

Euromed Chronology

January

Latvian Presidency

1 – *Riga*: Latvia takes over the EU Council Presidency from Italy and will have three priorities: Competitive Europe (to enhance its entrepreneurial capacity), Digital Europe (to seize the opportunities offered by rapidly growing information technologies) and Engaged Europe (to assume a full and active role on the global stage). Latvia supports a comprehensive review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) which should enable the ENP to be more effective, putting an increased emphasis on differentiation in approaching the partner countries. The Latvian Presidency also supports European external Action Service (EEAS) in further developing the relationship with the Southern Neighbourhood region, thereby contributing to the stability and security of the region based on the principles of democracy, human rights, freedom of speech, and the rule of law.

https://eu2015.lv/images/PRES_prog_2015_EN-final.pdf

Training

19 – *Turin*: An ETF review of progress in promoting entrepreneurial learning and skills for small enterprises in the EU's Southern Neighbourhood underlines both challenges and opportunities for the countries in accommodating the human capital dimensions of the Small Business Act for Europe. The SBA assessment underlines how entrepreneurship promotion in general education remains weak. More developed cooperation between the business world, governments and training community is important to improve quality of human resources within

SMEs. This will help improve competitiveness and employment potential which all countries particularly need.

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

PA-UfM

23-26-30 – *Barcelona*: Three Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) hold their working sessions at the UfM headquarter. The three committees are: the Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture; the Committee on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education; and the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights. These sessions gather more than 100 parliamentarians from 35 UfM member States and the EP to discuss and exchange views on economic, social and security challenges in the region. The meetings are an opportunity to reinforce cooperation between the UfM Secretariat and the PA-UfM and the occasion to address strategic issues such as mobility and migration, youth employment, economic opportunities and women's empowerment.

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/more-than-100-euro-mediterranean-parliamentarians-will-meet-at-the-ufm-secretariat-to-discuss-and-exchange-views-on-regional-economic-social-and-security-challenges-and-opportunities/>

Migration

26-27 – *Brussels*: During the first meeting of the European Migration Forum, on the initiative of the European Commission (EC) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the

President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), Lebrun, stresses the need for a genuine Euro-Mediterranean policy for migration. The forum is conceived as a platform for dialogue with civil society on migration, asylum and integration, and it brings together representatives of EU institutions, civil society and cities, and European and Mediterranean regions. He also called for the creation of "Partnerships for migration and integration" between the cities and regions of countries of origin and destination in order to ensure a more decentralized management of migration.

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/forum-europeen-sur-migration-lebrun-appelle-veritable-politique-euro-mediterrannee-pour-la-migration.aspx>

Humanitarian Aid

29 – *Brussels*: The EU announces an increasing in assistance to the Syria crisis by €136 million in humanitarian funding, half of which will go to needs inside Syria, and the other half to Syrian refugees and host communities in neighbouring Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. The new humanitarian funding will ensure that those most in need can obtain shelter, livelihood and a dignified life despite the current very harsh circumstances. The funds will support humanitarian partners to deliver food aid, emergency medical supplies, clean water, and cash assistance and education among others.

February

EU-Lebanon

9 – *Brussels*: The 7th meeting of the EU-Lebanon Association Council dis-

cuses responses to Lebanon's political, security, humanitarian, economic and social challenges, taking stock of the development of bilateral relations and the implementation of the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement. Both sides signed the Protocol to the Association Agreement enabling Lebanon's participation in EU.

UfM

10 - Strasbourg: The UfM SG Sijlmasi and the EU High Representative Mogherini meet to discuss the role of the UfM in the framework of the ENP review, to strengthen regional cooperation and address the needs and opportunities of the region. Both parties stress the need to strengthen cooperation and regional integration, and agreed to seize the opportunity of the ENP review to foster the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The ongoing review of the ENP, along with the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, provide an opportunity to further enhance the role of the UfM as a regional platform to deal with challenges and opportunities for the region.

Industrial Cooperation

24-25 - Brussels: On the 20th anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean industrial cooperation process, the Working Party on Euro-Mediterranean industrial cooperation meet to update and implement the 2014-2016 work programme. The meeting is attended by representatives of eight Mediterranean neighbour (MED) countries, 14 EU Member States, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Turkey, business and international organizations and European institutions. The meeting splits into four sessions corresponding to the four strands of the work programme (SMEs, networks, trade and sector-specific work).

<http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/11225?locale=en>

March

ENP

4 - Brussels: EU High Representative Mogherini and Commissioner for ENP Hahn launch a consultation on the future of the ENP. This task is essential in or-

der to review the principles on which the policy is based as well as its scope and instruments given the significant developments in the region, considering that its last review dates back to 2011. The consultation is meant to be as wide as possible and will include both partners in neighbouring countries and with EU stakeholders. A joint Consultation paper setting out preliminary findings in terms of lessons learnt from ENP to date, as well as key questions for discussion with partners and stakeholders, is adopted.

<http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/consultation/consultation.pdf>

Justice

11 - Barcelona: The EU-funded Euromed Justice III project holds its Final Conference providing an overview of the work developed throughout the project, gathering feedback on the results achieved and agreeing on lessons learned. Over the past four years the EU-funded Euromed Justice III project has stimulated the discussions across the southern Mediterranean on legal areas crucial to the fast evolving judicial systems in the EU's partner countries especially around three main components: Access to justice and legal aid, Resolution of cross-border family conflicts and Criminal and penitentiary law. <http://euromed-justice.eu/activity/final-conference-euromed-justice-iii-project-barcelona-11-march-2015>

Investments

14 - Sharm el-Sheikh: On the sidelines of Egypt Economic Development Conference (EEDC) the EU and the government of Egypt sign agreements to support social and economic development in Egypt with a grant contribution of €130 million. The main Memorandum of Understanding concerns the EU Single Support Framework for Egypt for 2014-15, which allocates an indicative total of €210-257 million in EU grants to Egypt, across the following priority areas: poverty alleviation, local socio-economic development and social protection (40%), governance, transparency and business environment (20%) and quality of life and environment: (40%).

Investment

25-27 - Belgrade: In the framework of the EUROMED Invest project, the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia organized the 3rd Euromed Invest Academy "Cooperation - Complementarity between the South Mediterranean and the Western Balkans." The focus remains on further development of private business and investment opportunities between the Southern Neighbourhood and the EU Enlargement countries through two main components: benchmarking between both regions on their relations with the EU and better understanding between regions to contribute to an inclusive economic development

Women

27 - Barcelona: A UfM workshop on "Women's economic participation and Information & Communications Technology (ICT) in the Euro-Mediterranean Region: constraints and opportunities" gather over 40 participants from international and regional organizations, development agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector. It is the opportunity for regional stakeholders to discuss actions to enhance women's participation in the sector. Participants stressed the need for a comprehensive approach and complementarity between different actors to overcome the main obstacles that still hinder the equal participation of women in the sector.

Employment

31 - Brussels: The Senior Officials of the UfM member countries label one new regional project, Maharat Med - Developing Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship Skills, that is aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of both SMEs and recent graduates, fostering youth employment and building human capacities. This training programme falls within the framework of the UfM Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs), and will be implemented in Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Morocco.

Media

31 March - 1 April, Paris: A two-day conference entitled "Stand up for free expression: raising our voice against intolerance and racism" co-organized by the EU-funded programme MedMedia

gathers journalists' unions and broadcasters from across the Mediterranean. They call for urgent action to halt the dramatic rise of hate speech and decline of journalistic standards in the region. The event is organized in response to the Charlie Hebdo massacre and the sharp increase in the killing of journalists in the Southern Mediterranean. The 60 union leaders, media experts and broadcasters who attend the conference agree on an action plan aimed at upholding freedom of expression and promoting public service values within the media community.

www.med-media.eu/journalists-unite-to-protect-freedom-of-expression-against-extremist-violence/

April

Governance

10 – Strasbourg: A new Council of Europe-EU programme to improve democratic governance in Europe's southern neighbourhood is launched, with senior representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and the Palestinian National Authorities meeting CoE officials. The three-year South Programme II – carried out by the CoE and funded by the EU – aims at strengthening the independence and efficiency of the judiciary; promoting good governance and preventing corruption and money laundering; combating the problem of trafficking in human beings; and promoting democratic values. The programme will support justice reform, and legal reform, ensuring fundamental rights such as freedom of expression are taken into account.

ENP

13 – Barcelona: An Informal Ministerial Meeting on the future on the ENP gathered Foreign Ministers from both the EU countries and the ENP partner countries and EU High Representative Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Hahn as co-chair. The conference allows for an in-depth discussion within the framework of the ongoing consultation process on the review of the ENP and a discussion of the situation in the Southern Neighbourhood, given the

significant developments in the region since the ENP last review in 2011. The consultation follows four priorities: differentiation, focus, flexibility, ownership and visibility; and five areas where both sides share common interests are identified: trade and economic development, connectivity, security, governance, migration and mobility. After this public consultation, some proposals for the future direction of the ENP will follow in the autumn.

Employment

16-17 – Beirut: The Daedalus project's first international workshop is the occasion to present a new platform, DAE-DALUS; allowing young job seekers and entrepreneurs to find job opportunities in the region. The portal, the first of its kind at a Mediterranean level, is more than a job database, offering grant, scholarship and investment opportunities; and promoting awareness about youth empowerment, economic justice and decent working conditions. The Daedalus project aims to address the needs of young job seekers by enhancing their opportunities and matching their qualifications with needs in neighbouring countries, and to address the problem of unemployment in many Mediterranean countries.

Migration

20 – Luxembourg: EU Foreign and Interior Ministers agree their full backing to a 10-point plan in response to the crisis situation in the Mediterranean presented by EU Migration Commissioner Avramopoulos. The 10 actions agreed are: reinforce Joint Operations in the Mediterranean and extend operational area; systematic effort to capture and destroy vessels used by the smugglers; EUROPOL, FRONTEX, EASO and EUROJUST to work closely to gather information on smugglers; EASO to deploy teams in Italy and Greece for joint processing of asylum applications; Member States to ensure fingerprinting of all migrants; to consider options for emergency relocation mechanism; an EU-wide voluntary pilot project on resettlement; a new return programme for rapid return of irregular migrants; the engagement with countries surrounding Libya; to deploy Immigration Liaison Of-

ficers (ILO) in key third countries, to gather intelligence on migratory flows.

Counterterrorism cooperation

28 – Brussels: The EU launches a "Countering radicalization and Foreign Terrorist Fighters" programme to help partner countries fight radicalization in the Maghreb and stem the flow of foreign fighters from North Africa, the Middle East and Western Balkans. The EU will allocate €5 million to fund technical assistance to enhance the capacities of criminal justice officials to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of foreign fighters or would-be foreign fighters. A second tranche of €5 million will finance countering radicalization programmes in the Sahel and Maghreb region, supporting non-state actors to implement activities in media, education, religion and culture. Projects focusing on messaging, social media, and awareness-raising with social workers will also be considered as will measures preventing the radicalization and recruitment of foreign fighters.

May

Food Security

5-6 – Barcelona: The UfM, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) launch a high-level forum bringing together policymakers, financing institutions and CEOs from leading agribusiness companies. The goal is to deepen relationships between the public and private sector and develop initiatives to increase agricultural investment in the region. The forum contributes to a sustainable regional approach for agriculture and food security, capitalizing on the experience of each of the countries in the region and maximizing opportunities for the public and private sectors alike.

Employment

6 – Turin: The EU-funded Governance for Employability in the Mediterranean Project brings together its participants from Southern Mediterranean partners in a cross country four-day event. It focuses on three areas: local labour market information, skills anticipation and

matching, and career guidance. These thematic areas are a feature of the pilot projects undertaken by each participating country and participants share what they have learned from their own pilot project.

www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/GEMM:_Cross-country_learning_in_Turin_EN

Migration

11- Lisbon: The Second Summit of Speakers of the PA-UfM takes place in the Portuguese capital gathering nearly 30 speakers. The Summit emphasized that migration pressures should be treated as a priority by all governments. The participants noted that the EU did not have a unified position on its migration policy so far. In this meeting is adopted the Declaration on Migration, Asylum and Human Rights in the Euro-Mediterranean region, with concrete proposals for addressing the growing problem of migration.

www.paufm.org/

Culture

11 – Barcelona: The 8th edition of the contest “A Sea of Words” is launched by the IEMed – Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) Head of Network organization in Spain with the objective of contributing to the promotion of dialogue between peoples and the exchange of knowledge and experiences between different local and international traditions. In the framework of the Year of Sustainable Development, the contest seeks short stories about sustainable and non-excluding growth, which raises living standards, benefits the whole of society through wealth distribution and protects both the cultural and environmental heritage. The competition is aimed at young people between 18 and 30, citizens of one of the 43 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean area. This year's edition receives 150 short stories, the highest number coming from Egyptian youths.

www.annalindhfoundation.org/news/sea-words-8th-edition

Women

21-24 – Barcelona: The UfM organizes the 2nd international Conference on Women's Participation in Economic life. 250 policymakers, experts, representa-

tives from international organizations, think tanks, funding agencies, private sector and civil society from 35 countries discuss over three days solutions to reduce the economic gender gap in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Participants stress the urgency to improve women's economic participation and call for concrete measures and more synergy between key actors in the region. They also share experiences and best practices and make recommendations on how to promote inclusive growth and gender equality in the region. The Conference is also the occasion to launch the first “Regional Dialogue on women empowerment” involving UfM countries and regional and international stakeholders, including civil society organizations of the region; and two other projects “Developing Women Empowerment” promoted by the Euro Mediterranean Women Foundation and “Forming Responsible citizen” promoted by Ideaborn.

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/250-experts-gathered-in-the-ufm-conference-to-foster-womens-participation-in-the-economic-life/>

Energy

24 – Istanbul: The EU-supported Mediterranean Energy Regulators' Association (MEDREG) holds its 19th General Assembly marking the approval of the new Action Plan for 2015-2017 and highlighting MEDREG's contribution to the three Euro-Mediterranean Energy Platforms on regional electricity market, natural gas, and renewable energy and energy efficiency. In Istanbul, MEDREG also participates in the sixth World Forum on Energy Regulation, organized by the Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EMRA) gathering regulators from all over the world as well as practitioners, academics and other interested parties.

Civil Society

28-30 – Brussels: The 2nd Civil Society Forum-Southern Neighbourhood, organized by the European External Action Service together with European Commission, CoR and EESC gathers some Civil Society organizations from the Southern Mediterranean and the EU, academic and think tank organizations, and media and professional com-

municators from both sides of the Mediterranean. Several ARLEM members also participate as well as EU ENP Commissioner Hahn. The Forum seeks to reinforce the commitment to making civil society an active partner in discussions on the EU's relations with the Southern Neighbourhood. A key element is the discussion on the review of the ENP.

Humanitarian Aid

29 – Brussels: In its first meeting board, the EU regional Trust Fund adopts programmes worth €40 million in response to the Syrian crisis. The three response programmes will provide aid to 400,000 Syrian refugees and host communities in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq, focusing on education, livelihoods and food security targeting especially children and young people. With €17.5 million, the Trust Fund will provide more than 200,000 Syrian refugee children in Turkey with additional Arabic teaching, life skills education, school supplies and psychosocial support. A €12-million regional higher and further education facility for young Syrians will address the forced dropout of almost half of Syrian students from university since the beginning of the crisis, reaching 20,000 young Syrians. Finally, a €10-million programme will sustain livelihoods by increasing economic opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey, reaching up to 190,000 people.

June

IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook

1 – Brussels: The IEMed presents the new edition of the IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2014 in the European Parliament. The presentation is presided by the EU ENP Commissioner Hahn. The focal points of the themes dealt with throughout in this 2014 edition are the Arab transitions, the state of play and outlook of the Syrian crisis, the challenges facing Arab youth and the future of the Euro-Mediterranean relations.

www.iemed.org/actualitat-en/noticies/

Justice

9 – *Monastir*: A regional seminar under the initiative of the Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) takes place in the framework of the EU-funded South Programme II. Over 100 participants, including magistrates and pilot court staff members from Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan, as well as representatives of the Ministries of Justice of these three countries, attend this event centred around workshops on the theme "improving everyday justice," providing the opportunity to present the different systems and solutions adopted by various countries. The goal is twofold: to encourage exchanges of views among magistrates, lawyers and journalists with regard to the reform of justice in Tunisia and in the South Mediterranean region; to present the CEPEJ's achievements and projects, as well as its tools and methodologies to officials of courts located in central and southern Tunisia, with a view to establishing new contacts and furthering co-operation in these regions.

Water

8-10 – *Amman*: The EU-funded Sustainable Water Integrated Management – Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM) holds a regional training to support water and financing officials from the Mediterranean partner countries, as well as stakeholders from the private sector and NGOs, on evaluating and structuring public-private partnership (PPP) agreements for water projects. The training includes: evaluating PPP options; main actions by the Authority related to requirements, feasibility, bankability, local conditions and main clauses to be included in agreements; process for assessment of PPPs as well as project management including reporting procedures, monitoring and indicators.

Energy

10 – *Cagliari*: The "Sharing policies to foster renewable energies and solar technologies in the Mediterranean area" seminar congregates representatives of local authorities from Egypt, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Spain and Tunisia. It is organized by the EU-funded

project "Fostering Solar Technology in the Mediterranean Area" (FOSTER in MED) and the main goal is to highlight common solutions developed under the project in order to overcome the barriers hindering the diffusion of solar photovoltaic technologies in the Mediterranean.

Audiovisual

10 – *Amman*: Representatives of the ministries of culture of Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia and Morocco take part in a workshop organized by the EU-funded regional programme Med Culture at the Royal Film Commission in Amman. The workshop focuses on improving the governance of the culture sector allowing the participants to share best practices and work on the definition of methodologies to develop strategic action plans for culture; promotion of inter-ministerial coordination; and broadening access to cultural activities in peripheral areas.

Migration

15 – *Brussels*: The EC launches an online public consultation on the EU Blue Card and its labour migration policies, as part of the first package of measures in follow-up to the European Agenda on Migration. The aim is to collect opinions on a range of issues related to economic migration with a view to contribute to the elaboration of a new European policy on legal migration and a review of the so-called "Blue Card" Directive. The consultation is open to all citizens, organizations and third-country nationals, both inside and outside the EU.

Civil Society

16 – *Gammarth*: Representatives from Civil Society Organizations from the Mediterranean region and from Europe gather in Tunisia at an event held by the EU-funded Civil Society Facility South (CSF South) to discuss the work process ahead and priority areas that need to be strengthened to bring about change and enhance democratic processes during the next three years. The event seeks to identify needs, gaps, and ways forward as well as to enhance understanding, communication, and work planning be-

tween the different partners. CSF South seeks to encourage the development of CSOs' advocacy capacity and their monitoring action towards governments at the local, national and regional levels.

July

Luxembourg Presidency

1 – *Luxembourg*: Luxembourg holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second semester of 2015. The priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency are based on seven pillars: Stimulating investment to boost growth and employment, Deepening the EU social dimension, Managing migration, combining freedom, justice and security, Revitalizing the single market by focusing on its digital dimension, Placing European competitiveness in a global and transparent framework, Promoting sustainable development, Strengthening the European Union's presence on the global stage. To give a resolute and sustained answer to the loss of lives in the Mediterranean, the Luxembourg Presidency will prioritize the actions taken on EU territory, as well as those carried out in partnership with third countries to save lives and implement an effective immigration policy.

www.eu2015lu.eu/en/la-presidence/a-propos-presidence/programme-et-priorites/

Employment

16 – *Luxembourg*: An Informal Meeting brings together EU Ministers for Employment, their counterparts from the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), the Secretariat of the UfM, the EC, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the World Bank Group and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Discussions focus on social affairs within the governance framework of the EU, policies and programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and job creation, and an initiative, proposed by the Luxembourg Presidency, for youth employment through vocational training in the Maghreb countries.

Humanitarian Aid

17 – Brussels: The EU increases its humanitarian response to the Syria crisis with an additional €64 million to bring vital aid in the areas of health, food, water, sanitation and protection to people in need both inside Syria and in the neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugees. This decision follows a previous special measure of €18 million from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) adopted by the European Commission on June to address immediate educational and food security needs of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Intercultural dialogue

22-23 – Barcelona: A high-level meeting on intercultural and interreligious dialogue is held at the headquarters of UfM, in partnership with the EU, the ALF, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, and the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue. Some 80 representatives from institutions for intercultural dialogue, interfaith organizations and religious authorities, as well as prominent public figures, attend the event and commit to establishing a network of institutions and focal points, enhancing coordination for institutions actively involved in intercultural dialogue, and setting out a roadmap for future activities. Actions and programmes are identified for implementation in three different spheres: education, media and youth. The meeting falls within the framework of the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona Process and the ongoing ENP review, and responds to a broad consensus on the growing significance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the region.

Children Rights

6-24 – Strasbourg: As part of the EU-funded South Program II, 9 experts from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia have participate in the 46th annual study session of the International Institute of Human Rights on the theme of “Children and international human rights law.” Alongside this event, a workshop organized by experts on children’s rights of the Council of Europe (CoE) with participants from Mediterranean partner countries present the 14 children rights’ Conventions of the, with a

special focus on the CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

August*Women*

6 – Ramallah and Gaza: As part of the EU-funded Spring Forward for Women programme, UN Women and the General Union of Palestinian Women launch a training programme that will enable Palestinian women activists to issue a “shadow report” that verifies the state report on the status of women in Palestine. There will be a series of training sessions planned to take place from June to September 2015. The first two, involving 35 activists, have introduced the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) articles and recommendations to identify priority issues for the shadow report. Spring Forward for Women is a joint initiative of UN Women and the European Commission. The programme supports the economic empowerment of women in the Southern Mediterranean region and enhances their participation in political and decision-making spheres.

EU- Tunisia

17 – Tunis: Today marks the 20th anniversary of the Association Agreement (AA) between EU and Tunisia, an agreement that has strongly contributed to the strengthening of political, trade and economic relations, as well as social and cultural ties between both countries. Tunisia was the first Mediterranean country to sign an AA with the EU, beginning to implement the agreement from 1996, even before it officially entered into force in 1998. In 2008, Tunisia was the first country in the Southern Mediterranean to join the free trade area for industrial products with the European Union. The EU has supported Tunisia throughout the last two decades, with funding of cooperation programmes to the tune of €1,864,000,000 under the MEDA programme (1995-2006) and the ENPI since 2007, while the EIB has provided credits worth €4,958,191,000. Relations have strengthened even more since the revolution, with an agreement

on a Privileged Partnership in 2014, which envisages negotiations for a full free trade agreement.

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/documents/press_corner/cp_20ans_accord_association_fr.pdf

September*Culture*

8-11 – Tunis: More than 50 participants from seven Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia) take part in three working groups to discuss ways of promoting cultural activities outside capitals, by the EU-funded Med Culture project. These activities conclude with an informal round-table discussion regrouping all participants from the Southern Mediterranean region, representing government institutions cultural practitioners from civil society organizations and young emerging cultural actors. One of the key issues is for peers to discuss and exchange ways to break the isolation of areas outside capitals, look inward at the potential and resources that exist locally, and explore ways to capitalize on these findings.

www.medculture.eu/information/press-releases/promoting-culture-outside-capitals-breaking-isolation-and-looking-forward

Migration

15-16 – Brussels: ETF holds a conference focusing on the issue of skills and migration. The event includes participants from the six Eastern Partnership countries as well as countries from the Southern Mediterranean who have signed or are preparing to sign Mobility Partnership agreements with the EU (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia). In the discussion on migration from countries in the EU’s neighbourhood to EU Member States and beyond, there is a growing need to focus on skills development and their utilization. The conference builds on the EU’s external migration policy, Mobility Partnerships and the European Agenda on Migration, with a focus on how skills development and employment policies can contribute to the better management of circular migration. A global in-

ventory of migrant support measures from the employment and skills perspective (MISMES) and country case studies made by the ETF is presented and discussed at the conference.

www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Migration_and_skills:_Making_migration_work_better_EN

Women

22 - Brussels: A new framework for the EU's activities on gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations for the period 2016-2020 is adopted. Its goal is to support partner countries, especially in developing, enlargement and neighbouring countries, to achieve tangible results towards gender equality. The new framework is divided into four pillars: fighting violence of any kind against women and girls; economic and social empowerment; strengthening voice and participation; shifting institutional culture. It will build on the achievements of the Gender Action Plan in Development 2010-2015; about €100 million has already been allocated to concrete measures specifically targeting improving women's and girls' rights, while gender will also be mainstreamed throughout other sectors of development cooperation.

October

Women

15 - Milan: The UfM takes part in the Conference on Women's Economic Empowerment in the MENA region, organized at Expo Milano 2015 by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in the framework of the regional project "Promoting women empowerment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA region." The aim of the event is to establish a policy dialogue, identify recommendations for policy makers and share good practices and business women's experiences at international level, in order to support the promotion of a large network of women engaged in contributing to sustainable and inclusive development in their countries. It brings together representatives of governments, Women's Business Associations, women entrepreneurs, international finance

institutions, NGOs and representatives of the private sector. The UfM runs 10 projects focused on women's empowerment.

Energy

12 - Rabat: EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy and Moroccan Energy Minister launch a new UfM platform for cooperation on regional electricity markets. The platform intends to integrate electricity networks and markets of the UfM countries. Initially, the platform will focus on integrating countries on the southern and eastern coasts of the Mediterranean. In the medium to long term, the platform then envisages integrating these markets with EU countries. The overall goal is to achieve a regional electricity market in which electricity can be exchanged across borders without physical, technical or regulatory barriers.

ARLEM

26 - Brussels: The ARLEM holds the first meeting of its Commission for sustainable territorial development to discuss two thematic reports, on employment and territorial development and on sustainable urban agenda in the Mediterranean region. As a follow up to the ARLEM report on "The role of local and regional authorities in managing migration in the Mediterranean," a discussion on the latest developments linked to migration in the Mediterranean region is also on the agenda.

November

Sustainable Tourism

2-5 - London: The EU-funded Sustainability and Tourism in the Mediterranean (S&T Med) project, implemented under the cross-border Mediterranean (CBC-Med) programme, takes part in the World Travel Market (WTM), the largest annual event of the tourism industry. The aim is to share experiences with destinations sharing sustainability values, promoting sustainable integrated itineraries in Jordan, Italy and Tunisia, and fostering business opportunities related to sustainable tourism products. S&T MED is invited to participate to the WTM Responsible Tourism Day events (4 No-

vember) and has been granted the World Travel Market "Responsible Tourism logo," acknowledging its efforts to support sustainable tourism.

Employment

7 - Marseille: The 11th Mediterranean Economic Rendezvous, a conference organized by the Mediterranean Institute/Femise and the Circle of Economists, closes the Mediterranean Economic Week by highlighting the need to "strengthen the partnership between the European Union and the Maghreb through training and entrepreneurship." An initiative to encourage youth employment through vocational training in the Maghreb countries, presented by the Luxembourg Presidency of the EU, receives the full support of economists, experts, actors on the ground and political leaders present at the conference.

Blue Economy

11 - Brussels: The UfM Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy gathers Ministers in charge of maritime affairs from 43 countries comprising the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the UfM Co-Presidency and the UfM Secretariat. The conference aims at strengthening the potential of the blue economy in the Mediterranean region, as well as improving maritime governance and achieving a conducive environment to promote jobs, innovation and knowledge-based business opportunities through the development of key maritime sectors. This regional effort is key in the wider context of the newly approved UN Sustainable Development agenda, which aims to promote globally shared economic prosperity, social development and environmental protection. This Ministerial Meeting will look at setting in place a UfM mechanism for regional dialogue, stakeholders involvement and launch of concrete actions in areas of common interest. This collaborative approach is crucial, as the challenges affecting the Mediterranean Sea (such as ever-increasing demands for natural resources and pressures on the marine environment, as well as continued need for growth and jobs in marine sectors) call for shared and integrated responses.

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-ministerial-on-blue-economy/>

ENP

18 – *Brussels*: The EC unveils the main lines of the review of the ENP, which has been under review since the launch of a public consultation in March. Differentiation and greater mutual ownership will be further key elements of the new ENP, recognizing that not all partners aspire to comply with EU rules and standards, and reflecting the wishes of each country concerning the nature and scope of its partnership with the EU. In this renewed approach to its eastern and southern neighbours, with stabilization as the main political priority, the EU will uphold and continue to promote universal values, seeking more effective ways to promote democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and rule of law. The new ENP will mobilize efforts to support inclusive economic and social development and create job opportunities for youth, as key measures of economic stabilization. There will be a new focus on stepping up work with partners countries in the security sector, mainly in the areas of conflict-prevention, counter-terrorism and anti-radicalization policies. Safe and legal mobility on the one hand and tackling irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling on the other are further priorities along with working with partners on energy security and climate action. The essential goal of this new ENP is to involve Member States more intensively in the definition and implementation of policy in neighbourhood countries. That is why, in the coming months, the proposals unveiled will be discussed with Member States and partner countries, with a view to jointly determine new priorities and the shape of future relations.

EuroMeSCo

18 – *Beirut*: A workshop is organized in the framework of an EU-funded activity of EuroMeSCo, aiming to present and discuss the initial research findings of a Joint Policy Study on “Understanding Youth-Related Activism in the South and East Mediterranean Countries.” The event gathers the researchers from the network, the practitioners and the representative of the EU Delegation in

Lebanon and examines the actions, goals and strategies of youth movements in the socio-political field, with case studies of Egypt, Tunisia and Palestine. The final research results will be published in a joint volume and presented at the Local Presentation and at the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference 2016.

ALF's Euro-Mediterranean Award

19 – *Brussels*: Capoeira 4 Refugees, a UK based charity organization running projects in Syria, Palestine and Jordan is the winner of the 2015 Anna Lindh Foundation's Euro-Mediterranean Award. This year's Award recognizes outstanding initiatives that aim at fostering cultural exchange against hate-speech and xenophobia, that contribute to building alternative narratives based on the positive potential of diversity as well as projects that build on shared values for inclusive citizenship.

UfM

26 – *Barcelona*: Three years after the EU and Jordan assumed the Co-Presidency of the UfM and 20 years after the Barcelona Declaration launched the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, the UfM holds a major conference, “Towards a common Development Agenda for the Mediterranean.” In the context of the increasing magnitude of the common challenges in the Mediterranean region and the recent presentation of the reviewed ENP, the conference offers a timely opportunity to discuss the way forward for a strengthened regional cooperation agenda in the Mediterranean. High-level officials, eminent personalities, representatives from regional organizations and international financial institutions, as well as key regional stakeholders from civil society, the private sector and local authorities, review UfM activities and achievements and discuss the perspectives for working together in the years to come towards a better future for the Mediterranean region. The event is structured around three thematic panels: Inclusive growth and youth employability; Sustainable development; and Women's empowerment.

<http://ufmsecretariat.org/towards-a-common-development-agenda-for-the-mediterranean/>

UfM

27 – *Barcelona*: Senior Officials of the 43 Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean unanimously endorse four new projects, bringing the total amount of labelled projects to 37. These projects illustrate concrete efforts in the three priority areas of sustainable development, inclusive growth and youth employability and women's empowerment. They are: UfM Energy University which will provide free and specialized education programmes for energy professionals through an online platform; Economic Development through Inclusive and Local Empowerment (EDILE) that formulates a regional approach to identify and support investments and best practices with high local impact; EUROMED Invest Promotion & Observatory which will maximize investments and support private sector development in the region; and Women Economic Empowerment in the MENA Region, promoted by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), that will create favourable conditions for women-led enterprises through inclusive dialogue and policy reform.

Civil Society

30 November and 1 December, *Brussels*: Representatives of the Euro-Mediterranean region's economic and social councils and economic and social players adopt a Final Declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions. The Declaration underlines the need for a greater role for civil society in the ENP, not only in further involving civil society organizations in ENP related commitments and activities, but also by calling on the ENP to ensure that it empowers civil society in all countries and ensures compliance with fundamental human, civil, political, economic and social rights. It asks the revised ENP to clearly aim at an effective dialogue between representative civil society organizations, public authorities and regions, rather than mere on-line consultations, which are sometimes irrelevant. The meeting marks the 20th anniversary of the Euromed Summits, which were launched on the basis of the mandate conferred by the Barcelona Declaration in 1995.

December

Humanitarian Aid

1 – *Brussels*: The EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis adopts a package of programmes totaling €350 million, the single biggest EU measure in response to the Syrian refugee crisis to date. The programmes will help up to 1.5 million Syrian refugees and overstretched host communities in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq through the provision of basic education and child protection, better access to health-care, improved water and waste-water infrastructure, as well as support to resilience, economic opportunities and social inclusion. The aid package consists of four different programmes: education (€140 million), resilience and local development (€130 million), health (€55 million) and water and sanitation (€25 million).

Energy

7-8 – *Cairo*: The EuroMed Green Energy Roadshow organized by the EU-funded project EUROMED Invest welcomes entrepreneurs, micro, small and medium sized enterprises, Business Innovation Clusters, investors or research centres in the Green Energy and Energy Efficiency Sector. The two-day event includes a high-level panel on opportunities in the renewable energy sector that covers everything from large scale public tenders to small island solutions for the tourism and industry sector; a multilingual workshop on doing business between the Euro-Med region and Egypt; a networking event with highly targeted participants from the renewable energy sector including representatives of companies, BSOs, business clusters and policy makers; some 250 individual B2B meetings.

Climate

8 – *Paris*: The UfM Secretariat organizes with the support of the European Union, an event during the COP21 aiming to discuss the role of the UfM as a facilitator to put into operation the provisions of the Paris declaration. It will also

be an opportunity for France, current COP Presidency, and Morocco, forthcoming COP presidency, to exchange views on the role of the Euro-Mediterranean region in the global process. Representatives of the EC, France, and Morocco are joined by the Team Leader of the EU-funded ClimaSouth project to discuss the need to reinforce regional cooperation on climate change. The interventions focus on the established cooperation within the Union for the Mediterranean Climate Change Expert Group, namely the agreed work plan and its relevance to the international climate change negotiations.

ENP Review

14 – *Brussels*: EU Foreign Ministers welcome the European Commission's review of the ENP, announced on 18 November, saying "a democratic, stable and prosperous neighbourhood is a strategic priority and a fundamental interest for the EU." They highlight the importance of stabilization of the neighbourhood in political, economic and security terms. Ministers also say the ENP is key for both the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and other areas of the EU's external action.

Cross Border Cooperation

15-17 – *Athens*: Representatives of over 20 cooperation projects gather in Athens on the occasion of the last capitalization event organized under the ENPI Cross Border Cooperation Med (CBC Med) Programme. The event aims at analyzing and discussing key topics addressed and main results achieved by projects in: economic growth, innovation processes, and human capital development. Two days later, the EC adopts the 2014-2020 Mediterranean Sea Basin Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Programme, with €209 million of EU funding under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The programme aims to foster fair and sustainable economic, social and territorial development in regions along the shores of the Mediterranean. It also provides a framework for implementing

cooperation projects in four main thematic objectives: business and SMEs development; support to education, research, technological development and innovation; promotion of social inclusion and the fight against poverty; and environmental protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation

EU- Israel

16-17 – *Brussels*: The 9th EU-Israel Seminar on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Antisemitism brings together about 30 representatives from the Israeli Foreign Ministry, the EC, the EU External Action Service and the Fundamental Rights Agency, as well as technology experts and NGOs. The EU and Israel agree to continue to work closely together in combatting antisemitism, in particular through tackling hate speech online.

Education

16-19 – *Tarragona*: Representatives from 108 associations from 12 European and Arab countries gather to discuss and put into practice innovative ways of understanding and promoting non-formal education in Euro-Mediterranean countries with the aim of acquiring knowledge, skills and new approaches related to intercultural dialogue. The goal is to give participating associations the opportunity to share experiences in the field of non-formal education as well as to reflect on new initiatives in this field applicable to the different contexts of Euro-Mediterranean countries. The event organized by IEMed takes place within the framework of the Anna Lindh Foundation's cross-network action 2015 "Non-formal and Intercultural Education in the Mediterranean." It includes an important programme of concerts, human tower shows and playful activities in several squares of the city, as well as workshops in the schools of Tarragona. www.iemed.org/dossiers-en/dossiers-iemed/cultures-mediterranies/lindhaction2015/accio-comu-entrexarxes-anna-lindh-2015?set_language=en