Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

The Union for the Mediterranean promotes economic integration across 15 neighbours to the EU’s south in North Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans region.

Formerly known as the Barcelona Process, cooperation was re-launched in 2008 as the Union for the Mediterranean. It was an opportunity to make relations more operational with the initiation of new regional and sub-regional projects with relevance for those living in the region. Projects address areas such as economy, environment, energy, health, migration, education and social affairs.

Along with the 28 EU member states, 15 Southern Mediterranean countries are members of the UfM: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Syria (suspended), Tunisia and Turkey. Libya is an observer.

In 2012, against the background of the events in Southern Mediterranean and Arab world, the Council of the EU (FAC Conclusions of February 2012) decided that:

The High Representative will take over the Northern co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean in the format of Foreign Ministers Meetings;

The Commission will take over the Northern co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean for Ministerial Meetings that solely concern matters falling within areas of exclusive Union competence:

The EU External Action Service will take over the Northern co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean for Senior Official Meetings.

To date, the format provided by the bimonthly meetings of Senior Officials / Ambassadors is unique, especially with Israel and Palestine, Turkey and Cyprus, Balkans and EU countries, Countries of the Northern and Southern shores co-chaired by the EU and Jordan.

On the southern side, it was decided that Jordan would take over from Egypt to assume the co-presidency, as proposed by the Arab Group. The first Senior Official meeting to be chaired under this agreement was held in Brussels in September 2012.

The UfM is now a key forum for regional exchanges, as illustrated by the success of recent ministerial

An informal meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was co-chaired by Mrs. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy /Vice-President of the EU Commission, and H.E. Mr Nasser Judeh, Deputy-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Barcelona on 26 November 2015, the first of its kind since 2008.

The UfM has a number of key projects managed by the UfM General Secretariat based in Barcelona on its agenda:

- the de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, including coastal and protected marine areas;
- the establishment of maritime and land highways that connect ports and improve rail connections so as to facilitate movement of people and goods;
- a joint civil protection programme on prevention, preparation and response to natural and man-made disasters;
- several projects that explore opportunities for developing alternative energy sources in the region, such as the Tafila wind farm in Jordan and the Mediterranean Solar plan
- the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative, which supports small businesses operating in the region by first assessing their needs and then providing technical assistance and access to finance.

The EU provides substantial support to the UfM secretariat and contributes to over 50% of its budget.

See also

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