

UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy

The Ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in charge of Energy gathered for their Third Ministerial Conference on Energy in Lisbon on 14 June 2021. The Conference was co-chaired by H.E. Mrs Hala Zawati, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and H.E. Ms Kadri Simson, Commissioner for Energy, for the European Union, in the presence of H.E. Mr Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the UfM Secretariat, and hosted by H.E. Mr João Pedro Matos Fernandes, Minister of Environment and Climate Action of the Portuguese Republic.

Recalling

- The UfM Declaration on Energy, in Rome, on 1 December 2016 and other references below¹;
- The important role of the Secretariat of the UfM in enhancing regional dialogue and cooperation;
- The UfM Stakeholder Consultation on post-2020 Environment and Climate Action priorities, 2020;
- The UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy, 2021.
- The Joint Communication of the European Commission on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, 2021;

Willing to endeavor to

- Join efforts for a just and fair transition towards circular, low emissions, inclusive, resilient, sustainable resource and energy efficient economies and societies, by taking into account national circumstances; thereby contributing to climate change commitments in the framework of the Paris Agreement², and the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular SDG 7;
- Promote sustainable recovery, fair and inclusive growth post Covid-19 in line with national circumstances, socio-economic progress, inclusive gender, balanced decent job creation, reduction in energy poverty, and involve, where appropriate, all relevant stakeholders, public and private actors along with civil society, and financial institutions;

¹ *The UfM Roadmap for Action, in Barcelona, on 23 January 2017; The energy scenarios for the Mediterranean Region developed in 2020 by the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie (OME); and the work for developing the "Near Zero Carbon 2050" scenario as an important achievement of the action conducted by the UfM Energy Platforms.*

² <https://ufmsecretariat.org/ref2/>

- Enhance the regional cooperation on energy, in accordance with the International Law and the gradual integration of energy markets by expanding knowledge and best practices, reinforcing the energy exchange and interconnections and removing existing and potential barriers, for the common benefit of the Mediterranean citizens as well as on just transition and the socio-economic dimension of the energy transition;
- Harness the opportunities created by research & development, innovation and digitalization, to drive the optimization of secure and sustainable energy production (including the expansion of decentralized generation) and efficiency in energy use (including in particular the growing use of cooling in buildings), develop capacity building and other cooperation mechanisms, and facilitate the market uptake of new cost-effective sustainable technologies and solutions;
- Endow the present and future workforce with the knowledge and skills it needs to benefit from the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities related to emerging energy solutions.

Acknowledging

- The benefit to the region's people and economies of a clean, secure, affordable, sustainable and safe energy supply and a predictable, secure and efficient energy use;
- The fact that the current environmental challenges, including inter alia GHG emissions, are the result of unsustainable modes of production and consumption and the current energy mix;
- The high vulnerability of the region to climate change and environmental degradation, notably resulting in dramatic consequences on already stressed hydric resources and implications on agriculture;
- All future energy developments should take into account disaster risk management;
- The disparities amongst the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, particularly regarding the means of action, therefore requiring an increased access to financial support, technology and technical know-how for the Southern and Eastern countries;
- The role of cities as actors in the energy transition and as expanding energy demand centers due to the increasing urbanization in particular in the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean region;
- The air pollution problems and their health consequences, especially in cities and for vulnerable groups;
- The expected significant growth of electricity demand in the region by 2050, driven by the increasing electrification of the economy, and population growth;
- The projected increased share in the primary energy supply of renewables, of which the region is abundantly endowed, in particular solar PV, onshore wind and increasingly offshore renewable energy (wind, waves, solar, geothermal and tidal energy) as well as renewable hydrogen, along with the high potential of energy efficiency which remains the largest clean energy transition wedge;
- The need to continue to finance research and innovation in marine renewable energy production;

- The key role played by energy infrastructures in facilitating the system integration of renewable energy sources, therefore acting as a catalyst for achieving the energy transition;
- The significant clean energy transition potential arising in major transport modes such as electric, hybrid and fuel cell vehicles on-land, in addition to advanced bio fuels, e-fuels, and renewable hydrogen in maritime shipping, as well as the learning curve potential of electrolysers' development for the latter and the transitory role of lower-emission fossil fuels such as LNG and CNG, in particular when blended with biomethane or e-gas and provided methane emissions are minimised ;
- The major role of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries as producers of renewable energy, in particular solar and wind; and as stable suppliers of natural gas, including LNG;
- The role of natural gas as a transition energy to sustainable production and consumption modes, and to environment-friendly development pathways and models, taking into consideration the need for the containing of fugitive methane emissions;;
- The central role of industry and SMEs to supply and adopt solutions based on technological developments informed by research;
- The key role of governments to set the right conditions for emerging technological trajectories;
- The key role of workers, employers and citizens to support the uptake and deployment of solutions based on technological developments, informed by research and stakeholder engagement;
- The inspiring ambition of the European Green Deal for the EU member countries and notably the objective of reaching climate neutrality by 2050, the goal of achieving at least 55% GHG net emissions reduction by 2030 compared with 1990, adopted by the European Council, and the post Covid-19 EU recovery and resilience plan, promoting a fast and inclusive recovery, including by accelerating the twin green and digital transition;
- The various initiatives proposed by the European Commission, and among others, the EU Hydrogen Strategy, the EU strategy for energy system integration, the EU Methane Strategy, the EU Offshore Renewable Energy strategy, the EU Sustainable and Smart Mobility strategy, and the Renovation Wave initiative;
- The Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries' NDC's/INDCs and national post Covid-19 recovery plans, and potential synergies amongst them;
- The role and contribution of the International Financial Institutions and of sustainable finance in further accelerating energy transition in the region in particular for Mediterranean developing countries;
- The important role of regional energy associations and organizations (including Medener, MEDREG, Med-TSO, OME, RCREEE ...), that enable for a bottom-up approach for exchanging experience and reaching common understanding towards the harmonization of energy systems around the region.

Hereby

1. envisage to jointly promote the transition to a post Covid-19 sustainable recovery pathway in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement objectives and the ambitions of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change;
2. intend to further develop national integrated energy and climate modelling and scenarios, collaborate on the Mediterranean energy scenarios with the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie, and take into consideration the nexus energy-water-food in their outlooks;
3. intend to review, re-design and implement ambitious roadmaps and targets for energy efficiency in all sectors and policies, including the enforcement of existing legislation, and accounting for national conditions, the development of possible shared incentivizing frameworks for innovative technologies, the removal of regulatory and financial bottlenecks, and support the phasing-out of environmentally and economically harmful subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption;
4. intend to improve the business environment and the investment climate for sustainable energy supply and demand;
5. intend to step up public funds and take appropriate actions to attract private investments in sustainable renewables and in energy efficiency, including through public private partnerships and notably by ensuring sound, stable and predictable regulatory frameworks;
6. intend to involve local stakeholders, where appropriate and in accordance to relevant national laws, in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and actions to address energy and climate challenges, and in line with the Global Covenant of Mayors ambitions for the entities who are signatory parties;
7. Express the political intention to further support regulatory and policy measures necessary to achieve regional integration of energy systems and markets in the Euro Mediterranean region, to increase flexibility for accommodating a higher rate of sustainable renewables, to achieve significant economies of scale and to increase security of supply and demand, also by promoting the reinforcement of electricity interconnections at regional and EuroMed level promoting adequate support schemes and streamlining administrative procedures in Euro-Mediterranean region;
8. envisage to jointly work to strengthen the regional electricity interconnections, smart grids and digitalization (for which cyber security requirements are an important element), increase electricity exchange, when necessary, and interoperability, harmonize technical operating rules, regulation and electricity pricing methodologies for transmission network taking into account national considerations/concerns;
9. Invite the UfM Member States in collaboration with the Platforms' Secretariats to assess the opportunity of the establishment of sub-regional electricity exchange zones;
10. envisage to work with national education and research institutions to increase public awareness about energy, climate, mobility and environmental issues, especially with younger generations in their future role as energy prosumers, raise research and education efforts for enterprises, public authorities and citizens and accelerate the behavioral and lifestyle changes

required for zero pollution, sustainable, energy and resources-efficient economies and societies;

11. envisage to foster an exchange of knowledge and capacity building addressed to public institutions and energy agencies;
12. envisage to collaborate on research and development, innovation and exchange knowledge on digitalization, due to its fundamental role in supporting the transition towards circular, low emissions, fair, inclusive and resilient and to energy- and resources efficient economies and societies, for instance through improved follow up of the energy production and transformation, transport, distribution and storage;
13. envisage to promote investments in marine areas for the sustainable exploitation of offshore renewable energies and for the potential multi-use of those areas with other activities at sea, notably with nature protection and fisheries ;
14. Intend to support the efforts to reduce fugitive methane emissions linked to fossil fuel production, transport and use, and enhance CO₂ emissions' reduction;
15. envisage to examine the opportunity of a EuroMed Digital Energy Forum, as a collaborative platform to support projects' information exchange and accelerate investments related to sustainable renewable energy projects as well as electricity transmission and distribution infrastructures in the region;
16. Invite the UfM co-Presidency in collaboration with the Platforms' Secretariats to continue coordinating the work of the three UfM Energy Platforms, including also where relevant other platforms of the UfM such as Research and Innovation, involving the relevant actors in the manner set out in the working guidelines;
17. Express their strong support for the UfM Energy Platforms, and invite the UfM Energy Platforms to elaborate a draft Roadmap for Action in line with the objectives of this Declaration and after adoption, support its implementation;
18. Express their gratitude to the Government of Portugal for its warm hospitality and to the UfM Secretariat for helping convene the meeting.

The present instrument is not intended to create rights or obligations under international or domestic law or to result in binding financial implications