



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



**European Economic and Social Committee**

## **Press Release**

**Brussels, 13 January, 2015**

### **The UfM Secretariat and the European Economic and Social Committee sign agreement to advance regional cooperation in the Mediterranean**

**The UfM Secretariat and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work closer on areas of common concern, including job creation, women's socio-economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, social economy, food security and climate change.**

At a time where cooperation and dialogue is of vital importance, as the recent tragic events in Paris have unfortunately shown, a strategic agreement concerning the reinforcement of the relations between the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was signed today by EESC President Henri Malosse and the Secretary General of the UfM Fathallah Sijilmassi.

*"Both institutions are fully committed to establish closer cooperation with the goal to advance regional integration, promote sustainable socio-economic development, create more inclusive dialogue and strengthen the relations between the two Mediterranean shores", said UfM Secretary General Sijilmassi during the meeting. "It is now time for action", added EESC President Malosse, "the Mediterranean region has been neglected by the EU this whole past decade."*

Through this agreement, both parties agree to regularly meet, exchange information and involve each other in regional projects and activities. This cooperation will also contribute to facilitate the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders -Trade Unions, professional federations, private sector and civil society organisations- in addressing the regional challenges around the Mediterranean Sea. These stakeholders are encouraged to promote and propose regional, sub-regional and transnational projects to be labelled by the UfM with the objective to advance regional cooperation and impact directly on the livelihoods of citizens of the region.

Following the Momentum of the 2013 Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Socio-Economic councils, which took place at the UfM headquarters in Barcelona, both institutions identified priority actions of cooperation such as advancing job creation, particularly for youth (under the UfM initiative [Med4Jobs](#)), reinforcing the role of women (the second edition of the UfM Project Conference on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment is set to take place in May 2015), fostering entrepreneurship, promoting social economy, enhancing food security and fighting climate change.

The EESC and UfM Secretariat share a common understanding of the added value of reinforcing the links between the north and the south of the Mediterranean. Through this partnership, both institutions join forces to develop a more inclusive regional process.

### **More information**

[MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING \(FRENCH\)](#)

[UfM WEBSITE](#)

### **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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