

Cooperation between Mediterranean cities to design tomorrow's metropolises

The Mediterranean basin is the cradle of the world's oldest cities which have always maintained interactive links based on competition and complementarity.

In the current context of globalization, the Mediterranean urban structure is a powerful asset. Cities have developed competitiveness and innovation as a gate through which globalization can reach the territories.

Large Mediterranean cities understood the advantages they would gain from cooperating, coordinating their strategies and reinforcing their respective assets. This joint vision gave birth to the **I2C Project: Innovation, Competitiveness and Connectivity of Mediterranean metropolises**. Seven cities from the Mediterranean basin took part in it: Sevilla, Malaga, Valencia, Barcelona, Marseille, Genoa and Turin. The objective was to launch stronger cooperation in order to **identify priority actions** and then to invest in their **concrete implementation**. This approach received the support of the Interreg Programme from the European Union. Launched in 2006, the I2C Project ended in March 2008. Thanks to the mobilization of numerous players from the public and private sectors a huge amount of work has been completed.

The Cities face similar challenges which they tackle by using different approaches and tools. The objective of I2C was to develop joint solutions in order to build together **strategic, communication-driven, inclusive, innovative and sustainable cities**.

They are **strategic metropolises** because, first of all, they want to be able to initiate long term strategies. The intention is not to freeze the future but rather to define the main orientations that will enable each city to become a sustainable player in global exchanges.

But no strategy can succeed concretely without the **involvement and adhesion of its civil society and its metropolitan players**, in the broadest sense of the word.

Besides, the strategies defined by the cities must lead to concrete **projects**. During the I2C project, the emphasis was placed on two main axes. The first one concerns **innovation and new technologies**, the second deals with **sustainable development**.

Through the I2C project, cities have been able to assess their experience in strategic planning and to ponder the conditions that will enable them to transform such experience into competitiveness leveraging tools. **Barcelona and the Mediterranean Institute** mobilized the partners on this stake.

The City of Barcelona examined the notion of a **complex creative city** which embodies four specific themes: the relationships between the city and the productive activities, between universities and businesses, as well as private innovation and creative industries.

A city must become creative to attract and retain the "creative classes". Throughout the World, cities are competing with one another and have identified the same principles of action. These principles combine sustainable development, art and culture, innovation and technologies, knowledge economy, but they also call for effective political leadership and a reactive public administration.

The Mediterranean Institute explored **ways to ensure** that projects would serve the stakes. Competitiveness strategies were analyzed as per two priority axes: innovation and also the city's attractiveness and international prestige. This pilot project made it possible to understand the mechanisms conducive to the success of metropolitan strategies. It thus appeared essential to provide Mediterranean cities with a new form of governance that induces synergies and adhesion.

The **citizen participation** is the second strategic axis of the I2C project. In order to ensure its competitiveness, a Mediterranean metropolis must be visible and intelligible for its inhabitants and of course must include all the players in the transformation processes. **Sevilla and Genoa** worked together on these two dimensions.

The city of **Sevilla** experimented with a new internal communication instrument: a permanent exhibition open to the citizens and the economic players. This type of tool enables the inhabitants to discover aspects of their city that are poorly known, such as large urban projects, economic drivers, industrial projects...

Genoa used its project of the virtual urban center to define the conditions that would enable other cities to reproduce its experience. This tool utilises the new technologies to boost democratic participation. The City of Genoa proposed a content management methodology which provides the largest possible number of people with all key information on urban transformations.

The **project** was the third axis selected by the I2C partner cities. The projects selected were first of all those focusing on **innovation and employment**. Innovation is considered in the broad meaning of the word and applies to economic governance of metropolitan areas.

Valencia and Marseille examined together the implementation of a "territorial intelligence" tool. All partners have made the same observation: there is insufficient communication among the key players of the metropolitan territories.

First, the Gecobio platform implemented by **Valencia** had to be studied. It comprises key players in health and biotechnologies within a city-operated structure. Through the evaluation of this project, it has been possible to define the elements that could be transposed into other cities.

Marseille has extended this model to the employment issues. An enriched platform was experimented with on site. This pilot project made it possible to identify all the health and employment players within the metropolitan territory. Afterwards, services were proposed and the beneficiaries were analyzed. This makes it possible to understand the urban and metropolitan relational tissue and the way it functions, in order to propose a dynamic platform.

Founding projects enable the Mediterranean metropolises to become **sustainable cities**, in other words metropolises offering a good quality of life combined with a form of development that preserves the architectural and cultural heritage. In this case, the issue of transports and sustainable mobility is central. Mediterranean cities are characterized by historical centers incompatible with the "automobile" transport. The importance of port zones adds another constraint. Therefore, the challenge for the cities is to ensure fluid logistics while preserving the environment and the mobility of the inhabitants. **Malaga and Turin** are working together on possible joint projects.

Turin was especially involved in this process. Indeed, this city has faced major problems of urban traffic congestion. The authorities have had to reinforce public transport to limit the use of individual cars. The city has leveraged this experience to propose a pilot project of data and indicator analyses. This project was designed to build a **decision support system** for public players.

This approach was completed and concretized by the pilot project in Malaga in which measures implemented in different cities throughout the world – such as urban payroll or alternate traffic – were analyzed. This work enabled a good practice guide for sustainable metropolitan mobility to be designed. In fact, Malaga has experimented with an "on-demand" taxibus transport system.

Conclusion

Through the I2C Project, the large Mediterranean cities have been able, for the first time, to **deepen their cooperation**. The pilot projects focused on concrete and operational dimensions.

The dialogue led to the joint commitment of the partners on the strategic actions to be carried out. These shared strategies are essential. Even though today regions are privileged by European territorial governance, Mediterranean metropolises are the entry gates through which the global economy reaches the territories. The strength of I2C is to propose a **new methodology** which is applicable to all metropolises.