

# HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

**2 October 2024**

Venue:

The General Secretariat of the  
League of Arab States, Cairo



Union for the Mediterranean  
Union pour la Méditerranée  
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط





# High-level Meeting on Science Diplomacy: Science diplomacy for advancing cooperation and dialogue in the Mediterranean

Science and technology play an increasingly important role in international arena, especially so in the Mediterranean, a sea connecting three continents, and which has served for millennia as an interface between European and Arab Countries. Highly relevant fields for the future of the region call for closer technological and research cooperation, from climate change to energy and health, from food security to the blue economy. This raises the stakes for diplomacy, which needs to be aware and properly informed of challenges and opportunities arising from science and technology. The Mediterranean is demonstrating the positive societal impact of various research initiatives that unite the North, South, and East of the region, including the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA), Horizon Europe's Mediterranean Initiative, and the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME), as it was remarked also during the first European Science Diplomacy Conference (Madrid, December 2023).

The Union for the Mediterranean is supporting the development of a scientific agenda in the region with renewed emphasis following the mandate received by its 43 Member States during the UfM Ministerial Conference on Research and Innovation (2022). It has been active in promoting training, research initiatives and acting as a broker between different societal actors, including diplomats, ministries, international organizations, scientists, universities and research centers. In 2024, it launched with the European Commission a Euro-Mediterranean Hub.

The EU is committed to evidence-informed multilateral cooperation and global solidarity. As outlined in the EU's Global Approach to Research and Innovation, a stronger focus on science, technology and innovation in foreign and security policies enables the EU to respond to global challenges, while simultaneously enhancing its resilience and open strategic autonomy. Concurrently, the European Union is developing a European Framework for Science Diplomacy and coordinating

a multilateral dialogue on the principles and values of international cooperation in research and innovation, building on its long-standing commitment to academic freedom, research ethics, gender equality, and open science and data.

The League of Arab States (LAS) emphasizes the importance of scientific research, highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In collaboration with the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ALECSO), LAS organized seminars on managing disasters and crises. A Scientific Research Strategy was approved in 2017, focusing on social, cultural, and economic dimensions. This led to the development of a General Framework for Arab Scientific Research, approved in 2019, with an executive plan set in 2021.

Building on the 2023 Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Science Diplomacy, co-organised by the Union for the Mediterranean in partnership with the European Commission at the UfM Headquarters in Barcelona, the UfM, the European Commission, and the League of Arab States are partnering to organise jointly a High-level Meeting on Science Diplomacy, as an ideal place to discuss regional cooperation, and how to build concrete initiatives including research infrastructures, mobility and training, and science advice for foreign policy.

### Structure of the meeting

The meeting is structured in a political and a seminar segment. Invitees include diplomats, directors of research institutes, senior officials in line Ministries (research, foreign affairs, development, environ-

ment, etc), and other science diplomacy scholars and practitioners. The goal of the meeting is to present and discuss initiatives on how science, technology and innovation can be transformative engines for dialogue and sectorial cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The meeting will be opened with a **high-level segment with political/institutional representatives** from the 43 UfM Member States, European Commission, Arab League, and other international organisations. A seminar segment will delve into thematic sessions on selected regional priorities as well as into ways to foster science diplomacy in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

### Outcome of the meeting

Each session is called to produce an outcome in form of document, recommendation, or draft initiative, to be presented at the end of the event.

**Research and innovation community meets at UfM to explore science diplomacy's potential**

**Fostering Science Diplomacy in the Mediterranean Region - Outcome of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Science Diplomacy**

**1st UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation**

**Science diplomacy | EEAS (europa.eu)**

**Science diplomacy - European Commission (europa.eu)**

# Agenda

**Day before**  
**01/10/2024**

Cultural visit offered by the  
EU Delegation in Cairo

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## Political segment

**09:30**  
**Opening**

High-level representatives from co-organising institutions

- **Ahmed Aboul Gheit**, Secretary General, League of Arab States
- **Nasser Kamel**, Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean
- **Signe Ratso**, Deputy Director General, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission

**10:00**  
**High-level institutional segment**

Political-level invitees

- Minister of Research of Egypt TBC
- (Deputy) Minister of Research/Foreign Affairs from Europe TBC
- ALECSO/UNESCO TBC

**11:00**  
**Keynote: Opening the door to dialogue through science in the Mediterranean**

An engaging high-level speaker making the case for science diplomacy in the Mediterranean region.

- **Romano Prodi**, former President of the European Commission

**11.20**

## Plenary session: Dialogue among partners: Science diplomacy in EuroMed countries

Setting the scene panel: *Topics and areas for science diplomacy in the Mediterranean*

- **Farraj Alajmi**, Director of Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States
- **Giuseppe Provenzano**, Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean
- **Nienke Buisman**, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission

**12:00**

## Tour de table among Country representatives, international organizations and institutions

Leading questions: *what are the visions and the strategies for Science Diplomacy being developed? What concrete next steps?*

- Moderator: **Heba Gaber**, Science Counselor, EU Delegation to Egypt

**13.00 Lunch**

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## Seminar segment

After the high-level segment, thematic sessions will discuss concrete areas where the shores of the Mediterranean can work concretely towards common goals.

**Format:** A co-organising partner takes the lead in organising the session, in partnership with a diplomat/science counsellor.

## *Thematic sessions*

**14.00**

## Parallel session 1: Science and the Water-Energy-Food-Environment Nexus (in cooperation with the PRIMA foundation)

- Moderator: PRIMA Foundation TBC
- Speakers: TBC

**14.00**

**Parallel session 2:  
SESAME, a science  
diplomacy lighthouse  
in the Middle East:  
Achievements and long-  
term sustainability (in  
cooperation with SESAME)**

This session will look into one of the most prominent examples of science diplomacy in the Mediterranean Area, the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME). The session will discuss its achievements since its inauguration in 2017 and the challenges of its long-term sustainability.

- Moderator: **Rolf-Dieter Heuer**, former CERN Director General, President of the SESAME Council
- Speakers: TBC

**15.15 Coffee break** .....

**15.30**

**Parallel session 3:  
Towards a EuroMed  
Science Diplomacy Hub  
network (in cooperation  
with *Fundación Española  
para la Ciencia y la  
Tecnología*)**

What would a “Med Science Diplomacy Hub” look like? Is there any interest to create such a network, or a collection of multilateral/bilateral activities, or even a center. This brainstorming session invites diplomats, scientists and stakeholders to be creative in proposing concrete steps, and to signal interest in taking the lead.

- Moderator: **Ana Elorza Moreno**, Coordinator at the Science and Technology Office – Spanish National Congress of Deputies
- Co-Moderator: **Jan Marco Müller**, Science Diplomacy Coordinator, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission
- Speakers: TBC

**15.30**

**Parallel session 4: Science  
for a sustainable blue  
economy (in cooperation  
with Maritime Arab  
Academy of Science)**

- Moderator: **Domenico De Martinis**, Science Counselor, Embassy of Italy in Cairo
- Speakers: TBC



## 16.45 Coffee break

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**17.00**

**Showcasing an initiative:  
Academic support for  
university students in  
Gaza**

- **Kherieh Rassas**, President, UNIMED

## 17.10 Feedback from the Parallel Sessions

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## 17.20 Final statement/Outcome of the Conference

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**17.30**

**Closing remarks: Science  
Diplomacy for advancing  
Euro Mediterranean  
Cooperation**

- **Farraj Alajmi**, Director of Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States
- UfM Deputy Secretary General for Higher Education and Research
- **Christian Berger**, EU Ambassador to Egypt

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**Day after  
03/12/2024**

30th meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation (hosted at Fairmont Hotel – Upon invitation only)





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