

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 Union for the Mediterranean, European Commission, Arab League, and their respective Member States 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
19:15

Cultural visit offered by the EU Delegation in Cairo
Nile boat tour and dinner. Meeting point: Fairmont Nile City
Hotel – 18:30

Political segment

09:30
Opening

- **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
- **H.E. Mohamed Ayman Ashour**, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, TBC

10:00
Keynote: Opening the door to dialogue through science in the Mediterranean

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

10:20
Institutional segment

- **Christina Hainzl**, EU Science Diplomacy Alliance
- **Amr Salama**, Secretary General, Union of Arab Universities
- **Abdelmajid Benamara**, Secretary General, Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils

10:45 Coffee break

11:00
Science and cultural diplomacy: Exploring a nexus

- Moderator: **Sohail Luka**, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission
- **Ahmed Abdullah Zayed**, Director, Bibliotheca Alexandrina
- **Dietrich Raue**, Director, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
- **Josep Ferré**, Executive Director, Anna Lindh Foundation
- **Sabine Kroissenbrunner**, Austrian Cultural Forum, EUNIC Cluster President TBC
- ICESCO TBC

11:45

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

Topics and areas for science diplomacy in the Mediterranean

- Moderator: **Nehal Aboud**, International Cooperation Officer, League of Arab States
- **Farraj AlAjami**, Director of Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States
- **Giuseppe Provenzano**, Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean
- **Jan Marco Müller**, Science Diplomacy Coordinator, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission

12:15

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: **Joan Borrell**, Deputy Secretary General for Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean

Interventions from attending participants.

13:00 Lunch

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.

14:00

Thematic sessions

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

- Moderator: **Octavi Quintana Trias**, Director, PRIMA Foundation

Speakers:

- **Nikolaos Nikolaidis**, Coordinator, ECOFUTURE
- **Roggero PierPaolo**, Coordinator, Salam-Med
- **Halima Khaled**, Expert, QUINOA4MED
- **Raúl Compes**, Director, CIHEAM Zaragoza

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

- Moderator: **Rolf-Dieter Heuer**, former CERN Director General, President of the SESAME Council
- Rapporteur: **Maria Rentetzi**, Chair of Science, Technology and Gender Studies, Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

Speakers:

- **Gihan Kamel**, SESAME
- **Ana Persic**, UNESCO
- **Edward Mitchell**, European Synchrotron Radiation Facility
- **Zehra Sayers**, Sabanci University
- **Angela Trapananti**, University of Camerino

15:15 Coffee break

15:30 Parallel session 3: Towards a EuroMed Science Diplomacy Hub network

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: **Jan Marco Müller**, Science Diplomacy Coordinator, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission
- Co-Moderator: **Giuseppe Provenzano**, Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean
- Rapporteur: **George Bugeja**, Deputy Director for Internationalisation, Xjenza Malta

Speakers:

- **Marga Gual Soler**, Head of Science Diplomacy Capacity Building, GESDA
- **Rado Bohinc**, President, Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI)
- **Andrei Luca**, Director for Cultural Diplomacy, Education and Science, Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Interventions from attending participants, experts, diplomats, institutions.

15:30 Parallel session 4: Science for a sustainable blue economy

- Moderator: **Domenico De Martinis**, Scientific Attaché, Embassy of Italy in Cairo
- Rapporteur: **Mohi-Eldin M. Elsayeh**, Dean of College of Maritime Transport and Technology, Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport

Speakers:

- **Mounir Ghribi**, Director of International Cooperation and Research promotion, Italian National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics
- **Suzan El-Gharabawy**, Vice President, Egyptian National Institute for Oceanography & Fisheries
- **Tarek Tawfik**, President, Union of Mediterranean Confederation of Enterprises
- **Mustapha elKhayat**, President, Association Marocaine pour la Logistique
- **Sara elGazzar**, Dean, College of International Transport and Logistics

16:45 Coffee break

17:00

Science diplomacy on the ground: Showcasing initiatives

- **Marcello Scalisi**, Director, UNIMED. The TESI Initiative.
- **Marilena Rossano**, International Relation Officer, Italian National Council of Research. Capacity building action for Lebanese and Palestinian Researchers.
- **Mohamed Abdel Monem**, MedECC

17:20 Feedback from the Parallel Sessions

17:40 Final statement/ Outcome of the Conference

17:55

Closing remarks: Science Diplomacy for advancing Euro Mediterranean Cooperation

- **Farraj AlAjami**, Director of Education and Scientific Research Department, League of Arab States
- **Joan Borrell**, Deputy Secretary General for Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean
- **Christian Berger**, EU Ambassador to Egypt

20:00 Dinner offered by the Union for the Mediterranean

Kebabgy Grill Oriental, Sofitel Cairo Nile El Gezira /
Address: 3 El Thawra Council St. Zamalek

Day after

03/10/2024

- 30th meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation (hosted at Fairmont Hotel – 08:30 – 12:30 (Upon invitation only)
- Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Marketplace – 12:00 – 17:00 (Open Event) (information and registration at: euromedim.com)



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