



UfM Conference on Digital Transformation and Digital Skills for the Future

30 September 2019

Tallinn, Estonia

Outcome Document

The *UfM Conference on Digital Transformation and Digital Skills for the Future* which took place in the Estonian Capital Tallinn marked an important step towards the Union for the Mediterranean's engagement with the rapidly shifting technological landscape whose character is essentially digital. The Conference leveraged on Estonia's inspiring experience as a global digital leader, with one of the most advanced digital societies in the world and much to learn from its e-government success.

The Conference which was organized by the UfM Secretariat in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) brought together over 50 participants from the Euro-Mediterranean region including government officials, representatives of the Private Sector, entrepreneurs, academics, and other stakeholders to engage in discussions on a broad range of issues that encompassed e-governance, e-services, digital economy and digital skills.

The discussions and the presentations made during the Conference yielded the following set of key messages and recommendations:

1. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is presenting smart solutions and posing serious challenges to governments, to businesses and to entire societies within and beyond the Euro-Mediterranean region. The disruptive nature of the new technologies calls for a change in the mindset and a multi-stakeholder's approach to unlocking new assets and resources, investing in digital infrastructures and developing digital skills.
2. Digital Transformation can contribute significantly to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by creating efficiencies and economies of scale in delivering value and unlocking resources. Digital Transformation needs innovative approach to policy, regulations, institutions and technology. Capabilities to respond to digital opportunities have evolved unequally.
3. Skills development and ICT education play a key role in boosting employability, competitiveness and growth and in better addressing the challenges of technological change and digitalization of the economy in the region. There is a need to enhance the exchange of good practices, at bilateral and regional levels, in key areas of Digital Economy and Digital Transformation. Partnership in the framework of the UFM will support member-states to catch up front-runners.



4. Building functioning e-societies calls for a smart, conducive and secure ecosystem based on trust, transparency, cooperation and promotion of innovation and creativity. Know-how and skills necessary to set goals, priorities, time-lines and funding for building up digital ecosystem – including datasets, eID, interoperability platforms - have to be developed.
5. Harmonized approach to skills development on regional level opens up new opportunities for cross-border services, raising the user-centricity of services and broadening of scope of digital dividends. UFM Secretariat will use its potential to promote regional harmonization of Digital Transformation policies and support practical development of digital ecosystems in the interested UFM member-states.
6. The EU Digital Competence Frameworks serve as a reference for the types of competences that the Digital Age requires. In addition, career management skills are of paramount importance for future jobs.
7. Investing in R&D and embracing new technologies are among the tenets of Digital societies. Free movement of non-personalized data, support to cross-border access to digital services and cooperation on cyber security, are among the fields of potential collaboration. The price of missing the digital transformation is much higher than the cost involved in investing in providing online services based on new technologies like the blockchain technology, Big Data and the Internet of Things (IoT). The return of investment in digital technologies has always been higher than that for conventional models of business and governance.
8. Estonian experience in digital transformation process demonstrates that setting up an e-Government that works on a large scale necessitates more than just technology. It is more important to concentrate on political and legal environment, change management and capacity building. At the same time, Estonia has a long-term tradition to share its experience to partner countries.
9. These recommendations serve as guidelines for the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean and relevant ministerial meetings and donor organizations for promoting the cooperation projects for UFM member-states interested in up-grading their Digital Transformation developments.