

Message from the Secretary General Nasser Kamel



Tangibly impacting lives on the ground for the citizen today and working to build a better future.

2022 has been a cumbersome year for the Euro-Mediterranean region: against a backdrop of post-pandemic socio-economic crisis and an increasingly overriding climate emergency, the invasion of Ukraine has further enhanced the region's existing fragility and vulnerability, and brought new challenges to the forefront of regional concerns.

Amidst this context, the UfM has been able to deliver both at the policy and the operational level, making strides to ensure that we **leave no one behind**.

We have guided work towards two ambitious renewed regional strategies, on employment and labour on the one hand and on women empowerment on

the other both focused on **policies for the most vulnerable**.

In this framework, we launched the new UfM Hub for Jobs, Trade and Investment, with a budget of €11 million, to notably help set up more editions of the region-wide UfM Grant Scheme on

Employment Promotion. Aimed at young people and women, this Grant Scheme saw its first results in 2022, benefitting more than 18,000 individuals in 7 UfM Member States through four projects.

Moreover, the UfM has integrated in the last year the protection and inclusion of people with disabilities within its mandate, to truly reach all populations at risk and fully achieve our objectives of **social inclusiveness and equality**.

In 2022, the Union for the Mediterranean has also built up its activities to promote existing and potential solutions to prepare for a better future, in light of the climate emergency faced throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region, and the need

to further **build resilience and sustainable development to protect both the environment and the people**.

In this framework, the first UfM Ministerial Conference on Research and Innovation (R&I) was held to promote cooperation on science and knowledge in the region, notably on climate change, renewable energies, and health. Through these new regional roadmaps, we will seek to increase our shared resilience against the environmental or food security challenges we pressingly experiencing.

All in all, the progress achieved on the ground in 2022 has crystallised in a key milestone: the creation of a **Mediterranean Pavilion** for the first time in the history of climate negotiations, in the framework of the COP27.

The initiative, conceived by the UfM Secretariat, aimed to raise awareness on the Mediterranean, often overlooked in climate negotiations, and provided an exceptional opportunity for the region **to talk and act as one**, bridging the voices of public and private, scientific and academic, technical, policymaking, civil society, finance, and business actors.

This initiative and others have demonstrated how the UfM, 15 years after its creation, has established itself as the multilateral institutional framework for dialogue and cooperation in the Mediterranean, **tangibly impacting lives on the ground for the citizens today and working to build a better future**.

I invite you to go through this publication to discover our action and activities for 2022, in our efforts to make the Mediterranean adapt to adversity and bounce back always stronger.