

Activity Report 2025

January – December 2025

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MedCities, the voice
of Mediterranean
local authorities
to the world

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Michaël DELAFOSSSE

A word from the President, Mayor of Montpellier

2025 is a pivotal moment for MedCities and for all Mediterranean cities.

We are living in uncertain times in which cooperation and networking are more necessary than ever. In the face of the complexity of the challenges we share, the strength of MedCities lies in our ability to unite local and metropolitan actors around a common goal: the construction of a sustainable, solidaristic and peaceful Mediterranean.

This year, our network has fully illustrated the power of multilateralism at the local level. In a fragmented international context, cities are proving that they can be spaces for openness, dialogue and meaningful action. Peer-to-peer collaboration between mayors, municipal technicians and local teams is at the heart of our approach. It is through these direct exchanges, based on trust and shared experience, that the most effective and just solutions are born.

The climate crisis is one of the great challenges that unites us in the Mediterranean today. Its effects – rising temperatures, scarcity of resources and pressure on our ecosystems – have no borders. In the face of this emergency, our cities can offer both resistance and hope. Every local action counts, and every shared project strengthens our collective resilience.

Nevertheless, the climate crisis is not the only challenge that binds us. Inequality, in all its forms, runs through our societies and calls for a collective response. MedCities works to ensure that our cities are places of inclusion, justice and dignity for all.

This year, the Mediterranean has once again been the scene of human tragedies that profoundly challenge us. The humanitarian crisis affecting part of our region – and particularly the situation in Palestine – reminds us of the urgent need to stand up for human rights and the dignity of civilian populations. Our close ties with Bethlehem, Ramallah and other cities in the region mean we are directly engaged as a network of cities carrying the voice of solidarity and dialogue.

The spirit of MedCities is embodied in this space for cooperation, exchange and action among equals. I am proud to be the President of this network, in which every city, whether big or small, can find its place and contribute to a shared vision.

In 2025, more than ever, I am convinced that our Mediterranean cities have a decisive role to play in building a sustainable, just and peaceful future. Together, we will continue to keep this local multilateralism alive, through cooperation, trust and a shared vision for a better Mediterranean.

The spirit of MedCities is embodied in this space for cooperation, exchange and action among equals

Josep CANALS

A word from the Secretary General

Once again, we present the activities carried out by our association in 2025 and show our enormous gratitude to the team who make up the General Secretariat for their commitment, which has gone above and beyond professional duty.

This past year has been particularly painful given the genocide affecting the Palestinian people in Gaza, and the occupation of the West Bank and Lebanon, which greatly hinder the daily activities of local municipal councils and the population at large. As a result, the projects which provide support to our Palestinian and Lebanese members have been reinforced, with the resumption of the activities of our Knowledge Transfer Centre, which also supports our Jordanian members. We have been able to travel to the region and listen closely to the needs and hopes of local mayors who struggle to maintain the essential public services required for residents' quality of life and the safeguarding of their natural environment.

In these troubled times, I believe that the first-hand relationships forged through the exchange of experiences within the network are a key factor for cohesion, cooperation and peace in our Mediterranean region. Technical transfer also plays a transcendental political role.

The time has come for local diplomacy. That is why we want to continue being the local Mediterranean voice in the world. Good practice, learning from improvement, relationships with other institutions – including those from outside the region – and support for our mayors and presidents are the essence of this network, which will celebrate its thirty-fifth anniversary next year.

Thirty years on from the Barcelona Process – and fifty years on from the Barcelona Convention and the Mediterranean Action Plan – the Catalan capital, which is also the headquarters of MedCities, has sought to play a leading role in 2025 by launching a period of reflection about what actions must be reinforced, and what must be done differently. This is where MedCities continues to forge new alliances, with a multilevel approach that is essential for accelerating the changes we need to mitigate man-made climate change and for a prosperous and peaceful region.

As our President says, it is time for multilateralism, and it is therefore time for networks. Thirty-five years later, more than ever, it is time for MedCities.



The time has come for local diplomacy. That is why we want to continue being the local Mediterranean voice in the world

Introduction

The MedCities 2025 Activity Report outlines the work carried out by the General Secretariat, based in Barcelona, on behalf of our 81 members since the November 2024 General Assembly in Tanger. These activities were concentrated within 23 projects, in addition to participation in various international forums, amplifying the voice of Mediterranean local authorities.

Local governments and intermunicipal entities are frontline public service managers. While municipalities are experts in implementation, many struggle with limited human and financial resources, making it challenging to ensure quality provision for citizens. Despite these obstacles, local authorities remain positive and motivated to address the immense challenges and threats they face.

Based on their capacity for intercooperation, local authorities are emerging as a key example of what is known as local diplomacy. Human connection at this level offers significant opportunities for integration, cohesion and peace in the region.

MedCities is fully committed, both politically and ethically, to supporting the improvement of municipal services, with our primary goal being the enhancement of quality of life for people in the region and protecting the natural ecosystems of the Mediterranean Sea and the surrounding areas.

This year has seen our Knowledge Transfer Centre to the Middle East return to activity. Locally targeted support allows us to get closer to our members in Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan, and to better understand their priorities and the challenges they face.

MedCities advocates a genuine ceasefire, adherence to UN resolutions and effective humanitarian aid. As an organisation, we mourn the victims of the conflict and hope for real peace in 2026.

Lastly, the report highlights the partners and organisations with whom we have worked on various projects and strategic alliances, and to whom we are grateful for their contributions.

At MedCities, we are proud of our achievements in 2025, and we look forward to making 2026 even better, as we wish our members success, health and peace for the year ahead.

MedCities strengthens the role of local authorities in order to foster genuine cooperation for peace that promotes the well-being of citizens and ecosystems

Our network

Agadir, Agia Paraskevi, Urban Community of Al Fayhaa, Al Mirad, Al Karak, Al Hoceima, Al Qamishli, Ancona, Antalya, Municipality of Greater As-Salt, Azraq, Bab Amman, Baddawi, Bani Obeid, Barcelona, Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), Batroun, Union of Municipalities of Batroun, Bethlehem, Biograd Na Moru, Bizerte, Bodrum, Bonifacio, Union of Municipalities of Dannieh, Deir Alla, Djerba Midoun, Durres, Dubrovnik, El Mina, Ein-el-Basha, Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality, Gabès, Gaza, Gaziantep, Genova, Girona, 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, Menzil Bourghiba, Mersin, Minieh, Monastir, Montpellier - Montpelhièr, M'Saken, Metropolitan Municipality of Muğla, Nabeul, Nablus, Napoli, Città Metropolitana di Napoli, Palma, Piraeus, Grad Pula - Pola, Qalamoun, Ramallah, Rethymno, Roma, Roskovec, Saida, Sarajevo, Sarafand, Sfax, Sidi Bou Said, Sousse, Tanger, Tataouine, Tétouan, Tirana, Tripoli, Tripoli (Lybia), Tunis, Um al Basateen, València, Zahle, Municipality of Greater Zarqa and Zgharta-Ehden.

Members





Governance

12

MedCities, the voice of Mediterranean local authorities to the world

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 an 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 representing members is responsible, among other duties, for the approval of the Action Plan, the activity report and the economic report for each year, as well as the inclusion of new members. In 2025, the General Assembly was held in Barcelona on 26 November 2025.

MedCities' Board of Directors is made up of nine members. There are no paid positions on the board. The Board of Directors for the period 2023-2026 was approved by members during the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 31 January 2023. The composition of the current board 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 Tétouan**
(Treasurer)
- **Municipality of Limassol**
(Member)
- **Municipality of València**
(Member)
- **Zarqa Greater Municipality**
(Member)
- **Municipality of Bethlehem**
(Member)

MedCities' General Secretariat is based in Barcelona, on the premises of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), and is supported by Barcelona City Council. This year, MedCities relaunched its decentralised structure, with the recovery of the Knowledge Transfer Centre (KTC) for the Middle East, located in the Urban Community of Al Fayhaa, Lebanon. This structure facilitates direct support to member cities by offering a local point of contact in the region to better understand the needs and opportunities for our members in Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan.

This document, approved by the General Assembly in Barcelona on 26 November 2025, details the work undertaken by MedCities over the past year.

**MedCities' Board
of Directors is made
up of nine members**

2025 at a Glance

During 2025 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 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

23

Ongoing Projects

10

Led by MedCities

45

Members engaged

New memberships

+12 = 91 total

MedCities as a knowledge-sharing platform

94 actions

51 Trainings, knowledge transfer, mentorings & workshops

11 Position papers, studies & reports

26 Events & seminars

3 Exchange visits

3 Pilot projects

Media appearances

35

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.

212

Cases

112

Tools

132

Voices

456

Total of contents

A voice for Mediterranean local authorities: dialogue and political exchanges

29 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:

- 19th plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean in Rome
- Mission Ocean and Waters Forum in Brussels
- Seminar "Mediterranean Strategy of Catalonia, MedCat 2030" of the Generalitat and the IEMed
- Arab European Cities Dialogue in Riyadh
- Consultation session on the ARLEM report "Territorial Perspectives for the New Euro-Mediterranean Strategic Agenda" in Brussels
- Presentation of Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Coalition in Nice
- UNOC3 in Nice
- 26th Executive Committee and 21st Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development in Corinth
- Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action in Cairo

Ongoing projects across the Mediterranean

Sustainable Urban Services

Strategic planning

Environment and Biodiversity

Economic Development & Social Cohesion

16

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

NATURIncMed: Promoting the naturalisation of public spaces with social inclusion and ecosystem services

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Tackle growing climate change-related risks, from heatwaves to the heat island effect, flooding and pollution and water scarcity, while also addressing the lack of socially inclusive public areas. It promotes Nature-based Solutions (NbS) tailored to local environmental and social circumstances, integrating the full range of community voices from the outset.



NATURIncMed methodological guide

The NATURIncMed project, funded by the **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)** as part of the Masar Al'an programme and launched in January 2025, provides technical support to three Southern Mediterranean municipalities in co-designing urban green spaces that enhance climate resilience and social cohesion.

Supporting municipalities for inclusive climate-resilient urban spaces

NATURIncMed is a modular project, and Phase I provides implementation of actions and guidance in three pilot municipalities—**Madaba** in Jordan, **El Mina** in Lebanon and **Gabès** in Tunisia—through participatory diagnosis of local needs and the pre-design of green spaces tailored to environmental and social objectives, taking into consideration vulnerable social groups. MedCities coordinates the overall project between the pilot cities and fosters the knowledge transfer activities through the micro-network of 23 Mediterranean municipalities focused on Greener and More Resilient Cities.

Throughout 2025, the majority of our activities have focused on capacity building and knowledge sharing activities, both at the local and international level. In May 2025, kick-off meetings were held in the three cities, at which municipal staff and the experts involved explored project objectives, methodology and participatory approaches. Visits to site selected for implementation were carried out in order to appraise pros and cons, while workshop helped the team to define priorities for inclusive and climate-resilient spaces, ensuring citizen-driven co-creation.

Following a first online session, the team of experts from OECUMENE Spaces for Dignity arranged participatory training in Madaba, engaging municipal representatives and the local teams of experts in co-designing exercises, site analysis and collective visioning. These activities reinforced municipal capacities in designing green spaces which meet local social and environmental needs.

MedCities coordinates the overall project between the pilot cities and fosters the knowledge transfer activities

At the core of municipal government



Participative workshop for the NATURIncMed project in Gabès



Young people participating in a NATURIncMed project workshop in El Mina

A study visit to **València** in July allowed participants from pilot cities and other Mediterranean municipalities to explore NbS and urban greening projects, including **renaturalised river corridors**, community gardens and schoolyard initiatives. These examples inspired practical applications in each municipality and strengthened intercity learning.

From June to October, the pilot cities conducted the first participatory phase, engaging local communities in workshops to discuss current use, challenges and aspirations for public spaces. Insights informed preliminary project design and co-creation sessions, moving from diagnosis to conceptual design. A webinar on digital twins in September introduced innovative tools for green urban planning, and in December, NATURIncMed's methodology was presented, consolidating participatory strategies for greener and socially inclusive urban spaces.

By creating green, inclusive and climate-resilient urban spaces, the project addresses urgent urban challenges, providing shaded socialisation areas that mitigate urban heat and enhance social cohesion. Municipalities gain knowledge and capacity to develop scalable green infrastructure projects by using a methodology that can be easily tailored and applied to other municipalities.

NATURIncMed contributes to **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, with a specific focus on **SDG 10** (Reduced Inequalities), **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities), **SDG 13** (Climate Action), and **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals). The project reinforces MedCities' role in fostering cooperation, knowledge exchange and capacity building across Mediterranean municipalities.

Community 4 Living Areas (C4LA): Building a community of projects for greener Mediterranean cities

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

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 in making tangible progress in their adaptation to climate change.

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. As part of the Mission, **the C4LA project's main objective is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge** among the partners and stakeholders—whether public, private, research-oriented or citizen-based—working across the Mediterranean region to improve cities' responses to challenges related to mobility, waste management, water and energy efficiency, among others.

MedCities leads the C4LA Transfer Work Package and works to ensure the results of the project benefit member cities. MedCities aims to secure the involvement of the network's associate partners, namely the **Greater Irbid Municipality, Sfax Municipality** and the **AMB**, by inviting them to take part in activities with an international scope in order to learn more about thematic projects and participate in project forums.

MedCities leads the C4LA Transfer Work Package and works to ensure the results of the project benefit member cities

2nd gathering of the Green Living Areas Community in Barcelona, May 2025



The C4LA's key action this year was the **second gathering of the Green Living Areas Mission's Thematic Community that took place in May in Barcelona**. This two-day event brought together project partners from across the northern shore of the Mediterranean to promote joint working between policymakers, technical partners, academia and the private sector. Three training sessions were delivered on the second day of the event and participants engaged in **practical exercises on policy, transfer, climate finance and innovative financing**. As a result of the positive feedback received, these training sessions were later replicated in an online format in September and October, reaching a wider audience within the four missions of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

In March, MedCities, EMEA and IREC **gathered 11 partners from the Mission's Thematic Projects to launch a Spanish Green Living Areas Territorial Antenna**, a hub for coordinating communication and fostering synergies among local projects. The event was a unique occasion for networking and planning joint working. MedCities is engaged in facilitating the second online coordination session, preparing the ground for the upcoming face-to-face meeting in spring 2026, which will include the participation of new thematic projects and focus on the exchange of practical project experiences.

In September, MedCities was actively involved at the meeting organised by the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Euro-MED programme in Marseille, 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.

MedCities participated in the two C4LA Steering Committee meetings held this year, with one in Barcelona in May and the other in Sofia in October, the latter of which saw partners participate in a two-day meeting to plan the implementation of the project over the coming months ahead. Discussions focused on the thematic activities within the three Work Packages. Partners explored the integration of the Ecosystemic Transformation Unit (ETU) model, synergies in deliverables and strategies to strengthen collaboration through online working groups. As part of an ETU grant programme, MedCities is developing a **mentoring scheme aimed at transferring solutions for greener and more sustainable cities across the Mediterranean**. These exchanges will feed into the next community gathering, scheduled for April 2026 in Patras, Greece.

Gathering of the governance projects, including C4LA, organised by the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Euro-MED programme in Marseille



The event was a unique occasion for networking and planning joint working

URWAN: Urban Regenerative Water Avant-garde (N)

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Engage in urban regeneration and adaptation to climate change via Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to water management issues.

Urban regeneration and building renewal in Mediterranean cities must grasp opportunities for climate change adaptation, particularly concerning water scarcity and increasing temperatures. The Interreg Euro-MED project URWAN, launched in January 2024, aims to showcase innovative solutions in climate change adaptation and address water scarcity through a participatory, nature-based approach. It aims to redefine water management, encouraging engagement with local stakeholders and the implementation of multifunctional strategies that bring together sustainability, aesthetics and social impact, as well as optimising the use of public funds.

In 2025, several milestones were reached. The **URWAN NbS Catalogue** provides a detailed overview of innovative and replicable solutions that enhance water resilience, promote urban biodiversity, and improve the quality of life in cities and towns. Each solution is presented with technical features, environmental benefits, and practical examples for integration in different urban contexts, from small villages to metropolitan areas. Rome and Sarajevo, as MedCities members and partners, have designed **field interventions in public spaces**, and construction works will be completed early 2026. In **Rome**, for example, URWAN intervention has taken the form of building a rain garden in a public school to collect rainwater from roofs and paved areas, with two bioretention areas, depaving of surfaces and installation of a storage tank for water reuse. Other participating cities (Ptuj, **Sarajevo** and Ferla) have implemented co-design workshops using the Start Park methodology, bringing stakeholders around the table to ensure ownership of the final project.

MedCities is responsible for the **Amplification Strategy and the NbS Enabler Pack**, which contain key project outputs that allow for scaling of project results. As a partner of both projects, it also liaises with the **C4LA** governance project. As such, URWAN entails active community involvement in events such as the aforementioned gathering in Barcelona in May and the Territorial Antenna Spain in March. It will also coordinate with C4LA to tailor the outputs to the **Euro-MED Academy** and boost their dissemination.

The project includes **Living Labs** as practical workshops in which participants tackle real-world implementation challenges. In July 2025, a second workshop took place in Cuba (Portugal), where local authorities, urban planners, technical experts and community stakeholders from across the Euro-Mediterranean region met for an

immersive experience focused on overcoming the barriers to implementing NbS. MedCities was also invited to showcase the project at important events such as the World Urban Parks Forum (Istanbul, 8-10 October 2025).

The third and final workshop will take place in **Malta** in February 2026 and will focus on mainstreaming NbS in local policies and practices. MedCities members and associate project partners **Málaga** and **Jerash** will continue their participation following the first edition. Finally, URWAN will hold a closing event at the New European Bauhaus Festival (Brussels, 9-13 June 2026).

The project works towards the objectives of the European Green Deal and the SDGs, especially **SDG 3** (Good health and well-being), **SDG 6** (Clean Water and Sanitation), **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities), **SDG 13** (Climate Action), **SDG 15** (Life on Land) and **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals).

URWAN meeting in Cuba, roundtable on how to communicate and create awareness on Nature-based Solutions, July 2025



WEFE4MED: Water-Energy-Food- Ecosystems Nexus Community of Practice

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Bring Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus thinking to urban planning and operations by establishing a Mediterranean Nexus Community of Practice that fosters coordinated joint working, shared practices and peer learning, with the aim of identifying trade-offs and pursuing co-benefits.

The WEFE Nexus frames water, energy, food and ecosystem services as interconnected systems, where actions in one domain affect the others. For cities in the Mediterranean—an area where water scarcity, heat stress and intensive agriculture intersect—local authorities are central actors in delivering services, setting planning rules and convening stakeholders.

Cities concentrate demand for water, energy and food supply chains and alter ecosystem dynamics. A siloed approach risks undesired outcomes; large-scale desalination, for example, increases energy demand and emissions; irrigation expansion reduces environmental flows, and hard flood defences can undermine urban ecosystems. Nexus thinking helps local governments identify trade-offs and pursue co-benefits such as combining wastewater reuse with energy recovery and urban greening to cool neighbourhoods and provide irrigation.

In 2025, the WEFE4MED project consolidated the **Mediterranean WEFE Nexus Community of Practice (NCoP)**. With around 500 members, it is open to professionals from diverse fields, including water management, engineering, energy, agriculture, sociology, economics, public administration, gender studies and more.

We encourage MedCities member cities who wish to implement the WEFE approach to join the NCoP.

We consider it particularly interesting for our members to gain insights into different WEFE demonstration sites implemented across the Mediterranean, as a source of inspiration and to ensure their future projects benefit from the interlinks between the Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems sectors.

In addition, practitioners working in the WEFE Nexus can benefit from services funded by the WEFE4MED project, such as mentoring, twinning (in which a number of MedCities members participate) and knowledge exchange aimed at linking practitioners with experienced mentors, as well as Internship and Summer school programmes. Moreover, the project has launched the **WEFE4MED Award**, via which WEFE demonstrators can bring their project to the final conference that will take place in 2026 in Cyprus.

With around 500 members, it is open to professionals from diverse fields

MedCities promotes the NCoP within its activities, and the Secretary-General plays a key role as a **WEFE Ambassador**. This involves promoting the WEFE Nexus in public forums such as the Mission Ocean & Waters Danish EU Presidency Conference; the Consultation Circle on the New Pact for the Mediterranean; the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action, and the panel discussion of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus in Urban Water Management at the Towards a Water-Resilient Mediterranean: Solutions from Local Authorities conference. Likewise, as an ambassador, MedCities has informed the development of WEFE4MED policy briefs.

The **WEFE4MED project, funded by the PRIMA programme**, focuses on three pillars: showcasing successful WEFE demonstration sites, engaging partners and countries in policy discussions, and exploring financial mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability.

The Secretary-General plays a key role as a WEFE Ambassador



WEFE4MED, Contributions of Regenerative Agriculture and Ecological Restoration in the Mediterranean



Presentation of WEFE4MED project during the PRIMA Info Day

MedCUC: MedCities' Climate Urban Capacity programme

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

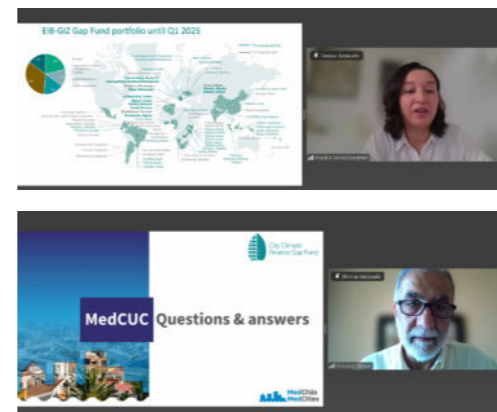
Leverage the capacity of Mediterranean local authorities for obtaining funding for their climate-resilient and low-carbon urban projects.

The Mediterranean area is among those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and municipalities and local governments are on the front line in managing both the short- and long-term consequences. As such, they face numerous challenges, one of which is the lack of knowledge and capacity for the design and implementation of specific measures required to make climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies operational. MedCUC aims to achieve this by leveraging the capacity of the association to offer needs-oriented and sustainable support to our members as a means of preparing and financing climate-resilient and low-carbon urban projects in the Mediterranean area.

One of a number of new projects in 2025, MedCUC kicked off with a **three-day course on climate finance provided by experts to the MedCities operations team** in May. The objective of this course was to achieve an overview and understand the different funding options available to local public authorities at each stage of the development of their climate project, whether it be in the areas of waste, mobility, energy efficiency or green and resilient cities. The team went through intensive training, studying various funding options, ranging from grants, economic and operational support from national and multilateral stakeholders and Green Climate Funds, loans and guarantees for innovative finance, such as sustainable and green bonds, and public-private partnerships, as well as alternative options like pooled procurement and project aggregation. The course covered the options available for all the stages of climate project preparation, from origination and conceptualisation to implementation, without forgoing feasibility, strategic planning and project structuring and design. Common pitfalls and key barriers in accessing climate finance were also considered, such as poor creditworthiness, limited fiscal autonomy, poor data quality and low technical capacity, in addition to possible solutions to overcome them.

MedCUC is now in the second phase of the programme, which involves the **development and implementation of a new service portfolio for MedCities members** to improve their capacity to obtain climate finance. This portfolio has the following objectives:

Presentation of the Gap Fund at the launching event of MedCUC



Participation of Mr. Ghassan Tayoun, Zgharta-Eden, to the launching event of the MedCUC programme

1 — Offer the promoters of urban climate projects information and capacity development activities for early-stage project preparation and financing. MedCities launched a Call for Mediterranean Local Authorities in June in order to select nine local authorities from the region committed to climate transition and provide them with a boost in the preparation and financing of urban climate projects. All nine participated in initial training in project preparation and financing at the beginning of November, and will benefit from four to six-month technical support from experts for their project's preparation, financing and resource mobilisation. These experts will also develop a project preparation pack, a tool to guide city leads step-by-step in the preparation of their climate projects, with an emphasis on how to finance them, including tips and practical recommendations.

Of the nine beneficiaries of the MedCUC programme, eight are MedCities members: **Al Fayhaa** Urban Community (Lebanon), **Hatay** Metropolitan Municipality (Türkiye), Greater **Madaba** Municipality (Jordan), **Mahdia** Municipality (Tunisia), **Tirana** Municipality (Albania), **Zgarta-Eden** Municipality (Lebanon), **Tétouan** Municipality (Morocco), and **Sarajevo** Municipality (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The sole non-member beneficiary is Almuwaqqar Municipality from Jordan.

2 — Enable local governments and cities to share lessons learned and replicate successful models for climate action. In 2026, MedCities will organise eight thematic peer-to-peer exchange sessions within the framework of its working groups, targeting waste, green and resilient cities, coastal cities and mobility.

3 — Act as a liaison between donors and highlight financing opportunities to Mediterranean cities. MedCities launched our brand-new Digest in November, identifying and sharing available opportunities of all kinds with its members (including for funding, capacity building, networking, matchmaking and awards) In 2026, we will organise two "Financers to cities" sessions to allow donors to pitch their funding and support programmes, as well as calls to potential beneficiaries.

MedCUC is led by the General Secretariat and two external experts who specialise in designing urban climate projects in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. It targets Mediterranean municipalities and local governments from countries in three geographical zones: the Middle East (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine), North Africa (Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria) and Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Türkiye). Funded by the City Climate Finance Gap Fund implemented by the World Bank and the European Investment Bank in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), MedCUC will be carried out until the summer 2026.

Annual Partnership Forum of the Gap Fund in Tirana, with the participation of MedCities for the MedCUC programme



Eight beneficiary members of the MedCUC programme: Al Fayhaa, Hatay, Madaba, Mahdia, Tirana, Zgarta-Eden, Tétouan and Sarajevo

Gov4GreenMed: Inclusive governance models for a greener transition in the Mediterranean

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Promote inclusive governance models for better municipal waste management throughout the Mediterranean.



Gov4GreenMed kick-off meeting in Vic, Catalonia

Although significant progress has been made in waste collection, recycling and prevention, municipal solid waste and food waste continue to pose urgent challenges across the Mediterranean. Participatory approaches are still rarely applied, and citizens and businesses play a limited role in decision-making. Gov4GreenMed is a two-year project launched in September 2025 to develop locally focused participatory methodologies as a means of strengthening municipal solid waste and food waste management policies and practices. Co-funded by the European Union through the Interreg Next-MED programme, the project is also set to develop a framework for participatory collaboration for waste management.

Gov4GreenMed has a total allocated budget of almost 1.5 million euros and a contribution from the European Union of 1.3 million euros (89%). It includes a total of six partners, these being UVic-UCC BETA Technology Centre (as the lead partner of the project) and MedCities in Catalonia, the Cooperation for the Development of Countries in Emergency Situations (COSPE) in Italy, the Tunis International Center for Environmental Technologies (CITET) in Tunisia, Future Pioneers for Empowering Communities' Members in the Environmental and Educational Fields (FPEC) in Jordan, and the **Antalya Metropolitan Municipality (AMM)** in Türkiye.

The project will test participatory methodologies through five pilot actions in different Mediterranean municipalities, such as Mancomunitat La Plana (Catalonia), Kumluca (Türkiye), **Nabeul** (Tunisia), Scandicci (Italy) and **Ein-el-Basha** (Jordan), with each addressing specific local issues in municipal waste management.

MedCities is responsible for the implementation phase of pilot actions and will coordinate the development of multi-stakeholder consultation spaces in the above-mentioned selected municipalities, while the rest of the project partners will provide support to their assigned pilot locality throughout the entire process. MedCities will also organise study visits to gain knowledge and learn from similar experiences. Finally, drawing on its experience in other projects, the association will also organise a transnational capitalisation event to highlight and promote the adoption of the Gov4GreenMed participatory governance models methodology by other municipalities.

The project was officially launched during a kick-off meeting in Vic (Catalonia) on 15 and 16 October 2025, attended by all project partners. The initiative directly contributes to **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production).

**MedCities is responsible
for the implementation
phase of pilot actions**

ProcuraMED: Driving innovative and green public procurement in the Mediterranean

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

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

Green Public Procurement (GPP) and Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions (PPI) are essential levers for a competitive and sustainable economy. Yet, these tools remain largely underused by local governments, which often lack the skills and instruments to integrate environmental and innovation criteria into their purchasing processes. ProcuraMED responds to this gap by building capacities and inspiring change among Mediterranean local authorities and businesses.

Funded by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme until March 2026, ProcuraMED promotes greener, more innovative and resilient economic ecosystems in the Mediterranean. The project develops the skills of municipalities and companies to design and implement GPP and PPI procedures that accelerate sustainability transitions.

In partnership with ACCIÓ—the Catalan Agency for Business Competitiveness, MedCities delivered a comprehensive training programme tailored to public administrations and private sector actors. A total of nine municipalities and eleven companies participated in 16-hour and 8-hour training modules respectively, strengthening their strategic capacity to launch green and innovation-oriented tenders.

In addition, **Sant Boi, Sant Feliu de Llobregat and Viladecans—municipal members located in the AMB**, and which belong to Barcelona Provincial Council—benefited from a dedicated mentoring process, receiving hands-on support from external experts to improve real procurement procedures with a focus on innovation and sustainability.

These training and mentoring actions were mirrored across partner countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia, where each partner produced a Technology Transfer and Transferability Strategy to foster the uptake of green innovation.

Building on these results, MedCities launched the Euro-Mediterranean Coalition for an Innovative Sustainable Economy to promote GPP and PPI across the region and connect public procurers with innovative enterprises.

The coalition serves as a collaborative space for knowledge exchange, matchmaking and advocacy. The initiative is supported by:

- A set of policy recommendations for improving innovative green procurement frameworks.
- A dedicated section on the MedUrbanTools platform, showcasing best practices, innovative solutions and procurement methodologies and tools.

The coalition was officially launched at the Smart City Expo World Congress (Barcelona, 4–6 November 2025).

Sant Boi de Llobregat and Viladecans and the Greater Irbid Municipality participate as associate partners in ProcuraMED. The initiative directly contributes to **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production) by promoting procurement practices that reduce environmental impact and boost innovation.

ProcuraMed family picture at the SCEWC, November 2025



ProcuraMed project presentation at the AMB premises, March 2025

A'SIMA Tunis: Consolidating the Tunis City Strategy

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Establish an urban development strategy that encourages the participation of citizens as guarantors of democratic governance, in addition to multi-partner and multi-actor consultation mechanisms, based on a cross-sectoral approach to all aspects of city life as part of a broader metropolitan whole.

Strategic planning

The A'SIMA Tunis project aims to reinforce **participative local governance through the elaboration of a participative City Strategy**. An important milestone was reached this year, with the **Tunis City Strategy** being officially presented to stakeholders in Tunis at a public conference held in late February 2025. This document was the result of a reflection that began several years ago concerning urban planning in Tunis, within the framework of the EU-funded A'SIMA Tunis project. The process took place in several phases (diagnosis, strategic framing, action plan) and **involved more than 170 institutional, professional and civil society stakeholders from Greater Tunis**, as well as more than 10,000 citizens. It resulted in the development of an action plan, which includes 50 short, medium and long-term projects organised across six strategic areas and reflects the aspirations and priorities identified by stakeholders:

- 1 — Appeal, prestige, metropolitan economic innovation (6 projects).
- 2 — Reclassification, linkage and enhancement of the central core (10 projects).
- 3 — Socio-economic integration and inclusion, articulation, revitalisation and promotion (12 projects).
- 4 — Regional resilience and eco-responsibility (7 projects).
- 5 — Effectiveness and transparency in regional management (10 projects)
- 6 — Integrated and sustainable urban mobility (5 projects).

To achieve this, **MedCities** supported the **Municipality of Tunis** in developing an urban development strategy based on its extensive experience in the field. This activity contributes to the achievement of **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities), particularly in strengthening the capacity for integrated and sustainable participatory planning and management through a multi-stakeholder consultation process such as the City Strategy.

In addition, MedCities and the Municipality of Tunis have engaged in developing a new **pilot project** for waste reduction, recycling and reuse. This project aims to meet A'SIMA Tunis objectives for a sustainable and green urban transition, focusing on waste management. The **pilot project involves implementing door-to-door inorganic waste collection** in the neighbourhood of El Menzah, and improvement of the current waste management system in the neighbourhood of Essijoumi. It will enable the recovery and treatment of waste as part of a circular

economy approach and will be accompanied by a citizen awareness campaign in each neighbourhood. At the end of this process, an evaluation of the results and impacts of the pilot project will be carried out, contributing to the localisation of **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production). An expert feasibility assessment and action plan have been developed for both neighbourhoods, outlining all the requirements for implementation. Waste collection will begin in early 2026.

In addition to the pilot project, an **intermunicipal waste management strategy** aimed at improving approaches in the Greater Tunis area—the result of cooperation between municipalities initiated in 2022—was presented in February 2025. This followed on from a series of workshops on various topics related to waste management (collection, communication, governance, transfer, etc.). The strategy and the projects included therein were developed and presented to workshop participants, municipal representatives and stakeholders in order to gather their comments on the plan and validate it.

Presentation of Tunis City Development Strategy



Support for the elaboration of urban development strategies

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

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 plans operational.

MedCities is strengthening its strategic links with the key stakeholders present in the Mediterranean region. The network is perceived by international donors and partners as a reliable regional stakeholder that supports and mobilises a diverse range of municipalities in the Mediterranean region in their approach to **climate change adaptation focused on local resilience and citizens' quality of life**. One such example is GIZ, the German agency for international cooperation, with whom MedCities works jointly on a number of initiatives.

GIZ has entrusted MedCities with the design and implementation of knowledge exchange and peer learning activities, one of the key components of its regional programme **Urban Adaptation to Climate Change in the Maghreb (Urba-CliMA)**. Building on two previous phases that supported municipalities in developing climate adaptation plans through **capacity building, tailored technical support and guidance on implementing specific measures, this new phase reinforces collaboration and learning across borders**. Through the EViMACC project, MedCities enhances the transregional **exchange of expertise and the capitalisation of good practices among selected cities in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria**, helping them strengthen their capacity to anticipate and respond to the impacts of climate change by promoting peer learning, knowledge sharing and the dissemination of innovative urban adaptation practices throughout the Maghreb region.

In Morocco, the project is already in full swing. A **national workshop in Rabat in February 2025** gathered more than sixty municipal and provincial representatives to discuss climate challenges and explore collaborative solutions. This was followed by a first online session in July, during which Moroccan cities exchanged experiences and presented innovative actions on water management, environmental education and green space planning. The forthcoming sessions, planned throughout 2026, will **explore how to integrate climate adaptation into territorial planning, combining technical insights with inspiring examples from Morocco and other Mediterranean locations**.



EViMACC project presentation by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)

Meanwhile, MedCities is working with partners across Tunisia and Algeria to develop a common methodology for the upcoming knowledge exchange processes. These activities will begin over the coming months, ensuring a consistent regional approach.

During the same period, MedCities will also publish a collection of good practices via the MedUrbanTools platform, offering cities across the region practical ideas to build more resilient, climate-ready communities.

Enhancing regional exchanges for local service provision in Libya

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Strengthen the technical capacities of Libyan municipalities through interregional exchanges and digital capacity-building initiatives in waste management, green urban planning, local economic development and women's empowerment.

MedCities supports Libyan municipalities in enhancing their technical capacities across various citizen-oriented basic service domains through cooperation and knowledge exchange with members of its network. Running from August 2024 to April 2026, the project builds on the collaboration launched in 2023 with the **GIZ Libya Country Programme**.

The initiative involves two main capacity-building programmes—one focused on Solid Waste Management and Circular Economy and another on **Green Urban Planning (GUP)**—and includes study visits to MedCities members and the organisation of thematic webinars. In 2025, two additional areas of cooperation were introduced: **Local Economic Development and support for the recently created Libyan Women Municipal Council Members Forum**.

Following a study visit which focused on waste management and circular economy initiatives, hosted by the **AMB and Barcelona City Council** in December 2024, a technical expert was engaged to support beneficiary municipalities in **designing projects in this field**. Ten pilot projects have been jointly developed with the municipalities involved. The outcomes of this capacity-building programme will inform operational recommendations on solid waste management and the circular economy, tailored to the Libyan context.

The GUP component aims to strengthen the capacities of selected Libyan municipalities in sustainable urban development through a structured set of activities. It began with a transferability webinar led by MedCities in July 2025, featuring experiences from pilot cities of the **NatureMed** and **HERA projects Jerash, Bethlehem, and Saida** which shared lessons learned on green infrastructure and planning. Building on methodologies developed as part of these projects, additional online training delivered by an external expert provided participants with a **comprehensive introduction to GUP principles**, adapted to Libya's urban realities.

In December 2025, representatives from ten Libyan municipalities participated in the LASERMed community webinars, followed by a targeted online training session designed to further strengthen municipal capacities in local economic development.

Finally, a series of online meetings have been held between representatives of the **Libyan Women Municipal Council Members Forum**, established in 2023, and the **Barcelona Provincial Council**, which coordinates the EqualMED community, a network of local elected women from Morocco and the Barcelona Province promoting gender equality in local governance.

MedCities and the AMB are helping Libyan cities strengthen their technical capacity in the field of waste management



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

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 modes of transport.

The EU-funded project **Active and Intelligent Mobility in Sfax** (abbreviated to MAIS 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 as an approach to addressing 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 initiatives in the fields of active mobility, e-mobility, smart collection and use of data and public awareness. MedCities is a 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 donors.

Over the past year, MAIS has reached a number of significant milestones that show its growing impact on sustainable urban mobility in Sfax and Chihia.

The municipalities of Sfax and Chihia have made substantial progress in deploying pilot initiatives for electric mobility and active transport. Infrastructural developments include pedestrian paths, cycling lanes and the construction of the Bechka solar power station. This facility will supply renewable energy for electric vehicle charging points, symbolising the mainstreaming of clean energy and sustainable transport solutions.

Two major tenders have been launched via the TUNEPS public procurement platform. The first concerns a comprehensive traffic circulation study for the city of Sfax, while the second focuses on the creation of a Sustainable Mobility Observatory. **These studies will provide crucial data and analytical tools to guide evidence-based decisions and enhance coordination between urban mobility stakeholders.**

The MAIS project continues to promote a culture of sustainable mobility through community-driven events. Notably, the National Environment Day, celebrated on 18 June 2025, and the Car-Free City Day in Chihia and Sfax during autumn, enjoyed strong participation from citizens and civil society organisations, reinforcing collective commitment to environmental protection and sustainable living.

Celebration of the Day without cars in Sfax for the MAIS project



The MAIS project positions **Sfax as a significant example of urban innovation and climate-conscious mobility in the southern Mediterranean**. Through its integrated approach—combining infrastructural development, capacity building, strategic planning and citizen engagement—the project contributes significantly to Tunisia's broader multi-transition efforts. The year's achievements mark important steps towards making Sfax a smarter, cleaner and more liveable city for all.

MELUP: Integrating a gender perspective into urban planning

Through participatory assessments

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Strengthen the capacity of Al Hoceima and Tripoli to incorporate a gender perspective into urban planning through participatory assessments, action plans, capacity-building activities and regional exchanges. Its ultimate goal is to promote inclusive, safe and accessible public spaces for women and all residents.

The **Mediterranean Everyday Life Urban Planning (MELUP)** project seeks to improve the quality of life and the inclusion of women in local public policymaking in Al Hoceima (Morocco) and Tripoli (Lebanon), in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the MedCat 2030 Strategy. Funded by the **Government of Catalonia and coordinated by MedCities**, the project aims to **strengthen local governments' capacities to adopt gender-responsive approaches in urban planning**, ensuring that public spaces reflect the needs and rights of all citizens—particularly women and other underrepresented groups.

The project supports participatory assessments in one district of each city, leading to the development of gender-responsive action plans that identify and address barriers women face in accessing and using public spaces. These plans will include concrete **proposals for more inclusive urban design**. Building on these outcomes, each city will implement a pilot project in 2026 to adapt a selected public space to better respond to women's everyday needs.

MELUP was officially launched in both municipalities in September, **bringing together local stakeholders working in the fields of women's rights, youth work, childhood and disability inclusion**. The launch was followed by a three-day training workshop on gender-responsive urban planning. The sessions combined theoretical learning with practical exercises, including exploratory walks where women evaluated urban spaces and identified opportunities and challenges related to safety, accessibility and community life.

To reinforce institutional capacities, MELUP will conduct a targeted peer-review process on gender-responsive urban planning, involving two mentoring municipalities from the MedCities network. The project will also organise two international study visits: one to Barcelona to explore inclusive planning practices, and another to foster South-South cooperation and exchange experiences of the "Caring Cities" model in 2026.

The initiative directly contributes to **SDG 5** (Gender Equality) and **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities). It also supports **SDG 10** (Reduced Inequalities) by addressing intersectional barriers in urban access, **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), through inclusive governance and participatory planning, and **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals), through international cooperation and city-to-city exchanges.

As part of the MELUP project, **the Secretary-General of MedCities, Josep Canals Molina, met with the Mayor of Tripoli** to discuss the situation in the city and the challenges it is facing. The Secretary-General also provided a detailed overview of the organisation's activities and the four key sectors that MedCities prioritises. He encouraged the Mayor of Tripoli to intensify efforts towards environmental and sustainable projects. Following the meeting with the Mayor, a public event was held to officially launch the project in partnership with the Municipality of Tripoli.

Canals also took advantage of his visit to Lebanon to meet with some mayors and presidents of unions. He had the opportunity of meeting with the **mayors of Mina, Tripoli, Zgharta-Ehden and the presidents of Dannieh and Al Fayhaa**. The purpose was to exchange with these recently elected new representatives about the network, and their expectations.

Exploratory walk in Tripoli



ValEUr Gabès: Managing the final phase of sustainable urban water pilot project implementation

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Encourage sustainable urban water management through the recovery of non-conventional water resources in the Municipality of Gabès.

Increasing water demand arising from human activity and reduction of conventional water disposal mechanisms have driven southern cities to rethink the provision and reuse of water sources. In 2025, ValEUr Gabès' activities focused on advancing the implementation of pilot projects, with two retention and infiltration basins and the two rainwater rooftop tanks under construction, with this phase expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

Two public areas in the **Municipality of Gabès** will function as retention and infiltration basins to manage floods during sporadic but heavy rain episodes. These two spaces will reduce the risk of flooding in the city and facilitate the renewal of the subterranean water table in the city of Gabès. Additionally, the municipal slaughterhouse and sports complex rooftops will feature rainwater tanks installed by the project, capable of holding more than 300 m³ of reusable water for use in green spaces and by municipal cleaning services.

With the end of the project scheduled for November 2026, the partnership led by the **AMB** is planning the final capitalisation activities. A capitalisation report will be developed, 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 first-hand.

MedCities is a partner in the project, which is led by the AMB, with funding provided by the EU Delegation in Tunisia.

The project concentrates mainly on **SDG 6** (Clean Water and Sanitation).

Activity of art intervention in Gabès linked to the ValEUr Gabès project



The end of the project is scheduled for November 2026

RESILIENCE – SAIDA: Building a comprehensive risk and resilience profile for Saida

Municipalities are the first line of defence against shocks (sudden events like floods, storms and conflict-related displacement) and stresses (slow-building problems like heat, drought, ageing infrastructure and economic fragility). **A city resilience plan turns that frontline role into a strategic advantage:** it helps a city anticipate risks, prioritise investments, protect vulnerable people and services, coordinate across departments and partners, and recover faster when things go wrong. This is not just good planning: it is also fiscal prudence, social protection and political stability, pooled in one municipal instrument.

With a long record of city-to-city cooperation, **Barcelona City Council funds and supports the RESILIENCE project in Saida.** Led by MedCities, the project aims to build a comprehensive risk and resilience profile for Saida as a Mediterranean city exposed to multiple urban, environmental and socio-economic challenges. The project is implemented in conjunction and continuous coordination with the **Municipality of Saida, the Hariri Foundation** (MedCities observer member) and experts on city resilience from Barcelona City Council and is guided by an **expert team from UN-Habitat**, which provides support for implementation of the City Resilience Profiling Tool.

In July, the city of Saida, MedCities, **UN-Habitat Urban Resilience Hub and Barcelona City Council** kicked off the project with a three-day workshop focused on aligning Saida's operational team—including the Mayor, Mustafa Hijazi—with the City Resilience Profiling Tool methodology developed by UN-Habitat.

Thereafter, the **Saida team** worked on identifying and gathering data and assessing risks, including policy, plans and initiatives, as well as shocks, stresses and challenges. The process required stakeholders' involvement, which led to a high-level event in September, bringing together the Federation of Municipalities of Saida-Zahrani as well as the South Governorate of Lebanon.

Once the preliminary assessment was prepared, a validation workshop was convened in October, with notable attendance and enthusiastic participation from civil society organisations, council members, academia, service providers (waste management, electricity), etc. This permitted fine-tuning of the resilience diagnosis, as well as awareness-raising on the importance of anticipating shocks.



Workshop in Saida for the Resilience project

The Resilience Diagnosis Report was released in December. This document is set to serve as the foundation of Saida's Urban Resilience Strategy in 2026, paving the way to continue the close collaboration between Saida, Barcelona and MedCities in the years to come.

The main SDGs addressed are **SDG 8** (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Within the framework of the RESILIENCE project, the **Secretary-General of MedCities, Josep Canals Molina**, travelled to Lebanon to meet with several city representatives, among them the **President of the Federation of Municipalities of Saida-Zahrani**. Mr. Canals-Molina also held a meeting with the Ambassador of Spain to Lebanon. During the meeting, the Secretary-General presented the organisation's general activities, with a particular focus on its work in Lebanon. He listed the Lebanese municipalities that are members of the MedCities and emphasised **MedCities' special interest in Lebanon**, noting that the **Vice President of MedCities is also the President of the Union of Municipalities of Dannieh**, Lebanon.



Environment and Biodiversity

ANERIS: Consolidating citizen science

In member cities to enrich knowledge of marine biodiversity

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Develop and implement operational marine biology solutions for continuous monitoring of marine biodiversity through participatory science initiatives and cutting-edge technologies, while engaging local communities and stakeholders across the Mediterranean region.

Citizen science is increasingly contributing to the wealth of data and information on marine biodiversity. Following successful work of 2024, MedCities has mobilised local communities within the ANERIS project to enrich the information available on the Mediterranean biodiversity.

ANERIS, funded via a HORIZON-INFRA-2022-TECH-01 grant, 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.

To this end, the project has relied on the **MINKA citizen science platform** for collecting biodiversity and environmental data, with a focus on the SDGs. This platform enables users to collect and store data, ensuring its publication and accessibility for researchers and policymakers. A collaborative validation process involving experts ensures the accuracy and reliability of the data records. The platform empowers citizen scientists, bridging the gap between scientific expertise and the public and promoting community engagement and knowledge sharing.

MedCities has engaged in collaboration with member cities to raise awareness, build capacity and conduct monitoring sessions. In May, **Mersin Metropolitan Municipality** renewed its commitment and, in conjunction with the Turkish Marine Life Conservation Association, jointly organised an introductory workshop to MINKA, with two monitoring sessions: a guided walk observing the seashore, and an underwater exploration session held by divers.

In June, the project **travelled to Italian shores**, with biodiversity monitoring activities held in the Sentina Natural Park and in the waters surrounding Grottammare. In Sentina, participants of all ages learned about the most **interesting species in the park in terms of their role in the ecosystem**. Park staff provided a tour of the area and explained its characteristics, ecosystems and range of biodiversity, reintroducing a small **European pond turtle** during the visit. Following the visit to Sentina, the ANERIS project continued with its activities in Grottammare, undertaking **data collection** at the Scoglio di San Nicola, a Site of Community Importance, where sandy and rocky ecosystems meet.



Citizen science event in Grottammare

In September, 14 volunteers aged between 25 and 70 visited La Misericordia beach in **Málaga** to record the area's rich coastal life. During the event, 60 observations were registered, resulting in the identification of 24 species, primarily molluscs, including *Mytilus galloprovincialis* and *Acanthocardia tuberculata*.

Events of this nature, which focus on registering biodiversity, known as **BioBlitz**, enable engagement with communities in order to find volunteers for **BioMarathons**, which allow for data recording over a longer period of time. During 2025, a total of 84 people participated in these events, registering **154 observations** on the MINKA platform.

In 2026, MedCities will continue to reinforce monitoring sessions in participating member cities, as well as championing participation in others, like **Hyerres**, for the first time.

Strengthening cities' capacity to address climate change



Dialogue 4 Nature (D4N): 2025, a turning point for new Mediterranean governance

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Enhance regional and multilevel governance for nature protection, restoration and valorisation.

2025 was a particularly dynamic year in terms of policy developments in and for the Mediterranean region.

Starting with the **Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3)** and the **Second Mediterranean Green Week** in June, the year continued with several milestone events: the **approval of the new EU Pact for the Mediterranean**, the 10th Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the amendment of the **Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)** and several Barcelona Convention protocols during the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP24), as well as the first steps for the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Plans.

Within this evolving policy landscape, the **Natural Heritage Mission (NHM)** ensured its active participation at all these major events, grasping key opportunities to showcase the work of the thematic projects that are part of the NHM community. Additionally, the NHM designed and implemented a series of activities to create spaces for training, reflection and joint action among participants.

For example, in 2025, **the NHM organised some group or bilateral online workshops to prepare participation to the UNOC3 and the COP24**, and we manage to issue a policy document gathering a common position over the NHM regarding terrestrial and wetlands restoration. Additionally, as D4N project specifically organised some policy trainings to the thematic projects; one introducing the legal framework and policy tools for Mediterranean coastal conservation, another on policy development processes at the Euro-Mediterranean level, and a final one on how to integrate biodiversity into governance frameworks. In all these training sessions, **NHM partners could explore how policies are shaped and influenced to support natural heritage conservation**, providing guidance on planning and effectively implementing legal instruments, and focusing on cross-sectoral approaches to governance for biodiversity protection.

The approval of the new EU Pact for the Mediterranean



The presidency of MedCities, the representative of the Interreg Euro-MED programme and the representative of MedCities at the Mission Natural Heritage event in Barcelona



Natural Heritage Mission - Annual Institutional Dialogue, 2025 in Barcelona

The Third Annual Institutional Dialogue of the Mission

As MedCities, we finished the year with the co-organisation of the **third annual institutional dialogue of the NHM** in Barcelona. A three-days event gathering more than 130 participants coming from organisations and public authorities of all over the Mediterranean. In this occasion, our acting president, **Clare Hart**, **opened the dialogue underlying MedCities' added value in bringing cities together to discuss and share experiences across the Mediterranean and work collectively towards new sustainable solutions for the Mediterranean future.** Among the different interventions concerning Mediterranean Governance and nature restoration plans, we had the opportunity to listen to representatives of three MedCities members, the **City of Dubrovnik, the City of Marseille and the Barcelona Metropolitan Area**. Dubrovnik presented how they shifted from an uncontrolled touristic destination to a sustainable city for its inhabitants and visitors. Marseille presented two of their flagship actions towards a sustainable city; the de-pollution process in the Calanques National Park and their Posidonia Protection Plan. In both actions, Marseille underlined the essential role played by the civil society organisations and academia. Finally, the Barcelona Metropolitan Area showcased the role played by their institution on the recovery of both Llobregat and Besòs riverbanks.

The event underlined **the importance of participatory processes that includes local actors** on the development of EU and national policies, as local actors are **key partners in all governance processes**. Many examples were shown from Interreg Euro-MED thematic project presenting the effectiveness of participatory and scientific-based bottom-up solutions that can contribute to the achievement of the renewed Mediterranean policies frameworks.

The **D4N** project is a project lasting until the end of 2029. It contributes significantly to **SDG 13** (Climate Action) and **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals). In addition, as part of the Natural Heritage Mission, projects also contribute to **SDG 6** (Clean Water and Sanitation) **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production), **SDG 14** (Life Below Water) and **SDG 15** (Life on Land).

The D4N project is a project lasting until the end of 2029

BlueMissionMed: Accelerating the fulfilment of the objectives of the EU Mission: Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Support the European Union Mission: Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030 through a holistic and coherent framework for developing a systemic approach to the pressing need for remediation and regeneration of the Mediterranean Basin's water ecosystem.

Technologies and practices designed to mitigate marine pollution at source

Following two years of work dedicated initially to setting up a framework for appraising the circumstances, needs and challenges of different sectors directly linked to marine pollution, and thereafter to the identification of a wide array of transferable innovative solutions, **in its final year, the project has focused on putting the full range of this knowledge into practice.**

The **BlueMissionMed (BMM) catalogue of solutions**—a curated collection of technologies and practices designed to mitigate marine pollution at source—draws upon the programme's broader support mechanisms at this phase, including mentoring and matchmaking opportunities for cities aiming to pilot or scale these innovations.

Through BMM, MedCities highlights the importance of local authorities' role in addressing the mission's three targets on ecosystem restoration, elimination of pollution and the sustainable blue economy, as well as the urgency of strengthening basin-wide engagement and support outside EU borders.

This year's milestones included, among others:

- Participation in the **European Ocean Days in March**, reinforcing the event's commitment to the EU Mission. MedCities took part in a wide range of sessions, including the matchmaking session, mission thematic workshops and active involvement in the mission forum, engaging stakeholders at the BlueMissionMed project booth. The booth provided an opportunity for stakeholders to gain insights into the project's showcased solutions, emphasising innovative approaches to water remediation and sustainable blue economy transformation. Participants were also invited to join the **BlueMissionMed Support Programme**, designed to scale up and implement these solutions across Mediterranean regions. The **City of Genova and the Metropolitan Municipality of Mersin** were fully engaged in the sessions.
- The celebration of **HUBs4Innovation** online sessions featuring the seven National and Regional Hubs, each addressing different sectors and solutions. MedCities was especially active in the online webinar "**Solutions to Face Plastic Pollution**", organised by the Spanish Hub

ECOMONDO with member cities
Ancona, Genova and Mersin



in March, with 46 attendees, the majority coming from the municipal management sector, including the member cities of **Barcelona and Málaga**. The main objective was to build capacity for the implementation of policies to manage plastic pollution, share and align governance policy tools with mission objectives and reduce plastic waste from land-based sources, particularly tourism, municipal waste management systems and the port sector.

- MedCities **Policy4Med Designathon in July**, an online event dedicated to empowering local authorities in the Mediterranean to tackle one of the region's most pressing environmental challenges: land-based sources of marine pollution. By presenting innovative practices and fostering dialogue around their implementation, the event served as a key step in strengthening an innovative Mediterranean ecosystem rooted in a practical, low-level approach. The event was attended by 47 registered participants, with specific showcases by **Barcelona and Mersin Metropolitan Municipality**. It was also the occasion of the presentation of the BlueMissionMed publication "Depolluting the Mediterranean", which includes a sectoral chapter for local authorities featuring recommendations and good practices on solid waste management, among other issues.
- BMM closed the year with a series of events and sessions at the **International Fair on Green Transition ECOMONDO**, held in Rimini, during the first week of November. MedCities sessions focused on the transferability and sustainability of project outputs, co-organising a session that brought together member cities such as **Genova, Ancona and Mersin** to discuss the potential of innovative tools such as the Digital Twins of the Ocean for Mediterranean local authorities.

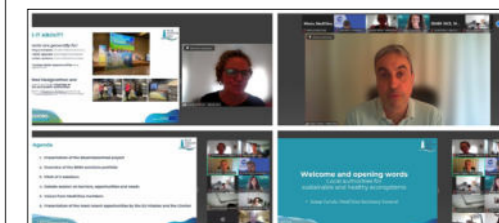
While the BMM project has drawn to a close, MedCities' commitment to the Mission continues. MedCities is one of the partners of a Horizon proposal by a BMM-based consortium, through which it aims to continue supporting the deployment of the Mission in the Mediterranean over the coming years.

The main SDGs addressed by the project are **SDG 6** (Clean Water and Sanitation), **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production), **SDG 14** (Life Below Water) and **SDG 17** (Partnership for the Goals).

ECOMONDO with member cities
Ancona, Genova and Mersin



46 attendees, the majority coming from the municipal management sector



The Policy4Med Design Marathon is driving local action against marine pollution



Economic Development & Social Cohesion

RESILIENCE: Women's entrepreneurship and culture for children A strategy for a resilient Bethlehem

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Boost socio-economic resilience in Bethlehem through the promotion of women's involvement in business and cultural activities for children and teenagers.



Resilience project event in Bethlehem

Across the Mediterranean, urban resilience has become a guiding principle for cities battling floods and heatwaves. However, in the places most at risk, resilience is not only a matter of infrastructure, but also of the social and economic strength that binds communities.

Funded by Barcelona City Council, the RESILIENCE project in **Bethlehem** has focused on the economic and social resilience of the city, in line with its Strategic Development and Investment Plan (2023-2026), placing special emphasis on the most vulnerable population groups: women and children. Building on the community created around the **Bethlehem Peace Center**, which in recent months has become key to the economic development of the city, the project partnered with the Community Development and Continuing Education Institute to implement **12 training sessions for women's entrepreneurship**, focusing on the following topics: research and pricing strategies for small businesses; marketing and branding for handmade goods; digital marketing and online sales, and strategies for growth and sustainability.

Eighteen women have benefited from the training sessions, each with their own particular project ideas and ambitions. Nicole, a 23-year-old entrepreneur from Beit Jala, runs a small beauty business that offers eyelash extensions and lifts, piercings, hair styling, bridal and cinematic make-up and skincare services. Nicole describes the training's impact as a "complete shift", enabling a transition **from a disorganised business management model to a structured and strategic approach**. This change not only boosted her confidence

and marketing abilities, but also strengthened her business's foundations, helping her advance in her ambition of establishing a larger beauty centre in the future.

The project nevertheless encountered certain difficulties, including restrictions on travel due to the political and security situation. These hindered participation and access to the training venue, especially for participants coming from further afield.

In addition, Bethlehem has partnered with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to build an employment opportunities centre. To support this, MedCities organised a technical exchange involving **Barcelona City Council**, via its economic development agency, **Barcelona Activa**, Bethlehem City Council and the Bethlehem Peace Center in October.

Lastly, and as part of a drive to strengthen social ties and to improve mental health in the city, **23 art and cultural workshops for more than 400 children and teenagers** were organised by Power Group. These ranged from "Paper Craft Party (animal masks)" to "Musical Storytelling (narration + improvised sounds)", with a number of them taking place while women attended the training for the purposes of facilitating a work-family balance.

The main SDG addressed is **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

The project adapted to the Bethlehem reality. After a two-year pause caused by Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, Mayor Maher Qanawati announced preparations for this year's Christmas celebrations, and MedCities was requested to provide support. In order to contribute to the emotional resilience, the project organised a Christmas event at the Peace Center with a children's theatre performance and music concerts. The Mayor also said the city remains "a symbol of peace and hope" despite the pressures facing Palestinians. He said Bethlehem's resilience and its humanitarian message continue to "serve as an example for others".

Strengthening intercultural dialogue, gender equality, and youth participation



LASERMed: Advancing towards more inclusive and green economic development

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Monetise the social value of two associations and a social local policy, support green and inclusive local economic promotion and strengthen intermunicipal cooperation

Experts with the support of local specialists, adapted the methodology to each city's context

The **LASERMed 2025: Local Development Initiative with a Social and Environmental Perspective in the Mediterranean** introduced several innovative elements. Among the most significant was the first application of the Integrated Social Value Index (ISVI) by the cities of **Agadir** and **Zgharta-Ehden**. Building on the experience shared in 2024 by the Municipality of El Prat de Llobregat, experts with the support of local specialists, adapted the methodology to each city's context. This allowed them to calculate, for the first time, the monetary value of their social impact. This activity benefited from the mentorship of the Economic Development Department of the **Municipality of El Prat de Llobregat**, which played an active role throughout the process by engaging both online and in-person with councillors from Agadir and Zgharta-Ehden. In November, representatives from the three municipalities—along with members of civil society from each local area—met in Agadir to present their social inclusion, professional capacity building and economic development projects. This meeting also offered an opportunity for valuable peer-to-peer exchange among participants.

Ivsi results in this pilot project

From every dirham spent by the Association SOS Village d'Enfants in Agadir, they produced 1,59 MAD of social integrated value, among their stakeholders (public administration, providers, staff, users and users' families).

From every USD spent by the National Autism Community (NAC) in Zgharta-Ehden, they produced 2,98 USD of social integrated value, among their stakeholders (public administration, providers, staff, users and users' families).

From every dirham spent by the Municipality of Agadir in its social department, they produced 7,66 MAD of social integrated value, among their stakeholders (women, elderly, disabled, street children, and ill population).

Visit to the Oum El Banine Association as part of the LASERMed project



In parallel, the LASERMed 2025 project implemented targeted activities to promote socio-economic development in both cities.

- In **Agadir**, the project supported the creation of an orientation service within municipal social centres to help users access suitable employment opportunities and entrepreneurship initiatives available (public or private) in their region. Following the development of a tailored orientation pathway for vulnerable women, 26 professionals, including public servants, charity staff and association managers, were trained to deliver this service.
- In **Zgharta-Ehden**, the project implemented a training programme for two associations and one informal group to enhance their financial sustainability and revenue-generation capacity. Moreover, LASERMed 2025 facilitated the formalisation of an informal citizen initiative, helping it become a fully established social, green and inclusive organisation.

Finally, in December, a two-part webinar series on *The Role of Municipalities as Active Agents of Socio-Economic Development* was organised for all MedCities members. The first session focused on local green socio-economic services. The second session focused on alternative measures that also facilitate inclusive and sustainable economic development.

Aiming at widespread the learning of this project, a capitalisation document has been published containing the social value index methodology and the cases presented during the LASERMED Community webinars, and it is available in MedCities' website.

Since 2021, the LASERMed initiative, funded by Barcelona Provincial Council, has sought to place local governments at the centre of territorial development. It does so by supporting municipalities in strengthening their local policies, promoting peer-to-peer learning and intermunicipal cooperation, and disseminating good practices in local governance across the Mediterranean region.

The main SDGs addressed by the project are **SDG 8** (Decent Work and Economic Growth), **SDG 10** (Reduced Inequalities) and **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production).

Visit to the Mohammed V Solidarity Foundation for the LASERMed project



Members of civil society gathered in Agadir to present their projects on social inclusion, professional capacity building, and economic development



Sought to place local governments at the centre of territorial development

MedCities as a project platform

Funding programmes to which we have submitted applications

Especially active in the Interreg Next-MED Programme

MedCities engaged in 13 proposals via a set of ongoing European calls, 9 as partners, with the involvement of a great representation of member cities.

We were especially active in responding to the **second call for proposals by the Interreg Next-MED Programme for green transition projects**, aimed at tackling climate challenges across the Mediterranean, with particular attention on **Priority 2: A greener, low-carbon and resilient Mediterranean**.

Within Priority 2, two proposals were presented concerning the objective of **Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions**: one focused on renovation of energy efficiency and storage management in public facilities, including a demonstration in the **AMB**, while the other focused on the improvement of energy efficiency in public facilities and behavioural change, with a strong emphasis on participatory social processes, with the **Metropolitan Municipality of Mersin** as a pilot territory. MedCities acted as a full partner in both proposals.

Five proposals focused on the objective **Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience taking into account ecosystem-based approaches**, with MedCities participating in two as a full partner and three as an associate partner.

A further proposal focused on **Priority 3: A more social and inclusive Mediterranean**, with MedCities participating as an associate partner to **Izmir Metropolitan Municipality**.

In terms of **energy transition**—and in response to the **LIFE 2025 Clean Energy Transition LOCAL call for proposals**, one proposal was submitted addressing electromobility and urban energy reuse, featuring demonstration interventions in the **AMB**, with Thessaloniki acting as a replicator territory, and in which MedCities participated as a full partner. MedCities is also engaged as a **full partner in three proposals** made in response to the **Horizon Europe for the Mission Oceans and Waters** call for local authorities and in one proposal from the **PRIMA Programme on Sustainable Food Systems**.

In the majority of these proposals, MedCities is set to take the lead on key work packages related to capacity building, knowledge transfer and capitalisation.

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Accompanying our members in the preparation of international projects

Participation in 13 new project proposals



Capacity building

MedCities Thematic Working Groups: Focusing on the main Mediterranean cities' challenges

Coastal Cities

In May 2025, the Coastal Cities Working Group, along with other MedCities members leading on coastal management, undertook work on a policy alignment document to advocate for sustainable and healthy coastal ecosystems.

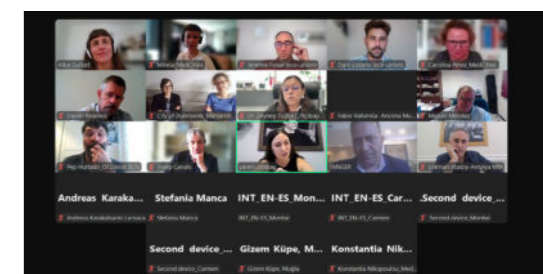
The Joint Position issued as a result of this process addresses 16 specific demands made by local authorities. Our cities seek to be included in coastal governance and planning, and advocate for promoting more sustainable coastal ecosystem management and restoration, reducing pressure on coastal ecosystems, and enabling coastal resilience.

The document is built on existing positions developed by MedCities and endorsed by its Coastal Cities Working Group members. It seeks to influence key global, regional and national policy frameworks and agendas. To this end, the Joint Position was presented during several thematic sessions **at UNOC3 in Nice**, as well as at the CPMR-ICM General Assembly, at the Second Mediterranean Green Week, and at a high-level event of the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters.

The Joint Position declaration is still a unique opportunity to deepen commitment to marine conservation through dialogue, collaboration and advocacy. The involvement of the MedCities Coastal Cities Working Group underscored the critical role of local and metropolitan authorities in shaping practical, inclusive and science-based marine policies.

This initiative is part of the METROMed project, funded by the **AMB**.

Coastal Cities Working Group, with AMB, Bodrum, and Tanger



Preparation meeting with several members of MedCities' coastal cities working group, for UNOC3



MedCities participated at the UNOC3 in Nice



For elected officials and technical staff and opportunities for member cities

Integrated Solid Waste Management

This working group focuses its efforts on the development of municipal integrated waste management plans, prevention, reuse circuits and the circular economy, intermunicipal cooperation, waste collection, treatment infrastructure and finances.

Over the course of 2025, the working group developed an online capacity-building programme on technological and digital solutions in municipal waste management, with the support of the AMB.

In July, two webinars brought together eight MedCities member cities—**Al Fayhaa, Ain Al-Basha, Jerash, Higher Chouf, Irbid, Málaga, M'Saken and Zgharta-Ehden**—along with representatives of Libyan municipalities, with the support of GIZ Libya.

The first session introduced key concepts related to efficient municipal waste management and the appropriate technological solutions applicable within the sector, such as kerbside collection using Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) models, user identification systems, fill level sensors for containers and weighing systems in waste collection vehicles. The importance of biowaste was stressed, since it is the largest fraction in municipal waste management.

The second session offered hands-on training in a Decision Support Web Tool (DSWT) used to evaluate urban biowaste systems according to environmental, economic and social indicators. This tool enables assessment of the impacts associated with each stage of the biowaste and residual waste management system (i.e. generation, separation at source, collection from generation sources to the first waste facility, pretreatment, treatment, final disposal, use of bio-based products, and transport between different facilities).

A short mentoring programme followed in autumn, which provided support to **Al Fayhaa, Higher Chouf and M'Saken** in implementing the DSWT and advancing sustainable local waste strategies.

The main projects related to this Working Group are: A'SIMA Tunis (EuropeAid), Gov4GreenMed (NEXT MED) and METROMed (AMB).

An online capacity-building programme on technological and digital solutions in municipal waste management



Greener and Resilient Cities

The Working Group on Greener and Climate Resilient Cities' 2025 action plan focused on build-out, inclusivity and resilience in urban climate action, with activities centred on three key areas: digitalisation and data use, participatory approaches to green urban planning, and the promotion of NbS. Four main activities were implemented during 2025:

1— Technical study visits to València (1–3 July 2025)

Organised with the support of the Fundació València Clima i Energia, the visit provided a practical learning experience on urban greening, green infrastructure and citizen engagement. Participants included representatives from the three NATURIncMed pilot cities—**Gabès** (Tunisia), **Madaba** (Jordan) and **El Mina** (Lebanon)—along with five additional municipalities participating in the Working Group: **Agadir** (Morocco), **Hatay** and **Bodrum** (Türkiye), **Roscovec** (Albania) and **Ein-El-Basha** (Jordan). The exchange showcased innovative models for community participation in planning and maintaining urban green spaces.

2— Online training on digital twins and data use for urban decision-making (6, 23 and 30 September 2025)

In collaboration with the Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC), this three-session online training module focused on building municipal capacity to use data, indicators and digital tools for sustainable and resilient urban governance. Focusing on Digital twins—virtual city models that integrate real time and historical data—the training sessions demonstrated how these technologies can support simulation, analysis and decision-making in areas such as mobility, energy, waste management and climate adaptation.

3— Webinar – Accelerating the digital transition of Mediterranean municipalities and metropolises (4 November 2025)

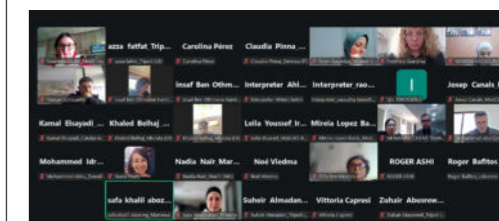
Held as part of the **METROMed** project – and, within the Digitalisation Study, one of its main outputs – this webinar brought together MedCities members from the Greener and Resilient Cities, Waste Management and Sustainable Mobility Working Groups. The session aimed to align members on common frameworks and methods, share practical city cases and lessons learned, and identify key barriers and quick wins. It also co-prioritised support actions for the next 6–12 months and served to launch a call for additional city case studies.

4— Online knowledge transfer session on equity and inclusivity in urban green planning (December 2025)

This session presented the **NATURIncMed** participatory methodology tailored to Arab cities. The three pilot cities shared early experiences from their local participatory diagnosis processes, contributing to more inclusive and community-driven approaches to green infrastructure.

Focused on build-out, inclusivity and resilience

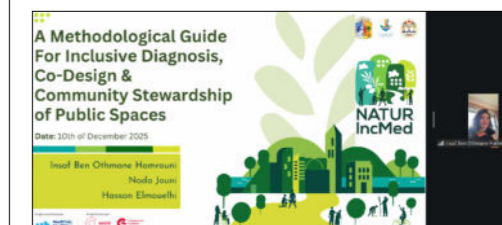
Workshop on the NATURIncMed participatory methodology adapted for Arab cities



Technical visit to València as part of the NATURIncMed project



NATURIncMed Participatory Methodology Adapted for Arab Cities



Barcelona Academy for Mediterranean Municipalities (BAMM)

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Support Mediterranean municipalities in developing effective strategies to promote urban resilience and tackle climate change-related effects at the urban level.

From 7 to 10 October 2025, Barcelona became a hub for Mediterranean cities committed to addressing climate change, with the second edition of the **Barcelona Academy for Mediterranean Municipalities (BAMM)**. Organised by **MedCities** and **Barcelona City Council**, with funding from AECID, the Academy gathered 19 elected representatives and technical experts from 11 cities: Amman, **Madaba**, **Saida**, **El Mina**, **Bethlehem**, **Ramallah**, **Tétouan**, **Gabès**, **Tunis**, Nouakchott and Dakar.

This year, BAMM adopted a holistic approach to resilience, addressing not only environmental but also socio-economic and health factors as Mediterranean cities stand on the front line of the climate crisis, facing rising temperatures, water scarcity, floods and social inequalities.

The first day, led by **UN-Habitat**, introduced the City Resilience Profiling Tool (CRPT), a structured methodology for assessing and planning urban resilience, highlighting flood response in Jordan and post-conflict participatory planning in Syria. **Barcelona City Council** showcased the city's integrated resilience strategies, while member cities shared practices, such as Madaba's inclusive green parks, Tétouan's Local Energy and Climate Service, Bethlehem's stormwater management system and Dakar's municipal resilience programme. Special guests from Aleppo (Syria) and Qena (Egypt), invited by AECID, provided further regional perspectives.

The second day focused on data-driven urban planning. **Barcelona Regional** focused on integrating climate data into urban design, addressing heat, drought and coastal risks. Participants explored digital twins, vulnerability mapping tools such as the Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI) by the **AMB** and the EU-funded project **Climate Ready BCN**. Digital co-design and gamification projects, presented by the **Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC)** together with the **BCN in Your Pocket App**, highlighted how digital services are becoming more and more important and how citizens can also engage in reporting problems in the city. Cities presented initiatives including Nouakchott's data-based planning, Saida's resilience strategy, Ramallah's child-friendly urban environment and Amman's Resilience strategy. The third day offered field visits to Barcelona's resilience infrastructure, including the **Joan Miró retention basin**, the **CECOR emergency management centre** and the new urban

BAMM adopted a holistic approach to resilience, addressing not only environmental factors

park located in **Plaça de les Glòries**, in addition to showcasing Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and long-term planning, with a practical exercise focused on SDGs led by United Cities and Local Governments (**UCLG**).

The fourth day addressed social and health resilience, with the **Barcelona Public Health Agency (ASPB)** presenting climate-health adaptation measures and plans. The **University of Barcelona Solidarity Foundation** introduced the importance of a *One Health* approach based on the interconnection between human, animal and environmental health, while the **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)** presented its programme for strengthening SME resilience. Tunis's Safe City, the **ValEur Gabès** water efficiency programme and El Mina's participatory planning projects were also discussed.

The Academy concluded with a participatory workshop, during which participants co-designed a joint roadmap for resilient and inclusive cities. This edition also ran alongside the **UN-Habitat Regional Consultation**, opening a valuable space for dialogue and reflecting the Mediterranean's determination to shape a resilient future. The Academy's final message reaffirmed a shared vision: *"Resilience is a collective process, built through specific action, and driven by the hope of improving people's wellbeing and building their capacity to handle adversity"*.

Participants co-designed a joint roadmap for resilient and inclusive cities



Technical visit by BAMM participants to Glòries Park in Barcelona



The Deputy Director for Cooperation with the Arab World and Asia at AECID, Ms Luísa M. García García; the Deputy Mayor of Barcelona – and City Councillor responsible for 'District 11 of Palestinian Cities' – María Eugenia Gay; and Josep Canals, Secretary General of MedCities



Participants of the second edition of the BAMM gather at Barcelona City Hall

Study of the digital transition of Mediterranean municipalities and metropolises

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

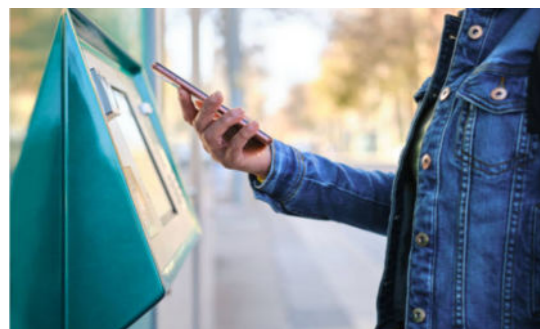
Negotiate capacity gaps, including limited resources, outdated systems and weak digital governance frameworks, in addition to the urban digital divide between different municipalities and that affecting vulnerable groups, and the fragmented coordination and knowledge exchange which hinders replication of best practices and alignment with regional and EU agendas.

Cities in the region show broad differences in digital maturity

As part of the **METROMed** project, this study provides a strategic roadmap to support Mediterranean municipalities and metropolises in their digital transformation. Cities in the region show broad differences in digital maturity, ranging from advanced smart cities to municipalities still developing basic connectivity and e-government services. Digitalisation can improve public service efficiency and urban sustainability, supporting the **EU Green Deal and SDG**, but challenges remain. Many cities face limited resources, fragmented data systems and weak governance, while others struggle to ensure inclusive access to digital tools. The study pursues six objectives:

- 1 — Identify digitalisation opportunities aligned with EU and national agendas.
- 2 — Diagnose challenges to municipal digital transition.
- 3 — Document seven innovation case studies.
- 4 — Integrate insights from MedCities' Waste Management and Green and Resilient Cities Working Groups.
- 5 — Provide recommendations to strengthen municipal capacities.
- 6 — Propose a forward-looking action plan for MedCities and the AMB.

The methodology combines desk research, city engagement through an online survey and consultation workshop, and case study analysis, ensuring findings are evidence-based and contextually relevant.



IEFCA: Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award 2025

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Encourage local authorities to move towards a more environmentally friendly future, enable local authorities to act as role models to inspire other cities, and raise awareness among the general public regarding environmental quality in their cities.

Promoted by the **United Nations Environment Programme's Mediterranean Action Plan (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 as a flagship initiative within the **Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)**. The Award recognises and highlights the role and efforts of local authorities in Mediterranean coastal cities in achieving sustainability.

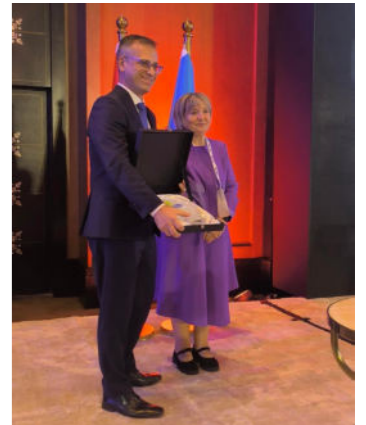
In previous editions, **MedCities** supported **UNEP/MAP** via the implementation of the biannual Istanbul Award.

COP24 also held the award ceremony of the fifth edition of the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award on Thursday 4 December 2025. This edition distinguished Almería as the winning city, recognizing its outstanding performance across climate action, including through its Municipal Climate Change Plan (PMCC), biodiversity protection, integrated planning, and water management. Balıkesir (Türkiye) ranked second, whereas Antalya, one of MedCities member, ranked third in this competition.

In total, 10 applications were received. MedCities implemented an outreach strategy across its network, organising two online regional workshops focused on the award (attended by 33 people), supporting interested cities in their applications, coordinating evaluation of applications with a team of experts and planning for the participation of the winning city at the award ceremony. For this edition, the application form was simplified in order to enable increased participation. In total, ten applications were received and assessed.

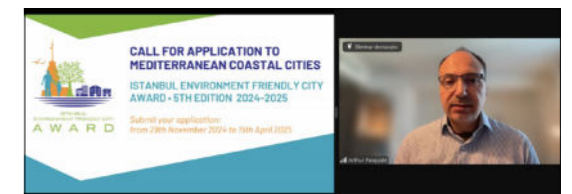
Since its inception, three MedCities members have been awarded this prize. These are **Izmir Metropolitan Municipality**, **Municipality of Málaga** and **Municipality of Genova**.

Almería received the IEFCA 2025 Award



This edition distinguished Almería as the winning city

Webinar introducing the Istanbul Award



Presentation of the Istanbul UNEP MAP Award



MedCities as a Knowledge Transfer Platform

Working towards cohesive internal and external communication

This year, MedCities has continued to strengthen both its internal and external communication to ensure visibility, transparency and engagement for our members and partners.

In terms of **external communication**, we worked closely with an external expert who supported us in drafting and sharing press calls and press releases for key events. As a result, MedCities was featured in several Catalan media outlets, which published articles and interviews highlighting our activities and objectives. We also produced a wide range of **audiovisual and graphic materials** to raise awareness of MedCities projects and the initiatives in which our member cities have been involved. This enabled us to present our work in a more attractive, professional and accurate way, helping to highlight the impact of our initiatives across the Mediterranean. Throughout the year, we continued to promote our events, meetings and exchange visits via our two websites—**MedCities** and **MedUrbanTools**—as well as via our social media channels.

As for **internal communication**, MedCities maintained regular contact with all member cities through targeted emails and our monthly newsletter, which includes specific calls for proposals and updates tailored to their interests. We truly value the contributions and initiatives of our member cities and encourage them to keep sharing relevant news, events and project highlights with us so we can amplify their visibility through our channels.

In addition, this year we **relaunched our Knowledge Transfer Centre in the Middle East**, reinforcing our commitment to maintaining close ties with our members in the region and improving communication and collaboration at a local level.

Finally, we would like to remind our members that the **MedCities website includes a members-only internal area**, accessible with a username and password. If you are a member city and do not yet have login credentials, please contact the Secretariat so that we can provide you with access.

Through the contributions of our members, MedCities can continue to act as their ambassador and champion across the Mediterranean.



Examples of some of the articles and interviews published in national and international media linked to MedCities activities

Exchanging good practices among Mediterranean cities

MedUrbanTools open resources platform

MedUrbanTools is one of the eleven flagship initiatives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development under the UNEP/MAP –Barcelona Convention system.

Over the past year, the **MedUrbanTools website has continued to grow as an open knowledge platform** providing valuable and practical information for MedCities members and partners. The platform serves as a shared space for exchanging experiences, tools and strategies that contribute to building sustainable and resilient Mediterranean cities.

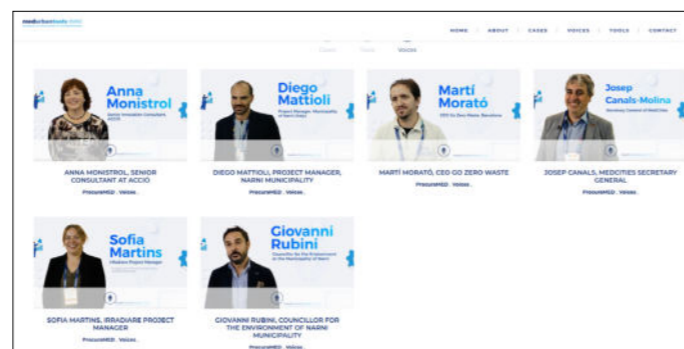
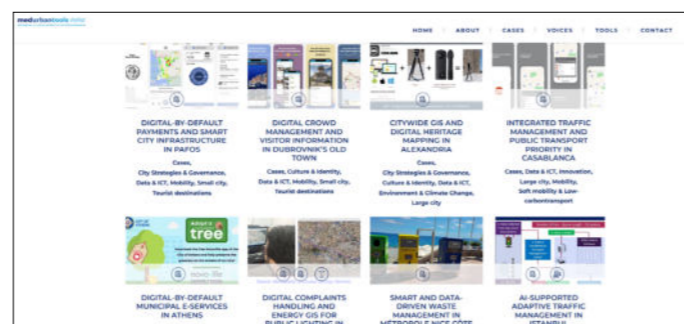
A major milestone this year has been the creation of a new section, **Innovation**, which gathers the outputs of the **ProcuraMED project**. This section features some 30 new entries—both cases and tools—which illustrate innovative public procurement practices and showcase how cities can integrate sustainability and innovation into their urban policies and projects.

In addition, the **Voices section**—featuring interviews with experts and practitioners—is set to include new contributions in the coming months, further enriching the diversity of perspectives available on the platform.

The platform continues to feature a wide variety of case studies, tools and interviews covering topics such as strategic planning, mobility, climate adaptation and coastal management. These resources are aligned with the SDGs and are designed to provide practical insights for local authorities facing urban and environmental challenges across the Mediterranean region.

Crucially, **MedUrbanTools is an open platform for all MedCities members**. We warmly invite member cities to share information about their own initiatives and projects that represent good practices—whether as cases or tools—so that these can be included on the platform and made available to peers across the network.

Examples of best practice and interviews published on the MedUrbanTools website



MedCities strategic alliances

Case studies: 212
Voices: 132
Tools: 112

Total number of cases, tools and voices published: 456

The Mediterranean global voice

AECID: Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation

MedCities has worked in conjunction with the **AECID** since 2024. That year, our organisation joined the regional **Masar Al'an programme**, an ambitious initiative focusing on three critical areas of intervention: employment creation, ecological transition—with an emphasis on the environment and water—and gender equality. The **partnership between AECID and MedCities is anchored within the NATURIncMed project**, which supports three Mediterranean pilot cities in designing and implementing socially inclusive green urban spaces and strengthens local capacities for greener and more resilient cities. In January 2025, MedCities participated in the **Masar Al'an programme** launch at Casa Mediterráneo in Alicante. Representatives from North Africa, the Arab world and Spanish cooperation offices attended, and **MedCities presented NATURIncMed**, highlighting its focus on knowledge exchange, innovative local projects and training in climate-resilient urbanism, nature-based solutions and gender inclusion. Building on this, in April 2025, MedCities joined the virtual meeting arranged by **AECID Tunisia** with other Spanish cooperation stakeholders active in the country, sharing initial developments of the NATURIncMed project there, as well as the EU-funded projects **A'SIMA Tunis**, **ValEur Gabès** and **MAIS**. The meeting facilitated discussions on project adaptation, regional coordination and best practices, strengthening collaboration with Spanish cooperation partners. These activities, carried out in 2025, consolidated the strategic partnership started in 2024, **reinforcing MedCities' role as a key regional actor** in promoting sustainable, inclusive and climate-resilient urban development across the Mediterranean.



Presentation of MedCities as part of the launch of the MASAR AL'AN programme (AECID)

UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) – Barcelona Convention

MedCities has continued to strengthen its ties with the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention. As a member of the Steering Committee, **MedCities took part in the 25th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSDD)** held in Greece, which **brought together sustainable development stakeholders from across the Mediterranean**, including the directors of the six regional activity centres, observers (AFED, UfM and MedCities) and two representatives of the MedYouthGroup. This high-level meeting served to update the activities related to the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025, looking ahead to the period 2026-2035, with MedCities spearheading the inclusion of new terms under which the role of local authorities will be recognised. The new MSSD was ratified at the COP 24 meeting in December.



Signing of the memorandum of understanding between MedCities and UNEP MAP

MedCities participated in the MCSDD Steering Committee meeting. The MedCities Secretary-General highlighted the progress of two flagship initiatives: the Istanbul Award and the MedUrbanTools open resources platform. He also proposed the creation of a working group on NetZero cities, which was approved, and followed by the joint drafting by UNEP/MAP and MedCities of an initial concept paper for discussion at the next MCSDD meeting.

In 2024, MedCities supported the review and simplification of the IEFCA award application form and was involved in the launch of the 2024-2025 edition to coincide with the Day of the Mediterranean. MedCities also engaged in discussion and a preliminary proposal to upscale the award through the adaptation of elements of the EU Mission: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, focused on delivering 100 climate-neutral and smart cities to the Mediterranean.

At the COP24, MedCities formally signed an **MoU with the UNEP/MAP Programme** to provide a strong and stable framework for future cooperation.

SCEWC: Smart City Expo World Congress

MedCities and Smart City Expo World Congress join forces to promote urban innovation in the Mediterranean

MedCities has signed a collaboration agreement with the **Smart City Expo World Congress (SCEWC)**, the world's leading event on cities and urban innovation, held annually in Barcelona and organised by **Fira de Barcelona**. Bringing together global leaders, policymakers, and innovators, the SCEWC drives progress towards more sustainable, efficient and human-centred urban models.

Through this partnership, **MedCities** became an **Official Collaborating Organization** for the 2025, 2026 and 2027 editions of the SCEWC. We will promote the event among Mediterranean members and partners, fostering exchange on digital transformation, sustainability and metropolitan governance. The collaboration entails no monetary contribution but instead ensures mutual visibility and communication support between both bodies.

One of the first activities under this partnership was **MedCities' participation in the 2025 edition**, featuring the presentation of the **ProcuraMED project**. This collaboration reinforces **MedCities' mission** to connect local governments and promote inclusive, sustainable and innovative urban development across the Mediterranean.



ProcuraMed project at the SCEWC in Barcelona

UN-Habitat

With longstanding good relations between both parties, MedCities has engaged in partnership work with UN-Habitat, particularly via its Urban Resilience Hub in Barcelona. The Urban Resilience Hub is currently engaged in the RESILIENCE project funded by Barcelona City Council, providing guidance and technical support to the municipality of Saida (Lebanon) and local experts to build the city's "Resilience Profile".

Moreover, both bodies joined forces as part of the **Barcelona Academy of Mediterranean Municipalities (BAMM)** initiative. Through this collaboration, MedCities

and its members who participated in the 2025 edition of BAMM also took part in the UN-Habitat Regional Consultation on Resilience held in Barcelona. The **UN-Habitat Urban Resilience Hub** also delivered the foundational training session at this year's edition of the BAMM.

This collaboration, fostered by Barcelona City Council and the Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development (AECID), has set up a joint line of work that will continue to be followed over the coming years.



Representatives from UN-Habitat at the BAMM in Barcelona

UCLG: United Cities and Local Governments

We have continued strengthening our relations with UCLG by working on building the capacity of our members in relation to localising SDGs in the areas where they are experts.

We also participated in the visit of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) to Catalonia, highlighting a number of experiences in urban management, including water treatment, and resilience. MedCities was also invited to present the network to APLA staff and members.

We also attended the annual UCLG retreat and lab in Barcelona with the participation of our **Acting President, Clare Hart**.



The Presidency of MedCities, Montpellier, and the Secretary-General of MedCities at the UCLG retreat

Promote the interests of local authorities

in local and international forums

MedCat Days 2025

Shaping the future of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation

The sixth edition of **MedCat Days**, held in Barcelona, gathered Mediterranean stakeholders to reflect on the future of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, thirty years after the launch of the Barcelona Process. Organised by the **European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)**, the **UfM**, the **European Commission Representation in Barcelona**, the **Government of Catalonia** and the **MedCoopAlliance**—of which MedCities is a founding member—the event fostered strategic dialogue, territorial cooperation and multilevel governance.



The Secretary of MedCities, also Vice-President of the AMB, is contributing to MedCatDays on a panel focusing on the multi-stakeholder approach in Mediterranean cities

Towards a renewed vision for the Mediterranean

This edition focused on the need for a renewed and inclusive vision of cooperation to address pressing geopolitical, social and environmental challenges. It also provided an opportunity to engage with the European Commission's forthcoming new Pact for the Mediterranean, a key policy to reinforce ties with Southern and Eastern partners.

In her keynote address, **Dubravka Šuica**, the newly appointed **European Commissioner for the Mediterranean**, underlined the region's potential:

“The Mediterranean must be a space of shared responsibility and opportunity. Local and regional authorities are not only implementers but architects of change.”

“This must be the era of stability in the Mediterranean following the new Pact for the Mediterranean that will be presented in October, and which has been worked on with a bottom-up approach to present tangible results for the benefit of people.”

The role of local and metropolitan governments

With the Mediterranean region warming 20% faster than the global average, its local and metropolitan authorities face the dual challenge of cutting emissions and building resilience.

At MedCat Days, **Jordi Castellana**, Vice-President for International and Digital Metropolis at the AMB and Secretary of MedCities, stressed their central role:

“Local authorities are on the front lines of the climate crisis and need to be heard and have a central role in international forums and decisions.”

“Local and metropolitan governments in the Mediterranean share the challenges of reducing emissions and addressing the daily effects of climate change on their citizens.”

Castellana highlighted the **AMB's Metropolitan Action Plan (2024–2027)**, aligned with the UN SDGs and the **New Urban Agenda**, and **MedCities initiatives such as the A'SIMA Tunis project** on sustainable resource management. He also reaffirmed the importance of MedCities' membership of the **MCSO under the Barcelona Convention**, to strengthen local participation in regional policy processes.

IME and AVITEM: a local Mediterranean voice on the water agenda

MedCities, the **Mediterranean Water Institute (IME)** and **AVITEM** joined forces at the **World Metropolitan Summit 2025 (WMS 2025)** to advance governance and cooperation for sustainable water management across the Mediterranean. As part of the WMS 2025 programme, the three organisations convened the event “Towards a Water-Resilient Mediterranean: Solutions from Local Authorities” (held on 16 October 2025 in Barcelona).

Gathering metropolitan and local representatives from across the region, the meeting addressed the urgent challenge of ensuring sustainable water governance amidst increasing scarcity, uneven distribution and climate pressures in Mediterranean urban areas. Participants discussed integrated approaches linking water, energy, food and ecosystems (**WEFE Nexus**), innovative reuse practices and equitable access to water as a human right. Our members, such as the **AMB, Antalya, Agadir, Barcelona, Bodrum, Metropolis of Napoli, Genova and Tanger**, shared the stage with other relevant stakeholders on water management to discuss their own good practices as a step towards shaping a more sustainable region.

The event served as a key milestone in building a shared Mediterranean voice ahead of the **Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum (Rome, 2026)** and the **World Water Forum (Riyadh, 2027)**, where local governments aim to present joint political recommendations.

By highlighting the role of municipalities in fostering urban resilience, green transition, and inclusive governance, this initiative contributes directly to the achievement of **SDG 6** (Clean Water and Sanitation) and **SDG 11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

The event was made possible thanks to the support of the AMB in the scope of the METROMed project.



Opening by the event organisers: IME, AVITEM and MedCities

MedCities Dialogue: Resilient cities and metropolises

— transformation and adaptation to pressing challenges

CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

Cultivate greater interest and awareness of Mediterranean issues among Catalan citizens, highlighting both the role of MedCities as a bridge between shores and the commitment of local and metropolitan authorities to cooperation in the Mediterranean, and staking our claim for involvement in the process of building a prosperous and resilient region.

The third edition of the MedCities Dialogues concentrated on resilient Mediterranean urban futures against a backdrop of growing threats. It featured **Jordi Castellana, Vice-President for International Relations and Digital Metropolis at the AMB, and Issa Kassis, Mayor of Ramallah**, in a high-level and profound conversation, with a technical and political focus, as well as a marked emotional impact. Their discussions focused on the importance of working together to improve the wellbeing of our citizens and the quality of the environment at a local level.

Cities are both drivers and victims of the global climate crisis. In the Middle East, this is coupled with additional risks linked to latent and open armed conflict. The dialogue focused on how cities can design and build their **urban resilience from a multidimensional perspective**, addressing environmental, social and economic aspects while gauging the growing threat of military aggression. As an example, both speakers discussed **climate change challenges** and how cities are coping with the weather volatility this causes, how they are preparing to manage floods and droughts, and how there is a constant and **undeniable link between city management and the wellbeing of citizens**. In the case of Ramallah,



Presentation of the “MedCities Dialogue” by the Secretary General of MedCities, Josep Canals



Speech by Mr Jordi Castellana, Vice-President of Internacional and Digital Metropolis at the AMB and MedCities Secretary

the focus remained on how to understand resilience, bearing in mind that any action taken in terms of **city management is carried out under an occupation that prevents authorities from providing basic services in the way they would like to**. The mayor highlighted the need for cooperation with other international associations and organisations with a shared vision, as well as the importance of spaces for debate in which they can elaborate on their day-to-day experience.

By his side, the AMB Vice-President highlighted the creation of the organisation’s social cohesion, investment and spending plans, which are available to local authorities interested in bringing investment to municipalities unable to fund projects designed to strengthen local and regional cohesion.

Issa Kassis, Mayor of Ramallah:

“Ramallah is a municipality that offers services like no other municipality in the world. We are building a citizenry, and we are building a country, a homeland.

When I talk about building citizenry, I mean that we are helping citizens to progress, to educate themselves, to live in an environment that allows them to think about their families, their children, the future—to prepare themselves, to build the future. And we are doing this under an occupation that limits us every day.”

Jordi Castellana, AMB Vice-President:

“I believe that metropolitan areas are essential. Ultimately, strengthening in an area that apparently does not concern us—it seems that we are only concerned with waste, water, etc.—backing our public services, diversifying our economy and having infrastructure adapted to climate change will also strengthen democracy.

Therefore, this is my wish: that by strengthening all these areas of resistance, we also strengthen democracy.”

UNOC3: MedCities at the Third United Nations Ocean Conference

MedCities contributed to high-level events

MedCities actively participated in **UNOC3 in Nice**, contributing to high-level events that strengthened collaboration between scientific, policy and local authorities for the protection of marine ecosystems.

Launch of the Coalition for Coastal Cities and Regions

On 7 June 2025, the Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Summit, a special UNOC3 event, marked the official launch of the Coalition for Coastal Cities and Regions. Over 200 local leaders, including MedCities members Al Hoceimas, Antalya, Málaga, Mersin and Mugla, highlighted the central role of cities, scientists and civil society in climate adaptation. The launch also concluded the Sea’ties project, addressing major coastal adaptation challenges with MedCities’ involvement.

The Coalition invites coastal cities and regions to join by signing its Charter, a **voluntary, non-binding pledge** to enhance access to capacity building, financial and scientific opportunities for resilient coastlines.

A voice for coastal authorities

The **MedCities Secretary-General, Josep Canals Molina**, joined a networking breakfast organised by the **Government of Catalonia** on “Science to Policy,” at which he presented the **ANERIS Project**, showcasing the impact of citizen science on ocean conservation.

Alliances for Action: a Mediterranean perspective

Mediterranean Day on 10 June 2025 focused on the region’s climate challenges. **Dubravka Šuica**, European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, announced progress on the **Pact for the Mediterranean**, centred on People, Economy, Peace and Resilience.

Agnès Rampal, President of the **Agency for Sustainable Mediterranean Cities and Territories (AVITEM)**, introduced a joint initiative by AVITEM, **MedCities** and partners to build a unified Mediterranean vision for coastal resilience. **Clare Hart**, Acting President of **MedCities**, presented the position paper “Local Authorities for Sustainable and Healthy Coastal Ecosystems”, emphasising port-city relations, ecosystem restoration and reduced environmental pressures. This position is a joint output of the MedCities Coastal Cities Working Group as part of the METROMed project, supported by the AMB.

Addressing degraded ecosystems

MedCities also joined a panel on restoring degraded ecosystems and **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**, alongside **MedPAN**, the **Government of Catalonia** and other partners.

Conclusion

Participation in **UNOC3** reinforced **MedCities’** commitment to inclusive, science-based cooperation and the vital role of local authorities in ocean governance.



Dubravka Šuica, European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, marks Mediterranean Day and announces progress on the Pact for the Mediterranean



Partners of the BlueMissionMed project, including MedCities, at the Mediterranean Day event at UNOC3

New Pact for the Mediterranean

We have actively participated in political forums to stress the role of local authorities as key implementers of global agendas, agents of change and enhancers of local diplomacy essential for cohesion and peace in the region. To this end, we have participated and shared this vision as part of the consultation process for the Pact for the Mediterranean conducted by the European Union as a step towards a new era in interregional relations. Indeed, **MedCities' Secretary-General, Josep Canals Molina**, was present at the consultation with Southern stakeholders carried out by the European Union in Cairo, in addition to the consultation organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) in Brussels.



The Secretary-General of MedCities, Josep Canals, attended the consultation with stakeholders from the South organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) in Brussels



UfM: Union for the Mediterranean

2025 was a crucial year for UfM, marking the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, with revision of its RoadMap for the future amidst an extremely challenging geopolitical situation. MedCities participated and provided input at many different moments and levels throughout the year.

In February 2025, MedCities participated in UfM's first open consultation on its future vision and mandate. Held as part of a broader reform process, the event offered an opportunity to explore which areas of cooperation should be prioritised over the coming years, and how the UfM can play a unique role in future regional challenges, including post-crisis reconciliation and recovery.

MedCities was also present at the **Second Mediterranean Green Week**, which took place in Brussels in June, and which aimed to strengthen multilateralism and enhance collaborative dialogue among the 43 UfM Member States. It centred on key energy, environment, climate and water Focal Points, bringing a broad range of stakeholders together, including funding institutions, local and national governments, civil society and expert organisations. This edition took place at a key stage for Mediterranean policy, with the new Pact for the Mediterranean under development, the 30th anniversary of the Mediterranean Process and the 50th anniversary of the

Barcelona Convention, and the unlocking of new financial instruments to underpin the green and blue transition in the Mediterranean. MedCities participated in the meeting of the **UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Action**, featuring on the panel which discussed the risks posed by rising sea levels, representing the **D4N** Interreg Euro-MED project, a UfM-labelled initiative. During the session, MedCities highlighted D4N's strategic efforts on policymaking, notably the policy recommendations for the **EU Nature Restoration Law**. The discussion also provided the opportunity to highlight the initiatives which MedCities is engaged in, particularly the Mediterranean Lighthouse project **BlueMissionMed**, the **Ocean Cities Network**, the **Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Coalition** and the **EU Mission: Restore our Oceans and Waters**. The intervention closed with a presentation of the work carried out by the **MedCities Coastal Cities Working Group** to reach a **joint policy position** on the challenges and needs of local authorities in delivering sustainable and healthy coastal urban ecosystems.

MedCities is also engaged in the **UfM Water agenda**, and participated in a kick-off meeting at the 6th Mediterranean Water Forum, focused on joining forces and incorporating local perspectives within the Mediterranean and global water agenda.



The Union for the Mediterranean's first open consultation on its future vision and mandate



The Union for the Mediterranean took part in the session on water-resilient cities organised by MedCities

Rivercity Global Forum

Rivercity Global Forum 2025, organised by the city of Montería in Colombia, is a gathering of mayors and experts from around the world who have transformed cities around rivers. It is a space for sharing experiences, case studies and lessons learned to inspire local governments, experts and academics to transform cities based on their own rivers.

MedCities was invited by the mayor of Montería to participate in a number of panels, at which a range of our members' success stories were shared. The **Vice-President of Montpellier Métropole Méditerranée, Claire Hart**, presented the strategy for managing the river Lez; **Xavier Tiana, representing the AMB**, presented the ecological restoration of the Llobregat and Besòs rivers, and **MedCities' Secretary-General, Josep Canals Molina**, highlighted a number of projects linked to river protection and restoration, including **BlueMissionMed** and **D4N**.

Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action

More than 100 NGOs and civil society organisations, parliamentarians, journalists, women's and youth group representatives, researchers and private-sector actors from across the Mediterranean convened in Cairo for the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action: **"Making the behavioural shift happen"**.

By bringing together diverse voices and areas of expertise, the Forum aspired to strengthen understanding and skills, consolidate and expand active Mediterranean communities of practice, help break down siloed governance approaches and encourage compelling narratives to accelerate behavioural change in support of climate preparedness in the region.

Within Session 3: Optimising synergies and managing trade-offs – The WEFEX nexus within the S2S continuum, **Josep Canals Molina, MedCities Secretary-General**, highlighted the role of the **WEFEX4MED NCoP** in sharing knowledge and practices across the Mediterranean, as well as other **specific WEFEX interventions by MedCities in countries like Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia**. During the session, Canals highlighted the importance of the motto of the conference in encouraging change in behaviours among the general public in order to mitigate the causes of the climate emergency, as well as the role of local authorities as key implementers, giving specific examples of actions undertaken.

The Secretary-General also detailed other projects in which the WEFEX approach featured transversally, in addition to projects which several member cities are engaged in, including **NaturMed, NarturIncMed, ValEU Gabès and URWAN**.

The Forum, held on 21 October 2025, was supported by the EU, the UNEP/MAP–Barcelona Convention, the UfM, the League of Arab States and the Ministry of Environment of Egypt. It was made possible with the support of the EU-funded WES-BCA project and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)-funded MedProgramme, in close collaboration with the EU Delegation to Egypt, the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) and other partners that champion climate action through diverse initiatives.



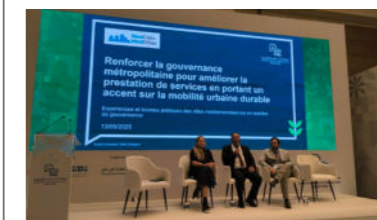
MedCities' participation in the Consultation of Southern Stakeholders organised by the European Union in Cairo. The Secretary-General of MedCities presented some of the association's projects



AECD: The Arab-European Cities Dialogue

The **Arab-European Cities Dialogue (AECD)** is a global-regional forum that aims to create a space for cooperation, enhance communication and build relationships between representatives of Arab and European cities and municipalities, including mayors, presidents, secretaries and governors, with the participation of influential parties in international development, such as international urban organisations, intermunicipal entities and donor institutions. As an event, it is scheduled to take place over a period of ten years, alternating between Arab and European cities.

MedCities joined the Arab-European Cities Dialogue organised by the **Arab Urban Development Institute** in Riyadh in 2025, hosting one of the Forum for Local Action sessions **"Building Metropolitan Governance to Enhance the Provision of Services With a Focus on Sustainable Urban Mobility"**. Together with **Clare Hart, Vice President of Montpellier Métropole Méditerranée and Acting President of MedCities** as host, MedCities' Secretary-General presented a study into metropolitan governance and sustainable mobility, undertaken in collaboration with AMB. During the session, speakers discussed lessons learned from emerging and consolidated metropolitanisation processes in the Mediterranean, offering models and tools to promote metropolitan solutions to the urban development challenges faced by Mediterranean cities, particularly in terms of urban mobility. The session featured key insights from **Montpellier, Sfax and Napoli** as MedCities member cities.



The MedCities member cities of Sfax and Napoli, along with the representative from Montpellier, Ms Clare Hart, who serves as the association's President, took part in a panel discussion on metropolitan governance



The Secretary-General of MedCities, Josep Canals, had the opportunity to meet with several member cities during the Dialogue in Riyadh. Pictured here with the Mayor of Ramallah, Mr Kassir

The topics addressed included:

- Fare-free transport and linkage with culture as a cohesive tool in Montpellier.
- A multimodal vision in Sfax, as the city works with MedCities in the planning and enlargement of bike lanes and the creation of a Metropolitan Transport Authority via the MAIS project.
- The importance of accessible transport as a tool for social cohesion in the Metropolitan City of Napoli.

In addition, a welcome address by the mayor of Tanger offered an opportunity to hear about how the city council promotes water treatment policies to offset the effects of the climate crisis, as part of an integrated water cycle.

The occasion allowed MedCities' Secretary-General, Josep Canals Molina, to meet with representatives from other global organisations, such as UCLG, and city member representatives, including those from **Ramallah, Barcelona, Tunis, Montpellier, Sfax, Tripoli, Zarqa, Al Karak and Tanger**, as well as engaging with other Mediterranean city stakeholders, such as Athens and Piraeus, who potentially share the same climate and social challenges.

MedCities advocacy

70

through co-produced statements
and endorsement of initiatives

Barcelona +30: Empowering local action for regional transformation — Declaration and Call for Action

As the Euro-Mediterranean partnership enters its fourth decade, it faces a complex set of evolving challenges – from the global energy transition and the escalating impacts of climate change to the urgent need for sustainable and inclusive economic development, all unfolding alongside devastating conflicts and grave violations of international law, including ongoing military action in Gaza.

With this in mind, and on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Barcelona Process and the launch of the Pact for the Mediterranean, **MedCities drafted a Declaration, co-led by Barcelona City Council and IEMed, and with the support of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB) and Barcelona Provincial Council.** This Declaration was endorsed by members participating in the 2025 MedCities General Assembly in Barcelona, as well as other invited local authorities, and was presented at the Union for the Mediterranean Regional Conference on the Day of the Mediterranean.

Signatory cities commit to:

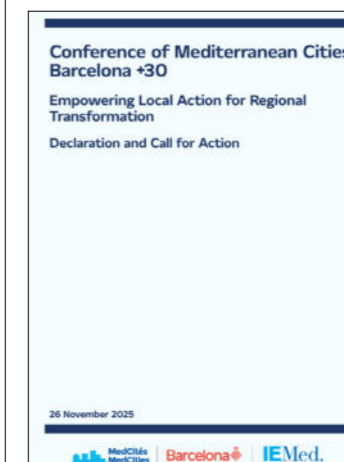
- Building strategic alliances with other local governments across the Mediterranean to advocate collectively for greater recognition, resources and influence in shaping shared priorities.
- Ensuring equity and inclusion are central to all local policies and programmes, with particular attention to the needs and participation of women, young people, minorities and vulnerable groups.
- Promoting partnerships with civil society, especially in at-risk and under-served communities, for the co-design and implementation of solutions that reflect lived experiences and respond to concrete needs.
- Participating in peer learning, benchmarking and capacity-building within Euro-Mediterranean city networks to foster innovation and harmonise local approaches.
- Integrating climate action into local policies by embedding adaptation and mitigation goals in urban planning, infrastructure design and service delivery.
- Collaborating with peer cities and regional networks to share technical knowledge, access climate finance and scale up innovative practices that foster resilient and sustainable urban environments.

Priority areas of the Call to Action:

- Strengthening multilevel and coordinated governance.
- Advancing climate resilience and sustainable urban development.
- Supporting local economic development, innovation and decent work.
- Improving local service delivery and democratic legitimacy.
- Ensuring monitoring and follow-up of local commitments.
- Promoting local diplomacy for a peaceful region.

This Declaration reaffirms the transformative role of Mediterranean cities as key actors in shaping a more just, sustainable and peaceful region. The time to act is now – and we will act together.

*This Declaration was presented
at the Union for the Mediterranean
Regional Conference*



*Declaration: Empowering Local
Action for Regional Transformation*



*The 'Barcelona+30 Cities Declaration' was presented
at the Union for the Mediterranean's regional conference
for the Mediterranean Day*

Barcelona Metropolitan Declaration

On the occasion of the World Metropolitan Summit in Barcelona organised by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), MedCities contributed to and backed the Barcelona Metropolitan Declaration: Metropolitan future beyond 2030, which was also endorsed by numerous local authorities in attendance.

The Declaration centres particularly on:

The importance of polycentric metropolitan structures, in which multiple municipalities form an integrated territorial system. These configurations require tailored approaches to planning, governance and financing that recognise both the interdependence and the autonomy of individual urban centres.

Metropolitan areas as key actors in meeting international and regional agendas.

The increasing role of metropolises as havens and hotspots of biodiversity that must be protected and reinforced.

The role of metropolitan areas worldwide in creating ecosystems of innovation, the empowerment of citizens and contributing to a more prosperous, sustainable and digital future that prioritises inclusivity.

Among other pledges, **endorsers commit:**

- To assume a pivotal role in driving and nurturing the global agenda beyond 2030 and 2050.
- To implement a bold metropolitan housing policy that guarantees accessibility, affordability and quality living conditions for all citizens.
- To enhance collaboration among metropolitan areas by sharing experiences and promoting mutual learning that drives innovation and growth.
- To achieve climate neutrality.

In addition, they **call on:**

- National governments, international institutions and multilateral organisations to recognise metropolitan areas as essential partners in global governance.

An extract from the Barcelona Metropolitan Declaration



ARLEM Report: Territorial Perspectives for the New Euro-Mediterranean Strategic Agenda

On the occasion of the 16th Plenary Session held on 7 November 2025 in Palermo, Italy, MedCities – represented by Josep Canals Molina, Secretary-General, and Jordi Castellana, Vice-President of International Affairs and Digitalisation – approved the adoption of the recommendations contained in the ARLEM Report *Territorial Perspectives for the New Euro-Mediterranean Strategic Agenda*. MedCities actively participated in the drafting of this report, providing written and oral material, much of which has been included in the final draft.

The Vice-President of the AMB's International and Digital Metropolis Service at ARLEM to discuss a stronger Euro-Mediterranean partnership



The **ARLEM Report** calls for a **stronger, more inclusive Euro-Mediterranean partnership** that empowers local and regional authorities (LRAs) as key actors in addressing shared challenges like climate change, migration and inequality. It emphasises the need for multilevel governance, territorial cooperation and better access to funding, recognising LRAs' unique role in delivering citizen-led solutions and translating regional strategies into local action.

To amplify their impact, **ARLEM** proposes a series of specific measures: launching a Mediterranean Macro-Regional Strategy, scaling up city-to-city partnerships, creating a Mediterranean Observatory for data-driven policy, and improving coordination between EU and Union for the Mediterranean programmes. It also highlights the **importance of digital inclusion and gender equality**, advocating for investment in care infrastructure and support for women-led initiatives to build a fairer and more resilient region.

Local Authorities for Sustainable and Healthy Coastal Ecosystems: the joint position of the Coastal Cities MedCities Working Group

This position paper reflects the collective stance of the **MedCities Coastal Cities Working Group**, with further participation from other cities, and was presented at the **UNOC3 in Nice** and at other policy-focused events. As previously stated in the section concerning MedCities' Working Groups, the purpose of the document is to present the shared priorities, positions and concerns of Mediterranean coastal municipalities, with a focus on influencing key global, regional and national policy frameworks and agendas.

The Joint Position statement issued as a result of this process includes 16 specific demands made by local authorities. They ask to be included in governance and coastal planning, and they advocate for more sustainable coastal ecosystem management and restoration, reducing pressure on coastal ecosystems and enabling coastal resilience.

This document is a unique opportunity to deepen existing commitments to marine conservation through dialogue, collaboration and advocacy. **MedCities Coastal Cities Working Group** involvement underscores the critical role of local and metropolitan authorities in shaping practical, inclusive and science-based marine policies.

This initiative is part of the **METROMED project**.

Joint position developed by MedCities and endorsed by its coastal city working group members



Policy recommendations for officials responsible for public procurement within the PROCURAMED project



Policy recommendations for public procurement officers

Each year, European public authorities allocate around 14% of the EU's GDP to the procurement of goods, services and works. However, many of these procedures still rely on cost as the sole award criterion, overlooking the significant impact that could be achieved by including innovation and sustainability criteria in even a small share of them.

To this end, **ProcuraMED aims to strengthening the innovation capacities of local authorities and Mediterranean businesses**, encouraging the adoption of green technologies and the implementation of strategic procurement processes as a driver of a more sustainable and innovative economy in the Mediterranean. As a result, MedCities has led the development of a set of policy recommendations for enhancing green and innovative procurement frameworks. The document is a practical support tool for policymakers, local and sub-state authorities and key stakeholders engaged in public procurement, innovation and sustainability. It aims to **assist decision-makers in shaping and implementing procurement policies that embed green and innovative criteria** within regulatory, strategic and operational structures.



General Assembly Barcelona 2025 and International Conference

MedCities held its General Assembly and the international conference on cities, Barcelona+30, as part of the celebrations marking the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process

MedCities General Assembly in Barcelona

The MedCities General Assembly, the network's most important annual meeting, gathered a **record 45 members in Barcelona**, hosted by the Barcelona City Council. Now representing **91 Mediterranean cities and metropolitan areas**, the meeting demonstrated the growing commitment of local authorities to confront shared regional challenges. The session opened with remarks from **Josep Canals, Secretary-General of MedCities, Acting President Clare Hart, and representatives from the Barcelona City Council and the Government of Catalonia.**

Members discussed and approved key internal documents, including the 2024 accounts, the 2025 Activity Report and current budget execution, and the estimated 2026 budget and Action Plan. A major milestone was the adoption of the *Declaration and Call for Action for Mediterranean Cities*, highlighting the essential role of cities in building a sustainable, inclusive, and peaceful Mediterranean. Presented at the Ministerial Meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean, on November 28, it calls for stronger local leadership to confront climate change, instability, and socio-economic disparities.

The Assembly also welcomed **12 new members:**

- Um Al Basateen
- Deir Alla
- Azraq
- Nablus
- Girona
- Biograd Na Moru
- Qalamoun
- Beddawi
- Zahle
- Piraeus
- Qamishlo
- Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality

MedCities welcomed a new observer, the **European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)**, bringing the number of observer members to eight.



Group photo of MedCities at the General Assembly and Conference of Mediterranean Cities at the Barcelona City Hall



A minute's silence for the victims in Gaza and Lebanon



Participation of representatives from member cities at the MedCities General Assembly

+12 new members

Mediterranean Cities Conference

Following the Assembly, the **Mediterranean Cities Conference (Barcelona+30)** took place on November 26–27 at the **Barcelona City Council** and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Organised by MedCities, the Barcelona City Council and IEMed, with the collaboration of the Provincial Council of de Barcelona, the UfM and Catalonia International, the event marked **30 years of the Barcelona Process**.

City leaders from across the region participated in debates on peace, climate resilience, sustainable development, and the growing diplomatic role of local authorities. Representatives from **Bethlehem, Barcelona, Sarajevo, Mersin, Ramallah** and others shared experiences on crisis management, climate adaptation, and local diplomacy. High-level speakers—including the **UfM Secretary General, the European Commissioner for the Mediterranean**, and senior Catalan and municipal representatives—emphasised how cities are often first responders to regional challenges and key actors in shaping multilevel governance.

The conference concluded with a **call for a more inclusive and resilient Mediterranean, highlighting cities as drivers of innovation, cooperation, and peace**. On the margins, a high-level event presented the new EU Pact for the Mediterranean.

City leaders from across the region participated in debates on peace, climate resilience, sustainable development, and the growing diplomatic role of local authorities



The mayor of Roskovec addresses the MedCities General Assembly



The Mayor of Bethlehem speaks at the MedCities General Assembly



The Mayor of Saïda delivers a speech to the participants at the MedCities General Assembly



A panel featuring MedCities member cities participating in the cities' conference at Barcelona City Hall



A greeting between Ms. Hart, representative of Montpellier – President of MedCities – and the Mayor of Barcelona, Mr. Collboni



Ms. Clare Hart, representative of Montpellier – President of MedCities – welcomed the association members



MedCities members at the conference of Mediterranean cities



The Deputy Mayor of Barcelona, the Secretary-General of MedCities and the Executive President and Director-General of IEMed at the opening of the Cities Conference at the headquarters of the Union for the Mediterranean



Opening of the second session of the Conference of Cities at the Union for the Mediterranean, attended by the Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Mr Kamel, and the European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, Ms Šuica

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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MedCities Activity Report 2025

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Direction

MedCities

Editor

MedCities team

Graphic design

P.A.R

www.p-a-r.net

Printing

Barcelona, April 2026

100% Recycled paper

Agadir, Agia Paraskevi, Urban Community of Al Fayhaa, Al Mirad, Al Karak, Al Hoceima, Al Qamishli, Ancona, Antalya, Municipality of Greater As-Salt, Azraq, Bab Amman, Baddawi, Bani Obeid, Barcelona, Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), Batroun, Union of Municipalities of Batroun, Bethlehem, Biograd Na Moru, Bizerte, Bodrum, Bonifacio, Union of Municipalities of Dannieh, Deir Alla, Djerba Midoun, Durres, Dubrovnik, El Mina, Ein-el-Basha, Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality, Gabès, Gaza, Gaziantep, Genova, Girona, 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, Menzil Bourghiba, Mersin, Minieh, Monastir, Montpellier - Montpelhièr, M'Saken, Metropolitan Municipality of Muğla, Nabeul, Nablus, Napoli, Città Metropolitana di Napoli, Palma, Piraeus, Grad Pula - Pola, Qalamoun, Ramallah, Rethymno, Roma, Roskovec, Saida, Sarajevo, Sarafand, Sfax, Sidi Bou Said, Sousse, Tanger, Tataouine, Tétouan, Tirana, Tripoli, Tripoli (Lybia), Tunis, Um al Basateen, València, Zahle, Municipality of Greater Zarqa and Zgharta-Ehden.

MedCities activities are possible thanks to membership fees and the financial contribution of key funders:



European Union



Agència Catalana
de Cooperació
al Desenvolupament



Generalitat de Catalunya
Government of Catalonia



Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



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