

14/05/2018

Barcelona Euro-Med Forum

"Bridging SMEs between North and South Mediterranean"

**The role of SMEs in the socioeconomic development of the
Mediterranean region**

4-5 July 2018
Palau Macaya, Barcelona

MEDConfederation promotes a Barcelona Euro-Med Forum organised by "la Caixa" Foundation and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), with the firm commitment to turn it into one of its core annual events. Hosted by "la Caixa" Foundation at the iconic Palau Macaya, this initiative stems from the will of consolidating a long-term meeting point for economic, political and social stakeholders around the Mediterranean, and bringing them together with the members of the MED Confederation. Through establishing a fluent yearly dialogue, the Euro-Med Forum will strengthen the alliance forged through the Med Confederation in order to facilitate and develop cooperation and economic integration, social progress and cultural exchange between the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

This unique two days event at Palau Macaya will gather representatives of companies, civil society networks, associations and foundations to discuss shared socioeconomic challenges in the Mediterranean under the scope of the small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the role they can play in achieving goals such as job creation, sustainable development and the inclusion of all sectors in the economy. The conference will also focus on the analysis of the current social entrepreneurship systems, business enabling infrastructures and access to financial instruments for SMEs around the Mediterranean basin.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

4th July 2018

17.00 **Accreditations**

17.45-19:00 **Welcome address**

Jaume Lanaspa, Member of the Board of trustees of "la Caixa" Foundation, Spain

Senén Florensa, President of the Executive Committee of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), Spain

Jean-Louis Guigou, President, IPemed, France

Jaloul Ayed, President of MED Confederation and Former Minister of Finance of Tunisia, Tunisia

Opening session

Josep González, President of PIMEC, the Catalan SME's employer organisation, Spain

Jorge Borrego, Acting Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean

Fernando García Casas, Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain

19:00-20:00 **Special Presentations:**

- *"Economic challenges of financing SMEs in the Northern Mediterranean"* by **Chris De Noose**, Secretary General of MED Confederation. Managing Director of the World Savings and Retail Banking Institute and the European Savings and Retail Banking Group (WSBI-ESBG), Belgium

- *"Economic challenges of financing SMEs in the Southern Mediterranean"* by **Boutheina Ben Yaghlane**, General Manager, Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDC), Tunisia.

- *"Technical Assistance, Seed funding and Mentoring: the added value of Business incubators"* by **Mondher Khanfir**, Co-Founder & CEO, Wiki Start-up, Associate Partner at Colombus Consulting, Tunisia.

20:00 **Cocktail dinner**

5th July 2018

09:00 **Keynote speech** *"The role of SMEs in tackling unemployment"* by **Michel Gonnet**, Finance Expert, IPEMED, France.

09:30 **First session –** *How can we create ecosystems for new forms of entrepreneurship?*

The capability of entrepreneurship to generate and sustain value depends largely on its socioeconomic environment and on a legal framework that stimulates and protects innovation, accountability and meaningful investment. Also the creation of infrastructures (such as incubators, accelerators, technology centers, work centers, and coworking spaces...) to promote the creation and growth of start-ups and early-stage companies. This panel will debate about the role of the public and private sectors as well as financial institutions in the support and promotion of new forms of entrepreneurship.

Chair: Anwar Zibaoui, Coordinator, Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME), Spain

Speakers:

Mohammed El Razzaz, Business Development and Employment, Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, Spain

Jihen Boutiba, General Secretary, The Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises (BUSINESSMED), Tunisia

Emmanuel Noutary, General Delegate, ANIMA Investment Network, France

Representative, TBC.

First comment:

Iolanda Piedra, Coordinator of Blue Economy, PIMEC, Spain

Open debate

11:00

Coffee Break

11:30

Second session – *How can we support the growth of SMEs?*

Access to finance remains limited in the Mediterranean region and constitutes a primary obstacle to the development of SMEs. Besides, some Southern Mediterranean countries have less access to bank loans for SMEs than other emerging markets. This session will be devoted to the analysis of the root causes of this problem and the appropriate solutions to it.

Chair: Janet Heckman, Managing Director Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), England

Mustapha Nabli, Consultant and researcher, Institute for New Economic Thinking, Tunisia

Khater Abi Habib, President, Kafalat, Lebanon

Rym Ayadi, Founder and Scientific Director of the Euro-Mediterranean Network for Economic Studies (EMNES), Belgium

Representative, TBC.

First comment:

Daniel Viñas, Partner, Mediterranean Capital Partners, Spain

Open debate

13:00 Lunch cocktail

14:00 **Third session – *How can policy makers and stakeholders support SMEs in the Southern Mediterranean?***

In recent years, the expansion of financial assets in the Mediterranean has provided new mechanisms for investors and entrepreneurs to meet common goals. However, certain asymmetries of information prevent those formulas from appearing as a valuable alternative in certain Southern countries. The role of policy-making in tackling this mismatch will be discussed in this session.

Chair: María Helena de Felipe Lehtonen, President, Euromed Committee, European Economic and Social Committee

Christos Kyriatzis, Deputy Head of Unit, DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs International Affairs, European Commission

Amr Taha, Deputy Executive Director, Industrial Modernisation Center, Egypt

Ali Berrada, Director of Strategy and Communication, Maroc PME, Morocco

Wajdi Neffati, Director of International Cooperation, Agency for the Promotion of Industry and Innovation, Tunisia

First comment:

Roger Albinyana, Director of Mediterranean Regional Policies and Human Development

15:30 Closing Remarks