



Concept Note

UfM Conference: The Tourism Sector *Employment-related opportunities and challenges* 2-3 July 2025 Athens, Greece

The Mediterranean region is one of the world's most significant tourism destinations, attracting over **400 million visitors annually** and generating nearly **30% of global tourism revenue**. With its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and solid hospitality infrastructure, tourism is a major contributor to economic and social development. The industry accounts for **11% of the region's GDP** and provides **15 million direct jobs**, making it a key pillar of employment and economic stability. Tourism is a crucial sector for decent job creation for women and youth in the region, and yet, the Mediterranean tourism sector faces persistent challenges that hinder its ability to drive long-term, **inclusive**, and **sustainable** growth.

To address these challenges and fully unlock the potential of the tourism sector in the Mediterranean, there is an urgent need to **invest in skills development, encourage private sector engagement, and promote innovation-driven sustainability**. The **2022 Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour** reaffirmed the commitment to **promoting decent work, addressing youth unemployment, and strengthening social inclusion**.

Acting upon this mandate, the UfM will hold a conference on **2-3 July 2025 in Athens, Greece**, dedicated to Tourism with a focus on **"Employment-Related Opportunities and Challenges"**, co-organised with the German Development Cooperation and supported by the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion). The Conference will bring together **policymakers, industry leaders, international organizations, and experts**, to discuss opportunities and challenges as well as best practices that can **collaborative solutions** that drive **inclusive economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability** in Mediterranean tourism, thus contributing to a **shared regional vision** for integrating employment, skills, and sustainability in tourism, reinforcing the UfM's broader drive for economic and labor market resilience in the region.

The Conference will showcase success stories and incorporate a tailored **study visit** for the participants to learn from inspiring initiatives already employed within the Greek Tourism Sector and that can be replicated in other countries. In addition, it will facilitate structured networking amongst multiple stakeholders to explore potential synergies and complementarities. The Conference will be part of a series of UfM conferences dedicated to strategic economic sectors of significant potential around the region.