



UfM Higher Education Stakeholders' Meeting

Casa Mediterráneo, Alicante, Spain, 17 March 2023

CONCEPT NOTE

The UfM cooperation framework on Higher Education

Cooperation on Higher Education and Research has been one of the main priorities of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) since its establishment in 2008. While the 2007 Cairo Ministerial Declaration on Higher Education was developed outside the UfM framework, the UfM has been active on this field along three main axes: academic mobility, employability and quality of education, and cooperation through university networks, with the objective of building a common vision on university cooperation and academic mobility within the Euro-Mediterranean region.

In the framework of the Regional Dialogue on Higher Education, a Report on the Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Mediterranean was commissioned by the UfM and published in June 2021. It includes both country-specific recommendations and common themes for cooperation, with the aim of enhancing the internationalisation of higher education in the region.

A first UfM Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education

Several recent EU policy developments provide considerable momentum for the organisation of a UfM Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education:

- the New Agenda for the Mediterranean, adopted in February 2021, which attaches special importance to the field of education;
- the Communication on the European Education Area, seeking to strengthen international cooperation on education, including at regional level, to address existing and emerging challenges;
- the Digital Education Action Plan, fostering the crucial role of digital education;
- and recently (January 2022), the Communication from the European Commission on a European strategy for universities, which mentions several actions with direct impact in the UfM region, such as better relying on alumni networks, supporting consortia of worldwide leading universities to develop and implement Master programmes, or supporting transparent and fair recognition of third country qualifications.

The UfM Senior Officials agreed in October 2022 convening the first UfM Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education in 2023. This ministerial meeting should lay the bases for a renewed regional cooperation on higher education and constitute a powerful tool to give guidance to both policymakers and institutions by establishing clear priorities for cooperation. It should also acknowledge the achievements and developments of the past 15 years and affirm new commitments on the strategic importance of higher education for the development of human capital in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It will lead to a Ministerial Declaration supported by the 43 UfM Member States.

Presentation of the results of the Public Consultation in view of the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education

In view of the above, the Union for the Mediterranean launched a Public Consultation for interested parties in bringing forward cooperation in the field of higher education in the Euro-Mediterranean



region. The Consultation was open from mid-December until mid-February. The results of the survey will be presented on 17 March at Casa Mediterráneo, Alicante, Spain. The Stakeholder's Meeting is aimed at discussing the results of the Consultation so that the contribution of Higher Education Institutions and Networks may feed the Declaration to be adopted during the UfM Ministerial Meeting. On the previous day, 16 March, also at Casa Mediterráneo, a first UfM Higher Education Ad hoc Senior Officials' Meeting will be convened, to start preparing the Declaration.

Relevant documents

- [Cairo Declaration Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education & Research Area \(ufmsecretariat.org\)](https://ufmsecretariat.org)
- [The Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Mediterranean - Current and Prospective Trends - Union for the Mediterranean - UfM \(ufmsecretariat.org\)](https://ufmsecretariat.org).
- [EU proposes new Agenda for the Mediterranean \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)
- [Digital Education Action Plan \(2021-2027\) | European Education Area \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)
- [About the European Education Area | European Education Area \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)
- [Report on progress towards the achievement of the European Education Area](https://europa.eu)
- [Commission Communication on a European strategy for universities | European Education Area \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu).

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AGENDA

09.30 – 09.40

10'

Welcome & Opening Remarks

5 minutes each

- **Andrés Perelló Rodríguez**, Director, Casa Mediterraneo
- **Álvaro Albacete**, Deputy Secretary General in charge of Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean

09.40 – 10.00

20'

Presentation of the results of the Public Consultation in view of a 1st UfM Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education

- **Filip Van Depoele**, Deputy Director and Head of the International Cooperation Unit, Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), European Commission
- **Yoran Beldengrün**, Policy Consultant, SIRIS Academic

10.00 – 10.20

20'

Achievements and challenges of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of Higher Education since 2007 and the Euro-Med Declaration of Cairo

- **Mostapha Bousmina**, President, Euromed University of Fez (UEMF)
- **Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry**, President, Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI)

10.20 – 11.10

50'

Session 1. Looking at the future: Internationalisation, Governance, Digital Education

Speakers: 5 minutes each (20 minutes total) / Open Debate: 30 minutes

Moderator: **Itaf Ben Abdallah**, Senior Advisor on Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean

Internationalisation / Mobility:

- **Giorgio Marinoni**, Manager of Higher Education and Internationalization, International Association of Universities
- **Juan Rayón**, President, Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

Governance :

- **Blanca Moreno-Dodson**, Manager, Centre for Mediterranean Integration - TBC

Digital Education:

- **Carla Eddé**, Vice-rector for International Relations, Université Saint Joseph, Lebanon - TBC

Open Debate with all the participants

11.10 – 11.30

20'

Coffee break



11.30 – 12.15
45'

Session 2. Looking at the future: Education for Sustainable Development, Social inclusion and gender, Fundamental academic values

Speakers: 5 minutes each (15 minutes total) / Open Debate: 30 minutes

Moderator: **Giuseppe Provenzano**, Project Manager, Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean

Education for sustainable development:

- **Aravella Zachariou**, Chair of the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development - TBC

Social inclusion and gender:

- **Anastasia Zabaniotou**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, President of the Network of Mediterranean Engineering and Management Schools (RMEI)

Fundamental academic values:

- **Olfa Zéribi**, Director for Western Europe, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie

Open Debate with all the participants

12.15 – 12.35
20'

Wrap-up and suggestions for the future

Speakers: 6-7 minutes each

- **Amr Salama**, Secretary General, Association of Arab Universities - TBC
- **Ranwa Safadi**, Chief of Higher Education Representative, UNESCO - TBC
- **Marcello Scalisi**, Director, Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED)

12.35 – 12.45
10'

Closing Remarks

- **Álvaro Albacete**, Deputy Secretary General in charge of Higher Education and Research, Union for the Mediterranean

12.45 – 13.10

Press Conference (TBC)

13.10 – 14.30

Lunch

Master of ceremonies: **João Lobo**, Project Analyst, Higher Education and Research Division, Union for the Mediterranean

Working languages: English and French. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

Attendees participating in the open debates:

- **Germán Bernal Ríos**, Policy Officer International Cooperation, Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)
- **Mauve Carbonell**, President, Téthys Consortium of Euro-Mediterranean Universities



- **Giulia Marchesini**, Human Capital Senior Programme Manager, Centre for Mediterranean Integration - TBC
- **Hicham Lakhssassi**, Université Mohammed V- Rabat & Consortium Euro-méditerranéen Droit et Famille
- **Josep Maria Vilalta**, Director, Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI)
- **Michael Gaebel**, Director, European University Association (EUA) – TBC
- **Olfa Bouallegue**, Vice-President in charge of the International Relations Office, Université de Sousse - TBC

- **José Luján Alcaraz**, Rector, Universidad de Murcia - TBC
- **Francisco Oliva Blázquez**, Rector, Universidad Pablo de Olavide - TBC
- **Juan Romo**, Rector, Universidad Carlos III, President of Crue Spanish Universities – TBC

- **Naouel Abdellatif Mami**, University Setif 2, Algeria
- **Bassam Badran**, Rector, Lebanese University - TBC
- **Hmaid Ben Aziza**, Secretary General, UNIMED Tunisia
- **Francisco Matte Bon**, Rector, Università Internazionale di Roma, Italy - TBC
- **Abdelwahed Mokni**, President, University of Sfax, Tunisia
- **Kherieh Rassas**, Vice-President, University of Najah, Palestine
- **Carlogionanni Cereti**, Sapienza University of Rome – TBC
- **Hadeel Yaseen**, Director of International Relations, University of Jordan -TBC

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