



Outcome Document of the Key Messages

UfM Online Workshop “Social Economy and the Post-Pandemic Recovery: Challenges and Prospects”

26 June 2020

The second **UfM Workshop on Social Economy** was organised online by the UfM Secretariat on 26 June 2020 in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and La Confederación Empresarial Española de la Economía Social (CEPES), with the support of the ESMED Network and Social Economy Europe.

This event builds on and follows up on the [first UfM Workshop on Social Economy in the MENA Region and the Balkans](#) which took place on 5 July 2019, being the first-ever UfM event fully dedicated to promoting Social Economy in the UfM Region, with a focus on Entrepreneurship and Job Creation in Social Economy and Social Innovation for a positive Socio-Economic Impact.

The Workshop brought together over 60 stakeholders and practitioners from both shores of the Euro-Mediterranean Region. This year’s edition focused on the role that the Social Economy should play in the social and economic post-pandemic recovery and the measures to promote its contribution to a sustainable growth path and reduction of inequalities in the Euro-Mediterranean region in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Workshop also addressed the challenges faced by Social Economy and the innovative solutions provided by this enterprise model based on values of democracy, solidarity and social responsibility to the most immediate effects of the crisis through creating jobs, supporting small enterprises and tackling social and economic injustices.

During his keynote speech, the UfM Secretary General stressed that *“Social Economy has the capacity to address the socio-economic injustices and inequalities that were further deepened by the current global crisis, and has an unexploited potential in offering future alternatives to our future generation. The UfM will continue to promote increased technical and financial business cooperation between the social economy from both shores of the Mediterranean.”* For his part, the President of CEPES and Social Economy Europe and General Coordinator of the ESMED network, Mr. Juan Antonio Pedreño stated that *“Today’s UfM Workshop confirms that Social Economy enterprises and organisations are contributing to the economic and social recovery of the Mediterranean and to overcome the consequences of the pandemic. And most importantly, Social Economy is a lever for sustainable and fair growth in the Mediterranean and for building a better future for the millions of people who live in the south and north of the Mediterranean.”*

The European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, stated that *“boosting the potential of the social economy to create jobs and complement the provision of social services and care services will help recover from the crisis with enhanced social and economic resilience. By supporting the long-term development of the social economy in the Mediterranean region, we aim at working together along the values of cooperation, solidarity and responsibility.”*

National measures to promote Social Economy as key actor in post-pandemic recovery in Morocco, Spain and Tunisia were presented respectively by H.E. Nadia Fatteh, Minister of Tourism, Air Transport, Handicrafts and Social Economy (Morocco); H.E. Joaquin Pérez Rey, Secretary of State for Labour and Social Economy (Spain); and Mr. Youssef Fennira, Director General of the National

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Employment and Self-Employment Agency (Tunisia). This was followed by the showcasing of best practices by representatives of different entities and organizations from the region.

The interventions and exchanges among participants yielded the following **key messages**:

1. The Euro-Mediterranean Region has been affected intensely by the current COVID-19 Crisis, and the repercussions are expected to last well into 2021 or even beyond. In this context, Social Economy being a resilient enterprise model that is inclusive, responsible and sustainable has an important role in the post-pandemic socio-economic recovery in the UfM Region.
2. In coherence with its values of solidarity and primacy of people over capital, Social Economy enterprises and organisations have been and are at the frontline of the response to the damaging consequences of the pandemic. This crisis has revealed the strong commitment of Social Economy to its social and economic environment as well as its key role in the production and provision of crucial goods and services for the wellbeing and survival of all citizens around the Region.
3. Social Economy has the capacity to address the socio-economic injustices and inequalities that were further deepened by the current global crisis. It also promises opportunities in the post-pandemic economy through creating jobs and supporting MSMEs actively engaging in fulfilling social and environmental causes.
4. Social Economy enterprises and organisations have been seriously affected by the crisis, just as the rest of the private sector actors. Social Economy should therefore benefit from the labour, social, economic and health measures adopted by the Public Institutions and Authorities to overcome the crisis. These measures should take into account the Social Economy characteristics and its method of operation in the market.
5. In order to fully unleash the potential of Social Economy in the region, several obstacles need to be addressed through coordinated action. Such barriers include –but are not limited to- access to finance, access to market information, access to markets and regulatory constraints
6. There is a need to generate a more structured space for dialogue aimed at promoting and developing the Social Economy in the Region, through the concerted efforts between the Union for the Mediterranean and the other national and regional frameworks, and in dialogue with Social Economy organisations and stakeholders.
7. It is proposed to launch an ambitious Euro-Mediterranean initiative to strengthen the Social Economy as a key actor for social and economic reconstruction after the pandemic:
 - *To save jobs and entities in the Social Economy, especially through financial instruments, by applying guarantees and facilitating the access to funds with low or no interest rates;*
 - *To establish a financial eco-system that favours the social economy, including by the strengthening of already-existing initiatives;*
 - *To speed up the digitalisation process of Social Economy enterprises and organisations in all sectors;*



- *To promote the development of social economy in emerging and innovative sectors, such as the blue economy or those related to the green transition as well as any other that contributes to SDGs;*
 - *To strengthen the value chains between Social Economy enterprises through greater business and commercial cooperation, both at national and Euro-Mediterranean level;*
 - *To encourage the adoption, in those countries where they do not exist, of legislative frameworks that give the Social Economy legal protection and promote public policies to encourage these enterprises and organisations;*
 - *To strengthen the incubators, development poles and clusters with the aim of consolidating and increasing the advisory and support services to Social Economy entrepreneurs;*
 - *To strength the visibility of Social Economy, its values and enterprise models in particular throughout the education system, from school to university and in vocational training systems;*
 - *To strengthen the role of the Social Economy representative organisations at national and Euro-Mediterranean levels as interlocutors with the public authorities in order to adopt effective measures and initiatives to promote the contribution of Social Economy to the economic and social recovery of the UfM region.*
8. The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean is committed to accompanying and promoting the ongoing efforts to further develop the Social Economy ecosystem in the Region through its role as a unique platform of regional dialogue that helps build consensus on regional agenda.