

26-27 NOV 2025—BARCELONA

CONFERENCE OF MEDITERRANEAN CITIES

**BARCELONA+30: EMPOWERING LOCAL
ACTION FOR REGIONAL**

26-27 November 2025, Barcelona

The Conference of Mediterranean Cities Barcelona+30 will take place on the occasion of the 10th UfM Regional Forum/30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, to be held in Barcelona on 28 November 2025. Co-organised by MedCités, the Municipality of Barcelona, and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), with the support of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and the Barcelona Provincial Council, the event seeks to foster an inclusive and forward-looking dialogue among Euro-Mediterranean policy-makers, civil society actors, academia, and socio-economic players. While reflecting on three decades of the Barcelona Process and its impacts, the event will explore future pathways for reinvigorating the role of local authorities in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and dialogue. The conference will take place back-to-back with MedCités annual General Assembly, to create greater opportunities for members' engagement and participation.

Context

Cities have played and continue to play a crucial role in Euro-Mediterranean integration by driving decentralised cooperation, fostering territorial diplomacy, and promoting sustainable development at local level. Since the adoption of the Barcelona Declaration in 1995, local authorities have proven to be powerful agents of change, implementing sustainable practices, fostering dialogue, sharing lessons learned, and driving progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Being on the frontlines of regional challenges, their work enhances everyday environmental protection, promotes social inclusion, strengthens economic resilience, and connects policy with tangible benefits for citizens on the ground.

Without the active engagement of local authorities, no policy can truly be implemented in a way that reflects the lived realities of communities, as they are the essential link between strategy and action, translating global and regional frameworks into concrete, context-sensitive initiatives.

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Their proximity to citizens ensures that policies are not only executed, but adapted, monitored, and improved based on real needs and feedback. Moreover, they have shown a consistent commitment to strengthening what unites the region, serving as bridges for peace and solidarity.

The recent appointment of a European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, and the review of regional strategies of cooperation, notably around the Pact for the Mediterranean and the reform process undertaken by the Union for the Mediterranean, are powerful signals of renewed commitment. Local authorities must be integral actors to this process, to ensure a balanced, equal and pragmatic partnership. This Conference is therefore a timely opportunity to build on 30+ years of decentralised cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area, and to advocate for a strengthened role of local governments in shaping the region's future.

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Draft programme

Simultaneous interpretation in *English, French, and Arabic* is offered

Day 1 – 26 November 2025

Saló de Cent, Ajuntament de Barcelona (Plaça Sant Jaume)

16h30 – 17h00 | **Welcoming remarks**

17h00 – 17h20 | **Keynote address**

17h20 – 18h05 | **Cities as players for peace in the Mediterranean+**

The session will feature a discussion among three representatives of local authorities that will discuss the role of cities in peacebuilding, mediation and conflict resolution across the Mediterranean.

18h05 – 18h15 | **Presentation of the Declaration and call for**

Mediterranean Cities - Barcelona +30: Empowering local action for regional transformation

18h15 – 19h00 | **Cities as frontliners of climate change and sustainable development in the Mediterranean**

An exchange among city representatives and networks will take place to assess the role of the territorial level in tackling the environmental and societal challenges faced in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

19h00 | **Cocktail dinner**

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Day 2 – 27 November 2025

Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (Palau de Pedralbes)

9h30-10h15 | **Opening roundtable**

30 years of Barcelona Process. Local diplomacy on the spotlight: lessons learnt and future perspectives

10h15-10h45 | **Keynote address**

10h45-11h15 | **Coffee break**

11h15-12h30 | Roundtable 1: **First responders - The frontline position of local authorities in regional challenges**

Cities and regions are on the frontline of today's most pressing regional challenges—climate change, migration and refugees, economic volatility, and more. These pressures are not abstract; they manifest most acutely at the local level, where municipalities must respond rapidly and effectively. Yet while regional frameworks set strategic direction, success ultimately relies on local implementation and the capacity of territorial actors.

This session explores the dual role of local authorities as both first responders to regional crises and key enablers of long-term policy implementation. It offers practical insights into how local and metropolitan governments are adapting, aligning with regional objectives, and building the institutional strength needed to drive sustainable solutions.

12h30-13h15 | Roundtable 2: **Barcelona 30+ - Embedding local realities in the next generation of regional cooperation**

This roundtable will explore how to design and adapt the upcoming regional strategies (Pact for the Mediterranean, UfM renewed strategy 2030) that are grounded in the lived experiences, capacities, and contributions of local and regional authorities.

It will highlight the need for inclusive policymaking that reflects territorial diversity, harnesses local strengths, and builds effective mechanisms for shared governance.

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Particular attention will be given to addressing the specific needs of local actors, such as access to financing, limited policy space, and institutional capacity.

13h15-13h30 | **Closing statements**