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Citizenship, Governance,  
Institutional and External Affairs**

**CIVEX**

# **The contribution of local and regional authorities to regional integration in the Mediterranean**



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# 1. Introduction

This note was prepared as part of the project, *The contribution of local and regional authorities to regional integration in the Mediterranean*, commissioned by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) under the specific contract No. CDR 9104, implementing Framework contract CDR/TL1/11/2018/1.

The main aim of the contract is the preparation of a file note exploring the role of local and regional authorities in promoting regional integration in the Mediterranean region in the fields of trade, infrastructure, governance, labour mobility, research and innovation, and higher education.





## 2. Main obstacles to regional integration

South-South integration, both in the broader Southern Mediterranean region and in its sub-regions (Maghreb and Mashreq), is poor in all dimensions relevant to the present study: trade, infrastructure, governance, labour mobility, research and innovation, and higher education. Moreover, there exist barriers across all governance levels, mainly at the national level but also at the regional and local levels. The reasons for this are manifold and include factors such as political instability and regional conflicts, lack of institutional capacity, and lack of political will.

Political inattention appears especially important as a cause of stalled integration, as regional integration is normally a political project following economic opportunities. Studies focusing on the Maghreb region (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia)<sup>1</sup> underline that a **lack of political will** – closely connected to the existence of **political conflicts** between various pairs and groups of countries in the region – has impeded already-existing bilateral and regional agreements (e.g. the Arab Maghreb Union) in both implementation and enforcement. The situation in the Eastern Mediterranean (Turkey, Israel, Palestine,<sup>2</sup> Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria, as well as Greece and Cyprus) is even less conducive to integration, with the region presently characterised ‘more by conflict than by cohesion’.<sup>3</sup> Much (if not all) of this stagnation can be attributed to the ongoing conflict in Syria, while other frozen conflicts such as that between Lebanon and Israel or Turkey and Greece and Cyprus also play a role. While these conflicts take place at the national level, they are severe impediments at lower levels of governance as well, meaning that cooperation between local and regional associations (LRAs) can be difficult if not outright impossible. Conflict situations and especially political instability (e.g. in Western Sahara) may also be associated with increased turnover among staff in LRAs and local government associations (LGAs), which in turn inhibits the development of trust between partners.<sup>4</sup>

The **high level of centralisation of public administration** is also a common problem across the region. National political strategies and the need for ‘stability

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<sup>1</sup> <https://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Maghreb-Study-on-the-decentralised-cooperation-between-the-regional-authorities-of-Arab-Maghreb.pdf>;  
[https://www.kas.de/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=3676dc02-4110-6654-8539-cba354836aeb&groupId=252038](https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=3676dc02-4110-6654-8539-cba354836aeb&groupId=252038); [https://www.iemed.org/recursos-compartits/pdfs/MedOccidental\\_Forum2016\\_Dossier%20EN.pdf](https://www.iemed.org/recursos-compartits/pdfs/MedOccidental_Forum2016_Dossier%20EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> ‘This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue’. [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/palestine\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/palestine_en)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.euromesco.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Brief82\\_Eastern-Mediterranean-Regional-Dynamics\\_Conflicts-and-Opportunities-for-Conflict-Resolution-Support.pdf](https://www.euromesco.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Brief82_Eastern-Mediterranean-Regional-Dynamics_Conflicts-and-Opportunities-for-Conflict-Resolution-Support.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/World-Local-and-regional-government-associations.pdf>

and security’ are often treated as pretexts to delay or impede decentralisation efforts which may be seen as a threat to national integrity<sup>5</sup> (as is the case, for example, in Lebanon).<sup>6</sup> While the situation varies from country to country, with decentralisation processes underway in Morocco and Tunisia but no progress being made in Lebanon,<sup>7</sup> in general, the autonomy of LRAs is limited and their capacity to be involved in integration mechanisms is restricted, not least due to lack of funds and lack of training.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, local budgets frequently come from subsidies and transfers from central governments, with municipalities unable to efficiently levy local taxes and local governments having ‘very limited access to funding’.<sup>9</sup> Even if a decentralisation process is acknowledged in the constitution of the relevant country, it is often not followed by adequate fiscal transfers from the central to the local level.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, LGAs frequently struggle to collect fees from their members. External funding possibilities are also often limited, as most donor programmes are sectoral and focused on multiple actors (such as European Neighbourhood Instrument [ENI] Cross-Border Cooperation [CBC] Med); hence, there are few specific programmes directly targeting cities or networks of LRAs.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, and partially due to these financial constraints,<sup>12</sup> LRAs generally possess weak management capacities and are (over)staffed with under-skilled bureaucrats,<sup>13</sup> despite the numerous capacity building and twinning programmes being implemented throughout the region. In LGAs, however, most staff are employed based on merit, though exceptions can occur. Furthermore, trainings are often fragmented and generally insufficient, and motivation-based schemes remain poor.<sup>14</sup> LRAs also frequently lack knowledge concerning their constitutional competencies and duties.<sup>15</sup>

Obstacles more specific to **trade integration** are pervasive in the Southern Mediterranean region, where integration levels are some of the lowest in the world, despite the existence of a number of (overlapping) regional trade

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<sup>5</sup> <https://cutt.ly/fuFgzJ>

<sup>6</sup> <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/World-Local-and-regional-government-associations.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.kas.de/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=3676dc02-4110-6654-8539-cba354836aeb&groupId=252038](https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=3676dc02-4110-6654-8539-cba354836aeb&groupId=252038); <https://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Maghreb-Study-on-the-decentralised-cooperation-between-the-regional-authorities-of-Arab-Maghreb.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Based on an interview with Xavier Tiana, Head of International Relations in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, Secretary General of the MedCities network, conducted on 11 June 2019.

<sup>9</sup> <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/World-Local-and-regional-government-associations.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Based on an interview with Sylvia Bergh, Associate Professor, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, conducted on 12 June 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Based on an interview with Xavier Tiana, Head of International Relations in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, Secretary General of the MedCities network, conducted on 11 June 2019.

<sup>12</sup> <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/World-Local-and-regional-government-associations.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.iemed.org/anuari/2010/articles/Bergh\\_decentralisation\\_en.pdf](https://www.iemed.org/anuari/2010/articles/Bergh_decentralisation_en.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/World-Local-and-regional-government-associations.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Based on an interview with Sylvia Bergh, Associate Professor, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, conducted on 12 June 2019.

agreements and economic communities, such as GAFTA (Greater-Arab Free Trade Area), the Agadir Agreement, or the AMU (Arab Maghreb Union). Some of the most important barriers to effective integration include:<sup>16</sup>

- **lack of economic diversification** and ‘lack of complementarity in production structures of countries in the region’,<sup>17</sup> which means that the goods needed as either inputs or completed products in one country are not produced in neighbouring countries;
- nominal **tariffs** remain relatively high and differ significantly across countries (from 5% in Lebanon to 20% in Morocco and Tunisia), making the process of integration more costly (and, as a result, more difficult to justify politically) for some countries than for others;
- numerous **non-tariff measures**, such as complex, costly, and time-consuming administrative processes at borders, which are further complicated by the lack of harmonised and unified standards and requirements (e.g. on rules of origin or health); and
- **high cost of trade** between countries in the region, exceeding costs incurred when trading with European Union (EU) countries (in 2014, trade costs within the Maghreb region amounted to 278% of production value and were roughly twice as high as the cost of trade with the EU<sup>18</sup>), which is a result of the poor infrastructure and logistics services in the region, time delays, and long administrative procedures at the borders.

Due to highly restrictive policies, especially related to the cost of trade, but also related to outright prohibition, trade in services in the region is even more underdeveloped than trade in goods.

With regard to trade integration between the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean, the EU has free trade agreements in place with Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan. While the volume of trade between these countries and EU Member States is significantly higher than between each other,

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<sup>16</sup> See more: [https://mpr.a.ub.uni-muenchen.de/67991/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_67991.pdf](https://mpr.a.ub.uni-muenchen.de/67991/1/MPRA_paper_67991.pdf); <http://bruegel.org/2017/12/promoting-intra-regional-trade-in-the-south-of-the-mediterranean/>; [https://www.kas.de/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=3676dc02-4110-6654-8539-cba354836aeb&groupId=252038](https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=3676dc02-4110-6654-8539-cba354836aeb&groupId=252038); <http://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/WGTI2018-Trends-Trade-Investment-Policies-MENA-Nasser-Saidi.pdf>; <http://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/etud77-mediterraneanintegration-tbehr-en.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> [https://issuu.com/ispionline/docs/rapporto\\_med](https://issuu.com/ispionline/docs/rapporto_med)

<sup>18</sup> <http://bruegel.org/2017/12/promoting-intra-regional-trade-in-the-south-of-the-mediterranean/>

their trade volumes still underperform, mainly due to non-tariff barriers (NTBs), including sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), technical barriers to trade (TBT), and rules of origin issues, as well as burdensome customs procedures, the slow pace of trade liberalisation, and institutional weaknesses.<sup>19</sup> These issues may be especially egregious in preventing trade between the localities and regions located at national borders, where natural trading patterns might otherwise exist.

Lack of properly developed **infrastructure** is another impediment to the development of regional trade ties. **Physical facilities at border crossings** do not have sufficient capacity to accommodate high volumes of traffic and countries ‘rarely if ever’ coordinate work on border terminals or the regional roads leading to them.<sup>20</sup> Lack of adequate infrastructure also hinders cooperation in the energy sector, especially gas and electricity trade, which requires substantial physical cross-border infrastructure (**transmission lines and pipelines**). Underdeveloped **broadband and fibre networks** and the under-use of already-existing infrastructure (e.g. those used by non-telecom companies) also works to prevent cross-border internet connectivity, stifling innovation. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that regulatory frameworks for the information and communications technology (ICT) sector are not well developed in most countries in the region (except for Turkey and Jordan), and the existing frameworks are not harmonised between neighbouring states.<sup>21</sup> Local authorities are important players in the development of broadband networks, being responsible for urban planning strategies, and, as such, could play an active role in accelerating access to high-speed internet.<sup>22</sup>

**Limited institutional and personnel capacities** are also preventing stronger cooperation in the field of **labour migration**. Southern Mediterranean countries that are members of the African Union collaborate on this issue mostly on a bilateral basis, and multilateral approaches to the issue are non-existent. One of the reasons for this myopic approach is the limited capacity of institutions (at all levels of governance) to navigate through complex and multidimensional relationships, thus preventing the transition from a bilateral to a truly regional approach.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, labour market institutions, such as public employment services and labour administrations, across the region are at different stages of development, which makes cooperation – even on a bilateral basis – challenging.

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<sup>19</sup> See the upcoming *Evaluation of the impact of trade chapters of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements with six partners: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia*. Inception report prepared by CASE, Ecorys, and FEMISE for the European Commission.

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/PP4\\_Larbi\\_RCS\\_Infrastructure\\_web.pdf](https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/PP4_Larbi_RCS_Infrastructure_web.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/PP4\\_Larbi\\_RCS\\_Infrastructure\\_web.pdf](https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/PP4_Larbi_RCS_Infrastructure_web.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/newsroom/cf/dae/document.cfm?doc\\_id=4975;](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=4975;)

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16680>

<sup>23</sup> *Migration in North African Development Policies and Strategies. A comparative analysis*, United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, Office for North Africa, 2014, p. 70.

Additionally, as some studies suggest,<sup>24</sup> data on labour mobility might be difficult to access and compare within the region due to different definitions for common terms and categories or different methodologies.

Additionally, **labour migration is not seen as a priority** in countries such as Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, where preventing human trafficking and human smuggling are still at the top of the cooperation agenda, with fields such as South-South labour mobility remaining unexploited.<sup>25</sup> This also seems to be true for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro (as well as other Western Balkan countries), where regional discussions on labour migration have only recently been initiated, for instance within the framework of the MARRI (Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative) dialogue.<sup>26</sup>

Impediments to the mobility of students, researchers, and academics (such as time-consuming, complex, and costly visa procedures) are in turn an obstacle to regional integration in the field of **higher education**. Global and regional competition between regional universities may also factor into this state of affairs,<sup>27</sup> but a more simple explanation could be the differences in curricula, academic credit systems, and quality assurance systems employed by various countries in the region. The adoption of common mechanisms and instruments for the recognition of diplomas (e.g. on the basis of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] conventions) has been recognised on a number of occasions by Southern Mediterranean countries as a *sine qua non* to foster employability and mobility.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, following the Bologna Policy Forum held in May 2015, Arab states, with the support of UNESCO and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), agreed to cooperate in the development of a regional Arab network for the recognition of higher education diplomas and certificates. Nevertheless, there has been no practical advancement in this regard, a reality which may result from a lack of trust between the countries in the region.<sup>29</sup> It is worth mentioning, however, that some universities based in Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, and Turkey have started to adopt a European system of credits.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> City Migration Profiles Synthesis Report, Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Dialogue, Knowledge and Action, October 2017, p. 5,

[https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1\\_2018/MC2CM/MC2CM\\_Synthesis\\_Report\\_EN\\_Online.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1_2018/MC2CM/MC2CM_Synthesis_Report_EN_Online.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> *Migration in North African Development Policies and Strategies*, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Based on an interview with Aleksandar Todosiev, Programme Manager, MARRI, conducted on 4 June 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Based on an interview with Jerneja Penca, Research Fellow, Head of Academic Affairs, Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI University), conducted on 12 June 2019.

<sup>28</sup> See Statement of the Fifth Bologna Policy Forum at:

[http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018\\_Paris/36/8/BPFStatement\\_with\\_Annex\\_958368.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/36/8/BPFStatement_with_Annex_958368.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Based on an interview with Itaf Ben Adallah, Senior Advisor, Higher Education & Research, UfM, and Giuseppe Provenzano, Junior Advisor, Higher Education & Research, UfM, conducted on 07 June 2019.

<sup>30</sup> Based on an interview with Jerneja Penca, Research Fellow, Head of Academic Affairs, Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI University), conducted on 12 June 2019.



Regarding higher education integration between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean, even though countries from the South have been promoting the mobility of students to EU Member States, between 2014 and 2017, only 318 Erasmus+ scholarships were awarded to students from the Southern Mediterranean region.<sup>31</sup> **Linguistic and cultural barriers**, as well as the **lack of comprehensive social guarantees** (e.g. affordable housing and health insurance) for Southern Mediterranean students are among the main reasons for this outcome. Information on mobility opportunities is often scattered and not widely disseminated beyond capitals and other large cities.<sup>32</sup>

As higher education in most of the Southern Mediterranean (as well as Balkan) countries is highly centralised, it is primarily national governments that are responsible for university exchanges and drafting academic curricula. Only in Tunisia is there a regional commissionership of education, responsible for implementing state education policy at the regional level.

Low spending, fluctuating around 1% of gross domestic product (GDP) on average in the Southern Mediterranean countries (compared to 2.3% on average in the EU),<sup>33</sup> is one of the major obstacles to increased regional integration in the field of **research and innovation (R&I)**. Even more crucially, the vast majority of funding is spent on salaries, leaving research infrastructure and labs heavily underfunded,<sup>34</sup> which consequently leads to brain drain, affecting the research capacity of the countries under study. The limited regional integration in the field of higher education noted above (especially concerning the recognition or accreditation of skills and diplomas) also has a direct adverse impact on integration in R&I. Obstacles to regional mobility (e.g. work permits and visas) as well as scarce funding further prevent South-South exchanges between researchers and universities and research centres. In fact, exchanges between research staff are more likely to happen between the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean than within the South, due to the inclusion of the majority of the Southern Mediterranean countries in EU R&I programmes, such as Horizon2020, and the existence of regional initiatives for R&I, such as PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area).

The lack of clear and transparent legal frameworks in most of the Southern Mediterranean countries relating to intellectual property as well as the absence of a common patent framework further hinder regional integration in the field of

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<sup>31</sup> Salhi Eddine, Salah, *La mobilité des jeunes chercheurs dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen: Réalité, enjeux et facteurs déterminants*, [Young Researchers Mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean Region: Reality, Issues and Key Factors] EuroMeSCo Policy Brief, IEMed, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> El Ouassif, Amal, *Building a Youth Euro-Med Community through Learning and Research Mobility: Incubators and Obstacles*, EuroMeSCo Policy Brief, IEMed, 2018.

<sup>33</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/gb.xpd.rsdv.gd.zs>

<sup>34</sup> Cugusi, Battistina, *Le système national d'innovation au Maroc*, [The national system of innovation in Morocco] Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale, 2008.

R&I. This consequently leads to the duplication of research, wasting scarce resources which could be directed elsewhere with better coordination. Indeed, the development of common research projects and the exchange of data and best practices could be a benefit for the region and its sustainable economic development. Research can also often be disconnected from local needs, which leads to ‘knowledge waste’. In this vein, LRAs might play a role in helping to adjust the research conducted to the local environment and needs.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Based on the interview with Itaf Ben Adallah, Senior Advisor, Higher Education & Research, UfM and Giuseppe Provenzano, Junior Advisor, Higher Education & Research, UfM, conducted on 07.06.2019.





### 3. Annotated and commented bibliography

- Arvis, Jean-François, Vesin, Vincent, Carruthers, Robin, Ducruet, César, and de Langen, Peter, *Maritime Networks, Port Efficiency, and Hinterland Connectivity in the Mediterranean*, World Bank Group, 2018. Available at: <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01933726/document>

The authors of this report provide an overview of trade connectivity in the Mediterranean region, referring both to global and local networks. While the main focus of the study is not on the role of subnational entities, the study provides some insights into the role of local authorities in the development of ports and enhancing their efficiency. Data on sub-regional maritime traffic distribution in the Mediterranean can be found in the report as well.

**Themes:** infrastructure

- Ayadi, Rym, et al., *Youth employment and regional integration in the Euro-Mediterranean Region. Qualitative and quantitative economic analysis on whether and how regional integration could lead to youth employment*, 2017. Available at: <http://www.euromed-economists.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/UFM-Report-on-Youth-Employment-Creation-and-Regional-Integration-FINAL-STUDY-Final-ES.pdf>

This report includes a collection of best practices and good examples of active labour market policies (ALMPs) from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Turkey. It refers primarily to regional and rural-urban labour mobility and highlights the need for enhanced coordination between countries in the region, mainly through deeper regional integration, which can boost employment through different channels. Regarding ALMPs, the report underlines the need for policy interventions in order to improve the employability of workers and suggests a shift towards focusing on assisting unemployed in becoming employable first and then searching for a new job (not vice versa) with the help of efficient intermediation services through public and private agencies. As ALMPs are implemented by LRAs, the report's findings might have some relevance to the study, especially in relation to intra-state mobility.

**Themes:** labour market mobility

- Barcelo Fontanals, Marga, *Local and Regional Government Associations in EU Partner Countries: State of Play. Dialogue and capacity building of local and regional authorities in EU partner countries in the fields of development and local governance*, 2015. Available at:  
<http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/World-Local-and-regional-government-associations.pdf>

The report explores the role that local and regional authorities play in formulating and implementing developmental policies in the EU's partner countries, including in the Mediterranean region. It evaluates their performance, pointing to the main weaknesses in local governance and comparing it across different regions and across a series of factors such as quality of service delivery or governance structures.

**Themes:** governance

- Bergh, Sylvia, *Decentralisation and Local Governance in the MENA Region*, 2010. Available at:  
[https://www.iemed.org/anuari/2010/aarticles/Bergh\\_decentralisation\\_en.pdf](https://www.iemed.org/anuari/2010/aarticles/Bergh_decentralisation_en.pdf)

As noted in the previous paper, the extent to which regional and local authorities can contribute to regional integration depends crucially on the level of decentralisation of the public administration. This paper suggests that, although the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries have implemented decentralisation reforms, the LRAs are in practice still largely under the control of central governments. As a result, they have limited financial autonomy, laws concerning their responsibilities are unclear, and the local management capacity is weak.

**Themes:** governance

- Bojinović Fenko, Ana, *Compatibility of regionalizing actors' activities in the Mediterranean region; what kind of opportunity for the European Union?* Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, Vol. 12, No. 3, September 2012, 407-429. Available at:  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14683857.2012.710487>

The author of the report conducts a quantitative analysis of various internal and external regionalising actors in the Mediterranean region, grouping them by level and field of cooperation (including those of interest to this note). Subsequently, she analyses their 'levels of regionalism' and compatibility with each other's –

and the EU's – activities. She finds that there are relatively few micro-regional actors (such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership [EMP] of local and regional authorities [COPPEM] or Local Governments for Sustainability [ICLEI]), external actors prevail over the internal ones, and, among the internal ones, non-governmental actors prevail over governmental ones. This, in her opinion, illustrates the fact that the 'political agenda is set outside the region', which needs to change in order to empower the local actors. She sees cooperation at sub-regional and regional (but not micro-regional<sup>36</sup>) levels as most promising opportunities.

**Themes:** general economic integration

- Cugusi, Battistina, *Le système national d'innovation au Maroc*. Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale, 2008.

The paper provides an analysis of the R&I system in Morocco, finding it highly centralised, suffering from a lack of funds and human resources. It also highlights the value of decentralised cooperation in the promotion of R&I at the regional level; in particular, the author notes the need to make local actors aware of the importance of innovation and of helping workers acquire skills in this field. Regarding external cooperation on R&I, the paper highlights the importance of the Tanger-Tetouan region, which is considered a strategic zone for the development of Morocco. A number of successful projects and cooperation on R&I are cited, such as CDTEC project (Cross-border cooperation in the context of technology), focused on technological development; RETSE (Cross-border Business Services Network), aiming to establish, among others, a technology transfer centre; and projects with the PACA (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) region on the modernisation of the Chamber of Commerce or a 'system of geographical information', localising industrial and commercial activities in the region.

**Themes:** research and innovation, higher education

- Guillet, Lucie, Zarrouk, Najat, and Ouchati, Saber, *Study on the decentralized cooperation between the regional authorities of the Arab Maghreb*, PLATFORMA, 2015.

Available at <https://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Maghreb-Study-on-the-decentralised-cooperation-between-the-regional-authorities-of-Arab-Maghreb.pdf>

The study provides an analysis of North-South and South-South decentralised cooperation. In relation to R&I, the study cites examples of projects launched by

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<sup>36</sup> By micro-regional, the author understands cooperation between the LRAs.

AIMF (International Association of Francophone Mayors) related to the computerisation of civil status: CoMun, a programme facilitating decentralised cooperation between German and Maghreb cities (with a focus on Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria); and the LOCAL Med Platform, bringing over 20 city councils of Barcelona province and the Tanger-Tetouan region together to cooperate and exchange on innovative businesses related to energy efficiency, renewable energies, tourism, and the food and agriculture sector. The study highlights that South-South exchanges remain weak due to an unfavourable political environment, lack of political will, and absence of strategy for decentralised cooperation. In order to reverse these weaknesses, the study calls for the adoption of national strategies to support issue-based decentralised cooperation, stressing the need to encourage cross-border cooperation within Arab Maghreb through incentives.

**Themes:** governance, research and innovation, infrastructure

- Jolly, Cecile, *Regional Integration in the Mediterranean – impact and limits of community and bilateral policies*, European Union, 2014. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2014/457129/EXPO-AFET\\_NT\(2014\)457129\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2014/457129/EXPO-AFET_NT(2014)457129_EN.pdf)

The report provides an assessment of regional integration in the Mediterranean in the fields of higher education, trade, infrastructure, innovation, and labour mobility. With reference to higher education, the author states that integrated education systems at a regional level would provide young graduates with expanded economic opportunities. As noted above, nevertheless, university exchanges within the Maghreb region remain limited. With regard to North-South cooperation, the demands of controlling migratory flows constitutes the main obstacle to any project intending to increase exchanges between the two shores. The report provides a set of recommendations on how to strengthen regional cooperation in higher education: encouraging people to obtain qualifications for example through the ‘recognition-accreditation of skills and diplomas’ and the creation of ErasmusMed, an analogue to the Erasmus programme in the EU. While not explicitly addressed in this report, local and regional authorities can also play a key role in raising awareness of local communities on the benefits of obtaining higher education qualifications and of partaking in exchange programmes.

**Themes:** higher education, trade, infrastructure, innovation, labour mobility

- Larbi, Hedi and Christensen, Lars, *Smart Development Strategy for the Maghreb Structural Reform. A New Role for the State, Regional Integration*. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Programme South Mediterranean, 2017. Available at: [https://www.kas.de/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=3676dc02-4110-6654-8539-cba354836aeb&groupId=252038](https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=3676dc02-4110-6654-8539-cba354836aeb&groupId=252038)

The report outlines the state of art in terms of economic regional integration in the Maghreb and discusses reforms that should be undertaken in order to strengthen the regional economy and cooperation between countries in the region. The role of LRAs is mentioned throughout the report, with one key recommendation to increase decentralisation in order to empower local governments.

- Licha, Adrien, *Decentralised cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Projects and best practices of the regions*, Regione Toscana & PLATFORMA, 2018. Available at: <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Decent-coop-Medit-and-ME-with-Regione-Toscana.pdf>

The report focuses on decentralised bilateral and multilateral cooperation between selected Italian regions and Balkan and Middle Eastern LRAs (and other subnational actors). The author finds that the majority of projects undertaken were in the field of broadly understood socio-economic development (including trade, education, and governance). Additionally, the authors provide an overview of the best practices related to knowledge transfers, effective partnership implementation, and multi-sectoral interventions. Finally, the report outlines a selection of lessons learned, underlying instances of the positive influence of LRAs on 'socioeconomic reconstruction and democratisation' and knowledge sharing.

**Themes:** infrastructure, trade, education, governance

- *Migration in North African Development Policies and Strategies. A comparative analysis*, United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, Office for North Africa, 2014. Available at: <https://www.uneca.org/publications/migration-north-african-development-policies-and-strategies-comparative-analysis>

This study's main focus is the relationship between migration and development. According to the authors, migration is insufficiently taken into consideration in the planning and development policies of North Africa. The reasons behind this include lack of knowledge and competencies in the 'integration' approach; the lack of data and political will; poorly defined roles and coordination mechanisms

between the various relevant governmental departments; and a lack of cooperation and dialogue between the countries of origin, transit, and destination. The report refers to the role of local authorities in migration management while discussing strategic frameworks and national development plans, the institutions in charge of migration in North African countries, as well as the needs in terms of capacity building. The report also provides an overview of the main problems in applying a sustainable migration approach.

**Themes:** labour mobility

- *Migration Initiatives 2015. Middle East and North Africa: Migrants and Cities*, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2014. Available at: [http://www.musicandresilience.net/sites/default/files/2018-03/iom-migration\\_initiatives\\_2015-middle\\_east\\_and\\_north\\_africa\\_0.pdf](http://www.musicandresilience.net/sites/default/files/2018-03/iom-migration_initiatives_2015-middle_east_and_north_africa_0.pdf)

This report concentrates on the issue of migration in urban contexts, and more specifically, on the new partnerships being forged between migrants, local governments, civil society, and the private sector for managing cities for mutual benefit. The document is, however, devoted in part to the presentation of the IOM regional strategies and funding requirements. Despite sources regarding the role of LRAs in labour migration management in the researched region being scarce, the report brings useful insights into the situation in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia.

**Themes:** labour mobility

- OECD, *Dialogue Maroc-OCDE sur les politiques de développement territorial. Enjeux et recommandations pour une action publique coordonnée*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018. Available at: [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/dialogue-maroc-ocde-sur-les-politiques-de-developpement-territorial\\_9789264302884-fr](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/dialogue-maroc-ocde-sur-les-politiques-de-developpement-territorial_9789264302884-fr)

The publication concentrates on internal migration in Morocco. It claims that the inflow of rural workers to cities might contribute to an increase in poverty and unemployment levels, as well as put additional pressures on housing accessibility and public goods. In order to counter this trend, urban and rural areas have to develop a ‘win-win’ relationship, with rural areas included in any development strategy. The development of urban-rural partnerships can contribute to the integrated and sustainable development of the whole country, while improvement of public services in rural areas might increase their attractiveness. Although the study does not relate directly to the role of LRAs, it highlights some important areas of their intervention and cooperation, both on the national and subnational



levels. Some takeaways from this report might also be applicable to other North African states with characteristics similar to Morocco.

**Themes:** labour market mobility

- Pasternak, Andree and Pellissier, Jean-Paul, *Transport and logistics: Territorial issues and the role of local and regional authorities*. In: Lacirignola, Cosimo (Ed.), *MediTerra. Logistics and Agro-food Trade. A Challenge for the Mediterranean*, CIHEAM, Presses de Sciences Po, 2014. Available at: [https://www.iamm.ciheam.org/ress\\_doc/opac\\_css/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=13986](https://www.iamm.ciheam.org/ress_doc/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=13986)

This chapter is part of a broader report exploring the dynamics of the agricultural trade in the Euro-Mediterranean region from a historical perspective. The authors evaluate the role that LRAs play in the governance of the transport and logistics sectors, especially in the formation of international (road, rail, and maritime) trade routes. They compare the position and impact made by LRAs on the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean and discuss different ways in which they cooperate and compete with each other and with national and supranational bodies (e.g. the EU).

**Themes:** infrastructure, trade

- PLATFORMA & CPMR, *North-South Cooperation in the Maghreb: The Added Value of the Regional Approach. Dialogue and capacity building of local and regional authorities in EU partner countries in the fields of development and local governance*, 2015. Available at: <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Maghreb-North-South-cooperation-in-the-Maghreb.pdf>

In this publication, six case studies on North-South cooperation are reviewed, involving France, Italy, and Spain in the North and Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia in the South. The projects in question reflect innovative collaborative practices supporting further regional integration and concern mainly governance, health care, education, and welfare.

This report also highlights the crucial role of LRAs in promoting democratic values and the development of territorial and multilevel governance. As demonstrated by the case studies, North-South partnerships provide an original perspective to support public sector reforms and decentralisation through territorial approaches to development, complementary actions, and the inclusion of local stakeholders (mainly non-governmental organisations).

**Themes:** governance

- Tourret, Jean Claude and Wallaert, Vincent, *Analysis of Euro-Mediterranean governance framework, toward an effective contribution of regional authorities to Euro-Mediterranean policies*, 2010.

This report analyses the contribution of LRAs to the EU's decision-making process and highlights the growing importance of EU regions in policy making. Regions have adapted to face the competition between the various stakeholders which try to influence EU policies. In this scope, numerous organisations have been created, such as delegations of LRAs to Brussels and associations of regions or municipalities. Examples mentioned in the document include the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR), the European Commission of United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), Arco Latin, and MedCities. The situation, however, is different in countries of the Maghreb and the Middle East, which are characterised by strong political centralisation, limiting the role local and regional authorities can play in international decision-making. The report highlights a common issue for both European and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries: there is a need for better coordination at the transnational level.

**Themes:** governance



## 4. Successful mechanisms in support of regional integration

### 4.1 The 5+5 Dialogue

Currently, the 5+5 Dialogue encompasses four macro-regional strategies (MRS),<sup>37</sup> including three involving EU Mediterranean countries (France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, and Greece) as well as non-EU Mediterranean countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro): the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (adopted in 2010), the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (2014), and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (2015).

The MRS model faces a number of challenges and has several shortcomings. In 2014, the InterMediterranean Commission of the CPMR proposed ‘to apply and adapt to the Mediterranean basin the Macro-Regional and Sea Basin approaches that the EU has been testing during the last years in the Baltic and the Danube areas’.<sup>38</sup> However, as pointed out in an external study carried out in November 2017, it is difficult to track the results which may have arisen from a specific MRS.<sup>39</sup> In January 2019, the European Commission also produced a report on the implementation of EU MRS with unambiguous conclusions: ‘[...] without joint political impetus at national and regional level, the commitment of players on the ground, while very valuable, will not be enough to ensure the MRS survive [...]’.<sup>40</sup>

In this context, efforts seem to be geared towards exploring synergies between existing Mediterranean initiatives involving LRAs rather than setting new MRS in the Mediterranean. This trend was illustrated by the recently created #MedCooperationAlliance, an initiative involving the regions of the CPMR, the Euro-Région Pyrénées-Méditerranée, the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, and the networks of MedCities and Arco Latino. The objective of this initiative, as noted in official documents, is to ‘redouble efforts towards better integrated macro-

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<sup>37</sup> ‘A European Union macro-regional strategy is a policy framework which allows countries located in the same region to jointly tackle and find solutions to problems or to better use the potential they have in common.’ It may involve non-EU countries and regions as well. In institutional terms, the creation of such a strategy is initiated by the European Council that subsequently tasks the European Commission with drafting it. ([https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/cooperate/macro\\_region\\_strategy/pdf/mrs\\_factsheet\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/mrs_factsheet_en.pdf))

<sup>38</sup> <https://cpmr-intermed.org/download/road-map-on-macro-regional-strategies-in-the-mediterranean-2/?wpdmdl=7484&ind=1531730832668>

<sup>39</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/cooperate/macro\\_region\\_strategy/pdf/mrs\\_links\\_cohesion\\_policy.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/mrs_links_cohesion_policy.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/cooperate/macro\\_region\\_strategy/pdf/2\\_implementation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/2_implementation_en.pdf)

regional strategies and stronger cooperation instruments, in order to build a common, more cohesive and co-owned Euro-Mediterranean region'.<sup>41</sup>

If the debate over setting new MRS in the Mediterranean resurfaces, the role and involvement of LRAs should be reconsidered. In other words, setting a new Mediterranean MRS could be the laboratory for a new generation of MRS which are characterised by enhanced roles for LRAs, in line with recommendations from the European Parliament. In its resolution of January 2018 on the implementation of EU MRS, the European Parliament repeatedly stressed the importance of involving LRAs from the outset, stating for example that 'multilevel governance with a proper role for the regions within its framework should be a cornerstone of any macro-regional strategy from its inception, involving regional and local communities [...]'.<sup>42</sup>

Traditionally, the 5+5 Dialogue has focused on policies closely related to sovereign powers, with a limited role for LRAs. However, more recently, the 5+5 Dialogue has increasingly touched upon soft policy areas as exemplified by the main theme of its most recent meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Valetta in January 2019, 'Working Together: A Sustainable future for the Western Mediterranean'. In this context, and although the ministerial declaration<sup>43</sup> does not refer extensively to the subnational dimension, there is a trend towards more actively associating LRAs in the context of the 5+5 Dialogue. LRA representatives were, for instance, directly involved in a 5+5 ministerial meeting held in Montpellier on 26 April 2019 on cohesion and territorial planning, preceded by a 'Journée des autorités locales de la Méditerranée de l'Ouest'. In line with this trend, and as MRS originate from EU Member States, the five EU Member States that are part of the 5+5 initiative could consider the opportunity to come up with new Mediterranean MRS, involving for the first time partners from the Southern shore.

However, it is arguably the Secretariat of the UfM that is best placed to create bridges and synergies between initiatives in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Although the local and regional dimension does not feature prominently in the UfM Roadmap for action adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the UfM member states in 2017,<sup>44</sup> the UfM Secretariat's 'policy dimension is structured around regional dialogue platforms involving not only representatives from governmental institutions and experts, but also regional and international organisations, local authorities, civil society, private sector and financial institutions'.<sup>45</sup> In line with

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<sup>41</sup> [www.medicities.org/documents/10180/1127472/Mediterranean+Cooperation+Alliance/15ddd13c-026e-4c03-a87a-b705176a90a8](http://www.medicities.org/documents/10180/1127472/Mediterranean+Cooperation+Alliance/15ddd13c-026e-4c03-a87a-b705176a90a8)

<sup>42</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0002\\_EN.html?redirect](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0002_EN.html?redirect)

<sup>43</sup> [https://medthink5plus5.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/55-Valetta-Declaration\\_ministerial.pdf](https://medthink5plus5.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/55-Valetta-Declaration_ministerial.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/UfM-Roadmap-for-action-2017.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> <https://ufmsecretariat.org/what-we-do/platforms/>

this priority, there have been various initiatives undertaken, such as the second UfM Secretariat Peer to Peer Dialogue for Supporting Local Authorities' Efforts in Energy Transition and Climate Change and the UfM Secretariat Capacity Building Program for Local Energy Transition in Istanbul, Turkey, from 24 to 29 November 2018. More recently, the Secretary General of the UfM has backed the role of LRAs in the Mediterranean<sup>46</sup> and, more concretely, the launching of #MedCooperationAlliance as mentioned above.

## 4.2 Arab Towns Organization

The Arab Towns Organization (ATO) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation focusing on cities and municipalities in Arab countries, established on 15 March 1967 and headquartered in Kuwait. Membership is open to all Arab cities. Currently, 650 cities from 22 countries (Arab League Member States) are part of ATO.<sup>47</sup> Its main goals are 1) preservation of the identity and heritage of Arab cities, 2) the identification of problems facing Arab cities and the search for solutions to these problems through debate and the exchange of experiences, 3) promotion of the sustainable growth of Arab towns, 4) contribution to the empowerment of cities, 5) working towards achieving the financial independence of Arab cities, and 6) facilitation of cultural life in Arab towns.

ATO realises its specific goals through a number of subsidiary organisations, such as the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI),<sup>48</sup> the Environmental Center for Arab Towns (ECAT),<sup>49</sup> and the Arab Forum for Smart Cities.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, it cooperates with a variety of stakeholders such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), the Arab League, the Islamic Development Bank, UfM, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat),<sup>51</sup> the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank Group, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the International City/County Management Association (ICMA, which is a global network of local government employees and professional city managers), and others. It is a member of UCLG and has an observer status at United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC). It played a role in establishing the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC) and was one of the organisations – alongside the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) – behind the establishment of the Euro Mediterranean Partnership of Local and Regional

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<sup>46</sup> <https://ufmsecretariat.org/the-union-for-the-mediterranean-backs-regional-and-local-authorities-strategy-for-the-sustainable-a-territorial-development-of-the-mediterranean-basin/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.arabtowns.org/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://araburban.org/>

<sup>49</sup> <http://en.envirocitiesmag.com/aboutus/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://itcat.org/En/EN.aspx>

<sup>51</sup> It is a member of the Global Taskforce (GTF) of Local and Regional Governments

Authorities (COPPEM).<sup>52</sup> It disseminates information among its members and observers by publishing quarterly magazines (e.g. Al-Madina Al-Arabiyya [Arab Town]), commissioning specialist studies and reports, and organising and participating in various types of events centred around the topic of local governance.

Thanks to the large number of members from countries across the South Mediterranean region – many of which are relatively small and overseen by other LGAs – the ATO is (as noted by the UNDP) an ‘important vehicle to reach out to a vast number of member cities’ with ‘a strong potential to become a vehicle for promoting urban resilience in the region’.<sup>53</sup>

*More information* (in Arabic): <http://www.arabtowns.org/>

### **4.3 Center for Mediterranean Integration**

The Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) is a multi-actor platform aiming at facilitating debate and cooperation on regional solutions to regional challenges, as well as promoting an exchange of ideas between state, local, and regional authorities, civil society, and development agencies. Established in 2009 and working on a three-year mandate, CMI addresses challenges related to labour migration, socio-economic development, and climate change. CMI’s current mandate expires in 2021.

During the 2018-2021 timeframe, the Center is focusing on ‘providing technical depth and links to policy reforms’ and ‘build[ing] synergies among Mediterranean stakeholders (...) in order to have a transformational impact on the region’.

CMI’s uniqueness results from the fact that it is the only Mediterranean institution whose membership is open to governments, international financial institutions, local authorities, and civil society; thus, it promotes more inclusive regional dialogue and solutions. At present, CMI is composed of 13 members: 9 states (Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, and Tunisia), two local authorities (the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (Sud) Region of France and the City of Marseille), as well as the EIB and the World Bank Group. Additionally, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has observer status.

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.coppem.org/default.asp?hl=en&p=86>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/Crisis%20prevention/MainReportScreen.pdf>

The actions of CMI are jointly decided by its members, who also contribute financially to the organisation. The principal activities of CMI are the production of analyses and publications, multi-actor seminars and forums, technical hubs (to promote peer-to-peer exchange on such topics as water, energy, refugees, and social protection), targeted capacity-building initiatives, and the incubation of projects. Under its fourth mandate, its aim is to convert CMI into a centre of excellence for Mediterranean integration.

CMI has contributed to the exchange of knowledge and best practices, strengthening capacities, and building networks around a number of issues. For instance, through the organisation of numerous seminars, CMI has promoted regional dialogue on innovation in the MENA region.<sup>54</sup> In the field of migration and displacement, CMI has supported and strengthened the Mediterranean host municipalities learning network (HLMN), enabling them to exchange best practices and lessons learned, and provided capacity building trainings on local economic development strategies.<sup>55</sup> With regard to climate, CMI has contributed to the creation of networks of governments and the private sector to exchange on the benefits of the regional integration of energy markets and develop implementation plans.<sup>56</sup> Through forums and workshops, CMI strengthened awareness on the need for a regional energy transition and the importance of regional water security and stability. And in the area of urban development, CMI has promoted the exchange of information and knowledge on urban transitions in the Mediterranean region, in order to be able to more effectively attract new investors.<sup>57</sup>

Throughout its activities, CMI has been collaborating with a number of international organisations, financial institutions, and LRA networks, such as MedCities, the CPMR, and the ATO. For instance, MedCities has collaborated with CMI in the organisation of training activities held in Morocco and Tunisia.<sup>58</sup> In October 2018, CMI signed a memorandum of understanding with UfM.

*More information:* <https://www.cmimarseille.org/center>

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<sup>54</sup><https://www.cmimarseille.org/sites/default/files/newsite/library/files/en/Annual%20report%20final%20FOR%20online.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> [https://www.cmimarseille.org/sites/default/files/newsite/annual\\_report\\_2018\\_for\\_online\\_pages.pdf](https://www.cmimarseille.org/sites/default/files/newsite/annual_report_2018_for_online_pages.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> [https://www.cmimarseille.org/sites/default/files/newsite/annual\\_report\\_2018\\_for\\_online\\_pages.pdf](https://www.cmimarseille.org/sites/default/files/newsite/annual_report_2018_for_online_pages.pdf)

<sup>57</sup><https://www.cmimarseille.org/sites/default/files/newsite/library/files/en/Annual%20report%20final%20FOR%20online.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> Based on an interview with Xavier Tiana, Head of International Relations in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona; Secretary General of the MedCities network, conducted on 11 June 2019.

## **4.4 Dialogues on migration implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development: MTM Dialogue and EUROMED Migration IV**

Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) and migration dialogues, such as the Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Dialogue or EUROMED Migration IV, are led by state governments; however, the role of LRAs in migration management – including labour migration – has been widely acknowledged by the majority of its participants. These processes form a platform to implement specific projects aiming at building both the technical and operational capacities of LRAs.

The MTM Dialogue, hosted by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) since its creation in 2002, has the participation of 28 EU Member States as well as Algeria, Cape Verde, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Senegal, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey. The initial focus of this informal and non-binding initiative was transit migration, but over the years, the Dialogue has opened up to other areas of migration-related cooperation, including labour mobility. The initiative operates mostly at the technical level. For example, in 2015, a network of select Mediterranean cities (from both Northern and Southern MTM Partner States) was created, resulting in the introduction of the local dimension to the Dialogue.

From 2015 to 2018, the first phase of the City-to-City (MC2CM) project was implemented within the framework of the MTM Dialogue (financed by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation). Its aim was to increase the knowledge base of urban migration and nurture a peer-to-peer dialogue to support mutual learning among the cities of Amman, Beirut, Lisbon, Lyon, Madrid, Tangier, Tunis, Turin, and Vienna. The projects' partner organisations included the UCLG and UN Habitat. The aims of the project were threefold: 1) to foster dialogue between the participant cities, 2) to conduct research on the local dimension of migration policies in participant cities, and 3) to take action through developing a toolkit on local-level migration planning and implementing specific pilot projects.



The project's outputs encompass city migration profiles, policy recommendations, and specific case studies.<sup>59</sup> As stated in the 'City Migration Profiles Synthesis Report', the task of compiling such profiles had important impacts for participant cities, allowing them, for example, to collect disparate data on local migration situations and highlight existing data gaps. Moreover, 'profiles also provided a platform for new and strengthened future cooperation on migration between actors at different levels of government, who in several cases had not previously collaborated in this area'.<sup>60</sup> The concept of multilevel governance in migration was widely promoted during project implementation, and its results are, among others, the enhanced understanding of the role of cities in addressing migration challenges and the strengthened understanding of multilevel governance as such.

The second phase of the MC2CM project was initiated in July 2018 (with an end date of March 2021). The following cities have joined the initiative: Rabat, Casablanca, Oujda, Sousse, Sfax, and Naples, as well as FAMSI (*Fondo Andaluz de Municipios para la Solidaridad Internacional*); the project also cooperates with Irbid, Ramallah, and Gaziantep. In addition to what has been the core activity during the first phase, the second phase of the project also concentrates on triangular cooperation, including with Sub-Saharan associations of local authorities and UCLG Africa.

Platforms such as MTM Dialogue may be considered a successful cooperation mechanism in terms of providing space for joint regional actions, fostering mutual learning, and strengthening the capacities of relevant actors, including LRAs. Moreover, combined with other dialogues, such as EUROMED Migration IV,<sup>61</sup> the MTM Dialogue may provide a valuable platform for fostering both horizontal (between the states) and vertical (within the states and all levels of governance) cooperation on labour mobility for relevant state authorities and LRAs.

*More information:* <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/euromed-migration-iv/>; <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/mtm-dialogue/>

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<sup>59</sup> All outputs can be accessed at: <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/mtm-dialogue/city-to-city-mc2cm/> (accessed 11 June 2019).

<sup>60</sup> City Migration Profiles Synthesis Report, Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Dialogue, Knowledge and Action, October 2017, p. 3, [https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1\\_2018/MC2CM/MC2CM\\_Synthesis\\_Report\\_EN\\_Online.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1_2018/MC2CM/MC2CM_Synthesis_Report_EN_Online.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> Currently implemented in 2016-2019; the first three phases took place in 2004-2015. EUROMED Migration IV constitutes another forum for fostering regional cooperation on migration and mobility-related issues. In addition to the 28 EU Member States, the following South partner countries participate in the programme: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco, and Tunisia. The list of realised activities include peer-to-peer events at the regional and sub-regional levels and the provision of technical expertise.

## 4.5 MEDports Association

The MEDports Association was established in June 2018 in Marseille (which also serves as its seat), following two years under a less formal format known as the ‘MEDports Forum’.<sup>62</sup> The goals of the MEDports Association are to strengthen cooperation between Mediterranean ports, tackle the challenges of modern logistics and commerce, develop joint opportunities, and promote the Mediterranean as an important area of the global shipping industry. Among others, the members of the association work to facilitate trade and improve cargo flows across the Mediterranean, share data, and defend common interests before third parties. The members of the Association are **twenty-four port authorities** from Algeria, Egypt, France, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Spain, Slovenia, and Tunisia,<sup>63</sup> which jointly represent almost 70% of the total traffic in the Mediterranean Sea.

Most of the port members associated in MEDports are state-owned enterprises, and the participation of LRAs is guaranteed through their membership in supervisory boards. The Tanger Med port in Morocco is managed by the Tangiers Mediterranean Special Agency, a limited-liability company under state control, which acts in the capacity of a regional authority.<sup>64</sup> In Algeria, ports are managed by financially autonomous regional institutions. In addition, two French ports, Bastia and Toulon, are managed directly by LRAs.

The Association operates through **seven committees**: the Executive Committee; the Technical Committee; the Sustainability, Training, and Maritime Expertise Committee; the Safety and Security Committee; the Statistics and Market Analysis Committee; the Relations with International Institutions Committee; and the Smart Ports Committee. The last one serves to exchange good practices and coordinate efforts in the areas of digital technologies and energy transition, among others.

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<sup>62</sup> This section draws on consultations with representatives of MEDports and uses the following sources: *MEDports Association brochure*;

<https://www.portseurope.com/first-general-assembly-of-medports-association-takes-place-in-marseille/>;

<https://www.portstrategy.com/news101/world/europe/medports-association-hits-ground-running>;

<https://lefrenchsmartportinmed.com/node/45>;

<https://container-mag.com/2018/12/10/medports-association-outlines-2019-plans/>;

*The Shipping & Finance Maritime Newspaper*, December 2018, Issue 270.

<sup>63</sup> Port authorities that are MEDports members by country: Algeria: Arzew, Skikda, and Bejaia; Egypt: Damietta; France: Bastia, Marseilles Fos, and Toulon; Italy: Civitavecchia, Taranto, and Venice; Lebanon: Beirut; Malta: Malta Freeport; Morocco: Moroccan Ports Agency, Tanger Med; Spain: Algeciras, Barcelona, Cartagena, Ports of Catalonia, Puertos des Estado, Tarragona, and Valenciaport; Slovenia: Luka Koper; Tunisia: Tunisian National Ports Authority.

<sup>64</sup> [https://www.iamm.ciheam.org/ress\\_doc/opac\\_css/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=13986](https://www.iamm.ciheam.org/ress_doc/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=13986)



MEDports organises regular fora with members and stakeholders. It also communicates the results of its work and submits regulatory proposals to the institutions of the EU. The Association's roadmap of activities in 2019 includes a range of ambitious yet realistic goals, such as the adoption of uniform key performance indicators (KPIs), the expansion of the on-shore power supply for ships on the Mediterranean, the development of a common training programme, and the joint development of a '**single window**' administration system for shippers. The latter will enable international shippers to handle administrative issues related to customs declarations, import/export permits, and certificates of origin, among others, in a single office.

By forging a wide network of ports and related LRAs, ensuring the strong representation of both Northern and Southern countries, and populating its agenda with highly relevant and timely issues, the MEDports Association plays an important role in the landscape of Mediterranean cooperation.

*More information:* <https://twitter.com/medportsasso>



## 5. Policy recommendations

While addressing the issue of the political situation in the Southern Mediterranean (and Balkan) region and in individual countries – which is arguably the main bottleneck to regional integration – is beyond the scope of this study, a number of steps can be undertaken to enhance cooperation between countries in the Mediterranean.

First, because the capacity of LRAs and LGAs is a function of their financial condition, and because across the region LGAs are generally quite poor, it appears appropriate to fashion ways to increase the financial leeway of these organisations. In particular, LGAs may be encouraged to **develop mechanisms of generating their own revenue**. One example, established by the Bureau Technique des Villes Libanaises, is to use advocacy and technical competences as income-generating activities.<sup>65</sup> Of course, to monetise capacity, organisations need to have some capacity to share in the first place. In order to avoid a vicious circle, **tailored programmes that transfer marketable skills and competences** could be provided to LGAs. The ‘market’ for such specific services would naturally be quite specific, but a healthy client pool based on non-governmental organisations, international organisations, and research institutions might prove possible.

In the same vein, **specific programmes targeting cities in particular** could be designed at the EU level. Current programmes are sectoral and multi-actor (such as ENI CBC Med), which limits the possibility of LRAs to obtain funding. South-South and South-North city-to-city programmes would enable cities to develop regional cooperation on common challenges in their areas of competences, thus contributing to regional integration.<sup>66</sup> In order to increase the capacities of LRAs, mobility and exchange programmes targeting civil servants could be designed, as well as a renewed emphasis on twinning and on-the-job training.<sup>67</sup>

Arguably, the most realistic way for LRAs to support regional integration is by developing a **stronger lobbying approach**. By virtue of organising themselves into more or less formal groups and associations, LRAs have the chance to have their voices heard by national and supranational bodies. One instance of such a successful intervention by LRAs was the coordinated participation in public consultations launched in 2010 in preparation for establishing the trans-European

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<sup>65</sup> <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/World-Local-and-regional-government-associations.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> Based on an interview with Xavier Tiana, Head of International Relations in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona; Secretary General of the MedCities network, conducted on 11 June 2019

<sup>67</sup> Based on an interview with Sylvia Bergh, Associate Professor, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, conducted on 12 June 2019

transport network (TEN-T).<sup>68</sup> This approach could be used when negotiating with donor countries providing technical assistance, for example, in the field of labour mobility (currently, the role of LRAs in this field is purely declarative and they have no real ownership over the ‘sustainable migration approach’).

In a similar vein, and in order to gain more leverage in influencing state agendas (and recruiting new members), LGAs should also focus on **increasing their visibility and internal capacities** and **working closely with other stakeholders**, including the local civil society, small and medium-sized enterprises, research centres, health organisations, migrant associations, and other actors.<sup>69</sup> This ‘added value [of] decentralised cooperation’ verifies and legitimises the actions of LRAs, increases their efficiency by way of networking and access to local knowledge, and reinforces the democratisation and decentralisation agenda. The participation of local communities could be encouraged and strengthened by awareness and education campaigns.

Regarding specific remedies related to **labour mobility**, two main points should be highlighted. In the first instance, further technical support to labour market institutions at the regional and local levels should be provided. This could include training staff both on specific labour migration-related issues and on managing and organising labour migration. Importantly, technical support should encompass methods and means of data gathering; for Western Balkan states, this might include support in introducing a module on migration in the LFS survey. Second, labour mobility should be highlighted as an important issue within cooperation platforms with the EU such as the MTM Dialogue or EUROMED Migration IV. Labour mobility should be supported as a theme for specific projects and activities implemented within the framework of such fora.

In the field of **R&I and higher education**, South-South and South-North partnerships between research centres, universities, and LRAs should be promoted through the creation of specific funding programmes. Such horizontal partnerships will support the adaptation of research to the local milieu and needs, thus avoiding ‘knowledge waste’ and leading to evidence-based sustainable local development and stronger regional cooperation.

Furthermore, as much of the emphasis on **trade integration** remains at the national level and given that issues related to trade liberalisation are politically sensitive, it may be effective to have countries in the region agree to pilot trade liberalisation programmes at the local level. In particular, this could entail small pilot programmes of cross-border liberalisation similar to ‘special economic zones’ but including two (or more) national boundaries. The small scale of the

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<sup>68</sup> [https://www.iamm.ciheam.org/ress\\_doc/opac\\_css/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=13986](https://www.iamm.ciheam.org/ress_doc/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=13986)

<sup>69</sup> <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Decent-coop-Medit-and-ME-with-Regione-Toscana.pdf>

experiment coupled with the likely support of border communities could make such a policy change easier than broader-based liberalisation. These types of solutions, known as ‘small border traffic zones’, can be found, for example, in Poland, which has implemented them at various points on its border with Kaliningrad and Ukraine.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, LRAs could work together within territorial networks on the **development of regional products and their branding**, which could be helpful both in expanding trade with the EU and contributing to the discussion on the planned revision of the pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin.<sup>71</sup> It could also be used to boost tourism, with cross-country touristic routes developed around selected products.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See e.g. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14650045.2016.1176916?journalCode=fgeo20>

<sup>71</sup> [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2019/may/tradoc\\_157882.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2019/may/tradoc_157882.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> See for example, Arco Latino’s Terra Nostra project (<http://cat.arcolatino.org/article/terra-nostra>) or various cultural routes promoted by the Council of Europe, which can serve as an inspiration (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/by-theme>).



## 6. Abbreviations

AIMF	International Association of Francophone Mayors
ALMP	Active labour market policies
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
ATO	Arab Towns Organisation
AUDI	Arab Urban Development Institute
CDTEC	Cross-border cooperation in the context of technology
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CIHEAM	International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies
CMI	Center for Mediterranean Integration
CoR	Committee of the Regions
COPPEM	Standing Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of Local and Regional Authorities
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions
DG	Directorate General
ECAT	Environmental Center for Arab Towns
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EMUNI	Euro-Mediterranean University
ENI CBC	European Neighbourhood Instrument Cross Border Cooperation
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
EU	European Union
GAFTA	Greater-Arab Free Trade Area
GDP	Gross domestic product
GTF	Global Taskforce
HLMN	Host municipalities learning network
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IOM	International Organisation for Migration

KPI	Key performance indicators
LGA	Local government associations
LRA	Local and regional authorities
MARRI	Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative
MC2CM	Mediterranean City-to-City Migration
MEDports	Mediterranean Ports Association
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MRS	Macro-regional strategies
MTM	Mediterranean Transit Migration
NTBs	Non-tariff barriers
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PACA	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region
PRIMA	Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area
R&I	Research and innovation
RETSE	Cross-border Network of Services to Enterprises
SPS	Sanitary and phytosanitary measures
TBT	Technical barriers to trade
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
UCLG	United Cities and Local Government
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
WACLAC	World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination



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