

“Mediterranean Charter of Democracy and Local Autonomy” CHARMEDAL

I/ PREAMBLE

More than two decades ago, the Barcelona process (1995) and, subsequently the Union for the Mediterranean (2008) attempted to build a common project for all countries of the region.

Facing the multiplication of hotbeds of crisis and the magnitude of the economic, cultural, social and security challenges the region is currently facing, all those who participated in the CHARMEDAL meetings are convinced that it is necessary to go further and jointly define new perspectives for the future, primarily through the action and involvement of citizens, CSOs, decision-makers and elected representatives at the local level.

The members of the MED Path group within the project LADDER believe that the creation of common, positive destiny for the people of the Mediterranean area is a feasible and desirable goal since we do all share the values of democracy, freedom, solidarity, peace, respect for cultural diversity and environmental liability, as well as a common historical heritage.

II/ FRAME OF REFERENCE

- Considering the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Considering the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- Considering the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Rome, 4 November 1950);
- Considering the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Considering the European Charter of Local Self-Government;
- Considering the Political Declaration of Political and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean produced in Marseille on 3th-4th April 2013;
- Having regard the letter entitled “Humane, complete and immediate action on



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immigration” of 10th September 2015 addressed by the LADDER consortium to the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs of the Member States of the EU;

- Having regard to the common declaration on the European Neighbourhood Policy of the LADDER Consortium (February 2016);
- Having regard to the UN General Assembly Resolution A/Res/59/210 of 20 December 2004;
- Having regard to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003.

III/ PRINCIPLES OF MEDITERRANEAN LOCAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

CHARMEDAL signatories believe that the promotion of local and regional autonomy as well as democratic governance lead to the strengthening of the feeling of belonging to a common Mediterranean space on the basis of:

1. Respect for the principles of exchange and coordination between local authorities and elected representatives as decision-makers and guarantors of the implementation of common projects and of respect for collective interests on the one hand, and citizens and CSOs as a source of proposals and evaluation on the other;
2. The right to information for all citizens, since this is a necessary condition for all forms of participation in local affairs;
3. The right to consultation which allows all citizens to express their needs and opinions which have to be taken into account by local elected representatives;
4. The right to consultation as an indispensable means to foster debate and create an exchange between elected representatives and citizens in order to take into account their needs in the projects and decisions to be made;
5. The right to decide intended to empower citizens in the framework of a participatory democracy, which is complementary to the representative democracy at the local level.

IV/ RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMITMENTS:

CHARMEDAL signatories:

- Are convinced that citizens and all levels of government of the Mediterranean area need to commit or strengthen the processes of decentralisation and devolution of *power* in order to formulate concrete answers to the needs of a wide participation of men, women and young people in national and local democratic life;



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- Request that CSOs and Local authorities are fully involved in all actions aiming at sharing acquired experience, spreading good practices, promoting cross-border cooperation between local bodies and fostering the implementation of coherent and coordinated actions and policies within the Mediterranean area;
- Are aware that Culture and Education, along each of their dimension, can effectively contribute to local sustainable development and local democracy, and we are convinced that their promotion is essential for the empowerment of the Mediterranean communities;
- Are convinced that in order to reach the objectives and meet the challenges of the post-2015 development agenda at community, national and regional levels in the Mediterranean area, there is a need for a wide participation of CSOs, local and national authorities, as well as national and international institutions of development along with more transparent and responsible governance;
- Are convinced that minorities, women and young people have to be considered as priority groups in any decision making in order to make possible all commitments mentioned.

At a sectorial level, CHARMEDAL signatories:

PEACE, SECURITY AND TOLERANCE

- Assert their commitment to making the Mediterranean area a space of peace, security and solidarity by acting:
 - for a just and sustainable peace in the Middle-East on the basis of the recognition of the Palestinian's right to have an independent sovereign state;
 - to stop war and any other forms of violence and terrorism in all the region's countries, particularly in Libya and Syria by preventing all forms of ideological, political and military manipulation, whose victims are innocent non-combatants, women and children.

MIGRATION

- Observe that for many years, the Mediterranean has been the stage for an on-going humanitarian disaster, which has resulted in thousands of deaths and missing people amongst migrants;
- Call for the respect of refugees' and migrants' fundamental rights and dignity everywhere;
- Insist that violations of human rights have to be punished, and that victims should have the right of appeal and the right to be compensated for damages;



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- Ask for the establishment of a united European policy for asylum and residence rights pursuant to international standards, in particular, the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the ILO Conventions on migrant's rights and the United Nations Conventions relating to the Status of Refugees;
- Ask the governments of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean to promulgate approaches and policies aimed at greater democratisation and development, with the aim of ending marginalisation, and ensuring a more equitable sharing out of common resources, in order to tackle the root causes of migration, namely poverty and precariousness;
- Considering a form of migration representing a danger for youngsters travelling in the Mediterranean and at risk their lives, the signatories ask governments, local authorities and civil society to launch awareness campaigns aimed at combating this flow and at putting an end to the traffic of human beings.

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

- Asserting that education - formal, informal and not formal - is a fundamental human right, contributing as it does to individual freedom and empowerment, and to human development, invite the local authorities and the regions of the Mediterranean area to ensure an equal access for everybody to all the different forms of Education.
- Observing that education consists of not only *knowledge* transmission but also *values* transmission, including social and cultural factors as they are bound up with experiences and memory, creativity and imagination, invite the educational institutions to promote all the different forms of education.
- Ask the local authorities and the regions of the Mediterranean Area for developing a more flexible, appropriate and inclusive form of education founded on multicultural education — for majority groups as well as for ethnic-linguistic minorities and indigenous and other vulnerable groups — so as to develop critical thinking and intercultural competencies.
- Invite the local and regional authorities of the Mediterranean area to consider the culture as a fundamental asset of the local community to strengthen the sustainable development, democracy, peace and security

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

- Urge the local and regional communities of the Mediterranean area to support and foster an educative, social and economic policy for the promotion of gender equality;
- Underline the vital role that women play within all local structures through their equal participation in the whole decision-making process.



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UNEMPLOYMENT

- Are convinced that the economic and social conditions in which the population lives, especially young people, affects their availability and ability to participate in local life. That is why local employers, local authorities and civil society should devise policies and programmes aimed at tackling the reasons for unemployment and promoting job opportunities, particularly for young people.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Are convinced that the protection and preservation of the Mediterranean Sea as a resource, a heritage and an environment requires urgent action;
- Call all actors at local and regional levels to act so as to develop policies on the urban environment that promote the development of convivial, egalitarian and sustainable public areas;
- Urge governments and international institutions to implement the recommendations of the International Community for sustainable development by taking into consideration the local and regional dimensions of the Mediterranean territories and their cultural, social and economic characteristics;

YOUNG PEOPLE AS FULLY FLEDGED ACTORS OF GOVERNANCE

- Ask local authorities to empower capacities of young people for their direct and effective implication in the decision-making processes.
- Consider that structures and mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making should be identified and promoted and that their potential and challenges on public governance should be debated;

ALDA – European Association for Local Democracy

LAM ECHAML – LADDER Med Path Coordinator

On behalf of **LADDER** - Local Authorities as Drivers for Development Education and Awareness Raising



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