DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CITIES AND REGIONS
ALGIERS, JUNE 24TH

COPPEM
Standing Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

FACM
Algerian Forum for Citizenship and Modernity

UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ALGERIA
The IX General Assembly of Coppem, held in Palermo last May, seemed to be based on an operational character with reference, on the one hand, to the developments of initiatives in the works for a long time and from the other side to some countries having great potentialities in the perspective of strengthening the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In many cases, they are projects “in progress” which are developing day by day. For example, during the Assembly of Palermo, other meetings have been held for better defining the programme of coastal cooperation between Jordan, Egypt, Palestine and Israel, planned thanks to the input of Coppem and two UN Agencies, Unesco and UN-Habitat. Today we can assert that such project will be implemented as from 2007, by involving four cities affected by terrorist violence: Akaba, Sharm El Sheikh, Gaza and Eilat. Among other things, thanks to a strong synergy amongst the involved cities, the ancient routes of the caravans running through the desert will be revived for tourism.

As well as the idea launched by the Fiera del Mediterraneo of Palermo for implementing a wide-range network of exhibitions is increasingly becoming a concrete reality: contacts with a number of Fairs have been established and the first agreements have been signed too. Moreover: Coppem has signed a memorandum of understanding with the promoters of the project “Sun&Wind” that intends to build bio-climatic dwellings in the Mediterranean Countries. But another chapter of the relations amongst the communities of the region seems it must be written by ISMETT, Mediterranean Institute for transplantation and Advanced Specialized Therapies, created by the Sicilian Region and managed by Pittsburg University. Moreover, the Institute based in Palermo, is the only Italian centre participating in the Community programme “Emispher” intended on implementing a telemicine system and an e-learning training programme amongst 16 medical centres from 10 Mediterranean Countries. Meanwhile the contents of the the memorandum of understanding between the Sicilian Region and the Qalyubya Governorate in Egypt, where recently a delegation of higher officials of the Sicilian regional government went with the aim to agree upon the definition of joint programmes, are being enriched.

Many wonder whether EU policies for the Mediterranean today are slowed down for the recent entry of the European Eastern Countries in the EU. It is an issue that the representatives of the communities from the Countries have signed the Barcelona agreements for Partnership are pointing out with the intent to fully recover the original spirit and values of the declaration undersigned in 1995. For this reason Coppem is looking for alliances with different bod- 
sies such as Universities, cultural, social and economic Institutions so as to jointly act.

The awareness that Local Authorities play a decisive role in developing suitable policies of cooperation having more or less immediate effects on national governments’ policies is increasingly spreading. And just to debate on these issues and, in particular on the “Development prospects of cooperation between Euro-Mediterranean Cities and Regions”, Coppem and the Algerian Forum for citizenship and modernity have organized a meeting amongst Local Authorities’ representatives of the Euro-Mediterranean region”. It is significant that the meeting takes place in Algiers, a country strongly committed in developing and making effective the public machinery, local governments and their administrations. The Meeting follows the recent Assembly of Moroccan Communities which continuously invite to develop new and original forms of cooperation. But all the possible initiatives, operational programmes and ambitious projects shall have a common denominator in order to be really effective: that is the commitment of political powers and local Institutions, civil society and therefore citizens, for building the framework of peace.
CITIES AND REGIONS ARE LEADING ACTORS OF DEVELOPMENT

In Algiers Coppem-Facm Meeting on the cooperation between local authorities

On the long and difficult way of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, there is a new stage to enlarge and strengthen the relations of collaboration already established and establish new ones characterized by solidarity and cooperation as well as by a deeper mutual acquaintance. This is the meaning of the meeting that Coppem and the Facm (Algerian Forum for citizenship and modernity) have promoted on June 24th in Algiers focusing on the topic “Development prospects of cooperation between Euro-Mediterranean Cities and Regions”. “This meeting- Facm’s President Noureddine Sbia said- is also the occasion to reveal a Country where democracy and economic activities are growing and introduce Local Authorities’ actors and partners who, through their commitment and the powers assigned to them, manage and support sustainable development in Algeria. The meeting will be also the place to illustrate policies for development implemented by central bodies and local authorities to face those phenomena influencing the factors for development such as poverty, unemployment as well as the disastrous effects of terrorism on the Algerian society and economy”. But the meeting in Algiers has especially a constructive value both in Coppem’s intentions and in Facm’s programmes. “In the framework of the partnership implemented by Coppem, we intend – Sbia said – a series of initiatives concerning projects of cooperation and town-twinings so as to achieve, through a joint action, immediate effects for people. Today, regions are not only an accumulation of interests but they are able to make efforts for answering present needs and projecting them into the future intelligently and with suitable actions being fully and concretely aware of working for safeguarding peace and security”. Just the exchange of experiences amongst different cities and regions and the setting-up of tools for partnership are one of the main topics of the meeting together with those concerning the strengthening of information and training channels for good governance and sustainable development. Within the meeting, the workshop focusing on “Cities management at good governance-proof and cooperation between Euro-Mediterranean cities and regions” will have particular relevance, from which concrete guidelines and proposals should emerge. The guidelines worked out will be summed up in a paper that will be submitted to vote at the end of the works. The participation in the meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohamed Bedjaoui is very important, and it shows the importance ascribed to this event by the Algerian Government also through the participation of deputed ministers in charge of Local Governments and Cities. Other important personalities will take part in the event from the Ministry for Participation and Investment’s Promotion, the Director General of the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and some leaders of regional and local communities. Moreover also the organizing Committee of the III Euro-Arab Conference, due to be held in Dubai on the next February, will take part in the event. Also the Conference of Dubai is another important action that Coppem, together with other bodies in charge of celebrating the Conference, intends to place in the complex and, at the same time, extraordinary mosaic of the creation of the great free trade area in the region and, more in general, of that “Euro-Mediterranean citizenship” which is more insistently debated at political as well as cultural and sociologic level, practically intending to prefigure a new life dimension able to find common roots.
INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY

A survey on Algerian administrative system dealing with the issue of “Transition” too

Organization of local authorities and regionalization in Algeria:

Algerian public authorities have undertaken, albeit slowly and hesitatingly, some practices that seem to prioritize local community management. The report by Sbih, an expert and old mastermind of the Algerian public administration, proposes a deep restructuring of the management framework and of those public bodies that deal with the global management of public authority-based issues and with the decisions for which the national and local government are responsible. The political and economic crisis has dramatically disclosed the Algerian structural malfunctioning. The transition from a former managed and strongly centralized economy to a so-called market economy has revealed both the resistance and the obsolescence of an administration lacking imagination and flexibility. In this wake, along the worsening of development problems exacerbating into poverty and unemployment, the authorities of the country are realizing that the administrative framework of the country needs deep but progressive review. The heart of the country’s functioning is represented by public lands administration and local governance. While offering a dispassionate diagnosis of the Algerian administration functioning, by highlighting its paradoxical and vicious features, the Sbih report has also presented an array of measures and proposals allowing for a beneficial harmonization between the Rule of Law frame of mind and the mission of a neutral and effective public administration. On its part, the Algerian public opinion, through the press, has never ceased to denounce the distortions and arbitrariness of some public administration sectors. The civic society came up with a series of considerations and engaged in a debate that attracted all civic society actors, who strongly marked the deliberations. The national economic and social council has devoted itself to deep reflection on this issue, the FACM arranged several meetings, in which a contradictory debate on all government-related issues developed and is planning to arrange a future meeting on urban government and city-management with a view to deepening the discussion. Public authorities have become aware of the public administration deficiencies that are eroding development and squandering wealth. The costs of a low and ineffective administration affect the public treasury, thus shaping nests of corruption and ending any chance for modernization in the Algerian public administration. Although the principle of permanent rotation of the administrations in charge of local communities (prefectures, departments, municipalities) has allowed for the disconnection of interest networks and reduction of patronage, the evaluation of the results and the outcomes are far behind people’s expectations. The reviews of the wilaya code (prefecture) and of the municipality are to be considered as parts of a strategy that strengthens local democracy and allows local public authorities to be responsible for and engage directly in local public affairs management.

Human capital and the need for modernization in public affairs management

Algeria and countries alike that were subject to administrative violence and to the paradoxes of the colonial administrative system under the Indigenato have a representation founded on the resistance against some public administration actions. Moreover, the tendencies towards autonomy, which developed from the collapse of political centrality, hand in hand with excessive centralism at the basis of the rising national state, represent paradoxes and a sociological hindrance to the development of the local public action in general. Innovation, founded on objective analyses rather than ideological slogans, allows for better harmonization of the public authorities’ intervention tools both in public affairs management and in the command of development in general as well as of human development in its cultural and political aspects.

Democratization and decentralization

The issue of local democracy is first of all a matter of human and social capital development. It is not only a question
of decentralization, which in some cases ends up with being decentralization of privation and poverty, but a question of the central state being unable to work out an integrated development strategy, and hence gets disengaged on weakness, not on principle. In demographically significant and geographically enormous countries, centralization has overshadowed development, used up energies and doped the burocratic power. Local resistance and territorial identities develop with a view to a consistent decentralization that can be implemented but through a factual democratization. This involves the creation of a local political representation that is able to empower the local opinion thus fostering the factual advancement of the local civic society. In the case of Algeria, there sure exist opportunities for positive evolution and terrorism has confirmed the importance of local democracy management in the promotion and maintenance of political, economic and cultural balances.

Decentralization and good government

The frame of mind and the purposes as well as the tools applied in the decentralization processes are all elements impacting on governance. The institutional architecture and the high-ranking officials’ performance are government factors. Local representation, voluntary contribution by the civic society and above all the freedom of the press are factors that reduce the damages of local and central autarchy and allow for a transparent management of local interests. Our country, which has undergone a crisis, is now suffering the consequences of disrupted local management. The rigid actions of the Algerian justice and the clear steps forwards in flexibility of control and audit when implementing projects show a real positive political will striving, not without difficulty, to set up modern management and control devices, which could shape a local and national government framework matching the requirements of the universal government.

Territory and government administrative organization

The administrative organization of the territory goes beyond the technical and legal fields. It is the heart of the political philosophy of a state. The management of territories primarily concerns political balance and wealth distribution devices. Good government indicators result from the management of the disparities between regions and space. The intervention of public authorities to bridge the regional divide, by setting up specific regional development banks, allows for considering poverty and privation as a national and not regional phenomenon, which demands national solidarity. In the case of Algeria, also with reference to the issue of demographic and urban balance, public authorities have implemented empowering policies for the integrated development of the highland and South-Saharan Algerian regions.

Local authorities’ challenges in countries in democratic emergency

Countries on their way to democratization, which doesn’t necessarily mean that there is real ongoing democracy, tackle the issue of local authorities democratization as their initiation step in democracy. As transitologists, we have noticed that the democratization of local authorities was and still is a major question as it copes with a double challenge:

• the raising impact of anthropological frameworks, whose obsolescence in terms of tribalism, patronage, confrériste and ancient legitimacy mechanisms threatens to annul the social scope and significance of democracy, which builds upon citizenship and competence.

• The situations of potential distortion of the democratic act: while the resistance and the opposition to democratization of Arabic political systems can be justified in the light of sociological, ideological and historical considerations of the system – and it needs to be insistently pointed out that some western countries did offer support and help far before and beyond the second world war – today these systems seem to progressively give up when confronted with the need for democracy. On their left side, Arab systems are pressed by the movements demanding modernization, although they often do not build upon modernity, and these are compressed by conservative and traditionalist forces, which in some cases strongly and violently call for going back to the origin of the religious political tradition. In this situation, Arab systems, each in its way but all with difficulty, strive to find an option that preserves the continuity of the system, the structural balance of the state, which often doesn’t correspond to the system, and the need for a democratization process with some chances to outlive this confusion, whose broadness cultivates uncertainty and even hints at re-questioning.

In this frame of mind, local authorities and local government institutions are challenges that cannot be ignored, let alone neglected, in the light of the current Algerian experience.
FROM THE ASSEMBLY AN IMPULSE TO PROGRAMMES

Wide scope to ongoing projects and to new operative methodologies

There were delegations and representatives of the most important local institutions from the 35 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean area at the IX General Assembly of Coppem held in Palermo in the wonderful setting of Villa Malfitano. It was the occasion not only for implementing a series of executions (recognition of Balance variations 2006 and final balance 2005) but also for taking stock of Commissions’ activities and the Partnership situation and prospects. It clearly emerged that, while EU policies and actions for partnership don’t respond to general needs expressed in the Barcelona Conference, confirming the concerns showed on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, Local Authorities are making joint efforts to enlarge cooperation and dialogue, that is the basic precondition for development and peace policies in the tormented Mediterranean region. After welcome speeches by Sicilian Authorities, the Assembly getting to the heart of the works agenda, approved the composition of the delegations from the following countries:

- **Algeria**, substitution of the alternate member Nacer-Riad Bendaoud with Mrs Chouebla Bisker, senior executive at Economic and Social National Council who decides to join the I Commission; Resignation of the alternate member Lakhdar Khaldoun.
- **Hungary**, adhesion of a new alternate member: Mrs Katalin Sabjan, Secretary of International Affairs at the Hungarian Local Authorities National Association.
- **Lithuania**, Vytautas Kvetkauska, Director of the Association of Lithuanian Local Authorities, from whom we previously received its membership, decided to join the IV Commission.
- **Palestine**, substitution of Osama Al Farra with Maged Abu Ramadan, new APLa’s President and Mayor of Gaza.
- **Estonia**, substitution of Jaanus Tamkivi with the new President of Estonian Cities Association, Mr Lepik.
- **France**, adhesion of a new member, Mrs Lucile Schmid, Regional Councillor at Ile de France, Paris, who decided to join the V Commission on Equal Opportunities.
- **Tunisia**, adhesion of Mrs Najoua Mahjoub, member of UNFT (Tunisian Women Union) of Sousse.

Still concerning appointments, the Assembly approved the appointment of Muzzafer Baca (Turkey) as Vice President of Coppem and Tamer Al Haja, governor of Aleppo, as vice president of the II Commission.

Once concluded this first part of works, Secretary General Lino Motta informed the Assembly about the various activities and meetings on the agenda. Meanwhile, the Congress of local and regional authorities (CPRLE) has accepted Coppem as observer member. Concerning the meetings on the agenda, the following are particularly important: the Presidency Council enlarged to Commissions’ vice presidents due to be held in Algiers on June 23rd –24th, coinciding with the meeting on “Development prospects of cooperation between Euro-Mediterranean cities and regions” organized together with FACM; on July 17th in Palermo, the 50th anniversary celebration of ISIDA (Higher Institute of Entrepreneur and Top Managers) with the participation of representatives from the Euro-med area. At the end of September, the Presidency Council enlarged to Commissions’ vice presidents will meet in Chania, Greece. Coppem is committed to organize the III Conference of Euro-Arab cities due to be held on 7th February 2007 at Dubai. Soon at Innsbruck, CEMR General Assembly will be held, and Fabio Pellegrini, Founder President of Coppem, will take part in also on behalf of the Committee. Concerning the ASEM (Euro-Mediterranean Development Agency), the following joined: Marseilles, Qalubiya Governorate, and the Euro-Arab Chamber of Commerce. Motta stressed that 300 adhesions at least from cities, provinces and regions of the Euro-Mediterranean area are needed.
Our members – he added – must contribute to achieve such objective. On the basis of a project carried out for a few years, the Herimed Association has been established, and among its objectives there are initiatives for preserving and enhancing cultural heritage. Cultural bodies from ten States have joined it. Motta talked also about the Socio-Sanitary Coordination Centre of the 35 States; he hopes for further developments in the next months so as to have concrete tools for partnership and cooperation. An important thing is the entry of the Mediterranean Institute for Transplantation and Advanced Specialized Therapies as observer member of Coppem. After having informed about the setting-up of the Commission for equal opportunities and about requests for joining it already reached, Motta announced the institution of the “Seme d’Arancia” prize to be awarded every year to great European and Mediterranean personalities have distinguished themselves for their commitment for cooperation and peace as well as for cultural, social and economic relations. Other initiatives to be held in Greece and in Syria are ongoing. Continuing to talk about the initiatives promoted by Coppem, Mustafa Aydin (Turkey) emphasized the inauguration of Coppem representative office at Istanbul, where central government’s authorities and numerous representatives from local communities took part in. In particular, the Minister of Public Works and Settlements Faruk Ozak suggested to launch great common projects and provide with rich contents the initiatives already undertaken. With the speech of Adly Hussein, vice president of Coppem, the debate moved to great issues relevant to EU policies for the Mediterranean and to the threat of terrorism. As for Partnership, there are gaps it is necessary to cover for not endangering the value of the Barcelona declaration. Concerning the terrorist attacks, Hussein has invited local communities to work for isolating this phenomenon and checking hostile feelings against Muslim people that seem to be spreading in Europe.

Noureddine Sbia, President of the Algerian Forum for citizenship and modernity, after having talked about the contents of the Meeting jointly promoted with Coppem on June 24th in Algiers, indicated the cooperation between local authorities as one of the basic instrument to overcome the challenges that Mediterranean peoples have to face. Fikri Kose, Mayor of Maltepe (Turkey) resumed the issue of the prospects opened by the joint work with Coppem and the activity of the representative office in Istanbul, while Athos Germanos representing the Greek-Cypriot Republic, after having welcomed the election of Muzaffer Baca as Coppem Vice President and congratulated with him for this important recognition, he pointed out that Turkey has started the process to be member of the EU, and the Greek-Cypriot Republic is an effective member. A decision in this direction - he said- could contribute to improve the relations in the Mediterranean between Cyprus and Turkey, in view of Turkey’s EU membership.

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firm and cautious and therefore a concrete one. Coppem is a practically unique tool in the Euro-Mediterranean context, therefore drawing up provisions and instructions has direct effects on this region. Concerning transport – he added – at European level we are discussing about maritime transport, coastal navigation, Corridor S, but these issues must be discussed with Med Partner Countries; it is necessary to mobilize technical expertise and resources, and to be aware of which are the European directions in the Mediterranean area. Concerning the migration issue, for example, it is necessary to find concrete points of implementation. Michele Raimondi, Programmes and Projects Coordinator of Coppem, summed up Secretariat’s activities during 2006: the organization of the Euro-Arab towns Conference due to be held at Dubai on February 2007; the participation in the conference on environment at Alexandria (Egypt) organized by the Governorate in collaboration with the World Bank, the meeting with Coppem members from Eastern European countries (in April at Warsaw), the meeting of the II Coppem Commission has preceded the Assembly in order to discuss about migration issues, and the meeting to launch the programme for regional coastal cooperation focusing on Tourism, between cities of Jordan, Egypt, Palestinian Authority and Israel. Moreover, he announced that a number of projects have been partially financed. And many other are on evaluation stage.

He informed we are working to create a Mediterranean network of Fairs enabling interchanges and provide with assistance the economic dealers, jointly conceived with the Fiera del Mediterraneo autonomus body, based in Palermo. Next initiatives concern the participation in the Meeting in Algiers on cooperation between the Euro-Mediterranean cities and regions (June 24th), a meeting in Chania (Crete) on September 16th, and the organization of a Congress of magistrates and jurists on illegal immigration and fight against terrorism, foreseen in the second half of the current year.

On the last April, at the preence of the Ministers for Public works and Settlements, Coppem representative office of Istanbul was inaugurated, while the agreement for opening an office at Poznan in Poland is under way, it will function as link with local authorities and regions of the European Eastern Countries, and soon the Offices of Cairo and Rabat will be operative.

Raimondi outlined also I Commission activities, the survey on the Euro-Mediterranean socio-sanitary systems to promote exchanges. The drawing-up of memorandum of understanding with Universities. On this point, on May 5th a meeting with the Rector of Palermo University has been held to discuss about exchanges of student and graduated between Palermo and other Universities of the Euro-Mediterranean countries. A Scientific Committee has been established in which there are Prof Said El Dakkak (Egypt) and Dr. Mohammed Taibi (Algeria) from Oran University. In Enna in the Scientific Committee established according to the memorandum of Understanding signed by Coppem and Enna University, two Coppem members have been included: Prof. Mosbah (Tunisia) and Prof. Ali Abu Ghanimeh (Jordan). Rinaldo Bontempi (Italy), President of Parallelri Northern-West Institute expressed particular interest in Coppem and noted how the Institute is a political attempt to involve Italian north-western Regions in the dialogue for peace, since these didn’t adopt this issue as a basic one. Prof.Bruno Gridelli (Italy), Medical and Scientific Director ISMETT (Mediterranean Institute for Transplantation and Advanced Specialized Therapies), illustrated its activities by emphasizing its direction towards the Mediterranean context. Mohammed Taibi (Algeria), socio-anthropologist, researcher, member of FACM national office and Coppem member, outlined a close analysis on local authorities’ functioning and services supplied to citizens in his country. Taibi emphasized the efforts that central bodies have done in this direction, but he don’t hide the serious obstacles there are still today for a solid modernization process of bureaucratic machine and Algerian society, which is intent on new citizenship’s targets. In this new perspective, decentralization and a modern and efficient administrative machine play a basic role, being aware that transition to a real and full democracy is based on local authorities democratization.

Pasquale Assennato (Italy), representative of International Office at Palermo University, suggested to implement a cooperation programme of education. Students’ mobility at European level has produced an integration of education programmes. Palermo University has a growing interest in opening to the educational internationalization paths. At present, in the Mediterranean area the better moment is that of post-lauream education. It is important to favour education meetings such as Postgraduated Masters and PhDs through a closer joint work to create, for example, joint PhDs or technical staff training. Furthermore cultural heritage enhancement and safeguard is a field which can find synergies for education paths by providing with professional skills. As well as fishing sector is very important, or the common problem of water resources. For a joint path aiming at a better education of our graduates it is necessary to involve civil society and industry world
too. Implementing a strategy which integrates the educational experiences with productive activities of each single country, Palermo University is available to create a Mediterranean Polytechnic combining all the educational potentials to found a common area for scientific research, being aware that through good culture we can achieve good policies.

Alessandra Prudente reported the activities of the II Commission. She reminded the debate about Coppem bodies operativeness and methodologies to be adopted for achieving very concrete outcomes. The Secretariat in collaboration with the Presidents of the Commissions, has conceived a new action plan foreseeing the organization of restricted meetings between two or more representatives from decentralized institutions, in order to closely discuss specific issues and jointly work by using good practices and methodologies. Just on this ground, on May 5th, II Commission speaker Mr Herrie Jaurissen chaired a meeting concerning the very relevant topic of migration issue. Alessandra Prudente completed the activities report by illustrating two project proposals already submitted to EC: Cross-Service Training Program, in the framework of European Union Partnership for Peace programme. The proposal’s aim regards promoting racial, ethnic and religious comprehension and reconciliation in Middle East, especially between Israelis and Palestinians. The project proposal foresees the implementation of a peace training course in Tunung, Mugla, Turkey, addressed to children, young people and women, and the organization of workshops and peace summer camps; Raising Public Awareness About Illegal Immigration to Europe, in the framework of the European programme AENEAS - Financial and technical assistance to third countries in the field of migration and asylum. Proposal’s main aim is information dissemination concerning possible and tragic effects of illegal immigration. This in order to reinforce knowledge and debate regarding immigration issues as well as to involve members of the civil society which could play an active role for the dissemination of information. The partners of this proposal are the following: Coppem, International Blue Crescent (Turkey), Anadolu Bil Vocational School (Turkey), The Algerian Forum for Citizenship and Modernity (Algeria), Rionell’Elba Municipality (Italy).

Annamaria Frosina (Italy), Project Manager of CRELEM (Centre for Economic and Social Researches in the Southern Italy), highlighted different aspects of the pilot project Cities for Immigrants, promoted by Coppem in the framework of City to City project. This proposal foresees actions of data collection, education, and dissemination, which respond to the need of creating a network composed by public and private institutions, trade associations and citizens contributing to an effective integration of migrants communities in the territory. The implementation of such project can be the basic precondition according to which Institutions and local and regional authorities of the territory define regulations, provisions and services for a more concrete and aware management of the migration issue.

Jalal Abs (Lebanon) pointed out that immigration/emigration issue is a universal problem that each single State differently perceive. There isn’t a unique solution and nobody can have definitive ones. For example, experiences and good practices implemented in a specific place, can’t be valid for another one. Jalal Abs stressed the difference between Northern countries and Southern ones, and he asserted that the world is a paradox: on the one hand, thanks to technological progress, the circulation of ideas and images is very fast, on the other the circulation of people is subjected to a system of barriers and visas restricting freedom. It’s necessary to get to the root of this issue, be acquainted with the reasons for which people leave their country of origin (conflicts, wars, disadvantaged economic and social conditions). The great economic resources the States plan for military expenses should be addressed to economically and socially disadvantaged countries.

Jan Mans, Commission’s president, stressed that problem doesn’t consist in finding the best ideas, but in being able to implement such ideas in the best way. Of course, we aren’t here to change the world, but in any case the work of Coppem must keep on the way embarked on.

For the III Commission, Abdelkarim Mosbah (Tunisia) stressed the question of Southern Mediterranean shore representativeness within the European area. Of course a contribution – he added - can derive from a pro-active cooperation and dialogue by the III Commission members who can focus needs, capacities and suitable tools for local communities development.

Paolo Carrara, referent for III Commission, reported about initiatives and activities emphasizing in particular the relationship between Coppem and Fiera del Mediterraneo of Palermo, established in the previous General Assembly held in Cairo.

Avi Robinovitch (Israel), Said El Dukkak (Egypt), Ali Abu Ghanimeh (Jordan), Nihad Al Mughany (Palestine), Papamikroulis (Greece) have declared to agree upon the proposal to participate in the events organized by the Fair focusing on cooperation in the handicrafts field and on coastal cooperation between Egypt, Jordan and Israel through representatives from their Embassies in Italy. And...
this in order to ensure a valid participation despite the very short time of the meetings promoted in Palermo.

Mohammed Taibi (Algeria) stressed the need that EU adopts new policies, the Neighbourhood one, considering and covering economic and social gaps existing between Southern and Eastern Countries. Natale Giordano, referent for the IV Commission, reported the activities carried out since December 2005 up to now. In particular, he informs that the EU has financed Ecomemaq and Medins projects, both presented in the framework of Interreg III Community Initiative, respectively in Archimed and Medoc areas. Within the Ecomemaq project, Coppem is the leader partner and the partnership is composed of the following: PIT Demetra (Italy), Crete Region (Greece), University of Bari (Italy), University of Athens (Greece) and IAMB (Advanced research centre) of Bari (Italy). Moreover the Ministry of Environment of the Arab Republic of Libya participates in the project as observer and the Pragmata (San Marino) provides with its technical assistance.

Project’s aim is promoting sustainable development, through the management of the Mediterranean environmental patrimony, by particularly enhancing the Mediterranean scrub, also through the implementation of some pilot projects involving Greek partners of Coppem. It foresees to implement some activities of the project in Chania – Crete - and in Nea Halkidonia (Attica). The total amount of the financing is 1.310.000, the duration of the project is 18 months and it will be concluded in December 2007.

While Medins project is aimed at cataloguing and integrated enhancement of Intangible Mediterranean Cultural Heritage. It is inspired to the experience, unique in its kind, of the Registry of Intangible Cultural Heritage, promoted by the Sicilian Regional Cultural Heritage Department that is also the leader partner of the project. Coppem as partner will have the task of the aspects relevant to results dissemination and sensibilization and of managing the transnational partnership concerning Local Authorities. In fact, Region of Murcia and Jaen Municipality (Spain), Khalivia Touriki Municipality and the Attic Region Municipalities Association take part in the project too.

Moreover, for the first time the Initiative Interreg III will provide a MEDA co-financing addressed to Mediterranean Partner Countries. In this case, the Region of Rabat – Salè – Zamour – Zaer and Rabat Municipality (Morocco), the FACM (Algeria), the Governorate of Kairouan and Bizerte Municipality (Tunisia) will be involved in the implementation of the project having a budget of about 900.000 of ERDF and about 600.000 of MEDA budget. Duration of the project is three years and it will be concluded at end of May 2008.

Then Giordano illustrated progress made in the pilot project “Cultural Heritage and Local Development, 55 Local Authorities from Sicily Region have join the initiative and by the end of June training activities addressed to 60 officials for improving the institutional capacity building in the sector of Cultural resources management as factor of local development will be implemented. Such objectives will be repeated as priority to which it is intended to respond by presenting the project CITTA to the EC in the framework of MED PACT programme addressed to Euro-Mediterranean cities. As for the relations with the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the dialogue between Cultures (ALF), besides the drafting of a joint project, it is foreseen to organize on May 2007, the Biennial of Young Artists at Alexandria, and Coppem participates in the Steering Committee together with the Governorate of Alexandria and Bjiocem.

Another joint activity between ALF and Coppem is the project Culture of water, a pilot project on the culture of water and its aspects relevant to social, environmental and artistic processes. Within such project, which foresees also the participation of the World Water Fellowship, the Fundacion Nueva Cultura dell’Agua and the Alexandria Library as well as the Swedish Culture Institute in Alexandria that is the Leader Partner, topics such as “Great rivers and civilizations” and “Town-Twinnings amongst water cities and between humid rural areas communities” will be investigated.

Roberto Albergoni, Secretary General of Herimed, illustrated programmes and peculiarities of the association composed of (in addition to Coppem, member of the Board of Directors) Universities, Research Centres, Local Authorities from Spain, Portugal, Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine and Italy. Herimed is based in Palermo, in the Sicilian Regional Centre for Restoration premises, its president is Fathi Saleh (Cultnat Director – Research and Cataloguing Centre of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Egypt) and intends to operate in the Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage integrated management, in line with partnership strategies indicated in the Barcelona Process.

Ornella Amara, landscape architect and historian of arts as well as coordinator of a group dealing with parks, reserves, protected areas and degraded areas to be restored, on behalf of Palermo Municipality, presented the project LIFE “Sun & Wind” focusing on bio-climatic architecture and connected to the reintroduction of Mediterranean architectonic models as well as to energy conservation issue.
NEW POLICIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The EU has adopted geographic and thematic planning as standards of action

A simple overview of the countless initiatives (conferences, meetings, seminars etc.) promoted by various bodies and organisations where I took part as a Coppem speaker or as an invited person, would take a number of columns in our magazine. Even more pages would be necessary to discuss and to make remarks concerning the various topics dealt with and carefully analysed during these events. Therefore, I shall confine myself to some brief comments and consideration. In general, there are too many initiatives which are started only with the aim for the promoting organisation of becoming more visible, other initiatives are organised with the even less noble aim of over shading the initiatives promoted by others: as a matter of fact we speak more than acting. The sense of our participation in these initiatives was to connect our activities with the purposes we had set forth. In participating in events such as the Conference on the Right to Food organised by the Maritain Institute, the Round Tables on the Mediterranean, the CCRE seminars, the 23rd General Assembly of Innsbruck, the Seminar of the Mediterranean Institute of Certification on agricultural products and food, the Conference of the Adenauer Foundation, recently held in Brussels in agreement with CCRE and the European Commission or the initiatives organised by CGLU on the eight goals of the Millennium, our aim was to promote cooperation for development and to enhance the role of local authorities as community participation tools and pillars of democracy.

Whatever the topic of the discussion, on Public Services to citizens or on decentralised cooperation for development of less favoured Countries, the role of territorial bodies is one of the key issues to reach the before mentioned goals. Local authorities are the entities which can deal with the fulfilment of people's primary needs such as food, water supply or education, better than others. In many instances we have noticed the remarkable commitment and the financial support of local authorities and regions to foster decentralized cooperation. Projects by the thousands were presented, many of which of very small size, nonetheless trying to face very difficult problems for communities needing almost everything. In spite of this commitment, 0.7% of the GDP of rich countries for cooperation and development indicates that the vast majority of developed countries is far away from reaching their tasks. Even though some countries have increased their budget (Italy, USA, Japan and Canada) and others have even cut it short (France, UK and Germany) they are all well below their actual possibilities, at about 0.40% of the GDP.

The food situation continues to be critical. The increase in food production in many countries is unable to counterbalance population increase, thereby contributing to make future perspectives for these people even more gloomy. A study carried out by the French Institute CIHEAM on agriculture in the Mediterranean pointed out that in the last two decades - since the enlargement of the EU to Greece, Spain and Portugal - the difference in the GDP of the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries has considerably increased. From a demographic viewpoint the situation has profoundly changed in 40 years: the ratio of 2 inhabitants of the North to 1 of the South has been transformed into 1 to
1 and according to present trends it will be reversed from 2 inhabitants of the South to 1 inhabitant of the North, by 2025. This means that the population in these areas will be doubled accounting for 10% of the world population. In spite of the increase of the rural population in the Southern areas of the Mediterranean (41% as compared to 29% of northern EU countries) the agricultural balance of trade has collapsed during the last 30 years; in the meanwhile food coverage and food safety have worsened. The increase of grain import from Canada, USA, Australia, Argentina and France (the latter with a smaller percentage) reached about 50%.

To the purpose of offering better perspectives to the people of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean it is necessary to include these Countries in the agricultural and food quality system. The problem of water supply to rural population (and not only to them) is another extremely serious issue. In conclusion, in spite of the numerous projects, life conditions of poor people do not improve; countless of projects do not actually improve the general situation, nor provide the spur of development and growth in these countries. On the contrary, growth and development of these areas are of vital importance in order to avoid the risk of wasting financial resources. The paper of the European Commission on cooperation for development highlights two main criteria: a) geographical planning and b) thematic planning and these are currently topics of discussion.

The involvement of local communities is also mentioned in the paper, however neither the modalities, nor the tools for their participation are mentioned.

We must work on this document and submit new proposals; a balance between the two planning strategies might produce a development strategy through decentralised cooperation and we could find the suitable operative and financial tools to bring about the project. If we are able to reach this goal, even smaller projects could find a reference framework and contribute to start up development processes, going beyond the emergency needs of the people of these area. The Barcelona Process taught us that we must fully commit ourselves and that nothing can be taken for granted. I cannot conclude this overview without mentioning the 2nd Conference of the National Association of Local Authorities of Morocco, where a number of Mayors and of locally elected members took part. The participation of Moroccan Ministers in this important conference confirms the leading role of local authorities in Morocco and the increase in importance of this Association, whose aim is to reinforce the role of local powers in the process of democratic growth of the Country. Once again congratulations to the President Bahraoui, we wish him new and important success for the future. Success which is important for all of us.
COPPEM TAKES ROOT IN TURKEY

Solemn inauguration of the representative office at Istanbul

Among the priority objectives of Coppem, a body with strong political imprint, there is that aiming at creating in the Mediterranean basin a North-South axis of cooperation and peace through the promotion of dialogue between the Euro-Mediterranean local and regional authorities. With this aim the Committee decided to open representative offices in some cities which are important for their geographical position and political importance. Istanbul, with a population consisting of 11,322,000 inhabitants, is the main industrial pole of the country. The current urban area extends along both the Bosphorus shores, the strait that divides the Asiatic continent from the European one and connects the Black Sea to the Marmaris Sea. Political and cultural heart of Balkans, Middle Eastern countries and Turkish republic of Central Asia, Istanbul is the city where East and West join in harmonic synthesis. In this metropolis, located on two continents and place of great geo-political importance from time immemorial, Coppem has opened a new office. Office’s inauguration has taken place at the presence of the Turkish Minister of Public Works, Faruk Özak, the Governor of Istanbul Muammar Guler, the Undersecretary to the Minister of Interiors, Sahabettin Harput, and the Undersecretary to Industry, Adem Sahin. The starting-up of the activity was welcome with great favour by national and local authorities that place this initiative in the more general framework of the relations between European and Mediterranean Southern shore countries and in view of the Turkey’s entry into the EU. Latest governments of the country, which is member of the Council of Europe, have reformed the State in order to allow Turkey’s entry. Membership’s negotiations officially have started in 2005, motivated not only with economic opportunities but also by cultural and political reasons, thereby integrating a moderate Muslim Country. “Turkey is showing great efforts in the process for peace and stability we all need” the Minister said. “The campaign about the Dialogue between Civilizations started by our Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero, is one of the major steps towards this way”. Özak emphasized that the outcomes of the path towards the EU have been an example for many countries, and he also added: “If it is looked through inter-cultural perspective, Turkey’s membership to the EU can not be explained only with economic reasons, but it is a strong effort to dialogue. We, as the Government, are trying to stress Turkey’s combining identity, because we want the EU to treat Turkey’s membership as an alliance between civilizations. Since respect for human rights is at the basis of this approach”. Then
Özak stated that NGOs are more effective and faster than diplomacy, for this reason, Coppem can provide essential contributions in this process of dialogue. In Özak’s opinion, Coppem, through the work of its Commissions and thanks to the opening of its representative office in Istanbul, can give “an important contribution to Turkey’s activities in this area”. The Minister reminded that in Coppem’s last year meeting, Arab and European Municipalities declared their full support to Turkey’s EU membership.

“Turkey – he added – is serving as a bridge between civilizations. Istanbul, which connects Europe to Asia, has been a city with close friendship relations, crossroads of civilizations for thousands years and it is a great contribution to the civilized world. The opening of Coppem’s representative office will provide a new impulse to the same process. Anyway, Turkey’s face is turned to West and it aims to be fully integrated with European Civilization, which is the path set by Atatürk”. According to Minister Faruk Özak’s considerations, the Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern Muslim countries’ eyes are turned to Brussels and they closely follow the developments about Turkey’s EU membership. “A positive position of Brussels - he added - will increase the level of hope for world peace and cooperation, otherwise the dispute among civilizations might worsen. Radical expressions and positions are an hurdle for world stability. We ask Coppem to contribute to build policies which can turn the Mediterranean in a place of dialogue, where the efforts for progress can be implemented in synergy with those have been so far divided between exploited and exploiter. This could happen, if South benefits from North’s welfare”. “We hope - Coppem’s Secretary General Carmelo Motta said- that Istanbul, the city of the great bridge Bogazici, which is hanging between Europe and Asia as well as a strategic centre within the delicate relationship between West and East, can be also the key for a new stability and cooperation in the entire Euro-Mediterranean region”. In the meantime, the agreements to open offices at Poznan (Poland), for Eastern cities and regions, and at Dubai, for the Arab Emirates are under construction. Offices in Cairo and in Rabat have been already established.
LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE THE OUTPOST OF PEACE

Coppem’s role to promote dialogue amongst local institutions

Muzaffer Baca
Vice President of Coppem

Mediterranean region as cradle of civilizations for thousands of years plays a great role in events related with the world stability and peace. The fragile social and political systems of the South are threatening the entire regional cooperation and dialogue between civilizations. Looking on the real framework in the Mediterranean region, we can notice different factors endangering the security of the region. Conflicts between Israeli and Palestinians, the Cyprus issue, threats against Syria and the chaos in Iraq are the main negative factors weakening efforts for a stable regional cooperation system. In this framework the role Coppem undertook is very important and helping bringing closer people of the region it pursues them for a better understanding and good neighbourship.

During the last General Assembly held in Palermo on 6th May 2006, Israeli and Arab delegates were present at the roundtable discussion focusing on the elimination of conflicts between civilizations and tension mitigation. Coppem, by taking into consideration the main obstacles blocking the cooperation, is very active on economic, social, cultural and political cooperation reinforced by its member local authorities which play a role to reflect the perspectives to the ordinary people and forming them as pressure groups to the governments. Such activities are supported by a wider community through the local authorities. Involvement of non governmental organizations and universities of Mediterranean to the same process will assist Coppem in building up a more effective and stable general framework for regional peace in the Mediterranean basin. By the beginning of the 21st century we faced the tragedy of 11 September 2001. The barbarous attack was condemned by all conscious people, societies and states and all the World expressed its sympathy to the American people as victims of the tragedy. Just five years after, US is the most criticized country for human right violations and world instability. And at the end of this policy we see a 1-half billion population of Muslims declared as potential terrorists and under international pressure. Many factors are leading to a general conflict between Muslim and Christian world and through such campaigns both sides become more aggressive. Just in the heart of the conflict of civilizations there is the Mediterranean region. Looking to the map, it is very easy to see both sides of the conflict clearly. Campaigns like those Coppem is launching might be supported as tools to eliminate the danger of a general conflict. Including the activities Coppem already undertook, there is a need of common researches and cam-
campaigns between both shores of Mediterranean in order to introduce “the other” in a cooperative and humanitarian manner. The resources of the North must be transferred for the benefit of the South and a balance of economic prosperity must be created. Organization such as ASEM will play a great role for generating such a system and sharing the problems of the South. In addition, platforms for common initiatives between Muslims and Christians, quarreling sides, North and South shall be promoted and organized in a more frequent basis. Four commissions of Coppem are working hardly to promote such platforms. The main promoting elements must be the local leaders members of Coppem. Coins have two faces and by not taking into consideration the rights and opportunities of the other there is no way for common peace and prosperity. Just to remind that at a new initiative to submit a Project for the Middle East Peace, Israeli and Palestinian members’ policy was discouraging because they even didn’t respond to the proposal. Lately by taking in the same roundtable discussion for peace and dialogue they are looking like encouraging the process now. Members from conflicting sides must insist to the continuity of such initiatives and promote the same ideas and policies in their homelands. National interest, democratic limitations and different local difficulties are playing a substantial role for the stalemate of such discussions but we have to be keen to overcome such limitations and difficulties by taking the support of the people we represent. Involvement of non-govermental organizations to such processes will strengthen the campaign for creating a more cooperative and peaceful Mediterranean free of enmities, conflicts and mainly of misunderstandings. Leading countries of the region with the mediation they might provide will be able to force the elimination of the tension in the region. In the meantime, people discussing the issues face to face in the framework of Coppem initiatives will be able to overcome the prejudice for the others something helping to create more healthy cooperation and friendships. In the international politics no stable peace is possible to be imposed without satisfying both sides. Otherwise such peace will be a tool for pressure from the powerful side and inflames the radical reactions basis for anarchy and terror. Being keen on the peace campaign and cooperation platforms between both sides, Coppem is leading to be one of the most serious and important organizations for World Peace. A chain between Coppem and international organizations such EU and UN and the involvement of all local actors and civil society in the member countries will transform the region to a more secure environment, something promoting the share of prosperity culture and economic resources for the benefit of the humanity. All members of Coppem focusing to support such policies will be pioneers of survival of world peace and international stability.
THE ANCIENT CARAVAN ROUTES REVIVE

Involved in the project Aqaba (Jordan), Eilat (Israel), Gaza (Palestine), and Sharm El Sheikh (Egypt).

Tourism, cultural heritage and environmental protection are the guidelines of the project of regional coastal cooperation between Jordan, Israel, Palestinian authority and Egypt promoted by Coppem and UN Agencies, Unesco and UN-Habitat. Practically, next year the ancient caravan routes will be revived for the purposes of tourism and will involve the cities of Aqaba, Eilat, Gaza and Sharm-el-Sheick. This path evokes the scent and the atmosphere of colourful souls and enhances ancient handicraft traditions. Today convoys of trucks have replaced the long camel caravans and in many cases the action of wind and sand erased the ancient tracks. The four-sided project on coastal cooperation, was presented in Palermo at the Fiera del Mediterraneo, within the international workshop on “Craftsmanship for the Local Development in the Mediterranean area”; the aim of the project is also to strengthen the Barcelona process and it is an important political and business opportunity for the Countries joining the project, since it represents a cooperation workshop of considerable importance. The representatives of the Embassies of Egypt and Jordan, the General Delegation of Palestine, as well as the leading exponents of the Sicilian business, financial and institutional establishment took also part in the presentation of the Project. A friendly message of support to the activities promoted by Coppem was sent by the Israeli ambassador to Italy and read aloud by Professor Aurelio Anselmo. As Michele Raimondi – coordinator of Coppem Programmes and Projects – announced “within next October a cultural meeting shall be organised in Sharm-el-Sheick where the development and outcomes of cooperation shall be presented. Besides Coppem delegates, the institutional authorities and the representatives of the lay society of the four Countries joining the project, as well as the delegations of other Mediterranean countries shall also take part in the event”. Tourism is the most important industry of contemporary world; its connection with the enhancement of cultural heritage and environmental protection shall be the economic driving force of these four regions having common interests. An action plan will be prepared within one month and it shall focus on the enhancement of this sector starting from the revival of ancient caravan routes. The political importance of such initiative has been pointed out by Coppem secretary general Lino Motta who has defined it “a contribution to peace and the evidence of the role played by local Authorities capable of taking steps forward instead of a more rigid system of relationships brought about by central Governments”. Through the cooperation between local and regional authorities, Coppem promotes local development by setting up networks of cooperation and collaboration among the Mediterranean countries. The role of local communities and the local development fostered by them – also with the contribution of this Project – becomes a strategic tool both for the economic development of the area and for the creation of peace and stability in the area. The path involving cities struck by terrorism such as Aqaba, Eilat, Gaza and Sharm-el-Sheick is ideal to reinforce peaceful coexistence necessary to promote any project of economic, social and cultural development. (n.r.)

“Villa Sicilia” has been set up in Egypt, on initiative of the Governorate of Qalyubiya. It is located on the banks of the Nile river, in an area already fitted out to a large extent with adventure playground for children and enriched by a pleasant promenade along the riverside. The selected area is very much suitable for creating a magnificent garden including various species of plants which are typical of this area. Entitling to Sicily this new villa is a symbolic gesture of regard and friendship for the great Mediterranean island by the Governorate of Qalyubiya, following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, promoted by Coppem, between the two regions by Governors Salvatore Cuffaro and Adly Hussein. The achieved agreements define the framework for a fruitful cooperation at economic, social and cultural level and announce the prospect for closer relations between Europe and the Mediterranean southern shore, coinciding with the creation of the great free trade area foreseen by partnership policies started by the Conference of Barcelona in 1995. Thanks to the contribution of Coppem which held its VIII General Assembly at Cairo, where a representative office has been established, the relations between Egypt and Sicily are increasingly intensifying and it is a sign of an intense operative phase for exchanges and joint initiatives in different fields.
The definition of “typical product” does not only indicate “crafts”; typical products are the products of a region, they derive from the natural and cultural resources of this region, they are the result of the work of generations, and therefore have a story to tell. Typical products are the result of the social and cultural context of an area, hence they are strictly associated with the area where they are produced. In order to establish a strong link between an area and its products it is necessary to select certain categories of products having specific characteristics of quality and tradition; subsequently a number of actions must be developed and coordinated in order to selectively promote these products. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area by the year 2010, shall surely offer incredible economic perspectives, but also that only very well organised production systems shall be able to compete in this challenging market and make their products stand out. Therefore, being aware that craftsmanship must not only be kept alive but also be enhanced, Coppem, in cooperation with the Fiera del Mediterraneo in Palermo and Asem (Agency for the Euro-Mediterranean development) have organised a workshop on the topic “Craftsmanship for the local development and cooperation among the Mediterranean countries: new perspectives in view of the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area”. Institutional and diplomatic authorities of the Mediterranean countries, professionals and experts of the Arab world, presidents of craft and professional organisations, as well as the representatives of the business and financial establishment took part in this workshop with the aim of working out a strategy or cultural diffusion, thereby creating an added value for these products. Actually, the different interests of local economic operators should be matched with a local social system able to guarantee opportunities for qualification, environmental enhancement, production, services and the creation of a local cultural identity. Giovanna Livreri – temporal external administrator of the Fair Board – in announcing the next opening of two business info-point centres in Algiers and Tunis, focused on the concepts of qualification and enhancement; she also outlined the profile of the Mediterranean network of fairs, which shall be created in the next future and already announced during the Coppem General Assembly held in Cairo. The aim is to create a network of exhibition areas, which are also important reference points for commercial activities in the Mediterranean Region. Once this network has been implemented, craft activities of the whole region will take advantage from this project since they can rely on a qualified system of promotional activities associated to suitable areas to exchange their goods, draw up agreements and start up productive and business cooperation. These initiatives are included in a more advanced perspective of relationships among the Countries of the Mediterranean. As a consequence, the Partnership and - more in general - the EU Mediterranean policy shall be re-launched. Lino Motta, Coppem Secretary General, pointed out that – the date of 2010 set forth in the Barcelona conference for the creation of the free-trade area – shall be postponed due to the lack of firm actions by the countries of the southern Mediterranean shore. Therefore a number of initiatives aiming at local development and at the magnification on a continental scale of the economic growth of the Mediterranean Region must be redesigned. During the workshop, the representative of the American Chamber of Commerce, Ernesto Fiorillo, proposed to use this important body to ensure wider visibility of these products on foreign markets. While discussing this topic, many people took the floor to give their contribution like Ibrahim Saad El-Din Ibrahim Moharam, president of the Association of the Egyptian cooperatives. Today tourism is experiencing a revival, however a number of factors must be considered, such as compliance with quality standard levels linked to tradition, new production processes and training opportunities. In any case, craftsmanship will be a crucial element of the economic and social life of the countries where crafts are linked to the countries’ history and civilisation; it shall also be able to guarantee new job opportunities for people living in these countries. Moreover, as the representative of the Palestinian delegation Mohammed Rabee pointed out, craftsmanship could ensure reintegration into the labour market for people who suffered injuries in the Middle-Eastern war.
THE BET ON HEALTH HAS ALREADY BEEN WON

Thanks to Ismett the Euromed cooperation is being enlarged

On 31st June 1999, in the Mediterranean Institute for Transplantation and Advanced Specialized Therapies (ISMETT) the first liver transplant was performed. It was the beginning of a path having ambitious objectives: the setting up of a structure located in Palermo which could offer the therapeutic option of transplantation to Sicilian people firstly but also a centre with a strong Euro-Mediterranean imprint, able to start a virtuous circuit of synergy and collaboration especially with the countries of the Mediterranean basin. The ISMETT, was originated from a partnership between Civico and Cervello Hospitals and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC). Hence an international centre that in few years has been able to achieve extraordinary results. Today, in fact, the Mediterranean Institute is a structure able to compete with the best Northern Italy and European transplantation centres both in terms of volume of activities and of quality of performed surgery. Since a little more than two years, all the clinical activities have moved to a new seat, a modern and advanced structure which has enabled us to develop transplantation programmes – in 2005 we performed more than 100 transplantations in one year and to start those haven’t been started yet. Now at ISMETT, every kind of transplantations of solid organs (liver, kidney, pancreas, lung and heart) is performed and we are preparing to start on also the activity for pancreatic insulae. Today patients from every place in Italy come to Palermo and some of them from the rest of the world. A real trend inversion we want and must stimulate. This is the bet we are committed to in the next years. At present in the Mediterranean Institute we have subjected to transplantation patients coming from Greece, Albania, Israel and Palestine as well as from Arab countries and some even from South American countries such as Peru and Equador. They are patients that before chose to go to United States to follow a treatment in North American medical centres and instead today they can come here in Palermo. ISMETT, through its partnership with Pittsburgh, can offer the same standards of quality and efficiency of US structures with a further advantage consisting in its geographical position. We have established a lot of contacts with physicians and professionals of the health field from the Mediterranean basin countries. Still now, about every six weeks, some of our physicians go to Saudi Arabia and to United Arab Emirates in order evaluate and suggest valid therapies to the patients of those countries, we have established a fruitful cooperation especially in the field of epathology and bariatric surgery. Another kind of collaboration we are committed in is connected to the training. The ISMETT is the only Italian centre participating in the project Emispher, a community programme of development and cooperation having the objective to build a telemedicine system and an e-learning training programme amongst 16 important medical centres of the Mediterranean basin (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey). The bet we intend on is not only for ISMETT but also for Sicily as a whole. If the programme for international patients should achieve the results we hope for, in few years there will be benefits not only for the centre whose i’m the director but for all the Island’s economy. All the Sicilian allied activities like hotel structures, catering industry, shops etc. would benefit from it.
BIO-CLIMATIC DWELLINGS FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Palermo Municipality launches the project SUN & WIND

Ornella Amara
Landscape architect and historian of arts

The structure of the city of Palermo, as well as it happened in many metropolitan cities, has become virtually illegible. If the historic centre, even though in its general blight, has preserved its dimensional, spatial and semantic identity, suburbs and marginal areas of the city have been distorted by a process of uncontrolled building. The lack of or especially the ignorance about precise regulations has moreover caused that this process includes and encroaches on larger and larger portions of territory, ignoring the role of country and suburbs, depriving important places of their identity, breaking and fragmenting that “genius loci” and thereby wasting and mixing up it in a inextricable mesh of signs conflicting with each other, a new urban Babel!

The project “Sun & Wind” is based and concretized on such consideration, and it intends to become an action of sustainable development whose aim is the integration of environmental dimension in territorial planning and enhancement by introducing innovative integrated techniques and methods which can influence and contribute to Local Authorities’ Community environmental policies.

The project proposal has emerged from the will of sharing with all the actors participating to the Governance of territorial policies aimed at building up a normative system which regulates technical and methodological actions for building in order to achieve a real energy conservation, a better buildings heatproofing as well as better environmental comfort. Project’s aim is to achieve a sensible reduction of home energy consumptions through actions aiming at changing the culture of citizens on the art of building, by recovering “building technical knowledge” of the Mediterranean architecture, that still today is a perfect example of bio-climatic architecture, and by building a normative of the “good building practice” which can become effective first at territorial level, and then at wider and wider level, with a proposal of law to be presented to the Regional Assembly and including all Sicilian territory. Proponent and beneficiary subject of the project is the Municipality of Palermo, Department for Environment, Environmental and Ecology Service, Parks and Reserves Group; the project will be implemented in partnership with all the Local Authorities supervising the territory that is object of the action: Municipalities of Monreale, Regional Province of Palermo, Sicilian Region, in order to build together local policies on energy conservation, Mediterranean basin European countries (Municipality of Toledo, Spain, Athens – Greece, sample area Sifnos Island – Cicladi) the University of Palermo, DREAM Institute of Technical Physics, Faculty of Agriculture, Institute of Arboreal Cultivations and finally private stakeholders, professional association, ANCE (Building Contractors National Association - Enterprises Association), PANORMEDIL. The foreseen actions are the following: involving all the local actors, training local workers and experts; analysis of the current normative framework at national and regional level and the comparison with the respective regulations in the Partner Countries, implementing an information window, creating a database of the current building catalogue, drawing up Guidelines for building good practice, the proposal to include those Guidelines for good building practice in the GTP Technical Regulations of Municipalities, design and realization of prototypes, starting up forms for economic incentives for those who will use the building methodology foreseen by the Guidelines for good building practice, creating a network of Municipalities and an Euro-Mediterranean one for building, for which an agreement with Coppem has been signed, as it is the ideal subject for this important task. Drafting a bill to be presented to the Regional Assembly, the D.A.P declaration on typical building elements in the Mediterranean sea, the energetic evaluation of the realized prototype, dissemination of the achieved results. And since Architecture is able to evoke the places, make them recognizable, and suggest their belonging to a specific territory, “Sun & Wind” methodology can be reproposed in different context, modifying external surfaces and the way these are processed, materials and forms, respecting the place and their tradition, but maintaining the general criteria marking the project itself. As well as the agriculture evoking and building the landscape, will be used to repropose and go back to horticulture and tree-culture techniques, going back to that tradition from which citrus gardens are originated, or the shady areas in the Mediterranean houses inside or outside them, building an ideal margin that fades the limit between urban and rural system, and contributing also in synergy with sun and wind to realize a system to air-conditioning our dwellings with natural methods being as much as possible at low energetic impact.
CLOSER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SICILY AND EGYPT

A Sicilian delegation to Qaliyubiya to implement the memorandum of understanding

Salvatore Cilento
Minister Plenipotentiary of Sicilian Region

Through Coppem’s organizational coordination, a Sicilian delegation including the Diplomatic Counsellor of the President of the Region, Minister Plenipotentiary Salvatore Cilento, Hon. Pino Apprendi representing Palermo Municipality, regional executives general Vincenzo Emanuele (Balance and Treasury Department), Benedetto Mineo (Finance and Credit Department), Giuseppe Incaradona (Industry Department), Dario Cartabellotta (Agriculture Department) and Sebastiano Di Bella on behalf of the Regional Assembly, made a diplomatic mission in Egypt (Cairo and Benha, capital of Qaliyubiya Governorate) from June 5th to 8th, in order to jointly examine with Governor Adly Hussein – Coppem’s Vice President – and his closest collaborators which kind of concrete follow-up they can give to the memorandum of understanding between Sicilian Region and Qaliyubiya Governorate signed on the last 30th January.

The attention of both the delegations focused on the following field:

a) Cultural and University cooperation; concerning this specific issue, the availability of Palermo University to award to young graduates from Benha University some scholarships for postgraduate masters has been represented.

b) Cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises; in reply of a specific request advanced by the president of the industry association of Qaliyubiya, eng. Abdel Hady El Sayed, it has been agreed that a SME delegation of Qaliyubiya active in agro-industry, metalwork and woodwork sectors, will come to Sicily – to be hoped for the third ten days of July – to meet our enterprise working in the same productive sectors.

c) Cooperation on agriculture and training sectors, also through programmes to be implemented with EU funds;

The attention of both the delegations focused on the following field:

d) Asem’s role promotion – the Euro-Mediterranean Development Agency recently established under the auspices of Coppem – to implement policies of cooperation agreed upon between Sicily and Qaliyubiya.

Governor Hussein has hoped that these kind of relations can be extended to young people exchanges and he has proposed to initiate specific bilateral initiatives focusing on women’s condition and human rights.

Following the works, the delegation met with the Egyptian first lady, Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, to whom has handed a present by the President of the Region Hon. Salvatore Cuffaro; Governor of Giza Fathi Saad took part in a session of the Regional Assembly of Qaliyubiya in Benha, which ended with the opening ceremony of a garden overlooking the Nile river that Governor Hussein wanted to dedicate to Sicily.

Local mass-media – national TV channels as well as the press – have given a wide scope to the visit of the Sicilian delegation, emphasizing its importance in the framework of the very good relations between Egypt and Italy.

Actually, the cooperation between Sicily and Qaliyubiya goes beyond the bilateral framework and it plays a great importance in the Euro-Mediterranean relations framework as well as in the Barcelona process re-launch hoped for.
NEW IMPULSE TO PARTNERSHIP

Coppem and Paralleli united for the dialogue amongst local institutions

Nino Randisi

Coppem and Paralleli Institute can work together for promoting and strengthening the dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean area. The collaboration between these two bodies will be useful to promote in actual fact the dialogue with Regions, cities and civil society of continental Europe, with the aim of strengthening the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. Rinaldo Bontempi, President of the Northern-West Euro-Mediterranean “Paralleli” Institute, established in Turin on July 2005, is convinced of this. The former European Parliament member has supported the idea according to which today both the city of Turin and Piedmont Region take their place in an area which is a geo-strategic one at European and Mediterranean level. Because of their position they have developed in the last few years a strong interest to be an active part in the process to relaunch the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue.

Which are the grounds of this trend?
Piedmont Region can be an important junction point in the network connecting the large logistic and industrial platform, consisting in the Po valley and the city of Milan, with the southern-west Mediterranean area and therefore with the whole southern countries basin.

In which kind of perspective does such prospect place itself?
The rapid development of Asian economies is by now the most dynamic force in the global economy. A substantial part of trade flows originated from these economies, pass along the Suez Canal and, instead of landing at northern European ports in Rotterdam and Hamburg, go towards Nice, Gioia Tauro and Genoa, or towards Taranto and Marghera. Hence, Italy as a whole is a natural Mediterranean bridge leaning forward the heart of Community Europe and the axis Alessandria-Turin, also for the peculiarities of Genoa which has no backport, is the main potential junction towards the strongest European area at economic level.

Which is the economic and cultural point of reference for this ideal "bridge"?
The social tissue of Turin and Piedmont in general offers an extraordinary number of cultural, social and productive organizations that can be important leading actors in the process for building the future, on the basis of the sedimentation of experiences and innovations experimented and produce during the centuries of a contradictory but continuous development, rich of memory but influenced by different inputs and daring innovations.

Which is the role that Paralleli Institute is called to play?
Institute’s mission, in coherence with the three great axes of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (political and of security, economic, social and cultural) and with territorial needs, has the objective to contribute to building an Euro-Mediterranean area of freedom, security and socio-economic development. This mandate includes actions and initiatives involving civil society with its participation, promoting cultural and religious dialogue and economic relations targeted to sustainability, with particular attention to co-development.

Which are the political prospects at territorial and international level?
At international level, the priority of the first three years of activities is that of implementing European and international networks which the Institute already joins and activating new channels of relations. In particular, Paralleli has worked so as to draw up agreements and provisions with the IEMED Institute in Barcelona, l’Institut de la Mediterranée in Marseille, the European University Institute in Fiesole. Furthermore Paralleli has joined the network led by the Anna Lindh Foundation. Both through public debates and studies and researches, the Institute is trying to stimulate the debate towards the central issues of our age by activating cultural paths having the aim to build conditions to draw up specific policies.

How the Paralleli Institute does intend to work?
Particular attention is devoted to the countries called as “objective countries”: Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Egypt and Turkey. But the real attention is devoted to the relations between Palestine and Israel. Moreover the Balkan area has an ad hoc position, as it isn’t included in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership even though it is a central and strategic area not only at geographical level.
ALGIERS, JUNE 24TH
DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CITIES AND REGIONS

PROGRAMME OF THE WORKS
VENUE OF THE MEETING
HOTEL AURASSI

FRIDAY 23 JUNE 2006
Reception of the members of Presidency Council, accommodation at Aurassi Hotel
Meeting of the Presidency Council enlarged to the Coppem Commissions Vice-Presidents

SATURDAY 24 JUNE 2006
Meeting with the EuroMediterranean representatives of decentralized institutional authorities (Local Communities)

09h00. Reception of participants
09h30. Welcome address by the President of the FACM, Noureddine Sbia
09h35. Opening speech by His Excellency Mohammed Bedjzai, Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs.
10h00. Speech by the Minister Delegate in charge of local communities
10h20. Speech by Mr. Abderrachid Boukerzagga, Minister Delegate in charge of cities
10h40. Speech by the Secretary General of Coppem
11h00. Coffee break
11h30. Speech by representative of the Minister for Participations and Promotion of Investment (Investments opportunities in Algeria)
11h50. Speech by the representative of the organizer committee of the Ill EuroArab Towns Conferences
12h05. Speech by a Wali (Algiers /Constantina/Djelfa/Sétif)
12h25. Speech by the Director General of the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI): twinning, economical and cultural exchanges (outcomes and prospects)
12h40. Speech by the President of the Algerian Municipality (APC-Tlemcen /Oran)
13h00. Speech by the FACM
13h30. Lunch
15h00. Resumption of works
- Workshop. Cities management at good governance-proof and cooperation between Euro-Mediterranean cities and regions
- Plenary session: debates
17h30: Reading and approval of the workshop recommendation and proposals
18h00: Closure of works