THE TERRITORIAL OBSERVATORY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS AND THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

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1. THE MEDITERRANEAN: LANDSCAPE AND GEOGRAPHIC SPACE.

The Mediterranean is a space with a particular geography, created, basically, from three elements. First of all we can identify a sea amongst mountains, in this understanding Braudel\(^1\) points out: "above all, is not Mediterranean a sea amongst mountains? And does not it suit to emphasize this strongly on the historical level, since this fact and its several consequences often slip by?; secondly, we find a strip where agricultural landscapes coexist, vineyards and olive groves mainly, close to strongly urbanized areas; the Mediterranean is, in addition, a high mountainous country and of difficult access.

The Mediterranean is in the singularity of each one of these strips but, especially, in the complexity generated by the conjunction of the three and the interrelationships that its adjoining causes. From this complexity and their contradictions, it is easy to feel that this territory is, together with a functional space, a metaphysical place that has been evoked and invoked from ancient. A suggestive set, which has become an inspiration source for the civilizations that have settled down in these latitudes.

This reality is in accordance with the numerous descriptions that travellers and novelists have done about the Mediterranean World. As one reference, Azorín\(^2\) said about the Spanish south-east: "... - blinding light, blue sea, slight breezes that impregnate the salt of our lips, round and white clouds, white houses and palms - ... "

2. THE MEDITERRANEAN: IN THE ECONOMICAL INNOVATION FRAMEWORK.

In a world more and more globalized, we understand territorial competitiveness as the capacity of the territory to confront the competence of the market and to guarantee at the same time the environmental, economic, social and cultural viability. This meaning is shared by the Agenda of Lisbon (2000), Agenda of Gothenburg (2001) where show the reinforcement of the economic and social cohesion.

In the competitiveness seeking we should bear in mind the territorial context as:

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\(^2\) AZORÍN :  "Al margen de la fuerza de la sangre" (At the margin of the blood strenght), Cervantes, Espasa Calpe S.A.,1944, p. 38
- The consideration of the territory resources in the search of global coherence;
- The implication of the agents and institutions;
- The integration of activity sectors in a innovation logical way
- The cooperation of other territories and the joint with the regional, national, European policies and with the global context.

On the other hand, the Mediterranean cultural identity has given rise an own and forceful economy, whose more outstanding value has been its dynamism and its ability to adjust to the reality.

This territory of innovation can be defined by four typical elements of its landscape:

a. The communications created along the coasts, across the valleys, from the interior, towards the Sea, from the Sea.
b. The agriculture as base for other economies.
c. The environment and climate diversity.
d. The social mixing. The social and participative atmosphere of the Mediterranean, like its traditional hospitality, has become a strong attractive for the population settlement and the economic activity.

3. THE TERRITORIAL OBSERVATORY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS (OTREMED) AS TOOL TO STRENGTH THE COMPETITIVITY FACING ECONOMICAL GLOBALISATION

To the alluded role of the territory in the Mediterranean economic development and as result of the pace of growth and expansion that the current society imposes, there joins the recent attention that the European policies have put in the space as support of activities

The problematic associated to transport, communication, competitiveness, management of natural and cultural resources, employment, immigration, etc, demand, to the public organisms, policies aimed at cutting imbalances and reaching the sustainable development of the territory. In this line stand out the ESDP (European Spatial Development Perspective, Potsdam 1999) and the recent Leipzig’s Letter (2007)
Considering the scope of territorial competitiveness, the singularity of Mediterranean space and the spatial development in the limelight of the European Policy, it’s absolutely necessary the development of planning tools that help us to identify and strengthen the competitiveness territorial factors through common directives directed towards balanced and sustainable development of the territory.

To get the consolidation of the territorial governance and the improvement of the territorial competitiveness factors have appeared others observatories and territorial information systems at regional level, as technical and scientific support for the development of planning and management strategies. Among which it’s worth highlighting the one of the European Observatory ESPON

The proposed Territorial Observatory of the Mediterranean (OTREMED), has fundamentally, two differential notes with regard to other observatories:
a) Mediterranean Regions must stand up for themselves in front of other European regions, exploiting the exception opportunity that the Mediterranean Space represents, in order to improve their territorial competitiveness
b) Developing an instrument that shares ESPON's governing principles in its wish for evaluating the territorial development, but with the difference of it will be created and shared by a set of transnational regions with a common identity, whose work in net will give place to the consolidation of a **Unique Structure of Spatial Information for the Mediterranean Regions**, unifying the different databases and resources of every region on the basis of a common standard of execution according with the European Directive 2007/2/CE INSPIRE.

4. ACTIONS AND AIMS OF OTREMED

OTREMED’s project implementing, as spatial planning tool, can be summarized from the following premises:

A. Development of a common and transferable methodology for the implementation of a Territorial Observatory through the Mediterranean regions transnational cooperation
B. To set-up a Spatial Observatory for the Mediterranean Regions through a Territorial Information System (SIT) capable of managing, processing and dumping a serial of territorial information on a digital cartography.
C. To identify the areas where to be able to improve the conditions of the territorial sustainable development by means of a cities and regions network.
D. Cross-sectorial involvement offering a European perspective on regions and their development opportunities
E. Development of a tool for the territorial evolution study and identification of aims associated with the strategic challenges

F. Creation of a Network for the spreading of information and experiences on the territorial development, and as link for good practices exchange directed to an improvement in the territory management and planning.

G. Formation and awareness experiences over the Mediterranean space

H. Publication of the conclusions of the project

OTREMED’s main objectives are:

1. OTREMED’s implement will allow realizing an analysis of the territorial structure, to get a major knowledge and will improve the interpretation capacity of the reality (occupation of the soil, distribution of the accessions, spatial interrelationships, potentials, deficiencies). Once known the territory determining, problematic, strengths and trends the regions will be capable of directing the general lines of its territorial policy, and the priority actions toward a sustainable and balanced development of the territory.

2. To strengthen the information related to territorial development to encourage public organisms, professional and public in general to be involvement in the spatial management.

3. Impact analysis of sectorial policies and their influence on the territory and on cohesion

4. To promote the maximum possible scope of this network through the adhesion of the Mediterranean regions and integration in other platforms or observatories for the study of the territorial evolution and impact of the policies on the European space
5. THE ROLE OF OTREMED’s REGIONS

According with the structure proposed by OTREMED, it’s going to be essential an active participation of the Mediterranean region both start up, working and maintenance. It will be crucial to promote an integrated collaboration between different territorial systems to be able to develop a polycentric territorial joint and favour the setting up of common strategies in all sectors (transports, planning, tourism, management of natural and cultural heritage, citizenship…); this fact is one of the SDEP priorities facing the territorial development. Among the mechanisms that the European Union has established for the interregional cooperation, there are emphasizing the INTERREG Programs.

5.1. PROJECT OF COMMON INITIATIVE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS (PIC-RM), AS OTREMED’S PREDECESSOR.

The Project of Common Initiative for the Mediterranean Regions (PIC-RM), developed between 2005-2007 within Interreg III B MEDOCC, had as purpose identify future projects judged strategic by the partnership. The final output was the selection of 9 structural projects which covering the challenges of sustainable development, of territorial development and of socioeconomic cohesion in the area of the Mediterranean space, being OTREMED one of these strategic projects.

From PIC-RM we can have the following documents:

- OTREMED’s viability study, where there were analyzed the factors that affect on territorial cohesion and were lumped in 11 big challenges of territorial competitiveness, in coherence with the factors that, from the EU Territorial Agenda of Leipzig, they propose for the territorial development study.
- Study of basis criteria for its implementation
5.2 OTREMED WITHIN INTERREG IVB MED PROGRAMME

OTREMED inserts within Axis 4 of INTERREG IVB 2007-2013 MED² Operative Program, “Promotion of a polycentric and integrated development of the Med space”, priority 4.1 “Coordination of development policies and improvement of territorial governance”, relative to the development of a spatial vision of the territory MED.

It is worth noting the involvement and transferability character of OTREMED, although it will develop inside the space Interreg IVB MED, it tries to be an open and accessible project, which top ambition is to be able to lump the set of regions in both shores of the Mediterranean, supporting for it on the Enlargement and Neighbouring European Policy and on the instruments developed for the convergence of the Mediterranean regions, IPA³ (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) and ENPI⁴ (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument).

This fact will allow advancing together in specific topics as migration, energy, environment, communication or social matters, sharing at the same time the aims proposed by the CRPM (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions)

6 WORKING METHODOLOGY

For OTREMED’s accomplishment, and in agreement of INTERREG IVB MED Program, there have been established four phases that will gather the different actions of the project: 0-Start Up, A- Identification of Factors and Territorial Indicators, B- Observatory Execution, C- Exchange of Experiences and D- Information and diffusion

6.1. PHASE 0. START UP

Two actions are distinguished in this phase. The first one, OTREMED’s launching (Action 0.1, to which this work belongs). Secondly, Identification of the competitiveness challenges (Action 0.2), where the challenges defined by PIC-RM, will be agreed by the partnership.

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² MED’s region are composed by: Cyprus, France: (Corsica, Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence Alpes Côte d’Azur, Rhône-Alpes), Greece, Italy: (Abruzzo, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Molise, Umbria, Piedmonte, Sardinia, Sicily, Tuscany, Veneto), Malta, Portugal: (Algarve, Alentejo), Slovenia, Spain: (Andalucía, Aragón, Cataluña, Baleares, Murcia, Valencia, Ceuta y Melilla), United-Kingdom: Gibraltar

³ IPA regions are Croatia and Montenegro

⁴ ENPI regions are not IPA region and situated outside of European Union

The budget assigned to each partner will be depending on the responsibilities that he assumes, and will be in the range from 150.000 to 250.000 €. The participation of ERDF for each Member state varies from 75% (France, Great-Britain, Greece, Italia, Portugal, Spain) to 85% (Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia).
6.2. PHASE A. IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS AND TERRITORIAL INDICATORS

There are four actions in this phase. First of all, Characterization Analysis of the Mediterranean Space (Action A.1). This document will try to give a synthetic idea of the territorial dynamics that happen inside of the Mediterranean space. The result of this analysis will suppose the questionnaires grounding carried out in the following action.

In the Action A.2, Analysis of Territorial Information, there will be identified, for each challenge, the Factors that affect on the territory and, for each of these, the territorial indicators that allow to evaluate the Factors suitably\(^5\), which allow us to know, to analyse and to make comparisons among the different elements of territorial management at a given moment. The definition of these Indicators appears as the result of the information got from:

a) All Partners will take part into territorial Factors setting process and its measuring by means of the Territorial Indicators System, (which has been defined by the Questionnaires). This document will be designed by one partner in cooperation with a Research Centre. Once set the form and the content, the final document will be sent to each partner for its fulfilment, so that the accomplishment of these questionnaires will turn into a coordination and cooperation horizontal work.

b) Region of Murcia will provide the study of basic criteria for the implantation of a territorial observatory that was carried out in the project PIC-RM. On the other hand another partner of the project will do a research work where it will study and evaluate the methodology proposed by other observatories or other comparable projects, gathering its impressions in a summarize document.

c) The processing of this information will give place to an initial list of the Factors and Territorial Indicators that OTREMED will shelter

\(^5\) The Factors and Territorial Indicators have to satisfy the following questions:
- Allow creating a territorial comparable model where the different information sources, databases, scales, interpreting... can be compatible.
- To meet the requirements of representation, relevancy, technical validity, temporary and spatial coverage.
- To be based on statistical trustworthy information
- To be georeferenced
In the next action, **Adoption of the Indicator System (Action A.3)**, it will proceed to the quality validation of OTREMED’s Factors and Indicators’ System by a Scientific Committee, it will be composed of 5 experts of recognized prestige in the field of the project (territorial planning, competitiveness, sustainable development...) and it will be elected by partnership vote.

Finally, to guarantee the homogenisation and management of the information we’ll fill a technical card for each indicator which it will give place to the Territorial Database. The information bear in mind will be:

- Indicator’s name and code.
- Challenge, Factor and Framework associated
- Description and aim.
- Getting method. Unit of measure
- Representativeness.
- Source.

Action A.4, **Net Portal**, the structure, contents, maintenance and technical requirements for the creation of the Project’s web will be defined, having the following functions:

a) As communication way among partners, it will make easy the exchange of information, the load of resources and it will encourage the dynamic of the project through the cooperation among Mediterranean regions.

b) As a means of spreading the development and of the reached results

c) As technical support to set of the Observatory for the Mediterranean Regions through a TIS that allows the location, managing, visualization and unload of information

d) To allow other regions joining to this network and adding their territorial information according with the standard adopted.

6.3. PHASE B. OBSERVATORY EXECUTION: DEVELOPMENT OF THE INFORMATION ESTRUCTURE

The proposed methodology must fulfil the data processing for its integration in a System of Territorial Information (SIT) able to allow the visualization of the indicators by means of a system multi layer

The problems relative to the availability, quality, organization, accessibility and place in common the spatial information they will be solved thanks to a protocol in full agreement with the Directive 2007/72/CE INSPIRE, where it develops the common procedure of execution, bearing in mind:
- Compatibility of the spatial information in a community and cross-border context
- The spatial information must be interoperable, geo-referenced, accessible and comparable
- The framework and the working conditions that will govern the rules of access, storage and information use, visualization, unload, transformation and maintenance
- Multilingual Configuration
- Basic digital Cartography
- Calculation and data managing

Once established the common frame of work, we’ll define the steps to process the spatial information assisted by a hardware + software:

- Design of applications for alphanumeric data input
- Graphical documentation scanned and digitalization onto geo-referenced cartography.
- Connection of the different databases with the graphical information
- Software application able to manage the geographical information.
- Introduction of calculation functions

Understanding the difficulty, both technical and economic that this work shows the technical resources of each partner must be considered in order to do a viable proposal. The most suitable way of work is that every region come equipped with the computer tools necessary for the management of the spatial information (database + software GIS) compatible with a WMS Service. It would be advisable that each partner has, at its disposal, this sort of resource.

6.4. PHASE C. EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE

In this phase appear 2 actions. Action C.1 Guideline Values suppose a second criterion of available data processing, it will define the information treatment and the graphical display on the screen that we can get by means of statistical multivariable analysis of the indicators.

It proposes to establish a weighting system that be able to obtain a reference or a guide value for each indicators, its quantification will represent the desirable values that it should reach to assure the competitiveness conditions of the territory.

These values will come determined by the analysis of the information obtained through the indicators and its comparison with regional and European standards.
The object of the second action **Validation of the results** (Action C.2), will be to verify the scope of the aims proposed by OTREMED and the functionality of this planning and land management tool.

For it one partner will carry out a pilot experience on a limited territory, where he will evaluate the competitiveness of this space and will identify the priority strategies.

6.5. PHASE D. INFORMATION AND DIFFUSION

In this phase, the project approaches the aspects related with projection of results:

- Seminars and Meetings to analyze and to expose the main results of the project, to realize comparisons among the territories, to exchange experiences about how resolving one specific problematic…
- Launching of the project web page as a projection window of the project
- Issue of the methodology and results reached by the project

7. PARTNERSHIP

The planned partnership is addressed to Public Administrations of region NUTS II (National Territorial Units) of the MED space with responsibility in spatial planning, although given the implication in the project of all the Mediterranean regions the involvement of IPA and ENPI regions will be welcome and it would contribute an added value to the project.

To raise the scientific level and quality of the project the participation of a University or Research Centre is foreseen, as well as the creation of a Scientific Committee as support body.

The project execution period will be 2008-2010.

In principle, French-Italian-Spanish simultaneous translation is planned for each meeting.

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