

MEDACITY FORUM

ECONOMIC FORUM OF THE MEDITERRANEAN CITY
FORUM ÉCONOMIQUE DE LA VILLE MÉDITERRANÉENNE

The Mediterranean: Blue City

The oldest cities in the world were born in the Mediterranean. Most of them have been big, powerful and active cities that, previously, shined over the whole Mediterranean and the Middle East.

The city has been one of the most relevant elements and a constant fact of Mediterranean History. The commercial activities have been developed throughout the seashores, while the maritime routes and the Mediterranean space were being built.

Currently, cities are gaining more significance as half of the global population is living in urban districts. This figure will increase to 75% in 2025, meaning that the urban population is constantly developing. The world urban population has exceeded the symbolic threshold of 50% and in the next decade, there will be around 500 cities with more than one million inhabitants, including several “Megacities” with a population over 20 million inhabitants.

One of the key roles of the cities is the driving forces of economic growth. As the main generator of employment and wealth, cities produce goods and provide services that strengthen the economic opportunities for the whole country.

Nevertheless, cities are also facing many challenges nowadays and they will only be able to face them if they rely on business management tools. For the companies, the urban world is a growing market with enormous potential.



SESSION 1: MEDITERRANEAN CITY: NEW ENERGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

In this session, the role of both city values and identity that make it possible to achieve sustainable growth and success in the cities, in an increasingly globalised world, will be on discussion.

Nowadays, competitiveness between cities to obtain resources is strong, since these destinations are competing to attract more citizens, tourists and investors. Intending to improve their advantages, cities are focusing on determining success factors, such as their own identity, values, symbolism and images. That is the reason why many important cities around the world concentrate on promoting their identity and values as a priority in their public and budget agenda.

The identity of a city is shaped by several conditions as, for example, the quality of the environment, the performance of the local economy, the satisfaction of the residents, the identity of the community and the sense of cohesion. All these factors taken together are closely linked to the continuing success and prosperity of the city. The type of design of the public space, green infrastructures, an effective public sector, accessibility and mobility are the fundamentals of the identity and the self-image of a city.



SESSION 2: BLUE CITIES & GROWTH: MEDITERRANEAN CITIES ECONOMIC FUTURE IS LINKED TO THE SEA

Since ancient times, the Mediterranean Sea has played a key role in the economy of coastal communities and States. Today, more than ever, the Blue Economy sectors are an important engine for the region's economy, with enormous potential for innovation and for sustainable and inclusive prosperity. The economic opportunities provided by the Mediterranean Sea are accompanied by an increased need for a type of management that is respectful of its ecosystems and also able to maintain and increase their value over time.

The sustainable conversion of economic sectors that have often adversely affected the health of ecosystems, such as fisheries and coastal tourism, as well as the development of new clean and technologically advanced activities (e.g. renewable energy), represent important opportunities for innovation and employment for the benefit of all Mediterranean countries.

Close collaboration between all the Mediterranean countries and their stakeholders is a condition for realising a common objective: the sustainable use and conservation of our main common resource: The Mediterranean Sea. The future of the Mediterranean, situated along a vast stretch of coastline reaching the strategic 3 continents, is linked to the sea. Therefore, the region's ability to leverage this connection will be key to its economic development in the years ahead. The Mediterranean region boasts 450 ports and terminals, 30% of global seaborne trade by volume, is the world's second-largest destination for cruise-ship tourism and has a population of 500 million people that doubles during tourist season.

As a coastal area on the Mediterranean Sea, it faces unique challenges and opportunities associated with the transition to a green economy, a diversified economy and growing population. The assets and contributions of the maritime sector to the economy are remarkable, but there is still potential for more. Many jobs related to the maritime field could be created throughout the region, thus giving young people real prospects for the future. Without any doubt, the Mediterranean economic future is linked to the sea.

Blue Economy growth implies both investment and public and private consumption, using sustainable resources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and lowering the vulnerability to climate change. Cities will have a clear economic advantage if they implement a strategy for green growth.

- Challenges and opportunities of Mediterranean cities.
- Selection of the private and public partners and strategies that enable them to implement the requirements for becoming sustainable cities.
- Identity, values and Green strategy for a competitive, inclusive and liveable city.



SESSION 3: LOOKING BEYOND THE SEA: PORT-CITIES AND CRUISE TOURISM

In this session, key topics related to Mediterranean city-ports and cruise tourism will be brought into discussion:

- **Ports and cities** have been historically strongly linked, but the link between port and city growth has become weaker in the last few years. It will be examined how ports can regain their role as drivers of urban economic growth and how negative port impacts can be mitigated.
- **How can ports keep their competitive edge?** That is the core question, which is of prime relevance to port-cities, given that only well-functioning, competitive ports will be able to create economic value. The three main determinants for competitive ports are extensive maritime forelands, effective port operations and strong hinterland connections. The long-term competitiveness of the port is also dependent on the support of the local population, which is necessary to sustain port functions in metropolitan areas.
- **Impact of ports, their terminals and their related economic sectors and activities.** Despite their economic benefits, they also have negative impacts, particularly on the environment, land use and traffic. It will be discussed how these effects are distributed, but also the mismatch between negative impacts and their benefits, which spill over to other regions. This mismatch has intensified in recent decades due to technological, market and other developments.
- **The appropriate policy mix** for a specific port-city depends on its local assets and characteristics. Despite the need for tailor-made policy design, a few generic lessons can be identified. An assessment of port-city policies shows the effectiveness of transport-related port-city policies, provided that policy coherence is respected.
- **Developing sustainable tourism of coastal cities** could preserve landscapes and biodiversity, decrease water and air pollution as well as the pressure on natural resources. Moreover, it would generate additional economic benefits that would be more evenly distributed to the local economy, and create additional, better-paid jobs. It may also contribute to preserving the local identity and physical appearance of coastal cities.
- **Impact of Cruise Tourism on the economy.** Cruise tourism is a strategic sector in Mediterranean port-cities. It is, in fact, one of the fastest-growing sectors in the worldwide holiday industry. However, Mediterranean tourism has not been side-lined from this boom. Above this, the cruise industry is one of the economic sectors where the imprint of globalisation is most recognisable, as it implies many industries, as well as benefits fanning through the community and environment. As a result, they are important players in job creation, both within and beyond the hospitality industry.

Nevertheless, cruise tourism can have significant environmental impacts, including water pollution caused by waste production or cruise ship sewage systems. It is estimated that cruise ships in the Mediterranean can produce up to 800 million litres of wastewater per year that can be discharged at sea without treatment.

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The development of sustainable practices is thus necessary to decrease the environmental impact of the sector. Cruise companies have several options to do so, including switching to modern engines that lower emissions and eliminate haze; adopting mechanisms of ballast water control; choosing mooring locations to avoid anchor damage to the seafloor and disruption of benthic habitats; treating sewage before discharge within 4-10 miles of land; shifting from dirty heavy fuel oil to a low sulphur fuel, and using scrubbers (pollution control systems) to decrease nitrogen oxide emissions.

- ❖ How the construction of cruise terminals can contribute to better development and play a role in cities economic growth, by promoting tourism and employment.
- ❖ Which lessons can we learn from Barcelona and Marseille, cities that have redeveloped their waterfront?