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**UNIMED WEEK
IN BRUSSELS**

10-12 APRIL 2018

3rd edition

**POST EVENT
REPORT**

UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS: objective and background

Objective

Education, research and innovation have an enormous transformational potential of our societies and they can play a crucial role in promoting equal opportunities, equal access, build employability, as the essential pillars for sustainable, inclusive and equitable societies.

The UNIMED WEEK in BRUSSELS seeks to propose a political reflection by the Euro-Mediterranean academic community on the relationships between the European Institutions and the Mediterranean region, offering an opportunity for evaluation of regional policies. Concurrently, the event allows to improve the knowledge and use of EU supported programmes in this field, thus facilitating the identification of further support needs. The UNIMED WEEK in BRUSSELS, at its 3rd edition, is an opportunity to reinforce our common platform for dialogue, raise questions, develop our skills and ability to deal with issues of common concern, and identify steps for future cooperation, in a constructive and positive atmosphere.

Background

Since the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference in 1995, the EU has stepped up its efforts to achieve our shared objectives of a common area of peace and stability, shared prosperity and social, cultural and human partnership. The international cooperation instruments made available by the EU have largely contributed to create bridges among peoples and societies, reinforcing scientific dialogue, cultural cooperation, trust, and mutual understanding. EU instruments play a crucial role in building stable and effective relations among European and Southern Mediterranean countries, and education is central to the efforts of the European Union. Academic communities, students, faculty members, administrators, have benefited from a wide range of programs promoting cooperation, mobility, research, capacity building.

The activities undertaken by the Euro-Mediterranean academic community show the value of encouraging and supporting this work, while also seeking more synergies in the light of the current multifaceted dynamics and challenges. UNIMED is strongly committed to play a major role in the region, integrating and synergizing key initiatives in research, education, and innovation, as well as in supporting the political dialogue. Over the past 27 years, UNIMED has been engaged in small and large-scale initiatives to promote Euro-Mediterranean academic cooperation, contributing to the scientific, cultural, social and economic cooperation.

Full program

[The program is available here](#)

Key figures

75	PARTICIPANTS
3	DAYS OF EVENTS
16	COUNTRIES
23	UNIVERSITIES
36	SPEAKERS
2	SESSIONS AT EU COMMISSION
1	SESSION AT EU PARLIAMENT

The UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS event was attended by 75 participants from 15 countries, including 8 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain) and 8 extra-EU countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey). In particular, this event was attended by representatives from universities (chancellors and their deputies, academics, project managers, and so on) and associations linked to the academic world and the press, representatives of the European and international institutions, embassies and politics, and of international companies.

23 universities participated in the event: Cyprus was represented by the University of Cyprus, Egypt by the University of Alexandria, France by the Universities of Rouen and Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Iraq by the University of Mosul, Italy by the Universities of Ca' Foscari, Pavia, Bologna, UNINT, Siena, Pisa and Bari, Jordan by the University of Petra, Lebanon by the Lebanese University and the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Libya by the University of Tripoli, Portugal by the University of Évora, Spain by the University of Granada, Syria by the Arab International University, Tunisia by the Universities of Carthage, Manouba and Sfax, Turkey by the Universities of Bogazici and Istanbul Aydin.

The following non-academic Institutions participated in the event: Organisation for Security and cooperation in Europe, Womenpreneur, Lifelong Learning Platform, Search for Common Ground, Campus France, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, DAAD/HOPES, CIMEA and APRE.

UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS working sessions:

10 April 2018

Meeting with the Directorate-General for Research & Innovation (DG RTD)

11 April 2018

Meeting with the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)

11 April 2018

UNIMED Seminar: The Role of Higher Education in Crisis contexts

12 April 2018

Meeting with European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

12 April 2018

Meeting with the European Parliament

10 April 2018

Meeting with the Directorate-General for Research & Innovation (DG RTD)

The meeting with the Directorate-General for Research & Innovation (DG RTD) saw the crucial participation of Ms Maria Cristina Russo, Director for International Cooperation: “We at DG Research and Innovation stand ready to support UNIMED with the aim to have more collaboration with researchers from the Southern Mediterranean”. During this third edition, Maria Cristina Russo continuously stressed the need to enlarge research horizons towards the Mediterranean countries searching for more partnership and improving the quality of scientific cooperation.

In this sense must be interpreted the non-scheduled participation of Moroccan Ministry of Higher Education, His Excellency Mr Saïd Amzazi, who participated as guest speaker during the day and addressing a speech towards the audience concerning the importance to further improve scientific cooperation among Universities in the Mediterranean region and recognizing in this process the importance to rely on a structured wide network as UNIMED.

Session participants benefited also from very detailed presentations concerning key activities of the DG Research & Innovation and the opportunities for funding and further cooperation with universities across the Mediterranean region. The session focused on the focus on issues such as Migration, BlueMed and Food & Water:

- Mr Angelo Riccaboni, President of PRIMA Foundation, presented the PRIMA initiative presenting open and forthcoming calls of the initiative and explaining PRIMA governance and procedures in order to favour the participation of South Mediterranean countries. By illustrating PRIMA Annual Work plans, Riccaboni went deeply into the presentation of 3 Main Thematic Areas showing opportunities for participants in the fields of Management of Water, Farming Systems and Agro-Food value Chain.
- Ms Angela Liberatore, Head of Unit ERC Executive Agency, explained opportunities in the framework of ERC granting schemes and encouraged Southern Mediterranean Universities in finding quality partnership for a better and greater exploitation of these schemes in order to enhance the participation of non-European researchers.
- Ms Raffaella Greco Tonegutti, Migration and Mobility Policy Office from DG Research and Innovation, gave an overview about Migration related activities by analyzing the EU research agenda on Migration and by focusing on Societal Challenge 6 – Europe in a Changing World: Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies
- Ms Marta Garcia-Gato, on behalf of Ms Marta Iglesias, from Marine Resource Unit DG Research and Innovation, focused her presentation on the BlueMed initiative which has the aim of Boosting Blue Growth in the MED

After DG Research and Innovation, UNIMED members and cooperating institutions took the floor to present their activities on the aforementioned topics. The first speech was done by Ms Marta Laranjo, Senior researcher at University of Evora when she explained aims and functioning of the newly launched UNIMED SubNetwork on Food and Water having the aim of bringing together research centres, university departments, faculties, academics, scholars and independent researchers that work in the same field. After Ms Laranjo was the turn of Ms Paola Mazzucchelli from EUREC, presented the 5TOI_4EWAS project and the results of NEXUS approach in the Mediterranean region with particular regard to Living Labs experience.

Finally, Mr Raniero Chelli – UNIMED EU projects coordinator, illustrated the UNIMED's agenda to improve the research dimension in the South Mediterranean on capacity building by focusing on four priorities for the UNIMED's future activities in this regard:

- 1) More structured involvement of Research Centres;
- 2) Linking Capacity Building and FP projects;
- 3) Promoting Research in Socio-economic disciplines as a means to increase impact;
- 4) Define, together with our stakeholders, important missions concerning the Mediterranean and Middle East countries.

11 April 2018

Meeting with the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)

A whole session of the UNIMED Week was dedicated to share ideas and best practices between UNIMED representatives and the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) about the programmes Erasmus + and mobility projects.

The proceedings were opened by Mr Graham Wilkie, Deputy Head of DG EAC International Cooperation Unit, who highlighted the importance of the European programmes. Mr Wilkie together with Ms Claire Herrmann, Policy Officer of DG EAC, gave then an overview about the programme Erasmus+.

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Organisations wanting to participate in Erasmus+ may engage in a number of development and networking activities, including strategic improvement of the professional skills of their staff, organisational capacity building, and creating transnational cooperative partnerships with organisations from other countries in order to produce innovative outputs or exchange best practices. The benefits for involved organisations include an increased capacity to operate at an international level, improved management methods, access to more funding opportunities and projects, increased ability to prepare, manage, and follow-up projects, as well as a more attractive portfolio of opportunities for learners and staff at participating organisations.

Erasmus+ is divided in different key actions. Key Action 1 - Learning mobility of individuals; Key Action 2 which is designed to develop the education, training, and youth sectors; Key Action 3 - Support for policy reform- that aims to increase the participation of young people in democratic life. Furthermore, there are also Jean Monnet programme focused on teaching, research, and policy debate on the EU and its policies and the Sport action, designed to develop and implement joint activities to promote sport and physical activity, identify and implement innovative activities in the field of sport, and manage not-for-profit events to increase participation in sport. Finally, Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions have been mentioned as valid tool of mobility for researchers at all stages of their careers.

Then, Ms Elena Palavrova, EACEA - Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture, took the floor to illustrate The "Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme" that supports higher education cooperation between countries in Africa. The scheme aims to promote sustainable development and ultimately contribute to poverty reduction by increasing the availability of trained and qualified high-level professional manpower in Africa. The programme's objective is to improve the skills and competences of students and staff through enhanced mobility between African countries.

Then a specific panel was addressed to the UNIMED's participation in Erasmus+.

Prof. Mussari, University of Siena, presented two UNIMED projects dealing with governance of the higher education system (UniGov project and SAGESSE project), before presenting the main objectives of both and their expected results, prof. Mussari explained the importance to have a good governance system in the higher education that means to acquire several dimensions related to a major autonomy (from financial to academic), a better strategic planning and a more efficient management of the HE system. He gave some examples by mentioning the UniGov project that seeks to support the modernisation, accessibility, and internationalization of HEIs in Palestine, through the creation of an enabling environment to adopt decent governance, management and accountability practices; the establishment of a clear governance framework, including well-defined and clear mission and goals and of an effective governance and management structures; improvement of autonomy, accountability and of links with different stakeholders (i.e. improve participation) in strategic planning and development activities (this will reduce the gap between recent graduates and the industry).

Prof. Mussari presented also SAGESSE that by bringing together all the 13 Tunisian public universities and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, aims at modernizing the Higher Education system in Tunisia by strengthening its quality assurance system, governance mechanisms and results based funding. SAGESSE is a structural and national project that will aim to accompany the Tunisian HEIs in their reform process of getting major autonomy and a more efficient management of the system. Mr Marco Di Donato, UNIMED project manager, took the floor explaining the efforts of UNIMED and of the other Universities partners in managing the refugee crisis in inHERE and RESCUE projects. The main specific objective of RESCUE is to help the Partner Country Universities in structuring an effective response to this problem, by creating *ad hoc* units (the Refugee Student Operational Support Unit – R-SOS), whose mission is to structure specific services supporting the refugee students in resuming their academic training path.

inHERE aims at responding to the refugee crisis in Europe strengthening knowledge sharing, peer-support and academic partnership among Higher Education Institutions on initiatives and resources aimed at facilitating integration and access of refugees in European universities.

Ms Silvia Marchionne then took the floor, UNIMED project manager, who together with Dr. Khalil Abboud, Director of the Career Center of the University Holy Spirit of Kaslik (Lebanon), illustrated the engagement of UNIMED concerning the employability and the entrepreneurship as in RESUME project that aims at enhancing and reinforcing the role and potential of HEIs in the development of employability in the Mediterranean countries by adopting a transversal entrepreneurial mind-set at the HEIs and by opening and structuring the dialogue among the universities, the enterprises and the policy makers. Ms. Marchionne presented the main results achieved during the almost three years of the project namely a RESUME syllabus on entrepreneurship course that has been adopted by the 6 HEIs partners and delivered to their students, by mentioning the agreements that the career centers are signing with the enterprises and by informing the audience that an international start-up competition will be organised in next September where all the Southern countries students will have the opportunity to pitch their business idea at international level with students from Italy, France and Spain. Dr. Abboud presented the benefits that his institution, USEK, is getting from the RESUME project in terms of capacity building for the staff leading the career center, the opportunity to network with international partners and to better improve their skills in collecting surveys and doing statistics and analysis to evaluate the professional insertion of the students in the labour market. Finally, Ms Cristina Stefanelli, UNIMED Senior Project Manager, presented the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange which is a groundbreaking project enabling youth in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to engage in meaningful intercultural experiences, as part of their formal or non-formal education. This programme aims to expand the reach and scope of the Erasmus+ programme through Virtual Exchanges, which are technology-enabled people-to-people dialogues sustained over a period of time. Sustained communication takes place between individual and groups who are geographically separated, with the support of educators or facilitators. Ms Stefanelli then mentioned also the project OpenMed that fosters the role of universities as knowledge providers not only to their on-campus students but also beyond the walls of institutions, especially towards disadvantaged groups. During this session the role of UNIMED of improving both the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation and among the Arab countries, was highlighted.

Ms Valentina Manzato of University of Bologna then took the floor focusing on some adjustments to the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility for the South-Mediterranean Region in order to better

improve this action. She suggested some adjustments regarding the students mobility, such as reducing the minimum duration of student mobility period (from 3 months to 1 week) in order to concentrate learning activities in a reduced timeframe (seminars / study visits and field trips) and extending the deadline for the end date of their mobility.

Furthermore, in order to be effective, it is necessary to increase the capability of certain destinations/HEIs in Partner Countries to guarantee the reciprocity. Finally, UNIMED proposed to the DG EAC officials the idea to have regional clusters meeting organised according to the different topics in order to create more synergies and form of collaboration among the projects dealing in the Mediterranean region on the same topic by enhancing then the guarantee to an impact in the institutions and not only, also on a national and regional level.

11 April 2018

UNIMED Seminar: The Role of Higher Education in Crisis contexts

Syria, Libya, Iraq. The refugees and IDPs challenges, the Universities autonomies, the financial crisis, the terrorists threats. Universities in the MENA region are facing un-precedents challenges and are nowadays under a heavy pressure from political, social and economic point of view. Nevertheless, Higher Education Institutions are continuously playing a crucial role as social facilitator and represent a space for dialogue and debate and can be identified as economic engines for the development of the country as well as the region.

For this reason in the 2018 edition of the UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS, together with its partners UNIMED decided to dedicate a specific workshop focusing on Higher education in crisis contexts moderated by Italian Journalist and ISPI Senior Consultant Mr. Ugo Tramballi.

The first speaker was Mr. Obay Said al-Dewachi, the President of Mosul University. He presented, with photos and statistics, the destruction operated by ISIS of his University and his city and showed the audience the future strategies of Mosul University in order to rebuild local infrastructure and provide to local students the opportunity to come back to their studies. On top of that, Mr. Al-Dewachi strongly encouraged visits to the University of Mosul by European delegates and other Universities present in the audience and see with their eyes the amount of damage suffered by city infrastructures but mostly important city population. Under ISIS, the university life conceptions change dramatically with regard to the people around the university and the conceptions of the students who witnessed the crimes and atrocities.

Secondly was the turn of the University of Tripoli President, Mr. Nabil Enattah. According to Enattah views Higher education institutions in these contexts can contribute significantly to: stabilization and securitization, peace building, state building and drive reconstruction efforts being the main reliable institutions in a crisis context such as the Libyan one. Universities in Libya are facing several problems but are continuously providing education avoiding any interruption even if, most of the times, University of Tripoli is overloaded with students coming from other Universities and under a heavy pressure because of the presence of IDPs.

Finally, Mr. Sulaiman Mouselli from Arab International University in Syria tried to illustrate the future of Syrian Higher Education Institutions in the context of the country's future and forthcoming months. He tried to identify areas for urgent intervention asking to set up programmes that can boost HEIs academic staff teaching methods & digital skill, strengthen linkages between HEIs and business and industry, address the presence of IDPs integration in higher education and war psychological consequences.

Representatives from European Commission and international stakeholders promptly reacted to the three guests presentation. The first one was Mr. Nadim Karkutli (Manager of the EU's Trust Fund for Syria) who exposed the roots of crisis in the Middle East and North Africa Region and analyzed the different strategies the European Commission is putting on the table with the MADAD Fund in order to contribute to alleviate the sufferings of Syrian refugees. On behalf of Mr. Colin Scicluna, Mr. Alar Olljum from the EEAS (External Action Service) explained in details the EU's response during these

years and towards the several crisis in the region, especially after the Arab Spring. A “practitioner point of view” was finally given by Mr. Carsten Walbinger from DAAD and Director of HOPEs project and Mr Marcello Scalisi, UNIMED Director. Both agreed on the needs to have a better and deep knowledge of these contexts, the need to have a more detailed definition of their needs and actual constraints. Only by acting with a solid state of the art and by guaranteeing its constant update, it is possible to concretely help international organizations and stakeholders to better identify priorities and redirect future programs for a more effective impact and a stronger sustainability. Last but not least it was the turn of Ms Helena Barroco, Secretary General of the Global Platform for Syrian Students presenting a [video about the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies \(RRM\)](#) and debating about how to intervene in the region doing, according to RRM slogan: more, better, faster.

12 April 2018

Meeting with European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Following its commitment to interact with an ever-wider network of decision-makers, UNIMED met for the first time with the European Economic and Social Committee.

The meeting, focused on the theme of cooperation between the EESC and the Mediterranean, was opened by Maria Helena de Felipe Lehtonen from Group I, and saw the participation of three members of the Euromed follow-up committee: Henri Malosse, Ozlem Yildirim, and Dilyana Slavova, President of the External Relations section of the EESC. The speakers emphasized the need for clearer and more frequent dialogue, and highlighted the importance of the Mediterranean region. This prompted a response from UNIMED Secretary General, Professor Hmaid Ben Aziza, Olfa Benouda Ep Soud, President of the University of Carthage, and Nabil Enattah, President of the University of Tripoli.

Eleonora Insalaco from the Anna Lindh Foundation in Egypt then proceeded to present the organisation, its commitment to cooperation in the Mediterranean region and its role as regional reference for intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean area. She went on to illustrate the main strategic pillars of the institution: the intercultural trends observatory, the Erasmus virtual exchange, the intercultural dialogue academy and networks connect. The possibility of cooperation between the Anna Lindh Foundation and UNIMED were also highlighted.

Finally, during this session EECs confirmed its interest in collaborating more and more with UNIMED as proven by its participation to the conference on employability in the framework of the RESUME project organized by UNIMED in collaboration with UpM and ETF on 8th May 2018 in Barcelona.

12 April 2018 Meeting with the European Parliament

“Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts are key instruments to build more autonomous persons who are able to tackle the unprecedented challenges they will face” as in the past edition of the UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS. As happened in 2017, also in 2018 Universities representatives gathered at the EU Parliament in order to stress the absolute importance of enhancing scientific cooperation by refusing a homogeneous perception of the reality and at the opposite by underlining the leading role of Universities in promoting Human Rights through the teaching of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts.

Common values, shared identities and new cooperation paths. All the participants to the Parliament Session agreed on the fact that more has to be done in this direction. The role of Universities in the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea is of utmost relevance to overcome false myths, stereotypes and fight against racism attitude promoting research paths that can really serve society interests and practically contribute in easing social tensions.

Migration, taken as one of the leading examples by the speakers, must be read under a different light, searching for positive aspects of and considering it as a real added value rather than a menace for European values and culture. As underlined during the speeches, we must (re)search for common roots by (re)discovering and recognize that we, as European, have the same complex identities as the “others” on the other side of the Mediterranean sea. That we have, as European, complex identities composed by a common history, shared knowledge and historical exchanges of ideas.



QUOTES

“Higher Education should be in the agenda from day one of crises, not only as a humanitarian issue but as a development issue” - Helena Barrocco, Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies

“One of the main problems of the University of Tripoli is the recognition of certifications for internally displaced people” - Nabil Enattah, President of the University of Tripoli

“Two of the main challenges of Syrian Higher Education are overcrowded classrooms due to student displacement and lack of academic staff because of professors leaving the country” - Sulamain Mouselli, Professor at Arab International University

“The social structure of the city of Mosul and its university was torn apart” - Obay Said al-Dewachi, President of the University of Mosul

“We at DG Research and Innovation stand ready to support UNIMED with the aim to have more collaboration with researchers from the Southern Mediterranean” - Maria Cristina Russo, Director for International Cooperation

« UNIMED incarne pour nous une université ouverte, qui n’a pas de frontières » Saïd Amzazi, Ministre de l’Éducation nationale du Maroc

« Accueillir l’autre comme une partie de soi-même, promouvoir l’éthique du dialogue interculturel, comprendre les mutations de notre monde, ce sont là les tâches qui incombent désormais à nos Universités. C’est là l’esprit qui anime l’UNIMED, et son engagement dès sa création » Hmaid Ben Aziza, Secrétaire général de l’UNIMED

« L’université a aussi pour but de former des citoyens, citoyens de leur pays, mais aussi selon l’expression consacrée, citoyens du monde, partageant une humanité commune. En ce sens, l’université a bel et bien une fonction humaniste, et je dirais humanisant, puisqu’elle doit être un lieu où l’on peut se découvrir un peu plus humain. » Eric Vallet, Maître de conférences, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

« Universities have the duty to influence the political institutions. This is the main role of the UNIMED Week in Brussels: bringing to the attention of the European institutions the Universities of the Euro-mediterranean region. Indeed, Universities have also a humanitarian mission as the right to education. » Marcello Scalisi, Director of UNIMED

PHOTO GALLERY







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