



Unione delle Università del Mediterraneo
Mediterranean Universities Union
Union des Universités de la Méditerranée
اتحاد الجامعات المتوسطية

UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS 15th – 17th March 2016

Universities have always played a leading role in human development, and thus have traditionally facilitated the work of institutions and organizations concerned with the advancement and exchange of cultural and scientific knowledge. The international cooperation instruments made available by the European Union, both before and after the Barcelona Process, were designed to further such scientific dialogue and cultural cooperation between the Mediterranean countries. **They have created bridges between peoples and societies, reinforcing trust and mutual respect.** Academic communities (students, faculty and administrators) have benefited from **programs promoting cooperation and mobility, research, and capacity building.** EU instruments have contributed decisively to the construction of a stable and effective environment of relationships that today is expressed by the numerous collaborations between universities and research institutes of the two shores of the Mediterranean area.

The route taken and the activities carried out by the characters of the academic world, students, researchers, teachers and administrative staff, shows the need to support this work in view of the current multifaceted dynamics and future challenges. In this framework, in 2015 the European Commission launched a process of consultation and review and consequently recently revised its Neighborhood Policy¹.

In this evolving context, UNIMED-the Mediterranean Universities Union-, founded in October 1991, has proven to be an effective and reliable promoter of exchange and cooperation between the universities in countries bordering the Mediterranean basin (www.uni-med.net). Strongly committed to playing a major role in the region, **UNIMED stands ready to support EC programs, both in terms of integrating and synergizing key initiatives in research, education and innovation as well as in the delivery of actions supporting the political dialogue.**

UNIMED can count on the active participation of 84 member universities from 20 countries on both shores of the Mediterranean. Over the past 20 years, this network has engaged in multiple initiatives to promote academic research and training in the Euro-Mediterranean region, contributing to scientific, cultural, social and economic cooperation. UNIMED has thus become a unique and dynamic stakeholder in Euro-Mediterranean international university cooperation.

At a time of uncertainty in our region, the **UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS** is an opportunity for a political reflection about the role of the European Parliament and the European Union in the Mediterranean region, involving the Euro-Mediterranean academic and research communities. It

¹http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf



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provides a pause for the evaluation of regional policies, through a rich set of multidisciplinary and diversified perspectives.

To this end, the input of the scientific and academic community is important in trying to understand, together, where the Mediterranean currently is and which options and actions should be adopted to support civil society, universities, women and youth as future leaders and game changers. The UNIMED WEEK will build and integrate public and private inputs at international, regional and national and regional levels.

The outcomes will include a set of policy making recommendations for EC services, EU Parliament and main key-stakeholders in the Mediterranean, highlighting the challenges and changes needed to face them, through the development of a common Mediterranean generation able to tackle our common societal challenges and support a common knowledge and innovation space.

At the same time, **the UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS is an opportunity for Mediterranean universities and research centers to better understand the tools available through the European Parliament and the European Commission.** It will also provide a forum to discuss different cooperation viewpoints with participants from non-European Mediterranean countries, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding of reciprocal concerns during specific work sessions with the DGs supporting cooperation with the Mediterranean region.

Given the above, the UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS should build towards the creation of a common platform for dialogue, favoring imaginative and innovative mechanisms for cooperation, with a bottom-up approach. Such a strategy will certainly yield significant improvements in relations between our societies, responding at the same time to the aspirations of the young people from both sides.



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UNIMED WEEK IN BRUSSELS Draft Agenda

15 March 2016

- Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC)
2.30 pm – 5.00 pm

16 March 2016

- European Parliament - *Plenary Session:*
The Mediterranean and the scientific and cultural cooperation: the role of universities
10 am – 1.00 pm
- Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG Research)
2.30 pm – 5.00 pm

17 March 2016

- DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and European External Action Service (EEAS)
10 am – 1.00 pm