



Concept Note

Workshop on Social Economy in the MENA Region and the Balkans

5 July 2019 – UfM Secretariat, Barcelona

Social Economy is both the agent and the instrument of inclusive and responsible growth in the UfM Region at varying degrees of progress that correspond to the heterogeneity of the Euro-Mediterranean region in terms of enabling environments and business cultures. The **potential for job creation** through Social Economy in the MENA Region and the Balkans remains to be largely unexplored in comparison to other regions, which presents an opportunity and poses question marks about the optimal path ahead in order to unleash the potential of a significant private sector player with more than 3.2 million enterprises and 15 million jobs.

The Ministerial Declaration of the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour held in Cascais on 2-3 April 2019 placed an unequivocal emphasis on Social Economy, not only as an alternative way of delivering economic, social and environmental value, but also a smart way of unlocking resources, creating sustainable employment, and generating inclusive economic growth in the region. They call for *“promoting Social Innovation and creating an enabling environment for Social Enterprises to unleash the full potential of Social and Solidarity Economy,”* and *“acknowledge the role it will play in the context of the work program on UfM Industrial Cooperation and SMEs development.”*

Acting upon the UfM Ministerial mandates and in line with the UfM Roadmap’s emphasis on ensuring the contribution of UfM activities to regional stability and human development efforts, the UfM Secretariat in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (**GIZ**) GmbH commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (**BMZ**), and in partnership with the Spanish Confederation of Social Economy Enterprises (**CEPES**), will organize a **Workshop on Social Economy in the MENA Region and the Balkans** at its premises in Barcelona on **5 July 2019**. The Workshop will focus on two key thematic, namely **Entrepreneurship and Job Creation in Social Economy** and **Social Innovation for a positive Socio-Economic Impact**.

This Workshop is meant to be the **first of a series of UfM events dedicated to Social Economy**. It will bring together stakeholders, Governments, International organisations and practitioners **from both shores of the Euro-Mediterranean Region**, and will facilitate the exchange of experiences on bottlenecks, opportunities and challenges of Social Economy in the region, as well as ideas on how to consolidate the Sector and adapt the lessons learned to the different socio-economic and political-legal realities of each sub-region. The **recommendations yielded by this Workshop will feed into future activities and policy dialogues** in a structured and sequential manner.