

# Informal meeting of Ministers of Employment, Social Affairs and Gender Equality

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European Convention Center  
Luxembourg

Session 2:  
Proposal of the Luxembourg  
Presidency for an initiative on youth  
employment through vocational  
training in the Maghreb countries

Background note

*(English version)*



## Proposal of the Luxembourg Presidency for an initiative on youth employment through vocational training in the Maghreb countries

This proposal is based on a two-fold observation:

- Economic and political stability in Mediterranean countries is heavily dependent on lowering the rate of youth unemployment, in particular in the Maghreb countries (Tunisia's 'Arab Spring' was sparked by young unemployed people);
- Security in the north of the Mediterranean region depends on the stability of the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean and, in particular, on the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia).

The document attached to the present note and its appendix puts forward an initiative on youth employment and training in the Maghreb countries. It is in line with the economic and social policies of these countries for which creating employment is a priority. It seeks to improve the matching of skills demand and supply in the labour market by increasing investment and boosting growth in quality job opportunities. It also highlights the solidarity between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries and, in particular, the Maghreb countries. This initiative of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union was developed in collaboration with the *Institut de la Méditerranée*<sup>1</sup> (Mediterranean Institute) and in close consultation with the authorities of the countries concerned, and with the European and international financial institutions likely to support it.

Existing cooperation between the three Maghreb countries in question is essentially bilateral and any significant investments to which they give support are mainly material (buildings, infrastructure, etc.).

The initiative on youth employment has a different yet complementary approach: first and foremost it is regional and significant funding is earmarked for investment in qualifications and skills.

Existing cooperation adopts an institutional approach (that is to say a 'top-down' approach involving national administrations). The initiative on youth employment shall adopt a 'bottom-up' approach based on proposals from stakeholders (companies and training centres, etc.) which are coordinated, presented and supported by national institutions.

The proposed working method is collaborative: the institutions that have expressed their willingness to support it - currently the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the European

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ins-med.org/>

Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the World Bank - agree to cooperate upstream in the management of their involvement and operations.

The initiative does not propose an alternative working method for existing projects, but rather a complementary approach which aims to build synergies.

It has a global area of intervention, namely vocational training at all levels. Over the course of several years, it seeks to mobilise funds in the amount of EUR 150 to 200 million.

### **The proposals in detail**

They are based on setting up and supporting a North-South network of training centres and institutes located in both the north and south of the Mediterranean region. They operate in priority areas and involve different levels of skills. The full range of skills is covered: from low-skilled labour to training given by highly-qualified post-doctorate experts.

The centres and institutions operate in networks. They are selected for their excellence in their respective fields. They collaborate while respecting the principle of autonomy.

Their collaboration covers different aspects:

- Raising standards to improve the quality of the training delivered in the centres located in the Maghreb countries;
- Defining different career profiles using common North-South labels (diplomas, various accreditations, qualifications and recognised jobs).

Implementation depends on the 'virtuous chain', i.e. identification of training/skills needs - training - employment. Within the North-South networks, any collaboration must be open to innovation (in terms of content and methods), forming partnerships and stakeholder dialogue (institutions, companies and civil society).

These networks will enable the following objectives to be achieved:

- Upgrading methods and programmes (a change of focus from gaining basic knowledge to acquiring skills);
- Training for trainers;
- Replacing and modernising training centre equipment and the training of maintenance staff;
- Private sector partnerships: learning by doing (apprenticeships, work/study apprenticeships);
- Synergies between vocational training and higher education;
- Certification of new programmes and methods.

The following actions are planned to achieve these objectives:

- Development of exchanges (between teachers, technical assistance missions, thematic workshops and videoconference facilities);
- Transfer of good practice;
- Mobility between training centres.

They help create a community of good practice for the benefit of both the Mediterranean shores. They enhance the quality and image of vocational training in an effort to engage young people.

The UfM will steer the partnership for implementation. It will focus on selecting recognised jobs and projects supported on the basis of proposals from the institutions and stakeholders. It should be based on a resource common to those institutions such as the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI).

Questions for discussion:

*What synergies exist with European initiatives such as the European Alliance for Apprenticeships? What synergies and contributions exist with regard to inter-European regional actions, in particular in terms of large-scale funding for intangible investments?*

*What is your view of the proposed initiative and the possible involvement of your country or institution (role of international financial institutions, role of the Union for the Mediterranean, regional accreditation of recognised qualifications/training etc.)?*

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