



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

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE N. 16

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EDITORIAL

2016 has seen decisive steps on the strengthening of the UfM regional cooperation framework on energy and climate action with the launch, at this year's COP22, of major initiatives that help achieve the Paris Agreement targets in our region and the endorsement at the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy of the three UfM energy platforms, which will be playing a central role in taking energy cooperation in the Mediterranean forward. The fight against climate change represents a great opportunity to implement new models of sustainable and inclusive development in the Mediterranean. It is essential to take advantage of this opportunity to boost investment, foster technology transfer, create job opportunities for young people, strengthen the role of women and develop low-carbon production and consumption patterns that contribute to greater integration, sustainable development and stability in the region.

We kindly invite you to find out more about it in this publication.

The UfM Secretariat's team

DID YOU KNOW?

The implementation of renewable energy projects will increase its production by **365%** by **2020** based on national targets.

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UfM Climate Action

Enhancing climate action through regional cooperation in the Mediterranean

12 projects and initiatives which account for more than €2.6 bn



Member States approve two new regional development projects and adopt a substantial Ministerial agenda for 2017

- Senior Officials representing the 43 Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) held their fourth regular meeting in 2016 to discuss the challenges facing the Euro-Mediterranean region and to approve several initiatives to promote regional stability, regional human development and regional integration.
- Senior Officials approved two new regional cooperation projects to promote urban development and economic integration in the region, bringing the total number of UfM-labelled projects to 47, valued at more than €5 billion.



At the fourth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of 2016, the Senior Officials of the 43 Member States met on 14 October 2016 in Brussels, Belgium, to discuss the challenges facing the Euro-Mediterranean region and to adopt several initiatives to address three key, interrelated priorities for the region: stability, human development and integration.

A substantial Ministerial agenda

Senior Officials discussed the preparations for the [UfM Ministerial Conference on Energy](#), which was held on 1 December 2016 in Rome; the [UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development](#), to be held in Cairo; and the [UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society](#).

New labelled projects

During their meeting, the Senior Officials approved **two new projects** promoting urban development and

economic integration. The labelling of these two projects brings the total number of UfM-labelled regional cooperation projects to 47 projects. The new labelled projects target the three interrelated regional priorities of the UfM's work; namely, human development, integration and stability. The two projects are the [Izmir Urban Integrated Waste Management Project](#) and the [Agadir SME Programme – Fostering SME competitiveness and trade in the Agadir Agreement member countries](#).

Izmir Urban Integrated Waste Management Project

Waste management is one of the main environment-related problems in Turkey's cities, including Izmir, and it is also a key strategic issue with particular relevance at the regional level. Izmir's current solid waste landfill facility is nearing full capacity. The new facility will provide high-quality integrated solid waste

management for Izmir at a critical time, and will adopt an exemplary, innovative and environmentally friendly urban infrastructure approach.

The project, promoted by the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) and European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), will bring significant environmental benefits for the city of Izmir by minimising the effects associated with solid waste management and will improve the living standards of the population. The Project is part of the UfM's [Urban Project Finance Initiative \(UPFI\)](#).

Agadir SME Programme – Fostering SME competitiveness and trade in the Agadir Agreement member countries

The objective of this project promoted by the Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) is to reinforce economic integration and contribute to economic development and income generation through SME-led growth. Specifically, the project aims to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs and improve their supply capacity and ability to ensure wider use of the cumulation of origin concept, in view of increasing intra-trade among the four Agadir Agreement member countries and their exports to the EU, and creating synergies and a new economic dynamism among the Agadir Agreement Member States (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan) to strengthen sub-regional economic integration.

UfM to push forward a New Urban Agenda for the Mediterranean Region

The “Union for the Mediterranean – Urban Project Finance Initiative (UPFI)” networking event was a unique opportunity to build on the UPFI success story and discuss the best tools for implementing a “New Urban Agenda for the Mediterranean Region”, ahead of the next UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development, which is to be held in Egypt in Spring 2017.



From left to right: H.E. Mr. Mohamed Salah Arfaoui, Minister of Equipment, Housing and Territorial Development, Tunisia; Amb. Ihab Fahmy, Deputy Secretary General, UfM Secretariat; Mr. Jan Vapaavuori, Vice-President, European Investment Bank.

On the fringes of the [UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development \(Habitat III\)](#), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), in cooperation with the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and European Investment Bank (EIB), organised the “Union for the Mediterranean – Urban Project Finance Initiative (UPFI): Towards a New Urban Agenda for the Mediterranean region” networking event in Quito on 18 October 2016.

The UfM-UPFI networking event brought together **more than 100 participants**, including several ministers from UfM Member States, representatives from international and regional organisations and IFIs, key urban development actors in the Mediterranean and partners involved in UPFI initiative, as well as potential

partners, in order to develop future regional programmes and projects, with a view to addressing the region’s demographic and environmental challenges.

The networking event was a timely opportunity to take stock of UPFI’s success story, which was one of the main deliverables of the [First UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development](#), held in Strasbourg in 2011.

It also raised awareness of the added value of the [UPFI initiative](#) and its related UfM-labelled projects. In addition, it provided an opportunity to discuss the best tools for implementing a “New Urban Agenda for the Mediterranean region”, ahead of the [Second UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development](#), which is to be held in Egypt in Spring

2017, and in consideration of major regional and international milestones in that regard.

UPFI is an innovative initiative funded by the European Commission and jointly managed by the AFD and EIB, under the auspices of the UfM. It is aimed at identifying and selecting flagship sustainable urban development projects likely to be politically endorsed (labelled) by the UfM Member States and financed and implemented in the short term.

Keynote speakers at the UfM-UPFI networking event included, among others, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Salah Arfaoui, Tunisia’s Minister of Equipment, Housing and Territorial Development; H.E. Dr. Ahmed Darwish, Egypt’s Deputy Minister for Housing, Utilities and Urban Development; Mr. Jan Vapaavuori, EIB Vice-President; and Ambassador Ihab Fahmy, UfM Deputy Secretary General.

All agreed that, in view of the increasing magnitude of the common challenges in the Mediterranean, the event was a timely opportunity to develop and strengthen synergies and complementarities amongst key stakeholders and to assess the perspectives for working together in the years to come.

EIB Vice-President Mr. Jan Vapaavuori said that “*the Union for the Mediterranean provides a strong*

political momentum for the visibility of the Urban Project Finance Initiative drawing on its relationships with the Mediterranean countries and by labelling projects to confirm their quality. The EIB is involved in several key projects in the region and is aiming to appraise and finance them in 2017."

UfM Deputy Secretary General Ihab Fahmy said that *"it is high time for common responses to the pressing challenges facing urban areas in the Mediterranean region, following a*

holistic approach that ensures urban sustainability and a greater socio-economic impact on the ground, through effective and concrete action towards a better future for the Mediterranean region."

The Habitat III Conference was an historic opportunity to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanisation and to focus on the implementation of a **New Urban Agenda**. It was the first time in 20 years that the international community,

led by national governments, took collective stock of fast-changing urban trends and the ways in which these patterns are impacting human development, environmental well-being and governance systems worldwide. The conference resulted in an action-oriented outcome document, the New Urban Agenda, which will lay the groundwork for policies and approaches and will guide urbanisation efforts for the next 20 years.

Turning schools into key institutions to fight against violence and promote gender equality

- The Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat and the project's sponsor, Ideaborn, met with various institutional stakeholders and field workers at the Institut Français in Tunis, all of whom are committed to promoting gender equality through education.
- They were able to present the initial results of the project entitled "Forming Responsible Citizens" and share best practices in the efforts that have been implemented to combat violence and promote gender equality values in the region.



"Education lies at the heart of creating a shared memory which consolidates the concept of 'coexistence'. Schools play an essential role in forging a sense of belonging to a community based on the values of equality, citizenship and mutual respect", stated DSG Delphine Borione.

In partnership with **Ideaborn**, the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat organised a regional workshop entitled "School as a key vehicle for the prevention of violence and promotion of gender equality values" at the Institut Français in Tunis on 20 October 2016.

This workshop was organised as part of "**Forming Responsible Citizens**", an UfM-labelled project that has been implemented with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway and the Principality of Monaco's government.

In the presence of the Tunisian Minister for Women, Children and Family Affairs, Her Excellency Neziha Labidi, and various European, Moroccan and Tunisian authorities, the workshop presented results of studies carried out in Morocco and Tunisia based on the role of citizenship education in schools and its impact on promoting a culture of equality and non-violence.

The stakeholders involved also discussed the best strategies and necessary tools for restoring the role of schools as key vehicles for the prevention of juvenile violence and the promotion of the principles and values of gender equality, as well as reinforcing the role of key stakeholders including the student's parents and students themselves.

The workshop presented national strategies for both countries on the subject, as well as the best practices in the Euro-Mediterranean region with the aim of enhancing and improving the project's intervention logic.

The project "Forming Responsible Citizens" was implemented in partnership with the Moroccan Center

for Civic Education (MCCE) and the Tunisian Social Development and Empowerment Center (SDEC), with the aim of contributing towards the reinforcement of civic values in young people and **establishing schools as the key vehicles in the prevention of violence** and the dissemination of citizenship and gender equality values. In order to do this, a curriculum guide

on citizenship education has been designed in cooperation with the relevant public authorities and has been trialled in 20 pilot schools, as well as the development of a training programme for teachers and students.

Foreign Affairs Ministers of the 5+5 Dialogue discuss pressing regional challenges and highlight the positive contribution of UfM activities to the enhancement of regional cooperation

- The Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Fathallah Sijilmassi, participated at the 13th Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 5+5 Dialogue, hosted by France in Marseille on 28 October 2016.
- Ministers discussed current pressing regional challenges and socio-economic cooperation, focusing on youth and employment.
- The final declaration highlights the importance of UfM projects and activities and its role in facilitating the concertation and complementarity between the different Euro-Mediterranean cooperation frameworks and initiatives.



The Foreign Ministers of the "5+5 Dialogue", which includes 5 countries from the Northern shore of the Mediterranean (France, Italy, Malta,

Portugal and Spain) and 5 from the Southern shore (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia) met in Marseille, France. The Meeting was

co-presided by H.E. Mr. Jean-Marc Ayrault, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development of the French Republic and H.E. Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

The Meeting also saw the participation of H.E. Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Algeria, H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic, H.E. Mr. Mohamad Taher Siala, Foreign Minister of the Libyan Government of

National Unity, H.E. Mr. George Vella, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Malta, H.E. Mr. Ould Ahmed Isselkou Izid Bih, Minister of Foreign Affairs and cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, H.E. Mr. Khemaies Jhinaoui, Foreign Minister of Tunisia, H.E. Mr. Ignacio Ybanez, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain and H.E. Ms Margarida Marques, Secretary of State for European Affairs of the Portuguese Republic, Mr. Taieb Baccouche, Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union, Mr. Hatem Atallah, Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation, and Mr. Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The Ministers discussed pressing common challenges, mainly related to migration and economic and social development. Mr. Fathallah Sijilmassi presented the current development of UfM regional cooperation activities addressing the root causes of these challenges notably those focusing

on human development, youth and women empowerment as key drivers for stability and development in the Mediterranean.

The Ministers adopted a Declaration stressing their will to continue strengthening cooperation and complementarity between the different frames and modalities of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: **the 5+5 Dialogue, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the European Union, and the Union of Arab Maghreb.**

They reaffirmed the priority of job creation and training and professional integration of young people in the framework of the renewed European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). They highlighted and welcomed in this regard the UfM labelled projects and initiatives, particularly the integrated regional programme on employment **Med4Jobs** (Mediterranean Initiative

for Jobs), the **Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes**, and **HOMERe** (High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment).

Ministers stressed the **need to place youth at the heart of cooperation** and exchange programmes between the two shores of the Mediterranean in their economic but also political, social and cultural dimensions.

They welcomed the concrete actions developed in favour of the environment in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean such as **the project for the protection of the lake of Bizerte in Tunisia against pollution.**

Ministers also encouraged the pursuance of ongoing work on the **Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean**, underlining the important role of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean in this regard.

EU, UfM, EIB and EBRD launch project for the environmental clean-up of Lake Bizerte and the depollution of the Mediterranean

Youssef Chahed, Head of Government of Tunisia, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, and Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), gathered in Bizerte to launch the “Integrated Programme for the Protection of Lake Bizerte against Pollution”, labelled by the 43 UfM Member States.

With a total budget of more than **€90 million over a 5-year period**, the programme will contribute towards cleaning up Lake Bizerte in northern Tunisia, improving the living conditions

of the surrounding populations and reducing the main sources of pollution impacting the entire Mediterranean Sea.

As emphasised by the **High**

Representative, Ms Federica Mogherini: “*This is a great example of how fighting pollution and protecting the environment can contribute to more sustainable and inclusive*



socio-economic growth, providing new opportunities for young people in the region in sectors such as fishing, ecotourism, agriculture, industry and aquaculture”.

Implemented by the Tunisian Ministry of Local Affairs and the Environment, the programme will **help to rehabilitate the entire area with the aim of encouraging sustainable development**. Furthermore, it will improve the health and quality of life of the inhabitants and facilitate the socio-economic development of the region.

As well as being integrated into the Euro-Mediterranean Horizon 2020 Initiative for a cleaner Mediterranean Sea, the project is one of the first large-scale infrastructure programmes labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to be underway.

UfM Secretary General Fathallah Sijilmassi highlighted the regional impact of the project: *“This flagship initiative represents a success story as regards the cooperative efforts undertaken in the Euro-Mediterranean*

region in order to achieve further integration and stability. Implementing this initiative will directly improve the living conditions of around 500,000 people and its positive effects will be felt by millions of citizens, thanks to the Mediterranean Sea clean-up operation. The project will also create new SMEs and job opportunities for young people, who will contribute towards our region’s socio-economic development and stability”.

The project is an example of how international donors are coordinating and complementing each other’s efforts, as it benefits from the support of two major financial institutions and the European Union, all of which represents a particularly interesting way of mixing loans and donations that **total around €90 million**.

As the project’s main donor, the **European Investment Bank (EIB)** – the European Union’s bank – has supported the programme from the outset and is granting a loan of €40 million. This will mainly be used for the environmental modernisation of the three largest industrial plants

near the lake, and more specifically, will include the treatment of industrial liquid waste, air emissions and solid waste. In addition to the EIB loan, the European Union has agreed to provide a €15 million grant for both capital expenditure and technical assistance thanks to the Neighbourhood Investment Facility.

The **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** is granting a €20 million loan to the National Sanitation Utility (ONAS) and technical assistance worth €2 million, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to support the expansion and rehabilitation of the sewerage network of the Bizerte region as well as the rehabilitation of three wastewater treatment plants near the lake. Aside from a contribution by the Tunisian Government (worth €16 million), the synergy created will thus allow for the development of other complex projects like the Bizerte project.

The Integrated Programme for the Protection of the Lake Bizerte against Pollution is a part of Tunisia’s global development strategy. It has been launched just a few days away from the International Conference in support of economic, social and sustainable development in Tunisia, **Tunisia 2020**, as a confirmation of the international community’s support for Tunisia.

The Union for the Mediterranean will continue to deepen its rich and comprehensive partnership with Tunisia as part of its efforts to strengthening regional cooperation in the Mediterranean.

UfM at COP22: Driving a shared Mediterranean Agenda for climate action

- The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was actively participating in this year's COP22, designated as the "COP of Action", to launch specific regional initiatives and projects aimed at helping achieve the Paris Agreement targets in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- The Union for the Mediterranean and the European Commission launched the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform (REEE) to promote progressive deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in order to foster socio-economic development in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- The Union for the Mediterranean together with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) launched a major Mediterranean project for renewable energy in the private sector. The innovative "SEMED Private Renewable Energy Framework (SPREF)" is a €227.5 million financing framework that will mobilise further investment from other parties of up to €834 million and aims to stimulate the development of private renewable energy markets in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan.



MARRAKECH COP22 | CMP12 | CMA1 UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2016

Keeping the global temperature rise to below 2°C, the target set by the Paris Agreement, calls for coordinated action that cannot rely solely on nationally-determined contributions.

As emphasised by the UfM Secretary General, Fathallah Sijilmassi: "This is a defining moment as we are starting to build towards the low-carbon era. It is indeed a collective effort. States, communities, civil society organisations, businesses, international and intergovernmental organisations: we are all mobilised for the challenges that

face us. The complexity of the climate challenge requires us to not only work at the global level but also to foster support at the appropriate intermediary levels. The Euro-Mediterranean region is undeniably one of these levels".

In line with its mandate to enhance regional cooperation on climate action, the Union for the Mediterranean is deeply engaged in the development of a common, region-wide Mediterranean Climate Agenda that was reflected through various major activities at the COP22:

LAUNCH OF TWO MAJOR MEDITERRANEAN INITIATIVES

[Launch of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency \(REEE\) Platform](#)

Following the launch earlier in 2016 of the UfM Regional Electricity Market Platform and the UfM Gas Platform, the REEE Platform aims to promote gradual implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in order to ensure that all citizens and businesses in the region have access to secure, affordable and reliable modern energy services, as well as to support mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

[Launch of a major Mediterranean Project for renewable energy in the private sector](#)

The UfM and the EBRD launched the UfM-labelled project "SEMED Private Renewable Energy

Framework (SPREF)" which aims to stimulate the development of private renewable energy markets in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan. Through this project, EBRD will provide financing of up to €227.5 million and will mobilise further investment from other parties of up to €834 million. The project will also provide targeted technical cooperation support for the implementation of renewable energy projects in the region aiming to avoid 780,000 tons of CO₂ emissions annually.

Following the launch of the abovementioned innovative framework, a conference for private businesses was organised with the COP22's Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) committee and the Moroccan Agency for Energy Efficiency (AMEE) and the CGEM. The event was aimed at informing businesses about the SPREF mechanism in order to encourage them to use it.

ORGANISATION OF HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCES

[Presentation of the Agenda of Regional Mediterranean Events](#)
In collaboration with other key

Euro-Mediterranean partners, the UfM Secretariat has compiled all the COP22 events related to climate activities in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This provided the opportunity for regional institutions to work in support of sustainable development in the Mediterranean by presenting their activities during the COP22 and showcasing potential synergies.

[High-level panel: Sustainable development and regional stability go hand in hand in the Mediterranean](#)

The transition towards low-carbon development is a tremendous source of opportunity for the region through the creation of new economic activities, and also offers greater resilience in the face of climatic variations. To that end, the UfM Secretariat and the European Commission organised a high-level discussion on these issues.

The event was moderated by Teresa Ribeiro, Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), and featured the EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete, President of the Energy Commission of the

Parliamentary Assembly of UfM Samir Mourad, President of the Scientific Committee of COP22 Nizar Baraka, Director for Sustainability, Technology and Outlooks in the International Energy Agency (IEA) Kamel Ben Naceur, Director of the Spanish International Cooperation Agency, AECID Luis Tejada, Chief of the Energy, Climate and Technology Branch of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Mark Radka, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean Fathallah Sijilmassi, and other high officials, experts and stakeholders from across the region.

PUBLICATION OF A REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

[Key player's perspective on climate change in the Mediterranean](#)

This publication is introduced by Ségolène Royal, President of COP21, Hakima El Haite, Moroccan Minister Delegate in charge of the Environment, Arias Cañete, European Commissioner, and Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, and includes a large number of personalities addressing the transition of the Mediterranean to low-carbon development.

EBRD and UfM private renewable energy framework for North Africa and Middle East

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) launched a joint programme on 14 November 2016, aimed at the development of private renewable energy markets in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

The [SEMED Private Renewable Energy Framework \(SPREF\)](#), a €227.5 million financing framework, was presented during the EU Energy Day at the COP22 international climate conference in Marrakesh.

The programme will help the region

reduce its heavy dependence on imports of hydrocarbons. It aims to mobilise additional investment from other parties, including the Climate Investment Funds' Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), of up to €834 million. Financing will be accompanied by



targeted technical cooperation support for the implementation of renewable energy projects in the region that aim to avoid **780,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions** annually.

SPREF falls under the umbrella of the **UfM Regional Dialogue Platform on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency**, launched with the aim of promoting the deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in energy generation, transmission, distribution and end use.

This platform will foster sustainable socio-economic development, promote job creation, and help ensure that all consumers and industries in the region have access to secure, affordable and

reliable energy services. It will also support energy efficient economies and mitigation and adaptation to climate change in Europe and the Mediterranean region. This initiative follows the launch earlier in 2016 of the **UfM Regional Electricity Market Platform** and the **UfM Gas Platform**. During the launch the **UfM Secretary General, Fathallah Sijilmassi**, commented: *"These two major Mediterranean initiatives illustrate UfM's active efforts to achieve deeper regional cooperation and economic integration incorporating a climate dimension, and based on a methodology that can turn our political mandate into concrete projects through multi-partner dialogue in the region."*

EBRD Director of Power and Energy Utilities, Nandita Parshard, said: *"The*

EBRD has placed a priority on climate finance in the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region, where we have invested in 44 green projects worth over €1 billion since 2012. Green investments account for roughly one-third of the EBRD's total investments in the region, and we hope that will continue to grow."

The first project under the SPREF programme is the **120 MW Khalladi windfarm near Tangiers, in Morocco**, one of the first private renewable energy projects in the country. In order to encourage other private businesses to use the SPREF financing mechanism, a conference was held on Tuesday 15 November 2106 together with COP22's Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) committee, the Moroccan Agency for Energy Efficiency Management (AMEE) and the Confédération Générale des entreprises du Maroc (CGEM).

The event was attended by high-level participants, including the EU Commissioner of Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete; the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of Jordan, Ibrahim Saif; and the Deputy Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy of Egypt, Osama Assran.

UfM Ministers agree on new dynamics for an enhanced regional energy framework

Gathered on 1 December 2016 in Rome for a meeting hosted by Italy's Foreign Affairs Minister Paolo Gentiloni and Economic Development Minister Carlo Calenda, the ministers in charge of energy from the 43 members of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) agreed to **step up regional cooperation on energy** in

order to deliver a secure, affordable and sustainable energy supply, a major factor for stability and shared prosperity in the Mediterranean region.

At the meeting, co-chaired by the European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias

Cañete, and the Jordanian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ibrahim Saif, the ministers agreed that policy dialogue and concrete initiatives will be carried out under the **three UfM energy platforms** covering the priority policy areas, namely the UfM Regional Electricity Market Platform (UfM REM Platform),



the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform (UfM REEE Platform) and the UfM Gas Platform.

The UfM energy platforms are flexible and effective structures which, under the coordination of the UfM Co-Presidency, organise and support systematic dialogue among UfM Members, financial institutions, regional organisations, industrial enterprises and experts.

Commissioner Arias Cañete said: *"Cooperation in the energy sector is a major element of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. A secure, sustainable and competitive energy supply is a priority that Europe shares with its North African and Middle East partners, and is key to underpinning stability and prosperity across the region. To achieve these objectives, large scale investments in energy in the Mediterranean will be necessary. The bulk of the financing will have to come from private investors. We therefore need sound regulatory frameworks to attract this much-needed private capital".*

Minister Ibrahim Saif said: *"Energy security is one of the major common concerns and challenges that are storming our region at the Mediterranean, adding more constraints to the economic and social development. Ministers and*

stakeholders today's gathering stand testimonial that only by strategic cooperation, energy security can be achieved. Based on three pillars of technical cooperation conducted via three platforms, the general guidelines of strategic cooperation shall be identified; however, obstacles that persist facing this cooperation must be strategically addressed. Regulatory reforms can provide part of the solution, but efforts to tackle declining FDIs and lack of national funding schemes for infrastructural projects, is the other side of the coin."

UfM Secretary General Fathallah Sijilmassi said: *"This meeting demonstrates the common will of 43 countries to work together in the areas of energy and climate action. The three platforms should make the regional framework for the development of renewable energies, energy efficiency and the integration of electricity markets and gas in the Mediterranean more coherent and clearer. These initiatives illustrate the UfM's action-driven efforts towards deeper regional cooperation and economic integration based on a specific methodology which turns our political mandate into concrete projects through a multi-partner regional dialogue".*

The UfM Gas Platform aims at establishing a regional structured dialogue allowing the gradual

development of a Euro-Mediterranean gas market to promote security, transparency and predictability of both demand and supply in a manner that correctly and fairly balances the interests of producing and consuming countries and provides the basis for the long-term secure development of the abundant resources in the region.

The UfM Regional Electricity Market Platform aims at the progressive integration of energy systems and energy markets in the UfM region and, in particular, at the enhancement of electricity exchanges and interconnections, in order to achieve a secure, affordable and sustainable electricity supply for the benefit of citizens and economies in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform aims at promoting the progressive deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, in order to foster socio-economic development, contribute to ensuring that all citizens and businesses of the region have access to secure, affordable and reliable modern energy services, and support mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

With the ministers' agreement now in place, the UfM energy platforms are established for structured policy dialogue with a view to identifying concrete partnership actions and following up on their implementation. As such, they will play a central role in taking energy cooperation in the Mediterranean region forward.

FEATURED INTERVIEW

UfM interviews Mariya Gabriel, Vice-President of the EPP

- Following her first election to the European Parliament for Bulgarian party GERB in 2009, Mariya Gabriel was nominated by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, as Chief of the EU Electoral Observation Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2011. On 19 October 2012 she was elected Vice-President of the European People's Party (EPP) Women.
- In 2014, Mariya Gabriel became a Member of the European Parliament for a second mandate. Since then she is Head of the Bulgarian EPP Delegation and Vice-President of the EPP Group responsible for relations with Mediterranean countries.



UfM: What is the UfM's potential role in the region as regards women's empowerment?

Mariya Gabriel (M.G.): I would start by saying that the Union for the Mediterranean has a key role in, on the one hand, promoting women's rights and, on the other, working towards the inclusion of women in all spheres of political, economic and social activity.

Thus, the Union for the Mediterranean is the driving force; it is the platform that allows the different issues to be brought together, the different conditions that rightly enable women to get involved in decision-making, to work towards an inclusive economy and to share good practice, as well as ensuring that the various women's networks get to know each other, thereby contributing to raising awareness of women's potential.

The Union for the Mediterranean is, therefore, a major contributor to development and to raising awareness of women's potential in political, economic and social activity.

UfM: What should be the main priority for action in support of women's empowerment in the region?

M.G.: These days, we all know that we need political stability, economic development and inclusive social activity.

What is detrimental to these three aspects right now is the increasing radicalisation both within our societies and beyond our borders. So nowadays, I think that we should look ahead, look at what role women can play in combating radicalisation, in bringing that positive touch that allows -on a community level before moving to a national level- women to contribute to prevention, instead of dealing with the consequences, and therefore to promote this model of peace and security, without which no economic or social development is possible.

AGENDA

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| 23-24 January 2017 | 2nd UfM Regional Forum. Mediterranean in Action: Youth for Stability and Development. Barcelona, Spain |
| 2 February 2017 | Sustainable Development: Stakeholder conference on the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean. Barcelona, Spain |
| 14-15 March 2017 | Sustainable Development: UfM Environment and Climate Change Working Group Meeting. Barcelona, Spain |
| 15-16 March 2017 | Sustainable Development: 1st UfM Regional Dialogue on Transport Connectivity and 1st UfM-IFIs Transport Project Committee Meeting. Barcelona, Spain |
| 30-31 March 2017 | Youth Employability & Entrepreneurship: 5+5 Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Tunisia |