

Message from the Secretary General Nasser Kamel



As we prepare for the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, it is an opportune moment to reflect on what helps bind our longstanding commitment to continue forging ever stronger bonds of partnership in the Euro-Mediterranean region. For its part, the foundation of the Union for the Mediterranean and its Secretariat was able to further focus, consolidate and institutionalise the vision set forth 25 years ago. But the essence of the decision to choose this path of multilateral partnership can be found in the determination to always walk hand-in-hand with our Members States and partners. What is more, whilst the journey so far has also doubled as one long learning curve, we have of course enjoyed the steadfast backing of our Co-Presidency, whose continuous support has made possible everything we have so far achieved, and plan to achieve in the future.

Driven by a shared dedication to fulfil the legitimate ambitions of the peoples of the Euro-Mediterranean region in the face of the challenges brazenly inhibiting the pursuit of their dreams, we are fully convinced that regional ambitions call for regional sobriety, both conceptually and institutionally.

Propelled by this conviction, the year 2019 saw the UfM Secretariat reach previously unscaled heights of regional cooperation, energised at all times by the UfM mandate, guided by its Roadmap for Action, and motivated by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The sentiment and urgency of this international agenda are both shared by the UfM Secretariat and help galvanise its own momentum towards some of the human development goals that hold most potential in the region, especially those gained through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Operating in an ever expanding ecosystem of collaborative forces and committed to a broader, more deep-rooted multilateralism, the cluster of

partnerships the UfM Secretariat maintains with development cooperation agencies and financial institutions attests to its capacity to pursue different modalities of cooperation within and beyond the Mediterranean region.

Conscious of the fact that the dismal clocks of climate change and resource degradation are ticking faster for our region than for other parts of the world, we adopted a positive agenda of climate and environmental action backed by scientific findings that also encompasses energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production, the blue economy, transport connectivity and the development of a UfM Urban Agenda.

In addition to the Mediterranean's huge marine, coastal and land resources, the UfM region is also home to a treasure-trove of human capital: a young population whose full potential is far from being fully realised. Our work on gender equality, youth empowerment, quality education, employment and job creation is also part of our unwavering efforts to leave no one behind.

Our Mediterranean identity can be measured in lessons learned throughout history, and the one lesson that has stood the test of time is that on the commitment of each, depends the destiny of all. As we are committed then to promoting regional cooperation and integration, we share not only the dream of peace, stability and shared prosperity, but also the desire to inspire through our work and to lead by our example. The path to a better future belongs to us all, and we are determined to be bold in our pledges, but in the same vein, our actions and impact shall act as the sole standard-bearers of our promise to deliver on a better tomorrow.

Nasser Kamel