



Focus on private sector development: UfM and EU hold seminar gathering EU Heads of cooperation and private sector representatives

Over 25 private sector representatives from more than 10 countries participated in the seminar together with the Heads of Cooperation from EU Delegations in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

Barcelona, 14 November 2014. The UfM Secretariat is developing a strategy to strengthen relations with the private sector and promote inclusive development and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean region. In line with this strategy and its role of platform promoting regional cooperation initiatives and fostering dialogue, coordination and synergies, the Secretariat and the European Commission organised a working seminar gathering UfM representatives, European Commission staff from Brussels, Heads of Cooperation from EU Delegations in Southern Mediterranean countries and key representatives from the private sector. The event took place today at UfM headquarters, in Barcelona.

The meeting aimed to provide an opportunity to discuss the main challenges for private sector development in the region, as well as identify possible joint initiatives and innovative projects (including public-private partnerships – PPPs) to facilitate private sector growth. With a particular focus on job creation, participants discussed specific examples on how private sector growth can reduce unemployment and discussed ways to disseminate success stories.

“Investment in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries is of particular concern, where youth unemployment has reached about 30%. Small and medium enterprises are key to creating opportunities in the region; they contribute nearly 35% of national GDPs while generating 80% of jobs. In light of these figures, the private sector has a crucial role to play in achieving a more prosperous and integrated Mediterranean”, said UfM Senior Deputy Secretary General for Business Development, Claudio Cortese.

For his part, Michael Koehler, Director for the Neighbourhood region at the European Commission commented on the event: *“Ensuring that businesses find an enabling environment to invest more, and more responsibly, in Southern Mediterranean countries is of utmost importance to help all sectors of society benefit from the economic opportunities which the private sector can bring.”*

Hakim El Karoui, Partner at Roland Berger Strategy Consultants stated that: *“Southern Mediterranean countries will boost business and private job creation if they improve their regulatory framework and develop internal competition. Their administrations need to accept a comprehensive dialog with the private sector: all these countries have to review their economic model and a strong cooperation between the private sector and governments is highly requested”.*



This seminar was the second of a series of meetings aiming to involve the private sector, international organisations, financial institutions and other cooperation frameworks in the implementation of UfM initiatives and projects towards private sector development. [A first round table session was held on 24 October](#) bringing together over 50 high-level private sector players from the Euro-Mediterranean region. Mr Philippe de Fontaine Vive, European Investment Bank Vice President, and Mr Jaloul Ayed, President of the MED Confederation, participated as keynote speakers on that occasion.

The private sector is an essential partner to foster greater investment opportunities and trade as well as technology and knowledge transfer. Promoting job creation and contributing to the development of the private sector in the Euro-Mediterranean region are priorities for both the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Commission. These private sector development activities are undertaken in coherence and coordination with the European Neighbourhood Policy's objectives.

[Audiovisual Gallery](#)

About the UfM

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental organisation bringing together 43 countries: 28 EU member states and 15 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. It provides a platform for political dialogue, coordination, and regional cooperation.

The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, established in Barcelona in 2010, focuses on implementing regional cooperation projects and initiatives in areas such as energy, environment, education, transport, business development and social affairs. The Secretariat works in close collaboration with governments and with an active network of Euro-Mediterranean partners to assist project promoters throughout the entire project cycle: from technical assistance to project implementation, including financial planning and fundraising.

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