Towards a revised Euro-Mediterranean partnership:
Making decentralised cooperation and collaborative governance a priority

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Sala Jordi Maragall, CIDOB. Elisabets 12, 08001 Barcelona
Organised by CIDOB’s Global Cities Programme

More than half of the Mediterranean population now lives in urban areas. The South Mediterranean has one of the fastest urbanisation rates worldwide with estimates suggesting a 45% increase in urban dwellers by 2030. The rapid growth of the region’s cities calls for a shared vision for sustainable urban development and joint strategies to tackle broader global and regional dynamics at local level. In response to this new urban reality and to contribute towards achieving the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) adopted its first Urban Agenda in May 2017. The acknowledgement of the centrality of urban processes to the regions’ future, points towards an overdue revision of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). In particular, it makes evident the need for new governance structures that facilitate the systematic and active engagement of local authorities and other urban stakeholders.

The 2030 Agenda concedes that in an urban world cities are our principal pathways to sustainable development. The relevance accorded to cities is reflected in both the Urban Goal (SDG 11) and the more general concern with a multi-level governance approach to the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. In this context, strengthening the capacity of local governments to address complex demographic, socio-economic, environmental, technological and governance challenges has emerged as a priority. The Euro-Mediterranean already boasts a considerable number of decentralised North-South and South-South cooperation initiatives for capacity building and exchange of best practices in the form of city-to-city partnerships and larger programmes that are led by city networks, development agencies, international foundations and multilateral organizations. However, a major challenge remains how to effectively connect and integrate these local cooperation initiatives with the broader EMP process.

A more systematic integration of decentralised cooperation initiatives into the EMP would also provide the opportunity for a place-based approach to urban development that engages other relevant local stakeholders. This is in line with the requirement of the 2030 Agenda for participatory and inclusive governance, including not only all levels of government, but also civil society, the private and knowledge sectors. Especially in some South Mediterranean countries where steps to devolve power to local government have been taken – including Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon – new governance arrangements that enable collaboration with non-governmental actors are gaining relevance. Individual local authorities in these countries are seeking to provide more opportunities for participation, accountability and transparency in areas such as service provisions, mobility and social policies. Decentralised cooperation can substantially support these efforts and thereby contribute to the quality and effectiveness of public policies and consolidate trust in local authorities.

In preparation for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the EMP, the seminar seeks to provoke new thinking on how a revised EMP that is aligned with the 2030 Agenda could and should further promote decentralized cooperation and collaborative governance at local level. It brings together representatives from city networks, multilateral organizations, foundations and research centres with local policy makers and diplomats.
The seminar programme consists of three sessions. Each session opens with a moderated panel discussion, followed by an open discussion during which all participants are encouraged to actively engage in an exchange of ideas and views. The seminar will result in a report that offers recommendations to policy makers based on the outcomes of the discussion. There will be English to French and Spanish translation.

**PROGRAMME**

09.00 – 09.15 **Opening remarks**
Miquel Rodríguez, Commissioner of the 2030 Agenda, Barcelona City Council
Pol Morillas, Director, CIDOB

09.15 – 09.30 **Objectives of the seminar**
Hannah Abdullah, Researcher, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

09.30 – 11.00 **Session 1: Revising Euro-Mediterranean cooperation to better address urban challenges**
*Moderator:* Hannah Abdullah, Researcher, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
*Panelists:* Ayşe Asya, Deputy Secretary General and Head of Transport and Urban Development, Union for the Mediterranean
Mohamed Boudra, Co-President, Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM); President, Moroccan Association of Chairs of Municipal Councils (AMPCC)
Gemma Aubarell Solduga, Head of Mediterranean Strategy and Networks, Government of Catalonia

11.00 – 11.30 **Coffee break**

11.30 – 13.00 **Session 2: New governance structures for more inclusive Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: Engaging local authorities and urban stakeholders**
*Moderator:* Agustí Fernández de Losada, Director, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
*Panelists:* Sylvia Bergh, Associate Professor in Development Management and Governance, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University of Rotterdam
Noha El-Mikawy, Director, Middle East and North Africa, Ford Foundation
Mohamed Boussraoui, Director of Programmes, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

13.00 – 14.00 **Lunch**

14.00 – 15.30 **Session 3: Ways forward for effectively integrating decentralised cooperation initiatives in the EMP process**
*Moderator:* David Llistar, Director of Global Justice and International Cooperation, Barcelona City Council
Farouk Tebbal, Independent Mediterranean Urban Planning and Management Expert
Rachel Morris, Policy Analyst, Financing for Sustainable Development Division, OECD
Béchir Odeimi, Director, Lebansese Cities Technical Office

15.30-16.00 **Closing remarks**
Eva Garcia Chueca, Senior Researcher and Scientific Coordinator, Global Cities Programme, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)