

# TOWARDS A SHARED MEDITERRANEAN AGENDA

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**The Survey reveals the existence of a shared Euro-Mediterranean agenda, built on common interests and concerns**

According to the results of the 5<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey, experts from both Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries appear to share the degree of importance they attribute to projects of regional cooperation in the Mediterranean. This signals the existence of a shared Euro-Mediterranean agenda, that is, an agreed set of issues to which all countries attach a similar high degree of importance.

This should be of high significance to all those striving for more operational cooperation in the Mediterranean. It entails that an Euro-Mediterranean agenda can build on shared interests and concerns: a) the actual existence of a series of challenges to which both Northern and Southern countries are confronted – for instance, inclusive growth and job creation, as well as youth unemployment; b) a shared understanding on the driving-change role that socio-economic actors like women and youth, but also small and medium enterprises, are to play; c) a shared geo-political understanding of the need to tackle major challenges – such as sustainable development, water, environment or energy – by adopting a regional approach drawing on North-South partnerships.

**The Survey shows the higher degree of priority attached to projects directly tackling major socio-economic concerns**

The resumption of UfM Ministerial meetings – 5 UfM ministerial conferences have been held since 2013 – as well as the acceleration of the UfM pipeline of projects and initiatives gives full evidence of this shared conviction by UfM member states of the need to accelerate regional cooperation under the impulse of the UfM Co-presidency, EU and Jordan, in fields such as transport, urban development, energy, women empowerment, private sector development and job creation, environment and climate change, and higher education and research. This current positive momentum not only showcases the shared commitment of all countries and stakeholders in the region to work on shared key topics and challenges, it also points to the existence of a broad field of opportunities in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation paving the way for concrete and effective cooperation in a growing number of sectors.

As shown in the Survey by the higher degree of priority attached to projects directly tackling major socio-economic concerns such as unemployment, or to those dealing with governance matters on highly sensitive issues such as water, the strengthening of the human dimension of the UfM activities encouraged by member states has allowed the Barcelona Secretariat to be a useful tool in light of the recent economic and political transformations both in the region.

**Infrastructure flagship projects continue to be considered as key for the future of the region.**

Meanwhile, large infrastructure projects, such as “the Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip”, the “Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis” or “The Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes” remain flagship projects with a highly symbolic significance and continue to be considered as key for the future of the region. In addition, the relatively higher degree of priority that experts from Southern Mediterranean countries attach to infrastructure projects renders the goal of economic regional integration, all the more necessary in light of the still very low levels of intra-regional trade between countries in the South, at the forefront of the UfM agenda.

The results of this Survey are thus consistent with the major challenges facing the region and provide a forceful incentive to step up our efforts to contribute to a more economically integrated Mediterranean. Indeed, regional integration constitutes the overarching horizontal objective of all UfM activities, both as a long-term driver for political stability in the South and for economic competitiveness in the North, as well as, let's not forget it, a suitable way to deal with great challenges and opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The UfM Secretariat's result-oriented approach, as well as its capacity to operationalize within ad hoc variable geometry frameworks the political decisions taken by member states, ensures that UfM regional activities are fully in line with member states' shared priorities and national interests.

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