



**MALTA EU 2017**

Valletta Declaration on  
Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean  
Cooperation through Research and  
Innovation

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**4 May 2017  
Valletta, Malta**





# Valletta Declaration on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation

**We, the Ministers responsible for Research and Innovation from the Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and of the European Union (EU), and in the presence of Mr. Carlos Moedas, Member of the European Commission responsible for Research, Science and Innovation, Mr. Karmenu Vella, Member of the European Commission responsible for Environment, met in Valletta, Malta on 4 May 2017, determined to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation through research and innovation.**

**RECOGNISING** that the Mediterranean area has great potential for *economic growth which could be used to deliver the social and sustainable dimension of the region*;

**CONSIDERING** that the Mediterranean area is experiencing intense social, economic, environmental and demographic changes; that population growth, urban concentration around coastal areas and a climate-sensitive agriculture amongst others, result in water stress, while the incidence of extreme climate events is likely to increase in the region in coming years; that our Mediterranean Sea witnesses the strife and desperation of thousands of migrants who are driven to leave their home countries to escape conflict-stricken territories or to improve their living conditions;

**WELCOMING** the commitment of the Member States of the UfM and of the EU to delivering on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as also recently demonstrated by the implementing actions and commitments taken at COP22 in Marrakech;

**We restate our belief that strengthening Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in research and innovation contributes to fully tap the potential of economic growth and sustainable development of the Mediterranean. Therefore, we reconfirm our commitment to knowledge creation and to identifying innovative solutions as a means to creating more opportunities for youth and to understanding and addressing key challenges in the Mediterranean area.**



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***[STOCK TAKING]***

1. We **RECALL** the Joint Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research held in Cairo on 18 June 2007, the Conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Research and Innovation held in Barcelona on 2-3 April 2012 and the Discussion of the Informal meeting of the Competitiveness Council on “Euro- Mediterranean Cooperation in Research and Innovation – The Vision and the Mission” held in Nicosia on 20 July 2012.
2. We **REITERATE** the commitment to addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement resulting from state fragility and insecurity, as well as from demographic, economic and environmental trends as expressed in the Declaration and the Action Plan following the Valletta Summit on Migration held on 11-12 November 2015 and in the Conclusions of the high-level Conference on the Migration Challenge and the Role of Research held in Brussels in February 2016.
3. We also **SUPPORT** the Declaration of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour, held in Jordan on 27 September 2016, which calls for mainstreaming employment and decent work objectives in other UfM policies and cooperation initiatives, including research and innovation; the Declaration of the Dialogue 5+5 Third Ministerial Conference on Research and Innovation and Higher Education, held in Tunis, on 31 March 2017.
4. We **RECALL** the Declaration of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change held in Athens on 13 May 2014 and the Declaration of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Water held in Valletta, on 27 April 2017.
5. In the area of Blue Economy, we **PROMOTE** the importance of "Investing on Blue research, technology, innovation, knowledge and skills" as indicated in the Declaration of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy, held in Brussels on 17 November 2015, in the Conclusions of the high-level Conference on the BLUEMED initiative held in Venice in October 2015 and the Venice Declaration as well as in the conclusions of the Ministerial Conference on Blue Growth, held in Valletta, on 20 April 2017.
6. We **WELCOME** the Joint Programming Proposal for a Partnership in Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) and the subsequent Proposal of the European Commission on 18 October 2016, for a 'Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the participation of the EU in PRIMA jointly undertaken by several Member States'.



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***[MIGRATION and RESEARCH & INNOVATION]***

7. We **UPHOLD** the key role that research and innovation play in developing an understanding of the root causes of migration and the inter-dependencies between different drivers for migration including economic, political, social, demographic, conflict-related and environmental drivers. In this respect, we **EMPHASIZE** the importance of brain circulation, integration and the contribution of scientific diasporas to regional integration, human and sustainable development and regional stability and **ACKNOWLEDGE** the need for increased researchers' and students' mobility, and take note of initiatives launched by countries in the Euro-Mediterranean area to support refugee scientists and researchers in the EU, including 'science4refugees'.
8. We **PURSUE** to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge and data, aimed at understanding and addressing the challenges posed by migration and integration while also maximising its benefits to the Euro-Mediterranean area, and acknowledge the importance of developing jointly tailored approaches to the needs of populations in the countries of origin and transit as well as of host populations.

***[PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA -PRIMA]***

9. We **WELCOME** PRIMA as the most ambitious joint programme to be undertaken in the frame of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and we **CONFIRM** our intention to implementing it on the basis of the principles of co-ownership, mutual interest and shared benefit. We therefore **CALL** for PRIMA to develop, in coherence with national research and innovation policies and programmes in the field of water provision and agro-food systems, in collaboration with the existing Initiatives (such as, Joint Programming initiatives on Water and FACCE and others), a common strategic research and innovation agenda so as to promote scientific excellence, contribute to healthier and more sustainable Euro-Mediterranean societies and strengthen capacities durably while leveraging the knowledge and financial resources of both public and private stakeholders. We therefore **CALL** for the prompt implementation of the PRIMA programme so as to maximise its impact at early stages within the timeframe of Horizon 2020 and beyond.

***[RESEARCH and INNOVATION for BLUE JOBS and GROWTH in the Mediterranean Area (BLUEMED)]***

10. We **WELCOME** the BLUEMED initiative as a means to promote a healthy, productive and resilient Mediterranean Sea and stress the importance of structuring Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in marine and maritime sectors to encompass a broad range of objectives comprising the creation of new, blue jobs and social well-being while also being mindful of sustainable development and the preservation of the environment in the Mediterranean area.



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11. We **VALUE** the work performed by the countries in the Western Mediterranean and the Adriatic and Ionian Region that aim at a joint and common definition of research priorities and **WELCOME** the efforts pursued by the European Commission and the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU to include other member countries of the UfM in the implementation of the BLUEMED initiative on a voluntary basis. To this aim, we **CALL** for support to maintain an open dialogue between key stakeholders to develop joint sub-regional and regional approaches towards actions supporting the implementation of the BLUEMED initiative. We **ACKNOWLEDGE** the potential of research and innovation communities across the Euro-Mediterranean area to maximise existing and future opportunities and the use of the most appropriate instruments supporting the implementation of the BLUEMED initiative.

***[THE WAY FORWARD]***

12. We **ENCOURAGE** a coordinated and partnership approach in the Euro-Mediterranean area, including establishing common platforms for methodologies for data collection, analysis and use on migration and integration-related aspects, while making the best possible use of existing tools.
13. We **CALL** for a common research and innovation agenda for countries in the Euro-Mediterranean area based on the principles of co-ownership, equal footing and mutual benefit in the key common areas of interest of food systems and water resources in PRIMA, including through key enabling technologies (KETs) and circular economy processes, and **LOOK FORWARD** to the swift implementation and launch of the first Calls in 2018.
14. We **ACKNOWLEDGE** the importance of developing and promoting a shared vision of the Mediterranean Sea as a healthy, safe and productive common resource, so as to promote security, safety and prosperity of present and future generations, via the BLUEMED initiative.
15. We **EMBOLDEN** the development of further priorities for future research and innovation cooperation, including in areas of high industrial relevance. Furthermore, novel innovation paradigms (particularly frugal innovation) addressing societal needs in a sustainable and affordable way could provide significant advantages to facilitate the take-up of new solutions coming from industrial enabling technologies, by involving all relevant stakeholders of the target value chains. Other activities could be enhanced for example in the transport sector, in the fields of competitive, green ports and hinterland connectivity, transport and logistics networks, sustainable urban development and mobility, social sciences, health, environment, blue technology, climate change and renewable energy research.
16. We **INVITE** the EU-MED Group of Senior Officials in Research and Innovation, through its Co-Presidency, in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the UfM, to pursue its efforts to identify priorities for research and innovation cooperation in the Mediterranean, actively promote synergies and complementarities among all the Euro-Mediterranean countries and stakeholders and in cooperation with the Co-Presidency of the UfM Blue Economy Working Group, in order to provide added value to investments and achieve sustainable growth and decent job creation for the region, by capitalizing on achieved results and best practices including through removing barriers, promoting brain circulation, avoiding duplication, reducing fragmentation and promoting integration, while fostering gender equality and research ethics.



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