

**18<sup>th</sup> MEDITERRANEAN LOGISTICS & TRANSPORT FORUM**  
**Official Opening of Meda Logistics & Transport Week Barcelona**

*Tuesday, 31 May, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m., Global Partners Stage*

**Introductory Remarks by HE Mr Erdal Sabri Ergen,  
UfM Deputy Secretary-General for Transport and Urban Development**

Dear Mr Ahmed El Wakil, Dear Mr Anwar Zibaoui, President and General Coordinator of ASCAME,

Dear Mr Pere Navarro, Special Delegate of the State to the Barcelona “Zona Franca” Consortium,

Dear Ms Elisabet Camprubí, President of the International Commission at the Chamber of Commerce of Barcelona,

Dear Ms Adina Vălean, EU Commissioner for Transport,

Dear Mr Kamel Al-Wazir, Minister of Transport of Egypt,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to begin by thanking ASCAME for inviting the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (the UfM) to take part in this opening session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Logistics & Transport Forum.

In my capacity as Deputy-Secretary General for Transport and Urban Development of the UfM, I would like to commend the organizers for dedicating this Forum to discuss such relevant and timely themes, touching upon how to transform the Mediterranean transport and logistics value chain, as well as the role of e-logistics and e-commerce in the new sharing economy.

It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to be able to share this podium with such eminent partners.

And it is a great pleasure for me to address this prestigious audience here within the framework of SIL BARCELONA, a fair which is major meeting point for the entire logistics and transport sector in the Mediterranean region and is now fortunately back in its physical format.

I would like to stress the importance of this event for our organisation, since transport and logistics lie at the heart of the Union for the Mediterranean’s mandate.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may already know, the UfM is an intergovernmental organisation that brings together 42 countries, including the 27 Member States of the European Union and 15 non-EU Member States in North Africa, the Middle East and the Western Balkans.

The UfM is a platform for dialogue and cooperation, based on consensus building, and it is also a multilateral partnership which aims at increasing the potential for regional integration and cohesion among its member countries.

It does so by enhancing co-ownership of the process, setting governance on the basis of equal footing and translating it into concrete development projects in the priority sectors falling within the UfM' mandate, among which are transport and logistics.

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Within the framework of our dialogue structures with the countries, which are co-chaired by the European Union and Jordan, we are now laying the groundwork for the **next UfM Ministerial Conference on Transport** to be held in **Cairo, Egypt**, on **3<sup>rd</sup> October** this year.

I would like to express our deep gratitude to the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and in particular his excellency Lieutenant General Kamel Al-Wazir, Minister of Transport, for hosting this important Conference.

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One of the key deliverables under preparation and expected to be endorsed by UfM Ministers of Transport meeting in Cairo, is the **new Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean region until 2027**. We called it **RTAP**.

The drafting exercise of the new Action Plan has been a collaborative and co-owned effort by all UfM Member States.

The multi-stakeholder consultative process on the new Plan was launched in June 2021, and most recently, on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022, less than a year later, has been validated at the technical level by our Member countries and is ready for adoption at the political level.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

As we move towards the Ministerial Conference, we have already started thinking about the implementation stage of the 28 actions foreseen in the new Action Plan, covering all transport modes.

For example, **Action 5** of the new Transport Action Plan concerns the **development, coordination and upgrading of logistics** within the Mediterranean region.

In this regard, UfM countries will need to establish or strengthen in the coming years their national logistics development strategies to take into account the regional and Mediterranean dimension of the sector.

Logistics programmes in the UfM area of action will continue, in particular, through the implementation of priority logistics platforms of the trans-Mediterranean transport network, in order to help improve logistics performance, sustainability and coordination at the regional level.

In this context, it will be necessary to support and promote the development of green logistics, to prioritise the rationalization of urban logistics and to ensure the resilience of the logistics chain. To achieve these goals, the potential of digitalisation of the information exchange process along the logistics chain will need to be mobilised.

In order to boost logistics performance and to ensure effective coordination at regional level, training and capacity building activities will be maintained and tailored to the specific needs of countries.

Logistics will continue to be promoted by countries, in raising awareness of public administration, aligning training with international standards, and in developing professional associations.

Capacity building in the digitalisation of supply chains and the creation of 3PL and 4PL logistics service providers will also be encouraged and ensured.

Finally, data collection and exchange, in particular building on EU standards and solutions, as well as the establishment of a regional logistics observatory will also be key issues to consider and elaborate on within the implementation of the Action Plan, including measures for the exchange of multimodal transport data supporting more efficient cargo flows along the transport networks in the region.

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**Action 6** of the new Action Plan concerns the **development of multimodal transport**.

Similarly to the logistics sector, to implement this action countries will need to set up or strengthen multimodal transport development strategies with the aim of optimizing transport operations, minimizing transport costs and ensuring gains in terms of sustainability and competitiveness.

The development of regional multimodal transport corridors will need to be prioritised and supported at national level need in order to help enhance connectivity.

As part of the development of multimodal transport, countries will be encouraged to improve and strengthen port connectivity, by land and in particular by rail, with the hinterland.

This connectivity should be seen as a strategic element of port development and multimodal transport, taking into account its economic and competitive advantages in order to reduce negative externalities to people and the environment.

With the further development of the so-called “Motorways of the Sea”, this connectivity will ensure complementarity between the different transport modes and will promote modal shift towards sustainable transport, which will strengthen the integration of multimodal services and allow for concrete progress in the interconnection between infrastructure networks within and between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

In addition, countries will be encouraged to implement projects to expand local and regional rail networks.

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Allow me to highlight two examples of UfM-labelled projects already specifically targeting logistics and multimodal transport with a Mediterranean scope, one completed and the second on-going. The [LOGISMED Training Activities \(LOGISMED – TA\)](#) project, implemented during the period 2013-2019 in ten Mediterranean countries, was aimed at improving the level of qualifications of logistics platforms’ operators and managers and reinforcing transport and logistics in the Mediterranean. The ongoing [TransLogMED](#) project, which started in late 2017, develops training and knowledge-transfer activities targeting the logistics sector in 7 Mediterranean countries, thus complementing the LOGISMED-TA project, and promotes the establishment of sustainable multimodal transport chains and door-to-door logistics services.

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(Optional)

The new Action Plan also aims to assist UfM countries in mitigating risks and considering adaptation options to build resilience, future-proof national transport policies, as well as strengthen the region’s culture of preparedness and evidence-based anticipatory policy-making, with strategic foresight on a regional level.

The new RTAP provides comprehensive guidance for action in these fields and intensified cooperation for the transport connectivity sector across the UfM area of action as a whole.

Through **Action 9** on “**Port efficiency improvement**”, and as part of the implementation of the SDGs, UfM countries will establish emission reduction targets at the port level and continue to introduce pilot initiatives and projects between ports in the Mediterranean region.

Mediterranean ports will ensure, through a pilot phase, the transition towards Energy Communities, considered as a pathway towards the transformation of ports into ‘sustainable energy hubs’ for maritime and inland supply of sustainable and clean energy, and will also ensure the creation of local innovative business ecosystems.

Through **Action 10** on “**Development of maritime transport**”, UfM Countries will boost renewable energy investments in order to minimise the negative effects of fossil fuels on the environment, health and biodiversity.

In this context, countries will be encouraged to renew their fleets through investment programmes at the national level with the use of national and international financial institutions and all available financing and support instruments.

UfM countries will also continue working together in the Mediterranean region towards making full use of existing LNG terminal capacity, and further optimising it going forward in line with market demand.

Together and related to the development of sustainable maritime transport solutions, UfM countries will address the diversification of energy options, including different alternative fuels, as relevant and applicable for shipping, not only engaged in international voyages but, more importantly, in short sea shipping routes.

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As part of the thinking process about the implementation of the Action Plan, we have also started to consider when and how to involve International Financial Institutions and donors into our work using the existing UfM framework.

This will allow us to present the new action plan to IFIs and, conversely, will allow UfM Members States to know about the funding programmes put in place by IFIs, also by the European Commission, in relation to the different actions of the Plan and their funding requirements.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

We hope this new Regional Transport Action Plan will guide the UfM Member States' individual and collaborative work in the transport sector in the years to come and will indicate the regional transport system's path towards achieving the goal of a sustainable, smart, resilient, cleaner and more inclusive mobility, in line with the vision for trans-Mediterranean integration in the infrastructure sector.

We wish to involve as many partners and stakeholders as possible in this important endeavour, including, needless to say, the organisations and governments on this panel.

In this context, we very much look forward to the outcomes of the discussions of this 18<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Logistics & Transport Forum.

Thank you very much.

#### N.B. (on Action 5)

*Green logistics aim at optimising freight transport by using less polluting vehicles and vessels, developing smart and multimodal logistics platforms to support the development of an efficient multimodal transport, and deployment of digital technologies.*

*Diagnostic and/or feasibility studies will most likely be necessary, particularly for logistics platforms within the framework of the transport network in the Mediterranean. Strategies and action plans will be developed or revised according to respective needs of countries. Simplification and digitalisation of administrative procedures (and in particular customs procedures) will have a positive impact on the logistic processes, such as reducing time of transport operations.*

*Strategies and action plans for the rationalisation of urban logistics will also be part of sustainable urban mobility plans with the objective of optimising urban freight transport in line with the SDGs, taking into account its economic, social and environmental dimensions.*

*Specific measures will also need to be taken to make logistics platforms more resilient to climate change, as well as possible epidemics, drawing upon lessons learned from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure the continuity of their deliveries.*

*The availability of sustainable energy infrastructures, at the level of logistics platforms, will need to be reinforced as well in order to foster green and sustainable transport across the Mediterranean.*

#### N.B. (on Action 6)

*The efficiency of modern transport systems depends fundamentally on their ability to interface, in an appropriate way, with integrated multimodal services. In order for multimodality to materialise and be successful, the quality levels of the individual transport modes must be upgraded.*

*Setting up of multimodal transport corridors should be prioritised and supported at national level, hence the need to prioritise the modernisation of the internationally important road and rail infrastructure, investments in port infrastructure, connections of ports with their hinterlands, as well as the further development of the Motorways of the Sea to strengthen integrated multimodal services and make concrete progress in connecting the two shores of the Mediterranean.*

#### N.B. (on Actions 9 and 10)

*A fundamental building block for energy sustainability in maritime transport is the availability of clean energy and alternative fuels for shipping. To this end, the supply of LNG, Green Hydrogen or Renewable Low Carbon Fuels, either of biological or synthetic origin, should be promoted in consistency and in a way compatible with the feedstock and renewable energy availability around the Mediterranean basin. To this end, countries are invited to consider the need for distributed LNG storage facilities, of small to large scale, able to secure expected increase in demand for LNG as fuel for shipping and, at the same time, to secure ability for imports and regasification as adequate and necessary. In addition, as feedstock for synthetic fuels, or as fuel for future maritime transport applications, Green Hydrogen production should be considered as an important building block in the promotion and uptake of alternative future marine fuels. The availability of renewable electricity production around the Mediterranean should assist in the construction of a resilient and diversified maritime fuels production network, able to support the uptake of demand from sustainable shipping.*