

OUR YOUTH, FUTURE

THE UfM POSITIVE AGENDA FOR YOUTH

Unleashing young people's potential as drivers
for regional development and stability



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط



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The UfM Positive Agenda for Youth in context

Never before has the world been home to so many young people. **At 1.8 billion, this generation represents an unprecedented potential for global economic and social progress.**

With over 60% of its population under the age of 30, the Euro-Mediterranean is one of the youngest regions in the world. At the same time, with an average of 30% youth unemployment, two to three times higher than for adults, the Euro-Mediterranean region also has among the highest rates of youth unemployment worldwide.

The Union for the Mediterranean has therefore placed **youth at the heart of its action**, focusing on empowering young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region, enhancing their employability and skills, and engaging them as full partners in its activities. Through its Positive Agenda for Youth, the UfM gives a strong impulse to youth engagement in areas of regional priority in view of unleashing their potential as agents for change.

WITH OVER **60% OF ITS POPULATION UNDER THE AGE OF 30**, THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN IS **ONE OF THE YOUNGEST REGIONS IN THE WORLD.**

THE NUMBER OF **UNDER-15s** IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE OVER **18%**  **BY 2020.** ← 

The UfM Positive Agenda for Youth in action



UfM-labelled project MedNC

Enhancing youth employability and employment

- The UfM launched the **Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs)** in 2013 to help increase the employability of young people and women, close the gap between labour demand and supply and foster a culture of entrepreneurship and private sector development.

This UfM cross-sectoral initiative is driven by the need for an integrated regional response to **job creation** and youth empowerment. Med4Jobs currently includes 13 labelled projects targeting over 100,000 beneficiaries, in addition to supporting the development of SMEs in the region.



UfM-labelled project Skills for Success

Skills for Success is a 320-hour programme labelled by the UfM under the Med4Jobs initiative. It aims to develop transferrable skills to prepare young women for entry-level jobs, while raising their confidence. Nearly 300 women in Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco have completed the Skills for Success programme, promoted by the non-profit AMIDEAST. Many have since found jobs, started internships or returned to school.

“Med4Jobs is exactly the sort of initiative that we need, to give young people the opportunities they deserve and businesses the qualified staff they are looking for. This is the Union for the Mediterranean at its best.”

Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission

- One of the reasons for high levels of youth unemployment is a persistent gap between the skills acquired in the education system and the requirements of the labour market. Regional cooperation efforts on **higher education, vocational training and mobility** play therefore an essential role in achieving the UfM Positive Agenda for Youth.

In this regard, the UfM notably promotes higher education internationalization and academic mobility, scales up learning opportunities and fosters regional initiatives and projects on school-to-work transition, with the objective of leaving no one behind.

Mediterranean New Chance (MedNC) is a UfM labelled project that addresses the challenge of socio-professional integration of young people and, particularly, of those not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). Coordinated on a regional level by the *Institut européen de coopération et de développement* (IECD), this project is currently being implemented in eight Euro-Mediterranean countries. Every year more than 26,000 young people benefit from professional training thanks to the 100 centres active within the network.

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

Salma Mustapha, beneficiary of MedNC

Promoting youth engagement on key issues

- Young people worldwide are leading the way on environmental protection, as they are the first to demand urgent action be taken against climate change. The UfM has been therefore focusing its efforts on the promotion of young people’s engagement in its actions on sustainable development.

The UfM Secretariat supports, since its creation in 2016, the **Mediterranean Youth Climate Network (MYCN)**, a community of seven associations promoting the Euro-Mediterranean climate agenda in international fora. MYCN participates as an observer in the UfM Climate Change Expert Group, alongside government representatives, international financial institutions, private sector actors and international organisations.

The UfM also works, in the framework of its collaboration with the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), with the Mediterranean Youth for Water (MedYWat), a network that seeks to stimulate intergenerational learning in the water sector.

“Youth is already at the forefront of climate action. With their boundless energy and desire to take action, many young people want to become an even stronger vehicle for societal change.”

Hajar Khamlichi, President of MYCN

- Young people and women can and do play a significant role in building secure lives and communities through addressing the root causes of violent extremism and working towards its eradication. In line with the UN agendas involving youth and women in peace and security, the UfM has been working to enhance the role of young people and women in [preventing violence and violent extremism](#) (PVE).

Launched in 2015 by Ideaborn, a Spain-based NGO, **Forming Responsible Citizens** is a UfM-labelled project that includes 14 schools in Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon. It aims to empower secondary teachers to impart civic education to their students, promoting respect for differences and dialogue as an alternative to violence. The project analyses existing textbooks from the perspective of civic education and gender equality, and produces new redesigned versions of the national curricula, in full partnership with national education authorities.

“It’s all about turning schools into a tool to teach young people how to live together.”

Amara Ben Romdhane, Director of the Social Development & Empowerment Centre of Tunisia

Developing a new generation of leaders

- Through formal and non-formal education, the UfM works on the development of young Mediterranean people’s **leadership skills**. Each year, it gathers youth from across the Euro-Mediterranean region during the **UfM Youth Forum** to provide them with concrete tools and skills that enhance their participation and engagement, while fostering intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

The UfM-labelled project of the **EuroMed University of Fes (UEMF)** in Morocco operates as a growing centre of excellence that promotes dialogue, intercultural exchange, sharing of knowledge and cooperation in the fields of higher education, research and innovation. It aims at building a new generation of young people with strong Euro-Mediterranean profiles, 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. The University’s unique eco-campus is expected to be completed by 2021, with a capacity of 7,000 students.

From debating to project development, the **UfM Youth Forum** aims to build the capacities of Mediterranean youth with a view to enhancing cooperation and accelerating progress on regional priorities and the implementation of the SDGs. Since 2017, over 100 young leaders have met in the framework of the UfM Youth Fora, and have released two statements calling for strengthened youth participation and policies.

Read them here:

- ① [Bridging Youth Across the Mediterranean](#)
- ② [We have so much to do together - 4 axis to bring together our youth](#)



①



②

“The Youth Forum for the Mediterranean is an incredibly relevant platform [...]. What motivates me is that it was an occasion to plan ahead concrete actions on the ground, that will eventually act as multipliers of change within our local communities.”

Federica Giordano, representative of Forum Nazionale dei Giovani

A UfM Ministerial Mandate

The II UfM Regional Forum, held in Barcelona in January 2017 under the theme **"Mediterranean in Action: Youth for Stability and Development"**, focused on building a shared agenda on youth in the Euro-Mediterranean area, across the different sectors of regional priority. Through the adoption of the new UfM Roadmap for Action on this occasion, UfM Ministers of Foreign Affairs agreed to launch a "Positive Agenda for Youth in the Mediterranean" facilitating higher education, VET, employability, youth empowerment and mobility, and mainstreaming gender equality, thus promoting social inclusiveness.

Many young beneficiaries of UfM-labelled projects attended the Forum, joining over 500 Mediterranean key stakeholders, including Ministers, official delegations, civil society and private sector representatives, international financial institutions and socio-economic project promoters, highlighting thereby the action-driven nature of the organisation.

More generally, the UfM has made it a priority to **ensure and facilitate the participation of youth in all**

its meetings, conferences and events. By ensuring whenever possible a systematic representation of young experts, leaders or project beneficiaries, their opinions are voiced and accounted for in charting future actions and shaping the Mediterranean development agenda.



II UfM Regional Forum - *Mediterranean in Action: Youth for Stability and Development*

UfM in short

Mission

To enhance regional cooperation and dialogue through the implementation of concrete projects and initiatives addressing human development, stability and integration.



43 Members

28 EU members and 15 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. Their Senior Officials meet regularly to oversee and coordinate the activities of the UfM.

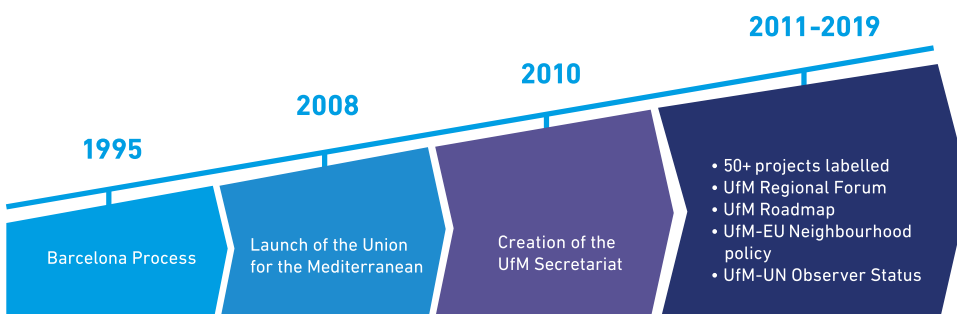
2 Co-Presidents

The EU and Jordan have assumed the Northern and Southern co-presidency since 2012, embodying the UfM principle of co-ownership.

1 Secretariat

Based in Barcelona, the Secretariat is the operational platform of the UfM.

Milestones



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