

JOINT DECLARATION OF THE “FOUR MOTORS FOR EUROPE”, WALES AND FLANDERS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

The presidents or representatives of the “Four Motors for Europe” (Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia, Lombardy and Rhône-Alpes), and the associated regions of Wales and Flanders, gathered together in Rabat on 16th January 2006 on the occasion of the Meeting for Sustainable Development and Environmental Technologies in the Mediterranean Basin”

As a continuation of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference held in Barcelona on 27th November 2005 on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Barcelona Declaration, in which the work programme for the next five years was approved, which includes direct references to decentralisation, good governance and the role of local government to enable citizens to take part in decision-making;

As a continuation of the Euromed Regional Conference Barcelona +10, organised by the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, in conjunction with the Committee of the Regions, which for the first time brought together more than fifty representatives of local and regional authorities with the goal of promoting reflection on decentralised co-operation, good governance and the decentralisation processes on both shores of the Mediterranean;

Referring to the political declaration signed at the end of the aforementioned conference, in which the regions and cities requested greater recognition of their role in the development of Euro-Mediterranean policies;

Convinced of the crucial role of inter-regional co-operation in the process of eliminating the political, economic and cultural barriers currently in place in the context of the Mediterranean basin;

Bearing in mind the declaration by the presidents of the Four Motors at their meeting in Stuttgart on 15th April 1999 on the occasion of the Ministerial Conference of Stuttgart, the third since the beginning of the Barcelona Process;

Recalling the commitment by the Four Motors to the Mediterranean, within the framework of the Year of the Mediterranean, and wishing to illustrating its desire to participate in the re-launch of the Euro-Mediterranean co-operation process;

Convinced that the European regions have a wide range of co-operation and joint projects based on which new networks of co-operation could be established between the EU and the southern and eastern rims of the Mediterranean.

In light of these considerations, and convinced that the time has come to begin to act in an area as meaningful as the environment and sustainable development,

Bearing in mind the global Agenda 21 adopted in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit), which declares that sustainable development is one of the international community's priorities for all public sectors (international and regional organisations, states, regions, local authorities) and all stakeholders (companies, trade unions, NGOs, farmers, women, the scientific community, indigenous communities), and defines it as economic and social development that is compatible with protecting the environment, which ensures the needs of current societies without sacrificing those of future generations;

Bearing in mind the Millennium Development Goals as defined by the United Nations General Assembly, which calls for integrating sustainable development into national policies, access to safe drinking water for half the world population by 2015, and a reduction in the loss of environmental resources;

Bearing in mind the implementation plan adopted at the 2002 Johannesburg Summit (Rio +10), which outlines the goals to steer towards for sustainable development in areas such as protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, comprehensive water resource management, sanitation for the entire world population, promoting renewable energies, preventing and reducing industrial and urban waste at origin, fighting against climate change, and the interactions between these policies and others, such as education, health care, urban development, agricultural and fishing;

Bearing in mind that the goal of the Johannesburg Action Plan is also to modify unsustainable modes of consumption and production, especially through the implementation of eco-efficiency, life-cycle analysis, prevention at origin and others which thus encourage the implementation of initiatives on a regional scale;

Bearing in mind the European Strategy on Sustainable Development adopted by the European Council at Gothenburg in 2002, which places sustainable development at the same level as the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy on matters of the knowledge economy, competitiveness, employment and social cohesion;

Bearing in mind the latest report from the European Environment Agency, which analyses the main causes behind the degradation of the Mediterranean by land-based waste (cities, industry, agriculture), marine pollution, urbanisation on the coast, erosion, overfishing, urban and tourism development, and the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity which require urgent measures to be implemented, such as those contained in the initiative on Mediterranean depollution ratified by the Action Plan of the heads of state and government of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership adopted at the last summit held in November 2005 in Barcelona;

Bearing in mind the adoption by the signatories of the Barcelona Convention of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, ratified as one of the objectives of the Action Plan adopted by the heads of state at the November 2005 Euro-Mediterranean Conference;

Bearing in mind the adoption by the Environmental Conference of the European Regions (ENCORE) of the 1995 Valencia Charter and the declaration of Gothenburg in 1997, which establish the regions' commitment to adopt regional sustainable development strategies as well as to implement measures and projects;

Bearing in mind the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (NRG4SD) set up at the Johannesburg Summit, at which the Gauteng Declaration was adopted by more than thirty regions from the five continents, which regards the regional sphere as particularly appropriate for adopting strategies and actions for sustainable development given its proximity to citizens and the territorial dimensions that enable environmental concerns to be integrated into regional policies and plans in a holistic way;

Bearing in mind the declaration presented by the regional governments on the occasion of the high level conference that gathered together the Environment Ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean states and representatives of the regions, cities, NGOs and companies, which calls for involving all stakeholders in developing, adopting, implementing and monitoring the "roadmap" that the European Commission must present to be implemented in 2006;

Taking into account the fact that eighty percent of the pollution in the Mediterranean Sea is generated on land, with an especially noteworthy contribution by businesses, which continue to play a key role in both generating pollution and economically developing the Mediterranean basin;

Taking into account the experience of the regions that are members of the Four Motors for Europe, as well as associated regions such as Wales and Flanders, in implementing eco-efficiency and cleaner production in the realm of corporate management;

Bearing in mind that the area of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership poses enormous challenges to meeting the needs of the peoples on the southern rim, especially in promoting a type of sustainable development that combines people's quality of life, economic development and the comprehensive management of natural resources, and protecting biodiversity.

Bearing in mind that despite the series of initiatives promoted by the United Nations, especially via its Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), and the Global Environment Fund (GEF); the initiatives by the European Union (strategic, regulatory, financial, inter-regional co-operation programmes, partnership and neighbourhood policy); the activities by cities on matters of local sustainable

development; the Mediterranean programmes and projects financed by NGOs such as the WWF and the UICN; the numerous activities conducted by enterprises and the private sector in general; nothing seems to reverse the trend towards the gradual degradation of the Mediterranean coast and sea;

Bearing in mind that it is necessary to adopt a roadmap with specific measures, a precise implementation calendar, a partnership that extends to all the public and private stakeholders, a broad process of citizen participation with the goal of promoting sustainable development in the Mediterranean within the framework of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development;

The presidents of the regions in the Four Motors for Europe and the associated regions of Wales and Flanders:

Resolve to continue promoting sustainable development in their respective regional territories as well as on matters of international and inter-regional co-operation and development co-operation;

Resolve to promote exemplary actions in the public sector, especially in the procurement of environmentally friendly goods and services;

Resolve to promote sustainable development in the regions in a practical way by strengthening good governance, which involves participation by all sectors when developing the policies, plans and programmes; and by strengthening the principle of including environmental criteria in sectorial policies, especially in land management, public works, transport, industry, energy policy, agricultural policy, tourism and education;

Pledge to support research and innovation in the realm of environmental affairs in both the public and private sector, with the goal of making respect for the environment also become an engine of growth and competitiveness;

Resolve to promote sustainable modes of consumption and production not only in their regions but also in the Mediterranean basin with the help of all the stakeholders, especially by empowering consumers as a key decision-making factor in market mechanisms through their decisions to choose goods and services that meet the three criteria of sustainable development, namely the social, environmental and economic spheres;

Resolve that the principles of precaution and prevention of pollution at origin requires environmental criteria to be introduced in the strategic phase of plan and programme development, with the goal of preventing subsequent environmental impacts from public or private projects;

Resolve that it is necessary to complete the implementation of environmental rules with flexible instruments such as voluntary agreements with industrial

sectors, good practices in companies and in the public sector, economic and tax incentive mechanisms, information, empowerment and awareness-raising in all sectors and amongst citizens with the goal of enabling all stakeholders to play a key role in achieving sustainable development;

Adopt the commitment to take action in their regional territory, but also in their international and inter-regional co-operation, especially in the Mediterranean basin, in the following areas: sustainable water resource management; promotion of renewable energies; management of urban transport; prevention of industrial waste at origin with the emphasis on sharing positive experiences in the regions with the Mediterranean basin; fight against urban and agricultural pollution; projects aimed at adapting to climate change; sustainable urban and tourist planning; strategic environmental assessment of plans and programmes; protection of biodiversity; comprehensive coastal management; and sustainable management of halieutic reserves;

Resolve to promote co-operation on matters of clean production, especially in the Mediterranean basin, through the activities put on by centres such as the Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production (RAC/CP) of the Mediterranean Action Plan;

Resolve to promote the creation of centres to fight against climate change in order to foster projects, especially in the Mediterranean, within the framework of the mechanisms of clean development such as the one recently created with the approval of the Marrakech agreement at the latest United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Montreal;

Resolve to create a steering committee to promote cooperation projects and actions aimed at strengthening the capacities in the aforementioned areas in the Mediterranean basin, and more specifically to put into motion initiatives on matters of comprehensive water resource management, sustainable waste management and the fight against climate change, as well as those outlined in the technical meeting held on 17th January 2006 in Skhirat.