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PALERMO
VILLA MALFITANO

IX GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COPPEM NEWS
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The Experience developed in the last ten years on the EU Mediterranean policies, and particularly, along the line outlined by the Barcelona Conference of 1995, still today is closely criticized with the objective of resuming the Partnership originary value and overcoming gaps that everybody recognize even though with different tones, the EU Parliament and bodies, national government and local institutions and their representative and coordination associations have expressed attentive and substantial evaluations with the aim to give an impulse to this Process started up some time ago in the perspective to create the great Euro-mediterranean free-trade area. A first result was achieved with the agreement on an action Plan to be developed in a period of time of five years in order to better develop the concrete prospects of the Partnership itself, while in more comprehensive prospects a new political and civil condition such as the Euro-Mediterranean citizenship becomes to be in sight.

Coppem, which participated in the several meetings held in Barcelona for celebrating the Conference tenth anniversary, has carried out – in Cairo on the occasion of the VIII General Assembly – an attentive analysis and formulated, through the approved document, a range of proposals aiming at making effective the European action by involving territorial autonomies, as they directly and really can give voice to the needs and ambitions of the different communities and concretely implement new and original forms of cooperation. For example, it is the case of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Palermo, under the aegis of Coppem, between the Sicilian Region and the Egyptian Governorate of Qalyubya; as well as the project of cooperation between communities from Egypt, Israel, Jordan; and Palestinian Authority, and Coppem, Unesco and UN-Habitat, for improving activities related to tourism, cultural heritage enhancement, infrastructure development and intercultural dialogue widening. All this indicate a firm intention to follow a joint path for the interest of their populations, an intention that should find further confirmation in the III Euro-Arab Towns Conference, due to be held the next year on February at Dubai. This is a particularly important political event with foreseeable and important effects on cultural, social and economic field. Coppem is strongly committed to achieve the best results also on the organizational ground, as it is attested by the preparatory meeting held in Palermo where the programmatic document, which is a sort of first “navigation chart” for organizing the works of the different thematic sessions. As well as the meeting of Local Authorities of Eastern European Countries that Coppem promoted in Warsaw in collaboration with the Polish Cities Association, takes on a particular significance. And in this case too, a tangible mark of the extraordinary cooperation which drives Cities and Regions to open a Representative Office in Poznan has been given, the main task of this office is to implement a network for the entire region of the Eastern Europe.

Such Coppem News issue is not only limited to document the intense activities carried out in the few last months but it also focuses the attention of its readership, through some interviews, on analyses concerning the evolution of democratization and modernization processes in Algeria and the widening of consensum around the great and rousing project connected to the Euro-Mediterranean policy, being fully aware that ten years ago one of the greatest challenges of the contemporary history was launched, foreseeing the creation of a large region where 600 million citizens live.
Thanks to a more effective co-operation and to a close exchange by which developed experiences are critically evaluated to be transferred on the ground of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and of the initiatives supporting development, cities and regions are perceived nowadays as able to face and resolve the problems of their communities. Still from this point of view, there is the possibility to improve meetings and cooperation with international institutions and organizations as well as with other networks of cities and regions, and also to consolidate the members’ network and promote a sound cohesion among them, by giving voice to their needs, and by assisting them to cooperate for socio-economic development in a sympathetic and peaceful framework. These lines were strongly confirmed in the VIII Coppem’s General Assembly which was held in Egypt (Cairo 3-4 December 2005) thanks to the organizational contribution of Coppem’s vice president as well as Governor of Qalyubiya Adly Hussein. The same issues were developed in detail and further investigated within the four commissions works, through which Coppem’s activities are developed.

The General Assembly, where the most authoritative institutional delegations and representatives from the 32 signatories countries of the Barcelona declaration participated in, opened its works with a close and sound debate focusing on ten years of partnership process. First Adly Hussein, stressed how the Barcelona Declaration didn’t achieve quite positive results concerning economic development in the Southern Mediterranean shore Countries as well as concerning the lack of a clear and strong engagement against terrorism. The EU decided to concentrate its efforts – Hussein pointed out – on policies aiming at technological innovation and concentrating smaller efforts on policies which are more important and urgent like the one pertaining to migratory phenomenon.
Coppem’s Secretary General Carmelo Motta thinks it is necessary to stress objectives aiming to create new forms of partnership addressed to the economic, cultural and social growth in the different countries. “Creating sustainable development needs the implementation of local development – Motta said – and the implementation of local development needs to play on what economists and sociologists call social capital”. Such consideration was corroborated by the active and close participation of authorities from the Republic of Egypt, such as the Governors of Cairo and Giza Abdel Azim Morsi Wazir and Fathy Saad who pointed out how the pinpointing of common lines for policies aiming at the protection of human rights is one of the most important results of the Barcelona process.

Minister for planning Osman-M-Osman, sharing the same views above, invited the institutional representatives to join for a concrete and effective policy against terrorism, that produces instability in the region as well as damages tourist economies in the Mediterranean partner countries. Furthermore, referring to the Egyptian legislative reform, Osman reminded that the current system to the election of the President of the Republic of Egypt, for the first time has seen the presentation of Opposition party lists and also female candidates to the Parliament. Minister for Local Development Abdel Rahim Hashem Shahata presented the legislative reforms that the Egyptian Republic has enforced in the administrative decentralization sector, and he also emphasized that now Governors and Mayors enjoy with a considerable autonomy at administrative level as well as in the State management.

Traugott Shoefthaler, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the dialogue between cultures presented the Foundation’s initiative consisting in joining the Euro-Mediterranean regional networks. Pertaining to such initiative, the General Assembly has indicated in the final declaration the implementation of a standing forum within which cities and regions associations like Coppem, the Euromed group of Eurocities, Latin Arch and Medcities, can discuss issues of common interest relevant to the issues of cities and regions of the area, in order to define actions and give higher authoritativeness to local and regional authorities in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean policy process. Furthermore Shoefthaler has launched the proposal to set up a biennal of the young Euro-Mediterranean artists.

Thanks to the participation of Francesco Saverio Nisio, Minister Advisor at the Italian Embassy in Cairo, the attention has been focused on the need to implement a solid infrastructure restructuring also in view of the free trade area and especially for this, more incisive and substantial aids from the European Union will be necessary. On this topic Gilles Pipien, representing the World Bank, ensured that financial aids to decentralized institutional powers will be increased, as well as a better distribution of contributions in the Euro-Mediterranean area. Nicola Bellomo, officer of the EU representative offices in Egypt, stated that maybe one of the Barcelona Treaty’s limits is due to a little cooperation among the various international organizations working in the sector and other ones as well, in order to discuss together and cooperate. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions was represented by Heinrich Hoffschulte whose speech was focused on the need to promote institutional adjustments bringing about legislative reforms for decentralization. He has intended to emphasize that partnership must be implemented especially among citizens and not only among government bodies.
Abdalla Abbas, on behalf of UN-Habitat, referring to actions implemented for rural areas and concerning them little incisive, affirmed that information exchange between experts could be a good way for implementing better actions.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities at the European Council was represented by its vice president Gunter Krug, who has focused his report on the lack of effective and concrete policies for decentralization of legislative powers. Krug invited the COPPEM to concentrate its efforts on these issues that the major experts consider decisive to implementing the three pillars of the Barcelona process. Following the debate on Barcelona process tenth anniversary, proceedings have continued with the appointment of Nourredine Sbia, President of the Algerina Forum for Citizenship and Modernity, as vice president of COPPEM. This appointment was unanimously approved by the General Assembly.*

THE WORKS OF THE FOUR COPPEM'S COMMISSIONS

First Commission
Political and Institutional
Francesco Sammaritano, contact person for the I Commission, presented the activities foreseen in 2006, mainly focused on three points: Euro-Mediterranean socio-sanitary Coordination Centre; cooperation between decentralized institutional powers and Universities and Memorandums of Understanding between Regions. Speaker Prof. Said El Dakkak (Egypt), has focused the attention on the ongoing process for legislative reforms in some Middle-Eastern countries and on human rights issue. In many Arab Countries new legislative assets opened to a democratic and participated dimension are in sight: reformist overtures in Morocco, elections characterized by secret ballot and overtures to the opposition party candidates in Egypt. As to human rights and equal opportunities issue, Dakkak invited COPPEM, and in particular the I Commission to be more actively involved in, since these issues influence the civil growth in the whole area with inevitable effects on the economic ground.

Governor of Aleppo Tamer Alhaja (Syria), referring to the bilateral agreement signed between the Syrian government and the EU, has pointed out that the Middle-Eastern political situation could influence the implementation of reforms at social, economic and commercial level foreseen in the agreement itself.

Algerian delegate Mohamed Taibi in his speech has talked about the current government's will to provide cities with a central role in the political life of the country. In fact legislative powers to Governors, Mayors and People's Councils reflect this political line.

Rector of KORE University of Enna (Italy) Salvo Andò, with whom COPPEM Secretary General has signed a cooperation agreement, underlined the importance of the implanted agreements. In particular, it is foreseen to contribute to a real, effective and concrete exchange between institutional structures, teachers and students of this area. Such agreements based on know-how exchanges as well as on the implementation of common actions, promote peace through the mutual acquaintance of the cultural, economic and political background of the respective countries.

Catalina Schezzini (Italy) Mayor of Rio nell'Elba, stressing that equal gender opportunities are one of the main vehicles for human rights respect, suggested to COPPEM the establishment of a fifth Commission dealing with those issues. For Maria Teresa Coppo Gavazzi, (Italy) AICCRE Lombardia Regional President and member of the Equal gender opportunities Commission at CEMR, who has...
supported Schezzini’s proposal, it is necessary to think over equal gender opportunities policies in a more comprehensive sense, considering not only a higher involvement of women in public life, but also a sociological process including all the individuals. Equal gender opportunities must mean equal dignity at all levels.

Piero Fagone (Italy), responsible for COPPEM press office, illustrated the conclusions of the World Summit on Information society in Bilbao. Indications have emerged in the Basque sessions foresee that communication technologies must:

1. be a service to citizens;
2. be one of the main tools for sustainable development in all its aspects and dimensions;
3. be heritage for all the people and not a privilege enjoyed by a few

Second Commission - For the cooperation between cities and regions

President Jan Mans (the Netherlands), introduced migration issue by stressing how the existing flows in the Euro-Mediterranean area have often common features: migration of highly or poorly qualified workers, new transnational movements, illegal traffic of people, refugees and asylum seekers overlapping, and illegal immigration. Muraffer Baca (Turkey), first vice president of the Commission, has announced that the EU suggested to declare 2008 the year of interculturalism, during which a wide range of actions and initiatives is foreseen. On that occasion the Coppem could play an active role as cities and regions network and, it should present a series of proposals also in view of the adoption of particular initiatives relevant to this topic. Jalal Abs, Town Councillor at Tripoli Municipality (Lebanon), invited to investigate the phenomenon relevant to war - refugee status. The Lebanese representative has urged Coppem to promote a lobby action on international bodies for the Middle-Eastern issue. Prof. Concetta Fallanca De Blasio (Italy), Director of the Department of Mediterranean City Architecture and Analysis at the Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, presented the project “City to City – Plural identities and urban contexts; new approaches to migration policies” financed in the framework of Interreg III C Programme, in which Coppem participates on a synergic role with the Sicilian Region. Prof. De Blasio suggested to organize cooperation ateliers to let planners from the countries of origin and destination work together in order to put into practice a more aware planning taking into account a multicultural approach. Abdelfattah Skir (Kingdom of Morocco), Secretary General of the Moroccan cities Union, pointed out that migration movements don’t follow only a South-North direction. From this, he advanced the proposal according to which Coppem can play a strategic and leading role in order to outline new initiatives insisting on changes and migration phenomenon evolution in the Mediterranean area. Ghassan Samman (Kuwait), responsible for communication at ATO, announced that the 3rd Euro-Arab Towns Conference will be held at Dubai and it will be organized by Coppem, ATO, Arab League, CEMR, Dubai Municipality and CLARE. He added that the Arab Towns Organization represents more than 450 cities and other organizations can cooperate in its network to achieve common objectives. Finally, Abdallah Cahouad, Secretary General of Salé Municipality (Kingdom of Morocco), about the migration phenomenon thinks it’s necessary to find a radical solution involving concrete actions with citizens, the leading actors to whom every project and action concerning the cooperation between cities and regions should be targeted.
President of 3rd Commission Abdelkarim Misbah (Tunisia), reminded that works carried out in 2005 let the role strategic role of local development for Mediterranean cities and regions emerge as well as the strengthening of local partnership can be implemented also through the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Agency of Local and Regional authorities (ASEM). For Luca Meldolesi, professor of economics at Naples University (Italy), local development should be considered driving force for the economic growth. For this reason training and business management schools play a decisive role because they contribute to enhance, through a proper training, a considerable patrimony of human resources. Small and medium-sized enterprises expansion in the socio-economic tissue is strategic to local development, as it promotes people and ideas and goods circulation. Meldolesi quoted at this purpose “pocket-sized multinationals”, small enterprises able to settle in a socio-economic tissue and become promoters of local development. Fashion industry, nanotechnology and agriculture and food industry can be an example of it. Giuseppe Frisella, professor of political economics at Palermo University (Italy), outlined the profile of the ASEM, promoted by COPPEM. The aim of this new body is planning initiatives for development addressed to cities and regions. The main needs of a territory is development creating employment, and the development that COPPEM intends to pursue can be achieved by activating a series of initiatives at economic level, respecting territory traditions and local communities. The ASEM mission is to assist local autonomies in project design which are useful to economic, social and cultural development in agriculture, crafts, tourism, public and private services aiming at research, protection of territorial original products, human resources enhancement. ASEM initiative intends to be not so much demanding but an operational one, it isn’t in competition with other supranational or national development agency but intends to coexist with them. Giovanna Livreri, Extraordinary Commissioner of the self-governing authority Fair of the Mediterranean of Palermo (Italy), suggested to organize travelling fairs for promoting local products and activities and implementing networks with public and private associations of local development. In short, it is intended to develop a concertation policy between COPPEM, ASEM, Fair of the Mediterranean and other fair bodies to promote a decentralized local development. Philippe Sanmarco, Town Councillor at Marseilles Municipality (France) emphasized the role of North-South cooperation and young people disappointment for social and economic dynamics, starting from the access to labour market. Young people must become a resource for the economy and such resource must be enhanced through training to job, so opportunities offered by the labour market.
should be created and especially by implementing serious policies for local development from which a growth of youth employment can be originated. Mohammed Taibi, sociologist and anthropologist at Oran University (Algeria), pointed out that today economic policies of his country go towards a decentralized economy rather than to a nationalized one. “Oil industries are large useless plants”, as they don’t promote local development in the area, as well as they don’t give employment to local manpower and neither know the territory where they operate. While 52 Algerian Universities are promoting integration policies between medium-sized enterprises which intend to work in their territory and local communities, in order to promote local development bringing prosperity in the interested areas. This is the direction along which COPPEM should move, by activating all the necessary synergies to start a bottom-up promotion of development in Algeria. Finally Erkan Ayan, Advisor to the Mayor of Izmit (Turkey), outlined the experiences developed there. In this territory small and medium-sized enterprises which has created industrial and rural districts and established commercial relations especially with Greece and Ukraine operate. Such relations and best-practices and products exchange should be more stimulated through serious policies for decentralized development. ASEM’s role could be a good development element, advocating policies aiming at enhancing local resources through commercial exchange promotion and opening to countries interested in nourishing new flows of commercial exchange. Paolo Carrara, contact person for III Commission, underlined that all the efforts both of Secretariat and members, were concentrated especially on the issue of strengthening and participation of local and regional authorities to Barcelona process, with regard to economic and financial cooperation issues. COPPEM Secretariat and III Commission members think that the way to achieve local development is that of investigating the different socio-economic background and then starting up projects for knowledge and best practice exchange, as well as for development between local authorities of different countries.

Fourth Commission – For culture, technology, tourism and environment

President Falah Al Omoush (Jordan) recognised that the Barcelona Process, at least concerning cultural cooperation, dialogue and multiculturalism has achieved good results. Speaker Petros Filippou (Greece) introduced the topic of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation of the EU, remarking that the New Neighbourhood Policy has a weak point for having excluded the cultural sector from its priorities. So actions for promoting dialogue and multiculturalism will be excluded by the ENPI financings. Natale Giordano, contact person for the IV Commission, illustrated the activities carried out on cultural cooperation,
and in particular the completion of the Project Unimed Cultural Heritage II, the creation of the Herimed Association, the setting-up of the project “Cultural Heritage and Local Development” for the institutional capacity building of officers from 60 Sicilian Local Authorities. In the framework of the last year activities, 2 Project have been presented “Cultural Dialogue and local development” in Egypt and in Algeria; 3 Projects within the Interreg Archimed Programme and a project proposal in the framework of Interreg Medoc programme. Roberto Albergoni, Unimed vice director (Italy), described Herimed Association aims and pointed out the objectives it intends to achieve, its strategies and activities. Claudio Basso, Town Councilor of Genoa Municipality (Italy), illustrated the project for a network of Cities of Culture and Tourism, based on the common historical and cultural roots: Genoa, Rijeka, Kios, Galata, Costanza, Kiev, Latakya e Byblos. Finally he pointed out the launch of Med-Child, a project implemented by Genoa Municipality in collaboration with the Gaslini hospital. Such project foresees the creation of a travelling children’s hospital based on a ship, and provided with the most modern technologies for medicine, paediatric first aid, vocational training and telemedicine. It will work on Mediterranean area and will be able to intervene in crisis area, in the case of natural disasters or situations of conflict or emergency. Vito Giacalone, Councilor for Community Policies at Mazara del Vallo Municipality (Italy), referring to the project Cultural Heritage and Local Development, has given the availability of his Municipality to implement a workshop for launching the project. In that occasion also the Dancing Satyr, a prestigious bronze sculpture founded in the sea near Mazara could be further promoted. Mustafa Aydyn, President of the Anadolu BIL of higher Education (Turkey), pointed out the respect for conservation and valorisation of diversity as shared value for social development. The need to promote a stronger role of education and training in cooperation policies is linked to that aim and on this point he welcomes the close relation between COPPEM and Unimed.

At the end of the Assembly works a delegation of Coppem was received by President of People’s Assembly (the Egyptian Parliament) Ahmed Fathy Sorour. The themes discussed were many, among those the prospects for economic development, civil and cultural growth. In particular, President Sorour indicated a more advanced frontier of coexistence based on dialogue between cultures and religions in respect of pluralism, diversity and cultural specificities of each Country. “The Dialogue – he said- must serve not only to a better understanding of the other, but also the solution of more urgent problems. The aim must be the peaceful coexistence and not to change the other.
1. We, members of Coppem – Standing Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of Local Authorities and Regions, gathered in Cairo for the VI-II General Assembly on the 3rd - 4th of December 2005, ten years after the Barcelona Declaration and five years after the Coppem establishment, reaffirm our commitment in the pursuing of socio-economic development of the communities at local level, also by strengthening co-operation among Local Authorities and Regions of the Euro-Mediterranean area in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership process.

2. We reaffirm our strong commitment in pursuing the aims defined in the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 since in the light of the current prospects, it is to be considered the best instrument for turning the Euro-Mediterranean region into an area of peace, dialogue and shared prosperity.

3. In the light of the disappointing outcomes emerged from the recent summit of Barcelona, we are convinced that local powers and regions are increasingly the actors that legitimately may successfully conceive, elaborate and orient partnership policies within the Euro-Mediterranean area, by taking into account citizens aspirations and needs, giving a contribution that besides policies made at governmental level, is necessary for lending the Barcelona Process the expected advantages, not achieved up to now.

4. We are fully aware and firmly convinced that Local Authorities are entrusted with the responsibility of playing a key role towards a steady and lasting peace and prosperity in the Euro-Mediterranean area, which are of the utmost importance to attain by furthering open dialogues and joint initiatives, and are crucial ways to go through by taking advantage of mutual support and close co-operation. Opposition against any culture, form and act of terrorism, racism and xenophobia shall resolutely inspire our policy in direction of a conscious participation to establish sound relations among, and a fair quality of life for our citizens.

5. We consider decentralization of powers essential means to make Local Authorities of the Euro-Mediterranean area actors and driving force of a joint process devoted to safeguard the human rights and the principles of democracy, of justice, of transparency and of equality, and to alleviate sufferings and poverty of the citizens, in observance of national and international laws. Local Authorities have to be guarantors of socio-economic cohesion and inclusion between European and Mediterranean society.

6. We deem of paramount importance that Euro-Mediterranean Local Authorities experiences and requirements are duly taken into account in the re-orientation of the Barcelona Process towards an ever more effective Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which we demand could broaden actions and follow ups for the direct benefits of local communities of the area.

To this end, we, representatives of Euro-Mediterranean cities and regions, commit ourselves to co-operatively improve strengthening appropriate ties with the European Commission, and for the purpose we assign to Coppem the mandate to make any effort to be recognized advisory and counselling body of it.

Alike we call for with regard to the neighbourhood policy, whose fundamental role in the stability and socio-economic development of our Countries we are fully aware, and which we wish be progressing as a sound complement to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership policy.

7. We believe that cohesion, coexistence and collaboration among Euro-Mediterranean communities must go
throughout open dialogue and co-operation among international organizations, associations of cities and regions, non-governmental organizations, academic world, and private and public bodies that are involved in concerned themes in the area.

8. We look with satisfaction upon the steps forward taken by Coppem in 2005, in terms of contacts with European Institutions, the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the Euromed Group of Eurocities, the Council of Europe – Congress of local and regional authorities, UN-OPS, UNDP, UNESCO, UN – Habitat, the Union of Mediterranean Universities, the Association of Turkish World Municipalities, and many other highly authoritative organizations. We agree that Coppem strives with increased impetus after the direction of strengthening relations with major organizations for consultation, exchanges, design of joint undertakings to advantage of Euro-Mediterranean local and regional authorities, and we urge it into action.

9. We confirm that the setting up of a permanent forum is of the utmost importance; within its framework international associations of cities and regions such as Coppem, the Euromed group of Eurocities, Arco Latino and Medcities may discuss about topics of common interest related to cities and regions issues in the Euro-Mediterranean area, in order to tune actions and to make the voice of local authorities and regions much authoritative within the Euro-Mediterranean policy process.

10. We approve the initiative of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for dialogue between cultures, to invite the Euro-Mediterranean regional networks to encourage dialogue between peoples and cultures and we wish the establishment of a permanent Committee, composed of regional networks and independent from national networks, with advisory and driving functions.

11. Being aware of the importance of the growth of South-South relations for the success of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and of the impact of twinning among Cities in the social and cultural growth of citizens, we wish that the European Commission, in the framework of its own capacity, may launch a programme devoted to foster South-South Twinning among Cities.

12. Being aware of the importance that cultural heritage has in the socio-cultural growth of the citizens and of the impact that its sustainable and shared management has on the local economies, we complain for the absence of the cultural heritage management in the priority goals of the neighbourhood policy, and invite the European Commission to include the Cultural heritage in its priorities.

13. We deem very useful the mutual exchange of our legislative, social and economic experiences and achievements. To this end, we will positively welcome any proposal of bilateral and multilateral meetings the Secretariat will put forward, including also applications to the European Commission and other donors for proper funding.

14. We are absolutely open-minded to participate as partners in joint projects and we appreciate the efforts made by the Secretariat in 2005 to this purpose, and we encourage it to promote new partnerships for projects along next year.

15. We welcome the Representative Offices of Coppem in Cairo, Rabat and Istanbul and wish that their commitment may resolutely contribute to the strengthening and widening of the Coppem mission. Commissions of which we are members are called for proposing and suggesting initiatives that the said offices may undertake.
16. We look with interest on the recent setting up of the Socio-sanitary Co-ordination Centre that Coppem has promoted, and we particularly encourage the I Commission to provide all suggestions and contributions that may help to its best organization and achievement.

17. We wish that Coppem will succeed in activating concrete co-operation with Universities of the Euro-Mediterranean area for the setting up of educational exchanges programmes, referring also to the already signed agreements with the Universities of Enna and Palermo in Italy, and we are confident that the I Commission will study and propose the best implementation of such agreements.

18. We attach great interest to establish co-operation relations among our cities and bilateral understandings between our regions, taking as examples those agreed upon by Sicily Region, Italy, with the Rabat Region, Morocco, and the Qalyubiya Governorate, Egypt, that the Secretariat has promoted, and we hope that the I Commission and the II Commission will be able to identify further possible partnership among cities and regions, working out the best forms of co-operation and agreement.

19. We believe that issues connected to migration phenomena should be properly analysed and tackled for a sound co-existence among citizens, and to this purpose we hope that the II Commission will contribute to draw up a clear position of Coppem on the subject, pointing out viable political-strategic initiatives.

20. We hope that ASEM – Euro-Mediterranean Development Agency promoted by Coppem starts its operational activity to give impulse to socioeconomic development of local communities, and we express our interest and commitment to actively participate in it, and in particular we wish that the works of the III Commission, in the framework of its commitment addressed to local development, concretely contribute to its strategic and operational consolidation.

21. We wish that the III Commission fully supports initiatives oriented to the setting up of memorandum of understanding among Chambers of Commerce, to joint strategies of trade fairs, particularly of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, to the training of entrepreneurs and services technicians in view of territories development.

22. We welcome the real prospect of the constitution of “Herimed”, Euro-Mediterranean Agency for the conservation and valorization of Cultural Heritage, which we encourage Coppem to be founding member of, and local authorities and regions to join, and we trust in proposals, suggestions and strategies that in particular the IV Commission would like to work out and present.

23. We agree that the IV Commission goes on searching for most suitable modalities to activate closer co-operation, which Coppem is interested in, with organizations dealing with tourism, cultural heritage, environment and technology in the Euro-Mediterranean area, through development of contacts and agreements already discussed or established with the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, the Field Foundation, and with many other organizations.

24. We agree that the fifth Coppem Commission for equal opportunities may be established, and that it could be presented to the next General Assembly for approval.

25. We resolutely recognize that the overall Coppem mission is based on our shared principles, and are confident that, also through the above hoped for and recommended initiatives, it will be further projected into a successful growth.
not been reduced, or rather it has get worse. Euro-Mediterranean policies implemented so far haven’t focused on the central issue: to create sustainable development in the partner countries. Coppem thinks that to create sustainable development it is necessary implementing local development, and for local development implementation is necessary to create what the economists and sociologists define as social capital. Euro-Mediterranean Partnership doesn’t achieve adequate results and the comprehensive political plan might be endangered, if we don’t pursue this line. We must be fully aware of that. Since its establishment, the Coppem has followed the strategy of new partnership forms which let territories improve themselves at economic, social and cultural level. For this reason, we have carried out several initiatives in addition to institutional meetings, that however have been very positive because they has given us the opportunity to know each others and become friends. Coppem has promoted structures that will be effective as soon as possible and enable us to actively contribute to building up the social capital.

This afternoon and tomorrow, Prof. Frisella from Palermo University together with Dr. Furnari, General Manager of Messina Health Authority and Dr Roberto Albergoni, General Manager of UNIMED representing the 71 Mediterranean Universities, and based at Sapienza University in Rome, will talk about the aim of the following structures: the ASEM (Euro-Mediterranean Development Agency dealing with projects), the Socio-Sanitary Coordination Center of the 35 countries, which UN has joined in, Herimed (the Association for the enhancement of cultural heritage of the 35 Countries).
As you can note, Coppem doesn't make political propaganda but a concrete policy. Mr Pipien, World Bank's representative, who is here together with us, can help us to implement our social strategies of development. During this year Coppem has made a great step forward in the relations with the International Organizations and it has become a fundamental interlocutor not only for the Euro-Mediterranean Associations.

With UN we are committed in the action plan concerning coastal cities from the four countries above mentioned; in the socio-sanitary coordination; in the Art Gold project already presented by UN at Messina, and at Caserta during Meetings of Coppem, and concerning the Maghrebi Countries and other initiatives of cooperation are under consideration. There is a full cooperation with the Anna Lindh Foundation about which I have already informed you. With the ATO, Arab Towns Organizations, there is a very close relation, ATO is member of Coppem by right, and we are glad to inform that Coppem, the CEMR, and CLARE together with ATO, Arab League and Dubai Municipality are organizing the 3rd Euro-Arab Towns Conference. The first meeting was held at Dubai on November 21st, the second one will be held at Palermo on January 21st, 2006. The 3rd will be held at Dubai indicatively in last week of November 2006. We must work in order that this conference can be a great event at international level.

We have resumed the relationships with the Council of the European Municipalities and Regions, and we both agree on a series of initiatives, we also welcome to our works the Honorary Vice President Mr Hoffschulte. Even the relations with the Euro-Mediterranean associations, such as Euromed Eurocities, MedCities, Latin Arch, have become very close and we soon meet all them in Turin to define the relationships with the Euro-Mediterranean Commission of the Local Authorities World Organization and to decide how carry out the request of an Euro-Mediterranean Forum of local and regional authorities, which has to be implemented by the EU, as well as it happened for the Euro-Mediterranean Parliaments. We have proposed initiatives of cooperation to the Euro-Mediterranean Parliaments Association, chaired by the European Parliament President Mr Borrel. I inform all of you I have been invited to go to Strasbourg as Coppem Secretary General, in order to make a report on Coppem following our request to become observer of the Congress of Local Authorities at the European Council. I think we have carried out a good work; thanks to all of you and to our collaborators, our responsibilities are increasing, because our political-institutional growth has been very strong. Today we are going to present a detailed report on all Coppem’s initiatives carried out in 2005.

In conclusion, concerning the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process, I feel to affirm that the Barcelona process needs deep innovation at political level and in its resources planning. To invest more and better on a policy for peace and security, and for economic and financial as well as social and cultural partnership is not only a duty for Europe, but also a decisive choice, I believe it is necessary. Concerning the tenth anniversary celebration I’m fully aware we should all maintain our identity. It is a cultural as well as a political need. We have to let the others know who we are and what we want. Following our numerous initiatives in the Southern Mediterranean shore and in the Arab world, someone has asked me joking “Are you an European, or Palestinian, or Israeli, or Turk or Arab?” And I seriously answer them. “I’m an Euro-Mediterranean citizen.”
FOUR CHALLENGES TO RELAUNCH THE MEDITERRANEAN

Adly Hussein
Governor of Qalyubiya and COPPEM Vice President

Egypt, land of civilizations, security and peace. Along the banks of its great river, the Nile, whose waters run from South to North, providing us with welfare, growth and constant inspiration as well as strongly marking our culture, different civilizations have arisen starting from the Pharaonic civilization to the Coptic and the Islamic ones. When you leave to your countries, you will carry with you friendship and love feelings; such feelings well represent the inner nature of the Egyptian people. Egyptian people, by nature, welcome warmly and friendly all the people who enter in the country, since when the prophet Isaiah said “Blessed be my people of Egypt” and as the holy Koran said “Enter Egypt safely God willing”. Such body of water created by God to gather on its banks all these various and extraordinary civilizations, inspire us to meet for the common good according to the implementation of the Barcelona Declaration. Therefore while celebrating the Barcelona Declaration tenth anniversary, I think we must make comprehensive evaluations about this process and this celebration must be also a chance to confirm our objectives of peace and stability, in order to increase cooperation and economic integration between North and South, and to reinforce the dialogue between cultures and civilizations so as to allow that all the Mediterranean Countries enjoy stability and welfare, and provide the young generations with values through which they can express their identity in a climate of freedom and respect for human rights. These are our hopes, but the matter has presents different opinions. Ambassador Klaus Eberman - representative of the EC delegation in Egypt – said that the celebration of the Barcelona tenth anniversary doesn’t need forms of jubilation. Peace in Middle East wasn’t achieved and the economic welfare wasn’t accomplished. Therefore he sees that we need to support democracy, respect for human rights and fighting terrorism as well as evacuate the Middle East from weapons of mass destruction and supporting issues concerning justice and security and solve problems relevant to immigration and social integration, moreover he says that the alternative to the Barcelona vision is the clash of civilization.

Ambassador Bembly – the UK Ambassador in Egypt – says that although some objectives in the Barcelona process have been achieved, we don’t achieve progress in what we hope to do. Regional conflicts are not settled. The economic growth wasn’t going on and there is no progress in the fight against illiteracy. So there are mutual criticisms between the two sides (North and South) because so far the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 has been not implemented. Some people wonder how the Europeans ignore the items of this agreement after September 11th and intend to ignore
words like development, modernization and democracy, and begin to consider concepts that only turn on security and immigration. Those critic indicate as unacceptable that all the Southern Countries get only 1% of the total EU investments- which is about 9% - while only a country (Israel) gets 45% from the European investments during 2004, and the total of what the Southern Countries get from these investments is equivalent to what one country from the Eastern Europe such as Poland gets. Those critic are still talking about the fact that this injustice in the Barcelona path creates other parallel and competitive paths like the path 5+5 between France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Malta on the northern side, as well as that composed of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania on the southern side in addition to free trade agreements between Jordan and USA and between Morocco and USA.

Stability in the Mediterranean cannot be achieved, if there are stambles in the peace process in the Middle East, and without joining all he countries of this area with a treaty banning weapons of mass destruction. We can't take about stability in the Mediterranean without a close cooperation tackling aspects such as violence, terrorism and aggression. In this occasion I'd like to mention that President Hosni Mubarak presented his famous initiative – in the European Parliament in 1986 – about the need to held an international conference to face terrorism, and that initiative still exists. The Declaration of Barcelona has confirmed the need to meet in order to discuss about political and security issues from on the one hand, and about economic, social and cultural issues from the other hand. Through this conception of comprehensive development, a real and peaceful coexistence among nations can be achieved. Barcelona Summit closed the celebration of the Barcelona Process tenth anniversary focusing on two points: Terrorism and Immigration. As for Terrorism, the slogan of our assembly is “no terrorism” all of us suffer from it, since it indiscriminate-
ollowed such events, accused Muslims from these regions to be involved in such acts of violence.

Recently in Paris a book entitled "Freedom- Equality-Islam" was published, and it warns us that Islam in France is going towards racism, moreover the author of this essay informs us that Islam in France includes those who France forgot to book a place for them in the train of development, for this reason these slices of population are ruled by feelings of rejection and hatred for the society in which they find difficulties to integrate in its tissue. I hope you are agree with me that this difficult problem can’t be solved simply, by describing those who participate in aggressions in Paris with cruel characterizations.

We were pleased, when the French President Jacques Chirac, announced in his speech about Paris events that the treatment of this phenomena is not only a security matter but it also has social, economic and human grounds, and for this reason he instructed his government and all the groups of civil society and organizations to activate the law of solidarity and renew civilization and employing youth between 15 to 35 years old who don’t have any certificates and deeding the principles of equal opportunities for diversity and against discrimination.

The history of both Islamic and European civilizations imposes us the need to go on a cultural mixture between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

North and South agreed on the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 for a but, in my opinion, the succes of this Declaration depends on four conditions: the North should contribute more seriously to achieve the comprehensive development for the South; the South should, on the other side, should take serious and urgent measures in the field of the political and economic liberalization; the North still gives priority to political and security issues while the South still gives priority to economic issues. This is very important to know which are the priorities between the two parties. Moreover there is the need of facing the main challenges which the two parties are involved in and the most important are the following ones:

1. Human challenge (migration issue)
2. Productive challenge (production system)
3. Commercial challenge (disturbance in the commercial balance)
4. Cultural challenge (dialogue between civilizations)
5. Environmental challenge (Mediterranean pollution)

The Mediterranean sea can represent a focal point for the dangers of the modern world; poverty, bad governance, terrorism, human beings trading, political extremism. But at the same time, this unstable sea is still our common culture and our way to cooperate, there is no way for mistakes. Spreading democracy, multiculturality, and human rights are parts of Barcelona original plan.

To support reaching good governance, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership should not be restricted only to the official and central government level but also local authorities should join it, since they are the real guarantee of continuity in spreading the culture of dialogue, mutual understanding, and supporting democracy and good governance. There is no doubt that Coppem is qualified since the local authorities of which it is composed, carry out this responsibility in the near future.

Closing my speech, I repeat my welcome to all the participants, and I wish you enjoy your time in our country, and I take this opportunity to give my greetings and appreciation to the the Sicilian Region and to President Salvatore Cuffaro, for the great support given to Coppem to achieve its great responsibility in the implementation of the Barcelona process in a right way.
ECONOMY AS GEOSTRATEGIC FACTOR FOR PEACE AND STABILITY

Omar El Bahraoui
president of Rabat Municipality and 1st vice-president of Coppem

Omar El Baharoui addressed to the VI-II General Assembly of Coppem a message which was read by Abdel Fat-tah Skir, secretary general of Rabat Municipality.

The 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration is grounded on a long term ambitious policy aiming at making the Mediterranean basin an area of dialogue, exchange and co-operation that can ensure peace and mutual understanding among peoples in view of 2010. The historic Barcelona Declaration expresses the will, from Mediterranean peoples together with their government and local representatives, to build an area of shared prosperity, as well as to strengthen and develop co-operation on bilateral regional projects and the implementation of a global development programme based on three axes:

- **political axis:** whose aim is creating a common area of peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean basin through the consolidation of the political dialogue and security, in order to promote values such as democracy, freedom, respect for human rights and the creation of a constitutional state;
- **economic and financial axis:** launching the establishment of an area of shared prosperity through an economic and financial partnership so as to gradually implement a free trade area based on market economy principles;
- **socio-cultural axis:** promoting peoples’ rapprochement through socio-cultural and human partnership aimed at encouraging the exchange and mutual understanding between cultures.

Such partnership can play an important role on improving the relationships among the different components of civil society, and on promoting decentralized co-operation as well as social and economic issues such as the immigration one. Such celebration is undoubtedly an occasion that will give new impulse to a strategic partnership between the European Union and the Mediterranean Countries and cities as well, a partnership which could enable Southern countries to launch into important reforms at economic and social level. Such partnership can be considered as a social contract aiming at creating a link between peoples from both the Mediterranean shores. Nevertheless it is
necessary to take note that ten years after the launch of the Barcelona Process all the envisaged results haven’t been achieved. Actually, even though this process is a real experience of development in the whole Mediterranean area, a lot of gaps and contradictions can be found: Southern partners have always been expecting investments in their areas, the crisis in Middle East and Europe’s inability to impose itself as mediator in the region concerning conflicts resolution, immigration and terrorism issues that the European Union has emphasized as matters of priority and which are perceived as hurdles so much that the implementation of Barcelona’s objectives hasn’t been allowed. Ten years later this Declaration, we must recognise that the Mediterranean region has been always marked by asymmetric relations as well as by the gap in development levels between the two shores. Moreover some Southern countries have met with situations of a clear regression at political, social and economic levels, in spite of the European financial contribution in the framework of MEDA program. Nowadays we are living a difficult season, we are all concerned about threat loading on peace and stability in the Mediterranean basin region. On this point, a common approach enabling us to improve and grow is necessary in a region whose decisions have been linked to decisions taken in other countries for a long time. Barcelona process is not a purpose itself, but it only presents the institutional framework allowing us to ensure our responsibilities for carrying out actions encouraging relations between the two shores. We are all agree on the positive impact that the cooperation between Northern and Southern countries could have. The European Union can effectively intensify cooperation with each country and promote the decentralized cooperation between cities and territorial communities in the basin for investments lines and implementation of partnership projects. Of course, implementing such a partnership will help the Southern countries and cities to overcome their economic and social problems (immigration, extremism, organized crime and terrorism) that engender most of the despair conditions in which their people live. To that end, terrorism and extremism must not discourage our efforts aimed at making the Mediterranean basin an area of prosperity and security. Strengthening the dialogue between the countries along the Mediterranean as well as political and economic reforms are both basic. Without this dialogue, combating terrorism, respecting human rights and founding a constitutional state, would be very difficult. Economic development is not only the main stake for the future of the region, but it is also a geostrategic element in consideration of peace and stability. Peoples who embrace values of democracy, cultural dialogue, respect for human rights, confirm their strong devotion to partnership which can ensure better life conditions to the inhabitants from both the shores in an area of peace, stability and shared prosperity.
A CONSORTIUM FOR COMMERCIAL EXHIBITIONS

The Mediterranean Fair Authority is an economic public subject, and it is the operational branch of the Sicilian Region for promoting and launching the exchange of local and international productive activities. Such legal status qualifies it to be a supplier of services for Local Authorities represented within Coppem for projects of international interest. The Mediterranean Fair Authority for a long time organizes an international trade fair which was and still is a place for presenting productive activities and services offered by the Countries of the Mediterranean basin. In the last ten years, the Fair has registered a practically constant average of visitors consisting in over 450,000 yearly visitors. It extends for 84,000 square metres of which roughly 50,000 consist of covered stands and when the usual spring international trade fair takes place, the exhibition area is totally covered.

This structure can be immediately oriented to become a center for aggregation, launching and promotion of ideas, initiatives, proposals, and commercial exchanges, in a market of reference such as the Mediterranean one which has contributed to enhance the strategic position of Palermo and nowadays it can enhance the cooperation between Mediterranean cities. Meeting the needs coming from Mediterranean territory and communities as well as the attention for social and environmental aspects of the projects, are parts of a more comprehensive concept of “social responsibility” which the Fair of the Mediterranean intends to apply and implement in the years to come.

Since its establishment and by choice of its leadership, the Fair of the Mediterranean has been for sixty years a real “machinery exchange”, and now it has to turn into a real “machinery of development” a real territorial econom my driving force for resident communities and enterprises operating in the territory. This is the project to be prepared for 2010.

The fair of the Mediterranean shall have the task to promote the culture of exchange by promoting and publicizing Mediterranean products, disseminate the related social culture by promoting meetings between actors that normally don’t dialogue with each other like students, citizens, enterprises, universities, artists, etc., after fair exhibitions.

Innovation, managerial skills, transparency and tradition are the guidelines on which all the projects of the Mediterranean Fair for events, shows, market exhibition, workshops, promotional exhibition and entrepreneurial meetings shall be based. The projects also foresee, through studies, researches, conferences and publications, dissemination of the culture and values of exchange in the Mediterranean, through the Fair.

The Statute of the Mediterranean Fair Authority has been modified, and today it provides for the access of a new social structure consisting of partners and identified as “Project partner”. Recently Coppem’s Secretary General, hon. Carmelo Motta has illustrated this modification, he explained that with such a modification, the Fair Authority will be able to develop its mission by working for the Mediterranean enterprises to implement the following projects:

a) travelling fairs;
b) congress organization;
c) services for enterprises;
d) cultural and artistic exchanges;
e) contributing to scientific and technological dissemination and social communication;
f) strengthening development of networks and large territorial systems in collaboration with Local and Regional Institutions and public and private bodies.

According to the project of relaunching, in the next years the Fair of the Mediterranean intends to implement a fair system along the way of the integration of Sicily with other Mediterranean Regions, targeted to modify the area of commercial attraction as well as the services to the Mediterranean basin.

The commitment foreseen by this project of relaunching is very important for its effects on Mediterranean communities and Sicilian territory as well. The project of relaunching foresees the adoption of an ethical code that the Fair of the Mediterranean will present together with the budget following the new statute adoption.

I invite Coppem as well as the Euro-Mediterranean Local and Regional Authorities joining it to define this ethical code.

In a still unripe community normative framework, there are great opportunities and the capacity of fair operators to gather and present in a coordinate way their needs to legislative bodies assumes a great importance. Competition can’t be perceived as a threat, or as gang warfare, but it is an opportunity for improvement and development. Competition must not be opposed by deferring free trade areas, it would be seriously wrong; but by planning conversions of local productive structures in such a way as to be revitalized by free trade opportunities. Sometimes, it brings about for exhibiting firms the difficulty to conceive a joint project, because they perceive competition in an individualistic way. A coordinate action of Local Authorities in planning Mediterranean fairs enables networking and conflicts mitigation through incentives and aids concerted with the various Companies. The public Authority “Fair of the Mediterranean” will establish some representative offices in the seats of the Sicilian Region offices in Italy and in the world, and through a partnership with the international system of fair branches, implemented by the Fair of the Mediterranean, it will locate representative branches in the 42 offices still existing all over the world and depending on Fiera Milano spa. Moreover Fair of the Mediterranean will have to undertake the task to organize meetings addressed to promote fair systems at Mediterranean and European level. So, the Mediterranean fair system must become not only an important driving force for developing trade and culture exchanges between the resident companies; but more than anything else it must become a tool for facilitating interchange between European and Mediterranean companies as well as a place of meeting and exchange between very different national cultures. For achieving such aims a policy of close cooperation with Coppem could be very helpful. So I suggest that Coppem, also by availing itself of the ASEM, the Euro-Mediterranean Development Agency, considers a concertation with Cities and regional local authorities within it, to arrange a structure of “Mediterranean Consortium” among the various Public and Mixed Fair Authorities operating in the exchange area, in order to implement an integrated network having objectives that can be shared.

As Extraordinary Commissioner, representing the powers of the President, the board of directors and the executive committee of the Mediterranean Fair Authority, I’m entitled to participate in such dialogue and organization, and I’m ready to give my concrete and immediate contribution to the design that Coppem, with the collaboration of Local and Regional Authorities joining it, will indicate.
FOR AN EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CITIZENSHIP

In expectation of the meeting in Barcelona and ten years after the first EUROMED conference, the Group of the Socialist party at the European Parliament has met in the Catalan city; on the last November 11th and 12th. During this meeting it was disseminated a “Manifest for the Mediterranean – Towards an alliance of Civilizations. Building an Euro-Mediterranean citizenship”. This proposal of “citizenship” joining the two Mediterranean shores is full of significance and it has been formalized in the following document: “through this action we will be able to build a real regional entity having a voice in the world dialogue and insisting on a progressive building of an Euro-Mediterranean citizenship. Both the shores of our common sea have seen some of the greatest confrontations in the history but is just for this reason that the Mediterranean is the best laboratory to come to goodwill. A broad as well as young and dynamic and united Euro-Mediterranean area is our best guarantee for a better world”. An action requiring proper instruments, to which the document, also thanks to the contribution of Pasqualina Napoletano which is Member the European Parliament and ESP vice-president, makes reference: we must promote proper instruments for that aim: the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly must strengthen its role of political control by implementing partnership and defining its guidelines; it is necessary to concretize the proposal for an Euro-Mediterranean Bank of Development to financing sustainable development strategies and the necessary infrastructure; finally, it is necessary to create the Chart for peace and stability in the Mediterranean in order to structure neighbourood relationships in the region. Structuring relationships. So a “global” project included in a still more general policy for Peace; for an area, such as the one between the two Mediterranean shores, where processes of mutual recognition at present are marking time. In this connection, on November 28th, a joint declaration of Tony Blair and José Zapatero stressed once again the role that the Euro-Mediterranean space is called to play for peace; the EU Enlargement, the new Neighbourhood Policy (a political initiative of good neighbourhood) and the Barcelona Process have enabled to build stronger political and trade relations between the two Mediterranean shores. However we must do much more, and we have to work better and faster. Through ups and downs of the peace process, we have also offered to Israel and Palestine and their neighbouring Countries the opportunity to meet each other and work together for a just and lasting peace in that region. Despite all the hardles coming bewteen, the EU is strongly committed to support their ambition for achieving peace.
Among the conclusions of the Barcelona Summit for the 10th anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (27-28 November 2005), the Code of Conduct is included, which highlights the common commitment of the 35 Countries to fighting terrorism in all its dimensions, by bringing Europeans, Arabs and Israelis together around one agenda, and by pursuing the objective of achieving a common area of peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean region through ongoing dialogue, exchange and co-operation, promotion of greater understanding between cultures and peoples, so pursuing an area of shared economic development.

The improvement of intercultural dialogue aiming at promoting understanding, building on cultural heritage and co-operating to enhance the impact of tourism on job creation, infrastructure development and intercultural understanding while ensuring environmental sustainability has been pointed out as a main goal. With this same aim in mind, and with the agreement of Coppem members representatives of Local Authorities of Egypt, Israeli, Jordan, and Palestine Authority, the 2nd of December 2005 a 1st preparatory meeting to a joint cooperation was held in Cairo on the Coppem request, with the participation of UNESCO and UN-Habitat. The meeting took place in a very co-operative atmosphere by all the attendants and the achieved results witnessed their joint availability to create a concrete framework for constructive dialogue on a theme of common interest.

In particular, a general consensus was reached on the essence of the initiative and on the immediate objectives: fostering dialogue between participants, building trust, identifying priorities for action, awareness of the added value of cooperation, building the mechanism of communication. A proactive discussion led to a shared decision to focus on tourism as driving force implying the improvement of the protection of the environment, the preservation and valorisation of the cultural heritage, the creation of new employment. The establishment of a network of cities of the four Countries was deemed necessary, whose representatives first would exchange views on the best co-operative approach to be given to talks on the selected theme, then would set a shared strategy, and at the end would design a concrete plan of joint initiatives to be started as from 2007. To this purpose, a 2nd preparatory meeting would be held in February 2006 for detailing main issues concerning the sound implementation of tourism in the concerned neighbouring areas and for exchanging point of views among cities about the best co-operative approach, in view of preparing a conclusive report to be presented in a next conference, enlarged to Euro-Mediterranean cities and regions and to international organizations, planned to be organized by 2006. On the same occasion, main actions to be carried out as from 2007 and a relevant development plan would be introduced.

All the participants expressed their convinced agreement on the decisions taken in the meeting. Coppem, UNESCO and UN-Habitat declared their full interest to further provide support to the initiative. The involvement of other organizations like World Bank, Anna Lindh Foundation and the European Commission would be welcome and will be called for.
NEW SCENARIO FOR PROSPERITY

it will be outlined by the Communities of the two great regions at Dubai on 5-6 February 2007 in the 3rd Euro-Arab Towns Conference.

The III Euro-Arab Towns Conference, whose main theme is “A new dialogue for development” is beginning to get a more and more detailed outline. Following the previous ones held in Dubai and in Palermo, another meeting held in Paris at the site of the Western Europe Union Assembly, allowed to better define the programme of this important event that will take place on February 5th-6th. Dubai will be the location of the Conference. Mayor of sixty European and sixty Arab towns, as well as representatives of ten European and ten Arab International Associations and Organizations will be invited. A list of them has been agreed upon during the meeting in Paris where the attitude of encouraging the participation of other Local Authorities and Organization emerged. But let’s see more in detail the organization of the Conference whose objective is to elaborate terms of concrete cooperation between Arab and European towns not only on a political but also on an extremely concrete ground with reference to an integrated network of services addressed to regions and local autonomies, as well as to transport, tourism, logistics, technical and technological transfer, environment and water, financial tools for Euro-Mediterranean partnership projects useful both to the creation of a free trade area and to the drawing-up of bilateral agreements concerning taxation system. The organizing Bodies are the CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions), in collaboration with Coppem, the Congress of Local Authorities and Regions of Europe, Dubai Municipality, the Arab Towns Organization/ATO, and the Arab Urban Development Institute/AUDI. In particular, 6 parallel sessions will be devoted to analyze the state of the art in selected themes and to design possible plans of mutual interest to be jointly carried out. Furthermore, a scientific committee composed of two members for each organizer, will assist and select the keynote speeches in compliance with the scope of the individual sessions. Coppem is taking care of the session “environment and water”, for which it has already drafted a guideline for participants, in order to help speakers and participants focusing on the subject and providing the works with appropriate and shared outcomes. On the whole, the conference intends to boost the attitude and perspective of towns from both the European and Arab world to a closer dialogue toward a shared future of peace and prosperity. An exhibition on activities and achievements of towns in any sector addressed to promote local development, will allow participants to share experience and to meet requirements for a sound management of Municipalities and co-operation among them. Grounds and objectives of the Conference are included in the preparatory document which has been already defined and approved in the previous meetings between the organizers held in different locations. We report as follows the full version in order to enable everybody to evaluate inspirer elements and design data pertaining to the conference as a whole.

A NEW DIALOGUE FOR DEVELOPMENT

That's the text of the programmatic document on which Conference's works will be based.

INTRODUCTION

In the framework of the current and foreseen developments of the socio-economic processes indicating and requiring with growing force that development is regulated by complex and delicate equilibriums at supranational and global level, cities and regions want and
Arab regions and cities from opposite shores and continents must play an aware and decisive role.
It is pointless to hide that the current models of development still present imbalances and contradictions slackening and making this process of cooperation difficult.
Then, it is necessary to give a strong impetus to dialogue as well as to mutual acquaintance and understanding in view of objectives of common interest.

ASSOCIATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The European and Arab cities and regions are represented in many wide-ranging associations at global, European, Arab and Euro-Mediterranean level.
Interactions with Non-Governmental Organizations and with other international institutions such as the Arab League, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the Union of the Mediterranean Universities and so on, are ahead to be extremely interesting and important for the support and cooperation that the Euro-Arab cities and regions may benefit from them.
The Euro-Mediterranean partnership, started from the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, intends to be a process of cooperation between Europe and Southern Mediterranean shore Countries.
The attention of nations and international institutions is focused on the Mediterranean, since they think it may originate and work out a strong process of cooperation, in which European and Arab regions and cities from opposite shores and continents must play an aware and decisive role.

EUROPEAN AND ARAB WORLD LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Cities and Regions of the European and Arab area mark a geopolitical area having different traditions, cultures, religions, political, economic and social structures, that in the past and even more today originate dialogues and debates among their representatives, jointly investigating convergent harmonic development models.
The ideal meeting place that has historically represented the common ground of these issues and has been confronted with such topics is the Mediterranean, common cradle of civilization that nowadays is going to recover its crucial role for achieving peace and prosperity, not only in the European and Arab context, but also in the whole world.
The attention of nations and international institutions is focused on the Mediterranean, since they think it may originate and work out a strong process of cooperation, in which European and Arab regions and cities from opposite shores and continents must play an aware and decisive role.

must recover a decisive role both in giving and in promoting prosperity and welfare conditions to citizens' communities with further strength.
There can be no development without local development giving every citizen a better quality of life, in the same way that there can be no democracy without local democracy involving all citizens.
Development sustainability is of course brought about by citizens' consent to shared and participatory decision-making and planning policies, within which local authorities must act as a link bridge with national governments and international institutions as well.
In order to investigate such themes, the III Euro-Arab towns Conference has been organised, due to be held in Dubai on November 2006, considering:
- the agreement of friendship and cooperation signed at Valencia in 1984
- the First Euro-Arab Towns Conference held at Marrakech in October 1988
- the second Euro-Arab towns Conference that took place in Valencia in September 1994

Abdellattah Toukan, Obaid Salem Al Shamsi, Salvatore Cuffaro, Lino Motta
World Bank, and UN agencies such as UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNDP are now decisively addressed also to urge and promote cooperation among local authorities in the areas above mentioned. This wide platform of inputs and contributions must be properly enhanced and targeted to an action to be concerted at cities and regions level. In such background, the Associations must undertake the task of being the driving force behind a targeted local development in keeping with the real needs.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Deep socio-economic changes in life standards as well as in people's habits, mostly induced both by relentless concentrations of settlements and by the rapid introduction of new technologies and new productive and industrial processes, have progressively emphasized the idea according to which development cannot evolve unlimitedly, if its sources are thoughtlessly depauperated or eliminated.

Proceeding with the implementation of the current models, the effects on the community will deeply modify the existing equilibriums so much that in the long-term the benefits of development itself could be eliminated and its inspirer preconditions invalidated. The idea of sustainable development, defined as "the development that can help to satisfy present generation's needs but without endangering future generations' needs", was focused by the international community on the occasion of the Rio de Janeiro Conference in 1992 and then reviewed during the Johannesburg Conference in 2002. Then a process of considerations and researches has started originating the need to achieve the objective of strengthening all the tools for a multilateral and multidimensional concertation for a new order at cultural and social level. It stands out that the sustainable development gets through a complex concertation between Governments, Institutions, Local Bodies and Authorities. Only a closer dialogue between peoples as well as Countries, can set up the basis to design paths bringing to objectives of development preserving resources, and delimited by restrictions that everyone is called to keep to for the common interest. From this vision, the basic role that cities and regions are called to play is emerging.

**THE COOPERATION BETWEEN EURO-ARAB CITIES AND REGIONS**

Respecting political-institutional peculiarities and differences of the European and Arab cities must be precondition and incentive for strategic-operational plans to be implemented in cooperation. These must consider the different systems of decentralisation, the different regulations at national and local level, the territorial socio-economic characteristics, and people's conditions and needs. Political stability and peaceful climate are preconditions to be considered and
pursued with determination. The possible guiding axes of cooperation are the north-south, south-north, south-south and north-north ones, where the contribution and the participation of European and Arab cities can anyway complement and support each other. The themes of cooperation may concern numerous fields, such as environment, migration phenomena, financial instruments, territorial planning, infrastructure, transport and mobility, education, communication, scientific and technological research, water resources and supply, health, tourism, cultural heritage, employment and so forth. Adequate modalities of cooperation may be focused in the setting up of networks of cities playing the role of knots for mutual interchange, on issues to be dealt with which are assimilable with each other, and initially in organizing meetings through which to start up relations at first for talks and then for real collaborations, both in political and normative field, and in the field of practical support to sustainable development.

To achieve such objectives it is necessary to create a mutual trust climate as well as to share criteria and models of development. In a context where an unavoidable competitiveness emerges, cities and regions have the interest and the task to embark on every initiative useful to implement these objectives.

THE CONFERENCE

The third Euro-Arab Towns conference, due to be held in Dubai on November 2006, of course seems to be a difficult challenge, in which possible real progresses are however coming into play for strengthening the belief that benefits both for European and Arab cities can arise only from an open and constructive dialogue. The authoritative participants are called to have a debate on the complex issues above mentioned, but on which any evaluation and explanation could give impetus to synergies and agreements on programmes aiming at achieving, in a climate of trust and cooperation, this sustainable development that nowadays seems to be the only feasible policy to preserve the present and future citizens’ communities. The qualified participation of international organizations, associations of cities and regions, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Arab League, leading exponents of the academic and entrepreneurial world, could give Mayors and Governors from the most important cities of the Euro-Arab area the opportunity to work out new and closer forms of dialogue.
FOUAD MEBAZA BECOMES CHAIRMAN OF THE EMPA

He succeeds Josep Borrell who has led the Assembly so far

This week the plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) met in Brussels. MPs from 35 countries discussed issues of common concern to people from both shores of the Mediterranean: the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, freedom of speech, respect for religious beliefs and development. This session marked the end of the European Parliament's presidency of the Assembly. At the meeting EP President Josep Borrell said he "still did not fully understand all the complexities of the Mediterranean, which is a concentrate of all the problems facing humanity." However, he was "more convinced than ever that Europe's relations with the Muslim world will be the major challenge facing Europe in the years ahead", explaining that the Mediterranean region is on the one hand "extremely dynamic" and on the other hand "becoming increasingly fragile".

Important forum for discussion

EMPA is part of the Barcelona-process, launched in 1995, and it aims to play a strong role in bringing citizens from the two shores of the Mediterranean closer to one another. Its approach is to replace an atmosphere of confrontation with one of dialogue. It is an important forum for in-depth discussions and almost the only opportunity for Palestinian and Israeli representatives to meet as equals. The 240-strong EMPA brings together Members of the European Parliament, EU national parliaments and parliaments of the EU's 10 partner countries around the Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey). Mr Borrell explained that "our aim is to establish an 'Alliance of Civilisations' at the very time when some people are seeking to promote a 'Clash of Civilisations'." The creation of the "Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures" is an example of an important action in this direction. The Foundation promotes dialogue between cultures and contributes to the visibility of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership through intellectual, cultural and civil society exchanges.

Cartoon crisis

When the crisis over the Danish cartoons of prophet Mohammed broke out, the EMPA Bureau was the first joint European and Arab body to speak on the subject with a single voice. EMPA this week strongly condemned "any offences against religious values" and urged governments "to ensure respect for religious beliefs...and to promote the values of tolerance, freedom and multiculturalism". At the same time, they stressed that freedom of expression is an essential part of any democratic, pluralistic tolerant and open society.

The Israeli-Palestinian Peace process

The Israel-Palestine conflict is another key topic of the Euro Mediterranean cooperation. EMPA's final declaration urges the future Palestinian Authority to respect the 2002 Beirut Declaration of the Arab League which calls for peace with Israel. The Euromed parliamentarians called on both the Palestinians and the Israelis to keep the promises they have made so far and to go on with the peace process. The EMPA said it will strive to "continue and reinforce the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue" in its midst.

Having been EMPA President since March 2005 Josep Borrell now hands over the chair to Fouad Mebazaa, President of the Tunisian Chamber of Deputies. The next meeting will take place in Tunis. Mr. Borrell said "I hope, it will be an opportunity to continue to develop our ideas about the basic principles underlying the future of Euro-Mediterranean relations".

Joseph Borrell, former president of Apem
AN AGREEMENT FOR GROWING TOGETHER

Memorandum of Understanding between Sicily and Qalyubiya. Implemented in the partnership perspective under the auspices of Coppem

Roberta Puglisi

Sicilian Region President Mr. Salvatore Cuffaro and Governor of Qalyubiya (Egypt) H.E Adly Hussein, have signed a bilateral agreement of cooperation with a handshake and a signature put down in writing. On the last January 30th, in the gorgeous setting of the Red Hall in the seat of the Sicilian Parliament, Palazzo dei Normanni, under the auspices of Coppem a Memorandum of Understanding, having a triennial validity but tacitly renewable for the next years, was signed. This document has started a series of initiatives like cooperation activities and interactions in different cultural, social and economic fields between Sicily and Egypt, jointly working in the building up and promotion of relations in the Mediterranean area. “We are in the right place. - Governor of Qalyubiya remarked on - because history is rich of exchanges between us and this wonderful Island, and today - Hussein continued – thanks to Coppem, which surely plays a more incisive and direct role on local communities than central Governments, that must follow a slower bureaucratic iter, we have the great opportunity to open us to dialogue and cooperation”. The President of the Sicilian Region was on the same wavelength, and after having welcomed the distinguished guests he reminded how the relationships with the Arab world are now well-established for a long time, through implemented projects and other ones under way. Among all the Italian Regions, Sicily is the most influenced by islamic culture – Cuffaro said-. In fact there are significant evidences of this culture in Palermo (the Arab Balarn), that the Arab traveller of the Norman period Ibn Hawqal defined in 973 as “the city with three hundred mosques”. Well Sicily becomes bridge of the Arab world through initiatives and projects, cooperation and interactions, that is what substantially ratified by the agreement signing. In detail, the Memorandum of Understanding foresees the management, restoration and valorisation of the cultural heritage of both the Regions, the promotion of relationships between Universities, scientific Institutions, youth organizations, theatres and museums; in such framework, projects of cooperation, which will be directly agreed upon between the Universities from both the parties, have a strategic importance too; interchange of know-how and scientific didactic collaboration on the socio-sanitary field; vocational training on the fields of education, health, culture and handicraft aimed at developing their respective human resources; promotion of initiatives aimed at encouraging the establishment of joint companies between small and medium-sized enterprises and technology transfer between enterprises from both the Regions which will be also provided with any relevant information about the market situation. Each party will promote the participation of their enterprises in fair-exhibitions organized in their territories; new information and communication technologies; cooperation on the tourist field, on landscape protection and waste management; technology transfer on the following fields: wine-growing cultivation, watering, and control of security in food industries. Of course it is an important role for both the Regions, a great common responsibility, as well as a commitment and planning skill, the Memorandum foresees also the setting up of a work-group for implementing operational programs. A regular interaction of the workgroup will be basic, also with the awareness to share the same objectives as well as tasks. Everyone will play a specific and recognized role.

The workgroup will meet yearly, alternatively in Sicily and in Egypt. “I’m sure this institutional agreement will allow us to grow, because it represents a project aimed at dialogue – the President of the Sicilian Region as well as of Coppem said – Sicily has always been crossroads of cultures, religions, ideas and values, so this kind of cooperation is included in the widest strategy of cooperation at cultural, technical and scientific level that the European Union has started with the countries of the Mediterranean area for a long time, by enlarging to this region the “European space” of education, training and research which is progressively implementing. A project that would fully seize the spirit of the tasks solemnly undertaken with the Barcelona Declaration in 1995, a declaration exactly stated: “it is our commitment to develop human resources, promote understanding between cultures and rapprochement of peoples living in the Euro-Mediterranean region as well as to develop free and prosperous societies through social, cultural and human partnerships”. So both the institutional protagonists have expressed their great satisfaction as well as their spirit of cooperation, and they both have given free access to their common growth at economic, social and cultural level.
EUROMED BETWEEN UTOPIA AND REALITY

Interview with Philippe Sanmarco. Local Authorities’ role in a process of authentic cooperation

by Giovanna Cirino

Which idea of Europe and of Mediterranean has been spreading among their people? Which are the future Euro-Mediterranean policies? Which are the possible guarantees concerning security and the actions for fighting terrorism? These are some of the topics driving political and cultural debate within the community context and in particular in the Mediterranean one. We talk about this with Philippe Sanmarco, town councillor at Marseilles Municipality since 1983, and Secretary General of the Geo-strategy Centre at the Ecole normale supérieure in Paris, as well as author of various publications whose most recent is “Marseille, ville capitale!”. Sanmarco, recently has become member of Coppem taking office as representative of the III Commission.

On the last November the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration which established the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, was celebrated. But the process launched in 1995 with great enthusiasm and ambition hasn’t focused the expected objectives. Expectations of cooperation, stability and peace in the area have been disappointed, as well as the path to democratization in many Mediterranean countries is still long. Which prospects and objectives should have the new Euro-Mediterranean policy?

The priority fact is to realize what happens so as to react to the disenchantment attested by the almost complete absence of Mediterranean Southern Countries Heads in the last Conference of Barcelona. Ten years ago high spirits reigned: the peace process in Palestine seemed to be solid and the fall of the Soviet regime let market economy and democracy took a universal dimension. Peace and prosperity were there, within reach. Euro-Mediterranean partnership was theirs directions. And yet in the Balkans, Europe had showed its political and military limits. Somewhere else in the Mediterranean, Europe played an observer role: Palestine lives in a daily nightmare and Iraq is an uncertain battlefield. United States thereby have strengthened their political role in the area, which is much more higher than the EU role. In the South every government has realized that the American alliance was a basic one. On the other hand, the economic and social situation, notwithstanding huge efforts, isn’t yet above a general claim. The gap between North and South is greater and greater. The real fact is that the transition towards an open economy is a complex process, which inevitably destabilizes governments in office. Now the EU, that is perfectly able to drive membership processes which are very strict for its candidates, is there without any other operational tool except those that a banker like many others has. Moreover, the increase in terrorism and migration phenomena explosion have become priority issues. The new Euro-Mediterranean policy must clearly adjust itself to this situation. I think it is necessary to forget for a while great political ambitions and accept that the EU, weakened inside, isn’t yet an international actor able to steer the stream of things. For this, geography imposes itself. We are neighbours and we all need stability. Beyond dreams, everyday life call us.

Achieving a lasting peace and building up a real dialogue between cultures seem to be very hard. There is the danger of a sort of hardening of the respective positions of the two sides, north and south, west and east. How can be found a channel of communication to encourage policies and a culture free from clichés and sterile disputes?
sure and increasing urbanization as well as by a weakened agriculture. The associations of local and regional authorities don't overcharge themselves directly of ideologies and they are less dependent on great political prospects. They live men and women's daily life, by here and by now, and look for pragmatic solutions to everyday problems. Their horizon is a short term one.

Now the Euro-Mediterranean space is subjected to great impulses and long term visions. It needs something concrete as soon as possible. Without this, the fire of fanaticism and regression in identity will make a clean sweep of everything. Local actors know that this won't solve any problem for them. For this reason, beyond their modalities, they will be the bearers of a joint acting will. Finally, among the members of these associations there is a genuine solidarity. There are no hierarchies among them, but problems are often the same ones, and everyone aims at learning how his neighbour faces such problems. Against scepticism and lost illusions, Coppem can be the driving force to an optimistic as well as human new mobilization.

If the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership meets with difficulties to be a room for political building, it can be more easily a ground for concrete projects catalysing new energies around common challenges. Far from being a sort of unbalanced and sometimes compliant transfer of the Northern aids to the South, or a sort of know-how transfer without transposing a real model, the renewed partnership could be expression of the will to face together common difficulties and launch great programmes responding to people's concrete needs. There are many and rousing examples. Great transport and communication infrastructure, water management for farmers as well as for citizens, fight against pollution in the Mediterranean, natural risks management, urban control, migrants' saving mobilization, involvement of diasporas, university and cultural networks, and much more. The list of the actors which can contribute to the growth of the Euro-Mediterranean process with proposals, common actions, expertise and backings mobilization both from the northern and southern area, is long. Moreover, South has a great human capital and its own natural resources. In its diversity, the South can decide how to mobilize its human and natural resources playing a leading role of a fully responsible actor and not surely the more or less smart pupil of foreign teachers.

In such a context, which role can play the Associations of local and regional authorities like Coppem? They can play a basic role, for this reason I wanted to take part in Coppem activities. Because in actual fact, local authorities play a decisive role within their territory. They are directly in touch with people and can focus their main needs whose answer in short time would give immediate and good credit to a partnership that has been too abstract so far. Local Authorities mobilization will enable to move to the next stage of the partnership. So far, the main effort has been focused on the macroeconomic stabilization. It was and still is essential. But if we intend to overcome present hesitations and give back trust to the actors, we have to shift gears to a higher one and answer to people's daily needs, in a context marked by demographic pressure and increasing urbanization as well as by a weakened agriculture. The associations of local and regional authorities don't overcharge themselves directly of ideologies and they are less dependent on great political prospects. They live men and women's daily life, by here and by now, and look for pragmatic solutions to everyday problems. Their horizon is a short term one. Now the Euro-Mediterranean space is subjected to great impulses and long term visions. It needs something concrete as soon as possible. Without this, the fire of fanaticism and regression in identity will make a clean sweep of everything. Local actors know that this won’t solve any problem for them. For this reason, beyond their modalities, they will be the bearers of a joint acting will. Finally, among the members of these associations there is a genuine solidarity. There are no hierarchies among them, but problems are often the same ones, and everyone aims at learning how his neighbour faces such problems. Against scepticism and lost illusions, Coppem can be the driving force to an optimistic as well as human new mobilization.
ALGERIA IS SEEKING PARTNERS FOR DEVELOPMENT

State reform and decentralization are the main features of the new administrative architecture

by Giovanna Cirino

Today Algeria is a country living a period of transition and after ten years of terrorism has become a likely partner, open to changes and to diplomatic relations required by the new Mediterranean geo-political framework. On March 1st, the Charter for peace and national reconciliation, adopted by popular referendum on the last September 29th, has become effective. The new challenge for Algeria is that of reforms and structural changes: labour market, oil and agricultural and food industry, support to small and medium-sized enterprises, security and social policies. We meet Noureddine Sbia, Inspector General at the Ministry of Commerce, and President of the Algerian Forum for Citizenship and Modernization, as well as Vice President of Coppem, who explains in the following interview, which is the situation of the process towards modernization and democratization in a Country where bureaucracy is still a mammoth system and its population has trebled in the last forty years.

Algeria is divided in 48 wilaya (provinces) directed by wali (governors) who refer to the Ministry of the Interior. Each wilaya is subdivided into municipalities. Wilaya and Municipalities are both ruled by an elected assembly. Which are the next steps of this initial democratic structure addressed to achieve a larger autonomy as to central government?

Centralization in Algeria doesn’t mean all-out bureaucratization. It is linked, both in its structures and in its functioning, to the process of re-founding the post-colonial state and also to a necessary political centrality. Of course the political maturity of the state has encouraged the central government by providing it with a power which is often bureaucratized, but the present pluralism and decentralization under way as well as the reassessment of municipal and departmental codes enables a real decentralization of power. On the other hand, the administrative organization of the territory has been a constant benchmark for the process of independence. Demography, economy and even ecology have always produced needs for territory reorganization to answer the needs of development and ensure structural stability. Nowadays and with the same ability to adapt, public authorities, starting from the first election of President Bouteflika, at first have taken up a policy called reform of the state based on an expertise report called Sbia Report which thoroughly revises powers structures and functioning. Decentralization and regionalization are the main features of the new administrative architecture of the territory. Such features will provide local and regional political representatives with more powers and initiative as well as they will involve the country in a bottom-up competition for development started-up by local actors. Central government and the State will maintain their initiative on the major projects and watch over the great economic imbalances and political arbitration.

Algeria has more than 30 issued newspapers – in arabic and french - having a circulation of roughly 1,5 million copies. Do you think it is enough to ensure a full freedom of the press?

Of course Algeria had and still has a lot of publications consisting in two million daily copies having vague headlines. Expertise and learning in terms of freedom of the press are increasing. We daily see the contribution of the press to investigations on de-
After 15 years of reforms, two basic sectors still seem to prevail in the Algerian economy: agriculture and hydrocarbon industry. In particular, the last one represents the 60% of the GDP and the 78% of Country’s exports. How do you think to diversify the productive tissue? Do you think to concentrate your efforts on local development?

Of course, we are always subjected to the risks of economy. Foreign investments as well as the development of the Algerian private sector in the agricultural and food industry and services are seriously doping non-oil sectors. It is a process of change which has been strongly damaged by terrorism. Productive tissue diversification is an economic and strategic worry included in the plan for the economic revival. Tourism seems to be a thriving sector. But all the hopes are addressed to the agricultural and food industry. Local development is a segment including sustainable development. We think it is a choice that governs gaps, gives stability to populations and enables to govern any form of immigration. It is also an opportunity of partnership with our European neighbours. You are the President of the Algerian Forum for Citizenship and Modernity. Which are your next activities?

FACM is an open place for reflection, proposals and mediation. In addition to its activities aiming at gathering ideas and potential actors, the FACM is also a driving force for proposals. Calling for competences and civil society, it follows Algerian society changes for its modernization and reforms. Our challenge is to see our country that definitively overcomes firstly the period of terrorism and then underdevelopment. Our satisfaction consists in being able to implement a fruitful partnership with its Euro-Mediterranean background from which the communities of the region and in particular young people would benefit. The contribution to the civil society we join, must not be limited on citizenship participation level but it must go beyond issues related to the current economic situation in order to contribute to form a humanist awareness which considers human beings and their environment, seriously threatened, as main ideal of its continuing action.
THE ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN CULTURES

A wide range of initiatives respecting differences

After the celebration of the Barcelona process tenth anniversary, the dialogue between peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean area, still today needs to be constantly nourished. The Euro-Mediterranean Foundation “Anna Lindh” for dialogue between cultures, whose seat is based in Alexandria, is carrying out this delicate task.

The latest initiatives promoted by the Foundation were numerous and qualified such as that promoting a new idea of dialogue between cultures and individuals to contribute to make the Barcelona Process visible. For this Foundation is essential to improve intercultural interchange and interrelation between different cultures. Therefore, Anna Lindh Foundation’s initiatives are centred on Partnership issues since it intended to give a considerable contribution to the Euro-Mediterranean relations and cooperation development thereby starting up a path of mutual acquaintance for achieving peace and development in the whole Mediterranean basin. In order to overcome conflicts and create a context of peaceful coexistence, it’s necessary to strengthen decentralized cooperation, improve relations and exchange between actors and public and private institutions operating in the Mediterranean countries basin on the field of culture, science and economy. Through its recent initiatives, the Foundation intends to enhance the different Mediterranean identities, consistently with Community programmes, in order to encourage processes of peace, democracy and citizenship development.

The projects proposed for the dialogue between cultures in the current year are the following: Euro-Mediterranean Music and other artistic and cultural creations with the aim to support initiatives encouraging a better communication, exchange of experiences and joint creation between Euro-Mediterranean artists, musicians, and writers; An Euro-Mediterranean Programme for schools having the aim to support projects at school level through exchanges and cooperation between teachers, educators and students (12-18) in order to allow an active participation in the dialogue between cultures; Exchange Programmes in order to promote the improvement of young people mobility and encourage exchanges, joint creation and local communities contribution to local development; Libraries, books and reading and translations promotion in order to improve citizens’ participation in the information society through the creation of networks and giving evidence to the role of linguistic pluralism, libraries, books, reading, translation and information society; Intercultural exchanges addressed to women in civil society organisations in order to improve women’s participation in the decision making process at all the society levels.
IX GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MEETING OF THE FOUR COPPEM COMMISSIONS
6 MAY 2006 VILLA MALFITANO, VIA DANTE 167 PALERMO (ITALY)

5 May 2006
Arrival of participants - Palermo Airport
Transfer to the Politeama Hotel – Piazza Ruggiero Settimo, 15
18h30. Presidency Council (Coppem Secretariat, via Emerico Amari, 162)
21h00. Dinner

6 May 2006
8h30. Participants Registration
9h00. General Assembly
Welcome addresses by: Salvatore Cilento, Minister Plenipotentiary – Sicilian Region
Giuseppe Silvestri, Rector University of Palermo
Maurizio Gambino, President Provincial Council of Palermo
Salvatore Cordaro, President Town Council of Palermo
Rinaldo Bontempi, President Institute for North West “Paralleli”
- Verification of conformity of members appointment
- Election of a Vice-President
- Recognition of Variations to the Budget 2006
- Approval of the final balance 2005

10h30. Works of the Commissions
Statement by the Secretary General of Coppem, Carmelo Motta
Presentation of Commissions works – Michele Raimondi, Co-ordinator Programmes and Projects
I Commission: “Experiences of participation of Euro-Mediterranean Local Authorities and Regions”
1st Vice-President: Said El Dakkak
Presentation of Commission activities: Francesco Sammaritano, Statements by the Commission Members
External statements: Bruno Gridelli, General Manager ISMETT
Drafting of an action plan for further activities

11h30. Coffee break

11h45. II Commission: “Immigration and emigration, actions and tools of the co-operation among Euro-Mediterranean Towns and Regions”
President: Jan Mans
Presentation of Commission activities: Alessandra Prudente, Statements by the Commission Members
External statements: Anna Maria Frosina, Project Manager CRESM (Centre for Economic and Social Researches for South)
Drafting of an action plan for further activities

11h30. Coffee break

13h15. Buffet – Villa Malfitano


President: Abdelkarim Misbah
Presentation of Commission activities: Paolo Carrara, Statements by the Commission Members
External statements: Giovanna Livreri, Extraordinary Commissioner Fair of the Mediterranean
Drafting of an action plan for further activities

16h30. Coffee break

16h45. IV Commission: “Culture and Tourism: promotion and management of cultural areas”
President: Falah Al Omoush
Presentation of Commission activities: Natale Giordano, Statements by the Commission Members
External statements: Roberto Albergoni, Secretary General HERIMED
Giovanni Salemi, Director Service 9 Territory and Environment - Councillship Sicilian Region
Drafting of an action plan for further activities

Miscellaneous

18h30. Closure of works

21h00. Dinner offered by the Sicilian Region, Villa Bosco Grande