

THE EUROMED PARTNERSHIP AS A CATALYST FOR SDGs: ADVANCING VALUE CHAINS, CLIMATE ACTION, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

10-12 December 2024

Moataz Al Alfi Hall, The American University in Cairo

New Cairo Campus

Cairo, Egypt

Context

The EuroMed region holds great potential for sustainable development due to its abundant natural resources, prominent role in global trade, and vibrant young population. However, the region faces significant challenges, reflected in its slow progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Factors hindering progress include the still-ongoing impact of the Covid-19, conflicts, resource scarcity, climate shocks and domestic economic and social crises.

The South and Eastern Mediterranean Countries (SEMCs) are struggling to meet their SDGs targets. Despite some improvements, their average SDGs score in 2024 stands at 65%. Goals related to decent work, economic growth and innovation, gender equality, social inclusion and climate action are among the most challenging.

Regional cooperation is essential to overcome these challenges. By leveraging the EuroMed partnership, countries can collaborate to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and enhance regional stability and prosperity. This could be achieved by:

- Integrating sustainable **value chains** to foster trade and investment while enhancing innovation and **digital transformation**;
- Addressing common environmental challenges through **climate action and sustainable practices**, including agriculture, renewable energy, water and food security, etc.
- Supporting **social and territorial development** by investing in education, training (TVET), skills, healthcare, social protection and inclusion, addressing migration and refugees' issues, creating jobs, and promoting entrepreneurship to reduce inequality;



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- Empowering **Mediterranean youth** by creating decent jobs, promoting skills, innovation, and social integration.

Against this backdrop, the 2024 FEMISE Annual Conference will be hosted by the School of Business at the American University in Cairo ([AUC](#)) and co-organized by the European Institute of the Mediterranean ([IEMed](#)), with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation ([AECID](#)).

The conference aims to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among key stakeholders in the Mediterranean region. The objectives of this year’s conference are threefold:

- **Engage stakeholders in a dialogue** on how the EuroMed partnership can drive sustainable development and advance SDG progress;
- **Promote strategies** for enhancing sustainable collaboration while prioritizing resilient value chains, climate action, digital transformation, innovation, investing in people and territories, and youth empowerment.
- **Formulate actionable** recommendations for achieving a sustainable and resilient EuroMed partnership with youth at its center.

The conference will include four plenary sessions, in addition to the opening and closing sessions. It will also feature four thematic sessions where selected researchers will present their research outputs on these sub-themes.

Day 1 – Tuesday, 10 December 2024

14:30-15:30	Conference registration and Welcome Coffee
15:30-16:00	Welcoming Remarks Ibrahim Elbadawi , President, FEMISE Senén Florensa , Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) Sherif Kamel , Dean of the School of Business at The American University in Cairo (AUC)
16:00-17:30	Opening Speeches <p>The EuroMed region faces common challenges such as climate change, economic and social inequalities, unemployment, social exclusion, and migration. Addressing these complex issues requires collaboration on shared priorities to find common solutions while advancing progress toward the SDGs.</p> Moderator: Ibrahim Elbadawi , President, FEMISE Keynote speakers:



	<p>H.E. Dr. Rania Al-Mashat, Minister of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation of Egypt (TBC)</p> <p>H.E. Amb. Nasser Kamel, Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)</p> <p>H. E. Amb. Angelina Eichhorst, EU Ambassador-Designate and Head of Delegation to Egypt. (TBC)</p> <p>H.E. Amb. Alvaro Iranzo, Spanish Ambassador in Cairo (TBC)</p> <p>Cecilia García Gasalla, Director of Cooperation with Africa and Asia, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) (TBC)</p> <p>Noha El-Mikawy, Dean of the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, The American University in Cairo (AUC)</p>
17:30 -17:45	Conference Photo and Coffee Break

Day 2 – Wednesday, 11 December 2024

9:30-11:00	<p>Plenary Session 1: Accelerating Sustainable Value Chain in the EuroMed region through Digital Transformation</p> <p>Enhancing EuroMed value chains can foster economic integration, build resilience, and promote fair trade practices, contributing to job creation, environmental actions, and regional progress, <i>but challenges still exist</i>¹. Digital transformation can advance sustainable development and facilitate regional value chain integration by enhancing innovation, product quality, competitiveness, new technologies, and access to data and information. This will have a positive spill-over effect on the economic, social and environmental aspects across the region.</p> <p>Moderator: Maryse Louis, General Manager, FEMISE</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ahmed Ghoneim, Professor of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences, Cairo University, Egypt - Nora Aboushady, Senior Researcher, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Germany - Saoussen Ben Romdhane, Business Development Officer, International trade Center - Sherif Kamel, Dean of the School of Business at The American University in Cairo (AUC), Egypt - Mondher Khanfir, President, Transformons l'Afrique par le Numérique & l'Innovation Technologique - Debora Revoltella, Director of the Economics Department of the European Investment Bank, acting as Chief Economist (TBC)
11:00-11:30	Coffee Break
11:30-13:00	Thematic Session 1: Driving Sustainable Development in the EuroMed: The Role of Value Chains and Digital Transformation

¹ Please refer to the FEMISE annual conference 2023 plenary session 2 for more details:
<https://www.femise.org/en/articles-en/femise-annual-conference2023-plenary-session-2-report/>



	<p>Moderator: Raed Safadi, Chief Economist, Dubai Department of Economy</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental Regulations and GVCs Participation: The Role of Green Practices in Firms from the EuroMed Region Myriam Gad, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University - Global Value Chains (GVCS) And Social Upgrading: The Role of Country's Absorptive Capacity Sylvana Wafik, Lecturer at University of London, the European universities in Egypt and Asmaa Ezzat, Assistant Professor at the Economics Department in Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS), Cairo University - The Impact of Digital Transformation on Informal Sector Integration and SDG Progress in the EuroMed Region Ceyhun Elgin, Professor of economics at American University in Bulgaria and Bogazici University, Turkey - Leveraging Networks and Digital Platforms of Collaborative Models to Build Local and Regional Sustainable Value Chains in Agriculture and Waste Management: Two Cases from Lebanon: Green Circle and the Agricultural Revival Program Mohammad Makki, Assistant Professor of Economics at the School of Business of the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) and Co-director of the Social Economy unit at COSV, Lebanon <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anna Ferragina, Associate Professor, Department of Economics and Statistics, University of Salerno, Italy - Sami Mouley, Professor of International Finance, University of Tunis
13:00-14:30	Lunch
14:30-16:00	<p>Plenary Session 2: Accelerating Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability in the EuroMed region</p> <p>As the region faces numerous challenges², there is a need to expediate the EuroMed green transition, enhance innovation in renewable energy, water and agriculture to promote sustainable growth, job creation and attainment of SDGs. Despite some progress made, the pace of action needs to accelerate to meet SDG targets, particularly in renewable energy adoption and sustainable water management. Shifting towards sustainable practices in sectors like agriculture, energy, and manufacturing is crucial for environmental protection and economic resilience in the EuroMed region. This requires regional collaboration on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, promoting renewable energy sources, advancing relevant technologies, and implementing sustainable resource management practices.</p> <p>Moderator: Hala Abou Ali, Vice President of the Institute of National Planning and Professor of Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS), Cairo University, Egypt</p>

² Please refer to the FEMISE annual conference 2023 plenary session 3 for more details:
<https://www.femise.org/en/articles-en/femise-annual-conference-2023-plenary-session-3-report/>



	<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mahmoud Mohieldin, United Nations Climate Change High-Level Champion for Egypt, Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund and United Nations Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. - Constantin Tsakas, Chief Economist, Plan Blue, France - Radia Sedaoui, Chief of Section in the Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster of the UN Economic Social Commission of West Asia (ESCWA) - Filomena Annunziata, Policy Advisor MED Programme ECCO – The Italian Climate Change Think Tank - Afef Ajengui, Regional Programme Manager - Green Forward, Spark - Michael Jakob, Senior Researcher, Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC) (TBC)
16:00-16:30	Coffee break
16:30-18:00	<p>Thematic Session 2: Navigating the Energy Transition: Economic, Social and Environmental Impacts in the EuroMed</p> <p>Moderator: Rafael de Arce, Professor of Econometrics, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labor Market Responses to Rapid Energy Transition in the MENA Vladimir Hlasny, Associate professor, Ewha Womans University, Seoul; Economic affairs officer, UN ESCWA, Beirut - Energy policies and labour market gender gaps: the case of EuroMed region Chrysoula Chitou, PhD Candidate, University of Ioannina, Greece - Adaptation and resilience of firms in the EuroMed region to the impacts of climate change Imen Khanchel, Full Professor, Higher School of Business, Manouba University, Tunisia and Cyrine Khiari, PhD in Finance, Higher School of Business, Manouba University, Tunisia - Fostering Social and Environmental Development in EUROMED Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) through Decentralized Ledger Technology (DLT). Simona Ramos, Tenure Track Assistant Professor, Barcelona School of Management, Pompeu Fabra University, Spain <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abeer El-Shinnawy, Professor, American University in Cairo, Egypt - Majd ElNaber, Director of Science for Society Centre, Royal Scientific Society, Jordan

Day 3 – Thursday, 12 December 2024

<p>9:30-11:00</p>	<p>Plenary Session 3: Fostering Social and Territorial Equalities and Sustainable Development in and across the EuroMed Region</p> <p>Social and territorial disparities are major challenges in SMECs, reflected in pronounced inequalities in terms of opportunities and access to resources based on gender, territory and socioeconomic status. Supporting social and territorial development is key to advance sustainable development and strengthen the EuroMed partnership. Investing in education, training, healthcare and social protection can expand employment opportunities, reduce unemployment, enhance female labour participation, and decrease inequalities. Addressing migration and refugees' challenges is also becoming a priority</p> <p>Moderator: Samir Makdisi, Professor Emeritus and founding director of the Institute of Financial Economics, American University of Beirut, Lebanon</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ragui Assaad, Professor at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota - Eric Oechslin, Director of the ILO Decent Work Team for North Africa and the ILO Country Office for Egypt and Eritrea - Leonardo Menchini, Chief Social Policy and Social Protection, UNICEF - Ilyes Boumahdi, Chef de service des activités tertiaires et de l'économie du savoir DEPF, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco - Ghada Barsoum, Professor and Director of Master of Public Policy, Department of Public Policy and Administration, American University in Cairo - Stephane Guimbert, Country Director for Egypt, Yemen and Djibouti, World Bank (TBC) - Farah Al Shami, Director of Social Protection program, Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) (TBC)
<p>11:00-11:30</p>	<p>Coffee Break</p>
<p>11:30-13:00</p>	<p>Thematic Session 3: Empowering communities, Promoting Entrepreneurship, and Addressing Social and Territorial Inequalities</p> <p>Moderator: Heba Nassar, Professor of Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University and former Vice President of Cairo University</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harnessing Renewable Energy for Social and Territorial Equity in the EuroMed Region: Decentralized Solar Energy as a Catalyst for Community Empowerment and Climate Action Jérémie Fosse, President and Co-founder, Eco-union, and Haïat Jellouli-

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With the support of:



	<p>moaddine, Policy Researcher, Eco-union, Spain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does Immigration Promote Entrepreneurship? In Search for Potential Developmental Avenues for the Euro-Mediterranean (EuroMed) Region Samar Abdelmageed, PhD Student at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt - Measuring three decades of regional economic inequality in Egypt and how it was affected by the 2016 structural adjustment program Senior Researcher Hussein M. Suleiman, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies Cairo, Egypt - Women and Youth Empowerment in the Palestinian Labor Market: Addressing Challenges and Unlocking Potentials Rabeh Morrar, Assistant Professor, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine <p>Discussant: Sergio Alessandrini, Professor of economics at the department of Law at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia</p>
13:00-14:30	Lunch
14:30-16:00	<p>Plenary Session 4: Empowering Mediterranean Youth: The Catalyst for an Integrated EuroMed Region Achieving SDGs</p> <p>Despite being a large proportion of the population, Mediterranean youth face many challenges, such as exclusion, unemployment and lack of opportunities, just to name a few³. Empowering young people as leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, and change-makers is essential for a sustainable future. By fostering youth entrepreneurship and equipping them with skills, knowledge, and resources, they can become active participants and leaders in achieving the SDGs.</p> <p>Moderator: Roger Albinyana, Managing Director, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simona Rinaldi, Senior Human Capital Development Expert - Country Liaison for Lebanon, European Training Foundation (ETF) - Reem El-Saady, Regional Manager, SME F&D, Egypt, Jordan and West Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) - Leila Belkhiria Jaber, President, Chambre Nationale des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprise, Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), Tunisia - Pietro Gagliardi, Policy Analyst, OECD - Graziano Tullio, Consultant on Youth and Civil Dialogue, European Economic and Social Committee - Giulia Dimonopoli, Project Analyst – Youth, Union for the Mediterranean
16:00-16:30	Coffee break
16:30-18:00	Thematic Session 4: Harnessing the Power of Youth: Fostering Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Social Change in the EuroMed

³ Please refer to the FEMISE annual conference 2023 plenary session 4 for more details:
<https://www.femise.org/en/conferences-and-seminars/femise-annual-conference2023-plenary-session-4-report/>



	<p>Moderator: Frédéric Docquier, Research Program Leader (on Crossing Borders) at the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (TBC)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empowering Mediterranean Youth for Knowledge-Driven Growth: Unlocking the Potential of the EuroMed Partnership to Achieve the SDGs Simon Neaime, Professor of Finance and Economics, Institute of Financial Economics, American University of Beirut, Lebanon - Circulations, Migrations, and Interactions: Micro-structures and Young People at the Heart of the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation Process Valentina Gruarin, Ph.D. Student Università Degli Studi Di Catania (University of Catania) - Youth Quest for Belonging amidst Disenchantment, Radicalisation, and Mass-Migration in a Digital Age Badre Abdeslam, Associate Professor, Mohammed V University in Rabat - Digital financial inclusion: A silver bullet for entrepreneurship in South Mediterranean countries Siham Matallah, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Oran 2, Algeria <p>Discussant: Moundir Lassassi, Research Director, Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement (CREAD), Algeria</p>
<p>18:00-18:30</p>	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Ibrahim Elbadawi, President, FEMISE Maryse Louis, General Manager, FEMISE Roger Albinyana, Managing Director, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) Mona Said, Professor of Economics at The American University of Cairo (AUC) Dina Abdelfattah, Assistant Professor of Economics at The American University in Cairo (AUC)</p>

