



European Economic and Social Committee



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

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Economic and Social Committee

The European Economic and Social Committee and the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat,

Preamble

Whereas the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Secretariat established by the Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government in Paris on July 13th 2008, bringing together 43 members states from the North and South of the Mediterranean is a multilateral partnership aiming at increasing the potential for regional integration and cohesion among Euro-Mediterranean countries with a view to enhancing multilateral relations, fostering co-ownership of the process, set governance on the basis of equal footing and translate it into concrete projects, more visible to the citizens, by:

- identifying, processing, promoting and coordinating regional, sub-regional and transnational UfM projects that enhance and strengthen cooperation and impact directly on the livelihoods of citizens of the Euro-Mediterranean region;
- promoting initiatives aimed at improving socio-economic development, regional integration, sustainable development and the exchange of knowledge among and within the UfM member states;
- working on the priority areas of the UfM: Business Development, Transport and Urban Development, Energy, Water and Environment, Higher Education and Research, and Social and Civil Affairs.

Whereas the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), established by the European Economic Community Treaty of 1958, is the European Union's official consultative body representing civil society and, in accordance with the decision taken at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in Barcelona in November 1995, has the mandate to forge links between economic and social councils (ESCs) in the region through the Euromed network of Economic and Social Councils and to act as the main organiser of an annual Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions.

Whereas both parties share the aims set out in the 2008 Paris declaration, which underlines the importance of the active participation of civil society in the Union for the Mediterranean¹. This participation is an added value for the ownership by the UfM countries' citizens of the UfM's activities and thus for the success of these activities.

Whereas both parties share the wider aims of the declaration, including its ambition to support ongoing political and economic reforms in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries on the basis of equality and mutual respect of each other, enhancing sustainable, growth, entrepreneurship and job creation, encouraging regional cooperation within the UfM and South-South integration, and contributing to the development of an area of peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the Mediterranean.

Whereas the Mediterranean ESCs are convinced that their joint activities can make an effective contribution to ensuring that the strategic role of the UfM and its secretariat serves the societies of the Mediterranean countries and is recognised by their political authorities,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1: Objectives

- 1) By means of this Memorandum of Understanding, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Secretariat are establishing a formal framework for cooperation, the aim of which will be to enhance cooperation and promote synergies between the two bodies through the multilateral framework of the UfM.
- 2) The EESC and the UfM Secretariat intend by means of this cooperation to initiate and enhance ESC and economic and social stakeholder involvement in UfM activities.

Article 2: Areas of cooperation

The EESC and the UfM Secretariat agree:

- 1) to join forces with a view to stepping up the involvement of economic and social stakeholders from the UfM countries in UfM processes and projects, in order to achieve the objectives of the 2008 Paris declaration regarding active civil society participation in the Union for the Mediterranean;

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See Paris Declaration of 13 July 2008: paragraph 2 of introduction, as well as points 3 and 32.

2) to boost mutual cooperation between the UfM Secretariat and the EESC, as the coordinator of the Euromed network of ESCs, in the six UfM priority areas defined in the 2008 Paris declaration, so that projects in these areas address the real needs of society;

3) to foster such cooperation in further areas relevant for both parties such as job creation and sustainable growth; food security, entrepreneurship; social affairs, women empowerment, regional integration within the UfM, both North–South and South-South; support ongoing socio-economic reforms in the southern and eastern Mediterranean; and the development of an area of peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the Mediterranean.

Article 3: Working method of cooperation

1) The parties agree to regularly meet and ensure the exchange of information on their respective work programmes in relevant fields and to involve each other in projects and activities where cooperation between the UfM and civil society is advantageous, such as involvement of the UfM Secretariat in relevant EESC study group meetings, involvement of the EESC in UfM seminars, conferences and other events.

2) The parties agree to facilitate contacts and the establishment of structured working relations between the UfMS and the Euromed Network of Economic and Social Councils and stakeholders, coordinated by the EESC; the UfMS will thereby seek to promote the involvement, as far as appropriate, of economic and social stakeholders and other civil society organisations in accordance with the UfM criteria and processes. In this regard, efforts will be made to make the ESC contribution to relevant UfM ministerial meetings more effective.

3) Both parties may also organise joint events of mutual interest involving social and economic stakeholders.

Article 4: Financing

1) Since cooperation between the EESC and the UfM Secretariat will not imply the allocation of any additional funds or resources to support and implement activities arising from the present memorandum, each party shall cover the full costs of its participation in any aspect of the above cooperation in accordance with its own policies, rules and regulations.

Article 5: Implementation

1) The UfM Secretariat and the EESC will seek to implement the provisions of the present memorandum by focusing on three areas: identification of annual thematic cooperation priorities; description of joint initiatives to be developed; and a timetable.

Article 6: Amendment and conclusion of the present memorandum

1) The UfM Secretariat and the EESC may carry out a review of this Memorandum of Understanding at the request of either party, by common consent. Either party may terminate it provided that they inform the other party in writing.

Agreed in Brussels on 13 January 2015.

For the EESC

For the UfM secretariat

Henri Malosse
President

Fathallah Sijilmassi
Secretary-General