

A MANIFESTO FROM THE CPMR: TERRITORIES MATTER IN A REFORMED EUROPEAN UNION

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) and its 150 Member Regions firmly believe that territories matter in a reformed European Union (EU) that should also act as a stronger global actor.

Following the European elections and as the new European Commission starts its mandate later this year, the CPMR wishes to address the following messages to the European institutions

1 The European Union needs an ambitious and long-term strategy to prioritise the achievement of a balanced territorial development throughout Europe, in line with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and to put the Territorial Agenda in action

The European Commission should develop a follow-up strategy to the Europe 2020 strategy to:

- **Prioritise the achievement of a balanced territorial development** throughout Europe, in line with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and to turn the Territorial Agenda into a reality to unlock the potential of peripheral maritime regions
- **Ensure that future EU policies are designed to consider the diversity of territories**, both in terms of building on their potential and addressing their specific needs. Particular attention should be paid to territories beset by permanent and geographical handicaps as well as outermost regions
- **Reach carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest.** The transition to carbon neutrality should be fair and socially balanced and delivered in full partnership with regional and local authorities, businesses and citizens. Peripheral maritime regions are on the front line of both feeling the effects and putting in place solutions to combat and adapt to climate change
- **Reassert Cohesion Policy as the EU's main investment policy**

2 The European Union needs regions to reach its objectives, as laid out in its overarching strategy. At a time when the EU's current and emerging priorities are largely located at the borders of Europe, peripheral maritime regions are strategic and legitimate actors.

As part of this strategy and regarding regionally relevant policy action at European level, the European Commission should:

- **Ensure that EU objectives linked to sustainability are strongly connected to territorial cohesion.** Future EU funding programmes should be designed to ensure that all territories in Europe are able to reach such objectives
- **Explicitly integrate a territorial approach within EU climate and energy policies** and be designed to recognise the role and potential of regions in delivering EU objectives
- **Prioritise the development of marine renewable energies** and recognise and foster the role of innovation laboratories that islands and coastal regions can have for clean renewable energies
- **Ensure that future EU transport policies promote high standards in terms of sustainability** for all transport modes while ensuring territorial accessibility and an equal access to clean mobility throughout Europe and with its neighbours
- **Prioritise sustainable transport modes and enhance intermodal solutions.** More specifically, it should provide a strong support to sustainable maritime transport and reinforce the Motorways of the Sea
- **Pursue the efforts to make aviation greener** and more sustainable in order to **provide a long-term accessibility solution** to peripheral maritime regions

- **Ensure that future EU migration and neighbourhood policies** are designed to acknowledge the role that regions can play in that regard and provide adequate finance mechanisms according to the needs of territories

3 The European Union should empower peripheral maritime regions to deliver European policies on the ground and to connect the European project to citizens.

To achieve this, the European Commission should:

- **Prioritise EU policies and priorities delivered in partnership with regional authorities under shared management** (Cohesion Policy funds and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund in particular). Many EU priorities such as stimulating innovation can only be reached via Cohesion Policy
- **Be accompanied by a substantial reform of the European Semester** to allow meaningful involvement of regions and a greater territorial dimension particularly when it comes to **guiding investment from European Structural and Investment Funds**
- **Deliver a level playing field for all EU funds and financial instruments supporting investment** (centrally managed or under shared management) in the future, and reduce the bureaucratic burden on beneficiaries and managing authorities of EU funds

4 The European Union should reinvigorate ‘cooperation’, both to solve problems which transcend national borders and require a European solution, and to promote dialogue and joint-working between EU and non-EU regions, territories and countries.

To achieve this, the European Commission should:

- **Show real ambition on European Territorial Cooperation** by increasing its funding and enhancing its role to contribute to a sense of EU community and build on the innovation potential at regional level
- **Sustain existing cooperation mechanisms between EU regions and the UK nations and local authorities** in the context of Brexit
- **Rely on cooperation frameworks such as macroregional strategies, sea-basin and initiatives.** These frameworks provide significant EU added value to align priorities, funding resources and strengthening the multilevel cooperation in particular between stakeholders from EU, Pre-Accession and non-EU Neighbourhood countries. The role, the potential and the participation of regions needs to be reinforced and fully exploited both in terms of governance and implementation
- **Ensure that the future EU Neighbourhood Policy, as well as other key EU sectoral policies such as Research and Innovation, Migration or Integrated Maritime Policy further consider the regions and the needs of the Eastern and Mediterranean partner countries,** as well as their territorial stakeholders. The Neighbourhood Development International Cooperation Instrument and the European External Investment Plan should provide a key role and adequate funding opportunities for regional and local authorities, amplifying the connection with other EU sectoral policies