



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



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UfM VISION STATEMENT 2025



**Reconnecting the Mediterranean:
Back to the core, forward with
ambition**





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INTRODUCTION

Mandated by Ministers at the 2024 Regional Forum, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is undergoing a strategic transformation reaffirming its foundational purpose while aligning with emerging regional realities. Since its inception in 2008 and the last structural revision in 2017¹, the UfM has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, navigating shifting dynamics. The institution has delivered tangible results, including 14 sectoral Ministerial meetings, a visible role in global processes, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP summits, and leveraged its convening power to establish impactful processes, such as the Blue Mediterranean Partnership, a multilateral investment facility aimed at supporting the transition to a sustainable blue economy mobilizing more than 1 billion EUR by 2030. These achievements underscore the capacity of the Institution to convene, deliver and innovate in a challenging context. As the UfM's activities have grown, the member states have called for the definition of a renewed, coherent and ambitious vision to guide the Institution and a work programme that ensures its effective implementation.

As the Mediterranean navigates volatile geopolitical and environmental context, this vision offers a renewed framework for collective engagement – anchored in the values of multilateralism, cooperation, and the principles of the United Nations Charter, including protecting and promoting human rights, sovereign equality, good neighbourly relations and peaceful settlement of disputes. These principles remain a cornerstone of the vision, underpinning efforts towards shared prosperity and peace. Marking the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the UfM seeks to reassert its role as a central platform for confidence building, dialogue, regional coordination and stability.

The Mediterranean continues to face a host of escalating challenges. Protracted conflicts strain multilateral dialogue. Disruptions to supply chains and growing concerns over energy security have exposed the fragility of economic structures, underscoring the need for deeper regional integration. Meanwhile, untapped opportunities to boost economic growth and job creation remain. People-to-people connections have been challenged amid polarised narratives and rising mistrust. Climate change and environmental degradation threaten the shared natural heritage that binds the region.

Against this backdrop, reinforcing the UfM is essential – not only for the Mediterranean but for broader global stability. To remain relevant, the UfM must upgrade its role by strengthening policy coherence and

¹ UfM Roadmap 23/01/2017



regional policy dialogue, by deepening regional cooperation, and building new coalitions with Africa and the Gulf.

To that end, it has launched a comprehensive reform centered on three phases:

1

Renewed mandate: Member states endorsed a new mandate focusing on resilience, regional stability, economic connectivity, and environmental sustainability.

2

Strategy for impact: A detailed implementation work programme will translate priorities into measurable results that directly benefit Mediterranean populations.

3

Institutional restructuring: A full internal reorganisation is enhancing its operational capacity, ensuring the UfM is better equipped to meet its strategic objectives.

With this, the UfM is laying out a new vision for reconnecting the Mediterranean – building on the core principles of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation while moving forward with renewed ambition. At its heart is the concept of connectivity: connecting people through education, mobility, cultural exchange and shared prosperity; connecting countries through dialogue and cooperation; and connecting economies through trade, investment, integration and energy infrastructure. The region's potential for stability, sustainability, and inclusive growth depends on restoring connections, leveraging complementarities, and strengthening collective commitment to a common future.

This vision for reconnecting aligns with the regional objectives set out in the Pact for the Mediterranean, while maintaining the UfM's distinct identity as a separate and complementary framework. Achieving this vision will require efforts to mobilise additional financial and human resources.



CHARTER TER ONE

CONNECTING PEOPLE, CONNECTING COUNTRIES, CONNECTING ECONOMIES

Over the years, the UfM has expanded its scope of action to address emerging developments and regional trends with limited overarching strategic compass. In November 2021, the Co-Presidency acknowledged the need to refocus efforts on areas where the UfM has a clear comparative advantage and delivers added value. As a result, five thematic focus areas were identified: environmental and climate action; sustainable and inclusive economic and human development; social inclusiveness and equality; digital transformation; and civil protection. Building on this, an updated set of priority areas aimed at addressing the region's evolving context has been identified:

- **Infrastructure, digital transition and trade and new technologies.**
- **Climate action, environmental sustainability, green transition and sustainable blue economy, circular transition and energy transition.**
- **Disaster management, civil protection and resilience.**
- **Education, research and decent job creation.**
- **Human development, inclusion and empowerment of women and youth.**
- **Mobility and root causes of migration.**

These priorities also reflect growing demands for trust building, regional cohesion, strengthening multilateralism, reaffirming the role of the UfM in conflict prevention, post-crisis recovery and resilience building.

These priorities will be framed strategically around three interrelated pillars:

**1
CONNECTING
PEOPLE**

**2
CONNECTING
COUNTRIES**

**3
CONNECTING
ECONOMIES**

This structure reflects proposed visions received from member states, and anchors the UfM as a central actor for long term regional stability, integration, and dialogue.

1.1 Connecting and engaging people: A people-centered approach

The UfM is committed to placing people at the heart of regional cooperation, connecting communities across the Euro-Mediterranean region. The UfM will advance the alignment of education systems with



green and digital labour transitions, research, innovation and markets. The UfM will support job creation through entrepreneurship, skills development, and sector-specific opportunities – ensuring decent work and supporting the pipeline between research, market and societies. The UfM will seek to increase the impact of science in Mediterranean societies, including through science diplomacy, promote regional cooperation in inclusive education, academic mobility, university exchanges and joint research programmes to build regional networks of knowledge, building on projects such as the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) and the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fez (UEMF). Legal migration and mobility based on a comprehensive and rights-based approach must be seen as a strategic priority alongside investment in skills development.

Connecting people across the Euro-Mediterranean region requires sustained investment in human development, particularly by addressing inequalities, and the creation of inclusive societies where all, including people with disabilities, can be agents of change. The UfM will continue to advance gender and youth-responsive policies. It will champion youth participation through its Youth Strategy 2030, ensuring young people are not only recipients of initiatives but co-creators of policies. Strengthening the agency of women will remain a priority, with targeted support to remove financial barriers, especially for entrepreneurs in tech, green, and agro-food sectors. Gender equality will be further promoted through flagship reports and collaborative platforms, addressing structural inequalities and embedding gender across UfM action areas.

Civil society will play a key role in shaping and monitoring regional policies. The UfM will expand mechanisms that enable grassroots participation, ensuring policies reflect the diversity of lived experiences across the region and looking for further synergies with the Anna Lindh Foundation to promote intercultural dialogue. To further amplify this people-centered approach and enhance the UfM's visibility and impact within member states' societies, the UfM will explore avenues to strengthen citizen engagement to foster broader participation and ownership of regional cooperation.

1.2 Connecting countries: Building a resilient, sustainable and stable Mediterranean

Instability in the Mediterranean arises from a range of interconnected challenges, including protracted conflicts, environmental degradation,



resource disparities, and climate stresses that undermine trust and cooperation. To address these issues, the UfM will aim to strengthen regional resilience by promoting sustainability, climate action, dialogue, and peace through practical cooperation.

Climate action and integrated natural resource management – especially water – will be at the heart of UfM efforts for regional stability and sustainability, including by strengthening water resilience. As climate change intensifies environmental degradation and inequality, the UfM will promote regional cooperation and foster shared solutions. Climate resilience will be embedded across UfM activities and integrated frameworks linking climate adaptation, water security, energy systems and food security will be promoted. Environmental sustainability will be advanced through green, blue, and circular transitions, and taking into account social challenges. Building on the GreenerMed Agenda 2030 and its mid-term review, the UfM will prioritise ecosystem preservation, pollution reduction, and nature-based solutions. The UfM will encourage sustainable use of maritime resources, including fisheries and aquaculture, eco-tourism, and coastal resilience initiatives, integrating cultural heritage preservation with economic priority. Expanding access to clean energy and shifting to circular models will reduce emissions and support energy equity, while creating green and blue jobs with a focus on youth, women, and vulnerable groups.

With the region facing overlapping crises – from disasters to socio-economic fragility – the UfM will promote an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and civil protection. Lessons from recent floods, fires, and earthquakes highlight the need for better coordination, risk assessment, early warning systems, and solidarity mechanisms. The UfM will engage governments, civil society, and the private sector to develop a structured regional resilience framework, including joint planning and response protocols to build cross-border trust and to strengthen complementarity with EU Civil Protection Mechanism through facilitation of regional cooperation among Mediterranean partners.

Ongoing instability and rising mistrust continue to challenge the region's prospects for peace and sustainable development. Recent consultations among member states have reaffirmed that regional stability and resilience must be central pillars of the UfM action, requiring both proactive engagement and renewed focus on shared interests. Building a resilient region requires supporting inclusive discussions and leveraging the UfM convening power to foster dialogue and cooperation. The UfM



will thus continue to work to strengthen regional stability by promoting dialogue, confidence building measures and practical cooperation between member states.

Building a resilient region means seizing opportunities of working towards balanced territorial development, developing integrated and place-based approaches that are tailor-made to the needs of territories. It also means working with local and regional authorities, strengthening cooperation and multi-level governance. Indeed, they are uniquely positioned to bring the Euro-Mediterranean vision closer to the realities of people's everyday lives and deploy policies and solutions to pressing challenges.

More broadly, the UfM will seek to harness the peace dividends of sectoral cooperation, using shared challenges – such as water, climate resilience, civil protection, and disaster response – as entry points for dialogue, confidence building, and practical collaboration. These thematic areas offer pathways to depoliticize cooperation and demonstrate the tangible benefits of joint action. To support this, the UfM will promote innovative mechanisms that incentivise cross-border initiatives, especially those involving conflict-affected communities or bridging divides between member states.

1.3 Connecting economies: Building an interconnected, integrated Euro-Mediterranean region

Since the launch of the Barcelona Process in 1995, regional integration and interdependence have been core elements of the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. Today, shifting geopolitical and economic dynamics call for a renewed focus on connectivity as a driver of regional development and resilience aligned with regional and global initiatives such as the EU's Global Gateway, which place connectivity at their core. In this context, the UfM aims to strengthen its role as a key facilitator of regional interconnectivity – boosting integration and investments across the Mediterranean.

Building on its role as a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation, the UfM will support efforts aimed at strengthening trade and investment relations across the Euro-Mediterranean region. This includes fostering discussions on the effective implementation of trade agreements, the reduction of non-tariff barriers, the modernisation of bilateral trade frameworks, and the promotion of sustainable investment facilitation



– all to deepen economic integration and the global energy transition, enhance investor confidence and to build on near- and friend-shoring opportunities.

Energy connectivity is a cornerstone of this vision. Through its role as a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation, the UfM will support efforts to advance secure, low-carbon energy systems by fostering collaboration on electricity markets, renewable energy, green hydrogen, and clean technologies, positioning the Mediterranean as a renewable energy hub. The UfM will encourage greater legal harmonisation and facilitate increased EU co-investment in strategic sectors such as green hydrogen and wind energy.

A well-connected land, air, and maritime transport network is vital for boosting trade, mobility, investment, unlocking the economic potential of a more integrated Mediterranean, and promoting the development of sustainable regional value chains. To align with the region's low-carbon transition, focus needs to be placed on greening maritime transport, modernising and decarbonising ports, and scaling sustainable urban mobility – linking transport with climate action and the sustainable blue economy. The UfM will continue working with international partners and financial institutions to catalyse investment, enhance regulatory convergence and promote coordinated cross-border action.

Digital connectivity underpins these efforts. The UfM will facilitate the development of digital infrastructure, promote greater cooperation in digital trade and digital skills, and encourage innovation across sectors such as energy, transport, and urban development. The UfM will promote digital transformation and the ethical use of AI to foster resilience, innovation, and green tech enterprises focusing on youth-led initiatives.

The UfM will promote the development of ambitious climate-resilient and nature-positive policies and sustainable and inclusive recovery and growth plans aligned with the Paris Agreement objectives and in accordance with national priorities. This may cover – inter alia – budgets and green procurement frameworks; progressive reduction of fossil fuels use including through gradual phase-out of inefficient subsidies; accelerated clean, safe and sustainable energy transition; and reforms aimed at creating an enabling environment for sustainable investments and just transition mechanisms; that is compatible with the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

CHAPTER TWO

EMPOWERING THE CONNECTIVITY AGENDA THROUGH ENHANCED METHODS AND CUTTING-EDGE TOOLS

The UfM's distinct approach lies in a tripartite model: Policy, Platforms, and Projects – the so-called three Ps. This integrated approach has long defined the UfM's value-added, enabling it to catalyse policy dialogue, coordinate stakeholder cooperation, and support concrete initiatives across the Euro-Mediterranean region. The release of this vision statement marks the culmination of a systematic reform aimed at enhancing these foundations and strengthening its operational model.

2.1 The policy dimension: Leveraging the unique inter-governmental nature of the UfM

As part of annual Regional Forums, Foreign Affairs Ministerial meetings will continue to provide political guidance and strategic direction for the joint Euro-Mediterranean agenda. Building on best practices, the UfM's Secretary General will present strategic updates on activities, providing Ministers a more tangible understanding of the UfM's impact. The Co-Presidency may explore formats for more interactive exchanges including a Gymnich style format, providing space for less constrained dialogue. The UfM Regional Forum will continue to include an inter-institutional and multi-stakeholders component. The UfM will work towards developing a structured mechanism for the participation of Euro-Mediterranean youth representatives in the Regional Forum, reinforcing their role within the broader UfM agenda.

The UfM Sectorial Ministerial Meetings and ensuing Declarations will be supported by concrete, measurable, and inclusive actions defined and monitored in Regional Action Plans with clear outputs and benchmarks. Recent guidelines adopted in October 2023 and May 2025 now ensure uniform implementation guidelines/best practices for the UfM Sectorial Ministerial Declarations.

These guidelines foresee that each declaration is followed by a Regional Action Plan, developed by the Secretariat in coordination with the Co-Presidency and agreed within the Regional Platforms. These Actions Plans must then be systematically implemented and monitored in a harmonised way across the Secretariat. The guidelines also establish a progress-tracking and reporting mechanism.

Senior Officials are the strategic liaisons between the UfM and the member states they represent, including with relevant line ministries. As the UfM's principal decision-making body, they will continue to play a vital role at all stages of the process – particularly in the preparation



and follow-up of Ministerial meetings. This structure is already central to the UfM's operational model and is outlined here to clarify how strategic coordination is ensured.

To ensure progress, the UfM will further embed the principle of “reinforced cooperation” within its working methods. This approach allows groups of voluntary member states at policy levels to cooperate more closely with a view to foster results in specific areas, while preserving the inclusiveness of the overall UfM framework. Consensus remains the fundamental decision-making rule of the UfM. These structures will operate transparently, in full respect of multilateral rules and international legal frameworks. Moreover, a safeguard mechanism will be introduced to ensure that a particular reinforced cooperation does not prejudice the national interest of another member state.

2.2 Building connectivity together: Platforms, synergies and inclusiveness in the UfM

Regional Platforms are the central pillars of the UfM's three Ps approach. Driven by the Sectorial Co-Presidencies and the Deputy Secretary Generals, they provide a structured space for dialogue, monitoring, and implementation support, ensuring coherence between ministerial mandates and concrete actions on the ground. They act upstream, providing technical input, and downstream, ensuring monitoring, and evaluation of the implementation of those declarations.

The role of UfM Regional Platforms was clarified and improved by reform efforts undertaken since 2023. The operational framework for these platforms was formalised in the UfM Regional Platform Guidelines, adopted during the Senior Officials Meeting in May 2024. Key provisions in the guidelines include an effort to rationalise their composition and missions, clarify roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, clear naming conventions, the ability to form thematic working groups, and a strong emphasis on stakeholder inclusion – from member states to civil society and the private sector.

Current Euro-Mediterranean challenges require more coordinated and integrated cooperation across the region. Building on the first UfM Inter-Institutional Meeting held in February 2025, the UfM will intensify efforts to strengthen coordination among key Euro-Mediterranean institutions and agencies. This includes the Anna Lindh Foundation, the League of



Arab States, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly and the UfM Parliamentary Assembly, among others.

Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as well as development agencies will continue to play a central role in inter-institutional coordination efforts. Their participation helps to reduce fragmentation and maximise collective impact, especially through structured joint programming. Several European implementing agencies have already supported the UfM's work alongside representatives of other regional sectorial initiatives. This approach has reinforced the UfM's coordination role by structuring regional collaboration around shared priorities, aligning initiatives with political declarations, and enhancing complementarity across actors and funding sources. The UfM will continue to foster synergies, improve transparency, and streamline cooperation among diverse stakeholders, including regional agencies and partners beyond the EU, without duplicating existing structures or frameworks. Such coordination would also involve other regional actors, including the Gulf.

Building on this logic of expanded engagement and enhanced cooperation, the UfM will indeed work to advance a new Euro-Mediterranean-Gulf partnership. This partnership aims to deepen political, economic, and strategic cooperation across both regions, positioning the UfM as a connector between two neighbourhoods. It will serve as a structured platform for dialogue on issues such as cross-border water governance, energy interconnection frameworks, investment protection, coordination, and joint initiatives on issues such as climate resilience, energy transition, peacebuilding, and sustainable development. In this regard, the work programme will explore avenues to strengthen engagement with Gulf partners and identify opportunities for their involvement in UfM activities.

The UfM will continue to strengthen its collaboration with international organisations, including the United Nations and its specialised agencies. By building closer relations with key actors such as the United Nations, the League of Arab States, and multilateral development banks, the UfM aims to bring together complementary forces to better respond to regional challenges and support coordinated actions for meaningful impact on the ground while reducing duplication. This collaborative approach will enhance the UfM's capacity to address complex regional challenges, align with global agendas, and amplify the impact of its work.



In parallel, the UfM will continue to support sub-regional and cross-border cooperation, building on EU transnational cooperation instruments to promote concrete joint actions on blue economy, water resource management, and digital and energy connectivity.

2.3 Unlocking the potential of the project component in the UfM mandate

The UfM project-labelling mechanism was revitalised in February 2024 with a comprehensive set of revised guidelines. These new rules clearly define the concept of labelling and establish transparent procedures for application, selection, and eventual discontinuation if a project fails to meet expectations. Crucially, the new guidelines also embed a Results-Based Management approach, ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation throughout a project's lifecycle.

The UfM has also diversified its toolkit with the establishment of the UfM Grant Schemes; evolving from political endorsement to direct financial support, while maintaining its role distinct from that of an implementing agency. To ensure coherence and complementarity with existing efforts, the Grant Schemes support initiatives that demonstrate clear added value beyond existing regional schemes and align with UfM priorities.

In line with its core mandate to convene and facilitate regional cooperation, the UfM is assessing new mechanisms to support its member states in enhancing access to investments across the region. The UfM Secretariat will identify, together with the European Commission, UfM member states and the IFIs most involved, its most effective role to facilitate investments related to regional integration within the implementation of ministerial declarations.

2.4 The UfM as a communication and information anchor

More than just physical infrastructure, connectivity in the Euro-Mediterranean context must encompass faces, voices and stories. Strengthening this fabric of connections is essential to fostering mutual understanding and building a shared sense of purpose. In this context, information and communication are not auxiliary functions; they are vital instruments of connectivity. The UfM's strategic upgrade aimed at enhancing awareness through channels accessible to stakeholders and citizens across the region, thereby strengthening the connection to the organisation's evolving role and impact.



The UfM is uniquely positioned to play a central role as both an information hub and a strategic, yet non-political, communication facilitator across the Euro-Mediterranean region. In a landscape marked by fragmented messaging, disinformation, politicized communication, growing mistrust, and institutional complexity, the UfM model – based on equality and co-ownership – offers a strong foundation for delivering impactful narratives that resonate across diverse societies. This role can also be leveraged to support the Pact for the Mediterranean, helping to communicate progress and shared ambitions across its main areas of implementation.

To fulfil this role effectively, the UfM will continue moving beyond project-based communication approaches and build thematic, region-wide narratives that reflect a shared Mediterranean identity and common challenges. Storytelling rooted in human experiences and cross-shore collaborations can powerfully convey the benefits of cooperation and generate hope. The UfM has both access to and the capacity to curate such stories and to mobilise a broader institutional and non-institutional network of Euro-Mediterranean communicators. At the institutional level, the creation of a regional directory of knowledge sources, a shared communication charter, and a multilingual glossary would enhance consistency and mutual understanding across the board.

The UfM will strengthen its capacity as a trusted source of sectorial knowledge. By curating, contextualising, and disseminating relevant insights, the UfM will increase its impact on policy, foster public understanding, and support evidence-based decision-making, building on the experience the UfM developed with the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MEDECC) report and the UfM-OECD progress reports on regional integration.



CHAPTER THREE

STRENGTHENING THE UfM TO DELIVER MORE AND BETTER

3.1 The Secretariat: A structure fit for purpose

To successfully implement its renewed vision and equip the institution for greater efficiency and impact, the UfM is undergoing a comprehensive transformation along four axes: organisational structure, people who are part of the organisation, processes, and tools.

The UfM has developed a revised organisational structure to enhance operational performance, people management, and stakeholder responsiveness. This new model addresses previous fragmentation by clarifying roles, and introducing matrix elements such as a dual reporting system that promotes collaboration across the organisation. Thematic Divisions will be reorganised to ensure coherent portfolios, synergies and focused resource allocation.

Meanwhile, UfM leadership will focus on promoting dialogue on high-level strategic sectoral and policy priorities. Therefore, the different roles within the Divisions are clarified allowing Deputy Secretary Generals to lead political and strategic activities. They will be supported by Heads of Division managing day-to-day operations and coordination. Seconded staff will continue to have an important role in supporting the UfM. With stronger ambitions, the UfM requires that the Secretary General should be supported by a dedicated Senior Deputy Secretary General. A Management Committee will be established to strengthen strategic alignment and encourage collaboration across thematic areas, ensuring coherence between political leadership and administrative execution. Internal governance will be reinforced with clearer lines of authority as well as an updated compliance and internal controls framework. This structure supports greater agility and effectiveness in advancing the Euro-Mediterranean agenda.

In addition, a comprehensive Human Resources transformation process will support staff through this transition and beyond. A new post structure will better align responsibilities with skills and expertise. Talent management initiatives will foster a culture of performance and internal career progression while revised benefits and compensation packages will enhance motivation and retention. The UfM will adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards all types of harassment, discrimination and violence in the workplace. Modernised processes and tools, replacing manual workflows with data-driven, tech-enabled solutions will promote agility, transparency, and strategic alignment.



These efforts will amplify a range of measures that have already been initiated, such as the development of an impact assessment methodology and related internal guidance documents, with the objective to render the UfM more efficient.

Overall, these changes represent a significant evolution in how the UfM manages its people, processes, and strategic objectives.

3.2 A new budget

To align with its updated mandate and growing ambition, the UfM will implement a new financial model and budget designed to enhance stability, sustainability, and resilience. The core budget line will remain essential for funding the UfM's main activities and Secretariat operating costs, and promoting project implementation tied to dedicated contributions. In addition, the UfM will mobilise supplementary funding to support projects that align with and complement the core budget lines.

The core budget line will be increased to match the renewed strategic vision, with annual inflation-based adjustments to maintain purchasing power. Furthermore, a multi-year budgeting approach will be introduced. This shift aligns more closely with the nature and timeline of UfM activities and enables more effective governance oversight, strategic planning, and programmatic continuity.

Lastly, a revised member state contribution mechanism will be established to ensure greater fairness and transparency but also to enhance the UfM visibility and collective ownership. This includes enhanced contributions from member states, which will include both financial and in-kind contributions. Contributions will be pledged after the approval of the workplan and annual budget, with disbursements expected within the first months of each year, allowing member states to join progressively, while respecting the principle of voluntary contribution. The UfM Secretariat will propose annual contributions based on shared responsibilities that respect national budget processes with flexible payment mechanisms and options for additional funding for targeted programs. The UfM will continue to strengthen partnerships with implementing agencies such as GIZ, SIDA, and AECID, while seeking new financial partners to support its evolving role and mission in the region.



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