



Reinforcing the Innovation-Employability Nexus in the Mediterranean

Forum on Innovation and Employability: Innovating the Academia-Industry Linkage in the Mediterranean

Location	Remote – Zoom	
Seminar date/times	Thursday 18 November 2021	13:00-16:00 CET
Time commitment	3 hours	
Language	English with interpretation to/from Arabic and French	
Theme/topic	Synergies with the innovation ecosystem in the Mediterranean region in order to inspire follow-up actions	
Outcome	Increase high-level stakeholder's knowledge on interrelation between innovation, employability, and economic growth, and increase awareness of existing policy tools, best practices, instruments, and available opportunities for improving future career prospects (employability & innovation of students and researchers)	
Geography	Entire UfM region	
Participant profile	Focus on top-level members of HEIs & research centres with participation of policy bodies (e.g. research ministry, economics ministry) and other relevant complementary stakeholders	
Participant number	80 participants	
Interactivity/B2B section	View-only participants are able to see view-only participants, with title name and institution, and they will be able to communicate among themselves.	

Description

This forum is part of the UfM initiative 'Reinforcing the innovation-employability nexus in the Mediterranean', bringing together academia, industry, and policymakers to discuss, assess and share experiences and best practices around strengthening innovation and improving the employability of graduates.

Even with substantial differences in political, social, and economic conditions across the Mediterranean region, the 25% youth unemployment and the un- and underemployment of university graduates has been a major challenge with all of the characteristics of a so-called "wicked problem". It is socially complex, has many interdependencies, and is charged with social, economic and considerations that limit the effectiveness of any single course of action. Wicked problems can be best tackled by taking a collaborative approach, engaging all stakeholders to create a common vision and narrative, and develop innovative strategies.

In recent years, the Union for the Mediterranean has therefore doubled its commitment to higher, developing exchange platforms that enhance information flows between academia, industry and policymakers, fostering dialogue and a shared vision. In the quest for increased connectivity between the three spheres to power innovation and employability, higher education institutions and research centres are seen as key drivers of change, ideally suited to 'connect the dots' because they are impartial, and driven by curiosity and long-term perspectives. However, to deliver on those expectations, the three spheres must work together. Together they can become a new motor of innovation and employability.

Agenda

Thursday 18 November 2021 13:00-16:00 CET	
13:00 – 13:10	Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nasser Kamel, Secretary General, UfM</i> • <i>Regine Qualmann, Director of regional division North Africa, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)</i>
High level session: Keynote speakers	
13:10 – 13:20	Keynote speech: Innovation and Employability – The Case of Italy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>H. E. Maria Cristina Messa, Minister of Universities and Research, Italy</i>
13:20 – 13:55	High-level Panel: Innovation, Sustainability and Careers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dia-Eddin Arafah, Secretary General, Higher Council for Science and Technology, Jordan</i> • <i>Nienke Buisman, Head of Unit, Global Approach and International Cooperation in R&I, DG RTD, European Commission</i> • <i>Mokhtar Mahouachi, Head of the Cabinet, MHESR Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Tunisia</i> <p><i>Moderator: Giuseppe Provenzano, Advisor for Research and Innovation, UfM</i></p>
Context of UfM Reinforcing the Innovation-Employability Nexus	
13:55 – 14:15	Education and Industry – A key to recovery and jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Giuseppe Provenzano, Advisor for Research and Innovation, UfM</i> • <i>Nina Volles, Managing Director, Paeradigms</i>
14:15 – 14:20	<i>Coffee Break</i>
Part II: Lessons, ideas, and opportunities	
14:20 – 14:30	Setting the scene: Innovation and careers in the Mediterranean <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Angelo Riccaboni, Chair, PRIMA Foundation</i>
14:30 – 14:50	Mediterranean Lessons and examples of best practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ayhan Kızıltan, President of Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry - ASCAME's Commission on Innovation</i> • <i>Joseph Al Assad, Dean of School of Engineering, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik</i> • <i>Cristian Chiavetta, Researcher, ENEA and Michela Cariglia, General Manager, GCP</i>
14:50 – 15:25	Ideas and needs for way forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mahmoud Abu Hussein, Acting Director, Higher Council for Science and Technology, Jordan</i> • <i>Ahlem Dakhlaoui Chateur, Director, Observatory of Sciences and Technology, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Tunisia (MHESR)</i> • <i>Maria Sobron Bernal, Policy analyst at the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Cities, and Regions, OECD</i> • <i>Gonzalo León - Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) (5+5 dialogue on RIH)</i>
15:25 – 15:35	Project presentation from UfM Regional Training on Innovation and Employability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Patricia Oliveira-Silva (Portugal)</i> • <i>Ahmed Abdlaal (Palestine)</i> • <i>Nilav Atesogullari (Turkey)</i> • <i>Mehmet Koc (Turkey)</i> • <i>Mohammed Sallah (Egypt)</i>

15:35 – 15:55	Opportunities and voices of funders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ingrid Schwaiger, Deputy Head of Unit, DG NEAR, European Commission</i> • <i>Enrique de Villamore Martin, Director, SCP/ RAC (Entrepreneurship and Environment)</i>
15:55 – 16:00	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Itaf ben Abdallah, Senior Advisor for Higher Education and Research, UfM</i>
end	

*Schedule subject to change/adaptation

Speaker profiles



Maria Cristina Messa has been Minister of University and Research since 13 February 2021. She is a Professor of Diagnostic Imaging. She previously served as Rector of the University of Milano-Bicocca (2013-2019) and as a member of the Board of the Conference of Italian University Rectors, with the role of Delegate for research. In July 2013, she was designated as one of the Italian Delegates for Horizon 2020, and she was the MIUR Delegate for Research Infrastructures, including e-infrastructures. She served as Vice President of the National Research Council. Over the course of her career, she has widely published and held lectures on university, research, diagnostic imaging and healthcare, and participated in many national and international committees and working groups. Her expertise includes experimental research in Diagnostic Imaging, Nuclear Medicine, Radiology, with a research focus on neurodegenerative and neoplastic pathologies.



A career diplomat for the Egyptian government, **Nasser Kamel** held the position of Ambassador of Egypt to the United Kingdom from 2014 to 2018. He was also Ambassador to France in the period 2006-2012, during which he took part in the drafting of the Joint Declaration of the 2008 Paris Summit that marked the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean. Furthermore, between 2012 and 2014, he was Assistant Minister for Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs. From 2004 to 2006, he was the Director of Egypt's Public Information Service. Prior to this position he served in various embassies, including Washington (1984-1988), Lisbon (1990-1994), Tunis (1994-1998), Brussels (1999-2001) and Paris (2001-2004).



Regine Qualmann is currently Director of the North Africa Division at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Formerly, she served as Country Director for GIZ in Tanzania and held various managing positions in GIZ's Sector Department. Before joining GIZ, she worked as an adviser to the SADC Secretariat in Botswana and was a Research Fellow at the German Development Institute. Ms. Qualmann is an economist with a master's degree from Tübingen and a PhD from the University of Leipzig. Her professional interests are in Trade, Regional Integration, Private Sector Development and Employment Promotion, and her geographical focus has been on the African continent.



Dia-Eddin Arafah is currently the Secretary-General of the Higher Council for Science and Technology, (HCST) since Feb., 2020. Dr. Arafah is a professor of solid state physics, at the University of Jordan, since he obtained his Ph.D. degree in applied/solid state physics from the University of Sussex, Brighton, Britain - UK, 1984, after his Master's degree in Nuclear Physics, and Bachelor's degree in Physics from the University of Jordan in 1978, and 1976. He served as a Chair of the Board of Directors of the Jordanian Universities Network (JU-Net) and member of the Executive Council of the Association of Arab Universities during the year 2018, and member of the Higher Education Council at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHE), during Mar. 2012 and Sep. 2014. Dr. Arafah held the position, as President of Al al-Bayt University during 2014-2018. Before that, he was Vice President at the University of Jordan for

Planning, Accreditation and Quality and Vice for Scientific Faculties Affairs from 2007 to 2010. He also held the position of Vice President at other Private Universities. He held many academic and administrative positions at the University of Jordan, and was the dean of Scientific Research (2005-2007); Dean of the College of Science for the year 2005, Vice Dean of the College of Science during (2003-2005); Head of the Department of Physics for several years.

Dr. Arafah worked on several research projects supported by the University of Jordan and various international institutions and IAEA. He peer reviewed and evaluated many global, regional and local scientific programs and articles. His main interest is articulating the strategy of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI's) in Jordan and finding proper means of matching, partnering and networking with Jordanian Ecosystem and the globe. Dr. Arafah holds a futuristic vision towards institutionalizing policies and society openness in the age of digitalization and open science; he considers this to be the first building block that can link and merge experiences, networking and partnership through connecting interdisciplinary fields of science. The global outlook for him is to consider the HCST as a progressive think tank of diverse background, which has access to a large community of distinguished and diverse academicians. At all levels, HCST is involved in working, cooperatively on different joint programs with academic institutions and research centers worldwide with a view on capacity building of human resources, knowledge transfer, exchange programs, know-how and expertise, and thus keeping itself abreast with breakthroughs in various fields of science, technology and innovation. Dr. Arafah is one of the main founders of the Jordanian Physicists Association in 1976, and Chairman of the Center of Excellence Committee at the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission. He worked on establishing computer interactive courses in physics and supervised many Masters (34) and PhD (7) thesis works in the Department of Physics at the University of Jordan and has a number of quality research papers published in international specialized and local refereed journals (68).



Nienke Buisman is Head of Unit International Cooperation Policy in the European Commission, Directorate-General Research & Innovation since 2019. She is in charge of developing and implementing the 'Global Approach to Research and Innovation', Europe's strategy for international cooperation, specifically focussing on Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Previous jobs held in DG Research & Innovation: Deputy Head of Unit in charge of establishing public-private partnerships in research and innovation and preparing the delegation of program implementation to Executive Agencies and other Funding Bodies; Policy Advisor to the Deputy Director-General in charge of the climate change and sustainable energy research portfolios as well as financial and human resources management; Senior policy-officer in the international cooperation department, in charge of collaboration between the EU and South Africa and the African Union; and leading a team on knowledge management in the Resources Directorate.

Nienke started her career in the European Commission in 2002, in DG Transport and Energy as the assistant to the Resources Director. Before joining the European Commission, Nienke has been with UNICEF and the Assembly of French Chambers of Commerce in Brussels. Nienke holds a MSc in Development Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). She also holds a double French-British MA in European Public Policy.



Mokhtar Mouhouachi is Tunisian. He is the Chef of Cabinet the Ministry of higher education and scientific research in Tunisia. He is Full professor in the Higher School of Agronomy of Kef, University of Jendouba since 2008. Previously, he was the chancellor of the University of Jandouba during 2017-2020. During 2008-2017, he was Director General the Higher School of Agronomy of Kef, University of Jendouba. He was the vice-Dean of the Higher School of Agronomy of Kef, University of Jendouba during the period 2000-2008. He chaired the department of Zootechnics (1990–1996). He is the director of Laboratory of "Support for the sustainability of agricultural production systems in the Northwest" in Tunisia" since 2014. He has published more than 80 scientific articles in national and international impact factor journals. He coordinated several national and international research projects (Tempus, Erasmus+, PRIMA, DGSU...). He obtained his Doctorate of State in Agronomic sciences and biological engineering from

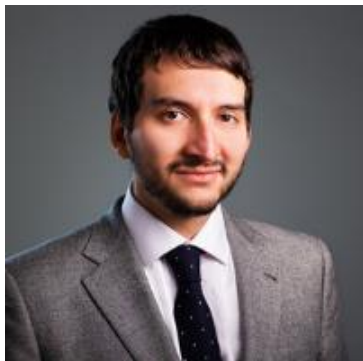
the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences of Gembloux (Belgium) (2001).



Nina Volles is the lead instructor. She is German/Iranian-born and was educated in Germany, France, the UK, and Switzerland. She is the Managing Director of Paeradigms and has over two decades of experience in education, communications, and international cooperation, working in industry, academia, and development sectors. A social scientist by training with a background in higher education management, she has been involved in the design, implementation, monitoring, review, and quality assurance of a wide spectrum of higher education programmes in Africa, Europe, North America, and Asia. In recent years, her interest has shifted to capacity development in international cooperation with a focus on education and training through university-industry-government

partnerships (e.g. industrial doctorates, strategic partnership development, academic policy-making, stakeholder engagement, and change management through development principles). She holds a doctorate

in Higher Education Management, an Executive Master of Science in Communications Management, a Master's in International Relations and a Bachelor's in English and French Literature and Civilisation.



Giuseppe Provenzano is an Advisor for Research and Innovation at the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, where he focuses on topics connected to research, innovation and employability. He has previously published on Blue Economy, the EU external policies towards Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, and on sustainability issues of the Iranian energy policies. He holds a second-level MA in International Public Affairs at LUISS School of Government and a Master in Relations and Institutions of Asia and Africa at L'Orientale University.



Angelo Riccaboni, Italian – University of Siena, is Chairman of PRIMA Foundation, created by 19 Countries and the EC to fund agrifood innovation, located in Barcelona. He also chairs the Santa Chiara Lab, an innovation center at the University of Siena. Former Rector of the University of Siena from (2010-2016), he is a member of the Leadership Council of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Chair of the Regional Centre of the SDSN for the Mediterranean, Co-Chair of the SDSN Europe. A full Professor in Business Administration at the University of Siena, his main research interests relate to businesses' governance and management systems for sustainability and to innovation in agrifood systems. He was Chair of the Association of Italian Rectors Foundation. He is also a Member of the EC sub-group on Mission Area Soil

Health and Food of the 'shadow' strategic configuration of the Horizon Europe Programme Committee. PhD in Business Administration at University of Pisa



Joseph Al Assad, Lebanese, living in Cornet Chawan, Lebanon. Since 2011, he was the Advisor to the Minister of energy and water in Lebanon as well as the Advisor of the Lebanese Center for Energy Conservation (LCEC) for engineering and planning. Since 2012, he was designated as the Vice Chairman of the World Energy Council, Lebanon Committee. In 2019, he was appointed Dean of the School of Engineering at USEK. Between 2011 and 2020, he worked on several Renewable Energy and Energy efficiency Projects among which co-authoring the NEEAP II for Lebanon and authoring the NREAP 3016-2020 for Lebanon. PhD, (electrical, electronics and telecommunications engineering), National Polytechnic Institute of Toulouse, France, 2008. M.S., (Microwave, electromagnetics, and electromagnetism), University of Paul Sabatier, Toulouse – France, 2005. Engineering diploma, Lebanese University, Lebanon, 2004.



Cristian Chiavetta is an Italian Researcher, working for the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA) in Rome. He coordinates Italian and International projects focusing on Sustainable Development and supports companies of the Blue Economy in eco-innovation paths through the implementation of industrial symbiosis instruments and circular economy principles. He is expert on Life Cycle Assessment Methodology (LCA), Efficient Management of resources and Green Public Procurement (GPP) and he is one of the 10 Italian experts on Circular Economy selected by the Italian Ministry for the Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) to represent Italy in the the Summit of Two Shores initiative. He is the coordinator of B-Blue, a project focusing on the Biotechnologies application in the Blue Bioeconomy sectors, financed by the call for strategic projects of the Interreg-Med programme. Cristian

is an Environmental Engineer graduated at the University of Bologna with a PhD on Life Cycle Assessment of renewable energy and secondary materials production.



Michela Cariglia, La Spezia 1976, is an Italian entrepreneur in blue economy sector. All her companies in IMTA aquaculture, restaurants, houseboats and pigmented grains are B Corps. Actually, she is founder and CEO of Ai4skills B Corp for the upskills and reskills trough AI, spin out of Eit Food Innovation. She is the General Manager and Founder of Consorzio Gargano Pesca- Bcorp located in Apulia Region an innovative aquaculture off shore based company. She is specialized in international funds management for biodiversity, blue economy, food and food tech. She applies to all the business unit the PESTLE approach toward the enhance of sustainable development along the entire supply chain. She published several scientific papers for sustainable flows in blue economy,

cross fertilization among supply chains and new frontier of sustainable development. Mum of Iris (5) and Flavio (3). Member of Matria Puglia, for the women empowerment. Lawyer, University of Foggia. MSc. in European and International Project Management - Venice International University. MSc. in International Communication -Scuola Sant'Anna di Pisa.



Mahmoud Abuhussein is currently the acting director of International Cooperation Department at The Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST)/. Mahmoud has a PhD in Agricultural Biotechnology, from the University of Jordan (UJ). He worked as a Technology Transfer Officer at EU funded projects, he also acts as a project director of four EU funded projects. Mahmoud worked at UJ as a research assistant for seven years. Dr. Abuhussein represents Jordan as a co-chair for BLUEMED initiative, UFM R&I platform Bureau, and the NCP of two EU programs



Ahlem Dakhlaoui Chateur is Tunisian. She is actually the director of the observatory of sciences and technology at the Ministry of higher education and scientific research in Tunisia. She is full professor in quantitative methods at the Carthage High Commercial Studies Institute and researcher at the Polytechnic School of Tunisia in the Laboratory of Industrial Economics and Management and associate researcher at CREATE, Laval University, Canada. Previously, she was vice-Dean of the faculty of Economics and Management of Nabeul (2017-April 2021); she has chaired the department of quantitative methods (2003-2008) and director of Ph.D. program in economics (2015-2018). She has 21 years of professional experience in academic research in the fields of Modelling and numerical simulation of public

policies, energy and environmental modelling, statistic, applied econometrics, computational economics and industrial organization. She has published several scientific articles in national and international impact factor journals. She participated in several national and international research projects. She received a Ph. D degree in quantitative economics and econometrics from Toulouse School of Economics (TSE) in 2002. She has recipient several national and international Excellence Scholarship for Graduate Studies (France, Germany and Canada).



Maria Sobron Bernal, Policy Analyst for the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Cities and Regions (CFE), is Spanish and Argentinean and is based at the OECD headquarters in Paris. Her main area of work is innovation for higher education and the connection between Higher Education Institutions and their innovative ecosystems. She has participated and coordinated OECD/EC Studies on this topic in European Countries and now is preparing a Study on Innovative and Entrepreneurial Higher Education Institutions in Latin America, developed in collaboration with the IDB and Santander Universities (forthcoming 2022). Prior to this experience, she has collaborated with other directorates at the OECD focusing on policy reforms in emerging markets. She has also worked in a

French start-up for over a year, gaining valuable insights on the day-to-day challenges that small business face. She holds a Master's degree in International Economic Policy from Sciences Po Paris and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the Torcuato di Tella University in Buenos Aires.



Gonzalo Leon was born in Spain in 1952. He is Senior Policy Adviser in the Spanish Secretary General for Research, the Spanish representative of the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation of the EU Council, Member of the Executive Committee of the Forum for Innovative Enterprises, Vice President of the Foundation of Technologies for Defence and Security and responsible for innovation in the Human Brain Project of the EU. He was former Secretary General of Science Policy, Deputy Director General of International Relations in R&D and Deputy Director of the Office for Science and Technology in the Presidency of the Spanish Government. At the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), he had the positions of Vice

President for Research, Deputy Rector for Innovation Partnerships, and Director of the Centre for Technology Innovation in the UPM. He has worked with the European Commission as President of the Advisory Group of Space Research, President of the Expert Group on Lisbon Strategy for R&D, and Chair and member of several Expert Groups. He holds a PhD on Telematics Engineering at the UPM.



Ingrid Schwaiger is the Deputy Head of Regional Co-operation in the Southern Neighbourhood, DG NEAR (Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) of the European Union. An economist by training, she has worked in the European Commission for more than 20 years, focusing on external relations. She holds a Masters Degree in International Relations as well as on Business Administration. As to her extensive work experience, she has dealt with different economic and political issues, private sector development, investment issues, financial instruments as well as geographic responsibilities in the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Neighbourhood, including in the EU Delegation in Algeria. She is promoting an economy that works for people, combining innovation and employability.






Enrique de Villamore Martin is Spanish and he's leaving in Barcelona. He has been a member of SCP/RAC since 2002. He worked as project manager from that year to 2010 when he was appointed as the centre's Director. Enrique together with other members of the Center jointly led a process of transformation of the Center through which it was finally assigned with the official mandate of promoting sustainable consumption and production in the Mediterranean region, assigned by the countries members of the Convention of Barcelona for the protection of the Environment and the promotion of sustainable development of that region. In the performance of its mandate SCP/RAC has become a reference Center for international cooperation in the support to administrations, entrepreneurs and SMEs in the transition to

green and circular economies. Enrique has a Law degree from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. After obtaining this grade, he has directed his career to sustainability-related issues. He has, among others, a Master in Environmental Law from the Basque Country University."



Itaf Ben Abdallah is a Tunisian diplomat with a juridical formation. Before taking on his role at UfM, as responsible of the Higher Education and Research Division, she was in charge in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia of multilateral files such as WTO, WIPO, FAO. She was also in charge of bilateral relations between Tunisia and several countries and was assigned to Tunisian Embassy in Cairo.

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