

# MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL NASSER KAMEL



The history of the Mediterranean has always been one of resilience and recovery, of overcoming adversities and coming back stronger following each crisis.

The year 2021 proved that the COVID-19 is an ill-curbed pandemic, and yet, since day one, we approached the crisis not with the pessimism of a sceptic, but rather with the maturity and the pragmatism of an organisation with a clear sense of strategic orientation, mobilising our resources, capacities and partners to tackle the ensuing disruptions and capture the looming opportunities for the good of our citizens.

In this spirit, the year 2021 witnessed significant progress in the five priority areas identified by our Member States in November 2020, namely: environmental and climate action, sustainable and inclusive economic and human development, social inclusiveness and equality, digital transformation, and civil protection.

We held three Ministerial Meetings on the blue economy, energy, and environment and climate change where for the first time, the UfM Member States formulated ambitious plans and adopted strong political commitments —despite their differences— to protect and preserve our unique, yet fragile, ecosystem.

We have also launched the first-ever progress report on regional integration in the UfM region; and managed to adopt new roadmaps on research and innovation in the areas of climate change,

health, and renewable energy, among other significant milestones that you can read about in this report.

While advancing on these strategic sectors, we ensured the alignment of our activities to the new EU Agenda for the Mediterranean launched in February 2021, following close consultations between the UfM Secretariat and the European Commission.

Lastly, 2021 saw the launch of the Day of the Mediterranean, on 28 November, a day to celebrate our cooperation and culture, to strengthen ties between our two shores, embrace diversity and deepen our understanding of each other. The outreach and impact of this first edition were remarkable, and we are grateful to all our partners and stakeholders for their engagement in making it a success. From the regional video campaigns, logo projections, and official statements, to the seminars and cultural activities organised: each initiative has further shed light on the great diversity of our common region and its richness.

May 2022 continue bringing us closer together as we co-create value and stand united in the face of global challenges and accelerating disruptions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nasser Kamel'.

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*In memory of Dr. Nabil Al-Sharif, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation and a great friend of the Union for the Mediterranean.*