SPECIAL ISSUE ON
6TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
EDITORIAL

by Piero Fagone

At rounding of the mark of its early five-year period, almost coinciding with the enlargement to east of the European Union, Coppem carried out a close examination, not only on its activities as a whole and on the role it is playing in fostering the relationships among local self-governments with a perspective of cooperation and real solidarity, but also on the Barcellona process, or the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership which, at the end of the year, will achieve the finishing line of its early decade. The occasion for a critical examination of the work carried out as well as of the EU policies concerning the Mediterranean has just been offered by the General Assembly of Coppem, during which Salvatore Cuffaro, president of the Sicilian Region and mover of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, has been appointed as its president, and the outgoing president Fabio Pellegrini appointed as founding president. The works were completed with the entry of the representatives from the Countries that recently join the EU and the appointment of the leaders of the four institutional Commissions.

The most salient fact emerged from the assembly of Palermo must be referred on the one hand to the valid policy followed by Coppem and also to the basic importance of a closer and closer cooperation among Institutions, Cities and European Regions, from the southern Mediterranean and Middle-eastern shores; and on the other hand, to the need to safeguard the community undertaking in reducing the gaps along the North-South axis, when everything lets envisage that, for the enlargement to the eastern European Countries, the relation West-East will be privileged. But, together with this concern, there is the bitter observation of the little effectiveness which the Barcellona process has shown up to now with regard to the financial aspect as well as to the political-institutional one.

About the considerations that the Assembly of Coppem moved on these topics we give a detailed overview by publishing the complete texts of the statements expressed by the standing Committee leaders and by some leading political personalities as Luigi Cocilovo, vice president of the European Parliament, Francesco Musotto, member of the European Parliament, and Dario Falzone, deputy mayor of Palermo. To such an overview outlined by following the two fronts of Coppem’s activity, is added an interview with Guido Lo Porto, President of the sicilian regional Assembly.

This issue of Coppem News has certainly a well-defined thematic kind, though the range of the comments worked out, the plurality of suggestions, the depth of the analyses included in the various contributions make it a very important document not only because you can find in it the Coppem’s “charter” but also, and especially, because it gives a contribution to increase the debate on important and concrete matters for the people living in the Mediterranean region and in the continental Europe as well.

The local autonomies are full aware of having to play a more basic role in the civil and political life; they think that, within the community framework, new institutional subjects with a strong representativeness must come out; they positively aim at establishing new and large forms of cooperation. In the last general Assembly, Coppem confirmed its will for supporting the commitment of Cities and Regions to achieving more and more advanced targets of participation and democracy, in a new dimension in the historical framework of the Mediterranean and Europe as well.
EASTERN EUROPE COMES IN THE FOREFRONT OF COPPEM

The Committee’s general Assembly renews its members and defines the strategic lines for the next four-years period.

SALVATORE CUFFARO ELECTED PRESIDENT OF COPPEM

Born in Raffadali (AG) on 21st February 1958, he is married and father of two children. With a degree in Medicine and Surgery, he was member of the Council of the Faculty of Medicine and of the Board of Directors of the University of Palermo. He was the organizational leader of the Sicilian DC party. He was town councillor of the municipality of Raffadali and then of Palermo. In the XI legislature, he was elected in the CDU party lists, in the Palermo constituency, as deputy of the Sicilian Regional Assembly, within which he held the post of Vice President of the Anti-Mafia Regional Commission. He was re-elected in the XII legislature, still in the Palermo constituency, holding the position of Regional Councillor Responsible for Agriculture and Forestry. He has been President of the Sicilian Region since 16th July 2001.

In the gorgeous setting of Villa Malfitano in Palermo, offered for the occasion by the Sicilian Region, the General Assembly of Coppen on November 20th -21st 2004 was particularly important and significant. It in fact has been held when due the Presidency two-year period and the four-year period of the members appointment. For this reason the main significant grounds were:

- The Assembly has been called to appoint the new President for the next two-year period.
- The participants were Coppen’s members which have been confirmed in their position or newly appointed for the two-year period 2004-2008. Thus, for the first time about half of them were present at a meeting of Coppen.
- It was the first Assembly in which, among the 26 national delegations of euro-mediterranean Representatives of the local and regional Authorities present, those from the new Countries joining the European Union on the last may 2004 took part. Also the Arab Towns Organisation (ATO) took part in it with its delegate.
- The delegations present were particularly numerous and leading ones, consisting of highest level representatives from local and regional institutions, and of their representative associations.

An evidence of such an importance has been represented by the welcome address by the President of the Sicilian Region Salvatore Cuffaro and by the Deputy Mayor of Palermo Dario Falzone, as well as by the authoritative opening speeches by the President of the European Parliament, the Honourable Mr Luigi Cocilovo, and by the President of Palermo Province and also Member of the European Parliament, the Honourable Mr Francesco Musotto, by the Minister of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan H.E Mrs Amal Hamad El-Fahran, and eventually by the Representative of the Arab Towns Organisation Saleem Etani, member of Beirut city Council (Lebanon).

On proposal of the Coppen Presidency Council, the Honourable Mr Salvatore Cuffaro has been acclaimed new President for the two-years period 2004-2006, and with that role he outlined the political-strategical guidelines of Coppen for the next years, by hoping for an intensification of the relations between Europe and arab world, and outlining the importance of a suitable proximity policy, and focusing the attention on the Countries recently joining the European Union. Moreover he has mentioned some initiatives adopted by the Sicilian Region, as the building up of the Sicily House in Tunisia, of Sicily Square in Jordan and, with the collaboration of Coppen, the cooperation agreement between the Sicilian Region – Region of Rabat (Morocco).
On behalf of all the members President Cuffaro and Secretary General Carmelo Motta addressed to the outgoing President Fabio Pellegrini, their warm thanks to have wisely and positively led Coppem during its early years since its establishment in 2000, and it has been recognized unanimously the office of founding President, for which a special amendment to the Statute has been introduced. Omar El-Barhaoui, Mayor of Rabat (Morocco) has been confirmed as Substitute Vice President and H.E Adly Hussein Governor of Qalyubia (Egypt) together with Nikos Papatheodoulis, Mayor of Nea Halkidonia (Greece), have been confirmed as Vice Presidents, and Andrzej Porawska, Executive Director of the Association of Polish Cities as well as Member of the City Council of Poznan.

Also the new Presidents have been appointed the first Vice Presidents and the Vice Presidents of the four Commissions [ For the 1st Commission respectively Ian Micallef (MT), Said El Dakkak (EG), Marc Thoulen (BE); for the 1Ird Commission Jan Mans (NL), Muzaffer Baca (TR), Jalal Abs (LB); for the 1IInd Commission Abdelkarim Mosbah (TN), Maria Pilsits (HU), Malachy Godfrey (IE); for the 1IVth Commission Falah Al Omounsh (JO) Keith Whitmore (GB), Antonio Maria Farina Murta (PT)].

The works of the four commissions in 2004 on the topics of institutional relations, migration, transport, cultural heritage have been presented, after an introduction by Michele Raimondi, Secretariat Programmes Coordinator, by the respective speakers and persons reports to each Commission for the Secretariat. Many interventions by the members followed. At last, the balance 2004 and the budget for 2005 have been approved. On the whole, the General Assembly 2004 has drawn an important step of Coppem towards a higher authoritativeness (high status), and towards a consolidation of its organizational and operational powers.

In a very friendly, aware and positive atmosphere, we all were present at the significant improvement of the Association, just when the enlargement of the European Union and the euro-mediterranean free-trade area is coming close to be effective, are a further challenge for the euro-mediterranean local and regional authorities as well as for Coppem which represents them. (m.r.).
European strategy envisages that the Mediterranean is considered a new cooperation area, where special relations shall be established in the framework of a wider “neighbouring policy”. The unification has created a new political, economic and human area. Now it is necessary sharing the benefits of this area through a new approach to the international relations, and a new cooperation and partnership philosophy. That means to establish closer and closer as well as more and more solid relations with all our neighbours and create a “link of friend countries” with which we can share all the benefits of the association. That poses a twofold objective: developing a prosperity, peace and stability area founded on shared values and on the economic integration principle; improving our political and human cooperation relations in a wide range of fields.

The “Proximity policy” will strengthen the good-governance, the respect for human rights and personal liberties, the State and participatory institutions; it will give more important opportunities for European peoples, and the Mediterranean peoples too, to get together. It is a first step, a stepping stone, towards the great oceans of our future, and towards the great world of tomorrow.

The President of the Sicilian Region relaunches the initiative of a new “Marshall Plan” for the Mediterranean Countries

Salvatore Cuffaro, elected by acclamation as President of Coppem, exposed the guidelines of the future activities. His speech is the following.

I’d like to point out some guidelines to which conforming the mandate you have just assigned to me and address my warm welcome to you as well as thank all those are here in this seat, such as representatives of Governments, Legislative Assemblies, local governments, and of the society in general, for having come in Palermo to take part in these works from which we all expect positive and concrete developments for the Mediterranean peoples. My kindest and warmest thanks goes to my dear friend Fabio Pellegrini, outgoing president, who from 2000 carried out the task assigned to him at Gaza with a great self-abnegation and now he concludes his mandate by leaving us a stronger Coppem, with further more members, that is more aware of the tasks it will have in the years to come. As I said before I am pleased of this election because as president of the Sicilian Region, I have always considered Coppem an useful instrument for better carrying out my political and institutional tasks in a region, such as Sicily, that is of course a strategic one, maybe today more than yesterday, for the whole Mediterranean area. In fact, the issues concerning the development of the Mediterranean regions have always been at the centre of my political commitment, as well as an important part of my government agenda, and a constant point of reference for the Sicilian Region’s government action.

I think it is right to recognize the efforts that Coppem, through all of you, is carrying out in order to improve the dialogue and cooperation among the Euro-Mediterranean local authorities. Every-day they have been improved and intensified, through more precise and effective instruments which have activated virtuous processes not only able to be compared, but also to activate common initiatives and decisions as well. “The Community we have built up is not an end in itself. The Community is a step forward to think over tomorrow’s world”. Jean Monnet’s words, father of the community integration, are for us – Euro-Mediterranean people – particularly interesting, in the day in which I am pleased to give my welcome to our colleagues coming from the new Countries joining the Eu. Your presence today in Palermo shows the interest that Europe has for the Mediterranean, which is one of the most important challenge for all the Union. It is necessary, in fact, a common approach that empowers us, both continental and Mediterranean Europeans, to take common decisions on the future of a region that is a human, social and historical fact and it calls for daring interventions aiming at the future in a more and more urgent way.

CUFFARO CALLED TO BE PRESIDENT OF COPPEM
in terms of market, growth and commercial exchanges; it will progressively widen the area of the four liberties: free movement of goods, capitals, services and people; and it will make the cooperation for fighting against common threats stronger. Moreover, the proximity policy will be more effective as much as the Local Authorities – Municipalities, Provinces and Regions – will play a leading role, being effective and efficient, for the realisation of the envisaged objectives. They shall be able to use the instruments at their disposal, but at the same time be watchful in asking for opportunities of “tripartite” concertation – community Institutions, States and local Authorities – in order to verify the concrete enforcement of the inspiring principle. These principles are really useful “to better enforce the basic principles of subsidiarity and proportionality which are on the basis of the treaties”, and they involve all the institutions of the Union as well. The Eu has to take an important decision, that can be achieved only through the decisive relation with countries of the mediterranean area. The enlargement to east caused a movement of the borders to farther states and at the same time a very huge financial investment directed to the new countries joining the Eu. New markets have opened and with them new opportunities for the enterprises as well as for workers. Of course the people which join the Europe since short time as well as that of ancient tradition will benefit from this process.

Europe now has to decide its position with the southern shore countries. In this case it can not be supposed an immediate entry of new countries and further movement of borders towards south; it is necessary facing up a population increase of men and women wishing to share a development as well as a progress which they see within reach but that can not be achieved. From here the sudden rise of both legal and illegal immigration, with all the problems it brings about. The solution to the demographic issue in this area, which is unbalanced towards the southern Mediterranean, is to improve the most critical problems at social and economic level, use its greatest richness that is its young people, and stimulate the economy of a region having very large areas as well as unfulfilled needs, which can contribute to close the population gap that seems to worry the central and northern European countries for opposing reasons. Even Kofi Annan, UNO’s Secretary General, reporting at the European Parliament on the 30th January of the last year, believed necessary to call Europe for a twofold need: from an european point of view the need to take in the migrant people and from their one to settle in Europe. “A closed Europe – he said – would be a poorer, weaker and older Europe. An open Europe will be also a fairer, richer, stronger and younger Europe”. All this should be the basis for reworking out the theories and development policies, in order to face a right relation on the Eu’s future and on the european unity in general. It has to be reworked a development pattern which can enhance the different tesserae making up the mediterranean mosaic today. It is necessary a changeover of their specialisations to be directed to different needs and countries abroad, to those of the mediterranean region as a whole, with growing levels in productive specialisation. Only with these objectives the deadline of 2010, that is the starting up of the free trade area, will be a real development opportunity which the mediterranean people will be able to use in a confrontation with the continental Europe on equal terms, otherwise it would be turned in a vain defence policy of little support for an area with so much high potentials. Many researches confirm that the Mediterranean, in spite of everything, did not be overcome by poverty and chaos, but
it keeps a potential productive and entrepreneurial ability. According to what Braudel said, it is a “sleeping region” but liable to quick revivals. For turning the polarization trends, which are successful for the present, into specialization and cooperation targets at regional level it is necessary a great changeover commitment involving all the Mediterranean countries and posing to the EU strong commitments as well as responsibilities.

In my opinion it is necessary to consider two basic things: the first one concerning the creation of authoritative and representative mediterranean institutions of people as well as of governments, which can carry out a significant improvement in order that the Mediterranean be empowered to join in Europe no longer as a mosaic with different tesserae, but as a diversified and at same time united region claiming an equal role and choices recognized by Europe as a whole. The second one concerns the choice for an EU’s mediterranean policy that places at this region’s disposal sizeable sources of finance for infrastructure, industrialization and public management. Some time ago I’ve launched the idea of a sort of “Marshall Plan” for these Mediterranean countries, in order to start a process, like that produced a lot of benefits in Italy soon after the war. It enabled to mobilize all the available human and financial resources as well as to activate virtuous development processes, from which we get benefits still today. It seems us a further and more significant implementation of the subsidiarity principle that in this case could give new resources and generate new responsibilities to young people which are longing for playing a leading role in their future.

CUFFARO METS THE AMBASSADOR OF MOROCCO IN SICILY A GREAT EVENT TO GET TOGETHER THE MEDITERRANEAN ARAB COUNTRIES

PALERMO — A great event joining all the Mediterranean arab countries and representing the occasion for improving dialogue and building a solid and durable peace. A project about which Salvatore Cuffaro, President of the Sicilian Region, and Tajeddine Badou, ambassador of the kingdom of Morocco, in courtesy visit, talked in the seat of the sicilian region Presidency. In a period in which the vision of Islam in the world is distorted, the african diplomat said, Sicily can really be the natural place where joining different cultures, promoting exchange of ideas and reducing the gaps that still divide us. Tajeddine Badou said he talks also on behalf of his colleagues which are in Rome. Cuffaro said that it is a proposal we welcome very enthusiastically and it promotes that role we intend to have in the Mediterranean area: solidarity, tolerance, respect for other people’s thinking with the firm belief that the power of dialogue can open scenarios of peace and serenity for everybody. The Ambassador of the kingdom of Morocco and President Cuffaro will meet again in order to define the details of what is going to be a great event at social, political, cultural and economic levels and that could be placed in the Zisa Castle or in the Albergo delle Povere. It will be also the occasion, the sicilian governor added, for giving to our entrepreneurs the opportunity of improving trade relations still existing and pinpointing new opportunities of investment.

MEDITERRANEAN: IN SICILY AN EURO-ARAB UNIVERSITY OF VETERINARY SCIENCE – CUFFARO ESTABLISHES A WORK-GROUP

PALERMO- In Sicily will be established an euro-arab University of veterinary science for training doctors and workers in the agricultural and food field coming from the Mediterranean basin. It is one of the first commitment that sicilian governor, Salvatore Cuffaro, wanted undertaking after his election as President of Coppem, the Standing Committee for Euro-mediterranean Partnership of local and regional authorities. Cuffaro accepted very enthusiastically the proposal, advanced by the euro-arab veterinary Association to create soon a work group working out this project and establishing its feasibility as well. “An ambitious plan arranged for 2010 – Cuffaro explained - when the Mediterranean basin, through the startup of the free trade area, will be again the heart of an intense movement of people as well as culture and goods which of course will affect people’s health and their life standards. For this reason it is essential to create the conditions for a regular and homogeneous development at everybody’s service, in a field like the veterinary science, which plays a great role for a right and healthy diet”.

JANUARY 2005
the role of the many young people longing for being involved in the international context. More than fifty years ago America realized that it wasn’t a question of doing a humanitarian act, but of contributing to the development of a nation which in few years became the sixth economic power of the world. Now Europe must have, through the support we all can offer, the same far-sightedness, being aware that the Mediterranean surely will be again a new core which can and must complement with development projects concerning the rest of Europe. For such an ambitious project that cannot be renounced, we need the solidarity and contribution of everybody: first of the European Union, so that it looks on its southern borders with the same attention it has with the eastern ones; of the Mediterranean regions, with which for a long time Sicily established useful and fruitful relations in this field, in order that they can achieve authoritative status in the economic field; of national governments, so that they keep up their efforts for the work carried out so far, and by overcoming nationalistic logics they can achieve more and more interesting targets for the region as a whole; of all the private and public as well as humanitarian and academic institutions, the social actors of our countries, so that they all support us in keeping the attention for this issue alive, and contributing in their own specific intervention field to involve first the people and local governments. Sicily intends to contribute to this important commitment also with its most original contribution deriving from its millenary history spreading over the Mediterranean area and becoming crossroads of different people and culture as well. It was a special place where men, ideals, and different ethnic groups could live together and create social organizations, legal systems and artistic works which still show, centuries later, an original coexistence among different peoples, proving once again that peace and development are universal values, while war does not resolve anything and it makes difficult everything. Still today Sicily is a place of confrontation and integration among different civilizations and cultures. Its history, the willingness of its people, its geographical position, keep on making it a meeting place located on Ulysses’s seashores where in ancient times early efforts for relations and integration among civilizations longing for living together in peace were carried out, when the war was supposed to be the only way for resolving every dispute. Our integration model is based on the awareness that it is necessary starting from the respect for everyone’s identity, firstly our own identity of sicilian people, and on this basis building up civil and social systems as well as organisations which produce and added value of progress and civilization. Every attempt of dissolving its own history for rebuilding another one, could bring about forms of participation and coexistence without deep ties with the other people and not able to work out the main problems of the new society we are all called for building up. Just freedom and democracy values are the real ground for a common confrontation on which all the men and people can disclose their energies and resources and put them out to the building up of “common good” service, which is an unavoidable benchmark for every political action.

The reasserted central role of these principles make us aware that freedom and democracy values can disregard the human dignity as the objective basis of every political system everywhere. For what concerning our history, it is dealing with a cultural heritage based on the christian tradition. Also the other religious traditions, in which the value of life and the centrality of the human beings are basic principles, have to refer to
this deep and renewed self-awareness. Within this framework we are about to achieve two important targets we intend to use for the common cause that Coppem carried out within its aims. The first one concerns Tunisia, where we are going to open “Sicily House” in a week’s time. It is the second among the activities (the first one was opened in Paris few months ago), which are planned for supporting the exchanges, not only at economic level, between Sicily and the home country. We have defined “House” such a choice just because we wish it can be a welcome place for the sicilians who are interested to invest in Tunisia, as well as for the tunisian enterprises interested to start economic relations with us. It is not an initiative directed only to both these countries but also to all of you, in order that you can better know Sicily as well as the opportunities it offers and the interchange possibilities still existing. The second one concerns Morocco, with which we are about to sign a cooperation agreement in different fields at economic, cultural, artistic and handicraft level, in order to make the historical relations between these two important regions closer, (I remind you that the moroccan community is the second one in Sicily for its population rate). Before I am done with my speech I can not fail to mention the basic issue which all of us can not leave out looking at the Mediterranean. It must be again a sea of peace, travels and trade exchanges. Unfortunately today it is not like this. The contribution that Sicily, like many other regions, can give to the israeli-palestinian peace process takes the risk to be merely formal if peace does not take root in those tormented countries where the people keep on dying with too much easiness.

RESOLUTIONS APPROVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PALERMO

The resolutions approved in Palermo by the General Assembly of COPPEM of the 20-21 November 2004 reflect the general scheme of reference debated on the occasion of the first meeting of the Standing COPPEM Commissions for 2004, which was held in Athens (Greece) last 27th March. Such scheme expected a similar approach of the resolutions with the same proposal by all the four Commissions, though each one deals with four specific themes: for the I Commission “Experiences of participation of the Euro-Mediterranean local and regional powers”, for the II Commission “Immigration and Emigration, actions and tools of Cooperation between Euro-Mediterranean Cities and Regions”, for the III Commission “The Euro-Mediterranean Integration of the strategic infrastructure networks: the example of transports”, for the IV Commission “Culture and Tourism: promotion and management of cultural areas”. The shared objective aimed at defining a clear position for each theme on the basis of priority needs of the Local Administrations and Regions of the 27 Countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In the light of the above, the suggested and approved resolutions aim at making closer contacts between the representatives of COPPEM, the European Commission and the Arab League in order to jointly analyze needs and any strategic and financial solutions, so that the Euro-Mediterranean Local Administrations and Regions can more concretely contribute to cooperation processes for local development within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and of the international support addressed to this area. In this sense, the members of COPPEM attending the Assembly unanimously approved that all the Commissions have to appoint their restricted delegation for meeting the appropriate representatives of the European Commission in the short-term. Finally, it is important to underline that the resolutions clearly quote that each Member of the Commissions has to be considered jointly and severally author of the report and its conclusions, and and as such he could be called to participate in the relevant initiatives towards institutions and organizations which the COPPEM components might invite the European Commission to draw its attention to. This is a further sign of willingness of the Administrations joining COPPEM to jointly cooperate to the stated objectives. (m.r.)

Italian government offered the city of Erice as a possible seat for resolute peace treaties. Sicily would be pleased. But we are still far from that target. We hope that the last tragic events occurred in that area speed up a process which is hard to become consolidated, especially in its people’s mind. Also Coppem can and must give its contribution and effort, as it has done so far and in many occasions it has given voice to call for a durable peace. Sicily contributes to this process by disseminating its cultural values of integration and peaceful coexistence which made it famous in the past times like nowadays. To this process we all have to added our voice and efforts. This is the sense for which I am involved in the cooperation process started by Coppem and that will characterize my commitment and presidency, this is the sense of Coppem’s role in the promotion of territorial partnership for prosperity and development, this is the sense of the responsibilities that each of us undertakes in order to building up a close network of relations and dialogue among local communities for sustainable co-development and stability as well as peace and prosperity.
READY FOR FACING NEW CHALLENGES

2010 is a fundamental stage that cannot be renounced.

Carmelo Motta, Secretary General of Coppem, resumed to the general Assembly the activities carried out by the Committee during its early four-years, and examined the EU’s mediterranean policies with a critical attitude.

From the signing of the Barcellona Declaration till today, we can not say that the basic targets established have been achieved. I am not worried about the fact that the date of 2010 for the realisation of the free trade area, cannot be observed. In a great political strategy, the postponement of a date, even if for a few years, it is not so important. In Coppem’s opinion the main issue we are facing up, is that we were not able to create the basic terms to make the free trade area coming out and being successful. We are not so far yet. Coppem, after many running-in years, was established in Palermo, at the end of 2000. It was established through the decisive contribution of the Council of European Municipalities and Arab Towns Organisation as well as of other local autonomies representatives which did not take part in any international organisation, for example Israel, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. Coppem is not a network of cities. Coppem can be joined through the national associations of CEMR and ATO as well as of Israel and Turkey which express delegates in relation to the Country’s population rate. According to its Statute the members of Coppem are 205: 101 regulars and 101 substitutes + 3 by rights. At present Coppem includes cities, Provinces and regions of 28 euro-mediterranean Countries; we are working in order to reach soon the one hundred per cent of adhesions. Coppem is managed by a Presidency Council, whose president is the Hon. Salvatore Cuffaro, President of the Sicilian Region, and the deputy vice president is Omar El Barahoui mayor of Rabat. Local Authorities Representatives of Greece, Egypt, and Poland are vice presidents, and representatives of the local government of Malta, the Netherlands, Tunisia and Jordan are members of the Presidency Council. Coppem's political-strategical action is outlined through the works of four advisory Commissions: the first one is dealing with institutional policies, the second is dealing with economic and financial cooperation, and the fourth of culture, tourism and environment. What moves our policies is shared by all the local Authorities Associations: to make cities and provinces and regions playing a leading role in the euro-mediterranean partnership. Overturning the logic itself of the Barcellona Declaration which gives to local autonomies a role that turned out to be quite marginal. But our experience is a very original one, which I’d like to talk about in a few words. The secretariat of our Association is located in Palermo, it is a standing structure consisting of a staff of 20 collaborators and about fifty external ones, free of charge, which are mostly university professors, union and entrepreneurial leaders. Since the beginning we have been convinced that
Coppem, an Association of local Authorities dealing with euro-mediterranean partnership, can not cut down on asking for further political spaces as well as financial resources. We know the risk of the tendency to make frequent demands, and it is to get something out within a logic. But the matter is just that of changing the logic which the euro-mediterranean policies followed in the last years.

During all these years particular strategies for the economic and social development under a logic of a strict planning of financial resources did not prevail in the policies of the European Union. A lot of indiscriminate interventions, bureaucratic delays, unsuccessful coordination of sectional interventions, a not very clear choice of priorities and so on. In the last period there was a reversal of trend that we appreciate but we think it is not enough yet. It is necessary, by showing great resolution, to promote local development in the southern and eastern Mediterranean shores that through local Authorities is directly addressed to the people and citizens, those who mainly have to benefit of this cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean partner countries. I know that everybody is agree on that. But the problem is how to building up that “social Capital” without which our friends of the Mediterranean partner Countries will be not able to make their countries develop. For us the policies for local development have always been our concern since the establishment of Coppem. At Marrakech in 2001, our general Assembly, moved by our arab friends approved a resolution through which the establishment of an euro-mediterranean development Agency promoted by Coppem, mostly established by representatives of local Authorities and aimed at development needs, was asked for. We created that Agency, which will be an indipendent body, but we think that it can give an important contribution for what we hope for that is a concrete partnership. So in the same framework the establishment of a socio-medical Coordination of local structures of welfare systems in the 35 Countries of the euro-mediterranean partnership can be placed. The collaboration among Associations, research Institutes, oriented to euro-mediterranean policies not only is to be hoped for, but it is also decisive.

During these years we worked especially on four themes: the migratory issue, the economic and financial partnership, cultural heritage, and welfare systems. We produced a rich documentation that is at your disposal. We are promoting agreement protocols between the european and the southern Mediterranean Regions, which are not a new thing, but, if widespread, they can be a great political fact. In facing up difficult and complicated problems, it is necessary to join forces, exchange experiences, and avoid mistakes that could be paid in the future; being realist we have to define our planning character that considers the partners needs, both the european and middle-eastern and eastern ones. We have always thought that the euro-mediterranean partnership, either produces a mutual advantage among its the contracting parties or is an illusion. As for us, also on the basis of the guidelines of our general Assembly held in the last few days, not only we are available for the dialogue between the Associations dealing with euro-mediterranean partnership, but we are also ready to give a contribution for pinpointing synergies and practical integrated instruments. I’d pay attention to the times for our common initiative. They are quite short. If we want to leave a mark on the real processes we have to define our planning character quite quickly. Therefore I emphasize the practical integrated instruments.
NEW INSTITUTIONS FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN POLICY

Pellegrini reproposes the creation of an euro-mediterranean Bank and a Committee of local and regional elected members.

Fabio Pellegrini, after having been the president of Coppem for four years, has handed over the presidency to Salvatore Cuffaro, president of the Sicilian Region. But he still remains committed for the joint achievement of the Barcellona Process.

I had already told about my intention to leave the presidency of Coppem because of all the commitments I have to meet. Of course, I am aware that for achieving positive results it is necessary a direct commitment of all those who believe in the validity of this project. But just in five years we have achieved remarkable results.

As a human being get to childhood, so Coppem passed over all the middle stages and it is grown-up: it has only to develop. The works as well as the activities carried out in these five years are proved with documents and so I do not expatiating up on drawing up a list of them. I shall confine myself to some considerations about Coppem’s prospects. The first one is that of going on with the aim of strengthening both its own legs: that of the Mediterranean Third Countries and the European one, the EU’s Countries. This exigency is essential for achieving the strategic objective to have a “standing Committee of local and regional elected members” of the Barcellona process, together with the Parliamentary Assembly already worked out. Our request have been shared with the Committee of the Regions, and it is already being examined by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs on the occasion of the Conference of Naples in December 2003. In that occasion, I remember, besides the Parliamentary Assembly it was also worked out the establishment of a Foundation for cultural cooperation which will be placed in the Alexandria Library as well as an EIB’s branch. We must insist in order to have a real euro-mediterranean Bank, at least for the opportunity to get capital from the Arab Countries.

The experience of the “Committee of the Regions and local Authorities”, taught us that for achieving our strategic goal we need the support of the European Parliament. The Honourable Mr Cocillo, whose I appreciated his contribution, is committed in this direction, a fact having a significant value because he is the Vice President of the European Parliament, I am sure we could rely on the Hon Mr Musotto’s support as well as on his commitment. I will follow the European Parliament’s works in order to make use of your availability and have the necessary support so that our work can be appreciated.

In the next years we should proceed considering the possible future developments of the cooperation in the Mediterranean area: whether it is the “enlarged Mediterranean” of European Union or, with the possible and necessary integrations and participations, “the Great Middle East” of USA which awakened interest but caused also a lot of reserves. In June 2004, the European Union approved a “Strategic Partnership” with the Mediterranean Countries and Middle East that follows the European neighborhood Policy (Enp, March 2003) and the Strategy for Security suggested by the High Representative for Foreign Policy and General Security (December 2003). The G8’s paper of June 2003 on “Partnership for progress and a common future with the enlarged Middle East region”, represents an agreement between the American initiatives and the objections that Europeans and Arabs raised. The Enp has already produced the new development of the European proximity instrument for coordinating, up to 2006, all the present financial means (in addition to Meda for the euro-mediterranean Partnership Countries, Interreg, Tacis and Phare for our Eastern neighbours, etc.). The approximate financial endowment for this first stage will be about 955 mil...
lion euros and not also about 45 million euros of the Meda programme. For the second stage (2007-2013) it will be created an only legal instrument and it is expected a reduction of the financial means number to six, and two of them, the promiximity instrument and the stability one (they both will take the place of Meda programme), will concern the mediterranean partners. But achieving significant results it is necessary to remove the obstacles which till now have brought about the substantial failure of the Barcellona process. First of all, it is necessary to get over bilateral cooperation among States for a bilateral cooperation between European Union and the Mediterranean Third Countries by opening important opportunities to the cooperation among local powers, the only one that can give a new impulse to that process outlined in Barcellona in 1995.

The strengthening of the territorial local communities role and their involvement shall be our first goal in our work. As well as the enlargement of the freedom association of the local authorities will contribute to achieve all the Barcellona’s objectives. Through the adoption of the European Constitution which recognizes the basic role playing the local authorities and the Committee of the Regions, Europe give us a very important reference and support frame. Even in this occasion I feel I have to stress our commitment in fulfilling common values as well as in realising political, economic and institutional reforms which shall be adopted in order to achieve a lasting peace as development and security condition in the Mediterranean and Middle eastern area.

A fair solution to the israeli-palestinian conflict, the origin of all tragedies as well as of terrorism, is a preliminary and overriding question. Probably we have to face distinct swing processes as we can just see; different paces of facing up changes (we could adopt a benchmark for estimating also the integration progress to the European market). Those who will have they could go faster without waiting for the others; no one, without being indifferent, shall be called for following destabilizing and unsettling paces. Personally I think that this five years path together with you has made me rich. I never felt myself in difficulties or different among different people. Of course there are differences, but they never be a discriminant factor and did not influenced our experience so much that we have established relations and also personal bonds of friendship. For this reason I thank you very much. We should go on working with the patience, perseverance and determination of the ants. The picture Mr Isgrò dedicated to me on behalf of you is very fit. In fact I consider myself a President that, like an ant, shuns the lights of the flashes in the pan to work hardly and build up the future. Even if changes seem us unexpected and sudden they are always the result of a long and patient political as well as cultural groundwork. I think that what Todorov wrote about the European union and the hard work it requires is valid for us, he in fact compared such an union to a craftsmen’s work putting ancient materials together to build new things. Our materials are among the most ancient and richest of the human civilization, and for sure we will build new and excellent things.
REGIONAL AUTONOMIES TOGETHER FOR DEVELOPMENT

Guido Lo Porto, President of the Sicilian Assembly, relaunches the role of the Agency for the Mediterranean Policies

by Roberta Puglisi

Sicily, island located in farthest south of the European Union territory, considers the opportunity of capital attraction, in this transition phase of global economy towards new geopolitical order, a special occasion to cover its gap with the other Italian and European areas, deriving benefit from the process of emancipation of the Mediterranean countries economic systems from underdevelopment and economic marginalization.

Coppem, during these years, carried out a decisive role within the Barcelona process. Today, the standing committee, reaches its sixth General Assembly, in which many institutional representatives of the euro-Mediterranean area took part. Mr. President do you think that Coppem’s objectives and strategies are in line with the new European policy?

I am pleased that Coppem, has its headquarters in Palermo, capital city of Sicily, so as Sicilians we must emphasize the importance of the full participation of the southern Mediterranean countries in economic, political and social European processes. According to this global approach, originated by the Conference of Barcelona in the month of nine years ago, Coppem is working in order that the assumption, under which, there can not be in Europe a significant, solid and durable development (as well as in the whole west), without removing social and cultural obstacles that interpose the participation of countries, economic systems and communities which are historically different but geographically neighbour to the Union borders.

Do you think Sicily plays a central role in the euro-Mediterranean area?

The contributions that our island can bring into the cultural, social and economic integration process of the Mediterranean area and could be in the next years numerous, qualified and significant. By way of an example with the signing of Amsterdam Treaty, the Union defined the framework for a ‘defence and security common policy’ empowered by Leaken declaration of the 14th and 15th December 2001 as well as by Nice Declaration of 2002 and regulated by the art.41 of the European Constitution approved in the October of the this year, that considers the establishment of an European army in the next future. Sicily of course will be a central actor of this process, by virtue of its strategic position within the euro-Mediterranean zone, crossroads of peace and security between the European West and East characterised by a fresh outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Islamic terrorism.

It is not enough to enjoy a privileged geographical position. Which kind of concrete input Sicily can give?

Sicily Region can offer considerable contributions to the euro-Mediterranean process in different sectors. With reference to ‘cultural partnership’, I think that Sicilian Universities and research Institutes, just like those of other European regions, can contribute in a decisive way to root out the seed of fundamentalism and radicalisation, by opening the doors more and more to the young Maghrebi, Libyan, Egyptian, Israeli, Syrian and Palestinian people, for learning a community language, and realising master’s and high educational training experiences. About ‘environmental partnership’, safeguarding the biodiversity existing in the Mediterranean is a priority for our Region, and it absolutely falls within the euro-Mediterranean policy framework. About the ‘energy partnership’, Sicily, since a long time is involved in the promotion of renewable energy sources (especially the wind and solar ones, considered the huge potentials of the Island). Considering that natural gas transport is the future for the energetic independence of the European Union, as it has been emphasised in the EuroMed meeting of the European ministers for foreign affairs on the 22nd of April 2002 in Valencia, we have not forget that Sicily is the strategic centre for Libyan and Algerian gas resources distribution in Italy and Europe as well. About the ‘economic partnership’, the passage to the MEDA II financial programme, which provides for a budget of 5.3 billion euros for the period 2000-2006 and financing both bilateral and regional co-operation programmes, is an advantageous fact which produces positive effects concerning financial re-
sources allocated in areas close to sicilian coasts. The creation of a free trade area in 2010 gives an opportunity without precedent of realising new investments in Sicily, making things easy for the internationalization of sicilian PMI and for the market penetration of the local typical products.

Which are, after nine years, the obstacles to the Barcellona process? First it is urgent the need of pacification in the middle-eastern area. It is not a matter of opinion hat the future of the free trade area closely depends on the development of the situation in Middle East and ceasing of the terrorism problem. Secondly it is necessary to mention the obstacles referred to the inadequacy of investments, and the direct investments of the foreign countries in particular, whose effects influence the acceleration of the economic development of the mediterranean partner countries. It is fact that the european direct investments preferably still go to countries of other emerging zones such as those of central and eastern Europe, latin Americ or Asia, as to the mediterranean area. it is necessary to implement the financial instruments to be used in the mediterranean area in a still firmer way.

The european common market, after the enlargement to East, has become the greatest of the world. How can be reached the advantages? First it is necessary to be endowed with an efficient infrastructure network, making the regional fiscal laws “attractive” for the enterprises and entering into commercial and strategic agreements, within the limits recognized by the reform of Title V of the italian Constitution, with other european and not european regions, with preference for those located in Mediterranean Countries.

Which are the initiatives of the Sicilian Region in support of the euro-mediterranean policy? A first and important step forward that Region has taken is the creation of the Agency for mediterranean policies (art.15 regional law 2003 n.20) having legal status of public right and organisational and accounting autonomy. The tasks of such body are many and all aiming at giving to our Region a leading role in the mediterranean zone. The Agency has come out as a decentralised co-operation institution for development and international diplomatic relations, with function of branch for local enterprises interested in financing programmes envisaged by the Partnership; advice to public and private bodies in the realisation of projects to be financed by the State, european Union and other international institutions; realisation of initiatives for the enhancing, in the euro-mediterranean area, dialogue between cultures and civilisations, promotion and protection of the basic rights. For the realisation of its aims, the Agency will be able to draw up agreements with specialised public and private organisations, institutions and bodies. Together with the creation of Sicily Houses (art.89 of regional law 26th march 2002 n.2), the euro-mediterranean Agency is a legal entity and its implementation could be a decisive step forward on the way of euro-mediterranean sub-regional co-operation. Sicily is an european Union region close to northern Africa. On this point, which are the initiatives for promoting the development of financial activities of the third countries who signed the Barcellona Declaration? It has been envisaged the institution of the euro-mediterranean ‘off shore’ Centre for financial and insurance services, where credit and movable brokerage societies, insurance companies, financial society which collect funds on the international markets. The incomes produced by that Centre will benefit from a 50% discount on Regional Business Tax rate of the exemption from regional concession tax and payment in fixed and reduced rate of registration, land and mortgage fees. Fiscal advantages are granted only in relation to the operations with the partners Countries of the euro-mediterranean process. We hope that these advantageous fiscal measures conceived by the Region can turn into an effective development opportunity for the sicilian economy in view of the free trade area.

Within the recent drawing up of the european Charter of the regions, and powers assigned to italian regions through the reform of the Title V of the Constitution on foreign policy matters what do you hope for? I hope for the creation of efficacious institutional and entrepreneurial partnership between our region and some Mediterranean, european and world Regions with particular reference to those regions having in their state a strong autonomist connotation, such as Catalognia. On the basis of what provided for by the new Constitution rules, and also by the project of statute that the sicilian Parliament is working out in these days, the sicilian Region not only will be able to coordinate its policies with the other foreign countries, but it will be also able to draw up economic and cultural and social agreements with the other exponential bodies located in the member States as well as in the Countries involved in the mediterranean euro-partnership.
THE EXPERIENCE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP PROMOTION

Dario Falzone, deputy mayor of Palermo, points out the life standard improvement as the basis for original communications.

The spirit of Barcellona about what provides for the development of the resources, the mutual understanding among cultures and the stabilisation of peace, is present in Palermo for ages. However, it can be not enough. The reasons of tension are always latent and as representatives of the communities we must implement all the efforts, activities as well as ideas for an economic development of this area as well. Development at economic level, in fact, is not only a duty as driving force for the general improvement of life standards, but it is also an instrument if not for global pacification, certainly for tensions relief. And, unfortunately, in some regions those tensions seems to have no end and so all our peoples cannot live in peace, even though they have this right. Also in this perspective the euro-mediterranean partnership, the free trade area which must be built up as well as the enlargement of the European Union to the new Countries are placed and among them Malta and Cyprus. Sovereign national Institutions needs the experience of local communities, because the agreements between states and international institutions, on the one hand see more and more involved the local territorial authorities, and on the other they are hardly perceived by the great many of citizens, at least in the immediate future. Local authorities, in the framework of the general agreement among states, can take part in different issues on which it is considered the life standard.

For example, I think about environmental problems as air and water pollution. The problems connected to the pollution of Mediterranean, for example, can be worked out only on the basis of a general agreement and commitment and the local authorities are more and more called to the implementation and vigilance as well. As for the implementation of life standards it is also important the exchange of experiences in socio-medical issues: it is intolerable that even today in certain zones of this area there is an incidence of diseases which are totally eradicated elsewhere. Cooperation at scientific level both on medical and veterinarian fields, as well as prevention and prophylaxis experiences should go more around the two shores of the Mediterranean Basin. But it is necessary to plan a stronger involvement of territorial communities as far as the legislative approach among the various States, that is a wide and rough issue. It is not an easy work and sometimes it lies outside our province, but the free movements of the administrative executives, the direct knowledge of the applied regulations, the solution of problems found in a State rather than in another one can contribute in the medium run to a common view of the public role and to the creation of an "euro-mediterranean" leading class helping and supporting the managers and balancing the north-european leadership. We must be pleased for the election of Salvatore Cuffaro, President of the Sicilian Region, as high authority of Coppem, because he will be able to give a sicilian mark and his leadership will also be able to constitute an important opportunity in order to make coming out the contribution of our Island to the resolution of the problems above mentioned. As local government, we are proud to have hosted the sixth general assembly; however, it is not the first time that Coppem's meetings at various levels take place in Palermo as well as in Sicily.
update and develop the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership by carving out a leading role for Regions and provinces. Local Authorities, in fact, can be active in doing cooperation project aimed at being high concrete and even more shared by citizens as well as entrepreneurs but included throughout in a general development framework drawn by the EU. The insecurity situation which all the world is living is the dramatic evidence of what comes about when dialogue and cooperation are not able to be a cohesion opportunity among people, civilizations, ethnic groups and religions. The European Union, after the downfall of the Berlin Wall, must contribute with all its efforts and best resources to close the gap that today seems to be unbridgeable, and create the conditions so that dialogue and diplomatic actions can allow to establish the necessary tie in order that we all together contribute to progress. During these years the Province of Palermo has promoted, together with the European institutions, a strong dialogue between Sicilian entrepreneurs and those from Northern Africa and in general in all the Mediterranean basin through which important collaboration projects have been established. We have taken part in many initiatives at European level and addressed to young people for training them as Union’s citizens, by educating them about tolerance and dialogue. And many other initiatives addressed to local officers for involving them in the Union’s growth path. Not it is the time to improve this commitment, by including it in a common effort towards the great appointment with the Mediterranean free trade Area. In 2010 everybody shall be ready to play its role.

Francesco Musotto, President of the regional Province of Palermo, suggests a wider involvement of rural and entrepreneurial forces.

The southern border of the European Union as driving force for creation process of a great peace area in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Peace not only as untangible objective that all declare to pursue in their political action but also as concrete realisation of a strong dialogue among the Mediterranean different cultures, as well as of an economic and social integration based on equal dignity, and common development projects that can put together the actors not under similar institutional statute but under the same interests. Just in this period more than ever, this great challenge launched at Barcelona in 1995 is an imperative for the European Union as well as for all the institutional subjects of Member States. Now more than ever it is essential to
JOINT STRATEGY FOR PARTNERSHIP

Luigi Cocilovo, vice president of the European Parliament, asks for suitable resources and strong instruments in the Mediterranean regions.

The Hon. Mr Cocilovo, addressed to COPPEM General Assembly the greetings of the European Parliament, emphasizing the role that local and regional authorities play in the Euro-mediterranean Partnership framework.

Recognizing the work that COPPEM carried out during these years seems to me a right and not ceremonial act. Of course, there were limits and difficulties, but these are to be traced back to the contradictions and lags that more in general still mark the cooperation and integration developing of the Mediterranean basin countries, at about ten years from the Barcellona declaration of 1995. I think it is better relaunching some priorities as well as pointing out the essential elements to improve the partnership process for the Euromed development. In this session I would like above all to underline three issues:

1) The completion of the EU enlargement process with 25 Countries and the endorsement of the new constitutional treaty have to release awareness, political commitments and resources in order to relaunch the challenge for a common role and political added value of Europe in the middle-eastern framework. The unsuccessful attempts in overcoming the problems existing for a long time (the Palestinian issue and the relations with Israel) as well as the dramatic arising of new problems (Iraq) are an element that put the brakes, or even an act of sabotage, on the development potentials of the euro-mediterranean partnership. On this direction, Europe produced mostly different points of view and doubts, without being able to move a real alternative solution to the american unilaterlalism as well as to the belief that the effort against the terrorism threat consist in the military option, by pursuing democracy development through confrontation and dialogue, and facing up economic ans social crisis through cooperation instruments.

2) Therefore a new and different political strategic framework is necessary, but it would not be enough. Today we need to implement a wider and more structured instruments framework, going over the government institutions commitment and efforts of the countries joining the Barcellona process. The prospect itself of the free trade area in 2010 could appear an unrealistic and even contradictory one, if in the meantime we are not able to give further expectations to elements like confrontation and cultural dialogue, as well as to synergies and efforts involving these countries in social, productive and educational sectors. For these reasons, I think it is essential relaunching, together with the intergovernmental actors, a virtuous and committed subsidiarity, which enhances not only the renewed interparliamentary Assembly, but also social forum and NGOs; the bodies promoted by Universities as well as by the other actors working in the educational and cultural fields; and collaborations among associations of the production world and enterprise systems.

3) This is the framework that can enhance in the best possible way the role of COPPEM and its initiatives, as an instrument for cooperation projects and experimentations to be implemented by the local and regional institutions of this area. This doesn’t mean to consider ourselves completely self-sufficient, but to contribute to improving the actions of regional and horizontal partnership within a common strategic inspiration. As well as improving synergies between institutional, social and productive actors and research/education organisations, which can be the driving force for projects supporting local development. Starting from this point of view, it will be easier and at the same time right to test the fairness and effectiveness of the resources as well as of the intervention instruments provided by Europe in support of the euro-mediterranean partnership.
LOCAL POWERS
DECENTRALIZATION

In an area of a huge strategic and economic interest such as the Mediterranean one, the political, economic and social integration process, launched by the Barcelona Declaration calls for the involvement of all institutional levels of the contracting countries, the 25 from the European Union and the 10 of the southern and eastern basin shores. Then the local and regional authorities have to contribute in a decisive way to support this process, and for that purpose they have to improve the know-how exchanges, as well as the joint conceiving of initiatives aimed at a concrete cooperation among communities, for their own harmonic development in peace values.

The Sicilian Region, in collaboration with Coppem and the Qalyubiya Governorate (Egypt) arranged meetings targeted to know-how exchanges between officers and representatives of the Qalyubiya Governorate and of the Sicilian Region, the Province of Palermo, and Palermo Municipality, and with members of the academic, entrepreneurial and social world on the topic of local development and of the most appropriate institutional, regulatory and co-operative structures for achieving it. It was dealing with a comparison between different local powers decentralization patterns, of the outcomes resulting from their application or envisaged to be reached in the future; furthermore, all the cooperation opportunities with the public and private sector, with no profit organizations, for the management of services to local communities and for the socio-economic development. The participants, ten trainees among the officers and managers of the Qalyubiya Governorate were lodged in Palermo during the period of the meetings. (m.r)

JORDAN IMPROVES LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Concrete commitment directed to economic and social development

by Nino Randisi

Jordan Minister for Municipal Affairs, Amal H. El Fahran (in the photo above), on the occasion of the VI General Assembly of Coppem, in stressing the full support of her Country to the euro-mediterranean peoples integration, and pointing out how the relations and cooperation among local institutions of the euro-mediterranean area are a stabilization factor in the peace process she declared that “Coppem during these years has worked to develop a new framework of action in order to give an impulse to the euro-mediterranean partnership for the creation, in actual fact, of a peace and stability area based on the respect for the basic rights, for the establishment of a joint prosperity area as well as the contribution for a better mutual understanding among the peoples of that region”. The Minister moreover made reference to the need “to speed up the rate of a sustainable socio-economic development by improving the life standards of these countries, and finally boosting the employment level as well as reducing the development gaps existing in euro-mediterranean region”. In Amal El Fahran’s opinion it is important “to promote the cooperation and the regional integration starting from the municipalities in order that they can be units for social and economic development”. And just because Jordan shall be more and more able to rely on an endogenous development model, since 1999 King Abdullah embarked on an intense reforms process, aimed at trade liberalization and integration at regional and global level; reconsidering the role of the State by carrying out large-scale privatization programmes; fostering productive export-oriented investments; reducing the unemployment and poverty rates. Such reforms started to produce outcomes on the macroeconomic front since 2000, and they have had a significant impact on the people’s standard of living.
Nine years after the signature of the Barcelona Declaration and in the year of the reunification of the Eastern European Countries to the EC, it is necessary to consider the topic of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the role that Local Authorities will play within the new strategies related to Wider Europe. It seems to be clear that criteria that inspired the Process of Barcelona (mainly of intergovernmental nature) have been changing with the advent of Proximity policy and the construction of the “ring of the neighbour friends” around the borders of the Enlarged Europe. Their inspiring principle tends to create a zone of co-development, where proximity partner countries are able to share everything with Europe “except for institutions”. Therefore, such a strategy brings to light the necessity to involve other cooperation actors and in this context, sub-state Authorities are called to play a role of co-protagonists.

In fact, even though Barcelona Declaration states as one of its principles, the promotion of association forms among Euro-Mediterranean Local Authorities, the European Commission has never been provided, up to now, with an operational instrument able to effectively support cooperation policies between local authorities of the Mediterranean shores. Nevertheless, the activities carried out over the last nine years by Local Authorities in favour of Euro-Mediterranean decentralized cooperation (the Conference of Mediterranean Cities in Barcelona in 1995, the Summit of Mediterranean Cities in Marseilles of 1998 and of Genoa of 2000, the Eurocities Euro-Mediterranean Commission and the establishment of the Standing Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of local and regional powers – Coppem) have spurred the European Commission to endow itself, in the regional Strategy Paper 2004-06, with a specific instrument in support of decentralized cooperation within the topics of sustainable local development, local governance, urban mobility, cultural heritage management, citizens’ welfare and policies of social inclusion of migrants and all those sectors that in the final analysis can be pursued by territorial authorities with greater effectiveness. Even though insufficiently endowed from the financial point of view, but decisive from the “political” one, in recognizing the role of Local Authorities as actors of the Euro-Mediterranean dynamics, such very important new development goes along with the launch of Proximity Policy and the acknowledgment of territorial cooperation as mainstreaming of Cohesion Policies2007-2013.

The pursuit of the new objectives expected within the next 2007-2013 structural financing programme, will be preceded by the pilot launching of the new Proximity Instrument during the two-year period 2004 – 06 to be applied to FESR funds deriving from Interg, and concerning the New Mediterranean neighbours, to MEDA funds. The traditional, intergovernmental and top down approach of cooperation to development must be replaced by a participative, bottom up approach, able to involve all the territorial development actors, among which Local Authorities are called to play a crucial role. What mentioned above calls Local Authorities for a deep reflection and the assumption of co-responsibility in achieving the objective of creating a Neighbourhood zone based on safety, stability and sustainable development. In order to study in depth the role of Local Authorities, particularly the Sicilian ones, within Euro-Mediterranean cooperation policies, the international Conference “Towards 2010 – Sicily and the Mediterranean countries in the economic and cultural Partnership” took place in Catania, last 10th and 11th December. The meeting, organized by the Province of Catania, in collaboration with Coppem, has seen the participation of authoritative delegations of eight Mediterranean Countries, composed of ambassadors, representatives of central and local governments, of the academic world and business. The representatives of the European Commission, of the European Training Foundation, of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, of the Sicilian Region and of several national and international organizations committed to the development of the Mediterranean area have participated in the works. The assembly of Catania has therefore resumed the proposal (also invoked by other actors of the cooperation world) for setting up Territorial Partnerships for Development and Cooperation.

The concrete pursuit of such proposal is made more practicable by the harmonization foreseen by the Proximity Policy, by EU external and internal means and the acknowledgement of an active role to Local Authorities and the other actors of the territory within decentralized and transnational cooperation. At the end of the meeting, three workshops have followed focusing on the topic of: “Proximity Policy, local development and Euro-Mediterranean cultural patrimony integrated management”. You can find the synthesis of the works in the following pages.
Proximity policy
and local development

by Alberto Tolumello

The theme of local “governance” within the framework of proximity policy, also directed to Third Mediterranean Countries and the topic of local development as modality and means of Euro-Mediterranean territorial cooperation are two faces of the same medal. Both of them express the new and growing awareness of the variety of levels in the political, economical and social processes. Besides the crucial role of both States and strong economic subjects (great enterprises and big actors of technological innovation), a role as much important is played by the decentralised and territorial levels of local government and by the economical vitality of civil society that expresses itself in local development and in medium, small and very small-sized producer subjects, which are rooted in their own local territory and cultures. Local “governance” describes, at a political and administrative level and in constructing and deepening democracy, what indicated by local development at the economic level and on the ground of local actors responsibility in the construction of prosperity and shared welfare. Following the Barcelona Declaration (1995) guidelines, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership finds in the proximity Policy that has been recently launched by the European Union, a framework in which general objectives strengthen and become consolidated, first of all the realization of “an area of shared welfare and prosperity” in the Mediterranean area. The territorial dimension receives from the same concept of “proximity policy” – necessity of good neighbourhood and sharing, contagion opportunities of the processes for constructing good policy and good economy – a confirmation and a reinforcement. Local “governance” with the extension of responsibility of the political and civil actors to the closest levels to citizens and local development, that is bottom up development, joint by citizens and enhancing cultural (multicultural) peculiarities of local populations and communities, are the main instrument for realizing a fair partnership and carrying out proximity policies. The interventions in the Workshop have articulated, from different points of view and with a wealth of accents and perspectives that only some years before would have been inconceivable, these concepts and this awareness of both local authorities and local actors role. Within the diversity and variety of accents and arguments expressed by the participants, who have intervened on behalf of local realities and organizations of the whole area (Tunisia and Turkey, Sicily and European Organizations), a shared culture seems to grow and be increasingly shared concerning the topic of the seminar, and the different contributions, given to the debate, have complemented each other. So the Secretary General of the Governorate of Kairouan has explained the complementarity between economy and culture within local development and the virtuous link between concurrency and competitiveness that are at the root of the effectiveness, with cooperation allowed by local dimension and local “governance”. In this framework, economy growth and innovation are linked in their answer to citizens’ local requirements, particularly need for employment, within the cultural peculiarities of the different territories. The active involvement of local authorities is at the root of the whole process. Leo Urbani reminded us that the territory is the basis of all the resources and the destruction of subsistence agriculture has been a social damage both in the underdeveloped and in the advanced countries, and territorial and local dimension should be recovered within the
framework of the subsidiarity principle. Economy also answers the "subsistence right" and in the Mediterranean area, agriculture, tourism and cultural heritage economy can create again the fabric of spread economy that meet the needs of that area not involved in the event of strong, at present post-Fordist economy. Giuseppe Pennella, for the Formez, denounces the European delay concerning these processes as well as the insufficiency of resources, reminding all the present the lack of an idea that is not a trend idea but a structural one, concerning the development of the area. So he suggests such idea must be conceived from the bottom up, and the increase of relations and local partnerships network can become the basis for the realization of this structural idea and the current seminar seems to suggest it, structural as long as shared and just realized from the bottom up, through local development and local "governance". The Sicilian Region, with the speech of Antonio Picerno, aims at "operational connotations" and at defining relations for a standing partnership. During the morning session, the opening of “Casa Sicilia” in Tunisia and the next unveiling of a Square in Amman dedicated to Sicily have been reminded, a sign of an increase of cooperation and partnership relations. In her speech, Marie Corman, on behalf of the European Training Foundation, has illustrated the activities of this important European Training organization directed to the Mediterranean, almost as a reply from the European Union to criticism. Perhaps the Union does not do what it should do but it acts, and the ETF has been increasing its activities towards the Mediterranean for some years, by contributing to Partnership and proximity policy towards the area, also acting towards training and auto employment as well as to the birth of young micro enterprise (ETE project). The last speech by the Secretary General of Turkish World Municipalities, Mustafa Taner Kisa, has nearly played the role of a summary and conclusive intervention of the works, as he has summarized, in an effective and stimulating way, the theme of “supremacy related to cities”, following the recent processes that have brought to the crisis of “supremacy related to States”, following the developments of the last quarter of last century. Globalisation makes local dynamics and regional relations easier, which are at the root of mutual understanding and cultural development, through the growth of civil societies and the role of local institutions. The Mediterranean man, with his multicultural lifestyle, can be at the centre of these new developments and even in his everyday life he lives multiculturality and its richness. It is important to underline the “responsibility” of local, political and economical actors that this process involves, stimulates and increases. Particularly meaningful these contents and suggestions, as they come from a representative of Turkish cities, a State that is currently a Third Mediterranean Country, but that asks for starting the admission process to the European Union and that has undertaken a path to transformation and growth in which creativity dimension and territories freedom are important and crucial. Its is a country that has undertaken a growth path to local “governance”, decentralized democracy and local and civil development, which affects all the Euro-Mediterranean Countries, European Union Countries, Third Mediterranean Countries, Eastern Union Countries, to which proximity policies are being launched and carried out. Therefore, proximity policies, Euro-Mediterranean partnership policies, closer examination on European Union enlargement policies seem to be coherent and almost put to form enlarged and concentric circles of a same process. Following the inspiration of Coppem constitution, and following what is increasingly becoming shared culture, we like to think that these policies have at their centre the actors "responsible" for territories, local, economical and cultural development and democracy growth at all levels.
changes of the political, social and cultural contexts of the area.

• Within the definition of the European Union directions and objectives, in carrying out proximity policy, the regulations of the European Parliament and Council of September 2004 don’t consider the themes linked to the integrated Cultural Patrimony management, either as resource to be activated, or as heritage to be preserved, it is necessary to undertake political actions and concrete initiatives for strengthening the acknowledgement of common cultural identities in the Mediterranean Basin and in the same time enhancing local cultural peculiarities in a framework of proactive dialogue and exchange. The political initiative takes its place as means of pressure towards Community Institutions, national Governments and Local Institutions so that the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage go back to being a recognized and shared objective for the Construction of a Mediterranean of Peace, stability and co-development. Such initiative also aims at fixing the awarding of remarkable resources within the European Commission programmes, in a multilateral prospect. For such purpose, in the next days, an official document will be prepared and submitted to the public and private Institutions.

Cultural Patrimony integrated management

This workshop has allowed analysing the opportunities offered by the sustainable valorisation of Cultural Patrimony compared to the topics of local development in the Countries involved in the Barcelona Process.

Considering that

• the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 has decreed the importance of Cultural Patrimony in strengthening dialogue among the peoples of the Partnership in a prospect of peace, stability and shared development;
• from the Declaration of Bologna (1996) of the Ministers for Culture of those Countries signatories of the Barcelona Declaration has started the Euromed Heritage programme promoted by the European Commission;
• such programme, besides guaranteeing concrete interventions directed to knowledge, conservation and valorisation of material and immaterial Cultural Heritage, has allowed opportunities of exchange and dialogue at regional level, otherwise unlikely to be practicable;
• it is considered necessary to enhance the experiences developed within the framework of the Barcelona Process since 1995 up to now, in the sector of Cultural Patrimony, by adjusting strategies and actions in relation to the
tions of the Euro-Mediterranean Area, by different right involved in the Cultural Patrimony management, in order to find consent and strengthen the requirements above-mentioned. Moreover, the following intervention priorities were found:

• interventions for encouraging the Institutional Capacity Building in the Administrations of Mediterranean Partner Countries, in order to contribute to a correct management capacity of national and local decision-makers;
• training instructors and Cultural Patrimony operators;
• realizing local Partnerships for encouraging strategies sharing and interventions agreements from below;
• cooperation among local partnerships for encouraging dialogue, locale co-development and territories promotion, even through a stronger relation between culture and enterprise;
• realizing networks allowing a greater spreading of ideas, projects and knowledge.

In light of the above, under the proposal of the Centre of planning and Restoration of the Sicilian Region and Unimed – Union of Mediterranean Universities, such partnership is to be realized for defining a Euro-Mediterranean regional project concerning Ancient Theatres. In brief, such proposal is based on the assumption that ancient Theatre represents:

• space for speech/dialogue between Peoples
• space for lecture on Myth/ Roots of History
• space for Arts demonstration/identity-memory-future

Objectives

• Organizing and sharing knowledge
• Defining shared and effective criteria of conservation, restoration, lessening risk
• Defining fruition criteria able to preserve identity and form of the monuments
• Promoting, starting from school-age kids, the classic theatre tests for preserving theatre memory as place of speech and myth
• Constructing networks for spreading theatre test in order to increase cooperation for sustainable local development.

In the course of the workshop, other considerable and important ideas and suggestions have emerged, so it was decided to consider the group of participants in this meeting as an open, informal and standing structure for debating these themes and promoting initiatives to be undertaken.
IN PARIS AND TUNIS “HOUSE SICILY” HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED

It is imminent the opening of another seat at Matanza, in the Argentine

by Roberta Puglisi

A meeting place for all those know Sicily and want to find the best it can offer in the most strategic sectors of its production, but also for all those do not know this island and can find there all the reasons for starting an approach path in order to achieve a more direct and concrete knowledge of it. This is the aim of “House Sicily”, which has already opened its doors in Paris and Tunis, on the initiative of the Sicilian Region that, by participating in the Regions’ role, provided for by the Italian Constitution as well as by the european constitutional Treaty, has invested on this initiative in order to promote the overall productive system of the Island, beyond its national borders, as well as Salvatore Cuffaro, President of the Sicilian Region, pointed out. These two seats of “House Sicily” in Paris and Tunis, managed respectively by Antonio Lagumina, President of the french-italian Chamber of Commerce in Paris and Ludovico Corrao, President of the Orestiadi Foundation in Gibellina, have formally started this new project, aiming at giving a large-scale visibility to the best things that Sicily can offer all over the world: from tourism to agriculture, and industrial production. It is a sort of “control tower”, as Cuffaro defined “House Sicily”, supporting the sicilian entrepreneurs to be involved in the difficult french market and, at the same time, that can be an excellent showcase in order to make better known the tourist and cultural opportunities to all the people would like to come in our region. The requests for establishing “House Sicily” come in thick and fast from everywhere in the world: Morocco, Canada, Russia, Poland, Brazil and from the Argentine, all countries where there are many sicilian communities, in fact, they are already available to host a piece of Sicily. House Sicily has been established through the art. 89 of the regional Law 2/2002. The office of the Sicilian Region which keeps relations with both the Sicily Houses, is the URDI (that is the Office for Diplomatic and International Relations) located in Palermo. That Office is directed by Salvatore Cilento, Minister Plenipotentiary who has praised that initiative in following the interview:

Do you think that the opening of both the “Sicily Houses” can really help the Sicilian producers to better know market’s potentials?

Of course I think that the Sicilian producers will benefit from it not only at economic level, but it will be useful also for their image which will be spread abroad with more effectiveness, through initiatives aimed at easing the contact with Sicily and its various aspects.

Between the two “Sicily Houses” at present established there is a substantial difference. Of course Paris’s market can not be considered alike the Tunisian one.

They are two different contexts, but both of them have a great importance. In Paris we can work all around, that is adopting promotion policies at large-scale: from the wine-making industry, to the agricultural and food one, and also considering arts and culture as well as tourism sector. In Tunis, the field of action is quite different, as it takes on characteristics attesting the attention of our region towards the “Mediterranean character” and the historical links which both the Sicilian and Tunisian people share. For this reason the Sicily House in Tunis is a point of reference having as its objective to improve and implement the already existing links.

It was the Region to take the choice of the managers of these two Houses, Lagumina in Paris and Corrao in Tunis?

Well, I’d like to specify that the running of the Houses is free of charge. The Region can give a partial contribution for the expenses, that is about 80%, from which the rent as well as staff payment is not included. Sicilian Government has the duty to check that all the applications as well as the aspirant manager are reliable. Only after such a procedure which envisages the close examination of applications and applicants, also through the embassies, we move to the operational stage, that is the concession of the Houses is free of charge. The Region can give a partial contribution for the rents as well as staff payment.

I can not give a definite answer yet, but we have received interesting requests from Canada, where there is a big Sicilian community, from St Paul in Brazil and from Buenos Aires. With another House Sicily in Matanza, in the metropolitan area of the Plata Sea, the Sicilian Region intends to give a basic health assistance to the needy Sicilian people living in the Argentine, as well as a training and vocational retraining programme, to create a system of incentives to the enterprises which will recruit sicilian workers and also a subsidized credit line for the Sicilian enterprises in the south-american Country. The initiative has been agreed on by President of the Region, Salvatore Cuffaro, and regional Councillor for emigration, Raffaele Stancanelli, with the representatives of all the associations of Sicilians in the Argentine, met in Buenos Aires, Plata Sea and Rosario and for the first time called to take part in the planning and managing of concrete interventions.
COINCIDING WITH THE SIGNING OF THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION IN ROME, on the last october 29th, a meeting of all the students of Palermo was held in the Liceo “Meli”. Nello Musumeci and Francesco Musotto, Members of the European Parliament, minister plenipotentiary Salvatore Cilenio, the president of Aiccre Sicilian section Francesco Procifidenti, Carmelo Motta, Coppem secretary general, and Toto Cardaro president of the Municipal Council participated in the Assembly.

A DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN LICEO “MARIA ADELAIDE” OF PALERMO, for the occasion led by Francesco Romeo, secretary of the Aiccre Sicilian Federation, on the last October took part in the First Youth European Forum focusing on the topic “Europe, Youth and Local Autonomies” held in Eboli (Sa). This event was organized by the Southern Italian section of Aiccre - Campania Region, under the aegis of the Italian Representation Office of the European Commission. During the meeting, the issues concerning the New Union Treaty and Eu’s Charter of Rights were studied in depth, with reference to the participation of youth in the local territorial and regional communities life. The works were closed by Pasquale Viespoli, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour and Welfare.

MEETING OF THE EUROMED WORK-GROUP OF EUROCITIES. On the 30th November and 1st of December 2004 in Rome, in the Statuary Hall in the Capitol, the municipality of Turin, at that moment seat of the Euromed group works of EUROCITIES, organized a meeting in the presence of representatives from nine EuroMediterranean Countries. The afternoon of the 1st of December was devoted to “OPENING EUROMED”, an open session addressed to different operators dealing with the EuroMediterranean Partnership, with the aim of starting a dialogue for developing new forms of cooperation. On behalf of COPPEM, invited by the Mayor of Turin, the Secretary General Carmelo Motta and Michele Raimondi, Coordinator of Programmes and Projects Unit, participated in the event. Motta presented widely COPPEM and its political-institutional mission, its full willingness to open contacts and cooperation for consolidating peace and for local development in the area. Together with numerous participants, Coppem laid the basis for a concrete dialogue inspired to such principles. (m.r.)

ON THE 28TH OCTOBER 2004 IN SIENA (ITALY) TOOK PLACE the workshop on “The future of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in light of “Wider Europe”: the human dimension” organized by the Robert Shuman Centre for Advanced Studies – European University Institute of Florence, in cooperation with IEMed – European Institute of the Mediterranean. Within the six sessions on the agenda the following themes were debated: 1. The EMP under the Pressure of reform: the impact of “Wider Europe”; 2. Political Reforms, Public Participation and Social Change in the Southern Mediterranean; 3. Creating an Integrated Euro-Mediterranean area: the EMP, “Wider Europe” and the (free) Movement of People; 4. Socioeconomic Development in the Southern Mediterranean and the Role of the Private Sector; 5. Human Capital Formation in the Southern Mediterranean and the Challenger for the EMP and “Wider Europe”; 6. The Interplay of Public and Private Agencies and their Contribution to Education Sector Development in the Southern Mediterranean. Helen Fallace, Director of the Robert Shuman Centre for Advanced Studies gave her welcome to the participants. Among the approximately 35 guests from several Euro-Mediterranean Countries, we must report the meaningful presence of Traugott Scholte, the new Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations, recently settled in Alexandria (Egypt) and branched off in national networks of the 35 Euro-Mediterranean Countries, of the Hon. Gianni De Michelis, President of the IPAIMO and former Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and of many representatives of Institutions and Organizations of the academic world and the private sector. Among the nine speakers of the workshop, during the Session 4, Michele Raimondi, Coordinator of the Programmes and Projects Unit of COPPEM, presented a report on “Local Authorities Participation in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Towards Local Development”. (m.r.)

“ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” it was the theme of the international Seminar held in Matera on the last December. The initiative, organized by Basilicata Region in collaboration with the Regions, self-governing provinces and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and with CeSPI technical-scientific support, was carried out in the framework of the project “Italy International, Six Regions on Five Continents”. International Seminars’s objective consisted in promoting pilot projects as well as initiatives for the dialogue between substate and regional governments of the Mediterranean area Countries, including the North African ones and those of the western Balkans. Both the working days were set out in plenary sessions and workshops: the Ochre Workshop dealing with rural development, the Blue Workshop on the sustainable marine environment, the Rainbow Workshop on safeguarding the environment of the Mediterranean as a common space, and the Green Workshop concerning sustainable urban development. In the Green Workshop Coppem presented a project plan, Urban Transport Sustainability, concerning sustainable urban mobility. That project plan, in partnership with the Sicilian Region, the Municipality of Palermo, the Municipality of Rabat and the Governorate of Kairouan, is intended to upgrading quality in urban mobility, in view of a public transport sustainable development. To that end it is envisaged the realisation of forms of territorial partnership among the relevant territorial bodies in the public transport field as well as in the implementation of environmentally compatible means of transport. (a.p.)
served in the sicilian women’s memory for many years. As mrs. Livreri says «our products have got a specific and unique DNA, which makes them attractive and authentic, as well as unique in their kind».

The representatives of the concerns which started off such initiative named “Terre di Sicanià” are the following: the Saf of Sara Ferrara (a concern located in Alimena and producing extravirgin olive oil); the Effelle (a tourist company located in Palermo); the Green Jato Ltd (a concern producing cheese and located in San Giuseppe Jato); the wine concern Retablo Fiefs of Castellazzo Ltd (located in Trapani); the Coalma (an historical concern of Palermo which produces tuna in oil and caponata); the the Tudia farm (specialized in producing preserves and sauces); the Corleonese Colletti (a firm producing sicilian durum wheat pasta); the wine concern Retablo Fiefs of Castellazzo Ltd (located in Trapani); the Coalma (an historical concern of Palermo which produces tuna in oil and caponata); the the Tudia farm (specialized in producing preserves and sauces); the Corleonese Colletti (a firm producing sicilian durum wheat pasta); the Montagnola (a concern located in Calatabellotta and specialized in producing sweet wine and honey); the Arte by Franco La Jacona & sons (a craft firm working wrought iron); the Calatrasi (a wine firm located in San Cipirello); and Marilù Fernandez (owner of a firm specialized in manufacturing coral). Also the representatives of the municipalities union of the area of Corleone (Corleone, Campofiorito, and Chiusa Sclafani) and the leading actors of two sicilian associations located abroad: the Other Sicily and Sicily around the world have joined this initiative. The first official presentation of that consortium was held in Brussels some time ago, in the seat of the italian cultural Institute. «An interesting occasion for presenting the products of our local firms, which are all family-owned business, and involved in different commercial sectors - Giovanna Livreri pointed out. We are satisfied – she also said- because the initiative met with a great success among the local sicilian associations». Anyway this project has planned the realisation of a real Scientific Department, a sort of control body, unique in its kind in Europe and placed in the castle of Trabia at San Nicolò all’Arena. According to Terre di Sicanià consortium opinion, here the products will be monitored, from its initial stage to the final one. Then they will move to the product internationalization as well as to its commercialization. On this point the consortium asked the Sicilian Region for abating cost of transport, in order to make its commercialization in world markets easier. Only in this way these products can reach our fellow country people’s table.