Building regional cooperation together
About Us

What is the Union for the Mediterranean?

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation that brings together all 27 countries of the European Union and 15 countries from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. The UfM provides a forum to enhance regional cooperation, dialogue and the implementation of concrete projects and initiatives with tangible impact on our citizens, with an emphasis on young people. The UfM aims to address the three strategic objectives of the region: stability, human development and integration.

42 Members

Albania • Algeria • Austria • Belgium • Bosnia and Herzegovina • Bulgaria • Croatia • Cyprus Czech Republic • Denmark • Egypt • Estonia • Finland • France • Germany • Greece • Hungary Ireland • Israel • Italy • Jordan • Latvia • Lebanon • Lithuania • Luxemburg • Malta • Mauritania • Monaco • Morocco • Netherlands • Palestine • Poland • Portugal • Romania • Slovakia • Slovenia • Spain • Sweden • Syria* • Tunisia • Turkey

*Syria suspended its membership in December 2011  |  Libya has an observer status

The members of the Union for the Mediterranean meet on a regular basis at the level of Senior Officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the 42 UfM countries, EU institutions and the League of Arab States. The Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) provide the framework to discuss the current political context and coordinate the work of the UfM Secretariat.

2 Co-Presidents

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

Nasser Kamel is the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

1 Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, based in Barcelona, is the first permanent structure dedicated to the intergovernmental Mediterranean partnership. It ensures operational follow-up of the regional priorities identified and promotes region-wide cooperation projects and initiatives. This is done in partnership with key international actors, to address the root causes of the current regional security and socio-economic challenges.

Milestones

1995 • Barcelona Process
2008 • Launch of the Union for the Mediterranean
2010 • Creation of the UfM Secretariat
2011- to date • EU projects launched
- UfM Regional Forum
- UfM Secretariat
- UfM-EU projects on human mobility
- UfM-EU Observer States

About us
Declarations adopted by consensus by the 42 Ministers define the scope and objectives of a common regional agenda by sectors.

Ministerial meetings have taken place since 2012 on key areas.

UfM Regional Forum: Ministers of Foreign Affairs • Women Empowerment • Transport • Energy • Industrial Cooperation • Environment and Climate Change • Digital Economy • Blue Economy • Regional Cooperation • Employment • Water • Sustainable Urban Development • Trade

Based on the political guidelines set by the Member States, the UfM structures in-depth dialogue with all the actors involved in each sector of the regional cooperation.

UfM Stakeholders
- Governments
- International and regional organisations
- Local authorities
- International Financial Institutions and donors
- Experts
- Universities and Think Tanks
- Civil society
- Private sector

These regional platforms have involved a network of over 30,000 STAKEHOLDERS through more than 400 Expert fora since its creation.

The added value of the UfM lies in the interrelation created between the policy dimension and its operational translation into concrete projects on the ground. The UfM Secretariat is currently promoting the implementation of more than 50 regional cooperation projects valued at over €5 billion.

Promoters of UfM-labelled projects
- Financial Institutions: 9%
- National Administrations: 25%
- International Organisations: 33%
- Higher Education & Research Institutions: 13%
- Civil Society: 11%
- Private Sector: 9%

Fostering regional dialogue

Translating the policy dimension into concrete projects

Building thematic common agendas

Policies in action
The Mediterranean region is facing significant energy challenges, including a growing demand for energy, which will reach 62% by 2040, as well as a lack of adequate electricity infrastructure. Regional cooperation is key to achieving a sustainable energy transition and addressing these challenges. The three UfM Energy Platforms aim to bring about such cooperation through the promotion of regional policy dialogue in fields such as the development of electricity and gas markets, and the promotion of renewable energies and energy efficiency.
The Mediterranean region has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the world. In this context, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is engaged in the implementation of specific projects and initiatives focused on the development of business, employment opportunities and employability skills.

There is a particular emphasis on youth and women, thus addressing cross-cutting issues such as the promotion of women’s socio-economic empowerment and the enhancement of youth employability. Particular attention is devoted to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), vectors for innovation and economic growth in the Mediterranean region.

Priorities

- Foster job creation and support the development of SMEs through the UfM Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs)
- Support creative industries, digital economy and social and solidarity economy in the region
- Develop a strategy for private sector development, advancing industrial cooperation, trade and investments in the region

Political framework

- UfM Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour (Cascais, 2-3 April 2019)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade (Brussels, 19 March 2018)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Digital Economy (Brussels, 30 September 2014)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Industrial Cooperation (Brussels, 19 February 2014)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour (Brussels, 22 November 2010)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Trade (Brussels, 11 November 2010)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour (Marrakesh, 10 November 2008)

Regional dialogue platforms

- Med4Jobs Advisory Board
- UfM High Level Working Group (HLWG) on employment and labour
- Euro-Mediterranean Experts Technical Meeting on industrial cooperation
- Digital Economy and Internet Access Working Group
- Euromed Trade Senior Officials Working Group

Zoom on key projects & initiatives

- Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs – Med4Jobs
  Med4Jobs is a UfM flagship initiative aiming to help increase the employability of youth and women, close the gap between labour demand and supply, and foster a culture of entrepreneurship and private sector development. Developed by the UfM Secretariat, Med4Jobs is a cross-sector initiative that aims to promote and replicate a number of successful private sector job creation projects in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region.

- YouMatch Toolbox Project
  YouMatch aims to set up a regional demand-driven toolbox for youth-oriented employment services to assess existing labour market tools, enable peer learning and knowledge exchange on a regional and international level, and encourage innovation and transfer of promising approaches within and among the participating countries.

- EDILE
  EDILE aims to formulate a regional approach to identify and support investments and best practices with high local impact, reinforce the capacities of national and local authorities involved in the regulation of investments and support enterprises through enhancing the social and economic impacts of their investment projects.
Social & Civil Affairs

Fostering gender equality and youth empowerment: a strategic dimension for human development

Priorities

• Build and consolidate a regional common agenda to empower youth and women as main drivers for the region’s development and stability

• Enhance economic, social and civic participation of women and youth, as a key human development asset to build more inclusive and sustainable societies

Political framework

• UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Cairo, 27 November 2017)
• UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Paris, 11-12 September 2013)

Regional dialogue platforms

• UfM Regional Dialogue: “Shared views on key issues in the Mediterranean”
• UfM Conferences on Women Empowerment
• Fostering Women’s Participation in Economic Life
• Combating Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
• Enhancing the role of women and youth, including young women in preventing violence and extremism

Zoom on key projects & initiatives

• Promoting women empowerment for inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the MENA region

This project aims to enhance women’s economic inclusion by harnessing the great potential of women entrepreneurs in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia and create the conditions for a sustainable and inclusive growth. Labelled by the UfM with a total budget of €4.5 million, the project is promoted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and constitutes the first regional best practice with an integrated approach to support women entrepreneurship.

FACILITATE ACCESS TO INVESTMENT and finance for at least 500 PROMISING BUSINESSES OPPORTUNITIES

CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATEION OF 800 NEW JOBS by the end of the project

TRAIN AND COUNSEL more than 2000 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS on business development and business plan formulation

• WOMED: the “next generation of leaders”

The project strengthened the leadership skills of high-potential Southern Mediterranean young women aged from 25 to 35 years old through an intensive training programme with a focus on gender affairs. It also developed a Euro-Mediterranean network for the promotion of gender equality.

• Forming Responsible Citizens

The project aims to contribute to the prevention of violence against girls and women by implementing a renewed civic education curriculum in Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon. The project’s long term goal is to influence policies and legislation in an effort to promote the principles of inclusive and sustainable development, women empowerment and gender equality.

Youth and women constitute a huge resource as agent for change and the future of each country’s development. They are and can be a catalyst for positive change and a source of creativity and innovation, if an enabling environment is provided to facilitate their full participation and engagement. Their role in creating jobs, preventing climate change, addressing community needs or providing mediation services is everywhere demonstrated.

The focus on human development, through youth and women empowerment, as a main contribution to addressing the root causes of the current challenges faced by the Euro-Mediterranean region is at the heart of the UfM strategy. This strategy has been progressively built and structured over the past years in close coordination with the UfM Member States and with the involvement of key stakeholders operating in the region, including local authorities, international organisations, donors, civil society and private sector.

Source: Word Bank 2019
Source: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Source: Eurostat; CIA World Factbook
Source: Word Bank 2019
Source: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN THE REGION COULD POTENTIALLY ADD 47 PERCENT TO THE GDP GROWTH BY 2025

13-15% OF WOMEN OWN AND MANAGE THEIR BUSINESSES IN THE MENA REGION COMPARED TO THE 31-38% WORLDWIDE RATE

50% OF THE POPULATION IN THE SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES IS UNDER 25 YEARS OLD COMPARED TO 27.8% IN THE EU

More projects at www.ufmsecretariat.org

ufmsecretariat.org/what-we-do/social-civil-affairs/
Higher Education and Research

Improving student mobility and employability through education

Higher education and research are shaping factors of a common and prosperous Mediterranean future.

Regional cooperation efforts in the fields of higher education, research and innovation as well as vocational training and mobility play an essential role in achieving a Positive agenda for the Youth in the Mediterranean because of their potential on increasing employability, promoting intercultural dialogue and preventing extremism.

The activities of the UfM in the area of Higher Education and Research also aim to contribute to the Global Development Agenda, particularly to the achievement of the the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, the SDG 8-6: Reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and SDGs where research and innovation play a crucial role.

Priorities

- Contribute to regional dialogue fora on Higher Education, Internationalisation & Academic Mobility and on Vocational Education & Training
- Scale-up learning opportunities in a Euro-Mediterranean environment
- Foster regional initiatives and projects in the areas of school-to-work transition and vocational training
- Contribute to the implementation of the 2017 Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation through Research and Innovation, in particular on PRIMA, BLUEMED and migration issues

Political framework

- 5+5 Dialogue of Ministers of Western Mediterranean countries on Higher Education and Scientific Research and Innovation (Rome, 10 June 2019)
- Ministerial Conference on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation (Valletta, 4 May 2017)
- 5+5 Dialogue of Ministers of Western Mediterranean countries on Higher Education and Scientific Research and Innovation (Tunis, 30-31 March 2017)
- 5+5 Dialogue of Ministers of Western Mediterranean countries on Higher Education and Scientific Research and Innovation (Madrid, 23-24 March 2015)
- 5+5 Dialogue of Ministers of Western Mediterranean countries on Vocational Education and Training (Marseille, 28 October 2014)
- 5+5 Dialogue of Ministers of Western Mediterranean countries on Higher Education and Scientific Research and Innovation (Kabat, 19-20 September 2013)
- First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research (Cairo, 18 June 2007)

Regional dialogue platforms

- Regional dialogue process on “Higher Education Internationalisation and Academic Mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean region”

Zoom on key projects & initiatives

- The Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes
The Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes (UEMF), a flagship project of the UfM, aims at contributing to stability and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean region through the promotion of dialogue, intercultural exchange, sharing of knowledge and cooperation in the fields of higher education, research and innovation. Initiated by His Majesty Mohammed VI King of Morocco, the UEMF is framed within the UfM cross-sectorial Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs).

- New Chance Mediterranean Network
The project aims to promote a regional network of accredited orientation, training and professional integration centres to establish a shared and innovative teaching model with a view to boosting the employability of unemployed graduates and young people who didn’t finish school.

- HOMERe
The project promotes internship mobility experiences among Mediterranean countries targeting high-profile students in their last year of study before graduation. The objective is to ease their transition from the academic environment to qualified entry-level roles in their own countries.

32% of enterprises in some Southern Mediterranean countries have identified skill shortages as a major constraint to hiring.

Young people not enrolled in education, employment or training (“NEETS”) is a growing concern in the region, with national rates ranging from 14% to 32% for the 15-24 age group.

Source: UNDP “Arab Knowledge Report 2018".

Higher education graduates in North Africa are unemployed.


7,000 students from across the Euro-Mediterranean region and Sub-Saharan Africa by 2024

650 highly qualified professors, researchers, administrative and technical personnel

80% of students participating in mobility experiences abroad

Sectorial factsheets

ufmsecretariat.org/what-we-do/higher-education-research/
Priorities

- Develop a regional transport network fostering socio-economic development and regional integration
- Contribute to implementing the UfM Urban Agenda with a view to fostering inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable urban development
- Enhance regional dialogue through a multi-stakeholder framework bringing together UfM Member States and key stakeholders to share best practices and develop projects, providing them with technical support and mobilizing financing instruments, in particular from IFIs

Political framework

- Second UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development (Cairo, 22 May 2017)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport (Brussels, 14 November 2013)
- First UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development (Strasbourg, 10 November 2011)

Regional dialogue platforms

- UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity
- UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development

Zoom on key projects & initiatives

- **Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project**
  The main objective of the Imbaba Urban Upgrading Project is to strengthen the integration of Imbaba and al-Warraq, two of the most populated urban areas within the Giza Governorate, with the rest of Greater Cairo by providing their inhabitants with the basic facilities, infrastructure and services which are currently lacking.

- **LOGISMED Training Activities**
  The project aims to contribute to the creation of a more competitive and efficient network of Euro-Mediterranean logistics platforms by increasing the training offer and improving the level of qualifications of the logistics platforms’ personnel.

- **TransLogMED**
  Through capacity building activities pursuing enhanced professional performance, the project addresses the development of sustainable transport and door-to-door logistics. It targets the implementation of intermodal transport services to foster regional integration in the Mediterranean. Project beneficiaries include public administrations related to international trade and transport, operators, training centres, SMEs, as well as companies in the transport and logistics sectors.

Easy and safe access to flows of goods and people over land and sea is essential for regional prosperity and integration. The UfM is actively engaged towards addressing the complex challenges facing the transport sector and developing an efficient, integrated, interoperable and sustainable transport infrastructure network through a holistic and integrated approach, with a view to improving transport connectivity in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Sustainable urbanization is key to addressing climate change, and cities are potential drivers for sustainable development, economic growth and stability. With this in mind, the UfM works to implement the UfM Urban Agenda for the Mediterranean region following a cooperative approach that underscores the joint efforts of governments, local and regional authorities, developers, financiers and civil society, with the ultimate aim of improving the liveability of Mediterranean urban areas by ensuring that urban growth is turned into opportunities.
The Mediterranean region offers an immense potential for the sustainable, environmentally friendly development of its people. The UfM promotes regional cooperation to protect the Mediterranean Sea and the natural resources of the countries belonging to its area, and supports partnerships inspired by ‘green/blue’ circular economy principles.

Serious environmental threats, including water scarcity, put at risk this potential. Sustainable access, provision and use of water are key concerns. Particularly the areas along the southern and eastern shores of the region are among the world’s most water-scarce, with more than 180 million people facing water stress as well as water pollution problems. The UfM supports the implementation of regional agendas on Water, Environment and Blue Economy through initiatives such as the H2020 initiative for a Cleaner Mediterranean, with the objective of tackling 80% of pollution sources by 2020.

**Priorities**

- Promote integrated water resources management and ensure access to water resources and affordable water services
- Protect the Mediterranean Sea and the environment, contributing to de-pollution and pollution prevention efforts in the region
- Promote the green and blue economies

The UfM has observer status at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

**Political framework**

- UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water (Valetta, 27 April 2017)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy (Brussels, 17 November 2015)
- UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change (Athens, 13 May 2014)
- Ministerial Conference on Water (Barcelona, 13 April 2010)

**Regional dialogue platforms**

- UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (H2020 Initiative for a Cleaner Mediterranean)
- UfM Working Group on Blue Economy
- UfM Water Expert Group (WEG)

**Zoom on key projects & initiatives**

- The integrated programme for the protection of the Lake Bizerte against pollution
  Over the course of a 5-year period, the project will contribute majorly to the depollution of the Lake of Bizerte, in northern Tunisia, improving the living conditions of the surrounding populations and aquatic life as well as reducing indirect pollution impacting the Mediterranean Sea. The project will create job opportunities for the local population in the fields of sewage, waste management, fisheries and agriculture.

- Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip
  The project will contribute to address the major water deficit for an ever increasing population of currently 1.8 million people living in the Gaza Strip, where 95% of the water is not drinkable.

- Plastic-Busters for a Mediterranean free from litter
  Over a 4-year period, the project will address the entire management cycle of marine litter, from monitoring and assessment to prevention and mitigation, as well as actions to strengthen networking between pelagic and coastal marine protected areas located in Albania, Croatia, Greece, Italy, France and Spain.

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**Access to sanitation and environmental conditions for an estimated 400,000 inhabitants** living close to the sources of pollution

**Access to sanitation for 10,000 people in urban areas and 26,000 people in rural areas**

**€90 million budget** over a 5-year period

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Source: FAO, 2018
Source: European Commission, 2018
Source: FAO, 2016
Source: FAO, 2016
The Mediterranean countries face today common energy and climate challenges that require a high level of multilateral responses and collective actions. A reinforced cooperation in the energy and climate action fields is needed and represents an opportunity for both shores of the Mediterranean to achieve the ultimate goal of fostering the integration and the social and economic development in the region.

The Union for the Mediterranean acts as a unique platform to facilitate and promote regional dialogue and cooperation as well as concrete projects and initiatives in the fields of Energy and Climate Action in order to deal with energy and climate change challenges in the region while advancing towards more secure and sustainable energy models.

The UfM has observer status at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

**Priorities**
- Promote a Mediterranean agenda for energy and climate action linked to the global agenda and the international fora
- Reinforce and animate a structured regional dialogue on energy and climate action among the UfM Member States, regional organisations, financial institutions, civil society, private sector and experts
- Support the promotion of projects and initiatives as well as their implementation and replicability, in line with the priorities identified within the dialogue platforms

**Political framework**
- UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy (Rome, 1 December 2016)
- UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change (Athens, 13 May 2014)
- UfM Ministerial Meeting on Energy (Brussels, 11 December 2013)

**Regional dialogue platforms**
The three UfM Energy Platforms aim to promote a multi-stakeholder regional dialogue on the development of renewable energies and energy efficiency, including the gas market, reliable supply transportation, the progressive deployment of renewable energies and energy efficiency measures as well as the progressive integration of the electricity market.
- UfM Regional Electricity Market Platform (UfM REM Platform)
- UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform (UfM REEE Platform)
- UfM Gas Platform

The UfM Climate Change Expert Group aims to enhance regional dialogue and catalyse the identification, support and development of specific projects and initiatives, both in mitigation and adaptation.

**Zoom on key projects & initiatives**
- **The SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework (SPREF)**
  Promoted in collaboration with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), SPREF aims to stimulate the development of private renewable energy markets in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. SPREF provides efficient financing mechanisms and targeted technical cooperation support for the implementation of renewable energy projects in the region that help to meet renewable energy targets and prevent CO₂ emissions.

- **UfM Energy University by Schneider Electric**
  The project seeks to foster expertise in energy efficiency and renewable energies through more than 200 online courses offered to engineers and professionals in the energy sector in UfM countries.

- **Tafila Wind Farm**
  The project aims to meet 3% of Jordan’s national electricity demand and constitutes a best practice model of public-private partnership.