

## 25 years of European Territorial Cooperation Towards a Europe of Europeans

European Territorial Cooperation and the Cohesion Policy.  
A contribution for the Europeans' common future.

Proposals for the future of European Territorial Cooperation presented to the  
European Commission  
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**RIET - Iberian Network of Cross border Cooperation Entities.** A cross-border association for territorial cooperation, established in 2009 by proximity organizations of the Spanish and Portuguese borders, under the Treaty of Valencia,

**MEDCITIES - Mediterranean Cities Network,** established in Barcelona in November 1991, whose activity is geared towards sustainable urban development, and

**CCAA - Atlantic Arc Cities Conference,** a territorial cooperation network, based on the particular identity of the Atlantic Cities, established in 2000, constituting itself as an Atlantic urban forum,

**FAIC - Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities** was constituted in Ancona on 30th April 1999. This association brings together the cities of the 7 countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin: Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece.

non-governmental entities with a legal nature and a permanent activity and with extensive experience in promoting cooperation initiatives and in the monitoring of integrated programs in the various European territorial cooperation plans, consider appropriate to promote reflection on the future of Cohesion Policy post 2020 in general and on the **future of European territorial cooperation** in particular.

In order to promote this reflection and to disseminate the conclusions and results obtained, they decided to constitute the **C4C - Cities for Cooperation** platform, aiming to promote a broad debate and the identification of common problems and solutions adjusted to the common reality of cities and metropolitan areas of the peripheral regions of the European Union in which the main problems and challenges facing the European Union and the future of Cohesion Policy have been particularly impacted.

Based on the experience gained and on the technical reflection already produced, they proposed to summarize a set of **10 proposals** on the future of European territorial cooperation contained in this document.

They also envisage carrying out a detailed assessment of the 25 years of European Territorial Cooperation. Being a technical study based on the experience of territorial actors, as such objective and based on its conclusions, It will not fail to reflect the analytical perspective of the organizations specifically set up for cooperation which are involved in the peripheral territories of the European Union and having a vast and unequalled experience.

Through this document, the **C4C - Cities for Cooperation** platform presents to the European Commission the 10 proposals on the future of European territorial cooperation, on the understanding that this presentation means the beginning of a regular and constructive dialogue, for which it mobilizes the means and the representativeness of their member organizations.



By placing co-operation as the third objective of Cohesion Policy, the European Union stressed the key role of territorial cooperation in building a common European area, helping to ensure that borders are not physical barriers, where people can share experiences and that work towards common goals can be a tangible reality.

European territorial cooperation thus becomes the cornerstone of European integration, and despite much already done, there is still a long way to go and great potential to be explored.

The economic and financial crisis which began in 2008 underlined this importance, not only because of the territorial asymmetry of its impact on European territory, but also because of the decisive role played by Cohesion Policy in the European crisis response and its important contribution to the structural adjustments of the regions necessary for the smooth functioning of Monetary Union.

The Treaty of Lisbon identified the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity between Member States as a core value and mission of the Union. And gave Cohesion Policy a clear objective of promoting a harmonious development of the Union as a whole and, in particular, to contribute to reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the most disadvantaged regions

Cohesion Policy, like other EU investment policies, is one of the important components of the response to the current economic and financial crisis and the current major challenges: the emerging phenomena of ultranationalism and antidemocratic populist movements, the pressure of migration, globalization, climate change, demography, etc. But it is certainly a key element in responding to these challenges, as well as the European Union's main response to the need to deepen the increasingly necessary building of effective and inclusive European citizenship.

The discontinuity in the territorial distribution of levels of economic and social development, induced by the persistence of obstacles arising from artificial economic and social frontiers, justifies that European territorial cooperation is now also the main instrument to support the full implementation of the single market and the main response to the need to create an effective and felt European citizenship in everyday life

Many of the cross-border territories, both internal and external, including transnational maritime spaces, especially in the peripheral regions of the European Union, show less population, aggravated demographic problems, fewer companies and less business dynamics, less employment and, consequently, lower income than European Union average. Within these territories, European territorial cooperation programs have long been the only financial instrument to support public policies geared towards the development of geographically disadvantaged territories and the development of common policies for shared resource management and exploitation of the potential and opportunities.

Through transnational European territorial cooperation and the promotion of macro regional strategies, it has been possible to develop in a shared way solutions whose effectiveness is not matched by the administrative constraints at the internal borders of the European Union.

Through the Inter-regional European territorial cooperation, the first common responses to the new problems posed by globalization and the challenges of the new digital economy were found.

Through neighborhood programs, maritime strategies and macro-regions, the first steps were taken, however insufficient and not always in the best sense, for effective cooperation between the European Union and the neighboring countries, both geographically and in terms of border security, cultural, innovation and trade, giving a more value to a more direct relationship between local and regional authorities in these countries.

Cooperation programs with neighboring regions, notably on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, may play an increased role in an effective common security policy, non-police, and seek structural responses to the migratory flows that undeniably frighten European citizens.

Although it is the third objective of the Cohesion Policy, European territorial cooperation was seen in a reduction way as an addition to the main stream of the application of European structural and investment funds. Despite this erroneous confusion between size and importance, European territorial cooperation has increasingly asserted itself in the European Union as a whole.

The European Union has few genuinely citizen-oriented policies and the creation of effective European citizenship. European territorial cooperation stands out in a small set of policy instruments, which can only be added to the ERASMUS, LIFE programs and Europe with citizens.

In the current context of the European Commission's White Paper on the future of Europe, European territorial cooperation could be one of the best responses of the European Union to the emerging phenomena of ultra-nationalism and antidemocratic populist movements, since it is a structured, coherent and articulated approach that is available and operational to address the new and major challenge facing European construction: keeping citizens identified with the European project and creating a European citizenship.

The C4C presents, in a concise and justified manner, **10 proposals** for the future of European territorial cooperation:

- 1 |** Adopt a common strategy for European territorial cooperation prior to the identification of the programmatic instruments for its implementation;
- 2 |** European territorial cooperation programs should be consistent with a common strategy, focused on a narrower set of objectives and better articulated with the other cross-border cooperation programs (IPA CBC and ENI-CBC), mainstream regional and sectoral programs and with Horizon 2020, LIFE, Erasmus and others initiatives;
- 3 |** European territorial cooperation must be provided with common more significant and more effectively allocated financial resources in order to better achieve the objectives of the Cohesion Policy;
- 4 |** European structural funds and investment appropriations for European territorial cooperation should be allocated to the program and not to the Member States, even for indicative purposes only;
- 5 |** The criterion for allocating the financial resources to be used in the preparation of forthcoming European territorial cooperation programs should take into account of the uniqueness of each area of cooperation and of each territory and contribute to the convergence of the least developed regions;
- 6 |** European territorial cooperation should continue to be structured in the current cooperation levels, and a new generation of transnational programs should be set up to implement formalized macro-regional strategies or to prepare regional strategies where macro-regional strategies do not exist;
- 7 |** Promote an effective strategic and operational monitoring of European territorial cooperation at European level and in each program, with an emphasis on the role of entities set up for European territorial cooperation with a legal nature and a permanent activity;
- 8 |** European territorial cooperation programs should incorporate a management model better suited to their supranational nature, adopting clear rules and administrative procedures, objectives, stable and properly publicized.
- 9 |** The entities created for the development of initiatives for European territorial cooperation, with a legal nature and a permanent activity, including EGTCs, must have their own and common legal and fiscal regime, which takes into account the nature and supranational scope of its activities, which should not be subject to the rules applicable to the place of its registered office, and its participation should be encouraged through an open and objective regulatory framework;
- 10 |** Adopt a model of calls for proposals and for the management of projects more in phase with the requirements and particularities of European Territorial Cooperation.

**1 | Adopt a common strategy for European territorial cooperation prior to the identification of the programmatic instruments for its implementation;**

European territorial cooperation must be strengthened in its strategic and operational objectives and institutional models for its implementation. A new European Strategic Framework should emphasize European territorial cooperation as the main instrument to support the full realization of the single market, the main common response to ultra-nationalism and the need to create an effective European citizenship felt by citizens in their every day's life.

A common strategy for European territorial cooperation must be defined prior to the design of the model of implementation of cohesion policy and cannot be limited to the adoption every seven years of new regulations, which are almost confined to extensive, and complex administrative and financial provisions on European structural and investment funds.

In the European legal sphere and with the instrumental exception of the European groupings of territorial cooperation, cooperation has not existed beyond the limits of the rules for the application of European structural and investment funds.

The identification of a common strategy for European territorial cooperation should take into account the role of European cities and metropolitan areas, the physical and thematic diversity of the territories and the challenges faced by the institutions and the principles of subsidiarity and territorial cohesion foreseen in the Treaty, and should be defined in a **bottom up** way.

The need to find answers to growing migratory pressure opens up a new front for European territorial cooperation, particularly in the area of cooperation with the EU's neighbors (North Africa, pre-accession countries, IPA, Russia, and ENI) and the Outermost Regions and neighboring ACP countries. Because it is through this cooperation that better structured and effective responses, rather than purely police, can be found, in particular through the creation of spaces for balance and social integration.

The social integration of cities and metropolitan areas, the security of people and goods, sustainability and energy, competitiveness and innovation, governance and the development of shared services in cross-border territories, are thematic that should be included in the Common Strategy on European Territorial Cooperation.

In the identification of the common strategy for European territorial cooperation, as well as in the definition of programs and their management models, an effective implementation of the Code of Conduct should be promoted, ensuring the consistent participation of regional, local and urban authorities and entities already created for European territorial cooperation with a legal nature and a permanent activity.

**2 | European territorial cooperation programs should be consistent with a common strategy, focused on a narrower set of objectives and better articulated with the other cross-border cooperation programs (IPA CBC and ENI-CBC), mainstream regional and sectoral programs and with Horizon 2020, LIFE, Erasmus and others initiatives;**

Due to the programming rules that have been adopted and the insufficient funding, most European territorial cooperation programs show a significant dispersion of initiatives across a wide range of objectives, which leads to a lower impact of the results obtained .

European territorial cooperation programs should be the programmatic instruments for implementing a common strategy for European territorial cooperation and be focused on a narrower and more justified set of objectives, targets and results to be achieved.

In order to correct the insufficient effectiveness of the results obtained in many of the programs, greater and effective synergy with the mainstream regional and sectoral programs and with the Horizon 2020, LIFE, Erasmus and others initiatives should be promoted. These programs should have a prespective of Labs for the development and consolidation of regional policy, making a minimum contribution to the objectives of European territorial cooperation and the urban agenda.

Complementarity and collaboration with the pre-accession countries, the neighborhood countries and Russia should be part of this strategy. Its instruments of cooperation (IPA-CBC and ENI-CBC) operate in the same territories of several programs of European territorial cooperation and in similar topics.

**3 | European territorial cooperation must be provided with common more significant and more effectively allocated financial resources in order to better achieve the objectives of the Cohesion Policy;**

European territorial cooperation is today the main instrument to support the full realization of the single market. Bearing in mind that the internal cross-border regions and maritime territories are today the EU regions where the need to fully achievement of the single market is perceived, and is, as well, the main answer to the need to create an effective European citizenship felt by European citizens in their daily lives.

On the other hand, the new challenges facing the European Union as a whole, in particular on neighboring regions, as regards the need to find answers to the growing migratory pressures, by highlighting opportunities for greater trade, scientific and cultural exchanges with neighboring and pre-accession countries, open up a new front for European territorial cooperation, since it is best way to find structured and effective responses, rather than merely police ones.

Consequently, to European territorial cooperation should be allocated more and more significant common financial resources, more effectively distributed in order to achieve in better conditions the objectives of the Cohesion Policy, by doubling current financial resources.

The contribution of European structural and investment funds should adopt sufficiently significant pre-financing mechanisms to stimulate the participation of organizations with less organizational capacity and fewer resources, increasing and generalizing the value of pre-financing projects to facilitate their implementation and, at least, maintaining the current levels of co-financing.



**4 | European structural funds and investment appropriations for European territorial cooperation should be allocated to the program and not to the Member States, even for indicative purposes only;**

The rules for the application of European structural and investment funds to European territorial cooperation have so far not been able to reconcile and deepen the principles of transnationality of cooperation with the principle of Member States' financial responsibility for the use of such funds.

By allocating appropriations of funds for European territorial cooperation to each of the Member States, even if it is said that is indicative, the regulations end up subordinating these resources to the national financial and budgetary discipline rules, and place a significant constraint on the appropriate implementation according to the strict objectives of the program.

What is the meaning and purpose of allocating funds for European territorial cooperation by Member State rather than the program when the supranational nature of the interventions is encouraged? Even if an indicative nature is invoked, the allocation of an appropriation for European territorial cooperation to each member state implies submission to national rules.

**Structural and investment European structural funds should be allocated to the program rather than to the Member States** and should be given the model already successfully applied in the ENI CBC1. It will thus be possible to promote a better articulation of the principle of transnational cooperation principle with the one of financial responsibility of the Member States for the resources allocated to them.

Thematic concentration and achievement of the program objectives should also be encouraged, while safeguarding the necessary flexibility in the thematic definition of programs, to promote a better and more responsive response to the challenges and particularities of each territory, city or metropolitan area.

**5 | The criterion for allocating the financial resources to be used in the preparation of forthcoming European territorial cooperation programs should take into account of the uniqueness of each area of cooperation and of each territory and contribute to the convergence of the least developed regions;**

The "population" criterion that has been used by the European Union for the allocation of financial resources allocated under European territorial cooperation is heavily penalizing for the regions with the lowest cohesion indicators because they are those with the lowest population. The use of the criterion "population" tends to perpetuate the socio-economic disadvantages of these territories compared to other European regions, with a perverse result and contrary to the objectives of the Cohesion Policy.

This perverse result can be mitigated through the combined use of the concepts of population density, GDP per capita and employability.

**The criterion for the distribution of the financial resources to be used in the preparation of the forthcoming European territorial cooperation programs should go beyond the population indicator and take into account of the uniqueness of each area of cooperation and of each cross-border territory and contribute to the convergence of regions less developed countries.**

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<sup>1</sup> Each MS contributes with an allocation from the ERDF not indicated in the OP and not previously recorded (pooled funding)

**6 | European territorial cooperation should continue to be structured in the current cooperation levels, and a new generation of transnational programs should be set up to implement formalized macro-regional strategies or to prepare regional strategies where macro-regional strategies do not exist;**

While there is a need to introduce significant adjustments, European territorial cooperation should continue to be structured in the current cross-border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation levels.

At the cross-border level, European territorial cooperation should cover internal cross-border regions, border regions with neighboring countries of the European Union (southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, North Africa, pre-accession countries, IPA-CBC, Russia, ENI CBC) and the Outermost Regions and neighboring ACP countries.

Cooperation at the external borders of the European Union should stimulate direct articulation between institutions without the necessary participation of central States, in particular with the Portuguese-speaking countries (PALOP), Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Palestine, Israel, Ukraine and Moldova, where local and regional authorities and other entities are already very active.

This cooperation level should focus not only on solving the problems of citizens in cross-border territories and on the implementation of economic, environmental and social development strategies for cities, urban and metropolitan areas and border areas but also on their capacity to assume, as the engine of change, innovation and living lab on a scale of new policies close to the citizen.

At the interregional level, common responses should be found to the new problems posed by globalization and the new digital economy, with valuing the circumstance that it is the only program affecting the whole of the European Union.

The concept of maritime neighborhood cannot be conditioned by the anomalous administrative condition of fixing a single distance kilometer that does not comprises the diversity of the existing dynamics nor to the history of the relationships.

The current transnational programs show a significant dispersion of objectives and disarticulation with mainstream programs and cross-border cooperation programs. They also show an inertia of continuity in the respective management structures, and they are often mere instruments of affirmation by the regional authorities, reducing the intervention of cities and metropolitan areas to simple monitoring.

**A new generation of transnational programs should be set up to implement formalized macro-regional strategies, or to support the development of regional strategies where they do not exist**, which means that priority should be given to defining such strategies, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity and a process bottom up, the programs becoming instruments of their implementation.

Macro-regional strategies should emerge from regional policy and be based on participation and consensus with regional, local and urban authorities as well as entities set up for European territorial cooperation with a legal nature and a permanent activity, observing the principle of partnership. Territorial agents (local, regional, economic, and social actors) should participate in both the definition and the management bodies of the macro-region, which should also be recognized by the COM.

The cross-border and peripheral regions of the European Union are likely to benefit greatly from this approach, in particular as regards macro-regional strategies for the Danube, the Atlantic, the Baltic, the Mediterranean, the Adriatic and Ionian and the Black Sea, among others.

**7 | Promote an effective strategic and operational monitoring of European territorial cooperation at European level and in each program, with an emphasis on the role of entities set up for European territorial cooperation with a legal nature and a permanent activity;**

Effective monitoring of European territorial cooperation programs in the strategic and operational levels is a critical element in targeting objectives and achieving the desired results. Entities created for the development of initiatives for European territorial cooperation, with a legal nature and a permanent activity should have a greater participation in the definition of objectives and programs and their monitoring.

At European level, the European Commission should promote the creation of a European forum of entities set up for European territorial cooperation with a legal nature and a permanent activity, integrating local authorities and their networks. With them COM can promote an annual evaluation of the European territorial cooperation in the various levels and spaces, as an equivalent to the figure of the annual meeting of the Commission with each of the Member States, with a possibility to operate as well in a thematic forums approach.

The work of this **European Forum for Territorial Cooperation** should be supported and stimulated through the creation of a **European Observatory for Territorial Cooperation**, independent from the European Commission in its operation.

In order to support the intended strategic focus, **monitoring committees should play a more important and effective role in monitoring programs**. A revised model of the functioning, representation and organization of the monitoring committees, in order to favor their role in strategic and operational monitoring, presupposes and requires a greater and more effective participation of the entities created for the development of initiatives for territorial cooperation European Union, with a legal nature and a permanent activity.

**8 | European territorial cooperation programs should incorporate a management model better suited to their supranational nature, adopting clear rules and administrative procedures, objectives, stable and properly publicized.**

The identification of management, certification, payment and audit authorities and the definition of their responsibilities should better incorporate the supranational nature of European territorial cooperation programs and be better articulated with the principle of Member States' financial responsibility.

The same supranational nature reinforces the indispensable safeguard of full application of the principle of prior publication of all the rules, rules and procedures to be used in the implementation of the program. The deadlines to be observed in the application of management acts must be publicized and effectively observed.

The responsibilities of the joint technical secretariats should be better adapted to the tasks assigned to the managing authorities in order to avoid the regrettably frequent disarticulation and repetition of tasks observed today.

The Code of Conduct for Multilevel Governance should be effectively implemented by encouraging the participation of regional, local and urban authorities and entities set up for European territorial cooperation with a legal nature and a permanent activity in the definition of programs and rules for its application and the management and evaluation model.

Greater scrutiny should be ensured for the desirable participation of external experts in the evaluation of applications, ensuring prior qualification practices (the establishment of experts' data basis) and the dissemination of the experts involved.

**9 | The entities created for the development of initiatives for European territorial cooperation, with a legal nature and a permanent activity, including EGTCs, must have their own and common legal and fiscal regime, which takes into account the nature and supranational scope of its activities, which should not be subject to the rules applicable to the place of its registered office, and its participation should be encouraged through an open and objective regulatory framework;**

European territorial cooperation could become the area of application of the European structural and investment funds which better and more widely apply the principles of subsidiarity and multilevel governance, as long as there is a greater involvement of the entities created for the development of initiatives for European territorial cooperation, with a legal nature and a permanent activity, such as associations and networks of cities.

The management model of European territorial cooperation programs should take into account the specificities of cooperation and its supranational impact and cannot be a mere copy of the regulatory model for the mainstream sectorial or regional programs.

**Participation should be encouraged in the development of initiatives for European territorial cooperation, by entities with a legal nature and a permanent activity, in the management of the programs. This participation shall exist through an open and objective legal framework, contrary to the priority given so far to intervention of regional and central government authorities, whose intervention should be reoriented to perform the functions of compliance, control and certification.**

In this perspective, the involvement of local authorities and cooperation networks should be strengthened in line with urban policy and multilevel governance stimulated by the European Commission and the dynamics created by the Urban Agenda.

New and increased responsibilities in the management of programs by entities set up to develop initiatives for European territorial cooperation, with a legal nature and a permanent activity, will make a significant contribution to administrative simplification and the necessary segregation of duties.

The functions of managing authority should not be attributed to the MS or the entities to which they decide to arbitrarily allocate. The regulation of European territorial cooperation for the post 2020 period should provide for and define an open and objective framework for initiatives that demonstrate transnationality, organization and management capacity.

**The entities created for the development of initiatives for European territorial cooperation, with a legal nature and a permanent activity, including EGTCs, must have a proper and common legal, financial and fiscal regime, which takes into account the nature and supranational scope of its action and that it should not be subject to the rules applicable to the place of its registered office.**

The EGTC implementation experience also highlights that for their creation there is a need to release them from the obstacles, constraints and uncertainties of the Member States' administrations and to simplify the procedures for transforming EGTCs of already established legal entities.

The Regulation establishing the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) represents until now the only regulatory initiative of the European Union that goes beyond the strict application of European structural and investment funds, which is applauded and recognized as important.

However, European legislation is silent on the tax regime for EGTCs and establishes the principle of the location of the EGTC headquarters in one of the Member States (two in most EGTCs) and the inherent submission to its administrative, financial and tax rules. That is to say, it encourages the creation of a supranational organization with legal personality, oriented to a uniform operation in a supranational cooperation space, but that is conditioned and submitted to the rules of one of the Member States.

**10 | Adopt a model of calls for proposals and for the management of projects more in phase with the requirements and particularities of European Territorial Cooperation.**

European regulations for the post 2020 period should develop and implement a **model of calls for proposals that is better suited to the requirements and particularities of European territorial cooperation** and the need for greater strategic focus, including namely:

- Launch **more structured and territorially oriented needs calls for proposals**, favoring a better evaluation of the relative merits of the applications submitted, a better analysis work distributed throughout the year, with shorter decision times and adjusted to the expectations and needs of the promoters.
- To encourage the **submission and approval of multi-annual work plans**, in particular for entities created for the development of initiatives for European territorial cooperation, with a legal nature and permanent activity, thus improving the strategic coherence of the program and the predictability of action for the promoters of cooperation;
- Promote the pre-qualification of the promoters of the operations to support, by means of a two-stage application, the first one based on a proposed project summary and the second phase, only for the preselected ideas, based on the detailed and complete application;
- **Limit the number of applications to be presented by each partner**, favoring the concentration of approved funds;
- Facilitate the principle of relating each operation to a specific objective and the corresponding main axis result indicators, avoiding the artificial reduction of the impact of operations that tend to have a wide range of actions;
- Simplify management, reporting and payment procedures by promoting a better balance between the weight of management resources allocated to the achievement of objectives (effectiveness) and the necessary safeguarding of the regularity of operations and the use of funds, in line with the principles of financial regulation;
- Provide for adaptation of the rules for the application of European structural and investment funds to the specific constraints of the EU's neighboring countries in the context of external cross-border cooperation;
- Facilitate the participation of partners from territories outside the program boundaries that can add value to the achievement of the objectives of the operations;
- Promote more flexible forms of participation, such as support for the operation of city networks, town twinning, peer-reviews, capacity building, etc., enabling cities with less technical resources and less experience to benefit from European territorial cooperation;
- We agree with the orientation of the European Commission to reinforce the relevant cooperation partners (stakeholders), but there is a need to clarify their concept, role and funding possibilities for their participation.
- The European Commission should promote the clarification and dissemination of state aid rules that should apply to European territorial cooperation programs.



## Cities for Cooperation Platform

**C4C - Cities for Cooperation** is a platform of non-governmental entities with a legal nature and a permanent activity and with extensive experience in promoting cooperation initiatives and in the monitoring of programs integrated in the various plans of European territorial cooperation, constituted with the objective of promoting reflection on the future of post 2020 Cohesion Policy in general and on the future of European territorial cooperation in particular.

It considers that the peripheral regions of the European Union have a common vision on the importance of European territorial cooperation in their territories and on the adjustments that need to be made to strengthen their role in European integration.

Constituted by **RIET - Iberian Network of Cross border Cooperation Entities**, by **MEDCITIES - Mediterranean Cities Network**, by the **CCAA - Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities** and by **FAIC - Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities**, it is proposed to promote a broad debate and the identification of common problems and solutions adjusted to reality of the peripheral regions of the European Union, regions in which the main problems and challenges facing the European Union and the future of Cohesion Policy have been particularly impacted.



**RIET - Iberian Network of Cross border Cooperation Entities**, is a cross-border association of territorial cooperation, established in 2009 by organizations of proximity, in the border of Spain and Portugal, under the Treaty of Valencia.

Established as a cooperation network, which strengthens the intervention, promotes local, regional, national and European cooperation, thus contributing to the ultimate goal of improving the citizens' quality of life.

It promotes a space for reflection on the role of cross - border organizations in the development of Iberian cooperation and its visibility on a European scale and the development of strategic reflection and work on cross - border issues of European interest in general and the Spain - Portugal border in particular .

It is composed of 23 associated entities, associations of municipalities, entities created for cross-border cooperation, business associations and universities



**MEDCITIES - The Mediterranean Cities Network**, created in Barcelona in November 1991 as an initiative of the Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Program, aims to strengthen decentralized interventions involving technical assistance as a way of promoting the importance of urban environmental problems, and aiming to reinforce municipal power in developing countries.

Being a network of Mediterranean communities and cities belonging to different countries, it aims at sustainable urban development as a way of improving living conditions in the regions.

The network comprises more than 50 cities in 14 Mediterranean countries, such as: Agadir, Alejandria, Ancona, Antalya, Barcelona, Mancomunidad de Batroun, Benghazi, Bizerte, Chefchaouen, Mancomunidad de Dannieh, Djerba, Dubrovnik, Comunidad Urbana de El Fayhaa, El Mina, Gabes, Gaza, Izmir, Jbeil ( Byblos), Mancomunidad de Jezzine, Kairouan, Mancomunidad de Koura, Larnaka, Lemosos, Mahdia, Málaga, Marseille, Monastir, M'Saken, Nabeul, Roma, Saida, Sfax, Sidi Bou Said, Sousse, Tanger, Tétouan, Tirana, Tripoli, Tunis, Oran, Zarqa, Zgharta-Ehden and Área Metropolitana de Barcelona.



**CCAA - Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities** is a network of territorial cooperation, based on the particular identity of the Atlantic Cities. Since 2000, the Atlantic Arc Cities Conference has stated its position as the Atlantic Urban Forum, facilitating cooperation between its members and other stakeholders, such as raising the awareness of the European institutions on issues of Atlantic cities' concern.

It assumes itself as a club of the Atlantic cities: The Urban Forum of the European Atlantic facade and as a Community that includes both cities and other actors, and, above all, citizens. It promotes campaigning, cooperation through European projects and presents itself as a resource center for Atlantic cities, ensuring that their activities contribute to the information, training and enhancement of members' European activities.

It consists of 18 members representing 200 local entities that make up the Atlantic Arc.



On the initiative of the Municipality of Ancona and ANCI (Italian National Association of Municipalities) and with the approval of the "Charter of Ancona", on 30th of April 1999 the **Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities** was constituted in Ancona. This association brings together the cities of the 7 countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin: Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece.

The Forum aims to build and develop the economic, social, environmental and cultural heritage of the Adriatic and Ionian cities and to collaborate on European integration and enlargement. It pursues this goal by promoting innovative forms of multi-level decentralized cooperation and partnerships among local authorities of the member Countries.