



European Union



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



The Hashemite
Kingdom of Jordan

UfM Seminar on blue skills, careers, jobs held on the 19 November 2019, in Brussels

This 1st regional seminar revealed:

- a variety of strategies and tools for blue career development used already or appropriate to emulate further in the Med, adapted to local needs: for example, propagate the use of the Med Blue Economy Platform (VKC) as platform of exchange of information/pedagogic tools/projects and contacts; or, work towards sharing and having access to information and data on skills-employment issues that some organizations in relevant countries are already collecting; or, mobility programs such as the one run by OGS and the expansion of the Deep Blue programme currently offering more than 30 fellowships for the South Med countries.
- An important service in the area of skills and career development is one that tackles the coaching/mentoring/matchmaking needs; in this respect, there exist many examples of activities/projects that can be implemented/expanded to other countries in the Mediterranean (i.e., Med4jobs can set up a dedicated BE pillar, using the existing projects that cover the demand side, supply side and intermediation, helping start-ups to become job creators or activating youmatch; MENTOR project can be further extended geographically; MARINEM project is looking for further partnerships).
- that upskilling and reskilling in the blue economy sectors can also serve as a stabilizer to inequalities in the Med; an increase in growth and employment opportunities in the non-EU rim will have strong implications for the entire region, also in terms of migration.
- what are the most competences that will lack most in the future (Skills mostly required: digital, environmental, soft skills and technical skills, security; also required are entrepreneurial, socio economic, multi-disciplinary, social media skills and definitely languages, as well as statistics/law and knowledge of maritime spatial planning. Education and training providers need in this sense to respond timely to changing needs and introduce more multi-disciplinarity in their training offer.



European Union



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



The Hashemite
Kingdom of Jordan

- what are the barriers to the development of labour markets: Brain drain is a major problem to immediately address; lack of awareness/sensibilization tools about new professional careers (open days, high level orientation etc.) which should be activated; a mismatch between the number of graduates and the posts available, a problem for all Med countries; an overall lack of coordination on skills in the region; finally, we have currently a jigsaw puzzle of support tools and programmes that can tackle skills development - they need to be well mapped, synergized and rationalized to avoid duplication and loss of efficiency – we need to organize information better. In this sense, smart specialization strategies are also to be taken into account.
- a confirmation of the need to provide the actual instances to develop vocational skills in the Med: VET training required more than university degrees, as well as short term training/ lifelong learning; in general training that links directly to employers. In this respect, maritime clusters offer a direct opportunity to address skills/jobs issues; and enhanced mobility will also lead to an increase of soft skills (as in the example of *Homere*, offering 6 months mobility for 34 members and is already up and running in areas such as hotel skills, etc...); operational internships need to complement studies, as in the case of internships in fleets; there is need to optimize the already existing networks in place and create a Med network out of them (for example based on the Med Blue Economy Platform/VKC, as a vehicle for the exchange of information on best practices and the elaboration of new programmes); pedagogic tools already available would need to be shared too; the importance of bridging and linking the two rims of the sea-basin through programs such as Interreg and CBC was also revealed.
- requests from southern countries/partners to loosen eligibility and participation conditions to EU programmes that address skilling and careers (as in Earamsus+, Interreg, various EMFF programme strands, others...) – there were calls to revisit the method the EU drafts and implements programmes and initiatives (provisions mainly linked to market requirements and dependent mostly on legislative approximation).
- a very important aspect in the development of skills in the blue economy, that of the buy-in and involvement of the relevant industry/demand-side actors:



European Union



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



The Hashemite
Kingdom of Jordan

they are the ones that need to be part of any successful initiatives, otherwise these will flounder.

- Wide-spread confirmation that political will needs to exist, as a precondition of all the above –this seems to be a given for the Med, so we need to put it to good use.

Overall, this 1st seminar on skills and career development in the blue economy in the Mediterranean revealed that the blue economy cannot be viewed in isolation from the forthcoming transformative technological trends. And that education, cooperation, decentralization are key concepts to be looked at. It also concluded that targeted educational and employment policies, adapted to the specificities of the region, are needed. The engagement of public and private sectors is extremely important and brings additional benefits for all endeavors, while local authorities also have an important role to play in this respect, since they link directly to coastal community development.

The seminar was very timely because of the crucial phase of EU programming – it serves as an instance to provide inputs for the EU for the next cycle ahead. It was also hailed as a first important step to help build a process on skills/careers/jobs in the region, one that will have a focus on the longer terms sustainability of the entire process and the social impact. Almost all countries provided inputs and expressed their interest and engagement in building this process on skills/careers/jobs.