

URBAN AREAS

More than 375 million city-dwellers in 2025

Whereas half the world population is becoming urbanised, in the Mediterranean countries two out of every three inhabitants already live in towns, a figure which will rise to almost three quarters towards 2030. This gives rise to some major urban development challenges such as managing faster urbanisation in the countries to the South and East, limiting concentration in the major cities and a further increase in inequality, as well as the impact on the environment.

- ✓ At less than 1% per year, urban growth is moderate in the countries to the North
- ✓ The countries to the South and East are undergoing rapid urbanisation with the number of town-dwellers forecast to increase by 100 million between 2000 and 2025
- ✓ An alarming increase in the volume of per capita waste in the southern countries (587 kg/capita/yr in 2025, 282 kg in 2000), where the majority of tips (80%) are unsupervised
- ✓ To the North, the volume of waste could reach one tonne/capita/yr in 2025 compared with 566 kg/capita/yr in 2000
- ✓ Ever-longer trips with increasing private car use and a decline in public transport.

Throughout the Mediterranean countries, what were once compact towns are now spreading or stretching along the coasts. Greater sprawl means longer trips and increases transport facilities, and air pollution is rising steeply. To the North, population and job dispersal, property speculation and the fact that cars have become commonplace means that towns are spreading. To the South, city sprawl is often marked by a mushrooming of “jerry-built” housing, leading to the creation of social wastelands and difficult access to water, sanitation and other basic services.

To the North as to the South, controlling urban sprawl, improving living conditions in the towns, promoting less wasteful and less polluting ways of life and boosting the urban economy whilst enhancing the Mediterranean heritage are the main objectives for changing scenario.

The change of scenario implies:

- ✓ Land planning and regional development to check excessive concentration in the cities
- ✓ Revamping the image of the Mediterranean model of the mixed, compact town, boosting urban economies by renovating old towns, breathing new life into public centres and areas... Such measures have been successfully introduced in cities like Barcelona, Marseilles, Genoa, Naples, Aleppo...
- ✓ Reducing the impact on the environment through:
 - developing non-polluting public transport; limiting the use of cars in town centres; using less polluting fuel;
 - reducing at source the volume of waste produced and making widespread use of recycling.