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AD-HOC MEETING OF THE DRAFTING GROUP OF THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON WATER IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Malta, 6th – 7th February 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The First UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water took place in Malta on 27th April 2017. It resulted in the approval of the Ministerial Declaration of the UfM Water Ministers on the UfM Water Agenda. The Declaration mandated the UfM Regional Platform on Water (then known as the Water Expert Group, which was created at the 2008 Water Ministerial Conference) to elaborate and implement the UfM Water Agenda, and an accompanying financial strategy, through a medium/long term work programme and biannual work plans. In the Declaration, Ministers agreed to reconvene, in principle, in two years to review progress on the development of the UfM Water Agenda.

At the 14th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water (Lisbon, June 2024), UfM member states strongly supported the need for a new UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water to provide high-level political orientation to the work on water carried out around the Mediterranean. At this meeting of the Regional Platform, Morocco reiterated its offer to host the Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water.

After meeting, the UfM Secretariat, in consultation with the co-Presidencies, developed a *Concept for the organisation of the Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water and the Development of a Ministerial Declaration on Water*. Following the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of 26 September 2024, the UfM Senior Officials supported the organisation of the Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water in principle at the end of 2025.

The main output of the Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water will be the *UfM Ministerial Declaration on Water in the Mediterranean*. The Ministerial Declaration will be a short document setting out the ambition and priorities for achieving the water-related SDGs in the Mediterranean. The time scope of the Ministerial Declaration will be the period 2026-2030. The Ministerial Declaration will be an input to the UN 2026 Water Conference that will take place at the UAE on 2-4 December 2026.

The development of the Ministerial Declaration will follow the guidance recently issued under the UfM Reform process (see the document *Reform Package 1 – organisational aspects*). In particular, a first draft of the Ministerial Declaration will be prepared by end February 2025 and an advanced draft will be presented for discussion in a multi-stakeholder setting at the next meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water in early June 2025.

Objectives

The overall objective of the meeting is to kick-start the process of drafting a new Ministerial Declaration on Water in the Mediterranean.

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The specific objectives of the meeting are:

- to recall the concept of the Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water,
- to discuss and seek agreement on the selection of host country the Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water,
- to present and discuss a Draft Outline of the Ministerial Declaration on Water,
- to present and discuss inputs provided by individual Member States,
- to provide updates on the preparation of the three policy documents that will be part of the Ministerial Package, and
- to present the concept of the Ministerial Meeting and the Ministerial Declaration to regional stakeholders and seek their feedback.

Participation in the meeting

The meeting will include two parts. The first day of the meeting, participation will be limited to representatives of UfM member states. The second day of the meeting (half-day) participation will be open to include regional stakeholders.

Meeting output

The Co-Presidencies and the UfM Secretariat will draft a summary of the meeting and share it with all members of the UfM Regional Platform on Water (RPWater).

Following the meeting, the UfM Secretariat, in consultation with the Co-Presidencies, will develop a full First Draft of the Ministerial Declaration by end of February. This will be shared with all RPWater members and written comments will be requested by the end of March.

The UfM Secretariat, in consultation with the Co-Presidencies, will develop, by mid-May, a Second Draft incorporating the written comments received, and will distribute it for discussion at the 15th Meeting of the UfM Regional Platform on Water in early June 2025 (location tbc).

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DRAFT AGENDA

The UfM will host a Networking Cocktail Dinner on 5th February, from 20:00 to 22:00, at the Ghajn Centre (transportation will be provided).

Day 1 – Thursday 6 th February Luzzu Room	
9h00-9h30h	<p>Session 1. Opening: Meeting background, objectives and agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manuel Sapiano, CEO, Energy and Water Agency, Malta Mohammed Al-Dwairi, Assistant Secretary General for Strategic Planning, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Jordan Frederic Fournet, DG NEAR, European Commission Patrick Wegerdt, DG ENV, European Commission Stephen Borg, DSG a.i. for Water, Environment and Blue Economy, UfM
9h30-10h00	<p>Session 2. Second UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water: Concept, process for the selection of host country, and timeline</p> <p>Chair: Patrick Wegerdt, DG ENV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Stephen Borg, DSG a.i. for Water, Environment and Blue Economy, UfM Q&A
10h00-10h30	<p>Session 3. Draft Outline of the Ministerial Declaration on Water in the Mediterranean</p> <p>Chair: Patrick Wegerdt, DG ENV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Roberto Martin Hurtado, Senior Advisor (TA), UfM Discussion of the structure of the outline
10h30-11h00	Break
11h00-13h00	<p>Session 4. Inputs from UfM Member States regarding the content of the declaration</p> <p>Chair: Frederic Fournet, DG NEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-call of member states Discussion
13h00-14h00	Lunch break
14h00-15h30	<p>Session 5. Ministerial Package</p> <p>Chair: Mohammed Al-Dwairi, Jordan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus in the Mediterranean Source-to-Sea Continuum</i>, Frederic de Dinechin, Senior Advisor, UfM (10 min plus 5 min Q&A) <i>UfM Recommendations on Water Finance</i>, Roberto Martin Hurtado, UfM (10 min plus 5 min Q&A) <i>UfM Roadmap for the Digitalization of the Mediterranean Water Sector</i>, Georg Petersen (10 min plus 5 min Q&A) <i>Working groups (40 min), one working group per document:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What key policy messages from this document should be reflected in the Ministerial Declaration? What post-ministerial priority work on this topic should be reflected in the Ministerial Declaration?

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15h30-16h00	Break
16h00-16h30	<p>Session 5. Ministerial Package (cont) Chair: Mohammed Al-Dwairi, Jordan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting from the working groups • Discussion
16h30-17h00	<p>Session 6. Closing of Day 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Borg, UfM • Frederic Fourtune, DG NEAR • Patrick Wegerdt, DG ENV • Mohammed Al-Dwairi, Jordan
<p>Day 2 – Friday 7th February Poseidon Room</p>	
9h00-10h15	<p>Session 7. Consultation with regional stakeholders: Ministerial Meeting Chair: Mohammed Al-Dwairi, Jordan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept and process of the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Water, Stephen Borg, DSG a.i. for Water, Environment and Blue Economy, UfM • Discussion
10h15-10h45	Break
10h45-12h00	<p>Session 8. Consultation with regional stakeholders: Ministerial Declaration Chair: Frederic Fourtune, DG NEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Outline of the UfM Ministerial Declaration, Roberto Martin Hurtado, Senior Advisor (TA), UfM • Discussion
12h00-12h30	<p>Session 9. Sixth Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum Chair: Frédéric Fourtune DG NEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by One Water Committee Italy • Q&A
12h30-13h00	<p>Session 10. Closing: conclusions and next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Borg, DSG a.i. for Water, Environment and Blue Economy, UfM • Mohammed Al-Dwairi, Assistant Secretary General for Strategic Planning, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Jordan • Frederic Fourtune, DG NEAR, European Commission • Manuel Sapiano, CEO, Energy and Water Agency, Malta
13h00-14h00	Lunch

In the afternoon of Day 2, the second part of the Workshop on Digitalization will take place, featuring sessions designed for both state and non-state actors.

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