

SMILO. Moral report 2021.

What could a COP say to the small islands whose special status, unlike others, has not yet been recognised by the United Nations? No one knows exactly, the spectrum of the Conference of the Parties being currently too broad for us to be able to translate the declarations of intentions on these small island territories not yet distinguished by the international negotiating bodies.

In the meantime, it is always possible to move forward, to work with these small islands associated in the SMILO network, which are trying to set up their resilience project themselves. And support them, one after the other, and all together: the part and the whole, the clarinet and the orchestra, islands and resilience in consonance with lasting solutions, *res'ilands*.

The important thing in this year 2021, which is coming to an end, is to note that our archipelago is expanding and has more and more capacities to imagine a future of its own, and SMILO is growing with it.

We saw it with a certain pleasure during the three sessions of the World Islands Network that the association organized: in five years, SMILO took place among other island networks and, better, the association offered them a platform during this WIN to compare their experiences and get closer; at the same time, our singularity, imagined by the founders, was highlighted: be on ground; and it is also this in-depth work, as close as possible to the realities of the land and the sea, which will allow us, we hope, to bring back to the big international bodies the voice of the small SMILO islands - which will appear less as vindictive victims of global changes, and more as exceptional territories that have demonstrated their creative originality in preserving biodiversity and adapting to climate change. Pilot islands, laboratory islands, living islands above all responding to the challenges posed by an inhabited nature.

The year 2021 was for SMILO a year of transition, consolidation, extensions.

Transition: due to the pandemic, we had to learn to support the islands as closely as possible, without being able to go there, and there were however certain changes that appeared in this distance suffered against our will: better preparation of funding requests, multiplication of workshops on the SMILO platform, from which were born convergences between several islands, video competition during the "Celebrate islands" contest, implementation of sustainable solutions with the Islands Funds, with a special call dedicated to local NGOs.

Consolidation: firstly through new or renewed funding, which underpins the expansion of the network and increased recognition of the label, the continuation of actions started on the islands already partners, the transfer of these experiences from an island to the other. Funding from season 1 of SMILO (2017-2021), with the FFEM or the Prince Albert of Monaco Foundation, funding that inaugurates season 2 with AFD in particular, but correlated with a second program with the FFEM, FPAII, or again and potentially the AFD: what is reassuring is that our donors are following up on their ideas. In addition to this program-financing spread over several years, there are operational and sector-based funds based on one of our 5 criteria, details of which will be given to you in the activity report.

Consolidation finally, and logically, because this work increase has resulted in better structuring of the Secretariat, which sees its missions expanded and its staff increased.

Extensions: the reform of the statutes presented at the last extraordinary general assembly of March 29 made it possible to set up geographical delegates within the Board of Directors, who are called upon to work on the expansion of the network and initiate new ways of funding. SMILO does not yet cover the entire vast world, but... approaches it with its delegates from Northern Europe, Caribbean, Mediterranean, West Africa, East Africa, North America, Asia, Pacific, Macaronesia.

Extension also concerning the *evolutionary* spirit of these fundings: SMILO, that goes without saying but it is worth to say it in full, does not aim to cover and finance all the fields of activity of an island, even small; on the other hand, the Islands Fund in particular, is a launch booster for sustainable solutions, a way of initiating the transition (and not an end in itself), then allowing an *autonomous* requests from these same islands to other donors (or the same but with complementary programs). This is already true in Kerkennah, Pangatalan, Gorée.

Territorial extensions, finally, perhaps the most anticipated: *other islands*, belonging to the same countries or geographical areas as the first to join SMILO, are entering the network, in Senegal, the Philippines, Madagascar, the Mediterranean; *other islands* bring SMILO into new seas or oceans: in New Caledonia, in the Seychelles, in Norway...

These geographical extensions sometimes confront us with a phenomenon that we already know, but which could be found more often with the extension of the network, that of the *double insularity*: a small island depends on another, larger, which can itself depend on a continent-metropolis, sometimes far away. We knew the case with the Lavezzi (Corsica),

Tavolara (Sardinia), Marie-Galante (Guadeloupe), and this “network within the network” is now increasing with the Loyalty Islands (New Caledonia) or Gozo (Malta) . It is necessary to underline this phenomenon of the double insularity, because starting from a possible secular feeling of “island in the second curtain”, it perhaps turned out in fact positive: when it happens in particular that the smallest island serves as an example of environmental management to the largest, which can then itself report back to the Metropolis!

Another scenario arises with the Seychelles: this time, and for the first time, SMILO should enter into a framework agreement with an island State, before working with several territories of the archipelago (but the case of Gozo Malta will also belong to this new domain).

Transition, consolidation, extensions: SMILO is evolving by adaptations to the specific conditions of each island unit while wishing to include in its strategic principles these *facts of experience*: our idea of small islands, their commitment to biodiversity, the establishment sustainable solutions, has been refined since 2017, and this is why we asked the evaluation committee to review and deepen these strategic principles. Without anticipating its conclusions which will be examined tomorrow, it seems that the message resulting from the first feedback is quite clear: let's keep our five criteria, biodiversity, landscapes, water, energy, waste, but let's broaden the *understanding* of these and the implementation of the resulting actions to the entire island community *over the long term*.

The year 2021 will also have been rich in new partnerships with international institutional structures, foundations, other associations, and even the private sector. To name but a few, SMILO has signed an agreement with UNESCO's Man and Biosphere reserves, with the Mediterranean Water Institute, with the Thalassa Foundation, with companies registered in the 1% for the planet.

The IUCN World Congress in Marseille in September, where SMILO took an active part in demonstrating the emergence of sustainable solutions on small islands ("Building islands resilience"), saw the creation of a new "consortium" at the initiative of the European and International Delegation of the Conservatoire du Littoral: *Islands-Coast-Ocean*, ICO. No need to remember that DEI is at the origin of SMILO, but hence the association is in total symbiosis with the ICO program.

We thus advocated the idea, when SMILO was created, that the continents look a little better at the small islands; what comes now is the new perspective that the small islands can bring to the continents, with, we hope, possible transfers of experiences.

Maxime Prodromides
President of SMILO.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'M. Prodromides', written in a cursive style.