



Union for the Mediterranean  
Union pour la Méditerranée  
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# THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN: TACKLING PRESENT CRISES, BUILDING FUTURE RESILIENCE

## 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

In the face of immediate challenges, notably the **post-pandemic socio-economic crisis** and the **war in Ukraine** and its repercussions on the **energy and food security** across the Euro-Mediterranean region, but also the **climate emergency** threatening the wellbeing of both nature and people, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Secretariat has enhanced in 2022 its action on the **5 priorities** retained by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at

the 5<sup>th</sup> UfM Regional Forum/25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barcelona Process, in November 2020.

The UfM Secretariat has notably made **strides** both at the **policy and the operational level**, bringing the organisation closer to its highest mandate: that of **tangibly improving lives on the ground for the citizens**, especially those of vulnerable populations such as **women and youth**.



ENVIRONMENTAL  
AND CLIMATE ACTION



SUSTAINABLE AND  
INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC  
AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL INCLUSIVENESS  
AND EQUALITY



DIGITAL  
TRANSFORMATION



CIVIL PROTECTION



DAY OF THE  
MEDITERRANEAN  
NOVEMBER 28



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# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND...

Protection and empowerment of populations in their entirety and diversity has been a priority for the UfM Secretariat amidst the current regional and global context; with the aim of tackling unemployment rates, gender equality, and inclusion, but also preparing for the jobs of the future and building sustainable resilience in a more integrated Euro-Mediterranean region.

- The **fifth UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour**, held on 17 and 18 May in Marrakech, Morocco, focused on **employment and employability of the most vulnerable**, especially among youth and women. UfM Member States discussed the most pressing labour market challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean region, how to ensure an **inclusive, green, digital and sustainable recovery for all**, and for the most vulnerable. Ministers reiterated their commitment to promote **an economy that works for people through employment and social policies** that respond to youth and gender-specific issues. The Ministers emphasised also the important role of **women's economic empowerment**, with women being active drivers for the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Finally, Ministers encouraged to further develop the use of Communities of Practice, notably on youth employment and monitoring.
- On occasion of the Ministerial on Employment and Labour, the UfM Secretariat signed a Joint Declaration of Intent with the **German Federal Mi-**

**nistry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ)** and the **Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation (MAEUEC)** that will significantly increase the support of Germany and Spain to the UfM and its Secretariat. This support entails the creation of a **“UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment”**, run by the German and Spanish Development Cooperation. Despite the strong ties and dependencies between the Mediterranean neighbours, **economic development** in the region remains **highly fragmented**. With a budget of **€11 million**, the Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment will reinforce the UfM's dialogue platforms in the areas of employment and regional economic integration, provide targeted assistance to individual UfM Member States and contribute to promoting South-South trade and sustainable investments in North Africa. Within this framework, the UfM will set up more editions of the region-wide Grant Scheme on Employment Promotion, with a focus on young people and women.

This Hub will also support and complement the objectives of the regional **Team Europe Initiative on “Job creation through trade and investment”**, **kicked-off by the European Commission** at the Ministerial Meeting as well, and aiming at aligning efforts and better focus trade, investment and entrepreneurship policies towards creating decent jobs.





Focus on the results of the **first edition of the UfM Grant Scheme:**

### Launch in August 2020

to respond to the employment crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic with the financial support of the German Development Cooperation

### 4 region-wide projects

benefitting 18,000 individuals in 7 UfM Member States - Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco and Tunisia

### Fields of

entrepreneurship, women empowerment, sustainable tourism, as well as education and research

**Overall budget of €1.13 million**



- The UfM has published, in March 2022, the results of the **first Report on Gender Equality in the Euro-Mediterranean region**, launched in 2020 upon the unanimous approval of an intergovernmental follow-up mechanism to evaluate the gender gap, monitor progress and provide data for scientific-based policy recommendations to decision-makers.

and Croatia leading the ranking nowadays with only 37.2% and 31.5% of female entrepreneurs, respectively. Despite initial progress, the COVID-19 crisis has had a retroceding effect on the economic situation of women and has clearly demonstrated a need for stronger commitment from the countries to protect women's rights.

### Women's economic empowerment continues to represent one of the regional priorities:

According to the report, Europe and the MENA region are below the 6.2% global average of female entrepreneurs who own established businesses. These regions also have the lowest percentages of nascent women-owned enterprises, representing the largest gender gaps worldwide. Despite strong variations amongst countries, entrepreneurship in the **Euro-Mediterranean region continues to bear a male face**, with countries like Portugal



- The **fifth UfM Ministerial Meeting on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society and the UfM High-level Conference on Women for the Mediterranean** were held against this background, on 26-27 October 2022 in Madrid. Some of the commitments made by the 42 countries **promote the transition to formal employment for female workers**; support and encourage **women’s entrepreneurship**; promote gender equality and **inclusive models of leadership from early-age education** in all fields, including in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (**STEM**); expand **gender-responsive finance** for climate and environmental action reaching women’s organizations, enterprises and cooperatives; and adopt comprehensive laws that **define and criminalize all forms of violence against women and girls**, including cyberviolence.
- To face some of these issues, the **United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)** and the UfM have joined forces with Business Club Africa, to launch **the first MENA Women Business Club**. This initia-

**successful models and best practices of women-led businesses.**

- In view of empowering its most vulnerable populations, the UfM Secretariat supported, in collaboration with the Anna Lindh Foundation, the **advocacy work of over 200 young people from twenty countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region**, namely the white paper **“Plaidoyer Méditerranée 2030”**, a common statement calling for a more sustainable, prosperous and integrated Mediterranean. The UfM Secretariat has worked throughout the year to help the young people **operationalizing the proposals and innovative ideas** they put forward in their advocacy paper, and including them in its work and action. One of the first outcomes realized by the UfM is the opportunity given to two representatives of this exercise to make a **presentation to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at the 7<sup>th</sup> UfM Regional Forum**, responding directly to their aspiration to **address policymakers** from the region formulated in the Plaidoyer.
- Finally, the UfM Secretariat has launched in 2022 works in a new area of action, to fully implement its mandate: that of **inclusion**. Over 1 in 7 persons are experiencing some form of disability globally, and they face many barriers in some key aspects of society, **even more so in the context of the current crises**. In light of these facts, the Secretariat held the **1st Conference on Disability and Social Inclusion in the Euro-Mediterranean Region**, in collaboration with ONCE, to explore the **limitations that people with disabilities face** to access employment, the importance of a gender perspective in inclusion-related agendas and recovery programmes, and the role of accessible tourism.

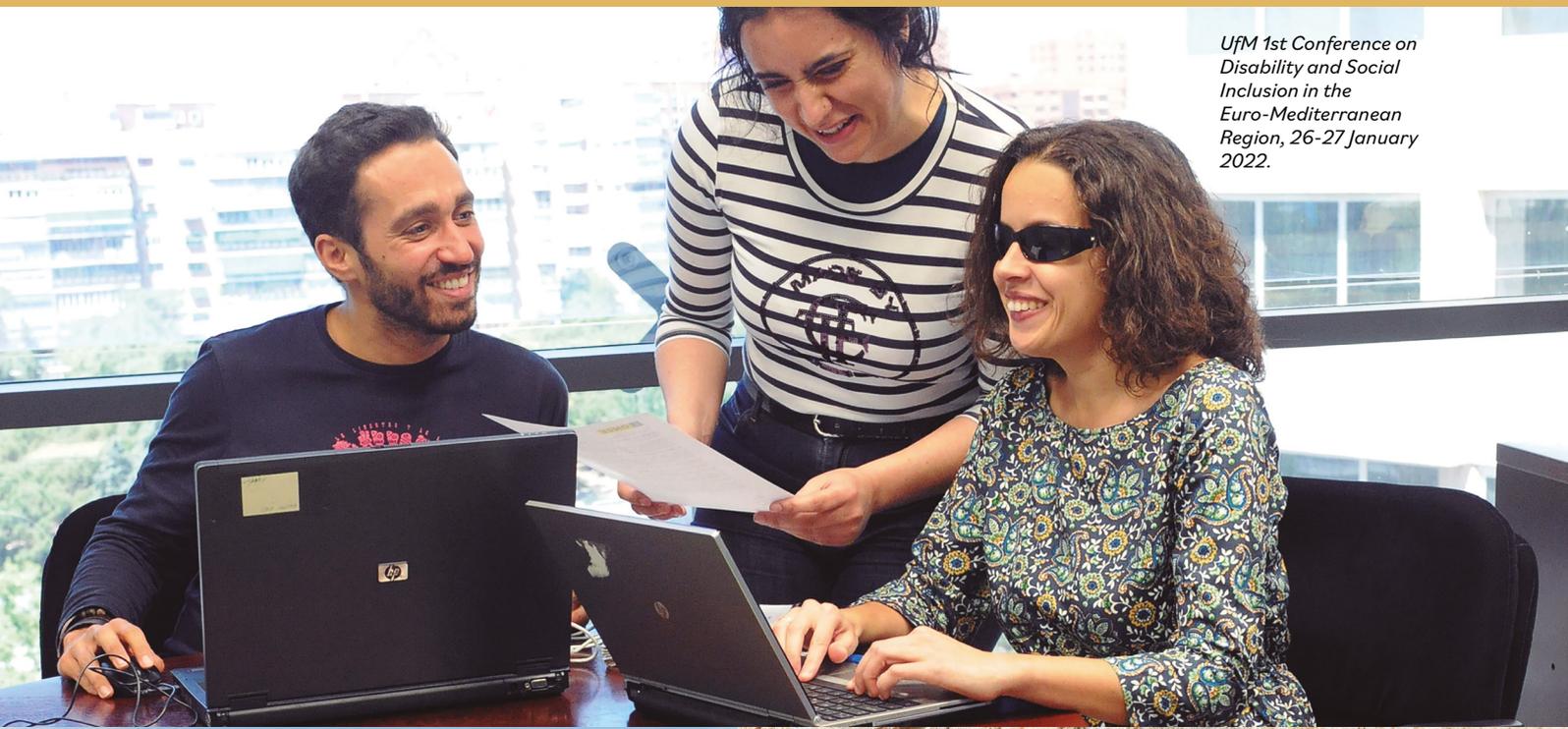


tive involves more than 130 women entrepreneurs and intends to create better networking opportunities and **support their businesses to scale-up** in the region.

- Under the title “Gender-smart financing to **unlock Women’s entrepreneurial potential** in the MENA region”, the **Women Business Forum 2022** sought to explore ways to empower women as entrepreneurs, traders, workers, and professionals, as well as identify financial inequalities that remain gender-based. The event, organized in July 2022, looked also into

Discover its outcomes:





# ...BUILDING RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

In light of the climate emergency faced throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region, and the need to further build resilience and sustainable development to protect both the environment and the people, the UfM has built up its activities to promote existing and potential solutions to tackle the current challenges and prepare for a better future.

- The **first UfM Ministerial Conference on Research and Innovation (R&I)** was held in June 2022 to promote international cooperation on science and knowledge in the region. Looking ahead to the ongoing and future challenges, ministers adopted a ministerial declaration that paves the way for further **strengthening scientific cooperation**, fostering **linkages on research, innovation and skills** as well as supporting capacity building, coordination and joint actions, including on sustainable development and employability. Ministers acknowledged three new R&I roadmaps on **climate change, renewable energies, and health**, that seek to exploit the potential of research and innovation to increase the resilience of the Euro-Mediterranean region against **environmental, food security and socioeconomic challenges**, as well as to promote **science diplomacy**.

- The UfM, in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Center for advanced Mediterranean agronomic studies (CIHEAM), enhanced their cooperation in 2022 to continue promoting **regional dialogue and cooperation on food systems transformation** in the Mediterranean through a multi-stakeholder initiative: the **Sustainable Food Systems in the Mediterranean (SFS-MED) Platform**. This initiative aims to foster the **sense of community** needed to engage countries and stakeholders

across the Mediterranean, including post-Summit efforts, offering a forum for dialogue and multi-stakeholder exchange, and promoting flagship projects, investments and regional cooperation on data sharing, science diplomacy and innovation.

- The UfM Secretariat helped kick-off in 2022 the new project **“Plastic Busters CAP: Fostering knowledge transfer to tackle marine litter in the Mediterranean”**: The main expected results of the project are the development of hands-on training activities on **marine litter monitoring and assessment and mitigation measures**, in 4 pilot campaigns, and the creation of a **coastal cities network for a litter-free Mediterranean**, with the aim of becoming an instrument to improve **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)** and resulting in better local development planning.

Marine litter, the vast majority of which is made of plastics, is globally acknowledged as a major environmental and societal challenge of our time. The Mediterranean is one of the most affected seas by marine litter with more than 130 marine species are affected by debris originating primarily from shoreline activities.

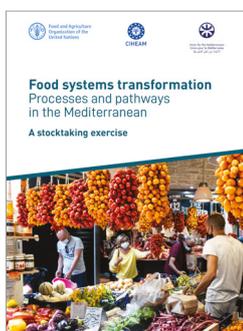
**Countries: Greece, Italy, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Spain, and Tunisia**

**Over the next 2 years**

**Over €1 Million**

**Co-funded by the European Union under the ENI CBC Med programme, with the support of SDSN MED (Sustainable Development Solutions Network Mediterranean) and led by the University of Siena**

*As part of this effort, a publication was launched to take stock of common challenges, priorities, and opportunities specific to the Mediterranean context:*





Activity of the Plastic Busters project.

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- For the first time in the Conference of the Parties' (COP) history, the 27<sup>th</sup> edition hosted a **Mediterranean Pavilion**. The initiative was conceived by the UfM Secretariat to **highlight** both the **urgent challenges** the Mediterranean is currently facing, and the **innovative solutions** already being developed, **raising awareness on a region overlooked in the climate negotiations**.

Located in the COP27 Blue zone, the Mediterranean Pavilion hosted more than **60 events** and working meetings and provided an exceptional opportunity for **the region to talk and act as one**, bridging the voices of public and private, scientific and academic, technical, policymaking, civil society, finance, and business actors. In an innovative approach, the Mediterranean Pavilion had the independent network of Mediterranean Experts on Environmental and Cli-

mate Change (MedECC) as a scientific council advising its activities, further enhancing the science-policy nexus.

**Some of the highlights of the Mediterranean Pavilion at COP27:**

- Creation of the **Blue Mediterranean Partnership**, with EIB and EBRD, to support the development of a sustainable blue economy in the European Union's Southern Neighbourhood countries in the Mediterranean region. The Blue Mediterranean partnership intends to create a new financial vehicle, pooling contributions from donors and beneficiary countries in the Southern Neighbourhood, to provide both capital expenditure and technical assistance grants for sustainable blue economy projects, that will **help close an estimated 6 billion euros investment gap in the next 8 years**.

Opening of the Mediterranean Pavilion in the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the Conference of the Parties' (COP).





Launch of International Drought Resilience Alliance.

- Launch of the **1 billion \$USD PAMEX 2030 Local Finance Investment Facility (PLIFF)**, with France, contribute to sanitation and waste management, electrification of ports, bioenergy for maritime transport, protection and re-generation of biodiversity of maritime coasts
- Launch of the **International Drought Resilience Alliance**, with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, which the UfM has observer status to, Spain and the European Commission, among other partners. The Alliance will function as a **collaborative platform** that catalyses political momentum and mobilizes resources for targeted actions to **enhance drought resilience in countries, cities, and communities.**
- Signature of the **“Sustainable Electricity Trade Roadmap”** by Morocco France, Germany, Portugal and Spain, with the support of the UfM. The initiative aims to facilitate the ‘mutually beneficial’ **exchanges of renewable electricity** between Morocco and the four EU countries, recognizing the benefits of **regional electricity market integration.**
- **Expansion of the Programme for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (PEEB-MED)**, with a budget of **460M euros**. PEEB Med will benefit **14 million people** and **help avoid 1M CO2 tonnes of equivalent over 50 years.** COP27 marked a new scaled up phase for the programme, which was launched at

COP22 in 2016, in Marrakech, with an extension to 7 additional Mediterranean countries.

Moreover, several key partners from the region, ranging from **Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation**, the **European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecast (ECMWF)**, the **German Development Agency (GIZ)**, **PRIMA to Plan Bleu, MedECC, EMEA** and **ALF** held side-events focused on the thematics of each COP27 day, among others finance, gender, science, cultural heritage or health. Innovative workshops applied **participatory methods, real-life examples and data-driven applications** to showcase the real impacts of climate change throughout the region.

- Building on past meetings of the UfM civil protection Director-Generals and their recommendations, as well as with the leadership of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and other key partners, the UfM Secretariat launched its **Regional Dialogue Platform on Civil Protection** in 2022, which will create a space for regional dialogue and consultation. The objectives of this platform will mainly entail developing a **comprehensive regional strategy on civil protection**; and paving the way to a **fourth UfM Directors-General Meeting on Civil Protection**. Support for the launch of the new EU-funded **PPRD Med Programme** will be among the priorities as well.



# A LEAP IN OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES WITH A TRUE COMMITMENT ON THE GROUND

As showcased throughout these selected highlights among the UfM Secretariat's 2022 activities, not only policy dialogue among member states has been promoted but also tangible results on the ground were enhanced. Almost 15 years after the creation of the organisation, the UfM starts seeing a **true development and expansion of its impact.**

This has been recognized by partners throughout the region, as demonstrated by significant mobilization around initiatives such as the Mediterranean Pavilion, but also through financial support.

The **European Union** has continued to substantially strengthen its unwavering commitment to the UfM, notably through the co-funding of the Secretariat.

Moreover, partnerships with the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency** (Sida) and the **German Development Cooperation** have also been renewed in 2022 and expanded:

The cooperation agreement with Sida was renewed for the period 2022-2025

and is moving from an operating grant to a **programmatic approach**, designed from a Results-Based Management (RBM) perspective geared towards presenting the **impact of the Secretariat activities and how the action of the UfM brings changes in the region.** With a total budget equivalent to **€ 4,9 million** over the **4-year period**, cooperation with Sida will aim at enhancing and amplifying regional activities in the MENA countries, in three priority areas, namely **Women Empowerment; Water, Environment and Blue Economy and energy and Climate Action.**

The support from Germany to the UfM entered a **second phase** (2022-2025) and will continue being implemented through a GIZ project based at the UfM Secretariat, under the **“UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment”**. The project's activities will include measures dedicated to **gender, digital solutions and the support to the African Continental Free Trade Area (Af-CFTA)**. This second phase has an increased budget of 10,5 million euros, compared to 2 million for the 2018-2022 period.



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