

International Conference on:
MEDITERRANEAN CITIES
BETWEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

organized by
the Italian Regional Science Association (AISRe)
and the University Parthenope, Napoli
Naples, 15th April 2013

INTRODUCTION

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Dear Experts from the Arab Speaking countries
and dear Colleagues from other European countries and from Italy,

on behalf of the Italian Association of Regional Science (AISRe, www.aisre.it) I would like first to thank the important experts and speakers from Egypt and Tunisia and from international organizations, which have allowed this first contact between various Italian institutions doing research in Regional Science and research centres in the Arab speaking countries in the South Mediterranean.

I thank the colleague Andre Torre from the French Speaking Regional Science Association for participating to this meeting. Also the Spanish and the Portuguese Associations and the European Regional Science Association (ERSA, www.ersa.org) are sharing the aims of this conference and are willing to cooperate in the future.

I thank the colleagues Maria Rosaria Carillo and Salvatore Capasso, the University Parthenope and the other universities and research centres in Naples, such as the Federico II University and the Institute for Mediterranean studies of CNR which have contributed to the design of the scientific programme and to the organization of this international conference of the Italian Regional Science Association. The scientific programme of the conference has been coordinated by Lidia Diappi, Politechnic of Milan, Executive Representative of AISRe International Office.

Regional research is about the role of space in the economy, in the society and also in the relationships between institutions. In fact, it seems useful to start this Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in Regional Science with an analysis of the Mediterranean cities, which perform a crucial role in the international relations, in the national development process and in the organization of the national territory and can therefore highlight the importance of the spatial dimension, which characterizes regional science methods.

But also Regional Science research should develop in space and in fact it has spread during the last 40 years from the US and from Northern Europe to South Europe and to Italy, where it has interacted with the previous tradition of regional policy and economic and spatial planning.

Now, the relationships between Europe and North America, Latin America and also Japan, Australia and China are intense in the field of Regional Science. However, we must recognize the lower internationalization of Regional Science with respect to international cooperation in other sciences: engineering or medicine and also macroeconomics and business economics and even arts and architecture.

The conference is organized in four sessions, which will analyze the following key topics: the political and institutional changes with specific reference to the role of local and regional governments on economic and spatial policies, the innovation, employment and economic development policies at the regional and local level, the spatial and social transformations occurring in the large Mediterranean cities and the contribution of transport and infrastructural projects and policies to the interregional integration in Mediterranean countries.

Cities, since the time of Cartago and Roma, have played a major role as hubs of transport linkages, innovation and production centers, areas where people live and interact according to customs which are increasingly common at the international level and, least but not last, cities are the centers of democracy, political participation and policy institutions. Although the congress will focus on urban areas, it will also consider the case of industrial clusters and of rural/tourist areas. All these areas are undergoing similar challenges in the regions of the Mediterranean basin. That could stimulate the development of regional research into new directions.

Our aim is not to make a survey of the regional and urban characteristics of Italy, of the other European countries and of the Arab countries, such as Egypt and Tunisia, but rather to compare methodologies used in regional and urban studies in Europe and in the various Arab countries and to promote the participation of Arab researchers to the European Regional Science congresses and to create a transnational research community in Regional Science.

The regions and countries in the Arab countries of South Mediterranean and the regions and countries in Europe and in particular in South Europe share common problems and a long historical tradition of economic, cultural and political contacts. Past political conflicts between the countries in the Mediterranean basin, as it has occurred also in other areas of transnational cooperation within Europe, may represent now the base of a strong reciprocal knowledge, respect and trust and have been overcome due to the existence of common values and of emerging common external and internal challenges. This “cognitive proximity” represents the prerequisites for future collaborations and it will allow identifying common aims or problems worth common investigation.

Our aim is to promote a stable relationship between the research institutions in the Arab speaking countries and the European research Institutions in the field of Regional Science and to stimulate the design of new development projects which respond to the need to promote national development in the South Mediterranean countries. In the future, we should make an effort to enlarge the participation by other universities and research centres in our respective country and in other countries, both in Europe and in the Arab countries.

This partnership will allow us to jointly work on the organization of other operative initiatives in the futures, such as the organization of a session at the European Regional Science Congress on 27-31 August in Palermo and hopefully a conference in spring 2014 in Tunisia and/or Egypt, in the framework of a **Joint Programme for the development of Regional Science research in Mediterranean Arab speaking countries (RSMAC)**.

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Aisre is not only a scientific institution aiming to diffuse the RS approach within the scientific community and embrace any field of territory investigation, **but also wants provide new frontiers of study and new topics.**

With this international initiative attended by various representatives and experts in economics and regional development of the North African coast, **AISRe wants bring the issue of Mediterranean not only to the attention of the scientific community of Regional Science and Planning** but also to the politicians and officers in public administrations.

A second objective is the establishment of new contacts with other scientific communities, even outside the European Union, in view of further initiatives of discussion and collaboration.

Why Mediterranean?

It is well known the political, geostrategic and economic importance of Mediterranean. This system is a mosaic of cultures, economies and political systems. It is still a system even if difficulties emerge in collaborating and overcoming the break between the North and the South coast of Mediterranean. Actually both sides are facing a period of crisis, of political transition the South, of structural transition the North.

The Maghreb, the Middle East represent areas of great challenges and opportunities for our country, especially in the light of developments of the systemic changes and events occurred since 2011. The opportunities are offered by the **large economic potential of the North Africa**, where the GDP growth after the political crisis is still increasing, **and the interest that they provoke, ranging from the natural resources not yet fully exploited and the potential markets, currently poorly integrated in the circuits the world economy. Italy today is the first European partner in terms of trade with North Africa.**

Why cities ?

The Northern and Southern coast present similarities and complementarities which could make the collaboration reciprocally fruitful through suitable neighbourhood policies. **These opportunities seem to emerge first of all from the network of cities facing the Mediterranean coast.** True engines and protagonists of radical changes in society, economy and image of the country, hubs of migration, these cities still belong to a network, still interact through flows of people, trade and communication, supported by the globalizing technological tools and media, as the Arab spring has clearly shown.

The second important reason is that Mediterranean cities and territories have some **specific characteristics that can't be ignored.** Mediterranean cities have **more similarities** among them than with whatever else city in central or Northern Europe. Cosmopolitan by definition, with their dense specific morphologies, these harbour cities present a stratification of multicultural services and functions, public goods and a considerable historic heritage which make these cities unique.

The high level of their urban fixed capital and the multiculturalism will allow the carrying out of regeneration policies which can't be implemented with the same advantages in whatever else urban context.

The Conference is articulated into four sessions that capture some key elements: framing macro-economic, political-institutional, economic development policies and the labor market , the role of cities as nodes in Mediterranean relationship, policies logistics / infrastructure.

The welfare of the cities is influenced by the economy at national level. Therefore the introductory first session has specifically the aim to evaluate the impact on “the Arab spring” on economy, society and institutions.

The second session on innovation, employment and development policies try to define the key challenges in labour market, innovation diffusion, firm creation on a background of deep reform and transformation dynamics.

The third session on identity, heritage, and needs of modernization in Mediterranean Cities highlights the potentialities and risks of urban transformation and reflects on urban quality and well being.

The fourth session develops the issue of the trade flows and the sea infrastructures in the Mediterranean area.

Finally some possible outcomes of this conference and future other initiatives will be discussed all together.

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INTRODUCTION

Maria Rosaria Carillo
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Dear Participants and Colleagues,

I am very glad today to be here with all of you and to begin the conference on

THE MEDITERRANEAN CITIES BETWEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

organized by Riccardo Cappellin, Lidia Diappi, myself and Salvatore Capasso.

Before to start, I and my colleagues want to thank all who have supported us in organizing this event.

First of all we are very grateful to the Italian Association of Regional Science for having believed in our project and having supported it financially.

I wish to thank the University Parthenope and the Department of Economics for having hosted the conference.

Also we are grateful to the whole scientific committee for his scientific support.

And finally, let me give my personal thanks to Riccardo Cappellin and Lidia Diappi for having chosen the University Parthenope and more generally the city of Naples as the place of this conference, by underlining, with this brilliant occasion, the centrality of our city in the Mediterranean area and the role which its universities and, among them, the University Parthenope, can play in developing the process of social and economic integration among Mediterranean countries.

In particular with countries of Maghreb area, today represented by the very distinguished speakers at this conference, among these the former and in charge ministers of Tunisia, as well as the representative of Egypt in the person of the Dean of Economics Faculty of Cairo.

Universities, in fact, can play an important rule in favoring the process of integration between Mediterranean countries and in rising their economic and social growth.

In particular they could contribute to overcome one of the most urgent problem of north Africa countries: the high unemployment rate of younger people especially of graduate ones.

A good development strategy should have, in fact, as a priority the employability of qualified personnel, that can be obtained by supporting some services activities, such as basic research, consulting and marketing services, or tourism services, deeply rooted geographically but also strongly conducive to the development of a knowledge economy.

It is clear that a strong program of collaborations and networking activities among Mediterranean universities can be crucial in the diffusion of knowledge necessary in order to carry on this program.

Another important aspect of this program is the rising of the mobility of young people among countries. Personal mobility is an important factor for the diffusion of knowledge.

Specific programs of exchange among universities and specific programs of training of younger people within firms, could be a very effective tool in order to diffuse knowledge, to reduce the graduate unemployment rate and to reduce the area of illegal immigration.

Once again, it is clear the paramount role that universities and a network among them can play in this process.

But I do not want to take too much of your time, so now I will give the floor to prof. Claudio Quintano, Rector of University Parthenope for his greetings.

**Joint Programme for the development of
Regional Science research in Mediterranean Arab speaking countries (RSMAC)**

**GUIDELINES FOR WORKSHOP/S
in Spring-Autumn 2014 in Tunisia and/or Egypt)**

MAIN TOPICS:

The problem of employment creation:

- Innovation, Knowledge and learning
- Creation of new firms and employment growth
- Creation of new qualified jobs for youth unemployment

The problem of decentralization and institutional building:

- The institutional framework of local development policies and the role of intermediate institutions and “social capital”
- Horizontal subsidiary and decentralization from the state to non-state collective organization / intermediate institutions
- A different type of governance approach at the local level: not free market and not top down planning such as the national level
- Bureaucracy, organization of local governments and overregulation
- Corruption vs solidarity and forms of governance

The problem of the development of non-urban areas:

- Tourism development in non-urban areas
- Development of the economic base of the rural areas
- Development of small and medium size cities in rural areas

The problematic sectors and their negative and positive linkages to the main sectors:

- The informal sectors, self-service and unemployment
- Capital accumulation and rent seeking activities linked to natural monopolies in the national market: telecommunication, transport, banks,
- The management of “public goods” and “common goods”: water, environment, knowledge vs the model: property rights/competition
- Communities and cooperatives
- Teaching of Regional Science in Arab universities

AIMS:

- From regional potentials and national constraints to a new development strategy
- Interactive learning in regional and urban policies between Europe and Arab countries

FIELDS OF INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION:

- Exchange of students and professors with some European Universities
- Development programmes for regions and large urban areas
- Local development projects in small municipalities
- Sectoral policies in specific industrial clusters
- Plans for transport infrastructure, education, health policies