

JOINT DECLARATION

Leadership of the regions to transform the Mediterranean

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SUMMIT OF REGIONS
Palau de Pedralbes, Barcelona - 22 November 2025

The Mediterranean is a key geographical space, a strategic bridge connecting Europe, Africa and Asia, and at the same time the epicentre of some of the great global challenges. Demographic and climate change, increasing political polarisation and economic, territorial and social inequalities shape a complex reality that puts internal regional cohesion to the test. Conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and the Sahel, along with other global disputes – such as Russia's war against Ukraine – intensify these challenges and directly impact security, maritime trade, food sovereignty and collective resilience.

However, the Mediterranean is also a place full of opportunities, where there is great potential for cooperation, innovation and sustainability. Areas such as the green and digital transitions, as well as local economic development, open up new avenues for competitiveness and shared prosperity. This dynamic reality makes it essential to strengthen the role of regions and cities, giving them greater adaptability and leadership to promote effective, legitimate and transformative multilevel governance.

The Barcelona Process, of which we are commemorating the thirtieth anniversary this year, already recognises the leading role of regions and cities as actors that give content to a project based on cooperation, dialogue and sustainable development between all shores of the Mediterranean. The involvement of the local and regional world over these three decades has helped translate diplomacy into visible results and has established a solid foundation on which to build a shared future.

In this scenario, the Pact for the Mediterranean is presented as a transformative and urgent initiative: an understanding that promotes a new paradigm of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, based on the legacy of the Barcelona Process and on dialogue on equal footing between the European Union and the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, in which civil society and youth have a key role to play in ensuring its implementation and legitimacy. The Pact calls for greater involvement of regions and cities in defining priorities, implementing projects and evaluating results. The objective is clear: turning political commitments into effective, collective and lasting responses to the integral needs of people and territories.

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Gathered at the Palau de Pedralbes in Barcelona, on the occasion of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Regions and in the context of the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the signatories to this Declaration:

DECLARE

1. That the **future of the Mediterranean and Europe** is shared and interdependent, and that the consolidation of an environment of peace is essential to foster progress, prosperity and social cohesion in the region. In this context, the new Pact for the Mediterranean is a historic opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation in an inclusive and sustainable manner, consistent with the values and principles of the European Union.
2. That **regions and cities**, as public authorities closest to citizens, have an irreplaceable role to play in translating this Pact into tangible results on the ground. Their proximity and capacity for action ensure that policies become responses adapted to local realities and people's needs.
3. That the Euro-Mediterranean area requires **multilevel governance** that effectively integrates regional and local authorities at all policy stages. This cooperation must be balanced and grounded in a genuine South-South and North-South partnership, built on dialogue among equals and shared responsibility across both shores of the Mediterranean.
Territorial and decentralised cooperation between regions and cities on both shores of the Mediterranean, including islands, as well as the strengthening of networks such as **MedCities**, the **Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions**, the **Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean** and the **Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance**, are tools for innovation, shared resilience and effective transformation, which must be recognised as fundamental pillars of the new Euro-Mediterranean cooperation strategy.
4. That **institutional collaboration spaces** such as the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), as the key intergovernmental framework of regional cooperation, and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) should be strengthened and interconnected to ensure coherence between the territorial, national and regional levels of

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- governance. At the same time, new tools and frameworks should be promoted – including the exploration of a Mediterranean macro-regional strategy based on the existing EU model – that allow for the coordination of agendas, resources and actors in a stable and inclusive manner.
5. That the new Pact must have an agile and accessible financial architecture, enabling regions and cities to deploy transformative projects with tangible impact, while fostering strong public-private partnerships. The cooperation framework **Team Europe**, as well as the **Global Gateway** initiative in the Euro-Mediterranean region, should be given a clear territorial dimension in order to ensure effective coordination between the European Union and local and regional actors. Moreover, it is essential to ensure simplified processes and direct access to European funding, especially as regards the **Global Europe** instrument. This will help translate political priorities into well-resourced territorial cooperation programmes, to foster public-private cooperation with companies and stakeholders in key economic sectors, and to reinforce multilevel and macro-regional governance. In addition, the post 2027 financial framework should guarantee predictable and long-term funding for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. An exploratory assessment of a potential Mediterranean Facility could offer the stability and coherence needed to support the Pact's priorities and future action plans.
 6. That the new Pact should be developed beyond a general approach, building on the three pillars identified – people, economy and security – but with a **clear territorial orientation**. This implies prioritising actions that have a tangible impact on the territories, such as training and youth participation; energy transition and green innovation; inclusive digitalisation; social cohesion, and the management of migration, in accordance with human rights and in a responsible manner. It is therefore necessary to promote decentralisation processes that strengthen the capacities of regions and cities to lead and adapt these initiatives to their local realities.
 7. That climate and maritime resilience are core challenges for the Euro-Mediterranean area. As such, the new Pact must foresee explicit commitments to coastal resilience, a sustainable blue economy, and

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climate change adaptation, given their direct impact on the territories. Regions and cities, including coastal and island territories, must be equipped with targeted resources, technical support, and coordinated long-term planning to lead these efforts effectively.

8. That the new Pact must guarantee an **inclusive approach** that integrates gender and intersectionality to ensure that policies respond to the diverse realities of people, especially those in the most peripheral, rural and island territories. It should promote cultural cooperation and linguistic diversity through the active involvement of regions, cities, civil society, and youth, ensuring both the legitimacy and effectiveness of its initiatives.

For all these reasons, promoting a **common voice** from the Mediterranean regions before the European and Euro-Mediterranean institutions, and to ensure an effective role in the new political and institutional framework,

WE URGE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE RESPONSIBLE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS TO:

- **Incentivise the relevant and central role of regional and local authorities** in the implementation of the new Pact for the Mediterranean, so that regions and local authorities are involved in the **definition and development of the first Action Plan (2026)**. This implies strong leadership from the territorial governments closest to citizens, ensuring that the projects and initiatives of this Action Plan are planned, implemented and evaluated in an effective way that is adapted to local realities.
- Create a **monitoring and evaluation committee grounded in the territory**, which incorporates the local and regional dimension in the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the new Pact and its action plans.
- Set up a **technical assistance fund for decentralised cooperation in the Mediterranean**, co-financed by the European Commission and other donors, both public and private.

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For all the above, we send this Joint Declaration to the member states of the Union for the Mediterranean, as a clear expression of the will and determination of the regions and cities to be full institutional actors in the future of the Mediterranean.

Barcelona, 22 November 2025

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About this Declaration (remains open to future signatories)

The following regions were present at the Summit and/or have confirmed their adherence to the Declaration:

- Region of Tirana (Albania)
- Region of Vlorë (Albania)
- Region of Shkodër (Albania)
- Government of Andalusia (Spain)
- Government of Murcia (Spain)
- Government of the Balearic Islands (Spain)
- Government of the Valencian Community (Spain)
- Region of Lapland (Finland)
- Occitanie Region (France)
- Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region (France)
- Territorial Collectivity of Corsica (France)
- Region of Crete (Greece)
- Region of Ionian Islands (Greece)
- Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Greece)
- Region of Attica (Greece)
- Region of Puglia (Italy)
- Region of Emilia-Romagna (Italy)
- Region of Sardinia (Italy)
- Ministry for Gozo and Planning (Malta)
- Oriental Region (Morocco)
- Region of Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima (Morocco)
- Region of Møre og Romsdal (Norway)

In addition, the following networks have signed this Declaration:

- The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) and, in particular, its Intermediterranean Commission (IMC)
- The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE)
- The Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean (EPM)
- MedCities