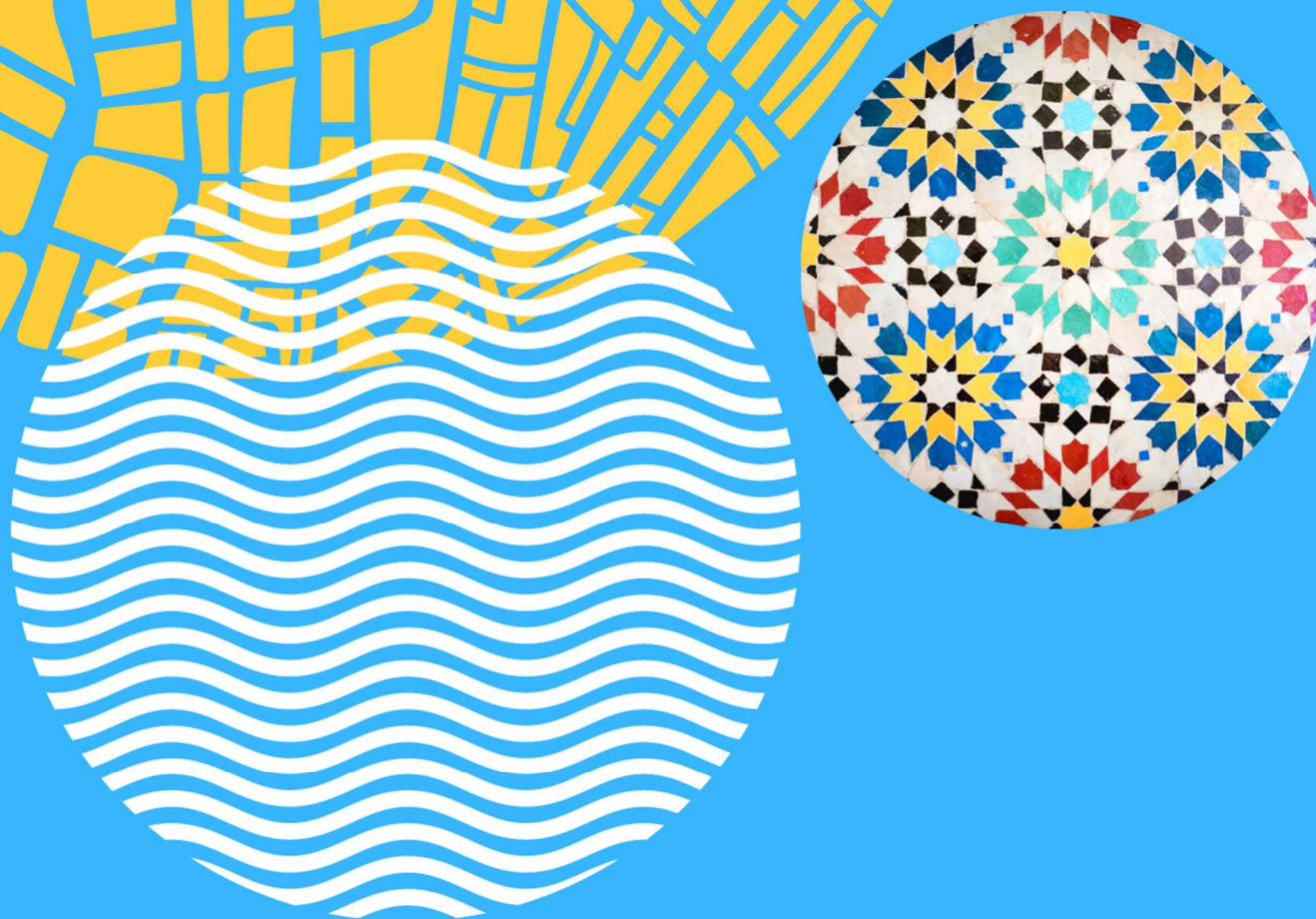# Manifesto for City Governance of Mediterranean Migration

Executive Summary of the *EUMedMi* International Symposium 2022

October 21st, 2022
Pedralbes Palace, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain

Manifesto for City Governance of Mediterranean Migration

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This report is the result of collaborative work by the Office team and the Jean Monnet Network project coordinator. The co-director of EuroMedMig and the members of the Scientific Committee were also directly involved by providing their final comments.

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The *EUMedMi* Symposium is an activity organized with the academic support of:

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Background

This Symposium was the final activity of the *EUMedMi* project "Mapping Mediterranean and European migration studies" (September 2019 - August 2022). Funded by the Erasmus program and the Jean Monnet network. (Ref: 611260-EPP-1-2019-1-ES-RESEAU EPPJMO). It is a direct activity of the research platform *EuroMedMig,* funded by *GRITIM-UPF* during the IMISCOE Annual Conference in Barcelona (July 2nd-4th, 2018), a Euro-Mediterranean Research Migration Network initiative supported academically by IMISCOE and institutionally by the Union for the Mediterranean. The Symposium was backed by Generalitat Catalunya (Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Open Government), Barcelona City Council, and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed).

On October 21st, 2022 took place at Pedralbes Palace (Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain) an International Symposium entitled "Mediterranean Cities and Migration Governance", which brought together more than 30 "multiple voices" among which academics, public officials, politicians, and representatives of civil society from several countries: Belgium, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Türkiye.

The main purpose was to discuss together around six thematic roundtables how Mediterranean Cities could provide new insights into the Euro-Mediterranean policy landscape and contribute to shaping a city-lens to the current Mediterranean Migration research, incorporating their diagnoses, and sharing their challenges and recommendations. Some main questions that guided the collective debates were:

- What are the main migration challenges and opportunities of Mediterranean cities today?
- How can the city perspective be incorporated into the current Euro-Mediterranean Migration agenda?
- What can Mediterranean cities learn from the past and how will cities be in the future?
- What is the status of knowledge production and data limitations on Mediterranean migration cities?
- How do Mediterranean cities manage the reception and assistance of migrants and refugees?
- How do urbanization processes, demographic change, and economic dynamics shape socio-spatial inequalities and integration in Mediterranean cities?
- How has the role of CSOs in dealing with migration issues evolved within the Mediterranean region of cities and the future of humanitarian action?

The ambition is to share with a wider public what were the main arguments that may help *us to shape both the policy and research agenda for the coming years. This is also a direct* invitation to undertake **Mediterranean City reading of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda**, especially SDG 10 (reducing inequalities), SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), and most important SDG 11 (making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable).

The event showed also how Barcelona can be a hub for *EuroMedMig*, since, as it was shared by all the authorities in the welcoming session, the Mediterranean is the context and identity of Barcelona city project and Barcelona can contribute to reframe the scale of the Mediterranean and be a speaker of the cities voice and values. The event also showed how important is the networking task of *EuroMedMig*, following **human-centered principles when addressing migration**, enhancing city autonomous engagement and multiple voices altogether with civil society, and pro-active research.

Outline

Mediterranean cities have developed through the influence of the diverse people and cultures that have composed and built the territories over the centuries. Trade and colonialism nurtured Mediterranean cities in the past and nowadays, globalization, political instability, and the growing socio-economic disparities between countries provoke human mobility with the consequence of placing migration and refugees at the center of the cities' political agenda. The duration and the intensity of current human mobility, the frequency of contact, and the variety of cultures, religions, languages, and traditions shape these cities and reflect the uniqueness of the Mediterranean. We share the Braudelian view of the Mediterranean as a *région de villes*, which is today largely reshaped by the so-called migratory corridors, creating a relational topography at the grassroots of a new Mediterranean city-system. Cities are both, arrival, departure, and transit hubs of mixed migrations. The current human movements give a new layer to an already urban migratory heritage and Mediterranean cities can be considered as potential new actors for the Mediterranean dialogue.

Cities are potentially more sensitive to humanitarian challenges, they are politically and socially much closer to people, and more pragmatic in diagnosis processes and problem-solving actions. This city-based approach is at the core of this *EuroMedMig* **Manifesto**. Hence, this executive summary aims to open a wide reflection on how cities can be a focus for Mediterranean migration research and policy debates. Cities can be new drivers for implementing the ideals of the Barcelona Process (1995), following the principles of dialogue, cooperation, and coordination of action. They can help foster a more holistic and integrated view of the migratory system and enhance urban and Mediterranean values and identities of belonging. This document is the outcome of a collective analysis on how cities can be a source of new knowledge and policy practices and can give us ground for complementary ways of researching migration governance and drawing new Mediterranean policy horizons.

Five General Recommendations

1. **Improve urban migration governance capacities**: There is currently an uneven migration governance capacities and know-how across the North, South and Levant. There is a need of reviewing legislative frameworks and administrative cooperation and coordination among different level of governance, social policies and financial resources, housing availability and access basic rights (healthcare, food, etc.).

2. **Support civil society organizations – cities networking**. Civil Society Organizations are supporting too many constraints in their action. There is a need to enhance their joint-actions toward migrants and refugees through financial and political support, legal resources and human building capacities.

3. **Reframe common Mediterranean cities history of migration**: The state and national centric approach of Mediterranean history leaves at the background the fact that there is still not a shared Mediterranean awareness that cities are built into a common migration history. In this framework there is a need of reviewing and incorporating the colonial and postcolonial history in Mediterranean city narrative. And also working on the memories of cities around their cosmopolitan dimension. Each city has a specific past but also collected from other cities.

4. **Create a Mediterranean cities research network** for data collection, knowledge production, and comparative analysis, including an open access data portal to solve the scarcity and disaggregated data at the local level, for policy and research purposes. This may also include a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue in the Mediterranean, including researchers, social and policy local representatives and international organizations.

5. **Create a Euro-Mediterranean Council of local governments** for coordinating and cooperative policy strategies, and promote city regional building.

Track 1. Cities and Migration in the Mediterranean: Mapping current challenges and opportunities

Leading questions: *What are the main challenges and opportunities of Mediterranean Migration Cities today? How can the city perspective be incorporated into the current Euro-Mediterranean Migration agenda?*

Framework debate: Cities often must face the unattended consequences of international and national decisions and migratory dynamics, but often lack human, financial, legal, and institutional infrastructures and resources. There are multi-layered tensions and pressures cities must face from a socio-demographic but also political, cultural, economic and legal perspective. Multi-level approaches and networks of cities, alliances with CSOs, and principles shaping their policies are also of vital importance to enhance their governance capacities.

Diagnoses: Pragmatism and proximity with citizens makes cities faster solution-builders than states due to their pragmatism and proximity to citizen requests. This development of governance capacity pushes them to build solidarity alliances with other cities but also with the civil society fabric. The support of national and international organizations is critical for southern Mediterranean cities to address urban needs in housing and health services and face the socio-economic consequences of ongoing urbanization processes. The incorporation of climate change into their governance agenda and claims for more knowledge and institutional support are additional ongoing struggles.

Challenges: The Mediterranean cities will be confronted in the upcoming years with serious challenges that must be anticipated. Cities are facing common challenges in all the rims of the Mediterranean, with variations in intensity and political/social consequences. The first permanent structural challenge is scarce or simply lacking economic and human resources, poor or unreliable data collection (not disaggregated enough for the local level), and poor policy-making capacities and know-how. Most often, cities find themselves isolated from upper levels of government, with weak mutual trust and multilevel cooperation. Their governance capacity deficits are also caused internally by rigid legislative frameworks or even lack of enforcement, with a strong centralization of city competencies, by structural/occasional social tensions but also externally by political deadlocks and regional instability. In the North, cities are witnessing the hardening of public opinion towards migrants and migration, which is allowing the far right to break into parliaments and city councils (Italy, France...). In the South, cities are victims of the affirmation of authoritarianism (Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, perhaps also Libya later) which puts them under a double pressure. One coming from the Center, with a return to centralism which aims to weaken the sphere (migration governance included) of local bodies and authorities and reduce the power and means of Cities' action.

Recommendations: The abovementioned shortages of governance capacities of Mediterranean cities can be tackled through an integrative multidimensional policy-making strategy that mainstreams migration governance across Mediterranean urban agendas; enhances multidirectional dialogue between the southern and northern shores of the region through city networks incorporating digital tools for remote dialogue, cooperation, coordination, and information sharing; sustains existing networks and promotes new ones between researchers and policy-makers to support decisions and capacities at the city level.

Track 2. History: What can we learn from the past?

Leading questions: *How were Mediterranean Cities shaped by past multi-crossed Mediterranean human mobilities? What can Mediterranean Cities learn from the past and how will cities be in the future?*

Framework debate: Population movements constitute the bedrock of Mediterranean history. We have to know better the past of migration and alterity perception in the Mediterranean area. Mediterranean cities have been shaped by migrations. Cities in the past and present are central hubs of human mobilities and draw a topographic system with many corridors. The past of movements explains current migrations. With confusion, the Mediterranean Cities have always been both border and bridge cities, intercultural and cosmopolitan. Today, cities are the key component of the Mediterranean region, but this has been nurtured by the past urban system in economic, colonial, trade, and knowledge communication. The debate brought up the main historical unresolved challenges the cities have nowadays, strengthening their historical roots. Therefore, a historical diagnosis of present challenges can help to shape the future of Mediterranean cities. It is through cities that the concept of cosmopolitanism has developed over time.

Diagnoses: Mediterranean cities are hybrid spots, made up of different migratory layers since ancient times. The historical narrative of Mediterranean cities has a direct impact on public migration representations. Behind a Mediterranean city, there is a migration narrative that often reflects current and past power hierarchies. Post-colonial history has not been fully recognized yet in the city narratives of most northern Mediterranean cities, which are plagued by colonial iconography structuring socio-economic inequalities and mindsets. Furthermore, in most cities, tourism, today, plays the role of a subliminal colonial force in the Mediterranean. It is also important to work on the monumentality in the city: places of memory, statues, plaques, street names are all traces that play on mentalities.

Challenges: The basic challenge is how to disentangle current racist practices from the city and his long history. Mediterranean migration governance cannot be addressed without first reviewing the definitions that we use of 'Mediterranean' and human (im)-mobilities in the region. Historically, uneven power relations within and between Mediterranean societies are silencing other potential. Cities must also face collective oblivion of the influence of colonialism on the current power relations inhabiting Mediterranean urban societies. In this regard, education systems are failing to play their part towards change, since most Mediterranean school curricula are not conducive to empowering citizens to be critical of city historical narratives and national narratives, without a Mediterranean dimension.

Recommendations: Each city should open a collective debate about the place of migration in the history of the city and how past Mediterranean migrations shaped the current city society and city identity. There is a need to shape the history of the city as a history of migrations, through cultural events and museums, for tourists and local social purposes. The incorporation of intercultural, intersectional lenses and historical narratives in the curricula of the city's schools can provide fundamental tools to increase the city's inclusivity, as well as the planning of pedagogical and socializing actions outside formal education.

Track 3. Knowledge and data production: Use, limits and how to solve them?

Leading questions: *What is the status of knowledge production and data limitations on Mediterranean migration Cities? What are the terms of the debate on evidence-based policy both at national and local (city) levels in the Mediterranean Basin?*

Framework debate: Conducting research or policy-setting comes with several challenges associated with knowledge production, data collection, and definitions that make difficult an integrated analysis of migration trends at the local level. The debate focused on the new data collection and technical capacity needs for evidence-based policy and a more comprehensive and analytical picture of key aspects of migration for scholarly and policy-related activities

Diagnoses: There is an awareness that human mobility and migration dynamics in the city are a complex phenomenon at the crossroads of culture, politics, and society, and that often there is a lack of data to drive policies, but that other levels of government monopolize data collection and knowledge production to control migrants, in particular irregular ones, and for national security purposes. Thus, data collection could negatively impact trust-building between the city and migrants. Particular attention is also given to promoting knowledge production in places with protracted crises and conflicts causing migration or hosting migrants (such as Lebanon).

Challenges: On the one hand, the nature of knowledge and data on migration in use is still too Eurocentric and nation-state centric, political and ideological, and some important key data needed by cities are missing. The poor granularity of data represents a barrier to better understanding the needs and challenges faced by both migrants and the city, and consequently to improve their quality of life and the city's governance capacities. On the other hand, the existing data and knowledge produced by civil society organizations and activism are often ignored. There are also difficulties to process and translate Big Data and data from IT companies into research paths and policy plans. Knowledge transfer and dissemination from academia to cities is still challenging, without clear and formal bridges and directional processes for many cities. Moreover, the knowledge produced by media and politicians often plays a negative role in city representatives. Finally, there is a certain burnout and disengagement given the difficulties to access reliable data

Recommendations: There is a need to build a Mediterranean knowledge production community through structured partnerships between the academia, policy and social arenas, and the private sector (i.e., city think tanks) to draw comparisons between cities, collect sociodemographic data related to urbanization and migration processes, irregular migrant rights, the youth and gender. It is important that these adopt participatory approaches and lobby, protest and fight for rights throughout an integrative vision. There is an opportunity to institutionalize and integrate the knowledge production with the needs of cities and communities, not just research done inside campuses and think tanks. An extended city survey to learn about the perceptions of society and a permanent structure of dissemination of data are strongly recommended too. Finally, it is also necessary to improve the methodologies and techniques for open access data collection at the city and regional level across the Mediterranean.

Track 4. Governance: Reception, regulation and key actors

Leading questions: *How have Mediterranean cities manage the reception and the assistance of migrants and refugees? How have two sensitive historical moments in the region influenced urban governance transformations, continuities, and change (the Arab uprisings of 2011 and the health crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic)?*

Framework debate: There are many governance issues affecting Mediterranean cities and their urban regimes since they are transit, arrival, and destination points, affected by a variety of migrant and refugee inflows. All these mobilities are constantly affected and shaped by current geopolitical, national and natural factors (i.e., the pandemic). The multiplicity of international and local, political, social, and private actors shaping urban governance on migration involved in multiple policy realms (reception and legal assistance, diversity accommodation, etc.), and sectors (housing, work, education, etc.) frame also the governance debate. Finally, political decisions, legal regulations, and new structures also shape governance decision-making in most Mediterranean cities, determining governance continuities and innovations, stability, and change.

Diagnoses: Mediterranean cities are both departure, transit, and destination hubs. Due to Euro-Mediterranean policies, externalization of policies, and conditional national strategies, most southern Mediterranean cities are becoming migrant cities, experiencing a fast urbanization sprawl that cannot be addressed due to a lack of governance capacities. Many northern cities have been promoting migrant rights and raising awareness about their barriers and discriminations, and there is a variety of partnerships with CSOs to tackle the migration governance challenges, such as: information desks/services to migrants, legal advice, access to healthcare and psychological support, housing, education, and empowerment to enter in the competitive market.

Challenges: Governance infrastructures are often deficient to deal with migration challenges, and enjoy limited financial resources for networking and promoting multi-directional dialogue. Lacking data collection to inform policy-making is often referred to as well as a weak European support. The diversity of migrant profiles and super-diverse reality complicates the provision of services.

Recommendations: We recommend creating a regional Mediterranean Cities hub of best governance practices of Mediterranean cities and a system for swift communication among them as well as concrete Mediterranean twinning projects between South/East/North/West cities. These are necessary to curve their financial deficits and to improve migration governance in a decentralized and co-integrative manner.

Track 5. Urbanization processes: Socio-spatial inequalities on Mediterranean cities

Leading questions: *How do urbanization processes, demographic change and economic dynamics shape socio-spatial inequalities and integration in Mediterranean cities? In which ways do housing policies and urban planning produce residential segregation? What are the potentials of urban planning to promote urban integration and more socially just cities?*

Framework debate: In recent decades, the increasing population diversity of Mediterranean cities coincides with growing socio-economic deprivation and urban fragmentation. There is a need to discuss, from a cross-comparative perspective between cities in different contexts, how socio-spatial inequalities are constructed and how they appear to be tied to different urban development trajectories. The contributions helped to better understand how housing markets, new urban economies, and urban planning produce residential segregation and, on the other way round, how spatial planning can promote urban integration. Lessons learned from specific housing and urban policies and their outcomes on socio-spatial inequalities were also discussed.

Diagnoses: National and international migration have had a huge impact on the redefinition of the Mediterranean urban space and current segregation processes, linking migration with poverty. Mediterranean societies live in different phases of urbanization. On the European and Western shores higher stability and more efficient tools for managing urbanization processes ease the cities' migration challenges, whereas the MENA region faces a demographic expansion and rapid urbanization moment significantly due to rural-urban mobilities, and Balkan countries are experiencing a strong population decline. Thus, on the one hand, urbanizing societies are focusing their policy efforts on regenerating their urban spaces and adapting them to the new population's needs. Housing availability is a source of competition in all Mediterranean cities driving gentrification up. In front of the constraints posed by growing urban population some countries have opted for building new cities from scratch, particularly in North Africa (for instance, Egypt plans to build 30 new fourth-generation cities in the coming years to house the country's growing population and reduce pressure on existing cities).

Challenges: Cities are facing all these multidimensional and overlapping challenges with poor or inexistent financial resources, capacities, and competencies. The most visible ones are related to climate change, urbanization, and financial crisis, together with more political and social instabilities, most prominently in the Southern rim of the Mediterranean. Many urbanization issues are related to rigid housing regulations. The impossibility to address these challenges exacerbates social inequalities and social polarization through gentrification and ghettoization, eventually producing the segregation of poverty in certain neighborhoods. As a result, racism, xenophobia, stigmatization of vulnerability, and the normalization of exclusionary practices continue to be challenging in northern cities, but also growing with unforeseen effects in the South.

Recommendations: Social housing policies with an urbanist and communitarian approach are urgent hand in hand with intercultural approaches to promote social cohesion. There is a need to build strategies to prevent segregation and disproportionate deterioration in certain city areas where migrants and poverty tend to concentrate. Social policies and urban planning are also palliative of the effects of climate change in current cities, and more sustainable than building cities from scratch, which bears huge financial and environmental costs. City planning cannot neglect the city's urban and regional peripheries and adopt a regional approach. As regards declining societies like the Balkans, social housing policies may also help retain population.

Track 6. Civil Society and humanitarianism: Priority actions and position

Leading questions: *How has role of NGOs in dealing with migration issues evolved within the Mediterranean cities region? What are the main challenges that civil society faces in most cities (Human, financial, legal, institutional…)? What are the key priority options to be undertaken in order to enhance the role of civil society to respond to migrant and refugee issues in line with the international engagements, especially those under the UN Sustainable Development Goals?*

Framework debate: Mediterranean Cities are at the frontline of refugee and migration integration response, as most refugees and migrants move to urban centers hoping to find a sense of community, safety, and economic independence. In light of the shortages in governmental responses to the new challenges posed by migration, the NGOs and associations seek to position themselves as legitimate stakeholders through humanitarian activities, providing services, awareness-raising against illegal migration, advocacy, supporting diversity and interculturality within cities for an inclusive and sustainable approach to refugee and migrant welcome and hosting. This diversity requires a huge investment that exceeds the capacities of NGOs, as the majority do not have sufficient financial and human resources and are not involved in national and international networks. As a consequence, their capacity to act and intervene in an appropriate way to fulfil their missions is reduced.

Diagnoses: States have abandoned Mediterranean cities on the periphery and borders of the European Union due to their security-oriented approaches to migration which threaten the Mediterranean cohesion. In light of that, cities and civil society have responded to fill up the gaps left by the state, but the states, instead of supporting, often criminalize these actions, especially search and rescue missions.

Challenges: The social actors involved in the migration governance in cities are confronted with many constraints to develop their social activities. CSOs see their field of action and initiatives increasingly contested and reduced by national authorities. Despite their welcoming stances, Mediterranean cities still struggle to provide access to basic rights like housing, healthcare, and food to migrants due to small financial and human resources and strict project deadlines. Without the civil society's support, the violation of international regulations becomes chronic. Many civil society initiatives are still volunteer-based and difficult to sustain for vulnerable migrants.

Recommendations There is a strong need to recognize the vital task of CSOs and to revalorize the role of civil society in the current Mediterranean cities system. The human-centered principles of the 'Right to the city' and the idea of "Protecting people, not borders" should be taken as a compass for all Mediterranean cities requesting an equal treatment for migrants. The need for concerted efforts among civil society and universities to advocate for this 'right to the city' and pool knowledge resources together to push for legal migration reforms. More cooperation with different actors (civil society, governments, and international organizations) needs is necessary for many reasons among which to replace criminalization of migrants and their defenders. The priority goal of all these principles and collaborations shall be the prevention of death and exploitation along migration journeys. Migrant women and unaccompanied minors, as key vulnerable groups, shall receive special attention and be targeted by more tailored projects. Last but not least, legal migration reforms are needed to enable the application for asylum from foreign embassies and consulates. Humanitarian visas for cities and respect for humanitarian corridors to ensure safe and orderly migration and relocations could also reduce the human tragedies going on across the Mediterranean.

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- **Sonia Fuertes**, Commissioner for Social Action, Barcelona City Council
- **Audrey Garino**, Deputy Mayor of Marseille, *France*
- **Victoria Jiménez Tejero**, Head of Sector for the Urban Development, Union for the Mediterranean
- **Imen Ourdani**, Deputy Mayor of Sousse, *Tunisia*
- **Aatimad Zahidi**, President of the Skhirat-Temara Prefectural Council, *Morocco*

Civil Society representatives

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- **Clara Huyghe**, Migration Expert at Belgium Development Agency (ENABEL), *Belgium*
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- **Ann Sleebus Baudoin**, President of Stop Mare Mortum, Barcelona, Catalonia, *Spain*
- **Nadia Tari**, General Director of Fondation Orient Occident, Rabat, *Morocco*
- **Osman Can Ünver,** Chair of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, United Nations, *Türkiye*

Photo Gallery of the Symposium

EuroMedMig Steering Committee. From left to right: Ricard Zapata-Barrero, Hassan Bousseta, Maria Lucinda Fonseca, Yvan Gastaut, Ahmet Içduygu, Boutaina Ismaili Idrissi, Hassen Boubrakri.

Welcome session. From left to right: Pau Solanilla Franco, Ricard Zapata-Barrero, Meritxell Serret I Aleu, Semén Florensa, Ibrahim Awad.

Brainstorming and discussion after the Welcome Session.

Roundtable 1. *Cities and Migration in the Mediterranean*.

Roundtable 1. From left to right: Imen Ourdani, Audrey Garino, Hassan Bousetta, Meltem Ersan, Aatimad Zahidi.

Roundtable 2. *History: What can we learn from the past?*

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Roundtable 3. *Knowledge and Data: use, limits and how to solve them?*

Roundtable 3. From left to right: Ahmet Içduygu, Imen Ourdani, Yosra Allani, Carmen Geha, Clara Huyghe

Roundtable 4. From left to right: Gemma Aubarell Solduga, Yosra Allani, Hassen Boubakri, Miguel Correia de Brito, Jean-Louis De Brouwer.

Roundtable 4. *Governance: reception, regulation and key actors.*

Roundtable 5. *Urbanization processes: social-spatial inequalities in Mediterranean cities.*

Roundtable 5. *General discussion.*

Roundtable 6. From left to right: Stefania Panebianco, Ann Sleebus Baudoin, Boutaina Ismaili Idrissi, Maria João Pereira

Closing session. Some of the attendants of the *EUMedMig* Symposium 2022.

EuMedMig Support Team. From left to right: Diletta Marcucci, Ángela María Londoño Lopez, Aida Casanovas i Oliveres, Juan Pablo Santangelo.