



Towards an ecosystem to foster the social economy in the Mediterranean

ESMED declaration after the 4th UfM Ministerial Meeting on Employment and Labour, Cascais (Portugal), 2nd and 3rd April 2019

The ESMED Network supports the call made by the Ministries for employment in the 43 States of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in favour of creating a Euro-Mediterranean ecosystem to unleash the full potential of social economy enterprises and institutions, as stated in the final declaration of the UfM Ministerial Meeting on Employment and Labour held in Cascais (Portugal) on 2nd and 3rd April 2019.

The aforementioned declaration establishes that:

The Ministers consider that Social and Solidarity Economy is not only an alternative way of delivering economic, social and environmental value, but also a smart way of unlocking resources, creating sustainable employment, and generating inclusive economic growth in the region. They call for promoting Social Innovation and creating an enabling environment for Social Enterprises to unleash the full potential of Social and Solidarity Economy. They acknowledge the role it will play in the context of the work program on UfM Industrial Cooperation and SMEs development.

The ESMED Network welcomes these conclusions as they acknowledge the key role that social economy plays in the development of the Mediterranean region. Likewise, ESMED strongly backs the proposal to create an enabling environment for the social economy between the southern and northern Mediterranean.

In this regard, ESMED wishes to recall the following:

- The specific chapter focusing on the social economy development within the work programme of the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Commission on industrial cooperation and SME development, together with the measures proposed by the EESC and Economic and Social Councils (ESC) on both sides of the Mediterranean to promote entrepreneurship and the social economy in the Euro-Mediterranean region, constitute the foundations on which to build a favourable cooperation environment.
- Strengthening the social economy in the Mediterranean contributes to fostering sustainable and inclusive economic growth, eradicating poverty, building up sustainable local development and improving labour market access and decent working conditions especially for women and young people, as well as for various categories of disadvantaged workers, as highlighted by the Economic and Social Councils in the northern and southern Mediterranean.

Therefore, **the ESMED Network and its members:**

- **Invite the UfM, the European Commission and the Member States** to establish and implement in close cooperation with social economy organisations and enterprises, a “roadmap” of measures to unleash the full potential of the Euro-Mediterranean social economy.
- **Are available for cooperating with all other social economy organisations and enterprises in the southern and northern Mediterranean region** to build a coordinated action in order to ensure the success of measures aimed to foster the social economy promoted by UfM, the European Union and other International Organisations committed to sustainable development in the Mediterranean.

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The Euro-Mediterranean Social Economy Network (ESMED)

ESMED Network is the reference institutional organisation for Social Economy in the Mediterranean. ESMED members are the main representative organisations of social economy in 9 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Spain, France, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Turkey.

Through its membership, ESMED represents more than 900,000 enterprises and organisations, more than 8 million jobs and more than 100 million associated members.

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