



UfM Regional Dialogue

# SHARED VIEWS ON KEY ISSUES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

22-23  
MAY 2019

A contribution to the 

## *Roundtable on Regional Economic and Social Challenges for Women and Youth*

The Euro-Mediterranean region retains one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world. This is an issue common to both the Southern and the Northern shores, with at least six Northern Mediterranean countries featuring youth unemployment rates exceeding 30%. Moreover, the failure to properly integrate women into the job market is a loss to the whole economy, as more and more women end up in the informal sector, mostly in emerging and developing countries. The majority of these workers, whether women or vulnerable communities, lack social protection, rights at work and decent working conditions which seriously hampers the inclusive development efforts underway towards the achievement of several SDGs, including Goal number 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal number 10 (Reduced Inequalities). In North Africa alone, close to 77% of the 80 million working-age women in the sub-region remain outside the labour force.

In parallel, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, whose currency is coessentially digital, has been transforming the labour market into a rapidly-shifting, technology-infused economic landscape. The fact that the nature of new technologies is mostly 'disruptive' means a radical and irrevocable change in the way we do business, as well as a transformation in the toolkit of skills needed for the future, as up to 40% of the conventional jobs might be wiped out or completely automated.

While these challenges pose serious threats to economies and communities that fail to adapt, they also present an un-tapped potential that could translate into considerable opportunities if harnessed properly. The UfM Region is one of huge geostrategic importance; it is rich in natural resources, human capital, business culture, as well as evident economic synergies and complementarities. It is not lacking in success stories, skill pools or creative solutions for employment-related issues. The potential increase in the region's Gross Domestic Product if youth unemployment is cut in half is over 20 billion euros in the short-term. The social impact of a shift from informal to formal



economy cannot be undermined, while the under-utilized Social Economy offers a smart, responsible and inclusive modality of growth.

In this context, UfM and partner organisations wish to contribute through this Roundtable to **gather the insights of youth representatives, civil society and non-state actors on ways to address two main thematic, namely 1) Partnering with the Youth for Job Creation and 2) Social Economy and inclusion of youth and women.** Always guided by the UfM Mandate and with the Sustainable Development Goals as a conceptual compass, each of the above-mentioned issues will be the subject of a specific round of interventions during the Roundtable.

In the context of the preparations of the Summit of the Two Shores which will take place in Marseille (France) on 24 June 2019, the Roundtable will benefit from the input of the preparatory fora for the Summit. The initiatives emerging from the Roundtable will be a potential contribution from youth and civil society stakeholders of the whole Mediterranean to the Summit of the Two Shores.

The Roundtable is organized jointly by the UfM and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and will include presentations from relevant civil society organization and other stakeholders active in the fields of job creation, skills development, socio-economic empowerment, inclusive growth and entrepreneurship promotion. An open and interactive discussion is expected with a view to gather concrete proposals which can be presented as an outcome of the event.



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