



CIHEAM at the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour

Press release

1-3 April 2019, Cascais, Portugal



In the Euro-Mediterranean region, youth unemployment is twice as high as adult unemployment. If we consider only the Southern Mediterranean shore, young people are even three times more likely than adults to be out of a job. Women continue to be underrepresented on the labour market due to persisting barriers and a remaining gap between legislative efforts and actual implementation.

With the aim to discuss these pressing challenges, the Ministerial Conference co-chaired by Marianne Thyssen, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, and Samir Said Murad, Ministry of Labour of Jordan and hosted by José António Vieira da Silva, Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal, in the presence of Nasser Kamel, UfM Secretary-General was complemented by two side-events, a Ministerial Policy Conference on *“Job, skills and opportunities for all”* and a Ministerial Meeting: *UfM side event “The employment of Mediterranean university graduates: Bridging the employability gap between advanced skills and markets”* for which the CIHEAM was a partner.

In parallel of these events, a bilateral meeting was held between the UfM SG, Nasser Kamel and the CIHEAM SG, Plácido Plaza, during which they exchanged on joint actions contributing to training, strengthening of capacities and job creation in rural and agricultural areas based notably on the mobilization of actors and stakeholders in the Mediterranean region.

Side-Event *“The employment of Mediterranean university graduates: Bridging the employability gap between advanced skills and markets”*

The side event was organized in parallel to the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour by the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), in partnership with *“Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit”* (GIZ) GmbH commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) and the CIHEAM.

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One of the reasons for high levels of youth unemployment in the Mediterranean is the persistent gap between the skills acquired at universities and the specific needs of businesses. Despite significant resources being invested in specialised training programmes, young graduates and researchers often face challenges in finding or creating meaningful job opportunities, increasing underemployment, brain drain and the waste of knowledge.

It is therefore essential to further bring closer the private and the higher education sectors for increasing the employability of graduates and researchers through an inclusive multilevel approach which takes into account higher education stakeholders, civil society, governments, companies, business accelerators, development institutions and the scientific community at large. In the opening of the side event, the Secretary-General Placido Plaza said *“At the CIHEAM, we are convinced that agriculture, fisheries and the sustainable development of rural territories are all key factors for long term security and stability in the region. Young Mediterranean graduates must play a central role in consolidating this momentum. We want to encourage them to invest in agriculture and fisheries, to strengthen their confidence and dynamism, to support them in their desire to change habits and codes, to support them in the implementation of technological and social innovation that will lead to the set-up of businesses and job creation.”* ([Introductory Address](#))

A message, that the CIHEAM will carry during its 12th ministerial meeting that will be held in Tunis on the 5 of November 2019 addressing the theme of youth empowerment as a lever for agricultural and rural development.

This side-event was an opportunity for the CIHEAM to present the [call for applications for a field research initiative for PHD students and young researchers](#) in the themes of “Food and nutrition security”, “Sustainable agriculture and rural development”, “Climate change mitigation”, “water and migration”, launched in partnership with the FAO. The objectives of this call are to:

- Link the academic work with the experience of a rural community and engage in knowledge exchanges with local farmers and producers;
- Provide a local host organization (i.e. Producer Organizations, SME, cooperative...) with specialized knowledge, disseminate research findings, promote new approaches for improving sustainable livelihoods and reducing rural poverty;
- Acquire practical skills to apply research findings in development-related field projects, engage with local communities and generate innovative solutions, embrace the digital transformation trends in agriculture.

This dedicated interactive meeting has been a venue for sharing best practices, highlighting standing challenges and offered practical recommendations on the employability of highly trained youth. Participants across the Mediterranean have contributed to a lively debate, enriching the

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discussion with their experience on the ground and suggesting areas for practical actions for possible follow-up. The CIHEAM was also rapporteur on the first session focused “University and job markets”.

[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT OF SESSION ONE](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT OF SESSION 1 and SESSION 2](#)

CIHEAM

Established in 1962, the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) is a Mediterranean intergovernmental organisation composed of 13 Member States (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey). As a key player in multilateral cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food, fisheries and rural territories, its missions revolve around four main objectives:



Protection of the planet by combating waste in all its forms including waste of knowledge and know-how;



Food and nutrition security by boosting sustainable agriculture and food;



Inclusive development by investing in new generations and fragile territories;



Prevention of crises and resilience of territories.

The CIHEAM Action Plan for the Mediterranean 2025 (**CAPMED 2025**) that falls within the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development of the United Nations is based on these four lines. The CIHEAM carries out its missions through the tools of specialised training, network research, cooperation, technical assistance but also political dialogue and partnerships.

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