



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



The UfM Secretariat
is co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION



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Message from the Secretary General Nasser Kamel



As we prepare for the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, it is an opportune moment to reflect on what helps bind our longstanding commitment to continue forging ever stronger bonds of partnership in the Euro-Mediterranean region. For its part, the foundation of the Union for the Mediterranean and its Secretariat was able to further focus, consolidate and institutionalise the vision set forth 25 years ago. But the essence of the decision to choose this path of multilateral partnership can be found in the determination to always walk hand-in-hand with our Members States and partners. What is more, whilst the journey so far has also doubled as one long learning curve, we have of course enjoyed the steadfast backing of our Co-Presidency, whose continuous support has made possible everything we have so far achieved, and plan to achieve in the future.

Driven by a shared dedication to fulfil the legitimate ambitions of the peoples of the Euro-Mediterranean region in the face of the challenges brazenly inhibiting the pursuit of their dreams, we are fully convinced that regional ambitions call for regional sobriety, both conceptually and institutionally.

Propelled by this conviction, the year 2019 saw the UfM Secretariat reach previously unscaled heights of regional cooperation, energised at all times by the UfM mandate, guided by its Roadmap for Action, and motivated by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The sentiment and urgency of this international agenda are both shared by the UfM Secretariat and help galvanise its own momentum towards some of the human development goals that hold most potential in the region, especially those gained through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Operating in an ever expanding ecosystem of collaborative forces and committed to a broader, more deep-rooted multilateralism, the cluster of

partnerships the UfM Secretariat maintains with development cooperation agencies and financial institutions attests to its capacity to pursue different modalities of cooperation within and beyond the Mediterranean region.

Conscious of the fact that the dismal clocks of climate change and resource degradation are ticking faster for our region than for other parts of the world, we adopted a positive agenda of climate and environmental action backed by scientific findings that also encompasses energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production, the blue economy, transport connectivity and the development of a UfM Urban Agenda.

In addition to the Mediterranean's huge marine, coastal and land resources, the UfM region is also home to a treasure-trove of human capital: a young population whose full potential is far from being fully realised. Our work on gender equality, youth empowerment, quality education, employment and job creation is also part of our unwavering efforts to leave no one behind.

Our Mediterranean identity can be measured in lessons learned throughout history, and the one lesson that has stood the test of time is that on the commitment of each, depends the destiny of all. As we are committed then to promoting regional cooperation and integration, we share not only the dream of peace, stability and shared prosperity, but also the desire to inspire through our work and to lead by our example. The path to a better future belongs to us all, and we are determined to be bold in our pledges, but in the same vein, our actions and impact shall act as the sole standard-bearers of our promise to deliver on a better tomorrow.

Nasser Kamel

The UfM in a nutshell



Bringing together 43 countries to promote dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation that brings together, on equal footing, the countries of the European Union and 15 countries of the South and East Mediterranean. Its aim is to strengthen regional cooperation and dialogue across the Euro-Mediterranean area.

A common ambition: creating an area of peace, stability and shared prosperity

As a direct continuation of the Barcelona Process, the launch of the UfM in July 2008 was a true reflection of its 43 Member States' shared political commitment to the enhancement of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

Established in March 2010 in Barcelona, the UfM Secretariat is the first permanent structure dedicated to the implementation of this partnership. It is co-financed by the European Commission and by contributions from UfM Member States. Ever since its creation, the institution has continuously worked to promote political dialogue across the Euro-Mediterranean region, in view of creating an area of peace, security, stability and

shared prosperity that addresses the legitimate aspirations of its citizens.

A roadmap for action: tackling the root causes of the challenges to be faced

The last few years have marked a turning point for the institution, exemplified by the adoption of a roadmap for action by the Member States' in January 2017.

The UfM roadmap for action, entitled *The Union for the Mediterranean: an Action-driven Organisation with a Common Ambition*, underlines the key role of the UfM as a unique framework for political dialogue and regional cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area whilst focusing its work on the socio-economic root causes of the growing challenges that the region is facing by capitalising on its immense untapped potential, particularly its youth.

Efforts made in 2019 to continue effectively implementing the Roadmap were acknowledged by the Member States' Ministers of Foreign Affairs at the 4th UfM Regional Forum (10 October 2019,

A co-owned regional cooperation framework

43 MEMBER STATES

With a co-presidency representing North and South on equal footing

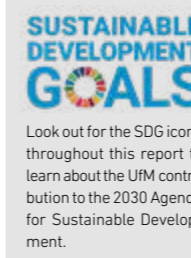


1 Secretary General from the South: NASSER KAMEL, Egypt

Headquarters located in the North: BARCELONA, Spain



1 Syria suspended its membership to the UfM on 1 December 2011.
2 Libya has an observer status at the UfM.



Look out for the SDG icons throughout this report to learn about the UfM contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Barcelona, Spain), which was chaired by the UfM Co-Presidency, assumed by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini (2014-2019), and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Ayman Safadi. Ministers also further agreed to focus work in the coming years on key priorities for the Mediterranean, such as the environment and climate change, trade, investment promotion, job creation and economic cooperation, including the digital economy and infrastructure connectivity.

An action-driven methodology: translating policies into results

Composed of three dimensions, the UfM working methodology aims to create effective links between political decisions taken by Member States, and their translation into region-wide, cooperation projects, which in return nourish the definition of relevant policies.

1. Political fora: defining the UfM priorities of work through the adoption of common ministerial agendas on key strategic areas for the region.
2. Platforms of policy dialogue: facilitating exchange on ministerial mandates; better understanding stakeholders' needs; sharing experiences and identifying best practices; promoting concrete cooperation projects. This dimension takes a multi-stakeholder approach, involving governmental

institutions, regional and international organisations, local authorities, civil society organisations, universities and think tanks, as well as the private sector and financial institutions.

3. Projects with regional impact: identifying and supporting regional cooperation projects that have a tangible impact on the ground and contribute to the goals set by UfM Ministers in each area of action.

A strong commitment to the global agenda: contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

The Euro-Mediterranean region is at the forefront of many pressing global challenges such as migration, terrorism, climate change, water scarcity and youth unemployment. In this context, the UfM aims to promote common regional responses in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, contributing at regional level to the implementation of this global agenda.

The UfM Secretariat is determined to continue joining forces with the international community, and particularly with the UN System, to address global challenges and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Euro-Mediterranean region, through tangible and concrete activities and initiatives.

In this sense, since 2017, the UfM Secretariat has specifically referred to the UN SDGs as indicators for the impacts of its activities.

The Barcelona Process

The first Euro-Mediterranean conference, held in Barcelona on 27-28 November 1995, launched the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Process. Known as the Barcelona Process, this dialogue framework was born out of a commitment to establish a Mediterranean area of peace, stability and shared prosperity.

In the Barcelona Declaration, Euro-Mediterranean partners established three main objectives for the Partnership:

1 Political and Security Basket: Definition of a common area of peace and stability through the reinforcement of political and security dialogue.

2 Economic and Financial Basket: Construction of a zone of shared prosperity through an economic and financial partnership and the gradual establishment of a free-trade area.

3 Social, Cultural and Human Basket: Rapprochement between peoples through a social, cultural and human partnership aimed at encouraging understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies.

Improving quality of life and responding to basic needs

The bare essentials of life remain a daily struggle for far too many of our citizens, whilst societies still face wide inequalities, for which future generations will hold us accountable. Our endeavours to enhance human development must therefore be uncompromising in the pursuit of these fundamental Sustainable Development Goals.

First things first

Water – a fundamental right and a tool for stability

The UfM Water Agenda has been elaborated to provide an integral, coherent vision complete with recommendations and proposals for UfM Member States. It facilitates the application of integrated water resource management approaches whilst including a strategy to encourage the increased financing of much needed water investments. Prime examples of this were the UfM National Workshops on Sustainable Water Financing conducted this year in Jordan and Albania. The overall objective of these workshops was to facilitate the implementation of the Water Agenda's financial strategy by UfM Member States. An important feature of each workshop were the specific objectives, tailored to the demands and requirements of each country. These have helped create concrete

recommendations and have proven so successful that more countries have requested UfM support to organise their own workshops in 2020.

Investing in the water sector is a powerful catalyst for boosting economic growth and achieving stability. In a region that faces acute water shortages, this is especially true and water therefore needs to be a fundamental element of all dialogue and cooperation. In its efforts to boost this dialogue, the UfM organised, together with the European Union, the Arab League, GWP-Med and other partners, a Water Governance and Business Forum in Cairo, Egypt. It highlighted the link between water security and economic growth, making the quest for water security to be made a collective goal that needs to involve as many diverse actors as possible. The event served as an intermediary step towards the Mediterranean Water Investment Forum, also organised by the UfM in the framework of the MED – Mediterranean Dialogues held in Rome. The conference examined

Read more about UfM activities on water:



Source: European Environment Agency.



Young boy drinking water in Gaza.

Investing in the water sector is a powerful catalyst for boosting economic growth and achieving stability in the region.

appropriate options for blending different sources of financing including stakeholders, international organisations and new forms of public-private partnership (PPP).

The UfM Secretariat is determined to pave the way for private actors to have a more central role in the water sector as a prerequisite for future sustainable financing. This includes supporting governments in developing a long-term vision on how to involve the private sector, with the necessary policy reforms to ensure the delivery of such a vital service and resource is underwritten with secure and robust plans.

Water for Gaza

The available water in Gaza ranks it among the lowest in the world. Not only this, 97% of it is unfit for human consumption. In attempt to find a solution to this critical situation, the UfM endorsed a desalination plant project to provide Palestinians living in Gaza with access to clean drinking water. Its ambitious objective is to address the water deficit for a population of 2 million people.

Throughout 2019, the UfM Secretariat continued to exercise its facilitation role among the parties involved, especially by concentrating efforts on a political and financial level, as well as carrying out activities with all the international financial institutions and partners.

In May 2019, international donors to the project gathered with partners involved in its promotion and coordination to allow the Palestinian government to present the progress on the project. Of particular relevance was the detailed timeline for completion that was shared, identifying July 2024 as a target date for the plant to be up and running. In this regard, the project is already becoming a reality on the ground. The first tenders have been launched with the support of the World Bank and substantial progress has been achieved in ongoing discussions between Palestine and Israel regarding arrangements for the entry of materials into Gaza for the project.

The cost of continuing with current policies?

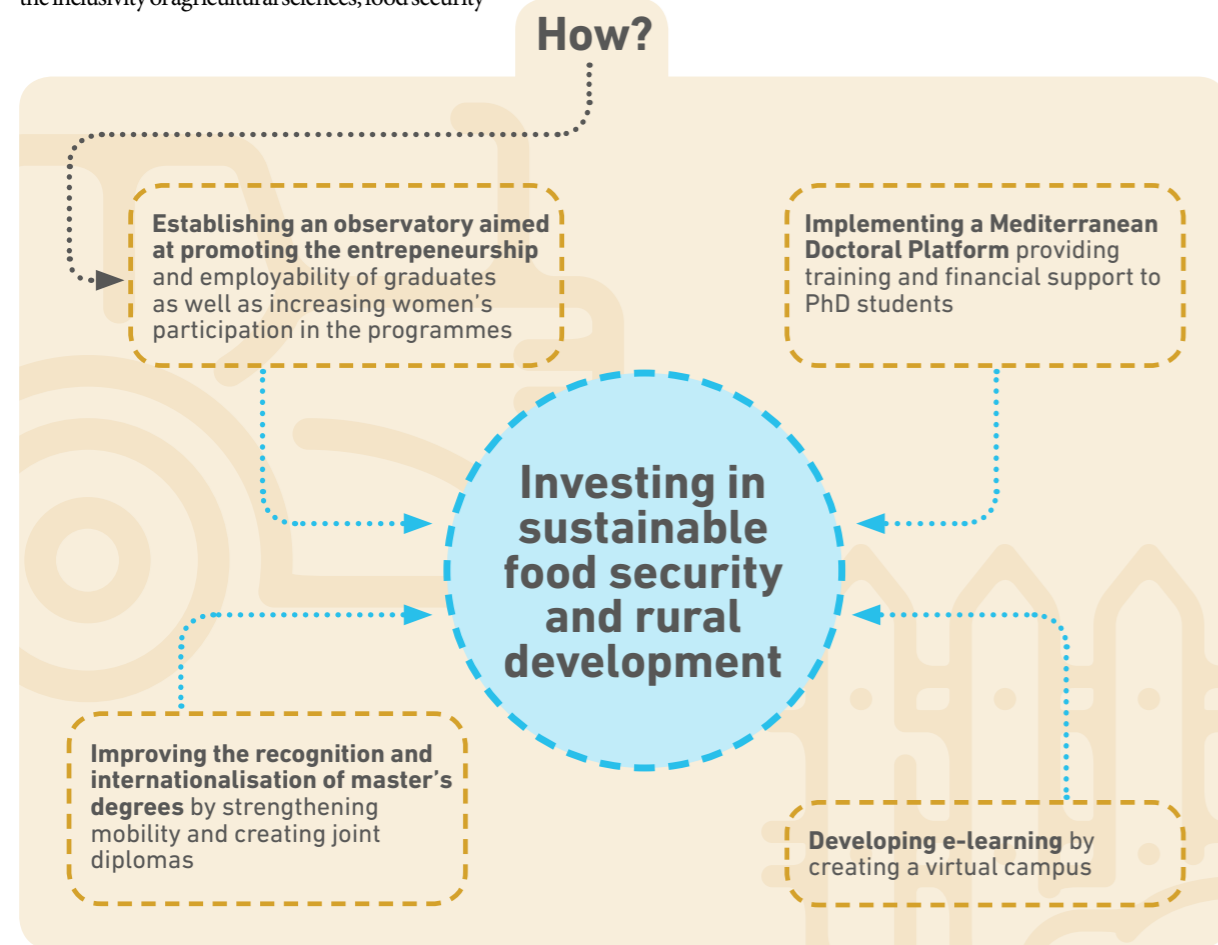
250 million people expected to be **water poor by 2040**

Finding food security in education and knowledge

The sustainability of food production and consumption in Mediterranean countries is pivotal when planning the human and environmental wellbeing of present and future generations. The International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and the UfM Secretariat have over time strengthened their partnership for promoting cooperation on the inclusivity of agricultural sciences, food security

and sustainability, as well as rural development in the Mediterranean.

The UfM-labelled project, Higher Education on Food Security and Rural Development, is testament to this commitment. It not only supports the CIHEAM Master of Science degrees and advanced training courses for professionals with the allocation of scholarships to Southern and Eastern Mediterranean students but has also created an alumni platform.



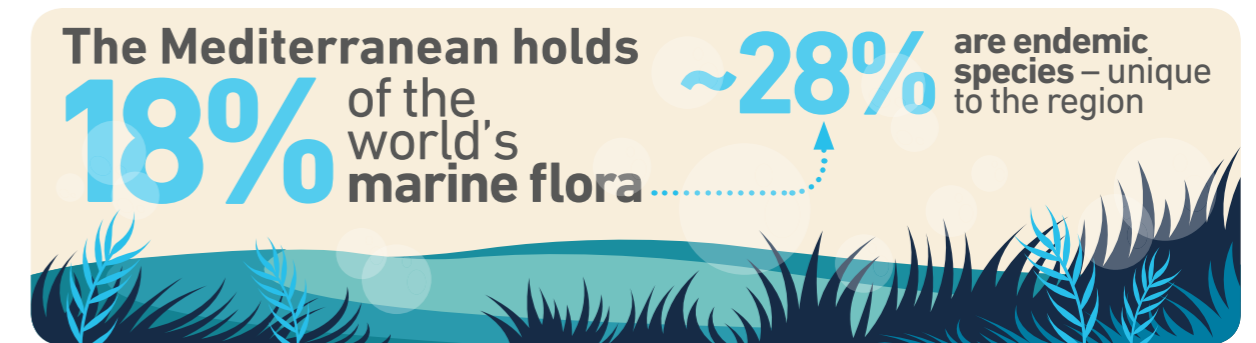
UfM workshop on Informal Business Integration. UfM Headquarters, Barcelona, Spain.

In 2019, CIHEAM organised the Forum on Mediterranean Food Cultures, where the UfM agreed to work jointly with CIHEAM and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on the co-development of a multi-actors platform for sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean. The platform's objectives are threefold:

1. Contribute to an improved understanding of the increasing challenges facing the region's food systems.
2. Identify and promote innovative solutions by

Working in these circumstances seriously hampers sustainable and inclusive development efforts on the ground. The challenge of the transition from an informal economy to widespread formal employment is one that affects countries on both shores of the Mediterranean and there is a growing need for viable alternatives that will protect workers' rights in a properly functioning labour market.

The UfM Secretariat recognises this and strongly contributes to regional and global efforts to accelerate the transition from informal to formal



Source: Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC).

linking food security, nutrition and environmental sustainability while developing and supporting training activities and actions on the ground.

3. Raise awareness by bringing these issues to the centre of national, regional and international debates.

This is particularly relevant as the Mediterranean holds 18% of the world's marine flora of which nearly 28% are endemic species. Endemic species are those plants and animals that only exist in one geographical region, rendering their preservation of utmost importance to prevent their extinction.

employment, adopting the principles of decent work in order to protect the most vulnerable. With this in mind, it organised the workshop, Informal Business Integration (18 March, Barcelona, Spain) to focus on two interrelated subjects: the role of social dialogue and the protection of women, young people and vulnerable groups at risk of economic exclusion.

The workshop stressed the need to involve representatives of the informal sector into structured social dialogue alongside other social partners to ensure an equal footing in both representation and advocacy. It further highlighted the importance of building conducive regulatory frameworks, enhancing trust, as well as unleashing the potential for new technologies like blockchain solutions to democratise social dialogue.

Living a dignified life

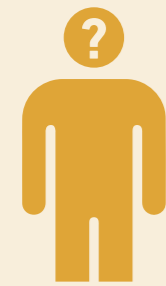
Promoting the transition from informal to formal employment

Around 2 billion people globally work in an informal capacity, most of them in emerging and developing countries. The majority of these workers do not enjoy protection from social security, rights at work or decent working conditions.

Among the best practices presented were the SOLiD Charter on Social Dialogue, the Sharaka Forums in Jordan, Tawasol in Egypt, the Democratisation of Care Economy through Social and Solidarity Economy in Spain, and Social Dialogue as a Tool to fight Informal Employment (KADIM) in Turkey.

The challenge of the transition from an informal economy to widespread formal employment is one that affects countries on both shores of the Mediterranean.

WHAT IS IT?



INFORMAL ECONOMY

Informal workers or enterprises are those that work outside of a country's regulatory framework. The reasons pushing workers to informal work can be manifold, however, the end result and consequences are the same for all. Among other things, informal workers and enterprises cannot benefit from their government's supportive systems such as social security, leaving them vulnerable to abuses of their rights. On the other hand, the wealth generated by informal workers and enterprises is generally not channelled into the country's economy, as it is not taxed or monitored by governments.

The schools give hope to younger generations, rebuilding their confidence in the future, and most of all, in themselves.

Rebuilding confidence, restarting futures

Our region holds immense potential with one of the youngest populations on the planet. But too many are left behind. Up to a third of our young people dropped out of school early and have no training or employment. This situation perpetuates poverty and social exclusion, where informal jobs become the only solution, leading to precarious living conditions.

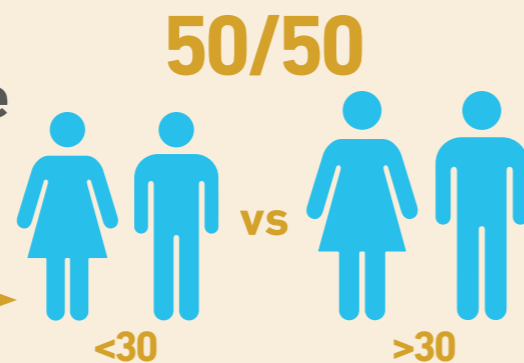
The MedNC project, supported by the UfM Member States since 2014, gathers a network of so-called 'second chance schools' to help those who have fallen from the system. In these schools, second chance might mean the last chance. Through practical training, tailored according to the students' natural abilities and interests,

the schools give hope to younger generations, rebuilding their confidence in a brighter future, and most of all, in themselves.

Today, the MedNC network gathers over 100 centres across nine countries and benefited over 29,000 young people during the last school term (September 2018-June 2019). The network turned into such a success story that it was chosen, among more than 200 proposals made by civil society, as an example to follow by the Foreign Ministers of the 5+5 Dialogue within the framework of the Summit of the two Shores initiated by the President of France. This represents a major step forward in the structuring and deployment of the MedNC network, as it will encourage countries to promote, at institutional and budgetary levels, a broader deployment of initiatives under the New Chance approach.

Source: UNICEF

In some Euro-Med countries, young people make up to half of the population



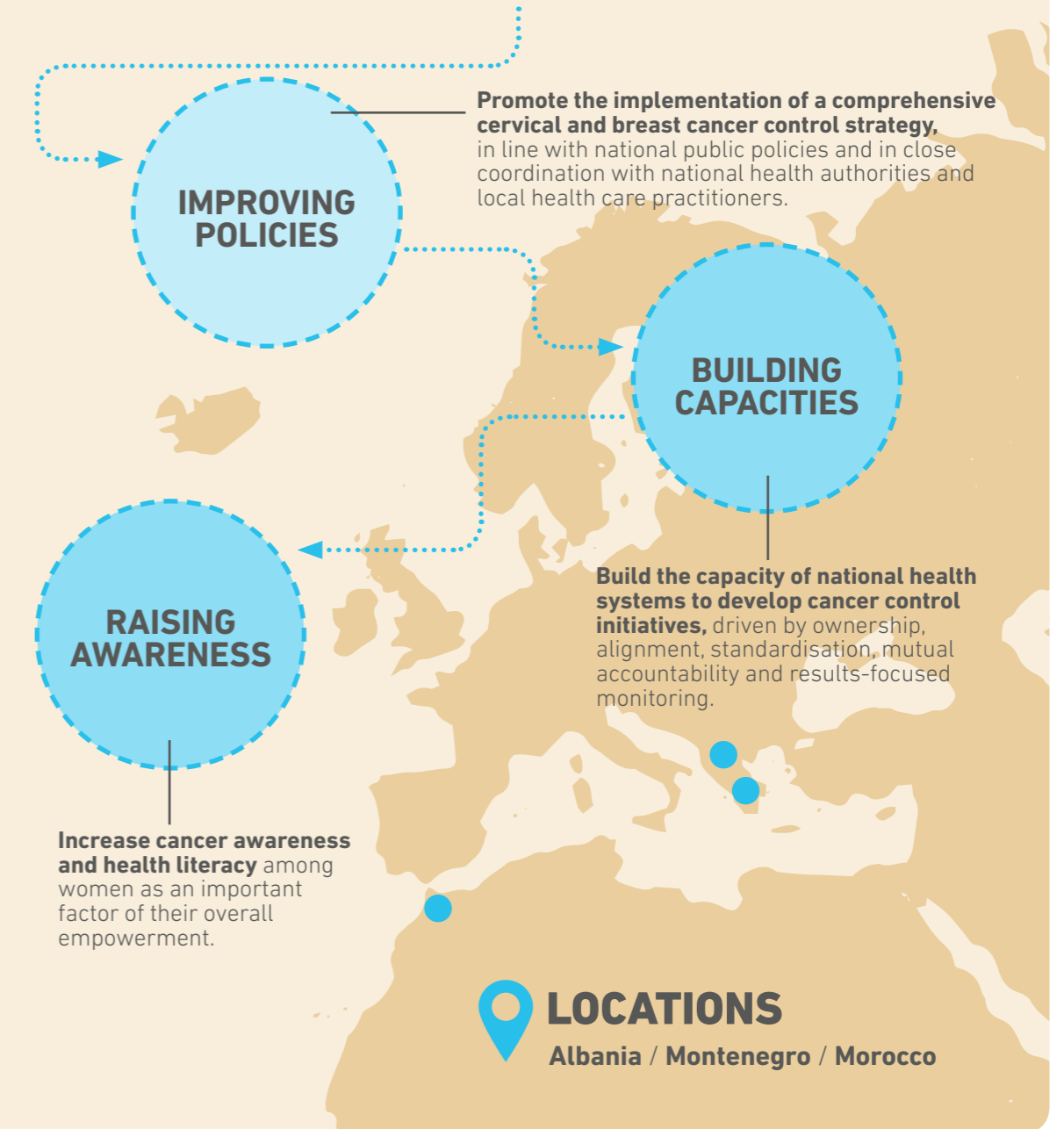
Access to health care, a fundamental right



Taking a closer look Worth Project

The Women's Right to Health project promoted by the Reference Centre for Epidemiology and Cancer Prevention in Piemonte (CPO), aims to reduce the incidence and mortality rate of women's breast and cervical malignancies through the design and implementation of a comprehensive cancer control strategy.

How?



- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 5 GENDER EQUALITY
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Providing equal and fairer opportunities

Women, young people and vulnerable citizens are particularly at risk of exclusion. Yet, they all deserve a voice, they all can perform a role. Doing what is fair, more than just doing what is right, is therefore doing what makes sense. An empowered citizen, is an active, engaged and productive citizen. Quite simply, working to achieve these Sustainable Development Goals means leaving no one behind.

Two target populations – Empowering women and youth

Turning words into action on gender equality

More than ever, issues surrounding gender equality are gaining momentum across the Euro-Mediterranean region. Beyond becoming a social matter, countries are even introducing strong legislative and regulatory measures for women's and girls' rights.

However, in spite of these measures, the region continues to face considerable challenges regarding the achievement of gender equality, and a clear gap perseveres between legislative efforts and implementation. The prevalence of discriminatory practices and unequal access to services and resources continues to block progress for women.

The key to fostering change will therefore be the proper implementation of legal and regulatory frameworks. In light of this, the UfM Secretariat was mandated by the 2017 Cairo Ministerial

Declaration to establish a regional mechanism that monitors progress on gender equality, aiming to provide recommendations to policymakers and regional stakeholders regarding the implementation gap.

In 2019, a set of indicators and monitoring tools were submitted to UfM Member States, taking into account their social, economic and cultural diversity. These included indicators to monitor legal frameworks and enforcement tools, women's access to leadership and decision-making processes, women's economic participation, violence against women and girls, as well as specific indicators about perceptions and stereotypes.

Once endorsed, the monitoring mechanism will be compiled by national counterparts, including national women's machineries, in coordination with national statistical offices, practitioners and researchers on gender equality. The UfM's added value can be seen in the technical support offered in view of enhancing implementation, encouraging more impact measurement and emphasising the importance of reliable gender data collection systems that will ultimately serve to unlock the full potential of women in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Read more about UfM activities on women's empowerment:



“When we ask women directors or producers if gender inequality is an issue in their countries, they usually say there is no problem, only when they look at the numbers do they realise it really is a problem.”

Isabel Castro Martinez, board member of the European Women's Audiovisual Network and speaker at the UfM International Women's Day event in 2019.

Read more about the outcomes of the event here:



Promoting women's economic leadership

The promotion of women's economic empowerment sees strong engagement across all countries. Nonetheless, women still experience greater obstacles when it comes to accessing the world of business or simply employment, despite higher levels of enrolment in, and completion of, tertiary education.

The UfM Secretariat is acutely aware of this fact. Part of its efforts to combat the problem are invested in the annual organisation of the UfM Women Business Forum that offers Euro-Mediterranean women-owned and women-led firms a unique opportunity to take their businesses to the next level. The 2019 edition took place in Barcelona on 19-21 November, in the margins of the Smart City Expo World Congress. It brought

together more than 120 women entrepreneurs, national women business organisations, leading international organisations and business support schemes to share knowledge and ideas on different business opportunities, good practices and innovative business models. This edition focused on promoting the role of women in the circular economy, technology and innovation.

The programme included roundtable training sessions with international business and industry experts, as well as access to a dedicated online networking platform for B2B matchmaking with the opportunity to organise a series of pre-scheduled B2B meetings and new business model presentations. Participants also had the opportunity to take part in two site visits to local start-ups in Barcelona to learn about their circular economy business models and eco-friendly products.

Source: Grant Thornton, Women in Business: Building a Blueprint for Action (2019).

2019 highest number of management roles held by women on record in the world

Also 2019: women still only represent **29%**



Beneficiaries of the UfM-labelled project, Skills for Success.



Young participants of the Model UfM at the World Youth Forum, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

The UfM has placed youth at the heart of its action, giving a strong impulse to youth engagement within the region's priorities.

Agents of change

The Euro-Mediterranean is one of the youngest regions in the world. The UfM has therefore placed youth at the heart of its action, giving a strong impulse to youth engagement within the region's priorities, in view of further empowering young people, meeting their needs and bringing into play their potential as agents of change. The organisation has made it a priority to guarantee the representation of young experts, leaders or project beneficiaries, in order to have their opinion voiced and accounted for when charting future actions and shaping the Mediterranean development agenda.

Building on the outcomes of youth-related activities organised in the past years, the UfM Secretariat has been working on the development of a structured and coordinated youth strategy in the Euro-Mediterranean area. In this context, it held a focus group during the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe's University on Youth and Development (15-18 September 2019, Molina, Spain), to discuss the development of this strategy, and more generally the structuring of its youth programme.

The focus group gathered experts on youth programmes and policies, as well as representatives of the main youth-led and youth-serving organisations from the Euro-Mediterranean region to identify inclusive processes and participatory approaches that will help build a relevant grassroots youth strategy for the UfM. They advised the organisation on how to actively involve young people in the definition of its priorities and actions, helped to define how to mainstream the youth dimension in other UfM activities, as well as how

to create synergies with other existing strategies in the region.

Shaping the young leaders of tomorrow

The World Youth Forum (16 December, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt) hosted in 2019 the first-ever Model Union for the Mediterranean (Model UfM), where 90 young delegates exchanged ideas for action and recommended initiatives to decision-makers and influential figures. In a simulation of UfM Ministerial Conferences, the participants drafted mock ministerial declarations to address pressing issues such as youth unemployment and climate change.

Youth delegates stressed that only improved regional cooperation and integration would be capable of tackling climate change. A big part of this would be the provision of opportunities for the development of circular economy models as well as blue and green financing. In line with this, they called for better training for younger generations that will take into account the constraints imposed by climate change for the region. They also emphasised the urgent need to create jobs for women and youth, foster entrepreneurship and develop cross-border projects in the Mediterranean, in order to equip young people with the skills that are required in a time of technological innovation and a rapidly changing job market.

The Model UfM encouraged participants to appreciate the importance of building consensus in a region that has great potential for integration, and inspired them to learn more about the dynamics of building mutual understanding right across the Mediterranean.

Read more about UfM activities on young people:



On 4 December 2019 in Barcelona, the UfM gathered young entrepreneurs to exchange ideas on their projects and success stories in the tourism area, with a view to discussing the sector's role as a catalyst for job creation on both shores of the Mediterranean, especially for youth and women.

The group discussions focused on youth entrepreneurship and job creation, women in tourism and the role of digital transformation in the sector. The

exchanges concluded that policy dialogue on tourism in the Euro-Mediterranean region cannot be neglected, and neither can the transfer of knowledge and best practices in the field. Specific capacity-building, standardisation and training skills in the tourism sector would also help to alleviate youth unemployment and create various opportunities for women.

Read more about the conclusions of the event:
<https://ufmsecretariat.org/tourism-job-creation/>

Education – unleashing everyone’s potential

From local to international: a new education paradigm

The Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes (UEMF), a flagship UfM project, celebrated a new generation of young Euro-Mediterranean leaders during its first graduation ceremony of master’s degrees. By enabling North-South, South-North and South-South mobility through its exchange programmes, the university provides a platform of intercultural dialogue and cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean. This intramural university offers high quality multi-dimensional curricula in Engineering and Architecture and in Humanities and Social Sciences, complemented in both cases by cross-cutting classes on Euro-Mediterranean history, civilisations, heritage and languages along with transversal courses in information technologies and entrepreneurship.



With the supply and demand for international higher education growing, the recognition of academic qualifications across borders has never been so crucial.

Graduation ceremony at the UEMF, Fes, Morocco.

Recognition of Higher Education qualifications: where does the Euro-Mediterranean region stand?

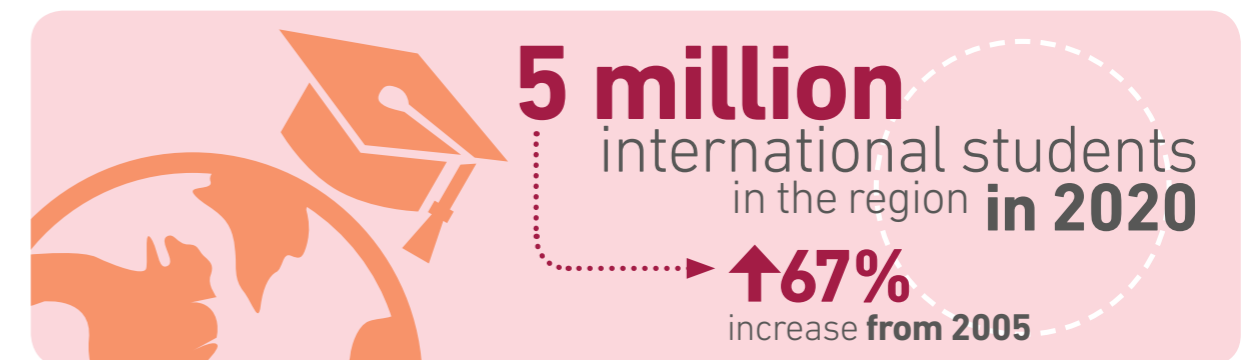
With the supply and demand for international higher education growing, the recognition of academic qualifications across borders has never been so crucial. The mobility of students, academics and workers, expanding employability and lifelong learning opportunities for all, strengthening cross-border cooperation and deepening regional integration processes, are all essential for prosperity in the region and are all very dependent on a system that recognises qualifications in a uniform manner. The number of international students is estimated at more than 5 million, an increase of 67% since 2005. Yet, like in other regions of the world, the diversity of higher education systems amongst Southern Mediterranean countries and between Southern and Northern Mediterranean countries has resulted in a lack of common practices

and mechanisms for the recognition of skills and qualifications acquired abroad.

Determined to change this, the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) and the UfM Secretariat organised a joint conference on the state of play and the challenges ahead for enhancing the recognition of higher education qualifications across the region. Participants shared best practices whilst pointing out the need for a coordinated use of top-down and bottom-up approaches to make concrete progress towards a more systemised approach to recognising higher education qualifications in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The UfM disseminated widely the policy and operational recommendations formulated during the conference, notably feeding into the work of the UfM regional platform on higher education internationalisation and academic mobility.

Source: OECD.



“ We are at the threshold of a new era. Higher education has experienced dramatic changes over the past years and there is no doubt that these should be seen from a regional perspective. ”

Prof. Mohamed Shinawi, Adviser to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Egypt.

As a complement to the existing educational exchanges on offer, the UfM-labelled project, HOMERe, promotes internship opportunities between Mediterranean countries, improving cross-cutting skills and increasing the employability of high-profile Mediterranean students in their last year of study before graduation.

In January 2019, HOMERe was proposed by France to the Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development through the call for proposals for pilot projects on legal migration under the Mobility Partnership Facility. The project was awarded €2.6 million, allowing the UfM Member States to endorse the second phase of the project. HOMERe now aims to extend to new countries and new sectors such as the blue economy, tourism or marketing and achieved more than 200 cross-border internship placements in 2019 alone.

The importance of mobility and cultural exchanges for the region’s stability has always been recognised

by the UfM. This appreciation led to its partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Egypt to organise a meeting on higher education regional cooperation in December 2019 in Cairo. The purpose of the meeting was to kick-start a discussion that would renew the region’s strategic agenda on this important topic.

Gathering representatives from Ministries for Higher Education and Research, regional networks of universities and students, higher education institutions and research centres, the meeting recommended a change of scale in the support mechanisms to pave the way for an ambitious higher education initiative to encompass the whole UfM region. A central tenet of the success of this proposal rests on the capitalisation of existing networks and collaborations whilst facilitating a transformative impact on higher education systems and institutions and ultimately, on communities themselves.

Read more about UfM activities on Higher Education:



Opportunities abound: Economic growth and the future of work

Creating jobs, skills and opportunities for all

On 2-3 April in Cascais, Portugal, the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour was held under the chairmanship of the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour mobility, Marianne Thyssen (2014-2019), and the Minister of Labour of Jordan, Samir Said Murad, to discuss the most pressing labour market needs in the region, in particular the persistent inequality in access to jobs, mostly for women and young people. Ministers stressed that economic progress and social cohesion need to go hand-in-hand and reiterated their commitment to creating the conditions to mainstream gender-specific policies in employment and labour.

Four regional priorities were emphasised:

1. Supporting decent job creation and entrepreneurship
2. Mobilising public and private stakeholders to create partnerships and synergies
3. Building inclusive labour markets to integrate potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups
4. Investing in quality education systems and training, to boost skills and employability in a changing world of work, especially in the digital sector

Reducing the impact of informal employment through promoting the potential of the social and solidarity economy was also strongly highlighted. Elsewhere in the Conference, a seminar focusing specifically on the employment of university graduates was held to address the employability gap

between skills acquired at universities and the requirements of labour markets.

Preparing the Mediterranean for the future of work

With support from the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*, commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the UfM Secretariat held several conferences and workshops in 2019 to contribute, at the Euro-Mediterranean level, to finding sustainable, responsible and inclusive solutions to the challenges surrounding the future of work.

In partnership with Social Economy Europe and the Spanish Business Confederation of the Social Economy (CEPES), the UfM Secretariat also held the workshop, Social Economy in the MENA Region and the Balkans (5 July, Barcelona, Spain), to explore the potential of the social economy not only as an alternative way of delivering economic, social and environmental value, but also as a smart way of unlocking resources, creating sustainable employment, and generating inclusive economic growth. This sector constitutes more than 3.2 million enterprises and organisations and 15 million jobs across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The UfM Conference on Digital Transformation and Digital Skills for the Future (30 September, Tallinn, Estonia), marked an important step towards the UfM's engagement with the rapidly shifting technological landscape across the labour market. The conference drew on Estonia's experience as one of the most advanced digital societies worldwide, and explored a broad range of subjects, including e-governance, e-services, digital economy and the digital skills.

Finally, the UfM workshop on The Future of Work and Skills for the Future, at the European Training Foundation (25 November, Torino, Italy), focused on entrepreneurial, digital and green skills.

Read more about UfM activities on employment:



Find out more:



The social economy sector constitutes more than 3.2 million enterprises and organisations and 15 million jobs across the Euro-Mediterranean region.



Taking a closer look YouMatch

The global initiative on innovative employment services for youth, YouMatch (promoted by GIZ), aims to establish a regional demand-driven toolbox for youth-orientated employment services to assess existing labour market tools, enable peer learning and knowledge exchange on a regional and international level, and encourage innovation as well as the transfer of promising approaches within and among the participating countries.

How?



2019 youth unemployment

UfM region
20% vs 13%
world average

26%
in Mediterranean coastal countries
- highest worldwide



Source: International Labour Organization.

Promoting trade and investment

The UfM region remains one of the most economically fragmented areas in the world, with trade flows sharply skewed towards a higher concentration in the EU representing 90% of all Euro-Mediterranean trade flows and a further 9% between the EU and its Southern and Eastern UfM neighbours. South-South trade meanwhile accounts for only 1%.

With the clear objective of including business organisations and operators in the definition and implementation of the trade and investment reform agenda in the Mediterranean, the UfM Secretariat organised its first UfM Business Forum exclusively dedicated to trade on 18 June in Cairo, Egypt. It focused on two trade issues of paramount importance to the economic integration of the region: market access and e-commerce.

Participants addressed many challenges. Some of these included identifying strategies for the removal of existing market access restrictions, targeting issues such as tariff and non-tariff barriers, quality infrastructure, market information, the costs of trade, rules of origin and the development of meaningful linkages between relevant market players. They also highlighted the importance of capacity building, technical assistance, and the transfer of knowledge and expertise for a functional trading system with a robust regulatory framework and for the full use of free trade opportunities.

The Agadir Agreement was highlighted as a good example of South-South cooperation in the field

of trade and the UfM Secretariat announced its commitment to support, in cooperation with GIZ, the Member States of the Agreement with technical training in the area of trade policy. This training would encompass issues such as rules of origin, the classification of goods, origin certification and other technical trade issues specific to needs in the region. The first training sessions were organised in Amman, Jordan, between 25-28 November 2019.

Fostering the economic potential of Culture and Creativity

The 2nd Creative Forum Ljubljana, co-organised by the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GIZ/BMZ and the UfM, took place 12-15 November in Ljubljana, and provided capacity-building and networking opportunities for more than 200 representatives of creative hubs, entrepreneurs and civil society, as well as governments, and international and local organisations.

The forum provided space for important debates on the creation of an environment that would encourage the cultural and creative sectors at the regional level. Under the title, Creative Capital United, this second edition sought to unite forces across sectors, from education to the economy and policymaking, in view of unlocking the potential of clusters and creative industries as a driver of economic growth and social resilience. In 2020, this UfM-Slovenian programme will seek to offer capacity-building activities to young creative talents and entrepreneurs, based on the policy recommendations of the forum.

Learn more about the outcomes here:



UfM Creative Forum, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

WHAT ARE THEY?



CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Creative industries refer to all the value produced that is derived from culture and innovative ideas, whether the end result is a product or a service. A creative industry finds its origins in individual creativity and can range from music, architecture and design to literature, advertising or video games. It usually relies on the exploitation of intellectual property.

“ We need to equip people with digital skills, which are increasingly in demand. This is a joint responsibility at all levels, with employers, unions and civil society organisations. With new tools to exchange best practices and monitor progress, we aim to gear up our joint work on fair jobs and growth on both sides of the Mediterranean. ”

Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility (2014-2019).

Enhancing environmental and climate responsibility

The urgency of action needed to fight the climate emergency in the Mediterranean is being felt daily by countless threatened ecosystems and millions of the region's citizens. Since no country can reverse the dangerous trends on its own, achieving these Sustainable Development Goals needs to be the priority of all. Only together can we reach our common goals. We need each other, now more than ever.



Acting before it's too late: climate change, our common challenge

Landmark scientific study: a first for understanding climate change in the Mediterranean

Science has proven that for successive decades, the average annual temperature of the sea and atmosphere have increased. Added to this, sea-levels have been rising. Science also forecasts these changes to accelerate, further jeopardising both ecosystems and human wellbeing alike. To grasp what this might look like, consider the plight of the region's 15 mega coastal cities where predicted sea rises leave them particularly susceptible to flooding.

Inadequate access to comprehensive and up-to-date research for private and public decision-makers compounds this problem. Furthermore, with existing studies generally focused on the North, the hotter and drier South struggles to make soundly informed and regionally coordinated decisions when it comes to climate action. Fully aware of this acute need, the UfM Secretariat closely supports and collaborates with MedECC, a network of more than 600 scientists from 35 countries with expertise on the Mediterranean region.

These efforts resulted in the development last year of a preliminary assessment of the first-ever scientific report on the impact of climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean, which was presented at the 4th UfM Regional Forum in October 2019. This served as a timely opportunity to bring the report to the attention of representatives of all sectors of society, in particular policy-makers coming from the 43 UfM Member States.

The complete report will be published in 2020 and will include a summary created with

policy-makers in mind and will be presented to the Ministers of Environment and Climate Change at the upcoming UfM Ministerial Meeting dedicated to these issues, foreseen to take place in 2020.



The UfM at the COP25

The Mediterranean region is the owner of a disquieting record. Having already reached the temperature rise threshold of 1.4°C, it is warming up 20% faster than the global average. The COP25 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) highlighted some of the UfM's endeavours to create a clean, resilient and energy efficient region. In three side-events, the UfM took on key issues to achieve a sustainable society and put the spot light on the impacts of climate change in the Mediterranean basin.

Two major regional initiatives supported by the UfM were presented in an effort to enhance collective and concerted action towards effective adaptation plans and mitigation measures.

Firstly, the Cyprus Climate Change Initiative is developing a regional action plan to address the pressing challenges caused by climate change in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. The importance of these efforts are paramount given that changes to the climate in both regions are expected to be significantly above the global means. Secondly, the Clima-Med project, an EU-led initiative labelled by the UfM, supports the transition of eight Southern Mediterranean

Source: Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change Network (MedECC).

Read more about UfM activities on climate action:



countries towards sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient development (see also p. 27).

A side-event was also organised in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and provided a platform to discuss how to achieve the implementation of the Nationally

Determined Contributions (NDCs) through supporting community-based mitigation, adaptation and cross-cutting actions in the region. NDCs were set by the Paris Agreement and are of crucial importance for the monitoring of national climate targets, including mitigation and adaptation actions, which countries committed to.



Taking a closer look CLIMA-MED

CLIMA-MED - promoted and fully financed by the European Union - seeks to enhance energy security and the adaptive capacity of partner countries while encouraging their transition to low carbon and climate-resilient economies.

How?



“ **Decarbonisation and the energy transition should be addressed as driven action lines of our society as a whole. The UfM, in its unique role of regional dialogue and as a debate platform, shall be enhanced at all levels, to contribute actively to build an inclusive and proactive Mediterranean energy policy, that ensures the fulfilment of energy and climate goals and commitments.** ”

João Galamba, Portuguese Secretary of State of Energy.



Changing our habits for a sustainable future

The UfM Energy Platforms

The integration of electricity markets, improvement of renewable energies, promotion of energy efficiency measures, as well as the development of gas markets all play an essential role in contributing to the diversification of the energy on offer to ensure a more secure and sustainable energy transition.

These regional challenges are at the centre of the work of the UfM Energy Platforms: the UfM Regional Electricity Markets Platform, the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform and the UfM Gas Platform. These three platforms are unique in their capacity to foster action and debate whilst gathering all Euro-Mediterranean countries as well as key stakeholders dealing with electricity markets, renewable energy, energy efficiency and gas in the Mediterranean region.

Every year, the UfM Energy Platforms Meeting is convened to ensure coherence across activities, review progress in the implementation of the respective work programmes for each platform as well as establish action plans for the next year. This year’s gathering stood out as it catalysed

preparation for the next UfM Ministerial Meeting on energy, foreseen in 2021, underlining the inter-connection between energy and the climate. In that regard, the UfM will launch in early 2020 an external evaluation process to assess the progress achieved since the last Ministerial Meeting on energy, which took place in 2016.

Going local

The climate emergency we are facing is a constant reminder of the important role played by every actor of society in shifting the current paradigm. In this regard, cities and regions are the first line of defence. The success of effective measures to mitigate and adapt to the negative effects of climate change depends, to a great extent, on the regulatory measures they enforce, the policies they adopt and the projects and initiatives they implement.

Through an understanding of their crucial role, the UfM placed local authorities at the heart of its 2nd Energy and Climate Business Forum (18 July 2019, Lisbon), organised in Lisbon together with the Portuguese Energy Agency (ADENE) and under the auspices of the Portuguese Ministry of the Environment and Energy Transition. The forum provided the opportunity to explore perspectives for future local authority actions, such as optimised institutional policies and legal reforms in the energy sector as well as specific

2nd UfM Energy and Climate Business Forum. Lisbon, Portugal.

regulations and initiatives that have had a positive impact on the development of investments.

As the energy demand is estimated to increase by 62% in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries by 2040, actors are also becoming increasingly aware of the existing barriers in finance, particularly when it comes to small-scale initiatives, regardless of their productivity and replicability.

Actors in the energy sector are becoming increasingly aware of the existing barriers in finance.

The gathering in Lisbon empowered its participants to identify realistic, adapted and replicable financing models as well as highlight successful local approaches that have gone beyond the traditional reliance on grants and loans. Successful stories and practices, such as the UfM labelled projects Clima-Med (more information on p. 25), and Tafila Wind Farm, were celebrated as positive reference points to emulate.

The Tafila Wind Farm alone breaks new ground for renewable energy in the Mediterranean and

serves as an example of successful partnership between the public and private sectors.

Beyond the fact that Tafila Wind Farm accounts for almost 25% of the energy produced from renewable sources in Jordan in 2018 and currently powers 83,000 homes, it plays a major role in the local community. Indeed, 80% of the employees are from the local area, in addition to the wind farm providing scholarships for students, supporting cultural activities and running a mobile clinic.

Sustainable consumption: a win-win situation

Fighting climate change and safeguarding the future of the next generation depends on our successful shift towards a green, circular economy that hinges on changing our production and consumption habits. In April 2019, the UfM Member States moved closer to the completion of a new post-2020 environmental agenda, that centred on three main pillars:

1. Support the transition to a green, circular and socially inclusive economy based on sustainable consumption and production practices and eco-friendly solutions.
2. Prevent and reduce pollution across land, sea and air.
3. Protect, preserve, manage and restore natural



resources in the Mediterranean region within an integrated approach towards ecosystems, including terrestrial, marine and coastal dimensions.

Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.

Action on the ground under the framework of the UfM-labelled project, Plastic Busters.

The fight against pollution

That same month, the EU-funded SwitchMed initiative launched its second phase and the UfM played an instrumental role. This included fundraising outreach actions to fund SwitchMed II and an in-depth analysis of the programme's added value, which was shared with the UfM policy-maker representatives. With a budget of €15 million to cover the four-year phase, the initiative will focus more on the involvement of the private sector and on extending sustainable production patterns from individual companies to the entire value chain, with special attention paid to plastics. In keeping with its role as mediator, the UfM is facilitating dialogue and operational collaboration among these programmes and other projects on the ground.

Every year, around 7 million deaths are caused by outdoor and household air pollution, 1 million of those are in the European and Eastern Mediterranean regions. Below water, marine litter represents a serious threat to the marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean as illustrated by the research activities conducted so far. Information on the amounts, trends, sources and impacts (including socio-economic) of marine litter is limited, however it is widely accepted that both the levels of marine litter and the rate of input into the oceans are rising. The threats to marine life are primarily due to the ingestion of plastic debris and entanglement in packaging bands, synthetic ropes and lines or drift nets. The list of affected species indicates that marine debris is endangering at least 267 species worldwide, including 86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all seabird species, and 43% of all marine mammal species.

A few months later, the 43 UfM Member States endorsed the Interreg MED Green Growth community, which gathers 14 projects promoting sustainable development in the Northern and Eastern Mediterranean area. The community aims to support the sound management of natural resources, whilst also alleviating any potential negative effects on the labour market by promoting social inclusion and green jobs. The network is designed to be agile and brings together project results, offering innovative solutions, supporting Mediterranean stakeholders and creating a fruitful and collaborative environment for all involved.

The UfM is fighting pollution in the region with the support of projects that tackle different aspects of the problem. For instance, the MedCoast 4BG – Med Coasts for Blue Growth project aims to analyse the impact of human activities – including pollution – on coastal areas, while promoting co-evolution, a sustainable way of life that maintains economic growth while respecting and preserving our natural systems. Achieving a perfect balance in that regard is not possible without taking into consideration the effects of climate change and the principles of sustainable development. This is particularly relevant considering that

The network involves partners from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, France,

Want to know more about **sustainable consumption?**

Check out the **report** published by the UfM in **2019!**



The UfM is fighting pollution in the region with the support of projects that tackle different aspects of the problem.

the Mediterranean is the world's leading tourist destination – both in terms of international and domestic tourism – and seeing as tourism is a heavy source of pollution, with its generation of solid waste, including marine plastic pollution, sewage, loss of biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions. More than 200 million tourists visit the Mediterranean every summer causing an almost 40% spike in plastic entering the sea.

Plastic Busters, in order to find and create synergies that will help align and synchronise efforts to combat marine litter throughout the Mediterranean. Plastic Busters is a regional initiative to prevent, reduce and remove marine litter from the Mediterranean Sea and has proven so successful that it has received considerable funding for two years in a row, allowing an expansion of the activities and countries involved.

Read more about UfM activities on the environment:



Just as pollution does not stop at borders, the UfM's work to foster regional cooperation and bring together stakeholders from the Northern and Southern shores must not either. With this motif in mind, the UfM co-organised a regional workshop under the framework of its labelled project,

The Mediterranean region's huge potential for sustainable and environmentally friendly development growth should serve as an extra incentive, especially as various key actors in the region are actively supporting the transition to an inclusive, circular and green economy.

WHAT IS IT?



SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Sustainable consumption provides for the needs of present and future generations while preserving our natural resources through responsible and environmentally friendly production systems. It is cross-cutting and integrated within all sectors of society.

Protecting life in all its forms

Saving our forests

Mediterranean forests and other wooded lands in the region make vital contributions to rural development, food security and the alleviation of poverty, as well as to the agriculture, water, tourism, and energy sectors. Yet, protected areas represent only 4.3% of the region's total surface area.

In April 2019, the UfM Secretariat co-chaired along with the FAO an event under the framework of the 6th Mediterranean Forest Week (Brummana, Lebanon). Through the launching of a forest restoration initiative, the project aims to scale up restoration by creating the right circumstances that enable pilot activities to apply appropriate Forest and Landscape Restoration

(FLR) approaches, and therefore contribute to the achievement of national and global restoration targets. With activities underway, the FAO and the UfM were able to collaborate again within the project's framework by organising a regional training session on climate finance, benefiting trainees coming from eight Mediterranean countries.

Desertification: a rampant threat

The Mediterranean region is characterised by an acute scarcity of land resources suitable for production, due to aridity and inherently poor soils in many areas. These more natural factors are only exacerbated by widespread poor land management.

To mitigate the effects of desertification, the UfM partnered with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to foster

“ With this project [...] the Mediterranean region will enhance national and regional capacities and the political will to successfully plan, implement and monitor large-scale programmes mainstreaming forest and landscape restoration as a key option to achieve the National Determined Contributions in the context of the Paris Agreement.

Tiina Vähänen, Chief of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division, FAO.



UfM calls for reinforced cooperation in the Mediterranean region to address the climate emergency.



Taking a closer look BlueSkills

BlueSkills promotes opportunities for marine and maritime careers by developing skills, exchanging knowledge and investing value in research for a more sustainable Mediterranean Sea. It aims to develop new curricula and increase employability in the marine and maritime sectors.

How?



“ The Civil Protection Mechanism offers a framework to work together to prevent, prepare for and respond to major disasters. [It] allowed us to put together our strengths and train together to reach a stronger response in case of disasters. This partnership and solidarity among all UfM Member States should be strengthened further. Today and tomorrow we should use the opportunity to enhance our cooperation, to work towards a new era of Civil Protection across the Mediterranean. ”

Christos Stylianides, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management (2014-2019).

cooperation on drought, desertification and land rehabilitation in the Mediterranean region, within a wider effort to adopt circular economy policies. In particular, the UfM Secretariat contributed to developing National Drought Plans to enhance societal resilience within UfM Southern Mediterranean countries. As a result, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia have already joined the Drought Initiative and have successfully developed a National Drought Plan.

Power in numbers when tackling disasters together

Disasters know no borders and the challenges and risks faced are very often shared. With an increasing number of forest fires, floods, earthquakes, marine pollution, pandemics and other natural catastrophes across the Euro-Mediterranean area, cooperation among UfM Member States is a priority in civil protection. The need to build stronger regional civil protection services and networks will benefit not only countries on a national level but also as a region through resource and knowledge sharing. By establishing a regional Civil Protection Mechanism, UfM Member States can play a key role in coordinating common responses to crises and cooperate on risk assessment, disaster prevention, preparedness and planning when a disaster occurs in a neighbouring country and overwhelms its ability to contain it.

Last year also saw the relaunching of the process of Civil Protection cooperation across the Euro-Mediterranean region. After 10 years of hiatus, the UfM Secretariat and the European Commission convened a meeting of Directors-General of Civil Protection of UfM Member States on 11 February 2019 and pushed forward the preparation of a regional action plan. Attention was focused on stronger cooperation concerning disaster risk management and increased resilience, including inter-institutional collaboration between political, operational and scientific players.

UfM Member States agreed to build on the recommendations of the three working groups set up to address:

1. Citizen engagement in disaster risk management.
2. The role of volunteers in civil protection.
3. Preparation for efficient mutual assistance in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

A technical working group on Preparing for Efficient Mutual Assistance in the Euro-Mediterranean Area convened under the UfM framework on 26 November in Brussels, Belgium. The outcomes of the discussions focused on host nation support, preparedness for responses, risk assessment and situational analysis to support rapid responses in case of natural and man-made

By establishing a regional Civil Protection Mechanism, UfM Member States can play a key role in coordinating common responses to crises.

disasters. The purpose of this working group served to facilitate the identification of priorities for the foreseen Action Plan for efficient mutual assistance in the Mediterranean area.

Exploring drivers of human mobility in the Mediterranean

Human security around the Mediterranean is highly dependent on the overall socio-political situation but it is also impacted by environmental change. Climate change is in fact already proving to be a very active agent capable of destabilising the region. By decreasing available natural and financial resources it has a direct correlation with the exacerbation of regional human conflicts.

The UfM Secretariat puts the people and their demands at the heart of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. This explains the consistent effort to tackle the root causes affecting migration

and the focus on sustainable development as a regional solution to involuntary migration. With this aim in mind, the UfM uses its unique role to encourage coordinated and collaborative approaches for research in the Euro-Mediterranean area on migration and related integration factors. A prime example of this work has been its support of the launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Research Network on Migration (EuroMedMig) in 2018.

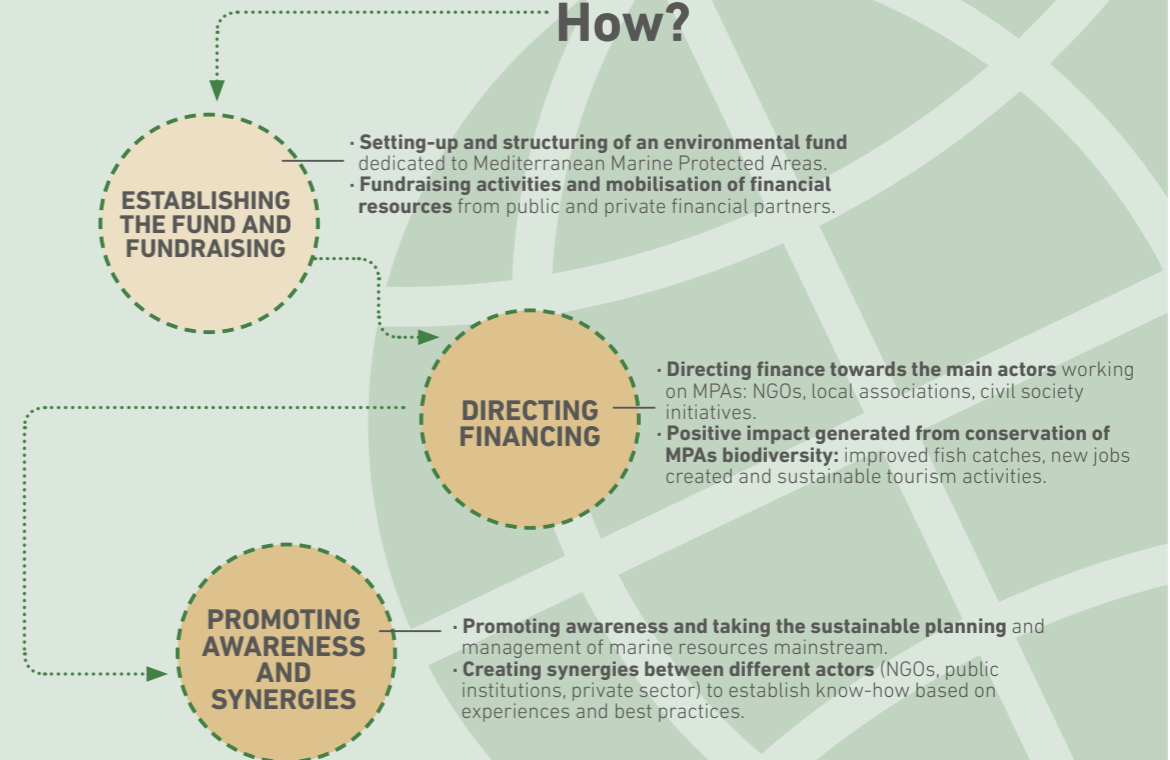
The EuroMedMig and the UfM returned to collaborate once again this year through the organisation of an event that allowed researchers and experts from all over the region to exchange on possible links between climate and environmental change, and the root causes of migration. The outcomes and conclusions of this gathering are now actively feeding the work of the researchers and professors attending, highlighting the value and potential of inter-disciplinary cooperation.



Taking a closer look **MedFund**

The MedFund project aims to contribute to the long-term management of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by strengthening their financial sustainability through the establishment of an environmental financing mechanism.

How?





Rethinking the future of sustainable infrastructure

Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities and communities in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean region has one of the fastest urbanisation rates worldwide. With almost 60% of the total population already living in urban areas, by 2030, nearly 80% of the Southern Mediterranean population will be concentrated on just 10% of the land, predominantly on the coast. Rapid urbanisation calls for a bottom-up approach and region-wide solutions, as well as the mobilisation of all actors, to address an increasing number of demographic, socio-economic, environmental

and technological challenges both at local and regional levels.

It was within this context that UfM Member States launched the UfM Urban Agenda in 2017, alongside a UfM regional platform for dialogue and technical cooperation, to effectively translate the agenda's priorities into concrete actions. Through its two thematic working groups, as well as the UfM Permanent Working Group on Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting on Sustainable Urban Development and in coordination with the UfM-International Financial Institutions (IFIs) Urban Project Committee, the platform has been working on the design of a UfM Strategic Urban Development Action Plan 2040 for sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities and communities in the Mediterranean.

Source: European Commission.

UfM-labelled project, Bouregreg Valley Development

The UfM Permanent Working Group on Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting aims at establishing a results-based, systematic evaluation, monitoring and reporting system for the implementation of the UfM Urban Agenda, in particular, through harmonisation of data in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The UfM Thematic Working Groups on Affordable and Sustainable Housing and on Urban Regeneration were convened in 2019 to frame the Action

energy efficiency remains an important component of sustainable housing.

On urban regeneration, two meetings were held to identify a future course of action regarding the following topics:

- integrated urban planning
- urban upgrading of informal settlements and deprived urban areas
- regeneration of railway sites, historical centres and industrial areas
- the links between city and port

Overall, the following priorities were agreed as the overarching goals that would underpin the Action Plan, in line with the new strategic orientation of UN-Habitat:

- strengthened climate resilience and improved urban environments
- reduced spatial inequality and poverty
- effective urban crisis prevention and response
- enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions
- overall improvement of quality of life

Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue on transport connectivity

Historically an area of exchange and interconnection, the Euro-Mediterranean area holds enormous potential in terms of regional integration. Facilitating the movement of goods and individuals in the

By 2030, nearly 80% of the Southern Mediterranean population will be concentrated on just 10% of the land.

Read more about UfM activities on urban development and transport:



Plan's areas of focus. On housing, Member States explored benchmarking methodologies for rented properties, ways of securing investment in the rental sector, shared experiences concerning public housing policies and engagement with private investors. One outcome was to agree to provide assistance for good quality project design and encourage social impact assessment, while facilitating capacity building for access to finance for projects. The working group also concluded that

The buildings sector represents

40% of energy used in the EU and holds a considerable cost-effective energy saving potential.



Historically an area of exchange and interconnection, the Euro-Mediterranean area holds enormous potential in terms of regional integration.

region could significantly contribute to unleashing this potential, leading to widespread increases in prosperity and socio-economic development.

With the current Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean Region (RTAP) coming to an end in 2020, the UfM Secretariat continued this past year to lay the groundwork for the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, which will take stock of the implementation of the RTAP 2014-2020, and launch a new regional action plan.

Meetings between the UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity and its four Working Groups, on Land, Air and Maritime Transport and Logistics, were held between 11-13 June 2019 in Barcelona, Spain, and on 7-8 November 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. They enabled the launch of preparatory work on deliverables for the next Ministerial Conference, namely the evaluation of the current RTAP, particularly in regards to the implementation at country level of transport activities, and the identification of strategic and evidence-based policy proposals for the next one.

In parallel, the UfM Secretariat continued to support the development of both existing and new transport projects with long-term regional

impact, to help improve transport and logistics connectivity in the region. The UfM-IFIs Transport Finance Committee convened in 2019 to overview the progress made in the implementation of the UfM-labelled regional projects as part of its efforts to develop the project pipeline under the new edition of the Regional Transport Action Plan.

Building bridges: promoting connectivity between the EU and Africa

The UfM Secretariat participated in, and contributed, to the work of the Connectivity Cluster of the Task Force on Transport (TFT), created within the framework of the EU-Africa Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs. The TFT Connectivity Cluster is a platform shared between the European Commission, the African Union Commission, as well as private sector actors, financing institutions and academia, and which counts on high-level engagement and support.

Covering land, maritime and inland waterway transport, the objective of this cluster is to develop policies, strategy and investment recommendations as well as reform proposals and collaborative projects.

Read out more here:



WHAT IS IT?



INTEROPERABILITY

Interoperability is the ability of two, or more, transport systems to operate effectively and efficiently together to fulfil consumers' requirements of a transport system. In other words, it is the ability to make a seamless journey between the origin and destination.



Taking a closer look TransLogMed

Promoted by the Escola Europea – Intermodal Transport, TransLogMed aims to establish an efficient, interoperable, and sustainable transport infrastructure network in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Through that, it strives to foster regional integration in the Mediterranean, enhance professional performance, as well as promote employment and gender equality in the transport and logistics sector.

How?

Training actions supporting the development of door-to-door logistics and the implementation of efficient maritime-related intermodal transport solutions.





Together for the Mediterranean: 2019 in partnerships

The UfM has a clear objective to expand and consolidate its role as a regional platform for dialogue and for cooperation. It engages in strategic partnerships with key stakeholders in the Mediterranean in view of creating a stronger impact in its efforts towards the shared goals of regional stability, integration and development and to better connect regional actions with global goals.



Governments

Strengthening political dialogue amongst the 43 Member States to build peace, security and stability in the region.



International organisations

Guaranteeing the coherence of regional actions and their contribution to the implementation of the SDGs in the Euro-Mediterranean area.



Local and Regional Organisations

“Localising” UfM action through territorial cooperation to bring impact closer to the citizens.



Parliaments

Increasing the democratic legitimacy of UfM actions and ensuring the views of national Parliaments are reflected in it



Financial Partners

Facilitating access to finance for UfM initiatives and projects through a dynamic network of donors and financial institutions



Civil Society

Encouraging a bottom-up perspective to ensure citizens’ opinions are voiced and accounted for in shaping the Mediterranean development agenda.



Think Tanks

Enhancing science-policy interfaces for more effective research-based actions.

“ In 2019, the 6th South EU Summit highlighted the role of the UfM as a key partner to promote dialogue and convert challenges into opportunities in the Mediterranean region.

14 June 2019, Valletta, Malta.

Governments



4th UfM Regional Forum.



15th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 5+5 Dialogue in Valletta.

International organisations



15th Annual Coordination meeting of Regional Organisations.



First official visit of the Arab Maghreb Union.



UfM Secretary General's participation in the UN General Assembly.



UfM participation in the OSCE Mediterranean Conference.



UNDP visit to the UfM.



High Representative for the UNAOC's visit to UfM.

Financial Partners



The European Commission is the UfM's major financial partner, contributing to half of its annual budget.



GIZ financially supports UfM activities on areas such as employment and trade.



EIB and the UfM collaborate through the secondment of EIB experts at the UfM Secretariat and the promotion of regional projects.



Sida financially supports the UfM to enhance regional dialogue on gender equality, water, environment, blue economy, energy and climate action in MENA countries.



The UfM Secretariat signed a partnership agreement with R20 to promote climate finance opportunities.

Parliaments



15th Plenary of PA-UfM.



Visit of a delegation of parliamentarians from the European People's Party group to the UfM.

Civil Society



Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils.



UfM Regional Dialogue Shared views on key issues in the Mediterranean.

Think Tanks



IV MedThink 5+5 Forum.



Seminar with think tanks and research institutions at the UfM.

Local and Regional Organisations



Memorandum of Understanding signature and labelling of ENI CBC Med.



ARLEM's 10th Plenary Session.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADENE

Portuguese Energy Agency
(*Agência para a Energia*)

ARLEM

Euro-Mediterranean
Regional and Local Assembly

B2B

Business to business

BMZ

Federal Ministry for
Economic Cooperation and
Development of Germany
(*Bundesministerium
für wirtschaftliche
Zusammenarbeit und
Entwicklung*)

CEPES

Spanish Business
Confederation of the Social
Economy
(*Confederación Empresarial
Española de la Economía
Social*)

CIHEAM

International Centre for
Advanced Mediterranean
Agronomic Studies

COP

Conference of the Parties

CPO

Reference Centre for
Epidemiology and Cancer
Prevention

EIB

European Investment Bank

EMUNI

Euro-Mediterranean University
of Piran

ENI CBC Med

European Neighbourhood
Instrument Cross-Border
Cooperation Mediterranean Sea
Basin Programme

EU

European Union

EuroMedMig

Euro-Mediterranean Research
Network on Migration

FAO

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
Nations

FLR

Forest and Landscape
Restoration

GIZ

German development agency
(*Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit*)

GWP-Med

Global Water Partnership-
Mediterranean

HOMERe

High Opportunity for
Mediterranean Executive
Recruitment

IFI

International Financial
Institution

MedECC

Mediterranean Experts on
Climate and Environmental
Change

MedNC

Mediterranean New Chance

MENA

Middle East and North Africa

MPA

Marine Protected Area

NDC

Nationally Determined
Contribution

OECD

Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development

OSCE

Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe

PA-UfM

Parliamentary Assembly of the
Union for the Mediterranean

PPP

Public-private partnership

R20

Regions of climate action

RTAP

Regional Transport Action Plan
for the Mediterranean Region

SDG

Sustainable Development Goal

Sida

Swedish International
Development Cooperation
Agency

SME

Small and medium-sized
enterprise

TFT

Task Force on Transport

UEMF

Euro-Mediterranean
University of Fes

UfM

Union for the Mediterranean

UN

United Nations

UNAOC

United Nations Alliance of
Civilizations

UNCCD

United Nations Convention to
Combat Desertification

UNDP

United Nations Development
Programme

UNFCCC

United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate
Change

UNICEF

United Nations Children's
Fund



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



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