



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE N. 17

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HIGHLIGHT OF UfM ACTIVITIES

UfM Member States adopt an action-oriented Roadmap for the strengthening of regional cooperation

- The UfM Foreign Affairs Ministers gave strong political impulse to the UfM by endorsing a roadmap for action at the second UfM Regional Forum, centred on the Mediterranean youth's potential for stability and development.
- UfM Secretariat and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) signed a €6.5 million multi annual financial agreement to support UfM core activities in three key areas in favour of a more sustainable and inclusive development in the region.
- Launch of the UfM-labelled project Generation Entrepreneur aiming to promote entrepreneurship and job creation in 7 countries across the Mediterranean.

Under the EU and Jordan UfM Co-presidency, the UfM Member States gave a strong political commitment to strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean by endorsing a roadmap for action at the **second Regional Forum of the UfM**, which took place on 23-24 of January in Barcelona under the theme of **Mediterranean in Action: Youth for Stability and Development**.



UfM Foreign Affairs Ministers under the Co-presidency of Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs underlined the key role played by the UfM as a unique framework for political dialogue and regional cooperation.



Considering the current pressing challenges of the region linked to extremism, radicalisation and irregular migration, **UfM Foreign Affairs Ministers** under the Co-presidency of Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Ayman Al Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jordan, and Alfonso María Dastis Quecedo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, as the host country, underlined the key role played by the UfM as a unique framework for political dialogue and regional cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

"With 47 labelled projects, 10 ministerial meetings, over 200 expert foras gathering 20000 stakeholders, the UfM activities illustrate the strong belief that regional challenges call for regional solutions and that there is no security without development. In this regard, youth is at the heart of the Mediterranean agenda", underlined UfM Secretary General Fathallah Sijilmassi.

Many young beneficiaries of UfM labelled projects attended the Forum highlighting thereby the action driven

nature of the organisation. *"Generating job opportunities and fighting against climate change are among the top priorities for young people. Young people can act as a driving force for sustainable development if we all work together. That's why we have created the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network with the support of the UfM, a place to share ideas and implement tangible action, putting the Mediterranean region at the forefront of positive actors for sustainable development"*, said **Imene Bouchair, young representative for the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network.**

As a clear signal in support of enhanced regional cooperation and strengthened ties, the **UfM Secretariat and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)** signed a **€6.5 million multi-annual financing agreement to implement and strengthen UfM core activities**. The first agreement with a Member country of its kind, the focus will be to work on three key areas for the region: **women's empowerment and gender equality, climate action and energy, as well as water, environment and blue economy.**

The Regional Forum also saw the project **"Generation Entrepreneur"** officially launched under the

framework of the **Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs)**. The project offers a jobs and business creation training programme that **will benefit some 79,000 school and university students** from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia and is expected to create job opportunities, upon successful completion of mentorship, incubation and graduation from the start-up programmes.

Furthermore, several UfM cooperation agreements were signed with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and the Agadir Technical Unit. The Government of Monaco announced a financial contribution for the UfM project **"Forming Responsible Citizens"**. The project, promoted by the Spanish-based organisation Ideaborn, aims to **contribute to the prevention of violence against girls and women** through the implementation of a renewed civic education curriculum in Morocco and Tunisia.

The **UfM Regional Forum** brought together **500 Mediterranean key stakeholders**, including Ministers, official delegations, civil society and private sector representatives, regional stakeholders, International financial institutions and socioeconomic project promoters. The Forum also saw the presence of the President of the Italian Senate in his capacity as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, the Vice-President of the World Bank for the Mena region, the Vice-President of the European Investment Bank as well as other representatives of key institutions working in the euro-Mediterranean region.



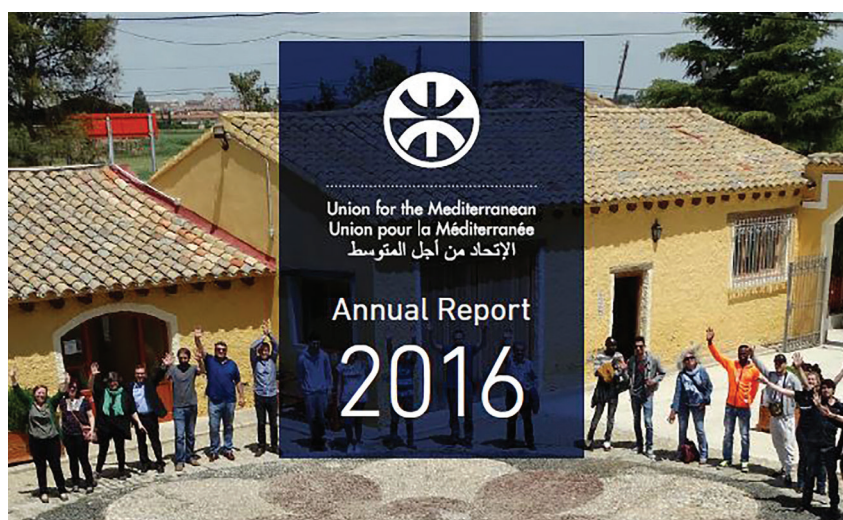
The Regional Forum also saw the project "Generation Entrepreneur" officially launched under the framework of the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs).

Annual Report 2016: Mediterranean in action, a new phase of strengthened regional commitment

- The UfM consolidates an action-driven methodology with a common ambition by creating effective links between the policy dimension and its operational translation into concrete projects and initiatives on the ground.
- 10 new projects were labelled in 2016. The year concludes with a total of 47 region-wide projects with a budget of €5.3 billion. The tangible positive impact from the first wave of projects is already visible involving over 200,000 beneficiaries in the region, mainly women and young people.

This past year has demonstrated once again that the scope and scale of the challenges faced by the Euro-Mediterranean region relating to security, migration, unemployment and climate change require swift collective and concerted responses. The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) works proactively to achieve greater levels of integration and cooperation in the region through a specific methodology that has yielded positive results in terms of political dialogue and the implementation of region-wide initiatives in which young people play a key role.

Under the active leadership of the UfM Co-Presidency – held by the EU and Jordan – and with the active involvement of the **UfM Member States**, 2016 has marked a turning point for the institution at the political and operational levels. The UfM 2016 [Annual Report showcases 10 new labelled projects](#) during the last year aimed at **SME development, job creation, women's empowerment, renewable energy and depollution, infrastructure development and education**. Altogether, the UfM adds [up to 47 projects with a budget of €5.3 billion](#). The tangible positive impact from the first wave of projects is already visible [involving over 200,000 beneficiaries in the region](#), mainly women and young people.



UfM initiatives aim to consolidate human development (26 projects) and promote sustainable development (21 projects) as the main drivers for stability and integration in the region. The first pillar of action includes initiatives linked to job creation, entrepreneurship and gender equality, such as **the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs)**. [More than 50,000 women benefit from women's empowerment programmes](#). In terms of sustainable development, in 2016 the UfM launched emblematic projects such as the depollution of Lake Bizerte, under the **EU's Horizon 2020 Initiative** for a cleaner Mediterranean Sea, and the **SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework (SPREF)**, developed in cooperation with the **EBRD** to encourage the growth of private markets for

renewable energy in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

Reinforcing their commitment to work together for a deepened and effective Euro-Mediterranean regional cooperation agenda, **the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the UfM Member States** endorsed a new action-oriented Roadmap in January 2017 entitled **"The Union for the Mediterranean: an action-driven organisation with a common ambition"**.

Furthermore, three **UfM Ministerial Meetings** were held in the past year on **Regional Cooperation and Planning** (Jordan, June 2016), **Employment and Labour** (Jordan, September 2016) and **Energy** (Italy, December 2016). The UfM Secretariat follows up on decisions taken at the political

level through regional sectoral policy dialogue platforms, thereby following through on Ministerial commitments and implementing concrete initiatives and projects. *Since 2012 these platforms have involved over 20,000 stakeholders from around the Mediterranean* region including parliamentarians and representatives of international organisations, NGOs,

civil society organisations, international financial institutions, development agencies, the private sector, universities and think tanks.

In the framework of the UN 2030 **Agenda for Sustainable Development**, the UfM has intensified its cooperation with all global, regional and sub-regional initiatives and organisations. The UfM attended as UN

observer the **United Nations General Assembly** (September 2016) and the **COP22 Climate Change Conference** in Marrakech (November 2016).

Sweden and the Union for the Mediterranean sign an agreement in support of regional integration and cooperation in the Mediterranean

- The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the UfM Secretariat have signed a €6.5 million multi annual financial agreement to support UfM core activities in favour of a more sustainable and inclusive development in the region.



Sida's Director of the regional unit for the Middle East and North Africa Anders Frankenberg and UfM's Secretary General Fathallah Sijilmassi signed the cooperation agreement in the UfM headquarters.

As a clear signal in support of enhanced regional cooperation and integration in the Mediterranean, the **UfM Secretariat** and the **Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)** have signed a €6.5 million multi-annual financing agreement to deepen and amplify UfM specific cooperation initiatives and core activities promoting regional dialogue. Sida's support will be focused on the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** countries, within the wider frame of the UfM mandate.

*"The Union for the Mediterranean is an action-oriented organisation **designed to build and operationalize common agendas in the region**. The agreement with Sida is a concrete and substantial contribution to UfM activities and overall regional efforts towards the three strategic objectives of human development, stability and integration. Indeed an example of effective partnership", underlined **UfM Secretary General Fathallah Sijilmassi**.*

*"The region's social and economic development is hindered by the low level of economic and regional integration. The main focus of our agreement with the UfM Secretariat is to strengthen integration in the Mediterranean by advancing and amplifying UfM regional dialogue and cooperation initiatives on sectors of particular value for the sharing of best practices, fostering dialogue processes and advancing the regional agenda", said **Anders Frankenberg, Sida's Director of the regional unit for the Middle East and North Africa**.*

The **Swedish Development Agency** supports a number of activities in the region and has successfully cooperated with the UfM and project partners on issues related to governance and financing as well as on capacity building related to water.

The World Alliance for Efficient Solutions and UfM Secretariat team up to promote sustainable development in the region

- The World Alliance for Efficient Solutions and the UfM Secretariat agree to collaborate on joint activities to support the Euro-Mediterranean region transition toward a sustainable and low-carbon development.

Bertrand Piccard, **Chairman of the Solar Impulse Foundation**, and UfM Secretary General Sijilmassi today signed a **Memorandum of Understanding between their organizations**.

The World Alliance for Efficient Solutions (WAES), established by the **Solar Impulse Foundation (SIF)**, aims to advance the cause of clean technologies and offer tangible solutions to the challenges facing society in its efforts to reach the objectives of the **Climate Action Agenda**, as defined at the **COP21** in Paris.

The cooperation between the UfM and the Alliance will enrich the policy dialogue on energy and climate change in the Euro-Mediterranean region. In particular, it will contribute to the three **UfM Energy Platforms** especially that dedicated to **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (UfM REEE)**, which aims to **promote the deployment of renewable energies and energy efficiency measures to access secure, affordable and reliable energy services** and support climate change adaptation and mitigation across the region.

This cooperation will also be an opportunity to mobilise the private sector, in particular companies providing innovative solutions for the energy transition, in support of an ambitious agenda for sustainable development in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Members of the Alliance will be invited to take part in the **UfM Energy Business Forum**, expected to be held in October 2017 in Egypt.

"We know that people, companies, national and local authorities in the Mediterranean have plenty of solutions to offer for a new, cleaner economy. We want to help promote them, by developing connections between those looking for solutions and those offering them," said Bertrand Piccard.

*"We at the Alliance are **looking to bring 1,000 efficient and profitable solutions for the environment** to COP 24 at the end of 2018, to set the world on a path toward sustainability. I believe the Mediterranean region has a great many ideas that can help others across the world work toward this shared objective," he added.*

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the Mediterranean have increased by a factor of four in the last half century. The region has been identified as one of the main climate change hotspots due to water scarcity, concentration of economic activities in coastal areas, and reliance on climate-sensitive agriculture. Further, the average temperature in the region has already risen by 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels, the limit set by the **Paris Agreement**.

"Climate action is a great opportunity to achieve sustainable and inclusive development models in the Mediterranean. It is essential to seize this opportunity to leverage investment, foster technology transfer, create job opportunities for our youth, promote the role of women and develop low carbon production and consumption patterns that contribute to greater integration, sustainable development and stability in our region", said UfM Secretary General Sijilmassi.

The UfM Secretariat works to foster an active participation of the civil society, local and regional authorities, the private sector, financing institutions as well as other key stakeholders in the regional cooperation process for sustainable development and regional integration.

The willingness to put the Euro-Mediterranean region at the forefront of the global sustainable development was also reaffirmed by **UfM Ministers at the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy**, held in Rome in December 2016.



Bertrand Piccard, Chairman of the Solar Impulse Foundation, and UfM Secretary General Sijilmassi signed a Memorandum of Understanding between their organisations.

Women's empowerment is at the core of the UfM's regional strategy

- The UfM Secretariat's projects and initiatives specifically addressing women's empowerment and gender equality benefit more than 50,000 women in 20 Euro-Mediterranean countries. Additionally, a gender mainstreaming policy is always ensured in all UfM projects.
- The region could increase its per capita GDP by 25%, by enabling women's equal participation in public life and the labour market.
- Ministers of UfM Member countries will convene this year at the fourth Ministerial Meeting on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society" to adopt a new Gender Equality agenda for the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The Union for the Mediterranean embraces the celebration of **International Women's Day** with the implementation of projects and initiatives in the framework of its strategy on women's empowerment.

Women's rights and opportunities are still lagging behind those of men in the region. While in the EU countries **women make up more than half of the university population (53.5%), they only represented 29% of members of parliament in 2016**. These figures are even lower in the Southern Mediterranean countries, where they account for 16% of parliamentarians and only 1 in 4 women among the working age population are employed. The European and worldwide average comes to slightly more than 50%. The UfM Secretariat, in coordination with all Member States, continues to develop the regional cooperation and dialogue agenda to advance women's participation in public, social and economic life. This agenda includes the implementation of specific projects with particular impact on women. For example, 2017 will see the implementation of the 2nd phase of a UfM-labelled project promoted by the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** that aims to enhance women's economic inclusion

by supporting women-led investments and businesses in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

In accordance with the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and the **UfM Roadmap for Action endorsed by UfM Foreign Affairs Ministers** on 23 January 2017, the UfM emphasises and supports the instrumental role of women and their decisive contribution to human development, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean region. The UfM implements this contribution at a number of levels:

Over 25 projects with more than 200,000 beneficiaries and a regional impact on human development have been officially launched. **Projects with a specific focus on gender equality are benefiting more than 50,000 women.**

Building a common regional policy agenda through the UfM Ministerial meetings on "**Strengthening the Role of Women in Society**". The **fourth Ministerial Meeting** is expected to take place in the second half of 2017, with the aim of defining a common regional agenda on gender equality for the coming years.

Every year the UfM Secretariat organises a high-level **Conference on Women's Empowerment** to identify, in partnership with key regional actors, specific and strategic solutions to promote the full participation of women in society.

Providing a regional platform for cooperation and dialogue between key stakeholders in the Euro-Mediterranean region to enhance cooperation, partnerships and complementarity



between actors within a multi-stakeholder approach.

Advancing the gender equality agenda through partnerships with Member countries, international financial institutions and multilateral organisations. A **€6.5 million multi-year financial agreement** was

recently signed with the **Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)** to enhance regional cooperation in the Mediterranean. **Women's empowerment and gender equality are at the core of this agreement.**

"Fostering region-wide cooperation initiatives in the field of women's

empowerment is paramount to effectively advance integration, stability and human development in our region. We all have the duty to act collectively and efficiently", said **Delphine Borione, UfM Deputy Secretary General for Social and Civil Affairs.**

UfM Ministers give new impetus to regional cooperation in research and innovation in the Mediterranean

- Research Ministers from the UfM Member States gathered in Malta in order to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean regional cooperation through research and innovation.
- The priority topics addressed were research and innovation's role in addressing the root causes of migration and promoting 'blue' jobs and growth in the Mediterranean as well as the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area – PRIMA.

The Ministerial Conference on "Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation" was held on 4 May 2017 in Valetta under the auspices of the **Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union** with the support of the **European Commission**.

The meeting saw the participation of the Parliamentary Secretary for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport of Malta, Chris Agius; the European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas; the European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella; the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Fathallah Sijilmassi; and the HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan of Jordan. **The Ministers emphasised the key role that research and innovation play in developing an understanding of the root causes of migration.** They encouraged a region-wide coordinated approach to increase researchers' and students'

mobility and establish common platforms for data collection and analysis while making the best possible use of existing tools.

The Ministers called for the identification of innovative solutions to create more opportunities for youth, and thus help to address the current pressing challenges of the Mediterranean region. They welcomed several emblematic regional initiatives, namely:

The **Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean area**

– **PRIMA**. This new integrated initiative will contribute to pooling the know-how and financial resources of the European Union and participating Member States in order to foster ground-breaking solutions for sustainable water provision and management and food production in the Mediterranean region. 19 UfM countries are currently involved in it. The Ministers reiterated their support for the launch of PRIMA's first calls for proposals in early 2018, after the formal adoption of the decision by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.



The Ministers called for the identification of innovative solutions to create more opportunities for youth, and thus help to address the current pressing challenges of the Mediterranean region.

The “**BLUEMED Initiative on research and innovation for blue jobs and growth in the Mediterranean**” and the inclusion of other UfM countries in its implementation, as stated in the **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy**. The BLUEMED initiative offers a shared strategic framework for working towards a healthy, productive and resilient Mediterranean Sea that is better known and valued. It is designed to tap the full potential of the marine and maritime sectors by structuring transnational cooperation to create new ‘blue’ jobs and promote and improve social wellbeing, sustainable prosperity and the environmental status of the region and its surroundings.

“Higher education, research and innovation are at the core of the UfM

Roadmap for Action endorsed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in January 2017,” said UfM Secretary General Sijilmassi. “Knowledge-sharing, scientific cooperation and technology transfer are more instrumental than ever in consolidating human development, job creation, inclusive growth and stability in our region.”

The Ministers welcomed the UfM Secretariat’s involvement in forthcoming initiatives and encouraged the promotion of synergies and complementarities among all countries and stakeholders. The UfM flagship projects in higher education and research include the **EuroMed University of Fes** as a new regional centre contributing to fostering scientific exchange and

cooperation as well as the mobility of students, professors, researchers and entrepreneurs in the region.

The Ministerial Declaration adopted in Valetta builds on the many research and innovation commitments endorsed at recent **UfM Ministerial Conferences** including ones on **Employment and Labour, Environment and Climate Change, Water and the Blue Economy**.

The Declaration also reflects many of the issues addressed in the **Tunis Declaration** signed on 31 March 2017 by **Ministers responsible for Research, Innovation and Higher Education of the 5+5 Dialogue** who adopted a renewed Work Programme for strengthening their cooperation in these sectors in 2017-2018.

UfM Ministers agree on a structured framework for enhanced regional cooperation on Sustainable Urban Development in the Euro-Mediterranean region

- Ministers in charge of housing, municipal affairs and urban development affirmed their commitment to reinforce cooperation and adopted the UfM Urban Agenda, with the aim of promoting and achieving sustainable urban development in the region.
- The Ministerial Conference witnessed the launch of the UfM-labelled “Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project” positively impacting 2 million inhabitants

Gathered in Cairo on the occasion of the **2nd Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development**, the Ministers in charge of housing, municipal affairs and urban development from the 43 UfM Member States agreed on a **UfM Urban Agenda** to step-up regional cooperation on sustainable urban development, with a view to delivering common responses to the pressing challenges facing urban areas, which are key drivers

for stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean region.

At the **Ministerial Conference**, Co-chaired by H.E. Corina Crețu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy and H.E. Walid Almasri, Minister for Municipal Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and hosted by H.E. Moustafa Madbouly, Minister for Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities of the Arab Republic of Egypt, in the presence

of H.E. Fathallah Sijilmassi, UfM Secretary General, the Ministers endorsed the final Declaration and adopted a comprehensive and operational **UfM Urban Agenda for the Euro-Mediterranean region**.

The **UfM Urban Agenda** represents an action-oriented roadmap for the future. It is aimed at addressing the multi-faceted challenges of the region, both at local and regional levels, through an integrated and holistic

approach, as well as at ensuring urban sustainability and resilience with a greater socio-economic impact on the ground, thus improving the quality of life of the peoples of the Mediterranean region.

UfM Ministers agreed to set a structured framework for UfM cooperation efforts in the years to come, through the creation of the **UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development**, its thematic platforms and working groups, as well as through the organization of the **UfM-IFIs (International Financial Institutions) Urban Development Project Committee Meetings**. This will result in enhanced policy dialogue among UfM Member States, financial institutions, regional organisations and stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, and will translate it into concrete projects and initiatives.

The Conference concluded with the launch of the UfM labelled project **"Imbaba Urban Upgrading"** by H.E. Minister Madbouly, which amounts to 100 million Euros. In his intervention, the Minister highlighted the added value of the UfM label and the socio-economic impact of such an integrated urban regeneration project in one of Greater Cairo's most populated areas, through the improvement of the living conditions of its 2 million inhabitants within the Giza Governorate.

This launch also confirms of the good preparatory work done by the **Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI)**. Since 2014 UPFI operates under the umbrella of the UfM Secretariat and is managed by the **French Development Agency (AFD)** and the **European Investment Bank (EIB)** with the financial support of the EU. UPFI currently supports five UfM labelled urban projects of regional importance, including the **"Imbaba Urban Upgrading"**, helping them to access financing.

The **UfM Ministerial Conference** also gathered high-level representatives of key institutional and financial partners, including the **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**, the **European Investment Bank (EIB)**, the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**, the **World Bank** and the **African Development Bank (AfDB)**.

On the margin of the Ministerial Conference and following the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the UfM Secretariat and UN-Habitat in April 2016, both organisations signed a [Letter of Intent to further strengthen their institutional collaboration with the aim of catalysing effective, coordinated support to countries and cities towards the common aim of harnessing urbanisation as a solution to barriers to sustainable development](#).

The Conference was also an opportunity to present the results of a study UN-Habitat conducted for the UfM Secretariat outlining an action plan for the effective implementation of the **UfM Urban Agenda** with a view to achieving the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** in particular SDG 11 **"Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"**, through joint actions, projects and initiatives

for a socially and environmentally sustainable urban development in the Mediterranean region.

Furthermore, a side event was organised by the UfM Secretariat in cooperation with the **European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy and UN-Habitat**. On this occasion, the **European Commission and the URBACT Secretariat** explained the experience of the URBACT programme in the EU and raised its potential replicability in the southern and the eastern Mediterranean countries. URBACT enables cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges and to ensure the implementation of urban projects for a positive socio-economic impact on the ground.

Minister Almasri stated: *"The 2nd Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development serves as an exceptional opportunity for the Mediterranean countries to enhance and develop cooperation at regional and international levels. The aim is to achieve security and stability in the Mediterranean region through enhancing a sustainable urban development and creating projects to develop the*



Ministers in charge of housing, municipal affairs and urban development gathered in Cairo to reinforce cooperation and adopted the UfM Urban Agenda.

local communities and provide job opportunities for young people to empower them to effectively participate in the development of their local communities”.

Commissioner Crețu underlined: “Like the EU, the Union for the Mediterranean has adopted a real urban roadmap and I very much welcome that. I hope you will draw on the experience and best practices of the Urban Agenda for the EU, and make cities close partners. They have a unique insight and their involvement in policy-making on key urban matters, together with local stakeholders from the civil society or the business sphere, will benefit the lives of millions of people around the Mediterranean”.

Minister Madbouly emphasized: “The Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS): Egypt Vision 2030 represents a foothold on the way towards inclusive development. The strategy comprises of ten pillars. One of which is the urban development pillar. This pillar aims at achieving a balanced spatial development management of land and resources to accommodate population and improve the quality of their lives. Subsequently, the national housing strategy was developed. A strategy of integrated sustainable urban development.”

UfM Secretary General Sijilmassi recalled: “Today’s meeting demonstrates the common will of 43 countries and key institutional partners to give a new impetus to the

Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on sustainable urban development. The UfM Secretariat will continue its active contribution to ensuring that political decisions are translated into concrete actions and regional projects, with a view to implementing the UfM Urban Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”.

With the adoption of this Ministerial Declaration, the UfM Secretariat will continue its active contribution to improving sustainable urban development in the region through regional dialogue and the implementation of regional projects in line with sustainable urban development priorities, with a view to strengthening regional cooperation and integration.

UfM Ministers agree on new framework for an enhanced regional cooperation on Water in the Mediterranean

- Ministers in charge of water from the UfM Member States recalled that the Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable to water scarcity and that climate change exacerbates the pressure on existing water resources in the region.
- They agreed to develop a Union for the Mediterranean Water Agenda to help UfM Member States implement sustainable and integrated water management policies and contribute to a sustainable livelihood for the region’s citizens, recalling the importance of the Paris agreement and reaffirming their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development.
- Ministers also called for an improvement of access to finance in order to face the adverse impact of climate change on water.

Gathered in Valetta (Malta) for a meeting hosted by the Maltese Government, the ministers in charge of Water from the 43 members of the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** agreed to develop a **UfM Water Agenda** to further enhance regional cooperation on water. Ministers recalled the unique features of the Mediterranean region, which makes it particularly vulnerable to

water scarcity and climate change. The UfM Water agenda is **expected to lead to a consensual regional water policy framework that offers a means for substantial and measurable positive impact towards sustainable livelihood in the region.** It will also contribute to meet the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** and targets, in particular **SDG 6 on Water**, as well as address the

adverse effects of climate change in the region.

The meeting was co-chaired by the EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, the Jordanian Minister of Water and Irrigation, Hazim El-Naser and the Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean for Water and



Ministers in charge of water from the UfM Member States gathered in Valetta (Malta) to develop a UfM Water Agenda to further enhance regional cooperation on water.

Environment, Miguel García-Herraiz. Ministers agreed that the new policy framework will help UfM Member States to implement sustainable and integrated water resources management in a comprehensive manner, thus promoting progressive integration, synergies and coordination among the water and other inter-linked sectors.

The UfM Water Agenda will be elaborated by the **UfM Water Expert Working Group (WEG)** under the leadership of the UfM Co-Presidency and the support of the UfM Secretariat, and will include:

A Work Programme to provide a suite of recommendations, proposals and initiatives helping UfM members to apply Integrated Water Resources Management approaches and to ensure a better coordination with other sectors in the UfM region.

A Financial Strategy to support the implementation of the **UfM Water Agenda**, promote the progressive deployment of financial resources and facilitate access to the existing financial resources across the UfM region.

Ministers recalled that access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a fundamental human right, key to sustainable social and economic development and has a crucial role in human health. They highlighted the importance of supporting comprehensive plans and projects in UfM countries that are suffering from water scarcity, which in some cases is exacerbated by refugee and migrant influxes as well as other emerging factors.

EU Commissioner Karmenu Vella said: "Water scarcity is a growing problem around the Mediterranean. To improve the situation cooperation between countries is essential. That is why I am so pleased to help the Union for the Mediterranean agree this Declaration on water. It provides a vision for a regional work programme on integrated water resources management. I am confident that improved access to clean, sustainable and efficient use of water will be the result".

Minister Hazim El-Naser said: "Water should be considered as a priority sector to donors considering the expensive development of water unit cost.

Technology and knowledge transfer, innovation and regional solutions to leverage water efficiency. Energy efficiency and renewable energy should continue to be a major policy to reduce cost and save the environment. We should promote Regional cooperation for development of regional water projects to utilize economies of scale (Red dead conveyance project). I am looking forward today to agree on the UfM Water Agenda to further enhance regional cooperation on water".

UfM Deputy Secretary General Miguel García-Herraiz said: "The adoption by the Ministers of today's Declaration demonstrates the common will of UfM countries to work together in this vital area in order to provide citizens across the region with sustainable access to quality water and job opportunities in the sector".

FEATURED INTERVIEW

Interview with Islem Ben Ali, beneficiary of the UfM-labelled project New Chance Mediterranean Network

The MedNC project aims to promote a regional network of accredited orientation, training and professional integration centres to establish a shared and innovative teaching model in order to boost the employability of young people who have dropped out of school before obtaining a degree and unemployed graduates. The network relies on national coordinators who support local centres, in partnership with government bodies, the private sector and civil society.

The New Chance Mediterranean project is part of the UfM's cross-sector initiative, Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs) and is part of the strategic goal of fostering employability for young people and inclusive growth in the region.

UfM: How did you find out about the "New Chance Mediterranean Network" (MedNC)?

Islem Ben Ali (I.B.): I found out about the New Chance Mediterranean Network through the Tunisian New Chance Association, which is part of the network. Tunisia's New Chance Association established a refresher sandwich course programme through a partnership with the educational institution I studied at. Thanks to the New Chance programme, I've been able to improve my skills and abilities in languages, IT, communication, personal development and also

entrepreneurial skills. The sandwich course programme lasted five months with training and an internship, and each learner benefited from personal tutoring and monitoring.

UfM: How did the project help you to improve your professional skills?

I.B.: The programme enabled me to enhance my CV and improve my interpersonal skills, self-confidence and certain technical skills.

UfM: What are the main challenges faced by young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region?

I.B.: Due to this programme, I've been able to enroll on a Master's degree in Environmental Security and Quality, a course with very selective and competitive entrance requirements. So, there were 16 of us students from management roles and IT specialists, three were able to join the Master's course and nine were employed. There has been a great synergy and dynamic among the group, enabling a really fruitful exchange of knowledge and experience. We've built a network between us that we find is really useful.

AGENDA

- 5-6 July 2017** 7th Steering Committee of the Mediterranean New Chance (MedNC) UfM-labelled project and visit to the Fundació El Llinard. Barcelona, Spain.
- 11 July 2017** Kick-off regional process: 3rd World Water Forum. Monaco.
- 13 July 2017** Workshop on "Boosting employability in the Mediterranean region: which role for internships? Lessons learnt and future perspectives of HOMERe UfM labelled project". Barcelona, Spain.
- 18-19 July 2017** Expert Meeting in Barcelona - Role of women and young people in promoting peace and preventing violent extremism in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Barcelona, Spain.
- 27 August 2017** UfM Side Event at the UNDP World Water Week. Stockholm, Sweden.
- 6-7 September 2017** UNFCCC 2017 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance: Mobilizing finance for climate-resilient infrastructures. Rabat, Morocco.
- 13 September 2017** EIB MED Conference: Boosting investments in the Mediterranean Region. Cairo, Egypt.
- 18 September 2017** International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals (GUNI). Barcelona, Spain.