INTRODUCTION

The global economy is undergoing major geopolitical and economic paradigm shifts. In addition to its profound political ramifications, the war on Ukraine has exacted major economic and social development costs on the global economy, especially for a developing world that is still reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, climate change’s impacts intensify and threaten the environment and societies with the poorest paying the heaviest price.

Within this context, the Euro-Mediterranean region has an important role to play as a major centre of global trade, connecting three continents of the world. In fact, while representing only 1% of the world’s waters, the Mediterranean Sea generates around 15% of global maritime traffic and 20% of related economic value, making it a fundamental global economic and social crossroads. It has become even more central today following the discovery of giant natural gas fields in the Eastern Mediterranean.

As such, and as the countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region are facing their new and existing challenges and resetting their priorities, new opportunities are emerging towards deeper Euro-Mediterranean integration. For the
Southern Mediterranean countries (SMC), the consequences of climate change, slow economic growth and increasing youth unemployment are particularly challenging. Nonetheless, there is a huge potential for the SMCs to exploit their comparative advantages to position themselves to meet economic, climate and human development challenges, while developing and strengthening a robust reciprocal, self-reinforcing, win-win partnership with the EU. Naturally, the SMCs’ youth will need to be the centrepiece of such strategy and should be amongst the main beneficiaries of the envisaged deepening cross-Mediterranean integration.

Hence, as the world geopolitics is shifting, the Euro-Mediterranean relations could be on the threshold of a new era where the two shores are working closer together to build a more resilient and sustainable region. The present common challenges in the region demand such integration and cooperation between the North and South.

Against this backdrop, the objectives of the FEMISE annual conference of 2023 are threefold:

- To bring forward issues that are of concern to the Euro-Mediterranean region and more precisely to explore how to turn challenges into opportunities for a deeper and closer partnership.

- To exchange on how to build a Euro-Mediterranean region that is better integrated and resilient to shocks while putting its young population at the heart of this partnership to allow them to play their role as the Mediterranean Change Makers.

- To explore ways through which this deeper integration between the EU and SMCs, notably enhanced trade and investments, could lead to better opportunities for the youth, providing important inputs to the Team Europe’s Initiative ‘Jobs through Trade and Investment in the Southern Neighbourhood.’
Day 1 – Wednesday 27 September 2023

14.00-15.30 FEMISE General Assembly

Sala del Consell - For FEMISE members only -

16.00-16.15 Welcoming Remarks

Senén Florensa, Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)
Ibrahim Elbadawi, President, FEMISE and Managing Director, Economic Research Forum (ERF)

16.15-16.45 Opening Speeches

Nasser Kamel, Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
Carmen Magariños, Director of Cooperation with Africa and Asia, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)
Pau Solanilla, Commissioner for City Promotion, Barcelona City Council

16.45-18.15 Plenary Session 1 – Towards Greater Euro-Mediterranean Regional Integration: Rebalancing the Geopolitical Landscape with Economic Opportunities

The Mediterranean region is witnessing a new era of changing geopolitical landscape. Given the central role that this region is playing in global trade, economic and social development, it will be key to enhance its integration to secure its place within the global trends while meeting common challenges.

Chair

Antoine Apprioual, Programme Manager, Department of Sustainable Development and Regional Integration, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Speakers

Birgit Loeser, Head of Division MENA, Regional Affairs, European External Action Service (EEAS) – via videoconference
Alia Moubayed, Managing Director, Fixed Income Strategy at Jefferies, Lebanon
Massimo Deandreis, Director general, S.R.M., Grupo Intesa Sanpaolo, Italy
Carlos Conde, Head of the Middle East and Africa Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD
Katarzyna Sidlo, Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department, CASE, Poland

18.15 Conference Photo
CONFERENCE GALA DINNER

Official reception and special keynote speech by
The Hble. Ms. Meritxell Serret i Aleu, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Union, Government of Catalonia

Venue: Museu Maritim de Barcelona
Av. de les Drassanes, 1
- Upon invitation -

Day 2 – 28 September 2023

Plenary Session 2 - A Better Integrated Euro-Mediterranean Region to Meet Common Challenges: Enhancing the Region's Resilience Through Regional Value Chains

Following the recent disruptions in the global supply chains due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the idea of near-shoring gained momentum in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This represents an opportunity for both shores as it would not only enhance intra-regional trade but will open new opportunities for cooperation on issues such as energy and food while reaching out further to SMCs’ neighbours, including Africa.

Chair
Maryse Louis, General Manager, FEMISE

Speakers
Ingrid Schwaiger, Deputy Head of Unit - Regional Cooperation Neighbourhood South, Economic Investment Plan (NEAR.B.2), Neighbourhood South and Türkiye, European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission
Mohamed El Razzaz, Head of Sector, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
Marc Lautier, Professor of Economics, University Rennes 2, France
Anna Ferragina, Associate Professor, Department of Economics and Statistics, University of Salerno, Italy

Coffee Break
Thematic Session 1 – Financial Inclusion and GVC Integration in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

- Presentation and Discussion of Selected Papers -

Chair
Samir Makdisi, Professor Emeritus and founding director of the Institute of Financial Economics, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Simon Neaime, Professor of Finance and Economics, Institute of Financial Economics, American University of Beirut, Lebanon & Isabelle Gaysset, Research Fellow, Institute of Financial Economics, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

2 - EU-Med Capital Market Integration and the EU’s Covered Bonds Directive
Bernd Lucke, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Hamburg, Germany

3 - Impacts of Financial Inclusion on Levels of Participation in a Global Value Chain (GVC)
Rawan Elshaarawy, Economic Researcher, Egyptian Competition Authority, Egypt

Discussant
Ahmed Ghoneim, Professor of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences, Cairo University, Egypt

13.00-14.30 Lunch Break

14.30-16.00 Thematic Session 2 – Building a More Integrated Euro-Mediterranean Region: Trade, Remittances and Skills’ Mobility

- Presentation and Discussion of Selected Papers -

Chair
Patrick Plane, Research Director CNRS, CERDI, France

1 - Estimation of the Integration of Tunisia and Egypt with the EU and Eastern and Southern African Countries Using the Gravity Equation
Karim Chaabouni, Assistant Professor in Economics, Sfax School of Commerce (ESC Sfax), Tunisia
2 - The Talents Race in the Euro-Mediterranean Region: Policy Recommendations Derived from Panel Data Estimation of the Osmosis Model
Samir Djelti, Economist of Migration Studies and Lecturer, University Mustapha Stambouli of Mascara, Algeria

Abdeslam Badre, Ph.D., Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco

Discussant
Raed Safadi, Chief Economist, Dubai Department of Economy

Coffee Break

16.00-16.30

Putting the green transition at the heart of the Euromed partnership, while finding solutions to sustainability challenges will help the region progress in achieving its goals in terms of resilience, prosperity, and development. While a number of opportunities arise in the region, especially with regard to clean energy production, challenges call for greater cooperation and integration to mobilise investments, build sustainable infrastructure, transfer knowledge and technology, create decent jobs, and green the productive tissue.

Chair
Rafael de Arce, Professor of Econometrics, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

Speakers
Adel Ben Youssef, Professor of Economics, University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis, France
Majd Al-Naber, Director of Science for Society Centre, Royal Scientific Society, Jordan
Bernard Ziller, Former Senior Advisor, European Investment Bank (EIB)
Hala Abou-Ali, Vice President of the Institute of National Planning and Professor of Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS), Cairo University, Egypt
Marco Berti Palazzi, International Relations and Enlargement Unit, DG Energy, European Commission - via videoconference
Day 3 – 29 September 2023

09.30-11.00 Thematic Session 3 – Economics of the Euro-Mediterranean Green Transition

- Presentation and Discussion of Selected Papers -

Chair
Stéphane Pouffary, Chief Executive Officer, Energies 2050, France

1 - ICT as a Driver of Green Economic Growth in the South Med region: An Output-Oriented Approach to Green TFP Estimation
Stefano Iandolo, Research Fellow, Department of Economics and Statistics (DISES), University of Salerno, Italy

2 - EU Hydrogen Policy: What Path for a Just Energy Transition in North Africa?
Ayoub Menzli, Ph.D Candidate, Department of Political Science, Roma Tre University, Italy

3 - Towards Sustainable Green Transition in the Southern Mediterranean Countries: Identifying Policy Gaps and Spotting Opportunities to Design Sustainable Policies
Jeanne Mawad, Head of the Management and Entrepreneurship Programme, Université du Saint-Esprit de Kaslik Business School, Lebanon

Discussant
Stella Tsani, Associate Professor, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

11.00-11.30 Coffee Break

11.30-13.00 Plenary Session 4 - Towards a Youth-Driven Euro-Mediterranean Region: Policies to Boost Training, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation

The Euro-Mediterranean region is home to the youngest population in the world. While youth can be among the most vulnerable, they are also the most creative and innovative and they aspire for a better future for their region. They deserve to be the main beneficiaries of a deepened regional integration with better education, job, and mobility opportunities. Unleashing the potential of the Mediterranean youth can only be achieved by providing them with the needed support in terms of training, access to finance, as well as the tools and knowledge to develop their entrepreneurship activities in innovative and sustainable sectors.

Chair
Majdi Hassen, Executive Director, The Arab Institute of Business Leaders (IACE), Tunisia
Speakers

Afef Ajengui, Senior Program Manager, Tunisia Foundation for Development, Tunisia
Nayef Stetieh, CEO, Business Development Center (BDC), Jordan
Houssam El Hajj, Instructor, General Directorate of Vocational Education and Training, Lebanon
Sana Afouaiz, Founder and CEO, Womenpreneur Initiative, Belgium
Giuseppe Provenzano, Project Manager, Higher Education and Research Division, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

13.00-14.30 Lunch Break

14.30-16.00 Thematic Session 4 – Policies Empowering the Youth to Deliver Sustainable Development in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

- Presentation and Discussion of Selected Papers -

Chair

Moundir Lassassi, Research Director, Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement (CREAD), Algeria

1 - When Active Labour Market Policies Increase Unemployment: An Assessment of the Impact Employment Plan in Algeria
Ali Souag, Associate Professor and Researcher, University Mustapha Stambouli of Mascara, Algeria

2 - Enhancing Decent Jobs and Access to Funding for Youth: Employment Formalisation and Financial Inclusion Issues in MENA Countries
Philippe Adair, Emeritus Professor, ERUDITE Fellow, University Paris-Est Créteil, France

3 - Possibilities and Benefits of Entrepreneurial Ventures: A Comprehensive Study on Youth Social Entrepreneurship in the MENA Region
Rabeh Morrar, Assistant Professor, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine

Discussant

Mona Said, Professor of Economic, American University Cairo (AUC), Egypt

16.00-16.20 Closing Remarks

Senén Florensa, Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)
Ibrahim Elbadawi, President, FEMISE. Managing Director, Economic Research Forum (ERF)