



**Regione Toscana**  
Diritti Valori Innovazione Sostenibilità



## MEDGOVERNANCE PROJECT

### 3 SCENARIOS FOR A MEDITERRANEAN MACRO-REGIONAL APPROACH

*Version as of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010*

Document prepared by Jean-Claude Tourret and Vincent Wallaert, Institut de la Méditerranée



This activity has received a subsidy from the ERDF through the MED Programme

**CONTENT**

**PREAMBULE ..... 4**

The MEDGOVERNANCE project ..... 4

Main outcomes of Phase 1..... 4

The “*macro-regional fever*”: hype or opportunity for the Mediterranean area? ..... 5

Methodology of the prospective approach ..... 6

Main outcomes of the paper ..... 6

**MAIN LEARNING FROM THE BALTIC SEA AND THE DANUBE EXPERIENCES ... 8**

A highly innovative approach towards territorial policies..... 8

The limits of existing macro-regional approaches ..... 10

A multilevel governance framework..... 11

Key assets for initiating a macro-regional approach ..... 12

**7 RATIONALES FOR INITIATING A MEDITERRANEAN MACRO-REGION..... 15**

Addressing key Mediterranean territorial challenges ..... 15

Addressing the lacks of the Mediterranean intergovernmental cooperation ..... 15

Capitalizing on the assets of Mediterranean territorial cooperation..... 16

Insuring equal opportunity between the different EU territories..... 17

Anchoring Mediterranean countries in the EU neighbourhood ..... 18

Introducing a strategic approach within EU territorial cooperation programmes ..... 18

Mainstreaming territorial cooperation in the future Regional Policy (2014-2020)..... 19

**6 POTENTIAL FIELDS OF TENSIONS OF A MEDITERRANEAN MACRO-REGION  
..... 20**

The geographic scale of a Mediterranean macro-region ..... 20

Financial tensions ..... 20

Coordination with the UfM process and the other Mediterranean policies ..... 21

Taking into account the new EU institutional context ..... 21

The level of cooperation culture in the Mediterranean area ..... 22

Time and agenda setting ..... 23

<b>POSITIONING OF THE KEY MEDITERRANEAN STAKEHOLDERS .....</b>	<b>24</b>
The “silent majority”: Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.....	24
The key European member States .....	24
The European Commission .....	26
Mediterranean local and regional authorities .....	26
<b>THE 3 SCENARIOS FOR A MEDITERRANEAN MACRO-REGION .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Scenario 1 – Networking several Mediterranean “sub-macro-regions” .....	29
Scenario 2 – A macro-regional UfM .....	30
Scenario 3 – Macro-projects for the Mediterranean.....	31
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>ANNEX – LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED .....</b>	<b>33</b>

## PREAMBULE

This document aims at presenting the contribution of the Network of Mediterranean Institutes (RIM) in the framework of the MEDGOVERNANCE project to the debate on the potential initiation of a macro-regional approach in the Mediterranean area.

### The MEDGOVERNANCE project

The MEDGOVERNANCE project is implemented in the framework of the MED interregional cooperation programme, gathering together 6 regions (Andalusia<sup>1</sup>, Catalonia<sup>2</sup>, PACA, Piedmont, Lazio, Tuscany) with the members of the RIM (Three Cultures Foundation, Seville; IEMed, Barcelona; Institut de la Méditerranée, Marseille; Paralleli, Turin; CeSPI, Rome; MAEM/MEMA, Florence) and the Inter-Mediterranean Commission (IMC) of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR). These are assisted in technical matters by Plural (Florence) in putting together policy recommendations on how to best integrate regional authorities in the development and implementation of Mediterranean policies.

The project started in 2009 with a diagnosis phase analyzing the governance framework for the preparation and implementation of major policies affecting the Mediterranean region in five policy fields: transportation; competitiveness and innovation; environment; culture; and migration. For each of these fields, the issue of “multilevel governance” and, more particularly, of the actual contribution of regions to these policies was investigated. A transversal analysis of the thematic contributions has been implemented and presented in a Mediterranean Governance Report.

### Main outcomes of Phase 1

Among its main conclusions, the Mediterranean Governance Report stressed the opportunity to investigate the concept of macro-regional strategies as a potential path for a political initiative of the Mediterranean regions in the perspective of the 2014-2020 European budgeting period. The concept of macro-region is broadly perceived as a very innovative and promising policy instrument. Meanwhile, the return of experience from both the Baltic Sea Strategy and the Danube Strategy has also resulted in the expression of numerous questions on the practicalities of such a concept.

This direction was consistent with the perspectives identified by the CPMR and notably by the Inter Mediterranean Commission of CPMR. In this context, an official mandate was given to the Network of Mediterranean Institutes (RIM) within an official resolution of the IMC CRPM adopted during the meeting of its Political Bureau held in Murcia (Spain) on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010. According to the resolution: « *The Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) asks the RIM, in the framework of the second phase of the MEDGOVERNANCE project, to investigate the potentialities of different scenarios of the preparation of a Mediterranean macro-regional (...)* ».

Following the Murcia resolution, RIM members engaged in an in-depth enquiry on possible scenarios for the implementation of a Mediterranean macro-regional process.

---

<sup>1</sup> Autonomous Government of Andalusia or *Junta de Andalucía*

<sup>2</sup> Generalitat of Catalonia or *Generalitat de Catalunya*

## The “*macro-regional fever*”: hype or opportunity for the Mediterranean area?

The decision taken by European Council in December 2007 to launch an integrated strategy for the Baltic Sea region initiated a movement. The Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009 subsequently took a similar decision concerning the Danube region. Since then, a large number of actors in numerous other European areas started lobbying for their own macro-regional strategy.

As underlined by Michel Vauzelle during a MEDGOVERNANCE seminar held in Brussels on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010, there is currently a “*macro-regional fever*” going on in Europe and in the Mediterranean area. Numerous political expertise and evaluation processes have been launched simultaneously at different levels of action: at the intergovernmental level (for example by the Managing Authority of the MED programme), at the governmental level (France, Italy), at the interregional level (initiatives of the RIM but also of CPMR and Arc Latin). These activities may have a prospective dimension but also an operational ambition like the initiative launched by the Italian authorities in order to prepare the elaboration and the adoption of a macro-regional strategy for the Adriatic-Ionic area.

Nevertheless, this concept remains still very new and not very easy to define. The main experiences available in order to set up criteria and standards are the Baltic Sea and the Danube strategies. In the official communication of the European Commission, the Baltic Sea and the Danube strategies are today one of the main “success stories” of the Regional Policy<sup>3</sup>. Both processes have raised numerous questions concerning the practical implementation of those strategies and notably concerning the implementation of the flagship projects:

1. What does the macro-region mean in term of future of the European construction ? Is it a recognition of the diversity of Europe and the fact that the same European policy cannot be applied in similar terms in all parts of Europe ?
2. Is macro-region a form of “meso-federalism” which would be applied to soft entities like macro regions given the fact that countries are reluctant to it ?
3. Is macro-region a new mode of governance that creates a new multi-level partnership?
4. Is macro-region a recognition of the fact that territorial cooperation and particularly transnational cooperation is getting on top of the European agenda ? And why ? How is the external dimension of macro-regions dealt with ?
5. Is the Baltic Sea Strategy as relevant as it looks like ? To date, the implementation phase has not started. Are the Baltic flagships projects much more “advanced” than the ones implemented in the Mediterranean area? Where do they stand in terms of strategic governance ?
6. More generally, is this strategy applicable during the current budgetary period ? Is this a preparation for the next budgetary period ? And what does all this mean for the Mediterranean area ?

---

<sup>3</sup> Together with the INTERREG 4C programme allowing benchmarking and good practices transfers between regional entities

## Methodology of the prospective approach

In order to address the above mentioned issues, RIM partners have decided to launch a dedicated investigation process. In this perspective, individual interviews of the key stakeholders of the Mediterranean policies have been performed<sup>4</sup>. More particularly, interviewed stakeholders came from different levels of decision and action:

- European levels including representatives from European institutions such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions...
- National level including officers of foreign affairs ministries (France, Italy, Spain) and other relevant ministries: persons in charge of the Mediterranean cooperation and territorial cooperation;
- Regional level including persons in charge of the Mediterranean cooperation and territorial cooperation within regional authorities but also responsible of key Mediterranean regions' networks and organizations like ARLEM, Med Cities, CPMR, Arc Latin, UCLG...
- Key experts.

The interviews aimed at sharing with different stakeholders the knowledge and information available on macro-regional approaches but also at identifying what are, according to them, the main issues related to the potential implementation of such an approach in the Mediterranean. More particularly, stakeholders were invited to explore the conditionalities expressed in the paper issued by Nordregio: « *the success of a macro regional strategy is basically dependent on the capacity to realise tailor made solutions within the six fields of tension* » : thematic, institutional, coordinating, instrumental, power sharing tensions and a final one related other overarching EU goals like Territorial Cohesion.

## Main outcomes of the paper

This document does not aim at providing a “one best way” to achieve a macro-regional approach in the Mediterranean area. Its main goal is to give a broad vision of the numerous understanding of what could be like and how could be prepared a macro-region in the Mediterranean area.

A great variety of positions and statements came out from the interviews resulting in the identification of different scenarios for a Mediterranean approach. The conclusions thus outlined in this document mainly reflect the opinion expressed by stakeholders during the interviews. They are strongly linked to a specific moment and “landscape” that might change along institutional and political evolutions at all levels of decision. Following this document, policy recommendations from the RIM will be formulated and presented within a Final Policy Paper foreseen for Autumn 2010.

The first section of this paper is devoted to the analysis of the main lessons learnt from existing macro-regional experiences, namely the Baltic and the Danube Strategies. These lessons include what these strategies actually are and the added-value brought by them; on the other hand, the section tries to underline what macro-regional approaches are not, and what should not be expected from these policy tools, what they are not. These lessons have led us to highlight 4 key territorial, institutional, political and cultural “asset” favouring the implementation of macro-regional approaches.

---

<sup>4</sup> See list of interviewed stakeholders in Annex 1

### Key assets for initiating a macro-regional approach

- 1- *A relevant territorial scale sharing common issues*
- 2- *Different levels of territorial development*
- 3- *A common cooperation culture*
- 4- *Active lobbying strategies by Member States*

The performed interviews have also allowed identifying many reasons justifying the implementation of a macro-regional approach in the Mediterranean context. The second section highlights 7 main rationales for implementing such an approach.

### Rationales for implementing a Mediterranean macro-regional approach

- 1- *Addressing the key Mediterranean territorial challenges*
- 2- *Capitalizing on the assets of Mediterranean territorial cooperation*
- 3- *Addressing the lacks of the Mediterranean intergovernmental cooperation*
- 4- *Insuring equal opportunity between the different EU territories*
- 5- *Anchoring Mediterranean countries in the EU Neighbourhood*
- 6- *Mainstreaming territorial cooperation in the future Regional Policy (2014-2020)*
- 7- *Introducing a strategic approach within EU territorial cooperation programmes*

Then, the report highlights 6 “fields of tensions” related to the implementation of a macro-regional approach in the Mediterranean area.

- 1- *The scale of a Mediterranean macro-region*
- 2- *Financial tensions*
- 3- *Coordination with the UfM process and the other Mediterranean policies*
- 4- *Taking into account the new EU institutional context*
- 5- *The level of cooperation culture in the Mediterranean area*
- 6- *Time and agenda setting*

The fourth section is devoted to a sort of “reality check” by examining the current position of key stakeholders towards a potential macro-regional approach in the Mediterranean area. The current “*macro-regional fever*” should lead decision-takers to overlook the actual political landscape. Indeed, at governmental and intergovernmental level, interviews have allowed to identify various levels of awareness and various perception of what could be the added-value of a Mediterranean macro-regional approach. Among a wide range of perception, it appeared that national authorities, notably in France and Spain, are to date very cautious in envisaging such an approach that is still considered as potentially jeopardizing the UfM.

Eventually, the paper ends with the identification of 3 different scenarios of how could emerge a macro-regional approach in the Mediterranean area.

## MAIN LEARNING FROM THE BALTIC SEA AND THE DANUBE EXPERIENCES

Since the adoption of the Baltic Sea and the Danube strategies, the concept of macro-region is becoming fashionable. Many actors are advocating the dissemination of this policy approach to the Mediterranean area despite the numerous differences existing with the Baltic Sea region.

### A highly innovative approach towards territorial policies

Stakeholders all share the same statement: the main characteristics of macro-regions is innovation. Macro-regional Strategies as developed in the Baltic Sea region and the Danube have indeed been carried out in order to overcome difficulties and deadlocks encountered by traditional features of governance and traditional policy instruments.

### Elaboration of a transnational territorial Strategy

Obviously, the main outcome of a macro-regional approach is the elaboration and the adoption of a transnational territorial Strategy. Such a Strategy is radically innovative from different points of view. Firstly, different member States state presenting themselves as belonging to a common space, sharing common issues and priorities and define a set of common priorities and activities. The territorial dimension of the Baltic Sea approach is also to be noticed: “*The EU Strategy Baltic Sea Region is the only document that explicitly addresses territorial development strategies in a macro-region*”<sup>5</sup>. For example, the Baltic Sea Strategy defined 15 Priority Areas under the umbrella of 4 strategic “pillars”:

1. To make the Baltic Sea region an environmentally sustainable place;
2. To make the Baltic Sea region a prosperous place;
3. To make the Baltic Sea region an accessible and attractive place;
4. To make the Baltic Sea region a safe and secure place.

### The coordination of various EU territorial policies

The second level of innovation concerns the coordination of existing European territorial programmes and policies as implemented in the region.

A great achievement of the Baltic Sea and Danube experiences consists in the coordination of the various programmes and instruments of the cohesion policy. A macro-regional Strategy indeed relies on the whole ERDF envelope meaning that projects implemented in this framework could benefit at the same time from regional, cross-border and transnational funds. This firstly provides stronger financial resources to the achievement of the strategic objectives. It secondly allows to bring consistency and coordination between the different parts of the regional policy. Thirdly, a macro-regional approach benefits from a commitment of higher levels of State administrations.

---

<sup>5</sup> Dubois, Alexandre, Hedin, Sigrid, Schmitt, Peter and Sterling, José, “EU macro-regions and macro-regional strategies – A scoping study” in *Nordregio Electronic Working Paper* 2009:4

## Identification of integrated “flagship projects”

The macro-regional strategies elaborated and adopted in the Baltic Sea and in the Danube areas go further in terms of operational commitment than previous intergovernmental statements and declarations generally limited to general strategic priorities and vague objectives. In the Baltic Sea region, a detailed Action Plan including 75 “flagship projects” was thus annexed to the Strategy embedded in the Communication of the European Commission. Moreover, a list of dedicated partners and a coordinator (*chef de file*) have been identified for each flagship project.

## A solemn commitment of member States and European institutions

The adoption of a macro-regional strategy involves an official strategic positioning and a high level commitment that is not today allowed within the process of elaboration of operational programmes. Indeed, those strategies have to be formally approved and signed at the governmental level by the relevant ministries. Territorial cooperation in the Mediterranean area suffers from a weak commitment of member States. The political visibility provided to projects by a macro-regional approach would allow a much higher level of engagement of national actors.

## A multilevel and participatory elaboration process

The policy-making process implemented to prepare, elaborate and implement the strategies constitutes also an innovation as it will be detailed further on in the present document. In fact, the Baltic Sea Strategy was adopted in the framework of a Communication of the European Commission released on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

The preparation of the Baltic Sea Strategy has been a multilevel process with a very strong commitment on the part both of central States and local and regional actors. These processes made it possible to identify priority areas and projects for this future region. In this bottom-up approach, regions had an important and active role.

### The public consultation organized for the Baltic Strategy<sup>6</sup>

*The public consultation process that took place between August 2008 and February 2009, intended to gain substantial input for the direction and structure of the strategy, in turn yielding increased legitimacy once adopted (and also smoothing the adoption process itself). In addition to input by member states and regions, a number of non-governmental organizations and international governmental organizations, and also individuals, have contributed propositions and opinions regarding the strategy. A total of 109 interventions have been made, in the form of position papers and opinions at two stakeholder conferences (Stockholm August 2008 and Rostock February 2009) and four round-tables (in Kaunas, Gdansk, Copenhagen and Helsinki), at a youth conference in Hamburg, and through an on-line consultation forum in November and December of 2008. The consultation process allowed a number of conclusions shared by a majority of stakeholders<sup>7</sup>:*

- *The absolute need for a strategy for the Baltic Sea region.*
- *The need for an integrated approach to ensure impact.*
- *An important role for the Commission in the actual working of the strategy.*
- *A focus on concrete projects to gain impact on the ground.*

<sup>6</sup> Bengtsson, Rikard, *An EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: good intentions meet complex challenges*, European Policy Analysis 9-2009

<sup>7</sup> See Commission 2009c, Hübner 2009

- *No need to develop new institutions, against the background of the many organizations already in existence.*
- *An ambition to move beyond empty declaration and rather work with designated lead countries and specific targets and deadlines.*

## The limits of existing macro-regional approaches

As underlined earlier, the signal sent by the European Commission with the adoption of the Baltic Sea and the Danube Strategies has raised strong and diverse expectations among a wide range of actors at local, regional, national and European level. It is thus also important to sketch the limits of the new political, institutional and financial framework provided by macro-regional strategies. People involved in the elaboration and the implementation of this instrument all stress the experimental dimension of the strategies that are not to solve all the problems encountered since decades by EU territorial policies and cooperation programmes.

### The 3 NOs

The communication of the European Commission concerning the Baltic Sea Strategy clearly underlines the principle of the three NOs: “*no additional institution, no additional legislation, no additional funding*”. The European Parliament was in favour of a more ambitious financial framework, including the creation of a dedicated budgetary line supporting the implementation of the strategy through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). As often underlined by European Commission’s official, no specific funds or financial facility should be expected from macro-regional approach. However,

### Not an official EU policy instrument

The Baltic Sea Strategy has thus quickly become a very important “asset” in the communication on regional policy of the European Commission. Yet, macro-regions are still not considered as an “official” EU policy instrument.

The procedure implemented for the Baltic Sea and the Danube areas is presented by the European Commission’s officers as an experimental one. According to European Commission’s officers, this experimentation should at this stage be analyzed and assessed before envisaging any dissemination to other areas. Moreover, many stakeholders stress that the approach implemented for the Baltic Sea and the Danube region is unique and could not be transposed as such in other areas and particularly in the Mediterranean area.

### Lack of evaluation on the implementation of flagship projects

Very little return of experience is today available on the practical implementation of the 75 flagship projects that constitute the core of the Baltic Sea Strategy. The main lesson that can already be drawn from the procedures under which the Baltic Sea Strategy has been developed so far concerns the lack of synchronisation between the 2007-2013 programming period and the timeframe for the Strategy. This lack of synchronisation has had the effect of restricting the strategy’s potential. The changes in priorities (in content or in timeframe) in the Operational Programmes imposed by the action plan came into effect while the OP and their management structures had already been in existence for more than two years. This made things particularly difficult in view of the complexity of those procedures under regional policy.

## A multilevel governance framework

Surprisingly, the decision-making process implemented within the Baltic Sea macro-region remains quite vague and full of ambiguities. One should remind that the implementation phase of the macro-region is only at its starting point and that governance issues should mainly be looked upon for the preparation phase. As stated above, the analysed governance framework does not constitute as such the basis of a “standardised” policy making process.

### The ambiguous contribution of EU member States

Member States are identified as the initiators, the “triggering” actor, of macro-regional processes. The upstream lobbying of Scandinavian and Baltic Sea Member States has brought a crucial contribution the initiation of this procedure.

In the context of the Baltic Sea and of the Danube region, Member States, through the European Council, have requested the European Commission to initiate and coordinate a Strategy and Action Plan elaboration process. In this perspective, a crucial role is played by the Member State in charge of the EU Presidency, notably in terms of EU Council summits agenda setting<sup>8</sup>.

However, many stakeholders also underlined how member States, whose initiative is necessary to start the whole process, are somehow marginalized in the process of elaboration and adoption of macro-regions. The European Commission enjoyed a central position with a very little contribution from the Member States and the Council who have no formal decision power and who are nevertheless asked to validate and approve elaborated documents. For the Baltic Sea macro-region, Member States have chosen to overcome this difficulty by including their position on the Baltic Sea Strategy within the *conclusions* of a Council’s meeting. This means that the position taken by the Council cannot be considered as legally binding. Moreover, the Council’s position distinguishes the Strategy itself, that has been *approved*, from the Action Plan, of which the Council *takes note*.

In the Baltic Sea area, a High Level Working Group has also been established in order to follow-up and monitor the implementation of the Strategy and of the Action Plan. This Group gathering the ministries of foreign affairs of 27 EU member States aims at monitoring and steering the implementation of the Baltic Sea Strategy. The main orientations adopted within this working group should be validated by the European Council and then (if requested) by the council of heads of State. The decision-making process within the Baltic Sea region is thus mainly an intergovernmental procedure.

### The central role of the European Commission

Once the macro-regional strategy has been initiated by the member States during a Council meeting, the European Commission becomes the leading actor meaning the institution that is practically in charge of coordinating the strategy elaboration process including dialogue with all relevant stakeholders through the organisation of seminars, roundtables, workshops and other events.

In the case of the Baltic Sea Strategy, the first striking element is the central role played by the DG REGIO that has concentrated most of the expertise and the human resources devoted to the Strategy and the Action Plan elaboration. During the implementation phase, the Commission is also in charge of following up the Strategy implementation. Such a role is very unusual in the

---

<sup>8</sup> The next Mediterranean presidency are scheduled as follows: 2012 second semester: Cyprus ; 2014 first semester: Greece; 2014 second semester: Italy.

context of regional policies that are characterized by much more “regionalized” management procedures<sup>9</sup>.

Again, the Commission brings the main contribution to the elaboration of the Strategy and the Action Plan. Both documents are then released as a Communication of the European Commission. As no additional funding are allocated to finance the Action Plan, the adoption and implementation of a macro-regional strategy do not require any “official” regulation or directive.

### **The limited contribution of regional and local authorities**

The definition of the Baltic Sea Strategy has been implemented through a transnational participatory process involving many different stakeholders from each country including local and regional authorities. These processes allowed identifying the future regional priority areas and projects. In this bottom-up approach, some regions had an important and active role<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, generally speaking, the actual multilevel dimension of these processes given limited effective local and regional authorities to their preparation and their management. For example, territorial actors does not seem to be represented within the High Level Working Group that is currently emerging as the leading governance body of the Baltic Sea Strategy.

Once the Baltic Sea Strategy was defined, regions were also involved: they had to adapt their operational programmes to the strategic axes and projects identified within the Baltic Sea Strategy. This second phase of the preparation phase had rather a top-down perspective. As a result, the ownership of the strategy by the territorial actors is weak – and for those who have played an active role in the open consultation phase and now find themselves excluded from the implementation phase, the disappointment is real. And yet, as has been observed with regard to the Lisbon Strategy, “ownership” is a pre-requisite for the effective delivery of this top-down strategy.

### **Key assets for initiating a macro-regional approach**

The Baltic Sea and Danube processes are still in infancy as regards the operational implementation of concrete “*flagship*” projects. Yet, their elaboration and official endorsement by the European Commission constitute *per se* a remarkable achievement that deserves to be closely examined and analysed. As underlined by many stakeholders, pushing forward a macro-regional approach is a long and highly uncertain political process requesting numerous favourable preconditions. Four of these preconditions are hereunder presented.

### **A relevant territorial scale with shared issues**

As stated in the Baltic Sea strategy, a macro-regional process is built upon the recognition by all participating countries that they “*share many common resources and demonstrate considerable interdependence*”: environment was an obvious common denominator for all the territories concerned by the Baltic Sea Strategy as well as geopolitical and geo-economic issues. These issues are also key in the Adriatic region where it is currently envisaged to initiate a macro-regional approach...

---

<sup>9</sup> See Medgovernance project *Mediterranean Governance Report*

<sup>10</sup> Baltic Sea regional authorities do not constitute a homogeneous group. German Länder enjoy a strong autonomy and competences while in Poland, voivodeships could be compared to French region in terms of regional programming of public policies; in Scandinavian, regional influence varies according to the context and the state of negotiation between individual regions and central States.

In this perspective, an important precondition for participating countries is to consider that they belong to the same geographic and territorial entity. Another vision is the one of an administrative (or bottom-up) zoning of macro-regional areas, as it has been used, among other examples, for the MED area. Acknowledged examples of successful macro-regional approaches (Baltic Sea area, Danube region) dealt with territorial entities sharing cultures, values, geographic proximity. For many stakeholders, the issue of scale is important: the size of the macro-region should be “reasonable”. However, existing macro-regions (Baltic Sea, Danube) are characterized by their large-scale transnational dimension. For that reason, they could not be confused with Euro-regions that concern more restricted cross-border areas.

### **Different levels of territorial development and European integration**

Paradoxically, territorial heterogeneity may be considered as an important and positive asset for initiating a macro-regional process. Already implemented (Baltic Sea, Danube) or foreseen (Adriatic) processes gather countries with highly heterogeneous levels of territorial economic development. As explicitly stated in the Baltic Sea Strategy, this region is recognised as a “highly heterogeneous area in economic, environmental and cultural terms”.

Heterogeneity in levels of European integration is also a positive asset. Existing and foreseen Macro-regions rely on hybrid partnerships gathering territories from “old Europe” and territories from “new Europe”. In the Baltic Sea region, one finds Germany and Scandinavian countries with “new comers” like the Baltic countries and Poland but also Russia. In the case of the Danube region, one finds 8 member States Germany again but also Austria with “new comers” from Eastern and Central Europe<sup>11</sup> with 6 non-EU countries including acceding countries<sup>12</sup> and “candidate” countries such as Ukraine, Moldavia.

Economic, social and cultural diversity should not therefore be regarded as deadlocks or blocking gaps. Disparities constitute obviously an impetus and even a trigger for transnational cooperation that is fuelled here not only by opportunities and emerging markets represented by “developing” countries<sup>13</sup> but also by a heavy amount of European funds (cohesion, convergence but also accession) benefiting to “new” European countries. Such resources represent clearly a powerful trigger for cooperation on the side of “old Europe” countries while cohesion funds are repeatedly disputed.

### **A common cooperation culture**

The process of creation of the Baltic Sea macro-region has obviously benefited from the cultural context in the area. Since centuries and at least since the Hanseatic League in the Middle Age, a very strong tradition of transnational cooperation is deeply rooted in the history of the region. Germany, Scandinavian countries and Baltic countries all share a strong culture of dialogue, transparency and consensus in decision-making. The fact that all the Baltic countries, with the exception of Russia, are member States of the European Union is also a very favourable factor bringing a high level of homogeneity among the partners. This common cultural background and this tradition of transnational cooperation make it easy for the partners to develop open discussions and to share experience on many different topics. For instance, the issue of migrations has been intensely discussed within Baltic working groups.

---

<sup>11</sup> Hungary, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania

<sup>12</sup> Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro

<sup>13</sup> Like in the theory of competitive advantage

Hence, the “willingness to cooperate”, that is the actual development of transnational cooperation can be considered as a good indicator of the maturity of a given area in the perspective of a macro-region. Indeed, a macro-regional approach must be first and foremost supported by local and regional stakeholders. The Baltic Sea region provides with good examples of those “autonomous” initiatives taken by national but also local and private actors. The Bonus 169 project is a typical illustration of that trend<sup>14</sup>. This project has been launched the very day of the adoption of the Baltic Sea Strategy; it aims at creating a cooperation framework between research institutes in maritime R&D in the Baltic Sea region. This initiative benefited from a co-financing from the R&D Framework Programme amounting to 50 million euros thanks to article 169<sup>15</sup> of the former EU Treaty which enables member States to develop subregional programmes (for instance limited to the Baltic area) with European co-financing.

The intergovernmental level also constitutes a crucial asset. The Baltic Sea region had a very long and successful experience of intergovernmental cooperation within the Baltic Sea State Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC), prior to the adoption of the Strategy. In the Baltic Sea region as well as in the Danube region many countries have very recently entered the European Union. The Baltic and the Danube can be seen both as “creative machines” with public actors used to innovation and cooperation and having strong links with the Commission and the other European institutions.

Beyond good will and ability to cooperate, macro-regional approaches also require a kind of “appetite for experimentation”. Introducing new features of transnational governance inevitably results in challenging existing decision-making processes, power distribution, roles and competences at different levels of decision. Engaging in those processes inevitably involves a certain level of risks that inevitably accompany the obvious opportunities represented by a macro-region.

### **Active lobbying of member States in the preparation phase**

As seen above, the intergovernmental level of cooperation constitutes a key asset. The interest and commitment of member States is a key element in order to initiate a macro-regional approach. This initiative generally takes place during a meeting of heads of State and Government.

The building of a macro-region requires a strong inter-governmental collaboration with the European Commission acting as “honest broker” and “primus inter pares” partners. A coalition of intents of the Member States participating in the macro-region must be forged. They must plan internal and external activities to create the conditions for the creation of the macro-region. This coalition has to plan an important diplomatic activity at diverse scales.

More generally, member States play a prominent role in the allocation of financial resources that are dedicated to transnational cooperation programmes. Each member State is granted with a global ERDF envelope covering all the objectives of regional policies (regional programmes; cross-border cooperation and transnational programmes). Then it is up to the member States (together with regional authorities according to the national institutional settings) to define the part of the whole national envelope that should be allocated to each programme. The budget of each programme is thus the sum of each national contribution. For example, for the current programming period, Spain had chosen to provide more financial resources to the regions of the Atlantic area than to Mediterranean regions.

---

<sup>14</sup> See [www.bonusportal.org](http://www.bonusportal.org)

<sup>15</sup> Article 185 in the Lisbon Treaty

## **7 RATIONALES FOR INITIATING A MEDITERRANEAN MACRO-REGION**

All the stakeholders agree on considering the macro-region as an opportunity for a new approach on trans-national development in the Mediterranean area. During the interviews, many different justifications have been identified. This section aims at analysing 7 rationales that have been repeatedly mentioned during the interviews. These rationales reflect the dual dimension of macro-regions: on the one hand, they can be considered as a purely European process, involving mainly regional programmes managed and coordinated by DG REGIO; on the other hand, they can be considered as a tool for the external relations of the EU, thus including the Neighbourhood Policy as an important component.

### **Addressing key Mediterranean territorial challenges**

For most of stakeholders, the main rationale for initiating a Mediterranean macro-regional approach is the need address the challenges faced today by Mediterranean territories.

Many of the territorial issues identified in this area involve strong interdependencies between various territories, policy fields and levels of action. Hence, they require a transnational answer.

### **Addressing the lacks of the Mediterranean intergovernmental cooperation**

According to Commission's officials, "*a macro-regional approach should be envisaged only when other policy instruments have failed*". For some stakeholders, existing policy Mediterranean instruments have reached today such a level of fragmentation that an effort of coordination is clearly needed. The Union for the Mediterranean launched in 2007 was supposed to give a new impetus to Mediterranean intergovernmental cooperation. As a matter of fact, this new framework of cooperation is today facing strong internal political tensions and difficulties in fund raising. Could a Mediterranean macro-regional approach provide with a revitalized cooperation framework enabling to overcome such difficulties.

### **Coordinating the "patchwork" of Mediterranean policies**

A Mediterranean macro-region would firstly address the issue of the fragmentation of "Mediterranean funds" coming from a variety of procedures and programs and dedicated to a variety of recipients. The concept of "Mediterranean policies" is a complex covering numerous instruments and programme ranging from the EU cohesion policy in the Mediterranean regions to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) but also the Euromediterranean process, the 5+5 process, the Mediterranean Integrated Maritime Policy but also bilateral cross-border cooperation... Of course in principle, all these programs are in line with general policy principles from the European Commission; but these principles are sometimes so vague that individual programmes can easily claim that they are in line with them even though they lead their own individual track. The elaboration of a Mediterranean Strategy should lead to a higher level of coordination between the various EU sectoral policies and programmes.

The establishment of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) in 2007 partly addressed this issue of coordination. The ENPI replaced some previous geographic and thematic programmes of the European Union to its neighbouring countries, like MEDA and TACIS programmes hence most of the funding of Euro-Mediterranean regional programmes. In practice, there is not much difference between MEDA and ENPI: both are divided into bilateral/individual programmes and regional programmes, with the regional programme only concentrating 10% of the MEDA funding. The Mediterranean integrated maritime policy

launched by DG MARE also represents a very significant attempt to develop an integrated and territory based approach of Mediterranean policies. However, the argument remains that funding systems continue to be fragmented and with scarce resource for a territorial approach.

### **Revitalizing the UfM**

At the intergovernmental level, the dialogue within the UfM is apparently blocked by internal difficulties (e.g Israeli-Palestinian conflict), as well as external geopolitical uncertainties (e.g. the negotiations over Iranian nuclear facilities). As a result, interministerial meetings have been regularly postponed since the inaugural conference of 13<sup>th</sup> July 2008 in Paris. The establishment of the Secretariat General in Barcelona has also been delayed and the launching of concrete projects (water management, solar energy, transport) has still not begun. A macro-regional approach could contribute to the implementation of the UfM strategic priorities and notably address the following issues that are challenging the UfM process to date:

- Operational involvement of the local and regional authorities. “Operational” involves a participation going beyond the representation of local authorities within the intergovernmental process thanks to the ARLEM and will include an active participation to the programming and to project implementation;
- The financing of projects: as a tool of coordination of different EU financing systems, a macro-regional strategy could allow the mobilisation of many EU programs;
- Emergence of integrated territorial projects: a macro-regional strategy provides with a multilevel governance framework for project programming, preparation and implementation.

### **Capitalizing on the assets of Mediterranean territorial cooperation**

Stakeholders also underlined the experiences and expertise built within Mediterranean cooperation programmes. This vision insists on the rich cooperation fabric and on the assets existing in the Mediterranean area in terms of intergovernmental dialogue, networks and organization, available expertise and territorial cooperation.

A key asset in this perspective is the experience is the autonomy and maturity of Mediterranean local and regional authorities, at least on the Northern side of the Mediterranean region. Mediterranean territorial actors enjoy strong institutional and technical competences, sometimes challenging the one of central States’ administration like in Spain or in Italy. They also share a long tradition in transnational cooperation built within the successive programmes (INTERREG, MED...). Hence, the current development of strategic projects in the framework of the MED programme<sup>16</sup> constitutes also a key asset as a unique experience of transnational territorial cooperation. A stronger strategic monitoring of projects is thus being experimented. The call for strategic projects has been co-written by member States representatives within the Monitoring Committee with strong contributions from national experts like, for example, the French Agency for Energy (ADEME) on the specific issue of energy. The success of the first call for projects of the CBC programme of the ENPI for the Mediterranean basin is also an illustration of the dynamism of the Mediterranean area. In that framework, a call for strategic projects is also provisioned for the 2010-2011 which constitutes an other opportunity for the emergence of “macro-projects”, meaning projects with a transnational Mediterranean impact and involving a multi-level partnership.

---

<sup>16</sup> Call for projects published on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010

In this perspective, a macro-region would simply consist in capitalizing on the assets and successes of Mediterranean cooperation. According to some stakeholders, the Mediterranean macro-region is a natural matter of fact. The Mediterranean area is *by excellence* the transnational area where such an approach would be relevant: actors, experts, projects, multilevel governance, everything is already there.

### Insuring equal opportunity between the different EU territories

Another geopolitical issue concerns potential unequal treatment that would come out of the development of the sole Baltic Sea and the Danube strategies. This would jeopardize the geopolitical balance that is theoretically insured by EU institutions between, on the one hand, the Western and Southern part of the EU and, on the other part, the Northern and Eastern part of the EU.

So far macro-region proposals concern areas of the North and Central Europe. According to some stakeholders without a generalized implementation, macro-regional approaches could lead to a “European zero sum game” with (territories participating to macro-regions) and losers (territories not participating to macro-region). Indeed one can expect the European Commission to mobilise funds and programmes under its direct authority<sup>17</sup> in order to support macro-regional projects in the Baltic and in the Danube areas. Macro-regions would therefore implicitly become priority areas for of both the Regional and the Neighbourhood Policy. The issue at stake here is the potential distortion of the principle of financial neutrality that is in theory at the heart of all European policies and programmes.

For some stakeholders, the creation of macro-region in the Northern and Eastern side of Europe thus reflects an implicit geopolitical vision of European decision-takers. According to such a vision, the future of Europe lies more in its peaceful enlargement to Eastern countries and in securing its relationships with Russia than in securing its Mediterranean neighbourhood. Indeed, Eastern and Central Europe is a priority strategic concerns as far as energy supply is concerns. Moreover, the next round of EU enlargement should concern Balkan countries (with current IPA countries such as Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro) and Ukraine whereas no accession process has to date been envisaged for Southern Mediterranean countries. As a results, the trend for future Neighbourhood Policy could be to devote as much political attention and resources to these Eastern and Central Europe acceding countries. In this perspective, Southern EU countries should be careful not to stay in an “outsider” position.

---

<sup>17</sup> Like the Framework Programme for Research and Development but also the Neighbourhood Policy

## Anchoring Mediterranean countries in the EU neighbourhood

According to different stakeholders, these strategies can be considered as “laboratories” for the enlargement of the EU and as experimental tools to facilitate the integration of new accessing countries to the European Union. The anchoring of the neighbourhood countries at the periphery of Europe has in fact become a strategic concern. It is a matter of developing convergence areas between countries whose development already impacts, and will increasingly impact, on the development of the single European market and on Europe’s place in a globalised world.

A macro-regional framework would provide a “meso-scale” model of European integration. This new paradigm of integration would be based on a step by step and incremental process and no more an on/off model. Such a model would allow to grow awareness of a common belonging of the different territories and populations to the Euro-Mediterranean area, on both shores. For the “older” EU countries, such a model would mean to develop new capacities of influence over the accessing and neighbourhood countries.

The economic impact of macro-regional approaches may also be very significant for these countries since the accessing countries benefit from a very heavy amount of EU financial support. For the European Union, macro-regions may constitute a *geopolitical continuum* or *corridor* running from the Black Sea to the North and the Baltic Sea. This issue is obvious in the context of the Baltic and the Danube regions that gather many new EU countries and acceding countries. For these new EU countries, a macro-region would allow to enjoy a more accessible and easy to grasp regional subnational framework (*klein heimat*).

## Introducing a strategic approach within EU territorial cooperation programmes

For many interviewed stakeholders, adopting a macro-regional approach would also allow a shift from program to projects in the conceptualization of cooperation programmes. Since the very beginning of the territorial cooperation programmes, observers have noticed and emphasised the lack of consistency and coherence of the local projects and activities implemented thanks to the funds of the cohesion policy. As stated in the CRPM Paper on macro-regional strategies issued in April 2010: “*The quantum leap anticipated in 2007 as a result of its promotion from Community Initiative to fully fledged Objective of the Cohesion Policy did not happen*”<sup>18</sup>. In other words, the approach so far has consisted in developing various sectorial programmes involving a weak connection with the territory.

Different attempts to introduce a more strategic approach to territorial cooperation are already to be observed. In the current programming period, National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF) at national level and Community Strategic Orientations (CSO) at European level clearly attempted to introduce common strategic priorities at both European and national levels. The latest call for strategic projects issued within the MED programme also aimed at addressing this problem by introducing a more top-down methodology with a stronger predefinition of what should be the partners, the activities and the methodology of the future projects. But many experts also stress that MED strategic projects will not be alone a sufficient solution to address numerous Mediterranean challenges. Devoted resources indeed are not sufficient to realise “hard” interventions such as infrastructural plans, technological or environmental investments.

---

<sup>18</sup> *What opportunities do territorial cooperation and the macro-regional strategies represent for cohesion policy after 2013*, Technical Paper from the CPMR General Secretariat, April 2010

A macro-regional strategy could thus allow such a “quantum leap” to a further stage in the programming methodology. Strategic and integrated projects would then be agreed and predefined within high-level international agreements. The different existing funds and programmes (regional, cross-border and transnational) would then provide different levels of co-financing for these projects. To date, the segmentation existing between different regional programmes and between different levels of decision has prevented the whole Mediterranean cooperation system to allow the implementation of those integrated projects.

## **Mainstreaming territorial cooperation in the future Regional Policy (2014-2020)**

Macro-regional strategy could be very useful in order to shape transnational programmes for the 2014-2020 period. Those strategies could provide future programmes with a consistent strategic, financial and governance framework. In this perspective, macro-regional strategies could also be useful in order to redefine the geographic scope of transnational cooperation programmes. For example, the Baltic macro-region matches with the geographic scope of the Baltic transnational programme. In the same perspective, the Danube macro-regional area includes most of the Central and Eastern Europe programme. Macro-regions thus constitute an opportunity to revisit and reframe the maps of the transnational cooperation programmes.

In the 2014-2020 budgetary period, macro-regional approaches could be relevant for the elaboration of operational programmes. This coordination could allow addressing the main obstacle met by the Baltic macro-region that is the difficulty to have the projects financed by the existing European programmes. Indeed, most of the European programmes had already been defined and scheduled without any reference to the Baltic Sea Strategy. As a result, macro-regional projects lack dedicated programmes and funds as well as they lack a governance framework in order to coordinate the different programmes existing for the area. So far various coordination procedures have been identified and provisioned. Firstly, each flagship project identified within the Action Plan is being coordinated by a dedicated partner of the macro-region (most of the time a member State). Secondly, DG REGIO has contacted the Management Authorities of the various programmes concerning the Baltic Area in order to foster the funding of the projects identified within the Action plan.

## **6 POTENTIAL FIELDS OF TENSIONS OF A MEDITERRANEAN MACRO-REGION**

This section is devoted to the exploration of 6 fields of tension identified for the Mediterranean area. The creation of macro-regions is not an easy task. It requires caution because of several constraints: tension among the stakeholders and particularly between the main protagonists: tension within central Governments, tension among public administrations at different levels, tension between public administrations of the same level (for example between the 20 Italian regions), tension inside administrations (i.e between DGs in the European Commission, between different ministries in a central government...), tension between programmes, tension with external states... Some of the identified tensions are related to macro-regional strategies in general while other tensions are more related to the specific characteristics of the Mediterranean area.

### **The geographic scale of a Mediterranean macro-region**

The first difficulty concerns the geographic scale of a Mediterranean macro-region. Performed interviews resulted in the expression of two main divergent positions regarding the issue of the relevant scale for a Mediterranean macro-regional approach.

For some stakeholders, the Mediterranean area as covered by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) appears to be too wide and complex to be considered as one macro-region. In this perspective, the Mediterranean area should be divided in several sub-regional areas (for example, a Western area, a central area including the Adriatic and Ionian area and an Eastern area). The main argument is here the complexity of the overall Mediterranean area and the territorial and institutional heterogeneity of the concerned territory that prevent from envisaging a single common tool for the whole region. Moreover, macro-regions have so far been designed as merely intra-EU processes managed through EU framework and procedures while the UfM is a North/South process with an intergovernmental governance.

For other stakeholders, only a pan-Mediterranean approach is worthwhile to be envisaged given the interdependencies and transversalities characterizing the Mediterranean region. For example, the depollution of the Mediterranean Sea deserves to involve all the Mediterranean countries. A Mediterranean macro-region should thus address the North/South geopolitical and geoeconomic issues and thus have a North/South ambition.

### **Financial tensions**

Increasing fund raising capacities firstly appear as a major asset of macro-regional approach. However, the current global financial crisis could jeopardize the existing programmes and financial instruments that the EU could devote to such an approach. Indeed, the current crisis is strongly impacting different EU Mediterranean countries (Greece, but also Spain, Portugal, Italy, France) and may therefore impact the amount of European funds available for regional policy and hence for macro-regional approaches.

## Coordination with the UfM process and the other Mediterranean policies

The UfM process does not only include Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries from the Mediterranean basin but also the whole European Union and its 27 member States. The UfM partnership and geographical scale is therefore much broader than the one of a Mediterranean macro-region. The UfM is not politically led by the EU (like the Neighbourhood Policy is for instance): all partners are equally co-responsible for and co-owners of the process.

In terms of financing, the scope identified for UfM projects is broader than the one of a macro-region (mainly regional policy and Neighbourhood Policy Instrument). Indeed a wide range of international contributions are expected including contributions from the World Bank, the European Investment Bank (EIB), Qatari funds, KfW, the African Development Bank but also private donors... The goal of the UfM is to achieve a high-level labelling process giving access to UfM labelled projects to international funds.

For many stakeholders, a Mediterranean macro-regional strategy should be clearly coordinated to the UfM process. In this perspective, the “classical” intra-EU procedure would appear as an “alien” initiative or at least a parallel procedure. A formal commitment of the UfM bodies (heads of States and Government and General Secretariat) is therefore strongly required in order to facilitate an ownership of the macro-region by all Mediterranean countries. Despite the participation of all 27 EU Member States to the UfM both procedures would remain different and separated. The UfM could not replace the European Council and directly ask the European Commission to prepare a Mediterranean strategy.

## Taking into account the new EU institutional context

The Lisbon Treaty is deepening a process of reinforcement of the governmental and intergovernmental levels in the European procedures and decision-making. This evolution firstly impacts the influence of the European Commission. It also results in a marginalization of regional authorities in the implementation of European policies and more particularly in the regional policy. Indeed, regional authorities have had a major role and influence in the traditional system of regional policy and particularly in territorial cooperation programmes. Historically, this bottom-up approach in regional policies and particularly in territorial cooperation has been facilitated by the European Commission that has deliberately favoured regional authorities, thanks to the regional funds and thanks to the establishment of direct political relationships. Macro-regional approaches involve a greater role of central administration in the definition of strategic priorities according to which these funds are being used.

In this context, a major field of uncertainties for future Mediterranean policies first concerns the establishment of a permanent EU Presidency<sup>19</sup>. Such an evolution will deeply change the agenda setting process within the European Council. As observed, the EU Presidency played a crucial role in setting the Baltic Sea and Danube regions at the agenda of Council Summits. How will the new Presidency impact the existing process? How will evolve the lobbying strategies so far carried out by stakeholders to influence the European decision-making process? In the same perspective, another uncertainty concerning the European policy-making process is the establishment of the European External Action Service<sup>20</sup>. This Service would integrate many different existing offices at three different levels of action: different DGs from

---

<sup>19</sup> Today headed by Mr Van Ruyp

<sup>20</sup> Under the authority of Jane Ashton

the European Commission: RELEX, AIDCO, Enlargement, Dev; the offices of the High Representatives for Common Foreign and Security Policy acting under the authority of the Council; diplomatic services and offices from the member States. This institutional change may aggravate the power struggles existing between the different DGs of the European Commission. Macro-regional processes result in providing DG REGIO with a very central position when the issue at stake is to allow a greater participation of all the other sectoral DGs and of DG RELEX.

## The level of cooperation culture in the Mediterranean area

The Mediterranean area is characterized by a long lasting cooperation culture resulting on a multiplicity of cooperation programmes. Yet, this dense and rich fabric is far from guaranteeing an effective will to cooperate. Many stakeholders underlined the difficulties and blockages encountered by cooperation frameworks and programmes established at various levels of action.

As underlined above, the UfM intergovernmental process is currently blocked by internal difficulties. At the interregional level, the elaboration of the call for strategic project in the framework of the MED programme has illustrated the structural difficulties to shift from a bottom-up approach to a more strategic approach. Many stakeholders of the MED programme expressed clear reluctance to adopt such an approach. It took nearly one year to prepare and publish the call for projects. Agreeing on both priorities was very difficult. The identification of the relevant stakeholders for each priority took also a lot of time. Moreover, the level of resources devoted to this call for projects is much lower than initially provisioned (15 million euro). Even in Italy where regions have a strong cooperation culture, dialogue and cooperation are rather based on financial resources sharing than on the co-designing of common strategic position and projects. Central State plays the role of the Mother proposing a big cake that regions, its children, are sharing. There is no vision of territorial development here.

A “pan-Mediterranean” approach would involve a high intensity of North-South territorial cooperation. Although Mediterranean local and regional authorities have already a long tradition of “decentralized cooperation” they have so far little experience of large scale strategic projects. Existing strategic cooperation programmes (MED, ENPI-CBC for the Mediterranean basin) has not just been launched and no return of experience is to date available on projects’ implementation.

## Time and agenda setting

Initiating, preparing, elaborating and then implementing a macro-regional approach is heavily time consuming. For example, 8 Commission's officers were devoted at full time to the elaboration of the Baltic Sea Strategy; then, 6 officers are in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Strategy. In addition, macro-regional approaches involve a lot of inter-DG work<sup>21</sup>.

As analysed above, agenda setting is a key target in the preparation of a macro-regional process. In this perspective, timing is a crucial issue of the lobbying strategies that should be explicitly launched by concerned member-States and relevant stakeholders. Performed interviews have highlighted two different approaches concerning the timing of a Mediterranean approach. The first one consists in integrating the macro-region in the preparation process of the 2014-2020 EU budgetary period. Thus, an official statement of the European Council should be adopted as soon as autumn 2010.

### Preparatory phase as highlighted in the CRPM paper on macro-regional strategies

*The European Council, in September 2010 at the latest, would need to ask in its conclusions that all the macro-regional strategies to be implemented as from 2014 should be developed by the end of 2012 at the latest. In order for this to happen the European Commission should submit, by June 2011, a proposal for the conceptual and operational framework (the latter to be integrated into the proposed regulations expected mid-2011) for the implementation of the strategies.*

*The debate on the potential geographical areas to be covered by those strategies could be organised by each of the 13 existing transnational areas by the end of 2011. Thematic conferences held in each area would identify a limited number of priority axes specific to each strategy area, while a general debate would take place on the (re)definition of the area in question.*

*Following these conferences, the Member States concerned would decide on the macro-regional strategies to be developed. These would then be prepared during 2012, on the basis of the axes identified at the thematic conferences.*

Far from this “state of emergency”, the other identified approach is the one envisaged by member States committed to the preparation of a Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionic area. The perspective is here more a middle-term, long term one with the ambition to have a formal commitment of the European Council by 2014. This position acknowledges the need for extended upstream negotiation and lobbying at all levels of action.

---

<sup>21</sup> For many stakeholders, such a position clearly lacks consistency. At the political level, it seems difficult to launch macro-regional strategies only in the Northern and Eastern countries of the European Union. This would be perceived by other countries as unfair or at least as a risk of unequal treatment by the European Commission. At the legal and procedural level, it is important to note that the European Commission cannot decide on its own to initiate or not a macro-regional strategy. Only the European Council has the ability and competence to do so. Finally, the lack of human resources available is not really a good argument or excuse.

## POSITIONING OF THE KEY MEDITERRANEAN STAKEHOLDERS

Although governance issues are described as essential, macro-regional approaches rely first and foremost on the political commitment of concerned public authorities at different levels of action and decision (local, regional, national, intergovernmental...). This section aims at assessing the “willingness to cooperate” and also to “experiment” that is already expressed by the main stakeholders of a potential Mediterranean macro-region.

### The “silent majority”: Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries

The participation of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries is a major issue in the perspective of a pan-Mediterranean macro-regional approach.

A fundamental difference exists between the Southern Mediterranean countries and the Western Balkan countries: the latter have a clear direction to follow, the accession in the European Union, while Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, except Turkey and Morocco, are not involved in such a procedure.

So far Mediterranean countries do not seem to be ready to enter a macro-regional process. For many observers, initiating a Mediterranean macro-region could be perceived by partner Mediterranean countries as short-cut of the UfM process. In this context, growing awareness among partner countries of the stakes and opportunities involved by a Mediterranean macro-regional approach appear as a crucial stake of any envisaged lobbying strategy.

### The key European member States

Performed interviews clearly highlighted that awareness is growing among the key Mediterranean Member States, namely, Spain, Italy and France, where public authorities are more and more paying attention to the concept of macro-region. The Baltic Sea and Danube experiences have of course played a key role in triggering the interest of member States for macro-regions. Italy and Spain are already envisaging to initiate a new initiative be it in the Adriatic or Atlantic area. Regarding the opportunity and the feasibility of a Mediterranean macro-region, a diversity of positioning is to be observed: interest, ambiguity and reluctance.

#### Italy

In Italy, the issue of macro-region is closely followed up by different Ministries: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Economic Development and the office for regional affairs of the Council Presidency. As stated by Alfredo Mantica, Foreign undersecretary, *“Italy shares the European Union approach on macro-regions and it is convinced that it is worthy to follow it without any hesitation in the areas that are mature for that”*.

Today, Italian authorities seem to express a low level of interest for the “pan-Mediterranean scenario”. Meanwhile, the “sub-regional” option is more and more envisaged. In this perspective, Italy could potentially be involved in macro-regional approaches concerning two different areas: the Alps and the Adriatic Ionian areas. The Italian central Government is thus today strongly committed to the preparation of a macro-region for the Adriatic Ionian area which is considered as the main opportunity for a macro-region given the potential participation of the Balkan countries.

## The process of preparation of an Adriatic-Ionic macro-region

*Agreements have been elaborated and adopted with the Slovenian and Greek authorities. High-level discussions have also been undertaken with public authorities of Balkan countries. Within the Italian government, different ministries are clearly committed to this project among which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy that are already preparing the agenda of the EU for the semester of 2013 where Italy will be responsible for the Presidency of the EU. The explicit objective will then to have the Council to mandate the European Commission for the preparation of the Adriatic Ionic macro-region. At the intergovernmental level, the first initiative undertaken by the Italian government dates back to 2000 where it created the Initiative for the Adriatic and Ionic region, a structure with some human resources. This structure could be used to contribute to the elaboration of the Strategy that would therefore not only be taken in charge by the European Commission. An active lobbying strategy is also been implemented by the Italian government and notably by the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs that is been travelling around Europe (UK, Germany, Hungary, Brussels...) to ask for their support within the European Council to the Adriatic Ionic macro-region.*

### **Spain**

Spanish authorities have so far shown little interest for the concept of macro-region. For example, Spanish representatives remained absolutely silent during an information meeting on the issue of macro-region held in Brussels in April 2010. This silent can be understood either as a lack of awareness of the macro-regional issues or as an implicit hostility of Spanish authorities to participating to such a process. Nevertheless, Spanish authorities envisage participating to a macro-regional Strategy that would cover the Atlantic arc area. On the contrary, Spanish authorities have expressed no specific interest for a potential Mediterranean macro-region. This has to be taken into account regarding the key position of Spain as in charge of the EU Presidency until July 2010 and as the host countries of the General Secretariat of the UfM and of the provisioned summit of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010<sup>22</sup>. Spain is also considering that UfM should remain the main priority and that a macro-regional approach in the Mediterranean could introduce confusion and even more complexity instead of fostering undergoing initiatives and projects.

### **France**

The development of the Baltic and Danube strategies has raised a strong interest from the French authorities and particularly from the Permanent Representation towards the EU (located in Brussels) that has closely followed up the preparation and implementation of these processes. Thus the Delegation has sent strong warnings to the Government on the several crucial political and financial issues associated to the development of macro-region as a new tool of the cohesion and regional policy of the European Union. In this perspective, informal discussions about macro-region took place in a working group gathering the French Delegation, members of the staff UfM, representatives of other central administrations (European Affairs, Territory Planning...) with representatives of the European Commission.

So far the following areas are being envisaged as potential macro-regions: the Mediterranean area but also the Atlantic Arc, the Alpine area, French Overseas Territories, the Channel and Flemish area or the cross-border area gathering Belgium, Luxemburg and the Lorraine region... French authorities have supported the principle of a macro-regional initiative focus on the Atlantic area. This initiative could be supported by France during the Belgium presidency in the perspective of the Council meeting to be held in Autumn 2010.

---

<sup>22</sup>

Since then postponed to November 2010

French Government is expressing ambiguous feelings towards a macro-regional approach for the Mediterranean area. French authorities are concerned not to multiply political initiatives in this area. The main condition for envisaging a Mediterranean macro-region is that this initiative would be clearly understood and “owned” by all the UfM partners. A macro-region should not be perceived as an “alien” process. The main issue is not “to frighten” partner countries from the Southern and Eastern side of the Mediterranean. The priority of French public authorities is first and foremost to consolidate and enhance the UfM process through two main activities that are the establishment of the General Secretariat currently under going and the organization of the Intergovernmental meeting foreseen early November 2010 in Barcelona. After the Barcelona summit, French authorities could envisage to support such an approach. However, in a first stage, French government would support macro-regions as a generic policy instrument and not only for the Mediterranean area.

French authorities are also involved in the prospective study implemented by the Managing Authority of the MED programme concerning the feasibility of a Mediterranean macro-region<sup>23</sup>.

## The European Commission

The European Commission is also expressing ambiguous positions towards macro-regions. The Commission seems to be more and more reluctant to transpose the macro-regional approach to other areas, like the Mediterranean. DG REGIO stressed the need to assess the outcomes and results of the strategies already elaborated (Baltic and Danube) before promoting the emergence of new macro-regions.

The issue at stake is whether this process can be transposed to other macro-regions or whether it is only a “one shot” process. Being highly time consuming, it appears that human resources available within DG REGIO are much too scarce to allow the same level of commitment that DG REGIO had for the Baltic Sea Strategy. The issue of human resources seems indeed to be the main obstacle for committing the European Commission in new macro-regional processes.

Nevertheless, positions expressed in 2010 by EC officers are more open to the perspective of new macro-regional approaches including in the Mediterranean area. They support the idea of new processes provided that these processes are able to prove their “added-value” compared to existing cooperation frameworks.

For the Mediterranean area, at least three DGs would be mobilised: REGIO, RELEX and MARE. The key DG is clearly DG REGIO which has the highest level of expertise on territorial planning and the highest capacity of steering a complex, transversal and multi-level process. DG RELEX and DG MARE do not have the same level of technical expertise and political maturity with still a very sectoral approach. In this regard, DG MARE is bringing a marginal contribution to the Baltic Sea Strategy although maritime issues are key in the regional context.

## Mediterranean local and regional authorities

Local and regional levels are key actors in the creation of a space and in the accomplishment of a territory development goal. Strategy will become multi-level and multi-players, in the field of social and territorial cohesion. In this framework, there are different competences and roles

---

<sup>23</sup> The reflection process combines two different levels: a general strategic reflection and a specific reflection devoted to the instruments and programmes that could be proposed in the perspective of the 2014-2020 programming period.

from regional sides; from one side the direct centralized governance in the activity management, from the other side a “catalyst” role in the sphere of an extended responsibility among national, regional and local stakeholders; another interesting trend is the gradual empowerment of the regions in issues as, for example, immigration. The growing use of multi-level governance helps to empower the regional authorities but also involves much more actors of the civil society in the implementation both on European and national level. “Horizontal” actors of the private sector and the civil society have been involved in the different stages of projects and policies implementation. The relationships among subjects at different level of governance could be facilitated also in the case that these processes would be very limited. The biggest obstacle is the incomplete maturation of administrative decentralization in Europe and in particular in the Mediterranean countries on the East and South shore.

### **The Italian regions**

Beside the project of an Adriatic Ionic process, Italian Western regions are expressing a strong interest for the perspective of a Mediterranean macro-region. In principle, they are all interested but they are also aware of the political complexity of such an initiative and thus prudent. The Sardinia region shows particular interest since it is managing the CBC Med programme. Meanwhile, Italian regions are interested by a potential macro-region in the Western Mediterranean. Within the National Committee for Transnational Cooperation, the Presidency is led by the Campania region and the vice-Presidency by the Tuscany region. Both regions are sustaining the debate on the possibility to create a Mediterranean or sub-Mediterranean (Western) macro-region.

### **The Spanish Autonomous Communities**

Today, Spanish autonomous communities are expressing no explicit interest towards macro-regional approaches. Moreover, the Spanish “landscape” is politically fragmented by strong differences of political acquaintances existing between Catalonia, Valencia and Andalusia.

### **The PACA region**

PACA region is fully aware of the challenges and opportunities related to a macro-regional approach in the Mediterranean area. A part from its involvement in the MEDGOVERNANCE project, PACA region has coordinated the working group of the MED programme managing authority on macro-regions.

### **Local and regional authorities’ networks and organizations**

Mediterranean regions’ and municipalities’ organizations have very early been considering the concept of macro-region. Different levels of involvement can be identified. On the one hand, some organizations are clearly committed to support and promote a process of preparation in the Mediterranean area.

The Committee of the Regions has already strongly contributed to disseminating the concept of macro-region as a potential European policy instrument. The meeting organized on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010 has been a key moment in growing awareness among regional and local actors on the importance of macro-regional approaches.

CPMR has been very soon investigating the main governance features of the Baltic and Danube experiences. For CPMR, macro-regions therefore constitute an interesting “vehicule” to promote various of its “traditional” claims: securing cohesion policy programmes for Mediterranean regions, mainstreaming territorial cooperation programmes and multi-level governance and territorial approach...

On the other hand, other networks and organizations show very little commitment to the perspective of a Mediterranean macro-region. The Arc Latin network is yet not firmly positioned on the macro-regional approach. However, Arc Latin has carried out a prospective survey on a macro-region concept that would gather the various metropolitan areas that constitute the Arc Latin area.

The newly created ARLEM is seen as a very significant potential contribution to the intergovernmental process. It could also be essential to legitimate, communicate and interface with the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries and to disseminate the macro-region concept that is so far understood as an emanation of the European regional policy.

## THE 3 SCENARIOS FOR A MEDITERRANEAN MACRO-REGION

At this stage of the inquiry, MEDGOVERNANCE partner are not in the position to advocate for one single scenario of preparation of a Mediterranean macro-regional approach. Performed interviews allow identifying various visions, here embedded within 3 scenarios.

### Scenario 1 – Networking several Mediterranean “sub-macro-regions”

The first scenario is based on the current trend of envisaging different sub-regional processes. The European Union would here become an archipelago of sub-processes of integration. The Mediterranean itself is covered by a “carpet” of “sub-macro-regions”. Macro-regions are often recovering past geopolitical blocks and alliances like the Hanseatic League, *Mittel Europa*, the Venetian Republic...

In the Mediterranean area, the first initiative comes from the Adriatic-Ionian area gathering Italy, Greece and Balkanic countries. As a result, territories from Western Mediterranean are starting a lobbying process in order to be recognized by the European Union as a macro-region.

Operationally, these macro-regional Strategies may be coordinated through a coordination staff supported by the European Commission.

#### SWOT analysis for Scenario 1

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination of cooperation programmes</li> <li>Mainstreaming of territorial cooperation</li> <li>High level of visibility</li> <li>Integrated and multilevel projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of call for strategic projects within the territorial cooperation programmes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little cooperation with Southern and Eastern countries</li> <li>Fragmentation of the Mediterranean area</li> <li>Institutional “mille-feuille”</li> <li>Lack of focus on key Mediterranean issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weakness of human resources available from DG REGIO and the European Commission</li> <li>Global economic crisis</li> </ul>

## Scenario 2 – A macro-regional UfM

In this second scenario, a macro-regional Strategy is elaborated for the whole Mediterranean area. As underlined above, the main conditions for such a scenario is the recognition and adoption of such an approach by the key stakeholders of the Union for the Mediterranean. Once UfM Head of State is organised, French and Spanish authorities might be able to envisage macro-region as a credible option and no longer as a threat for the UfM.

For instance, France and Spain eventually agree that a macro-regional approach provides with a worthwhile framework in order to mobilise European financial resources, notably from cohesion policy and territorial cooperation programmes. European programming and resources are vital to sustain the UfM process in a context where public finances are becoming more and more constrained by the impact of the global economic crisis and where extra EU financial resources foreseen to fund UfM projects (Qatari funds, EIB, World Bank...) are more and more jeopardized. More generally, the macro-regional approach is here allowing reconciling the Mediterranean area with the mainstream European policies and programming and with the European Commission.

The UfM Heads of State summit could result in the adoption of an updated version of the UfM strategic priorities integrating new considerations on the financial crisis, food crisis, climate change... On the basis of these UfM priorities, a Strategy could be elaborated for the whole Mediterranean area, including all Southern and Eastern countries and territories; the issue at stake in this framework is the coordination between this Strategy and the Union for the Mediterranean; another key issue is the different levels of the different countries and territories participating to the macro-regions in terms of economic development and levels of European integration.

### SWOT analysis for Scenario 2

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Strong Mediterranean (North/South) dimension</p> <p>High level political recognition</p>	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Growing awareness of the deadlocks and blockages impacting the UfM intergovernmental process</p>
<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Territorial dimension</p> <p>Rigidity of the decision-making process: weight of the intergovernmental process</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>New EU institutional context notably within the European Commission (creation of the external action service)</p> <p>Global economic crisis</p> <p>Political tensions and crisis in the Middle East region</p>

### Scenario 3 – Macro-projects for the Mediterranean

Sound strategies are always being elaborated after. The interviews clearly highlighted that political consensus on a potential Mediterranean macro-region is lacking among decision-takers at regional, national and European levels. Hence, initiating a trend for a Mediterranean macro-regional seems very unlikely at this stage. However, all interviewed stakeholders agree on the need to favour the emergence of strategic integrated projects in the Mediterranean area. Beyond the issue of institutional arrangements and governance, Mediterranean is in need of effective multilevel transnational governance in order to address the numerous environmental, social and economic issues challenging the future of the area. In other words, the future of Mediterranean policies mainly depends on the quality of the projects that will be actually be implemented. In this perspective, what is needed is efficient procedure to allow the emergence of operational answers to the challenges faced by Mediterranean territories.

In this third scenario, one observes the development of initiatives and experiences aiming at integrating European and Mediterranean priorities within local or regional strategies. The introduction of a Mediterranean section within the ERDF operation programme is a good example of this trend.

This scenario involves a flexible scale, depending on the strategic axis and the projects. For instance, in the case of maritime safety, the whole Mediterranean region appears as a relevant scale of action. In other policy fields, like transport (high-speed railways, motorways of the sea or shortsea shipping), a more restricted scale would be relevant.

At the operational level, a division of labour should be defined: macro-region should focus on “hard” projects and trans-national cooperation on “soft” projects like institution building and harmonization of rules and policies. Furthermore trans-national cooperation could be merged in the macro-region framework.

#### SWOT analysis for Scenario 3

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility</li> <li>Stress on core strategic Mediterranean issues</li> <li>North and South dimension</li> <li>Autonomy of the local and regional authorities initiating the process</li> </ul>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call for Strategic projects within the MED CBC ENPI programme</li> </ul>
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low political visibility</li> <li>Aggravation of institutional fragmentation</li> <li>Low level of institutional maturity of local and regional authorities in the South</li> <li>Complex cooperation culture</li> </ul>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global economic crisis</li> </ul>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Commission 2009c, Hübner 2009

*Document de travail sur la stratégie de l'Union Européenne pour la région de la mer Baltique et le rôle des macro-régions dans la future politique de cohésion.* European Parliament, Regional Development Commission, rapporteur Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, January 2010

*Action Plan for the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea region,* Commission Staff Working Strategy, COM (2009) 248 final

*European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea region,* Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, SEC (2009), 702

*Declaration of the Adriatic Ionian Council on the support to the EU Strategy for Adriatic Ionian Region,* the 12<sup>th</sup> Adriatic Ionian Council, Ancona, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2010

*Towards an effective contribution of regional authorities to Euro-Mediterranean policies,* MEDGOVERNANCE Report, April 2010

Stocchiero, Andrea, *Macro-regions, an old wine in a new bottle?* Working Paper 65/2010, CESPI, April 2010

Dangerfield, Martin “Macro-regions: a case of multilevel governance?” in Committee of the Regions 6<sup>th</sup> Atelier “EU Macro-regional strategies and European governance”, Brussels, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Dubois, Alexandre, Hedin, Sigrid, Schmitt, Peter and Sterling, José, “EU macro-regions and macro-regional strategies – A scoping study” in *Nordregio Electronic Working Paper 2009:4*

Bengtsson, Rikard, “An EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: good intentions meet complex challenges”, *European Policy Analysis 9-2009*

*What opportunities do territorial cooperation and the macro-regional strategies represent for cohesion policy after 2013,* Technical Paper from the CPMR General Secretariat, April 2010

*For a more active participation of territories in a new neighbourhood policies 2014-2020,* Technical Paper from the CPMR General Secretariat, April 2010

*Towards a Mediterranean macro-region? Framework and elements for operational planning.* MED Programme Managing Authority, April 2010.

*A competitive region in globalized world,* Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008

Comelli, Michele, Eralp, Atila, Üstün, Cigdem, *The European Neighbourhood Policy and the Southern Mediterranean,* Middle East Technical University Press, Ankara-Turkey, 2009

## ANNEX – LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

<i>Category of stakeholders</i>	<i>Stakeholders name</i>	<i>Institution and function</i>
<i>European institutions</i>	David Sweet	DG REGIO
	Gianluca SPINACI	Committee of the Regions
	Jean Sébastien Lamontagne	French Permanent Representation for the European Union
<i>Central administrations</i>	Anna Crozat	French General Secretariat European Affaire (SGAE)
	Mrs Claude Marcori	French Delegation for Territory Planning (DATAR)
	Mr Cosimo Risi	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Mediterranean DG
	Rosella Rusca	Italian Ministry of Economy – regional development of territorial cooperation
	Sabina De Luca	Italian Ministry of Economy – general director department development and economic cohesion
	Alfredo Mantica	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – State Secretary for Europe
	Raffaele Trombetta	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – acting general director European Integration
	Marco Riccardo Rusconi	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – officer in DG European Integration
	Luigi Marras	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – acting general director Mediterranean
	Agostino Pinna	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – officer in DG Mediterranean
<i>Regional authorities</i>	Mr Thierry Arpin Pont	French General Secretariat for Regional Affairs (SGAR) in the PACA region
	Di Gorgio Stazi Bargagna	Latium region – Mediterranean cooperation
	Gildo Baraldi	Inter-regional Observatory on Development Cooperation
	Mariella Olivier	Piedmont region – Territorial cooperation
	Tiziana dell’Olmo	Piedmont region – Territorial cooperation
	Giulia Marcon	Piedmont region – International

		Relations
	Giorgio Garelli Donati	Piedmont region – Bruxelles Office
	Ana Lisa Boni	Head of PACA region Delegation in Brussels
<i>Key networks leaders</i>	Antonio Saitta Octavi de la Varga	Arc Latin
	Joan Parpal	Medcities
	Jordi Fabregas	Ascame
	Mohamed Boussraoui Emilia Saiz	United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
	Mercedes Bresso	Committee of the Regions, CGLU, ARLEM
<i>Key experts</i>	Roberto Aliboni	IAI
	Raffaele Cattedra	Expert in Mediterranean urban policies
	Josep Ferré	IEMED
<i>Others</i>	Paolo Bertolino	Union of Chambers of Commerce