

## Local voices towards permanent dialogue in the Mediterranean

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**October 20-21, 2021 | Four Seasons Hotel – Gammarth, Tunis**

The findings of the survey “[10 Years after the Arab Uprisings: Where does Public Opinion in the Region Stand Today?](#)”, conducted by the Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung KAS PoDiMed, concluded that in many South Mediterranean countries there is relatively high levels of trust in local and municipal government authorities, especially when compared with other governmental bodies and political parties.

These outcomes vivid debates on the significance of local politics and the respective actors came back to life after the Arab uprisings, which initiated decentralisation reforms in several countries.

Decentralisation advocates expect the reforms to foster democratisation, local autonomy and the overall socioeconomic situation.

Since 2011, the region has witnessed upheavals, conflicts, major government changes, and eventually plummeting public trust in political parties and institutions. Failed to fulfil social and economic promises, central governments and political actors gave way to local leadership to be the last resort for citizens to express their needs. Whether elected local leaders within a community, such as mayors, or tribe chiefs, religious leaders, business leaders and other well-known community figures, they all have the ability to influence the people around them.

In this sense, mayors are ideally and legally positioned to directly meet the citizens’ demands and can effectively use their influence and connections as a means of motivating direct action. Furthermore, in many South Mediterranean countries, constitutions state that the governments should engage in a decentralisation process and provide a redefinition of competencies with an increased autonomy assigned to local authorities at the regional level, such actors that are below state level may play an active role in complementing the activities of governmental and/or intergovernmental actors. Local authorities have the freedom to encourage and boost decentralised cooperation and territorial diplomacy through a number of joint operations and regional and sub-regional initiatives in many important fields and thus to contribute to Euro-Mediterranean as well as South-South regional integration. Euro-Mediterranean regional and local cooperation usually tumble due to obstacles at the national level, but it is also, to a large extent, dependent on the level of decentralisation and local governance achieved by the various partners.

**Working language:** Simultaneous **English –Arabic** interpretation will be provided

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*This event is on-invitation only*

### Scope of the seminar

In this context, KAS PolDiMed, in partnership with the Mediterranean network of cities MedCities, organizes a seminar in Tunisia which aims to gather mayors from different South Mediterranean countries in order to discuss the needs and priorities of municipalities, with a regional perspective. The event will provide a space for the invited mayors to present their activities and highlight the needs of their respective communities. There will be also discussions about the impact of the local political and socioeconomic conditions on the region and how the existing institutional frameworks that define the Euro-Mediterranean relations (Barcelona process initiated in 1995 and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) set up in 2008; The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) created in 2008, revised in 2015 and renewed in 2021) could foster the role of local authorities in order to set-up a bottom-up approach for regional integration.

The first event of these dialogues will tackle the link between climate change, unemployment and migration, focusing on the challenges of local authorities in promoting youth-oriented interventions to encourage green local economy recovery. According to IPCC reports, the Mediterranean region is a hotspot for climate change warming 20% more than the global average, provoking devastating heatwaves, water shortages, loss of biodiversity and risks to food production and water availability. Other than the impact of climate change on the cities and the urban infrastructure, there is an inexorable link with citizens' livelihoods and wellbeing. Especially when it comes to youth, the lack of opportunities is a driver for migration.

The current seminar pretends to unveil the common challenges faced in the nexus between climate, youth, employment and migration as well as to discuss the potential of the role of local authorities to mitigate climate change impact and promote green job creation.

The goal of these dialogues is to set the basis for a permanent dialogue forum to be developed in 2022-23, which will tackle the importance of the role of local authorities in the Mediterranean development.

### Moderators:

1st day: Mr. Adel Ben Youssef, Professor of Economics, University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis

2nd day: Mr. Fayçal Gouiaa, Tunisian diplomat

### Invited cities:

Morocco: Chefchaouen

Tunisia: Sfax, Sousse, Tunis

Lebanon: Tripoli and Sidon

Libya: Misrata and Tobruk

Palestine: Bethlehem

## October 20, 2021 | 09.00 AM Tunis Time

- 9.00 AM **Welcome Address & Opening Remarks** 3/6
- Mr. Thomas Volk**  
Director, Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung – KAS  
POLDIMED
- Mr. Oriol Barba Suñol**  
Director, MedCities
- 9.30 AM **Introduction and presentation of the dialogues: Objectives and framework of the exchanges**
- Ms. Konstantia Nikopoulou**  
Project Manager, MedCities
- 09.45 AM **Keynote intervention: “Setting the scene: the international agenda for the Mediterranean”**
- Mr. Francisco Acosta Soto**  
Deputy Chief of Mission, EU delegation to Tunisia
- 10.15 AM **Coffee Break**
- 10.45 AM **Presentation of local challenges by the participating cities (1st part)**
- Mr. Adel Ben Youssef**  
Professor of Economics, University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis
- Cities and climate change mitigation challenges and efforts
  - Green transition : potential for job creation through sustainable economic development
- 12.30 PM **Lunch Break**
- 2.00 PM **Presentation of local challenges by the participating cities (2nd part)**
- Mr. Adel Ben Youssef**  
Professor of Economics, University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis
- Preventing youth migration and promoting migrant integration
- 3.30- 5.00PM **Debate: What common challenges are identified? Prioritizing ideas and actions**
- 6.30 PM **Departure to the restaurant Villa Didon**
- 7.00 PM **Networking dinner**

## October 21, 2021 | 09.00 AM Tunis Time

- 9.00 AM **Recap of first day** 4/6
- 9.15 AM **An overview of current regional agendas and frameworks (ZOOM)**
- Dr. Blanca Moreno-Dodson**  
Manager of the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) – UNOPS
- 9.45 AM **Input of regional organizations and discussion guidelines**
- Mr. Ambassador Fayçal Gouia**  
Diplomat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Tunisians Abroad
- 10.00 AM **Debate: Identification of future agenda to be developed in 2022-23: What's missing in the current regional agenda?**
- Mr. Ambassador Fayçal Gouia**  
Diplomat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Tunisians Abroad
- 11.00 AM **Debate: Identification of next meeting and content**
- Mr. Ambassador Fayçal Gouia**  
Diplomat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Tunisians Abroad
- Mr. Thomas Volk**  
Director, Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung – KAS POLDIMED
- Mr. Josep Canals Molina**  
Secretary General, MedCities
- 11.30 AM **break**
- 12.30 PM **Departure to the restaurant Dar El Jeld**
- 1.00 PM **Lunch Break**
- 2.30 PM **Technical visit to flagship projects in Tunisia**
- Association for Safeguarding of the Tunis Medina: preservation of patrimony
  - Project Innomed UP : circular economy in the handicraft sector
  - Project Femmedina : reinforcement of women participation in public life
- 5.00 PM **Departure of participants**

## Discussion topics

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### **CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION**

The temperature in the Mediterranean space has already reached + 1.5 ° C considered as a critical threshold by scientists. Have you carried out a carbon footprint in your city? Do you have any actions to mitigate greenhouse effects? Do you have a specific mitigation target for 2030? How is your city adapting to climate change in general?

### **PROMOTION OF THE GREEN RECOVERY**

All the cities of the world seek to promote the green economy. Has your city implemented green transition solutions (circular economy; renewable energy initiatives; solutions around sustainable mobility).

### **MIGRATION AND YOUTH**

Mobility has increased in recent years around the world and cities are attracting more and more young people and migrants. This influx of new populations poses many problems for cities in terms of the supply of services, housing and logistics. In addition, this dynamic is accompanied by social problems to be managed. Does your city have specific arrangements for the reception of young people and migrants? How does it deal with the issue of social inclusion of these populations? How does this fit into the question of the competitiveness of the territory?

Venue

Four Seasons Gammarth, Tunis

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Conception & organization:

**Medcities**

<http://www.medcities.org/>

**Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)**

Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean (PolDiMed)

<https://www.kas.de/poldimed>