



NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Our region is currently facing complex and serious challenges on an unprecedented scale. Those challenges, but also the many socioeconomic and sustainable development opportunities, highlight more than ever the importance of a collaborative approach in the Mediterranean, addressing the root causes through strengthened regional cooperation.

We are promoting, in partnership with all key actors, projects and initiatives with region wide impact. Our paramount priorities are youth employability and inclusive growth, women's empowerment and sustainable development, as they represent a huge human and economic potential for the whole region.

The UfM Secretariat's team

DID YOU KNOW?

Youth



60%
of the Southern
Mediterranean
population
is < 30 years old



28%
of the youth labour force
is unemployed

SMEs



Create 80%
of jobs in the
Mediterranean region



Account for 35% of the
region's GDP

Ufm currently works on:



13 projects
promoting youth
employability &
inclusive growth



Benefiting
200,000
young people



Involving
>1,000 SMEs

The ministers of the 5+5 Dialogue welcome the key role of the UfM as a unique forum of cooperation gathering all Mediterranean countries

- The Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean attended the 12th Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Western Mediterranean, hosted in Tangier by the Kingdom of Morocco as Co-President of the 5+5 Dialogue.
- 100,000 young people are benefiting directly from 16 of the 33 UfM-labelled projects in a region with almost 30% youth unemployment.



The Foreign Ministers of the “5+5 Dialogue” (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia) met on 8 October, 2015. The meeting focused on a key issue in the region: *“Youth, the gauge of a stable and prosperous Mediterranean”*.

The [final declaration of this Ministerial Conference](#) welcomed the “key role of the UfM as a unique forum of cooperation gathering all Mediterranean countries in a platform for dialogue and partnership”. The Ministers underlined “the importance that the Secretariat of the UfM continues promoting concrete and structuring projects that have positive impacts on the populations, on growth and on

the socio-economic development of the member countries”.

In their final declaration, Ministers recalled that “training, professional integration of young people and job creation are a priority for the projects developed within the framework of the ENP and the UfM”. They praised the start of the activities of the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes, a UfM flagship project.

The UfM has focused its activities on specific projects that have a direct impact on the population and that fall under three key areas: youth employment and inclusive growth, women’s empowerment and sustainable development.

The Secretary General of the UfM underlined youth as the real lever for development in the region: *“young people are often presented as being part of the problem, when in reality; they are the solution and the response to the region’s challenges, especially the socio-economic ones”*.

The Southern Mediterranean countries have approximately 60 million young people aged between 15 and 29 (almost 60% of the population). In 2030, this figure will have increased up to 80 million. Nowadays, **almost 30% of young people are unemployed and 2.8 million enter the labour market each year.**

UfM projects that benefit young people

In the area of Higher education one of the most iconic projects is [the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez](#) (UEMF in its French acronym) that will open its doors to more than 6,000 students from the region, offering a broad spectrum of courses with cross-disciplinary tuition on the languages and cultures of the Mediterranean. [The HOMERe project](#) promotes student mobility through internships within several Mediterranean countries with the aim to address the issue of

skills shortages, which is one of the main obstacles to recruiting young graduates in the region.

In terms of employability, [Med4Jobs](#) aims to share best practices on strengthening competencies and guiding people into jobs, as well as facilitate their replication on a regional scale. One of the Med4Jobs projects, [MedNC](#), aims to boost the employability of young people who have dropped out of school without any qualifications and unemployed graduates. [Maharat MED](#) seeks to support projects relating to employability in the private sector in

Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Morocco by promoting entrepreneurship, education and by involving the project beneficiaries in public life and in services for the community.

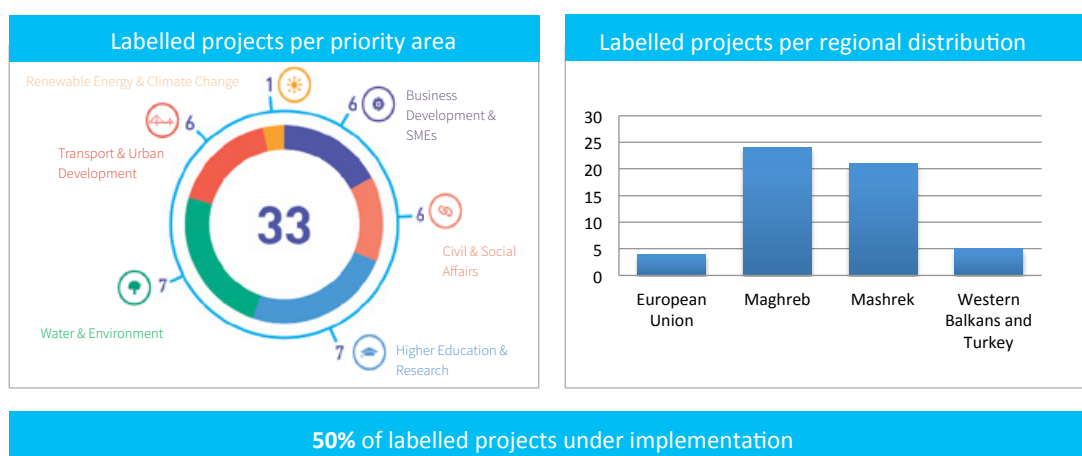
When it comes to **starting up companies**, the UfM is undertaking projects with several regional and international promoters, such as "[Generation Entrepreneur](#)", which aims to close the employment supply and demand gap by providing entrepreneurship and professional skills training to hundreds of young people in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The project is supporting the

growth of more than **300 companies run by women**.

In the area of **women's empowerment**, **10 projects** have been set up to provide training and entrepreneurship skills to **50,000 beneficiaries**. The "[Young Women as Job Creators](#)" project sets out to promote self-starting and a spirit of entrepreneurship among more than 2,000 young female university students in Morocco, Spain and Tunisia. The UfM has also launched other projects in the areas of [citizenship](#), [leadership](#) and [vocational training](#).

The Union for the Mediterranean presents its 2014-2015 report: 33 labelled projects across the region worth more than 5 billion euros

- The organisation presented its annual report to the European Parliament.
- The Secretary General of the UfM underlined the importance of the region's security and socio-economic issues. Challenges relating to illegal immigration, youth unemployment and weak economic growth concern both, the EU and the Southern Mediterranean, because they are shared by all the countries in the region and they require regional responses.



The Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Mr Fathallah Sijilmassi, was invited to Brussels by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament (AFET) to present the [annual report of the General Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean](#). Led by the Chair of the AFET Committee, Mr Elmar Brok, the meeting was attended by several MEPs who sit on the Committee and representatives of different political parties.

During the meeting, Mr Fathallah Sijilmassi presented the main lines of activity of the UfM General Secretariat taken over the course of 2014, highlighting the intensification of high-level meetings, the development of new strategic projects and the strengthening of ties between public and private actors in the Mediterranean countries.

Mr Sijilmassi pointed out that *"the UfM, on the initiative of its co-chairs,*

the EU and Jordan, and in coordination with all the partners in the region, has contributed towards the development of regional cooperation in the Mediterranean by re-starting the political dialogue and the ministerial conferences in response to the major challenges faced by the region. This year was also the time to develop and speed up implementation of new regional projects that are key socio-economic and strategic drivers: 33 regional labelled projects that, together, are worth around 5 billion euros". These projects relate to inclusive growth, youth employability, empowerment of women and promotion of student mobility, as well as integrated urban development and sustainable development.

The UfM also helped to provide structure for regional activities, by strengthening the ties between different actors in the region and organising high-level meetings that brought together more than 3000 representatives from governments,

international organisations, financial institutions, the private sector, civil society, parliamentarians and local councillors.

While pointing out the numerous opportunities that exist, Mr Sijilmassi also stressed that the region must face up to some major security and socio-economic challenges. Illegal immigration, terrorism and extremism, as well as youth unemployment, weak economic growth and climate change are all issues that are shared by all countries in the region and that require urgent collective and regional responses.

"It is urgent that we mobilise all the political, institutional and financial forces to make 2015 a year in which we consolidate and accelerate the dynamics of regional cooperation, so that we can collectively, efficiently and on a long-term basis deal with the numerous challenges faced by the Mediterranean region", he remarked.

The Urban Project Finance Initiative (UPFI) promotes €5 billion investment in more than 20 urban projects in the region

- The projects will directly benefit the development of sustainable urban areas in nine countries on the southern and eastern shores.
- According to the European Investment Bank, urban infrastructure in the region will require an investment of €60 billion in the next 20 years.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) launched in June 2015 the Technical Assistance phase of the Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI), with the support of the European Commission funding (€5 million) and in association with

international financial institutions and donors.

The purpose of UPFI is to select sustainable and innovative urban development projects that offer bottom-up, regionally replicable

solutions to the major urban development challenges the region is facing as a result of the important demographic shifts from rural to urban areas. Phase one of the Initiative involved selecting the projects and defining the Technical Assistance

needed. This second phase will focus on implementing the Technical Assistance programmes with a view to ensuring the projects' bankability by international financial institutions.

At present, the UPFI has identified up to 24 projects in seven countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Globally, these projects account for approximately €5 billion investment, which will be funded by international financial institutions operating in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This means that the total investment promoted under the Initiative (UPFI) is reaching 8% of the regional investment requirements that the European Investment Bank (EIB) has estimated for the next 20 years. According to this financial organisation, the Mediterranean basin will need an investment of €60 billion in urban infrastructure initiatives within the next two decades.

UPFI: FACING REGIONAL URBAN CHALLENGES

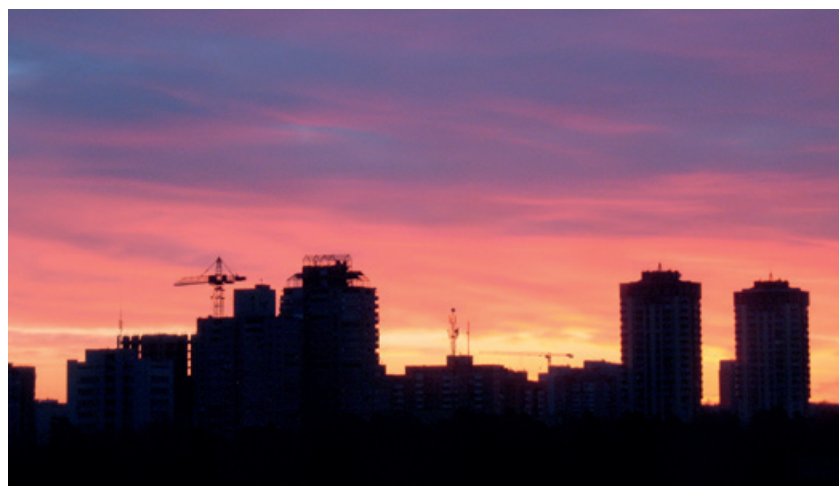
By 2050, the regional population will double (646 million) compared to the population in 2010 (357 million). And in the 2030 horizon, nearly 80% of the Mediterranean population will be

concentrated on 10% of the land — predominantly urban areas along the coast. Thus, the Euro-Mediterranean region is facing important demographic shifts with rapid urbanisation, which present a major regional challenge calling for collaborative solutions, regional approaches and public-private partnerships.

UPFI is one of the pillars of the Euro-Mediterranean Sustainable Urban Development Strategy, as stated in the declaration of the [First Ministerial Conference of the UfM on Sustainable Urban Development](#), held in Strasbourg on 10 November 2011. The initiative was launched during

the [Senior Officials Meeting on 7 April 2014](#), and received the endorsement of the representatives of the 43 UfM member countries.

Under the umbrella of the UfM Secretariat, UPFI is managed by the French Development Agency (AFD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) with the support of the European Commission. The KfW Development Bank, the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDC), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the Finnish Development Cooperation Organisation (Fida) are closely associated, whilst other IFIs and investors have expressed interest.



UFM LABELLED URBAN PROJECTS

Presently, three UPFI projects have already been labelled by the UfM and a new one in the Mashreq may be labelled in the coming months. In addition to the support of the UfM member states, the labelling facilitates access to finance and technical support.

- [Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project](#) (budget €100 million): This project aims to strengthen the integration

of Imbaba, one of the most populated and unplanned urban areas of **Egypt**, with the city of Cairo by providing its 700,000 inhabitants with basic facilities, infrastructure and services.

- [Sfax Taparura Project](#) (budget €403.2 million): Sfax is the second biggest city in **Tunisia** and the most important industrial and commercial centre. After the northern coast depollution following contamination caused by the local phosphate industry, the project foresees the

rehabilitation of its beaches and the development of 420 hectares of land to extend the metropolitan area.

- [Bouregreg Valley Development Project](#) (budget €394 million): With a view to achieving social diversity and sustainable development, this project in **Morocco** will develop new professional and residential neighbourhoods, public amenities and spaces such as a metropolitan hospital and the rehabilitation of Chellah, in addition to other environmental actions.

EBRD joins environmental clean-up of Lake Bizerte with €20 million loan

EBRD to finance rehabilitation of wastewater treatment with €20 million loan.



Lake Bizerte is connected to the Mediterranean Sea by a 7 km channel and located in close proximity to natural resources both on land and in the sea. About 400,000 people live in the adjacent Bizerte region alone. Improvement in the water quality of the lake will also have a positive impact on the development of tourism and aquaculture.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is joining international efforts to clean up Tunisia's Lake Bizerte with a €20 million loan and technical assistance to support the expansion and rehabilitation of the sewerage network of the Bizerte region and the rehabilitation of three wastewater treatment plants located near the lake.

The EBRD's investment is part of an integrated environmental programme aimed at de-polluting Lake Bizerte

and reducing sources of pollution through investments in wastewater, solid waste and industrial effluents. This programme is labelled by the UfM and is part of the Horizon 2020 Initiative, which aims to de-pollute the Mediterranean by the year 2020. The European Investment Bank is providing a €40 million sovereign loan to the programme while the European Union Neighbourhood Investment Facility is contributing a €15 million grant for both capital expenditure and technical cooperation.

The label delivered by the UfM in October 2013 is the recognition of a flagship project that could be an example for other promoters and institutions in the region, especially because of its great potential impact on pollution reduction and because of the exemplary dialogue set in place with local actors. The UfM Secretariat is working closely with the Tunisian Authorities to secure sound environmental management of the lake including a series of stakeholders from public entities to private actors and NGOs.

The MedNC project completes its first phase in Tunisia and further expansion is foreseen in Spain and Egypt

- Within the framework of the MedNC project, the ISCAE (Institut Supérieur de Comptabilité et d'Administration des Entreprises) linked to the University of la Manouba, completes the first edition of the ISCAE New Chance programme. The project will also be developed in Spain through the intermediation of iesMed (Innovation et Economie sociale en Méditerranée).

The Mediterranean New Chance (MedNC) project, promoted by the Office of Economic Cooperation for the Mediterranean and the East (OCEMO)

in partnership with the Second Chance School of Marseille (E2C-Marseille) and the French Development Agency (AFD) completed the first phase. The

project's objective is to build a network of accredited "New Chance" schemes for the occupational and social integration of young people excluded



from the labour market. Targeting both school dropouts and unemployed graduates, the project is specifically tailored to the context and needs of Southern Mediterranean countries (at this stage Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria) and is based on the successful E2C educational model.

Within the framework of the MedNC project, the ISCAE (*Institut Supérieur de Comptabilité et d'Administration des Entreprises*) linked to the University of

la Manouba concluded the first edition of the ISCAE New Chance programme. The course lasted six months and involved a total of 17 teachers, 15 volunteer trainers and 22 students, 5 of which have successfully found a job and 8 have extended their internship period until September. Benefiting from this successful experience, the promoters of the project are now studying the possibility of expanding the programme to other facilities linked both to the University of la

Manouba and also to other Tunisian universities and technical schools.

With a view to enlarging the geographical reach of the project, opportunities for collaboration are being identified between E2C-Marseille and several Spanish labour market integration centres for young people with the support of iesMed, the Mediterranean platform that renders services to social and solidarity economy. At the beginning of July, E2C-Marseille hosted a meeting with CEPS Projectes Socials and the Foundation el Llardar to discuss developing a Spanish E2C network.

The promoters of the project have also established preliminary contacts with Egyptian organisations. Various meetings with institutional representatives, civil society and the private sector (the Alexandrian Business Association and the French Chamber of Commerce in Egypt) have also taken place.

Sciences Po Paris provides Southern Mediterranean young women leaders with high-level training programme

- The UfM project “WOMED - Next generation of leaders” is addressed to 22 Southern Mediterranean young women. It aims to improve their leadership capacities and gender equality skills.
- The project was launched in the presence of Annick Girardin, State Secretary for Development and Francophone Countries; Pascale Boistard, State Secretary for Women's Rights; Élisabeth Guigou, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation; and Delphine Borione, UfM Deputy Secretary General.

Labelled by the 43 member countries of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) on 24 May 2015 in Amman, the three-year-long project, *WoMED “Next generation of leaders”*, aims to strengthen the

personal and professional skills of young women from the Southern Mediterranean countries through an intensive training programme on gender equality issues. The project also seeks to develop a

Euro-Mediterranean network for the promotion of gender equality.

Supported by the French authorities (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development and the



Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights), in partnership with the UfM and promoted by Sciences Po Paris, the programme took place in Paris and Strasbourg between 1–12 June 2015.

A total of 22 young women leaders

from civil society, politics, business, culture and the media were selected from 800 applications on the basis of their experience, knowledge and aspirations to promote gender equality in their respective fields of activity. This first promotion has participated in a series of workshops

and meetings with high-level experts, researchers and leading figures who will share their experiences. The training programme adopts a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to gender issues through economics, law, philosophy, political sciences, sociology, history, psychology, etc.

A total of 66 young women will benefit from the programme until 2016.

The WoMED project contributes to the implementation of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Paris – September 2013) and is part of the UfM Secretariat's global strategy to promote concrete projects for women empowerment and gender equality in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The Euro-Mediterranean region needs intercultural and religious actors in the area to take urgent and practical action to confront regional challenges

- Institutions for intercultural dialogue and cooperation, religious representatives and interfaith organisations are working together to build mutual understanding in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This is the first meeting in a long-term action-oriented process that aims to strengthen organisational capacity and foster cooperation as a means of countering discrimination and intolerance.
- Participants welcomed the meeting as an important opportunity to raise awareness of the substantial contribution that interreligious and intercultural dialogue can make to peace and security in the region.

Intercultural and interreligious dialogue can be a powerful tool for achieving stability and peace, combating intolerance and extremism and upholding the values of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding. That was the premise that brought 80 representatives from institutions for intercultural dialogue and cooperation,

interfaith organisations, religious authorities and prominent public figures together to discuss intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The meeting took place on 22-23 July at the headquarters of the UfM, in Barcelona. The conference was organised at the initiative of the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation,

José Manuel García-Margallo, and in partnership with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) and the European Union (EU).

The meeting falls within the framework of the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona Process and the ongoing consultation for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) review, and responds to a broad consensus on the growing significance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The meeting represented a unique occasion to chart and evaluate existing tools, instruments and institutions for intercultural and interreligious dialogue; position intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a central goal within a renewed multilateral policy approach to the Mediterranean; as well as set out a roadmap involving major stakeholders for a shared approach to intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Following discussions held during the meeting, partner institutions approved a conclusion document where they identified the need to record successful examples of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Actions and programmes were identified for implementation in three different spheres: education, media and youth. Based on this exercise and discussions during the meeting, they committed to establishing a network of institutions and focal points, enhancing mechanism coordination for institutions actively involved in intercultural dialogue and setting out a roadmap for future activities based on a common agenda and calendar of initiatives for the coming years. The roadmap created includes an action plan of activities by the various institutions.

José Manuel García-Margallo, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, said that *"States and the institutions they create must consider ways to improve efficacy, taking into account their complementary methods and synergies in the best possible way. No State or institution can achieve the goals needed, in the time needed, by working in isolation"*. He added that



"enhancing the role of intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a tool for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and mediation will make a difference to institutional performance. It is imperative that we move away from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention".

"Challenges in the region, such as terrorism, extremist trends and the humanitarian tragedy of immigration in the Mediterranean, confirm the need for greater collective action and a more comprehensive approach. Reinforcing intercultural and interreligious dialogue, strengthening regional integration and restoring harmony in civil society are now more important than ever if we are to create a common space for solidarity and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean region", said **Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the UfM**.

In the Northern and Southern Mediterranean, young men and women are often the first victims of unemployment, social instability and extremist trends, but they are also untapped assets in terms of promoting intercultural dialogue. The participants discussed how women and young people can play a more central role in working with institutions to link political cooperation policies with the wider society.

"As the EU and its partners in the South work to recalibrate their relationships, we are calling today for a new approach

to 'culture-centric' relations and a comprehensive intercultural dialogue strategy for the Mediterranean. The Anna Lindh Foundation and its Network of more than 4,000 civil society stakeholders is ready to play its role in ensuring this strategy is built from the ground up to empower the region's young women and men to act as central dialogue actors to counter the extremist narrative and 'clash of ignorance'", said **Elisabeth Guigou, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation**.

Faisal Bin Abdulrahman Bin Muaammar, Secretary General of KAICIID, concluded that, in a bid to raise awareness of the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the institutions had begun to set up an action plan for future activities for the network. These activities are based on a common agenda and calendar of activities to complement the major initiatives planned over the coming years.

"Rooting out radicalisation and violent extremism can be achieved through intercultural and interreligious dialogue, but also through a more practical and proactive approach, such as building trust among different communities and fostering cooperation and long-term transnational partnerships that take into account our common interest for peace and security", said **Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, High Representative of the UNAOC**.

Youth employment, training and job creation in the Euro-Mediterranean region: priorities for EU and Maghreb Ministers for Employment

- Luxembourg holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the second half of 2015. The Luxembourg Presidency hosted an Informal Meeting of EU Ministers for Employment, their Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) counterparts and key stakeholders to tackle youth unemployment, which is a major political, economic and social challenge in the region.
- A Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on Employment is expected to take place in 2016.



Youth unemployment, which has been identified as a major political, economic and social challenge in the Euro-Mediterranean region, was at the heart of discussions at the Informal Meeting of EU Ministers for Employment, their Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) counterparts and stakeholders. The event took place on 16 July and was organised by the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Along with the 20 ministers present, the UfM Secretariat attended the informal meeting, as did the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, the World Bank Group and the International Labour Organization.

In his speech, Claudio Cortese, Senior

Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, said that *"Tackling youth unemployment and economic regional integration are the major challenges in the region. Therefore, concrete actions, tangible results on the ground and projects with a real impact on citizens' wellbeing are paramount."* He moved on to say that, *"For this reason, it is crucial that all the different actors, initiatives and cooperation schemes operating in the region coordinate their actions. We must then make full use of the synergies and complementarities between all stakeholders."*

Discussions at the various sessions focused on social affairs within the governance framework of the EU; policies and programmes aimed at

addressing youth unemployment and job creation in the region; and an initiative, proposed by the Luxembourg Presidency, for youth employment through vocational training in the Maghreb countries.

The meeting was a follow-up to the UfM's mandate for action on employment, employability and decent work in the region. In this context, the Secretariat of the UfM has developed its flagship initiative, [Med4Jobs](#), to help increase employability for young people and women, close the gap between labour demand and supply, and foster a culture of entrepreneurship and private sector development in the region. This is a cross-sector initiative – driven by the need for an integrated regional strategy in terms of job creation – and designed to establish a programme of job creation projects and serve as a platform for employment.

Since the global economic crisis began, youth employment prospects have continued to deteriorate worldwide, in developed, transition and developing countries alike. With an average of just over 28% of the youth labour force currently out of work, the Middle East and North Africa is the region with the highest youth unemployment rate.

FEATURED INTERVIEW

UfM interviews Youssef Barghane

Youssef Barghane is a young Moroccan, beneficiary of the UfM-labelled programme “HOMERe – High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment”.



UfM: In your opinion, what is the added value of a Euro-Mediterranean internship programme like HOMERe?

Youssef Barghane (Y.B.): The added value of HOMERe is that it allows students to acquire the necessary professional skills, methods, know-how (and also the social skills) to work on a team with employees of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

From the point of view of the company, this type of internship provides a real added value in terms of industrialisation and productivity because it allows engineers from different backgrounds, cultures, and who speak different languages, to work in confidence on the same project, whatever the geographic location of their workplace.

Furthermore, this programme allows the cultural distance which may exist among various project employees,

where the team is divided up among several countries, to be reduced.

UfM: How do you think that HOMERe will give you a helping hand in your professional integration on your return to Morocco?

Y.B.: HOMERe's internship will give me, upon completion of the programme, the chance to continue working on the same project, but this time as an employee at CGI Morocco. The major asset of this programme is therefore to assist in my professional integration as soon as I return to Morocco. This internship will also allow me to take on responsibility within CGI Morocco more quickly compared to other Moroccan engineers who have not had the chance to be professionally immersed for 6 months in France.

UfM: What is the added value of your profile for the company?

Y.B.: The project which I was working on during my internship has the special feature of being carried out partly in France and partly in Morocco, in the context of an “extended” team divided between France and Morocco.

The main goal of CGI in the context of my internship is to increase my technical, functional and organisational skills in a specific project and to give me as much experience as possible, so that I can be as independent to continue working on

this very same project when I return to Morocco.

In summary, the real added value for CGI lies in my - from now on - dual Moroccan-French culture that I have strengthened from a professional point of view during my internship at CGI in Toulouse.

“Upon completion of this internship and return to Morocco I will have the chance to continue working in the same company, but this time as an employee”

UfM: Could you remind us of your background?

Y.B.: After finishing my baccalaureate, in science/mathematics, I went to the École Nationale des Sciences Appliquées (ENSA)(National School of Applied Sciences) in Agadir, Morocco, where I studied for two years in the integrated preparatory cycle and for two years in the software engineering cycle.

I then applied to do my last year of training in France, in the 2nd year of a Master in “Offshore Development of Information Systems” at the

Université de Bretagne Occidentale (UBO) (University of Western Brittany), in Brest. This Master is part of the OTI "Offshoring des Technologies de l'Information" ("Offshoring of Information Technology") network, which is now dependent on the "HOMERe – High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment" programme.

The goal of the OTI network, which groups 11 universities, is to offer Moroccan students in the 1st year of a Masters programme, or in the 4th year of an engineering school in Morocco, a mobility programme for a year in France. This mobility programme lasts 13 months, and includes 7 months of training in Brest, followed by a professional experience in a 6-month

end-of-studies internship in France. The idea is then to draw on the skills and experience acquired for the benefit of an entity in Morocco, which is part of the same company as the internship host company in France. The internship allows us to become operational in a project in which we will continue working from the same company when we return to Morocco.

About the programme

The "HOMERe – High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment" project promotes internship mobility between Mediterranean countries and is addressed at high-profile students in their last year of studies before graduation. The objective is to ease their transition from the academic environment to qualified entry-level roles in their own country – in a

region where youth unemployment often increases with the level of education.

HOMERe promotes internship mobility as a tool to combat the skills gap that has been identified as one of the region's main obstacles when it comes to hiring young people. Despite their solid academic backgrounds, graduates often do not have the soft skills that

potential employers are looking for, such as teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, etc. Through its extended network of high-level academic institutions on both sides of the Mediterranean (engineering and management schools as well as universities), HOMERe seeks to attract transnational private companies that operate in the Mediterranean region and are searching for brilliant colleagues.

AGENDA

4-7/11/2015 **Mediterranean Economic Week-Marseille**

11/11/2015 **Youth Employability: Kick-off Meeting: Implementation of UfM-labelled programme Mediterranean New Chance (MedNC) in Spain**

17/11/2015 **Sustainable Development: UfM Ministerial on Blue Economy**

25-27/11/2015 **Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders 2015 - Barcelona**

26/11/2015 **UfM Annual Meeting - Barcelona**

1/12/2015 **Youth employability: Official launch Luxembourg Initiative**

7-8/12/2015 **2015 Paris Climate Conference - COP21**