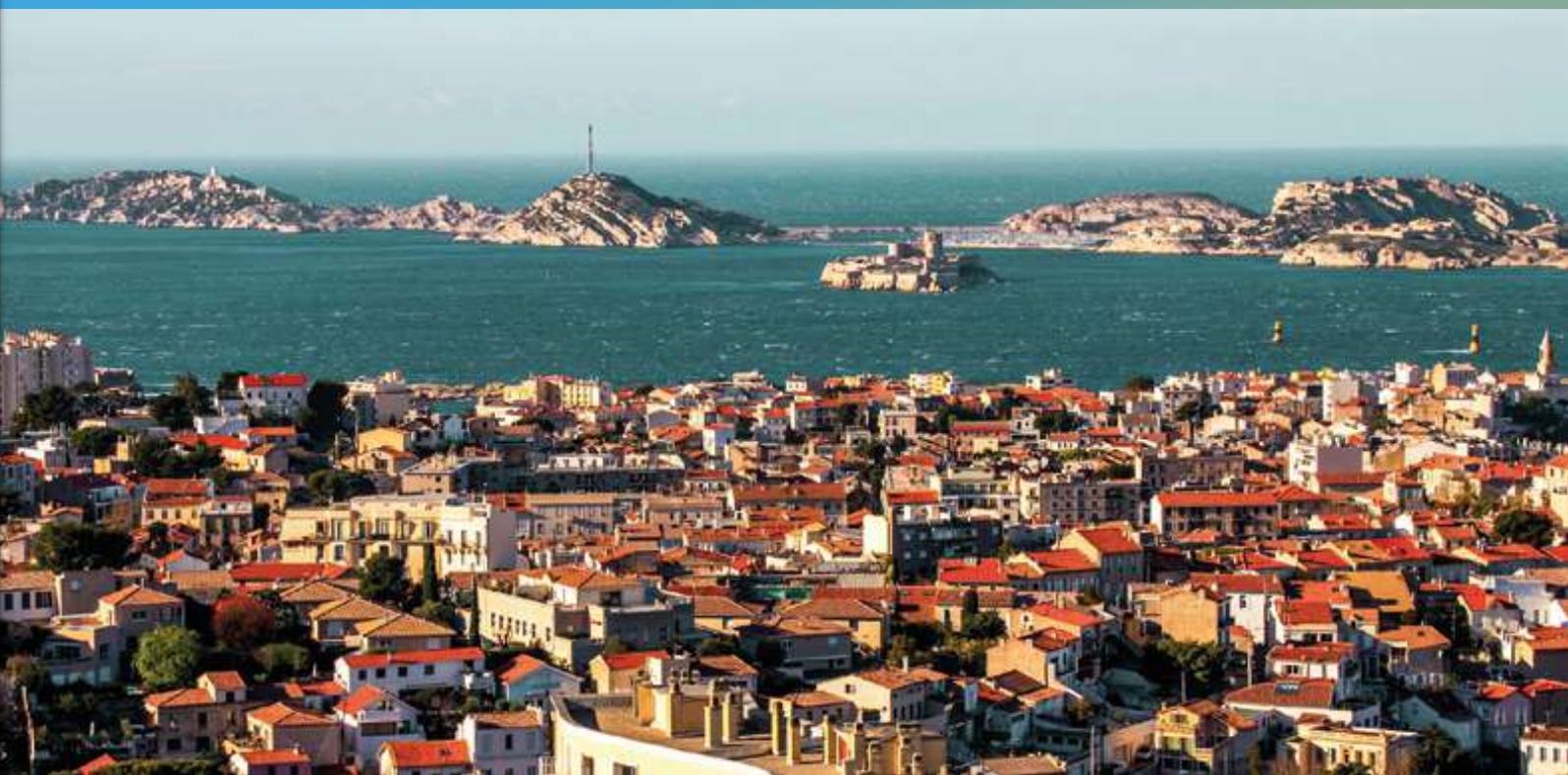


Activity Report 2024

January – December 2024



The Mediterranean connects us,
MedCities unites us



Activity Report 2024

January – December 2024

MedCities, the
Mediterranean
voice to the world

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Michaël DELAFOSSE

A Word from the President, Mayor of Montpellier

This year 2024 was once again a fruitful and productive year for our network of Mediterranean cities MedCities. I would like to warmly thank the Mayor of Tangier for welcoming us to this beautiful city for our General Assembly last November. This Assembly, which was a real success, saw the entry into the network of 8 new members whom I congratulate on their membership: Al Mirad, Al Karak, Bab Amman, Bani Obeid, Muğla Metropolitan Municipality, Agia Paraskevi, Ramallah and Al Hoceima.

This is a great proof of the dynamism of our network, and the active participation of our old and new members in our activities, our meetings, our projects, shows it every day.

At a time when the state of the world is increasingly worrying, climate crises and conflicts are multiplying, and the Mediterranean is a territory increasingly exposed to these risks, the City and Metropolis of Montpellier join MedCities' advocacy for a greener, more sustainable and safer Mediterranean basin for each of its cities, for each of its inhabitants. It is a message of peace that I, like all of you, want to carry for this year to come.

To achieve this, we need cities and local authorities. 70% of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 can only be achieved through the action of local governments: multilateralism, the recognition of the action of cities, are the key to a harmonious development of our common Mediterranean. I am convinced that MedCities can make a significant contribution, in partnership with other actors sharing similar objectives, which is why we will foster cooperation with other actors who have their place in our organization under the umbrella of observer members.

MedCities has gained a position in the region to become the voice of local authorities, through the implementation of dozens of projects over the years. The transfer of knowledge and the exchange of good practices, as during the seminar on sustainable mobility that we were honoured to host in Montpellier, are essential elements for moving forward together in the face of the challenges of the century. We made crucial contributions on subjects as central as water, at the Bali Summit, or participated in the redefinition of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD).

The year 2025 promises to be a year of challenges as well as opportunities. I wish us collectively to carry out as many collective projects as we can, in the service of our territories, our citizens and our common Mediterranean. You can count on my full commitment to this.



“MedCities has gained a position in the region to become the voice of local authorities”

Josep CANALS

A Word from the Secretary-General

The MedCities 2024 Activity Report outlines the work carried out by the General Secretariat, based in Barcelona, for its 81 members all through last year. The activities were driven by 17 projects, as well as participation in various international forums, amplifying the voice of local Mediterranean authorities.

Local governments and municipal unions are on the front lines of public management. While unions of municipalities are experts at implementation, many struggle with limited human and financial resources, making it challenging to meet the quality standards needed for their citizens. Despite these challenges, local authorities remain motivated by the hope and expectations to drive forward, addressing immense challenges and threats.

MedCities is committed not only on a professional level, but also ethically and with an infinite motivation to help improve services, with the primary goal of enhancing the quality of life for people in the region and protecting the natural ecosystems of the Mediterranean Sea and its surrounding areas.

A key highlight of 2024 was the launch of thematic working groups, which allow members to collaborate more deeply on areas of mutual interest, benefiting more municipalities than traditional projects. The positive feedback from members encourages the continuation of this approach, which aligns with the MedCities 2030 Strategic Plan.

The report also emphasizes solidarity with Palestinian and Lebanese members, who are suffering from inhuman foreign military aggression. MedCities stands by the call for a ceasefire, adherence to UN resolutions, and effective humanitarian aid. The organization mourns the victims of the aggressions and hopes for peace in 2025.

Finally, the report acknowledges the partners and entities with whom MedCities has worked on various projects and strategic alliances, expressing gratitude for their collaboration.

In conclusion, MedCities is proud of the achievements in 2024 and looks forward to making 2025 even better, wishing its members success, health, and peace in the year ahead.



“Local authorities remain motivated by the hope and expectations to drive forward”

Our network

Agadir, Agia Paraskevi, Urban Community of Al Fayhaa, Al Mirad, Al Karak, Al Hoceima, Ancona, Antalya, Municipality of Greater As-Salt, Bab Amman, Bani Obeid, Barcelona, Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), Batroun, Union of Municipalities of Batroun, Benghazi, Bethlehem, Bizerte, Bodrum, Bonifacio, Chefchaouen, Union of Municipalities of Dannieh, Djerba Midoun, Durres, Dubrovnik, El Mina, Ein-el-Basha, Gabès, Gaza, Gaziantep, Genova, Glyfada, Federation of Municipalities of Higher Chouf, Metropolitan Municipality of Hatay, Municipality of Greater Irbid, Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir, Jbeil (Byblos), Municipality of Greater Jerash, Union of Municipalities of Jezzine, Jounieh, Kairouan, Union of Municipalities of Koura, Kerkennah, Kotor, Larnaka, Lemesos (Limassol), Municipality of Greater Madaba, Mahdia, Málaga, Marseille, Menzel Bourghiba, Mersin, Minieh, Monastir, Montpellier (Montpelhièr), M’Saken, Metropolitan Municipality of Muğla, Nabeul, Napoli, Città Metropolitana di Napoli, Palma, Pula, Ramallah, Rethymno, Roma, Roskovec, Saida, Sarajevo, Sarafand, Sfax, Sidi Bou Said, Sousse, Tanger, Tataouine, Tétouan, Tirana, Tripoli, Tripoli (Lybia), Tunis, València, Municipality of Greater Zarqa and Zgharta-Ehden.



Governance

MedCities was established in Barcelona in 1991, when 16 cities formed a network with the initial aim of supporting environmental protection from a local perspective. In 2015, the network became a fully independent organisation, and now brings together 81 local authorities from all shores of the Mediterranean basin. The transformation of MedCities into a legal association has increased its operational capacity and enhanced its ability to promote sustainable urban development. MedCities is governed by its General Assembly, made up of all its member municipalities and unions of municipalities.

The group of mayors and presidents of the members is responsible in particular for approving the Working Plan, the activity report and the economic report for each year, as well as the inclusion of new members. In 2024, the general assembly was held in Tangier on 28 November 2024.

The MedCities board of directors is made up of 9 members. There are no paid positions on the board. The MedCities board of directors for the period 2023-2026 was approved by the members during the extraordinary general meeting held on 31 January 2023. The composition of the current board of directors is as follows:

- **Municipality of Montpellier**
(President)
- **Union of Municipalities of Dannieh**
(Vice-President)
- **Municipality of Tunis**
(Vice-President)
- **Barcelona Metropolitan Area**
(Secretary)
- **Municipality of Tetouan**
(Treasurer)
- **Municipality of Limassol**
(Member)
- **Municipality of València**
(Member)
- **Zarqa Greater Municipality**
(Member)
- **Municipality of Bethlehem**
(Member)

The MedCities board of directors is made up of 9 members

MedCities General Secretariat is established in Barcelona, at the premises of Barcelona Metropolitan Area and with the support of the Municipality of Barcelona. This document details the work undertaken by MedCities over the past year, as approved by its General Assembly held in Tangier on 28 November 2024.

2024 at a glance

During 2024 MedCities has continued supporting member cities in participating in multiple projects and initiatives. Numbers do not always reflect the work of an organization. However, this figures attempt to enable an insight.



Our actions are based on the SDG 17.

Our guiding principles

Sustainable development, Climate crisis mitigation, Economic & social equality

Fields we work on

- Waste management
- Mobility
- Social Cohesion
- Governance and city development
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable development
- Environment and climate change
- Energy

Our Projects

19 Ongoing Projects **7** Led by MedCities **46** Members engaged

New memberships

+8 = 81 total

MedCities as a knowledge-sharing platform

66 actions

- 17** Trainings, knowledge transfer, mentorings & workshops
- 22** Events & seminars
- 2** Pilot projects
- 8** Exchange visits
- 17** Position papers, studies & reports

Media appearances

5

Interviews in different media disseminated on TV, radio and in the press.

New content in **medurbantools**

Open access documents and resources divided in tools, cases and voices.

Continuous update of the online sharing platform.

A voice for Mediterranean local authorities: dialogue and political exchanges

45 voices

- Networking with international partners
- Support and accompaniment to city members in International foras
- Dissemination of good practices and policy recommendations
- Governance and city development

Participation in events & contribution to reports & technical papers. **Some highlights:**

- EU Oceans Week 2024 in Brussels
- Participation at MARLICE 2024 (International Forum on Marine Litter & Circular Economy)
- MedECC Plenary Session
- MedCatDays in Barcelona
- Signature of the MoU between MEDPAN and MedCities
- ARLEM Commission in Carcassone
- Biodiversity COP16 in Cali
- World Urban Forum in El Cairo
- 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference for BlueMissionMed project
- 20th Anniversary from Euroregion Pyrénées Méditerranée
- Dialogue between AMB and MedCities with member city Saida
- Symposium on Urban Migration Governance in the Mediterranean by IEMed
- MedCities Seminar “Local Initiatives for Economic Development and Territorial Promotion in the Mediterranean: The Case of Employment and Culture”, in Tanger
- European Urban Resilience Forum a València
- Conference “The value of Metropolitan Solutions” from AMB
- Annual Conference ‘Catalonia 2030 Alliance’

Ongoing projects across the Mediterranean

Sustainable Urban Services

Strategic Planning

Environment & Biodiversity

Social Cohesion

Economic Development

14

Implementing urban development and capacity-building projects across the Mediterranean



Our actions are based on the SDGs. MedCities is defined by SDG 17.

Sustainable Urban Services

ProcuraMED. Innovative and Green Procurement towards a sustainable economy in the Mediterranean area

Green Public Procurement (GPP) and Public Procurement for Innovation (PPI) are pillars of an innovative sustainable economy. However, these processes are hardly used at the local government level. Through this project, MedCities is eager to build capacity and respond to local authorities' challenges in terms of sustainability to support the transition of the procurement practices of local authorities around the Mediterranean.

The ProcuraMED project, funded under the **Interreg Euro-MED programme**, will last until March 2026, and aims to support the transition towards competitive, innovative, sustainable and resilient ecosystems in the Mediterranean by developing the innovation capacities of enterprises and local authorities related to green and innovative public procurement.

Launched in January 2024, the project set up a transnational survey in order to assess local authorities' and enterprises' knowledge of GPP and PPI in 8 EU countries, so as subsequently to develop and implement tailored training and mentorship programmes addressing green and innovative procurement. **The project also developed a Unified Strategic Procurement Online Platform** that includes reliable tools for public authorities and enterprises to boost the process of green innovative technology application in public services. Lastly, an international workshop on strategic procurement was organised in Brussels in October 2024, back to back with the European Week of Regions and Cities and within the framework of the First Institutional Policy Dialogue of the Green Living Areas Mission of the Interreg Euro-MED Programmes. The workshop aimed to activate a mutual learning process based on exchange of expertise and knowledge transfer on green innovation in the MED area.

In 2025 **MedCities will lead a Euro-Mediterranean Coalition for the Innovative Sustainable Economy**, with the mission of supporting both the possibility for enterprises to propose their green innovative product in a Euro-Mediterranean market, and for public procurers to have access to a wider offering of solutions to be applied in improving services for citizens.

To support the coalition, MedCities will include a dedicated space on the **MedUrbanTools platform** where experiences, best practices, innovative solutions and green procurement approaches will be shared, creating opportunities for discussion and collaboration.

Furthermore, MedCities will be responsible for the organisation of **one international Expo of Green Innovation** at the end of 2025 in Barcelona, to support innovative solutions development and market uptakes.

Sant Boi de Llobregat and Viladecans (**AMB municipalities**) and **Greater Irbid Municipality** are associate partners of the ProcuraMED project.

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

ProcuraMED addresses the challenges of green and innovative public procurement for enterprises and local authorities.

ProcuraMED Kickoff and Steering Committee Meetings in Lisbon



16

The core subject of municipal action



URWAN. Urban Regenerative Water Avant-garde(N)

Nature-Based Solutions for climate change adaptation & water scarcity

URWAN, launched in January 2024, aims to showcase innovative solutions to adapt to climate change and address water scarcity through a participatory, nature-based approach (in other words Nature-Based Solutions or NBS). It aims to redefine water management, encouraging engagement with local stakeholders and the implementation of multifunctional strategies that integrate sustainability, aesthetics and social impact, while also optimising the use of public funds.

To achieve its goal, URWAN intends to provide municipalities and key stakeholders with a comprehensive toolkit called **"URWAN Enabler Pack" that will include a catalogue of water management NBS adapted to the Mediterranean, the URWAN NBS co-design methodology and roadmap**, as well as a set of recommendations for the implementation and maintenance of NBS for local authorities.

All the components of the Enabler Pack will first be tested by six cities: three will carry out three experimental pilot NBS, and three others will test a modelling tool for integrated decision support to reach informed decisions, developed by URWAN. Among these six cities, three are members of MedCities: **Larnaca**, which will act as a pilot city and address the collection of grey water from public showers and toilets at the city beach and test two types of vertical gardens as NBS; **Rome**, which will also implement a pilot to collect rainwater from the roof of a market facility and paved areas for reuse in washing pavements, and test soil de-sealing and rain-gardens; and **Sarajevo**, which will test an integrated decision support system. All six test sites will also engage in participatory NBS planning. The tests have already been launched, while the pilots are currently being defined and will be launched in 2025.

URWAN kicked off with all the partners of the project, bringing together 9 leading organisations from 7 different countries: Italy, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, and Bosnia and Herzegovina - among which MedCities and the three members cities **Larnaca**, **Rome** and **Sarajevo** are full partners, and **Málaga** and **Jerash** associate partners. The partnership then had the opportunity to meet again in person in Ragusa, Italy, in April, and then online in June, to engage in enriching discussions and collaborative sessions aimed at advancing the common understanding of the opportunities stemming from the integration of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) into urban regeneration efforts. More recently, in September, MedCities took part in a twinning event in Ferla, Italy, called "Urban Green Horizons" between URWAN and another project, CARDIMED, in search of common actions

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

URWAN addresses severe drought and climate impacts in Mediterranean regions through Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) in urban regeneration.

and synergies to promote Mediterranean climate resilience through the widespread adoption of Nature-based Solutions.

In December, the first of the three URWAN Living Labs took place in Ptuj, Slovenia, alongside a partners' meeting. Not only did **MedCities**, **Larnaca** and **Sarajevo** took part in it, but also the cities of **Málaga** and **Jerash**, as associated partners. This Living Lab was the opportunity to think collectively about all the barriers that could potentially hinder the planning, implementation and maintenance of NBS, and to start sharing solutions and thinking about how to overcome them.

The project works towards the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially **SDG 3, 6, 11, 13, 15, 17**.

The project works towards the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals

MedCities presentation in the URWAN meeting in Ptuj *URWAN partners meeting in Ragusa*



WEFE4MED. Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus Community of Practice launched

In 2024, the WEFE4MED project made significant progress. At the start of the year, we launched a survey targeting potential members of the **WEFE Nexus Community of Practice (NCoP)**. The purpose of this survey was to gather insights from practitioners involved in WEFE demonstration sites, ensuring that future activities are aligned with community needs and interests.

Following the survey, MedCities successfully integrated two demonstration sites at the WEFE Nexus COP of the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)**:

- **Biosolar Green Roofs:** This project focuses on integrating green roofs into urban environments, promoting both energy efficiency and biodiversity.
- **Water Reuse Station in El Prat de Llobregat:** This facility showcases advanced wastewater reuse techniques, serving as a model for sustainable water management.

The **WEFE Knowledge Hub** was also unveiled, an online platform designed to facilitate knowledge exchange among stakeholders. By the end of the year, the hub had attracted over 13,000 views and 1,700 registered users from 31 countries, demonstrating its value as a resource for sharing best practices. The Knowledge Hub is envisioned to become the "LinkedIn for WEFE professionals" in the Mediterranean, offering an interactive space for professionals to connect and share resources. Today it hosts 13 demonstrators, 136 members and 43 published events.

A landmark moment occurred on 25 September 2024, with the official launch of the WEFE Nexus Community of Practice in **Larnaca**, Cyprus. This event brought together 112 participants from 20 countries, including scientists, policymakers, and practitioners, all committed to addressing pressing resource challenges facing the Mediterranean. The launch highlighted the significance of the demonstration sites as tangible examples of effective solutions, and facilitated discussions about integrated resource management strategies.

Key topics of discussion included the interdependencies between **water, energy, food, and ecosystems**, including policy and financing perspectives. Participants exchanged insights on successful models and strategies for



WEFE4MED partners in Larnaca



MedCities Secretary-General, Josep Canals, during the WEFE4MED presentation

sustainable resource use, providing a rich environment for collaborative learning. The event also served as a platform for stakeholders to explore the development of integrated policies that support the **WEFE Nexus approach**.

The launch event coincided with the Climate Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East Conference, where the results of the NCoP launch workshop were presented. These discussions underscored the urgent need for coordinated actions to mitigate climate change, highlighting the interconnections between conflict and environmental degradation.

The WEFE4MED project, funded by the **PRIMA programme**, aims to build a Mediterranean Nexus Community of Practice (NCoP) to integrate the management of Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystem resources through collaborative knowledge-sharing, best practices, and capacity-building activities. The project focuses on 3 pillars: showcasing successful WEFE demonstration sites, engaging partners and countries in policy discussions, and exploring financial mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability.

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Balancing water, energy, food, and ecosystem (WEFE) needs in the Mediterranean where disconnected management practices create challenges, by establishing a Nexus Community of Practice (NCoP) that fosters collaboration and coordinated and shared practices, aiming for sustainability across all sectors.

GIZ project. Enhancing regional exchanges for local service provision in Libya

MedCities is supporting Libyan municipalities to enhance technical capacities in different citizen-oriented basic service domains through interregional exchanges with members of the network. The project, which lasts from August 2024 to August 2025, builds on the cooperation launched in 2023 with the **GIZ Libya Country Programme**. The project develops **capacity-building programmes for Solid Waste Management & Circular Economy and for Green Urban Planning, including field visits to MedCities members** and the organisation of webinars on the topic.

The first activity of the project was the organisation of a study visit to Barcelona focusing on integrated waste management and circular economy initiatives from 10 to 12 December 2024. The activity was organised by the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area**, together with **Barcelona City Council**. The objective of the study visit was to showcase the best practices Barcelona and its metropolitan area have been implementing over the years in waste management and enable participants to exchange experiences.

The Libyan delegation consisted of 11 participants, including six representatives of the municipalities of Misrata, Janzour, Central Tripoli, Idri-Al-Shati, Tobruk and Shahat as well as 5 representatives of the Libyan Ministry of Local Governments. Representatives from **MedCities members of the working group on waste management -Ein El Basha, As Salt, Jerash (Jordan), Al Fayhaa, Higher Chouf (Lebanon) and M'Saken (Tunisia)** - also joined the activity in order to enlarge its regional impact.

Aside from the study visit, two transferability webinars will be organised on sustainable waste management and circular economy in 2025. The capacity-building programme will result in the generation of operational recommendations on solid waste management and circular economy for the Libyan context.

In 2025, the Green Urban Planning capacity-building programme will be implemented, including a field visit and the organisation of two webinars on the topic. MedCities members will also be invited to take part in the study visit to reinforce the interregional learning dimension. At the end of the programme, a booklet on Green Infrastructure Planning and exchanges via the MedCities network will be produced.

MedCities members Ein El Basha, As Salt, Jerash (Jordan), Al Fayhaa, Higher Chouf (Lebanon) and M'Saken (Tunisia) – also joined the activity in order to enlarge its regional impact.

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

The project aims to enhance the technical capacities of Libyan municipalities through interregional exchanges and digital capacity-building formats in waste management and green urban planning.



Participants at the study visit to Barcelona focused on integrated waste management and circular economy

MAIS. Building healthier cities for all through active & intelligent mobility solutions in Sfax and Chihia, Tunisia

This year has seen important progress in the development of the new cycling and pedestrian areas in the **Municipality of Sfax**, lead partner of the MAIS project, and in its partner municipality of Chihia. In Sfax, the area being transformed is located on the seafront corniche, which attracts families and local visitors at the weekend and has potential to become a popular area for cyclists and pedestrians. In Chihia, the area for the future pedestrian zone has been identified together with a group of citizens who have gathered every week since the pandemic to walk around the city. In parallel, the Municipality of Sfax foresees the finalisation of the construction of another of the flagship pilot projects, the photovoltaic power plant, by the end of the year. The plant will distribute green energy to respond to the growing city's transport needs.

The partners of the MAIS project have also been very active with **public campaigns to raise awareness of citizens**, partnering with local civil society organisations, as to the benefits of moving around the city by bike or simply on foot. A major event was held in both municipalities to mark **World Environment Day in June**, with the support of the General Secretariat of MedCities. The project has also assembled municipal staff to discuss and learn about measures to promote electric mobility (training sessions in April) and road security related to active mobility infrastructures (training sessions in November).

Lastly, the project is **advancing towards the operationalisation of a metropolitan mobility authority for greater Sfax**. MedCities appointed a group of experts specialised in transport-related planning and governance, to draw up an operational study to define the missions and functioning of the future Metropolitan Urban Mobility Authority for the area of "Greater Sfax". For this study, **four cases of metropolitan transport organisation authorities were identified as benchmarking references of interest**, and they were then interviewed for further inputs, including the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area**.

A restitution workshop was held in Sfax the 4 December with relevant stakeholders (local administration, transport operators, civils society organisations, among others) to present the diagnosis on the transport related context, trends, competencies and governance and gather inputs to draw possible scenarios on how the authority could

be shaped. The second phase is now ongoing to establish the main functions, internal structure, decision-making processes and budgetary focuses of the future Metropolitan Authority. The study is scheduled to be wrapped up by the first quarter of 2025.

The EU-funded project "MAIS: Active and Intelligent Mobility in Sfax" (its acronym in French) is led by the Municipality of Sfax and aims to promote the transition of the Sfax conurbation towards green and resilient urban development to address climate change. Sustainable urban mobility is the key lever in contributing to national commitments in terms of energy-saving and promotion of renewable energies. **The project implements innovative pilot projects in the fields of active mobility, e-mobility, smart collection and use of data and public awareness.** MedCities is partner of the project and supports the lead partner in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of all project activities, as well as financial management and relations with the donors.

MedCities' follow-up mission in Sfax for the MAIS project



CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Provide municipalities with opportunities to enhance their expertise and capacities to implement policies for sustainable urban mobility, particularly to promote active mobility, data-driven mobility planning and citizen awareness of the benefits of low-carbon transport modes.

Community 4 Living Areas. Building a community of projects to achieve greener Mediterranean cities



Community 4 Living Areas' project key action meeting organised in Turin

The **Green Living Areas Mission** aims to improve Mediterranean citizens' lives by promoting green living area development. As part of the **Interreg Euro-MED Programme**, the Mission undertakes projects that bring local communities to life with green development at their epicentre, reducing negative climate impacts on the region's ecosystems, and enhancing climate resilience. It aims in particular to use and replicate innovative solutions to help Mediterranean cities contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, ensure territorial resilience, citizen well-being and the prosperity of the MED region, through a green economy approach.

As part of the Mission, the **Community 4 Living Areas (C4LA) project's** main mission is in fact to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among the partners and stakeholders, whether public, private, research-oriented or citizen-based, that are working across the Mediterranean region to upgrade city challenges related to mobility, waste management, water or energy efficiency, among others.

MedCities leads the Transferring work package of the Community 4 Living Areas project, and will from next year onwards pilot the replication process of the most relevant tools generated by the community in fields such as energy efficiency, financing climate change transition, nature-based solutions, and rural on-demand sustainable mobility schemes. As a network, MedCities will ensure the results of the project benefit the city members, and will in particular secure the involvement of the associate partners from the network, namely **Greater Irbid Municipality, Sfax Municipality and Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)** by inviting them to take part in the activities with an international scope, to learn about the thematic projects and participate in the project forums.

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

The Community 4 Living Areas (C4LA) facilitate the exchange of expertise and innovative solutions among public and private institutions with a shared interest in making cities greener and more liveable, and to make concrete progress on their adaptation to climate change.

The main mission is in fact to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among the partners and stakeholders

The Community 4 Living Areas' key action this year was the mobilisation of over 100 representatives of public and private institutions at the 2-day event organised in Turin, Italy, last April, with broad representation from across the Mediterranean region. These representatives came from 19 thematic projects working on the development and testing of innovative solutions to make our Mediterranean cities greener. The community work will be structured around thematic working groups: green mobility, green energy systems, water management, green and climate-change-resilient spatial planning, finance for green transition and green community engagement.

In July, MedCities was present and actively involved at the meeting held in Marseille, organised by the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg EURO-Med programme, which brought together the programme's Governance projects. The meetings were rich and fruitful in terms of joint work and collaboration, outlining the shared challenges that the projects face across their missions, and the many opportunities to join forces in building a successful new edition of the MED Academy, among others.

MedCities participates actively in the governance and coordination of the project as full partners and leader of the transferring activities – and specifically ensured its participation at the two project meetings held this year, the one in Turin in April, and the one held in Zagreb in November.

Indeed, in November the partnership of the Community for Living Areas met in Zagreb for a two-days meeting to plan the upcoming months of implementation of the project. The Community for Living areas has as its main objective in its second year of implementation, to build a connected community of experts and implementers of solutions that will deal with green mobility, renewable energy, green territorial planning, climate finance and green community engagement. The community is currently constituted by 19 thematic projects and 2 governance projects.

Finally, in December MedCities led the moderation of an online session of the **working group on Green Mobility**, with projects implementing solutions on the fields of logistics and food transportation, mobility hubs, public transport efficiency or rural on-demand mobility. The discussion addressed joint initiatives and training needs, and will pave the way to the upcoming community gathering next year in May in Barcelona (Recinte Modernista de Sant Pau), dedicated to thematic projects' partners.

C4LA meeting held in Marseille, organised by the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg EURO-Med programme



MedCities participates actively in the governance and coordination of the project as full partners and leader of the transferring activities

Strategic Planning

24

Supporting the elaboration of city development strategies



A'SIMA Tunis. Fostering sustainable waste management in Greater Tunis

One of the main goals of the **A'SIMA Tunis project** is to **promote metropolitan governance in valorised waste management**. Within this context, the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)** and MedCities are supporting the Municipality of Tunis in implementing a multipurpose eco-centre for waste management with 4 modules (waste collection centre, bulky items management unit, sorting and selective classification of waste unit, and a transfer centre) targeting seven municipalities of the southern **Greater Tunis area**, namely Tunis, El Mourouj, Sidi Hessine, Radès, Megrine, Bardo and Ben Arous.

The technical feasibility studies and construction plans are ongoing in order to launch construction in 2025. The **feasibility studies include an analysis of the environmental, social, institutional, and economic dimensions of the pilot project**, and are carried out by an international consultancy firm together with Tunisian experts. The Steering Committee of the pilot project gathered for every major step, including the municipalities involved and other key stakeholders such as ANGED (Agence Nationale de Gestion des Déchets – National Agency for Waste Management) and ANPE (Agence Nationale de Protection de l'Environnement – National Agency for Environmental Protection).

In addition to the pilot project, the A'SIMA Tunis project has been leading an inter-municipal consultation on waste management with the aim of improving such management by setting up cooperation between different cities. The last technical workshop was held in June 2024 and focused on **governance mechanisms**. It presented the various possible scenarios to set up a structure responsible for establishing inter-municipal cooperation in the field of waste management to implement dynamic collaboration for a successful partnership. This workshop concluded a series of 4 workshops on specific themes. Previous workshops focused on the **intercommunal valorisation of solid waste, the collection and transport of waste, and communication and awareness-raising around waste management in Greater Tunis**. The exchanges from these workshops fed the action plan of pilot operations for improved waste management in Greater Tunis, and the inter-municipal strategy for integrated waste management. A capitalisation activity and a strategic workshop to adopt the final strategy will be organised in 2025.

Internal A'SIMA Tunis meeting with key stakeholders



Public consultation organised in Tunis to introduce the waste management pilot project and assess the social acceptability of it

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

The A'SIMA Tunis project aims to strengthen the urban and metropolitan sustainability of Tunis and Greater Tunis through improved governance. MedCities is leading the project, supporting the municipalities of Greater Tunis to improve their waste management system, among other aspects.

EViMACC. Expertise Exchange of Maghreb Cities on Urban Adaptation to Climate Change

MedCities is strengthening its strategic links with the key stakeholders present in the Mediterranean region. The network is indeed perceived by international donors and partners as a reliable regional stakeholder that supports and mobilises diverse types of municipality in the Mediterranean region that are ready to take on their role in the required adaptation to climate change impacts for the sake of their citizens' quality of life and their territory's resilience. One such is the **German Corporation for International Cooperation** (abbreviated as **GIZ** in German), with whom MedCities is collaborating on different initiatives.

On this occasion, GIZ has entrusted MedCities to **design and implement the knowledge exchange and peer-learning activities of its programme entitled "Urban Adaptation to Climate Change in the Maghreb"**. This programme builds on two previous phases during which a selected number of municipalities in the region were accompanied in drawing up climate adaptation plans through capacity building and tailored support, and advised on specific policies and measures to implement them operationally.

In the new phase starting this year, MedCities joins the team to enhance the transregional exchange of expertise and capitalisation of good practices regarding climate change adaptation by the selected cities in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. Under the project entitled "**EViMACC: Échange d'expertise des villes du Maghreb sur l'Adaptation au changement climatique**", MedCities has started designing a methodology to structure thematic discussions and exchanges in **working groups about waste cycle management, mobility, energy efficiency** and other matters. Through the working groups, the project will identify public policy messages that reflect the main obstacles to implementing adaptation measures and plans at the city level, and gather these together for dissemination.

The Secretariat has already conducted an initial assessment of initiatives already implemented from previous phases of the programme that could become transferable elements of expertise and solutions to help other cities in the region advance in the implementation of their adaptation plans.

View of a Moroccan city



A selected number of municipalities in the region were accompanied in drawing up climate adaptation plans

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Support cities in drafting their climate change adaptation plans and enhance the exchange of expertise and peer-learning on specific policies and solutions to make these plans operational.

Metropolitan initiatives to adapt to climate change in the Mediterranean

MedCities supported the **Metropolitan Municipality of Mersin** in developing its Action Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change, through the project 'Make a move for adaptation to climate change', funded with the support of the European Union. MedCities' role is to promote knowledge transfer by organising an international workshop to exchange good practices from the members of the network as to this topic, and develop a series of videos about such good practices.

The workshop '**Metropolitan initiatives to adapt to climate change in the Mediterranean**' took place on 18 and 19 September, in collaboration with the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)**. The event brought together fifteen experts from cities belonging to the MedCities network, and shared the solutions they are implementing in their cities to adapt to the climate crisis. Increasing coastal resilience to climate change and the restoration of ecosystems, promoting resilient urban planning and sustainable mobility, and implementing green and blue infrastructures were the central themes of this event.

The reconstruction of dunes on the metropolitan coast of Barcelona, the use of water and nature to reduce the heatwave effect in **Rome**, the creation of the first 'mobility island' in **Sarajevo**, the implementation of a free public transport strategy in **Montpellier**, the improvement of coastal resilience in **Mersin**, the creation of a network of climate shelters in the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area**, and energy efficiency in public buildings in **Irbid** are among the responses of Mediterranean cities that were presented to meet these challenges. Other experiences presented by MedCities members included presentations from **Ancona** on the 'urban forest contract' on the Adriatic coast to increase urban greenery and reduce the impact of heatwaves. **Tirana** talked about initiatives to rewild the city, and **València** explained the ongoing city 'greening' project, starting in schools with the participation of the educational community.

The participants, led by AMB technicians, were able to learn first-hand about regeneration and reuse of wastewater in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, as part of the **strategy to combat and prevent critical episodes of water shortage and drought**, as well as the projects carried out for the recovery and environmental protection of the Llobregat river.

Within the framework of the project, 4 videos on good practices of cities were produced, illustrating the experiences of **Rome, València, Ancona** and the **AMB**.

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

The '**Make a move for adaptation to climate change**' project aims to develop a climate change adaptation plan for the **Metropolitan Municipality of Mersin**.

Representatives and speakers of Mersin, MedCities, and AMB were present during the workshop



Fifteen experts from cities belonging to the MedCities network met and participated in different field visits



Environment & Biodiversity

ValEUR Gabès. Enhance urban water through innovative actions and instruments

In 2024, ValEUR Gabès' activities focused on advancing the implementation of pilot projects, training the private sector in urban water valorisation systems, and planning the final capitalisation activities in 2025.

After launching the public procurement procedures at the start of the year, the two retention and infiltration basins and the three rainwater rooftop tanks are entering the construction phase, running up until mid-2025. Two public areas in the **Municipality of Gabès** will function as **retention and infiltration basins to manage the floods during sporadic but heavy rain episodes**. These two spaces will reduce the risk of floods in the city and facilitate the recharge of the subterranean water table in the city of Gabès. In this regard, the municipal slaughterhouse and sports complex rooftops will have rainwater tanks installed by the project, capable of holding more than 300 m3 of reusable water for watering green spaces and municipal cleaning purposes.

Aside from the pilots, in April, **ValEUR Gabès trained 35 professionals from the private sector in urban water management techniques and systems** so that they can design more sustainable and adaptive infrastructures and spaces. The majority of the participants were architects and urban planners, bringing in their expertise in the design and planning of urban infrastructure. In addition, the presence of fluid engineers enables a deeper understanding of the technical aspects of water management. This combination of professional profiles created a stimulating environment conducive to collaboration and mutual learning, granting success and general satisfaction after the training initiative.

With the end of the project scheduled for mid-2025, the partnership led by the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area** is planning the final capitalisation activities. A capitalisation report will be launched and a field visit will be organised to Gabès once pilot construction is complete, to visit the facilities and learn more about the whole project process firsthand.

MedCities is a partner in the project, which is led by the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area** with **funding from the EU Delegation in Tunisia**. The main SDG addressed is number 6.



Private sector professionals training in urban water management techniques and systems in Gabès

Improving the capacities of cities to face climate change

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Increasing water demand from human activities and reduction of conventional water disposal, drive southern cities to rethink the provision and reuse of water sources. The ValEUR Gabès project aims to promote sustainable urban water management through the valorisation of non-conventional water resources in the Municipality of Gabès.



Dialogue 4 Nature. Holistic actions for a resilient society taking into account the natural environment and heritage



MedCities participation in the Annual Institutional Dialogue for Mediterranean Nature in Málaga

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

The Mediterranean region's natural heritage is becoming increasingly vulnerable to the adverse social and environmental effects of human activity and global climate change. The Natural Heritage Mission of the Interreg Euro-MED programme is focusing its efforts on addressing this exact challenge: protecting, restoring and valorising natural resources.

The dialogue presented a unique opportunity to engage with key multilevel stakeholders and contribute to meaningful discussions on nature conservation strategies

One of this year's milestones was the **launch of the four Working Group activities**, a space to coordinate and support thematic projects in policy engagement and impact, and to build shared positions. During 2024, the project partnership met three times, twice online in April and October and once in person in November. **MedCities leads the Working Group dedicated to "Overcoming Local Barriers for Climate Change Adaptation"** which aims to tackle the negative impacts of the threefold crisis of climate, biodiversity and pollution linked to urban expansion under the umbrella of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). A first online workshop of the working group took place in October to prepare the content of the upcoming position paper of the community with regards to the **historic approval of the EU Nature Restoration Law**, which was a turning point in the focus of our work.

At the end of June, the partners of the two governance projects of the mission (Dialogue 4 Nature-D4N and Community 4 Nature-C4N) and thirteen representatives of the projects currently integrated within the community met in Rovinj, Croatia. This provided an **opportunity to review the Mission's joint implementation plan, update the results of the recently implemented Summer School focused on restoration law, and exchange and shape key upcoming activities with thematic projects**. The meeting ended with a Mission 2024-2025 timeline that included potential relevant activities and events for the Mission members, a mapping of policy targets and actors relevant to the thematic projects, and a communication session to present and involve the thematic projects on the communication joint strategy.

At the end of November, the D4N partners co-organised the Annual Institutional Dialogue for Mediterranean Nature in **Málaga**, back-to-back with the 6th International Marine Science Communication Conference (CommOCEAN). Over two days, more than 120 representatives of 60 public and private institutions from around the Mediterranean shoreline discussed policy challenges and promoted solutions for key thematic issues relevant to the Mediterranean's natural heritage. The dialogue presented a unique opportunity to engage with key multilevel stakeholders and contribute to meaningful discussions on nature conservation strategies. **Our member cities Málaga and Genova took part as speakers** in the round table dedicated to the Euro-Mediterranean Restoration Policy Context. This also gave the opportunity to present the position paper from the working group's seminars this year as to the recently approved EU Restoration Law, that will be advocated at international forums in 2025.

Lastly, as with the rest of the **governance project partners**, we met several times with the funding programme secretariat to co-design strategic activities for the programme as the Med Academy, a capacity building and knowledge exchange mechanism that will begin operations next year.

This **Interreg EuroMed-funded project** targets a very wide array of multilevel and multisector stakeholders, with local public authorities as one of the key targets. They will benefit from tailored mapping exercises, capacity building activities, institutional dialogues and working group events. The Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities (FAIC) is "associate partner" to the project, as well as MedCities members **Marseille, Dubrovnik, Izmir and Sfax**.



D4N policy interactive session to listen to thematic projects needs, in Rovinj

MedCities met several times with the funding programme secretariat to co-design strategic activities

ANERIS. Scientific Instrumentation Tools and Methods for Sensing Marine Life: Promoting Citizen Science for Marine Biodiversity

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

To develop and implement operational marine biology products for continuous monitoring of marine biodiversity through participatory science initiatives and advanced technologies, while engaging local communities and stakeholders across the Mediterranean region.

Representative from Ancona, MedCities member city, presenting the citizen science event



In 2024, the ANERIS project engaged communities, stakeholders, and international partners through various activities to promote citizen science and enhance marine biodiversity monitoring across Mediterranean cities.

The year began with participation in the “Il Mare nelle Città - OcNet” conference in **Ancona** on 15 February, which facilitated discussions among stakeholders as to the role of urban environments in marine conservation. On the same day, ANERIS co-organised a citizen science event for high school students in collaboration with a local university and the City of Ancona. This initiative enabled students to engage directly with marine biodiversity monitoring using the **MINKA platform** to document observations of coastal species.

Additionally, a broader citizen science event was held for local authorities, scuba divers and environmentalists, emphasising the benefits of citizen science in education and sustainable tourism.

In April, ANERIS presented the findings from the Ancona workshop at the **UN Ocean Decade Conference** in Barcelona. The feedback from local stakeholders helped shape recommendations, highlighting ANERIS’s commitment to fostering international dialogue on marine conservation.

On 1 March, ANERIS organised a similar citizen science event in **Mersin**, coinciding with the “*Urban Coastal Ecosystems Workshop on Marine Restoration with Nature-Based Solutions*.” This event engaged local researchers and policymakers in discussions about marine spatial planning and pollution prevention, with participants actively using the **MINKA** platform for data collection.

ANERIS took part in the “*Restoration of Marine Ecosystems: Strategies and Successes of Mediterranean Cities*” workshop in **Genova** on 14 June. The workshop focused on **strategies to restore and preserve marine ecosystems in Mediterranean cities**. Key topics included successful restoration initiatives and ongoing efforts to promote sustainable practices in coastal areas.

The workshop concluded with the *Posidonia Green Festival* on 15 June in **Bogliasco**, where ANERIS conducted various citizen science activities. The festival featured workshops for children and a **MINKA Biomarathon**, engaging participants of all ages in collecting observations of marine and coastal species. Throughout the day, various activities and marine-related sporting events promoted environmental awareness and sustainability, all adhering to strict ecological principles, such as eliminating single-use plastics.

The festival included discussions on marine conservation challenges, featuring talks by marine biologists and local environmental organisations and the premiere of a documentary, emphasising the importance of collaborative efforts in preserving marine biodiversity.

From September 25 to 27, members of the *Coastal Cities Working Group* from **Bodrum, Dubrovnik, Málaga, and Tangier** met in Barcelona to discuss integrated coastal management and beach management practices. During the visit they observed a practical monitoring project in **Castelldefels** (a city member of AMB) using the **MINKA citizen science application**, and expressed interest in participating in ANERIS; follow-up meetings were organised.

In November, ANERIS had its annual meeting and hosted an International Marine Conservation programme, gathering researchers and practitioners connected with the project for a technical discussion of the latest developments in **marine conservation efforts across the Mediterranean**. The 2-day gathering also featured presentations on successful citizen science projects and strategies to enhance marine biodiversity.

The activities reflect a strong commitment to enhancing marine biodiversity through collaborative citizen science initiatives. **By engaging local communities, stakeholders and international partners, ANERIS contributes to a sustainable future for our oceans.**

The ANERIS project, funded by the HORIZON-INFRA-2022 TECH-01 call, aims to develop operational marine biology products for continuous monitoring of marine biodiversity using advanced technologies such as genomics, imaging, bio-optics, and participatory citizen science actions.

Discussions about marine spatial planning and pollution prevention



Coastal Cities Working Group from Bodrum, Dubrovnik, Málaga and Tangier met in Barcelona

Citizen Science: participants of all ages collect observations of marine and coastal species

BlueMissionMed.

Accelerating the achievement of the objectives of the Mission “Restore Our Oceans & Waters by 2030”

The Mission supports waterfront cities, regions, ports, islands, fisheries, and conservation communities, to become resilient, climate-neutral and future-proof

The MedCities milestone was the celebration of a **dedicated onsite Satellite Event during the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona**, from 10 to 12 April, entitled “Turn Ideas into Action. The Mediterranean Lighthouse as a pilot to upscale the challenges of the Decade from local to global”. The event, co-organised by the European Commission, the BlueMissionMed (BMM) CSA project and MedCities, showed that by connecting people and places with the necessary solutions and knowledge, the Mission supports such key actors as waterfront cities, regions, ports, islands, fisheries, and conservation communities, to become resilient, climate-neutral and future-proof.

The event included a keynote by John Bell, Deputy Mission Manager and Director of Healthy Planet, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, and closing remarks by Pascal Lamy, Chair of the Mission Board for the Ocean & Waters Mission. During the event four new cities, three of them MedCities members – **Barcelona, Ancona, and Mersin Metropolitan Municipality** – signed up to the Ocean & Waters Mission Charter and presented their engagements. **Barcelona City Council** presented the public-private partnership built to define its pioneering Blue Economy Strategy, while the **Metropolitan Municipality of Mersin** shared the project “Clean Mediterranean” to address various marine pressures in close collaboration with the Middle East Technical University, also including pollution prevention and marine restoration actions. The **city of Ancona** showcased how European funds can allow for tailor-made innovative solutions, such as the management of sanitation waters from boats at Ancona marina. The city of Burgas is fostering a sustainable blue economy by supporting fishermen and aquaculture communities, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship as well as enhancing environmental monitoring and waste management.

Their interventions were followed by implementation of a collaborative and participative dialogue to prioritise action in “The Zero Pollution Hierarchy” for Prevention, Minimisation/Control, and Elimination/Remediation of pollutants from waters and oceans. The collaborative effort promoted with the participation of the event attendees helped to identify which solutions and best practices should be applied by cities to achieve the Mission objectives, what kind of support local authorities need so as to implement these solutions, and what kind of synergies can be implemented to help reach common objectives across different basins.

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

BlueMissionMed aims to support the European Union Mission Restore Our Oceans and Waters by 2030 by providing a holistic and coherent framework to develop a systemic approach to the depollution and regeneration of the basin hydrosphere, a pressing need in the Mediterranean Sea.

The event was preceded by a technical visit co-organised with the **Barcelona City Council water cycle department (BCASA)** and **UNEP MAP MedWaves** to the largest of the 13 underground rainwater collection tanks of Barcelona. Smart management of Barcelona’s drainage and sewerage network helps to minimise discharges into the natural environment during periods of intense rainfall, and reduces the environmental impact on beaches. Participants were able to learn about installing floater and solid-waste retention systems at the sewerage network’s discharge points to help reduce the pollution load that reaches the natural receiving environment. The municipality also presented the “**Barcelona Zero Plastic Commitment**”.

MedCities was likewise present at the **BlueMissionMed Spanish Hub Workshop**, coinciding with the **3rd International Forum on Marine Litter and Circular Economy (MARLICE) in València**. The Workshop, organised by the Spanish Institute of Oceanography, Ecorys, and MedWaves, served as an occasion to share shortlisted innovative transferable solutions for Mediterranean marine pollution, and benchmark them with participants to prioritise them in terms of incentives and barriers to their implementation. The public assessed options for **circular solutions for fishing gear, bio-based solutions to prevent pollution in natural environments, hospitality sector solutions to reduce the impact of plastic, solutions supporting cities in taking bold action to stop plastic pollution, and educational actions aimed at promoting a positive shift in the relationship between society and the ocean**. An inspiring and powerful array of transformative and innovative solutions and actions enabling the dynamic transformation of the services and business models required to achieve the **Oceans and Waters Mission** objectives. This exercise was taken one step further at the Smart Cities Expo World Congress in Barcelona, early in November, through the Agora Session “Blue Solutions for Ports to Address Plastic Pollution”, where the project showcased solutions related to the port and tourism sectors, aiming to foster collaboration among key stakeholders.

BlueMissionMed is a **Horizon Europe project** focused on designing, structuring, and supporting an innovation ecosystem in the Mediterranean basin to accelerate progress toward the goals of the ‘Restore Our Oceans and Waters by 2030’ Mission, with a particular emphasis on preventing and eliminating pollution.

MedCities Secretary-General at the Satellite Event during the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona



Presentation of MedCities at the MARLICE Forum held in the member city of València



MedCities members Mersin and Ancona at the technical visit co-organised with the Barcelona City Council water cycle department (BCASA) and UNEP MAP MedWaves to the largest of Barcelona’s 13 underground rainwater collection tanks



Innovative transferable solutions for Mediterranean marine pollution

Social Cohesion

Strengthening intercultural dialogue, gender equity and youth participation



TT Emploi. Tangier & Tetouan

Promoting Employability of Youth & Women and Multilevel Governance of Employment

In 2024 several activities were organised with the aim of strengthening the capacities of municipalities in terms of job creation, professional guidance and entrepreneurship support for young people and women.

The first involved developing **professional information and guidance support services in municipal dependencies close to young people**. In the case of **Tangier** the municipal team of the libraries of Bni Makada and Al-Andalous de Souani followed a capacity-building training course to co-design an information and professional guidance support service for young people that was launched in September 2024 at both libraries. The aim was to expand the municipal library resources and services to **offer young people the first professional and training guidance support**. With this same scope, in **Tetouan** a **capacity-building training course** was given to the municipal staff of the economic affairs service in charge of new business authorisation to co-design specific support measures for young entrepreneurs during their application process.

The second activity was the organisation of professional trainings, targeting 40 unemployed youth in each city. In both cities the training programmes were implemented by civil society organisations active in the field. In Tetouan, a sewing & soft skills training course was developed, **combining technical and personal development skills to better adapt to the demands of the job market**. The training also included a one-month internship at a local sewing company. In Tangier, a soft skills training course was implemented at both libraries hosting the information and professional guidance support service. By strengthening their skills, the project aims to improve their employability, give beneficiaries self-confidence, and encourage them to pursue their professional aspirations.

The third activity was the organisation of a mentorship programme that supported **15 green entrepreneurship projects led by young women** in each city.

Lastly, the project sought to promote multi-level governance & cooperation in employment with relevant institutional, private and civil society stakeholders in the field. In this sense, in both cities working groups with key local stakeholders were created in order to promote the **organisation of job fairs as a pilot governing platform in employment and professional integration of young people**. In **Tetouan**, the Training and Employment Fair took place from 3 to 5 July, bringing together more than 8.000 youngsters along with 9 public institutions active in the field of training and employment, 7 civil society

associations and 32 private companies. In Tangier, the fair took place from the 28th to the 30th of November, attracting more than 4.000 youngsters and offering a unique platform where 21 companies, 8 associations, 7 public institutions, 6 training establishments and 3 financing institutions presented their offers and services.

As a result of this process, both cities signed MoU with relevant local stakeholders and developed a roadmap for employment governance and cooperation.

Lastly, an international seminar on local employment governance and policies was organised in Tangier on 27 November, back-to-back with the MedCities General Assembly. 25 Mediterranean cities, and some others online, got together to share their experiences on tackling youth unemployment.



TT Emploi job fair participants in Tetouan



The North Africa Delegate of the Government of Catalonia inaugurates the job fair in Tetouan alongside the city's authorities

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

MedCities accompanied the municipalities of Tangier and Tetouan promoting their operational role in supporting youth and women's employability initiatives and promoting multi-level governance & cooperation in employment with relevant stakeholders. A project funded by the Government of Catalonia.

Economic development

LASERMed project. Socio-economic recovery in the Mediterranean

During 2024, our member cities **Zarqa** and **Agadir** have been working hand-in-hand with the LASERMED24 project for socio-economic promotion at the local level, with a focus on responding to the climate crisis affecting us. **These cities offered a comprehensive training programme for more than 90 women and young people, covering employability, social networks and communication, and social innovation.** In addition, the project plans to assign resources to mentor 20 projects: 10 helping them to develop bankable proposals for specialised funds, 5 in launching their own business plans, and 5 in formalising 5 micro-companies. Additionally, in Agadir, three **environmental awareness activities** complemented the training programme. 40 women were able to participate in the Fresque du Clima workshop, and 20 of them had the chance to visit the Tamraght treatment station and Inchaden desalination plant to learn in greater depth about the water cycle and how we can help reduce consumption or generate less wastewater.



MedCities visits Agadir for the pilot projects launching

Likewise, these local initiatives were complemented by two communication campaigns. In Zarqa, the Municipality launched a social media campaign to boost circular economy entrepreneurship. The campaign had almost 100.000 views. Instead of a campaign, **Agadir made a brochure on private and public facilities for entrepreneurs** that has been distributed in all the social centers of Agadir. While in the Souss Massa region, there are some available programmes that accompany or fund entrepreneurs, most of the women and youth trained were not aware of all those programmes.

Meanwhile, this edition of the LASERMED project also supported online and physical exchanges of the **LASERMED Community**. This community is a space where the cities involved in the first and the second edition of the LASERMED project, were invited to meet and exchange ideas and good practices as to environmentally responsible social inclusion. The five MedCities members **Agadir, As Salt,**

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

LASERMED24 supports the cities in boosting the socio-economic inclusion of vulnerable groups with a green perspective. A project funded by the Provincial Council of Barcelona (Diputació de Barcelona).

Sousse, Zarqa and Zgharta-Ehden met twice online and once in person during the **study visit to Barcelona to learn about and reflect on how the social and solidarity economy can promote the integration of vulnerable groups in areas related to green or social jobs.** The study mission in Barcelona, co-organised with the donor and observer of MedCities, was highly appreciated by the participants. Field visits included an exchange with La CIBA, the women's municipal service in Santa Coloma de Gramenet (a member city of AMB) a visit to the social and solidarity economy facilities in Gavà, and a final day in El Prat de Llobregat (both member cities of AMB) focusing on three circular economy projects run by people with disabilities or at risk of exclusion.

The results of these have been systematised in the **Capitalization Guide for Sustainable Socio-Economic Local Action in the Mediterranean**, which was publicly presented on 9 December, and included in our **MedUrbanTools online catalogue** in French, Arabic and Catalan. This guide comprises an explanation of nine cases under the following umbrella: legal tools, analytical tools, Networking tools and measures-project.

Lastly, within the framework of the project, MedCities sent a survey to its members to assess their needs with regards to promoting Climate and Energy Plans and related projects. Although not all the cities that responded to the survey are members of the Covenant of Mayors, nor do they all have a climate plan, all 15 have shown that they have initiatives to mitigate or adapt to climate change, regardless of the geographical area where they are located and the size of the city. The results provided also first-hand knowledge to identify some priority actions for our members regarding technical support. The actions identified have been matchmaking of funding opportunities, technical training and mentorings and activities to gather more political support.

Reinforcing the role of local authorities

MedCities as a project platform

Funding programmes to which we have submitted applications

MedCities continuously engages in discussions with possible funding institutions to align our approaches and common goals and identify opportunities for its cities

This year, MedCities participated in several calls as partner and associate in 15 new project proposals funded by European programmes, including **Interreg Euro-MED, Interreg NEXT MED, Interreg SUDOE, Life, Horizon Europe** and **PRIMA**. These projects focus on various areas such as green urban spaces, soft mobility and tourism, energy efficiency, circular economy, climate change adaptation, coastal management and economic promotion, directly engaging a total of **21 member cities**. We are notably either lead partner or partner in **9 of these submitted projects**.

As a result, the projects 'Regional Exchanges of Libyan Municipalities for Local Service Provision' **EVINMACC**, Expertise Exchange of Maghreb Cities on Urban Adaptation to Climate Change', and 'MedCities Climate Urban Capacity Programme' were approved, funded by the **GIZ Libya Country Programme**, and the **City Climate Finance Gap Fund**, respectively.

Additionally, we continue to work on annual projects with decentralised cooperation funding institutions, such as the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), Barcelona City Council, the Government of Catalonia, through the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD), and Barcelona Provincial Council**. Also, for the first time MedCities was awarded direct funding, from the **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)**, to work on resilient Mediterranean cities with inclusive and naturalised public spaces. **MedCities continuously engages in discussions with possible funding institutions** to align our approaches and common goals and identify opportunities for its cities. Year after year, we take pride in the trust they place in us, allowing us to continue our activities in specific territories.

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We present projects to work with our members

Participation in 15 new project proposals



Capacity Building

MedCities thematic working groups. Focusing on the main Mediterranean cities' challenges

The 2021 General Assembly in Montpellier approved the creation of thematic working groups at the proposal of the General Secretariat. This instrument aims to give stability and an ad hoc working framework in small groups beyond the dynamics of projects that can involve a small number of members only. **The creation of working groups is also one of the main conclusions arising from member cities in the Strategic Plan MedCities 2030.** In a nutshell, the objective of the working groups is to gather technical representatives of the municipalities for exchanges as to technical aspects in the field of selected topics, creating direct links between peers. This would also make it possible to consolidate and transfer the results of some projects.

The general objectives of these working groups are:

- Exchange platform for practices
- Capitalisation of activities
- Information on calls for proposals on the subject
- Channel the positioning of cities
- Identify priorities and needs of members
- Invite external experts and institutions that may provide insightful information or experiences

After several discussions with member cities during the General Assemblies of 2022 and 2023, four working groups were defined, and a consultation was organised in 2024 to consolidate the interest of the members in participating.

Participation in a working group does not directly imply participation in all its activities, as this is shaped according to the specific topics addressed and the resources available for each of the activities.

2024 Working Group activities have mostly been financed by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area as one of the core activities of the project COMPAS-MED.

Coastal cities

The working group aims in the medium-long term to share experiences about an array of land-sea interactions related themes:

- **Port Authority-City Council relation at the governance level**
- **City-based sources of marine pollution**
- **Ecosystem-based coastal management, with a focus on three challenges: coastal adaptation to climate change; interactions and integration among coastal cities and coastal and marine ecosystems (and protected areas); and citizen engagement and participatory sciences approaches**
- **Sustainable blue economy development challenges and opportunities, including tourism**

During 2024 several actions have been accomplished, such as the organisation for a selected group of working group members of a technical visit to Barcelona, engaging the directorates of coasts and sustainable urban planning of the cities of **Bodrum, Dubrovnik, Málaga and Tangier** to learn first-hand about the integrated coastal management plan and beach management actions of **Barcelona City Council and Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)**, and to learn about and explore the opportunities offered by citizen science for their cities.

This rich on-site experience also allowed participants to learn about the integrated management of natural coastal ecosystems in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, such as the **Llobregat Delta nature reserve**. During the working session, in the framework of the **Horizon project GUARDEN partners meeting, partnered by AMB**, participants were able to see a practical case of coastal resilience and dune space recovery, as well as a citizen mobilisation programme for follow-up and control (monitoring) of the area in Castelldefels through the use of the **citizen science application MINKA**, which MedCities is testing in other member cities through the **project ANERIS**. Participants also met with representatives of the Marine Sciences Institute (ICM) to get an understanding of initiatives led by ICM, such as the **Ocean Cities Network UNESCO programme** and the Horizon project ANERIS and use of the MINKA Platform, all activities with MedCities engagement.

MedCities further fostered the endorsement of working group member cities to the EU Ocean and Waters Mission and the testing of MINKA application through next year's ANERIS activities.

Moreover, a preliminary benchmarking study was conducted about existing practices and potential instruments for local councils and metropolitan areas to foster coastal and marine ecosystem protection so as to **contribute to the target of 30% protection** by EU and global regulations.

The related projects to this working group are BlueMissionMed (Horizon Europe), ANERIS (Horizon Europe), Dialogue 4 Nature (Interreg Euro-MED), COMPAS-MED (Barcelona Metropolitan Area) and Ocean Cities Network (UN Ocean Decade)

The 2024 working group includes 10 member cities: **Tangier, Málaga, Dubrovnik, Bodrum, Kotor, Genova, Ancona, Saida, Byblos and Tripoli** (Lebanon). **AMB and Barcelona** provided resources and technical support.



Some members of the Coastal Cities MedCities working group met in Barcelona



Coastal Cities Working group at the MINKA platform presentation by ICM-CSIC



Field visit to the Llobregat Delta Park

Participants learned about integrated management of natural coastal ecosystems in the metropolitan area of Barcelona

Sustainable Urban Mobility

The main topics addressed in this working group include:

- **The planning instruments for the promotion of sustainable mobility**
- **The management of sustainable mobility in tourist areas**
- **The promotion of active and electric mobility**



Some of the members of the Sustainable Mobility MedCities working group in an exchange visit in Montpellier

Accompanying the change of behaviour at the citizen level by raising awareness of the impacts of private vehicles and the ways we can contribute to climate change mitigation is a transversal topic.

This year, the group comprises 14 municipalities from across the Mediterranean regions, sharing a common interest to promote sustainable, inclusive and affordable mobility. These are: **Agadir, Al Fayhaa, Ancona, Antalya Metropolitan Municipality, Barcelona Metropolitan Area, Bonifacio, Dubrovnik, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Kotor, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, Pula, Rethymno, Sarajevo and Tangier.**

MedCities organised two thematic online sessions, a peer-review programme for cities and an international technical visit hosted by the **Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole**. The first online session was held on 15 October 2024 under the title "Minimising environmental and social impact through sustainable mobility solutions for peak demands and major events", and brought together 22 city representatives from 11 member municipalities. The local councils of Madrid and Rome were invited to present their experiences regarding annual sports events and tourist high seasons that challenge their mobility systems and at the same time provide leverage for testing and implementing new sustainable transport solutions.

From 21 to 24 October, an international exchange visit was held in Montpellier, with the participation of 8 cities: **Greater Mersin Municipality and Greater Izmir Municipality, Agadir, Dubrovnik, Sarajevo, Rethymno and Ancona**. The participants, including 2 elected members and 5 technical officers, visited Montpellier Metropole's transformative projects which **prioritise pedestrians in the urban space, and promote cycling and public transport**, with new tramlines and strong efforts to support the change of behaviours of daily commuting in the city. A two-day programme took the group to walk and use public transport, visiting the ongoing works for the new tram line 4, and discussing the environmental, social and economic impact of major projects that commonly generate negative feedback.

The group closed the visit with a discussion about the main conclusions, lessons learned, and topics that require further exploration to collaboratively shape the future steps of the group.

On the other side, the peer-to-peer programme was a pilot activity of this group that has created unique peer-matches between cities proposing a challenge they are facing (the takers) and cities holding experience on the same issue (the givers). The bilateral exchanges have been conducted online following in November and early December. The benefitting cities of this first pilot peer to peer were **Rethymno** as the taker and **Dubrovnik** as the giver of expertise on the management of touristic buses' access to the city center and the disruption on traffic congestion and air quality they generate during the touristic season. On the other side, **Agadir** has played the taker role of experiences on how to plan sustainable mobility solutions around the upcoming Africa and World Football cups the city will host in 2025 and 2030, taking stock of experiences such as Madrid's annual sustainable golf tournament.

The process has unveiled the taker's problematic by analysing the main causes, effects and affected target groups; while on the giver's side the expertise and examples of projects implemented have served as inspirational inputs. The main product of the peer to peer programme has been a **brief set of recommendations and takeaways** for the taker on the concrete use of the givers' experience on their particular case, in order to support them for future application.

To wrap up the year, a second online session was held early December and addressed the ever-expanding topic of last-mile delivery solutions and sustainable logistics mobility with different case studies and experience from across the region, including a presentation by the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area** on last-mile cyclo-logistics, by Bologna's Municipality and **Rethymno Municipality** on their Sulp. In this last gathering, 11 representatives of municipalities participated.

The projects related to this mobility working group are MAIS (Cities 4 Climate EU), COMPAS-MED (Metropolitan Area of Barcelona), Community 4 Living Areas (Interreg Euro-MED).

Presentation of the Working Group members



Visit of the members of the working group to the Gavà-Viladecans triage plant



Visit to the Sant Antoni Market (Barcelona) waste management system



The Mayor of Tiana receives the members of the working group on waste management



Integrated Waste management

This working group focuses its action on the

- Development of municipal integrated waste management plans, prevention, reuse circuits & circular economy, intermunicipal cooperation, waste collection, treatment infrastructure and finances

During 2024, two webinars were organised to discuss best practices, current challenges and innovative solutions to common concerns. In this regard, the first webinar focused on **waste treatment and disposal** (selective waste collection, valorisation and recycling), finances (waste collection pricing and taxation systems) and **optimisation of waste transfer**. Meanwhile, the second session focused on the development of **Municipal Integrated Waste Management Plans**, intermunicipal cooperation, reuse circuits, and education and awareness. The webinars gathered 32 and 21 participants respectively.

The main activity of this working group for 2024 was the organisation of a study visit to the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB) on 10 and 11 December to learn and exchange experiences on circular economy and waste management. Representatives from **Ein El Basha, As Salt, Jerash** (Jordan), **Al Fayhaa, Higher Chouf** (Lebanon) and **M'Saken** (Tunisia) took part in this activity, together with a large delegation from Libya to reinforce the interregional learning dimension.

The main projects related to this group are: A'SIMA Tunis (EuropeAID) and COMPAS-MED (Barcelona Metropolitan Area).

The group comprises the following municipalities: **Ain Al Basha, Al Fayhaa, As Salt, Bethlehem, Dannieh, Hatay, Higher Chouf, Irbid, Izmir, Jerash, Málaga, M'saken, Zgharta Ehdén**

Greener and Climate-Resilient Cities

This group seeks to:

- Establish a platform for cities to share transferable experiences in urban planning and climate resilience through participatory processes
- Enhancing green infrastructure
- Implementing Nature-based Solutions (NBS) for efficient water management and pollution reduction
- Improving overall water and energy management
- It also promotes the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) concept to strengthen current and future projects and support existing Climate Adaptation Plans

The group attended the webinar “Greening Cities: the experience of **Bethlehem, Jerash and Saida**”, in which MedCities shared insights from the **HERA** and **NATURMED** projects, highlighting their achievements over the past two years. Through these projects, MedCities assisted the cities in developing a green infrastructure strategy, with funding and technical collaboration from **Barcelona City Council**. The session aimed to evaluate the **challenges and needs of MedCities members** in creating greener and climate-resilient cities.

MedCities held the inaugural Barcelona Academy for **Mediterranean Municipalities (BAMM)** on 15-18 October 2024, bringing together municipal representatives from 10 Mediterranean cities and a guest city, for training in sustainable urban planning, green infrastructure, and water management through expert-led sessions and collaborative workshops.

To launch the work of the working group, MedCities hosted, in November and December, **two open webinars for all members of the Greener Cities Working Group**, offering an inclusive platform for knowledge-sharing and engagement on sustainable urban planning, green infrastructure, and Nature-Based Solutions through expert presentations and interactive discussions.

As a result of the analysis undertaken to define the works of the working group, a comprehensive report featuring 20 best practices will be prepared. These practices, formatted as profiles compatible with **MedUrbanTools**, include detailed descriptions, concrete examples, and recommendations for implementation to optimise urban policies.

The Greener Cities working group comprises 25 members: **AMB, Agadir, Antalya, As Salt, Bodrum, Bonifacio, Union of Municipalities of Dannieh, Ein Al Basha, Genova, Hatay, Federation of Municipalities of Higher Chouf, Irbid, Jbail Byblos, Jerash, M'Saken, Mersin, Rethymno, Roskovec, Saida, Sarajevo, Tripoli (Lebanon), Zarqa and Zgharta Ehdén**.

Webinar for the WG Resilient Green Cities, welcomed by MedCities. València explains its case climate shelters case



The objectives of the working groups is to gather technical representatives of the municipalities for exchanges as to technical aspects in the field of selected topics, creating direct links between peers

Barcelona Academy for Mediterranean Municipalities (BAMM)

The Barcelona Academy for Mediterranean Municipalities (BAMM) took place from 15 to 18 October 2024, organised by MedCities and funded by **Barcelona City Council**. This inaugural initiative aims to empower Mediterranean cities to enhance their resilience and sustainability in the face of climate change, which is affecting the region at a rate 20% faster than the global average.

The academy brought together 16 technical experts and mayors from ten cities: **Amman, Antalya, Barcelona, Bethlehem, Benghazi, Irbid, Málaga, Sarajevo, Tetouan, Tripoli (Lebanon)**, and the non-Mediterranean city of Nouakchott. The focus of this first edition was on **developing Green and Blue cities**, structured into three major blocks: Policies and Initiatives for Urban Resilience, Planning Resilient Cities, and Efficient Urban Water Management, concluding with a peer-to-peer session.

Participants presented the experiences, challenges and best practices from their municipalities, creating a collaborative learning environment that enhanced the relevance of the sessions. **The academy featured sessions led by experts from renowned organisations.** The Centre de Recerca Ecològica i Aplicacions Forestals (CREAF) discussed the integration of urban forests and green corridors to mitigate climate impacts. The Institut Català de Recerca de l'Aigua (ICRA) focused on sustainable urban water management, addressing strategies for rainwater harvesting and flood prevention. ISGlobal highlighted the connections between urban planning and public health, emphasising the effects of urban environments on community well-being. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) presented EU policies to promote biodiversity in urban settings, while the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) facilitated discussions on regional cooperation and policy alignment for urban resilience.

The academy's format combined theoretical presentations, Q&A sessions, practical workshops, and technical visits. The theoretical sessions provided fundamental knowledge as to green and blue infrastructure while the workshop encouraged hands-on problem-solving, allowing participants to develop strategies tailored to their specific challenges.

Technical visits throughout Barcelona allowed participants to observe successful examples of nature-based solutions (NBS) in action, such as sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), green corridors, and innovative wastewater treatment and management practices. These visits offered practical insights into the implementation of these solutions in their own cities.

On the final day, **the peer-to-peer session used Bethlehem as a case study** for in-depth discussions and collaborative problem-solving. Participants examined the city's unique challenges and worked together **to design a vision for 2040**, focusing on practical solutions to its climate issues. Bethlehem's complex urban landscape, coupled with its UNESCO historical protection, provided a distinctive backdrop for the discussion of strategies to enhance green spaces, promote sustainable transportation, and improve water management. Proposals included increasing green spaces, implementing rainwater collection systems, and enhancing energy-efficient urban lighting, all aimed at bolstering the city's resilience to climate change. **This session highlighted the significance of local context in developing effective resilience strategies.**

This inaugural edition of the BAMM academy established a strong foundation for future annual events tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the participating cities, fostering ongoing collaboration, learning, and knowledge exchange among Mediterranean municipalities.



Family picture of the BAMM participants in the Barcelona City Council premises



Some of the MedCities members' representatives during the BAMM working sessions

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Support Mediterranean municipalities in developing effective strategies to promote urban resilience and combat the effects of climate change.

Knowledge Transfer Platform. Exchanging good practices among Mediterranean cities

Working towards cohesive internal and external communication

MedCities continues to focus on internal and external communication. This year we have continued to **promote events, meetings and exchange visits through the news on our website, as well as via social media.**

Once a month, we send out our newsletter, which is getting more and more subscribers (there are already more than 1200 people receiving it!). And thanks to our member cities' actions, we also have content that we disseminate through the sections of the monthly newsletter, the website agenda and via social media. We like to be aware of what our cities are doing when it comes to pilots, events or other information of interest.

Once again this year, we have had the support of a communication and advertising agency that has helped us to reach the general public, by attracting the media to some of our project-related events. **And we have also been able to explain, through the voice of the Secretary General, what MedCities is and its objectives, thanks to interviews in digital media.**

We have strengthened ties with the communications departments of some of the member cities we have met this year, and also with other associations and funders. Our commitment to continue forging networks is to communicate what we do via the Secretariat, and above all, to highlight what our member cities do thanks to the projects we work on together.

We would like to remind you that the **MedCities website has an internal area only accessible to members**, and which can only be accessed with an email and password. If you are a member and you do not have login credentials, please contact the Secretariat so that we can create a user ID for you.

MedCities website, User Area for members



We would ask our members to take into consideration the MedCities' channels as a potential way to disseminate their activities and share its noteworthy news

MedUrbanTools open resources platform

MedUrbanTools is one of the eleven flagship initiatives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development under the Barcelona Convention-Mediterranean Action Plan/UNEP system. The MedurbanTools website was updated to enhance its offerings, providing valuable and practical information for MedCities members. The knowledge platform now features new case studies, tools and expert interviews covering various topics, including strategic planning, mobility, and coastal management.

The cases section has been expanded to include projects from the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)**, showcasing diverse interventions such as water management, the implementation of the low emissions zone in Barcelona, and climate shelters with photovoltaic installations in the metropolitan area. This information is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and offers practical insights for local authorities and cities confronting the challenges of the climate crisis. Also, the working groups exchanging experiences have provided the platform with a lot of new information, such as new interviews talking about coastal resilience, and around 20 that will be included from the **Greener and Climate-Resilient Cities** working group.

The EViMACC project, funded by GIZ and Procuramed, with funding from the Interreg EURO-Med programme, will also produce some good practices to be included on a featured page within the MedUrbanTools platform.

Visit www.medurbantools.com to learn how to improve your public policies. We invite you to send us your case studies and tools to upload them to the open platform.

MedUrbanTools different sections, divided by tools, cases and voices



Case studies: 191
Voices: 132
Tools: 109

Total number of English and French publications in the website: 412

The Mediterranean voice to the world

To establish long-lasting partnerships with international organizations

MedCities strategic alliances

AECID

MedCities initiated discussions with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID in Spanish) in order to join forces in its ambitious new regional programme “Masar Al’an” for the Mediterranean. The **Regional Masar Al’an Programme** was launched on 21 May in Madrid. It is set to launch a new phase for regional cooperation, focusing on three critical areas of intervention: employment creation, ecological transition with an emphasis on environment and water, and gender equality. As an organisation dedicated to cooperation among Mediterranean cities, MedCities is a key stakeholder in achieving these objectives through its network of Mediterranean cities. Discussions have therefore been undertaken with AECID since early 2024 to support programme implementation. As a result MedCities will receive comprehensive funding in 2024 and 2025 in order to promote the naturalisation of public spaces in three beneficiary cities. The programme will support the implementation of effective solutions for socially inclusive green spaces in the Mediterranean, and will promote change by enhancing the capacities of local authorities in favour of greener and more inclusive cities.

UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan of the Barcelona Convention

MedCities continues strengthening its collaboration with the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) - Barcelona Convention.

As a member of the steering committee, in April **MedCities took part at the 25th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD)** held in Athens. The two-day high-level meeting served to review the progress of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 activities, including the implementation of MSSD and its Flagship Initiatives since the 20th Meeting of the MCSD (Marseille, 14-16 June 2023); and the MSSD revision process and timeline, and offer appropriate guidance as to the way forward.

The meeting brought together sustainable development stakeholders in the Mediterranean, including the directors of the 6 regional activity centres, observers (AFED, UfM, MedCities), as well as 2 representatives of the MedYouthGroup.

MedCities participates in the Steering Committee meeting of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD). **The MedCities Secretary General presented the progress of 2 flagship initiatives: the Istanbul Award and the Medurbantools open resources platform that MedCities manages.** He also suggested the **creation of a working group on NetZero cities**, which was approved, and followed by the joint UNEP MAP and MedCities drafting of an initial concept note for discussion at the next meeting of the MCSD.

Promoted by UNEP/MAP and funded by the Government of Türkiye, the **Istanbul Environment-Friendly City Award (IEFCA)** was established by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2016 in the context of the implementation of the MSSD. The Award recognises and highlights the role and efforts of local authorities of coastal cities in achieving sustainability within the Mediterranean context. **MedCities supports UNEP/MAP with the implementation of the biannual Istanbul award, ensuring publicity for this key activity among members**, supporting interested cities in their applications, coordinating the assessment work carried out by the experts and ensuring the logistical participation of the winning city at the award ceremony. In 2024, MedCities supported the review and simplification of the application form indicators, as well as the launching of the 24-25 edition, to coincide with Mediterranean Day. MedCities also engaged in the discussion and preliminary proposal to upscale the award by bringing to a Mediterranean scale some elements of the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral smart cities.

Since its inception, 3 MedCities members have been awarded this prize namely, **Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Municipality of Málaga and Municipality of Genova.**



UNEP MAP. © Dimitris Poursanidis

Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance (MedCoopAlliance)

The **Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance (MedCoopAlliance)** is a group of stakeholders who decided to coordinate their advocacy actions in support of stronger EU-backed policies to ensure sustainable development and enhance the quality of life of citizens in the Mediterranean member states, and to jointly advocate for the creation of a Macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean, which would arguably include a strengthening of the relations between the EU states and their southern neighbours.

The MedCoopAlliance continued to meet regularly during the year under the rotating coordination of the Secretariat of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and the Secretariat of the Pyrenees Mediterranean Euroregion. A **joint lobbying initiative** was ruled out due to the very special period experienced by the EU institutions this year, with the results of the EU elections impacting the appointment of a new Presidency of the European Commission and a new College of Commissioners. The appointment of a brand **new Commissioner for the Mediterranean**, Ms Dubravka Šuica, **former Mayor of the City of Dubrovnik**, will be looked at closely over the coming year for the opportunities it may open up for interaction with the EC on the proposal of advancing towards a Mediterranean Macro-Region.



Ocean Cities Network (OCNet) Programme

This ten-year programme, endorsed by **IOC-UNESCO under the UN Ocean Decade**, promotes dialogue between public administrations and research centres with the support of civil society, to obtain **evidence-based policy for the coastal cities** of the future. The network's partners, currently more than 20 institutions from around the world, are the driving force in co-designing actions and identifying opportunities and strategies at the regional and global levels. **MedCities engages especially with the Programme Leader, the Marine Science Institute (ICM-CSIC) in Barcelona and the Barcelona City Council**, in engaging member cities in adopting common positions on strategic issues. In 2024 we continued to work on the **role of local authorities to address marine pollution**, issued a manifesto on the importance of the engagement of local authorities in the negotiations for the **UN Global Treaty**, a legally binding international instrument to contain plastic pollution, and on a set of recommendations to foster the restoration of urban coastal ecosystems.

UN Ocean Decade conference open speech by Barcelona Mayor, Jaume Collboni

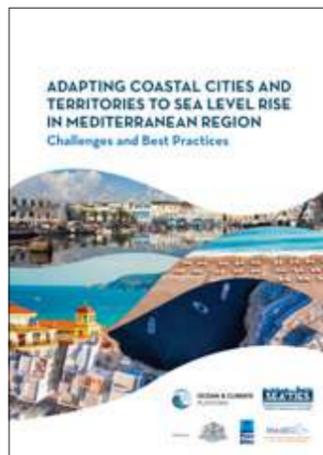


MedCities Secretary General and Barcelona and Mersin representatives during the UN Ocean Decade Satellite Event in Barcelona

The UN Ocean Decade 2021-2030 fosters synergies through the research community, decision-makers, private sector and civil society towards effective solutions addressing the urgent crisis, enhancing innovation, dialogue and public awareness of marine ecosystems, focusing on the environment and human health. As part of this scenario, the coastal cities of **Barcelona, Ancona and Mersin** organised Mediterranean roundtables across the three coastal cities to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among stakeholders as to the restoration of urban coastal ecosystems as a contribution to achieving the SDGs by 2030, maintaining the sustainability and well-being of cities. The multi-stakeholder discussion promoted sustainable development in its three dimensions—economic, social, and ecological—to provide tools to address climate change, end poverty, and build peaceful societies that respect human rights. The three local administrations, with the support of the Institut de Ciències del Mar-CISC, the Polytechnic University of Marche, MedCities and the Middle East Technical University (METU) Institute of Marine Sciences, have created an open hub on the quintuple helix in urban coastal areas and agreed on a series of recommendations that were presented to the IOC-UNESCO during the **UN Ocean Decade Conference held in Barcelona** in April.

MedCities and OCNet further co-hosted a joint session at **MARLICE International Forum on Marine Litter and Circular Economy held in València** in May. The session was dedicated to the role of local authorities in implementing solutions to address marine pollution. Starting at the global level it addressed the **importance of hearing and considering local communities and authorities** when agreeing international regulations such as the UN Environment Programme Plastic Treaty and joint OCNet manifesto. The role of coastal cities and communities was highlighted not only in connection with the prevention of land-based marine pollution, but also as key actors to engage in policy development.

*A healthy ocean for
a protected climate*



OCP Sea'ties Initiative publication

Ocean & Climate Platform (OCP)

The OCP brings together more than 100 members – research institutes, NGOs, aquariums, private sector, French institutions and international agencies, local authorities – working together in order to spread the following message: “a healthy ocean for a protected climate”. While the ocean is particularly vulnerable to climate change, it also is a source of mitigation and adaptation solutions.

MedCities collaborates in particular with the OCP Sea'ties Initiative that aims to facilitate the development of public policy and the implementation of adaptation and mitigation solutions to support coastal cities threatened by sea level rise.

In 2024 MedCities agreed to support and engage in the shaping of the OCP initiative “Ocean Rise & Coastal Resilience - Coalition for Cities & Regions”, to be launched in the next UN Ocean Conference in 2025 in Nice/Nissa.

City Climate Gap Fund

MedCities was approached by the City Climate Gap Fund, in order to identify opportunities for cooperation in the framework of its Capacity Development for Knowledge and Advocacy partners programme. The City Climate Finance Gap Fund (Gap Fund) is supported by Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of Germany (BMWK) and the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ), as well as Luxembourg's Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development. Implemented by the World Bank (WB) and European Investment Bank (EIB), in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), **the Gap Fund helps cities in developing and emerging countries realise their climate ambitions, turning low-carbon, climate-resilient ideas into strategies and finance-ready projects**, by supporting them in the development and implementation of their climate strategies and investment projects. Following these exchanges, MedCities has submitted a proposal for the implementation of the “**MedCUC – MedCities Climate Urban Capacity**” programme, to be carried out in 2025.

*MedCities will work with
City Climate Gap Fund in
the MedCUC programme*



Climate resilient cities

Promote the interests of local authorities in local & international fora

MedCatDays 2024

With the slogan “We are Mediterranean”, the Government of Catalonia organised the 5th edition of the MedCat Days 2024 focused on the topic “**Tackling climate change in times of multiple crises in the Mediterranean**”. To this end, it offered a space for meeting and dialogue, as well as for advocacy and the visibility of the actors working in the basin.

MedCities contributed to the debate, specifically at the roundtable about 'Euro-Mediterranean Cooperative Responses to address climate change' at which the MedCities **Secretary-General, Mr Josep Canals**, shared the stage with a representative of the Centre for Social and Economic Research (CASE), the Vice-President of Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima Regional Council (which includes two MedCities members: **Tangier** and **Tetouan**), the Mayor of the Greater Ramtha Municipality (Jordan) and the Founding Principal of Resilient Cities Catalyst, Mediterranean Climate Action Partnership (MCAP).

The **MedCities Secretary General highlighted**: “We are very concerned about adaptation to climate change and very little about mitigation. Because the second is related to changing human attitudes, behaviours and perceptions, which is much more difficult than providing money and resources to patch over what is coming”.

Concerning concrete examples of projects where MedCities works in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, MedCities explained those implemented to provide resources and capacities to local authorities. Among the examples presented were the creation of the strategic planning of Tunis (**A'SIMA Tunis project**), the revalorisation of non-conventional water (**ValeUr Gabès project**), or the initiative focused on greening cities (**HERA project**). The secretary general also talked about the European-funded projects in which MedCities has the role of transferring and disseminating activities and results, such as **Natural Heritage** and **Green Living Areas**, both Interreg Euro-MED missions.

The two-day seminar focused on how to address climate change in the Mediterranean in the current context of crisis and how it overlaps with other challenges in the region: the **relationship with climate change and drought**, the responses at the institutional and political level, and the importance of territorial and cross-border cooperation and new cooperation mechanisms to address the key challenges facing the Mediterranean, such as climate change.



MedCatDays participants, in Barcelona

Lastly, the final session analysed how different Euro-Mediterranean initiatives and programmes focus on the water dimension and address the problem of drought. The debate provided examples of ongoing innovative good practices and projects focused on drought and climate change. At this last roundtable, the **general manager of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)**, Ramon Torra, emphasised the importance of the work carried out, together with MedCities, on projects that have water as a common thread. One of the examples is **ValeUr Gabès**, which evaluates the water resources of the city of Gabès and also works on the planning, valorisation, and efficient management of resources so that the city council itself is equipped with tools to continue the work done so far.

To conclude the meeting, the then **Minister for Foreign Action and European Union of the Government of Catalonia**, Ms Meritxell Serret, stressed that particular attention must be paid to climate change, but from a very open and cross-cutting perspective. Serret underlined the need for the creation of a **macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean** to have a multilevel governance meant to be closer to the citizens, able to act more efficiently in the face of all these present and future challenges. This macro-regional **Mediterranean strategy is supported by the members of the MedCoopAlliance**, of which **MedCities is a co-founder alongside CPMR, the Pyrenees Mediterranean Euroregion and Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion**, and their partners and friends.

Urban Agendas seminar: Fostering dialogue about strategic urban planning among Mediterranean municipalities

This year MedCities supported the organisation of the “**Mediterranean Urban Agendas Exchange Session**” event hosted by the Department of Territory of the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya) as part of the MedCatDays, a busy week in June to discuss shared Mediterranean challenges and the collaboration roadmap. MedCities identified relevant cases across the Mediterranean and within its network to show how Mediterranean cities and metropolises strategically plan their urban development and implement their strategies. MedCities has also produced a document compiling the main contributions, takeaways and lessons learnt from the analysis of the 7 study cases identified.

These include the **Provincial Council of Barcelona**, the **Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima Regional Council**, the experience of **Málaga City Council** presented by the Managing Director of the CIEDES Foundation, the **Greater Amman Municipality**, the Union of Municipalities of Romagna Faentina in the Region of Emilia Romagna, while the Strategic Department of the **Izmir Metropolitan Municipality** was also invited but could not ultimately join due to a flight delay.

The session was held in July at the offices of the Department of Territory of the Government of Catalonia, in Barcelona, and brought together over 30 stakeholders, mostly public administrations from the local and regional levels. The event served as a unique opportunity to present the **Catalan Urban Agenda, entitled “Agenda of Towns and Cities - Catalonia 2050”**. Ms Ester Capella i Farré, the current Catalan Minister for Territory, highlighted the importance of a strategic vision covering the whole territory: “The Urban Agendas are a process of co-creation and require considerable exchange between regional and local authorities”.

The discussion was structured around two discussion panels focused on the **challenges and innovative planning policies**, and effective solutions during the implementation of these plans. It is worth mentioning the rich discussion about **territorial coverage and multi-level articulation of governance**, and the interest of **public-private innovative governance models** such as the case of Málaga. The challenges and key drivers of implementing the urban agendas and plans referred to reporting and data gathering, financing transformative projects, and maintaining political commitment throughout implementation.

The Minister for External Action and European Union, Ms Meritxell Serret, closed the session with a call to cooperate for a “living and sustainable Mediterranean” from the Government of Catalonia. Indeed, the takeaways of the sessions, and of the individual interviews held with each of the invited cases, are now available online in the “Results Report”. Moreover, the **highlights and main conclusions were presented at the World Urban Forum** at Catalonia’s stand, with participation from different regions that contributed to the document itself.



Minister of External Action & European Union, Government of Catalonia, Ms. Serret (2022-2024)



MedCities Secretary-General, Josep Canals, at the Catalan Urban Agenda presentation

IEMed: A New Urban Narrative on Migrations, the municipal level at the forefront

Migration policies are at the cornerstone of Mediterranean cooperation, and cities have a key role to play at the forefront of first-arrival public service delivery and long-term integration. This year MedCities actively participated as an associate institution in the project “Migrations and urban governance: an agenda for cooperation (MigUrb)”, led by **Barcelona City Council** and IEMed.

MedCities is in fact one of the stakeholders that the project assembled on three occasions this year to discuss the creation of new narratives on migration that should be more inclusive and be promoted by public administrations. At the first meeting in February in Barcelona, and later on at the gathering hosted by Casa Mediterráneo in Alicante in June, MedCities shared its insights and experience with projects such as **TangerAccueil**, implemented back in 2020 in collaboration with **Tangier City Council**, which aimed to replicate the hosting and information services developed by **Barcelona City Council** back in the early nineties (SAIER). The discussions shed light on the need for coherent policies, multidisciplinary reflection and strategies to counter the far right, and address the numerous threats to social cohesion and human rights our cities are facing.

MigUrb was launched in April 2024 by **Barcelona City Council** and **IEMed**, and aims to promote **cities as key players in coordinated urban migration governance strategies**. Given the complexity of migration flows from West Africa and the Sahel to North Africa and Europe, the project aims to help connect and bring innovative solutions for local governments to effectively address the challenges of human mobility.

In October, the project organised a third meeting called “**Migration governance capacities for Mediterranean cities: A strategic urban agenda for the next decade**” from the EuroMedMig, the EuroMed Research Network on Migration, together with the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) and Barcelona City Council. The aim of this symposium was to facilitate dialogue between key actors and researchers in order to develop a strategic urban agenda for migration for the next decade. The intention was to enhance the capacities and role of Mediterranean cities in terms of migration governance.

The symposium was organised through different thematic roundtables, which addressed a wide range of key issues and challenges in the **urban governance of migration**, such as **innovation in public policy and urban resilience** as a way to overcome the limitations faced by city councils; the key role of certain organisations that support cities; the potential of city networks and city diplomacy as policy strategies to enhance leadership in this area; and the challenges and opportunities linked to the generation and interpretation of data at the local level to ensure evidence-based policies.

The MedCities Secretary General, Josep Canals, was able to underline that the migratory aspect has been a key factor for some time now in MedCities projects such as the A’SIMA Tunis strategic plan, and has been taken into account in the work performed from a migration perspective in the greening cities project in Irbid, or the core of the Tanger Accueil project.

The event was attended by senior representatives from the municipalities of **Barcelona, Marseille, Istanbul, Tangier, Tirana** and **Gaziantep**, MedCities members and Athens, in an environment that promoted municipal cooperation and peer-to-peer dialogue and learning. Meanwhile, representatives of leading international organisations and non-state actors from all shores of the Mediterranean, such as UN-Habitat, the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), Africapolis-OECD, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), were also present, alongside United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement, the Mayors’ Mechanism, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the Smart Cities Network (RECI) and others.



Casa Mediterráneo, New Narratives in Migration meeting, Alacant



Migration governance symposium, MedCities Secretary-General participation

Towards the World Water Forum: MedCities’ and its members’ contribution

MedCities contributed to the World Water Forum that took place in Bali from 18 to 25 May, through its member – acting as Secretary – the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)**. Together with the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME), AVITEM, and Ps-EAU, MedCities co-organised an event dedicated to Mediterranean local authorities and the role they play in integrated water management in a context of climate change and water stress. This conference aimed to prepare a joint political declaration by Mediterranean local authorities and institutions for the 10th World Water Forum. In this discussion, **Ms Clare Hart, Vice-President of Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole** and acting **President of MedCities**, represented the association and underlined the work of MedCities on water management, focusing on integrated water cycle planning, and the support for demand management. The political declaration was then presented by **M. Oriol Illa, Director of International Relations and Digital Metropolis of the AMB**, in the political process addressing local authorities in the World Water Forum in Bali.



The MedCities presidency, Montpellier participates at the World Water Forum

UN-Habitat World Urban Forum WUF12, “Cities and Climate Crisis” dialogue

MedCities joined forces with UN-Habitat, the Global Resilient Cities Network and Deltares to organise the session “Cities at the Forefront of Multi-level Governance for Urban Water Resilience. Insights from innovative municipal flood and drought risk management”. The session, involving **Barcelona Provincial Council** among others, focused on bridging the gap between national policies and local urban resilience efforts, particularly in urban water-climate adaptation. It addressed the **critical role of cities in driving effective climate action and shaping sustainable urban futures through multilevel and multisectoral partnerships and collaboration**. The event directly contributed to the discussions in Dialogue 2, exploring how cities can scale up successful, locally led actions for climate change adaptation, emphasising the need for National Action Plans to be developed in consultation with cities to promote environmental justice, inclusivity, and fairness. **The MedCities Secretary General was one of the panellists.**

The Secretary General also participated in several sessions at the stand of the Catalan public actors, presenting MedCities and, especially in the joint presentation with the Catalan Government of the key findings and way forward of the “Mediterranean Urban Agendas Exchange Session”, held in June.



MedCities Secretary-General at the ONU Habitat session, in WUF12

COP16 of the UN Conference of the Biological Diversity, in Cali, Colombia

Invited by the Government of Colombia, and with the support of the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area**, the **Secretary General of MedCities, Josep Canals**, was able to travel to Cali, Colombia, to attend the Conference of the Parties, COP16. This COP16 put all its efforts into being for citizens, and was divided into different pavilions, from blue (the most official), to green or the EU Pavilion, where various meetings with a European slant took place. Once again, **this activity served to highlight the importance of local authorities at international events where decisions are taken at a high level.**

Canals was first able to speak on an official panel in the green zone of the COP, a series of open conferences dedicated to the Colombian people. This conversation aimed to establish the needs regarding the actions to be taken by urban environmental authorities in caring for water as a vital element for life, and how the processes of climate change affects the conditions of inhabitants in cities in the process of expansion.

A second **important meeting for MedCities was its participation in the session “Environmental Governance and Local Action in Small and Intermediate Cities”**, alongside the representative of UN-Habitat Latin America, Mr Velásquez, where Canals was able to present what the network of Mediterranean cities is and some of its key projects that focus their activity on strengthening governance among various local and sub-state authorities. This was a dialogue between public, private and community actors from small and intermediate cities regarding the local governance needed to integrate biodiversity into urban-rural planning and management. It was of interest to have **an audience that included mayors and representatives of local and sub-national governments, social actors from small and intermediate cities**, urban collectives, entrepreneurs, NGOs, academics and the general public with an interest in sustainable, resilient and inclusive urban development.

We also found space to talk about the **presentation of the manifesto for the participation of small and medium-sized cities in the implementation of the Kunming agreements**. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is an international agreement that emerged from the conferences of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Kunming, China, and Montreal, Canada, in 2022. This framework seeks to promote participation, governance and the public and collective nature of decisions on biodiversity. The framework proposes an action plan up to 2030 that sets out 23 targets to meet four proposed goals by 2050.

These targets are in turn grouped into three challenges.

1. **Reducing threats to biodiversity.**
2. **Meeting people’s needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing.**
3. **Tools and solutions for implementation and integration.**

In addition, it was very interesting to hear what was said in the session “From Inspirational Ideas to Transformative Actions: How to achieve transformational change to support the implementation of the KMGBF” from the **Oceans and Climate Platform**, in which Josep Canals was able to take the opportunity to talk about the **key role of local authorities** in emphasising the need to pave the way towards a future where biodiversity thrives, and our planet can sustain us all.

A **meeting with the MedCities Presidency, Montpellier, represented by Clare Hart**, Vice-President of Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole and Delegate for International Outreach and European Cooperation, was also a key point to strengthen bonds and show unity from the Mediterranean point of view.

The COP was a great occasion to **showcase MedCities’ commitment to the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets** by sharing strategic alliances in which we are engaged as the Oceans Cities Network and the Ocean & Climate Platform, along with the advocacy we build together, governance projects as Mission 4 Nature and BlueMissionMed, and their role in supporting EU biodiversity agendas, as well as the role of metropolitan areas and local authorities in helping to reach those targets, with good practices such as the dunes restoration initiative by the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB)** and the water regeneration mechanisms.



MedCities Secretary General at the COP16, Environmental governance session



MedCities SG and presidency Mrs. Clare Hart from Montpellier at the COP16

ARLEM

MedCities took part at the 10th **ARLEM Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development** meeting held in Carcassonne on 2 July. The Secretary General was present at the commission meeting and contributed to the conference: ‘Water, Europe and resilient communities - Towards a European Water Strategy: multilevel water management to fight the climate crisis’ by highlighting the **importance of multi-level governance and of the recognition of the role that local authorities** play in efficient water management in a context of drought and water scarcity. He presented concrete developments and initiatives implemented in Mediterranean cities, and also presented the **Marseille** declaration submitted at the World Water Forum.



MedCities participation at the 10th ARLEM Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development meeting



10th ARLEM Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development, in Carcassonne

Bizerte World Sea Forum

The 7th World Sea Forum - Bizerte took place in Bizerte, hosting the Second BlueMissionMed Annual Event, a project in which MedCities is a partner, with attracted outstanding engagement with around 100 in-person participants and thousands online. The Forum proved to be a pivotal event, assembling over seventy experts, policymakers, and representatives from international organisations to address the Mediterranean’s most pressing environmental issues and to achieve the EU Mission “Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030” objectives around the Mediterranean basin.

The **MedCities Secretary-General opened the session dedicated to the challenges and solutions in restoring biodiversity and tackling pollution in the Mediterranean**. His intervention provided an overview of Mediterranean pollution and the connection with coastal cities, and focused on the threefold global crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and the need to tackle them in an integrated manner. MedCities focused the intervention on coastal cities’ challenges to reduce marine pollution, including waste prevention and management, sanitation, beach management and others, as well as the need to address the threefold crisis by improving resilience to climate change, for instance by improving city biodiversity.

The Bizerte Sea Forum also **allowed MedCities to exchange visions with other stakeholders** working on the protection of the oceans and seas.

The announcement of the **European Ocean Pact** was a key highlight of the Forum, to align Mediterranean conservation efforts with the broader European marine protection agenda, offering a unified response to the environmental crisis.



MedCities Secretary-General at the 7th World Sea Forum, in Bizerte

MedCities engagement in policy processes

2024 was a challenging year in terms of policy processes linked to international summits and events listed below. It is worth gathering together by way of summary the policy initiatives co-produced by MedCities and its members or endorsed by the Network.

Co-produced statements:

- **Marseille Declaration: Commitments of the Decentralised Authorities of the Mediterranean.** This Joint Declaration by the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME), AVITEM, Ps-EAU and MedCities is dedicated to Mediterranean local authorities and the role they play in integrated water management in a context of climate change and water stress, identifying priority issues and local commitments. Presented by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area at the **10th World Water Forum**.
- Ocean Cities Network Manifesto towards the **UN Global Plastic Treaty**, setting before the intergovernmental negotiating committee, the UN members states, coastal areas and cities, the considerations to reach the global legally binding agreement by 2024. Presented at **MARLICE** International Forum on Marine Litter and Circular Economy in València.
- Ocean Cities Network **“Recommendations for urban coastal ecosystem restoration”**. Presented at the **UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona**.
- Mission 4 Nature Policy brief on the **EU Nature Restoration Law** presented at the **Annual Dialogue of the Interreg Euro-Med Mission for Nature in Málaga**.

Endorsed initiatives:

- **Statement by the Local and Subnational Governments Coalition to End Plastic Pollution**, setting out the rationale for the voice of local and subnational governments to be included in the final instrument. The Statement also identifies critical areas that impact local and subnational governments, while advocating for an ambitious final UN Global Plastic Treaty.
- **EU Mission Ocean & Waters Charter** as to the Mediterranean sea depollution targets. The Charter was presented to members at different forums, and MedCities accompanied individual member endorsements of the Charter.
- Oceans & Climate Platform initiative **“Ocean Rise & Coastal Resilience - Coalition for Cities & Regions”**, to be launched at the next **UN Ocean Conference in 2025 in Nice**.
- Closer relationship with **biodiversity within small and medium cities**, promoted by the Colombian government in the **COP16** framework.



EU Nature Restoration Law presented at the Annual Dialogue of the Interreg Euro-Med Mission for Nature in Málaga



Statement by the Local and Subnational Governments Coalition to End Plastic Pollution

MedCities General Assembly & Annual Seminar, Tangier 2024

MedCities celebrates the General Assembly and the Annual Seminar in Tanger focusing on the youth employment and cultural aspects in the Mediterranean

MedCities brought together 25 Mediterranean cities in Tangier to share experiences on youth employment, in the framework of the **TT Emploi project**. Also, MedCities held the annual General Assembly that sat together some of the members, online and on-site. The event coincided with the **Mediterranean Day**, and its key point was the inauguration of the employment fair in Tangiers, within the framework of the TT-Emploi project.

The General Assembly is the space where all members can express themselves and talk about all the aspects they consider important to share with the other members. In addition, some of the representatives explained some of their latest projects and future needs, which created synergies with other cities and helped MedCities to see where to focus on future projects.

The Assembly began with a strict and **emotional minute's silence to show respect for the victims of the aggressions in Palestine and Lebanon**. In addition, everyone was able to listen to the heartfelt recorded message sent by the Mayor of Gaza, Mr. Yahya Al-Sarraj.

In a more strict sense, the Assembly served to present and approve the 2023 financial report as well as the presentation, discussion and approval of the 2024 activity report. For that part, the **17 ongoing and future projects were presented**, underlying the cities involved. Members had the opportunity to **discuss the current 2025 action plan and present and discuss the 2025 budget**.

The Assembly endorsed several manifestos such as the **Charter of the EU Mission Restore our Oceans, Declaration on Human Mobility, Manifesto from the COP16, Marseille Declaration, and Declaration on the situation in Palestine and Lebanon**, and unanimously agreed on the approval of 8 new members, bringing the **total number of members to 81**.

About these **8 new members**, all had the opportunity to present the cities they were representing focusing on the needs and the opportunities that MedCities can offer them.

The General Assembly is always a special moment for the secretariat because it is a unique opportunity to exchange with members who can meet and exchange in person, and also with those that connect online. We would like to thank all those who have traveled to **Tangier** for this meeting of the MedCities family. Above all, a special thanks to the city of Tangier and its **Mayor, Mr. Mounir Laymouri**, for the welcome and the attention received as a host city.



Highlights of the MedCities General Assembly in Tangier with the representatives of the member cities

The new members approved are:

- Al Mirad
- Al Karak
- Bab Amman
- Bani Obeid
- Muğla Metropolitan Municipality
- Agia Paraskevi
- Ramallah
- Al Hoceima

+8 new members

The Annual Seminar: Employment and Culture



Diverse moments of the MedCities General Assembly, with MedCities members' presentations and the field visit to the employment fair in Tanger

The network of Mediterranean cities held the seminar '**Local Initiatives for Economic Development and Territorial Promotion in the Mediterranean: The Case of Employment and Culture**' to explain the initiatives of various member cities regarding their strategies for promoting local economic development. The meeting was held within the framework of the annual General Assembly held in Tangiers.

This Annual Seminar was dedicated to the **TT-Emploi project** in which MedCities has been working for the last two years and which was funded by the **Government of Catalonia**, through the **Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD)** with an endowment of 200,000 euros. **The project aimed at promoting inter-institutional cooperation to guarantee the economic and social rights of women and young people in Morocco**. Specifically, the project focused on the cities of **Tetouan and Tangiers** and worked on job creation, training, guidance and entrepreneurship at local level.

To disseminate the results of the project and generate a debate with peers from the Mediterranean, the international seminar on local governance and local employment policies held in Tangiers. This knowledge transfer was attended by experts in local territorial development and local political leaders from Mediterranean municipalities that are members of the **MedCities network: Barcelona City Council, Marseille, Montpellier, Larnaca, Izmir, Tangier, Madaba, Antalya and Tirana** explained their strategies in terms of economic development and the creation of sustainable employment in emerging sectors, also **emphasising the importance of integrating the cultural sector as a creator of job opportunities and attracting talent**. During the seminar, the importance of cooperation between Mediterranean cities to promote regional integration and the integration of all human groups through employment was highlighted.

In the framework of the **seminar linked to the TT Emploi project**, the participants were able to visit the first day of the employment fair in Tangier (also held in Tetouan) at the Ahmed Boukmakh Municipal Cultural Centre, which was inaugurated by the Minister of Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills. During the inauguration, the Minister had a meeting with the representatives of the **Government of Catalonia** (the Director General of Cooperation, Mrs. Andrea Costafreda and the **Delegate of the Government of North Africa**, Mrs. Habiba El Mouali) -financiers of the project- and the **Secretary General of MedCities**.

Partnering with other institutions

MedCities operates as a reliable and cooperative actor together with other institutions working on urban sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. MedCities underlines the need to consolidate and grow local and global partnerships for sustainable development.



Strategic partners and Collaborations



Observer members



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