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“The Role of the Regions in the Multilevel Governance of Culture in the Mediterranean”

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Executive Summary

Objectives of the Report

This report undertakes to analyse the actual and potential contribution of regional authorities to cultural cooperation and policy formulation in the Euro-Mediterranean space. It has been developed in the framework of Activity 3.1. (Analysis of EuroMed Governance Framework) of the MEDGOVERNANCE project. The latter aims to develop, the role and contribution of Mediterranean regions to major policies, including transport, competitiveness, environment, and culture. A case study –the *Network of Historic Urban Centres of Islamic Influence* between Spain, Portugal, and Morocco (see Annex)- has been selected for an in-depth analysis in order to draw conclusions regarding the articulation between field projects and cultural strategies and policies and regarding the institutional aspects of cultural cooperation. The conclusions and recommendations at the end of the report and in this Executive Summary aim to identify the room to manoeuvre for the Mediterranean region’s initiatives in the field of culture and to propose arrangements that could lead to a full use of this manoeuvring space.

The report deliberately focuses on the cultural action of the regions at the Euro-Mediterranean level, and hence does not address the main context factors of cultural development: freedom as a context requirement for culture, education as the main enhancing factor, language as a vehicle for communication at the foundation of any cultural exchange (this often has a lot to do with the cultural action of the regions), and mobility as a multiplier of culture. By nature, it is only a first general approximation to the subject.

The Network of Historic Urban Centres of Islamic Influence Project

The documentary analysis carried out of the “Network of Historic Urban Centres of Islamic Influence” project was clearly relevant and well designed and, after some initial difficulties, was implemented as planned, but its potential as a lever for territorial development and integration between the regions involved in Spain, Portugal, and Morocco, was not fully exploited (see Annex 1). This was due mainly to three factors: a) insufficient integration of the project with other territorial development projects in the same regions, b) insufficient investment in the project’s dissemination and outreach to the populations involved, and c) a lack of follow-up. The “Creation of a project bank for interregional cooperation in the field of territorial planning and cultural heritage” which was mentioned in the original project plan (a workshop on this issue was scheduled) was never implemented, and this probably prevented the lessons and experiences drawn from the project from being used in other contexts by the partners involved or by other regions. This conclusion might be relevant for other similar projects of international cultural cooperation between regions (note that the other two projects described by partners of the MEDGOVERNANCE, “Mercator” and “Memory of the Alps,” are very similar in nature).

Main Conclusions

The documentary and case-study analysis conducted to prepare this report has led to the following main general conclusions (see a more developed version in Section 3):

- 1) Regions in the Mediterranean have a long tradition and a rich experience of action in the field of culture. However, despite their sizeable resources, administrative capacity, and political competences in the field of culture, their participation in formulating cultural policy and strategy at the EU level is very limited.
- 2) Regions in the Mediterranean often suffer from cultural action focused mainly on events and activities. This is detrimental to their natural role as planning and strategic formulation bodies within their territories. In turn, this focus on activities is detrimental to the contribution of culture to territorial development.
- 3) Most Mediterranean regions do not have cultural strategies as such for their own territories. But regions cannot claim participation in the cultural agenda-setting and policy formulation at the State, EU, or Euro-Mediterranean level if they, in turn, do not consult and involve sub-regional actors.
- 4) In the field of international cultural cooperation, the heterogeneity of competences and systems of regional governance in the Mediterranean is a serious obstacle to cultural cooperation between regional governments across the Mediterranean, but it may be an asset, too: it could contribute to strengthening regional authorities in those countries where they are less autonomous.
- 5) In any case, there is a huge inventory of projects and experiences to draw on, and a critical mass of regions with an extensive experience of international cultural cooperation. There is a long tradition of cultural cooperation between European regions, and the lessons learned could be usefully transferred to North-South Mediterranean cultural cooperation.
- 6) Nevertheless, the evidence shows that transnational projects are often not subject to any serious evaluation or impact assessment, and lessons are not drawn from the evaluations carried out. This means that a lot of good practices are lost.
- 7) In particular, within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership framework, regions have effectively been absent from Euro-Mediterranean cultural policy-making until now.
- 8) On the operational front, the Cross-Border Cooperation component of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument introduced in 2007, including an innovative and sizeable Mediterranean Basin Programme (one of the four priorities of which is culture, and the management methodology based on EU regional policy structural funds) risks failing because of political interferences. This could have very negative consequences for the prospects of participation for the regions in policy- and strategy-making in the Euro-Mediterranean framework in all fields, including culture.

- 9) So far, networks of regional authorities mainly have a generalist nature, have weak technical and lobbying capacities, and focus on declaratory activities or attracting and managing funds from States or international organizations. In order to be effective, these networks should be thematic and specialized.

Strategic Recommendations

On the basis of these conclusions, the following preliminary recommendations or hints for action can be formulated (see a more developed version in Section 3):

- 1) Mediterranean regions should invest in developing their own comprehensive territorial cultural strategies, and not limit themselves to managing cultural activities. To formulate these strategies, they should consult lower levels of local government and civil society actors in their territories, if they want to have a legitimate claim to their right to participate in EU and Euro-Mediterranean cultural policy-making.
- 2) Inter-regional international cooperation projects should try to involve territorial bodies of the same level as leading partners. When this is not possible, regional bodies should be associated to the projects so that the implementation of the projects at least contributes to their capacity building.
- 3) Culture should be mainstreamed into general territorial development strategies at all levels and, as this is increasingly accepted, regions should be mainstreamed into the cultural policy formulation process. To advance in this direction, it would be useful to create a Network of Mediterranean Regions for Culture, bringing together regions from throughout the region and specifically focused on cultural and cultural cooperation issues. A limited but specialized and dedicated technical secretariat should be created in this framework.
- 4) Following the same rationale, a commission on cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue should be created within the newly established Euro-Mediterranean Local and Regional Assembly (ARLEM).
- 5) Both instances should address the issue of how to associate regional authorities to the on-going formulation of a Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Strategy (the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Culture scheduled for the first semester of 2010 would be the right moment to visualize this involvement, and networks of Euro-Mediterranean regions should submit their claims and vision to the Conference) and to the activities of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures.
- 6) The success of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme of the ENPI, and in particular of the Mediterranean Basin Programme, has strategic importance for the prospects of increasing the participation of the regions in Mediterranean policy-

making in all fields, including culture. The credibility of the regions as full-fledged partners in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is at stake. So a top priority of all existing networks and regional authorities from the North and the South of the Mediterranean should be to solve current blockades.

- 7) In line with the rationale of the European Neighbourhood Policy, EU programmes and agencies in the field of culture should be opened to the participation of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.
- 8) International cooperation projects in the Mediterranean should invest more resources and in a more systematic way:
 - in the dissemination of outcomes and results among the general public and in reaching out to civil society, with dedicated budget resources for this
 - in integrating into the project plan the assimilation of best practices and experiences from other previous similar projects
- 9) A systematic catalogue of international cultural cooperation projects in the Mediterranean (by similar categories of projects) and a synthetic brief of good and bad practices derived from them are necessary to ensure the valorisation of the rich experience regional authorities have accumulated in the field of international cultural cooperation (very often in projects with similar characteristics).
- 10) In the Mediterranean, specific strategies for cultural cooperation should be developed standard “cooperation themes” (such as cultural heritage, youth or artists exchanges, cultural tourism...) as a guide and a framework for future action.

Introduction: The Importance of Culture in Cooperation in the Mediterranean

It can be argued that culture in general and intercultural dialogue in particular represent one of the major challenges today in the Mediterranean. They are fundamental building blocks for achieving the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership put in place in 1995 (and relaunched through the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008). Indeed, for the Mediterranean to become a true area of shared security and prosperity, culture is a key dimension. In the current context of “clash” of civilizations and religions, cultural dialogue becomes a key instrument for peace. Its contribution to economic development cannot be neglected either, as cultural activities make an important contribution to economic activity and to job creation (through tourism and other activities). But cultural development (and cultural cooperation) has to be acknowledged as something more than just an input for social and economic development (and development cooperation). Cultural cooperation also has a significant added value in terms of developing a sense of belonging together among populations, something which is acutely needed in the Mediterranean.

Culture plays a key role in fighting challenges that are arising, such as fundamentalism and racism, which specifically affect the Mediterranean, thus increasing the difficulties for bridging cultural differences, separating both shores of the Mediterranean. These challenges need to be addressed by further promoting mutual understanding and dialogue. At the European level, the ‘European consensus on development’ adopted by the Council in November 2005 identified culture as part of the European Community’s (EC) human development policy and contributing to local development and economic growth.

The last Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Culture (Athens, 29–30 May 2008)¹ provides a full *plaidoyer* for the role of culture, cultural cooperation, and intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean process:

“6. In this regard dialogue between cultures may be seen as a key element in uniting the people of the region and, in parallel, spreading awareness of their differences and particularities. Ministers consider that dialogue between cultures and cultural cooperation are an essential tool for the promotion of mutual understanding, reconciliation and tolerance within the Euro-Mediterranean region.

8. Mutual knowledge and understanding are crucial to building bridges which will help overcome the prejudices and cultural barriers that, in turn, jeopardize the objective of achieving a common area of peace, stability and shared prosperity in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

14. Ministers affirm that Culture is the main arena in which real instruments for the purpose of anticipating, defusing, averting, and resolving conflicts can be provided. Dialogue

¹ Conclusions: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/docs/culture_concl_0508_en.pdf.

between cultures should be a *modus operandi* for managing diversity and progressing towards a common future in a shared area.

15. Ministers highlight the importance of cooperation regarding the dialogue between cultures with and within the Euro-Mediterranean region as the main instrument to foster conflict prevention, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and as a conflict prevention mechanism.

16. Ministers recognize that dialogue between cultures is an essential tool for promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and reconciliation, as well as fighting against discrimination, racism, xenophobia and extremism, and is a valuable tool of conflict prevention.”

This principle has already been acquired within the European Union context,² where the European Commission adopted in May 2007 a European Agenda for Culture,³ endorsed by the EU’s Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting in November 2007, and by the European Council in December 2007.

In this European Agenda for Culture,⁴ the EU committed itself, as well, to enhancing the cultural component of its external relations⁵: indeed, the “promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations” is one of the three interrelated sets of objectives of the European Agenda for Culture. To this end,

“the EU will follow a 'twin-track' approach, consisting of:

- the systematic integration of the cultural dimension and different components of culture in all external and development policies, projects and programmes - as a means of strengthening the quality of its diplomatic efforts, and the viability and sustainability of all EU cooperation activities; and
- support for specific cultural actions and events – Culture is a resource in its own right, and access to culture should be considered as a priority in development policies.”

Cultural cooperation also offers the opportunity to link past, present, and future. A commonplace of Europe-Mediterranean cooperation is that the Mediterranean and the developments in it are of fundamental importance for the future of Europe and European societies, and a standard piece of the Euro-Mediterranean discourse is to build a shared area of security and stability for the future. But the present lives of Mediterranean and European citizens can also be substantially improved, and cultural cooperation can be a crucial tool in this respect. Culture is by nature a field for exchange and human contacts that enrich people’s lives. Cultural action and cultural cooperation should contribute to preserve the heritage of the past, but also to build the future, and, last but not least, to construct a better *present* for Mediterranean populations.

² One should remember here the standard quotation from Jean Monnet on European integration: “If I were to start again, I would start with culture.”

³ Communication from the Commission on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world, COM(2007)242 final, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:PDF>.

⁴ Pages 10-11.

⁵ Article 151 of the Treaty of the EU states that “*The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the sphere of culture.*”

1. The Contribution of Regions to Cultural Policies and Action in the Mediterranean: The Current Situation⁶

Regional authorities have an important and strategic role to play in cultural policy, both because of their proximity to the citizens and the territories and because of their mobilizing potential. They have a key role “to deglobalise its universal objectives and produce local results.”⁷ The European Agenda for Culture states that:

“each actor would be called upon to contribute, in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity:

- for the Member States and their regions, this would mean further developing their policies in these areas with reference to common objectives and an endeavour to steer joint activities *inter alia* through an open method of coordination and exploring opportunities offered by EU funding.”

It then points to the need for “Further developing dialogue with the cultural sector” and describes the “open method of coordination”:

The OMC offers an appropriate framework for cooperation in the field of culture between the Member States. It is a non-binding, intergovernmental framework for policy exchange and concerted action suitable for a field such as this, where competence remains very much at Member State level. It consists of agreeing common objectives, regularly following up progress towards them and exchanging best practice and relevant data in order to foster mutual learning. [...]

The Commission proposes that acting on the basis of this Communication, the Council of Ministers endorses the objectives suggested above, setting priorities and agreeing on a biennial follow-up exercise. As part of this exercise, the Commission would draft a joint report with high level representatives of Member States every two years summarizing main issues and trends and discussing progress across Member States with regard to the common objectives.

Member States would be encouraged to fully associate local and regional authorities and national cultural stakeholders in the follow-up process and to describe in their national reports how they have been involved.

However, we must acknowledge that this association has been rather limited and proforma, and that, so far, regions play a very limited role in the preparation of the broad (be it State, European, or Euro-Mediterranean) cultural policy framework. With some few exceptions (often linked to nationalistic aspirations or language specificities of some specific regions in Europe), cultural *policies* and *strategies* tend to be defined exclusively by the States, and the same happens for all other broad policies affecting culture, such as education policy. Even the EU plays a limited role in this regard, where it mainly focuses on a limited set of cultural programmes and financing activities.

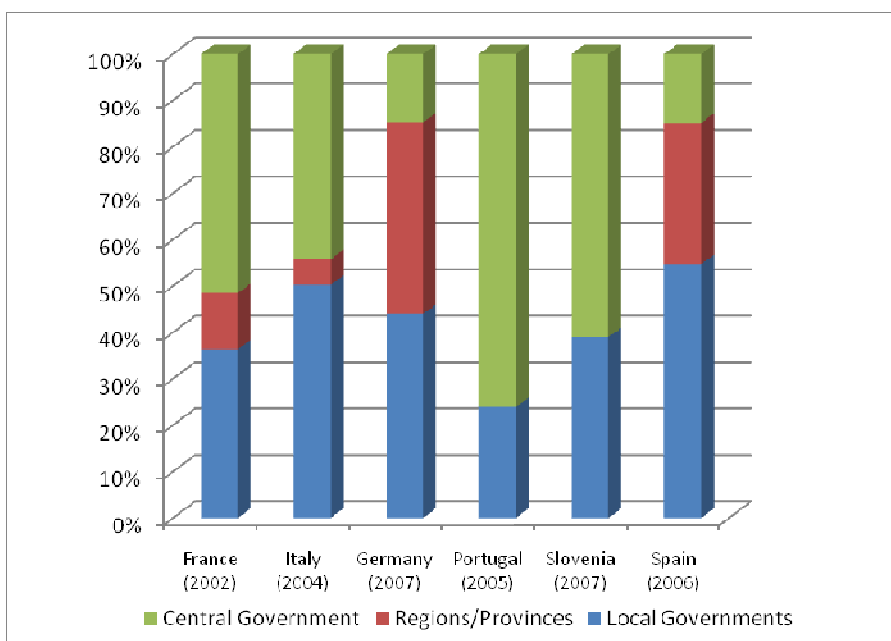
⁶ The analysis in this chapter focuses on cultural action by European regions, since the regions in most Mediterranean Partner Countries do not have any meaningful cultural competences. The latter will be dealt with in Chapter 2, dealing with multilevel governance and international cooperation in culture in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

⁷ See Manonelles 2008, p. 4, referring to the role of local authorities in the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations.

1.1. The Cultural Action of Regions in the Mediterranean

European regions do generally have certain competences in the field of culture (often overlapping with other public administrations, whether State or local), as well as financial resources to fund their own policies, i.e., they have the legal, political, and financial tools required to influence general cultural policies and strategies.⁸ They also tend to have specific public institutions (institutes, foundations...) that are active in the field of cultural action and international cultural co-operation, and a wide portfolio of cultural activities. In quantitative terms, the situation varies greatly across regions, depending on the level of decentralization in every country and the distribution of competences in the field of culture. Table 1 shows the share of European Mediterranean regions in public expenditure on culture:

Table 1. Share of regions and provinces in public expenditure on culture



	Local Governments	Regions/Provinces	Central Government
France (2002)	36%	12%	51%
Italy (2004)	50,3%	5,5%	44,3%
Germany (2007)	44%	41,3%	14,7%
Portugal (2005)	23,9%	0%	76,1%
Slovenia (2007)	39%	0%	61%
Spain (2006)	54,7%	30,47%	14,83%

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of data from Council of Europe/ERICarts, *Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*, 10th edition, 2009. No data available for Greece.

⁸ For a general review of cultural strategies and policies in some regions of France (PACA), Italy (Lazio, Sardinia and Tuscany), Spain (Andalusia), and Morocco (Tangier-Tetuan and Rabat-Salé), see EuromedinCulture (2006).

But despite this concrete experience, in the cultural field, regions often act more as service providers and activity organizers, often in competition with other levels of governments, than as policy-makers establishing a strategic link between the territories and the State and the international level of governments to define cultural policies and strategies. This leads to cultural action –and cultural cooperation by extension- not playing its key role as a lever for territorial development.

As a consequence, European regions' participation in cultural policy-making at the European level is rather limited, if not inexistent. Regional councils tend to act as a) just another cultural operator, often in competition with cities and State institutions, or b) a grant-distributor (many regions have very sophisticated procedures for calls for proposals in the field of culture), and c) regions' cultural action is often an instrument of external "regional marketing" or in some cases "identity projection" (see Perrin 2009). This is detrimental to the role of regions as a clearing house for various actors involved in cultural strategy formulation in their territory and prevents them from providing answers to specific regional social, economic, cultural, and political challenges.

Very often, regions do not even have a general blueprint for their action in the field of culture, setting objectives, instruments, and coordination with other public and private operators...., let alone international cultural cooperation. Administratively, this is reflected in the lack of "cultural planners and policy-makers" as opposed to "cultural managers" in the regions (in contrast to other policy areas where there are strong planning capacities, such as territorial planning, economic development...). In turn, this contrasts with the world-wide or supra-regional cultural strategies of some Mediterranean cities (a case in point is Agenda 21 for Culture launched by 300 cities and local governments in the World Forum of Cultures held in the City of Barcelona in 2004⁹; an attempt to create a Network of Mediterranean Cultural Cities undertaken in this framework in 2007 did not materialize).

The activities of the administrative sections in charge of cultural issues or European or Euro-Mediterranean programmes are not based on multiannual Programmes, nor on a general planning activity, and it is often the case that there is no real integration of decision-making regarding the region's participation in European Programmes and the rest of the cultural actions of each region, or even its territorial planning activities.

More generally, there is often no mechanism integrating territorial planning and cultural heritage. Both dimensions are usually kept separate in regional policies implemented by State and territorial authorities. External cultural activities are often integrated into the regional attractiveness policy (whether for investment or tourism) or managed, from an institutional point of view, by the departments in charge of international relations. This often prevents cultural action from being sustainable and integrated into an overall territorial development strategy.

⁹ <http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?lang=en>.

This is a particularly serious shortcoming in the field of culture. Indeed, the specific added value of regions vis-à-vis other levels of governments is their capacity to act as building blocks for wider cultural strategies. In contrast to other sectors (such as environment or transport) where a *top-down* approach to policy implementation prevails and is warranted, in the cultural sector neither regions nor local governments act as executors of State-level strategies and policies. This means that, in the field of culture, it is rather a *bottom-up* approach which is at work and the regions are best placed to act as strategic link between the territories and the wider State or EU strategies.

1.2. Governance Structures and Network Building on the Basis of Multi-country Cultural Projects

Nevertheless, as shown by the answers of the MEDGOVERNANCE partner institutions to the Questionnaire,¹⁰ most Mediterranean regions have extensive experience in the participation and management of multicountry cultural projects and activities, often in cooperation with other government levels (local and city authorities or national public bodies, but also international organizations) or partners (universities and research centres, chambers of commerce, and other business institutions...). European programmes, and in particular Interreg Programmes (and, to a lesser extent, other EU Programmes such as Media, Culture 2000, VI and VII Framework Programmes) have made a strong contribution to this. So have Euro-regions (which often have a cultural section¹¹), in the framework of which “the evidence shows that cultural cooperation is easier” than in other fields (see Perrin 2009). Nevertheless, we must note that, in this framework, cooperation is quite complex due to different administrative and institutional traditions, if not different political priorities. On the other hand, the

¹⁰ Answers to the Questionnaire were received from:

- the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) on Catalonia (partial questionnaire)
- the Institut de la Méditerranée (partial questionnaire plus interviews with Mr. Thierry Arlandis, head of the mission for cultural diversity and cooperation within the Direction for Culture and Heritage of the PACA regional council, formerly at the Unit for European Affairs of the General Direction of International Relations (DRI) of the regional council, and Mr. Sylvaine Pontal, in charge of theatre and street arts at the Direction for Culture and Heritage at the PACA regional council established in Marseilles).
- Lazio Region
- the Istituto Parallelli (questionnaire)

¹¹ In the Mediterranean, the relevant Euro-regions are:

- The Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euro-region, bringing together the Spanish Autonomous Communities of Catalonia, Aragon, and the Balearic Islands, and the French ones of Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon. For its cultural portal, typically focused on cultural activities, see <http://www.euroregion-pm.eu/pc/AppJava/es/>. Annual calls for proposals mobilize between 100,000 and 150,000 euros per year.
- The Alps-Mediterranean Euro-region, bringing together the Italian regions of Piamonte, Liguria, and Valle d’Aosta, and the French ones of Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (PACA). For its cultural section, see <http://www.regionpaca.fr/index.php?id=24>, with a more general approach.
- The Adriatic Euro-Region, with regions from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Albania (<http://www.adriaticeuoregion.org/>).

prevalence of EU funding has determined a de facto exclusion of Southern Mediterranean regions and partners in many projects due to their lack of competences and resources (see Annexes).

Despite this rich experience, as it happens in other areas of study of the MEDGOVERNANCE project, the influence of regions on cultural policy dynamics at the EU or Euro-Mediterranean level is often channeled through individual initiatives and strategies by specific regions (on the basis of specific know-how developed in the cultural field or the personal interest and/or weight of their political leaders), rather than through articulated strategies from networks of regions. On the other hand, the contribution of regions to the Member States' position on cultural issues is often diluted by other considerations.

In their relations with State and supranational (European, Euro-Mediterranean or even international organizations) levels, regions tend to focus on fund-raising rather than on influencing cultural strategies and policies; so the regions do not correctly comply with their proper role as articulators between the supranational institutions and the territories. As a consequence, regional cultural action often becomes diluted in a succession of individual initiatives without coherence or strategic vision, incurring in dispersion and sometimes even cacophony. Network-building is largely induced by calls for applications from funding institutions.

And the generalist networks (in the Euro-Mediterranean context, the only network including exclusively regions is the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Region – CPMR-, although regions are active jointly with other local authorities in other networks as well, such as United Cities and Local Governments –UCLG- and the Standing Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of Local and Regional Authorities –COPPEM) do not have specific commissions dealing with cultural cooperation. Representatives of regions in these networks are often officers from the international relations department and not from thematic operational departments, and network internal processes are often too politicized.¹² Not being specialized, these networks have weak sector-specific technical and lobbying capacities, and focus on declaratory activities or attracting and managing funds from States or international organizations (in particular, the EU) rather than on coordination and lobbying. As a consequence, existing networks do not have the specific technical expertise required for influencing culture policy-making at European or Euro-Mediterranean level, and they are usually not considered as partners by EU institutions or international organizations active in the Mediterranean in the field of culture (UNESCO for instance)¹³.

¹² UCLG has a Committee and a Working Group on Culture, but not specifically for the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean Commission of the UCLG does not act in the field of culture specifically.

¹³ In this respect, it is revealing the lack of involvement of regions as such in some ambitious projects implemented by international organizations in the field of culture in the Mediterranean, even if they partially overlap with other interregional cooperation projects in the area. See, for instance, the Olive Road promoted by the UNESCO (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001296/129656e.pdf>) or the

The EU Committee of the Regions, as the representative body of local and regional governments in the EU institutions, has a Commission for Culture, Education, and Research (EDUC¹⁴) with the following six fields of competence: a) lifelong learning, education, and training, b) culture and cultural diversity, and promotion of minority languages, c) research and technology, including ethical questions, d) information society and trans-European telecommunication networks, e) communications, audiovisual industry and media technologies, and markets, and f) youth, sports, and active citizenship. In the last couple of years, it has been more focused on education and training, and on the audiovisual sector and youth. It produced a single report dealing specifically with cultural issues (an “Opinion on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World” linked to the above-mentioned Commission Communication),¹⁵ but no single own initiative report.

In any case, networks and institutions such as the CPMR or the Committee of the Regions seldom focus on cultural issues: they have a rather political nature and act as instances of representation or, in certain cases, support for funding mobilization, but do not often engage in concrete contributions in the cultural field.

1.3. Experiences of Benchmarking and Best Practices Transfer on the Basis of Multi-country Cultural Projects

Nevertheless, evidence from partner regions and experts points to the existence of a huge inventory of projects and experiences to draw on, and a critical mass of regions with extensive experience in international cultural cooperation. European inter-regional cooperation in the field of culture, in particular, has a long tradition and an increasing stock of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation projects that have been completed or are near completion. It is not so evident, however, that there is mutual knowledge of those experiences or a learning curve based on the assessment and exchange of experiences and good and bad practices resulting from those projects, which often have similar features (and even overlapping institutional partners). We know too little about these projects. Information on them, the way they work, and their assessment is scattered, rather than systematic, preventing: i) the identification of good and bad practices to draw lessons from experience, 2) synergies between projects, and, most importantly, 3), the articulation of projects with broader cultural policies or strategies. One of the features of international cultural cooperation in the region is “fragmentation and lack of visibility.”¹⁶

Phoenicians Road (<http://www.rottadeifenici.it/>) taken up by the Council of Europe from the UNESCO as well.

¹⁴ www.cor.europa.eu/pages/EventTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=08703846-60b2-4dc7-8940-2b73f4dbefec.

¹⁵ CdR 172/2007, adopted in November 2007, Rapporteur: Gerd Harms.

www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/pa/692/692020/692020en.pdf.

¹⁶ See Diputació de Barcelona 2007, p. 34.

In any case, this experience has allowed us to identify some key elements for the success of the international cultural cooperation process:

- identification of the “cooperation theme”; for the big cooperation themes involved such as common cultural heritage (archaeology and rehabilitation, monuments...), cultural tourism (roads and itineraries), common history and identity, exchanges (youth, artists...) or performing arts, a plethora of former projects from which to draw lessons do exist, often with the same or similar partners, so that a first step should be to explore and assess former experiences;
- identification of partner regions (with a particular emphasis on other European Mediterranean countries and on Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries), their “offer” and capacities, their needs and priorities, and ways to involve them in strategy-building;
- identification of institutional actors involved, their skills and capacities;
- involvement of external actors (agencies, institutions, schools and universities, associations, cultural operators);
- a strategy to interact with national and international bodies of cultural policy-making and contribute to them based on the project experience (this is often missing).

2. Multilevel Governance and Interregional Cooperation in the Field of Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Area

2.1. Cultural Governance and Cultural Strategies in the Mediterranean

Culture has been an integral part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership since the beginning, with a specific chapter for “social, human and cultural cooperation.” The stated general aim of the EMP’s third chapter was to develop human resources, increase knowledge of and promote understanding between cultures, and encourage rapprochement between the peoples of the Euro-Mediterranean area through exchanges and the development of free civil societies. These goals were to be addressed through a variety of regional activities aimed at improving educational and training systems, controlling demographic growth, reducing migratory pressures (*sic*), and fighting racism, xenophobia, and intolerance. Specific areas addressed include cultural heritage, audio-visual cooperation, youth, media, and women. The 1995 Barcelona Work Programme included two specific actions that call for meetings about a) the cultural and religious fields to address intolerance, and b) closer media interaction.

Despite the judgment that “culture is the poor cousin” of the Partnership (Balta 2000), this was in itself a big leap forward. We must acknowledge that culture and dialogue between cultures have enjoyed increasing importance in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in recent years, evolving from a limited number of concrete regional programmes to the creation of an ambitious institution to deal with this area and then to a process that should lead to the formulation of a full-fledged Mediterranean Cultural Strategy.¹⁷

However, for at least the first ten years of the EMP, cultural cooperation was a largely technical tool involving only institutional actors or specialized agencies, to the extent that we can state that there was no correspondence between stated objectives and mobilized means. The budget allocations have remained largely symbolic (in particular in relation to the overall financial envelope for the MEDA Programme and then the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument -ENPI), and the political relevance of cultural initiatives in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership can be questioned (Pace 2005).

The main initiatives implemented over the years in the field of culture in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are the following:

¹⁷ For a critical and lucid review of the action of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the field of culture until 2005, see Tanzarella 2005.

EuroMed Heritage¹⁸. The EuroMed Heritage regional programme (with a budget of €40 million in 2002-2008) to promote cultural dialogue about the Mediterranean heritage clearly stands out. Euromed IV, the fourth stage of the programme, has been approved for 2008-2012 (€13.5 million). In 2007, this programme gave rise to the first “*Strategy for the Development of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage: Priorities from Mediterranean Countries (2007-2013.)*”¹⁹ Local and regional authorities are hardly mentioned in it,²⁰ and, in any case, they are portrayed as “targets” of the strategy, not as actors and authors of it. However, the programme has recently moved to promote a closer involvement of rlocal and regional activities in its activities.

Other relevant regional programmes are:

- the EuroMed Audiovisual²¹ regional programme (€15 million in 2005-2008, plus €11 million for 2009-2012) to promote the development, promotion, distribution, and circulation of Mediterranean and European audiovisual products, including film festivals, film production and distribution, and the creation of a database. It works mainly with and through audiovisual operators;
- the EuroMed Youth III programme (€5 million in 2005-2007, plus €5 million for 2010-2013 for the IV stage) to promote youth exchanges;
- TEMPUS (2005-2013, approximately €35-39 million per year) and Erasmus Mundus (2009-2010, €29 million) in the field of higher education and student mobility (the ENPI Interregional Programme in the framework of the Neighbourhood Policy).

Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (ALF)²². But there is no doubt that the culmination of this process was the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation in 2005 as the only new institution within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership so far. Its headquarters were established in Alexandria, and its Board of Governors is made up of representatives of all partner States of the EMP. In the words of the Ministers of Culture, “the Foundation is a clear testimony of the importance that the Euro-Mediterranean family attaches to dialogue between cultures.” And, given their competences and their activities in the field of culture, local and regional authorities should have an important and specific role in this. Indeed in their proposal to create a Mediterranean Cultural Foundation, the High Level Group of Experts specified that

¹⁸ <http://www.euromedheritage.net/>.

¹⁹ <http://www.euromedheritage.net/doc/Culture%20strategy%202007%20-%202013.pdf>.

²⁰ The methodological orientations contained in this Strategy indicate that “The setting up of networks of professionals, of local authorities and of local actors in civil society makes it possible to open up a genuine intercultural dialogue based on actual experience,” that “the operational capacities of middle management according to capacities at the level of national and local administrations” should be improved, and that “local actors should be made aware of, and be consulted in, the planning and development of cultural heritage projects.”

²¹ <http://www.euromedaudiovisuel.net>.

²² <http://www.euromedalex.org/>.

“when performing its [report] drafting role, the Foundation should take into account as much as possible the experiences and initiatives of local authorities, thus underlining the part they play, and will increasingly play in the intercultural dialogue in everyday life.” In fact, one of the six strategic axes of the Anna Lindh Foundation established is “Cities and Diversity” (the others are Ideas and Ideologies, Education, Cultural Production, Media, and Religion, Spirituality, and Values). But in reality nothing has been done so far in this respect, probably because of a structural underfunding of the ALF in relation to its ambitious objectives (€11 million for 2005-2008 and €14 million for 2009-2011). Some local and regional authorities are integrated in its national networks and its first activity in this thematic area will be the upcoming seminar in Munich on “Cities, Migrants and Diversity”.

Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Strategy. A new major breakthrough in the development of the cultural chapter was achieved in the Agreed Conclusions of the third Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Culture (Athens, 29 – 30 May 2008), following two former Ministerial Meetings (Bologna 1996 and Rhodes 1998) and the meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Crete 2003) specifically devoted to dialogue between cultures.

The Conference reviewed the action of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the field of culture since 1995. But the most important outcome of the Conference was the decision to let the Conference:

“mark the starting point of a fully-fledged Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture, encompassing cooperation in both the dialogue between cultures and cultural policy. This strategy should enhance the cultural dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in an innovative and concrete way” (point 11).

Some of the features of this new Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Strategy should be the following:

“34. Besides art and heritage, cultural policies should be linked to other domains of life (social policy, education, cultural industries, etc.) and be conceived as trans-sectoral development activities. In that sense, Ministers acknowledge that a Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture has the potential to contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the three pillars of the Barcelona Declaration.”

“35. This new Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture should give particular attention to strengthening the capacity of partner countries in the field of cultural expression and to promoting access to culture. Euro-Mediterranean partners should be encouraged to further develop coherent national cultural policies, taking into account the needs of the cultural sector and the relevant international references.”

“37. Ministers agree that all joint action in the cultural domain would have the following priorities: the development of human resources, the transfer of know-how, training in culture-related skills, the establishment of joint systems of information and communication, the use of new technologies and the promotion of sustainable economic development through culture.”

The main elements of this strategy, according to the Ministers’ conclusions, should be:

The Role of the Regions in the Multilevel Governance of Culture in the Mediterranean

“20. Ministers agree on the importance of equipping future generations with intercultural competences and advocate the spread of new technologies to the widest possible social spectrum.

21. Ministers acknowledge that multilingualism represents a key element in dialogue between cultures.

22. Ministers underline that translation, as it relates languages and cultures and provides wide access to works of art and ideas, is an essential tool for dialogue between cultures, and should be subject to a joint effort from the partner countries as well as relevant EU institutions.

23. Ministers acknowledge that the mobility of artists, intellectuals, academicians and cultural workers and trainers, works of art, knowledge, and creativity, including under the framework of cultural exchange, significantly contributes to dialogue between cultures, and further emphasize that they are committed to encouraging it. In this context, Ministers stress the need for simplification of visa procedures for artists.

24. Ministers stress that particular attention should be paid to the specific cultural, linguistic and educational needs of minorities, in accordance with national legislations and international obligations of the countries concerned, while appreciating the Euro-Mediterranean concept of identity, as a result of cosmopolitan interpenetrations, which is also a way of preventing the fragmentation of identity in our societies.

25. Ministers recognize the importance of enhancing women’s participation in cultural exchanges and dialogue between cultures, as underlined in the Conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Istanbul, November 2006).

26. Ministers welcome the first meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament in Berlin (26 May – 3 June 2007) as an example of dialogue between young people from both sides of the Mediterranean, and support its continuation. They further welcome that Morocco has offered to host the second Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament during 2008.

27. Ministers recognize that sporting events, on international or regional level, have contributed to the promotion of contacts between peoples and dialogue between cultures. They have essentially contributed to tolerance and better understanding of different cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

29. Ministers recognize the pivotal role the media can play in the promotion of dialogue between cultures and understanding, taking into consideration that applying the principle of the freedom of speech should be exercised in a spirit of respect for "the Other" including its [his or her] beliefs.

33. Ministers agree that the following areas for action should be given consideration and further explored:

- assessment of the impact of dialogue between cultures as a contribution to conflict prevention;
- declaration of a week of dialogue between cultures all around the Euro-Mediterranean region.

38. Ministers consider the exchange of people, in particular young people, ideas and cultural activities as a common denominator for future projects, especially through networking between cultural actors at the Euro-Mediterranean level which is a major factor in promoting exchange of experience, transfer of know-how and the emergence of joint projects.

39. Ministers stress the importance of the identification, protection and presentation of cultural heritage which is of significance for the Euro-Mediterranean countries.”

The Conference also agreed “to establish a follow-up mechanism to draw up a Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Strategy and concrete proposals, to be endorsed by the next meeting of the Ministers of Culture, to be held in the first semester of 2010.”

Quite interestingly and revealingly, no single reference to local and regional authorities' participation is made throughout the long, articulated conclusions.

Union for the Mediterranean. In the middle of this process of increasing formalization of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural action, the Union for the Mediterranean project established in the Paris Summit in July 2008, and conceived to relaunch the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, focuses on concrete (mainly infrastructure) regional projects and was not originally meant to include a specific cultural dimension. However, one of the six projects finally selected for implementation in the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Marseille in November 2008²³ was the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) inaugurated in June 2008 in Piran, Slovenia, with the aim of becoming “a university of universities.” More specifically in the cultural field, the Ministers just committed themselves to pursuing Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, among many other aspects, for “Promoting dialogue between cultures and cultural diversity,” with three major dimensions: 1) the process that should lead to a new Euromed Strategy on Culture in two years' time built on a “dialogue between cultures” and “cultural policy” (see above), 2) the consolidation of the Anna Lindh Foundation's capacity to promote intercultural dialogue, diversity, and mutual understanding, and 3) the launching of the Euromed Heritage IV programme.

In this context, a *Conseil Culturel de l'Union pour la Méditerranée* was formally established in May 2009 by the French Government (which exerts the EU Co-Presidencies of the UfM for 2008-2010, jointly with Egypt) as a culmination of the three *Ateliers Culturels de la Méditerranée* and the *États Généraux Culturels de la Méditerranée* convened from 2006 to 2008 by the French government, but its main mission is to consult on French Mediterranean cultural policy, so it has a rather national character.

Alliance of Civilizations (AoC). Completely outside the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and in parallel to it, in the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations, too, regional authorities are largely absent, in contrast to business bodies and civil society at large. Local authorities are formally present in the AoC process through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in January 2008 with United Cities and Local Governments, and some mayors of big cities were present at the second high-level Forum for the AoC held in Istanbul in 2009, but their substantial involvement has been very limited so far.²⁴

²³ Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, Ministerial Conference, Final Statement, Marseilles, 3-4 November 2008, http://ue2008.fr/webdav/site/PFUE/shared/import/1103_ministerielle_Euromed/Final_Statement_Mediterranean_Union_EN.pdf.

²⁴ <http://cities-localgovernments.org/uclg/index.asp?pag=template.asp&L=EN&ID=370&old=134>. See also Manonelles 2008.

Cross-Border Cooperation (European Neighbourhood Policy). In parallel to this dynamics and with a completely different rationale, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) started in 2005 as the new framework for *bilateral* relations between the EU and its neighbouring countries, including the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs). Its financial instrument, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), replaced in 2007 all previous geographic and thematic assistance programmes of the European Union to its neighbouring countries, including the MEDA Programme for MPCs (and hence also the funding of Euromed regional programmes). The ENPI contains a new and innovative cross-border cooperation component with sizeable resources specifically addressed to support the involvement of regions and other local actors in the management of EU borders and the cross-border flows, including personal and cultural exchanges.

It aims at strengthening cooperation between territories located on the EU's external borders, in other words, between member States and partner countries that share common maritime or land borders. In this respect, two types of programmes exist: bilateral programmes for land borders or short sea crossings, and multilateral sea basin programmes for maritime borders. Fifteen programmes have been approved within the framework of the ENPI Cross-Border Cooperation Programme (Strategy Paper 2007-2013).²⁵ They have a total budget of €1.181 billion for 2007-2013 (half of it coming from ENPI – or 5 % of the overall ENPI budget – and the other half from the ERDF, i.e. from EU structural funds). As a consequence, these programmes will be managed using the methodology applicable to structural funds, although slightly simplified. They will be used to finance cooperation projects managed by local and regional authorities, as well as by other local actors and social partners such as universities, trade unions, employer organizations, NGOs, and Chambers of Commerce, including cultural operators. The Mediterranean Partner Countries take part in three of these programmes:

i) **The Spain-Morocco Programme**, with two components: Andalusia-North Morocco and Canary Islands-South Morocco. The total indicative budget is €156.7 million. The programme has not been ratified yet by Spain and Morocco due to lack of an agreement between their respective governments (the deadline is 2010; unless an agreement is finally reached, half the funds will revert to the European Commission and the other half will be devoted to cross-border interregional projects for the same regions managed as EU structural funds).

ii) **The Italy-Tunisia Programme**, adopted in December 2008 with a budget of €25.2 million to promote economic, institutional, and cultural integration between Tunisian and Sicilian territories.²⁶

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_cross-border_cooperation_strategy_paper_en.pdf.

²⁶ [http://www.regione.sicilia.it/Presidenza/uscs/doc/PO_It-Tun_Final_version_23_juin_\[1\].pdf](http://www.regione.sicilia.it/Presidenza/uscs/doc/PO_It-Tun_Final_version_23_juin_[1].pdf) (French version).

iii) The **Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme**, with an approximate budget of €173 million for the period 2007-2013 (almost €190 million, if co-financing is included). The Autonomous Region of Sardinia manages the Programme as Joint Managing Authority.²⁷ This multilateral cross-border cooperation programme is open for participation to Mediterranean coastal regions of EU Member States and MPCs. The joint operational programme, adopted in August 2008 by the European Commission, establishes a series of priorities and measures to be implemented and defines the distribution of financial resources for each priority.²⁸ One of the four main priorities is precisely the “Promotion of cultural dialogue and local governance,” with an indicative allocation of €34.4 million for the period and three axes: a) support for mobility, exchanges, training, and professionalism for young people, b) support for artistic creativity in all its expressions to encourage dialogue among communities, and c) improvement of governance processes at the local level.²⁹ There are two kinds of projects envisaged: strategic projects (actions in thematic areas of strategic relevance for the cooperation zone that should yield measurable qualitative and quantitative leverage effects) and standard projects (initiated by local actors organised in cross-border partnerships).

2.2. Structural Limitations to the Participation of Regions in Multilevel Governance in the Field of Culture in the Mediterranean

So finally the European Neighbourhood Policy has created a cooperation instrument, the Cross Border Cooperation Programme, which entrust Mediterranean regions with sizeable resources to build up a joint strategy on the basis of a network of projects and partner institutions, including in the cultural sector. However, the publication of the first call for proposals for standard projects in May 2009³⁰ has quickly revealed some of the structural limitations of this kind of cooperation. Because of administrative delays imputable to heavy EU procedures, it has taken almost two years to start the programme. And its implementation is being further delayed because of political interferences, which do not allow the Programme to be extended to all Mediterranean coastal areas. A suspension clause applies to projects: partners in eligible territories of the MPCs may apply for financing under the call for proposals, but may only receive Programme funds if their country has signed the Financing Agreement with the European Commission on or before 31 December 2009. By September 2009, only Jordan and Syria had signed the Agreement). Algeria, Libya, the UK (Gibraltar), and the Northern Sinai region (Egypt), on the other hand, do not participate in the Programme, and Morocco has suspended its participation in the Programme for the time being (also for political reasons). Turkey, which benefits from the pre-accession funds,

²⁷ <http://www.enpicbmed.eu/en/index.html>

²⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regionalcooperation/enpi-cross-border/documents/mediterranean_sea_adopted_programme_en.pdf.

²⁹ For a synthesis of details, see Martín 2009.

³⁰ www.enpicbmed.eu/en/index.php?xsl=866&s=29&v=9&c=5902&na=1&n=10.

asked to be excluded from the list of eligible countries. So the perimeter of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean regions eligible is very limited, as political considerations have prevailed over concrete cooperation interests and the potential for interregional cooperation offered by this programme, in the field of culture as well.

Another recurrent obstacle to region-to-region cultural cooperation across the Mediterranean is the heterogeneity of competences and institutional structures of regions across countries.³¹ When it comes to Southern and Eastern Mediterranean regions, this is aggravated by the regions' lack of autonomy,³² both administratively and financially: often the partner institutions have to be de-concentrated State bodies (or Ministries), only public institutions with political competences, administrative capacities, and financial resources, in order to engage in this kind of programme. Even if regional authorities are involved, they lack formal competences, or real decision-making often lies in central government institutions (the parallel phenomena of informal decentralization and informal recentralization are at play).

Finally, there is no doubt that the lack of a thematic network of regions focused on culture and cultural cooperation in the Mediterranean has prevented the regions from becoming a necessary partner (whether because of their political clout or because of their technical expertise) for the describe initiatives undertaken in the Euro-Mediterranean framework in the last few years, such as the Anna Lindh Foundation or the Euro-Mediterranean Strategy for Culture.

2.3. The (Potential) Contribution of Regions to European and Euro-Mediterranean Regional Initiatives and Policies in the Field of Culture

As seen in Section 2.1, the EU and Euromed regions have been largely absent so far from cultural policy- and strategy-making at the European and Euro-Mediterranean level. As indicated above, although the blueprint for the Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture states that it “should also aim at establishing more balanced cultural exchanges” and that “all dimensions of cooperation should be enhanced (EU -partner countries, regional, bilateral), including direct cooperation between individual EuroMed partners, with a view to empowering cultural operators,” this is far from being carried out.

As the EU Committee of the Regions stated in its recent *White Paper on Multi-Level Governance*,

“The European Union is underpinned by a set of common values and fundamental rights that has been the basis for the emergence of a common political culture at the level of the European Union. Subsidiarity, proportionality, proximity, partnership, participation, solidarity and mutual loyalty are the key principles that inspire and guide Community

³¹ Regarding the heterogeneity between European local and regional administrations, see Council of Europe (2009).

³² See Institut de la Méditerranée 2009, pp. 57-71.

action. They shape the European model of protection for fundamental rights, which include local and regional autonomy and respect for diversity. Promoting and preserving this model requires responsibility to be shared between all tiers of government.”

Exactly the same applies to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Local and Regional Assembly (ARLEM) could be an instrument to ensure this co-ownership and participation.

The CoR also states that “Multilevel governance is not simply a question of translating European or national objectives into local or regional action, but must also be understood as a process for integrating the objectives of local and regional authorities within the strategies of the European Union.” But in order to do so, local and regional authorities should have their own strategies defined, agreed upon, and advocated at the EU and Euro-Mediterranean levels. This requires regions to acquire enhanced strategic capacities and, in particular in the field of culture, a thorough reorientation of their action in this field.

Another aspect that should not be neglected is that multilevel governance is a two-way framework. Regions cannot claim participation in the cultural agenda-setting and policy formulation at the State, EU, or Euro-Mediterranean level if they, in turn, do not consult and involve sub-regional actors (such as provinces or cities, but also civil society actors) in their own cultural policy formulation process. This is often the case in Mediterranean regions.

3. Enhancing the Role of Regions' Multilevel Governance of Culture in the Mediterranean: Conclusions and Strategic Recommendations

Conclusions. The documentary and case-study analysis conducted to elaborate this report, including the rich information on interregional cooperation projects contained in the referred bibliography, has led to the following main general conclusions:

- 1) Regions in the Mediterranean have a long tradition and a rich experience of action in the field of culture. However, despite their sizeable resources, administrative capacity and political competences in the field of culture, their participation in formulating cultural policy and strategy at the EU level is very limited. In the cultural field, multi-level governance is more a framework for analysis and an aspiration than a reality. So the scope for improvement of regions' participation in cultural policy formulation is quite wide, since regions are not using all the potential offered by the EU or by Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation to influence cultural policies.
- 2) Regions in the Mediterranean often suffer from cultural action focused mainly on events and activities. This is detrimental to their natural role as planning and strategic formulation bodies, i.e., as a clearing house for different actors and operators within their territories. In turn, this focus on activities is detrimental to the contribution of culture to territorial development. In cultural policies and particularly in cooperation action, the regional council should not be positioned as an operational partner or a coordinator. Its mission is rather to contribute methodologically by improving the coherence and the consistency of individual cooperation actions, by integrating them into a wider framework of cooperation, and by acting as a mediator and articulator between the local and the State or international levels of government.
- 3) Most Mediterranean regions do not have cultural strategies as such for their own territories. But multilevel governance is a two-way framework. Regions cannot claim participation in the cultural agenda-setting and policy formulation at the State, EU, or Euro-Mediterranean level if they, in turn, do not consult and involve sub-regional actors (such as provinces or cities, but also civil society actors).
- 4) In the field of international cultural cooperation, the heterogeneity of competences and systems of regional governance in the Mediterranean (in particular, but not only, between North and South) is a serious obstacle to cultural cooperation between regional governments across the Mediterranean, but it may be an asset, too. This heterogeneity often makes it necessary to incorporate other levels of government into cultural cooperation projects. This

could contribute to strengthening regional authorities in those countries where they are less autonomous, to the extent that regional authorities would be integrated in the projects and cultural cooperation could act as a factor of institutional strengthening and capacity building for them.

- 5) In any case, there is a huge inventory of projects and experiences to draw on, and a critical mass of regions with an extensive experience of international cultural cooperation. There is a long tradition of cultural cooperation between European regions, in particular, and the lessons learned could be usefully transferred to North-South Mediterranean cultural cooperation.
- 6) Nevertheless, the evidence shows that transnational projects, although they are a very useful tool for developing international cultural cooperation, do not have an equally significant impact on regional territory and its institutional or civil society actors. Often closed in upon themselves (there is a deficit of dissemination of these activities), they are often not subject to any serious evaluation or impact assessment, and lessons are not drawn from the evaluations carried out. This means that a lot of good practices are lost. So there is no effective collective learning curve for regions in international cultural cooperation.
- 7) In particular, within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership framework, regions have effectively been absent from Euro-Mediterranean cultural policy-making until now (whether in the 2007 “Strategy for the Development of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage: Priorities from Mediterranean Countries (2007-2013)” or the upcoming Mediterranean Cultural Strategy, as well as the Anna Lindh Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures).
- 8) On the operational front, the Cross-Border Cooperation component of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument introduced in 2007, including an innovative and sizeable Mediterranean Basin Programme (one of the four priorities of which is culture, and the management methodology based on EU regional policy structural funds) is taking more time than planned to take off because of administrative procedures (until 2009) and because of political interferences which risk letting the programme fail. This could have very negative consequences for the prospects of participation for the regions in policy- and strategy-making in the Euro-Mediterranean framework in all fields, including culture.
- 9) So far, networks of regional authorities mainly have a generalist nature (i.e., they are not specialized), have weak technical and lobbying capacities, and focus on declaratory activities or attracting and managing funds from States or international organizations (in particular, the EU). Neither networks nor regions as such have a significant impact on cultural policy formulation at the State or EU level. However, the role of international networks of regions is fundamental

as a lobby to make sure that regions do contribute to and participate in cultural strategy formulation at the State, EU, and Euro-Mediterranean levels. The Mediterranean is a natural perimeter for these networks in the cultural field. In order to be effective, these networks should be thematic and specialized.

Recommendations. On the basis of these conclusions, the following preliminary recommendations or hints for action can be formulated:

- 1) Mediterranean regions should invest in developing their own comprehensive territorial cultural strategies, and not limit themselves to managing cultural activities. This is relevant even for those regions that do not have direct competences in the field of culture. These strategies should have an international cooperation window reaching out to other Mediterranean regions. To formulate these strategies, they should consult lower levels of local government (provinces and cities) and civil society actors in their territories, if they want to have a legitimate claim to their right to be consulted and participate in State, EU, and Euro-Mediterranean cultural policy-making.
- 2) Inter-regional international cooperation projects should try to involve territorial bodies of the same level as leading partners. When this is not possible due to the heterogeneity of competences across countries, regional bodies should be associated to the projects (for instance, when the leading project partner in a Southern Mediterranean country is a Ministry or other de-concentrated State body), so that the implementation of projects contributes to their capacity building.
- 3) Culture should be mainstreamed into general territorial development strategies at all levels, and as this is increasingly accepted, regions should be mainstreamed into the cultural policy formulation process. To advance in this direction, it would be extremely functional to create a Mediterranean Network of Regions for Culture bringing together regions from throughout the region (regardless of their level of competences) and specifically focused on cultural and cultural cooperation issues. As a first step, such a network could be created within the Inter-Mediterranean Commission of the CMPR to take advantage of institutional synergies and facilitate linkage to other strategic fields of regions' action. This would contribute to integrating regions' diplomacy in the field of culture into a single framework where regions could be collectively involved as such (without undermining their individual action), a prerequisite for exerting influence on policy-making in the field of culture in the Mediterranean. A limited but specialized and dedicated technical secretariat should be created in this framework. The Network would act as a permanent framework for exchanges and cooperation between regions on cultural issues. It would also conduct a systematic dialogue with networks of cities and other local authorities, Euro-Mediterranean networks of cultural operators, and civil society networks in this

field (such as the Forum Euro-Méditerranéen de la Culture, FEMEC, and others).

- 4) Following the same rationale, a commission on cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue should be created within the newly established Euro-Mediterranean Local and Regional Assembly (ARLEM).
- 5) Both instances –the Mediterranean Network of Regions for Culture and the commission on cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue in ARLEM– should first address the issue of how to associate regional authorities to the ongoing formulation of a Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Strategy (the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Culture scheduled for the first semester of 2010 would be the right moment to visualize this involvement, and networks of Euro-Mediterranean regions should submit their claims and vision to the Conference) and to the activities of the Anna Lindh Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures.
- 6) The success of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme of the ENPI, and in particular of the Mediterranean Basin Programme, has strategic importance for the prospects of increasing the participation of the regions in Mediterranean policy-making in all fields, including culture. The credibility of the regions as full-fledged partners in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is at stake. So a top priority of all existing networks and regional authorities from the North and the South of the Mediterranean should be to solve current blockades (lack of agreement for the bilateral Spain-Morocco programme, limited participation from regions from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean in the Programme....), to the point that this warrants the drafting of a crisis management plan to this effect.
- 7) In line with the rationale of the European Neighbourhood Policy, EU programmes and agencies in the field of culture should be opened to the participation of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries (and regions, in the same conditions as European ones). The EU-Morocco Advanced Status agreed on in October 2008 and currently being developed offers an appropriate framework for this. Participation in EU cultural programmes would strongly enhance Southern Mediterranean regions' capacities in this field.
- 8) International cooperation projects in the Mediterranean should invest more resources and in a more systematic way:
 - in the dissemination of outcomes and results among the general public and in reaching out to civil society, with dedicated budget resources for this (a radical but warranted measure would be to reserve 10% of the budget for these purposes)
 - in integrating into the project plan the assimilation of best practices and experiences from other previous similar projects (in the same or other Mediterranean regions)

- 9) Further research: A systematic catalogue of international cultural cooperation projects in the Mediterranean (by similar categories of projects) and a synthetic brief of good and bad practices derived from them are necessary to ensure the valorisation of the rich experience regional authorities have accumulated in the field of international cultural cooperation (very often in projects with similar characteristics).
- 10) In the Mediterranean, natural “cooperation themes” for international cultural cooperation are based on common interests/identities such as:
- common cultural heritage (archaeology and rehabilitation, monuments...)
 - cultural tourism (roads and itineraries)
 - common history and identity
 - exchanges (youth, artists...)
 - performing arts.
- A specific strategy for cultural cooperation in each of these fields should be developed by trans-Mediterranean networks of regions as a guide to and a framework for future action.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Case Study: The Network of Historic Urban Centres of Islamic Influence Project: Assessments and Lessons

The “Network of Historic Urban Centres of Islamic Influence in the Southern Iberian Peninsula and Northern Morocco” was a pilot cooperation action according to Art. 10 of the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRD) between Spain, Portugal, and Morocco.

Partners. It involved three regional governments (Junta de Andalucía, Junta de Extremadura, and Regiao do Algarve), the Archeological Camp of Mértola (a scientific institution in the Alentejo region), and the Moroccan Ministry for Culture. The Junta de Andalucía was the leading partner.

Implementation period. Its original implementation period was 2000-2001, but it was then extended for another four years to 2006 (so it is closed now).

Objectives. Its ultimate objectives were to intensify cooperation links between the participating partners on the basis of the valorisation of their common cultural heritage of Islamic origin. The choice of the project was not only meant to achieve these objectives, but also to link the preservation and management of cultural heritage to the territorial development of the partners and to develop a test case for the EU to develop general policies and strategies regarding the Southern EU and North African (i.e., Mediterranean) countries, i.e., to promote Mediterranean integration. The outcomes of the project aimed also to influence the cultural heritage and territorial development policies of the partner regions. This makes the project particularly relevant for the purposes of the MEDGOVERNANCE project.

To achieve this, the project aimed to identify a set of historical urban centres of Islamic influence in the partner regions to launch a series of projects and actions to promote a better knowledge of their value, the exchange of information and experiences, and the definition of policies to preserve and manage them in a perspective of territorial sustainable development.

Outcomes and activities. The outcomes expected were:

- i) the development of a multimedia database on urban centres of Islamic influence in Andalusia and Extremadura (plus a CD “*Medinas, Mudun*”)
- ii) a series of heritage and tourism promotion activities, such as a) two tourism promotion activities, b) the preparation of a strategic plan for defining interpretation methods, and 7 interpretation plans (3 in Morocco, 3 in Andalusia, and 1 in the Algarve, c) 12 cultural itineraries (3 in Andalucía, 2 in the Algarve, 4 in Extremadura, and 3 in Morocco), and d) single interventions (5)

iii) the design and establishment of 7 interpretation centers (3 in Morocco, 2 in Portugal, and two in Andalusia).

Around those activities:

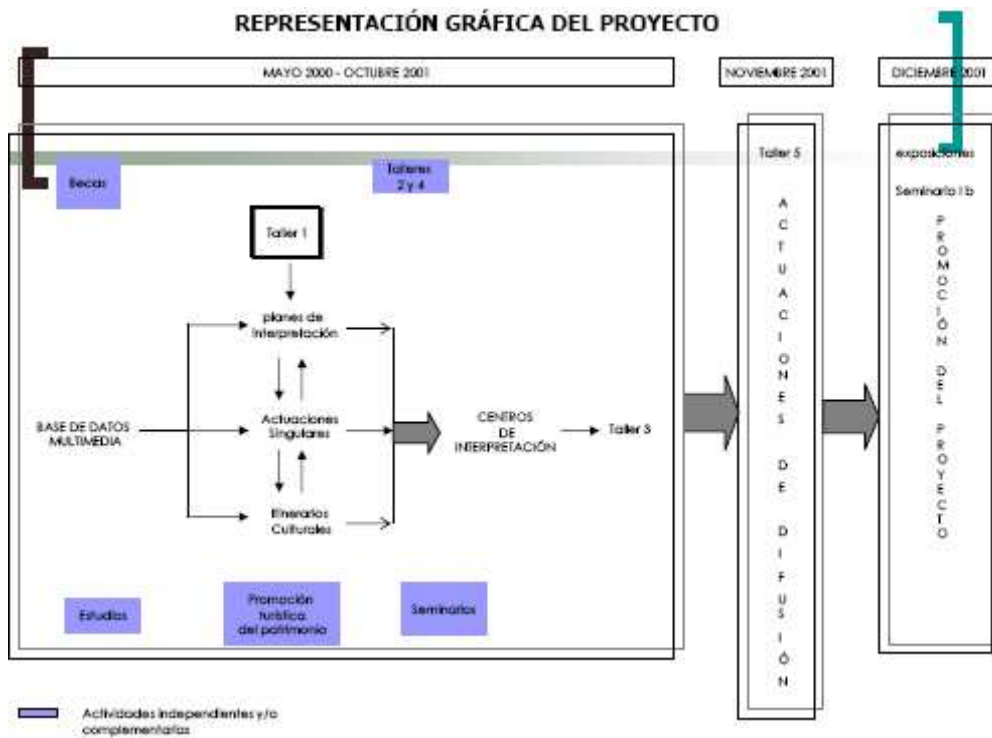
iv) 8 research scholarships were granted in Andalusia, plus 8 in Morocco and training activities for heritage managers and technicians from Moroccan local, regional, and state administration

v) studies were commissioned (two studies concerning the archeological site of Ksar Seguir in Morocco and the potential of the North-Eastern region of Morocco) in order to increase knowledge about the common cultural heritage

vi) workshops and seminars –nine in total- were organized (as a way to intensify the cooperation and exchange of experiences)

A series of dissemination and promotion activities at the end of the first stage were approved in the project review undertaken in October 2000, in order to disseminate the common cultural heritage among the population; a public information event was convened in Seville in November 2001, with the attendance of around 70 people, including some local journalists. A long list of publications was produced by the partners of the project, as well as an exhibit, some project promotion materials, and a webpage.

The first stage of the project was presented at the time as follows:



Budget. The total budget for the project was estimated at 3.2 million euros. 75% of the funding of the project came from EU Structural Funds and the rest from participating partner institutions. Since the expenditure of EU funds outside the EU territory was not possible, Moroccan participation was made possible by a contribution by the Junta de Andalucía through the Fundación Tres Culturas (for an amount of 636,934 euros).

Implementation. The project was implemented in two stages:

2000-2001. In this first stage, delays, a lack of clear attribution of responsibility, and shortcomings in planning and evaluation were identified. It took the project some time to take off, mainly due to the delay in attributing credit to the partners (on December 4-5, 2000, a launching activity was organised). So the implementation period for this first stage was sensibly reduced and this did not allow progress beyond the creation of the network and the multimedia database.

2002-2006. A second stage for the project was planned to complete the scheduled activities and the execution of the budget.

Preliminary Conclusions:

The analysis of the documents provided (which have only been synthetically summarized above to avoid reiterations) points to the following relevant conclusions for the MEDGOVERNANCE project:

- 1) The design of the project seemed very pertinent and adapted to the context (a good cooperation theme, alignment with the objectives of territorial development...). Despite this, the approval of the project and the allocation of project credits to the partners took a long time, delaying the start of the project (and hence making a second stage necessary).
- 2) The project did contribute to intensify the exchanges and valorisation of common cultural heritage across the Mediterranean, given the intense involvement of Moroccan partners. The choice of the cooperation theme (historic urban centres of Islamic influence) can be a model for a mutually interesting subject highlighting historical interdependence and current co-development potential.
- 3) Despite difficulties due to the different administrative and political structures, the project managed to associate partners in the North and the South of the Mediterranean through ad-hoc administrative and financial solutions. It contributed to capacity-building in Morocco in the field of cultural heritage management (to this end, the creation of a project coordination unit in Morocco was important). Some administrative problems concerning the activities in Morocco were duly solved.
- 4) The heterogeneity of partners in the project (not all of them were regions) posed some problems and probably limited the impact of its actions. It is not clear, in the

project documents, whether and how it contributed to strengthening the regional councils in Morocco, for instance.

- 5) The high number of institutional partners (11 different services and DGs in three different departments within the Junta de Andalucía, 3 in the same department in the Junta de Extremadura, a regional coordination commission, and three city governments in Algarve, plus the Mértola Archaeological Camp and the Moroccan Ministry of Cultural Affairs) made the attribution of responsibilities and consensus-building for the implementation of the project more difficult. It certainly also contributed to a wider co-ownership of its process and results.
- 6) However, it is not clear in the project documents how the territorial planning dimension of the project (linking it to cultural heritage management), strongly underlined in the project formulation, was integrated during its implementation (apart from the seminars convened during the project, 5 of which were directly related to territorial planning).
- 7) Much effort was devoted to ensuring the financial and administrative implementation of the project, and maybe not enough to evaluation (lack of impact indicators for the actions of the project, for instance), and in particular to the dissemination and sustainability of the results. This is particularly striking for a pilot action: an assessment of impact in Morocco (in the fields of valorisation and management of cultural heritage and capacity building), as well as in EU regions-Morocco cooperation relations would have been very relevant and useful.
- 8) The sustainability of some of the actions undertaken within the project was low, according to project evaluations (others, like some of the interpretation centres and the Islamic Culture Day of Almonaster la Real, have been sustained over time). Just three years after project closure, guides or leaflets on the itineraries created are no longer available in the tourist information centres, the presence on Internet of the outcomes of the project is very low, and publications have not been re-edited.
- 9) Throughout the project documents examined, it has not been possible to find any reference to the assimilation into the project of best practices and experiences from other previous projects (in these or other Mediterranean regions). Importation of knowledge and experience from similar projects may have happened through external consultants or officers participating in the project, but there was no systematic framework facilitating it.
- 10) Later on, a workshop on the “Creation of a project bank for interregional cooperation in the field of territorial planning and cultural heritage” which was scheduled in the original project plan was replaced by another more general subject. So no systematic evaluation of the project experience gathering ideas for further cooperation or lessons for future projects was conducted.

- 11) Despite the pilot nature of the project, no systematic transfer of experience gained through its implementation seems to have been undertaken. No specific evaluation was made to draw lessons for future cooperation projects on the key issue of Islamic influence in European Mediterranean regions. The lessons of the project have been quickly lost except for the direct participants (the website is no longer in operation, and access to key information about it is hardly possible).
- 12) No information has been provided or found on the continuation of exchanges between the partner regions or the centres in the network of urban centres of Islamic influence after the closure of the project, so no conclusions can be drawn on this key issue.

In sum, the “Network of Historic Urban Centres of Islamic Influence” project was clearly relevant and well designed, and after some initial difficulties was implemented as planned, but its potential as a lever for territorial development and integration between the regions involved was not fully exploited. This was due mainly to four factors: a) insufficient integration of the project with other territorial development projects in the same regions, b) no integration into the project (before and after) of *learning* activities to ensure the assimilation of previous experience in similar projects and the generation of evaluation and ideas for further cooperation, c) insufficient investment in dissemination and outreach of the project to the populations involved, and d) a lack of follow-up.

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1. Other Cases of Cultural Projects reported by the MEDGOVERNANCE Partner institutions

The information received from other trans-border cultural cooperation projects implemented by MEDGOVERNANCE partner institutions does not allow us to reach any relevant conclusions. However, we consider it useful to include a brief note with their main features.

- “*Mercator*” INTERREG III B project

This project also seems particularly fit to be taken as an example and a precedent, considering that its main objective was to foster cultural development and networking in the European-Mediterranean area.

Partners. The project involved a total of five European countries from Greece to Portugal and two Southern Mediterranean ones: the leading partner was Heritage Malta, and the partners were the Municipality of Mertola (Portugal), the University of Evora (Portugal), the Diputación de Alicante (Spain), the Regione Liguria (Italy), the Consorzio Pisa Ricerche (Italy), Lazio Region (Italy), and the Poseidon Organization (Euroregion Belasica-Belles, Greece). Also involved in the project, as observers, were the University Hassan II of Mohammedia (Morocco) and the United Cities and local governments of Lebanon. Each country partner was represented by regional or local authorities, universities, and think tanks, and Maritime or Archaeological Museums linked to the chosen area of interest for studying ancient commercial routes.

Objectives. The project “*Merchant routes and trade cities in the Mediterranean*” aimed to create an interactive platform to share information and historical details on the main commercial routes, in particular Mediterranean ports.

Implementation period. The *Mercator* project started in May 2006 and ended in June 2008.

Budget. The overall cost of the project was 1,512,500.40 euros, divided as follows: the EFRD contribution was 970,000 euros, the amount of national contributions was 523,204 euros and, finally, Lazio Region co-financing covered 19,296.64 euros.

Outputs. All the outputs of the project (the *Mercator Atlas*, the *Mercator Museums* network, the conferences, workshops and related publications) were conceived as “dynamic” ones. One of the main outputs of the project is the *Mercator Atlas*, in paper and on-line versions. The on-line version of the atlas is to be found, among much other information, on the site www.mercatorproject.eu.

The Atlas has been written in all Country partners' languages, with the English translation on the side, and has been distributed to the interested stakeholders and institutions in the territories involved in the project. The aim of the Atlas is to join all Heritage Trails developed by the different organisations implementing the project and to offer a wide reconstruction of ancient commercial routes all around the Mediterranean area. It shows the user several different journeys in well-known lands to be rediscovered in a historical perspective, using maps and thematic papers to recognize existing buildings and monuments, and to discover their function in the ancient commercial routes.

Activities. At a first stage, each partner carried out historical, geographical, and economic research in the selected areas of interest, collecting data on ancient commercial structures and infrastructures, to be developed in a proposal for a Heritage trail in its territory; then, the proposal needed to be shared with the partners and to be included in the *Mercator Atlas*, which is the project's main output. Finally, eight Heritage Trails were developed in the Atlas, one for each partner: Malta, Lazio, Tuscany (in particular, the city of Pisa), Liguria (Genoa), Mertola, Evora (Portugal), Alicante (Spain), and Thessaloniki (Greece).

At the same time, Maritime or Archaeological Museums in selected areas were involved in the creation of the Mercator Museums network

- *The Memory of the Alps* (<http://www.memoryofthealps.net/index.php>)

Partners. Lead partner: the Piedmont Region.

Italy: Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte, Regione Valle d'Aosta, Provincia di Torino, Provincia di Alessandria, Provincia di Asti, Provincia di Cuneo, Provincia di Novara, Provincia di Imperia, Provincia Verbano Cusio-Ossola, Comunità Montana Valsesia, Comunità Montana Valsessere, Comunità Montantana Valle Ossola, Comune di Avier (VdA), Comune di Valpelline (VdA) Comune di Valsavaranche (VdA), CIE Piemonte-Centro d'Iniziativa per l'Europa del Piemonte (TO)

France: Université Pierre Mendès France, Grenoble, Musèè de la Résistance et de la Deportation de l'Isère - Grenoble, Parc Naturel Regional du Vercors, Ville de Menton, Association Montagne et Traditions de Saint-Martin-Vesubie.

Swiss: Istituto di storia delle Alpi, Università della Svizzera Italiana, Centro di Dialettologia e di Etnografia, DECS (Dip Educazione, cultura e sport) Cantone Ticino, Museo del Malcantone- Cantone Ticino, Radio Televisione svizzera di lingua italiana (RTSI)-Cantone Ticino, Mediatheque Valais-Image et Son-Cantone Vallese, Musee de Bagnes-Cantone Vallese, Forschungsinstitut fur die Geschichte des Alpenraumes (FGA)-Cantone Vallese

Implementation period: 2003-2008.

Objectives. “The Memory of the Alps” project aims to study, illustrate, and pass on – especially to the younger generations – the collective memory relating to the Alpine territory lying between Italy, France, and Switzerland, in its cross-border dimension. In particular, it aims at reconstructing, physically, as well, the history of the Second World War in the west Alps – the frontiers, the presence of occupying and freedom forces, and the salvation path.

Outcomes and activities. The project Interreg Alcotra “*La memoria delle Alpi / La mémoire des Alpes*” focused, on the scientific research level and on the divulgation level, on intervention across the Alpine territory. 45 publications, 95 itineraries, 29 network centers created by Regions and Provinces across the territory in cooperation with the Istituti per la storia della Resistenza e della società contemporanea del Piemonte e della Valle d'Aosta, 4 thematic CD-roms, the web Portal, data bank, and the guide “*I sentieri della libertà. Piemonte e Alpi occidentali. 1938-1945 la Guerra, la Resistenza, la persecuzione razziale,*” edited with the Touring Club Italiano. The activities planned for the project can be divided into the following sections:

- a) research and documentation
- b) virtual museum
- c) network-Centres
- d) exhibits
- e) paths and itineraries
- f) didactic activities
- g) centres for documentation on material culture
- h) communication and information