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REPORT

the evolution of EU macro-regional strategies: present practice and future prospects, especially in the Mediterranean
(2011/2179(INI))

Committee on Regional Development

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the evolution of EU macro-regional strategies: present practice and future prospects, especially in the Mediterranean (2011/2179(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the MED operational programme 2007–2013 adopted by the Commission in December 2007,
- having regard to the ENPI Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme for cross-border cooperation 2007–2013, adopted by the Commission on 14 August 2008,
- having regard to Arco Latino’s strategic plan 2010–2015 entitled ‘A structured and innovative Mediterranean’,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2010 on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea and the role of macro-regions in the future cohesion policy¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 September 2010 on the European strategy for the economic and social development of mountain regions, islands and sparsely populated areas²,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 9 November 2010 entitled ‘Conclusions of the fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion: the future of cohesion policy’ (COM(2010)0642),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 December 2010 entitled ‘European Union Strategy for the Danube Region’ (COM(2010)0715) and the indicative action plan accompanying the strategy (SEC(2009)0712/2),
- having regard to its resolution of 17 February 2011 on the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region³,
- having regard to the ARLEM report of 29 January 2011 on the territorial dimension of the Union for the Mediterranean – recommendations for the future,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 April 2011 on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy – Southern Dimension⁴,
- having regard to the report of 22 June 2011 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) (COM(2011)0381),

¹ OJ C 351E 2.12.2011, p. 1.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0341.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0065.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0154.

- having regard to its resolution of 23 June 2011 on Objective 3: a challenge for territorial cooperation – the future agenda for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation¹,
- having regard to the conclusions of the European Council of 23 and 24 June 2011 endorsing the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region and inviting the Member States to continue working in cooperation with the Commission on possible future macro-regional strategies, in particular as regards the Adriatic and Ionian region,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 6 October 2011 for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on specific provisions for support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal (COM(2011)0611),
- having regard to the own-initiative opinion on territorial cooperation in the Mediterranean through the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region, adopted unanimously at the plenary session of the Committee of the Regions on 11 October 2011,
- having regard to the final declaration by the chair of the Interinstitutional Forum held in Catania on 10 December 2011 on ‘Old and new faces in an ever evolving Mediterranean: the role of the people, the regions and local bodies, the governments and the supranational institutions in a strategy of intrinsic unity’,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2011 on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy²,
- having regard to its declaration of 19 January 2012 on the establishment of the Pact of Islands as an official European initiative³, pursuant to Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the communication of 23 March 2012 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (COM(2012)0128),
- having regard to the Belgrade Declaration, approved at the 14th meeting of the Adriatic and Ionian Council on 30 April 2012,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Developing a Maritime Strategy for the Atlantic Ocean Area’ (COM(2011)0782),
- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0285.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0576.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0016.

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development and the opinions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Culture and Education (A7-0219/2012),
- A. whereas the macro-regional strategy for the Baltic Sea was adopted in 2009 and whereas the Commission (report of 22 June 2011 – COM(2011)0381) has stressed ‘the value of [this] new way of cooperating’;
- B. whereas on 13 April 2011¹ the Council invited the Commission ‘to play a leading role in the strategic coordination’ of the macro-regional strategy for the Danube;
- C. whereas the macro-regional strategy aims to open up a new area for cohesion policy in Europe, with the goal being territorial-based development;
- D. whereas the budget line ‘technical assistance on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region’, which was created on Parliament’s initiative when the European Union’s 2011 budget was adopted, has demonstrated the value of such appropriations for the successful development of a macro-regional strategy;
- E. whereas the Commission is proposing that the transnational strand of territorial cooperation policy should be enhanced in order to support further macro-regional policies²;
- F. whereas several macro-region projects are at an advanced stage, and whereas the Commission, in its capacity as coordinator, should help to put in place sustainable governance, and to set out common criteria and measureable indicators for assessing their relevance;
- G. whereas the Mediterranean has played a major geopolitical role in European history;
- H. whereas the so-called 'Arab Spring' has highlighted the strategic potential of the geographic, political and economic links between the two sides of the Mediterranean;
- I. noting the success of cooperation within the framework of the Barcelona Process and the Union for the Mediterranean and the multilateral and bilateral cooperation initiatives taken under EU instruments and programmes such as the MED and ENPI in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
- J. noting the current development of the Union for the Mediterranean and given that its potential as a catalyst in the region will increase;
- K. whereas a macro-regional approach would enable an overall project to be set out in this area vital to the EU’s future, with a view to emerging from the present crisis and responding to the expectations of all its neighbours, particularly those in the Southern Mediterranean;
- L. whereas the Mediterranean is a coherent whole, constituting a single cultural and

¹ 8743/1/11 REV 1.

² (COM(2010)0642.

environmental area, and sharing very many characteristics and priorities common to the ‘Mediterranean climate’: the same crops, abundant renewable energy sources, particularly solar energy, the importance of tourism, the same natural disaster risks (fires, floods, earthquakes, water shortages) and the risks from human activity, particularly maritime pollution;

- M. whereas the Mediterranean is a very large area stretching nearly 4 000 km from east to west, with numerous islands and with territories with land and sea borders with North Africa, and whereas a huge network of maritime routes should be promoted therein, enabling increased trade whilst reducing related CO₂ emissions;
- N. whereas, notwithstanding Article 174 of the TFEU, the European institutions have not yet adopted a permanent strategy that takes into account the specific needs of the islands, and whereas the full accessibility of Mediterranean insular regions and their better integration within the European single market could best be ensured through the allocation of appropriate resources and the adoption of an integrated approach on the insularity issue, acknowledging the structural disadvantage faced by island populations in the fields of transport and energy;
- O. whereas the proposal for an Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategy is progressing, taking place in the context of longstanding cooperation and solidarity in a contiguous territory around the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, and supported by the eight participating states of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII), as repeatedly demonstrated in the statements made by the eight foreign ministers who signed up to the Initiative in Ancona (2010), Brussels (2011) and Belgrade (2012);
- P. whereas there have been meetings with numerous involved regions, with the Union for the Mediterranean and with the various bodies involved in European Union territorial cooperation policy, as part of the drafting process for this report;

On macro-regional strategies in general

1. Endorses the macro-regional approach to territorial cooperation policies between territories belonging to a services and working area: maritime area, mountain range or river basin; believes that macro-regional strategies opened a new chapter in European territorial cooperation by applying a bottom-up approach and spreading cooperation to more and more areas via the better use of available resources; recommends that, in view of their clear European added value, macro-regional strategies should receive more attention in the framework of European territorial cooperation, to be reinforced as of 2013;
2. Considers that this type of territorial cooperation strategy is useful, particularly when these territories have historically been divided by borders, and can further the integration of new Member States and their regions;
3. Takes the view that the overview provided by a macro-regional strategy would make territorial cooperation projects and the EGTC more beneficial, and that this would enhance synergies with the major EU strategies, such as the trans-European transport network or the Integrated Maritime Policy; considers that it would also be easier to

involve other European policy instruments, such as those proposed by the EIB; considers that these steps would improve the coordination of EU policies at a transnational and inter-regional level;

4. Recommends basing macro-regional strategies on multilevel governance, ensuring the involvement of local and regional authorities and of the greatest possible number of partners and stakeholders, such as representatives of civil society, universities and research centres, in both the elaboration and the implementation of macro-regional strategies in order to increase their ownership at local and regional level;
5. Stresses that macro-regions provide an environment conducive to the involvement of local political stakeholders and non-governmental stakeholders, as these regions foster the development of effective coordination systems which facilitate bottom-up approaches, with a view to ensuring the meaningful involvement of civil society in political decision-making, and to pooling existing initiatives in order to optimise resources and bring together the actors involved;
6. Takes the view that the macro-regional strategy could steer the European Neighbourhood Policy and/or pre-accession policy towards being more effective;

On current macro-regional strategies

7. Welcomes the evidence that the macro-regional strategy for the Baltic Sea is of major benefit to Europe; it has set out an action plan with clearly identified priorities, and is endorsed by the Council, supported by the Commission and shared by all national, regional and local stakeholders;
8. Calls for this strategy to be the subject of a complete evaluation based on objective criteria and measurable indicators for each of the priority areas;
9. Considers it necessary, if this strategy is to be fully successful, to retain the governance structure in the long term, extending it to include local and regional authorities, by including it in the upcoming programming period 2014–2020;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Council to support fully the approach taken with the Danube basin, which should also be evaluated and regularly monitored;

On future macro-regional strategies

11. Suggests that the Commission coordinate a consultation and dialogue process for future macro-regional strategies; takes the view that lack of cooperation or the need to strengthen existing cooperation between European territories belonging to different Member States but the same services and working area should be the basis for identifying priority areas; considers that the result of this dialogue should be a ‘projected European macro-regions map’, mainly coordinated with the Member States and the regions concerned, which would not be binding and could change depending on local dynamics;
12. Takes the view that the macro-regional strategies need better alignment of funding, more efficient utilisation of existing resources and coordination of instruments; considers that, although such strategies do not require further funding, institutional instruments or

regulation, funding for the monitoring thereof in the form of technical assistance appropriations and appropriations for preliminary evaluation and data-collection and for any start-up is justified, and that the macro-regional strategy should promote structural projects, taking the multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020 into account;

13. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take into account EU macro-regional strategies when deciding on budgetary envelopes such as cohesion and structural funds, research and development, and in particular regional cooperation;
14. Calls for the operational programmes to be closely geared to the corresponding priorities of the macro-regional strategies in order to ensure the best possible coordination of objectives and means;

Prospects in the Mediterranean

15. Supports the implementation of a macro-regional strategy for the Mediterranean basin, so as to offer an action plan for addressing the common and problematic challenges facing the Mediterranean countries and regions and to give structure to this key area for Europe's development and integration, and calls on the Council and the Commission to act quickly on this matter;
16. Takes the view that a Mediterranean macro-regional strategy that involves European, national, regional and local authorities, regional organisations, financial institutions, and NGOs from the European side of the Mediterranean basin and the Union for the Mediterranean, and that is open to neighbouring countries and/or countries at the pre-accession stage, would significantly improve territorial cooperation in this area in political and operational terms; stresses the importance of drawing on the experience, existing resources and achievements of existing regional organisations;
17. Emphasises that a Mediterranean macro-region could ensure that the EU's different programmes concerning the Mediterranean complement each other and that existing financing is used as efficiently as possible, and could bring real added value to the concrete projects of the Union for the Mediterranean and involve the relevant third countries and regions at the moment of defining the strategy, using the Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument to this end, always in strict compliance with the rule of law and on the basis of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, promoting where necessary the principle of 'more for more';
18. Emphasises the importance of the Mediterranean as a decentralised area of cooperation – that goes beyond strict geographical borders – for strengthening cross-regional decision-making and the sharing of good practices, not least concerning democracy, human rights, the rule of law, ecology, economic development, ecotourism, as well as cultural, research, educational, youth and sport partnerships; underlines the specific importance of education as a catalyst for democratic transition;
19. Considers that the Mediterranean macro-region must develop in accordance with international standards on economic, social and cultural rights, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;

20. Urges the Council to follow up on its conclusions of 24 June 2011 and take into account the willingness shown by the territories concerned nationally, regionally and locally with regard to the Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategy, historical links, traditions and the initiatives undertaken, by adopting this strategy in the coming months, so as to realise a first step towards a Mediterranean macro-regional strategy;
21. Stresses that the Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategy is a significant factor in reconciliation between territories of the Western Balkans and may assist these countries' efforts to join the EU;
22. Hopes that macro-regional strategies that have significant maritime aspects and that take into account the numerous Mediterranean coastal and island territories and their development needs will also emerge for the western and eastern Mediterranean; believes that such future strategies should pay increased attention to the protection of the environment, biodiversity and sustainable tourism;
23. Calls on the Commission to genuinely implement Article 174 of the TFEU through a strategic plan, with a view to overcoming the structural handicaps of island territories and ensuring the conditions for economic growth and effective social and territorial cohesion; stresses that particular focus needs to be placed on ensuring full accessibility and territorial continuity of these territories with the continent, through appropriate funding; urges the Commission, furthermore, to adopt measures, such as an increase in the threshold for de minimis aid for islands, with special reference to the agriculture, transport and fishery sectors, that contribute to making island territories equally competitive with the mainland territories so as to reduce the gap between different levels of development among European regions and ensure their effective integration in the single market;
24. Hopes that the Commission will take a positive stand towards the insular dimension of the Mediterranean macro-regional strategy, particularly when considering state aid which constitutes legitimate compensation with respect to the handicaps of insularity and when adapting cohesion policy and research and innovation policies to the specific needs of the islands in order to increase their integration into continental Europe;
25. Stresses the importance of culture and creative industries as a fundamental pillar of development and job creation in island regions;
26. Urges the Commission to determine what instruments are required to evaluate and launch any new macro-regional initiatives in the western and eastern Mediterranean, such as pilot projects;
27. Emphasises that major areas of intervention for a Mediterranean macro-region should target appropriate sub-regional levels for cooperation on specific projects and include energy networks, scientific cooperation and innovation, networks for culture, education and training, tourism, trade, environmental protection, sustainable maritime transport, maritime security and safety and the protection of the marine environment against pollution, overfishing and illegal fishing through the creation of an integrated network of reporting and surveillance systems for maritime activities, the strengthening of good governance and effective public administration, so as to foster job creation;

28. Takes the view that coordination of these three macro-regional strategies – western Mediterranean, Adriatic-Ionian, and eastern Mediterranean – will enable the implementation of an overall policy for the whole Mediterranean basin that is in synergy with the priorities set out by regional and international organisations, and in particular those defined by the Union for the Mediterranean, and the implementation of best practices that can contribute towards achieving the EU Strategy objectives of smart and sustainable economic growth;
29. Considers it important, especially after the events of the Arab Spring, that the new macro-region should contribute to the definition of a new strategy with third countries for the proper management of immigration flows, with due regard for the mutual benefits of increased mobility, based on combating poverty and fostering employment and fair trade, and thereby contributing to stability in the macro-region;
30. Considers, given that the EU's Mediterranean territories share sea and land borders with North Africa, that a macro-regional strategy would boost the southern dimension of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy, taking on a concrete territorial dimension which would guarantee greater management of migration flows and impact positively on the performance of the economies of the countries concerned;
31. Considers that a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean must coordinate existing EU funds, particularly neighbourhood policy, cohesion policy and territorial cooperation funds to implement projects aimed at addressing common challenges such as the protection and enhancement of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage; recalls the importance of a coordinated and balanced neighbourhood policy for the South and the eligibility of cultural projects financed by ERDF to address these challenges;
32. Stresses the importance of creative and cultural industries, and considers that this sector of the economy will play an increasingly important role in the region's economic growth and employment; calls for particular attention to be afforded to the implementation of cultural and academic exchange programmes, as well as to the strengthening of cultural and stable tourism links;
33. Considers that cultural tourism can have a particular impact on the Mediterranean region, both from an economic point of view and as a factor of mutual knowledge and intercultural understanding;
34. Stresses that the Mediterranean macro-region would favour intercultural dialogue and the enrichment of the shared cultural heritage of the European Union, mobilise civil society and thereby encourage NGOs and Mediterranean peoples to participate in EU cultural and educational programmes;
35. Recalls the fundamental role that education plays in democracy and social and economic development, as well as the importance of professional training in fighting youth unemployment;
36. Stresses that, in the context of the Mediterranean macro-region and taking into account the motivation of young people particularly in the southern countries, it is important to

strengthen cooperation in the field of youth by promoting European programmes and creating synergies with the work of the Mediterranean Office for Youth;

37. Stresses the importance of focusing especially on young people, as they will be the foundation of a new generation and the ones to wield the greatest influence on how their respective countries face the future;
38. Recommends, in order to promote exchange programmes, dynamic research, innovation and lifelong learning, the creation of networks with higher education and research institutions in the future Mediterranean macro-region and the development of education infrastructure in that region, as well as the removal of obstacles to the movement of students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers, trainers, researchers and administrative staff; stresses the need to strengthen the quality of teaching and research in those networks by adequately financing and supporting the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes, especially in view of the low number of Erasmus Mundus programme beneficiaries in the Mediterranean area;
39. Considers that the mobility of artists and the arts in the Euro-Mediterranean area is hindered by numerous obstacles, that vary according to country and region, and that are linked not only to difficulties in obtaining visas but also to the lack of status that artists face and to the conditions they face as creators of artistic works, particularly in southern countries; considers that a Mediterranean macro-region would serve to promote mutual recognition of the status of artists, offer opportunities to reflect on mobility and optimise the use of training programmes, networking and the free movement of cultural actors, artists and works;
40. Calls for the implementation, in the next programming period, of a 'Euro-Mediterranean Erasmus' programme, intended to encourage the transnational mobility of students from both sides of the Mediterranean, as well as a 'Euro-Mediterranean Leonardo da Vinci' programme for young people who, in the framework of a macro-regional strategy, wish to acquire professional training abroad;
41. Emphasises the need to adopt measures to counter the increasing 'brain drain' from this region;
42. Calls for the most to be made of the historical, cultural and linguistic diversity of the Mediterranean area, which is a source of innovation, providing an impetus to the cultural and creative industries as well as to the tourism sector; calls for cooperation between museums and cultural establishments to be encouraged and supported;
43. Recalls that, in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean, there is particular interest in European cinema and audiovisual productions, and that this continues to exert significant influence on the dialogue between cultures in the area, as part of the current stage of democratic development of these societies;
44. Suggests that greater cooperation and trade should be pursued with third countries in order to improve the standing of European production on the global market, and particularly in the Mediterranean area, and thereby promote cultural exchange and the launch of new initiatives to encourage Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and democratic

progress across the entire region, particularly in light of the commitments made during the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Cinema;

45. Calls on the Member States involved to encourage the cooperative spirit that has emerged during the drafting of the present report and urges the future Cypriot Presidency of the EU to support this project so that the Commission and the Council can adopt an action plan for the Mediterranean macroregional strategy as a matter of urgency; highlights moreover, the importance of inter-governmental and inter-regional cooperation in the development of a macro-regional strategy;
46. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Emergence of macro-regions

Launched in 2009, the Baltic Sea macro-region brings together a coherent set of territories that want to cooperate in order to find better solutions to the economic and environmental problems facing them. This cooperation has taken the form of a ‘macro-regional strategy’, designed to coordinate the existing extensive sectoral cooperation and based on four pillars — environment, prosperity, accessibility and security — and an action plan setting out 15 priority areas and 80 flagship projects.

This experience has inspired other projects. One of these — the Danube macro-region — has taken its first steps. Further projects are envisaged. The institutions concerned, Member States, regions and local authorities are working together to define similar frameworks for other European macro-regions that share common traits: same maritime area, same mountain range, same river basin, etc.

Macro-regional strategies offer new prospects for territorial cooperation projects supported by cohesion policy. They can assist the broad EU strategies, such as trans-European transport networks or the integrated maritime policy. They can ensure better coordination between regional programmes and the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

2. State of play and initial lessons learned

The macro-region concept has motivated stakeholders, and the passion observed indicates a definite intention to invest in this new area of public policy in Europe, with the goal being territorial-based development. The reasons for this are not only objective — interaction between neighbouring regions — but also historical and cultural, as these regional areas have for centuries shared a common history. These age-old links, which must be strengthened or, in some cases, restored, provide a basis for shared cooperation. Adoption of the macro-region concept is also evidence that the European idea is spreading.

The Commission has become involved in implementing the Baltic Sea strategy. In its conclusions of 13 April 2011 on the Danube macro-region, the Council again invited the Commission ‘to play a leading role in the strategic coordination’. In concrete terms, the governance of such a mechanism is complex and requires extensive technical assistance. In the current circumstances, DG REGIO cannot assume any more responsibility.

Once the announcement effect has faded, there is a real risk of a high-spending, ineffective and ‘vast contraption’. As a result, a ‘three noes rule’ has been suggested: no more money, no more institutions, no more regulation. This constraint has been adapted by the Council, which on 13 April proposed a ‘three yeses rule’: more complementary funding, more institutional coordination and more new projects. This dialectic seeks to find a balance that must be defined before the regulations for the next territorial cohesion policy 2014–2020 are decided.

3. Benefits of macro-regional strategy

Looking at the Baltic Sea example, the implementation of a macro-regional strategy offers many opportunities, principally by providing a reference framework relevant to cohesion policy and encouraging inter-sectoral cooperation in a single services and working area. This framework can steer investment towards more complementarity and can influence the respective priorities of each regional development plan for a European macro-region, ensuring an overview and genuine synergies within an integrated approach.

This strategy also ensures greater involvement and better cooperation between the EU's various intervention mechanisms, going beyond the appropriations allocated to cohesion policy. This is particularly the case with the European Investment Bank (EIB). It also pools the resources of regions and Member States through multi-level governance. This represents a 'win-win' strategy for each stakeholder.

Finally, macro-regional strategy frames the EU's neighbourhood policies in a way that encourages renewed dialogue as well as profitable and concrete relations.

4. Difficulties to be overcome

Every macro-regional strategy has a dual dimension: territorial, through the definition of a relevant territory in which the strategy is applied; and functional, through the determination of priorities. The respective communities must be on board at the time such a strategy is launched. As a result, a pre-development phase is needed, lasting between one and two years, before a macro-region can effectively be established.

The operation of macro-regions must avoid the trap of intergovernmental governance, even where their transnational nature necessitates the involvement of the Member States concerned. Only multi-level governance, particularly involving the regional level, can guarantee the European vocation of such strategies and ensure complementarity with the European Union's regional development policy.

Creating future macro-regions by 'spontaneous generation' cannot be a plan for the future as this results in a random approach, which will prevent coherent strategies being developed. However, each creation must be a 'bottom-up' process, based on the genuine motivation of stakeholders on the ground.

Neighbouring regions must be involved so that numerous projects can be developed within the macro-regional strategies. This involvement must stem from territorial policies, and not from a foreign policy dimension.

5. Measures to be envisaged

Macro-regional strategies must be developed through wide-ranging consultations that can define the problems on the ground in order to avoid projects that are vague or simply based on immediate political considerations. A 'roadmap for European macro-regions' must be defined, although this will not be binding and could change depending on local dynamics.

A ‘pre-development phase’ is essential for each macro-region. During this phase, a round table will be organised between the partners involved, the main strategic areas will be identified and the bases for future governance will also be defined: either a body will be given a leading role, or an EGTC will be created, or governance will be collegiate, with well-defined responsibilities shared between several Member States or regions, or some other method will be followed. In line with the Council’s decision, the Commission is the natural authority to steer such a pre-development approach. It must provide the necessary human and financial resources for such an investment.

The funding to support the macro-regional cooperation approach must come from the territorial cooperation area of cohesion policy. This is in line with the aim of sensibly increasing its budget. The European Parliament has already expressed that it wishes to see this happen for the programming period 2014–2020, as has the European Commission, specifically in the fifth cohesion policy report, which advocates a ‘reinforced trans-national strand’.

This financial support could take the form of technical assistance appropriations, both for the pre-development phase conducted by the Commission itself, and for the implementation phase conducted by the governance authority selected at the end of the pre-development phase.

For priority projects, as has occurred within the Baltic Sea strategy, complementary funding can be ensured by linking the selection criteria with the priorities of the macro-regional strategy during calls for projects in the context of cohesion policy operational programmes.

6. Importance of a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean

The entire Mediterranean basin shares the same natural environment, and its shores are connected by the same history and culture. Significant opportunities exist in southern Europe, which cannot be seized without the coordination and overview permitted by the definition of a macro-regional strategy.

The Mediterranean area is vast, which leads to questions about which macro-regional mechanism will be most appropriate. In the central Mediterranean, stakeholders are working towards an Adriatic-Ionian macro-region project. The consultations carried out whilst drafting this report lean towards retaining the option of three distinct macro-regions: one in the western Mediterranean, another in the central Mediterranean — also known as the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region — and the third in the eastern Mediterranean, with a structured mechanism for coordination between them.

Owing to their ‘Mediterranean climate’, the Mediterranean regions have similar ecotypes. The same types of agricultural product are produced from north to south and from east to west, and form a single, albeit diverse, range of products. The environmental problems (for example, fires) are the same all over. As the world’s top tourist destination, the Mediterranean territories are keen to cooperate in order to maintain and improve the prospects of this economic sector, which is vital to most of them.

In terms of developing potential, maritime traffic must be placed at the heart of a transport strategy for the whole area, particularly for goods. Many diverse sea routes must be

established. The Mediterranean offers optimum conditions for the development of renewable energy, particularly solar energy. A macro-regional strategy can provide tailored responses to these objectives, with the involvement of partners such as the EIB.

Mediterranean biodiversity is particularly abundant, but also under serious threat. Overfishing is a threat to fish stocks. The Mediterranean Sea is a closed sea, with heavy sea traffic. Its shores are experiencing some of the highest population growth, which is accentuated by tourism. As a result, the sea and shore environment is a major concern for this whole area. A coordinated policy on how to handle discards, with general 'north-south' cooperation between local authorities, must be encouraged, with the support of neighbourhood policies.

For 2020 and beyond, the Mediterranean represents the main 'neighbourhood prospect' for Europe, due to its 500 million inhabitants, less than one-third of whom live within the European Union. A development dynamic based around the Mediterranean could drive forward the whole European economy.

Within the EU, the Mediterranean area is unstructured. Its performance in terms of cooperation and interconnection is very poor. The challenges that must be tackled by the Mediterranean's political authorities could be better identified within a comprehensive plan and consultation.

Outside the EU, those populations living in the Mediterranean region have very low standards of living at all levels: economic, social, environmental and political. The development of these societies is an essential requirement for them, and an opportunity for Europe as it could capitalise on greater security, more 'sustainable' control of immigration flows and direct participation in this growth area. This would positively impact on the performance of its own economy. As a result, the events of last spring along the southern shores of the Mediterranean are a powerful incentive to develop new and active neighbourhood policies. By linking these, at least in part, with a macro-regional strategy, they could take on a concrete territorial dimension ensuring greater effectiveness.

The EU Member States and regions in the Mediterranean area must commit to a reinforced cooperation approach. This must be opened up to all partners in this area which is essential to the future of Europe. Macro-regional strategy is the best way of achieving this goal.

19.3.2012

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Regional Development

on the evolution of EU macro-regional strategies: present practice and future prospects, especially in the Mediterranean
(2011/2179(INI))

Rapporteur: Nikolaos Salavrakos

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the concept of macro-regional strategies, which, on the basis of the experience gained in existing macro-regions, can encourage the development of synergies and coordinated policies between the EU, the Member States concerned, candidate and non-EU countries, regions and local authorities, fostering sustainable growth, job creation, security and protection of the environment by developing territorial cooperation projects in areas sharing common geographic, historic and cultural characteristics to address common challenges identified through a ‘bottom-up’ process, avoiding a random approach and preventing incoherence; calls also for more synergy effects between the different macro-regional strategies;
2. Requests a more long-term financing solution for macro-regional strategies, within the framework of the EU budget, in order to finance actions not covered by Cohesion Policy, e.g. cooperation with third countries; notes that experience of the Baltic Sea Strategy shows furthermore a need for ‘seed money’ for planning and preparing projects in support of the strategy;
3. Calls on the Commission and Council to take into account EU macro-regional strategies when deciding on budgetary envelopes such as cohesion and structural funds, research and development, and in particular regional cooperation; in addition, calls on the Commission and Council to evaluate whether macro-regional strategies need direct funding to guarantee successful implementation;
4. Emphasises, in light of the numerous similar economic, social and environmental

challenges faced by all regions sharing the Mediterranean Sea as a major element of their heritage, the interest in creating a macro-region for the Mediterranean, be it as a whole or in the form of coherent sub-regions such as the emerging Adriatic-Ionian initiatives to address those key areas where synergies, partnerships and regional cooperation should be strengthened in order to create sustainable growth in the Mediterranean region;

5. Stresses that the Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategy is a significant factor in reconciliation between territories of the Western Balkans and may assist these countries' efforts to join the EU;
6. Believes that it is necessary, in order to implement a Mediterranean macro-regional strategy, to build on the experience and work of existing regional institutions and to seek possible synergies with them, particularly – in addition to the UFM – the European Investment Bank and ARLEM;
7. Emphasises that a Mediterranean macro-region could ensure that the EU's different programmes concerning the Mediterranean complement each other and that existing financing is used as efficiently as possible, and could bring real added value to the concrete projects of the Union for the Mediterranean and involve the relevant third countries and regions at the moment of defining the strategy, using the Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument to this end, always in strict compliance with the rule of law and on the basis of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, promoting where necessary the principle of 'more for more';
8. Emphasises that major areas of intervention for a Mediterranean macro-region should be geared to the appropriate sub-regional levels for cooperation on specific projects and include energy networks, scientific cooperation and innovation, networks for culture, education and training, tourism, trade, environmental protection, sustainable maritime transport, maritime security and safety and the protection of the marine environment against pollution, overfishing and illegal fishing through the creation of an integrated network of reporting and surveillance systems for maritime activities, the strengthening of good governance and effective public administration, so as to foster job creation;
9. Regards it as important, especially after the events of the Arab Spring, that the new macro-region contributes to the definition of a new strategy with third countries for the proper management of immigration flows and mutual benefits of increased mobility, approaching it from a strategy with third countries of combating poverty and fostering employment and fair trade, thereby contributing to stability in the macro-region;
10. Calls for such a strategy to include as one of its main priorities the development of south-south trade, the creation of regional markets and reduction of trade tariffs and barriers between countries in the region;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	12.3.2012
Result of final vote	+: 58 -: 1 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Sir Robert Atkins, Bastiaan Belder, Frieda Brepoels, Elmar Brok, Jerzy Buzek, Mário David, Michael Gahler, Marietta Giannakou, Ana Gomes, Andrzej Grzyb, Richard Howitt, Anna Ibrisagic, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Ioannis Kasoulides, Tunne Kelam, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Evgeni Kirilov, Maria Eleni Koppa, Andrey Kovatchev, Paweł Robert Kowal, Eduard Kukan, Vytautas Landsbergis, Krzysztof Lisek, Sabine Lösing, Ulrike Lunacek, Mario Mauro, Kyriakos Mavronikolas, Francisco José Millán Mon, Alexander Mirsky, María Muñoz De Urquiza, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Raimon Obiols, Kristiina Ojuland, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Alojz Peterle, Bernd Posselt, Cristian Dan Preda, Libor Rouček, Tokia Saïfi, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Nikolaos Salavrakos, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, György Schöpflin, Werner Schulz, Adrian Severin, Charles Tannock, Inese Vaidere, Kristian Vigenin, Boris Zala
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Laima Liucija Andrikiienė, Véronique De Keyser, Barbara Lochbihler, Monica Luisa Macovei, Carmen Romero López, Marietje Schaake, Helmut Scholz, Hannes Swoboda, Indrek Tarand, Ivo Vajgl
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Philippe Boulland

2.3.2012

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

for the Committee on Regional Development

on the evolution of EU macro-regional strategies: present practice and future prospects,
especially in the Mediterranean
(2011/2179(INI))

Rapporteur: Malika Benarab-Attou

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Recognises that macro-regions, as catchment areas bound by common history and collective memory, geography, climate and culture, are an appropriate reference framework for the setting of priorities for programmes and European financing and, in this context, recognises that the Mediterranean's south bank is undergoing unprecedented development, which the European Union must sustain through new initiatives;
2. Considers that a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean must coordinate existing EU funds, particularly neighbourhood policy, cohesion policy and territorial cooperation funds to implement projects aimed at confronting common challenges such as the protection and enhancement of Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage; recalls the importance of a coordinated and balanced neighbourhood policy for the South and the eligibility of cultural projects financed by ERDF to address these challenges;
3. Stresses that macro-regions provide an environment conducive to the involvement of local political stakeholders and non-governmental stakeholders, as these regions foster the development of effective coordination systems which facilitate bottom-up approaches, with a view to ensuring the meaningful involvement of civil society in political decision-making, and to pooling existing initiatives in order to optimise resources and bring together the actors involved;
4. Encourages the plan for an Adriatic-Ionian macro-region, an area conceived to bring together Member States and extra-European countries in the same economic, historical

and cultural reality;

5. Notes that the Mediterranean macro-region, within the meaning of human civilisation and history, is much broader than what the strict geographic sense implies, and may include countries on the Atlantic seaboard, such as Portugal and Morocco, and in other regions, such as the Black Sea area;
6. Emphasises the importance of the Mediterranean as a decentralised area of cooperation – that goes beyond strict geographic borders – for strengthening cross-regional decision-making and the sharing of good practices, not least concerning democracy, human rights, the rule of law, ecology, economic development, ecotourism as well as cultural, research, educational, youth and sport partnerships; underlines the specific importance of education as a catalyst for democratic transition;
7. Considers that the Mediterranean macro-region must develop in accordance with international legislation on economic, social and cultural rights, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
8. Stresses the importance of creative and cultural industries, and considers that this sector of the economy will play an increasingly important role in the region's economic growth and employment ; calls for particular attention to be afforded to the implementation of cultural and academic exchange programmes, as well as to the strengthening of cultural and stable tourism links;
9. Considers that cultural tourism can have a particular impact on the Mediterranean region, both from an economic point of view and also as a factor of reciprocal knowledge and intercultural understanding;
10. Stresses that the Mediterranean macro-region would favour intercultural dialogue and the enrichment of the shared cultural heritage of the European Union, mobilise civil society and thereby encourage NGOs and Mediterranean peoples to participate in EU cultural and educational programmes;
11. Recalls the fundamental role that education plays in democracy and social and economic development, as well as the importance of professional training in fighting youth unemployment;
12. Stresses that, in the context of the Mediterranean macro-region and taking into account the motivation of young people particularly in the southern countries, it is important to strengthen cooperation in the field of youth by promoting European programmes and creating synergies with the work of the Mediterranean Office for Youth;
13. Stresses the importance of focusing especially on young people, as they will be the foundation of a new generation and the ones to wield the largest influence on how their respective countries will face the future;
14. Highlights that cooperation in the audio-visual domain can have an important role in transmitting democratic values in all the countries in the macro-region;

15. Recommends, in order to promote exchange programmes, dynamic research, innovation and lifelong learning, the creation of networks with higher education and research institutions in the future Mediterranean macro-region and the development of education infrastructure in that region, as well as the removal of obstacles to the movement of students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers, trainers, researchers and administrative staff; stresses the need to strengthen the quality of teaching and research in those networks by adequately financing and supporting the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes, especially in view of the low number of Erasmus Mundus programme beneficiaries in the Mediterranean area;
16. Finds that the mobility of artists and arts in the euro-Mediterranean area is hindered by numerous obstacles that vary according to country and region, and that are linked not only to difficulties in obtaining visas but also to the lack of status that artists face and to the conditions they face as creators of artistic works, particularly in southern countries; considers that a Mediterranean macro-region would serve to promote mutual recognition of the status of artists, offer opportunities to reflect on mobility and optimise the use of training programmes, networking and the free movement of cultural actors, artists and works;
17. Calls for the implementation, in the next programming period, of a 'Euro-Mediterranean Erasmus' programme, intended to encourage the transnational mobility of students from both sides of the Mediterranean, as well as a 'Euro-Mediterranean Leonardo da Vinci' programme for young people who, in the framework of a macro-regional strategy, want to acquire professional training abroad;
18. Emphasises the need to adopt measures to counter the growing trend towards the 'brain drain' from this region;
19. Calls for the most to be made of the historical, cultural and linguistic diversity of the Mediterranean area, which is a source of innovation providing an impetus to the cultural and creative industries as well as to the tourism sector; calls for cooperation between museums and cultural establishments to be encouraged and supported;
20. Recalls that in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean there is a particular interest in European cinema and audiovisual productions, and that this continues to exert significant influence on the dialogue between cultures in the area, as part of the current stage of democratic development of these societies;
21. Suggests that greater cooperation and trade should be pursued with third countries in order to improve the standing of European production on the global market, and particularly in the Mediterranean area, and thereby promote cultural exchange and the launch of new initiatives to encourage Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and democratic progress across the entire region, particularly in light of the commitments made during the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Cinema.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	29.2.2012
Result of final vote	+: 23 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Malika Benarab-Attou, Lothar Bisky, Piotr Borys, Jean-Marie Cavada, Silvia Costa, Mary Honeyball, Petra Kammerevert, Emma McClarkin, Emilio Menéndez del Valle, Marek Henryk Migalski, Katarína Neveďalová, Gianni Pittella, Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, Marietje Schaake, Marco Scurria, Emil Stoyanov, Hannu Takkula, László Tőkés, Helga Trüpel, Gianni Vattimo, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Milan Zver
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Heinz K. Becker, Seán Kelly, Iosif Matula, Georgios Papanikolaou, Olga Sehnalová, Rui Tavares
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	21.6.2012
Result of final vote	+: 40 -: 2 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	François Alfonsi, Catherine Bearder, Jean-Paul Basset, Victor Boştinaru, John Bufton, Alain Cadec, Salvatore Caronna, Nikos Chrysogelos, Ryszard Czarnecki, Francesco De Angelis, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Brice Hortefeux, Danuta Maria Hübner, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, María Irigoyen Pérez, Seán Kelly, Constanze Angela Krehl, Petru Constantin Luhan, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Vladimír Maňka, Riikka Manner, Iosif Matula, Erminia Mazzoni, Miroslav Mikolášik, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Monika Smolková, Ewald Stadler, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Oldřich Vlasák, Kerstin Westphal, Joachim Zeller, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Antonello Antinoro, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Jens Geier, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, James Nicholson, Ivari Padar, Vilja Savisaar-Toomast, Elisabeth Schroedter, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Patrice Tirolien