

9th Working Group on Environment January 29th 2025, online

FINAL AGREED CONCLUSIONS

Considering that:

- The 2nd UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change (hereinafter *the Declaration*) adopted in Cairo on 4 October 2021 calls for a specific, structured coordination and monitoring mechanism among initiatives, programs and projects run at regional level to create political and operational convergence and maximize results, through the UfM Agenda 2030 towards a Greener Mediterranean (hereinafter 2030GreenerMed)
- The 2030GreenerMed Agenda provides the structural framework that, based on the coordination of existing and future programs and projects, creates political and operational convergence around the key environmental priorities.

The 9th meeting of the UfM Working Group on Environment, which took place on the 29th of January 2025, online, at the presence of national representatives and regional stakeholders,

- Discussed and highlighted:
 - The developments of relevance for the Mediterranean region with respect to:
 - Biodiversity (COP16/Cali) and the CBD Technical Support Centre for 'Europe', Climate Change (COP29/Baku), and Desertification (COP16/Riyadh), as well as other international agreements such as the BBNJ (so called High Seas Treaty) and the Global Plastic Treaty;
 - the upcoming COP24 of the Barcelona Convention and its preparatory steps, including the update of the Mediterranean Strategy For Sustainable Development as multi stakeholders regional cooperation framework aligned with the SDGs and ensuring an extensive and integrated coverage of the main challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of the Region.
 - the relevance of the 2030GreenerMed Agenda as framework to address interconnected and joint priorities at Mediterranean level, facing the triple environmental crisis and promoting common solutions.
 - National priorities and follow ups to the recent COPs and negotiations, as per above.
 - the latest GreenerMed related activities that took place in the second half of 2024, such as the Medpan/World Ocean Council/UfM Webinar on Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM); the 8th Mediterranean Forest Week; the Interreg EuroMed/UfM Med Talks 2025 and as well as the DG Near/TAIEX Workshop on enhancing the adaptive capacity and resilience of Mediterranean forests to climate change, referred to the.

- Exchanged on:
 - Upcoming projects and activities such as the DG NEAR new regional projects MedforGen and WES-BCA, the FAO Report Unasylva 255 -Restoring the Mediterranean region: status and challenges, and the upcoming State of Mediterranean Forests 2025.
- Shared information and shed light on:
 - the Interreg EuroMED Natural Heritage Mission and in particular its policy paper on coastal and marine restoration as well as the wetland contracts as governance and policy tools, as opportunity for wider Med cooperation.
 - the upcoming Interreg Next Med Green Economy Calls, which South Med countries and Turkey can apply for.
- Reaffirmed the need to continue including the widest range of stakeholders from all categories, reiterating their crucial contribution to the future of the Mediterranean.

More in detail:

The meeting was chaired and opened by the UfM European and Jordanian Co-Presidency, together with the UfM Secretariat, sharing the following messages and updates:

- The creation of *DG Mena* as a new DG in the European Union;
- The launch of the *External Evaluation of the implementation of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Action*, with a focus on the environment/green economy aspects addressed by UfM Environment Agenda/2030GreenerMed, as a key focus for 2025.
- The relevance of the upcoming *resumed negotiations for the CBD in Rome in February 2025* as well as the potential *Sea Level Rise International Conference* proposed by Malta in Spring 2025 (*tbd*), linking more closely with civil protection and disaster risk reduction;
- The ongoing discussion to integrate the *6th UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Change* into the potential 2025 Med Green Week (*date and location tbc*).
- The organization of the *17th UfM Sustainable Blue Economy Regional Platform* taking place on February 19th February 2025 in Barcelona, as well as the organization of a *UfM Sustainable Blue Economy session at UNOC3*.
- Stressing that in these challenging times, the need to work together is shown to be even more important.

The 9th Meeting of the UfM Working Group on the Environment:

- Welcomed:
 - the updates related to *new EU regulations such as the Ecodesign for sustainable products regulation, the packaging and packaging waste regulation and the waste shipment regulation*, as well as the advancements in the *implementation of the EU Restoration Law (PPT attached)*;

- the outcomes of the different COPs:
 - ✓ *biodiversity/COP16 Cali, climate change/COP29 Baku and desertification/COP16 Riyadh; (PPTs are attached)*
- *The creation of the CBD Technical Support Centre for 'Europe' and the call by CBD and IUCN, as one of the lead implementation partners, to make of it an opportunity for enhanced Euro-Mediterranean technical and scientific cooperation, with a large network of regional and subregional entities associated to it;*
- the expected advancements of the *High Sea Treaty (PPT attached)* at UNOC3/June in Nice, where, on the Med Day (10th of June), a UfM Session on Sustainable Blue Economy will be organized;
- the complex negotiations of the *Global Plastic Treaty* and the current options in terms of way forward; *(PPT attached)*
- the upcoming *Barcelona Convention COP24, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development* and its expected decisions.
- *NGOs/WWF views and recommendations:* stressed NBSAPs and that actions need to be fast. For climate, attention was put on NDCs stressing that in the Med, actions should be embedded in blue carbon and in the SSF. Strong welcome to the BBNJ and Call for a strong binding Treaty on Plastic. *(PPT attached)*;
- Reiterated that the Agenda 2030 for a Greener Med is a living document, meant as a tool for regional integration, cooperation and collaboration, which acts as a framework for existing and emerging initiatives, programmes and projects to work in a coordinated manner, ensuring maximization of efforts and complementarity towards common goals.
By now/end of 2024, 2030GreenerMed is supported by 291 associated regional projects covering:
 - i) *Axis 1 – Green Circular Economy*
 - This remains the most frequently addressed thematic area, with Sustainable Production and Resource Efficiency as the primary focus areas.
 - More support is needed for projects promoting Sustainable Consumption, Education, and Behavioral and Lifestyle Changes
 - This aligns with the initial GreenerMed considerations, emphasizing that consistent advancements in the green circular economy are essential to address pollution and biodiversity loss
 - ii) *Axis 2 – Pollution (Land, Sea, Air)*
 - This axis has fewer supporting projects.
 - The urgency to tackle plastic pollution and marine litter and their environmental impacts in the Med remain high.
 - Air pollution, however, is still underrepresented and needs more attention.
 - iii) *Axis 3 – Ecosystems and Biodiversity*
 - This axis shows the strongest relative growth, driven by actions supporting preservation, protection, and restoration of ecosystems, natural capital, and biodiversity
 - Efforts also include nature-based solutions and disaster risk reduction, reflecting international developments such as the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)

- Within the GreenerMed associated result Based Monitoring, reporting and evaluation, acknowledged the launch the UfM External Evaluation of the 2021 UfM Ministerial on ENV and CA, with a focus on the UfM Environment and Green Economy Agenda so called 2030GreenerMed, as operational tool of the UFM Ministerial on Environment and Climate Action, highlighting the need for countries and partners to actively contribute to it; consultants will be activated soon and the evaluation will in principle conclude by summer 2025;
- Appreciated the updates and information provided by the participating countries with regards to their current priorities and focus activities, in particular on their strategies, laws, projects and activities related to COPs, multilateral agreements and other areas relevant to 2030GreenerMed.

Commonalities include:

Biodiversity

- Several countries are currently in the process of finalizing or adopting their biodiversity strategies. Important advancements regard also the EU Nature Restoration law and related Restoration Plans. Major concerns are related to financing.

Climate Change

- All countries who intervened confirmed that they are focusing activities on Climate Change as well as on the mobilization of financing. Various countries have adopted new legislation or strategies related to climate change, mostly on adaptation. Biennial Transparency Reports have been submitted or are under development in some other cases. Among the policy and economic instruments advanced lately, show carbon taxation, interministerial working groups or the development of a national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Desertification

- Countries stressed the relevance of the Drought Resilience Observatory, the Science Policy Interface and the proposed innovative financial models.

BBNJ

- Countries that intervened during the meeting are currently either preparing the ratification process or are in the process of ratifying the BBNJ.

Global Plastic Treaty

- All countries are committed to the global fight to end plastic pollution; however, approaches towards the Global Plastic Treaty vary.
- While some of the countries are part of the High Ambition Coalition to end plastic pollution, others tackle the topic more through a project based approach.

Detailed national updates as presented at the 9th WG ENV will be duly recorded and shared with each country by the next meeting of the WG.

- Welcomed the updates and information from the different partners, managing authorities and projects, specifically
 - *SFS-Med insights on the SFS-Med process* and the links to the UN Food Summit; the webinar series and resource material produced, thanks to the Italian Development Cooperation funding; and its links to the 2030GreenerMed : <https://www.fao.org/food-systems/news/news-detail/bridging-local-actions-and-national-policies-to-reduce-food-waste-in-the-mediterranean/en>(PPT attached)

- The new *DG NEAR funded WES BCA*, as an extension of the WES programme with a specific focus on biodiversity and climate action; (*PPT attached*)
- The *FAO 8th Mediterranean Forest Week* and the to-be-launched process for the elaboration of a *Roadmap on Mediterranean Forest* with expected support by DG NEAR, as well as the new *DG NEAR funded MedForGen Project*, to be implemented by EFIMED, focusing on increasing the resilience of Mediterranean forests and conserving genetic resources. (*PPT attached*)
- The *DG REGIO Interreg EuroMed 7 year programme*, including 4 Missions out of which on specifically on Natural Heritage, and others on Sustainable and Innovative Economy; Sustainable Tourism; and Green living Areas; (*PPT attached*)
- The *Interreg EuroMed and UfM 2024 Med Talks and the upcoming Med Talks, planned in December 2025*, possibly also with Interreg Next Med; (*PPT attached*)
- The *Interreg NextMed programme*, providing information on its call for green transition projects (*PPT attached*)
- The *MedWet programme* to restore and protect wetlands in the Mediterranean, its new Coordinator and the related *RESCOM and WEGOCOOP projects* (*PPT attached*)
- The *MedPan/World Ocean Council/UfM partnership and their webinar on Other Environmental Conservation Measures (OECM)*, which PPT could not be displayed but is being circulated for follow up (*PPT attached*)
- Provided an update of the 2030GreenerMed mapping and reporting as a tool to identify key actions that require further attention (*PPT attached*);
- Considering the possibility of maintaining/strengthening 2030 GreenerMed even beyond 2030, should political ministerial gatherings and declarations be elaborated before that date.
- Included among the shared documents a calendar of UFM related events (*PPT available*).

The meeting concluded agreeing to:

- Keep on following closely the international and regional negotiations for further collaborative action at Mediterranean level, including the CBD Technical Support Centre for 'Europe' as immediate, concrete opportunity for enhanced Euro-Med collaboration;
- Jointly support the 2025 External Evaluation referred above, as foreseen in the GreenerMed Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Plan, building on the late 2023 First GreenerMed Monitoring Report and ongoing compilation of info/data; the regular project mapping; the country updates; the e-survey.
- Contribute to initiatives, programs and projects; integrating disaster risk reduction and gender aspects as much as possible;
- Follow up and engage in the *UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Action* (which the UfM WG ENV is part of,) planned to be held in person in few months' time, possibly as part of a larger Med Green Week;
- Keep on contributing and participating actively in implementing and updating the common 2030GreenerMed Agenda, as well as implementing joint actions/projects/programs, enhancing collaboration and networking

opportunities; the 2030GreenerMed Agenda mapping and update, to show progress in technical and financial convergence around the agreed GreenerMed priorities;

- Take into consideration immediate opportunities for regional collaboration under the 4 Missions of the Interreg EuroMed and the green economy projects emerging from the Interreg Next Med calls; new DG NEAR projects on biodiversity and climate change; UNOC3 Med Day; SFS Med upcoming thematic webinars; the 2025 Med Talks edition; the UfM Regional Platform on Environment and Climate Change, possibly framed within the UFM Green Week (tbc); the Med Forest Roadmap; the policy paper on marine and coastal restoration; the to-be-updated plastic busters policy paper; wetlands contracts, etc.
- Agreeing that, together with the documents and links shared by the participants, the UfM Co-Presidency and Secretariat would circulate the draft Agreed Conclusions by 10th February 2025 and that comments can be provided to the UfM Secretariat in writing by 25th February 2025, in order to adopt the Final Agreed Conclusions of the 9th UfM Working Group on Environment meeting;
- Thanking the participation of the countries, partner organizations and stakeholders for their active participation.

All PPT presentations shown throughout the meeting can be downloaded here: [SPEAKERS](#)
