



Activity Report 2017

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**Mohamed
Idaomar
President**

Welcome letter by the President

Dear members,

One year after the General Assembly held in Tetouan, MedCities is presenting its annual report full of activities and hard work. This has been a crucial year for our organisation. After 25 years working as a network of cities, MedCities has become a fully operative association. This has been the culmination of a political mandate made by our Assembly at our annual meeting in Barcelona in November 2013.

Becoming an association opens the door for more and better activities, led by our General Secretariat and underpinned by the important work of our branches, the Knowledge Transfer Centres established in the cities of Sfax (Tunisia) and the Urban Community of Al Fayhaa (Lebanon).

Apart from the large amount of activities, projects and seminars organised this year, which you will have the chance to discover through this annual report, I would like to particularly highlight the enormous work done in order to strengthen our organisation. Firstly, in consolidating and enlarging the team at the Secretariat in Barcelona, a group of vibrant and committed professionals who I would like to thank particularly for their task and dedication. Secondly, the new financial and administrative scheme of the association allows a more efficient system of reporting and monitoring of expenses, which increases the capacity of the Secretariat to implement new projects. Finally, efforts have been made to increase available resources in order for the activities of the network to have greater impact in promoting sustainable urban development in the region.

Each year MedCities is becoming a more reliable actor, ready to partner and work in cooperation with other actors, in order to improve the delivery of urban services in our cities. We all know that the challenges ahead are huge and complex. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the approach our association is promoting is on the right track, searching complementarities of our actions and tangible results through the implementation of specific projects.

Finally, I would like to call on our members to continue working together through this promising cooperation scheme of MedCities. I am sure that cities will play a greater role in the future development of the region. Being together is the first step to make this happen.



**Xavier
Tiana
Secretary
General**

Welcome letter by the Secretary General

The activity report shows that 2017 has been a very active year for the association. MedCities is year by year reinforcing its role as a reliable actor, both vis-à-vis our members and at a regional level. This is the result of intense work and cooperation, not only from the General Secretariat but also from the Knowledge Transfer Centres and through the involvement of all members.

Three issues appear particularly relevant among the activities this year. First, the beginning of our work as an association, which opens a new period for MedCities, its capacities to implement projects and to establish partnerships with other organisations. Intense work has been needed in order to set all juridical, administrative and financial measures in order to have a fully operative organisation.

Second, the strengthening of the relationship with historic members such as Oran, Rome, Limassol, Ancona and Tirana is very positive news for all of our members. Having established new contacts with these cities will allow the network to enlarge the scope of its activities and to increase the impact of our work.

Third, the international seminar celebrated in Sfax with the participation of eleven Libyan cities, cooperating with our members from Tunisia and Morocco deserves particular recognition. This is one of the few regional initiatives involving Libyan local authorities in the region and we are very glad to have cooperated with the Committee of the Region and the German Agency for Cooperation in a common objective.

Beyond these three points, the rhythm of projects and seminars organised has been hectic, showing once again the great work and commitment of MedCities to embark on new and successful initiatives.

I am convinced that the work carried out so far has prepared us for a very fruitful year in 2018, in which we will have to renew our Board of Directors to face a new mandate of four years full of challenges.

MedCities, a platform for projects

To promote, implement and assess City Development Strategies in the Mediterranean

**Support members in defining,
implementing and reviewing City
Development Strategies.**

Madinatouna Project

Launched in November 2016, this initiative is implemented within the framework of the Cities Alliances country program in Tunisia under the coordination of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and in partnership with MedCities, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), The International Development Centre for Innovative Local Governance (CILG -VNG), National Federation of Tunisian Cities (FNVT) and The Centre for Training and Supporting to the Decentralization (CFAD).

The project is addressed to nine Tunisian cities and aims at developing participative strategic urban planning strategies. MedCities is responsible for the methodological component of the project and for accompanying the cities of Kairouan and Gabès in the definition of their urban strategies. Currently, the local CDS teams have been constituted and the cities are working in the elaboration of their diagnosis as well as the preparation of the conference that will officially launch the strategy to the general public.



Finally, I would like to call on our members to continue working together through this promising cooperation scheme of MedCities. I am sure that cities will play a greater role in the future development of the region. Being together is the first step to make this happen.

Also, during this period, MedCities elaborated a methodological proposal, which was adopted and will be implemented by all nine cities and international partners for the elaboration of their City Development Strategy. It has also participated in the training for trainers activity, in order to enhance their capacity to use such methodology. This proposal will be reviewed at the end of the project in order to be adapted and capitalised by the national stakeholders, as a tool for strategic planning of Tunisian municipalities. Kairouan, Gabès and Monastir are the three MedCities members participating in this project.



To engage in CDS initiatives in Libya.

In the framework of the General Assembly of ARLEM (Malta, 22-23.02.2017), Medcities held a high-level working meeting with the Mayors of the cities of Tripoli, Zirte and political representatives from Gharyan, Sirte, Bengaz and Toubruk. MedCities shared with the Libyan representatives the activities and projects of the network. The Lybian representatives pointed out several issues on which they need assistance, such as water and waste management. As a result of this meeting, and with the aim to contribute in the ARLEM Initiative of Nicosia for Libyan cities, MedCities, with the support of the GiZ Programme for Libya, organised an international seminar in Sfax with a high level of participation of Libyan municipal representatives (16-17.10.2017). One of the issues dealt with in the seminar included City Development Strategies.

To communicate the CDS of MedCities members.

Sousse signs an agreement with SECO to implements its CDS

MedCities acts as a channel for the communication of the implementation process of the city development strategies of its members.

In 2017, an agreement was signed between the city of Sousse and the Swiss Cooperation Agency (SECO) for support in the implementation of the CDS with a grant of 2.3 million Swiss francs. The CDS of Sousse was developed under the USUDS project, led by MedCities. The first phase of the programme "Sousse Urban Sustainable Development and other cities" will be imple-



mented in 2017. The Convention foresees the revision of the Urban planning and Development Plan (PAU) and the Urban Transport Plan (PDU); the implementation of a plan for mobilizing resources and promoting Eco-construction criteria for the new municipal building; as well as setting up an energy master plan focusing on efficient and non-polluting public lighting.

Tripoli launches an Action Plan for the city to drive development in the coming years

During this period, the municipality of Tripoli launched its action plan for the coming years. On May 26th, 2017, Tripoli presented, through a 20 minutes video clip, the five components of the action plan which deals with most of the priorities of the city and the aspirations of the people of Tripoli: administrative organization and planning, improvement of the quality of life, urbanization and infrastructure, social dimension and economic dimension. Each priority has subsequent core concepts to be implemented. This promising Action Plan is a milestone for the new programming period and for the project implementation of the city. MedCities will support and contribute to its deployment through technical projects and activities undertaken with the support of KTC Al Fayhaa.



Accompany members in developing projects

To carry out capacity-building and technical assistance activities for members in cooperation with the KTCs.

Support Djerba Midoun in implementing energy efficiency measures in the municipal building

A technical assistance in Djerba Midoun on energy efficiency and renewable energy is being developed along the last semester of 2017. The project consists of the implementation of an energy audit and refurbishment works of the Djerba Midoun City Hall, with the aim of becoming a high energy performance building model throughout the island territory.

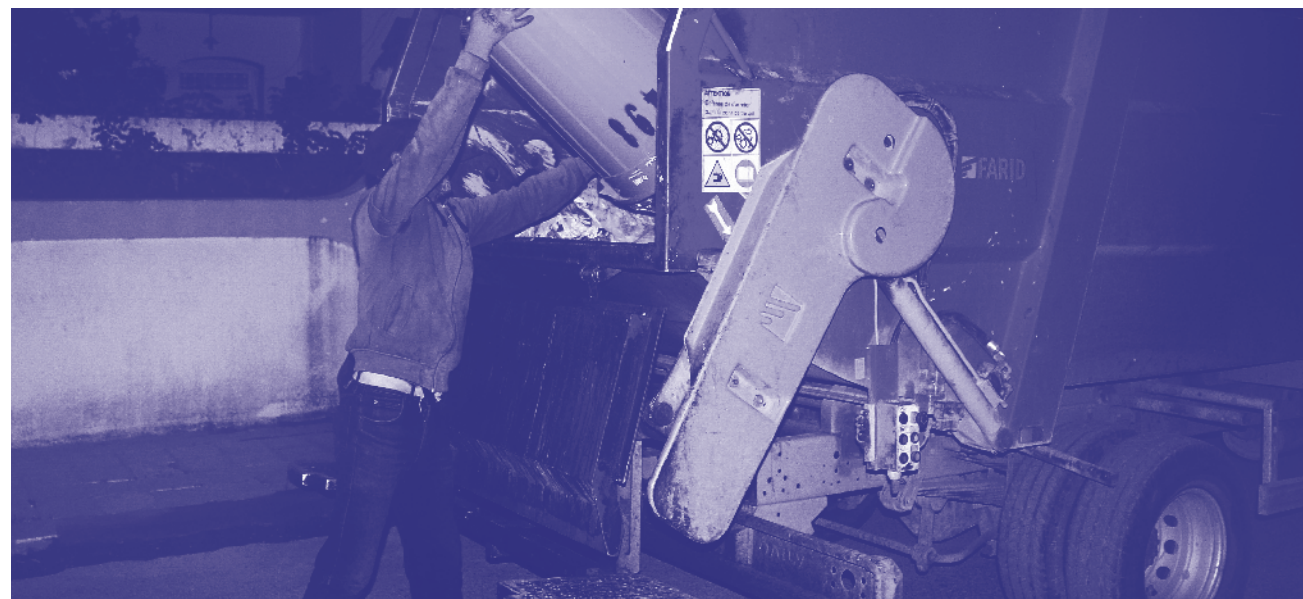
The development of an energy audit of the building will analyse the current energy performance framed by comfort in buildings standards together with an optimization of the energy demands contextualized in the Mediterranean climate. Also, it will dictate a set of measures likely to reduce energy consumption by increasing indoor comfort through passive architecture solutions and renewable energy systems.

The main objective is the development of an energy efficiency action plan that will describe in detail the set of solutions likely to reduce waste of energy resources. Also, a set of photovoltaic panels is being installed to cover over 60% of the energy demand, as an alternative to fossil fuels.

Support to tourism development in Batroun

In April 2017 the KTC of Al-Fayhaa undertook a technical mission to the Union of Municipalities of Batroun, in order to take an in-depth look at the Union strategic priorities and the possibilities of collaboration and technical assistance within the network. The municipalities underlined the need to define and implement a master plan for the coastal zone extending from Chekka to Kfar Abida, which should identify and give response to the main challenges related with the tourism sector in the mountainous region of the Union.

As a result of this meeting, MedCities is providing technical support to identify tourism development priority actions in Batroun City and the Union of Municipalities as a strategic tool to facilitate fundraising. The action includes field visits to identify key natural and cultural assets in the region and participatory workshops to pursue a SWOT analysis and the definition of a common vision and action plan for the development of sustainable tourism, including a number of well-defined priority actions.



To continue implementing projects in member cities, particularly related to integrated urban management and social cohesion, such as GeDeTun in Bizerte and Kairouan and COOPVERD in Nabeul

Waste Management in Tunisia (GEDETUN - Gestion de Déchets en Tunisie)

During 2017, MedCities continued with the implementation of the GeDeTun project. The project is financed by the Barcelona City Council, the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona and the two local counterparts, the Municipalities of Bizerte and Kairouan, with a total budget of 146,500€.

The project aims to improve the capacities on waste management of the municipalities through the implementation of changes in their waste management systems and the exchange of experiences and knowledge about efficient waste management.

In the case of Kairouan, support was given for the optimisation of waste collection circuits in order to cover a larger part of the city; accompanied by the provision of new collection bins to support collection in new parts of the city as well as the creation of a commercial route. Also, a big black point of illegal deposit of waste in the socially deprived neighbourhood of Menchia is being transformed into a green space for residents, after the implementation of a door-to-door collection system in the area.

In the case of Bizerte, an important part of the pilot project was implemented in 2016. During 2017 the project focused on two issues. Firstly, support the municipality in its decision to implement collection through underground waste containers, by funding a benchmarking analysis about the most adequate system for the city of Bizerte, as well as proposing a thorough set of terms of reference and technical and economic specifications for subcontracting the implementation of the new system in the Corniche. Also, the project is currently supporting the city in the optimisation of its waste collection circuits and routes in order to maximise efficiency.

Lastly, in May 2017 a technical seminar was organised in Bizerte with the participation of different municipalities of Tunisia and engineers from Barcelona in order to foster a debate among technical municipal staff on the issues of optimisation of waste collection based on the different options of containerisation.

COOP-VERD - Promotion of recycling and green employment in Nabeul

The project, launched in December 2016, is coordinated by the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, in cooperation with MedCities, the Municipality of Nabeul and the local association ETE+, and financed by the Municipality of Barcelona. The pilot project aims at promoting recycling and green employment by improving the working conditions of informal waste collectors (waste-pickers) in the city of Nabeul.



After a diagnosis of the situation of the waste-pickers and their working conditions as well as the opportunities presented for circular economy activities in Tunisia, the pilot project was launched in the Neapolis district of Nabeul. In order to assure engagement and encourage the residents to separate plastic and recycle at source, a communication campaign was launched as well as a participation process for the installation of recycling points for plastic in the neighbourhood.

Furthermore, the Municipality prepared and made available to ETE+ a green point for plastic collection in the city centre, in order to facilitate the work of the chiffonniers. The collectors that participate in the project will be provided with medical and social coverage; as well as appropriate hygienic conditions, including uniforms, vaccination campaigns and training in occupational risks. In order to give added value to the plastic collected and thus improve the revenue of this activity, the green point was provided with a pressing machine to transform the plastic into pressed bales.

COOP-VERD is implemented in a broader frame of optimisation of waste collection in Nabeul, contributing to ACTE pilot project for energetic transition through reorganisation of waste management. As part of this project, MedCities is also supporting the city in auditing the energy consumption of the mobile park used for waste collection.

Towards the establishment of a Cultural observatory in Al Fayhaa

The Urban Community of Al Fayhaa (Union of Tripoli, Mina, Baadawi and Kalamoun) has implemented a project towards the establishment of a cultural Observatory in Al Fayhaa. MedCities supported Al Fayhaa in attaining a grant for the project from the Diputació de Barcelona, which is funding the project. BIAT, who signed an MOU in 2016 with Al Fayhaa, acted as the Beneficiary of the grant.

The specific objectives of the Cultural observatory are to protect and safeguard the cultural heritage of Al Fayhaa cities in order to preserve the idea of their cultural diversity and to deepen the citizenship and belonging of the inhabitants to this urban space of Lebanon. Thanks to its cultural heritage Tripoli has several touristic identities: it can be a gastronomic city, an artisan city par excellence, and still a city rich in museums of arts and popular traditions.

To fulfil its objectives, the Cultural Observatory should identify the cultural potential, compile an inventory of cultural practices, modes of access and participation of the Tripolitans to cultural life, document the importance and role of culture in Tripolitan society, value the existing database on the cultural sector, interact with producers of statistics or knowledge in the cultural field, promote dialogue and partnership between different actors and facilitate the transfer of knowledge for the benefit of stakeholders.

Creation of a “Social Agreement” with associations in Tetouan

The municipality of Tetouan, in collaboration with the Association America-Europe of Regions and Cities (AERYC) and in partnership with MedCities has been working to establish a new framework of cooperation with the associations of the city. This project is replicating a methodology developed in Barcelona, to foster a cooperation model between associations and municipalities in order to work together in the definition, implementation and follow-up of social policies in the city.

The project has set the basis for this model and reinforces the role of local authorities of articulators or stakeholders of the city, in order to find and strengthen alliances with those actors, aligned with the objective of improving social services and social cohesion in the city.

To integrate gender, displaced and refugee dimension in members projects.

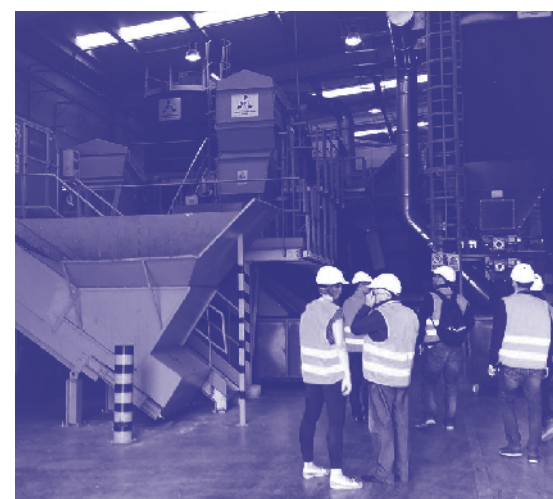
Improved Solid Waste Management in Al Fayhaa (ISWMF) Project

MedCities has supported the elaboration of a project for the “Improved solid waste management in Al Fayhaa” funded by different Catalan institutions and implemented in partnership with UNDP and the Urban Community of Al Fayhaa. The total budget of the action is 730.000€ and is being implemented during 2017 and 2018.

The objective of the project is to strengthen capacities for social stability in host communities affected by the Syrian crisis by supporting basic services provision for the vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian population. The project aims to elaborate an Integrated Solid Municipal Waste Management Plan

and to implement pilot projects for sorting at source initiatives and separate collection and transfer of municipal solid waste.

Solid waste management experts from different institutions participated in the assessment of the situation in the four cities of the Urban Community of Al Fayhaa (Tripoli, El Mina, Beddawi and Qalamoun) and visited waste management infrastructures. Furthermore, a mission was held in Catalonia in early September 2017, where political and technical representatives from Al Fayhaa became familiarised with the waste management strategies and infrastructure in Barcelona and its vicinity. MedCities is thus fulfilling one of its missions articulating decentralized cooperation among members, since the Municipality of Barcelona and the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona are among the partners of the project as well as the local authorities of Al Fayhaa.



To accompany members in seeking funding opportunities.

Accessibility Plans in the cities of Tanger and Tetouan

In the last six months of 2017, two new urban projects are being launched in Tanger and Tetouan, with an estimated implementation period of 18 months. In July 2017, MedCities organised a mission to both cities to identify possible initiatives and projects to be implemented, under the cooperation agreement signed between MedCities and the Municipality of Barcelona.

The objective of the technical mission was to exchange the initiatives and work programmes of the two cities in terms of sustainable urban development and local economic development.

The meeting output was the identification of needs and priorities for intervention on socio-economic aspects in both cities. Taking into account the priorities outlined and the initiatives presented by the PAC services and the social action services, the potential projects identified were to provide technical support actions for the development of Municipal Plans on City Accessibility.

Building capacity for applying to European funds in Lebanon: Training Workshop on ENI CBC MED Programme

On 9th September MedCities and its KTC in Al-Fayhaa a training workshop gathered in Tripoli 46 representatives of Lebanese municipalities and stakeholders (universities, private institutions, associations, etc.). The purpose of this training was to break the ice and make participants acquainted with the main features of the new ENI CBC MED programme on time for the submission of proposals to the first call for standard projects with deadline by the end of 2017.

The trainer went into depth on the components of the ENI Strategy, the main characteristics and requirements of the Standard Call, and the award criteria



and evaluation process. Training included a hands-on session where all participants were engaged in a group discussion about the different components of a Log Frame analysis.

The training, allowed for a significant level and interaction which was highly appreciated by the participants. This event was identified as a priority action during the MedCities mission last June to member cities in Lebanon and Cyprus and is part of the Catalan Agency for Development and Cooperation (ACCD) support to the strengthening of activities in the area.

Promotion of the participation of MedCities members in multilateral projects

In the framework of the next call for projects of the ENI Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme, MedCities has received several projects proposals. Fulfilling our mission to encourage the participation of the members to multilateral initiatives, the General Secretariat contacted several cities in order to assess their interest in joining some of these project proposals. Thus, MedCities acts as a facilitator to foster the participation of Mediterranean local authorities in region-wide cooperation schemes.

Technical assistance to Jordanian cities

During the last quarter of 2017 MedCities, through its KTC Al-Fayhaa, is developing new technical assistance initiatives to Jordanian member cities, as well as the possibility to strengthen the presence of the network in the country. A technical mission to the member cities of Zarqa and Jerash, as well to other potential members as Madaba, Irbid and Salt, has been organised and will be followed by a training workshop aimed at strengthening fundraising and project management capacity to respond to an increasing demand for municipal services.

Develop multilateral and bilateral cooperation projects

To submit projects to the ENI CBC MED Programme.

Medcities has worked during the last months on the inclusion of its members in proposals to be submitted for funding, according to their priorities. Apart from linking proposals with our members' priorities, the Secretariat has actively worked on two project proposals:

- Recuperation and Reuse of Non-Conventional Water Resources, where two member cities participate as partners together with the MedCities network.
- Energy efficiency auditing and renovation of public buildings, where three member cities participate as partners together with the MedCities network.

To promote bilateral cooperation among members.

Bilateral cooperation between the Municipality of Barcelona and the Municipality of Tunis

The Municipalities of Barcelona and Tunis signed a Twinning agreement on 1969. Currently, both municipalities are willing to renew their political relation into concrete actions.

In March 2017, a delegation of the Municipality of Barcelona visited the city of Tunis for a technical diagnostic mission, in order to identify new possibilities of collaboration. In summer 2017, a delegation of Tunis representatives developed a technical mission to Barcelona, aiming at starting the definition of concrete practices on urban development which were identified as priority concepts for both cities.

After successful meetings, technical visits and exchanges, different cooperation opportunities were identified. Actions will be specifically developed in one of the following fields: urban planning, green and public space, public markets management, waste re-collection or public lighting.

These missions showed the willingness of the two cities to work for a stronger partnership and to establish a concrete framework for cooperation. MedCities welcomes and promotes these types of bilateral cooperation among its members.

Exchange between Barcelona and Gaza on water cycle management

MedCities collaborated with the initiative of the Municipality of Barcelona to organise a visit of a delegation from Gaza. From 2 to 8 May 2017, a technical exchange mission on water cycle management took place, with the participation of various stakeholders from both cities. MedCities organised visits to water treatment infrastructures, use of regenerated waters as well as to the desalinization plant in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB). Such exchanges are an important element for MedCities since they allow the technical exchange of experiences among its members and the sharing of knowledge, creating conditions for bilateral cooperation to arise.



Exchange between Marseille and Tangiers on economic development and culture

From 10 to 14th May 2017, a delegation of high-level officials from Tangiers, led by the Mayor Mr. Abdellaoui, visited Marseille as part of a process of rapprochement between the two cities in order to facilitate exchanges for the economic and touristic development of the two territories.

The cooperation between the cities of Tangiers and Marseille has strengthened over the past three years. This visit represented a catalyst for cooperation, which will be materialised by the signature of a letter of intention in cooperation with the following domains: economic and port development, sustainable and touristic development, higher education and research, sport and cultural exchanges, international mobility for young people, Francophonie (promotion of French language and culture).

Exchange between Oran, Bizerte and Nabeul in Algeria

Representatives of the cities of Bizerte, Nabeul and Oran participated last November in an exchange in the Algerian city on waste management and energy efficient projects. This activity aimed at reinforcing the interaction between the three cities, fostering best practices exchanges and knowledge sharing.

This exchange took place in the framework of the EET project, managed by the organisation Data Processing Development and Studies (IDEE) and in cooperation with MedCities. The delegation of Tunisian partners was hosted by the association R20MED, and included representatives from all three municipalities and other actors. This activity has been relevant since it represents a new link with Oran, a very active city in our network in the past, whose commitment with the activities of the association is now reinforced.

To participate in other multilateral projects calls and opportunities that may arise.

In the framework of the Cities Alliance country programme for Tunisia, under which the MADINATOUNA project for the promotion of sustainable urban development strategies is being developed. This is a multilateral project for promoting the implementation of CDS through the engagement of civil society and citizens. The project, with a budget of 600,000 USD, will be implemented by the same partnership of MADINATOUNA, led by the German cooperation agency (GIZ) in Tunisia. Kairouan, Gabès and Monastir, members of MedCities, will be among the cities that will benefit from the activities of this project for the implementation of quick-win urban projects.

To capitalize Mediterranean initiatives with a local dimension

To disseminate good practices on social cohesion and integrated urban management in Mediterranean projects.

Seminar on waste management - Bizerte (Tunisia)

In collaboration with the Municipality of Bizerte, the Municipality of Kairouan and the National Federation of Tunisian Cities, MedCities organised a seminar for technical staff involved in municipal waste management in Tunisia, on 9th May in the city of Bizerte.

The technical seminar, part of the GeDeTun project, addressed the whole cycle of waste management and focused especially on the two issues that were tackled during the project lifespan in the cities of Bizerte and Kairouan: the different systems of containerisation for waste collection; and the optimisation of municipal waste management, including collection routes and localisation of containers.

This knowledge sharing activity included the experiences of the city of Barcelona, the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and the city of Tangier. Two workshops were held around these two issues, where a lively debate took place among the participants. In addition to these subjects, the seminar addressed the issue of mobilisation of actors around sustainable waste management, with presentations of the organization Regions for Recycling and Sustainable Resource Management (ACR+), the cities of Sfax and Nabeul



Seminar on “Urban strategies, tools and technologies in the era of sustainability” - Sfax (Tunisia)

This seminar, organised in Sfax with the participation of over 30 municipalities from Morocco, Tunisia and Libya, explored the practice of urban sustainability from the conception of Sustainable Development Strategies (SDS) to the tools and technologies for its implementation, through concrete and tangible projects. It took place in a context of consolidating decentralization in Tunisia, which is organizing the next municipal elections in March 2018.

This seminar is complementary to the Nicosia initiative, promoted by the Committee of the Regions and the ARLEM, encouraging decentralized cooperation towards Libyan cities, in order to strengthen their public services, and the City Development Strategy (CDS) Programme in Libya, promoted by the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ).

The introduction of new tools in the management of the city is necessary in order to optimise resources and achieve the objectives set by the CDSs, adapting them to the socio-economic context and drawing new scenarios for innovative solutions. In this context, the seminar focuses on CDS from the perspective of transversality of tools and new technologies in the era of sustainability.

The sessions were structured under the guiding thread of innovation, from planning and management of resources (Energy, Water and Waste) to the implementation of concrete projects.

Participation in the EU Interreg MED Program with the following projects.

GO-SUMP – Improving Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and Measures in the MED

MedCities participates as a partner within the GO-SUMP Project, which is an EU Interreg MED project on Sustainable Urban Mobility, dealing with Communication and Promotion of Results in the Mediterranean region. GO-SUMP guides and supports the Urban Transport Community (UTC), which is currently composed of the modular projects under development and other stakeholders. All listed projects work towards sustainable mobility solutions that are tailor-made to meet challenges in the respective areas, and are based on sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs).

The partnership is formed by Malaga City Council (lead partner), REC Slovenia, EUROCITIES, MEDCITIES, CODATU and UNIMED and the duration of the project is 3 years up to 2019. By capitalizing good and especially bad practices, the horizontal project contributes to a unique identity on SUMPs in the Mediterranean cities, enhancing their peculiarities as a key to implement low carbon transport & mobility measures

MedCities is dealing with the on-going definition, synthesis and methodology of the Med Urban Transport Community, in order to find a functional protocol to transfer and to involve the MedCities network within the project progresses and solutions developed, especially the Southern Mediterranean cities which have a high potential to design and implement SUMPs from a 'learnt lessons' criteria. The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) by an 85% and the remaining 15% is co-financed by the project partners.

PANACeA – The Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community

PANACeA is an Interreg MED Horizontal project aiming at streamlining management efforts in Protected Areas for enhanced Nature Conservation & Protection in the Mediterranean Sea. The project has led to the articulation of an EU Interreg Med Community focusing on Biodiversity Protection (the "MED Biodiversity Protection Community"), bringing together a comprehensive network of experts from public & private institutions actively working to protect biodiversity and natural ecosystems in Mediterranean Protected Areas.

PANACeA creates synergies between relevant Mediterranean stakeholders around several policy aspects including biodiversity protection, coastal and marine conservation, fisheries, Maritime Spatial Planning, climate change, governance mechanisms, marine litter or waste management are addressed under the umbrella of these MPs.

Last 23rd to 25th October, MedCities organised in Barcelona the first PANACeA Knowledge Sharing and Community Building Event towards linking the needs of regional practitioners to researchers and to facilitate evidence-based policy making.

The Metropolitan Area of Barcelona showcased its territorial strategy for biodiversity protection and its practice experience addressing coastal pressures and beach management. The city of Lanarka, which has biodiversity protection as one of its strategic development priorities, was one of the guests to this knowledge sharing opportunity.

The project, led by the European Topic Centre - University of Malaga (ETC-UMA) in partnership with the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), UNEP MAP Plan Bleu, UNIMED and REC Montenegro will last till November 2019. The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) by an 85% and the rest is co-financed by the project partners.



MADRE, capitalising efforts towards urban agriculture as instrument to promote local development

MedCities has taken the challenge to capitalise the success of the ENI CBC MED project SIDIG MED (2013-2015) on the promotion of urban and peri-urban agriculture as a local development instrument to fight social exclusion and poverty, with the participation of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and the Municipalities of Mahdia and Rome among others. In doing so, MedCities is a partner to the Interreg MED Project MADRE, which aims to pave the way for a transnational cluster on metropolitan agriculture in the Mediterranean, to make it a key factor for economic, social and sustainable development to promote a new design of urban agricultural planning suitable for integrating agriculture into urban development.

Six Mediterranean metropolises (Barcelona, Montpellier, Marseille, Bologna, Tirana and Thessaloniki) are engaging stakeholders on the discussion around six strategic topics on metropolitan agriculture, namely farmers' innovation, consumers' innovation, academic research, territorial innovation, social innovation and transnational innovation.

Each city organised during the first half of the year two metropolitan workshops to address cross sectorial challenges and opportunities in their territory. The next step is to bring the discussion to transnational level, through international meetings of stakeholders around the six thematic concepts.

The project is led by the Agency for Sustainable Mediterranean Cities and Territories (AViTeM) and partners include ANIMA Investment Network, CHIEAM-MAIM-Agro-nomic Institute of Montpellier, Metropolitan City of Bologna, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Agricultural University of Tirana. The project will run till July 2017. The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) by an 85% and the remaining 15% is co-financed by the project partners.

Medcities is also participating in the following MED projects as associated partner (without receiving financing). The BlueTourMed project in maritime tourism and led by Arco Latino and the MedNice project led by Nice in the domain of the energy efficiency.



MedCities, an efficient and sustainable network

To increase ownership by members

To formalize the structure, tasks and competences of the regional antennas (KTCs).

After the approval of the Rules of Procedures in the General Assembly of Tetouan in 2016, MedCities has worked to formalize and recognise the role of its branches, the Knowledge Transfer Centres. To that end, two Memorandums of Understanding have been signed between the members hosting these two branches, the Municipality of Sfax and the Urban Community of Al Fayhaa.

These agreements strengthen the decentralisation of the network, and reinforce its capacity to better assist our members in implementing projects and offering technical assistances and training, as a result of the geographic proximity that the KTCs offer to the network structure.

To strengthen internal communication.

MedCities has continued to issue internal communications to members to keep them updated on the relevant questions affecting the structure and functioning of the Association. These Communications are complementary to the newsletters issued regularly to the general public and respond to the mandate to maintain a vibrant and transparent relationship between the General Secretariat and the member cities.

To better communicate members' initiatives to all members and third parties.

During 2017, the General Secretariat has continued producing periodic newsletters, including different sections where updates on urban development and decentralized cooperation actions in the Mediterranean have been released by city members.

Throughout the period, the MedCities website contents have been enriched by 48 news articles with insights from a large majority of member cities. It has also included the participation of the General Secretariat in a large set of international meetings and seminars.

In the last semester, external support is being provided by a consultancy firm specialised in media and communications, in order to improve communication of the different projects to enlarge the scope of our activities.

To carry out activities with existing and future members of Italy, Balkans and Adriatic region.

This year MedCities has made an important effort to reinforce the relationship with its European member cities and to consolidate its position in the Adriatic region.

In July, representatives from the Secretariat, in collaboration with the KTC of Al Fayhaa, visited Larnaka and Limassol, in order to explore and reinforce the existing paths of cooperation. Both cities reaffirmed their commitment and their willingness to contribute to the activities of the network.

In September, another mission was organised in Rome, Ancona and Tirana, three important member cities with a key position in order to further develop the role of the association in the Adriatic region. The mission was also an occasion to meet representatives of the city of Durres (Albania) which has applied to become a full member of MedCities after this General Assembly.



To achieve effective and transparent management

To make MedCities association fully operative, defining internal procedures and assuring the performance of its actions.

Since 1st April 2017, MedCities started operating for all purposes as an association consolidating its structure and capacities. The formal incorporation of the technical staff and the definition of tasks was key to the strategic reinforcement of the association. This process has been accompanied by restructuring of internal procedures both at financial, operative and administrative levels, in order to better deliver good quality assistance to its members. The completion of this process is a success of the strategy defined by all members at the General Assembly of 2013 held in Barcelona.

To define a sustainable funding framework for the Association (increase payments of fees, consolidate the financial contribution of AMB and Barcelona City and search for new donors).

MedCities has worked to continue diversifying the sources of financing in order to become more sustainable. The budget of the association increased significantly in 2017 and will continue to do so next year.

The different sources of funding allow MedCities to be able to cope with and co-finance participation in various projects with benefit to the network. On the other hand, the contribution of fees by members continues to be an important aspect necessary for the stability and ownership of the network activities.

To highlight accountability vis-à-vis members and third parties.

MedCities is currently implementing all measures to make all relevant information related to the Association fully operative, becoming an advanced and transparent organisation. To that end, MedCities website is being modified in order to include all relevant documents that can be of interest to all members and third parties.

The accounting of the association and specifically the revenue and expenditure account is the faithful economic reflection of the day-to-day of the association. On the other hand, the economic balance of the year is the image of the consolidation of the entity. As the standard and always with the spirit of transparency, all financial information is made available to the general public. Moreover, the audits of all projects closing in 2017 have been undertaken with satisfactory results.

To promote a gender dimension in all projects and internal structures.

MedCities considers gender dimension in its operating structure, promoting equal hiring, with absolute gender independence, valuing the key technical factors for the proper performance of the entity's tasks. MedCities projects and activities actively search gender balance in the composition of roundtables and other activities, as a way to actively promote equality.

MedCities, a cooperative and reliable regional actor

Act as a facilitator for multilevel governance

To reinforce decentralization processes and increase interaction with national authorities.

MedCities advocates for greater decentralisation and the recognition of the role and competences and financing of the municipalities as an important element of multilevel governance. MedCities tries to foster interaction of its projects with national initiatives in order to contribute to the challenges faced by the Mediterranean countries from a municipal approach.

In Tunisia, for example, we are contributing to the implementation of the programme Municipal Alliance for Energy Transition (ACTE from its acronym in French) by linking the COOP-VERD project to the pilot project that it implements in Nabeul. Furthermore, the MADINATOUNA project has established strong links with national authorities in order to take into consideration relevant national strategies, like the Annual Programme of Communal Investments or the Sustainable Cities of the Ministry Programme, and to make sure that the city development strategies contribute to the objectives of these programmes.

Furthermore, we are promoting through the MADINATOUNA project, a strong interaction between cities and the respective regional representatives of national authorities, as part of the methodological approach, which focuses on multilevel partnerships for the elaboration of city development strategies. Also, a strong focus on capitalisation and mainstreaming of the approach at national level is foreseen at the end of the project.

Lastly, in our current project proposal on Non-Conventional Water Resources (NCWR) for ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin programme, we are working on a multilevel approach, proposing the elaboration of national strategies on reuse and recovery of non-conventional water resources as well as the definition and implementation of local action plans at city level, for both Lebanon and Tunisia.

To go further into dialogue with EU institutions and EU Delegations.

The interaction with EU institutions and Delegations is crucial in order to achieve MedCities objectives. This year, two main activities have been developed. Firstly, the close cooperation with the Committee of the Region around the Nicosia Initiative, in order to establish cooperation frameworks with Libyan local authorities.

Secondly, to increase the exchanges with EU Delegations. In that sense, last May MedCities Secretary General held a meeting at the EU Delegation in Tunisia to present the activities of the network and identify collaboration in the framework of EU programmes.

Medcities is a member of the EU Structured Dialogue with European Structural and Investment Funds. During 2017 we have participated in two meetings of this platform in Brussels where we have advocated for a more urban and metropolitan cohesion policy showing a special focus on the needs of the Mediterranean Area.



To ensure complementarity of actions at local level with regional initiatives.

MedCities aims to promote the active role of municipalities in the regional initiatives on sustainable development. For this reason, we represent local authorities in various international forums, but we also try to assure that our projects contribute to regional or national initiatives.

A clear example is the implementation of the Improved Waste Management project in Al Fayhaa, which is coordinated by the UNPD under the initiative of the Lebanese Host Community Support Programme. This is a regional multi-stakeholder initiative which encompasses a large part of humanitarian and development assistance projects, implemented in Lebanon to support municipalities to face the effects of the Syrian crisis.

Furthermore, MedCities participated in the 1st Regional Consultation Roundtable on Water-Employment-Migration, which was held on 7 December 2016, in Tunis, led by GWP-Med and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. More than 25 distinguished participants from 13 institutions and organisations across 10 countries gathered to elaborate on the linkages among water insecurity, enduring unemployment and increasing migration in the Mediterranean, also underlining youth and gender challenges.

MedCities is also participating in the debates on climate change in the Mediterranean.

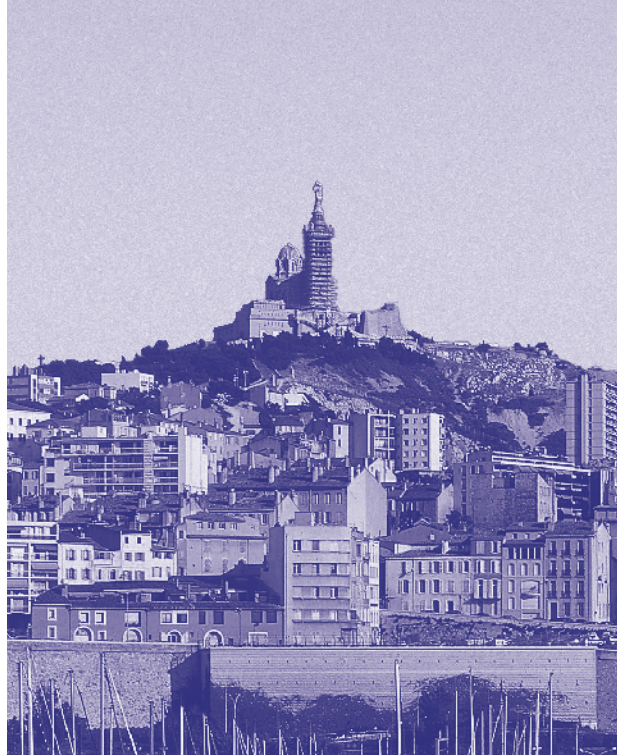
Finally, together with The Mediterranean world Economic Foresight Institute (IPEMED from its acronym in French), MedCities is acting as a facilitator of one of the working groups of the 3rd Mediterranean Water Forum, to be celebrated early 2018 in Cairo as a preparatory regional meeting of the 8th World Water Forum to be held in Brasilia in March 2018.

Establish joint initiatives with relevant actors on Urban Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean

To participate in multi-actor cooperation schemes on urban development in the Mediterranean: CMI Urban Hub initiative on Territorial Cohesion.

MedCities has continued to participate in the meetings and activities of the Urban Hub of the Centre for Mediterranean Integration. The Urban Hub of the CMI is a working group gathering the main institutions working on urban sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. On 4th-5th May, it participated in the Seminar "Addressing the Challenges of Territorial Cohesion and Promoting the Role of Cities in the MENA Region". MedCities organised a parallel session entitled "Strategic Planning and Multi-level Governance" with the participation of different experiences of planning at multiple levels. The experiences presented came from the Ministry for Development and International Cooperation of Tunisia, the municipality of Saida and the association of the Barcelona Metropolitan Strategic Plan.

Around forty experts and policy-makers of the region gathered together to discuss the challenges of territorial cohesion in the region. Apart from the General Secretariat, three members of the network participated in the discussions: Saida, the Union of Municipalities of Dannieh and Tetouan.



To participate in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Experts Group on Urban Development and the preparatory works of the Mediterranean Urban Agenda.

MedCities has continued to participate in the UfM Experts Group on Urban Development, particularly linked to the consultative task to prepare the 2nd Ministerial Conference on Urban Development, celebrated in Cairo (Egypt) in May 2017. As a result of the Declaration, a regional process, led by UfM Secretariat with all relevant actors working on this domain in the region, has been launched in which MedCities is actively participating.



To make the participation in the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) profitable for members.

MedCities ended its mandate as member of the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD), started in 2015. At the meeting of the MCSD held in Athens in July 2017, MedCities presented its commitment to contribute to the flagship initiative of creating an urban toolbox for Mediterranean cities. This is one of the eleven flagship initiatives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), approved in 2016.

Currently, MedCities is leading the development of this flagship initiative during a pilot phase, intended to be completed by January 2018 and to serve all members and relevant stakeholders, as a meeting point for sharing knowledge and best practices. MedCities has also supported the 1st edition of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City award in which several members have presented their candidacies. The resolution will be made public in December 2017.



To strengthen cooperation with strategic allies towards a greater integration of actions (CRPM, AVITEM...).

MedCities has continued to foster its cooperative and collaborative approach to its actions. To that end, the General Secretary of MedCities participated in the General Assembly of the CPRM last July in Naples (Italy). In the Assembly Medcities showed their views on the EU Neighbourhood policy through the experience of different projects like the USUDS or the SIDIGMED. Medcities and the CRPM are participating in common projects and they are also joining forces in joint activities in the area.

The complementarity between networks of cities and networks of regions appears as an important step to promote stability and prosperity in the whole region.

MedCities has also strengthened its cooperation with AVITEM, sharing actions plans and identifying common initiatives to join effort for the development of actions addressed to cities and territories in the region.

In 2017 the Conference of the Atlantic Cities, the Iberian network of Cross-border Cities, and Medcities have celebrated two meeting where for the preparation of a position paper on the future of the EU Territorial Cooperation Policy after 2020. This position paper calls among others for an increase of the funds to this policy, a more urban and metropolitan dimension and a better integration with the Neighbourhood policy with a bigger simplification of the procedures. Medcities has invited the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Cities to join this group.

The position paper will be officially presented to the European Commission before the end of the year.

Advocate for the role of Mediterranean local authorities in international debates

To participate in international Forums on local governments: ARLEM, UCLG.

In November 2016, MedCities participated in the 4th Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean. It was held in Tangier on 6th November, chaired by Mr. Boudra, Mayor of Al Hoceima and president of the Political Council of the Mediterranean Commission of UCLG, and by Mr. Roatta, Deputy Mayor of Marseille representing the presidency of the Mediterranean Commission of UCLG.

The President of Medcities participated in the last General Assembly of the ARLEM in Malta in February 2017 and he addressed some words to the Executive Board of the Committee of the Regions on the needs of the cities in the Mediterranean. Moreover, MedCities confirmed Mr Jean Roatta, Deputy Mayor of Marseille, as its representative in the Euro-Mediterranean Local and Regional Assembly (ARLEM), for the next term (2017-2019).

To participate in international Climate Change Forums.

In February, MedCities participated in the Conference “Quelles solutions pour la Méditerranée?” organized in Paris by the French Government. The event was chaired by Ms Ségolène Royal, Minister for the Environment, Energy and Sea and in charge of International Relations on Climate and President of COP21.

The objective of the Conference was to present the actions of the French Government on sea protection in the Mediterranean and to gather support on future initiatives for the region concerning coastal protection, maritime transport, and the prevention of pollution from terrestrial origin.

MedCities participated in a roundtable on how networks of local authorities can contribute to making interventions long-lasting and sustainable, since they are stable platforms of cooperation. The initiative counted on the participation of the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Union for the Mediterranean, two institutions with which MedCities cooperates on a regular basis on these domains.

To participate in international debates on local public policies on social cohesion.

In the framework of the Social Agreement in Tetouan implemented by the Association AERYC and the Municipality of Tetouan, MedCities co-organised an international seminar on social policies which took place in Barcelona in February. This seminar served to scale-up and capitalize the results of the project, in order to have a broader debate on the implementation of social policies in Mediterranean cities. This activity showed how the implementation of a specific project can trigger broader debates in order to enrich the definition of policies at local and national levels.

MedCities General Secretariat

Metropolitan Area of Barcelona

C. 62, 16-18 - Zona Franca

08040 Barcelona

contact@medcities.org

www.medcities.org