



Union for the Mediterranean
5th REGIONAL FORUM
Building a stronger Mediterranean

25 YEARS 1995 - 2020
BARCELONA
PROCESS
Union for the Mediterranean

The future of Euromed Civil Society +25

24-25 November 2020
Online

REPORT



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



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Introduction



The year 2020 marked the 25th Anniversary of the launch of the Barcelona Process, which laid the foundations of a renewed regional partnership in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The Barcelona Process received a new impetus in 2008 with the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

The 25th Anniversary represented an important opportunity to further deepen the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with a look to the future and to increase the visibility and impact of cooperation across the Mediterranean region.

The Fifth UfM Regional Forum, held on 27 November 2020, was therefore a timely occasion for the UfM Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the principles of the Union for the Mediterranean and to reiterate their engagement in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue within the UfM framework.

On this symbolic year for Mediterranean cooperation, the member states decided to particularly celebrate people-to-people cooperation.

Indeed, since the inception of the Barcelona Process, civil society has been playing

a key role. Its contribution has been recognised by the signatories of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration as fundamental in the process of development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and as an essential factor for greater understanding and closeness between the people.

On 29 November and 1 December 1995, Barcelona hosted the 1st Euromed Civil Forum, where over 1000 representatives of Mediterranean civil society brought their ideas to the new framework of debate and cooperation offered by the new Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Since then, the Euromed Civil Forum has accompanied a number of EuroMed ministerial conferences.

In light of this historical role, as well as the renewed impulse given by the UfM to the link between governments and civil society, the 5th UfM Regional Forum offered an ideal opportunity to hold a forum to discuss in an open and participatory way the role of civil society in Euro-Mediterranean relations, as well as its action in addressing emerging challenges across the region, and the forms it will take in the years to come.

Presentation

VIRTUAL EXHIBITION

Showcase of 25 successful civil society initiatives that promote Euro-Mediterranean cooperation

25 successful initiatives of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation promoted by civil society actors in priority areas of action were selected to showcase people-to-people dialogue. These initiatives address issues from climate action, environment, and water to local development, social inclusion, job creation, and women and youth empowerment.

A virtual exhibition was developed to showcase the 25 selected civil society projects, with communication material and other visual outputs such as videos to present the projects in a vibrant and interactive way. The promoters of the projects were connected to their virtual booth during the event to exhibit their initiatives and answer the questions of the visitors.

PRE-FORUM

Working sessions - future perspectives on the role of civil society on the ground

On 24 November 2020, three working sessions were organised to explore in-depth the role of civil society actors and its per-

spectives in addressing the major challenges faced by the Euro-Mediterranean region, namely environmental and climate change, gender equality and social inclusion.

These sessions, animated by UfM partners particularly engaged with civil society across the region, gave an additional space to the 25 selected project promoters to discuss action on the ground, and drew operational conclusions discussed during the main event of 25 November.

FORUM

The future of Euromed Civil Society +25

On 25 November 2020, two panels were held, where key representatives of institutions promoting civil society across the Euro-Mediterranean region, along with prominent civil society actors, were invited to discuss in an open and participatory way the role of civil society in Euro-Mediterranean relations, take stock of the achievements since the launch of the Barcelona Process and explore the role it would play in the next 25 years.

WATCH THE FULL EVENT HERE



Forum

The Future of Euromed Civil Society +25



OPENING SESSION

Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement

H.E Nasser Kamel and H.E Olivér Várhelyi opened the Forum by stressing the significant contribution of civil society in the process of development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and as an essential factor for greater understanding and people-to-people cooperation across the two shores of the Mediterranean.

H.E Nasser Kamel recalled the impulse given by the Barcelona Process to civil society across the region, and later on, the action of the Union for the Mediterranean, which further reaffirmed the

political will of the Euro-Mediterranean partners to strengthen their cooperation through the incorporation of more relevance, visibility and concrete impact for the citizens of the region. Under this framework, the link between governments and civil society was consequently strongly reinforced.

Furthermore, H.E Olivér Várhelyi underlined the need of promoting civil society organisations as part of the response to the Covid-19 crisis, which has deepened the already existing fragilities and vulnerabilities across the Euro-Mediterranean region. He reiterated the European Union's support to civil society in partner countries, with the aim of contributing to their inclusive economic development, to environment protection, as well as to the creation of thriving communities.

PANEL 1 People-to-People cooperation – lessons learned from the Barcelona Process

Moderator

Michael Köhler, Deputy Director-General of European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations at the European Commission

Panelists

Elisabeth Guigou, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation

Blanca Moreno-Dodson, Manager of the Center for Mediterranean Integration, the World Bank

Ziad Abdel Samad, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Arab NGO Network for Development

Barik Mhadeen, Senior Researcher Human Security at the West Asia - North Africa (WANA) Institute

After recalling the central place recognized to civil society by the Barcelona Declaration, and its key achievements and successes in strengthening trust, dialogue and mutual solidarity across the Euro-Mediterranean region since 1995, participants called for a redefinition of the role, importance and impact of civil society today. The new and informal social movements that have emerged in the last years, as drivers of innovative solutions, need further recognition and support, as they are able to spur change and collective improvement.

Participants highlighted particularly the capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and community dialogue to generate policy recommendations for decision-makers and to create more efficient and sustainable socio-economic development. Indeed, civil society is often considered in the region as the least expected but at the same time a trusted actor in providing essential services and solutions within their respective communities. Furthermore, discussants exchanged on

the new ways of strengthening the connexion between CSOs, governments and local communities, emphasizing the importance of cross-sectoral and structured dialogue for the mobilization of resources on the ground and the enhancement of accountability, legitimization and credibility. These dialogue mechanisms can in fact prove extremely effective compared to traditional top-down and institutionalized approaches.

In light of this reality, these mechanisms should not be limited to relations between governments and CSOs, but also with other actors, notably youth organisations. Ensuring safe spaces for young people, adapting to their working methodologies and approaches, and offering them platforms of dialogue remains essential to tap into their optimism and enthusiasm and to produce a positive change in the region. Participants highlighted here the key role of youth in developing innova-

“ Civil society has been at the heart of the Barcelona Process since its very beginning. Today is the time to recognise and redefine its role and impact in the society once again.

—Ziad Abdel Samad

tive ideas, skills and know-how as main tools to address common challenges faced in UfM member states, such as inequality, women empowerment, water scarcity or climate change.

Speakers also urged to recognize and support the involvement of the private sector in civil society action, and stressed the need of building further partnerships with business actors and companies, in particular in the job creation sector.

Finally, participants stressed the necessity to pursue cooperation and dialogue with all the different regional actors to bring civil society at the centre of the regional agenda, as well as to increase political and financial support for CSOs, particularly in a context where socio-economic and environmental fragilities have increased due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Promoting intercultural dialogue in the EuroMed region – Presentation by the Anna Lindh Foundation

Moderator

Eleonora Insalaco, Head of Operations and Intercultural Research at the Anna Lindh Foundation

Panelists

Dr Nabil Al Sharif, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation

Josep Ferré, Director General of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) - Head of the ALF Spanish National Network

Fatima Zuhra Outaiss, Young Mediterranean Voices Leader - Morocco

Zeina Dbouk, ALF trainer of trainers on Intercultural Citizenship Education - Assistant Principal at Lycée Celestin Freinet-Bramieh - Lebanon



Youth voices matter because they are drivers of change and improvement, but we need to ensure that they have a meaningful say in decision-making for the region.

—Fatima Zuhra Outaiss

The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) co-organised a session on the promotion of intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean area, where it presented its reflections on the future of social and cultural cooperation across the region through the testimonies of actors that shared their direct experience on the ground as well as results of research carried out in the field of intercultural relations in the past years.

Participants recalled that the situation of intercultural dialogue in the Mediterra-

nean has worsened if compared to 1995, underlining the increasing complexity of the environment in which CSOs have to operate; one characterized by exacerbated inequalities, fragilities and recurrent crises.

They further highlighted the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences on pre-existing vulnerabilities and regional challenges, such as isolation and shortage of resources.

In light of this context, the discussants called for enhanced cooperation, renewed intercultural dialogue and reinforced inclusion, focused on diversity, creativity and resilience. Here, the capacity of civil society to achieve great objectives with limited resources can be of significant importance.

In view of tapping into this potential, the link between education and CSOs needs to be further reinforced, notably through the development of advocacy tools. In particular, experience shows that digital training gives concrete results in strengthening intercultural dialogue. Participants called therefore for a digital revolution in the education field, suggesting an increased use of digital platforms and tools for teachers, educators and trainers in the region, drawing upon the lessons learnt during and after the pandemic in order to adapt and use those new tools.

Moreover, speakers stressed the need to put youth and their empowerment at the centre of a regional policy change. They recognized the urgent need to build bridges and connections between young people of different cultures, as well as to amplify youth voices through proper innovative and result-oriented mechanisms.

PANEL 2
Future perspectives for civil society cooperation in the Mediterranean

Moderator

Senen Florensa, President of the Executive Committee of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Keynote speaker

Ouided Bouchamaoui, 2015 Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Panelists

Hajar Khamlichi, President of the Mediterranean Youth Climate Network

Mariam Khalaf, Project Coordinator at the Euromed Feminist Initiative

Guillaume Thureau, Director of the Spanish Association of Second Chance Schools E2O España

Since the launch of the Barcelona Process, new challenges have arisen throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region, threatening the stability, security and prosperity of the area and calling for reinforced cooperation.

Among these challenges, the high levels of socio-economic inequality and the pressing climate change emergency exacerbate fragilities within and among UfM countries. They reconfirm that the systems on which we depend, are not only increasingly interdependent, but also growingly vulnerable.

This reality, valid at a global scale, is nonetheless a more urgent one for the Mediterranean region, where conditions of exposure are further concentrated. The role of civil society, in the face of these challenges, seems pivotal.

This second panel tackled therefore the role of civil society in addressing emerging challenges across the Euro-Mediterranean, and the forms it will take in years to come. Keynote speaker Ms. Bouchamaoui showcased the important role played by civil society in Tunisia as a driving force in the establishment of a national dialogue and in bringing different actors together to discuss future cooperation. Additionally, she recognized as essential to unite civil society across all the Mediterranean, in view of addressing the pressing common challenges for the next years, such as climate change, gender equality and social inclusion.

Here, she stressed the importance of capitalizing on the common experiences and lessons learnt by civil societies in the Northern and Southern countries of the Mediterranean in order to develop common successful initiatives in the future.

Ms. Bouchamaoui underlined the relevance of governmental support for CSOs and their achievements, notably to provide them with basic freedoms, financial assistance and access to information. She further underscored the necessity to call upon public opinion to provide CSOs the necessary visibility in order to achieve their greater objectives for the region.

“

25 years are not enough. It is essential today to continue capitalizing on experiences, from both shores of the Mediterranean, and learning from each other to create impact on the ground.

Ouided Bouchamaoui | *Nobel Peace Prize laureate 2015*



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After presenting the conclusions of the Pre-Forum working sessions (see section below), participants agreed on the fundamental role of continuous consultation and involvement of CSOs in international fora and decision-making processes. Moreover, a systemic change and a renovated partnership and dialogue between the main regional actors must be provoked in order to both address cross-border challenges and better tackle the needs of the local communities.

CLOSING SESSION

Marisa Farrugia, Deputy Secretary General for Social and Civil Affairs at the Union for the Mediterranean

In her closing remarks, H.E Marisa Farrugia, commended the numerous ideas, contributions and suggestions provided during the sessions. She notably underlined the resilience and preparedness of CSOs in adapting to the challenging conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and in providing innovative and diverse solutions.

She closed the Forum by calling for a robust political and institutional support to civil society in view of reinforcing overall regional cooperation, essential to ensure the prosperity and stability of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Pre-Forum

Future perspectives on the role of civil society on the ground

Working session 1: Civil Society & Environment and Climate Change In partnership with ENI CBC “Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme”



Moderator

Martin Hebeil, Communication Manager at ENI CBC Med Programme

Rapporteur

Hajar Khamlichi, President of MYCN network

Discussants

Michael Scoullas, Chairman of the Mediterranean Information Office for the Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development, representing “Plastic Busters” project

Emad Adly, General Coordinator of the Arab Network for Environment and Development “RAED”, representing “Blue-Green Med-CS” project

Giulia Maci, Urban Specialist at the Cities Alliance (UNOPS), representing “Circular Economy for Food: Partnership for sustainable coastal cities in the Western Mediterranean” project

Inès Khalifa, Technical Manager at the Mediterranean Renewable Energy Centre, representing “Med-EcoSuRe - Mediterra-

nean University as Catalyst for Eco-Sustainable Renovation” project

During the working session on Civil Society & Environment and Climate Change, practitioners highlighted that CSOs are not mere consumers but providers of essential services, tangible impacts and concrete positive change for the communities, at local and regional level. Indeed, CSOs produce environmental wealth for all, by putting skills, expertise, valuable and highly qualified human capital.



National and regional policies should be reshaped, adapted and readjusted to the consequences of the pandemic, putting health and environment as core issues of the international agenda.

A stable investment in CSOs - moving from a project-based approach to a more global structured approach - would therefore contribute to enhancing collective environmental and natural resources.

Participants also recognized the need to revitalize a policy agenda focused on how to protect environment and tackle climate change, drawing upon the habits and lessons learnt during the pandemic.

They notably stressed the need for a cultural change focused on these objectives.

Participants discussed here how national and regional policies should be reshaped, adapted and readjusted to the consequences of the pandemic, putting health and environment as core issues of the international agenda. COVID-19 is an opportunity to put attention on better management of natural resources and increased environmental awareness at all levels (policy, business and local communities).

The capacity of the UfM in building consensus and federating interests of civil society, as well as in transforming results into regionally recognized good practices was deemed essential to facilitate and mainstream environmental transition into national policies.

Participants called for a UfM involvement in structuring projects where civil society can have a role and promote regional collaboration, and particularly proposed that the organisation investigates the possibility to design an online platform highlighting the efforts and achievements of CSOs on the ground and make this knowledge available to wider groups of stakeholders.

Finally, participants underscored the need to acknowledge the crucial help and support that CSOs can provide to governments and decision-makers through the sharing of data, reports, publications and scientific information. Here, they took the opportunity to stress that the support of the UfM to these publications and reports acts as a powerful acknowledgement through their endorsement at regional level.

They added that the political support of the UfM to projects at regional level – through the labelling process – gives a strong legitimization to the work carried out by CSOs and facilitates the awareness of national governments about crucial environmental issues to be tackled and existing approaches already developed.

Working session 2: Civil Society & Gender Equality

In partnership with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe



Moderator

Rocio Cervera, Deputy Executive Director of the North-South Center of the Council of Europe

Rapporteur

Mariam Khalaf, Project Coordinator at the Euromed Feminist Initiative, representing “Combating Violence against Women in the Southern Mediterranean Region” project

Discussants

Jaume Guardans, CEO of Ideaborn, representing “Forming Responsible Citizens” project

Kirsten Sutherland, Team member at ACPP Oriente Medio, representing “RUWOMED” project

Zahra Bazzi, Programs Director at the Arab NGO Network for Development, representing “MAJALAT” project

Following an exchange with projects tackling gender equality and women empowerment in the Euro-Mediterranean region, namely RUWOMED, Ideaborn, Majalat, and Combating Violence against Women in the Southern Mediterranean Region, the session on Civil Society & Gender Equality put forward the following key issues:

The fight for gender equality has particularly suffered within the Covid-19 context, not only because crises are never gen-

der-neutral and issues such as domestic violence or women economic empowerment have deteriorated, but also because in more general terms, civil society has lost further space of action.

The reduction of physical spaces because of Covid-19 restrictions, the delays in legal and bureaucratic procedures and the decrease of funding represent a concrete threat to the active role of the CSOs and to its final beneficiaries in the entire region.

Among the recommendations outlined during the session, three main priorities were underlined for years to come.

First of all, participants underlined that ensuring gender justice is more than ever interconnected with larger factors, notably cultural, economic and political ones.

There is therefore a need for policies and programmes that incorporate all these elements, and that are not only isolated actions tackling single issues on the ground. Ensuring social protection for all should be, for example, a main entry point for gender equality in the next years.

Second, capacity-building activities and projects should not only be addressed for women but for all the community – gender equality benefitting to the whole society’s wellbeing, and not solely to women. Gender issues are deeply rooted within cultures, and reaching equality needs a deeply-rooted work within each local context, with its specificities, as well as building trust, rather than pushing too much too fast.

Here, the practice of gender equality through concrete actions, rather than just pledging it, was highlighted to effectively implement it within communities. The example of education and informal training on gender-related issues in schools and youth organisations was notably underlined by the participants.

Finally, discussants also stressed the need for reinforced cooperation at local level and increased co-ownership. International cooperation appears as key to advance gender equality throughout the region; however, it needs to be coupled with a strong and balanced dialogue at the local level. The involvement of the local communities through extensive consultations in the production of public policies on gender equality will indeed increase the co-ownership and the legitimacy of civil society actions.

Consequently, cooperation with national authorities is fundamental to allow programmes and projects to act effectively. As much as international cooperation can support civil society action, building up legitimacy and trust with local communities remains essential for the development of action on the ground.



Gender issues are deeply rooted within cultures, and reaching equality needs a deeply-rooted work within each local context, with its specificities, as well as building trust, rather than pushing too much too fast.



Working session 3: Civil Society & Social Inclusion

In partnership with the Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement



Moderator

Astrid Desjobert, Programme Manager of MedNC at Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement

Rapporteur

Guillaume Thureau, Director of the Asociación Española de Escuelas de Segunda Oportunidad, representing “MedNC” project



With the right public and institutional trust and support, vulnerable populations would experiment their own solutions, and use their expertise, skills and tools to develop and foster legitimization and representation within society.

Discussants

Léo Vincent, Programme Manager at Réseau Méditerranéen des Ecoles d’Ingénieurs and President of HOMERe France, representing “HOMERe” project
Saed Quzmar, Madarat Center, representing “Youth Empowerment Program - YEP” project

Georges Karam, Institute for Development, Research, Advocacy & Applied Care of Lebanon, representing “TEC-MED” project

Gianluca Solera, Team Leader, representing “Med Dialogue” project

The third working session tackled the issue of social inclusion and CSOs’ direct action in local communities.

First and foremost, participants stressed the importance of changing perceptions about vulnerable people, especially young people, and of promoting and enabling civic participation and active citizenship for young generations. With the right public and institutional trust and support, vulnerable populations would experiment their own solutions, and use their expertise, skills and tools to develop and foster legitimization and representation within society.

Further to that, they underlined that civil society should not be considered a threat but as a resource instead, as it brings innovation, as well as flexibility and agile attitude in rapidly changing environments.

The discussants tackled here the importance of grass-rooted action: indeed, there are no “copy pasted” solutions that work everywhere. Starting from understanding the local realities and needs, experimenting solutions and implementing them locally first, as well as keeping a strong and key connection with all the local stakeholders is the only way to bring sustainable responses to social exclusion and inequality.

For that, participants stressed the need to ensure that civil society, local authorities and private sector work continuously together.

Finally, the session addressed the necessity of targeting systemic change through partnerships. Indeed, major challenges know no borders, and the Euro-Mediterranean region is a key area for generating alliances and cooperation. Here, digital tools, as well as mobility and cultural exchanges, open huge opportunities. International partnerships are therefore key to improve quality of action, as they bring other countries’ experience, resources and skills. Thanks to a right public support that up-scales efficient solutions, a systemic change can be implemented beyond local action.

Virtual Exhibition

In view of showcasing the resilience of the peoples of the Mediterranean, and their capacity to join hands throughout the years to make the region a more peaceful, stable and prosperous one, a virtual exhibition of flagship civil society projects was held in the margins of the Forum.

25 successful initiatives of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation promoted by civil society actors were selected in different priority areas of action, ranging from cli-

mate action, environment, and water to local development, social inclusion, job creation, and women and youth empowerment.

In partnership with ENI CBC Med Programme, this exhibition aimed at displaying people-to-people dialogue around the Euro-Mediterranean area, connecting initiatives, and building the ground for even stronger cooperation and partnerships in the years to come.

“ Let our shared belief in our dynamic, creative and vibrant Euro-Mediterranean region be the compass for a brighter future.

—Nasser Kamel, UfM Secretary General



4 Days | 25 Projects | +1,500 Visitors



MedCoast4BlueGrowth



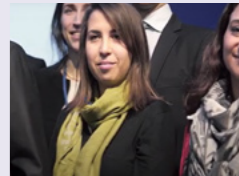
CROSSDEV - Cultural Routes for Sustainable Social and economic Development in Mediterranean



LACTIMED - Agro-clusters locaux pour des produits laitiers méditerranéens typiques et innovants



RUWOMED - Supporting and connecting rural women's traditional know how in the Mediterranean through the promotion of fair trade products



Mediterranean Youth Climate Network



Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change



Méditerranée Nouvelle Chance



HOMERe



Maharat MED



SOLiD-South Mediterranean Social Dialogue



Med-EcoSuRe - Mediterranean University as Catalyst for Eco-Sustainable Renovation



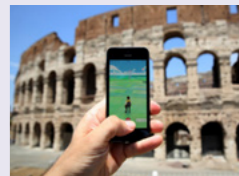
Plastic Busters



BlueGreen Med-CS



GMI - The Green MED Initiative



MED GAIMS - Gamification for Memorable tourist experienceS



BESTMEDGRAPE - New Business opportunities & Environmental suSTainability using MED GRAPE nanotechnological products



NAWAMED - Nature Based Solutions for Domestic Water Reuse in Mediterranean Countries



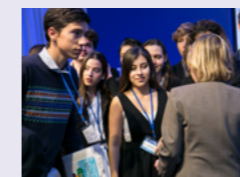
Forming Responsible Citizens



Med Dialogue



MAJALAT



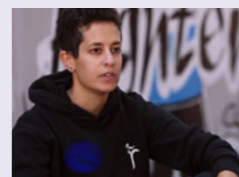
Youth Empowerment Program



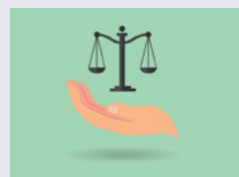
TEC-MED - Development of a Transcultural social-ethical-care model for dependent population in Mediterranean basin



COMMON - COastal Management and MONitoring Network for tackling marine litter in Mediterranean



Femmes d'Avenir en Méditerranée



Combating Violence against Women in the Southern Mediterranean Region

Visit the exhibition to learn more on each project



More on the UfM & Civil Society across the Mediterranean

Twenty-five years after the launch of the Barcelona Process, the UfM launched a campaign to make visible the importance of cooperation and development in the Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as to highlight a common Mediterranean identity. The organisation invited personalities from all walks of life – politics, institutions, sportsmen and women, musicians, writers, scientists, explorers – to share their personal journey in the Mediterranean and their hopes for the region. A region where they have grown up, lived and witnessed a unique history, culture and way of being.



Discover more in our publication:
Voices of the Mediterranean



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



GOBIERNO
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Y COOPERACIÓN