Mediteranean cities and regions have strong economic and cultural assets, but they also display inequalities. Territorial cohesion and inclusive growth are major issues challenging their capacity to reconcile their diversities while assuring socio-spatial cohesion.

With a focus on this topic the objective of the meeting is to initiate a debate between donors, civil society, local authorities, businesses and representatives of youth from both shores of the Mediterranean on inequality and inclusion, two challenges faced by Mediterranean cities and territories.

The event will not only be an opportunity to analyse the measures already taken at different levels, such as public policies and civil society initiatives, but also to discuss improvements on the operational level in order to promote growth, employment and to fight against discrimination and poverty in the Mediterranean region.

Moderator: Agnès LEVALLOIS

9am  Opening session

Patrick ALLEMAND, 1st Vice-President of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region in charge of International Relations, Europe and the Euro-Region
Mourad EZZINE, Manager of the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI)
Jean ROATTA, Deputy Mayor of Marseille in charge of International Relations and Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation
9:30am  PANEL 1: Which policies for territorial cohesion in the Mediterranean?

This session will look at how public policy is implemented on a national and regional level in order to deal with social, economic and environmental imbalances. With the Mediterranean being a region marked by strong territorial differences, the panel will analyse its interdependency and complementarity. The panel will also examine the inequalities between a city centre and its suburbs, or the difference between a dynamic economic hub and relegated territories, both at the sub-regional and national levels. This panel will put a strong focus on possible synergies between urban, semirural and rural areas which need to be maintained and developed to pave the way for sustainable growth. It will also highlight innovative solutions in terms of financial tools, land management, urban planning, and mobility in major territories.

Framing: Paul KRISS, Lead Urban Specialist, World Bank

› Sébastien ABIS, Principal Administrator of CIHEAM
› Reem ELTAIB, Coordinator of the NGOs Committee of the Governorate of Alexandria, Egypt
› Mohamed MBARKI, General Director of the Agency for Promotion and Economic and Social Development of the Oriental Region, Morocco
› Bernard VALERO, Ambassador, Director of AViTeM, France

General debate

11:15am  PANEL 2: Is decentralisation a tool for territorial cohesion?

With the growing role of civil society and the implementation of ambitious reforms for decentralisation north and south of the Mediterranean, it is crucial to create institutions capable of ensuring the involvement of local actors in the decision making. This panel will introduce the different reforms driven by existing examples of regionalisation and decentralisation in the Mediterranean region. It will also investigate the impact of these reforms on the distribution of resources at a local level. Do they guarantee a better territorial balance at the different levels? Do they risk creating a strong competition amongst territories with different resources, increasing the socio-spatial inequalities? The panel will also analyse how to reduce inequalities through power balance at all levels.

Framing: Aude SIGNOLÈS, Teacher and Researcher at Sciences Po Aix, France

› Ridha ABBASSI, Mayor of Kasserine, Tunisia
› Khalil HARFOUCHE, President of the Union of Jezzine Municipalities, Lebanon
› Déborah PEREZ, PhD Candidate at Sciences Po Aix and Ecole Normale Supérieure, France
› Nuno ROMÃO, Coordinator of Studies and Territorial Policies, Unit for Regional Policy, Agency for Development and Cohesion, Portugal

General debate
2pm  PANEL 3: How to act in favour for inclusive growth for youth?

The cities and regions in the Mediterranean are facing numerous challenges linked to an exacerbation of social spatial inequalities such as increasing migration and high youth unemployment. Cities can be a catalyst for social, economic and cultural development. While they represent engines of growth offering a range of opportunities to young people in terms of employment, training possibilities, entrepreneurship and mobility, urban centres can also be saturated spaces with a high level of unemployment and pockets of insecurity and poverty in some areas. This panel will concentrate on the obstacles to youth inclusion in the cities’ economic and political lives. They will present successful initiatives carried out by associations and civil society in order to stimulate inclusive growth for young people and encourage the participation of citizens and businesses.

Framing: Yasser EL-GAMMAL, Practice Manager, Social Protection and Labour, World Bank
  › Yehia DAHER, Mayor of Karaoun, Lebanon
  › Tarik GHEZALI, Director of Marseille Solutions, France
  › Thameur HEMDANE, Founder of CoFundy and Afrikwity, France
  › Henry MARTY-GAUQUIE, Representative of the European Investment Bank Group in France
  › Maha MEREZAK, Head of ISESCO Centre for Promotion of Scientific Research

General debate

3:30pm  MINISTERIAL SESSION: How to renew the social contract and restore trust?

This panel will present a summary of the topics covered during the day and analyse the proposals to reinforce the cohesion of the territories in the Mediterranean Region and to restore trust between the citizens and the authorities. First and foremost, this requires a dialogue between local institutions and the most marginalised population. Territorial inclusive and participative strategies will also need to be defined in order to find ways to renew the social contract.

Conference summary: Mourad EZZINE, Manager of the Center for Mediterranean Integration

Framing: Shantayanan DEVARAJAN, Chief Economist for the MENA Region, the World Bank
  › Helena DALLI, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Malta
  › Kamel JENDOUBI, Minister attached to the Chief of Government in charge of the Relations with Constitutional Institutions and Civil Society, Tunisia
  › Driss MERROUN, Minister of Urbanism and Planning, Morocco
  › Abdelmajid TEBBOUN, Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Cities, Algeria
  › Alain LE ROY, General Secretary of the European External Action Service
  › Michel VAUZELLE, President of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region