

# THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PROCESS AND THE ROOT CAUSES OF MIGRATION

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Mobility of people has always been at the core of Mediterranean civilizations. Historically, this shared sea has seen civilizations meeting and mingling, spurring trade, new agricultural techniques and innovations. As migration is at the heart of the Euro-Mediterranean process, one has to reject the claim that movements of people in this basin may be defined as starkly as a security threat to the Mediterranean, as it has always been one of the engines of its development since the times of the Phoenicians, Magna Graecia, the Roman Mare Nostrum, and the Islamic Empires (from the Umayyads to the Ottomans), spreading languages, ideas and technologies.

At the other end, it is fair to assess that the recent worsening of regional crises, such as conflicts, environmental conditions, demographic changes, and economic and political transitions, have led to involuntary migration, bringing it in the limelight at both regional and national levels. While mobility of people has its positive outcomes in the region, it cannot be denied that refugees and involuntary migrants are among the most fragile inhabitants of the region, often exposed to significant hardships and in many cases, putting their host communities under further strain through additional economic, social and infrastructural pressures.

The positive potential offered by mobility in the Mediterranean requires also taking into account in concrete ways the underlying fault lines that force the inhabitants of the Euro-Mediterranean region (and neighbouring regions) to abandon their original communities in order to venture, often at great risk, across the sea or in the same shore, to another destination perceived as a safe haven.

## The Union for the Mediterranean's Vision

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), a unique institution including 43 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region believes that promoting regional stability, social development, and economic growth is a crucial way of addressing the challenges of migration and diversity in the host, transit or origin countries. This can be achieved by focusing on the promotion of human development, reinforcing regional integration and supporting sustainability.

In line with the Valletta Declaration on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation (2017), the UfM contributes to this Migration and Development approach by choosing to place youth employability, job creation, education and women empowerment at the heart of its agenda.

### Box 1: The UfM Roadmap for Action

Under the EU and Jordan UfM Co-presidency, the UfM Member States gave a strong political commitment to strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean by endorsing a Roadmap for Action at the second Regional Forum of the UfM, which took place on 23-24 January 2017 in Barcelona under the theme of “Mediterranean in Action: Youth for Stability and Development”.

This Roadmap endorsed the UfM operational methodology based on political fora, projects with a regional impact and regional policy platforms. The overall objective of this methodology is to address the three key interrelated priorities: regional stability, human development and integration.

The roadmap charts the way for the future of the UfM by identifying four areas for action:

- 1) Enhancing political dialogue amongst the Member States;
- 2) Ensuring the contribution of UfM activities to regional stability and human development;
- 3) Strengthening regional integration; and
- 4) Strengthening UfM capacity for action.

A sub-chapter titled “Mobility, migration and development” confirms the need for a global and balanced approach to such issues, building on existing international instruments. Addressing the root causes of the current refugee and irregular migration crisis is seen as essential to regional stability and therefore it calls for extending activities to regions particularly affected by migration-related challenges, consideration of actions on the drivers for mobility (such as competition for talent and education and research schemes). In synergy with the Valletta Summit Declaration and Action Plan, it calls the UfM to contribute by placing youth employability, job creation, education, women’s socioeconomic empowerment and the territorial dimension at the heart of its agenda ensuring regional dialogue, coordination and cooperation.

Finally, it considers the diaspora communities in the Mediterranean as assets for building bridges between the two shores.

According to the UfM Vision, creating decent jobs and fostering regional integration are ways of addressing some of the root causes. In fact, these factors would contribute to regional stability through development, in accordance with the UfM Roadmap for Action, which was endorsed by the 43 Foreign Ministers at the UfM Second Regional Forum (Barcelona, January 2017) as a way to contribute to a Positive Agenda for the Mediterranean.

At the same time, it is evident that migration is not a phenomenon specific to the Mediterranean, but a feature of contemporary global affairs. In 2015, 244 million people, or 3.3% of the world’s population, lived outside their country of origin

(UNPF). Migrant workers account for 150.3 million of the world's approximately 244 million international migrants (ILO, 2015). An unprecedented 65.3 million people around the world have been forced to leave their home. As such, strategies on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region should be mindful of the multilateral framework on refugees and migrants established by the United Nations and the European Union, while tackling some specific entry points related to the wider UfM Mediterranean Positive Agenda.

Like other multilateral Institutions, the Union for the Mediterranean is showcasing possible positive solutions to regional challenges underlying involuntary migration, in order to promote the development of cooperative efforts to address common issues. While the systemic challenges that lead to involuntary migration are spread across the region, it should be underlined that rural areas are particularly hard hit by some of them, such as environmental and climate change challenges leading to loss of income opportunities. The lack of proper sustainable development in such areas is adding a specific internal dimension to the topic of migration, as it forces rural people to move to cities both in their own countries and abroad, increasing pressures on infrastructures and scarce job opportunities thus making rural areas (and countries in general) less resilient to external shocks and more food insecure.

## **The international framework on migration**

### **United Nations framework**

The incorporation of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the United Nations System proves that the topic is being prioritised on the international agenda and migration is included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda recognises the contribution of migration to inclusive growth and global development and calls for access by all – including migrants – to life-long learning opportunities.

Some references to migration-related challenges in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- 4.B: Increased scholarships (student mobility);
- 1.5: Resilience to climate events and socio economic shocks;
- 8.7: End modern slavery and human trafficking;
- 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers including migrant workers, in particular women migrants;
- 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies;
- 10.C: By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%;
- 13.1–3: Resilience to climate hazards and natural disasters; and
- 11.8: Cities implementing integrated policies.

At the same time of the establishment of the SDGs, in September 2015, Member States gathered at the Summit on Large movements of Refugees and Migrants to

adopt the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, then endorsed by a resolution during the 2016 United Nations General Assembly. As a result of this increased focus on migration in the international arena, two related global compacts are to be prepared: the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The New York Declaration expresses the political will of world leaders to protect the rights of refugees and migrants, to save lives and address vulnerabilities, and share responsibility for large movements at a global scale, focusing on development and calls for improved governance of migration and large flows of migrants and refugees. The Declaration calls for global approaches and global solutions (Art. 7), including fighting the root causes of undesired migration. The Declaration recognises the contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development (Art. 4), and calls to work on the nexus between development, humanitarian aid and migration, including working across mandates and using both humanitarian and development funds. Improving self-reliance and resilience for both hosting communities and newcomers is a chosen approach to cover the immediate needs of displaced people while addressing the challenges faced by hosting communities.

## European Union framework

Since 1999, the EU Treaties established a common European policy of migration (Art. 79 TFEU) and asylum, including the European Common Asylum System (Art. 80 TFEU) along with the internal freedom of movement within the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (Title V TFEU). The external dimension of migration and asylum has always been a key element of the EU migration and asylum policy.

The EU has adopted the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) as a policy framework with significant scope for future migration governance and border control. The Approach comprises a complex and vast array of loosely associated policy and legal mechanisms, as well as a number of projects in countries of transit and origin. Mobility partnerships are a key tool of the Approach and have been prominent in the recent dialogue held by the EU on its migration and border management. The partnerships address a broad range of issues ranging from development aid to visa facilitation, circular migration programmes and the fight against unauthorised migration, including cooperation on readmission. The GAMM foresees four broad strategic priorities for which the EU should engage in its external action and policy dialogue and cooperation with third countries: 1) Organising and facilitating legal migration and mobility; 2) Preventing and reducing irregular migration and trafficking of human beings; 3) Promoting international protection and enhancing the external dimension of asylum policy; and 4) Maximising the development impact of migration and mobility.

The European Commission announced a Migration Partnership Framework, which builds on the GAMM and aims to foster the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration. Among its priorities, there is a commitment to assist the development of third countries to address deep roots of irregular migration. The new European Agenda on Migration is based on four pillars: reducing incentives for irregular

migration; border management; addressing the asylum crisis while reforming the European Common Asylum System; and a new legal' migration policy. The following key accompanying actions that focus on addressing factors contributing to involuntary migration or on facilitating mobility are noteworthy especially in the framework of reducing the incentives for irregular migration: Addressing the root causes through development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, making migration a core issue for EU delegations. In the framework of a new policy on legal migration: *Modernisation and overhaul of the Blue Card Scheme, a platform for dialogue with social partners on economic migration, stronger action to link migration and development policy.*

The Declaration accompanying the Valletta Summit on Migration (11-12 November 2015) calls for action to face migration as a challenge and opportunity with the guiding principles of solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility and a comprehensive approach that also includes: advancing legal migration possibilities; fighting root causes of migration; providing decent jobs and education to young people; and recognising the benefits of well-managed migration and mobility between and within the two continents.

It also includes an action plan and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, whose goals include:

- Establishing economic programmes that create employment opportunities, especially for young people and women, with a focus on vocational training and the creation of micro and small enterprises. Actions could particularly contribute to supporting the reintegration of returnees into their communities.
- Supporting basic services for local populations such as food and nutrition security, health, education and social protection, as well as environmental sustainability.
- Supporting improvements in overall governance, in particular by promoting conflict prevention and enforcing the rule of law through capacity building in support of security and development as well as law enforcement, including border management and migration-related aspects. Actions could also contribute to preventing and countering radicalisation and extremism.

The EU Global Strategy also calls for a more effective migration policy. The work on resilience will especially focus on origin and transit countries of migrants and refugees. It is recognised that this strategy would require cooperation with countries of origin and transit on common and tailor-made approaches to migration featuring development, diplomacy, mobility, legal migration, border management, readmission and return (EEAS, 2016).

## Entry points to the Mediterranean Positive Agenda

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership already acknowledged the role of migration in its Barcelona Declaration (1995)<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, the topics of fighting illegal migration and fostering links between migration and development were already included in the Paris Declaration (2008) as issues of common interest. Subsequently, in Marseille, the UfM Ministers of Foreign Affairs identified migration as a field of cooperation. Taking the lead in its strategic role in advancing cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the UfM currently streamlines its vision through different entry points leading to actions that deal with mobility and migration in a horizontal way.

Combined efforts on development (targeted funds, PPPs, development cooperation agencies), capacity building, conflict resolution and the promotion of respect for human rights in countries of origin and transit are indeed essential to address the root causes and drivers of migration (EP, 2015). This could fundamentally require reconsidering the traditional approach to development cooperation, as recognised by the European Commission (EC, 2016), for instance by considering a much greater role for private resources in affected areas, in addition to public ones.

In the 2017 Roadmap for Action, UfM Foreign Ministers charted the way forward for the UfM to tackle deep causes of migration and promote positive mobility aimed at spurring sustainable growth in the Mediterranean. While different actors in the region may have different roles and strategies in addressing the drivers underlying irregular migration, positive synergies among them could be established. A multifaceted regional strategy could entail a three-pronged approach: paths toward legal mobility (with a focus on circular mobility, such as scholarship and traineeship schemes), addressing the causes of involuntary migration by providing employment opportunities and improved conditions in origin areas (including climate change as an underlying cause), and inclusive reintegration of readmitted irregular migrants.

Multilateralism in the Euro-Mediterranean region can therefore have a significant role especially in addressing long-term drivers of forced population movement and in promoting positive legal mobility. The UfM strengthens this process by creating synergies and fostering projects spurring social and inclusive development, therefore mainstreaming migration in regional development and integration. Multilateral efforts aimed at tackling migration challenges in a multifaceted way may consider some possible entry points to expand their actions:

- *Strengthening regional cooperation*: Increased South-North and South-South cooperation can be a driver of structural growth, offering increased local opportunities as an alternative to economic migration.
- *Circular migration*: The establishment of schemes aimed at developing skills and integrating networks to create regional synergies may have a powerful effect in

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<sup>1</sup> - Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, 27-28 November 1995 ([www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/euromed/docs/bd\\_en.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/euromed/docs/bd_en.pdf)).

increasing the employability of students and young graduates, and in their re-integration in sending communities as a way of increasing the resilience of the latter.

– *Diaspora communities*: integrating newcomers in a fruitful way and exploiting the ability already established to act as a bridge between host and origin countries may prove to be a boost for integrating the region economically. In addition, this would reduce the sense of not properly belonging to an area, a condition often exploited in radicalisation processes.

– *Migration-prone areas*: A special focus should be placed on job creation in areas of high migration where impacts are mostly needed, such as rural areas and coastal communities, which are feeding into internal and external migratory flows, adding pressures to urban areas.

– *Youth Employment*: There is a need to identify special weaknesses for labour market inclusion and to create employment opportunities, especially for young people and women in local communities, with a focus on vocational training and the creation of micro and small enterprises.

– *Education and Research*: Improving skills for better employability, and encouraging the education and the private sector to work together are part of a two-pronged strategy. Additional actions could involve fostering research on causes of migration and its socioeconomic impact; promoting reliable data at regional level and contributing to a scientific and evidence-based migration policy dialogue.

– *Climate Migration*: Environmental disruption and climate change diminish resilience to external shocks, breed food insecurity and increase competition for water and land resources. As such, they are underlying structural conditions amplifying the effects of other migratory causes.

– *Instability, corruption, conflict prevention and post-conflict scenarios* pose additional challenges to development, as conflict disrupts economic production thus decreasing the community resilience already eroded by harsher environmental conditions.

## Strengthening regional cooperation

Promoting regional integration is a means of stimulating growth and thus fighting against poverty, especially in the southern Mediterranean where economic integration could be much more developed subregionally and regionally, as it is currently one of the least integrated regions in the world. A study commissioned by the UfM Secretariat<sup>2</sup> has indicated the following trade flow distribution in the Euro-Mediterranean region: 90% within the EU; 9% between the EU and its southern neighbours; and 1% between the southern neighbours. Further economic integration would spur economic development and provide new job opportunities for its booming youth population, which is a generational opportunity for structural growth.

The Union for the Mediterranean has been at the forefront in promoting regional cooperation and economic integration. As a practical example, in terms of infrastructure, it has endorsed the project “Motorway of the Sea (MoS) Turkey-Italy-Tunisia” with the aim of optimising freight transport, the logistics chain and the

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2 - Data reported in the *RoadMap for Action. The Union For The Mediterranean: An Action-Driven Organisation with a Common Ambition*, Barcelona, UfM Secretariat, 2017 (<https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/UfM-Roadmap-for-action-2017.pdf>).

connection of the different shores of the Mediterranean by offering a high frequency port-to-port Roll-on-Roll-off (Ro-Ro) service, which will positively contribute to the expansion of trade relations between UfM countries through a combination of Short Sea Shipping with other modes of transport (road and rail). Furthermore, it will enhance the global competitiveness of the Mediterranean by complementing and creating synergies with the existing Mediterranean transport system.

Furthermore, with the endorsed “Agadir SME Programme – Fostering SME competitiveness and trade in the Agadir Agreement member countries”, the UfM aims to reinforce economic integration and contribute to economic development, and income generation through SME-led growth in countries that are parties of the Agadir Declaration. Signed in Agadir on 5 August 2001, this Declaration calls for the establishment of a free trade zone (FTZ) between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Tunisian Republic and the Kingdom of Morocco. The Agadir Agreement establishing the FTZ was signed in Rabat on 25 February 2004 and entered into force on 27 March 2007. The UfM-labelled project aims to relaunch and increase economic integration between Agadir Agreement member countries through the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean rules of origin, to intensify trade exchanges and investments among Agadir member countries and between them and the EU by improving SMEs competitiveness and strengthening supply capacity. The project is also aimed at attracting foreign direct investment to Agadir Agreement countries and removing trade barriers and impediments to integration.

## Circular migration

Mobility fosters the Mediterranean positive agenda. Mobility and migration can be drivers for economic development when some conditions are met. This is the case of seasonal migration during agricultural harvests, educational mobility and the effects of remittances in strengthening resilience in impacted communities. It is important to highlight the positive outcomes of mobility, without minimising the risks associated to irregular migration.

Despite the fact that mobility is a driver of employability for youth, both Mediterranean shores are currently experiencing a young brain drain, which robs origin areas of talent needed for economic growth. By facilitating legal and orderly movement of individuals and creating the right incentives for returning, countries may achieve a skilled “return migration” that could prove to be the backbone of economic growth in hard-hit emigration areas through competences and capitals acquired while abroad. Fostering a mobility culture among students, entrepreneurs, academics and more generally skilled individuals, improving skills through business and employment-oriented training, recognising competences and creating incentives for circularity are important elements of a migration and mobility agenda.

Actions may entail the inclusion of mobility and migration in sectoral policy dialogue frames, e.g. the creation of scholarships and mobility platform, and related projects such as competitions for talent, education, training and research mobility schemes, and programmes related to regional diasporas. Whereas in some contexts illegal



migration may pose additional strain to host, transit and origin communities, as they may feel insecure about their identity or under increased economic pressure, regional mobility and especially circular mobility offer many positive outcomes.

In the spirit of supporting circular mobility with win-win outcomes to host and origin countries, the UfM is currently supporting the HOMERe project,<sup>3</sup> which promotes internship mobility between Mediterranean countries, and is predominantly aimed at high-profile students in their last year of study before graduation. The objective is to ease their transition from the academic environment to qualified entry-level roles in their own country – in a region where youth unemployment often increases with the level of education. In this project, internship mobility is used as a tool to combat the gap between the skills acquired at university and the needs of business entities, an issue identified as one of the reasons behind the high levels of youth unemployment in the Mediterranean (O’Sullivan, Rey and Mendez, 2011). HOMERe internships last for six months on average, and are structured with pre-determined tasks and responsibilities.

The programme provides help in the identification, preparation and mentoring of appropriately qualified students while the host companies are committed to allocating a tutor to their interns. The most innovative aspect of the project is that participating companies must consider employment opportunities in the intern’s country of origin after the successful completion of the internship. Nine Euro-Mediterranean countries are already currently involved in the project.

Mobility results in the mingling of cultures and religions. This may give rise to issues such as intolerance and fears, which have to be decisively tackled head-on. In this regard, one must encourage youth to embrace tolerance, diversity and pluralism. The UfM Roadmap has recognised intercultural and interfaith dialogue in the Mediterranean region as an important underlying dimension of all regional cooperation activities in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

## **Diaspora communities**

With their knowledge of origin and hosting countries, established communities of migrants could be employed as decisive actors in the transfer of assets and knowledge across the region. This could bring neglected communities to the centre of development and integration across the Mediterranean.

As individuals belonging to diaspora communities often have a comprehensive ability to move in very different countries, they could offer an untapped potential for economic and cultural integration, if more focused initiatives could empower their ability to straddle communities. Further actions would be required to harness their potential (e.g. portability of benefits, facilitated frameworks for mobility, building of binational business networks, etc.).

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3 - HOMERe: High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment (<http://ufmsecretariat.org/homere-high-opportunity-for-mediterranean-executive-recruitment/>).

In the framework of increased regional cooperation on handling returns, and complementing actions on circular mobility, it may be possible to draw inspiration for some interventions supporting diaspora communities in the context of the reintegration of returnees into their communities with increased skill and development capabilities. This would increase development in destination countries, especially concerning the creation of incentives for voluntary returns.

In the region, additional targeted educational and training programmes could be identified by appropriate stakeholders for future actions, in order to increase employability and the establishment of SMEs in destination countries.

### **Migration-prone areas**

Rural areas and remote coastal communities tend to be particularly hard hit by emigration. Challenges such as degradation of resources, pollution, climate change, and high youth unemployment are pressuring communities to leave their historical areas, diminishing their ability to achieve constant demographic renewal and increasing food insecurity in the whole basin, as it is in rural areas where agricultural communities provide sources of nutrition for cities and countryside alike. Remote coastal communities are strongly impacted by emigration. In these areas, youth people struggle to find decent jobs as environmental, social and economic challenges do not foster sufficient job creation. Diminishing fish stocks, pollution, youth unemployment and loss of traditional heritage are particularly threatening for coastal communities.

The Blue Economy, which offers a holistic approach towards a sustainable exploitation of oceans and seas, might be an effective tool to trigger positive economic, social and environmental development in Mediterranean local coastal communities. Through youth training and investment in targeted innovation and research, balanced between economic development and environmental sustainability, this approach indicates potential pathways for traditional sectors to become drivers of job creation in the most fragile and peripheral communities of the Mediterranean.

Recognising this opportunity, in 2015, the UfM Ministerial Declaration on the Blue Economy invited countries to formulate appropriate maritime strategies at sub-regional level. In this context, the “Initiative for the Sustainable development of the Blue Economy in the western Mediterranean” (dubbed West Med Initiative), built on the experience of existing multilateral process, such as the 5+5 Dialogue was welcomed. In October 2016, together with the UfM Secretariat, the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia encouraged an initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy sectors. The West Med Initiative was officially launched by the European Commission through a Communication and detailed Frameworks for Action on 19 April 2017 and then formally adopted, together with a governance structure, by the Ministers of the participating Member States as a result of the Informal Ministerial Meeting held in Naples on 30 November 2017.

The West Med Initiative will pursue increased cooperation on a variety of topics, among which: cooperation between coastguards; marine safety and response to marine pollution; strategic research and innovation; marine clusters development; skills development and circulation; sustainable consumption and production; spatial planning and coastal management; marine and maritime knowledge; biodiversity and marine habitat conservation; and sustainable fisheries and coastal community development.<sup>4</sup>

In a similar way, signed in 2017 by Mediterranean ministerial representatives from both northern and southern coastlines (Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Albania, Montenegro), the MedFish4Ever Declaration<sup>5</sup> aims to enhance the region's ecological and economic wealth considering that over 300,000 persons are directly employed on fishing vessels in the Mediterranean, and many more indirect jobs depend on the sector. Throughout history, cities have grown by welcoming migrants from rural areas. Having speeded up, today this process is also taking place at international and regional levels. Thus the two Mediterranean shores share common opportunities and challenges.

At the same time, Mediterranean cities are under increasing pressure from inbound flows. The Mediterranean region is characterised by one of the fastest urbanisation rates worldwide, with almost 60% of the population living in urban areas. Mediterranean countries are facing migration and refugee issues adding to the multiple challenges experienced by cities for their sustainable development. By 2030, the urban population will increase by an additional 22.5 million due to the persistence of rural-urban migrations and endogenous urban growth, increasing demand for housing, facilities and urban services thus putting existing infrastructure under additional stress.<sup>6</sup> Considering this framework, the Union for the Mediterranean and its Member States have decided to define a shared vision for sustainable urban development and to adopt a comprehensive and operational agenda on this topic. During the Second Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) on Sustainable Urban Development (Cairo, Egypt, 22 May 2017), the "Union for the Mediterranean Urban Agenda" was launched.

If urban areas are to become sustainable tools of integration and interaction for migratory flows, common structural challenges need to be addressed regionally with efficient urban planning and sustainable urban development. With regards to migration, the Agenda is aimed at:

- Strengthening the capacity and basic services of cities hosting migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons;
- Dealing with increased influx from rural to urban areas; and
- Enhancing cooperation between different levels of governance dealing with migration issues including at the international level.

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4 - Further information available at the UfM Secretariat (<http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/17-10-12-westmed-goals-brochure-en-web.pdf>).

5 - The MedFish4Ever Declaration (<https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/2017-03-30-declaration-malta.pdf>).

6 - Second Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) on Sustainable Urban Development, "Union for the Mediterranean Urban Agenda", Cairo, 22 May 2017 (<http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/EN-FINAL-SUD-Ministerial-declaration.pdf>).

## Youth employment

The lack of employment opportunities is a powerful driver of forced migration. New jobs are needed for the booming young southern and eastern Mediterranean population. Young people represent between 40% and 60% of the unemployed in the Southern Mediterranean (Kocoglu, 2014). In many countries in the region, NEET (young people who are “Not in Education, Employment, or Training”) rates are between 15 and 32%.<sup>7</sup> According to some estimates, by 2030, 34 million new jobs must be created just to maintain the current activity rate of the population, and 90 million jobs in order to employ every newcomer to the job market (Kocoglu, 2014).

While in some cases the public sector has offered an emergency valve, especially after the inception of the Arab spring, the bulk of new jobs will probably have to be provided by the private sector, with a significant potential contribution from agriculture and agro-food industry sectors. Public and development cooperation efforts could focus on promoting intelligent approaches for strengthening competition through a level-playing field (thus allowing efficient newcomers to establish their start-ups), on capacity building programmes to make local and regional industries more modern and sustainable, on bridging the gap between research and industry (especially in key economic sectors such as agriculture), on transition programmes from the informal sectors to the social economy, on involving more minorities, refugees and women in the local economy, and on incentivising the creation of transnational Mediterranean economic champions.

New approaches could also involve more private involvement and focus on entrepreneurship and other job creation methods. The removal of structural bottlenecks to investment in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and sustainable infrastructure should address some of the root causes of migration directly, given the high impact of such investments in terms of employment and inequality reduction. In order to scale up the impact of the private sector, the European External Investment Plan offers a sensitive support to the region, especially as its business development strategy aims to connect the Plan to regional needs and to areas prone to migration.

Regional efforts could focus on designing new actions concerning transit and hosting countries, in order to reflect the reality in many parts of the Mediterranean basin. Some areas with special development gaps, particularly rural areas of high emigration, may be identified for urban development and entrepreneurial action, including in the framework of return and resilience policies. Actions on this topic should be addressed in the framework of a regional dialogue, taking into account best practices and a flexible variable geometry principle.

## Education and research

Education is key in achieving sustainable development. In the region, trends show that this concept has been accepted: statistics for enrolment growth indicate that during the ten years between the two academic years 1998/1999 and 2007/2008, the

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<sup>7</sup> - European Training Foundation Data.

number of students enrolled in higher education in the South increased by 256%, according to the United National Development Programme (UNDP) (*Arab Knowledge Report*, UNDP, 2014). Despite this positive outcome, additional efforts are needed to increase the quality of education, with the aim of increasing the employability of young graduates, especially in North Africa, where they experience the highest level of unemployment among higher education graduates in the world, at 25% (UNDP, 2014; Eurostat, 2015). One of the reasons for high levels of unemployment for youth and the educated is a persistent gap between the skills acquired at university and the requirements of business companies. More than 32% of enterprises in some southern Mediterranean countries have identified labour skill levels as a major constraint to hiring (UNDP, 2014).

The UfM has been at the forefront of regional efforts focusing on employability. The Euro-Med University of Fes (UEMF, from the French acronym), a flagship project of the UfM, is a new higher education centre aiming to train a new class of Euro-Mediterranean graduates with appropriate skills matching regional challenges, with competences on renewable energy, water conservation and big data.

The UfM-supported project Mediterranean New Chance (MedNC) aims to promote a regional network of accredited orientation, training and professional integration centres to establish a shared and innovative teaching model in order to boost the employability of young people who have dropped out of school before obtaining a degree and of unemployed graduates. These pilot projects show practical ways in which education can be a tool for employment to young people. More generally, research and innovation also have the potential of further activating key economic sectors in rural migration-prone areas.

On a different note, migration and mobility are a changing reality that should be better understood. Research on migration and mobility and their impact at all levels should be promoted to identify main obstacles and possible incentives, and inform policymaking. The exchange of best practices and research on incentives for circular skilled migration (e.g. voluntary return) should also be promoted regionally. On the other end, promoting knowledge exchange on the socioeconomic impact of migration and mobility, and on paths for legal migration between institutions, the private sector and universities would be an important field of cooperation.

## **Climate migration**

Among the different aspects currently analysed on migration, more attention could be given to structural factors contributing to it such as climate change and environmental challenges including water scarcity and land pressure. Despite economic needs and conflict figuring among the primary effects of migration, the long-term effects of climate change on the environment are significant underlying drivers of migratory flows, through their complex secondary effects in origin countries (Werz and Hoffman, 2017). The environment shapes the conditions that lead people to migrate. The effect of increased hardship brought by climate change, especially in rural areas, diminishes resilience to external shocks and paves the way for future emigration. Climate change also increases competition for land and water resources among the

millions of young people entering the job market each year in the Mediterranean. Additionally, it increases the risk for disasters that further complicate it.

Neighbours of Mediterranean Countries are among those most affected by migratory flows. Diminishing natural resources due to environmental conditions systemically contribute to underdevelopment, preparing fertile ground for forced migration. Further increasing pressure, countries such as Nigeria and Mali experience some of the highest fertility rates globally. Water scarcity for instance is already severely impacting livelihoods in rural areas in the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa in a disproportionate way, given the basic outlook of agricultural subsistence in many areas. Climate change is also affecting rain patterns, making them more unpredictable and prone to droughts and seasonal flooding.

Other long-term environmental damage related to global economic activities, such as water and land contamination is also affecting the ability of these territories to sustain their population, causing strains and becoming a push factor in migratory flows. Desertification is also progressively eroding the ability of lands to provide for rural populations in many areas in the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa, damaging livelihoods and the ability of local communities to provide for themselves and continue living in their original areas. As a result of many of those factors, environmental changes are contributing to rendering entire regions unsuitable for human living, forcing settlements to migrate either regionally or inter-regionally. Such shifts have contributed to the emerging notion of “climate refugees”, coming to the fore especially in other regions.

Naturally, irregularities or increased harshness in weather patterns are also part of natural variations. Nevertheless, increased research and a stronger focus on building a strong research-policy nexus may help in understanding the impact of these changes on rural populations and making them more resilient. Although the fact that the relationship between environmental change and human response is complex and varied, low governance responses and scarce economic opportunities clearly contribute to situations where for many individuals, irregular migration becomes more attractive despite its associated risks. Implementing more climate change adaptation actions in Mediterranean countries to counterweight such effects on forced movements of people may be a possible solution.

As climate change has clearly become a priority in the region, many actors are strongly supporting cooperation and shared awareness in this field. The 2016 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP22), held in Marrakech, Morocco on 7-18 November 2016, represented a clear reflection of the prominence of the issue in the Mediterranean. During the Conference, the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Commission launched the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform (REEE) to promote progressive deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures. Further strengthening its positive role, the Union for the Mediterranean together with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) also launched a major Mediterranean project for renewable energy in the private sector, the innovative “SEMED Private Renewable Energy Framework

(SPREF)”, aiming to stimulate the development of private renewable energy markets in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan.

Many efforts on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Mediterranean revolve around water, considering its already scarce status in this region, and agro-food chains. Climate change will significantly increase pressure on scarce water resources in the region, with major consequences for human life, the environment and regional food security. Together with food and energy, it forms a strategic nexus that requires a transversal and transectoral approach in order to tackle these challenges and turn them into opportunities for employment, territorial development and commerce.

In this framework, the development of the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) initiative offers a practical answer to these shared threats. This new ten-year initiative, in close cooperation with the UfM, will develop much-needed solutions for a more sustainable management of water and agro-food systems. Funded by the EU research and innovation programme Horizon 2020 and by participating countries, PRIMA is intended to devise new R&I approaches to improve water availability and sustainable agriculture production in the Mediterranean, in order to tackle climate change, urbanisation and population growth.

## **Instability, corruption, conflict prevention and post-conflict scenarios**

Conflicts, violence, and natural disasters diminish the possibility of having proper working and security conditions, forcing communities to flee. Conflict situations pose additional challenges to food security as they disrupt rural agricultural and agro-food production, decreasing community resilience already eroded in the wider Mediterranean region by harsher environmental conditions. Conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstructions are therefore key strategies for addressing new potential sources of migration that would not occur otherwise. Possible actions include community-building practices, win-win initiatives promoting coexistence between local communities, and the involvement of local population in post-conflict efforts. Transparent procedures for allocating scarce resources (such as agricultural lands), development aid, economic permits and public jobs are essential to avoid mistrust between groups, which could lead to further violence and thus perpetuate insecurity in the area, prompting residents to move to safer areas. Corruption is to be regarded in the same way, as it misallocates much-needed resources.

Securitisation of borders may also decrease the resilience of local communities, as migration, especially temporary and informal South-South migration, used to be a key strategy for local communities to cope with food and environmental insecurities (Raineri and Rossi, 2017).

## Conclusion

While rejecting the narrative according to which migration is simply a securitarian challenge, as mobility has always been at the heart of the Mediterranean, we must recognise that the worsening of living conditions has forced an increasing number of people to move out of their origin areas. This is a movement occurring both from the countryside to urban areas (nationally and regionally) and from a country to another. This is at the heart of the deep causes forcing millions to attempt dangerous travels through unsafe areas.

This multifaceted regional challenge requires further cooperation in order to provide answers in a horizontal way by improving the local resilience of communities, spurring inclusive development and providing enough job opportunities for a booming young population. Many actions in the Euro-Mediterranean are already tackling such underlying conditions, by improving youth employability, boosting employment, improving adaptation to climate change and environmental challenges, tapping into the green and blue economy, increasing research and innovation in water-food-energy nexus and strengthening regional cooperation for the benefit of the whole region. Nevertheless, synergies among like-minded institutions and stakeholders must be encouraged and promoted.

Enhancing positive initiatives in order to boost common solutions to common problems is at the core of the UfM mission. In this regional framework, the UfM has mainstreamed its vision on mobility and migration by working for the Euro-Mediterranean region and its citizens in a horizontal way.

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