

# COPPEM ACTIVITY REPORT

## 2022-2024

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# CULTURE AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

## **“In the name of Man: faith for peaceful coexistence in the Mediterranean”**

A meeting between representatives of civil society on integration and intercultural and interreligious dialogue was organized in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe. The objective was to contribute to the European dialogue with citizens by giving voice to the communities' requests regarding inclusion and social cohesion.

The event tried to get an answer to the question: “What can the EU concretely do to support local authorities in their interreligious transition?”. From that question, some final recommendations were elaborated and uploaded to the Conference for the Future of Europe portal. These recommendations were finally converted into a Call to Europe for inclusive cities.

The Call translated into English was distributed to around 150 European and Mediterranean bodies and organisations.

## **Erasmus+ KA171 project "MMM Mediterranean/Sub-Saharan Music Movement"**

In January 2024, the Erasmus+ project KA171 "MMM Mediterranean/Sub-Saharan Music Movement" was approved. The initiative aims to encourage cooperation and innovation through music, strengthening ties between Mediterranean and sub-Saharan African countries and creating new growth opportunities for young artists, institutions and local communities. COPPEM is associated partner to the project as its role is to promote results and good practices of the project.

# ENVIRONMENT

## Initiative in collaboration with the University of Palermo, RELINT 2024 programme

COPPEM has joined the project proposal called "SISPE.H" submitted to the Italian national programme RELINT 2024. The project has the objective to contribute to disseminating technical-scientific knowledge on the hydrogen cycle for the ecological transition. It is to be carried out in Tunisia, in the North Africa region and involves the creation of a Permanent International School of Higher Education in Energy, aimed at disseminating knowledge relating to the entire H2 technological cycle. In this role, in Tunisia it will be necessary to create many new skills on hydrogen technology, both for graduates and for lower and upper secondary school graduates, from production to storage, transport and transport. To do this, SISPE.H will initially be localized in Tunisia and can then be replicated in other African countries and beyond. The project could have a positive impact on emigration by creating jobs opportunities in origin countries.

## European Just Transition Platform (JTP)

In 2024 COPPEM was selected as a member of the European Just Transition Platform. the platform is a sharing space developed by European Union and aimed at assisting Member States in accessing the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM), a key tool for the transition a climate-neutral economy happens fairly and leaves no one behind.

As a network of local and regional governments, COPPEM knows that communities face unique social, economic and environmental challenges. Despite the good intentions that inspire transnational decisions, the latter could have unexpected and unfortunate impacts on local communities and especially on the most vulnerable citizens, who already suffer from discrimination and/or poor access to resources. Precisely for this reason, both the involvement of interested parties, including vulnerable groups, and attention to equal opportunities are crucial to guarantee community ownership and mitigate the risk of undesirable effects, both in the short and long term. Participating in the Working Groups is an invaluable opportunity for COPPEM to bring the point of view of the Euromed local authorities, their needs and experiences, directly to the attention of the JTP, sharing skills and contributing, where possible, to formulate tools and guidelines.

# GENDER JUSTICE

## "Promoting Gender Equality Rights for a more Justice Society Forum"

COPPEM was a partner of Creator Union of Arab and Arab Media Union in organizing the meeting "Promoting Gender Equality Rights for a more Justice Society Forum". This is an online side event of the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development. The objective of the side event was to contribute to the reflections of the UN HLPF for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 "Gender Equality". Academics, sociologists, leaders and professionals took part in the event and discussed new ways of promoting women's human rights. At the end of the meeting the participants also developed recommendations for international institutions and governments.

## Training course for officials of the Region of Sicily and university students on the topic of Gender Justice and the "Euro-Mediterranean Charter for equality between women and men in local life"

The training course had the purpose of contributing to promoting knowledge and practical use of the "Euro-Mediterranean Charter for equality between women and men in local life" among the staff of the Region of Sicily; it also aimed to make participants aware of the basic principles of equality and the related tools and areas of intervention; to identify and eliminate stereotyped attitudes and behaviors both within the organization and towards the public; to raise individual trainees' awareness of the need for gender training.

The course took place over three days in which around 50 university students and the same number of officials were trained. At the end of the course the participants learned the main elements of inequality and their historical roots, they also acquired basic tools to recognize the hidden signs of gender injustice in everyday interactions.

## Participation in the Structured Dialogue of the Policy Forum on Development on the Gender Action Plan III

Since 1 December 2022, COPPEM has been part, together with 125 other associations of local authorities and civil society, of the structured dialogue that the Policy Forum on Development and DG INTPA (DG International

Partnership) of the European Commission organizes on the topic of the gender action plan III (GAP III). COPPEM contributes to the reflection on the Gender Action Plan at European level by giving voice to the experiences of European and Mediterranean local authorities so to allow a possible reformulation of the Plan more in line with the needs of local communities.

## **“Cities Forging the Path to Gender Justice” – Evento parallelo alla 67 Commissione sullo status delle donne dell’ONU – 6th March 2023**

The Council of Municipalities and Regions of Europe (CEMR), PLATFORMA, United African Cities and Local Governments (UCLG Africa) and the Standing Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of Local and Regional Authorities (COPPEM), which have been cooperating since long time on theme of gender equality, joined forces on the occasion of the 67th edition of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Each of the three organizations has developed a regional Charter for local authorities to commit to gender justice and the fight against inequalities with specific policies, programs and partnerships. Precisely starting from the three documents and the international campaign #Thinkonit, the meeting "Cities that forge the path for gender justice" proposed by the three international organizations was selected by the UN to become a parallel event of the 67th session of the CSW which will take place is held in New York City.

Summary of the official speeches:

<https://platforma-dev.eu/gender-justice-is-justice-for-all-un-event-highlights-the-importance-of-local-and-regional-action-and-cooperation/>

Full video of the event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndC8CktwCCE&t=143s>

During the meeting, which was attended by over one hundred people, the key role of the Charters for equality between women and men in local life as effective and impactful tools for achieving gender justice and building more equal societies was explored.

The speakers, local and regional representatives of African, European and Mediterranean local authorities, shared the experiences and challenges they face every day.

In its agreed conclusions on " Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" the CSW, the UN Commission on the Status of Women, expressly recognized the importance of instruments such as

the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for equality between women and men in local life.

## Dissemination of the “Think On It” international campaign

#ThinkOnIt - “Without Equal parts we cannot be whole” is an international awarenessraising campaign developed by COPPEM in collaboration with the Council of Municipalities and Regions of Europe (CEMR), Platforma, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), the African Section of the Union Cities and Local Governments (UCLG Africa), the Region of Sicily and the Sicilian section of the BPW.

It has been adopted by partners and disseminated to over 20,000 people.

The campaign aims to promote gender equality.

Launched on 16 December 2022 in Palermo during the Congress of COPPEM, the initiative was also presented in New York on 6 March 2023, during the CSW Forum of United Nations NGOs.

## «Regions at the forefront of a Union of Equality: How can regions contribute to the fight against gender-based violence in Europe and its Neighbourhood?» – Seminar of the CPMR Political Bureau

The above seminar was held at Palazzo Sacratini Strozzi in Florence, as part of the activities of the task force on the gender-related issues of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR). The seminar opens the path for a debate among participants to the event. During the debate, representatives of the Regions involved analysed the role of the territories in the development of concrete actions to achieve the objectives outlined by the European Commission through a proposal for a Directive, which introduces legislation specifically aimed at combating violence against women.

## JUSTICE

### Meeting on "Metaverse and Cybercrime" at the Misr "MPL" Public Library in Cairo

On May 23, 2023, the Misr "MPL" Public Library in Cairo hosted a meeting entitled "Metaverse and Cybercrime: Impact on the Environment, Water and Food Security". The event was organized by COPPEM, in collaboration with the Arab Women Leaders association, the NGO Creators Union of Arab and the Al-Hadidi Foundation. Egyptian COPPEM delegates participated. The meeting highlighted the importance of addressing the emerging challenges of the metaverse and cybercrime, exploring their impact on the environment, water and food security.

### Round table "The Nexus between Organized Crime and Terrorism. The regional connotations of the phenomenon and the challenges for the Euro-Mediterranean area"

The round table organized in Palermo on 13 May 2024 by COPPEM took place under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Justice and the Sicilian Region. The Municipality of Capaci cooperated in its creation (as a member of COPPEM). Finally, the initiative was co-financed by the Sicilian Parliament and Sicilian section of CEMR.

The undoubted impact that the transnational criminal association between terrorism and organized crime has on local realities and on regional governments, together with the renewed interest of the Region of Sicily and the Anti-Mafia Commission of the Sicilian Parliament to the topic, has pushed COPPEM to organize an event which deepened the link between organized crime and terrorism in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The event focused on the main territorial constraints, stimulated exchanges of ideas and good practices. Ten judges from Belgium, Egypt, Germany, Jordan, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Libya and Morocco took part in the round table.

At the end of the meeting, a Call to improve international cooperation was shared by the participants. The call was then delivered to the representatives of EUROJUST and the Arab League, who were also at the meeting. The latter publicly expressed their great appreciation for the work of the round table and recognized the relevance of the Call, whose salient requests are summarized below:

- need for a more pragmatic approach aimed at making cooperation effective and efficient
- a context analysis shared between the countries involved
- operational unit for strengthening law enforcement tools
- joint meetings of experts, with new communication channels, joint analyses and continuous updates
- periodic consultations with the investigative and judicial authorities of the Euro-Mediterranean area
- intensification of joint action to trace financial flows and suspend the assets of criminal groups used to finance terrorism
- identification of shared strategies in the field of cybersecurity
- cooperation in migration policies to prevent the exploitation of weaknesses in the migration process
- fight against the so-called violent radicalization with investments in social activities and initiatives
- actions to provide adequate information in the countries of origin to people at risk of trafficking
- increase in measures to discourage exploitation in the field of work.

The event received considerable national media coverage, as can be seen from the links below:

[Il sole24ore](#); [Il Secolo d'Italia](#); [La cronaca 24](#); [La Sicilia](#); [La Sicilia web](#); [Messina Oggi](#); [Blog Sicilia](#); [Notizie Tiscali](#); [Tutto Oggi](#); [La discussione](#); [Radio Lombardia](#); [Crema Oggi](#); [La Gazzetta di Parma](#); [Tele Ischia](#)

# MIGRATION & SOCIAL COHESION

## Regional and local Powers. Rule and perspectives on the future of euromed area

On March 2022, with the involvement of international delegates, COPPEM secretariat draws up a plan titled “Regional and local Powers. Rule and perspectives on the future of EuroMed area”. A proposal has been submitted to European and Mediterranean governments on decentralization operations regarding equal opportunities, environment, culture, tourism and migration in order to facilitate faster transnational initiatives by communities from different nations but sharing similar problems and challenges. The report shows how the regional institutions and cooperation bodies must face new challenges through measures allowing room of manoeuvre for acting successfully; therefore the document proposes new legislative authorization and new powers for Local governments so that they can intervene with promptness for their territory and for the entire Euro-Mediterranean area.

## Activities on migrations and refugee integration

January-April 2022: COPPEM participation in REGIN (Regions refugees migrants integration) project as associate partner for spreading the project results.

May 2022: participation in task force migration meeting coordinated by [CRPM](#) titled: “Regions at the forefront of solidarity with Ukraine; EU emergency founding mechanism”.

# PARTNERSHIP

## Cooperation with other international network

### *ARLEM*

Constant contact with ARLEM supporting Sicilian Region for delegate participation in the following meeting:

February 7th, 8th meeting of commission for territorial sustainable development of ARLEM in Marseille.

June 23rd Meeting of commission CIVEX of CoR on global warming.

### *AMCPP*

Participation of the COPPEM Secretary general as speaker to the Assembly of Moroccan Association of the Presidents of Local councils held on the 19th March 2022.

### *Meeting in Foreign affairs and international meetings Government department*

May 2023 meeting between COPPEM international relations manager and councillor of Italian Ministry of External Affairs (MAECI). The meeting was an information exchange with MAECI on COPPEM activities with a view for forthcoming synergies since Mediterranean and Africa are international strategic areas for the Italian Government.

### *Eastern Neighbourhood Equality and Women's Solidarity Forum*

Event organized under the aegis of CEMR in Tbilisi, Georgia. On request of CEMR, COPPEM has provided pointing out Mediterranean speakers who have been invited to the event.

## PEACE

### Initiatives promoting and supporting peace initiatives

Developing activities and partnerships contributing for dialogue and peace in Euro-Mediterranean region is a necessary condition to pursue the objectives of Barcelona Process.

To the end following initiatives and institutional cooperations on peace were carried out:

*International relations with NGO HWPL* - Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light, promoting peace, dialogue and cooperation from Seoul. The association is an DGC associate and has special advisory status of ECOSOC, UNO Social and economic Council.

Participation in meetings organized by The department for extra-regional affairs of the Region of Sicily on initiative to undertake in sight of OSAKA 2025.

### Committee for initiatives on humanitarian aid to Gaza civilians

On the basis of terrible humanitarian situation provoked by conflict between Israel and Palestine, several COPPEM members have showed the will to create an international committee on the issue.

The objective was to detect and develop initiatives supporting peace and humanitarian aid to people in territories hit by war.

Several online and on-site meetings were organised to develop concrete initiatives on subject and collect proposals from the committee members, among them, the proposal of Committee for activities supporting online university students who are unable to pursue their studies in the territories hit by middle east war was selected. Currently, exchanges with several universities are ongoing.