

Higher education



UfM-labelled project Eastern Mediterranean International School (Israel)

The UfM region includes over 30 million university students and, by 2030, higher education enrolment rates are expected to rise to 40%. This “youth bulge” is dramatically changing the educational landscape, yet the situation in the region means that young people’s ambitions often go unfulfilled, despite being **the most educated southern Mediterranean generation** ever.

One of the reasons for high levels of youth unemployment, particularly amongst university graduates, is a persistent gap between the skills acquired in the education system and the requirements of the labour market. Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) are therefore key priorities in the Mediterranean region, playing a key role in the UfM agenda.



Building a new Euro-Mediterranean generation



The UfM-labelled **EuroMed University of Fes** (UEMF) in Morocco operates as a growing centre of excellence in higher education, research and innovation that aims to build a Mediterranean generation prepared to tackle the region’s needs. Recording a steady increase in

enrolments, the UEMF has now reached over a thousand students, **24% of which are scholarship recipients**. Meanwhile, international partnership agreements signed in 2018 with Belgian, French, German, Moroccan and Spanish higher education institutions promise new opportunities for academic exchanges.

In addition to existing programmes, the EuroMed University of Fes opened new courses for the 2018-2019 academic year, notably in business and financial law, design, and corporate and institutional communication, bringing the total number of accredited undergraduate and graduate programmes to more than 30. A new grant of over €13 million, awarded by the European Union in October 2018 through the European Investment Bank, will allow for the further building and equipping of the University’s unique eco-campus, expected to be completed by 2021 with a capacity of **7,000 students**.

On the other shore of the Mediterranean is the Slovenia-based **Euro-Mediterranean University** (EMUNI), a UfM-labelled project which works with over 130 universities in 33 different countries allowing it to gather unique expertise.

In partnership with the Italian National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics (OGS), EMUNI enlarged its educational offering by co-organising a summer school on blue growth, with the participation of students and young researchers from 18 nationalities. EMUNI also contributed to advancing, on a regional level, discussions on how to better integrate Euro-Mediterranean issues into existing study programmes through the new Erasmus+ Jean Monnet **“Knowledge Hub in the Euro-Mediterranean Region”** (MED-HUB) project.

“Before joining MedNC, I lacked a practical side to my training. I had no self-confidence, I was afraid of entrepreneurship and I thought I would never succeed. I’ve learned a lot in the last few weeks. I will leave more enriched and better trained to enter the labour market.”

Salma Mustapha, beneficiary of MedNC (Tunisia)



40%

OF EMPLOYERS IN THE MENA REGION
**IDENTIFY SKILLS SHORTAGES
AS A MAJOR CONSTRAINT TO
THEIR BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND
GROWTH** ←

Source: UNDP



Leaving no one behind



In 2018, an average of **one in four young Southern Mediterranean people were not in employment, education or training** (NEET), while youth unemployment rates across the Euro-Mediterranean region ranged from 20% to 35%. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of job positions are not filled due to a lack of suitable profiles.



The **Mediterranean New Chance Network** (MedNC), endorsed by the UfM’s 43 member states, was launched in eight Euro-Mediterranean countries to help NEETs find jobs. 2018 welcomed two new countries (Portugal and Lebanon) to the network, aiming to expand to at least two more in 2019.

Coordinated on a regional level by the *Institut européen de coopération et de développement* (IECD), the network promotes exchanges between different approaches and models, which are adapted to each country’s unique situation. More than **26,000 young people benefit every year from professional training** thanks to the 100 centres within the network. Furthermore, the French MedNC network (*Ecole de la Deuxième Chance*) has received an investment of €12 million to create nine second chance schools by 2022, which will support an additional 6,000 young people.



CONNECTING THE MEDITERRANEAN WITH THE GLOBAL AGENDA

From the Bologna Policy Forum, which the UfM participated in this year for the first time, to UNESCO’s 1st Partners’ Forum, where both institutions agreed to collaborate in the development of a regional Arab network for the recognition of higher education diplomas and certificates, the UfM Secretariat is committed to bringing the Mediterranean Agenda onto the international scene.

In 2018, the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi) and the UfM established a three-year framework of cooperation in support of both institutions’ mission and objectives. Under this partnership, the UfM Secretariat and GUNi co-organised the first meeting of the Group of Experts on Sustainable Development Goals and Higher Education (SDGs), which aims to help higher education institutions, students and policymakers implement the SDGs, in synergy with the efforts undertaken within the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.

ALSO ON THE AGENDA...

- 5+5 Dialogue on Higher Education, Research and Innovation
- Eastern Mediterranean International School
- High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executives Recruitment (HOMERe)

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