

Chronologies

Euromed Chronology

January 2021

Development & Aid, EU-Jordan

5-Luxembourg: The European Investment Bank (EIB) announces it will be providing financial support to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as the two parties sign a \$59-million loan agreement to support Jordan's healthcare sector during the Covid-19 pandemic. The funding is intended to assist the Ministry of Health in procuring Covid-19 vaccines, as well as implementing its vaccination campaign and purchasing medical supplies, including personal protective equipment and ambulances. www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-002-team-europe-eib-supports-healthcare-sector-in-jordan

Environment & Sustainability

11-Paris: The fourth edition of the One Planet Summit is held by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), bringing together heads of state to "speed up international action for nature." This year's summit focuses on the conservation of biodiversity in the face of climate change. Participating heads of state proposed a "Coalition for an Exceptional Mediterranean in 2030," an agreement revolving around four pillars: preserving marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean, promoting sustainable fishing in order to end overfishing by 2030, fighting marine pollution in order to end plastic pollution in the Mediterranean by 2030, and promoting maritime transport that protects the marine environment and combats climate change. <https://ufmsecretariat.org/one-planet-summit-biodiversity/>

Development & Aid

13-Cairo: Egypt signs its tourism recovery assistance package, financed by the

EBRD, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In response to the strain Covid-19 has placed on global tourism, the EBRD and UNWTO are supporting countries which are particularly dependent on tourism for job creation and economic growth. The financial support packages are implemented through country-level assistance, ensuring every package is tailored to the needs of each individual country. The EBRD and UNWTO are providing similar support to a number of other countries in the Mediterranean including Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon. www.ebrd.com/news/2021/egypt-launches-ebrdunwto-tourism-recovery-assistance-package.html

Environment & Sustainability

14-Barcelona: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and the UfM sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda through food systems transformation in the Mediterranean region. This MoU aims to address the increasing need, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, to change the way we produce, process, distribute, consume and dispose of food across the world, and it includes a detailed work plan to be carried out from 2021 to 2024, spanning areas including sustainable land management, value chain development, waste reduction or sustainable fisheries. <https://ufmsecretariat.org/food-systems-transformation-mediterranean/>

Justice & Human Rights, EU-Syria

18-Brussels: Syrian Foreign Affairs Minister Faisal Mekdad is added to the Eu-

ropean Union's (EU) sanctions list. Since the outbreak of the war in Syria in 2011, the EU has introduced a series of sanctions consisting of travel bans and asset freezes targeted at individuals and entities linked to the Syrian regime. These measures are adopted by the EU "in response to the violent repression of the Syrian civilian population" and are regularly updated and reviewed.

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/01/15/syrian-foreign-affairs-minister-added-to-eu-sanctions-list/

Environment & Sustainability

21-London: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the UK's Foreign Office announce the construction of the Ain Ghazal wastewater pipeline in Jordan, aimed at relieving pressure on water systems in both Amman and Zarqa. In addition to generating water available for irrigation, the pipeline will reduce untreated sewage overflows and reduce the risks of environmental contamination of surface water in the area. This investment is part of the EBRD's wider efforts to upgrade Jordan's wastewater system, and increase its resilience, in response to both the refugee crisis in Jordan, and the wider water scarcity issues it faces.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-and-uk-support-jordans-wastewater-treatment.html

Youth & Education

25/29-Online: The third Young Med Voices Regional Leadership Seminar takes place, bringing together over 25 emerging leaders from across the Euro-Mediterranean region, selected from an expanding resource pool of many hundreds of young debaters engaged

in the Young Mediterranean Voices programme. This seminar provides a space for cross-cultural interaction and dialogue among young leaders and focuses on tackling key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Young Mediterranean Voices is the flagship debate and dialogue programme connecting civil society, education and policymakers across the southern Mediterranean and Europe. <https://youngmedvoices.org/>

Trade & Diplomacy

26-Brussels: The EU's first regional media officer for the Middle East and North Africa takes office. It marks the first time the EU appoints an Arabic-speaking media officer and is part of a wider commitment from the EU to engage more with the Arab world, as highlighted by the European Union High Representative (EUHR) for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell. The new regional media officer, Luis Miguel Bueno, an Arabic-speaking European diplomat, will be based in Beirut and will communicate EU priorities, policies and projects relevant to the MENA region to local and pan-Arab media networks. https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/jordan/92057/eu%E2%80%99s-first-regional-media-officer-middle-east-and-north-africa_en

Development & Aid

26-Brussels: The EU announces it is boosting its humanitarian aid budget for 2021. The 60% increase, up to €1.4bn from €900 million last year, is aimed at meeting needs created by the consequences of the pandemic and climate change. This budget increase includes the Mediterranean region; €385 million of the EU humanitarian funding will be allocated to the Middle East and Turkey, and €505 million will be allocated to Africa. <https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-boosts-humanitarian-aid-budget-2021-including-middle-east-region>

Justice & Human Rights

26-Online: The EU and Morocco launch the Support to the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture in Morocco project. The project is part of the EU and Council of Europe's wider joint programme titled "Support to the national

mechanism for the prevention of torture in Morocco and to the development of Parliament's role in Morocco." The objective of the project is to support national mechanisms for the prevention of torture in Morocco through capacity building of the members of the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH). <https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/joint-eu-project-support-prevention-torture-morocco-be-launched>

Business & Entrepreneurship

27-Luxembourg: The EIB announces the signing of a €10-million loan agreement with JAÏDA, a lender to microfinance institutions that works in areas of financial inclusion and social development in Morocco. The funding from the EIB will be used to finance microloans for income-generating activities such as maintaining jobs at small enterprises or assisting self-employed workers. By supporting JAÏDA, the EIB aims to promote microfinance in Morocco and thus support the Moroccan economy through the pandemic, by promoting sustainable and responsible financial services, particularly for poor and rural populations, as well as for women and young people. www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-033-maroc-la-bei-et-jaida-signent-un-contrat-de-financement-pour-soutenir-l-activite-de-microcredit-a-travers-les-institutions-de-microfinance-imf

February 2021

Justice & Human Rights

1-Ramallah: The head of the EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS), Nataliya Apostolova, meets the Director General of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), Dr Ammar Dwaik, to discuss issues including human rights, law enforcement and the rule of law in the West Bank. Through regular cooperation meetings such as this one, EUPOL COPPS aims to contribute to the establishment of sustainable and effective policing arrangements in Palestine, and to advise Palestinian counterparts on criminal justice and the rule of law. <https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/palestine-head-eu>

police-mission-meets-director-general-independent

Environment & Sustainability

2-Brussels: Ministers from the 42 UfM countries sign a new Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy, during a virtual ministerial conference. With the intention of promoting the recovery of the region's economies from the pandemic, whilst addressing the environmental and climate challenges the Mediterranean faces, the ministers agree to promote transformative policies such as maritime spatial planning, shifting towards low-emissions technologies and the circular blue economy. This declaration is part of the UfM's broader aim of advancing regional and sub-regional cooperation to take on environmental degradation and climate change in the Mediterranean. <https://ufmsecretariat.org/news-ministerial-meeting-blue-economy-2021/>

Justice & Human Rights

2/3-The Hague: The Euromed Justice (EMJ) Programme is launched by the EU Agency for Criminal Justice (Eurojust), at an opening conference attended by representatives from Southern Partner Countries and EU Member States. The EMJ aims to strengthen strategic and operational cooperation in judicial criminal matters in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and is funded by the EU Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR). Some areas of possible cooperation between EU Member States and Southern Partner Countries discussed during the launch are the enhancement of the cross-border exchange of judicial information and digital transmission of evidence. <https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-funded-euromed-justice-programme-officially-launched>

Development & Aid

3-London: The EBRD announces it will provide a €300-million financing package for Tunisia's utility company, Société Tunisienne de l'Électricité et du Gaz (STEG). The package is aimed at allowing STEG to implement a climate reform roadmap which would make the company's operations more sustainable. Funding packages such as this one are

a part of the EBRD and the EU's efforts at supporting the decarbonization of Tunisia's energy sector, and are accompanied by the introduction of stringent climate governance measures.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-providing-300-million-loan-to-tunisia-utility-company-steg.html

Development & Aid

8-Luxembourg: The EIB announces a financing package of €2.7 million for Microfund for Women in Jordan. The financing is a part of the EU's response to the pandemic and it falls under the Southern Neighbourhood Microfinance Facility (SNMF) – a lending facility investing in microfinance markets in Southern Neighbourhood countries. The package is expected to support around 9000 micro-entrepreneurs in Jordan, over 90% of which will be women. www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-049-team-europe-eib-and-mfw-support-jordanian-micro-entrepreneurs-with-eur-2-7-million

Development & Aid

8-Jerusalem: The EU and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) announce the signature of a partnership agreement worth €1 million in support of the Office of the Quartet to promote fiscal sustainability in Palestine. The Office of the Quartet works towards creating pro-investment policies in order to increase Palestinian economic and institutional development in Gaza and the West Bank. This agreement aims to contribute to the stability of the Palestinian Authority's budget.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-contributes-palestinian-authority-fiscal-sustainability>

EU-Southern Neighbourhood

9-Brussels: The European Commission (EC) adopts a communication proposing a New Agenda for the Mediterranean to “relaunch and strengthen the strategic partnership between the EU and its Southern Neighbourhood partners,” 25 years after the Barcelona partnership, which launched the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The communication states that under the EU's new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), up to

€7 billion would be allocated to implementing the agenda between 2021-27. The agenda focuses on five policy areas: human development, good governance and the rule of law; resilience, prosperity and digital transition; peace and security; migration and mobility; and the green transition.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_21_426

Environment & Sustainability

10-London: The EBRD and EU announce a Green Financing Facility in Jordan, aimed at promoting green investment in the private sector, in line with Jordan's National Green Growth Plan. The facility is the first internationally supported comprehensive green economy programme in the country. The programme aims to support businesses and homeowners via local banks and microfinance institutions with investments in green technologies aimed at reducing emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and preserving natural resources. Such cooperation and development initiatives in the EU are in line with the sustainable economic development objectives of the EU Green Deal. <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-and-eu-to-promote-green-investments-in-jordan-.html>

Development & Aid

10-Algiers: The Algerian Ministry of Health, the EU Delegation to Algeria and the UNDP announce the implementation of a €43-million financing agreement aimed at supporting Algeria's efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19. Titled “European Solidarity Response to Covid-19 in Algeria,” the agreement will assist health facilities by providing medical equipment, early detection equipment and personal protective equipment.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-implements-project-european-solidarity-response-covid-19-algeria>

Development & Aid

19-Brussels: The EU announces it is doubling its contribution to COVAX, the global initiative leading efforts to ensure fair access to Covid-19 vaccines in low and middle-income countries. The EU

is contributing another €500 million, bringing the total contribution by the EU and individual Member States to €2.2 billion. Southern and eastern Mediterranean countries such as Tunisia, Algeria and Lebanon are among the beneficiaries of the COVAX Facility.

https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/eu-doubles-contribution-covax-eu1-billion-ensure-safe-and-effective-vaccines-low-and-middle_en

Health

22-Brussels and Online: The annual plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) takes place, addressing topics such as the provision of Covid vaccines and regional inequality among Mediterranean countries. In particular, the plenary session discusses the New Agenda for the Mediterranean; Apostolos Tzitzikostas, co-president of ARLEM, President of the European Committee of the Regions, and governor of the region of Central Macedonia, welcomed the New Agenda's ambitions, but stressed the need for them to be “transformed into benefits that reach beyond the capitals and reduce the existing huge territorial disparities.”

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/benefits-of-eus-new-mediterranean-agenda/>

Brussels

25-Gender & Inclusivity: The EU announces the launch of *Fa'ela*, a new initiative aimed at mobilizing Libyan women leaders and civil society organizations to increase the participation of women in the Libyan peace process, as well as social, political and economic life in Libya more generally. Only 17 out of 75 members of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum are women, and women account for less than 6% of the Libyan government. In addition, only about a third of Libyan women are active in the labour market. With €1.1 million of funding, *Fa'ela* will establish a network of CSOs, private sector representatives and decision-makers to advocate for the inclusion of women in leadership positions.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/libya/eu-launches-fa%20%80%99ela-new-initiative-boost-women-participation_en

March 2021

Health

2-Brussels & Online: The EU-funded Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality programme launches its first advocacy campaign focused on access to information on health across the Mediterranean. Through social and traditional media platforms, the campaign aims to facilitate the provision of accurate and transparent information relating to Covid-19 statistics and prevention measures, to support citizens throughout the pandemic. Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality is an EU-funded Technical Assistance Programme seeking to strengthen the role of civil society on a regional scale in building sustainable development, encouraging regional cohesion and resilience, and influencing policymaking in the Southern Neighbourhood.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/access-public-health-information-eu-funded-med-dialogue-launches-cross>

Development & Aid, EU-Morocco

3-Luxembourg: The EIB and the Société Nationale des Autoroutes du Maroc (ADM) announce the signature of a €85-million financing contract aimed at accelerating the digitalization of motorway infrastructure in Morocco. The funding aims to help improve traffic flows and increase road user safety. It is a part of the EIB's wider aim of supporting the transport sector in the Southern Neighbourhood, as it recovers from the ramifications of the pandemic. The project is expected to create over 6,000 jobs during its implementation phase.

www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-079-maroc-signature-d-un-contrat-de-financement-de-85-millions-d-euros-pour-accelerer-la-digitalisation-des-infrastructures-de-transport-autoroutiers

Development & Aid

5-Brussels: The EU announces it is adopting a €130-million assistance package to support Syrian refugees and local communities in Jordan and Lebanon, the countries hosting the highest number of refugees per capita in the

world. A decade after the start of the Syrian crisis, the funding package aims to provide support to refugees in areas such as social protection, healthcare services and waste management. It will also contribute to efforts in Lebanon to alleviate the consequences of the Beirut port blast. The package will be implemented through the Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis, which has channelled a significant share of the EU's support for Syria and its neighbouring countries since 2014.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_21_986

Gender & Inclusivity

5-Barcelona, Online: The UfM hosts an online event in celebration of International Women's Day, attended by over 700 participants, addressing the challenges faced by women and girls in the Mediterranean to access leadership positions. The event covers this issue in various sectors including agri-food, the digital economy and healthcare, and discusses the increased difficulties women are facing as a consequence of the pandemic, such as higher rates of domestic violence or increased unpaid care duties. This event is held in the context of the UfM's ongoing Regional Dialogue on Women Empowerment, which aims to produce an updated regional progress report by the end of the year and prepare policy recommendations for the UfM's 2022 Ministerial Declaration.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/international-womens-day-2021-news/>

Gender & Inclusivity

10-Rabat: In the aftermath of International Women's Day, the Council of Europe and Presidency of the Moroccan Public Prosecutor's Office hold a series of activities aimed at strengthening the role of Moroccan prosecutors in the fight against violence against women. The activities include theoretical and practical capacity building and working sessions, which will be based on existing standards such as the Istanbul Convention or the Council of Europe Convention. This initiative is being carried out in the context of the EU and the Council of Europe's South Programme IV, titled "Regional support to

reinforce human rights, rule of law and democracy in the South of the Mediterranean."

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/morocco-strengthening-role-magistrates-fight-against-violence-against>

Development & Aid

17-London: The EBRD announces a new financing package of \$100 million to Banque du Caire for financing and lending to MSMEs in Egypt. The package is aimed at supporting the local economy in Egypt by allowing Banque du Caire to increase its financing of MSMEs, which are considered to be a vital segment of Egypt's economy and a top priority in the bank's strategy. This kind of support for small and local business in Egypt is part of the EBRD's long-standing relationship with Egypt, a country in which it has been operating since 2012.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-boosts-egyptian-private-enterprises-and-trade.html

Business & Entrepreneurship

17-London: The EBRD and the Bank of Palestine announce a partnership to support women entrepreneurs in the West Bank and Gaza. As the pandemic continues to disproportionately affect vulnerable people and women, the programme aims to facilitate access to finance for women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as provide training programmes and business advice to support women in growing their companies.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-partners-with-bank-of-palestine-to-support-women-in-business-in-the-west-bank-and-gaza.html

Development & Aid

19-Brussels: The EC releases a statement welcoming the endorsement by the European Parliament and Council of the political agreement on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – the instrument aimed at supporting the EU's external action plan between 2021-2027 with an overall budget of €79.5 billion. The financing instrument will be essential towards implementing

the EU's renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1267

Justice & Human Rights, EU-Libya

22-Brussels: The Council of Europe announces it is imposing further sanctions over serious human rights violations in Libya. As part of a broader package of listings under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, the EU is imposing restrictive measures on 11 individuals and four entities, held responsible in cases of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances in Libya. www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/03/22/eu-imp-poses-further-sanctions-over-serious-violations-of-human-rights-around-the-world/

Health, EU-Tunisia

26-Tunis: The EU delivers health equipment worth €13 million to Tunisia, through its "Essaha Aziza" programme aimed at supporting the country's healthcare sector, in cooperation with the Tunisian Ministry of Health. The delivery is aimed at benefitting hospitals and clinics across the entire country, and includes a fleet of 193 ambulances to support first responder capacity.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/1%E2%80%99union-europ%C3%A9enne-livre-%C3%A0-la-tunisie-des-%C3%A9quipements-de-sant%C3%A9-pour-un-montant_en

Security & Defence, EU-Libya

29-Brussels: The European Council announces the extension of the mandate of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military operation in the Mediterranean – 'EUNAVFOR MED IRI-NI' – until March 2023. The operation's task is to implement the United Nations (UN) arms embargo on Libya through the use of aerial, satellite and maritime assets, mostly for the inspection and monitoring of Libyan vessels off the Libyan coast suspected to be carrying arms. EUNAVFOR MED IRI-NI was launched in March 2020 as an EU contribution to the international community's support towards the return to peace and stability in Libya. [www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/03/26/council-](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/03/26/council-extends-the-mandate-of-operation-irini-until-2023/)

[extends-the-mandate-of-operation-irini-until-2023/](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/03/26/council-extends-the-mandate-of-operation-irini-until-2023/)

Development & Aid

30-Brussels: The international community announces a pledge of €5.3 billion for Syria and neighbouring countries hosting refugees, including €3.7 billion from the EU and Member States. The EU has been a major donor in humanitarian, stabilization and resilience assistance to Syria since the start of the crisis in 2011. The announcement comes during the 5th Brussels Conference on "Supporting the future of Syria and the Region." These conferences, which have taken place since 2017, bring together the international community, as well as Syrian, regional and international civil society organizations, in support of the UN's efforts towards achieving a political solution to the Syrian conflict.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1464

April 2021

Justice & Human Rights, EU-Morocco

8-Rabat: The EU launches a new project aimed at supporting freedom of expression, association, and assembly in Morocco. The project, titled "Houqouq wa Mousawat" aims to promote the implementation of a legal framework in Morocco conducive to freedom of expression, association and assembly. It will provide support to civil society organizations through the consolidation of a fundamental freedoms observatory, as well as by organizing capacity building sessions on monitoring, advocacy and international standards for freedom of expression, association and access to information.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-funds-new-project-support-freedom-expression-association-and-assembly>

Water

10-Hebron: Construction begins on the Hebron Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, a plant which will be built with €36 million of funding from the EU, France and the World Bank. The plant will serve around 400,000 people living in Hebron City, Palestine, and will allow

for the reuse of treated water for agricultural purposes. Currently, sewage from the Hebron Governorate runs untreated through populated areas such as Wadi As-Samen, which significantly affects the water quality available for residents. Protecting water and the environment is therefore a key factor towards a more sustainable future for Palestinians. This plant is part of the EU's wider objective to protect the water and environment in Palestine. The EU has projects totalling €135 million in the water and sanitation sector, including the development of wastewater treatment plants in other areas prone to scarcity such as Tubas and Nablus.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/1%E2%82%AC36-million-eu-france_en

Trade & Diplomacy, EU-Turkey

12-Ankara: EC President Ursula von der Leyen releases a statement at the joint press conference following the EU meetings with the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, outlining the meeting and the EU's aim to give "new momentum" to its relationship with Turkey. Von der Leyen discusses the areas of priority addressed in the meeting, which include strengthening economic ties, establishing high-level dialogues on issues such as climate change, as well as strengthening cooperation on mobility, refugees and migration.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/turkey/statement-president-von-der-leyen-joint-press-conference-president-michel_en

Research, EU-Morocco

13-Rabat: Morocco announces it is entering the association process to join the EU's Horizon Europe research programme. The status of "Associated Country" will improve the visibility and attractiveness of Moroccan research structures, as well as encourage and facilitate their links with EU Member States, companies, NGOs and social partners. Moroccan researchers will also be able to access calls for projects from the Horizon Europe programme. Morocco's participation in Horizon Europe is part of the country's efforts to strengthen cooperation with the EU, as

is set out in the objectives of the “Joint Declaration of the EU and Morocco” of 2019.

www.eeas.europa.eu/node/96507_en

Justice & Human Rights, EU-Syria

13-Brussels: EUHR for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell provides a statement condemning the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The statement comes in response to the release of the second report of the Investigation and Identification Team to the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and to the UN Secretary General, which confirms the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Air Force in 2018. Borrell emphasized the EU’s support for the report’s findings, stressing that Syria had failed to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/use-chemical-weapons-syria-statement-high-representative-josep-borrell>

Environment and Sustainability

15-Barcelona, Online: The UfM holds an online training programme for young people across the Mediterranean on skills gaps and employability in the Blue Economy sector. 80 students and young professionals attend the two-day event, which includes sessions tackling topics related to the blue economy in the Mediterranean, like entrepreneurship, smart specialization strategies, technological innovation and partnership building. The blue economy sector has changed significantly over the last decade, and this training programme is part of the UfM’s efforts towards promoting initiatives that foster careers in the sector while addressing barriers to employability such as skills mismatches.

https://ufmsecretariat.org/training_blue_economy/

Health

20-Addis Ababa: The EU launches a €100-million humanitarian initiative to support Covid-19 vaccination campaigns in Africa. This initiative is part of the European Commission’s efforts to ensure equitable and safe access to vaccines for all. While one part of the

funding will be allocated to generally supporting the rollout of the vaccination campaign, another part will be specifically aimed at vaccine rollout in humanitarian settings, including conflict zones. Southern Mediterranean countries such as Algeria, Libya and Egypt are among the beneficiary countries.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1816

EU-Southern Neighbourhood

20-Brussels: The European Council approves the conclusions of the New Agenda for the Mediterranean. These conclusions affirm the EU’s ambition to renew and strengthen its strategic partnership with its Southern Neighbourhood. The approval of the Council marks a vital step towards the full implementation of the New Agenda for the Mediterranean.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/new-agenda-mediterranean-european-council-approves-conclusions-renewed>

Heritage & Culture

21-Beirut: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launches a 3D urban documentation of historic areas of Beirut most affected by the port explosion of August 2020. The explosion had a devastating impact on historic areas of the city such as Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhail and Karantina, and UNESCO’s documentation project has partnered with the Directorate General of Antiquities of Lebanon, as well as Iconem, an organization which specializes in the 3D digitalization of endangered cultural heritage sites. The initiative is funded by the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund and will provide vital architectural data towards achieving the rehabilitation of these urban cultural spaces and historical landmarks.

www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-and-partners-launch-3d-urban-documentation-historic-areas-beirut-affected?hub=701

Environment & Sustainability

22-London: The EBRD announces its contribution to a \$114-million financing package for the construction of Kom Ombo, Egypt’s largest private solar

plant. The OPEC Fund for International Development, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Green Climate Fund and the Arab Bank are among the other contributors. The construction of Kom Ombo will significantly increase the share of renewable energy in Egypt’s energy mix, and is expected to serve 130,000 households. This financing package is in line with the EBRD’s objectives to promote renewable energy in North Africa, one of the regions with the highest potential for solar energy production in the world.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/egypts-largest-solar-plant-kom-ombo-receives-us-114-million-financing-package.html

Health

28-Barcelona, Online: The first high-level coordination meeting between the UfM and the World Health Organization (WHO) takes place, bringing together representatives from both sides to discuss further collaboration and the implementation of the MoU signed by both parties in 2020. This includes common objectives on issues such as health research, clean water, urban development and governance, healthy cities, energy and climate action, or women’s access to health. This kind of high level meeting is a continuation of years of collaboration between the two parties, working towards achieving more sustainable and inclusive societies in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-who-meeting/>

May 2021

Trade & Diplomacy

3-Brussels: The European Council announces the appointment of Mr Sven Koopmans as the EU’s new Special Representative (EUSR) for the Middle East Peace Process, from May 2021 to February 2023. The EUSR for the Middle East Peace Process has a mandate to contribute to the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution, and aims to do so by maintaining close contact with all parties in the peace process, as well as with the UN and other organizations like the League of Arab States. The EUSR

oversees EU regional activities linked to the Middle East Peace Process.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/new-eu-special-representative-middle-east-peace-process-appointed>

Development & Aid

11-Tripoli, Online: The International Follow-Up Committee on Libya convenes via an online meeting to assess Libya's economic situation, as well as areas of international support. The committee, co-chaired by Egypt, the EU, the United States and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), focuses on discussing how the international community and the Libyan Economic Expert Commission can support the Libyan Government of National Unity, Parliament and other Libyan institutions as they work towards facing the economic challenges the country faces. Priorities discussed include delivering basic services to Libyans, strengthening economic institutions and revitalizing the private sector.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/international-follow-up-committee-libya-convenes-assess-economic-situation>

Health

12-Luxembourg: The EIB announces an increase in its support to the COVAX Facility. The investment comes as part of a new €1.5-billion financing package, which will provide investment towards green energy generation, transmission and distribution. €200 million of this funding is earmarked for increasing Team Europe's support for COVAX, thus scaling up access to Covid-19 vaccines in beneficiary countries, including in Europe's Southern Neighbourhood, such as Algeria or Tunisia.

www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-159-eib-increases-support-for-covax-and-backs-eur1-5-billion-clean-energy-water-health-and-education-investment

Environment & Sustainability

17-Brussels: The EC announces it will be cooperating with the EIB and the European Investment Fund (EIF) in the implementation of the new EU Sustainable Blue Economy Policy. The announcement comes as part of the EC's

new approach to a green recovery in the blue economy, one that aims to ensure coherence between the EU's blue economy and the European Green Deal. The institutions will work jointly with EU Member states to help tackle pollution in European seas, particularly the Mediterranean, and to support investment for blue innovation and blue bioeconomy.

www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-161-the-european-commission-and-european-investment-bank-group-join-forces-to-protect-the-oceans-and-boost-investment-in-the-sustainable-blue-economy

Development & Aid

17-London: The AfDB Group and the EBRD sign a memorandum of understanding to promote sustainable private sector development in Africa. The two development finance institutions will work in a partnership which is expected to focus on climate change, green and resilient infrastructure, and the improvement of business environments to mobilize private sector investment in Africa. As the pandemic continues to threaten progress made towards the UN SDGs, while worsening the debt vulnerability of African countries, both the EBRD and the AfDB hope to play a key role in generating sustainable private sector development for the continent.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/afdb-and-ebrd-partner-to-unlock-sustainable-investment-opportunities-in-africa.html

Migration

17-Brussels: The EC reaches an agreement on the entry and residence of highly skilled workers from outside the EU into the EU, under the Blue Card Directive. The Commission claims this new scheme will make rules on attracting highly-skilled workers more efficient, including more flexible admission conditions, enhanced rights and better possibilities for moving and working between EU Member States. The Blue Card Directive is one of the main goals set out in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and is likely to be an important element in future scenarios for migration to the EU from southern Mediterranean countries.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_21_2522

Trade & Diplomacy

19-Beirut: The International Support Group for Lebanon (ISG), comprising the governments of China, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the UN, the EU and the Arab League, convenes to discuss the situation in Lebanon. The ISG members focus on the increasing challenges in Lebanon, the difficulties faced by institutions in addressing them, and the growing hardship of the Lebanese population. Members call on Lebanese leaders to form a fully empowered government to address the country's urgent needs. The ISG was launched in 2013 to mobilize support and assistance for Lebanon's stability, sovereignty and state institutions.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/international-support-group-lebanon-expresses-concern-continuing-political>

Development & Aid

25-Brussels: The EC announces an increase in the EU's humanitarian assistance for Palestine by €8 million, bringing the total for 2021 to €34.4 million. The funding will be allocated to victims of recent violence, which has left hundreds of Palestinians dead. Covid-19 has aggravated the humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the EU aims to provide humanitarian assistance such as by creating safe education spaces for vulnerable children and increasing its cash assistance to the most vulnerable.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_21_2670

Justice & Human Rights, EU-Syria

27-Brussels: The European Council announces the extension of EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime for one additional year, in response to its continued repression of the civilian population. EU sanctions on Syria were introduced in 2011 in response to the violent repression of the civilian population by the Syrian regime. The sanctions also target companies, and businessmen benefitting from ties with the regime.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/syria-european-council-extends-sanctions-against-regime-another-year>

Environment & Sustainability

28-Barcelona, Online: The UfM holds its 5th UfM Environment Task Force meeting, bringing together country representatives and regional stakeholders from the UfM environment agenda. The meeting focuses on the priorities and modalities of the UfM 2030 Greener Med Agenda, which sets out objectives towards achieving Environmental SDGs in the Mediterranean. Among the topics discussed are plastic and the green circular economy (land and sea), as well as sustainable food systems and value chains.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/task-force-joint-action-mediterranean/>

Development & Aid, EU-Tunisia

28-Brussels: The EC announces it will provide €300 million to Tunisia as part of its €600-million macro-financial assistance (MFA) programme in response to Covid-19. This MFA will aim to mitigate the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic in Tunisia. This first instalment of the MFA package will not be tied to any conditions, given the urgent financial need. The EU's MFA to Tunisia is part of a wider objective on the part of the EU to assist countries in its Southern Neighbourhood, like Tunisia, through the post-pandemic recovery period. It has included other measures such as providing medical equipment like ambulances or financing the COVAX facility.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/union-europ%C3%A9enne-verse-300-millions-deuros-dassistance-macro-financi%C3%A8re-%C3%A0-la_en

Justice & Human Rights, EU-Jordan

31-Amman: The Jordan Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission launches a twinning project with the EU to support efforts in Jordan to strengthen integrity and corruption prevention. This is an EU-funded project aimed at reviewing the application of the national integrity standards in the public sector, and guaranteeing compliance with these standards. The project also aims to create mechanisms allowing the Jordan Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission to more effectively assess corruption risks.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-and-jordan-anti-cor>

ruption-commission-launch-twinning-project

June 2021

Business & Entrepreneurship

1-London & Brussels: The EU and the EBRD launch a new programme to strengthen growth opportunities for small businesses in Tunisia, called In-sadder. The programme aims to boost the competitiveness, productivity and export potential of Tunisian SMEs by helping them enter external markets. Beneficiaries will receive strategic and operational support, training on exports, and co-financing for certifications required for exports.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-and-eu-join-forces-to-boost-exports-by-tunisian-smes.html

Business & Entrepreneurship

2-Luxembourg: The EIB and CIH Bank (Morocco) sign a financing partnership from a package of €60 million to support SMEs in Morocco affected by the pandemic. This assistance is intended to help develop the private sector in Morocco by focusing on SMEs and their potential for job creation.

www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-184-la-bei-et-cih-bank-joignent-leurs-forces-pour-renforcer-le-soutien-aux-entreprises

Trade & Diplomacy, EU-Tunisia

4-Brussels: Tunisian President Kais Saied visits Brussels and holds meetings with Presidents Charles Michel, Ursula von der Leyen and David Maria Sassoli from the European Council, EC and European Parliament. Tunisia's strategic partnership with the EU is discussed, with a particular focus on youth, education, culture, economic ties and the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Two specific areas discussed as being vital to future cooperation between the EU and Tunisia are investing in youth through education and training, and cooperation on migration, mobility and border management.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/reactions-ue-%E2%80%93-tunisie-pour-un-partenariat-renouvel%C3%A9_en

Migration, EU-Libya

7-Tripoli: EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson visits Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Mohammad Dbeiba of Libya and other members of the Government of National Unity in Tripoli, to discuss issues including the political process in Libya, migration and border management, and security. As the largest provider of assistance in Libya, the EU has a vital relationship with the country, cooperating in fields such as human development, good governance, encouraging youth entrepreneurship and empowerment, the response to Covid-19 and migration.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-commissioner-johansson-libya-discuss-migration-border-management-and>

Business & Entrepreneurship

7-London: The EBRD provides a loan of \$100 million to the National Bank of Egypt (NBE) to support SMEs in Egypt in areas of energy efficiency, climate change mitigation and the implementation of adaptation technologies. The NBE will lend the funds to SMEs in industry, commerce and agriculture. Egypt is a founding member and long-standing cooperation partner of the EBRD.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/ebrd-and-nbe-support-small-businesses-egypt>

Development & Aid, EU-Southern Neighbourhood

10-Brussels: The EC announces that the European Parliament has adopted the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) for the period 2021-27. As the final step of the adoption process following negotiations between the European Parliament, Council and Commission, this decision means the EU will be able to use the €79.5 billion included in the instrument to foster a pandemic recovery in the EU's neighbouring countries, through international partnerships on sustainable development, climate change, democracy, governance, peace and security.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/european-commission-welcomes-final-adoption-eus-new-external-action-budget>

Environment & Sustainability

14-Lisbon: The UfM holds its Third Ministerial Conference on Energy, gathering energy ministers from the 42 UfM Member States to discuss regional cooperation towards energy security and a low-carbon transition. The ministers adopt a new Ministerial Declaration agreeing to join efforts to address the Mediterranean region's energy challenges and to promote a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The declaration is to be developed into concrete action plans by three UfM Energy Platforms, acting as a platform for dialogue that brings together stakeholders and organizations from across the region. <https://ufmsecretariat.org/3rd-energy-ministerial/>

Development & Aid

18-Brussels: The EC announces €20 million in humanitarian funding to be provided to Algeria, Egypt and Libya, in order to support the most vulnerable people affected by crises by facilitating access to basic needs such as nutrition, shelter and clean water. €9 million is allocated for supporting Sahrawi refugees in Algeria, €6 million for vulnerable people in Libya, and €5 million for refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. As one of the leading humanitarian donors in North Africa, the EU has sought to adapt its response to the growing needs caused by the pandemic. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2874

Migration, EU-Libya

21-Brussels: The European Council announces the extension of the mandate of the European Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) for another two years. The mission, which was launched in 2013, is tasked with continuing to assist relevant Libyan authorities in building state security structures in Libya, particularly in areas of border management and law enforcement in the central Mediterranean region. <https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eubam-libyas-mandate-extended-further-two-years>

Business & Entrepreneurship

22-Palestine: The EU-Palestine Investment Platform meets for the second time

as the EIB announces a new \$425-million financing package for the Palestinian private sector. The meeting brings together the EU Representative, the Palestinian Prime Minister, as well as the representatives of various European financial institutions, to discuss cooperation and investment. The EIB's announcement made during this meeting is an example of the coordinated effort between the EU and the EIB to support the sustainable social and economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis in partner countries.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/eu%E2%80%9393palestine_en

Environment & Sustainability

30-Brussels: The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) publishes a series of recommendations to the EU which provide a regional and local perspective on the EU's revised strategy towards the Mediterranean region. The recommendations include the improvement of the health of the Mediterranean sea as one of the top priorities. The CoR statement also praises the EU for its inclusion of support for youth entrepreneurship as one of the central pillars of its New Agenda for the Mediterranean. <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/mediterranean-citizens-and-mediterranean-sea.aspx>

July 2021*Business & Entrepreneurship*

1-Barcelona: The UfM and Mobile World Capital sign a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen their collaboration on addressing the digitalization needs of the Euro-Mediterranean region. While calls for digitalization and for a "digital, green transition" are increasingly frequent in the context of the post-pandemic recovery, there is a growing digital divide across the shores of the Mediterranean, with a North-South digital skills gap and a need to bolster digital connectivity and entrepreneurship. This partnership seeks to respond to these gaps and establish a framework for engagement between the UfM and Mobile World Capital towards achieving this.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-joins-mwc-barcelona/>

Business & Entrepreneurship

2-London: The EBRD announces a \$10-million financial package to Quds Bank in Palestine, intended to boost MSMEs and promote international trade in the West Bank and Gaza. MSMEs represent more than 98% of the local market in the Palestinian economy, and insufficient access to funding has been a constraint on their growth, which has been worsened by the pandemic.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-strengthens-small-businesses-and-trade-in-west-bank-and-gaza.html

Research

7/8-Barcelona: The UfM Regional Platform in Research and Innovation holds its 27th meeting, approving new research agendas for the Mediterranean on climate change, health and renewable energy. International cooperation on Research and Innovation has grown in the Mediterranean since the approval of the Euro-Med Valletta Declaration on Research and Innovation in 2017, and these new agendas will seek to pave the way for more effective cooperation in the Mediterranean in the future.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/new-research-and-innovation-agenda/>

Development & Aid

8-Hatay: European Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarcic visits the Turkish border with northwestern Syria ahead of the upcoming vote on the renewal of the UN resolution on cross-border aid delivery. The Turkish border with Syria is a vital crossing point for the delivery of humanitarian assistance for millions of Syrians. Commissioner Lenarcic meets senior UN representatives and aid workers, as well as Turkish government officials and local authorities, whilst emphasizing the importance of the UN cross-border resolution.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_3484

Youth

12-Damietta: The Damietta Port Authority (DPA) and Port Training Institute sign an agreement with the Damietta Port Community for cooperation under YEP

MED – a project co-financed by ENI CBC MED (European Neighbourhood Instrument, Cross-Border Cooperation, Mediterranean; an EU Programme). YEP MED promotes integration between education, technical vocational and educational training (TVET) and career guidance, leading to counselling, mentoring, specialized employment support, entrepreneurship and job placements. In this context, the project aims at capacity building for 582 young Egyptians to improve their opportunities for employment in the port sector.

www.enicbcmed.eu/egypt-yep-med-partners-sign-agreement-local-community-foster-youth-employment-port-sector

Trade & Diplomacy

27-Brussels: The EUHR for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell releases a statement on behalf of the EU discussing recent developments in Tunisia, including the suspension of parliament. The HR emphasizes the need for Tunisia’s democratic transition to be maintained, including its commitment to respecting the rule of law, the Constitution and the legislative framework. The HR calls for “institutional stability” to be restored and for parliamentary activity to be resumed. www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/07/27/tunisia-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu/

Business & Entrepreneurship

28-London: Lebanon joins the EBRD’s Star Venture programme, which provides innovative start-ups with tailored advisory services. Other beneficiary countries of the programme include Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia, and selected start-ups come from a range of sectors including educational technology, sustainable fashion and cloud computing. The EBRD has been investing in Lebanon since the start of its engagement with the country, supporting private sector development, sustainable energy and increasing the efficiency of public service delivery. www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-supports-highpotential-startups-in-lebanon.html

Health

29-Luxembourg: The EIB makes a €250,000-donation to UNICEF Luxem-

bourg and Red Cross International, both operating in Tunisia to provide some relief to the country’s health system, which has been heavily affected by the pandemic. The funds will be used for providing oxygen concentrators to various hospitals and sending mobile units of doctors and nurses to rural areas of the country to treat Covid patients with little access to healthcare.

www.eib.org/en/press/news/donation-to-help-tunisia-tackle-covid-19-crisis

Justice & Human Rights

30-Brussels: The European Council adopts a framework for targeted sanctions to address the ongoing financial, economic, social and political crisis in Lebanon. This framework provides the possibility of imposing sanctions on persons and entities responsible for undermining democracy or the rule of law in Lebanon through actions such as obstructing the political process, undermining the holding of elections or serious financial misconduct concerning public funds.

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/07/30/lebanon-eu-adopts-a-framework-for-targeted-sanctions/

Heritage & Culture

30-Rome: The UfM Secretary General Nasser Kamel addresses the Ministers of Culture at the G20 Culture Summit. The summit concluded with a new Ministerial Declaration on Culture, to which the UfM contributed. Secretary General Kamel speaks at panels focusing on cultural heritage, creativity and indigenous people’s knowledge of climate action, mitigation and adaptation, and he discusses the Mediterranean experience of human adaptability to climate change.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-secretary-general-g20-culture/>

August 2021

Health, EU-Algeria

3-Algiers: Following a request made by the Algerian Ministry of Health, the EU-funded “European Solidarity Response to Covid-19 in Algeria,” announces its provision of 750 oxygen

concentrators has been received and is ready for use by public health organizations. The concentrators are being delivered by the National People’s Army. This project aims to support the Algerian public health system in its ongoing fight against the consequences of Covid-19.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/algeria-receives-750-oxygen-concentrators-part-european-solidarity>

Health

4-Brussels: The EC announces the allocation of €5.5 million in humanitarian funding to support the Covid-19 response in Lebanon. This comes in addition to the previous allocation of €50 million in humanitarian aid. The funding is aimed at supporting vaccination rates, preventing infections, as well as critical health needs like psycho-social support. A year after the Beirut blast, the country continues to face a profound socioeconomic crisis, exacerbated by the pandemic. The new funding aims to help improve outbreak detection at community level, strengthen testing capacity and reinforce the health system.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_4042

Migration

9-Rome: Operation “EUNAVFOR MED IRINI” – an EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military operation in the Mediterranean – announces the signing of a working arrangement with the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya). Operations IRINI and EUBAM will seek to establish effective cooperation in order to strengthen their actions responding to newly emerging issues in Libya. EUBAM assists relevant Libyan authorities in security-related issues, particularly in areas of border management.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eunavfor-med-irini-and-eubam-libya-sign-working-arrangement>

Environment & Sustainability

16-London: The EBRD provides a \$50-million loan to Egyptian bank QNB ALAHLI, to be used on supporting SMEs and green investments in Egypt. The EU will support the financing, which

will be extended by QNB ALAHLI to SMEs in agribusiness, residential, industrial, commercial and service sectors, developing green, energy efficiency, water efficiency, renewable energy or resource efficiency projects.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-donors-and-qnb-alahli-boost-green-investments-in-egypt.html

Development & Aid

16-Brussels: The EU announces the provision by 13 European countries of urgent Covid-related assistance to Tunisia via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Countries including Belgium, Austria, Spain and Portugal provide close to 1.3 million vaccine doses, 8 million face masks, as well as antigen tests, ventilators and other vital medical equipment. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism aims to strengthen cooperation between EU Member States and six Participating States in the field of civil protection, as a way of improving prevention, preparedness and response to disasters in European and neighbouring countries.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_21_4243

September 2021

Trade & Diplomacy

1-London: The EBRD provides a \$5-million trade finance limit to the Bank of Palestine to support local exporters and importers from the West Bank and Gaza. The Covid-19 pandemic has produced a strong demand for trade financing in Palestine as a way of boosting the import and export of vital goods. To this end, the EBRD has previously established its Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP), to promote international trade amongst its member countries.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-and-bank-of-palestine-boost-trade-in-west-bank-and-gaza.html

Youth & Education

6-Jordan: The EDU-SYRIA/EDU-JORDAN programme announces it is opening scholarship applications for Syrian refugees living in refugee camps who apply to do bachelor's degrees at Zarqa University, Jordan. EDU-SYRIA/

EDU-JORDAN is an EU-funded project which provides higher education opportunities for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian youth. The programme offers scholarships for higher education (bachelor's and master's), as well as vocational education, technical training, special entrepreneurial training, or summer programmes for school students.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/edu-syria-bachelors-degree-scholarships-now-open-syrians-living-inside>

Development & Aid

8-Brussels: The EU releases €80,000 of humanitarian funding to provide emergency relief to 25,000 people affected by forest fires in northern Algeria. The aid will go to the Algerian Red Crescent to support families in the provinces of Bejaia, Tizi Ouzou, Jijel and Setif with emergency shelter, household items, food packages and psychosocial support. It will also support the Algerian Red Crescent by allowing it to sustain the mobilization of its staff and volunteers.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/european-union-helps-victims-forest-fires-algeria>

Trade & Diplomacy

8/10-Libya & Tunisia: EUHR for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell visits Libya and Tunisia. In Libya, Borrell voices the EU's intentions to continue to contribute to the stabilization of the country, and raises areas of ongoing cooperation between the EU and Libya, such as Operation Irini. In Tunisia, Borrell meets with President Kais Saied, as well as ministers, independent bodies and representatives of Tunisian civil society. In a statement, Borrell says he intends to "listen to our Tunisian friends" and "support the Tunisian people in building a sustainable democracy."

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/first-official-visit-eu-high-representativevice-president-borrell-tunisia>

Trade & Diplomacy

21-London: The EBRD provides the Housing Bank for Trade and Finance in Jordan with a \$50-million trade finance limit to support exports and imports in

the country. This facility comes under the EBRD's Trade Facilitation Programme, which seeks to enhance connectivity between banks, thus expanding the access of the Jordanian Housing Bank to a larger banking network and more international business opportunities.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-fosters-trade-in-jordan-.html

Trade & Diplomacy, EU-Lebanon

21-Brussels: The EU states its support for the Lebanese Parliament in its confirmation through a vote of confidence of the new government headed by Prime Minister Najib Mikati. In its statement, the EU commends the agenda of the new government in its ambitions to face Lebanon's multifaceted crisis, and welcomes calls for a strengthening of Lebanon's partnership with the EU.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/lebanon-statement-high-representative-confidence-vote-new-government>

Development & Aid

29-Brussels: EU ambassadors approve a budget amendment unlocking €149.6 million of funding from the EU budget to support the most vulnerable among the Syrian refugee population in Turkey. Turkey is the country with the highest refugee population in the world, and budget amendments like this one allow for the EU to continue providing support to refugees and host communities in Turkey, through programmes such as the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) – the biggest humanitarian programme in the EU's history – which provides multi-purpose cash assistance on a monthly basis to approximately 1.8 million refugees in Turkey to cover essential needs like rent, transport, bills, food and medicine.

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/09/29/humanitarian-support-to-refugees-in-turkey-approval-for-a-2021-eu-budget-amendment/

Environment & Sustainability

30-Morocco: The EU and its Member States launch "climate diplomacy weeks" across Morocco, from 30 September to 17 October, to address the

theme of “Action and Ambition.” The “climate diplomacy weeks” will be organized in association with Moroccan partner organizations, with the intention of discussing climate change action ahead of COP26. Activities include youth workshops, meetings between young people and European diplomats, or a radio and web campaign to raise awareness on climate change.
<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/climate-diplomacy-weeks-eu-and-its-member-states-mobilise-climate-morocco>

October 2021

EU-Southern Neighbourhood

4-Online: MAJALAT, an EU-funded initiative for EU-civil society dialogue in the southern Mediterranean region, announces the project is closing. Since its conception in 2018, MAJALAT has organized debates that have brought together civil society organizations, trade unions, policymakers and experts from across the Mediterranean. Its past activities have included national roundtables in Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco, and annual Civil Society Forums. The aim of the project has been to offer a multi-layered space for dialogue between the EU and partner countries in the southern Mediterranean.
<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-funded-initiative-majalat-comes-end>

Environment & Sustainability

4-Cairo: The 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Action takes place in Cairo, gathering ministers from the 42 member countries of the UfM. The ministers agree on a common agenda to bolster efforts to tackle the climate and environmental challenges of the Euro-Mediterranean region. The conference takes place against the backdrop of a summer dominated by climate and environmental emergencies across the Mediterranean, and as warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the Mediterranean as one of the world’s regions most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Ministers discuss the importance of

mainstreaming climate action across all sectoral policies, including energy, agriculture, transport or industry, and also highlighted the need for more investments and sustainable finance.
<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ministerial-climate-environment-2021/>

Environment & Sustainability

6-Monastir, Tunisia: As part of the COMMON project, a team of scientists and marine biologists from Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer and the Centre National de Veille Zoosanitaire, in Tunisia, visit local fishermen in Monastir, Tunisia, to discuss the effects of marine litter on biodiversity. COMMON is an EU-funded project aimed at tackling marine litter in the Mediterranean, working across Italy, Lebanon and Tunisia. Exchanges such as this one are central to the project’s aim to include local communities in developing solutions to mitigate marine litter.
<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/tunisia-common-project-discusses-marine-litter-and-its-impact-local>

Environment & Sustainability

11-Amman: The Jordanian Minister of Water and Irrigation signs a €24-million contract for an EU co-funded project aimed at improving access to water, water distribution performance and sewage disposal in the northern Irbid Governorate. The project is also funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD). Building resilience in water systems and infrastructure in southern Mediterranean countries such as Jordan is a key priority for EU development and cooperation in the Mediterranean.
<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/jordan-eu24-million-strengthen-and-restructure-water-networks-northern>

Migration

12-Cairo: The “European Asylum Support Office (EASO) regional conference on international protection and persons with specific protection needs in North Africa and Niger” takes place in Cairo, Egypt, chaired by the head of the EU Delegation to Egypt, Ambassador Chris-

tian Berger. Topics discussed throughout the conference include cooperation between EASO and Egypt, regionally and bilaterally, as well as the need to continue the approach of jointly designing activities to support asylum-related capacities.
<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/egypt-hosts-easo-regional-conference>

Trade & Diplomacy

13/14-Madrid: The 5th MedThink 5+5 Forum is held in Madrid, bringing together diplomats, experts and practitioners from Member States of the 5+5 Dialogue (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia), to discuss the transformation and future of the western Mediterranean region in the post-Covid-19 context. Participants emphasize the importance of the 5+5 Dialogue in the post-Covid-19 world to foster cooperation in the Mediterranean, on topics such as the enhancement of regional value chains, water security or the digital transition to achieve sustainable urban development.
<https://medthink5plus5.org/en/2021/10/14/what-prospects-for-the-55-dialogue-in-a-mediterranean-in-transformation/>

Development & Aid

14-London: The EBRD announces it is supporting olive oil production in Tunisia with a €6.2-million loan to the Compagnie Générale des Industries Alimentaires (COGIA SA) to boost Tunisian olive oil producers. Tunisia is one of the world’s five largest olive oil producers, and these funds are therefore intended to develop a sector of major strategic importance to the Tunisian economy by promoting regional integration, strengthening export competitiveness and thus bolstering economic growth.
<https://www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-promotes-tunisia-oliveoil-sector.html>

Development & Aid, EU-Palestine

14-East Jerusalem: The EU and Germany launch the East Jerusalem Tourism Development Programme and inaugurate the Tourism Development Hub in East Jerusalem. These projects aim to

maintain the Palestinian identity and support the tourism sector of East Jerusalem. Tourism is one of the main income-generating activities in the city and is therefore vital towards maintaining a Palestinian presence. However, it has been heavily affected by Covid-19, and these programmes aim to revive the sector.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-and-germany-launch-east-jerusalem-tourism-development-programme>

Business & Entrepreneurship

19-London: The EBRD loans €80 million to Reefy Microfinance Enterprise Services, Egypt's first licensed microfinance institution, to finance women entrepreneurs in the country. The loan is provided under the EBRD's Women in Business programme, which promotes the participation of women in the economy and provides financial, advisory, training and mentoring support to women-led small businesses. Focus will be placed on supporting women outside Greater Cairo and Alexandria.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-eu-and-reefy-step-up-support-for-women-entrepreneurs-in-egypt.html

Migration

21-Barcelona: UfM Member States endorse the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in the Euro-Mediterranean Region, a regional initiative to provide refugee and displaced populations with rapid access to higher education. Only 1% of refugees of relevant age worldwide have access to higher education, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has set the goal of increasing this to 15%. To this end, the project endorsed by the UfM aims at running emergency two-year scholarship programmes for 300 beneficiaries in 10 countries including Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Turkey.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/som-oct-2021/>

Environment & Sustainability

25-Cairo: The EIB, the Delegation of the EU to Egypt, the French Development Agency and the German Development Bank organize a seminar on the

instruments and prospects of the sustainable financing of water projects, in the context of Cairo Water Week. The seminar discusses the role of the EU, EU financial instruments and EU Member States in supporting the water sector in Egypt. As one of the regions most affected by the ongoing effects of climate change, the Mediterranean, and countries like Egypt, are likely to be increasingly affected by water scarcity.

www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-350-cairo-water-week-team-europe-high-lights-importance-of-sustainable-water-financing

Environment & Sustainability

27-Online: A new EU-funded project to develop sustainable waste management in the Mediterranean, called MED4WASTE, is launched during an online meeting. The project, which targets Italy, Greece, Spain, Jordan, Tunisia and Lebanon, aims to facilitate new governance models for integrated and efficient urban waste management policies across the Mediterranean.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/med4waste-new-eu-funded-project-develop-sustainable-waste-management>

Trade & Diplomacy

28-Brussels: EUHR for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell meets with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh in Brussels, to discuss the EU's support for the Palestinian people and for Palestinian state-building. Borrell emphasizes the EU's ongoing commitment to a negotiated and comprehensive resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution, as well as the need to relaunch meaningful negotiations and revive the peace process.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/palestine-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-met-prime>

November 2021

Development & Aid,

3-Brussels: The EU announces it is transferring a contribution of €15.6 million to the Palestinian Ministry of Finance to assist with payments of sala-

ries and pensions for civil servants in the health and education sectors in the West Bank. This is in response to the ongoing challenges posed by the economic crisis in occupied Palestinian territory, exacerbated by the pandemic and ongoing tensions with Israel.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/palestine-eu156-million-eu-payment-october-salaries-and-pensions>

Development & Aid

4-London: The EBRD publishes its Regional Economic Prospects report, in which it raises its growth forecast for the southern and eastern Mediterranean to 4.2% for 2021. The rise is driven by the recovery in economic activity in the region, characterized by a rebound in the agriculture and telecommunications sectors, and growth in tourism and exports. The report states that future economic growth will depend on factors such as the ongoing recovery from the pandemic, progress in vaccination rollout or advancing digitalization as a key step towards attracting investment.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-raises-forecast-for-southern-and-eastern-mediterranean-region.html

Youth & Education

10-Tunis & Online: The European Training Foundation holds its 7th Forum for the Development of Entrepreneurial Learning, which focuses on Tunisia. The forum discusses how the Tunisian government and international partners can strengthen and expand the network of entrepreneurial vocational education and training centres.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/etf-7th-forum-development-entrepreneurial-learning-focus-tunisia>

Trade & Diplomacy

11/13-Paris: The International Libya Conference, co-chaired by France, Germany, Italy, the UN and Libya takes place during the 4th edition of the Paris Peace Forum. The conference is attended by EUHR for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, and by President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. The conference discusses the

situation in Libya and calls for a resolution to ongoing security challenges.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/hrvp-josep-borrell-participates-international-libya-conference>

Health

14-Jordan: The EU partners with Radio Al-Balad in Jordan to launch a nationwide “Vaccine Misinformation Campaign.” The campaign will seek to combat Covid-19 and vaccine misinformation by sharing sound and accessible information on the safety and effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccine, and on ways of adapting to and fighting the pandemic. <https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/jordan-eu-and-radio-al-balad-join-forces-combat-vaccine-misinformation>

Migration

15-Cairo: The 3rd EU–Egypt Political Dialogue on Migration is launched by Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry and EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Ylva Johansson, in Cairo. The meeting aims to discuss all aspects of the EU’s cooperation with Egypt on migration. Topics addressed include fighting human trafficking and smuggling, promoting regular migration, the need for investment and job creation to support youth, and Egypt’s efforts to host millions of migrants, including Syrian refugees. These common challenges are central to the EU and Egypt’s partnership.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/joint-press-statement-third-eu-egypt-political-dialogue-migration>

Business & Entrepreneurship

18-London: The EBRD provides a \$3-million loan to Vitas Palestine, a microfinance institution in the West Bank and Gaza, to boost MSMEs. MSMEs in the West Bank and Gaza represent a significant portion of the economy, and their limited access to finance has been worsened by the pandemic. The funds will be distributed by Vitas Palestine to local businesses.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebrd-supports-small-businesses-in-west-bank-and-gaza.html

Culture & Heritage

28/29-Barcelona: On the occasion of the first annual celebration of the Day of the Mediterranean, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the UfM gather in Barcelona for the 6th UfM Regional Forum. The Forum produced an agreement from the ministers on the need to further intensify regional integration and cooperation in the Mediterranean. The newly established “Day of the Mediterranean” is celebrated with the aim of recognizing Mediterranean culture, embracing the rich diversity of the region. It is intended as a call for cooperation amongst the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/first-annual-celebration-of-the-day-of-the-mediterranean/>

Environment & Sustainability

29-Barcelona: A new MoU, focused on climate action, economic integration and support for women and youth is signed between the UfM and the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the UNDP. The MoU sets out to strengthen collaboration between both entities in order to address common challenges across the Mediterranean and among Arab States. One of the specific actions to be taken is the development of a Mediterranean Climate Change Hub, aiming to provide training to central and local public administration officers on climate adaptation.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/new-agreement-between-undp-and-ufm-2021/>

December 2021

Migration

2-Brussels: The EU announces the allocation of an additional €325 million in humanitarian aid for refugees in Turkey. The funds will be used to extend the EU’s ESSN programme until early 2023. The ESSN provides monthly cash transfers to over 1.5 million refugees in Turkey, to cover essential needs such as rent, transport, bills, food and medicine. This funding is part of a €3-billion package to support refugees in Turkey, announced by President Ursula von der Leyen following the European Council of June 2021. Turkey hosts the largest

number of refugees worldwide – 4 million, of which 3.7 million are estimated to be Syrians, the majority of which live outside camps.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_21_6470

Migration, EU-Egypt

5-Cairo: The EU Delegation to Egypt launches a cooperation project titled “Governance on Migration through Institutional Support,” in Cairo. The project aims to set up cooperation and exchange of expertise and experience, with the goal of facilitating safe and orderly migration and mobility. The project is established following the EU-Egypt High Level Dialogue on Migration in November 2021. Migration partnerships with neighbouring countries is a key element of the EU’s migration strategy, and Egypt is therefore a key partner on this issue.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/egypt-governance-migration-through-institutional-support-project-launched>

Water

6-Palestine: The Palestinian Ministry of Finance signs a financing agreement with the German Development Bank, funded by the EU, to improve availability and reliability of water supply services in Gaza City and Jabalia. The project will fund the construction of a new concrete reservoir in the region. The EU and Germany are large contributors towards increasing the availability of drinking water in northern Gaza, where drinking water availability is one of the lowest in the world.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-provides-eur-9-million-improve-water-supply-services-gaza-city-and>

Development & Aid

7-London: The EBRD announces a new €49-million loan to the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture to modernize irrigation infrastructure, serving 37 oases in Tunisia’s southern governorates of Gabès, Gafsa, Kébili and Tozeur. These oases are the primary source of employment and income in the region, and the funds will therefore aim to increase access to more economic opportunities for wom-

en and young people. Overall, the loan aims to improve access to irrigation water for over 6,800 farmers and their families.

www.ebrd.com/news/2021/ebird-supports-modernisation-of-irrigation-infrastructure-in-southern-tunisia.html

Business & Entrepreneurship

9-Tunis: The EIB signs financing contracts with microfinancing institutions and tech companies in Tunisia, to support entrepreneurship, innovation and social infrastructure. This funding falls under the Microfinance Facility for the Southern Neighbourhood, set up in co-operation with the EU. The financing, totalling €63 million, will go towards Enda Tamweel, a microfinance institution; One Tech Group, a tech company; and Transtu, the Tunisian public transport authority.

www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-444-tunisie-la-bei-mobilise-63-millions-d-euros-pour-renforcer-son-soutien-a-l-entreprenariat-a-l-innovation-et-aux-infrastructures-sociales

Migration

9-Brussels: The European Council adopts a regulation which upgrades the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) into a fully-fledged agency, the EU Agency for Asylum. The new agency will be responsible for improving the functioning of the common European asylum system, by providing technical and operational assistance to Member States and assisting with the assessment of applications for international protection. The creation of the European Union Agency for Asylum was one of the key pillars of the European Commission's New Pact for Migration and Asylum.

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/12/09/migration-and-asylum-pact-council-adopts-eu-asylum-agency-regulation/

Justice & Human Rights

14-Tunis: The Tunisian National Body for Combating Trafficking in Persons (INLTP) and the Council of Europe launch the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, in Tunisia. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework using a human rights approach for identifying potential victims of human trafficking, and referring them to services which can offer support adapted to their needs. The NRM is aimed at people working with victims of human trafficking, and is the first mechanism of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/tunisia-launched-new-initiative-better-detect-and-help-victims-human>

Justice & Human Rights

14-Brussels: The Council of Europe adopts sanctions against the Wagner Group, a Russia-based private military entity. The Wagner Group has operated in conflict zones around the world including in Libya and Syria, and individuals listed by the EU are linked to serious human rights abuses, such as torture and extrajudicial executions. Measures such as these mark the EU's aim to curtail the activities of the Wagner Group in its southern and eastern neighbourhoods.

<https://euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-imposes-restrictive-measures-against-wagner-group>

Water

17-Amman: The EIB signs a €70-million loan in Amman to invest in the reduction of water losses in Jordan. The funding will improve access to Jordan's limited water resources in communities in the Jordan Valley and major cities. In the context of climate change, investing in strengthening resilience and adapting

to increased water demand is a key priority in the region.

www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-470-jordanian-ministers-welcome-eur-70-million-eib-support-to-improve-use-of-scarce-water-in-the-jordan-valley

Migration

21-Brussels: The EC adopts two financing decisions, totaling €560 million, to provide higher education and inclusive quality education for refugees in Turkey, and to support border protection. Most of this funding (€530 million) will go towards increasing access to higher education for refugees through scholarships, while another portion of funding (€30 million) will go towards capacity building in border protection, including improving the conditions faced by migrants and refugees in Turkey's hosting centres.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_21_6931

Development & Aid

22-Brussels: The EU announces it is mobilizing €10 million in humanitarian aid to Syria, to mitigate the effects of drought on the most vulnerable. The funding will aim to increase access to water and rehabilitate critical water infrastructure, provide food and nutrition, expand medical services and provide assistance to vulnerable people in the winter with heating fuel, winter clothes, blankets and tents. Since the summer of 2021, Syria has faced its worst drought in 70 years, which has caused a major water crisis. Over 5 million people in Syria are losing access to water, food and electricity. This provides an example of how climate change is likely to affect the most vulnerable as its effects continue to increase in the Mediterranean region.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_21_7065