

Chronologies

Euromed Chronology

January

Maltese Presidency

1 – *Valletta*: Malta takes over the EU Council Presidency from Slovakia. The Maltese programme outlines six priorities: migration and the strengthening of the Common European Asylum System, with the application of the principles of solidarity and responsibility and the Dublin Regulation; the full development of the Single Market; security and the fight against terrorism; social inclusion of civil society and gender themes; EU Neighbourhood – South and East; and maritime themes. With respect to Southern Mediterranean, the Presidency aims at the stabilization of Libya through a peaceful transition, the resumption of the Middle East Peace Process, support to the democratic transition in Tunisia, the Syrian conflict, and deepened cooperation with LAS and GCC.

www.eu2017.mt/en/Documents/NationalProgramme_EN.pdf

Foreign Affairs Council

16 – *Brussels*: The first Foreign Affairs Council of the year discusses the developments in Syria, with full support to the UN-led process and UN Special Envoy. The Council reiterates its support to the EU regional initiative on the future of Syria. The HR briefs ministers on the latest round of talks conducted in this framework with key regional players: Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and soon Turkey and Qatar. The Council agrees that the EU will host a conference on Syria and the region in Brussels in the spring 2017, to be focused on the political process towards a transition, humanitarian work and possible support post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation once a credible political transi-

tion is firmly underway. Later they discuss about the Middle East peace process, building on the outcome of the Paris conference (15 January), to preserve the viability of the two-state solution. Moreover, they reaffirm the EU support to the democratic process in Lebanon, welcoming the recent formation of new government. They commend the country's extraordinary efforts in hosting more than 1.1 million Syrian refugees.

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2017/01/16/

Politics and Security

19 – *Brussels*: The European Union (EU) and Tunisia hold their 2nd high-level political dialogue meeting sharing their respective analyses of and responses to the transnational threat of terrorism, providing updates on existing cooperation on security and combating terrorism, and discussing how they could to address the challenges raised by terrorism and radicalization. Both parties renew their commitment to strengthen their bilateral cooperation on security and counter-terrorism. Tunisia's new national strategy on fighting extremism and terrorism, recently adopted, provides an excellent basis for an inclusive approach that involves civil society players and respects the country's constitutional principles as well as the international standards on human rights and fundamental freedoms reflected in the Tunis Declaration.

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/19207/second-high-level-political-dialogue-security-and-counter-terrorism-european-union-and-tunisia_en

Anti-Discrimination

17 – *New York*: The EU, Canada, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

(OIC) and the US co-organize a High Level Forum on Combating Anti-Muslim Discrimination and Hatred. The Forum, attended by over 300 participants, seeks to voice concerns about the rising tide of discrimination and violence specifically targeting populations of Muslim origin in Europe and worldwide and look for joint responses. The main message that emerges from the Forum is to promote diversity as a richness instead of a threat, to fight against all forms of discrimination, and to build bridges between different communities – religious and otherwise.

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/18773/press-release-following-high-level-forum-anti-muslim-discrimination-and-hatred_en

Culture

20-24 – *Paris*: Cultural entrepreneurs from the southern Mediterranean present their work in the framework of the EU-funded project 'Development of Clusters in Cultural and Creative Industries in the Southern Mediterranean (Creative Mediterranean)'. Participating clusters come from Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. The aim of the initiative is to foster entrepreneurial cooperation in the cultural and creative industry, through the promotion of pilot initiatives demonstrating contribution to inclusive growth. It then aims at demonstrating the potential for the national and regional development of these industries, thus opening the possibility through adequate replication and larger scale support from financial institutions to promote new employment in the region.

www.medcreative.org/

Youth and Development

23-24 – *Barcelona*: The UfM holds the 2nd edition of its Regional Forum under

the theme “Mediterranean in Action: Youth for Stability and Development.” The Forum, centred on youth potential as driving force for stability and development, brings together the region’s key players to review the UfM’s activities and achievements and to discuss perspectives for strengthening cooperation between the main stakeholders. HR Mogherini reaffirms that only greater regional integration can reduce the instability of the Mediterranean region and solve conflicts. The UfM Secretariat and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) sign a EUR 6.5 million multi-annual financing agreement to implement and strengthen UfM core activities, namely women’s empowerment and gender equality, climate action and energy, as well as water, environment and blue economy. The Forum also sees the project “Generation Entrepreneur” officially launched under the framework of the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs). The project offers a jobs and business creation training programme that will benefit some 79,000 school and university students from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. Furthermore, several UfM cooperation agreements are signed with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation and the Agadir Technical Unit.

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/second-ufm-regional-forum-mediterranean-in-action-youth-for-stability-and-development/>

Economic and Social Cooperation

24-25 – Casablanca: The EU-funded SwitchMed programme holds a business networking event, implemented by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to connect EU Eco-Innovation technologies, developed in the framework of EU’s Eco-Innovation and Life programme, to businesses of the southern Mediterranean region. The objective of the B2B event is to strengthen the internationalization of start-ups and SMEs in the region by promoting the transfer of EU Eco-Innovative technologies and the creation of joint ventures, to improve their ability to achieve common competitive advantages in innovation, greening and resource efficiency. SwitchMed aims to promote a switch by the Mediterranean

economies towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and green economy, including low-emission development, through demonstration and dissemination of methods.

www.switchmed.eu/en/corners/Business-networks-and-intermediaries/pages/SwitchMed_B2B_Morocco

Migration

25 – Brussels: EU HR and the European Commission put forward a number of additional measures to strengthen the EU’s work along this route, in particular with and around Libya. They focus on fighting human smuggling and trafficking networks, helping to manage migratory flows more effectively, continuing to save lives at sea and improving the living conditions of migrants and refugees in Libya and neighbouring countries. The package of concrete measures is to contribute to the Malta Summit discussion of the Heads of State and Government.

February

Justice

1 – The Hague: EU and Mediterranean partners meet for the opening conference of the latest phase of the EuroMed Justice project, focused on judicial cooperation in the field of criminal law, civil law, independence and access to justice. Cooperation mechanisms are based on national and regional platforms directly connected to Eurojust and the European Judicial Network. The project will promote the sharing of best practices, such as the use of judicial networks for exchanging information, and will be structured around working groups on criminal matters, conferences, technical training sessions, and study visits.

www.euromed-justice.eu/

Blue Economy

2 – Barcelona: The EC and the UfM organize a stakeholder conference on the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean. Stakeholders of the maritime sector include businesses, researchers, institutes, national and local authorities from Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. Panel sessions regard smart

and innovative Mediterranean, coastguards and safety, sustainable consumption and production, governance, transport and ports with new technologies and sustainable tourism. The aim of the meeting is to assess the feasibility and the added value of a possible sea-basin based initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean.

www.westmed-initiative.eu/events/

Politics and Security

6 – Brussels: EU Foreign Affairs Ministers reaffirm the EU’s commitment to supporting efforts to stabilize Libya and achieve an inclusive political settlement under the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). All armed forces need to be united under the control of the legitimate civilian authorities as set in the LPA. Concern is expressed about the humanitarian situation in country. The ministers call for the implementation of urgent measures to reform the economy, reduce wasteful public expenditure and improve delivery of basic services to the population. Moreover, they decide that the EU will join the UN, the LAS and the African Union (AU) to transform the Troika into a Quartet, bringing together mediation efforts. Other topics of discussion regard the Middle East Peace Process, Ukraine and Egypt; with regard to the latter, they commit for stronger EU support for economic growth and job creation, dialogue democracy, rule of law and human rights.

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2017/02/06/

Governance and Human Rights

7-9 – Tunis: Within the framework of the EU-funded South Programme II, the Venice Commission of the COE jointly with the UNDP and the Independent High Electoral Commission of Tunisia support the holding of the 2nd Annual General Assembly of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs). The Assembly is structured around a workshop on the theme of ‘Strengthening the Independence of Electoral Management Bodies’ and it is attended by about 80 participants from ministries, electoral authorities, human rights institutions as well as international organizations. The workshop al-

lows the EMBs of Arab States to network, share experience and exchange on the tenets of EMB independence, international and regional standards, as well as the best practices for securing the impartiality of EMBs.

Education and Vocational Training

15-16 – Rabat: Representatives from southern Mediterranean partner countries gather for a two-day forum on Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the region and its importance for development. The event is organized by the European Training Foundation (ETF), with the aim of sharing the findings from the ETF's national consultations in the Mediterranean partner countries and discussing common trends, progress, and future action. Given the high rates of unemployment, priorities for the modernization of VET in the region are: more participatory governance, modernization of qualifications, promoting entrepreneurial learning and skills for SMEs, policy analysis and monitoring of progress.

www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/SEMED_EN

Politics and Security

21-22 – Valletta: Representatives from EU and Mediterranean partner countries gather for the 1st high-level meeting of the Euromed Police IV Project, aimed at presenting and endorsing the Euromed Cooperation priorities to increase citizen security. Among the priorities are counter terrorism, irregular migration, trafficking of human beings, cybercrime, cyberterrorism. Europol, Cepol and Interpol participate as partner institutions. The project runs from 2016-2020 with a budget of 5 million.

Sustainable Development

21-22 – Agadir: The EU-funded CES-MED project, promoting clean and energy saving cities, holds its 7th Steering Committee, bringing together the EC, the National Focal Points of the eight beneficiary countries, eight mayors and other stakeholders. The CES-MED team gives several presentations covering progresses and work plans, funding opportunities, applied methodology to change from Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) to Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP), collaboration with

the European Joint Research Centre (JRC), gender equality, awareness actions and use of training tools.

www.ces-med.eu/news/city-agadir-hosted-seventh-project-steering-committee-meeting-ces-med

ARLEM

22-23 – St Julian's (Malta): The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) meets in the 8th plenary session. Local and regional authorities (LRAs) adopt a report on cross-border cooperation that urges national governments and the international community to work more closely with mayors and governors to help stabilize North Africa and the Middle East. The Assembly expresses concern for the conflict in Libya, migration and climate change (a specific report is adopted for the latter). With respect to Libyan cities, it is noted that these partnerships are contributing to the stabilization. Under the Nicosia initiative, EU cities and regions are providing support for Libya's local authorities in the areas of water and waste management, primary health care, public administration, language training, budgeting, fisheries, policing and counter-radicalisation. About climate change, it advises local and regional authorities to join the Global Covenant of Mayors, a bottom-up approach to climate action in which communities make ambitious pledges in exchange for technical support and easier access to funds. Among other decisions taken in Malta, ARLEM agrees to send members to Tunisia to monitor local elections, as part of a mission organized by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. In addition, the report examines the results achieved by different types of cross-border programmes, including IPA II, Interreg V-A and ENPI CBC.

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/local-leaders-urge-concerted-international-action-to-stabilise-mediterranean.aspx>

March

Economic and Social Cooperation

6-7 – Marrakesh: The EUROMED Invest project holds a training workshop on "Fostering Women Leaders - Women in

Business Support Organisations (BSOs)" bringing together participants from south Mediterranean countries, mainly active women entrepreneurs, members of Confederation of Enterprises and several stakeholders from the private sector in order to discuss the role of women in the economic and social development of their countries. It will also offer the opportunity to share best practices among BSOs in supporting women entrepreneurs and improving services provided.

www.euromedinvest.eu/en/women-bso-promoting-female-entrepreneurship

Youth

7-8 – Rabat: A seminar dedicated to youth in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia is organized by CESEM and UNESCO in the framework of Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project (Net-Med Youth). It brings together the academic community, civil society, national institutions, public and private, and cooperation actors. The project supports enhanced networking among youth organizations in order to harness the collective potential of youth to affect democratic transition towards active citizenship, political participation, economic contribution and social inclusion.

www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/extrabudgetary-projects-on-freedom-of-expression/projects/networks-of-mediterranean-youth/

Climate Change

13 – Barcelona: More than 50 representatives of government, international organizations and the scientific community meet to set the ground for the first assessment report on the impact of climate change in the Mediterranean region. The report is expected to be finalized by November 2018 and presented at the 24th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24). The aim of the meeting is also to advance the regional agenda on environment and climate change for the next years and support UfM Member States in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The UfM Secretariat is working closely with the network of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC).

Politics and Security

14-16 – *Madrid*: The 1st session of the CrimEx Experts Group, created under EuroMed Justice IV Project to enhance criminal cooperation and international judicial cooperation is attended by members of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia, as well as experts from EU, Eurojust, the European Judicial Network in criminal matters (EJN), UN-CTED (United Nation's Counter Terrorism Directorate), as well as EuroMed Police. In order to promote a holistic and coordinated national response to transnational crime and terrorism, the Project Team envisages creating mechanisms to facilitate strategic and operational development, information sharing and other coordination.

www.euromed-justice.eu/home

Politics and Security

14-16 – *Tangier*: In the framework of the EU-funded project on strengthening the legal regime against foreign terrorist fighters (FTF), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) holds a regional training entitled "Strengthening regional cooperation in foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) criminal cases." The training brings together some 20 senior criminal justice and law enforcement officials representing key counter-terrorism institutions from Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. The three-day event offered a forum to discuss practical methods and tools to further increase cooperation on criminal matters in FTF-related cases at the regional level. As a result of the training, participants are provided with a set of recommendations and concrete measures likely to improve mutual legal assistance and extradition requests at the regional level.

Media

15-16 – *Beirut*: Around 80 young people from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia come together to exchange views about their relationship with the media, their media habits and especially their expectations. The Forum, organized by the EU in partnership with CFI medias and the Samir Kassir Foundation, addresses several topics including the role of the media in helping young people to find a job, media literacy, the questioning of authorities by

young people through the media, youth expectations towards the media, etc.

Economic and Social Cooperation

22-23 – *Athens*: A regional workshop on "Visibility of statistics and relations with users" organized by EU-funded MEDSTAT IV project represents a unique opportunity for high level statisticians from the statistical offices of the southern Mediterranean countries to confront the tools they developed to reach out their users with the needs and requirements from these users. Journalists, researchers and programmes officers from EuroMED programmes and initiatives illustrate the relations they experienced with statistics and statisticians with concrete examples. They call for more open and transparent relations and for more easy-to-read, easy-to understand statistical products. The statisticians for their part promise to engage more with their users, to improve their capacities for attractive dissemination and genuine dialogue and to re-think their production.

Fisheries

30 – *Malta*: The Malta MedFish4Ever Declaration is signed by Mediterranean Ministerial representatives from northern and southern coastlines, after months of negotiation (Catania process). The declaration sets out a detailed work programme for the next 10 years, in which the parties commit to saving the Mediterranean fish stocks and protecting the ecological and economic resources of the region. In practice, this involves regular data collection that includes small-scale fishermen, multi-annual management plans for fisheries, illegal fishing elimination and support to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. Effective implementation will require the involvement of fishers, coastal communities, civil society, industrial, small-scale, artisanal and recreational fisheries, as well as the UN FAO and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). The countries participating are Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus and Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Albania, Montenegro. <https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/2017-03-30-declaration-malta.pdf>

Higher Education

30 – *Fes*: The European Investment Bank (EIB) approves a €70 million loan to support the EuroMed University of Fes (UEMF). The UEMF is a flagship project of the UfM. The loan will finance the construction of the eco-campus, able to host over 6,000 students from the Euro-Mediterranean region and Sub-Saharan Africa. The project has also received the institutional support of the Steering Committee of the COP22 as a "model of eco-space, combining academic life, research, innovation and technology transfer in a clean environment, using the latest technologies for sustainable development." Students from various nationalities are currently enrolled on UEMF academic and research programmes which are focused on important topics for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean region and launched in partnership with well-known Higher Education Institutions. The overall construction of the University is expected to be completed by 2019-2020. <http://ufmsecretariat.org/eib-grants-a-e70-million-loan-to-ufm-labelled-project-euromed-university-of-fes/>

April

Youth

3-5 – *Casablanca*: More than 70 young people speaking more than seven languages, from more than 15 countries of both sides of the Mediterranean gathered in the framework of the EU-funded Net-Med Youth project, to share experiences on social work, to enrich, strengthen and develop their abilities, and to find solutions to the obstacles each of them faces in their country. Four main themes are discussed during the meeting: Youth access to employment and training, Free movement of young people in the Mediterranean, The role of culture and the arts for young generations, and Civic participation in public life. Participants shared their experiences on these topics. www.netmedyouth.org

Economic and Social Cooperation

4-5 – *Rome*: Participants from National Institutes of Statistics of Southern Neighbourhood countries have the opportu-

nity to learn, or to improve their knowledge, about the most used applications of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for the production, dissemination, and analysis of statistical data, at a training workshop organized by the EU-funded project MEDSTAT IV. The workshop was also a unique opportunity for countries to share their experiences on the use of geo-information for statistics in their respective Institutes, and to be updated on the latest worldwide developments for the integration between geo-spatial and statistical data.

Culture

25-27 – Rabat: Representatives of public broadcasters from the southern Mediterranean take part in a regional platform alongside academics, representatives of training centres and actors of the Arab cultural sphere, at the initiative of Med-Culture and MedMedia, two EU-funded regional programmes. The event aims aimed to develop networks and exchanges on higher education issues and training in the field of management and cultural policies. Discussions cover cross-cutting issues such as the definition of required skills to operate in the sector, advocacy as a learning experience, innovative educational initiatives, employability and the integration of young people into the labour market.

Migrations

12 – Brussels: The EU Trust Fund for Africa adopts a €90 million programme to step up the protection of migrants and reinforce migration management in Libya, as well as supporting the people that host them. A part of the programme (€48 million) is for assistance and protection of migrants and refugees at disembarkation points, in detention centres and urban settings, as well as provision of information on viable options of food and non-food items and data collection. Another part (€42 million) is to be given to socio-economic development at municipal level to strengthen local authorities' capacities.

Water

27 – Valletta: Ministers in charge of Water from the 43 members of the UfM agreed to develop a UfM Water Agenda to further enhance regional cooperation

on water. They recall the unique features of the Mediterranean region, which makes it particularly vulnerable to water scarcity and climate change. The UfM Water agenda is expected to lead to a consensual regional water policy framework that offers a means for substantial and measurable positive impact towards sustainable livelihood in the region. Ministers agreed that the new policy framework will help UfM Member States to implement sustainable and integrated water resources management in a comprehensive manner, thus promoting progressive integration, synergies and coordination among the water and other inter-linked sectors.

http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Ministerial-Declaration-on-Water_Union-for-the-Mediterranean.pdf

FEMISE

27-29 – Casablanca: The FEMISE annual conference - on "Migration and Refugees' Crisis in the EU-Med: Dawn of an Era of Shared Responsibility?" - provides a platform for the different actors of the EUroMed region to engage in a constructive dialogue about the future of the region and the role the EU can play in the context of the new ENP. The refugees are facing a humanitarian crisis. The southern neighbouring countries are struggling to cope with the inflows of refugees. The EU countries are facing political and socio-economic divisions on how (or whether) to integrate refugees into their societies. Despite efforts that have taken place, there is still a lot to be done. Within this challenging environment, there is a shared responsibility within the EuroMed region to take prompt and concrete actions and to unify the different stakeholders through combined policies to find ways to resolve this crisis and ease the pressure on the region.

www.femise.org/en/slideshow-en/femise-annual-conference-2017/

May

Research and Higher Education

4 – Valletta: The Research Ministers of UfM countries gather for a Conference on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean

Cooperation through Research and Innovation. They emphasize the need to step up cooperation on research and innovation, with a region-wide approach to increase students' and researchers' mobility, as well as establish common platforms for data collection and analysis. The Ministerial Declaration builds on the many research and innovation commitments endorsed at recent UfM Ministerial Conferences including ones on Employment and Labour, Environment and Climate Change, Water and the Blue Economy.

http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Declaration_EuroMed-Cooperation-in-Research-and-Innovation.pdf

Justice

8, 11 – Maastricht: The EU-funded EuroMed Justice IV Project organizes the 2nd session of its Expert Group in Criminal Matters (CrimEx), bringing together justice practitioners in criminal matters from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, as well as EU and international experts. Themes of discussion are coordination at national level, cross-border cooperation, north-south and south-south judicial cooperation, transnational crime' challenges and best practices.

EU-Tunisia Association Council

11 – Brussels: During the 13th session of the EU-Tunisia Association Council the two parties note with satisfaction the marked improvement in the security situation in Tunisia and emphasize the progress achieved in their bilateral cooperation in the field of security and the fight against terrorism besides the progress in terms of the implementation of the Privileged Partnership Action Plan for 2013-2017. The EU and Tunisia agree on the importance of making progress in identifying a new framework for the future Partnership to replace the current Action Plan for a Privileged Partnership (2013-2017), to define priorities that reflect the scale and the depth of the privileged relations, and to meet their ambitions for the future. The two sides have an exchange of views at high level on regional issues of common interest, in particular the situation in Libya. EU and Tunisia reiterated their wish to

define together a common vision for the proper management of migration flows within their Mobility Partnership. The 13th session of the Association Council provided an opportunity to identify concrete bilateral actions in the priority areas of youth and of economic development

Energy Cooperation

18-19 – Valletta: An Informal High level meeting on Energy Efficiency in the gathers UfM Ministers in charge of energy, government representatives and stakeholders to discuss how to enhance regional cooperation to implement energy efficiency solutions in the Mediterranean. The meeting is held within the framework of the UfM Energy and Climate Action Agenda and is part of the UfM Energy Platforms, which aim to deliver a secure, affordable and sustainable energy supply in the Mediterranean with a special focus on the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform (UfM REEE).

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/fostering-energy-efficiency-solutions-in-the-mediterranean-high-level-meeting-to-be-held-in-malta/>

Sustainable Urban Development

22 – Cairo: For the 2nd UFM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development, the ministers in charge of housing, municipal affairs and urban development from 43 UfM countries gather and agree on an Urban Agenda. The Agenda is aimed at delivering common responses to the challenges facing urban areas, key drivers for stability. UfM Ministers agree to create a UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development, as well as to organize the UfM-IFIs (International Financial Institutions) Urban Development Project Committee Meetings. The Conference also gathers high-level representatives of UN-Habitat, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the WB and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The conference concludes with the launch of the project "Imbaba Urban Upgrading" for the urban regeneration of one of Greater Cairo's most populated areas.

MEDREG

24 – Athens: Mediterranean Energy Regulators gather for the 23rd General Assembly of Mediterranean Energy Regulators' Association (MEDREG). MEDREG is an association that brings together energy regulators of 21 countries around the Mediterranean in order to promote a clear, stable and harmonized legal and regulatory framework. It benefits from the support of the EU and of the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER). At the assembly, members have the chance to debate the strategy and action plan for MEDREG in the medium term, discuss the development of tailored support activities for members' national reforms, and approve a new communications strategy to extend MEDREG's outreach and the dissemination of its achievements. MEDREG unveils the first activities of its new initiative for "Support to Regulatory Reforms," which offers tailored and personalized assistance to members on national regulatory issues. Moreover, it announces the incoming technical study visits to the national energy regulators of Jordan, Egypt, Portugal, then Palestine and Tunisia.

June

EuroMeSCo

1-2 – Barcelona: The Euro-Mediterranean network of think tanks on politics and security EuroMeSCo holds its Annual Conference on the theme "Confronting Violent Extremism in the Euro-Mediterranean." It is organized in the framework of the project "Euro-Mediterranean Political Research and Dialogue for Inclusive Policymaking Processes and Dissemination through Network Participation," co-funded by the EU and the IEMed. The conference gathers over 150 researchers and practitioners from 22 countries to discuss violent extremism in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The plenary sessions explore how the region is affected by violent extremism, the specificities of violent extremism today and possible strategies to counter the phenomenon, the complex drivers and root causes motivating the radicalisation of individuals, as well as the interactions between violent extremism and other phenomena such as pop-

ulism, Islamophobia and authoritarianism. Three working sessions offer an opportunity to discuss specific angles of the phenomenon in a smaller format. Moreover, preliminary results of the Euromed survey of experts on violent extremism are presented.

www.euromesco.net/event/confronting-violent-extremism-in-the-euro-mediterranean/

Freedom of Press

2 – Beirut: The EU Delegation to Lebanon organizes the annual ceremony for the Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press, on the occasion of the 12th anniversary of Samir Kassir's assassination. Three journalists from Syria, Egypt and Iraq rewarded at the ceremony. The award rewards journalists who have distinguished themselves through the quality of their work and their commitment to human rights and democracy. Organized every year since 2006, the Samir Kassir Award honours the memory of the Lebanese journalist Samir Kassir who was assassinated on 2 June 2005 in Beirut.

Journalism and migration

14 – Valletta: The first edition of the Migration Media Award awards 35 journalists from 16 countries, based on fact-based and impartial reporting on the complexity of migration, its many challenges and opportunities. The 12 first-prize winners for four categories in three languages come from Egypt, Italy, Algeria, Portugal, UK, France and Morocco. The EU-funded competition is based on the initiative of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and is organized by EUROMED Migration IV, OPEN Media Hub projects, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and Malta's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion.

www.migration-media-award.eu/en/

Civil Society

19 – Brussels: EU Foreign Ministers stress the importance of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as promoters of democracy, and as defenders of the rule of law, social justice and human rights. In Conclusions on the EU's engagement with civil society in external relations adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council

meeting, the EU underlines the crucial importance of CSOs for the successful implementation of the EU Global Strategy and the 2030 Agenda, including in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At a time when the space for civil society is shrinking in an increasing number of countries, foreign ministers reaffirmed the EU's opposition to any unjustified restrictions to freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly that hinder the work of CSOs.

Politics and Security

19 – *Brussels*: EU Foreign Ministers meeting adopts conclusions on EU external action on counter-terrorism. Noting that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that the EU has a vital interest in continuing to work with partners at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels in countering this threat, in the conclusions of the Council the ministers tackled the following issues: Counter-terrorism structures; Internal-external nexus; Strengthened cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa, Western Balkans, Turkey, Sahel and the Horn of Africa, Strengthened international cooperation, in particular with key strategic partners, such as the United States, Australia, Canada and the Schengen partners; Strengthening the EU response in key thematic areas, such as preventing and countering violent extremism, the need to effectively address online recruitment and radicalization, the acute challenge of foreign terrorist fighters, in particular the issue of returnees, the issue of terrorist financing and money laundering and the links between serious and organized crime and terrorism.

July

Politics and Security

3 – *Barcelona*: Senior Officials of the UfM Member States discuss challenges and opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region and the ongoing projects and initiatives of the UfM Secretariat and for the stability of the region. They take stock of UfM Ministerial Meetings held during the first half of the year (in the areas of water and sustainable ur-

ban development). UfM Senior Officials discuss four new region-wide cooperation project proposals submitted by the UfM Secretariat aiming to facilitate access to employment, support entrepreneurship and SME development, promote climate transparency to help contribute to the Paris Agreement, and provide multimodal training to help build an efficient, interoperable and sustainable transport infrastructure network in the Mediterranean region.

Youth Employment

9-10 – *Cairo*: The Conference on "Youth and Employability in MENA: better skills, more jobs" is organized by the Centre for Mediterranean Integration, with support from the Anna Lindh Foundation, the WB, AFD, UNIMED and the Egyptian Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation. The aim of the event is to identify the main constraints affecting youth employment in the MENA region, and to explore the role of business climate, labour and education policies in mitigating those challenge. Participants come from governments and agencies, international organizations, private sector and civil society. The conference is able to create valuable interaction and discussion, and allows to identify concrete policy and operational recommendations to tackle the most serious challenges.

www.cmimarseille.org/highlights/conference-youth-and-employability-mena-better-skills-more-jobs

CSO Forum 2017

10-12 – *Brussels*: Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and stakeholders from the southern Mediterranean and representatives of EU institutions come together for the CSO Forum 2017 around the theme of Youth and Resilience. It is organized by DG NEAR, in co-operation with DG DEVCO and other European Institutions. This dialogue should lead to strengthening coherence and establishing a joint agenda between regional CSOs from the Southern Neighbourhood and the EU. In the build-up to the forum, four seminars have already taken place in Tunis in April to gather civil society inputs on: migration, security and resilience, human rights and governance, and reducing inequalities. They regarded

CSOs from the Mediterranean region (10 countries of the Southern Neighbourhood, from Morocco to Syria).

<http://csfsouth.org/data.php?itemId=475&lanId=1>

Youth

13 – *Barcelona*: The UfM Secretariat gathers relevant stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges related to the expansion of internships in the region and the specific role of the private sector. The workshop – titled "Boosting employability in the region: which role for internships? Lessons learnt and future perspectives of HOMERe UfM labelled project" – allows students, enterprises, civil society organizations and higher education institutions to formulate recommendations for the development of international training programmes in the region. The UfM has labelled the HOMERe project, a programme working through international traineeships to increase the employability of students from more than 100 top universities members of the Mediterranean Network of Engineering Schools in order to help companies to identify the best young talents and strengthening academic and professional mobility in the region. So far, 125 young people from the northern and the southern rims of the Mediterranean have benefitted from HOMERe

EU-Lebanon Association Council

18 – *Brussels*: The EU-Lebanon Association Council takes stock of progress in the implementation of the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement and of the EU-Lebanon partnership priorities and compact including: growth and jobs, security and counterterrorism, governance and the rule of law, migration and mobility. The consequences of the Syria crisis, as well as human rights and justice reform in Lebanon are also tackled.

Politics and Security

18-19 – *Barcelona*: A meeting of about 40 experts, academics, practitioners and advocates is held to identify key priority actions and approaches towards enhancing the roles of women and youth as key-actors in preventing violent extremism (PVE) in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The event is organized by

the UfM, the UNDP and UN Women. The meeting reaffirms that while women and youth can play a significant role in preventing violent extremism, they need to be supported and empowered to do so. It is noted that the drivers of recruitment and radicalization vary according to the context. Until recently a security approach to violent extremism has prevailed. However, evidence and experience show that it requires responses that addresses political, social, and economic drivers with a human rights based approach.

August

Inclusive Economy and Sustainable Growth

10 – *Amman/Cairo*: The two first national “Green start-ups meet investors” events takes place with the aim of bringing together entrepreneurs and financial actors in order to promote access to finance for green entrepreneurs. A total of 15 companies (eight in Jordan, and seven in Egypt) present their business ideas before potential investors and relevant stakeholders. During the events, the entrepreneurs also have the opportunity to network with the potential investors, aiming at closing deals in the future.

Research and Innovation

10 – *Allan*: The Jordanian city of Allan has seen the opening of the first major international research centre in the Middle East and the first such centre in the world powered by solar energy, supported by the EU with more than €20 million in funding. Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) is a unique science for peace project where Arabs, Israeli, Iranians, Turks, Europeans and others work together in a world-class science facility. The SESAME synchrotron is the first research hub in the Middle East that is open to scientists from all over the world, and the first synchrotron ever built in the region. SESAME was launched in 2002 under the auspices of UNESCO with the aim of using science diplomacy to foster a culture of peace and cooperation in the broader Middle East.

www.sesame.org.jo/sesame_2018/

Anna Lindh Foundation

28, 30 – *Helsinki*: About 70 civil society actors, teachers, youth workers and educators from nine countries (Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Morocco, Poland, Sweden, Tunisia and Turkey) participate in the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) Network Days for Intercultural Citizenship Education. The event is structured in a forum of discussion, interactive workshops and training. Main themes regard intersectional identities and education, the role of civil society in fostering intercultural learning, fighting hate speech and extremism, encouraging language learning as a tool for intercultural dialogue and the power of arts in education.

September

Migration

6 – *Brussels*: Measures put in place to better manage migration along the Central Mediterranean Route and with partners in Africa are starting to bear fruits, according to the fifth progress report on the Partnership Framework on Migration, presented by the European Commission and the EU High Representative for foreign affairs. The number of tragic deaths at sea has significantly decreased over the summer months, alongside a substantial reduction in the number of migrants crossing the Central Mediterranean. The partnership with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the IOM has been strengthened all along the Central Mediterranean route, with specific programmes in place for protection and support of migrants- such as primary health care, access to documentation-, assisted voluntary returns and reintegration for returnees.

Economic and Social Cooperation

14 – *Cairo*: The EIB (European Investment Bank) holds an international conference on “Boosting investments in the Mediterranean region” in partnership with the Ministry of International Cooperation and Investment, the EU Delegation to Egypt and the UfM. Government officials, investors, bankers, and researchers from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia discuss the current economic context and potential drivers of econom-

ic growth in the region, ways to help SMEs and micro entrepreneurs to access finance, and the critical investment needs to promote innovation and the international competitiveness of local firms. EIB is stepping up its support to the private sector with €600 million for SME finance. Furthermore, a new initiative called the European External Investment Plan (EIP) will cover the MENA region and will be aimed at leveraging public and private funds from the EU and its Member States.

Violent Extremisms

14 – *Brussels*: The EU adopts a programme under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) worth €17.5 million, aimed at addressing the terrorist threat in MENA region. Terrorism and radicalization leading to violent extremism continue to pose a significant threat to states and societies in the region. This three-year programme will address drivers and threats from terrorism in the region to foster human security and build resilience in both states and societies. The programme will include a first component to contribute to strengthening the capacity of state actors that play a key role in countering terrorism and violent extremism. The second component of the programme will focus on partnerships between authorities, youth and communities to address underlying factors that can make communities vulnerable to violent extremism.

Education and Refugees

26, 27 – *Beirut*: Supporting the access of refugees and vulnerable populations from host countries to higher education in the Mediterranean region is the object of a conference organized by EC and Hopes Project. The conference gathers more than 120 participants, including representatives from ministries, international and non-governmental organizations, universities, as well as students from the Mediterranean region and Europe. The European Union has provided material, help and expert knowledge to incorporate Syrian youth and vulnerable host communities into higher educational institutions with an investment of €53 million alone from the EU’s Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis.

October

Migration

11-12 – Amman: EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4) programme holds a 2nd Sub-Regional Workshop on Migration Governance implemented by The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The event provides a knowledge and experience-exchange platform on national migration governance and inter-institutional coordination for representatives of the three governments of Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. Participants discuss topics such as international, national and local Migration Governance frameworks, e-government tools and evidence-based policy-making for better migration governance. Participants exchange their respective national migration governance challenges and good practices.

www.icmpd.org

Energy

18 – Cairo: UfM Energy and Climate Business Forum is held in Cairo focusing on releasing renewable energy opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region as key to socio-economic development. Held in the perspective of the World Energy Day, the Forum brings together more than 150 high-level government officials from UfM countries, representatives of large private companies and start-up teams working on renewable energies, as well as international financial institutions and development banks. Participants agree on the need to promote regional cooperation through the federation of energy-related business associations in the Euro-Mediterranean region in order to encourage private sector initiatives in the energy sector. They also call for the structuring of a dialogue platform to explore the potential of public-private partnerships (PPP) in the UfM region as an essential tool to foster investments in the renewable energy sector.

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/new-push-for-energy-and-climate-investments-in-the-mediterranean/>

Politics and Security

19 – Madrid: The Senior Officials of the 43 UfM Member States meet to discuss upcoming regional cooperation activi-

ties and initiatives organized in the framework of the UfM. The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) is also the occasion to exchange information on activities and initiatives launched by the UfM Secretariat in the last quarter of 2017 especially updates and final details on the UfM Ministerial Conference on Women Empowerment, which will take place on 27 November in Cairo.

Youth

23-24 – Paris: 62 participants meet at UNESCO Headquarters to share findings of their skills forecasting work, with special focus on youth employment. The seminar, Regional Skills Forecasting in the South Mediterranean Region, presents the results of NET-MED Youth forecasting work and provides a platform for participants to discuss and exchange national and international experiences. In the area of employment, NET-MED Youth works with youth organizations, experts and decision-makers to reinforce the relevance of education and training systems so as to promote youth employment and enhance their skills. The project is multidisciplinary and strengthens national skills forecasting systems, empowers youth capacities so they can be part of policy dialogue and planning, and supports youth-led national awareness campaigns on youth skills needs.

<https://en.unesco.org/projects/netmedyouth/>

Women

24 – 26 Casablanca: The Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation organizes a meeting to strengthen the role of local and regional civil society associations in the preparation of European and Euro-Mediterranean policies in favour of the rights of women and gender equality in the southern Mediterranean. The objective of this regional dialogue is to strengthen the role of associations in the planning, implementation and monitoring of European and Euro-Mediterranean policies related to women's rights and gender equality in the southern Mediterranean.

www.euromedwomen.foundation/pg/en/agenda/view/7063/euromediterranean-dialogue-on-advocacy-for-gender-equality

November

Migration

7-8 – Beirut: 80 participants representing city and national governments, NGOs, international organizations, the European Union and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation attend the Conference of the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project (MC2CM) to present the project findings and launch a debate about the future of urban migration in the Mediterranean region. The relevance of the urban dimension of the phenomenon of migration is highlighted as well as the importance of a project such as MC2CM to shed light on the reality of the nexus between migration and urbanization.

Economic and Social Cooperation

14 – Cairo: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) organizes its 2nd Business Forum for the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and the West Bank and Gaza. The theme of the event is "Investing for Sustainable Growth." The event brings together key policymakers, government officials, investors and prominent business people to discuss the business outlook in the region, and to consider the obstacles impeding an increase in foreign investment.

Women

22-23 – Barcelona: The Women's Entrepreneurship & Investment Programme (WEIP) Forum provides a unique opportunity to promote women's entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean, where the rate of women who run their own businesses is two to three times lower than the world average. More than 70 Mediterranean women entrepreneurs exchange experiences and best practices and explore new business and investment opportunities through networking and match-making activities. Through dedicated workshops, B2B meetings and study tours the event will also promote dialogue between women entrepreneurs from both sides of the Mediterranean with the objectives of strengthening cooperation, fostering international partnerships and creating new business opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

UfM-Women

27 – *Cairo*: Ministers from the 43 UfM Member countries gathers at the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Society.” They agree on a common agenda to strengthen the role of women in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and they also acknowledge the efforts made by UfM countries to foster gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment and stressed the need to address the obstacles that still hinder the full participation of women in the public and private spheres. To that end they adopted a Declaration with concrete and operational recommendations, actions and measures focused on four priority areas: raising women’s participation in public life and decision-making; improving women’s economic participation; combating all forms of violence against women and girls; and eliminating gender stereotypes.

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/womenfinaldeclaration.pdf>

Culture

28-29 – *Amman*: The Med Culture Forum takes place providing an opportunity to assess what the EU-funded Med Culture programme has accomplished during the past four years and to look ahead to the future. The forum gathers a number of professionals involved in the themes addressed, including, cultural operators and civil society actors, representatives of Ministries of Culture and other relevant ministries, and representative of EU institutions and other EU-funded programmes. Med Culture will also take serious steps in creating a Community of practice for the future, comprising culture sector operators, managers, civil society organisations, academics and trainers, together for working in sustainable development and public policy making.

www.medculture.eu/

Blue Economy

29 – *Naples*: The UfM Regional Stakeholder Conference on the Blue Economy, kicks-off bringing together over 400 key

stakeholders dealing with marine and maritime issues from the entire region, including government representatives, regional and local authorities, international organizations, academia, the private sector and civil society. The main objective of this event is to consolidate a Mediterranean blue economy community working on sustainable development solutions for the region, as well as to create partnerships and initiatives to harness the potential for blue growth. The conference features 12 thematic workshops on the whole range of sectors covered by the blue economy, namely blue jobs and training, research and innovation, blue entrepreneurship, coast guard cooperation, marine protected areas, offshore energy, coastal and maritime tourism, fisheries and aquaculture.

December

Culture

3-4 *Amman*: SouthMed CV holds a regional conference bringing together representatives of 30 cultural projects sub-granted by SouthMed CV during the past two years, as well as local public authorities, cultural practitioners, artists, academics, international experts in the field of culture and development, and representatives the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries’ institutions in Jordan. During the conference, two different panels reflecting on the culture as a vector for development in the southern Mediterranean region with the participation of experts from the Euro-Mediterranean region are held. Moreover, group discussions among the SouthMed CV sub-grantees, speakers and the audience on cross border cooperation to foster the emergence of citizen platforms, new models for public-private partnerships, culture as an instrument to lead changes, creative economy in the southern Mediterranean region, among other issues, take place. www.smedcv.net/

Women

12-13 – *Amman*: Euro-Med Women’s Foundation meets with associations to

analyze women’s situation in 2018. These associations will study subjects that have a direct impact on women’s lives such as women’s access to local political decision-making (Jordan and Morocco), women’s entrepreneurship (Algeria), women’s role in the preservation of the environment (Lebanon and Tunisia), and violence against women (Egypt and Palestine). Every year, the Foundation sets up local clusters of gender equality actors around a leading association in order to develop a diagnosis on a specific subject and territory. The associations undertake to collaborate with different actors in their territory who do not work together generally (local and regional authorities, media, private sector...). Through this initiative, the Foundation highlights the expertise of civil society as a driver of social change and privileged observer of gender equality policies. It allows researchers involved in local clusters to learn about the work of women’s rights associations. The local clusters’ methodology helps establish long-term partnership dynamics and unites the efforts and resources available for gender equality.

www.euromedwomen.foundation/pg/en/news/view/7484/meeting-with-7-associations-that-will-analyse-situation-of-women-in-2018

Invest

14 – *Brussels*: The EUROMED Invest final conference is the occasion to have a look on the project achievements. Gathering implementing partners and the project’s final beneficiaries, the conference highlights the role and implication of the EU in the development of the Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as the main impact reached. Since the beginning of the project, the EUROMED Invest project enabled nearly 2,000 people to be trained. Around 9,000 organizations benefited from its activities, mostly start-ups, companies and Business Support Organizations, but also clusters, technoparks, incubators, local and central public authorities, civil society organizations, and others.