

## Areas - Transport & Urban Development

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### Focus on regional cooperation in the Mediterranean: five new projects labelled by the UfM

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- The Senior Officials of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) member states met for the sixth time this year in Barcelona. Five new projects promoting young people's employability, job opportunities, entrepreneurship, urban sustainable development and water management transparency were approved.
- The UfM Senior Officials approved unanimously the renewal of the mandate of Fathallah Sijilmassi as Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean for a second mandate of three years.



**Barcelona, 5 December 2014.** The Senior Officials of the UfM member countries approved the adoption of five new regional projects during their 6<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting this year, which took place on 4 December 2014 at the headquarters of the UfM Secretariat, in Barcelona (*find brief summary of each project below*). Additionally, one more project related to youth employability and entrepreneurship was presented with a view to its future UfM-labelling.

2014 has been the year to develop and accelerate the UfM project pipeline. The number of UfM-labelled projects has reached a figure of 29 and approximately 100 projects are currently under study by the UfM Secretariat in an effort to strengthen operational cooperation and provide answers to different socio-economic challenges in the region.

The year 2014 has also witnessed the holding of three UfM Ministerial meetings on Industrial Cooperation, Environment and Climate Change and Digital Economy, which took place on 19 February, 13 May and 30 September, respectively. Furthermore, two High-Level Conferences have been organised by the UfM Secretariat as a direct follow-up to Ministerial meetings held in 2013. The UfM High-Level Conference on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress was held on 26-27 March in Barcelona with the aim of identifying and potentially endorsing regional cooperation initiatives and projects in the field of women's empowerment. A UfM High-Level Conference on the financing of the future Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network (TMN-T) will be held on 10 December in Rome.

The Senior Officials of the UfM member states praised the UfM Secretariat's efforts and achievements in the promotion of regional cooperation and approved the UfM Secretariat's work programme and budget for the year 2015.

The UfM Senior Officials unanimously approved the renewal of the mandate of Fathallah Sijilmassi as Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean for three additional years.

#### **Brief Summary of the five new UfM-labelled projects:**

- ***“Mediterranean Entrepreneurship Network”*** seeks to support the creation of “Réseau Entreprendre” business associations in Morocco and Tunisia to provide mentoring to new-business starters with entrepreneurial potential. Through this project, experienced entrepreneurs will volunteer to personally mentor the new entrepreneurs for the first 2-3 years in monthly meetings. Financial support will also be provided through interest-free, unsecured loans, repayable over 5 years, allowing entrepreneurs to consolidate their equity capital. The associations are expected to contribute to the creation of more than 450 companies by 2017, 3,000 new jobs after 3 years of operation and approximately 5,000 jobs after 5 years of operation. This project model is promoted by Réseau Entreprendre International (REI) and has proved to be very successful in France as it has contributed to the creation of 7,600 companies and some 70,000 jobs since its launch.
- ***“MedNC – New Chance Mediterranean Network”*** is an accredited programme promoting the social and professional integration of young people currently excluded from the labour market, namely students who dropped out of school and unemployed graduates, with a particular focus on women (60%). The project's first phase will be implemented in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. This programme is based on an innovative training model inspired by the Second Chance Schools (E2C) teaching model. The project is promoted by the Office of Economic Cooperation for the Mediterranean and the Middle East (OCEMO), in partnership with the Second Chance School (E2C) of Marseille and the French Development Agency (AFD).
- ***“HOMERe – High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executives Recruitment”*** seeks to create an innovative international internship programme for high-profile young graduates across nine Mediterranean countries and targets companies with development prospects in the Mediterranean. More specifically, it aims to provide these graduates with meaningful first job positions through direct contact with local employers and in-house experience. The project will initially target Southern Mediterranean graduates and will be implemented in Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Spain, Morocco and Tunisia. It is promoted by the Réseau Méditerranéen des Ecoles d'Ingénieurs (RMEI).

- **“Sfax Taparura”** is one of the 12 flagship urban development projects selected during the project-identification phase of the Mediterranean Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI). Sfax is the most important industrial and commercial city in southern Tunisia. It is located on the Mediterranean coast and has suffered from significant pollution levels that have hampered its development. After the de-pollution of the northern coast of the city, the project includes the rehabilitation of its beaches and the creation of 420 hectares of land to extend the metropolitan area. The project is promoted by local and national Tunisian authorities.
- **“Water Integrity in MENA”**. Promoted by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), this project aims to improve transparency and accountability practices in water management in the MENA region by addressing poor governance structures; high water demand and low levels of trust among different parties sharing the same water resource; and limited institutional mechanisms for applying integrated water resources management principles, which is leading to chronic water stress in the region. The first phase will be implemented over a 4-year period in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.