

III Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean

Barcelona, 8 October, 2018

Conclusions of the Co-Presidency

A renewed commitment for regional cooperation and prosperity

The Third Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) commemorated the Tenth Anniversary of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean which gave birth to the organization, building on the acquis of the Barcelona Process.

We reaffirmed their strong political commitment to promote regional cooperation and recognized the UfM as a unique, action-driven platform to intensify joint efforts to address common challenges and create common opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region, placing the people of the region, and their legitimate demands, at the center of the cooperation and working together to address the serious challenges that undermine prosperity and stability in the region.

We renewed our appreciation for the UfM's effective model of governance which has increased ownership, encouraged political dialogue, optimized multi-stakeholder approach thus facilitating partnerships and synergies, and reinforced practical cooperation and regional integration, as part of an inclusive process based on the principle of consensus.

We appreciated the UfM's active engagement in developing meaningful solutions in a large number of crucial areas including employment and business development, energy and climate action, women empowerment, social development, higher education and research, environment and water management, urban development, digital economy and connectivity, depollution, integrated resource management and trade. We encouraged full implementation of the various commitments taken in the declarations of the increasing number of sectorial conferences held at ministerial level and the work pursued in the numerous regional platforms. Developments in these areas have strengthened the operational common agenda and concretely support our joint efforts towards the overarching goal of creating an area of peace, security, stability and prosperity that would respect all the inalienable legitimate

political rights and aspirations of the peoples of the Euro-Mediterranean region. These efforts, however, are no alternative to political solutions to regional crises that hamper such cooperation. Reaching such solutions in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and relevant UN resolutions are key to achieving the peace that peoples of the region need and deserve.

We positively assessed the first elements of the implementation of the UfM Roadmap for Action adopted at the II Regional Forum held on 23 January 2017, and encouraged the Senior Officials to agree on the specific priorities for the year to come.

We expressed satisfaction for the more than 50 projects with regional impact that have been labelled by the UfM so far and encouraged their swift implementation as a reflection of the concrete opportunities available for regional cooperation and integration. We particularly welcomed the decisive financial and political support provided in March 2018 for the construction of the Gaza Central Desalination Plant that will provide safe water for the population of Gaza. This UfM labelled project will have a major impact for the environment, economic opportunities, humanitarian situation and stability of Gaza.

We endorsed the review mechanism for the selection and labelling procedures of projects in order to strengthen the added-value they can provide for achieving enhanced regional cooperation and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

With young people and women at the very heart of all the UfM activities and endeavors, this year's Regional Forum particularly focused on one of the flagship initiatives developed by the UfM Secretariat, namely the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs), which has become a cross-sectoral pipeline of projects that emphasize job creation, skills development, SMEs promotion and employability enhancement.

We recognized the usefulness to continue developing the interactions between the UfM and other actors in Euro-Mediterranean region, and encouraged the UfM Secretariat to increase synergies with the activities pursued within the framework of the reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy, at national and regional level, as well as to continue supporting

regional and sub-regional initiatives such as the 5+5 Dialogue, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Agadir Agreement.

We agreed to meet again in the same format for a Fourth Regional Forum in 2019.