REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN: RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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PROGRESS REPORT ON INTEGRATION:
A MONITORING AND POLICY TOOL
Why a Progress Report?

Origin

• In 2017 the UfM Member States adopted a Roadmap for Action to strengthen the role of the UfM towards an enhanced regional cooperation and integration in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

• The Roadmap established the creation of a Report to monitor major developments in the Euro-Mediterranean region and assess progress achieved in regional integration.

• The UfM Secretariat gave mandate to the OECD to prepare the Report, with financial support of GIZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH.

Objective

• Analysis of major trends and evolutions of regional integration in five areas: trade, finance, infrastructure, movement of people, research and higher education.

• Assessment to be repeated at regular periodic intervals.

• Evidence-based policy recommendations to enhance regional integration.
The OECD approach to the report

Sound data

- The study applies the principles of statistical best practice: quality and reliability of data, comparability, transparency in data use and analysis
- Uses OECD databases and, when relevant, draws upon statistical sources compiled by other international and regional organisations, e.g. Eurostat, UNDESA, ILO
- Uses a limited number of sound indicators
- Does analysis at a disaggregated data level

Important gaps at the regional level in terms of availability and quality of comparable data

Sound analysis

- The study builds on the knowledge and expertise of area experts across the Organisation
- Benefits from advice of experts and policy makers in the region, who provided comments on the draft document

The recommendations developed reflect feedback from stakeholders
RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION
Key methodological elements

• Analysis based on data on:
  – research funding, including from abroad; scientific personnel; scientific co-publications; co-inventions; student and researcher mobility stocks and flows; and the internationalisation of higher education and research institutions and infrastructure.

• Policy perspective: holistic approach that links international co-operation in higher education and research with national reforms to connect, at the national level, the higher education and research systems of countries with industry as a way to enhance the quality of research and knowledge spill-overs for the benefit of society and the economy.
What monitoring indicators show

• Integration in research and higher education has increased unevenly, in line with the growing but unequal capacity in research and higher education in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

• The intensity of research co-operation is characterised by North-South interactions and less by South-South collaboration although there are exceptions, e.g. Morocco-Israel.

• Most research co-operation is organised around physical sciences and chemistry, and life sciences, areas which are important to industrial development.

• Scientific cooperation in environmental sciences is less strong.
Policies that encourage international scientific co-operation help shaping specialisation patterns

Top 10 overall collaborators among Southern Mediterranean UfM economies and European UfM countries

1 July 2019 to 29 June 2020

Note: Outside each circle, UfM countries are identified using coloured boxes. Number of scientific publications co-authored by scientists in different countries.
Source: OECD based on NatureIndex.com
Complementary policies in research, higher education and innovation

**Investment in research infrastructure** should be promoted at the national level, to facilitate **embedding technology** in local economic production systems and **attract** international flows of **research and development** (R&D), **human resources**, and related **high-value-added activities**. By supporting infrastructures such as distributed research labs, governments can **foster virtual mobility and “brain circulation”** as an alternative to brain drain.

**Reinforce scientific co-operation in environmental sciences** to prepare the region to the **impact of climate change** on the region’s water, food and agricultural systems. Such cooperation should further **encourage student mobility** as a vehicle for directing research towards **common problems in the Mediterranean**.

**Facilitate the diffusion and uptake of digital technologies for science and education**, such as **open science platforms**, can enable countries to take advantage of **new opportunities for regional co-operation** – especially in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As scientific research is increasingly **data-driven**, ensuring that research personnel are equipped with the **digital skills** necessary to engage with peers around the world will be important.
Complementary policies in trade, finance, infrastructure, movement of people

Policies that support industrial diversification including stronger integration in regional and global value chains, to promote local jobs and sustainable economic models.

The investment climate: to be further improved tackling existing regulatory restrictions to foreign direct investment, in key sectors for regional integration such as transport and energy connectivity.

Better planning of investment for connectivity infrastructure, between and within countries: building truly multi-modal connectivity in transport and logistics infrastructure and improving the capacity and efficiency of ports in their role as national or regional gateways, linked with inland areas, special economic zones and research centres and universities.

Mobility schemes built on investment in skills development, requiring greater harmonisation of national qualifications frameworks in the region, developing cooperation between institutions working towards the socio-professional integration of youth across the region.
Thank you

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