



# UfM Youth Strategy 2030

Euro-Mediterranean  
youth towards a  
common goal



The UfM Secretariat  
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***Euro-Mediterranean youth constitute our common hope, future, aspiration and commitment. Only together can we build a better future for our youth and better societies in our region.***

**John Paul Grech,**  
Deputy Secretary General  
of the UfM for Social and Civil Affairs

## Foreword



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

The Euro-Mediterranean region has one of the youngest populations in the world, with one in every three people being younger than 25 years old, and with this number reaching almost half of the population for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

Moreover, youth are among the most vulnerable groups in the face of the pressing challenges our Mare Nostrum has been facing in the last decades, mainly the issues of unemployment and gender equality, which have been exacerbated with the Covid-19 pandemic, but also migration, radicalization and violent extremism. Climate change and sustainable development represent also major challenges for the new generations, as the future of the region is at stake.

Nevertheless, the daily achievements of millions of Mediterranean young people continue to be remarkable. They represent, in the South and in the North, one of the best assets of the region, and its greatest potential to address the root causes of the challenges we are facing.

Youth should therefore be given prominence in policy-making across Euro-Mediterranean countries; not only as objects of these policies but as partners in the discussions and full actors in the promotion of inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

In this sense, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has placed young people at the heart of its action, focusing on empowering and engaging them as agents for positive change. The UfM Youth Strategy 2030 is a milestone that comes as a targeted response to the call of the 42 UfM Ministers of Foreign Affairs, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> UfM Regional Forum, to launch a ‘Positive Agenda for Youth in the Mediterranean’.

This Strategy is fully in line with UN Youth 2030 and the EU Youth Strategy. In this framework, the UfM will continue to support and mobilize youth in its main areas of action, cognizant of the fact that in addition to introducing fresh and alternative perspectives, they have direct knowledge and insights into the issues they continue to be at the forefront of.

The success of this Strategy and its Action Plan that will follow, is based on the conviction that we must act with, and not only for, youth, in view of promoting an effective regional cooperation with tangible impact on the ground. The UfM is fully committed to be a reliable partner in the quest to facilitate increased impact and expanded regional and country-level action to empower the Euro-Mediterranean youth in building an inclusive and sustainable future in the Mediterranean.

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

## Acknowledgement

The UfM Co-Presidencies deserve foremost recognition for their unstinting commitment towards youth empowerment.

The first drafts leading to the 2030 UfM Youth Strategy were originally developed by Deputy-Secretary General, Abdelkader EL KHISSASSI and former DSG, Ambassador Marisa FARRUGIA.

An informal, shared taskforce within the UfM Secretariat as well as the Co-Presidencies proceeded with developing the original first draft until its final phase.

The preparatory guidelines towards it were established in 2017 under the supervision of H.E. Fathallah Sijilmassi, former Secretary General of the UfM and his team.

H.E. Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the UfM, deserves special acknowledgement for his own personal input in getting the Strategy finalized.

A special recognition should also be reserved for the late Ms. Suzanne Kodsi – former Head of Sector, Political and Social development - Relations with Regional Organizations & Regional Programmes, Neighbourhood South, who firmly believed and supported this project.

Special thanks are also due to Ms. Miriam Theuma, CEO, Malta National Youth Agency, Government of Malta, for her significant contribution and revision of the draft Youth Strategy as well as to Ms. Meriem El Hilali, former advisor within the UfM Secretariat in charge of Youth for the very first draft of the guidelines.

Colleagues who worked within the UfM Secretariat between 2017 to 2021 all deserve acknowledgement.

The contribution of all UfM partners who participated in this exercise deserve due recognition: OECD, KAS, CMI, UNFPA, FAO, IEMED, MYFMED, FOMEJE, ERASMUS+, SCUOLA ITALIANA, NSC COE, RYCO, LAS, WYF, NTA, EYF, NYO Tunisia, WOSM, DYPALL.

Since September 2021, H.E. Dr. John Paul GRECH, DSG, Social and Civil Affairs, and Ms. Fatima-Ezzahrae EL KBIRI, Partnership Specialist, have been responsible for finalizing the Strategy and develop its Action Plan.

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## I. The Union for the Mediterranean



The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an inter-governmental organization which brings together all the 27 countries of the European Union and 15 countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. The UfM's mission is to enhance regional cooperation, dialogue and the implementation of projects and initiatives with tangible impact on the Euro-Mediterranean citizens, with an emphasis on young people and women.

The integration of the Euro-Mediterranean youth in the economic, social, and political spheres is paramount to the success of the UfM's mission, and particularly, the agenda of the Youth dossier. The main strategic objectives of the Youth agenda are: 1) the enhancement of economic, social, and civic participation of young people in order to build more fair, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable societies; 2) and the empowerment of the

Euro-Mediterranean youth and women, including the most vulnerable such as people with disabilities, in order to become agents of positive change and partners of regional development, cooperation and dialogue.

To achieve these objectives, the UfM adopts an action driven methodology that has three components: political fora, dialogue platforms and regional projects. Following the UfM mandate and adopted methodology, the UfM strategies are implemented at three levels: the UfM Secretariat level, the member states' level and the regional level. The three levels allow to pursue the regional common ambition of creating effective links between the policy dimension and its operational translation into concrete projects and initiatives on the ground to adequately address the challenges of the region.

## II. General Context

The Union for the Mediterranean recognizes that young people are a source of creativity, innovation, and positive change. If an enabling environment is provided to facilitate their full participation in all aspects of society, young people can play an important role in stimulating development, growth, societal wellbeing, as well as in fostering regional cooperation and integration.

In the European Union (EU), young people under the age of 30 accounted for one third of the EU-27's population in 2019<sup>1</sup>. In the southern Mediterranean region, 48% are under the age of 30<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, they are facing serious and complex challenges that prevent them from full access to their potential as agents of positive change and prevent them from sustainable, human-centric development for the region according to the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. Access to labor markets and integration remain key challenges.

In 2020, the European Union counted 15% of young women and men (between 15 and 34 years old) who were neither in the labour force nor in education or training.<sup>3</sup> The rates in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are more alarming. Indeed, 25%<sup>4</sup> of young women and men (between the age of 15 and 24) are unemployed. It is one of the highest rates in the world.

In addition, women are disproportionately affected by this socio-economic burden with an unemployment rate of 8.8% compared to 7.9% among their male counterparts which continues to fuel the gender gap in the region<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated pre-existing obstacles, and created new ones, that impede the inclusion of youth, particularly, young informal workers, and female workers who are overrepresented in high-risk sectors. This is also experienced in several education fields, where inequalities have been exacerbated.

The main reasons for these high rates of unemployment are: scarce decent work opportunities, underemployment, poor quality education with high dropout rates, skills mismatches in the labour market, and finally, the lack of institutional capacities and mechanisms that respond to the youth's needs and concerns. These key challenges have significantly exacerbated the phenomenon of brain drain in the region.

Unemployment is not the only challenge for young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It is intertwined with other equally urgent and pressing obstacles that are related to access to higher education of good quality, mobility, environment, inclusive growth, economic development, and prevention of radicalization, hence, the need for a regional strategy and a coordinated action plan. This should be further supported with the mainstreaming of youth in national policies.

Youth in the Euro-Mediterranean region is also closely concerned by other relevant topics, that fall under the UfM Mandates, such as climate action, energy, rural and urban development, digitalization and so on.

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat 2020, *Being Young in Europe Today- Demographic trends*: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being\\_young\\_in\\_Europe\\_today\\_-\\_demographic\\_trends](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being_young_in_Europe_today_-_demographic_trends).

<sup>2</sup> European Strategy and policy analysis system 2019, *Global Trends to 2030: Challenges and choices for Europe*: [https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/ESPAS\\_Report.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/ESPAS_Report.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat 2020, "Statistics on Young People Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training": [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat\\_ifse\\_20/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat_ifse_20/default/table?lang=en).

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat 2021, *Unemployment statistics*: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics#Youth\\_unemployment](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment).

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat 2021, *Unemployment statistics*: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics#Youth\\_unemployment](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment).



The UfM Youth strategy aims to address the main challenges young people are facing in the region which are centred on human development, and sustainable development. The UfM is also committed to gender equality, women's empowerment, and combating all forms of violence against women and girls as well as gender stereotypes.

The strategy intends to deal with these six priority areas that are: (i) climate action and energy, (ii) environment, (iii) urban and rural development, (iv) economic development and digitalisation, (v) education (including non-formal education) and

training, and (vi) social protection and inclusion of Euro-Mediterranean youth.

It mainly aims to empower young people as essential agents of positive change for the development and stability of the region. To achieve these strategic objectives, there is a need for a common regional agenda that proposes regional solutions that can be pursued by the UfM and its Member States in coordination with their partners especially, international youth-led and focused organisations, civil society, think tanks, other international organisations, and the private sector.



### III. The Global Vision

The UfM, as an intergovernmental action-oriented organisation, has accumulated years of experience and expertise in its areas of action since its inception in 2008 through the creation, support, and promotion of initiatives and projects in the region that it will continue to reinforce through its Youth Strategy 2030. Moreover, the 2017 Roadmap for Action has paved the way for the UfM Secretariat to focus its efforts on youth employment, higher education access, mobility, environment, inclusive growth, empowerment and prevention of radicalization<sup>6</sup>. The UfM Youth Strategy also relies on the EU 2020: A new Agenda for the Mediterranean, which recalls the necessity of paying particular attention to the human dimension and opportunities for young people.

The UfM considers the Euro-Mediterranean youth issues among its main priority areas of action. It also opts for a close collaboration and partnership

with young women and men to achieve the strategic goals of the UfM that aim to foster human and sustainable development, guarantee the achievement of gender equality, and enhance regional dialogue and cooperation among its Member States and partners from both shores.

To meet its strategic goals, the UfM has (co-)organised several events, supported many initiatives, and labelled different projects on youth-related issues such as employment, research and education (including higher education mobility), skills and employability, civil society, business development, gender empowerment, climate action, innovative careers, digital education and blue and green economy that targeted more than 100,000 young women and men in the region. Consequently, many tailor-made solutions and concrete actions have been identified and established for future action.

<sup>6</sup> UfM Secretariat 2017, "UfM Roadmap for Action: The Union for the Mediterranean: an Action-driven Organisation with a Common Ambition": <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/UfM-Roadmap-for-action-2017.pdf>

## IV. The Mediterranean Vision

The Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, July 2008, set out a strategic ambition for the region, its people and its youth<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the Marseille Declaration of November 2008 enhanced further the Paris Joint Declaration and underlined the creation of an area of peace, stability, security and shared prosperity as well as fostering social, economic, and political cooperation in the region.<sup>8</sup>

Drawing on the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean vision of the UfM Youth Strategy 2030 is founded on an understanding that

*“Europe and the Mediterranean countries are bound by history, geography and culture. More importantly, they are united by a common ambition: to build together a future of peace, democracy, prosperity and human, social and cultural understanding. To achieve these common objectives, participants agree to continue with renewed dynamism the quest for peace and cooperation, to explore their joint problems and transform these good intentions into actions in a renewed partnership for progress”<sup>9</sup>.*

In line with this strategic ambition, the UfM vision for the future of young women and men of the Mediterranean is guided by the following values:

### Respect

Guarantee the dignity and respect of all young women and men and their right to full social and economic inclusion into society.

### Recognition

Recognize the shared beliefs, culture, and experi-

ences of Euro-Mediterranean youth and preserve their fundamental rights.

### Solidarity

Ensure active social, economic, and political participation of the youth and solidarity among the communities of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

### Development

Develop physical, intellectual, emotional capacities and craft the skills and talents of young women and men in order to fulfil their aspirations.

And principles of:

### Access

Have access to quality education, training, employment and service, **such as health, in particular mental health therapy, which has increased during the COVID19 pandemic.**

### Inclusion

Include young people in economic, social, and political spheres.

### Diversity

Recognize and respect differences among young people.

### Empowerment

Empower young women and men to become self-reliant, responsible, and co-partners in decision making and policy making.

### Equality

Ensure equality between every young woman and man.

<sup>7</sup> UfM Secretariat 2008, “Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean.”: [https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ufm\\_paris\\_declaration1.pdf](https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ufm_paris_declaration1.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> UfM Secretariat 2008, “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference.”

<sup>9</sup> UfM, “Joint Paris Declaration”

## V. Strategic Objectives and Priorities

The Union for the Mediterranean put youth at the heart of all its action, focusing on empowering young women and men between the age of 18 and 35 in the Euro-Mediterranean region, enhancing their access to education, employability and skills, employment, engaging them as full partners, giving a strong impulse to youth engagement in areas of regional priority and tapping into their potential as agents for change and development. At the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barcelona Process in November 2020, the Co-Presidency Statement of the UfM Regional Forum highlighted that “*efforts must be focused on the crucial employment challenges, mainly for young people*” and stressed “*the importance to fully involve the younger generations, to empower women and promote gender equality, in terms of rights and opportunities*”<sup>10</sup>.

The UfM Strategy aims to contribute to and support the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations’ youth strategy Youth 2030 - Working with and for young people, the European Union Youth Strategy, Engaging, Connecting, Empowering (2019-2027), the Council of Europe’s Youth Sector Strategy 2030 - Engaging young people with the Council of Europe’s values, Cairo’s Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the role of Women in Society that was adopted by the UfM in 2017, and Anna Lindh Foundation’s strategy Working Together Towards 2025.

To achieve these strategic objectives, the UfM recognizes the importance of developing a coherent strategy that would allow it to act in a coordinated and flexible way with the Member States and its partners. Consequently, the strategy will coordinate the actions of the UfM in the youth sector and identify priority actions needed for 2021-2030. It also aims to help the Member States to define collectively the actions that need to be taken.

The strategy will be implemented at three related, mutually supportive and interdependent levels: at UfM Secretariat level, Member State level and regional level, within each level’s limit, responsibility, competence and capacity, as follows:

- **The UfM Secretariat level** - Mainstream youth and youth-related issues, undertake key actions for meeting strategic youth goals through actions and initiatives that include regional networks and platforms, international civil society organisations and agencies, youth led organisations, educational organisations and institutions, think tanks, and regional private foundations.
- **The Member States level** - Mainstream youth and youth-related issues and undertake key actions for meeting strategic youth goals through national youth policies and youth-related policies, strategies, action programmes and other initiatives.
- **The international level** - Support, cooperate, and work with European Youth Strategies (in particular encouraging and promoting all the actions planned for the European Year of Youth 2022), the African Youth Charter, Arab Youth Strategies, and the United Nations’ Youth Strategy and Strategic Development Goals.

Drawing on the main UfM mandate, six priority areas have been identified by the UfM under overarching themes of Youth and Sustainable Development and Youth and Human Development:

<sup>10</sup> <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Co-Presidency-Statement-V-UfM-Regional-Forum.pdf>



## Achieving strategic youth goals

### Youth and Sustainable Development

### Youth and Human Development



- Youth, Climate Action and Energy
- Youth and the Environment
- Youth and Urban and Rural Development



- Youth, Economic Development and Digitalisation
- Youth, Education and Training
- Youth, Social Inclusion, and Participation

## VI. Strategic Goals and Key Actions



Following the recommendations of several events, fora, meetings and workshops organized by the various divisions within the UfM, and its partners between 2017 and 2020, especially those related to the youth sector, the UfM has decided to focus its activities, initially, on the following key actions in order to achieve its strategic youth goals in the six priority areas mentioned before.

The outlined key actions may need to be further developed, re-orientated, revised, or expanded in light of evolving or unforeseen circumstances over the timeframe of the strategy. A detailed and targeted Action Plan will follow the adoption of the Strategy.



## VI.1. Youth and Sustainable Development

### a. Youth, Climate Action and Energy - Strategic Youth Goal

*Ensure that young people are aware and informed of climate action and energy challenges, that their views and concerns are taken into account through consultations and participatory decision making processes, when formulating policies and that they are encouraged, supported and facilitated to take appropriate actions in the field through initiatives and activities that concern youth.*

#### Key Actions

1. Engage and involve young people in climate action, climate resilience and Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE) planning, implementation and governance;
2. Address and raise awareness among young people on climate change and energy issues, assess their socio-economic impacts, mainly regional energy insecurity, and involve the youth, civil society, and decision makers in a regional policy dialogue on cross-cutting issues related to climate and energy such as the improvement of regional energy efficiency and the implementation of local solutions;
3. Support the Euro-Mediterranean young people to acquire the necessary skills in order to integrate the green and circular economy, implement solutions for clean energy, and contribute to achieve a dynamic energy policy in the region through entrepreneurship and the creation of smart, green and blue jobs;
4. Support the involvement of the Euro-Mediterranean young people as active agents and partners in combating the effects of climate change and increasing climate resilience;
5. Support the involvement of young researchers in existing scientific and research programs and initiatives as well as their integration in existing regional/global networks such as Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC);
6. Mobilise young people through innovation and

digitalization and create opportunities for environmentally friendly action;

7. Mainstream youth-related issues in climate action and energy policies through the collaboration and cooperation with UfM, regional, European, and international agencies and bodies;
8. Provide support for existing platforms of youth organisations working on climate and energy (REEE) solutions;
9. Form and support, when already existing, regional networks (such as Mediterranean Youth Climate Network (MYCN)) and link prominent youth initiatives across the region;
10. Ensure the meaningful involvement of civil society and youth-led organisations in the decision making processes;
11. Support young people access to leadership positions in the climate, energy and environmental sectors;
12. Support education programs/trainings related to climate action challenges at different levels of education (schools; higher education);
13. Integrate gender perspective into climate policy and action and include the knowledge, needs and capacities of young women and facilitate their participation at all levels of action;
14. Favour youth initiatives in innovative sustainable business models and actors.

### b. Youth and the Environment - Strategic Youth Goal

*Ensure that young people are informed and aware of environmental challenges, including in the areas of biodiversity, pollution and resource efficiency, and that their views and concerns are taken into account when formulating policies and that opportunities for environmentally friendly action and employment are made available to them.*

#### Key Actions

1. Promote and increase employment opportunities related to green and blue growth for young people;

2. Engage young people in promoting and adopting sustainable behaviours and lifestyles as key components of the wider UfM contribution to sustainable consumption and production;
3. Address the cross-sectorial nature of environmental challenges to foster growth and job creation in line with a sustainable future, making the best use of innovation and digitalization;
4. Promote the implementation of environmental policies that contribute to sustainable development, poverty eradication, and social and economic inclusion of young people, taking into consideration young people's engagement through a participatory approach;
5. Support young people's participation in environmental matters by focusing on the role of non-formal education;
6. Promote and support youth engagement and participation in environmental action and policy making; and promote youth led related initiatives;
7. Equip young people with relevant skills and training to promote sustainable tourism through the cooperation with the relevant partners;
8. Mainstream youth and youth-related issues in environmental policies through the collaboration and cooperation with European, regional, and international agencies and bodies;
9. Support the development of youth-related projects and initiatives in water and environmental sectors;
10. Reinforce the role of youth in fighting desertification and deforestation in the region, promote sustainable food systems, ecosystems restoration and nature-based overall solutions;
11. Integrate gender perspective into environmental policies and actions, and facilitate their participation at all levels of action and a focus on knowledge, needs and capacities of young women;
12. Empower the youth to act as agents of change, as part of the solution, in environmental issues;
13. Foster youth engagement in the water employ-

ment focusing on the Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus and Water, Employment and Migration (WEM) Nexus;

14. Promote water diplomacy and the role of women and wider gender aspects;
15. Continue supporting UfM joint endeavour with the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) and other actors including International Centre for Water Management Services (CEWAS), KAS-Remena on Youth and Water: supporting the flagship Mediterranean Youth for Water (MEDYWAT) also to elaborate efforts toward creating an intersectoral platform to boost entrepreneurial on water and water related themes such as Entre-Med to foster entrepreneurial on water aspects (aligned with the UfM Water Agenda's objectives);
16. Enhance capacity of young people on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Water and Climate finance;
17. Accelerate entrepreneurship with a focus on technology-based start-ups, start-ups that are focused on agricultural production, and innovations in businesses that recycle waste and/or conserve natural resources, like water for agricultural production;
18. Promote the role of systems thinking and understanding the interconnections between water and other interconnected sectors as an important skill set for entering the water sector job market;
19. Support online training opportunities that help develop the skills required for youth in the water sector;
20. Encourage non-traditional skills for entering the job market to include leadership and creativity;
21. Foster volunteering and community engagement important to encourage youth who are building the required water sector job skills;
22. Develop capacity building workshops that can be replicated on the themes highlighted in the survey results including systems thinking, sustainable development, leadership, entrepreneurship development, the Water-Energy-Food Nexus, and digital skills;

23. Build partnerships between water and youth organizations in the region and others globally to facilitate knowledge exchange and transfer; and
24. Research and gap analysis of worldwide and Mediterranean specific.

### c. Youth and Urban and Rural Development - Strategic Youth Goal

Ensure that the interests of young people are taken into account in policies, programmes and initiatives for sustainable urban and rural development and that the issues of displacement and migration of young people is actively tackled.

#### Key Actions

1. Reinforce sustainable and inclusive urban development through regional activities, projects, and initiatives that produce positive socio-economic impact on the life of young people such as expansion of green urban areas,

- access to cultural activities, expansion of digital services in rural areas, etc;
2. Improve inclusive, multimodal and sustainable transport for all and mainstream youth related issues in policies on inclusive and accessible mobility;
3. Address the needs of young people and integrate them in policy conception, implementation, and evaluation through the consultation of a representative advisory board, and the organisation of workshops to foster their participation in shaping the public space and the urban environment;
4. Mainstream youth, youth related issues, and gender specific challenges in urban and rural development policies through the collaboration, cooperation, and dialogue with European, regional and international agencies and bodies;
5. Promote the specific needs of young women in urban and in rural areas;
6. Identify sustainable and concrete solutions to reduce the negative impact of urban and rural displacement on young people.

## VI.2. Youth and Human Development

### a. Youth and Economic Development - Strategic Youth Goal

*Strengthen and enhance decent job creation and employment opportunities for young people (including apprenticeships), support them in developing their employability with skills-base, particularly their entrepreneurial and ICT skills, and address the particular needs of young people not in employment, education or training, accounting for the diverse needs of vulnerable youth.*

#### Key Actions

1. Contribute effectively in all the phases of Nation Strategies to ensure the inclusion of youth.
2. Support capacity building of National Authorities and Government to improve the access and quality of services to NEETs. Support young entrepreneurs and MSMEs managed by young people with capacity-building programmes, networking and business development opportunities;
3. Promote and support innovative young entrepreneurs, including entrepreneurial opportunities yielded by the social economy;
4. Contribute to reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs);
5. Provide financial support for youth-led organisations to lead initiatives aimed at advancing entrepreneurship, innovation and decent job creation (i.e. through entrepreneurship hubs, training, etc.);
6. Promote quality and effective apprenticeships, thus contributing to a speedy labour market recovery;
7. Support the establishment of a Euro-Med-

iterranean Youth Prize aimed at promoting the best initiatives, new ideas and initiatives of youth associations;

8. Organize projects and events for young people on the role of innovation and decent job creation in the key green and blue sectors;
9. Continue supporting initiatives and projects implementing solutions that enable young people not in employment, education or training to integrate the labour market and society, including through enhanced cooperation between public employment services, training institutions and the private sector and employers;
10. Focus on jobs of the future to prepare young people for new employment opportunities in the coming decade, with a specific focus on the green and digital transition;
11. Promote digital literacy and skills development through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) education for all young people;
12. Open up new prospects for cross-border employment and education opportunities for young people through the ICT development and exchange and transfer of knowledge;
13. Continue to support regional youth focused training programmes that involve ICT training;
14. Encourage the collaboration between the private sector and youth associations; Foster women entrepreneurship by providing mentorship as well as opportunities for young people;
15. Promote training and social entrepreneurship practices that stimulate the development of territories and job creation at the local level and support the establishment of an inclusive exchange programme for social entrepreneurs in order to harness entrepreneurial skills with an inclusive impact in the Mediterranean.



## b. Youth and Education (including non-formal education) and Training - Strategic Youth Goal

*Promote and support quality education, training, and lifelong learning for all young people, facilitate smooth transitions from education to working life, and address the needs of early school leavers and young people not in employment, education or training.*

### Key Actions

1. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities through inter-sectorial training and webinars on transversal topics such as green and blue skills and support the empowerment of young people in the social economy as potential entrepreneurs and job creators;
2. Support and facilitate alternative learning programmes for early school leavers and young people not in employment, education or training;
3. Support the capacity building of youth-led organisations and youth workers in the Euro-Mediterranean region and partner with them in order to reach disadvantaged young people;
4. Provide support for youth-lead organisations to deliver non-formal education activities at a local, regional and international levels;
5. Support greater links between upper secondary vocational education and tertiary education to enhance employability of young people;
6. Promote and support e-learning and distance learning for young people;
7. Support school-to-work transitions for young people;
8. Promote intercultural dialogue through educational, professional, cultural, and artistic exchange among the Euro-Mediterranean youth in collaboration with Anna Lindh Foundation;
9. Continue to support the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez (UEMF), as a flagship project, the Euro-Mediterranean University of Slovenia (EMUNI) and the Eastern Mediterranean International School (EMIS);
10. Help increase the employability of students upon graduation, for instance through increased Euro-Mediterranean traineeship opportunities, and yet help offer perspectives in countries of origin to combat brain drain;

11. Enhance academic mobility for young people throughout the region;
12. Encourage girls' access into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines;
13. Promote internationalisation of education "at home", prioritize tertiary education in the region, and stimulate policy debate about the internationalisation of education in order to mainstream it throughout the region;
14. Foster regional and bilateral cooperation that strengthens R&D departments and units in educational institutions and other relevant bodies in the Euro-Mediterranean region;
15. Support the exchange of good practices and the identification of joint projects on vocational education and training. Promote rural development through strengthening non-formal education for young people.

## c. Youth and Social Inclusion and Participation - Strategic Youth Goal

*Promote and strengthen young people's potential for active citizenship, the empowerment of young women, address the needs of vulnerable and at-risk young people and combat extremism.*

### Key Actions

1. Foster young people's potential for socio-economic stability and development in the region;
2. Promote and support gender equality and the empowerment of young women;
3. Advance young people's participation, in particular young women, in decision making in the field of peace and security, migration and in the prevention and resolution of social conflicts, violence and extremism;
4. Support and facilitate young people in intercultural dialogue, bridging potential cultural divides and combat extremism and all forms of racism;
5. Support access to social and health services for young people's sexual and reproductive health, this will prevent radicalization and extremism;
6. Strengthen and provide support for disadvantaged, disabled, and at-risk young people;
7. Strengthening young people's civic and political awareness, media literacy, and involvement in disaster prevention, preparedness and responses;

8. Invest in young people as volunteers, community activists as agents of change in their communities;
9. Enhance youth participation in gender equality initiatives;
10. Commit financial resources to support youth-led organisations in the region;
11. Establish 'Euro-Mediterranean Youth Advisory board' to integrate youth's knowledge, perspectives, and concerns at all levels of action and advance their participation in policy conception and decision-making process at the local and regional level.





## VI. Monitoring, coordination, and capacity building

The UfM's actions on these strategic goals will aim to optimise and complement existing programmes through consolidated or new initiatives, in close cooperation with UfM Member States, international organisations and agencies, youth organisations, educational institutions and networks, research centres, civil society, think tanks and regional foundations. The UfM Secretariat will continue to be closely involved in the preparation of regional and international youth processes related to the Mediterranean region.

Acknowledging that the UfM methodology offers great opportunities to help young people to connect regionally, the UfM Secretariat will provide additional support for the active engagement and participation of young people through networking events and support active groups and partners in each policy field.

The UfM Secretariat will monitor ongoing youth-related activities by other organisations in complementarity and synergy with existing efforts in addition to connecting to active youth initiatives in the region. The UfM will also continue to expand and manage the regional dialogue on youth and making it as inclusive as possible with the participation of the main stakeholders - governments, civil society, and the private sector.

As facilitators of networks and concrete actions on the ground, each Division of the UfM Secretariat will include in its annual work programme key actions to meet the strategic goals and also

how it plans to further include young people in its activities, not just as beneficiaries, but as agents, actors and partners of the Euro-Mediterranean regional mission. The UfM Secretariat will consolidate the involvement of youth and mainstream youth-related policy issues transversally through its six sectors. Thus, the UfM Secretariat will:

1. Consolidate youth networks on key themes for regional integration;
2. Ensure the active participation of young people in the different UfM regional actions and networks;
3. Mainstream the youth dimension at all levels of action;
4. Provide support and structural funding for youth networks;
5. Promote and support research and knowledge building on the lives of young people in the region;
6. Oversee, monitor, promote and facilitate the implementation of the strategy and evaluate the achievements of the UfM strategic goals;
7. Ensure effective monitoring through quality data gathering and long term research in order to track ongoing progress, identify and share good practices, and diagnose gaps for future actions;
8. Hold consultations with youth organisations, NGOs and networks;
9. Review and evaluate the strategy and its impact on the lives of young people in the region.

## VII. Conclusion



The UfM Youth Strategy 2030 will contribute to the empowerment of young women and men of the region in order to facilitate their substantive participation in all aspects of society. The strategy also aims to further consolidate regional integration, cooperation and dialogue among member states, communities, and citizens from both shores of the Mediterranean.

The operational translation of the strategy will be based on a future action plan that will be adopted by the UfM Secretariat, Member States, and regional partners.

The Youth Strategy 2030 will seek to join efforts of member states and reinforce existing initiatives

and projects in order to continue addressing the issues in the six identified priority areas: climate action and energy, environment, urban and rural development, economic development and digitalization, education and training and social inclusion and participation.

The UfM keen interest in Youth is not punctual nor circumscribed in time. As an interregional organization, the UfM considers that it has a responsibility, given by its Member States, to enable young people build their lives.

Young people are the future. Let's help them shape it.



## Acronyms

- CEWAS** International Centre for Water Management Services
- CMI** Center for Mediterranean Integration
- EMIS** Eastern Mediterranean International School
- EMUNI** Euro-Mediterranean University of Slovenia
- EU** European Union
- ICT** Information and Communication Technology
- IWRM** Integrated Water Resources Management
- MedECC** Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change
- MEDYWAT** Mediterranean Youth for Water
- MENA** Middle East and North Africa
- MYCN** Mediterranean Youth Climate Network
- NEET** Not in employment, education or training
- REEE** Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
- STEM** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- UEMF** Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez
- UfM** The Union for the Mediterranean
- WEFE** Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems
- WEM** Water, Employment and Migration



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