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# Message from the Secretary General Nasser Kamel



**Nasser Kamel**  
*Secretary General  
Union for the  
Mediterranean*

**Thirty years since the Barcelona Declaration was signed in this city, it is worth pausing to reflect on what that founding moment represented, and on what it still means today.**

Looking back at 2025, it is clear that this was a year of deep significance for the Union for the Mediterranean, and indeed for the wider Euro-Mediterranean region. It was a year in which we were confronted, with renewed force, by the fragility of the geopolitical environment we inhabit, and yet it was also a year in which our 43 Member States chose, deliberately and collectively, to invest in the future of regional cooperation.

The backdrop could not have been more testing. The war in Gaza, with its catastrophic human toll and far-reaching consequences for regional politics, alongside the profound uncertainties reshaping the wider Middle East and the ongoing war in Ukraine, weighed heavily on the entire region, deepening suffering, undermining the international rules-based order, and casting a long shadow over the trust upon which multilateral cooperation depends. Taken together, these

overlapping crises served as sobering reminders that the Mediterranean is not a space of abstraction, but a shared reality whose instability carries direct consequences for the lives of hundreds of millions of people on all its shores.

It is in precisely such circumstances that the case for regional cooperation becomes not weaker, but more urgent. That conviction guided our work throughout 2025.

On 28 November 2025, in the city of Barcelona where it all began thirty years ago, the Union for the Mediterranean held its 10th Regional Forum. Foreign Ministers from across the 43 Member States convened under the theme “Together for a Stronger Euro-Mediterranean Partnership” and took decisions of genuine strategic consequence. They endorsed a new Vision Statement for the UfM, shaped through broad regional consultations, to guide the organisation’s work in the years ahead. At the same Forum, the Pact for the Mediterranean secured political support from EU Member States and their Southern Mediterranean partners, reinforcing the complemen-

tarity between European instruments and the UfM’s framework of co-owned regional cooperation. Together, these outcomes reaffirmed that multilateralism is not optional, and that the Mediterranean must remain a shared space of peace, prosperity and mutual understanding.

The Vision Statement is built around three interconnected pillars. It positions the UfM as a platform focused on connecting people through education, youth mobility, skills development, gender equality and social inclusion; connecting countries through strengthened dialogue, climate resilience, water and energy security, and crisis preparedness; and connecting economies by advancing trade, digital cooperation and sustainable infrastructure. This is not a bureaucratic framework. It is a political commitment by 43 governments to a shared direction at a moment when shared direction is precisely what the region needs most.

The anniversary itself matters as well. Thirty years since the Barcelona Declaration was signed in this city, it is worth pausing to reflect on what that founding moment represented, and on what it still means today. The Barcelona Process was born out of a conviction that the stability and prosperity of Europe’s southern neighbourhood were inseparable from Europe’s own. That conviction has not diminished. If anything, the crises of recent years have underscored its validity with uncomfortable clarity.

Yet an anniversary is only meaningful if it serves as a spur to action rather than a cause for self-congratulation. In 2025, we treated it as the former. The new Strategic Vision is the most tangible expression of that spirit, and the wider programme of work documented in these pages reflects the same determination to turn political commitment into practical results.

This Annual Report highlights the work of the UfM Secretariat and its partners throughout the year: the ministerial meetings, the regional platforms, the projects under implementation, the partnerships forged and the results delivered. It is a record of cooperation in practice, pursued with persistence and professionalism in circumstances that were far from straightforward.

I am grateful to all Member States, to our institutional partners, and to the dedicated staff of the UfM Secretariat for their commitment throughout 2025. The task ahead is demanding. But the direction is now clear, and the foundation on which we build is strong.