

Euromed Chronology

January 2023

Fact-Checking

2-online: A consortium of technologists, policy consultants and media workers launches a free-to-use digital platform that combats disinformation in the MENA region. Using artificial intelligence, the platform helps fact-checkers more easily identify questionable claims requiring verification. The platform, dubbed DALIL (an acronym for Disinformation Assessment, Listening and Investigation Lab), is being developed by the Beirut-based tech consultancy Siren as part of the Arab Fact-Checkers Network Innovation and Resilience Project – a two-year initiative funded by the European Union and implemented in partnership with Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism and the Jordan Open Source Association.

https://dalilmena.com/landing/article/article_five

Food Security

10-Beirut: The European Union launches two new initiatives worth €25 million to support vulnerable people in Lebanon and to fight food insecurity. These initiatives are a response to the negative impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on the EU's neighbouring countries. This new funding is additional to the already existing projects implemented in the country related to food security and social protection. The funds available for Lebanon will provide immediate assistance for 7,245 impoverished Lebanese families. In the medium to longer term, the European Union wants to help strengthen Lebanese agricultural and agri-food systems and to diversify its food production.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/

SMEs

12-online: The SME4SMARTCITIES consortium announces that the SME4 SMARTCITIES training programme is now open to anyone who has registered on the platform beforehand. The project online course mainly aims to prepare the technological and innovative Mediterranean SMEs to address the smart cities solutions market, identify the opportunities generated and go international. www.enicbcmed.eu/sme4smartcities-training-material-are-now-available

Humanitarian Aid

18-Brussels: The EU maintains its commitment to support those in need by adopting its initial annual humanitarian budget of €1.7 billion for 2023. €382.2 million of EU humanitarian funding will be allocated in the Middle East and North Africa to address the ongoing regional crisis in Yemen, Syria and its neighbouring countries, as well as the critical situation of the Sahrawi refugees.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_23_253

Green Energy

20-Brussels: Launch of the regional EU-funded project "MED GEM: Support to Green Electrons and Molecules' development in the Southern Neighbourhood." This project represents a step forward in the fields of hydrogen (and derivatives) development, massive renewables' deployment and broad awareness-raising on necessary "behavioural changes" towards resource efficiency. Its objective is to create and operate a MED-GEM Network in the Southern Neighbourhood region by convening dialogue and collaborative activities between key energy stakeholders, in order to facilitate and promote

the growth of the GEM industry at the regional level.

<https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/near/items/775355/en>

Environment

24/25-Athens: The Plan of Action for a Model Mediterranean Sea by 2030 (PAMEx) holds its first Steering Committee meeting. In the meeting, partners follow up on the implementation of the 20 concrete actions that PAMEx encompasses, including governance matters and the functioning of the Local Investment Finance Facility (PLIFF) – the innovative financial mechanism created to underpin the implementation of PAMEx. The steering committee identifies the PLIFF Action Plan and expected deliverables in 2023 with a focus on the Mediterranean hotspots based on landscape, climate change and biodiversity indicators (Earth Po-saidon).

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/model-mediterranean-sea-2030-pamex/>

EU-Jordan

31-Brussels: The EU signs two financing agreements with the Jordanian government providing up to €64 million in the form of budget support. The first agreement provides €39 million to the "EU support to the Rule of Law in Jordan" programme. This financing aims to consolidate the rule of law and justice institutions in Jordan, their effectiveness, transparency, accountability and accessibility. The second agreement provides a €25 million top-up to the "Green Growth" programme from the EU's Food and Resilience Facility (FRF), which will support Jordan with the implementation of its Food Security Strategy and Action Plan and assist in ad-

dressing the impact due to Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/jordan/

Investments

31-London: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) posts a record investment of €2.4 billion in 50 projects in the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region in 2022. This follows cumulative investments of €1.5 billion in 2021 in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and the West Bank and Gaza. 70 percent of the bank's 2022 investments in the SEMED region were in the private sector, while 42 percent were in the green economy. Half of all projects had a gender inclusion component.

www.ebrd.com/news/2023/ebird-posts-record-investment-in-semmed-region-in-2022-.html

Security

31-Algiers: The project Sharaka ends after five and a half years of implementation. The project is a regional counter-terrorism project implemented by INTERPOL in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Palestine. It supports partner countries to better detect and intercept organized crime and terrorist individuals or groups through the use of INTERPOL technologies, capacity building and police operations. The project has connected frontline agencies at airports, seaports and national borders to the INTERPOL's secure global police communications system (I-24/7). This has enabled the partner countries to share intelligence in real time and to access INTERPOL's global criminal databases.

www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Terrorism/Counter-terrorism-projects/Project-Sharaka

February 2023

Green Economy

1-Cairo: The EBRD, the EU and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) are providing new funds under the Green Economy Financing Facility programme (GEFF) in Egypt to support green programmes and investments for the pri-

ivate sector. A total of US\$ 175.5 million will be made available to local financial institutions to on-lend to the private sector for investments in climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, supporting the decarbonization and competitiveness of the Egyptian economy. www.ebrd.com/news/2023/ebird-eu-and-gcf-support-egypt-transition-to-a-greener-and-more-inclusive-economy.html

EU-Palestine

6-Ramallah: The EU announces the 2022 financial assistance package to the Palestinian people. This package of €199.2 million will support the Palestinian Authority's expenditures for social allowances, medical referrals, salaries and pensions, and projects in the occupied Palestinian territory, in addition to EU-funded projects in East Jerusalem. This adds to the already disbursed financial support of €97 million to UN-RWA, which includes a €15 million top-up from the Food and Resilience Facility aimed at mitigating the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on food prices and food security. This brings the total EU assistance to the Palestinian people under the 2022 budget allocation to €296 million.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/

Humanitarian Aid

8-Brussels: Following multiple earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria earlier this week, the EU will provide additional emergency support to both countries through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and emergency humanitarian assistance worth €6.5 million. This is one of the EU's largest ever search and rescue operations through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The Syrian authorities request to activate the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The request includes search and rescue teams, shelter and medicine. The EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre is in contact with EU Member States and the UN to immediately channel possible offers to the people most in need in Syria. Today, in addition, the Commission also announces an initial €3.5 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Syria

to help people in need to access shelter, water and sanitation and healthcare, as well as to support the search and rescue operations.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_23_701

Transport

9-Barcelona: The 2nd Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Conference on Transport is held in Barcelona. The Ministers reaffirm the importance of connectivity among the southern Mediterranean countries, between these countries and the EU and towards inner Africa and Asia. On the occasion of the conference, the Ministerial Declaration on Transport, the Evaluation Report of the Regional Transport Action Plan 2014-2020 and the new Regional Transport Action Plan 2021-2027, are adopted. The UfM Regional Platform on Transport Connectivity will monitor the implementation of the new regional action plan in the years to come.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/2nd-ministerial-conference-transport-2023/>

Migration

16-Tunisia: The first National Migration Information System in Tunisia, MIGRA-DATA, is launched in the framework of the EU-funded project ProGreS II – "Migration Governance" component. The new tool enables a modernization of knowledge sharing and management and allows for better evidence-based governance on migration. On the occasion of the launching event, experts and researchers present the progress achieved and the results gathered since the launch of the Tunisia-HIMS survey, the first national survey on international migration.

<https://south.euneighbours.eu/news/tunisia-launches-its-first-national-information-system-on-migration/>

Climate Change

21/22-Amman: Clima-Med beneficiary cities and its key partners in the southern Mediterranean region gather to attend the project's 5th Steering Committee Meeting. The EU funded Clima-Med project supports the transition of eight partner countries in the Southern Neighbourhood towards sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient development.

During the meeting, the Clima-Med team presents the project's results, its progress, foreseen extension activities and sustainability prospects.

www.climamed.eu/fifth-steering-committee-meeting-psc5/

Israel/Palestine

23-Brussels: The EU condemns the Israeli authorities' approval of plans for advancing more than 7,000 housing units in illegal settlements across the occupied West Bank. This exceeds the total number advanced throughout 2022, which was a record year in terms of illegal settlement expansion. The EU reiterates its position that the settlements are illegal under international law.

www.eeas.europa.eu/

Digitalization

23-London: EBRD launches the second phase of its technical support programme to digitalize the Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZone). The EBRD is helping the SCZone to develop an efficient, competitive and eco-friendly business environment that is attractive to international investors and will position the SCZone as a leading space for global trade, industries and services, as well as generate jobs for Egyptians. The second phase will include the re-engineering of more than 60 services, including land management, project approvals, environmental approvals, company registration and foreign worker permits.

www.ebrd.com/news/2023/ebrd-launches-second-phase-to-digitalise-suez-canal-economic-zone.html

Humanitarian Aid

26-Brussels: As part of an EU humanitarian air bridge for Syria, two planes with emergency aid land in Damascus to provide further support for the Syrian people affected by the earthquake. These are the first such flights landing in Damascus, but they are part of a series of flights transporting assistance from the EU's own humanitarian stockpiles in Brindisi and Dubai to the Syrian people, in both government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas, via the mobilization of the European Humanitarian Response Capacity. In addition, 15 European countries have offered

in-kind assistance to Syria in response to the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism on 8 February.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1241

Social Inclusion

27-Beirut: The EU-funded MoreThanA-Job project holds its final Conference. Since its launch in December 2019, MoreThanAJob aims to foster dialogue and collaboration among social economy actors and public administrations to promote the social and labour inclusion of vulnerable groups in Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Greece and Italy. The conference concludes with several recommendations.

www.enicbomed.eu/projects/more-thanajob

EU-Palestine

28-Jerusalem: The EU contributes €82 million to UNRWA. Through this contribution, and in line with the EU-UNRWA Joint Declaration 2021-2024, the EU continues to provide vital, reliable and predictable support to enable the Agency to fulfil its mandate, protect and assist Palestine refugees, and play a stabilizing role in the region. The EU is the third-largest donor to the Agency. In the absence of a political solution to the conflict, the EU has become a key strategic partner for the Agency, supporting its efforts to help Palestinian refugees achieve their full human development potential, despite unprecedented challenges.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/

UfM

28-Barcelona: The main priorities and strategic orientations for the year are discussed in the UfM Member States' Senior Officials meeting, notably the upcoming launch of two grant schemes to fund projects on green jobs and trade, the presentation of the UfM Youth Action Plan and the holding of regional conferences and working groups on key issues such as energy and climate change, food security, disability, civil protection, youth entrepreneurship, digitalization and social economy, among others. They also discuss the upcoming ministerial

meetings on Urban Development, Trade and Higher Education.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/som-feb-2023/>

March 2023

Human Rights

13/14-Lisbon: The EU and Council of Europe launch the fifth phase of the South Programme "Protecting human rights, rule of law and democracy through shared standards in the Southern Mediterranean" for the period of 2022-2025. The launching event presents the objectives and new features of the fifth phase with a focus on the progressive establishment of a common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean. South Programme V introduces the provision of legislative support and continues to promote common standards as enshrined in Council of Europe conventions and to foster regional dialogue and cooperation.

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/south-programme>

Security

20-Brussels: The Council of Europe extends the mandate of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military operation in the Mediterranean – EUNAVFOR MED IRINI until 31 March 2025. The decision is taken in the wake of the Strategic Review of the operation carried out by the Political and Security Committee. Operation IRINI was launched on 31 March 2020 as a concrete contribution on the part of the European Union to the process set up by the international community to support the return to peace and stability in Libya. Operation IRINI's core task is to contribute to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya, established by UN Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011).

www.operationirini.eu/

Humanitarian Aid

20-Brussels: The EU and international donors pledge €7 billion in support of the people in Türkiye and Syria after the devastating earthquakes of February 2023. More than 60 delegations from

the European Union, its Member States and partners, including the UN, international and European financial institutions such as the EIB and the EBRD, and other relevant stakeholders meet in Brussels to mobilize support for the people in Türkiye and Syria and to coordinate the response in the affected areas in both countries.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1781

Water

21-Cairo: The EBRD and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) sign an advisory agreement to support Egypt in structuring and implementing public-private partnership (PPP) desalination projects, which will increase the supply of water in the country, particularly from sustainable, unconventional sources. The desalination project will help to ensure Egypt's water security, improve its resilience, mitigate the impact of climate change-induced freshwater scarcity and boost sustainable economic growth.

www.ebrd.com/news/2023/ebrd-and-ifc-support-seawater-desalination-and-renewables-in-egypt.html

Blue Economy

28-Barcelona: The UfM and the World Ocean Council (WOC) sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU details key avenues of collaboration to promote cooperation, strong engagement, stewardship and corporate responsibility on behalf of the business and investment communities in maritime and marine sectors and activities at Mediterranean level. Strategic cooperation will focus on – among other key areas – blue business development and entrepreneurship; blue skills, careers, jobs and employability in the activities of the blue economy in the Mediterranean; sustainable investments in the blue economy; and the blue finance process in the Mediterranean.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/mou-ocean-council-mediterranean-blue-economy/>

Cooperation

30-Cagliari: The first meeting of the Monitoring Committee (MC) of the Interreg NEXT MED Programme gives the operational start to a new cycle of activities and opportunities within one of

the largest transnational cooperation initiatives financed by the EU under the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) goal of the Cohesion Policy. With a budget of €253 million, Interreg NEXT MED's main objective is to contribute to a smart, sustainable, fair development for all in the Mediterranean area, through balanced cooperation and multilevel governance.

www.interregnextmed.eu/

EU-Lebanon

30-Beirut: The Commissioner for Crisis Management announces €60 million in humanitarian aid for the most vulnerable people in the country, including Syrian refugees and Lebanese people in need. The new EU humanitarian package will provide life-saving humanitarian aid, such as food assistance, cash support, education and health services, for those who need it the most. It will also help prepare for disasters and provide emergency responses.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_23_2026

April 2023

EU-Libya

2-Tripoli: The EUBAM Libya Border Management Unit holds a meeting with the Libyan Customs Maritime Department. The purpose of the meeting is to follow up a previous one after the evaluation of the information and requests submitted to the Mission to support the custom maritime agency. EUBAM Libya confirms the interest in cooperating with Libyan customs in the maritime domain and confirms that closer cooperation should be established during the next mandate. It is highlighted that the support will be structured in two phases according to short-, mid- and long-term needs.

www.eeas.europa.eu/eubam-libya_en

EU-Palestine

17-Jerusalem: The EU, France and Spain provide €26 million for the payment of social allowances to poor Palestinian families. For this payment, the European Union has more than doubled its usual financial contribution, providing €26.3 million, of which France has al-

located €8 million and Spain €1.5 million. The European funding is channelled through the PEGASE mechanism and pays the social allowances of the 70,108 selected families, which are verified by the PEGASE auditors to ensure their eligibility.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/eu-france-and-spain_en?s=206

Regional Integration

27-online: The UfM and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) co-organize the virtual UfM Conference on Regional Integration and Regional Value Chains. The conference focuses on two topics of utmost importance for the Mediterranean: economic integration in times of crisis and the implications of the ecological transition for regional value chains. The conference is part of a series of dedicated events, seeking to move from policy recommendation(s) to implementation after the launch of the first Progress Report on Regional Integration in the UfM Region.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/ufm-conference-integration-value-chain-transition/>

Regional Integration

27-Brussels: The European Commission and the EIB announce €18 billion of financing under Global Gateway, Europe's investment strategy for partner countries. This will boost investment in Global Gateway's priority areas – climate action, clean energy and connectivity – in Europe's partner countries around the world. These projects aim to help bridge the global climate finance gap and support prevention, adaptation and mitigation. The Global Gateway strategy is the EU's positive offer to partner countries in support of their resilience and sustainable development.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_2463

EU-Tunisia

27-Tunisia: The European Commissioner for Home Affairs – Ylva Johansson – travels to Tunisia. This visit is part of the EU and its Member States' broader political engagement with Tunisia and falls under the strategic partnership be-

tween the EU and Tunisia. The visit particularly highlights the importance of the migration partnership between Tunisia and the EU and the willingness for such a partnership to be deepened in cooperation with EU Member States. The two sides express a willingness to establish a stronger operational partnership on anti-smuggling, to strengthen existing schemes designed to support a more successful socioeconomic reintegration of returning Tunisian migrants and to establish a Talent Partnership to promote legal migration.

<https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu>

Youth

27-online: The UfM Working Group meeting on Youth engagement in Environment, Urban and Rural Development takes place online. The WG meeting convenes policymakers, thematic experts, and representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to discuss how to raise awareness among young people about the consequences of the massive urbanization faced by the Mediterranean region and how to provide them with the relevant circular economy skills that will facilitate their employability, while contributing to reversing this trend.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/working-group-youth-environment-urban-rural-development/>

May 2023

Energy

3/4-Barcelona: The UfM Energy Platforms holds its annual meeting with the participation of UfM Member States' representatives as well as regional energy sector stakeholders. The participants analyze the state of play of the implementation of the UfM Roadmap for Action on Energy. Moreover, the three UfM Energy Platforms (UfM Regional Electricity Markets Platform, UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform and UfM Gas Platform) share the implementation status of their respective work programme activities and present their work programmes for 2023.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/annual-meeting-ufm-energy-platforms-2023/>

Sustainable Development

4-Zagreb: The 3rd Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development of the UfM analyzes the progress achieved in fulfilling the objectives of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the sector, as defined at the previous two UfM Ministerial Conferences. In the afternoon, a high-level meeting is held to discuss the most urgent urban and housing challenges and relevant responses in the region, as part of the implementation of SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities).

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/fr/event/3rd-ministerial-conference-sustainable-urban-development-ufm/>

EU-Jordan

4-Brussels: The European Commission pays the third and final instalment of €200 million in Macro-Financial Assistance to Jordan. This payment concludes the Macro-Financial Assistance-III operation for Jordan, which amounts to a total of €700 million, of which €200 million has come from a package agreed in May 2020 to help Jordan mitigate the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. This financial support is an important demonstration of the EU's partnership and solidarity with Jordan.

https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-pays-eu200-million-financial-support-jordan-2023-05-03_en

Culture

11-Barcelona: The 43 UfM Member States launch the Mediterranean Capitals of Culture & Dialogue. This regional initiative seeks to promote and celebrate the Euro-Mediterranean's rich cultural diversity and shared heritage, as well as to foster mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue. The initiative will also provide the designated cities with the opportunity to highlight their Euro-Mediterranean identity while promoting their – own historical and cultural heritage, enhancing local action, as well as fostering a sense of identity across the region, while encouraging sustainable tourism through the promotion of culture. Local and regional authorities from the UfM region can submit their candidatures for the first edition, which will take place in 2025.

<https://medculturecapital.com/>

Finances

10-online: The INVESTMED project holds the first of a series of workshops, organized by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA) on access to finance for MSMEs and entrepreneurs in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia. This first workshop introduced "Crowdfunding as a Source of Finance." This session aims to present crowdfunding as an avenue for accessing finance for MSMEs. It will demonstrate the basic idea of crowdfunding and then dive deeper into the best practices for MSMEs in the CCI, blue and green economic sectors.

<https://south.euneighbours.eu/news/investmed-workshop-on-crowdfunding-as-a-source-of-finance-completed-successfully/>

Security

15-Marrakesh: EUPOL COPPS participates in the 16th Biennial International Conference of Women Judges with the participation of more than 1,000 female judges around the world. The purpose of the conference is to enhance female empowerment and the role of the judiciary in gender equality and to encourage relationships between women around the world. EUPOL COPPS supports and empowers Palestinian female judges and encourages them to create a female network in order to promote the exchange of experiences and best practices around the world. It is a great opportunity for Palestinian female judges to become members of the IAWJ, the International Association of Women Judges.

<https://eupolcopps.eu/single-news/779/en>

Food

16-Cairo: On the occasion of the EU-funded workshop series supporting the "Farm to Fork" (F2F) strategy put in place by the EU in the context of the wider "Green Deal," EU Southern Neighborhood policymakers and experts discuss strategies to combat the looming global food and climate crisis. Stakeholders from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Lebanon and Jordan express concerns regarding environmental degradation caused by agriculture and farming as well issues of food security, healthy nutrition and food waste reduction.

All participants agree that long-term actions must be put in place.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/eu-southern-neighborhood-policy-makers-and-experts-discuss-strategies-combat_en?s=95

Security

22-Brussels: The Council of Europe and its Member States have agreed on a new Civilian CSDP Compact. The Compact aims to strengthen the civilian side of the Common Security and Defence Policy and enhance the civilian missions' effectiveness, impact, flexibility and robustness. This will afford them greater efficiency in tackling current, emerging and future security challenges. The Compact will also allow the EU to more effectively face the current geopolitical environment marked by the return of war to Europe with Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

www.consilium.europa.eu/

UfM

23-Barcelona: The second UfM Senior Officials Meeting discusses the role, functioning and efficiency of the organization. The senior officials review the actions and activities planned for the year, notably the launch of the Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue, the Day of the Mediterranean, as well as the 8th UfM Regional Forum, which will take place in November. The UfM senior officials unanimously endorse a new cooperation project, "TouMaLi – Contribution of sustainable waste management systems in the tourism sector for the protection of marine ecosystems." This project aims to minimize waste volume from the tourism sector in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/som-may-2023/>

Investment

24/26-Barcelona: The UfM, in collaboration with ANIMA Investment Network, organizes a conference titled "Aligning investments with sustainability and corporate responsibility – The digitalization of impact measurement," with the support of the GIZ and EBSOMED. The conference offers an occasion to showcase several initiatives aimed at driving

private investments towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to exchange knowledge on the use of concrete tools to assess their performance in terms of economic, environmental and social effects.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/digitalization-of-impact-measurement/>

June 2023

Environment

5-Barcelona: On the occasion of Environment Day, the UfM calls for urgent action from all stakeholders to safeguard the delicate ecosystem of the Mediterranean. As a semi-enclosed sea and world tourist destination, the Mediterranean is particularly vulnerable to plastics, threatening Mediterranean species, ecosystems and human health. The UfM takes action to turn these challenges into solutions by supporting on-the-ground projects that identify plastic leakage hotspots and provide scientific evidence and recommendations to policymakers, as well as engaging stakeholders to develop solutions to plastic leakage and reduce usage.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/environment-day-2023/>

Tourism

5/6-Tunisia: RESTART MED! Project, co-funded under the EU's ENI CBC MED programme, organizes a sustainable tourism summit, "Scaling up climate-resilient sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean." The goal of the summit is to evaluate the feasibility of implementing effective measures for monitoring and adapting to the impacts of climate change, both on the physical composition and ecological functions of ecosystems and landscapes. The summit aims to contribute to the positioning of Mediterranean countries in the resilient sustainable tourism industry as places of biodiversity, committed to the protection of the environment in the face of climate change, while guaranteeing a competitive tourist offer on the world market.

www.enicbcmmed.eu/restart-med-sustainable-tourism-summit-scaling-climate-resilient-sustainable-tourism-mediterranean

Civil Protection

6-Rome: Euro-Mediterranean partners launch the new "Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made disasters in the EU Southern Neighbourhood countries – PPRD Mediterranean" programme. PPRD-Med will focus on building sustainable capacities of Partner Countries' civil protection institutions for disaster risk prevention, preparedness and response to disasters at sub-regional and regional level. The programme aims to increase the resilience to natural and man-made disasters in the Southern Neighbourhood countries and the Mediterranean region by reinforcing cooperation and partnerships between the EU and Mediterranean countries. This programme provides strong support to the UfM in civil protection and disaster risk management, given the increasing impact and scope of catastrophes across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/civil-protection-rome-2023/>

EU-Syria

15-Brussels: The EU organizes the Seventh Brussels Conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region. The Conference aims to reiterate the EU's commitment and support for the Syrian people and mobilize humanitarian and financial support to address the growing needs of the affected Syrian population – living in Syria and in neighbouring countries. It also aims to rally the international community's political and financial support to host communities in the wider region that have shown solidarity towards displaced people and refugees, such as Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, Egypt and Iraq. The conference brings together state actors, notably EU Member States, Syria's neighbouring states and third countries, as well as representatives from the United Nations and other international organizations.

www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/media-advisory-seventh-brussels-conference-supporting-future-syria-and-region-14-15-june_en?s=209

Water

19-Rabat: The UfM 13th Water Expert Group meeting takes place in Rabat to

review progress at national level in the implementation of the UfM Water Agenda, including the UfM Financial Strategy for Water. The meeting also examines the outcomes of the UNFCCC COP 27 and the UN 2023 Water Conference. The meeting reflects on the need to establish another UfM Water Ministries meeting. In that sense, it is agreed that the UfM would start a process of consultation with member states towards drafting a new declaration on water.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/13-water-expert-group/>

Economic development

16-Brussels: After more than five years of dedication, the final conference of the EBSOMED project shares the achievements, groundbreaking ideas and promising prospects of the project. EBSOMED aims to boost the Mediterranean Business Ecosystem, promoting inclusive economic development by enhancing the private sector organizations in the Southern Neighbourhood Countries. More specifically, EBSOMED will improve the overall management capacity of Mediterranean Business Support Organizations (BSOs) through enhanced services and quality standards.

<https://anima.coop/en/ebomed-closing-seminar-a-new-era-of-emerging-investment-opportunities-in-the-mediterranean-region/>

Agri-food

20-Seville: The final conference of the MedSNAIL project, entitled “Sharing experiences in the Mediterranean agri-food sector” presents the final results of the project and the experiences of its partners in their respective countries. The conference serves to present the methodology developed within the framework of the project, which is inspired by the “Slow Food” philosophy and models. In addition, the partnership signs the MedSNAIL Alliance, an open and scalable tool to ratify the commitment of those entities interested in strengthening and adding value to Mediterranean food chains.

www.enicbomed.eu/medsnail-promoting-mediterranean-slow-food-products-held-its-final-conference-sharing-other

Innovation

21-Málaga: The final conference of SME4SMARTCITIES project marks the end of four years of activities focused on facilitating the access of Mediterranean SMEs to the Smart Cities market, fostering collaboration and understanding between them and those responsible for innovative public procurement to develop technological solutions that truly respond to the current urban challenges. During the Conference, the main results of the project are presented: an online course, web platform, guides and business missions to support innovative and technological SMEs in the Mediterranean; as well as helping cities to be pioneers in innovation.

www.enicbomed.eu/sme4smartcities-final-conference-sheds-light-innovative-solutions-make-mediterranean-cities-smarter

EU-Libya

26-Brussels: The Council of the European Union extends the mandate of EUBAM Libya, the European Union Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya, for an additional two years, until 30 June 2025. EUBAM Libya will contribute in the next two years to enhance the capacity of the relevant Libyan authorities and agencies to manage Libya’s borders, to fight cross-border crime, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and to counter terrorism. The Mission will provide technical advice as well as capacity building activities at the operational and technical levels and projects, complemented, as appropriate and on a case-by-case basis, with specialized training.

www.eeas.europa.eu/eubam-libya_en?s=327

July 2023

Economic & Social Councils

5/6-Alexandria: The 2023 Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and similar institutions is dedicated to “Energy transition in the Euro-Mediterranean region.” The participants discuss the potential benefits of a successful North-South cooperation in the area of renewables and the increase in employment and better access to energy

in fragile regions. In addition, the participants also discuss the topic “Water scarcity and desertification” and learn about the EESC information report “Digital transition in the Euro-Mediterranean region.”

www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/concept_note_euromed_summit_2023.pdf

Sustainable Economy

6-online: The Interreg Euro-MED Mission: Innovative Sustainable Economy commences its activities with a webinar entitled “Strengthening governance for an innovative sustainable Mediterranean economy.” Partners provide an overview of the planned activities and the mission’s strategy for the coming years. The event also serves as an opportunity to introduce the joint roadmap, highlight synergies, and outline the expected roles of coordination bodies to ensure broader stakeholder engagement and a more significant impact on the governance projects of the mission.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/webinar-strengthening-governance-for-an-innovative-sustainable-mediterranean-economy-6th-july-online/>

EIB

10-Barcelona: The EIBMED Conference is resumed in a hybrid format after a break of a few years. The conference focuses on leveraging the EU’s Economic and Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbourhood and the Global Gateway strategy to enhance investments in critical infrastructure and regional value-chains. During the event, engaging discussions take place on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, economic integration and opportunities to boost investment. Two panels cover topics such as leveraging innovation and connectivity, addressing climate change and water security, and bridging the digital divide through digital investments.

<https://www.eib.org/en/events/eib-med-conference-2023>

Waste Management

10-online: The Mediterranean Dialogue for Waste Management Governance (Med4Waste) project launches the “The Med4ZeroWaste & Circular Economy Course.” The course is designed to em-

power individuals with the knowledge and skills required to make a significant impact in the field of municipal waste management. The course encompasses good practices and cutting-edge strategies in zero-waste strategies and circular economy in the Mediterranean region. The course is specifically tailored to cater to the needs of municipality staff and waste management stakeholders. www.enicbcomed.eu/projects/med4waste

Skills

12-Madrid: The UfM Co-presidency organizes the “UfM High-Level Meeting on Skills in the Mediterranean” in close cooperation with the UfM and relying on the expertise of the European Training Foundation and the Anna Lindh Foundation. In line with the European Year of Skills 2023, the meeting focuses on key priority areas, including investing and diversification of investments in skills to open up to more lifelong learning opportunities, supporting transitions (demographic, green and digital) and anticipating the future of work.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-high-level-meeting-skills-mediterranean/>

EU-Syria

14-Brussels: On 23 February 2023, the Council of the EU introduced an additional humanitarian exemption into the sanctions regime in view of the situation in Syria to facilitate the speedy delivery of humanitarian assistance, following the devastating earthquake that hit Türkiye and Syria. To continue responding in a timely manner to the urgency of the humanitarian crisis in Syria, and to keep facilitating the rapid delivery of aid, the Council decides to extend the duration of this humanitarian exemption for a further six months until 24 February 2024. www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/07/14/syria-eu-extends-humanitarian-exemption-for-another-six-months/

EU-Tunisia

16-Tunisia: The European Commission and Tunisia sign the MoU to implement the comprehensive partnership package announced jointly on 11 June 2023. The MoU covers five pillars: macro-economic stability, trade and investment, green

energy transition, people-to-people contacts and migration. It will be implemented through the various strands of cooperation between the European Union and Tunisia, following the relevant regulations and applicable procedures. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/european-union-and-tunisia-agreed-work-together-comprehensive-partnership-package-2023-06-11_en

Green Economy

17/18-Alexandria: The closing ceremony and final steering committee of the GIMED project is the occasion to review the project's impact and success, while evidencing the gaps and way forward for green entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean. From 2019 to 2023, GIMED has provided training and coaching to 450 entrepreneurs across its partner countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Italy, Palestine, Spain and Tunisia. The project also provided direct support to 28 start-ups and contributed to the creation of more than 80 jobs in the green and circular economy sector.

www.enicbcomed.eu/gimed-closes-its-project-having-supported-green-entrepreneurship-mediterranean

Economic Diplomacy

21-Rabat: The UfM and the Policy Center for the New South (PCNS) jointly organize a seminar on “Economic Diplomacy as a Lever for Regional Integration in the Euro-Mediterranean Region.” The aim of the event is for diplomats, experts and academics to share their views and knowledge with participants in order to develop a shared vision on how economic diplomacy can bring added value to the actions deployed by the Mediterranean countries and achieve the objectives of partnership and cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/seminar-economic-diplomacy-euromediterranean/>

EU-Lebanon

20-Brussels: The Council of Europe decides to extend the framework for imposing targeted restrictive measures to address the situation in Lebanon for an additional year, until 31 July 2024.

This framework, originally adopted on 30 July 2021, provides the possibility of imposing sanctions against persons and entities who are responsible for undermining democracy or the rule of law in Lebanon. Sanctions consist of a travel ban to the EU and an asset freeze for persons and an asset freeze for entities. In addition, EU persons and entities are forbidden from making funds available to listed persons and entities.

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/07/20/lebanon-eu-extends-framework-for-targeted-sanctions-by-one-year/

Civil Protection

26-Brussels: The wildfires, fuelled by dry weather conditions and high temperatures are posing a severe threat to lives, livelihoods and ecosystems across the Mediterranean. The EU steps in to reinforce fire-fighting in Greece and Tunisia. The two Mediterranean countries have activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Ten countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Italy, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Serbia) are contributing to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism's response to the wildfires in Greece. In total, over 490 fire-fighters and seven planes have been deployed to different areas of the country. Two firefighting planes from the resEU reserve hosted by Spain are being deployed to northwest Tunisia.

https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/news/wildfires-eu-provides-crucial-assistance-mediterranean-region-2023-07-26_en

August 2023

Agroforestry

8-Tal Amara: The final conference of the LIVINGAGRO project highlights the growing interest of Mediterranean agroforestry stakeholders in innovation and knowledge transfer-related issues with particular reference to multifunctional olive systems and grazed woodlands. Experts from Lebanon, Italy, Jordan and Greece present the implemented work and activities during the four years of the project's life, addressing various issues and challenges with final beneficiaries, namely farmers, entrepreneurs,

local administrators, researchers, private companies, policymakers and other stakeholders interested and involved in agroforestry.

www.enicbcmmed.eu/livingagro-closing-event-lebanon-highlights-its-contribution-mediterranean-agroforestry

Innovation

21/22-Sousse: The MED-QUAD project organizes a cross-border meeting around “The MED-QUAD project’s impact on the utilization of civic universities for conservation and water management in the Mediterranean.” The event provides an opportunity for interaction between academia, firms, local government and citizens. The main topic of focus are the results of the MED-QUAD for the relevant stakeholders from all the involved countries. The meeting transfers good practice and provides a valuable opportunity for attendees to network, share knowledge and explore potential partnerships with a diverse group of stakeholders.

www.enicbcmmed.eu/projects/med-quad

Tourism

31-online: The Cultural Routes for Sustainable Social and Economic Development in the Mediterranean (CROSSDEV) project ends after four years. CROSSDEV proposes a way to address the Mediterranean region challenges through the exploitation of local culture and heritage as assets for local socioeconomic development. The project sets up a cross-border tourism framework to enhance sustainable tourism policies, promote tourism-related business and develop community-led action plans. Notable among the numerous materials produced are: the “Hidden Mediterranean platform” and the book “Culture, history, environment and people to expand sustainable tourism in Italy, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.”

www.enicbcmmed.eu/projects/crossdev

Intellectual Property

31-Amman: The project, IPMED “Intellectual Property Capacities for Smart Inclusive Growth in the Mediterranean Region,” holds its closing meeting with the participation of a number of representatives of relevant stakeholders and

decision-makers in the Intellectual Property ecosystem. The IPMED project, through its partners in Jordan, Greece, Italy and Tunisia, has implemented different activities such as conducting a specialized and tailor-made training program in IP for more than 250 trainees. www.enicbcmmed.eu/ipmed-held-its-closure-event-about-intellectual-property-jordan

September 2023

Humanitarian Aid

12-Brussels: In response to the deadly 6.8-magnitude earthquake that struck central Morocco on the night of 8 September, the EU is releasing an initial funding of €1 million in humanitarian aid to assist the most affected people. This funding aims to support the relief efforts carried out by humanitarian partners in the country. Since the onset of the earthquake, the EU’s Emergency Response Coordination Centre has been following the situation closely and been in contact with the Moroccan authorities offering the EU’s full civil protection assistance. The EU’s Copernicus satellite system was also activated on 9 September to provide emergency mapping services.

https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/morocco-eu-provides-eu-1-million-humanitarian-aid-response-earthquake-2023-09-11_en

Humanitarian Aid

13-Brussels: The EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated to support Libya in the aftermath of the major flood that has left thousands of casualties. EU Member States have offered substantial assistance in the form of shelter items such as tents, field beds and blankets, 80 generators, food items, as well as hospital tents and water tanks via the Mechanism. The EU’s Emergency Response Coordination Centre stands ready to coordinate further offers of assistance. Furthermore, the EU has released an initial €500,000 in humanitarian funding to tackle the most urgent needs of people in Libya affected by the impact of Storm Daniel.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_4457

Humanitarian Aid

13-Brussels: As Libya’s needs rise dramatically, the EU is strengthening its support to the country by releasing €5.2 million in humanitarian funding. The funding will be channelled through EU humanitarian partners active in the country, enabling them to strengthen assistance with a focus on shelter, health, food, water, sanitation and hygiene, and protection. This new release brings total humanitarian funding allocated for the emergency to over €5.7 million. Furthermore, the European Union continues to provide in-kind assistance through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. So far, eight EU Member States have offered assistance to Libya via the Mechanism.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_23_4505

Women

20/21-Barcelona: The European League for Economic Cooperation (LECE) and IEMed co-organize, within the UfM premises, a conference entitled “Towards More Inclusive Economies: Advancing Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Mediterranean Region” to explore strategies for overcoming the economic barriers women face in the region and promoting women’s economic empowerment in the Mediterranean region. Through a series of panel discussions, the conference examines key challenges and opportunities in the areas of education and workforce participation, entrepreneurship, access to finance, legal and regulatory reform, and gender equality in the work environment. <https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/conference-towards-more-inclusive-economies/>

EU-Tunisa

22-Brussels: In support of the implementation of the MoU on a strategic and comprehensive partnership between the EU and Tunisia, the European Commission announces €60 million in budget support for Tunisia and an operational assistance package on migration worth around €67 million. The EU and Tunisia are committed to swiftly advancing on the implementation of the MoU, prioritizing actions in the field of migration, cooperation to crack down on smuggling

networks, as well as support for the voluntary return and reintegration of migrants to their countries of origin.

https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-announces-almost-eu127-million-support-implementation-memorandum-understanding-tunisia-2023-09-22_en

Human Trafficking

24/29-Barcelona: The second regional simulation on the referral of victims of human trafficking in the southern Mediterranean takes place under the title "Towards a victim-centred approach in criminal proceedings." The event brings together more than 100 participants and experts, including representatives of governments, judges and prosecutors, law enforcement, social and medical services, labour inspectorates and civil society. This simulation focuses on judicial proceedings in criminal matters, with an emphasis on the role of the justice sector actors.

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/>

Humanitarian Aid

29-Gaziantep: The European Union commits over €4 million to White Helmets in northern Syria. This marks another step in the EU's efforts to alleviate the devastating impact of the earthquakes that hit northern Syria in February 2023, which exacerbated pre-existing challenges in the region. The financial support from the European Union focuses on addressing the challenges faced by the affected communities in Aleppo and Idlib. The project aims to enhance community resilience through rubble management and infrastructural improvements, including water and sanitation networks in camps and local communities.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/syria/

October 2023

Forest

2/6-Barcelona: The Young Leadership Programme Mediterranean 2023 (YLP MED 2023) takes place, organized by the European Forest Institute in partnership with the UfM and dedicated to addressing the pressing challenges and opportunities associated with land

abandonment and forests in the Mediterranean region. The programme aims to equip participants with the scientific knowledge and essential soft skills needed to become effective and influential leaders, exploring the opportunities for sustainable entrepreneurship, jobs and biodiversity conservation and exchanging good practices.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/young-leadership-programme-mediterranean-edition-2023/>

Science Diplomacy

3-Barcelona: The UfM organizes the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Science Diplomacy aimed at bringing together the main stakeholders operating in the field of science diplomacy, most notably scientists and diplomats. The goal of this conference is to highlight the state-of-the-art science diplomacy in the Mediterranean, as well as the challenges and opportunities, and discuss the way forward as a community of practice.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/euro-mediterranean-conference-science-diplomacy/>

Innovation

4-Barcelona: The 29th Meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean Regional Platform in Research and Innovation takes place, aimed at monitoring progress on the four main pillars highlighted in the implementation plan for the agreed three R&I Roadmaps (health, Renewable Energy, Climate) as well as agreeing on the next steps. The event takes place after the regional stakeholders meeting for the co-creation of a UfM Knowledge Management and Communication Platform on Research and Innovation.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/29th-meeting-ufm-platform-research-innovation/>

Euromed Relations

9-Madrid: In the context of the celebration of the 2023 edition of EuroMeSCo's Annual Conference, the VI Euromed Young Researchers Forum is held. The Euromed Young Researchers Forum is part of the Euromed Young Researchers Lab, an initiative that aims to boost the research capacities of young experts

across the Mediterranean, give visibility and recognition to their work, strengthen exchanges and stimulate research on issues of common interest.

<https://www.euromesco.net/event/vi-euromed-young-researchers-forum/>

Euromed Relations

10/11-Madrid: EuroMeSCo holds its Annual Conference entitled "From the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to a Euro-Mediterranean Geostrategic Alliance." The event, hosted by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is an opportunity to reflect on how existing Euro-Mediterranean cooperation mechanisms and institutions could be adapting to a renewed cooperation of the EU with its southern neighbours to mitigate some of the socioeconomic consequences (including in terms of food security) of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, offering the conditions for win-win partnerships between equals.

<https://www.euromesco.net/annual-conference-2023/>

Cooperation

11-Marrakesh: The EIB pledges €1 billion over the next three years to Morocco's post-earthquake reconstruction programme, which will mobilize €12 billion by 2028. Funds will be used to repair damage from the earthquake and rebuild better, with a focus on resilient and sustainable infrastructure, leveraging the bank's resources and expertise. www.eib.org/en/press/all/2023-374-world-bank-imf-annual-meetings-eib-pledges-eur1-billion-for-morocco-s-earthquake-recovery-efforts

EU-Libya

10-Tripoli: EUBAM Libya and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation sign a MoU on joint cooperation. The Memorandum aims at strengthening cooperation and coordination between the EUBAM Mission and Libyan institutions in managing and securing Libyan borders and in fighting against border crimes and terrorism. This partnership also includes support for enhancing cross-border cooperation with Libya's neighbouring countries, including the Sahel.

<https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eubam-libya/>

Women

11/12-Tunisia: The 2023 edition of the UfM-UNIDO Women Business Forum addresses the pivotal role of women entrepreneurs in the MENA region amidst the emerging industrial and digital transformations. The forum discusses the impact of Industry 4.0 on women in manufacturing and related sectors, while also strategizing ways to empower women economically and foster their leadership skills in the Industry 4.0 era.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-unido-women-business-forum-2023/>

Social Economy

17-Barcelona: Over 80 social economy actors and entrepreneurs participate in the fourth edition of the UfM Social Economy Conference. The event focuses on two interrelated themes: promoting social entrepreneurship and the participation of women in the social economy. Attendees discuss best practices with the aim of unleashing the full potential of social economy entrepreneurship and facilitating the active engagement of women. Recommendations emanating from the conference will guide future actions on promoting this sector across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-social-economy-conference-2023/>

Humanitarian Aid

16-Brussels: In order to support the delivery of urgent humanitarian aid items to the Gaza population, the EU launches a humanitarian air bridge operation to Egypt to have humanitarian stock in place for its rapid deployment once access to Gaza is made available. The operation, conducted under the European Humanitarian Response Capacity, will facilitate the delivery of assistance to people in need in Gaza. Flights carry a total of 56 tonnes of humanitarian cargo, including medicines, shelter and hygiene kits. Additional emergency items from the EU emergency stockpiles are available and ready to be deployed to humanitarian partners.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/eu-second-humanitarian-air-bridge-flight-aid-gaza-reaches-egypt_en?s=95

Food Security

22/23-Cairo: The UfM, with the support of the GIZ, partnered with the League of Arab States, organizes the High-Level Conference on Food Industry for Food Security entitled “Towards More Resilient Regional Supply Chains and a More Sustainable Food Industry.” The conference brings together participants from across the Euro-Mediterranean region to discuss the current state of the food industry, strategies to enhance its resilience and pathways to foster sustainability. These issues have become particularly pressing given the global context of skyrocketing energy prices, staggering inflation rates and supply chain disruptions that have led to volatile prices and food shortages.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/food-security-resilience-and-sustainability-mediterranean/>

Urban Design

31-Barcelona: The “UfM Student Competition on Urban Design 2023: Urban Solutions to Climate Change in the Mediterranean” announces the winners. The competition has been conceptualized under the UfM Network of Schools of Architecture and Urban Design, to contribute to the international recognition of youth working on concrete projects in environmental and climate action through urban design. The jury praises the high quality of the project entries. The jury looks forward to evaluating the lessons learned from this first edition of the award and building on them to make the next iterations even better.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/urban-competition-results-2023/>

November 2023

Youth

6/9-Barcelona: The 3rd edition of the Mediterranean Youth Academy – MYA is co-organized by the UfM and the Mediterranean Youth Foundation for Development – MYF with the support of the GIZ. The mission of the MYA is to qualify and prepare selected young people from the Euro-Mediterranean area through interactive, bottom-up

training programmes focused on issues that are relevant to the region. The programme aims to promote awareness and involve youth in response to Mediterranean issues and challenges related to three thematic clusters: Climate Action & Justice, Social Inclusion and Youth Employment.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/call-3rd-edition-mediterranean-youth-academy/>

EU-Jordan

7-Brussels: During the visit of H.M. King Abdullah II from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Commission announces a substantial EU support package for Jordan worth €902 million (€402 million in grants and €500 million in loans by the European Investment Bank). The EU assistance package announced for Jordan includes: a package focused on improving education and technical training for youth; two new initiatives to promote private sector development and education; and investments to address the existing water shortage. The package also includes the adoption of a new programme for energy efficiency and promoting biogas production.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_5583

Environment

15/16-Brussels: The 7th Meeting of the UfM Task Force on Environment focuses on the 2030 GreenerMed Agenda, endorsed as a regional framework, and its three key priority axes: supporting the transition to a sustainable economy, reducing pollution and preserving natural resources. Participants engage in discussions relevant to upcoming COPs, such as climate, biodiversity and desertification, exchanging insights and exploring ways to enhance environmental progress in the region.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/7th-meeting-ufm-task-force-environment/>

Women

14-Barcelona: The UfM Regional Dialogue Platform on Women Empowerment aims to adopt the 2023-2025 Roadmap for the Implementation of the 5th UfM Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society and at the follow-up of the first-

ever Intergovernmental Monitoring Mechanism on Gender Equality.

<https://south.euneighbours.eu/news/ufm-regional-dialogue-platform-on-women-empowerment/>

Cooperation

14-Barcelona: After three years of work and €3.6 million invested in the project, the EU-funded INTECMED final conference is held in Barcelona. INTECMED results, among others, include the creation of cooperation links between 40 organizations from the four participating countries, including Chambers of Commerce, universities and research centres; mentoring 48 early-stage companies or organizations; and participation in 98 events across the Mediterranean. www.enicbcomed.eu/innovation-intecmed-culminates-its-final-conference-hosted-100-attendees-person-and-50-appearances

Investment

20-Cairo: The EIB opens its new regional hub in Cairo, to strengthen engagement and cooperation with private and public partners across the Middle East and North Africa. The EIB Global regional hub has been formally inaugurated at a ceremony attended by 150 Egyptian, regional and international political, business and banking leaders. The new regional hub builds on the permanent presence of the EIB in Cairo since 2002. The EIB Regional Hub is located alongside the European Union Delegation in Cairo. www.eib.org/

Social Dialogue

21/22-Marseille: The EC organizes the 5th UfM Social Dialogue Forum on behalf of the Union for the Mediterranean Co-Presidency. The Forum, held every three years, contributes to the development of a strong, independent and effective social dialogue, at the bi- and tripartite levels in the 43 UfM member countries. The event attracts around 80 participants and starts with two parallel bilateral North-South sessions of the employer and worker organizations, followed by common sessions on practice of social dialogue; green and digital transitions; active inclusion and social protection; eco-

nomie migration and brain drain and regional programming.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/social-dialogue-realities-prospects-mediterranean-region/>

Investment

28/29-Tunisia: The INVESTMED Project holds its final regional event, co-organized by lead partner BUSINESSMED, the IEMed and the EMEA. This event marks the end of the implementation of the work plans from 37 micro, small and medium enterprises and three business support organizations under the INVESTMED project. Investors from Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia and Europe are invited to listen to the subgrantees pitch their businesses after a year of INVESTMED financial support and training, to look beyond the project funds for their sustainability. www.enicbcomed.eu/projects/investmed

December 2023

Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue

5-online: The UfM and the Interreg Euro-MED programme launches MED Talks. The initiative promotes dialogue between Euro-MED and southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. The first MED Talks webinar is an opportunity to meet with Interreg Euro-MED to discuss and exchange Mediterranean challenges such as the green and blue economy, the protection of natural resources, the development of sustainable living areas and low-impact tourism. The webinar marks an occasion to contact the Interreg Euro-MED projects and participate in the various working groups, thematic activities, capacity-building sessions, networks, campaigns and other activities that are being organized.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/med-talks/>

Architecture

5/7-Tunisia: The UfM project “Traditional Building Skills in the South Mediterranean Region” holds its first country workshop. The project aims to identify and promote good practices in raising awareness, preserving and promoting vernacular architecture and traditional

building skills as a means to increase cultural embeddedness of time-honoured solutions and their climate adaptiveness, as well as to enhance a sustainable local economy and to create valuable and skilled jobs related to traditional materials, traditional techniques and heritage preservation.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/event/traditional-building-skills-south-mediterranean-workshop/>

Blue Economy

4-Dubai: At COP28, partners and donors involved in the Blue Mediterranean Partnership reinforce their support for developing the sustainable blue economy in the southern Mediterranean region. The parties involved sign a letter of intent to make their participation in the Partnership official and to make the Partnership operational for early 2024. The Blue Mediterranean Partnership aims to tackle the threats the Mediterranean Sea faces by coordinating the financing of blue economy projects in the Mediterranean and Red Sea regions, focusing initially on Egypt, Jordan and Morocco.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/blue-mediterranean-partnership-cop28/>

EU-Palestine

6-Brussels: The EU organizes six new humanitarian air bridge flights for Gaza and channels assistance for neighbouring countries. The Commission continues to scale up humanitarian assistance to respond to the ongoing crisis in the Middle East. During the month of December, the EU is planning to roll out six new humanitarian air bridge flights to get essential aid to people in need in Gaza. This brings the total supplies provided by the EU to over 1,000 tonnes, with 30 Air Bridge flights overall planned so far. Thanks to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the EU is facilitating the delivery of offers of assistance to Egypt from Sweden, Spain, Austria, Poland, Italy and Germany.

<https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/>

Energy

5-La Valletta: The Energy Regulators of the Mediterranean region gather at the highest level for their biannual General

Assembly meeting. The MEDREG members approve a series of important studies which distil good regulatory practices in the areas of natural gas, electricity, renewables and consumers, contributing to shaping common and stronger regulations in the region and providing the conditions for increased cross-border energy trade, needed to deliver on the decarbonization of the energy market and strengthen supply security. This General Assembly also approves a series of measures and mechanisms to tackle gas supply security and reinforce consumer protection. www.medreg-regulators.org

Anna Lindh Foundation

14/15-Istanbul: The Anna Lindh Foundation Final Head of Networks meeting gathers 53 participants from 28 Mediterranean countries to engage in fruitful discussions around the recent work of the ALF programmes, as well as the development of its upcoming communication initiatives. Additionally, key discussions take place on the engagement activities of the grassroots members of the ALF civil society networks, sharing success stories and effective contributions from their grassroots members. The meeting concludes with strategic

planning for the next ALF Forum and the expected network involvement. www.annalindhfoundation.org/heads-networks-meeting-istanbul-turkiye

Digital Transformation

18-Tangiers: The UfM Conference on Digital Transformation focuses on the role of digital transformation in promoting the green transition and developing enabling digital ecosystems in the region. The conference brings together a broad spectrum of partners and stakeholders from both shores of the Euro-Mediterranean region to exchange insights, experiences and best practices on the current opportunities and challenges with respect to unleashing the full potential of digitalization in the region. Recommendations emanating from the event will guide future actions on this priority area in the region. Experiences from Albania, Bosnia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Morocco and Spain are shared.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/digital-transformation-conference-2023/>

EU-Palestine

22-Brussels: The European Commission has adopted a €118.4 million assistance package to support the Pal-

estinian Authority (PA) as part of the annual allocation for Palestine in 2023. Through the EU's PEGASE mechanism, the new financial assistance adopted will contribute to the payments of the salaries and pensions of civil servants in the West Bank, the social allowances for vulnerable families, the payment of medical referrals to East Jerusalem Hospitals and support the administrative and technical capacity of the Palestinian Authority's institutions.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_23_6745

EU-Lebanon

21-Beirut: The EU announces New Support for Lebanon and has decided to allocate €205.5 million to address several priority areas to support the country's stability and recovery. The EU continues to support Lebanon in the enhancement of border management, by offering financial and technical assistance to align it with international standards. This will contribute to Lebanon's overall security and stability in the face of regional uncertainty and threats.

www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/