

A blue circular logo with the word "unimed" in white lowercase letters.

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The text "UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS" is displayed in white uppercase letters on a blue ribbon-like background.

**UNIMED WEEK  
IN BRUSSELS**

The text "18-20 February 2025" is displayed in white text on an orange ribbon-like background.

**18-20 February 2025**

The word "Programme" is displayed in white uppercase letters on a blue background.

**Programme**

The text "Venue of the event: Apulia Region, fifth floor, Rue du Trône 62, Brussels" is displayed in white text on a dark blue ribbon-like background.

Venue of the event: Apulia Region, fifth floor, Rue du Trône 62, Brussels

The logo for UNIMED, consisting of the word "unimed" in white lowercase letters inside a blue circle. The background of the entire page features a light blue, semi-transparent image of several European Union flags waving in front of a modern building with a grid of windows.

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**UNIMED WEEK  
IN BRUSSELS**

**18-20 February 2025**

UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union – is a network of Higher Education and Research Institutions, active in promoting academic cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region and in Sub-Saharan Africa, in the Middle East and in Western Balkans.

# UNIMED WEEK in Brussels

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

Since the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference in 1995, the European Union 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 creating 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 programmes 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 playing a major role in the region, integrating and synergising key initiatives in research, education, and innovation, as well as in supporting the political dialogue. Over the past 30 years, UNIMED has been engaged in small and large-scale initiatives to promote Euro-Mediterranean academic cooperation, contributing to scientific, cultural, social and economic collaboration.

The **ninth edition of the UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS** seeks to propose a political reflection by the Euro-Mediterranean academic community on the relationships between European Institutions and the Mediterranean region, offering an opportunity for evaluation and revaluation of regional policies.

Concurrently, this event allows to improve the knowledge and use of EU-supported programmes in this field, facilitating the identification of further support needs.

The UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS 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.

*Some sessions of this edition have been organised in collaboration with*



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



# 18th February (2.00 pm – 4.30 pm)

## Academic cooperation and the Neighbourhood Policy of the EU

This session, in cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS) of the European Commission and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), will cover the important dimension of the Neighbourhood Policy of the EU concerning its Southern borders. This will be a fundamental framework to strengthen academic cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

- 02:00pm** Welcome coffee and Registration of participants
- 02:15pm** Opening of the UNIMED WEEK in Brussels  
**Kherieh Rassas**  
*UNIMED President and Vice President of An-Najah National University, Palestine*
- 02:30pm** Conversation with the European External Action Service (EEAS) on evolving EU-MENA relations  
**Birgit Loeser**  
*Head of Division MENA.1 Regional Affairs of the EEAS, European Union  
UfM EU SOM Co-Chair*
- 03:00pm** Conversation with the Union for the Mediterranean: 30 years of Barcelona process - 1995-2025  
**Joan Borrell**  
*Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean*
- 03:30pm** UNIMED priorities to improve academic collaboration in the Mediterranean Region  
**Marcello Scalisi**  
*UNIMED Director*
- 04:00pm** Q&A
- 04:30pm** End of the session

# 19th February (10.00 am – 1.00 pm)

## Session organised by European Commission Directorate-General Research and Innovation (DG R&I) in collaboration with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and UNIMED

This session will provide key updates on R&I cooperation across the Mediterranean, Africa, and the Balkans. High-level speakers will present ongoing and upcoming regional initiatives, reflect on future priorities under the MED Initiative II in Horizon Europe, and discuss innovation strategies for strengthened international collaboration.

**10:00am** Registration of participants

**10:15am** Opening

**Nienke Buisman**

*Head of Unit, DG Research and Innovation,  
European Commission*

**10:45am** Overview and updates on R&I Cooperation with the Mediterranean  
**Giuseppe Provenzano**

*Project Manager, Higher Education and Research Division,  
Union for the Mediterranean*

**11:15am** Overview and updates on upcoming regional initiatives and reflection on future priorities for the region in the MED initiative II under Horizon Europe  
**Alessandro Calabrò**

*Policy Officer - Desk Med and Middle-East,  
DG Research and Innovation, European Commission*

**11:45am** Overview and updates on R&I cooperation with Africa, innovation agenda and upcoming initiatives  
**Vincenzo Lorusso\***

*Policy Officer - Desk AU-EU  
DG Research and Innovation, European Commission*

**12:15pm** Overview and updates on R&I cooperation with the Balkans  
**Fabianek Bernhard**  
**David Agota**

*Policy Officers - Desk Western Balkans,  
DG Research and Innovation, European Commission*

**1:00pm** Light lunch

# 19th February (2.30 pm – 4.30 pm)

## Higher Education in crisis contexts: challenges, opportunities for students and researchers at-risk

This session, organized by UNIMED, will explore the challenges and opportunities in higher education within crisis-affected contexts. Featuring interventions from experts, the discussion will address the protection and support of at-risk scholars and students. In addition, we will have an overview of the international mobility programs under the umbrella of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions for researchers.

### 2.30pm Higher Education in Crisis context situation

**Sarah Field**

*Policy & Programme Manager, Coordinator of the Inspireurope+ project*

**Stefanie Kottowski**

*Project Manager SAFE – Supporting at-risk researcher with fellowships in Europe*

*German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)*

**Opportunities under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions****Sohail Luka**

*Policy Officer*

*DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission*

**Marcello Scalisi**

*UNIMED Director*

### 4.30pm End of the session

# 20th February (10.00 am – 1.00 pm)

## Meeting with DG EAC – Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

The DG EAC is the European Commission department responsible for policy on education, culture, youth, languages and sport. DG EAC also supports these issues through a variety of opportunities in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme.

### 10:00am Welcome remarks

#### **Filip Van Depoele**

*Head of International Cooperation Unit,  
DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission*

#### **Petra Kežman**

*Senior Advisor – Higher Education and Research  
Union for the Mediterranean*

### 10:20am Regional session: overview of political engagements, work in the regions and opportunities under Erasmus+, including Jean Monnet

Southern Mediterranean  
**Georgiana Plesu**

Middle East  
**Jens Lie Stokbro**

Western Balkans  
**Antoaneta Irikova**

Sub-Saharan Africa  
**Claire Herrmann**

*Policy Officers, International Cooperation Unit,  
DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission*

### 11:30am Discussion on Future of Erasmus+ programme

#### **Georgiana Plesu**

*Policy Officer, International Cooperation Unit,  
DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission*

### 12:30pm The Mediterranean Students Summit contribution to internationalisation and intercultural dialogue

#### **Anne-Laurence Pastorini**

*UNIMED Project Manager*

### 1:00pm Light lunch

# 20th February (2.00 pm – 4.00 pm)

## Session organised by Africa-Europe Foundation and UNIMED

### Fostering educational partnerships to address Research and Innovation in the Africa- Europe relations

This session will explore key opportunities for strengthening collaboration in education, research, and innovation between Africa and Europe. Speakers will discuss ongoing initiatives, including the AEF State of Africa-Europe Report, UNIMED's projects in Africa, and the Africa-Euro Students Summit, while also highlighting the role of capacity building in fostering scientific cooperation.

**2:00pm** Africa-Europe cooperation: the new edition of the AEF State of Africa-Europe Report on 'Science, Culture, and Education'

**Rachel Dubale**  
*Research Officer at Africa-Europe Foundation*

**Elise Cuny**  
*Chair at Culture Solutions*

**Shawgi Ahmed**  
*Director of PLACE network*

*Moderator*  
**Holy Ranaivozanany** - *Deputy Executive Director at Africa-Europe Foundation*

**3:00pm** UNIMED for Africa: an overview of the current projects  
**Nathalie Clauter**  
*UNIMED Project Manager*

**3:20pm** The role of Capacity Building in fostering Africa-Euro scientific cooperation  
**Roberto Zanino**  
*Rector's Delegate for International University Networks at Politecnico di Torino, Italy*

**3:40pm** The Africa-Europe Students Summit: a new initiative  
**Marcello Scalisi**  
*UNIMED Director*

**4:00pm** End of the session and conclusion of the UNIMED WEEK in Brussels





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## **Credits**

UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union  
is an association of universities, based in Rome

## **Headquarters**

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