

## THE TIME TO ACT

### EURO-MEDITERRANEAN DEAL FOR THE MITIGATION OF AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean (EPM), one of the leading European Euroregions, created in the form of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2004, is constituted by the Government of the Balearic Islands (ES), the Region Occitanie (FR) and the Generalitat of Catalonia (ES). As a key player in European regional policy, the EPM is an essential speaker of the values of the EU on its territory. In this regard, **the EPM is moving forward and making a shared, clear and firm commitment facing the global climate emergency**, undertaking to take concrete, fair and effective measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

In a context of crisis related, among other things, to the climatic and environmental emergencies, our territories and, in particular, the most vulnerable - islands, the coast and mountainous areas - have already, in many cases, especially on the coasts, exceeded their load capacity. **The impacts of climate change constitute a threat for the well-being and health of persons, the cultural heritage, economic prosperity, urban systems and natural systems.** The adaptation of the territory of the EPM to the new biophysical, social and economic reality is also an opportunity for an ecological, energy and digital transition which is fairer socially and brings with it a new development model.

**Scientists and experts have been warning us for decades about the acceleration in climate change and, more recently, about the possibility of reaching a point of no return.** The latest report from the Intergovernmental Group of experts on climate change (IPCC) warns against the seriousness of the situation, points out human action as responsible for the acceleration of climate change and puts down the bases so that governments take rapid, strong and effective measures to reverse the dynamic and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which have constantly increased in recent times. **The preoccupation concerning climate and environmental change and the risks incurred is particularly evident in the Mediterranean:** as is underlined by the Medecc's first evaluation report<sup>1</sup>, the climate in the Mediterranean area is changing more quickly than global trends.

**The population must also confront a global climate alert from which our territories are already suffering**, but which is likely to worsen in the future. The increase in minimum, maximum and average temperatures, sunshine and heatwaves and tropical nights, increasingly intense and frequent droughts, the increase in the risk of major forest fires, the rising sea level threatening coastal and delta regions, the loss of biodiversity and biological integrity, extreme precipitation phenomena or the resurgence in our territory of diseases already eliminated, are some of the consequences we must confront together. **Six years after the Paris Agreement, it is urgent to**

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<sup>1</sup> MedECC (2020) Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin - Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report (Cramer, W., Guiot, J., Marini, K. (eds.)) Union for the Mediterranean, Plan Bleu, UNEP/MAP, Marseille, France, 632pp.

**act. Today, more than ever we must increase our efforts and develop applicable solutions to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts.**

**The EPM has been keen to highlight the climactic policies that the Occitanie, Catalonia and Balearic regions have implemented on their respective territories by elaborating a common commitment on this issue.** The sharing of the same Euro-Mediterranean space and the challenges of mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change mean that these policies have numerous common factors and synergies, in particular regarding coastal areas. Conscious of the gravity of the situation, we must urgently implement joint regional measures to combat climate change and its repercussions on health, the economy and the environment. The mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, embodied in strategies, action plans and governance processes, are the principal resource at the disposal of players acting on a territory to reduce its vulnerability. At the EPM, we are aware of this and wish to do it together.

**The new EPM 2021-2030 roadmap to build a resilient future by 2030 has laid down as one of its priorities responding to the climactic and environmental emergency and accelerating the ecological and digital transformation, including the energy transition, of our territories.** Three strategic objectives develop this priority, embodied by operational objectives. On the one hand, the preservation and promotion of our natural heritage and our biodiversity, to meet both the international objectives laid down by the UN around the SDGs and those laid down by the Green Deal of the European Union, the European Strategy on Biodiversity, the long-term 2050 strategy (clean Europe) or the European adaptation to climate change strategy. On the other hand, the preservation of our resources, in particular water, is strongly threatened by global change and human activities. Lastly, the achievement of energy sovereignty by 2030, within the framework of the new European law on the climate and the undertaking made by the EU to reduce its emissions by 55% by 2030 through its "Fit for 55" package.

**With the signing of this Euro-Mediterranean Deal for the Mitigation of and Adaptation to Climate Change, the territories which are part of the EPM commit, within the framework of the competencies available to them,** to promote the actions proposed in order to increase their resilience and confront the global climate emergency.

1. **Developing new management modes** which mitigate the human impact, reduce exposure to climate change and improve the sustainability of the EPM coast. It is necessary to promote new economic development models, more focussed on people and the quality of services and which avoid tourist overpopulation and recover degraded areas.
2. **Urgently planning adaptation measures** for the effects of climate change in coastal areas, prioritising actions to make them more resilient to impacts (in particular the rise in sea level, the intensification of the frequency and scope of storms which cause a more significant impact thereof on the natural systems and infrastructure of coastal areas, recurrent and extremes droughts and water shortage) and developing sectoral policies, in particular in the tourism sector, infrastructure and agriculture, in relation to the adaptation to climate change.

3. **Intensifying the preservation and restoration of ecosystems**, by protecting threatened species and areas and by restoring the natural dynamic. The solutions founded on nature are becoming an opportunity to improve coastal areas and will give priority to those of artificial nature in order to reverse the anthropisation of the coast, in particular in areas the most exposed to climactic risks or closest to natural spaces, with the aim of recovering the dynamics of the coastal ecosystems.
4. **Committing to an ecosystemic and adaptative management of the coastal and marine areas**, by increasing the surface area of the marine reserves, by regulating leisure activities, by making fishing and aquaculture more sustainable and by ensuring the successful integration of offshore wind farms. The delta and wet zones are particularly sensitive to climate change and must be protected and conserved.
5. **Acting on the management of water resources**, by concentrating efforts on the economy of water, its sustainable management and the improvement of its quality.
6. **Accompanying from a technical and budgetary point-of-view** the local agricultural, fishing, aquacultural and forestry producers in their necessary adaptation to climate change. We must accompany the farmers, fishermen, foresters and the entire food and forestry production chain in the transformation of their practices to practices which are fairer and more sustainable, supportive and respectful of the environment.
7. **Approving specific action plans which commit to the reduction of emissions**. The aim approved by the EU of a 55% reduction in emissions by 2030 must be achieved thanks to specific actions which are budgeted and programmed for the various economic sectors. The climate laws adopted in each territory must be elaborated and implemented as a matter of great urgency.
8. **Committing to the decentralised production of renewable energy** and supporting citizen actions for the production and consumption of local renewable energy. From the point of view of standards and budgets we must promote a fair transition for citizens, also reducing energy consumption, principally of houses, thanks to innovations.
9. **Transforming governance and integrating society as a whole** and with the best scientific knowledge available. Research and the dissemination of knowledge are the fundamental pillars of an informed, participative and decisive society. The creation of Climate Citizen Assemblies must be promoted as a complementary tool to institutional decision-making.
10. **Reinforcing the production of knowledge**, the Euroregional research networks and the raising of public awareness to biodiversity and adaptation to climate change in the coastal and marine areas of the EPM. Environmental education is a priority for a change of model in the current context of climactic emergency.
11. **Calling on the public institutions and private companies to work together** within the framework of their competencies and in their scope of action to combat the effects of climate change in the EPM coastal areas. Voluntary agreements to reduce emissions must make way for mandatory undertakings.