



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

Activity Report 2014



The UfM Secretariat
is co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION





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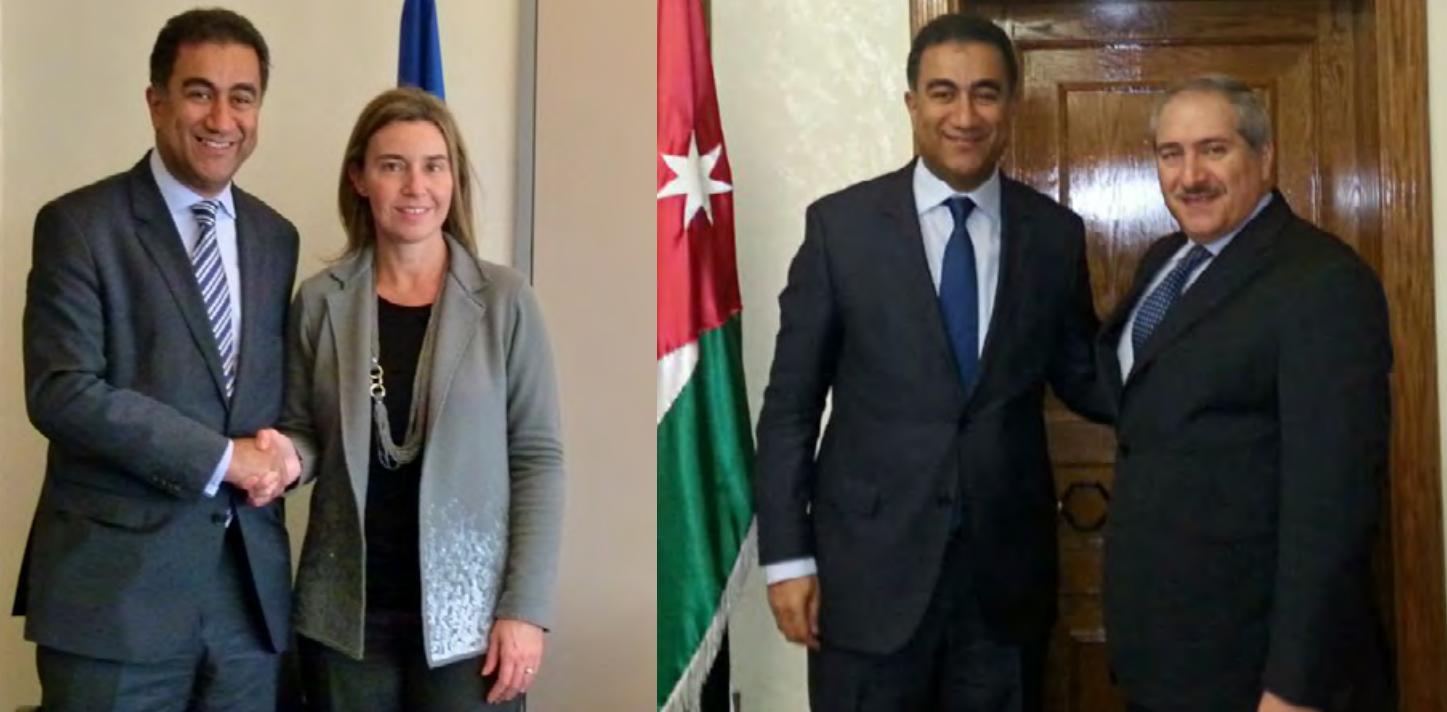


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The UfM Secretariat works in close coordination with the UfM Co-Presidency, which is assumed by H.E. Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and H.E. Mr. Nasser Judeh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

A message from The UfM Secretary General

The Union for the Mediterranean is the only intergovernmental organisation that gathers together the 28 European Union Member States, 9 Arab Mediterranean countries, plus Israel, Turkey and the Balkans.

This is undoubtedly a valuable asset. All countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region meeting around the same table with one main guiding principle: co-ownership. This allows us to build an agreed common Mediterranean agenda.

This is possible thanks to the strong political will and leadership of the UfM Co-Presidency of the European Union and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as well as of all 43 UfM Member States.

The Union for the Mediterranean is based on fully balanced and inclusive governance, which is also consistent with the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as with Southern Mediterranean countries' priorities and interests.

Through the UfM, the countries of the region express their commitment to a strengthened regional cooperation platform as a means to promote regional dialogue and integration around the Mediterranean.

The UfM Secretariat serves as the operational institution that empowers this regional dialogue between Member States and stakeholders.

Regional challenges and opportunities that call for action

It is important to encourage a global and balanced approach in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership encompassing both the security and developmental dimensions.

Growing security and socio-economic challenges make regional dialogue more important now than ever.

Furthermore, regional dialogue is crucial in seizing the existing opportunities that the region offers. Many men and women of all ages and backgrounds already embody this Euro-Mediterranean ambition: students, entrepreneurs, researchers, institutions and local authorities are all active and want to do more. They are role models and their inspiring success stories should be shared and amplified.

A committed “can-do” organisation

With six Ministerial Conferences, 29 labelled projects worth a total of €4 billion, and in 2014 alone, 55 high-level and expert meetings gathering 2,500 stakeholders, the activities of the Union for the Mediterranean are powering ahead.

With its headquarters in Barcelona and its 60 qualified staff, the Secretariat is the intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean platform where political decisions are put into action, and where concrete regional projects are developed with the support of governments, parliamentarians, private sector companies, civil society organisations, universities, foundations, international organisations, and financial institutions.

Within the framework of the Member States’ priorities, the Secretariat works with all Euro-Mediterranean believers to maximise the impact of their initiatives and to act as a bridge to make project ideas become realities.

The Mediterranean as we know it now is still young; young not only in its demography but in its wealth of talent and creative energy, too; young also because after millennia of civilisation it is still a new idea with great potential.

I hope that this general overview of our activities will encourage you to join us. Together, we can positively contribute to the wellbeing of our region.

Fathallah Sijilmassi

Introduction

The UfM: Driving regional integration

The UfM Secretariat promotes activities aimed at **strengthening cooperation and regional integration** between Euro-Mediterranean countries.

Intra-regional trade between Southern Mediterranean countries remains too low when considering its potential. At only 5%, this stands as a very low figure of their total external trade when compared with other regional economic blocs.

The weakness of regional integration is an **obstacle for growth and socio-economic development**, and ultimately, for stability in the region. It is also indirectly related to one of the region's main challenges: youth unemployment.

Yet, the region has **great potential for socio-economic progress, economic growth and competitiveness**. A dynamic population with emerging actors like young people and women; a business network primarily made up of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises accounts for 80%-90% of the companies in the region and is ready to embrace new ideas and projects; numerous business opportunities in large infrastructure projects in the fields of transport or urban development; and the exceptional natural resources available for energy, water and environment. These count as just some of the region's main assets.

Harnessing the power of cooperation and dialogue

Enhanced regional cooperation and dialogue is therefore called for on a wide range of topics, with a view to providing answers to some of the region's most prominent challenges. Under the impulse of the UfM Co-Presidency of the EU and Jordan, **six UfM Ministerial Conferences** have been held over the past two years in the following fields: Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Paris, 11-12 September 2013), Transport (Brussels, 14 November 2013), Energy (Brussels, 11 December 2013), Industrial Cooperation (Brussels, 19 February 2014), Environment and Climate Change (Athens, 13 May 2014) and Digital Economy (Brussels, 30 September 2014).

These Ministerial Conferences have strongly contributed towards building a **common Mediterranean agenda**, by establishing long-term objectives and sector-specific lines of action. The UfM Secretariat has furthered the operationalisation of decisions taken at Ministerial level by organising follow-up Conferences, advancing regional and sub-regional projects developed within variable geometry frameworks, and participating in many other activities intended to promote cooperation in the region.

Approving new projects

Fifteen new projects have been labelled by UfM Senior Officials over the past two years, bringing the total number of UfM-labelled projects to 29. Full priority has also been given to funding, launching and initiating the implementation of several of these projects, as well as accelerating existing ones. At present, more than 80 projects are under study, and a dozen have already been identified for possible labelling in 2015.

Strategic objectives 2013-2014

The UfM Secretariat has pursued the following strategic objectives, as its drivers for action:

1. **Stimulating employment and supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).** Within the framework of the UfM Ministerial Conferences on Industrial Cooperation and Digital Economy, the UfM Secretariat strived to promote SME development and job creation, namely through the UfM Med4Jobs initiative. It also launched a UfM Strategy for private sector development – within which the UfM Secretariat successfully hosted and actively participated in the first two editions of the Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean (5+5 Dialogue) – and developed activities to advance the digital economy and support creative industries in the region.
2. **Facilitating transport and mobility over land and sea.** As a follow-up to the UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport (Brussels, 14 November 2013), the UfM Secretariat co-organised the follow-up Conference on the Financing of the Future Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network (Civitavecchia, 9-10 December 2014). It also continued to develop main strategic regional projects in conjunction with its partners in the field of transport.
3. **Promoting sustainable and innovative urban projects.** In accordance with the mandate set forth at the Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development (Strasbourg, 10 November 2011), the UfM Secretariat strived to identify and advance flagship projects in collaboration with its institutional partners under the framework of its flagship Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI). The successful conclusion of the preparatory work for the Euro-Mediterranean Sustainable Urban Development Strategy has paved the way for a second UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development.
4. **Boosting the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency.** The UfM Ministerial Conference on Energy (Brussels, 11 December 2013) represented an important step for the development of a more structured dialogue on energy in the Mediterranean area. This was reinforced by the UfM Secretariat's organisation of two Extended Technical Committees (ETC), based on a two-pronged approach which seeks to foster regional dialogue and project promotion. In April 2014, the first UfM project in the field of energy – the Tafila Wind Farm project – was labelled by UfM Senior Officials.
5. **Addressing the challenges of climate change.** The UfM Secretariat participated in the preparatory works for the UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate

Change (Athens, 13 May 2014), which marked the highest political expression of the Euro-Mediterranean countries' commitment in the field of climate change.

As a first follow-up action, the UfM Secretariat convened the first UfM Climate Change Expert Group in October 2014.

6. **Promoting water and environment projects for a sustainable future in the Mediterranean.** Under the mandates delivered at the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change, as well as other regionally endorsed processes such as the United Nations Environment Programme or Mediterranean Action Plan, the UfM Secretariat participated in regional cooperation frameworks and worked closely with its partners to continue identifying and implementing its labelled projects.
7. **Improving student mobility and employability through education.** The UfM Secretariat focused on supporting the two regional centres for Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education (the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez and the EMUNI University). It also facilitated coordination and took concrete steps to foster student mobility and improve the quality of vocational training in the region through the labelling of two projects and promoting North-South dialogue within Mediterranean scientific frameworks.
8. **Fostering gender equality and women's socio-economic empowerment.** The UfM Secretariat played an active role in the preparation of the third UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Paris, 11-12 September 2013). The Secretariat also ensured its follow-up through the organisation of the Conference on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment in March 2014. The UfM Secretariat continued to promote its labelled projects and develop projects already in the pipeline.

A catalyst and promoter of regional integration

As an operational platform for cooperation, the UfM Secretariat pursued its objectives by encouraging consensus building, developing regional and sub-regional networks, and fostered dialogue and exchange among all stakeholders from the Mediterranean region.

The European Union stands out as the UfM's major partner, as well as the holder of the UfM Northern Co-Presidency through its European External Action Service. The UfM Secretariat has succeeded in establishing a close working relationship with the European Commission (EC), engaging in many joint initiatives, all of which have been in full coherence with the European Neighbourhood Policy.

In doing so, the UfM Secretariat has also strengthened its relations with its institutional partners, namely with those belonging to the UfM institutional framework, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), and the Anna Lindh Foundation. In tandem with consolidating these relations, the Secretariat has also worked with a wide range of partners directly related to the Secretariat's operational activities with the aim of achieving greater leverage for its activities.

UfM Activities



6 UfM Ministerial Conferences

- Digital Economy (Sept. 2014)
- Environment and Climate Change (May 2014)
- Industrial Cooperation (Feb. 2014)
- Energy (Dec. 2013)
- Transport (Nov. 2013)
- Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Sept. 2013)

Strategic Objective

Enhance regional cooperation and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean region through the implementation of concrete projects and initiatives with tangible impact on the region's citizens



43 Members

28 EU Members and 15 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. Their Senior Officials meet regularly to oversee and coordinate the activities of the UfM.

2 Co-Presidents

The EU and Jordan have assumed the Northern and Southern Co-Presidency since 2012, embodying the UfM principle of co-ownership.

1 Secretariat

Based in Barcelona, the Secretariat is the operational platform of the UfM.

Priority Areas



Business Development



Social & Civil Affairs



Higher Education & Research



Environment & Water

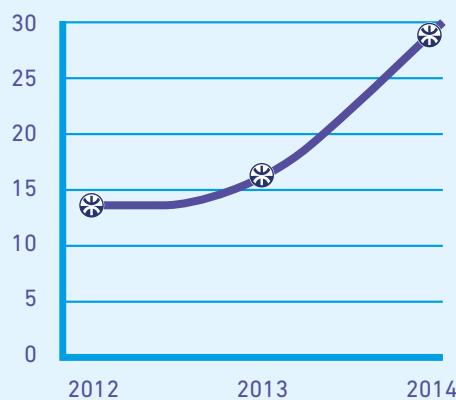


Transport & Urban Development



Energy

Significant increase in UfM labelled projects

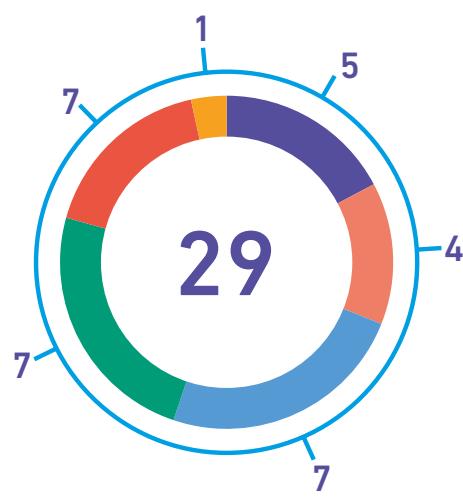


Platform for Cooperation

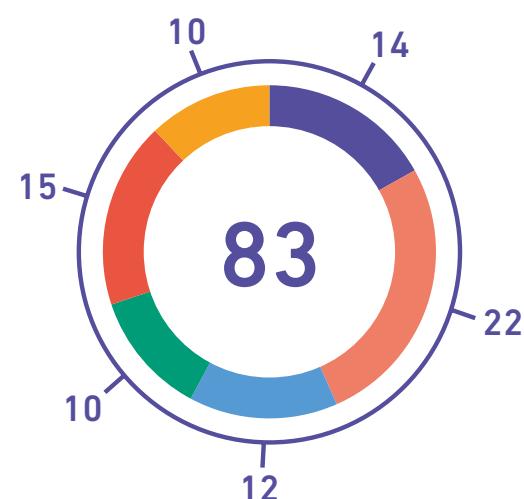


- 4 High-Level Conferences (Employment, Economic Cooperation, Women's Empowerment & Transport)
- Over 100 expert forums & round tables gathering more than 5,000 stakeholders
- 11 Senior Officials Meetings with representatives from the 43 Member States

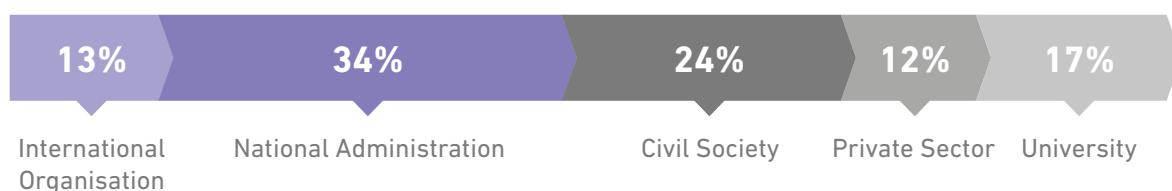
Labelled projects Per priority area



Projects in the pipeline Per priority area



Projects per promoter





Stimulating employment and supporting SMEs

The UfM has made significant progress in fulfilling its commitment to developing activities that help support job creation in the region.

Its strategic objectives for this field have been outlined in light of the current socio-economic climate and in response to the priorities expressed by Mediterranean countries.

In 2014, the UfM held two Ministerial Conferences on Industrial Cooperation and Digital Economy. Knowledge and best practices were exchanged, and cooperation strengthened through these Conferences and their follow-up work.

As a result, the UfM Secretariat has consolidated progress during the 2013-2014 period based on its ongoing strategic objectives:

- to promote the development of SMEs and foster job creation through the UfM **Med4Jobs** initiative;
- to launch a UfM strategy for private sector development, within which the UfM Secretariat would successfully host and actively participate in the first two editions of the Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean (5+5 Dialogue);
- to advance the digital economy in the region;
- to support creative industries.

Through intense coordination and fundraising efforts, the UfM Secretariat has contributed to job creation, supporting SMEs and advancing technology and creativity. In doing so, it is providing concrete responses to the most pressing needs of the region, to spur industrial growth, job creation and local and regional economic development.



UfM Ministerial Conferences on Industrial Cooperation and Digital Economy

Forging closer ties and linking regional actions

The **UfM Ministerial Conference on Industrial Cooperation** took place in Brussels on 19 February 2014. The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean and the UfM Co-Presidency actively participated in the preparatory work for this Conference, which aimed to improve the business environment in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and promote entrepreneurship and the development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

As a result, Ministers across the region adopted a Ministerial Declaration and undertook the 2014-2015 Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation Work Programme.

The Ministers acknowledged the results achieved by the UfM Secretariat in the promotion of specific projects in the field. They invited the national coordinators of the *Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise* to ensure optimum complementarity and link their regional actions with the projects and proposals carried out by the Secretariat.

A **UfM Ministerial Conference on Digital Economy** was held on 30 September 2014. Ministers agreed to forge closer ties on the use of open data and e-government, and to step up dialogue between national telecoms regulators across the Mediterranean. They also pledged to improve connectivity between scientific and research communities, and to work on a long-term eHealth cooperation strategy (see below).





The Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (**Med4Jobs**)

Creating Job Opportunities Promoting Inclusive Growth

The Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (**Med4Jobs**) is one of the UfM Secretariat's flagship initiatives for the region. It aims to promote and replicate a number of visible private sector job creation projects in the South and Eastern Mediterranean. **Med4Jobs** is a cross-sectorial, project-based initiative that is being developed in alignment with the UfM mandate. It covers supply and demand within the labour market by targeting three core issues: employability, job intermediation and business-enabling infrastructure.

The UfM's main strategic partners in the initiative include: the European Commission, International Labour Organization (ILO), European Training Foundation (ETF) and *Fundació Bancaria la Caixa* (Spain).

Med4Jobs was launched by the UfM Secretariat at the Mediterranean Economic Conference on Employment and Territorial Development, held in Tunis from 17-18 September 2013. Co-organised by the Tunisian government, the Conference raised awareness of key issues of employment and local development in the region.

THE MEDITERRANEAN ECONOMIC CONFERENCE ON EMPLOYMENT AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT AT A GLANCE

- 300 participants from 25 UfM Member States
 - Keynote speech by the head of the Tunisian government
 - Signature of an agreement between Shekra crowdfunding and INJAZ Al-Arab to provide financing opportunities to Southern Mediterranean young entrepreneurs
 - Signature of an agreement between the UfM Secretariat and UTICA (*Union Tunisienne de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de l'Artisanat*) to strengthen support for SMEs in Mediterranean countries.
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AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Stimulating employment and supporting SMEs



The Head of the Government of Tunisia, Mr. Ali Laarayedh, addressing the audience on the occasion of the Mediterranean Economic Conference on Employment and Territorial Development.
Tunis, 17-18 September 2013.

Med4Jobs was presented at a number of related events and workshops across the region to explore potential synergies and linkages with various actors in the field of employment and private sector development. The UfM Secretariat held direct consultations with stakeholders and promoters to review project proposals that address the three core pillars of the **Med4Jobs** initiative.

Several further events were held within the framework of this initiative during the activity period to raise awareness and build vital synergies. These were partly funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

Since its launch, **four projects have been labelled** under the framework of **Med4Jobs**: Generation Entrepreneur, Mediterranean Entrepreneurship Network, HOMERe – High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executives Recruitment (see page 63) and MedNC – New Chance Mediterranean Network (see page 64).



● Generation Entrepreneur

Bringing education and skills to tomorrow's business leaders

As part of its ongoing commitment to the **Med4Jobs** initiative, the UfM Secretariat is supporting INJAZ Al-Arab in its fundraising strategy for the Generation Entrepreneur project.

Labelled by the UfM Senior Officials in October 2013, Generation Entrepreneur was the first project approved under **Med4Jobs**. Promoted by INJAZ Al-Arab, the project seeks **to support and develop an entrepreneurial eco-system**

at multiple levels. It offers a dynamic, multi-dimensional approach, from grassroots business education in primary and secondary schools to hands-on training in business creation by providing vital skills, acumen and training to young people from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia.

Generation Entrepreneur also provides private sector mentorship and seed funding for real enterprises.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Approximately 79,000 students will benefit from the training programmes promoted by the project, and 500 job opportunities will be created upon successful completion of mentorship, incubation and graduation of the start-up programmes.

● Mediterranean Entrepreneurship Network – Réseau Entreprendre en Méditerranée

Nurturing new talents, nourishing new companies

Labelled in December 2014, the Mediterranean Entrepreneurship Network seeks **to support the creation of Réseau Entreprendre business associations in Morocco and Tunisia** to provide mentoring to talented start-up founders with entrepreneurial potential.

Through this project, experienced entrepreneurs will volunteer to personally mentor new business owners for the first two to three years in monthly meetings.

Financial support will also be provided through interest-free, unsecured loans, repayable over five years, thereby

allowing entrepreneurs to consolidate vital capital.

This project model is based on the *Réseau Entreprendre International* (REI) model, which has proven highly successful in France, where it has contributed to the creation of 7,600 companies and some 70,000 jobs since its launch.

The business associations are expected to contribute to the creation of more than 450 companies by 2017, 3,000 new jobs within three years of operation and approximately 5,000 jobs within five years.



UfM strategy

for Private Sector Development

Taking action in partnership with the private sector

The UfM Secretariat launched a new strategy aimed at involving the private sector in UfM initiatives and projects.

The Private Sector Development Strategy encompasses **five different and complementary pillars of action**:

1. Informal dialogue and exchange of experiences:

The UfM Secretariat will organise focus groups that facilitate informal dialogue and exchange of experiences among groups of private sector companies, which build on relationships already established within the sector. The topic of these meetings will focus on the private sector's approach to UfM sectors and areas of intervention.

2. Broader thematic platforms:

The UfM Secretariat will work towards organising broader platforms from a sector or theme-specific perspective. These will actively engage the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, and tackle key priority areas.

3. Med4Jobs:

Specific activities will be also developed within the framework of **Med4Jobs** (see above), in which the private sector plays an important role.

4. Participation of the private sector in UfM initiatives and projects:

The UfM Secretariat seeks to encourage the participation of the private sector in UfM initiatives and projects. This participation may take the form of financial support, engagement in labelled projects, the provision of expertise to existing projects, and the development of new initiatives within the Secretariat's fields of action.

5. Other processes:

The private sector will be engaged in other processes developed within the framework of the UfM or other institutions, to optimise synergies and complementarities. These include UfM Ministerial meetings, the 5+5 Business Forum, the Agadir Agreement, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the World Bank.



Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean (5+5 Dialogue¹)

Strengthening sub-regional economic cooperation

As a first step within its long-term strategy to strengthen relations with the private sector, and to promote inclusive development and regional integration, the UfM Secretariat took a hands-on role in the organisation of the first two editions of the Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean, under the framework of the 5+5 Dialogue.

The Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean aims to strengthen economic cooperation between Western European countries and the Maghreb region. Created as a platform for debate and identification of concrete areas of cooperation, the Forum facilitates **debate between high-level business delegations and Ministers of Foreign Affairs**, with a view to fostering trade, investment and regional cooperation between the 5+5 countries.

The **First Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean** took place in Barcelona on 23 October 2013.

The UfM Secretariat co-organised the Forum with Spain as host country, Portugal and Mauritania as the Co-Presidents of the 5+5 Dialogue, the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) and *Casa Mediterráneo*.

Inaugurated by the Spanish Prime Minister, Mr. Mariano Rajoy, the Forum sessions focused on the role of the Western Mediterranean in a global economy; economic



The President of the Government of Spain, Mr. Mariano Rajoy, addressing the audience at the first Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean (Dialogue 5+5), held at the UfM headquarters. Barcelona, 23 October 2013.

¹ The 5+5 Dialogue comprises Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia.



AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Stimulating employment and supporting SMEs

cooperation between Europe, the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa; public services and sustainable urban development; Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) as vectors of business development and economic growth; project funding for development; and Mediterranean arbitration.

FIRST ECONOMIC FORUM OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN AT A GLANCE

First Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean:

- more than 300 participants and 200 business leaders from the Euro-Mediterranean region
- 10 Ministers of Foreign Affairs and presidents of employers' associations from 5+5 Dialogue countries
- keynote speech by the head of the Spanish government
- official announcement by the Maghreb Employers Union (UME) of the launching of the Maghreb Initiative on Trade and Investment (IMCI), which aims to boost intra-Maghreb trade by providing a roadmap and action plan for the short, medium and long term
- establishment and first meeting of the 5+5 Business Council, announced in a joint statement by the heads of the 5+5 business delegations
- "Barcelona Charter" signed by employers' associations.



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Morocco, Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, addressing the audience at the first Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean. Barcelona, 23 October 2013.



The Deputy Prime Minister of Portugal, Mr. Paulo Portas, addressing the audience at the second Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean (Dialogue 5+5). Lisbon, 21 May 2014.

The results of the First Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean were presented in Madrid by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UfM Secretariat at a meeting at the headquarters of the [Spanish Confederation of Employers and Industries of Spain – CEOE](#) (Madrid, 14 February 2014) and at the [Third Maghreb Entrepreneurs Forum](#) (Marrakech, 18 February 2014), which witnessed the official launch of the Maghreb Initiative on Trade and Investment (IMCI).

The [Second Economic Forum of the Western Mediterranean](#) took place on 21 May 2014 in Lisbon. Organised by Portugal and Mauritania, as the Co-Presidents of the 5+5 Dialogue, by the UfM Secretariat and by the Portuguese Trade and Investment Agency (AICEP) and *Fundaçao AIP*, the Forum brought together more than 400 participants. Paulo Portas, Deputy Prime Minister of Portugal, gave a keynote speech during the Forum's inaugural session. In his speech, the Deputy Prime Minister reaffirmed Portugal's full support for this informal, dynamic and efficient process, and emphasised the importance of the UfM Secretariat's role in its consolidation.



Follow-up activities

In the framework of the UfM strategy for private sector development, the UfM Secretariat organised **a round table session gathering 50 high-level private sector representatives** from the Euro-Mediterranean region (Barcelona, 24 October 2014), encompassing the topics of youth unemployment, regional trade and competitiveness, and social responsibility, among others. This event marked the first of a series of meetings aimed at involving the private sector in the implementation of UfM initiatives and projects.

To follow, a **Joint UfM–European Commission (DG DEVCO) Working Seminar Promoting Private Sector Development and Entrepreneurship in the Region was held in Barcelona** on 14 November 2014.

Supporting SMEs

The UfM Secretariat advanced the labelled project the Euro-Mediterranean Development Centre for SMEs, and partnered with the Technical Unit of the Agadir Agreement (ATU) to interlink the issues of SME development and trade facilitation through the organisation of **two workshops on inter-trade development and supporting SMEs in Agadir Agreement member countries**. The workshops were held in Barcelona on 16 December 2013 and Cairo on 14 December 2014; the latter was also organised with the Egyptian Ministry of Trade, Industry and SMEs.

● The Euro-Mediterranean Development Centre for SMEs (EMDC)

Connecting entrepreneurs, institutions and investors

The UfM Secretariat has been closely cooperating with the promoter of the Euro-Mediterranean Development Centre for SMEs. The project was launched on 1 October 2014 during the SME Internationalisation Forum in Naples.

This project, promoted by the PROMOS (Milan Chamber of Commerce) and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aims to **build an efficient networking infrastructure among Euro-Mediterranean entrepreneurs, institutions and investors** in order to support MSMEs throughout the

critical stages of start-up, growth and internationalisation.

The UfM Secretariat is working closer with the EMDC Foundation, which has a network of 26 chambers of commerce and agencies. The programme has already been implemented in Morocco and Tunisia, while action plans for Egypt and Jordan are being finalised. The Foundation has also been actively creating its information retrieval system, a multi-level business information service oriented toward internationalisation.



Advancing the digital economy in the region

Moving closer through innovative solutions

With a view to providing a regional answer to some of the challenges identified at the UfM Ministerial Conference on Digital Economy, held in Brussels on 30 September 2014, the UfM Secretariat has undertaken work with the different partners to advance in the key areas identified in the final declaration of the Conference.

Following a partnership agreement signed in October 2014, the UfM Secretariat has been working closely with *Fundació Bancaria La Caixa* (Spain) to identify and develop joint initiatives in the field of digital economy and job creation.

June 2014 saw the first project labelled in this field: *Promoting Financial Inclusion via Mobile Financial Services*.

● Promoting Financial Inclusion via Mobile Financial Services

The UfM Secretariat is cooperating closely with the promoters (Central Banks of Jordan and Morocco) and the European Investment Bank (EIB), as main partner, to advance the implementation of this project.

This project will support the Central Banks of Jordan and Morocco in the development of regulations expanding

access to financial services among the Mediterranean population, through innovative retail payment solutions such as mobile financial services. It was officially launched on 1 October 2014, when the first regional working session was held.



Supporting creative industries

Building on regional cultural and creative capacities

In alignment with the conclusions of the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Industrial Cooperation, held in Brussels on 19 February 2014, the UfM Secretariat is striving to advance projects and initiatives aimed at fostering entrepreneurial cooperation, leveraging the potential of the cultural and creative industries, and promoting new employment opportunities and inclusive growth in the Southern Mediterranean region.

The first project in this field was labelled in June 2014: Regional Platform for the Development of Cultural and Creative Industries in the Southern Mediterranean.

● Regional Platform for the Development of Cultural and Creative Industries in the Southern Mediterranean

The project aims to complement and develop the regional dimension of the activities carried out under the EU/United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) programme, which was launched in the first quarter of 2014.

This programme aims to develop business capacities, and foster entrepreneurship cooperation and

development in the cultural and creative industries.

The UfM Secretariat labelled the project in June 2014. Just a few months later, it was officially launched – on 17 October 2014. The first regional Project Approval Committee was held on 11 December 2014.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Through this project, the UfM Secretariat is helping stimulate business in the region by acting as a platform to identify challenges and disseminate best practices for the success of the EU/UNIDO programme.





Institutional Partnerships

With a view to fully drawing on existing synergies with key institutions and stakeholders in the region, the UfM Secretariat has strengthened its institutional partnerships, namely through the signing or renewal of Memoranda of Understanding that triggered joint initiatives and activities. These include: the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), *Fundació Bancaria la Caixa* (Spain), the Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce (ASCAME), the Tunisian Union of Industry, Commerce and Crafts (UTICA), and the Association of MSMEs of Catalonia (PIMEC).



Signature of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UfM Secretariat and *Fundació Bancaria la Caixa*.



Facilitating transport and mobility over land and sea

The UfM Secretariat took an active role in developing projects and strategic partnerships in the field of transport, to improve mobility and facilitate closer cooperation between Member States in the region.

The UfM Secretariat collaborated closely with the European Commission in the preparation of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, held on 14 November 2013 in Brussels. Furthermore, the Secretariat co-organised the follow-up Conference on the Financing of the Future Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network (TMN-T), which took place from 9-10 December 2014 in Civitavecchia (Italy).

It also continued to promote its labelled projects, and established institutionalised cooperation schemes with other partners. Memoranda of Understanding were signed with the Centre for Transportation Studies for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO) and with the International Road Transport Union.

Optimising the region's communication and trade routes over land and sea is a crucial component to fostering long-term, sustainable economic growth and development.

Forging and maintaining stronger ties among Member States, sharing best practices and building a strong trans-Mediterranean transport network are vital tools with which to ensure the region's global competitiveness.

As such, the UfM Secretariat continues to prioritise its strategic objectives to strengthen cooperation in this field at local, national, regional and international levels.



UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport

Propelling the Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network

The UfM Secretariat actively participated with the European Commission in the preparatory work for the **first UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport**. The Conference was successfully held on 14 November 2013 in Brussels. It has been the first conference of this magnitude in the region since the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Transport took place in Marrakech in December 2005.

The Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) for 2014-2020 was established by Ministers within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, and adopted at the Conference.

HIGHLIGHT

As a participant in the Steering Committee for the new RTAP, the UfM Secretariat was designated to **provide permanent technical support** and has thus continued to actively participate in the preparation and incubation of TMN-T projects.





Conference on the Financing of the Future Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network

Going a step further towards raising vital funds

As a follow-up to the Ministerial Conference, and in collaboration with the UfM Co-Presidency and the Italian Presidency of the European Union, the UfM Secretariat co-organised the international high-level Conference "Financing of the Future Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network

(TMN-T)". Held from 9-10 December 2014 in Civitavecchia (Italy), the Conference gathered major international financial institutions, donors and private companies in order **to mobilise available funds to support the implementation of the TMN-T.**



UfM Working Group on Transport

Tracking progress and looking ahead

Several UfM Working Groups on Transport meetings were organised during the 2013-2014 period, to **present to the panel of international experts** the main outcomes of the first and the perspectives for the holding of a second UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, to spread and share the results of

internal evaluations of transport projects, present an up-to-date situation of UfM-labelled projects, and present the state of play regarding the multi-criteria methodology for the assessment of transport projects developed by the UfM Secretariat.



Main strategic regional projects in the field of transport

● Completion of the Central Section of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway

In close partnership with the promoter CETMO (the Secretariat of Group of Ministers of Transport – GTMO of the 5+5 Dialogue) and the Ministries of Transport of Morocco and Tunisia, the UfM Secretariat continued to follow the design phases of the project during this period. The project aims to complete the central section of the trans-Maghreb motorway, which will provide a **continuous motorway corridor** to connect Mauritania with Libya. The conclusion of the design phase will allow the UfM Secretariat, and the two partner countries, to jointly undertake the fundraising activity for the construction.

Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat started developing **the horizontal component of the project** with the promoter (CETMO) and in partnership with the International Road Transport Union (IRU), aimed at integrating the works into the implementation of ancillary infrastructures (border crossings, rest areas, maintenance points, etc.) and at introducing a series of "soft" components (international transit agreements, training activities for customs personnel, etc.). These components will make the infrastructure immediately viable for regional traffic, once the construction works are concluded.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

An Action Plan for these horizontal actions was delivered by the UfM Secretariat and the promoter, and adopted at the latest GTMO 5+5 Ministerial Conference in October 2014. It opens the door to carry out concrete actions regarding trade facilitation, financing and multimodality in 2015.





● Jordanian National Railway Project

Establishing the first part of a regional railway network

Labelled in December 2012, the UfM Secretariat has continued to work intensively on a comprehensive Project Roadmap for the project, which was approved by the Jordanian authorities in 2013. This ambitious project will **integrate Jordan's railway system with the regional network** by establishing an effective rail connection with neighbouring countries.

The Project Roadmap was followed by a set of supplementary studies on the train

operation and interoperability model carried out in 2014 with the support and coordination of the UfM Secretariat. The Project Roadmap and its subsequent studies have introduced an **innovative approach for the project**, based on the evaluation of the relationships and connections with other initiatives in the transport sector, both at national and regional level. These actions will help disseminate knowledge of the project's key elements and raise potential donor awareness.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

The opening of the worksites along the section linking the phosphate mine at Shidiya with the line south of Ma'an will mark the launch of the construction phase of the project.



AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Facilitating transport and mobility over land and sea

● LOGISMED-TA

The **LOGISMED-TA project**, promoted by the Group of Ministers of Transport (GTMO) of the 5+5 Dialogue, was officially launched on 17 June 2013 in Barcelona in the presence of the Ministers of Transport and high representatives of the countries involved in the project, European Commissioner Štefan Füle, European Investment Bank (EIB) Vice-President Philippe de Fontaine Vive, and Deauville Partnership Transition Fund Steering Committee Executive Secretary Jonathan Walters.

The UfM Secretariat actively worked with CETMO, the Secretariat of GTMO, in the technical work required to implement the different actions anticipated in three areas of this project: **Coordination, Observatory and Training**. Concrete actions included assistance in the creation, coordination and dissemination of programmes addressed at relevant personnel, including government functionaries, port authorities and customs officials, and the establishment and strengthening of logistics associations.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Following the conclusion of financial arrangements between the European Commission and the EIB at the end of 2013, the implementation phase of the project began in 2014 under the management of CETMO, the Secretariat of the GTMO 5+5. The promoter was chosen to lead the technical management of all phases of the project on behalf of the EIB.



EU Commissioner, Mr. Štefan Füle, addressing the audience on the occasion of the launch of the LOGISMED-TA project. Barcelona, 17 June 2013.

Institutional Partnerships

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the UfM Secretariat and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) in Geneva on 15 April 2013. This MoU aims at developing common initiatives in the field of transport and logistics in the Mediterranean region, harmonising and securing cross-border customs procedures, speeding up and facilitating customs transit processes, reducing transaction costs and border waiting times, and allowing the region to benefit fully from trade and transport facilitation.

In the margins of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the UfM Secretariat and the Group of Ministers of Transport of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO 5+5). This MoU institutionalised the existing active cooperation with CETMO, the Secretariat of the GTMO 5+5.



Promoting sustainable and innovative urban projects

The UfM Secretariat developed significant actions in the area of urban development during the 2013-2014 period.

The preparatory work of the Euro-Mediterranean Sustainable Urban Development Strategy was successfully concluded by the UfM Secretariat. This paved the way for a second UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development to be held in the near future. In the framework of the "Urban Projects Finance Initiative", the financing component of the Strategy, fifteen projects for possible UfM labelling were identified in 2014. Two projects were labelled: one in June and the other in December 2014.

Promoting and supporting sustainable and innovative urban projects remains high on the UfM's agenda.

Throughout this activity period, the UfM Secretariat has reiterated its ongoing commitment to transforming under- or over-developed urban areas through decisive actions.

In collaboration with stakeholders in Member States, the UfM has actively contributed to projects that set a replicable example, by improving infrastructure and public services to the benefit of citizens and the region as a whole.



Promoting sustainable urban development in the region: the Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI)

Finding cooperative solutions to major regional challenges

In 2014, the **UfM Secretariat labelled two projects** under the framework of its UPFI flagship initiative in the region: the Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project, for Egypt, in June and Sfax Taparura, for Tunisia, in December.

The UfM Secretariat is a member of the UPFI Steering Committee and chairs the Project Committee. The initiative was developed in accordance with the mandate set out at the **Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development**, held in November 2011.

Its added value lies in the **cooperative approach followed throughout the process**, which is integrated into the project methodology for identifying projects that engage governments, international financial institutions and local authorities. It offers bottom-up, regionally replicable solutions in response to the major urban development challenges facing the region. These solutions are multi-dimensional, and designed to simultaneously cover the demographic, social, environmental and technological dimensions.

The UPFI began its operations in strategic partnership in 2013 with the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the German KfW banking group and the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations* (CDC). Funding was provided by the EU Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF). The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Finland joined the initiative soon afterwards.

HIGHLIGHT

An initial group of 50 projects was chosen out of 122 submitted from the nine participating countries (Turkey, Palestine, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Algeria), worth €3.5 billion of potential investment. This group was later reduced to 25. For the **selection of the final 15 projects**, the UfM Secretariat headed the UPFI Delegation missions to the countries involved, to hold discussions with project promoters and public administrations involved during 2013-2014.

In the framework of the UPFI, the UfM Secretariat held an operational meeting with potential stakeholders (regional and technical institutions) of the **Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM)** capacity-building project in the field of urban development.



● The Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project

Bringing vital public services to citizens

Labelled by the UfM Senior Officials in June 2014, this project aims to strengthen the integration of Imbaba, one of Cairo's most populated and unplanned areas, into the greater metropolitan

area. The initiative will **provide 700,000 inhabitants with basic infrastructure** and public services, including medical centres, schools, recreational parks and sports facilities, among others.

● Sfax Taparura

Breathing new life into an underdeveloped urban area

Labelled by the UfM Senior Officials in December 2014, the Sfax Taparura project is devoted to revitalising Sfax, one of the most important industrial and commercial cities in Southern Tunisia. Site of the phosphate industry, its

development has been hampered due to significant pollution levels. Following the de-pollution of the city's northern coast, the project will **rehabilitate its beaches and create 420 hectares** of land to extend the metropolitan area.



Boosting the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency

Recognising the importance of addressing energy challenges, the UfM Secretariat has continued to fulfil its role as a platform for Member States, financial institutions, regional organisations, industrial enterprises and experts working towards the enhancement of synergies in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency (RE/EE) in the Mediterranean region.

To help foster the dialogue and collaboration necessary to achieve this aim, the UfM Secretariat was involved in the organisation of two *ad hoc* Senior Officials meetings held in 2014 in Jordan and Barcelona. It was also involved in the UfM Ministerial Conference on Energy held on 11 December 2013, which represented an important step for the development of a more structured dialogue on energy in the Mediterranean area.

In addition, the UfM Secretariat followed a two-pronged approach to fostering regional dialogue and project promotion in 2014: it held two Extended Technical Committees (ETC). In April 2014 UfM Senior Officials labelled the Tafila Wind Farm project.



Promoting Regional Dialogue on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

Encouraging policy dialogue and projects

Two ad hoc Senior Officials meetings were held at the mandate of the UfM Co-Presidency: one in Jordan on 29-30 May 2013 and the other in Spain on 5 November 2013, with the participation of representatives from the UfM Member States, the European Commission, international financial institutions, international organisations, national energy agencies and other energy-related organisations, as well as key industry members.

At the **UfM Ministerial Conference on Energy**, which took place in Brussels on 11 December 2013, the UfM Member States expressed their support for the work conducted, acknowledging the UfM Secretariat as the appropriate platform for a more structured dialogue regarding energy in the region.

In 2014, with the overarching aim of jointly identifying projects with Member States, the UfM Secretariat adopted a methodology built on **two interlinked and interdependent pillars: regional dialogue/technical cooperation and project promotion**.

HIGHLIGHT

Regional dialogue, through the meetings of the Extended Technical Committee (see below), will help Member States and stakeholders to identify potential projects. Simultaneously, ongoing projects will generate further regional dialogue.



Extended Technical Committee

Building a renewable energy and efficient energy roadmap for 2015

The Extended Technical Committee (ETC) was designed to facilitate policy dialogue. It constitutes an inclusive and dynamic technical platform of exchange and interaction, involving Member States and stakeholders working in the field of RE/EE. In order to complement the ETC, a **UfM Energy working session**, which actively involved the stakeholders, was organised and moderated by the UfM Secretariat. The session managed to streamline the operational orientation, with policy proximity targets taken from the dialogue conducted earlier.

The constructive outcome of the brainstorming session was instrumental to substantialise the two ETC meetings held during 2014, which resulted in the creation of four **Working Groups (WG)**.

The ETC WGs are oriented towards policymaking, as well as project identification and promotion in the following areas:

1. Best Practices (Policy and Regulatory);
2. Infrastructure/Interconnections;
3. Energy Efficiency;
4. Job Creation and Local Value Chain.

The conclusions of the four WGs were summarised and distributed as a roadmap for 2015, including the identification of pilot projects and examples of best practices as well as concrete tasks for each WG to undertake towards the third meeting of the ETC.

In parallel to the second ETC meeting, a workshop with experts from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt was organised in collaboration with EIB and IRENA. Its aim was to present the study “Evaluating renewable energy manufacturing potential in the Mediterranean Partner Countries”. The study assesses the region’s capability to attract foreign investment for developing local renewable energy industries.

Mobilising financial resources

With the support of the Extended Technical Committee and its Working Groups, the UfM Secretariat is advancing in the priority areas identified. These advances move towards the creation of a sound matchmaking environment for potential international investment for labelled projects in the Mediterranean Region.

Regarding the financial tools and risk management mechanisms, the UfM Secretariat continued to work in close collaboration with the European Investment Bank (EIB) in order to fully trigger the **Mediterranean Solar Plan-Project Preparation Initiative (MSP-PPI)** by the end of 2014. The overall objective of this initiative is to provide technical assistance



AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Promoting sustainable and innovative urban projects

to support project preparation and development in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy transmission capacities for connections to the grid in the region. The programme, addressed to the Mediterranean Partner Countries eligible under the European Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF), is financed by the European Commission, and the UfM Secretariat will be actively involved in the work of its Steering Committee.

HIGHLIGHT

Private investment opportunities in RE/EE were also a top priority for the UfM Secretariat and the Extended Technical Committee. In this regard, the UfM Secretariat will hold a UfM Energy and Climate Change Business Forum during 2015, aimed at exchanging experiences and showcasing potential business opportunities in the region.

Other innovative financial instruments have continued to be explored, including Public-Private Partnerships and promising crowdfunding initiatives.





Development of main strategic regional projects in the field of energy

● Generating energy and creating jobs in Jordan

Tafila Wind Farm

Labelled in April 2014, the Tafila Wind Farm project breaks new ground for renewable energy projects in the Mediterranean. It **will cover 3% of the national electricity demand in Jordan** and will create substantial jobs for qualified workers.

Located in the Tafila Governorate, the 117 MW wind farm contributes to Jordan's energy strategy and to regional

targets in the field of clean energy. Jordan has set an ambitious goal of achieving 10% of its total energy from renewable sources by 2020, of which wind power will account for 66.6%. The project aligns with regional dialogue principles as it will contribute to reducing the country's high dependency on energy imports while developing renewable energy generation.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

The Tafila Wind Farm will also create a local value chain (job opportunities and training capacities), improve access to energy, increase energy security and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Wind energy is a very promising renewable energy source. The Tafila Wind Farm will be the first renewable energy project to begin operations in Jordan and provide power to the Jordanian network. It sets a precedent for renewable energy projects in the Mediterranean as it is a best practice model and an example of partnership between the government and the private sector [Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Public-Private Agreement (PPA)]. As a private investment, Tafila has a high trans-boundary demonstrative effect on growing business opportunities in the region and serves as an example for replication.



Institutional Partnerships

Renewed understanding

In addition to strengthening its relations with agencies and ministries in UfM Member States, the UfM Secretariat has solidified its institutional partnerships with the European Commission (DG Energy and DG CLIMA) and the League of Arab States (LAS). It has already secured Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with key specialised regional stakeholders, including RCREEE (Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency), OME (*L'Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Energie*), Medgrid, Dii (Desertec Industrial Initiative) and IMEDER (*L'Institut Méditerranéen des Energies Renouvelables*).

Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat has continued to strengthen its partnerships in the field of energy. New MoUs with key partners, such as the International Energy Agency (IEA), Mediterranean Transmission System Operators (Med-TSO), Mediterranean Energy Regulators (MedReg) and the Energy Charter Secretariat, are being prepared. Work on giving broader content to existing MoUs in order to include energy-related issues is being carried out, namely within the framework of the MoU signed with UNEP/MAP (United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan).

In addition, since 2014, the Secretariat has been part of the Steering Committee of the CES-MED (Cleaner Energy Saving Mediterranean Cities) project.

Focus on capacity building and training

The UfM Secretariat has continued to emphasise the importance of capacity-building and training activities in the region. During this activity period, the UfM collaborated with Renewable Energy Solutions for the Mediterranean (RES4MED), Enel Foundation and the Politecnico di Milano in the first edition of **the advanced training course “Integration of Renewable Energy Solutions in the Mediterranean Electricity Markets”** (Milan, 17-28 November 2014). It will continue to strengthen this collaboration in future editions.



Addressing the challenges of climate change in the region

The UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change, held on 13 May 2014 in Athens, marked a visible expression of the Euro-Mediterranean countries' commitment to addressing climate change, at the highest political level. It also marked the run-up to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) to be held in Paris at the end of 2015.

Ministers agreed upon the creation of the "UfM Climate Change Expert Group", which first met in October 2014. The Ministers further agreed on the creation of the UfM Environment and Climate Change Working Group, which will meet every two years to ensure continued regional dialogue and to assess progress on joint actions.



UfM Climate Change Expert Group

Enhancing regional dialogue to catalyse positive change

The first UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change was held in Athens on 12-13 May 2014, preceded by a Stakeholders Conference which took place in Amman on 10-11 March 2014.

The UfM Ministerial Declaration of 13 May 2014 included climate change for the first time as a priority area of cooperation for the UfM. It underlined the urgency to address climate change in regards to its close connection with other major regional concerns, such as energy, water scarcity, desertification, food security, overpopulation and resilience to extreme weather events.

In this context, the UfM Ministerial Declaration mandated the UfM Secretariat to set up a Union for the Mediterranean Climate Change Expert Group (UfMCCEG) during the second semester of 2014. The UfMCCEG was created to act as a regional platform, bringing together governments, agencies, civil society, international institutions, private sector representatives and relevant experts of the region. Its aim is to enhance regional dialogue and catalyse the identification, support and development of specific projects and initiatives, both in mitigation and adaptation.

In line with this aim, most Member States proposed their UfMCCEG national focal points. A mapping of stakeholders and current climate change initiatives in the region was then carried out by the UfM Secretariat in close collaboration with the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med).

The first **UfMCCEG meeting** was successfully held in Barcelona on 13-14 October 2014. Key points were agreed, such as priority areas for addressing climate change in the region and a working plan for 2014-2015 that included specific initiatives to be developed during 2015. The UfMCCEG expressed particular interest in reinforcing climate knowledge in the region, exploring climate finance mechanisms – including private sector involvement – and supporting Member States in the identification and preparation of projects laid out in their Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs). The UfM Secretariat also launched a process aimed at involving civil society in the UfMCCEG works, in accordance with the Ministerial Declaration mandate.



Outreach Activities

Although not directly linked to the international negotiations, the UfMCCEG also supports Member States in the **preparation of their contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and in the implementation of their commitments once an international agreement is reached. The European Commission and the UfM Secretariat have also co-organised two side events during the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (CoP) 19 in Warsaw and CoP 20 in Lima, with the participation of Member State representatives. The events aimed at giving visibility to this process and showcasing how a complex system of diverse initiatives, programmes and structures can be brought together to create synergies, while including stakeholders, the private sector and various levels of governance.



Promoting water and environment projects for a sustainable future in the Mediterranean

As part of its continued commitment to the field of water and environment, the UfM Secretariat participated in the preparation and successful execution of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change, held in May 2014.

The Conference succeeded in delivering mandates which complement other already endorsed processes and strategic meetings, such as the overarching framework of the Barcelona Convention and the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP).

These developments enabled the UfM Secretariat to work closely and consistently with its partners in the process of identifying and implementing projects that will bring a positive socio-economic and environmental impact to the region.

The UfM Secretariat therefore continued to promote its ongoing projects, and succeeded in attaining labelling for new projects by Senior Officials that actively support the development of strategic projects to optimise water resources and management in key Mediterranean areas.

In collaboration with public and private institutions, national and local authorities, and other key stakeholders, the UfM Secretariat has established and strengthened vital partnerships, secured essential funding and generated crucial visibility for regional projects that address the needs of millions of citizens.



Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change

Securing commitment and cooperation for change

A UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change was held on 13 May 2014 in Athens. The three priority topics were: the Horizon 2020 Initiative for the depollution of the Mediterranean Sea, Sustainable Consumption and Production, and Climate Change.

Ministers agreed to launch the **second phase of the Horizon 2020 Initiative for the depollution of the Mediterranean Sea**, with the full involvement of the UfM Secretariat. The UfM Secretariat played an active role in the preparatory technical work of the Conference, and, in particular, supported the Horizon 2020 mid-term review, by delivering one of the four complementary technical assessments (conducted by UNEP/MAP, the EIB, the EEA and the UfM Secretariat) necessary for launching the second phase.

Countries also called for the **UfM Secretariat to co-chair with the EIB the Horizon 2020 Pollution Reduction Sub-group** and to contribute to the elaboration of the work programme for the second phase of Horizon 2020, which was approved by its Steering Committee in a meeting held in Barcelona in December 2014.

In addition, countries asked to develop criteria for the prioritisation of sustainable investments, aligning as appropriate with the **National Action Plans** revision process undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP).

HIGHLIGHT

- The Ministerial Declaration of the UfM Conference on Environment and Climate Change also welcomed the launch of **two major actions** on Sustainable Consumption and Production, namely the EU-funded SWITCH-Med and the UfM-labelled “Med ReSCP Programmes”.
 - The Ministerial Declaration led to the creation of the “UfM Climate Change Expert Group”, which agreed to meet at least once a year, and of the “UfM Environment and Climate Change Working Group”, which agreed to meet every two years – a prime example of both commitment and cooperation for change.
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Promoting Access to Water Resources and Water Management

● Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip

A commitment to reduce pollution, foster job creation, and facilitate sustainable economic development

The UfM Secretariat continued to support one of its flagship projects for the region, the Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip, promoted by the Palestine Water Authority.

This project will help address the major water deficit for an ever-increasing population and thus deliver an essential and **concrete response to the needs of 1.8 million citizens**. The project and associated works will also contribute to reducing pollution in the Mediterranean, as the anchor project in a broader water and sanitation programme, fostering job creation and facilitating sustainable economic development in this densely populated region.

During 2013 and 2014, the UfM Secretariat consolidated efforts by the main institutions involved to advance key aspects of the project. These include advancing a financial mechanism to govern funding for the project, designing the roadmap for an operational energy

supply model for plant management, developing the plant's conceptual design, and working to improve the financial sustainability of the project.

The UfM Secretariat focused its efforts on **increased facilitation among the governments** to ensure successful implementation and appropriate presentation of the project to secure financial support. Several missions were undertaken in Palestine to support the government's progress in tackling technical and financial challenges.

In June 2014, the UfM Secretariat and the European Commission co-chaired an IFI Coordination Meeting in Brussels, with the participation of the European Investment Bank (EIB), the World Bank (WB), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), UN agencies and Palestinian government officials. As a result, substantial progress was made on key technical preparation aspects of the project.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

On the occasion of the International Conference for Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza (Cairo, 12 October 2014), the Palestinian President, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, reaffirmed to the UfM Secretary General the urgency and vital importance of the Desalination project. Subsequently, the Director of the Al Aqsa Fund for Palestine within the Islamic Development Bank visited the UfM Secretariat headquarters, accompanied by the Palestinian representative to the Arab Funds, to confirm the assignment of Arab funds to the project.



AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Promoting water and environment projects for a sustainable future in the Mediterranean

● Governance and Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector

Governance and Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector aims to **improve public governance and attract investments to the water sector** of the Mediterranean region. Core objectives include diagnosing key governance bottlenecks that impede efficient use of financing, analysing opportunities and challenges arising from Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), and supporting the development of consensual action plans based on international best practices.

Promoted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med), the project was launched in May 2013 at the UfM headquarters in Barcelona

with Ministerial representatives from participating countries. An EIB-OECD agreement concerning the EIB contribution was signed in June 2013.

The first phase of the Governance and Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector project was successfully implemented in Tunisia and Jordan in 2014, and culminated in the First Regional Conference held in October 2014 in Athens. Experiences documented in the first phase were shared with participants from around the Mediterranean.

In June 2014, the implementation of the first phase concluded, following intense policy dialogue and analytical work, with a final workshop to launch the national reports respectively in Amman and Tunis.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Following the UfM Secretariat's continued efforts to support the promoters in identifying financial resources, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has become a key partner in the project by signing an agreement with GWP-Med for financing the regional component of the overall project. The second phase of the project will be implemented in Palestine and Morocco in 2015, followed by a Regional Conference.



The Ministers of Water of Egypt, Jordan and Palestine and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade of Bosnia and Herzegovina addressing the audience on the occasion of the launch of the "Governance and Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector" project. Barcelona, 29 May 2013.



● The Mediterranean Water Knowledge Platform

Improving access to information on water sharing

The UfM Secretariat has provided vital tools to promote fundraising for the Mediterranean Water Knowledge Platform, and has prioritised regional synergy-building activities.

Labelled in April 2014 and promoted by the International Office for Water and the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME), the Mediterranean Water Knowledge Platform project aims to facilitate **the production and sharing of water information** to all concerned parties in six pilot countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Monaco, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia.

The project's actions centre on improving dialogue and planning processes, and making information more readily available to all stakeholders.

The UfM Secretariat has provided an economic benchmark of existing water information systems to support ongoing fundraising activities. It has also prioritised the planning and implementation of regional activities, in alliance with existing regional initiatives on environment/water data, such as the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and the Sustainable Water Integrated Management (SWIM) Programme. These synergies will support and create visibility for national activities.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Following the elaboration of a comprehensive fundraising plan and the establishment of initial contact with donors, **the project is successfully advancing in the pilot countries**: Tunisia (implementation), and Jordan and Morocco (definition studies).



Protecting the Mediterranean Sea and Promoting Sustainable Development

● The Integrated Intervention Programme for Depollution of Lake Bizerte, Tunisia

Reducing pollution as part of the Horizon 2020 agenda

During 2013 and 2014, the UfM Secretariat worked to facilitate fundraising and cooperation for this initiative to reduce pollution impacting the Mediterranean Sea.

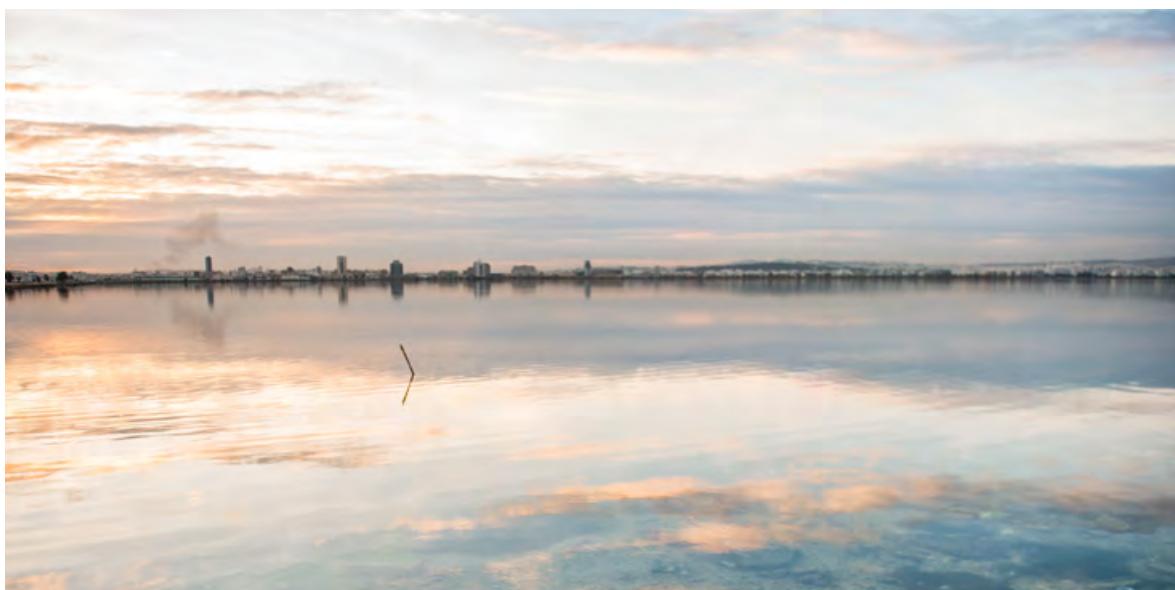
Under Horizon 2020, Lake Bizerte, in northern Tunisia, has been identified as one of the major regional pollution hot spots of the Mediterranean, due to its trans-boundary impact.

Labelled in October 2013, the depollution programme seeks to contribute to the **depollution of the Lake** and reduce indirect pollution that impacts the Mediterranean Sea. Its integrated approach centres on engaging local stakeholders while investing in facilities to reduce liquid or solid waste and air emissions around the Lake.

The Integrated Intervention Programme is scheduled for launch in 2015.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

The UfM Secretariat worked in the field of **decentralised cooperation** in close coordination with the EIB, to identify complementary working areas and raise ownership of the project among local stakeholders. Initial contact was established between the Tunisian promoters and local authorities in France, for further development into a concrete cooperation plan.





● Med ReSCP: Post-Rio+20 Promotion of Adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, in particular Resource Efficiency, in the Mediterranean Region

Promoting an inclusive, regional approach to sustainable consumption and production

During 2014, the UfM Secretariat played a key role in fundraising and coordination efforts for the Med ReSCP project.

Labelled in April 2014, the project has the overarching objective to actively promote **the adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns** throughout the Mediterranean region.

Med ReSCP is promoted by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), with the support of the Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP-CPRAC).

This regional project specifically aims to provide access to financing for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) adopting Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) models in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia (Component 1). It further focuses efforts on stimulating the development of green industries and entrepreneurship in the **West Balkans and Turkey**, through technical assistance and pilot projects (Component 2). Component 1 of the project was started in September 2014.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

The UfM Secretariat is advising and supporting the promoters of Med ReSCP in its fundraising efforts for Component 2, as well as ensuring full coordination with the EU-funded SWITCH-Med Programme.



● BlueGreen Med-CS: Networking civil society in the Mediterranean region through environment and water issues

Strengthening capacity, collaboration and funding opportunities for CSOs operating in the Mediterranean region

Labelled in June 2014, BlueGreen Med-CS aims to harness existing **cooperation and financial opportunities**, and promote new synergies **among civil society organisations (CSOs) in the field of water and environment**.

Since its labelling, the UfM Secretariat has been helping the promoter to optimise and focus fundraising efforts, also joining forces with other regional projects aimed at supporting the achievement of the same objectives.

The project is a joint initiative of the Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med), the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME), the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED) and the WWF Mediterranean Programme Office (WWF MedPO).

Built on a regional perspective and multi-stakeholder approach, the project will strengthen the capacity of selected CSOs in five Mediterranean countries, with the aim to turn them into knowledgeable and credible interlocutors when it comes to water and environment policies.

Core activities will encompass a capacity-building programme (e.g. on-the-job training, face-to-face training and regional study visits) and a small grants scheme so that the acquired capacities will allow the best implementation of the grant on relevant conservation and sustainable development issues. These include wetlands, water demand management, water-use efficiency, trans-boundary water resource management, environmental education and awareness-raising tools, and marine litter.



● Water Integrity in the MENA Region

Collaborating with regional and local partners to empower and engage stakeholders

Throughout 2014, the UfM Secretariat secured support, established a new partnership, and broadened the activities of this capacity-building project during its crucial inaugural year.

In December 2014, the Capacity Building Programme on Water Integrity in the Middle East and North Africa was labelled, following a year-long inception period.

Promoted by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the four-year programme focuses on collaborating with regional and local partners to develop capacities of the various stakeholder groups in the region, with the aim of **improving transparency and accountability practices in water resource management over the next three years**.

The Water Integrity project is initially being implemented in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. The programme is funded by Sida and builds

on extensive experience gained from similar capacity-building programmes in other regions.

The first operational year of this four-year project was dedicated to convening implementation partners. Partner institutions include: Integrity Action, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean, and International Union for Conservation of Nature – Regional Office for West Asia, with the support of the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network (AWARENET) and the following higher education institutes: Jordan University of Science and Technology (Jordan); Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (Lebanon); Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (Morocco); Al-Quds University (Palestine); and the Water Research and Technology Centre (Tunisia). The sheer number and range of stakeholders involved in this project is indicative of the collaborative work that UfM aims to foster and facilitate.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Throughout the inception period, the UfM Secretariat worked with SIWI to broaden project activities, introduced a new implementation partner, secured additional support from line ministries, and ensured that this project was labelled in time for announcement at the first regional training event in Tunis, in December 2014.



Horizontal Activities

- The UfM Secretariat is participating and providing technical expertise in the current conception process of the [Western Strategy for Western Mediterranean](#), under the leadership of Algeria and Spain and within the framework of the 5+5 Dialogue.
- In September 2013, the UfM Secretariat hosted a [workshop on water operator partnerships](#) organised by the Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance of UN-Habitat.
- Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UfM Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, a [working session on waste management](#) was held in Barcelona in late December 2013. The session gathered key experts from both regions. Synergies between the two Secretariats were identified and strengthened in 2014, enabling the UfM Secretariat to expand its activities in this field.
- In partnership with the *Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc* and the City of Rabat, the UfM Secretariat co-organised the [Rabat Conference for Sustainable Development](#) held 13-14 November 2013. This annual meeting proved a powerful occasion to promote reflection, change and innovation, and to give a voice to the agents involved in implementing sustainable development.

Institutional Partnerships

The UfM Secretariat has strengthened its collaboration with the Mediterranean Action Plan Coordinating Unit (UNEP/MAP). The two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the CoP Meeting in Istanbul, in December 2013.

To build upon this reinforced alliance, the UfM Secretariat is currently participating in the elaboration of the National Action Plans with UNEP/MAP, and is assuming an advisory role as one of the main regional partners within the process of [revision of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development](#).



Improving student mobility and employability through education

The UfM Secretariat focused on supporting the two regional centres for Euro-Mediterranean higher education: the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez (UEMF) and the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI University).

By labelling two new projects, the UfM Secretariat also pursued its efforts in schemes to facilitate student mobility, particularly among Southern countries, whilst also improving the quality of vocational training in the region and strengthening the articulation of higher education and research strategies in the face of unique socio-economic challenges.



Empowering the two regional centres for Euro-Mediterranean higher education

The UfM Secretariat continued to promote the two regional centres for Euro-Mediterranean higher education: the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez (UEMF) and the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI University). Cooperation between both universities was encouraged in order to promote staff and student mobility, identify complementarities in academic programmes that could be developed for the mutual benefit of both universities, and appoint common members on both institutions' respective management boards.

● The Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez (UEMF)

The UEMF, founded under the auspices of His Majesty Mohammed VI King of Morocco, is one of the UfM's flagship projects and will stand as a new and **unique regional centre of excellence** contributing to the promotion of dialogue, cultural exchange and cooperation in higher education and research across the Mediterranean.

This regional dimension will be reflected both in the diversity of nationalities of UEMF students, professors, researchers and non-academic staff and in the teaching language and content of the programmes that will target topics of regional interest for the Euro-Mediterranean area.

The UEMF will be organised into two divisions: the Engineering division and the Humanities & Social Sciences division.

The objective of the University is to deliver high-level standard of education

to committed, highly competent students with a unique Euro-Mediterranean profile who will contribute towards transforming the region in their future positions.

The project aims to increase employability among students, in particular, by developing their language, ICT and entrepreneurial skills, and by offering them mobility schemes and internship opportunities across the Euro-Mediterranean area in collaboration with partner universities and enterprises.

Over the last two years, the UfM Secretariat has worked alongside the promoter, the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Executive Training of the Kingdom of Morocco, to move the project forward in view of **inaugurating the University in September 2016** to therefore coincide with the opening of the 2016/2017 academic year.



Key achievements

- **Construction:** A consortium composed of two architect groups (from Morocco and France) and a Moroccan engineering consultancy were appointed with the objective of starting works in March 2015.
- **Academic partnerships:** The UfM Secretariat facilitated the University in obtaining several academic partnerships at national and international levels.
- **Fundraising:** The UfM Secretariat assisted the promoter in the elaboration of a financial model to be presented to potential donors (mainly international financial institutions).
- **Promotion:** A selection of strategic communication tools (including a website) has been produced, with which the University can communicate with its partners.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

The September 2014 signing of the agreement between the Group of 6 National Institutes of Applied Sciences [*Instituts Nationaux des Sciences Appliquées*, (INSA) – leading French group of engineering institutes] and the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez has paved the way for the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Institute of Technology (*INSA Euro-Méditerranée*), involving a large Euro-Mediterranean consortium of universities from Italy, Morocco, Portugal and Spain. Benefits for the UEMF and its specific regional dimension include the training programmes implemented in *INSA Euro-Méditerranée*, which will be recognised by the French and Moroccan governments and by the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education.

In October 2014, the UEMF launched the first two accredited master's degree programmes in the fields of environmental engineering and renewable energy.



AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Improving student mobility and employability through education

● The Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI University)

The EMUNI University is an international network of over 200 universities. Its headquarters are in Slovenia. The EMUNI University's main mission is to **strengthen mutual understanding**

and intercultural dialogue among Euro-Mediterranean countries by implementing postgraduate study and research programmes.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Following the appointment of a new President, and with the direct intermediation of the UfM Secretariat aimed at advancing the implementation of UfM-labelled master's and PhD programmes of EMUNI, 50 tuition waivers (worth approximately €1.5 million) related to a master's degree in Business Administration have been offered by the St. John International University (Torino, Italy). 60% will be reserved for EMUNI students enrolled in Southern universities.



Developing the UfM Secretariat as a platform for Mediterranean higher education and youth mobility

Improving South-South and North-South Euro-Mediterranean mobility is a major challenge, and one that highlights the need for the UfM Secretariat to act as a platform, providing visibility and synergy to ongoing mobility schemes and projects in the region. During this activity period, the UfM Secretariat concentrated on **facilitating coordination among main stakeholders**, with a view to fostering exchange of best practices and cooperation in this field.

In addition, the UfM Secretariat developed partnerships **with strategic university networks**, such as the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED), the Association of Arab Universities (AARU) and the Secretariat of the Arab-Euro Conference on Higher Education (AECHE), as well as other university networks from the region. One example of this fruitful collaboration was the January 2014 signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with UNIMED to further develop projects and widen cooperation.

● High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executives Recruitment (HOMERe)

HOMERe can be flagged as the first concrete result in the area of student mobility. In full accordance with the **Med4Jobs** initiative, the UfM labelled the project at the end of 2014 in order to set up an **innovative internship mobility scheme** between nine Mediterranean countries, primarily targeting Southern Mediterranean students. The project will involve business companies

with development prospects in the Mediterranean, by offering paid internships that answer to a certain number of quality criteria.

HOMERe is promoted by the Mediterranean Network of Engineering and Management Schools (RMEI), with the support of a wide consortium of academic and economic organisations.



AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Improving student mobility and employability through education

Improving the quality of vocational training and higher education in the Euro-Mediterranean area

In view of the high levels of youth unemployment in the region, the UfM Secretariat has consistently worked to improve the quality of vocational training and higher education in the Euro-Mediterranean area. This involves striving to replicate concrete initiatives that have proved successful in other countries and aligning VT and HE systems with the labour market needs.

○ MedNC – New Chance Mediterranean Network

Building upon the success of the *Ecole de la Deuxième Chance* pedagogical model and adapting it to the Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan contexts, the project MedNC – New Chance Mediterranean Network – promoted by the Office de Coopération Economique pour la Méditerranée et l’Orient (OCEMO) was labelled in 2014 under the framework of UfM’s **Med4Jobs** initiative. Local centres

targeting young people that did not complete their formal education and young unemployed graduates will be accredited as “New Chance” schools, and integrated into a **wider Mediterranean MedNC network**, which facilitates regional exchanges of experiences and good practices.





Facilitating North-South dialogue within Mediterranean scientific research frameworks

In the field of research and innovation, the UfM Secretariat continued to encourage further involvement of Southern Mediterranean countries within the current research frameworks and programmes covering the region. It also continued to participate in the main coordination research programmes, such as MEDSPRING (Mediterranean Science, Policy, Research & Innovation Gateway) and ERANETMED.

● Higher education on food security and rural development

Following [the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between CIHEAM \(Centre International de Hautes Études Agronomiques Méditerranéennes\) and the UfM Secretariat](#), the UfM-labelled project Higher Education on Food Security and Rural Development, aimed at improving CIHEAM's advanced training

programmes, was launched in 2014. One of the project's objectives is to increase women's participation in the CIHEAM MSc programmes. A rise in enrolment is foreseen for the 2015-2016 academic year thanks to the allocation of 20 *ad hoc* scholarships to Southern Mediterranean female students.

Partnership in Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA)

Promising new prospects for cooperation in the field of research and innovation were opened in 2014 in relation to the intergovernmental initiative Partnership in Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA)². The initiative aims at developing a long-term integrated R&I programme on food systems and water resources in the region, based on article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which enables the financial participation of the European Commission in research programmes jointly undertaken by several Member States. The UfM Secretariat is actively involved in the development of this partnership.

² Countries participating in PRIMA: Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. Germany, Israel, the European Commission and Romania participated as observers at PRIMA meetings. Luxembourg and the Czech Republic expressed a willingness to join PRIMA.



Fostering gender equality and women's socio-economic empowerment

The UfM Secretariat played an active role in the preparation of the third UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, held from 11-12 September 2013 in Paris, and ensured its follow-up through the organisation of the first project-oriented conference on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment, held in March 2014.

The implementation of three labelled projects began in 2014, aimed at enhancing women's access to local labour markets and entrepreneurial networks. Two further projects are in the final stages of the labelling process, while several others are in the assessment phase.

The UfM Secretariat continued its efforts in building institutional and strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the region in the field of women's empowerment. These diverse partners include international and regional organisations, donors, the private sector and civil society organisations.

To foster synergies, coherence and complementarity between actors and in order to avoid duplication, while maximising the impact of actions and advancing policies and women's socio-economic empowerment agenda, the UfM Secretariat started building a regionally structured multi-stakeholder dialogue on women's empowerment involving governments and non-governmental organisations.

The UfM Secretariat also implements a gender mainstreaming approach in all its sectorial projects and initiatives.



Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society

The third UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society was held in Paris from 11-12 September 2013. The UfM Secretariat played an active role in the preparatory process, working closely with the Co-Presidents, with France as the host country and the other Member States on [the conclusions of the Conference](#). The UfM Secretariat further contributed by producing a Progress Report on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, which was directly linked to the Conference's conclusions.



The President of France, Mr. François Hollande, addressing the audience at the third Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society. Paris, 11-12 September 2013.

UfM Project Conference on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress

As mandated in the final Declaration, and in order to facilitate project delivery and funding, the UfM Secretariat organised the UfM Project Conference

on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress, held in March 2014 in Barcelona.



The Conference gathered **250 major stakeholders from 35 countries**, including governmental representatives, international development agencies from the region and beyond, international organisations dealing with women's empowerment and gender equality, private sector and civil society representatives, and promoters of current and potential UfM projects.

Based on its **multi-stakeholder and project-oriented approach**, major needs and challenges for advancing an agenda for women in the Euro-Mediterranean

region was identified and public policies and private sector development programmes for women's empowerment were analysed. Three workshops allowed participants to share concrete proposals and recommendations on ways to improve the value chain for income-generating activities, to facilitate transition from education to work and to improve women's access to decision-making positions. New projects, initiatives and partners were identified, and labelled projects were officially presented, and in some cases launched.

HIGHLIGHT

The Conference, which will be held for a second edition in May 2015, provided an opportunity to officially launch a call for new projects. In addition, three UfM-labelled projects were presented: Developing Women's Empowerment, Young Women as Job Creators, and Skills for Success: Employability Skills for Women.



The French Minister of Women's Rights, Ms. Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, addressing the audience on the occasion of the UfM Project Conference on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress. Barcelona, 26-27 March 2014.



Supporting the regional agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment

● Skills for Success: Employability Skills for Women

Promoted by AMIDEAST (America-MidEast Educational and Training Services), the project's goal is to **support 450 underprivileged young women** and girls from the beneficiary countries in acquiring practical tools and knowledge needed to access labour markets, such as English language skills for the workplace, computer literacy, business communication and job-finding skills.

The project was implemented in Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon in 2014. Participant selection was followed by **320 hours of training between September and December 2014**. The 2015 implementation of the project in Egypt and Tunisia will constitute its second phase.

● Developing Women's Empowerment

This project, promoted by the Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation, is composed along three major lines, all interconnected and supported by a **trilingual internet platform** in French, Arabic and English:

- as a source of knowledge aimed at sharing and disseminating gender-related information;
- as an environment for networking aimed at creating links with associations and organisations involved in women and gender equality;
- as a catalyst for creating a series of grassroots field projects, supported by the promoter and focusing on women's socio-economic empowerment in the Southern Mediterranean.

The **Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation** was founded in September 2013 in Barcelona. It is composed of and governed by a Directorate of Representatives from the North and the South of the Mediterranean, which includes non-governmental organisations, the academic and research community and the public sector. **The Foundation's six founding members** are the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed, Spain), *Forum Femmes Méditerranée* (France), *Réseau Universitaire et Scientifique Euro-Méditerranéen sur le Genre et les Femmes* (RUSEMEG), *Fédération de la Ligue Démocratique des Droits des Femmes* (Morocco), the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), and the French government. The Directorate held its first meeting in Barcelona, in December 2014.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

During this period, the UfM Secretariat accompanied the promoter in defining its fundraising and activity programme. The French government pledged to provide €1.3 million over three years, as part of the €2.4 million programme: *Fonds de Solidarité Prioritaire "Femmes d'avenir en Méditerranée"*.



● Young Women as Job Creators: Facilitating young women's access to work by promoting entrepreneurship in universities

Promoted by AFAEMME (Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen) and labelled in September 2011, this project was officially launched on 30 April 2013 in Barcelona, with the participation of the Presidents of AFAEMME and four businesswomen associations (one from each participating country) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Spanish private company *Gas Natural Fenosa* and the European Investment Bank as the project's donors.

The first phase of the project was successfully implemented in 2013-2014.

Around 800 young female students benefited from the Women Entrepreneurship Day (WED) held at 32 local universities, higher education centres and national businesswomen organisation headquarters in the initial four countries (Spain, Jordan, Morocco and Palestine). The second phase of the project will be implemented in 2015, in Tunisia, Egypt and Albania, while the project continues in the initial four countries. Activities in support of the beneficiaries will be further developed and enhanced.



● Forming Responsible Citizens

This project, promoted by Ideaborn, was labelled in April 2014. It aims to contribute to the **prevention of violence against girls and women** through the implementation of a renewed civic education curriculum in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, which highlights the prevention of violence and promotes equality between boys and girls.

Several other projects form part of the UfM's plans to support women's empowerment. They relate among other things to the promotion of leadership amongst women, job creation and entrepreneurship, and strengthening the added value of handicraft projects, the social economy, education and vocational training.

Horizontal activities

The UfM Secretariat has dedicated special attention to consolidating its role in mainstreaming the gender dimension into all the activities and projects of the UfM divisions.

The UfM Secretariat also organised a number of regional events addressing topics such as women's handicraft in the region, regional cooperation on women's empowerment, and youth initiatives in the region.

- In October 2014, it organised a multi-stakeholder workshop in Beirut on vocational education and training (VET) for girls and women in the Euro-Mediterranean region, on the occasion of the launch in Lebanon of the first phase of the UfM-labelled project, Skills for Success: Employability Skills for Women, promoted by AMIDEAST.
- The 3rd Women's Mentoring International Forum was held in Rabat (Morocco) on 23 November 2013 and was organised by the Moroccan Women's Mentoring and Networking with the support of the UfM Secretariat. This edition focused on the socio-economic integration of young women, and the need to promote mentoring as a key factor for women's socio-economic empowerment in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Around 300 participants attended the Forum, which provided an optimal space for open dialogue, exchange of experiences and networking among attendees.
- The UfM Secretariat also participated in various workshops related to women's empowerment. In particular, it contributed to the OECD-MENA Women's Business Forum and the Euro-Mediterranean Réseau Mixité et Gouvernance.



Institutional partnerships

On the margins of the UfM Project Conference on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress, two funding agreements with the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Flanders (Belgium) were signed, to cover projects and initiatives carried out by the UfM Secretariat in the field of gender equality.

In addition to this, the UfM Secretariat met the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the UN Women's Headquarters in New York on 25 September 2014. The talks proved highly fruitful as a Memorandum of Understanding was signed that laid the ground for further cooperation and coordination of mutual efforts that promote gender equality, effectively advance women's rights, increase women's socio-economic opportunities and combat all kinds of discrimination and violence against girls and women in the Euro-Mediterranean region.





Signature of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UfM Secretariat
and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

Building partnerships with financial stakeholders

Priority was given in 2013-2014 to defining the UfM Secretariat's cooperation and financial networking strategy as a prerequisite to contributing to the implementation of labelled projects.

The UfM Secretariat developed a strategy action plan that was carried out according to its fixed objectives and targets. This sought to instigate productive relationships with bilateral institutions that resulted in genuine concrete cooperation on specific actions and projects. The UfM Secretariat further focused its efforts on strengthening and building funding partnerships with a complementary set of potential partners. Activities were made possible by building upon established relationships with partner organisations through bilateral missions and visits, or through wider regional or international forums.

The fundraising plan relies on two channels: European-based financial institutions and non-European funders, in addition to the aforementioned strategy for the private sector.



Strategic Partnership with the EU

The UfM Secretariat further strengthened its close cooperation with its major partner, the European Union, which holds the UfM Northern Co-Presidency. Close and effective cooperation has been established and joint initiatives have been undertaken with several Directorates Generals of the European Commission, under the coordination of DG DEVCO, which has a seconded official at the UfM Secretariat.

- The UfM Secretariat organised two seminars (one in 2013 and another in 2014) with [the Heads of Cooperation of the EU Delegations in the region](#), to develop synergies with the Delegations and thus define ways of working together on different UfM projects and EU-UfM activities in the region.
- The UfM Secretariat moved towards developing a structured relationship with the Managing Authority of the [EU-funded Cross-Border Cooperation Programme for the Mediterranean Basin](#), which holds considerable potential thanks to existing complementarities.

The UfM Secretariat has contributed to ongoing efforts to stimulate a more coordinated response to the existing and emerging challenges in the Southern Mediterranean, through better information exchange and broad operational partnerships.

- The UfM Secretariat participated in the [High-level International Financial Institutions meeting](#) organised by the European Commission (DG DEVCO) in Brussels on 1 October 2014. The meeting sought to maximise the effectiveness of current aid flows and the impact of development assistance on the reform paths.
- At the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU held on 15 December 2014, the Council adopted the Italian- and Greek-backed initiative on a common [Southern Mediterranean Investment Coordination Initiative \(AMICI\)](#). The initiative aims to facilitate strategic coordination of the main activities in the region related to investment facilitation, private sector development, and the creation of an environment that enables and encourages business and direct foreign investment.

Strengthening relations with European-based financial institutions

The following actions were pursued by the UfM Secretariat during 2013-2014:

- High-level dialogue and stronger cooperation was developed with the [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB) and the [European Bank of Reconstruction and Development](#) (EBRD), which both have seconded staff working at the UfM Secretariat. The UfM Secretariat participated in the 14th Meeting of the Committee of the FEMIP, and high-level meetings were held. With the [EBRD](#), further synergies were built for common activities, namely in the field of renewable energy, resource efficiency and food security.
- [Official visits and working meetings](#) were organised with several donors, where promising synergies for institutional collaboration and funding were pursued through a targeted approach: KfW (Germany), AFD (France), Danida (Denmark), Sida (Sweden), AECID (Spain) and Fida (Finland).
- As a consequence of contacts established through official visits, working meetings and extensive dialogue, a strategic agreement was reached with the government of [Norway to fund projects in the field of social affairs](#).
- Bilateral funding agreements were also concluded with [Flanders](#) (Belgium) to fund a UfM project for women's empowerment with the potential to renew agreements in the future (see above).
- The UfM Secretariat organised two seminars in 2014 to explore potential synergies in collaboration with regional partners. Firstly, from a horizontal perspective, a [Nordic coordination meeting](#) was held with positive engagement and follow-up in which Sida of Sweden engaged with the Secretariat in the area of water governance and management. Opportunities were identified in the civil affairs, environment and urban development sectors. From a sector-specific point of view, a working session was held on solid waste management with the Secretariat of [the Council of the Baltic Sea States](#).

Consolidating relations with non-European funders

The UfM Secretariat steadily developed its outreach strategy towards potential partners, in the public and private sector in the Gulf region. The UfM Secretariat took decisive steps towards reaching a long-term and structured relationship with **Gulf-based foundations** such as MICAD, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, the Al Maktoum Foundation and the Emirates Foundation.

The UfM Secretariat also strengthened its ties with the **African Development Bank and the Islamic Bank of Development**, with whom synergies in projects and initiatives are being developed.

Special attention was given to strengthening UfM activities within the framework of the **Deauville Partnership Transition Fund**. These activities aim to promote transformational projects in the transition countries and encourage coordination between international financial institutions.

The UfM Secretariat is involved in the work of the Steering Committee of the Transition Fund, primarily by helping to secure funding for the UfM-labelled LOGISMED-TA project. It has also been engaged in a number of initiatives under the Governance Pillar of the Deauville Partnership. Furthermore, the UfM Secretary General participated in the Deauville Partnership Foreign Ministers Meeting, held in New York on 25 September 2014, when the Partnership was under German Presidency.

Strengthening collaboration with our institutional Mediterranean partners

The UfM Secretariat worked in close partnership with public institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations to enhance cooperation and understanding between Mediterranean stakeholders.

This role of facilitator is crucial in the process of building links and bridges between public and private institutions that are often found to pursue similar goals. Helping to engender the kind of synergies that can exploit the gains of pooling resources or sharing expertise is paramount to the UfM's role as a chief interlocutor in the region.

Closer links with UfM institutional partners

In keeping with its dedication towards collaboration, the UfM continuously seeks to pursue its goals and objectives in the most inclusive manner. To this end, the Secretariat committed time to strengthening its relations and synergies with its Euro-Mediterranean partners, which include parliamentarians, local authorities, and economic and social stakeholders.

[Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean \(PA-UfM\)](#)

Following previous years of dynamic and close cooperation, the UfM Secretariat Divisions worked closely with the PA-UfM. The UfM Secretariat also attended several PA-UfM events and Committees and received different delegations of the PA-UfM at its headquarters.

In line with preparation of the March 2014 Women's Project Conference, the UfM Secretariat organised jointly with the PA-UfM [the Committee on Women's Rights](#) on 29 November 2013 in Barcelona. This meeting provided a prime opportunity to focus on two main topics: "The situation of women in armed conflicts" and "Women and job creation". Furthermore, the UfM Secretariat participated in meetings of the PA-UfM with a specific focus on UfM projects and programmes: European Parliament debate on Mediterranean issues (9 October 2013, Strasbourg) and Young Leaders Forum Maghreb – EU (4-6 November 2013, Brussels). In 2014, the UfM Secretariat attended the PA-UfM plenary session on 9 February (Amman) and hosted in Barcelona the [Energy, Environment and Water Committee](#) on 12 June.

Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM)

The UfM Secretariat has strived to strengthen its cooperation with ARLEM. In this regard, the UfM Secretariat signed a **joint declaration of intent** in February 2013. On 23 May 2013, in the framework of the ARLEM bureau, the UfM Secretariat jointly organised with ARLEM a workshop aiming to involve Local Authority (LA) actors and to identify common priorities such as sustainable urban mobility, the role of women and ways to support employment. Representatives of Euro-Mediterranean Local Authorities also shared their experiences in the promotion of local employment and support for entrepreneurship, particularly for women and youth. What's more, the UfM Secretariat held an operational meeting with stakeholders of ARLEM's capacity-building project in the field of **urban development** (see page 36). In parallel to its institutional relations, the UfM Secretariat continues to work closely with LA actors in order to improve the local dimension of its regional cooperation and projects.

In addition, the UfM Secretariat and the Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in June 2013 to strengthen common work and promote the role of regions in Mediterranean cooperation.

European Parliament

The SG of the UfM held several meetings with the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz. In addition, a **working session on the Union for the Mediterranean** was held at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament on 31 March 2014, with the participation of the Spanish Secretary of State for the European Union, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo. The projects

and initiatives developed by the UfM Secretariat were discussed, as well as the state of play and path forward for the UfM as an operational platform fostering greater regional integration in the Mediterranean.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)

In addition to existing cooperation with PA-UfM, the Secretariat of the UfM formalised a new cooperation agreement with the PAM through the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 9 April 2013. This joint document laid the basis for strengthening cooperation with national parliamentarians of Mediterranean countries.

Social and Economic Councils (EESC) and assimilated Mediterranean institutions

During this activity period, the UfM Secretariat consolidated its relationship with the EESC. The UfM jointly organised with the EESC the first Social and Economic Councils summit that took place in Barcelona on 11-12 November 2013. The summit gathered important civil society and private sector representatives and trade unions (from the North and South), to discuss and exchange insights on the UfM's main priorities and fields of work, such as women's empowerment, job creation and entrepreneurship.

Harnessing regional and sub-regional cooperation

In addition to its core institutional and operational partnership with EU institutions, the UfM Secretariat continued to develop its relations with regional and sub-regional international organisations and cooperation schemes, such as the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue and the Agadir Agreement. These enhanced relations are essential for ensuring greater coordination and synergies, and increasing the operational capacity of already established partnerships for the delivery and completion of concrete projects and initiatives.

Regional and sub-regional international organisations and initiatives

The UfM Secretariat was increasingly involved in the activities developed under the framework of the [5+5 Dialogue](#) that are more directly related to its priority areas. The UfM Secretariat developed several actions and initiatives with the [Union du Maghreb Arabe \(UMA\)](#) and the [Agadir Technical Unit](#).

[The League of Arab States](#) is a key partner for the UfM. It actively participates in UfM Senior Officials Meetings.

Several further actions and initiatives were developed in 2013 and 2014 with the [Council of Baltic Sea States](#) and the [Visegrad Group](#).

The UfM Secretariat also initiated preliminary contacts with a number of regional institutions, including the [Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation](#), the [Regional Cooperation Council](#), the [Adriatic-Ionian Initiative](#) and the [Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Nations](#).

Participation at Ministerial Conferences and high-level meetings

The UfM Secretariat was involved in a number of Ministerial Conferences, high-level meetings and events convened to discuss specific issues of interest for the region, such as the [Ministerial Conference on Stability and Development in Libya](#), held in Madrid (17 September 2014), the informal [Ministerial meeting of the Mediterranean Group of EU countries](#), held in Alicante, Spain (16 April 2014), the [Invest in Tunisia: Start-Up Democracy Conference](#), held in Tunis (8 September 2014), the [International Conference on](#)

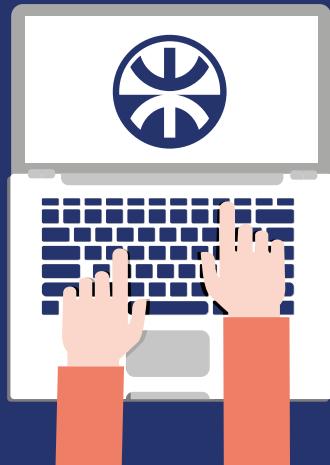
[Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza](#), held in Cairo (12 October 2014), the [5th Global Entrepreneurship Summit \(GES\)](#), held in Marrakech (19-21 November 2014), and the [2nd World Human Rights Forum \(WHRF\)](#), held in Marrakech (27-30 November 2014). The prominence of these meetings and the players involved is reflective of the UfM's standing in the region and indicates the role it plays in promoting participatory and productive discussion between both existing and potential partners.

UfM communication in figures



More than
400,000 page views
on the UfM website each year.

Launching of
new redesigned
multilingual website
and e-newsletter
(EN, FR, AR).



Over
18,000 online users
follow UfM activities
and actions through the UfM social networks.

Amplifying the message

As an institution comprising 43 countries with a mandate to promote regional cooperation projects and activities in the Euro-Mediterranean region, outreach communication represents a strategic objective for the UfM Secretariat.

Actions in this regard included the development of relations with key **media and opinion leaders** across the Euro-Mediterranean region (working visits, informative events, partnership agreements) and the production of a range of **new communication tools** (website content, and videos) **and publications** (leaflets, newsletters and project fact sheets).

The UfM Secretariat launched a **new redesigned website** offering an improved user experience through better navigation and access to content. A multilingual platform was also developed and launched in order to make the UfM website available in English, French and Arabic. Thanks to these actions, the website performance improved progressively in terms of total number of visits, and the information now reaches wider audiences in the Southern Mediterranean countries. Likewise, the **UfM bi-monthly newsletter** keeps more than 10,000 stakeholders, opinion leaders and people interested in Mediterranean affairs up to date on the latest news, projects and work carried out by the Secretariat.

The UfM Secretariat closely followed and participated where appropriate in debates aimed at generating ideas, analysis and concrete ideas for the promotion of regional cooperation. Informative sessions on the UfM were held in collaboration with important think tanks and universities, including CIDOB, Friends of Europe, Real Instituto Elcano, the College of Europe and

IBEI. It also welcomed the creation of MED Confederation as a key network of players to promote socioeconomic cooperation in the Mediterranean region, and collaborated with its members, including La Caixa, the IEMed (European Institute of the Mediterranean), the WSBI (World Savings and Retail Banking Institute, Brussels), IPEMED (Institut de Prospective Economique du Monde Méditerranéen, France), Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (Tunisia), Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion (Morocco), TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey), Al Barid Bank (Morocco) and CEEBA (Chamber of the Euro Chambers in Egypt).

Furthermore, operational collaboration with the **Communication & Press units from key partner institutions** such as Press Officers of EU Delegations in UfM countries, the Council of the European Union and European Commission was established, thus allowing the Secretariat to reach wider audiences across the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries.

During this period, the UfM Secretariat reinforced its presence on the most important **social networks**, increasing the base of followers on Facebook and Twitter. The Secretariat reported live on its events through Twitter and created dedicated picture and video galleries on Flickr and YouTube.



Union for the Mediterranean

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