Ascame
Strategic Plan
Ascame Strategic Plan 2018-2022

Ascame
The Mediterranean Association
Index

A. PREAMBLE

B. CONTEXT

I. Strategic lines

1. Ensuring the transition of the private sector from a spectator to an actor
2. Reinforcing the competitiveness of the Mediterranean private sector
3. Boosting the entrepreneurial spirit and the innovation
4. Reinforcing the role of key actors such as women, young people, through vocational training and entrepreneurship education
   A. Reinforcing the role of Mediterranean women in the Mediterranean economy
   B. Prioritizing training and professional insertion
      a. Training the workforce according to the needs of the Mediterranean labor market
      b. Leveraging technology in educative centers
      c. Encouraging the professional insertion of young graduates in the region, through a Mediterranean Erasmus
4. Encouraging the contribution of diasporas and migrants in the Mediterranean economic development
5. Making up for the lack of private investments in the region
6. Committing the Mediterranean private sector towards the good governance
7. Supporting the social and solidarity economy (SSE) enterprises in the Mediterranean
8. Encouraging the private sector to preserve the economic, natural, cultural and social heritage of the Mediterranean and to move towards sustainable economy
9. Calling on the Mediterranean private sector to actively engage towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030
10. Promoting a model of sustainable and competitive Mediterranean cities
11. Improving the cooperation between the EU Southern Neighborhood policy and the UfM activities
12. Unifying the promotion and finance of the Mediterranean MSEs/ SMEs
13. Promoting a Mediterranean Development Bank
14. Fostering Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in the region
15. Consolidating Social Corporate Responsibility in the region
16. Fostering the promotion of arbitration in the Mediterranean
18. Promoting a Mediterranean Tourism Agency and reinforcing the Mediterranean Brand
19. Supporting the integrated transport and multimodal network in the Mediterranean
20. Establishing a digital agenda
21. Diversifying the sectors of the Mediterranean economy
   A. Innovating in key traditional sectors such as energy, food processing, textile, tourism and transport and logistics
      a. Prioritizing the energy cooperation
      b. Turning the food processing industry into a political priority in the Euro-Mediterranean region
      c. Creating a more competitive textile sector
      d. Strengthening the cooperation of the tourism sector
      e. Consolidating the transport and logistics sector
   B. Consolidating the emerging sectors, representing great potential of growth for the private sector such as the green energies and the TIC sector
      a. Promoting the green sectors, in general, and the renewable energies, in particular, as a driver of development
      b. Positioning the TIC sector as a competitive sector
   C. Strengthening industrial alliances

II. ASCAME Internal development
A. MEMBERS
   1. Focus on members
   2. Member and Network Help Desk
   3. Menu of Services and Advantages
   4. Developing the category of Associated Members
   5. Partners
   6. Attracting new members

B. COMMUNICATION, EVENTS AND PROJECTS
   1. Communication
      1.1. ASCAME’S communication overview
      1.2. Communication and Social Network Interaction Strategy
      1.3. The goals of the new communication strategy
      1.4. ASCAME’s communication tools for the upcoming period
         1.4.1. New corporate identity
         1.4.2. Social Media
         1.4.3. New user experience focused website
         1.4.4. Press & Media
2. Events
   2.1. Concept and benefits for members
   2.2. Events 2018-2022. Expansion and Cooperation

3. Projects
   3.1. ASCAME's initiatives
   3.2. ASCAME's project strategy
   3.3. Project as a tool which serves for ASCAME's members

C. NEW INSTRUMENTS AND PROGRAMMES

1. Promo Meda - Promoting the Mediterranean outside the Mediterranean
2. Home Sweet Home Mediterranean
3. Multinationals Business Club - Economic Group for the Mediterranean (GEMED)
4. Sponsoring
5. ASCAME professional network - Linkedin
Preamble
ASCAME. The Mediterranean Association

The Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME) is the most important representative of the Mediterranean private sector. It brings together Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other similar entities such as ports, trade-fairs, Investment Promotion Agencies, Business Associations etc. from both the North and South shores of the Mediterranean region.

Considering these figures, we can say ASCAME is the highest private sector representative in the Mediterranean region. Today, around 75% of its members are Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) from different cities and countries of the Mediterranean; around 5-10% are National CCI, National CCI-related or bilateral Chambers of Commerce. Nearby 5-10% are business representative organizations, employees’ organizations and associations for economic promotion. The rest of members are port authorities, promotion agencies and fairs among others.

ASCAME regularly carries out activities aimed at promoting the economic development of its area of action, namely events, working groups and projects. The Association’s work as an interlocutor is recognized by relevant regional and international institutions such as the European Union, the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Arab League etc., through numerous collaboration agreements and joint participation in a large number of cooperation projects, as well as in various concrete actions. All this, as a result of being the organization that, with the greatest extension in the territory, has the biggest experience to create platforms for dialogue and business economic cooperation in the Mediterranean region. As a result, ASCAME occupies a prominent place in the field of cooperation between Chambers of Commerce, cities and companies in the Mediterranean field.

Throughout the years, the Association has faced many challenges and has had many different objectives in order to consolidate itself as a key actor and promote the economic development of the Mediterranean region. After 36 years of activity since its inception in 1982, the Association has consolidated itself as an entity that represents the interests of the vast majority of the Mediterranean private sector, representing millions of businesses across the region.
Institutional organizations relations

Projects
Since 2010, ASCAME has been involved in more than 35 projects, representing more than 120 Millions of euros

Events
Hundreds of ASCAME events and projects activities. The Association engages annually in around 10 events related to the development of the Mediterranean, touching topics related to logistics, tourism, cooperation, finances, energies, women empowerment and so on

Participants
across a series of sectorial and multisectorial events

Companies
participating in ASCAME events and projects (2007-2017)

Working commissions
in the relevant topics of economic development such as industry, renewable energies, urban development, tourism, innovation, trade retail and franchise, integrity values and business ethics and young entrepreneurs among many others

Over 70

More than 35

10 Annually

Thousands

Over 50,000

20
The mission of ASCAME is to unite all the key players of the Mediterranean private sector in order to contribute to the economic development of the area. The Association promotes economic exchanges within the region and strongly encourages the Euro-Mediterranean integration, through the essential role played by the private sector. Thus, the Association represents a powerful advocacy for the business interests of the Mediterranean Chambers and companies by working closely with policymakers, stakeholders and opinion leaders.

The Association is the voice of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and its members before major institutional and economic actors, helping its members to promote themselves and participate with their own voice in the key areas of the Mediterranean economic development, and offer a coordinated and synergistic response. Through ASCAME, the members of the Association influence and participate in the key issues that drive and condition development and growth, offering a perspective clearly focused on the Mediterranean area. The Association seeks to project and reinforce the potential of the Chambers of Commerce as fundamental pieces in the economic scenario of the Mediterranean region and ensure that the efforts at the local level have a regional and international impact and recognition.

The vision of the Association strives to continue working for the participation and presence of the Mediterranean private sector in the key decisions that are being taken by public and private actors every day. The Association must get closer to the reality of its different members and bring them closer to the stakeholders and decision makers of the region. The local realities of the territory must be heard by the policy makers and ASCAME has to act as a promoter for the private sector.

The current consolidation of ASCAME is merely a step in its mission. Every day new challenges arise, taking into account the fast-changing reality of the world. The Association must come with new products and new unexplored ways of promoting the Mediterranean basin in order to keep actively working for the economic promotion of the area and achieve its ambitious objectives.

Today, the growing involvement of the private sector in the elaboration of the strategies and the implementation of the initiatives and projects of the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Union and other multilateral organizations, confirms its importance for the Euro-Mediterranean integration and the status of the region. Widely recognized as the advocate of a sustainable and inclusive growth, the private sector is becoming today a vital complement of the public sector in the decision process regarding the future of the region. Indeed, it contributes largely to the creation of wealth and jobs, and to the consolidation of a society based on equal opportunities, provided that it ensures the participation of women, young and minorities in the economic development of the region.
The inclusion of the **civil society** in the development of strategies and policies regarding the future of the region has also become an important challenge since the civil society facilitates the dialogue and helps to stimulate a more democratic debate at the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership scale, encouraging thus the regional integration process.

Indeed, the recent economic upheavals make the implementation of a **common framework of innovative cooperation fundamental**. The objective is elaborating a **new roadmap** from which priorities and specific problems related to the current development of the region can be defined. The Mediterranean basin is the crossroad between very distinct cultures, religions and traditions. It is a sample of the world and of its main social challenges, which are, among others: the difference in the distribution of wealth between North and South; social instability; the disparity of opportunities, mainly for women and young people; the lack of rights and freedoms; the dependency of the private sector on the public sector and the strong social unrest engendered by a significant unemployment rate which radicalizes the social stances.

We ought to select ideas and implement the **efficient tools and programs to deepen the economic relations in the area** and to redefine the role of governments and companies in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. We must work together in favor of the region’s revival in order to continue the mission defined by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), consisting in creating a zone of peace, prosperity, development and growth based on a more active economic dialogue, where the private sector would play a main role. Based on this new roadmap, we must also respond to the process of regional integration and foster solidarity and trust boosting therefore the economic development and ensuring long-term political and social stability of the region. The interdependences in many sectors (environment, energy, migrations, security, trade) are now too strong to be disregarded by the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.
Context
The Mediterranean region is facing multiple challenges, mostly related to the consolidation of its position as a strong region in the economic world. Some challenges are crucial, such as making the private sector a key factor in the economic and social development. The economic actors must act quickly to build a unified economic and financial strategy. The door is open to an historic change that should promote the construction of a stable, prosperous and sustainable area.

The Mediterranean Sea generates an annual economic value of US$450 billion, which compared to the regional GDPs, makes it the fifth largest economy in the region after France, Italy, Spain and Turkey. This value represents about 20% of the world’s annual GMP (Gross Marine Product), in an area which makes up only 1% of the world’s ocean.¹

Today, the European countries are recovering the economic stability previous to 2009 and the debt crisis. In the other side of the sea, the countries of the Arab spring have lost, between 2010 and 2016, more than 600,000 M$ in economic activities. Indeed, adding the effects of the recent oil price shocks, the countries of the Arab spring have 40 million youth unemployed, 27 million of them without a formation. A particular attention is devoted to the role of young people in the context of demographic transition, the persistent high unemployment and the new forms of political and social mobilization.

Therefore, the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) governments are looking for good practices in the South of Europe: Spain, Italy and Greece concentrate among them the highest unemployment of the old continent. The problems are similar in one and the other side of the Mediterranean. In them adjoins two regional priorities: combating unemployment and obtaining an economically stability – and, for that purpose, a political stability in its internal and immediate external environment. Therefore, North/South cooperation is an effective solution that needs to be steered in the recent future.

In this reality, certainly innovative platforms and actors such as the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Neighborhood Policy and ASCAME have an essential role to play.

Home to around 280 million people living across the three continents surrounding the sea, approximately one-third of the Mediterranean population is concentrated along its coastal regions. In the southern region of the Mediterranean, 65% of the population (around 120 million inhabitants) is concentrated in coastal hydrological basins, where environmental pressures have increased. Demographically, this population is expected to grow, as will most of the economic activities. The economic opportunities provided by the Mediterranean Sea are accompanied by an increasingly need for a management that is respectful of its ecosystems and is able to maintain and increase their value over time.²

Indeed, environmentally, the region faces new challenges. The Mediterranean Sea has been identified as one of the main climate change hotspots and areas most responsive to climate change due to water scarcity, concentration of economic activities in coastal areas, and reliance on climate-sensitive agriculture. Also, the population growth, combined with the growth of coastal urban hubs, generates multiple environmental pressures. These stem from increased demand for water and energy resources, generation of air and water pollution in relation to wastewater discharge or sewage overflows, waste generation, land consumption, and degradation of habitats, landscapes, and coastlines. The upheavals that have recently affected the Mediterranean area (Arab Spring, financial crisis, political turmoil) give rise to new challenges but also represent new opportunities for the revival of the region, as a stable and prosperous zone. In the more recent periods, events such as migrations and the refugee crisis, but also political instabilities in the Mediterranean countries and regions – such as monitoring old and new regional and internal conflicts, the growing proliferation of new forms of violence, the (re)emergence of sectarian politics, the competing strategies by regional and global powers etc. –, are leading to unpredictable and still unresolved situations.

In this context, exploring the potential of regional cooperation and integration among Mediterranean countries and regions is more than ever a necessity. Indeed, after the unpredicted Arab spring, Europe is looking for partners at the MENA region, which is still recovering of the instabilities. In this light of events, Mediterranean relations are a priority for the EU so as to enhance the stability of the region. This cooperation has to be conscious that, in the process of wealth creation and consolidation of a global and competitive Mediterranean region, all the actors, but in particular enterprises and their representatives, the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce, are drivers of the economic cooperation between the companies of the region, as well as the civil society organizations which work for the creation of activities and job, and are foreseen as the "real actors for peace".

Therefore, it has become necessary to ensure technical and financial cooperation through the establishment of a series of efficient measures, tools and programs to deepen the economic relations of the Mediterranean, consolidate the strategic sectors of the region and redefine the role of governments and enterprises in the framework of the Mediterranean partnership. The development of the entrepreneurial spirit, the support to the creation and the durability of activities and to the creation of a network of SMEs, and the support to entrepreneurship constitute main drivers to improve the financial autonomy and the future prospects of the people in the region.

To sum up, the Euro-Mediterranean integration is essential to transform the Mediterranean into a truly competitive zone in regards to other strong regions such as Asia or America. We also have to take in account the crucial role the European Union plays in the success of the Euro-Mediterranean integration process, notably for its neighborhood policy with the countries of the region.

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4. IEMed (Marc Pierron). The European Union and the Mediterranean Area: Dealing with Conflicts, Tensions and Reset: https://goo.gl/1F0Mct
In this background, ASCAME has an extremely important role, and this strategic plan is an excellent tool to promote those actions aimed at responding to the nowadays challenges and preparing a coordinated and adequate response to promote economic development in its area of action, the Mediterranean basin. A road map is needed to link long-term projects that can ensure economic development and operational plans that enable its timely and effective implementation. The selection of appropriate instruments, correct priorities and effective execution will be essential to drive future success. This selection is to be made in a strategic plan and it has to contain suitable tools and the right priorities, as well as an efficient implementation, which will be essential to encourage the future success.

The greater Mediterranean

20% of the World GDP

Investors note its fast economic growth and multiple business opportunities, driven by demographics and urbanization.

Despite political and economic instability in the last years, foreign direct investment in the Region has shown resilience.

The greater Mediterranean region has the potential to leverage opportunities in areas such as Infrastructure, as backbone of integration processes, whose importance is increasingly recognized.

New digital technologies such as big data and other megatrends and the effect on companies and their business models. In fact, investors rank the tech sector as the second most promising in the Mediterranean.

Energy and renewables, by exploring the technologies, projects and policies aimed at increasing the efficiency of production processes and consumption.

Social economy and emerging economic sectors such as Blue Growth and Cruises are representative of new economic trends in the region.

Disruptive technologies, with the key role that cybersecurity plays in accelerating the use of digital services through a new approach to risk management.
ASCAME 6th Strategic Plan 2018-2022: The Road Map

The effective implementation of the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan has developed the Association both internally and externally and has strengthened its position as spokesperson for the Mediterranean private sector with Euro-Mediterranean and international bodies. Through its various strategies, ASCAME has promoted dialogue not only between economic actors but also with the public sector and civil society. In addition, the Association has strengthened alliances with organizations that share its values and objectives, with a view to generate positive economic and social spin-offs throughout the territory.

In the elaboration of the new Strategic Plan, the old 2012-2017 Strategic Plan has been taken into account, considering its achievements and lack of successes. Also, the changes and challenges that have been happening in the Mediterranean region play a major role in defining the new strategic lines.

In addition, the 20+20 Barcelona Declaration has a major importance in the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. The declaration was approved on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of Euro-Mediterranean Integration Process. The Mediterranean, European and Arab private sectors, following the initiative of ASCAME, invited all the Chambers of Commerce and its support agencies, the businesses in the region, the sectorial organizations and the representatives of the civil society to join efforts and commit for the economic development of the Mediterranean through 20 initiatives.

As stated during the past Executive Committee meetings, the 20+20 Barcelona Declaration has been signed by 25 adherent organizations such as: Eurochambres, BusinessMed, European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Euro-Arab Business Council, German-Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Euro-Mediterranean Development Center for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Anima Investment Network, Agency for the Entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean, Association of Organizations of Mediterranean Businesswoman, MedCruise, iesMed, Euro-Mediterranean Network of Social Economy, FERRMED, Mediterranean Federation of Brokers of Assurances, Mediterranean Franchise Association, Mediterranean Hotels and Restaurant Association, Mediterranean Union of Geometres, MedCities, InsulEUR, Office of Economic Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Mediterranean Network of Mediterranean Engineers and the Economic Zones Federation. Given the variety of relevant actors that have signed the Declaration, this initiative can represent a major step for the Association and the regional integration.

As a result of the aforementioned, ASCAME is pleased to present the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, which identifies the new ambitions of the Association, which fall under the following main axes:
1. Mediterranean economic development through the initiatives of the 20+20 Barcelona Declaration.

2. ASCAME internal development: New strategies for the relations with the members, communication, events and projects; new approaches characterized by being more proactive and member-centred.

3. New instruments and programmes to develop the mission of ASCAME and enhance its horizons. New categories of members and new initiatives in order to promote the Mediterranean region.

To sum up, these strategic lines specify the identity and mission of ASCAME, which is to defend the interests of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and more generally, those of the private sector. It is essential to give our Association the capacity and the means to assert itself more as a key agent of regional development in the Mediterranean and beyond. This is why it is necessary to implement a new strategy, create new tools and products, in order to capture new resources and new members, continuing the progress that our Association has made in the recent years. To sum up, ASCAME must keep working for a common cooperation that does not stop.

From an external point of view, we must further mobilize our efforts to consolidate Mediterranean companies through the Chambers of Commerce, as key actors and partners against their counterparts overseas, in order to boost international trade and investment, a source of economic growth and social development. Also, another important area of work of the next years will be the support of entrepreneurs women and young graduates.

From an internal point of view, ASCAME must find the way to highlight its importance for its members and network. Therefore, the Association must create instruments that underline its meaning, contribution and value for the members, communicating its indisputable contribution and its condition of optimal economic spokesperson with global reach, regional impact and capacity of repercussion and local action.
Strategic lines
The following strategic lines are the objectives of the Barcelona 20+20 Declaration. Given the relevance of the Declaration and the many crucial actors of the Mediterranean region that have signed and engaged to the declaration, the accomplishment of its objectives can represent a major step in the Mediterranean economic development.

1 Ensuring the transition of the private sector from a spectator to an actor

The private sector is an integral part of the Mediterranean economy and, as such, it should influence the decisions which will boost the future of the region, in general, and the future of businesses in particular. The Mediterranean private sector should be actively involved in the elaboration and implementation of the UfM and EU neighborhood development policies as an essential complement to the public sector. The Public sector and private sector together represent a defense network for the economy of the region.

As a key partner to the development, we must recognize the potential of the private sector and the crucial and effective role it plays in favor of the economic and social development. Indeed, it highly contributes to get rid of unemployment and the creation of opportunities for young people, two of the most important challenges to be addressed in the Mediterranean. It also plays a key role in the growth of national income, the reduction of dependencies and the development of exports. Hence, the private sector, as a catalyst of economic and social growth, and must move from being a mere spectator to an actor and it must accompany the public sector when designing and implementing the strategic future actions which will draw the future of the region.

As a predecessor of the integration Process between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea, the private sector deserves being recognized and involved in the development of the region. In this regard, it is vital to put in place some economic and structural reforms in the Mediterranean countries, aimed to promoting and supporting the private sector, particularly by improving its competitiveness and the good governance, by stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit and innovation, by remedying the lack of investments and by strengthening the role of key actors such as women and young people in the development. Moreover, this active role should be expanded by stimulating horizontal and regional projects and programs to support the capacities of intermediary organizations such as chambers of commerce, federations of SMEs, economic development and entrepreneurs support agencies and public assistance agencies. To achieve this, we must evaluate and redirect to a joint economic development. In the Mediterranean, this can be facilitated through a more active economic dialogue where the UfM would play a main role.
Reinforcing the competitiveness of the Mediterranean private sector

In an economic environment, each day more globalized and more competitive, and where the markets are struggling to attract investments and to integrate in the global economy, it is essential to ensure the competitiveness of the private sector and, thus, to consolidate the economic position of the region in the world.

To stimulate the private sector, the competitiveness, the trade and investments in the region, it is necessary to actively fight the protectionism through clear mechanisms; to improve access to financing; to invest in infrastructure projects among regions through a well-planned public-private association; to facilitate a framework for cooperation at the level of university studies and at the level of research; to fill the knowledge gap between the two shores of the Mediterranean; to facilitate accesses to services; to apply the rules of origin in the pan-Euro-Mediterranean Protocol area and to diversify the Mediterranean economies.

• One main priority, in some regions such as Maghreb and Mashreq, should address the informal sector that must be considered as an opportunity for companies and jobs to emerge and that must be directed towards the formal sector.

• On the other hand, all the stakeholders should recognize the importance of an efficient healthcare system for the competitiveness of the Euro-Mediterranean economies. Investing in the development of healthcare would ensure the development of a healthier and more competitive workforce. Furthermore, the private sector can play a role in capacity enhancement, which can result in further efficiency levels.

By intensifying trade and industrial cooperation between the Mediterranean countries and the rest of the world, the competitiveness of the Mediterranean region will increase vis-a-vis other economic areas, freeing up the market for products and services in the euro-Mediterranean region. That is why, some structural reforms should also be applied to partner countries.
3 Boosting the entrepreneurial spirit and the innovation

Should become a priority throughout the Mediterranean world:

- innovating, in general, and having an entrepreneurial spirit, in particular, with businessmen and businesswomen in the middle of the scenario, and, as new catalysts for a new economic and social development era;
- reinforcing the capacities of entrepreneurship support structures based on the methodologies and technics adapted to the categories of targets and to the local contexts;
- associating the research and innovation actors of the Southern countries to the main European programs such as PCRD (Horizon 2020) and Eco-Innovation and encouraging the common responses from Southern and Northern organizations to the EU tenders;
- implementing a technical and pedagogical environment in favor of the creation and durability of jobs and the development of territories;
- the capitalization, the exchanges and the promotion of good practices between the actors of the business creation;
- value creativity and entrepreneurial behavior in the academic curricula.

The valorization of the innovation is closely related to the development of entrepreneurial initiatives, since the integration of technological innovations (products or processes) and no technological ones (organizational, commercial or social innovations) have positive impacts on the company visibility, the market shares, the quality of goods and services, the production capacity or the guarantees in terms of health or safety.

It is essential to have a new vision which formalizes the great ambition of the Mediterranean to become a knowledge economy among the leaders in the world. In this sense, the Mediterranean can emerge as a winning region. Nevertheless, in order to ensure the way to the success, it is necessary to concentrate on creative structures in the detriment of the rigid public structures or businesses which do not allow the creative freedom to fly. Also, we must set, as a target, the diversification of economic development and the creation of innovative clusters. In this regard, we need to identify critical success factors and measures to assess the economic performance of the “clusters”, as geographic areas spread around the countries of the region, but specific in determined fields of the new economy, characterized by a high concentration of jobs and industry players, and a high level of education and research.
Reinforcing the role of key actors such as women, young people, through vocational training and entrepreneurship education

A. Reinforcing the role of Mediterranean women in the Mediterranean economy

Taking advantage of a country’s human potential means also having a long-term strategy based on specific programs which address to the rapidly changing environment and which ensure respect for groups and individuals rights. It is impossible to make a progress in the region without building together a society based on equality of opportunities, or without ensuring the participation of women in economic and business development. The countries can be competitive only if they develop, attract and retain the best talents, both male and female. For this reason, it is mandatory to support programs that promote business women in the economic life of the Mediterranean countries.

The significant contribution of women to the economy and the main role they play in the changing and development of the sectors of the society is more and more recognized and there is no doubt that there is a bi-directional relationship between economic development and women empowerment defined as improving the ability of women to access the constituents of development. While development itself will bring about women’s empowerment, empowering women will bring about changes in decision-making, which will have a direct positive impact in Mediterranean economies. To support the Mediterranean private sector, it is important to stimulate entrepreneurship within the women population though some actions: having more women entrepreneurs participating to the main economic debates; encouraging the creation of companies by women; promoting the image of women entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean; identifying and evaluating the difficulties experienced by women entrepreneurs in the creation and/or the management of their companies; guide the women towards formal economic sectors in the detriment of the informal ones.

B. Prioritizing training and professional insertion

Unemployment and, especially for the young people, represents the main threat of our region. We must answer urgently to the challenge of training and professional insertion to allow the economy to take benefit of the potential that can offer the human capital, as a factor of competitiveness that determines growth.

a. Training the workforce according to the needs of the Mediterranean labor market

Today, many labor markets in the region are characterized by a high level of unemployment, especially for young and women, and by a high level of informal jobs.

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The Mediterranean Association
That’s why, it is necessary to develop the competencies of the human capital through an efficient educative system and an employment policy in accordance with the needs of the developing economies. Although it is already late, we must apply the commitments of the nations expressed in the New Sustainable Development Goals (NSDGs) or those announced by the Euro-Mediterranean regional frameworks, underlying the necessity of an international cooperation. The main challenge today is obtaining jobs for young people, as a consequence of the important demographic growth, the incapacity of the economies to absorb a growing employment demand and the intensification of the international competition. Besides, the educative system must pay a particular attention to the development of the entrepreneurial spirit in the acquisition of basic skills in order to boost the entrepreneurial initiatives, which play a main role, as drivers of growth in the region.

b. Leveraging technology in educative centers

It is essential to allow students to develop the skills they need to compete successfully in a global, technology-driven economy. The chambers of commerce and companies can maximize the share of graduates and encourage the blossoming of technology in educative centers.

Specific programs in collaboration with local educative centers should be implemented in order to ensure that entrepreneurs get the talent they need to power their company’s growth and to develop a competitive workforce. The Chambers can leverage technology and the Internet to advance and support small business development and entrepreneurial success to the community through education and training by providing access to quality online training via multiple digital devices. Online education is particularly flexible and adaptable and it can be used to service a potentially huge audience.

c. Encouraging the professional insertion of young graduates in the region, through a Mediterranean Erasmus

In order to fight against the long-term unemployment of the young graduates in the region, but also to bridge the gap existing between the skills of the available workforce and the concrete needs of the companies at the Mediterranean scale, a Mediterranean Erasmus, between young graduates and companies in the region, could be launched. This initiative will offer the opportunity to these graduates to live an international professional experience which will allow them to acquire the competencies required by the companies and to access easier the labor market. On the other hand, this initiative will contribute also to the integration of the region by facilitating the transfer and the upgrading of knowledge and knowhow between both sides.
Encouraging the contribution of diasporas and migrants in the Mediterranean economic development

Diasporas contribute in the social and economic development of their countries, through the creation of business activities. More particularly, we need to encourage the productive investment of the Maghreb’s Diasporas living in Europe and promote the transfer of competencies, know-how and technologies.

Migrants in a mobile world help in manifold ways the development everywhere. Economically, migrants and diasporas work and create jobs. They use to send remittances, contributing then to improve the economic development of their families and community of origin.

Making up for the lack of private investments in the region

The private investments should dominate economic growth in the Mediterranean region and stop inhibiting the development. The fluctuations of employment rates, especially in the south of the region have a direct impact on the will to invest from the national or international private investors. That’s why the economic investment in the region must be accompanied by an investment in training and a stronger south-south cooperation.

Incentive schemes (taxation) should be implemented in order to direct popular savings towards productive investments. On the other hand, it is essential to encourage the countries to implement private equity vehicles (sector development fund, regional fund, etc.) and microfinance tools, aiming at filling the gap between the levels of microfinance intervention and the traditional bank intervention.

On the other hand, it is crucial to improve the Mediterranean emerging sectors’ capacities to present themselves to the investors; especially the energy sector that must become an element of competitiveness for the economies of the Mediterranean countries. Besides, it is important to encourage strategic alliances on the industrial level so that the region can be able to compete with other world powers and attract investments.
Committing the Mediterranean private sector towards the good governance

The successful experiences around the world show that the social development and the improvement in systems of good governance are not just some simple things to accompany policies but an essential condition.

Governance must be reinforced within the Mediterranean private sector, as an essential ally to raise transparency and financial reporting. Improving governance in the region will allow new entries; improve banks and SMEs capacities; allow advancements in the reform agenda; strengthen regulatory and supervisory institutions.

Supporting the social and solidarity economy (SSE) enterprises in the Mediterranean

The social economy can constitute a vital link in order to promote employment and social cohesion, especially among young people, by creating stable and high-quality jobs as well as better living conditions. The social and solidarity economy enterprises do not aim at making profit but at addressing unmet needs by drawing a new economic model based on reciprocity and civic responsibility, while placing humans and environment at the hearth of the development projects.

In Algeria, Spain, France, Italy, Morocco, Portugal and Tunis, it is estimated that more than 410,000 SSE companies generate more than 6.2 million jobs and involve more than 134 million people. Both the North and South shores have to face the same challenges regarding youth employment, gender equality and social protection.

That’s why; it is today essential to boost the growing role of the Mediterranean actors of the social economy and to encourage the Euro-Mediterranean politics and programs to take into account this sector, as a catalyst for economic dynamism, social and environmental protection and socio-political empowerment in the region.
Encouraging the private sector to preserve the economic, natural, cultural and social heritage of the Mediterranean and to move towards sustainable economy

The Mediterranean is an eco-region which benefit from a unique cultural and social heritage, stunning geographical features and abundant natural resources.

In this sense, it is essential to preserve these specificities and qualities of the Mediterranean territory, which have proved both vital and extremely vulnerable. The future of the region depends heavily on the sustainability of its future economic growth. Sustainability must be perceived as an opportunity and not as a threat, enabling policies to make the renewable energy and other green sectors factors of competitiveness and success for the regional economy.

In a context of threatened natural resources, promoting the green economy represents a wise strategic choice, as a tremendous potential for job creation, technological progress and competitiveness of the Euro-Mediterranean economies in the future.

It is important here to stress the importance of the islands of the Mediterranean which possess a large portion of the coastline giving them a high responsibility for the littoral zone which is comprised of a variety of significant and yet fragile ecosystems. They offer immense potential for growth and development.

Private sector should also be encouraged and rewarded when they generate local positive impacts: local jobs, social development, empowerment of communities, local subcontracting, staff training, preservation of heritage, development of infrastructure for the public, etc.

Calling on the Mediterranean private sector to actively engage towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030

Unlike previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the ambitious new UN sustainable development agenda is oriented more to economic development and environmental sustainability. This need for alternative solutions that will address these shortcomings gives businesses and the private sector a key role in the redrafted roadmap. The message is clear; in order to fully achieve the SDGs, the involvement of the businesses and private sector becomes essential.
The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will set a framework that is both inspirational and ambitious in tackling the root causes of poverty, human rights abuses, exclusion, inequality, and fragility. It is thus essential to commit the Mediterranean Private Sector to this new sustainable agenda and to accelerate initiatives to integrate the efficient use of the natural resources within a coordination framework between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Furthermore, it is required to encourage the enterprises to adhere to the international standards of transparency and environmental responsibility and help them to minimize business risk. The points of convergence between enterprises’ objectives and the SDGs have yet to be materialized, but it’s undoubtedly that the sustainability is the economic opportunity for the Mediterranean private sector future. The development of sustainable business practices is crucial for the future prosperity and well-being of the region.

This new Agenda also recognizes, in particular, the positive contributions of migrants and their fundamental role in sustainable development. The current migration realities make this point critical, especially in the Mediterranean which is currently witnessing a massive influx of migrants, mainly from Syria to Europe. The current migratory crisis requires an urgent and coordinated response at regional and international level.

11 Promoting a model of sustainable and competitive Mediterranean cities

The Mediterranean cities contribute obviously to the economic and social development of the region since they generate jobs and wealth at the local scale. Cities have developed all over the world to achieve various stages of “smartness”, while many cities are still in the process of implementing smart functionalities within their operations. Cities like New York, London, Berlin, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Vienna have incorporated smart functionalities in their administrative operation and service delivery mechanism. Similar trends can be experimented within the Mediterranean region with the example of Barcelona, Cairo, Istanbul and Casablanca.

By investing in the development of Smart cities, the region becomes more competitive, manages better its resources and its physical infrastructure, and ensures a better quality of life for its citizens. Consequently, it allows for environmental protection and green development and acts as a protection against inevitable global warming and climate change. Financial mechanisms for bringing about such development can include PPP projects, borrowings from multilateral/bilateral agencies and bonds subscribed by national and state level development agencies, amongst others.
Improving the cooperation between the EU Southern Neighborhood policy and the UfM activities

Europe should bet on a convincing long-term vision for the Mediterranean. The EU has implemented the following two instruments for the cooperation in the Mediterranean:

- the Barcelona Process: an association between the EU and the 14 countries around the Mediterranean launched in 1995 which evolved in the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008 in the form of an intergovernmental organization of 43 countries;
- the European Neighborhood Policy: the EU policy towards its neighbors, initiated in 2003;

These instruments have been conceived with the same objective of transforming the Mediterranean in a zone of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity, by strengthening the union between the UE and its Mediterranean partners. The review of the Neighborhood Policy initiated by the European Union in 2015 aims at providing more efficiency. In this context, it is important to improve the cooperation between the activities carried out by the UfM and those carried out under the neighborhood policy in order to reinforce the regional dimension.

Unifying the promotion and finance of the Mediterranean MSEs/ SMEs

As main driving forces of the economic growth in the Mediterranean, MSEs and SMEs represent a key and determinant factor. Indeed, they mainly contribute to jobs creation and encourage a true economic integration in the Euro-Mediterranean zone. It is estimated that for every 1-million-euro investment from a SME, 14.7 jobs are created, compared to the 3.1 generated if the investment is from a big company. The MSEs represent around 90% of the Euro-Mediterranean companies and the SMEs, 99%. Nevertheless, they face lots of difficulties in their access to financing. SMEs and MSEs often are left out of the big circuits, despite their effective contribution to the mobilization of savings, the modernization of economies, the increased competitiveness and the development of international trade.

We must then encourage the implementation of a more favorable environment for the development of the private sector and especially for the MSEs/SMEs By:

- developing policies, programs and initiatives to help not only the SMEs’ access to finance, but also to new technologies, trainings and good practices;
- ensuring the fast development of the South Mediterranean Entrepreneurship environment in the benefit of creators and entrepreneurs;
encouraging favorable politics to the implementation of public-private facilities and improving the “entrepreneurial nativity”.

Here the UfM can be the perfect tool to make all the action plans designed for setting MSEs/SMEs as a priority.

It is thus very important to encourage the emergence and growth of start-ups within the region, through efficient development strategies; to promote the transfers of technologies between the MSEs/SMEs, in order to boost the network, facilitating exchange of experiences and knowhow and to encourage the creation of business incubators. It is also essential to allow the networking between the different local economic promotion agencies, existing in the region, and to stimulate the public-private partnership.

Promoting a Mediterranean Development Bank

Based on the work done by the various European donors in the region, especially the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in order to expand the EU geographical action to the southern Mediterranean neighbors, it is necessary and urgent to promote a strong Mediterranean Development Bank.

This financial instrument could become a key element of the regional economic integration by contributing to the sustainable economic development and the social progress of the countries in the region, especially by mobilizing the resources to promote the investment in the Mediterranean space. It is easy to admit the need for a financial reference for the region as other parts of the world have, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) or the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Based on the co-participation of public-private capitals, this Bank would improve the financing for the SMEs and the venture capital funds, which would boost the foreign and domestic direct investment in the region. It would represent a financial institution that would encourage the exportations of the associate countries and that would standardize the monetary and trading policies, while promoting the relations and the south-south economic dialogue, in favor of a more competitive Mediterranean region with respect to the global market.

This Bank, which will be managed according to fully transparent and socially responsible principles, could represent a privileged action space for institutions and companies and could be focused on reforms and on canalizing new investments and projects, especially those considered a priority in the framework of the UfM. It should mediate on behalf of companies and above all, have place for all stakeholders in its
board, from Member States, multilateral organizations like the IMF, EIB, ADB, the Islamic Bank and sovereign funds, which would strengthen its credibility in the capital market and help to increase its lending capacity. This Bank should count, among its priority, the SMEs, the improvement of their environment and the access to finance.

However, this instrument will be really useful if it is accompanied by a close collaboration with the private sector. Increase its involvement as an interested stakeholder and not just a performer, which will give an appropriate response to the funding needs. The contribution of the public sphere would materialize in the transfer of resources and the development of a favorable environment for investment and this would introduce a more realistic and appropriate view for projects.

15 Fostering Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in the region

Public-private partnerships must be encouraged to facilitate the economic integration, the creation of jobs and to foster the development in general.

The Public sector must understand and support initiatives of the Private sector which is hiring more and more employees reducing the poverty in the World. Gathering local governments, private sector and civil society, the public-private partnership represents today an essential mean to mobilize new resources and to build a true Mediterranean of projects. The PPP are essential to the economic and social development in the region since they allow meeting the needs in services of the public sector thanks to the expertise of the private sector, based on the principle of the optimal risk spread. The states play a key role, not only for the instauration of a climate of trust between the public sector and the private one but also to ensure the well application of reforms.

While certain initiatives have already been undertaken in this regard, reinforcing the collaboration between public and private sectors is a crucial step in building relationships with the private sector to a more advanced degree.

16 Consolidating Social Corporate Responsibility in the region

By 2030, the world will experience a 50% increase of energy demand, a 30% increase of water demand and a 50% increase of food demand. To improve the standard of living rights in the coming years and to meet the growing challenges, it is required to adopt a corporate social responsibility in managing the relationships with consumers and with the environment and the business climate. Besides, the social responsibility represents a way to fight against poverty and to promote the creation of new quality
employment opportunities, based on solidarity and general interest criteria. Social responsibility promotes the creation of local employment, the distribution of value, the training of employee, the environmental and social compliance and the civic behavior of leaders who are called to encourage and to comply with these practices.

As a key challenge in the Mediterranean, it is important to tackle corruption wherever it presents itself, as it is a real impediment for the Mediterranean and has negative socio-economic effects in the region.

It is essential to promote and canalize investments in different Mediterranean countries with a shared commitment to economic and social development. As an action framework, we should promote a joint collaboration model that could address the key challenges of the modern society and, above all, raise expectations among the public while improving the social environment.

Fostering the promotion of arbitration in the Mediterranean

Arbitration is necessary for the cooperation spirit and integration among the Mediterranean countries and in view of the evolution of trade, investment projects and international trade contracts. It is today essential to make up for the lack of efficiency of the National Arbitration Centers in the Mediterranean which do not feature noticeably in the global arbitral market. That’s why, it is necessary to promote the creation of a Regional Arbitration Center that could provide appropriate dispute resolution services to the Mediterranean Region and offer the Mediterranean arbitration and ADR users the confidence, credibility, efficiency and flexibility they seek for the resolution of their commercial and investment regional disputes. There is no doubt that the availability of functioning and efficient commercial arbitration and mediation systems in the Mediterranean countries would help each and every one of those countries to attract foreign trade and investment.

Also, arbitration is a supporting factor for the private sector in building a common Mediterranean economic space. The bet must be clear: develop commercial arbitration techniques and promote the arbitration system and mediation in the Mediterranean level with the creation of regional centers and the reform of national centers as first step into the integration of a global Mediterranean network. We must act so that arbitration is seen as a quick and effective way to avoid judicial processes and to encourage trade and that’s why it is essential to work on the sensitivity and culture of the arbitration.

Networking and exchange of experiences between national arbitration centers should be fostered with the objective of developing joint practices and regulations related to mediation and arbitration across the region.
Promoting a Mediterranean Tourism Agency and reinforcing the Mediterranean Brand

The Mediterranean region represents the major world tourist destination, with approximately 35% of total world arrivals, 1/3 of tourist income, 20% of the accommodation capacity worldwide and 12% of the total GDP of the region. Future predictions indicate that the current growth trends will continue and that in the year 2020 they will reach the 420 million non-resident tourist visits. However, in this space of contrasts, there are large differences and a very unequal distribution of this advantageous position between the European side of the Mediterranean and the South and the East. There is no common branding, as some other regions take advantage of, such as the Caribbean.

We must promote the emergence of the Mediterranean Tourism Agency as an entity of public-private partnership to develop and implement measures to strengthen and support the development of the sector in this region and meet the challenges that it is currently facing, especially to improve their ability to keep attracting tourists, especially in southern and eastern coasts, with the aim of consolidating its leadership position in the world which will beneficiate to the competitiveness of the companies and especially the SMEs.

Another major challenge to take up is the creation of a Mediterranean Global Brand which would facilitate the promotion and selling of the Mediterranean as a global reference, while integrating new dimensions and creating new prospects and opportunities between the potential partners and investors of the North and the South of the region. This brand would allow to boost the region and would contribute thus to improve the business climate as well as the economic environment in general, acting as a true driver for value creation.

Supporting the integrated transport and multimodal network in the Mediterranean

Another important challenge, which is also one of the main objectives of the Barcelona Process, is transport and logistics since the sector is essential to the Euro-Mediterranean integration. That’s why, it is necessary, today more than ever, to facilitate a global and unique strategy to the system and transportation networks that, with an integrating impact, will benefit the economy and competitiveness of the region.

It is important facilitate the establishment of an integrated transport and multimodal network that will help strengthening trade between the EU and between the Mediterranean partners but also between the southern countries, fostering thus the creation
of a Mediterranean economic integration zone. We must focus and go for an effective multimodal system of air-sea transport through the improvement and modernization of ports and airports. Besides, the creation of terrestrial links and the connection of Mediterranean transport networks to the trans-European networks will ensure interoperability. Without connected and communicated networks, it is impossible to speak about integration and this is not just the task of administrations but of all public or private institutions which are called to work together to achieve this.

20 Establishing a digital agenda

The digital revolution is an undeniable fact that has surprised us all for its speed and presence in all areas of our lives. This also includes the presence in the work areas and the consequent loss of jobs in favor of machines or electronic devices.

This fact calls for a global strategy to adapt workers to technological changes, as well as to devise new jobs compatible with digital news. Undoubtedly, ASCAME must promote actions aimed at achieving these objectives in order to prepare the region for the technological changes that are still to come and at the same time ensure the stability or alternatives for the workplaces that may be affected by these changes.

21 Diversifying the sectors of the Mediterranean economy

A. Innovating in key traditional sectors such as energy, food processing, textile, tourism and transport and logistics

a. Prioritizing the energy cooperation

The Mediterranean offers a highly diversified energy mix by gathering countries with high resources in fossil energies, nuclear energies and renewable energies which spread in coherent geographic spaces. The South is characterized by a great potential in terms of solar energy and important resources in fossil energies whereas the North is more focused on nuclear and the northern territories are more favorable to the development of the wind energy sector. This distribution of resources goes hand in hand with achievements and skills specifics to each shore but also with new opportunities of industrial innovations.

The energy interdependency and complementarity that link the countries of both shores of the Mediterranean invite to think about a more in-depth energy cooperation that will allow ensuring the energy security, the integration of internal markets, the development of cross-border infrastructures and the promotion of investments,
at the sector level. That's why, it is important to build a true sustainable regional energy partnership and to work on a better coordination and harmonization of efforts at the national level and, above all, at the regional one, in order to ensure the optimization of energy exchanges.

b. Turning the food processing industry into a political priority in the Euro-Mediterranean region

It is essential to make the food processing industry a policy priority within the region, given the security, health and human crisis that a bad management of the sector could involve.

In this regard and in order to prevent the food processing industry in the Euro-Mediterranean region, from any threat, it is important to support the modernization of the agriculture in the South and to better distribute the value chain between the Northern and the Southern shores. This also requires an action on demand through the promotion of the Mediterranean food processing model, for nutritional, public health and competition reasons, required by the producing countries outside the region. A Mediterranean territorial action is also essential in terms of territory planning and rural development.

As a valuable cultural capital of high potential, the Mediterranean Diet can be a motor for sustainable and inclusive economic development in the region. It may inspire an ambitious program for mobilizing knowledge and creating partnerships between public and private actors of the whole region.

c. Creating a more competitive textile sector

For a long time, the textile and clothing industry has dominated the commercial exchanges in the Mediterranean. Today, it keeps playing a main role in the improvement of economic conditions, especially in the South of the Mediterranean, where the sector is of key importance. Around 40% of the European textile and clothing trade goes to the Mediterranean region\(^5\). The vision of a bilateral development aimed at making a totally integrated market should create a win-win situation for both sides of the Mediterranean. The advantages of a close collaboration between the Mediterranean countries and the EU in the textile and clothing sector are well recognized in the region.

Nevertheless, for the last years, the textile sector had to face a growing competition, especially because of technological changes related to processes and final products. That's why, it is essential to modernize this industry so that it can remain competitive in a highly competitive global marketplace.

\(^5\) Euro-Mediterranean industrial cooperation 2014-2016 work programme
d. Strengthening the cooperation of the tourism sector

Tourism is one of the most important activities in the world and is the creator of one of ten existing jobs worldwide. It represents a major axis of development since it is a highly intensive-service activity that generates jobs and important incomes and that fosters the promotion of the Mediterranean society and lifestyle.

Till nowadays, national tourism interests and competition between the Mediterranean countries have prevailed over regional cooperation and willingness to join forces to offer integrated packages of destinations and new innovative ways. Nevertheless, it is important to enhance and mutualize the complementarities that can offer the region from a cultural, geographic and historic point of view. In other words, it is necessary to generate awareness about what can represent the Mediterranean region, involving all the positive aspects in terms of diversity and unicity and we can do this thanks to a strengthened cooperation within the sector.

e. Consolidating the transport and logistics sector

It is evident that the transport and logistics sector is decisive to ensure an effective integration of the Euro-Mediterranean region and stimulate trade and exchange between the two shores. The two main objectives of the cooperation at the level of the Euro-Mediterranean transport reside first in the development of infrastructures capable of effectively linking the various countries of the region but also in the convergence of regulatory standards of these countries. It is essential to upgrade the logistics system between the north and the south and to put in place an efficient, sustainable and healthy transport system in order to facilitate the economic development of the countries in the region.

B. Consolidating the emerging sectors, representing great potential of growth for the private sector such as the green energies and the TIC sector

a. Promoting the green sectors, in general, and the renewable energies, in particular, as a driver of development

A greener restructuring of the economy responds to ones of the main current challenges: climatic change, deterioration of natural resources and energy problems. Existing studies demonstrate that different green sectors of the economy (waste treatment, climate adaptation challenges, material recycling or agriculture and transformation of traditional production methods) have a great potential for job creation. It is also widely recognized that tackling energy and climate change challenges is one of the biggest opportunities for the companies of our time.

It becomes thus urgent for economic and social reasons to move from a production model to the efficient use of resources, especially renewable energies and to promote the energy efficiency, as a key factor for the energy development. The demographic
growth and the urbanization of the region make essential the implementation of a regional strategy for the energy efficiency in terms of legislation, regulations and investments’ promotion. In this regard, it is also important to promote the projects related to the energy efficiency which represents the fastest and most affordable way to transform the challenges of the Mediterranean energy sector into concrete opportunities.

b. Positioning the TIC sector as a competitive sector

The traditional sectors that have been, for a long time, the drivers of growth of the Mediterranean, are not enough today to support the economic development of our region, which is now closely related to innovation and technology. The growing computerization of the societies in the region represents, without any doubt, the opportunity to modernize the economies but also to reinforce the cooperation between both shores. The private sector must take benefit of the digital technology since the companies evolving in this market tend to be more competitive, to gain market shares, to invest and to create jobs.

If it is true that, during the last years, the Euro-Mediterranean zone has improved significantly as for the use of new information and communication technologies, the access to these technologies remain unequal according to the different nations, which is translated by an important digital divide, based on provision of services, efficiency of technological networks, population alphabetization and incomes. It is thus necessary to bring closer the companies of the developing countries to the utilization of these technologies and to implement a digital Euro-Mediterranean global policy that would be on the service of the economic growth and the coming of a knowledge society.

c. Strengthening industrial alliances

The fast evolution of the strategic relations of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is an effective tool to “upgrade” the enterprises in the South, and offers businesses in the North specific advantages within the new international production scheme, in terms of production processes and international expansion.

Agreements based on the model of the ACAAs (Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of industrial products) – agreements covering three or four priority industrial sectors depending on each country involved – should be fostered in order to ensure the free movement of industrial products between the countries of the European Union (EU) and the Mediterranean countries.

The industrial alliances between the countries of the Barcelona process should consolidate the regional economic interdependency for the Mediterranean countries. In fact, these alliances constitute the means to acquire and consolidate the competitiveness of the European and Mediterranean companies and the opportunity for to improve their knowhow and to adapt to the European employers’ system.
The Mediterranean Association Strategic Plan 2018-2022
ASCAME
internal
development
New horizons, new instruments

During the last ASCAME’s General Assembly and Executive Committee Meetings, a new approach in the relations with the members of ASCAME has been approved. Our Association aims at offering a closer and more proactive treatment to its members and making them aware of the prestige and benefits the Association can offer.

Also, the vast economic, political and institutional reality gives rise to the creation of new categories of members and forms of participation given the growing interest in our Association and the many stakeholders that contact us. New categories, new products and an attractive marketing campaign will enable the Association to incorporate multiple types of members and thus enhance its potential.

A. MEMBERS

1. Focus on members

The members of ASCAME must be the central actors of it. The Association’s mission is to promote the work of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and of the other similar entities of the region. The Association seeks to project and reinforce the potential of the Chambers of Commerce as fundamental pieces in the economic scenario of the Mediterranean basin and ensure that the efforts at the local level have a regional and international impact and recognition.

ASCAME must be a platform of promotion and visibility for its members and should profit of the knowledge and capacity for action of its members to achieve regional initiatives on the ground that place the Mediterranean region as an economic key area. It is also important to integrate the achievements and activities of the members in the Association’s story.

Thus, it’s natural that ASCAME seeks to focus on its members, to offer them the best services and to respond to their needs, approaching to the Mediterranean reality of every member. Loyalty and satisfaction of the members can be boosted by making them aware of the value of ASCAME, and more importantly the services, activities, initiatives, projects and resources that the Association makes available to its members. Therefore, ASCAME must create instruments that underline its meaning, contribution and value for its members, communicating the indisputable contribution of ASCAME and its condition of optimal economic spokesperson with global reach, regional impact, capacity of repercussion and local action.

Thus, the Association’s objective is to consolidate the current members and build loyalty among them, perceiving the sense of belonging to a project of global scope and projection and being aware of everything they are offered. This strategic line will also be useful in order
to achieve more proactivity from the members and promote their participation in the activities they are offered, such as, among others, participating in the working commissions.

2. Member and Network Help Desk

In relation to the above, ASCAME seeks to offer a closer and more proactive treatment to its members, by making them the center of attention.

Thus, the creation of the Member and Network Help Desk aims at giving a closer and member-centered attention to the members and networkers of the Association. Members and networkers will be able to address the Help Desk for consults and requests that will be solved proactively, efficiently and quickly. The Help Desk should be useful to establish connections between members, networkers and also third parties.

Members and networkers should feel appreciated and cared about, as a part of ASCAME’s strategy of getting closer to its members and making them conscious about the value of their membership.

3. Menu of Services and Advantages

In relation to the objectives mentioned above, one way to carry out this member-centered and awareness approach is through a Brochure of Advantages, or Menu of Services and Advantages to be handed to the members and also to be used to attract new ones.

The Brochure of Advantages, should contain all the services and benefits offered by ASCAME to its members, which are often unknown or ignored. This is a way of valuing the meaning of the Association, its position in the Mediterranean field and becoming aware of all its services.

Through this brochure we will inform members about the added value ASCAME has to offer, as well as everything they can ask the Association for, which will enhance the meaning of ASCAME and give it more value.

The Brochure of Advantages will be useful to motivate the members, intensify the payment of the annual fees, being also an attractive marketing tool in order to attract new members and spread the mission of the Association.

4. Developing the category of Associated Members

The consolidation of ASCAME has given place to an exponential growth of its members throughout the years, namely Chambers of Commerce and Industry, arriving to have an extended presence in the Mediterranean region without precedents.
As said previously, ASCAME aims at consolidating and satisfying those current members. That being said, the exponential growth of Chambers of Commerce and Industry doesn’t mean that the Association can’t grow anymore. The diverse economic and institutional parties, as well as the interests we share with a multitude of regional actors, enables the incorporation of a new members.

In this regard, the category of Associated Members must be developed and profited at its maximum. This category is open to those Mediterranean institutions which have some connection with the aims of the Association. Thus, other organizations, different from the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and its similar entities can join ASCAME and its activities. Among others, we can name institutions and the Chambers of Commerce which are not direct riparians of the Mediterranean Sea. ASCAME needs to profit from everything the world and its actors have to offer.

5. Partners

ASCAME is partnering with several regional and International Associations and Organizations. The Association will work with esteemed and recognized groups to coordinate activities, projects, economic missions, events and advocacy, in order to promote the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and economy integration.

The vast economic, political and institutional reality gives rise to the creation of new categories of members and forms of participation given the growing interest in our Association and the many stakeholders that contact ASCAME.

One new category is “Partners”. It’s a Mediterranean operating institutions category, such as ports, institutes or intergovernmental organizations. This category doesn’t imply the payment of an annual fee. It’s an interesting way to incorporate ASCAME-interested actors in the network, that are not necessarily Chambers of Commerce or related entities, and bring many synergies and offer a great networking potential with their associates.

6. Attracting new members

On the one hand, there are still Chambers of Commerce and Industry which are not a member of ASCAME. Those Chambers of Commerce or similar entities could be invited to join the Association and share its mission, vision and activities.

On the other hand, ASCAME can keep growing if it focuses on new types of partnership and new categories, as stated before. New categories, new products and an attractive marketing campaign will enable the Association to incorporate multiple types of members and thus enhance its potential.
B. COMMUNICATION, EVENTS AND PROJECTS

1. Communication

1.1. ASCAME’s communication overview

ASCAME, as a consolidated entity representing the interests of the private sector in the Mediterranean, but also as an accredited partner of the EU and international organizations, is continually adapting its communication actions to face changing scenarios in the region. During the last years, ASCAME has offered communication tools capable of bringing effective answers to the opportunities and challenges facing the Chambers of Commerce and, particularly, the Mediterranean SMEs.

During the last period, actions in this regard have strongly focused on the maintenance and strengthening of the ASCAME members’ visibility. The result-oriented communication strategy during the past period, comprised three communication axis: institutional, events and projects that have actively reached out to Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and businesses, regional business communities, organizations and international institutions, governments, civil society and media.

As an example, here below some ASCAME Communication Figures of the last period:

• Increase by 20% of the number of page visits
• Hundreds of subscribers to ASCAME MedaNews
• Over 200 Press releases about ASCAME events, projects’ outputs and institutional statements
• More than 800 ASCAME related articles published on the media
• Above 900 media contacts and multiple media partners

1.2. Communication and Social Network Interaction Strategy

It is ASCAME’s mandate to provide a useful and effective service to all its members and interested stakeholders. If implemented correctly, in the upcoming period, ASCAME’s Communication and Social Network Interaction Strategy can reaffirm ASCAME’s position as the most influential representative of the Mediterranean private sector in Africa, Europe and Asia.

The new ASCAME’s Communication and Social Network Interaction Strategy will consist on clear, concise, comprehensive and credible messages to adapt its distinctive elements to the 2.0 environment. Our communication strategy will be clearly bidirectional, facilitating interaction between our members and developing spaces where they can search, share and receive information. In sum, we will develop a new communication era - both internal and external - focused on a continuous interactive scenario.
1.3. The goals of the new communication strategy

Because ASCAME is a member-based organization, having knowledgeable and engaged members is critical to making this ASCAME’s mission fully effective and creating sense of community between the Association’s network. In this regard, our efforts are focused on the maintenance and strengthening of our members’ visibility and gaining new potential members and partners to be part of the ASCAME network.

Our new communication and social network interaction strategy for the upcoming period, will implement new communication methods in order to achieve the expected goals, which mainly are:

- **Keep** ASCAME members informed on ASCAME developments
- **Update** ASCAME members on regional business developments and opportunities
- **Encourage** ASCAME membership chambers, associations and partners to communicate with each other; and
- **Communicate** with external stakeholders and promote ASCAME to potential members

This communication and social network interaction strategy- through 3 communication axis (institutional, events and projects) and 2 interconnected directions (internal and external communication)- will actively reach out to Chambers of Commerce and businesses; regional business community; organizations and international institutions; governments; civil society and media. The **multi-channel dissemination** of our communications and our **growing presence in the regional and international media** has been and will continue to be a strategic commitment for ASCAME.

To this end, a range of communication initiatives are set out for the next period in order to make ASCAME’s communication efforts more efficient, effective, and lasting.

1.4. ASCAME’s communication tools for the upcoming period

ASCAME’s communicative identity will consist on clear, concise, comprehensive and credible messages to adapt its distinctive elements to the 2.0 environment. Our communication strategy will be clearly bidirectional, facilitating interaction between our members and developing spaces where they can search, share and receive information.

1.4.1. New corporate identity

These perspectives on communication will be reflected on our new corporate identity, which will include a redefined logo and a new slogan, in order to give our brand strategy a long time horizon. This corporate identity strategy will be accompanied by:

- **E-brochure**
- **Communication kit**
- **Who We Are Video**: Highlighting the benefits of belonging to the Association.
1.4.2. Social media

Our presence on social networks for the dissemination of our diverse initiatives, events, projects and policy pushes, as well as those from our members and partners, have been highly successful, and Twitter is now the main external platform bringing traffic to ASCAME’s website. In the upcoming period, ASCAME will produce a wide variety of flows of useful information, facilitating networking, promoting ASCAME interest and those of its network.

To make our content more accessible in form, ASCAME will make a clear commitment to audio-visual content and seeking greater interaction with the end user. The segmentation of our audience has also led us to open up new channels for reaching a wide range of audience (e.g. Instagram).

1.4.3. New user experience focused website

ASCAME’s website is a central hub for important communication with our members. A new responsible design and user experience (UX) focused website is planned to be produced, which will have a greater presence on social networks and will facilitate interaction with users. The new format will allow more content with graphic material to be incorporated, display to be improved on mobile devices and will integrate into a single web platform all the microsites for the projects in which ASCAME participates, including all the information, publications and results they produce.

This new UX website will allow us to improve our conversation ratios with members, partners and potential members and external audience, while we:

- Reinforce our brand image, by improving the perception of the user
- Gain loyalty of our members, by increasing their conversation rate (conversion from mere visitors to active members)

In addition, this website will include a member’s info corner containing:

- A detailed explanation of what the benefits of joining ASCAME are.
- A powerful search facility in order to locate members/members’ organisations quickly and efficiently.
- A subsection where they can look up what our members are interested in, what projects they are undertaking and what projects/funding they would be interested in the future.
- A subsection where they can send their request to the Secretariat and/or send us a project/event/activity proposal.
- Member of the Month Initiative, including: Overview of the country; ASCAME member representative of the country, opinion article and upcoming events of this chamber/organization.

1.4.4. Press & media

In line with the goals established during the last period, ASCAME has consolidated its presence in the main regional media through regular collaborations in the written press and eventually in radio and television. Its appearance in the media in the regional and international arenas has also increased, cementing itself as a prestigious leader in the field of regional business dynamics.

With the objective of widening its target audience and forging media alliances, ASCAME will continue with its strategy of association with leading media and news agencies, producing content through press releases, opinion articles, and press conferences.
In sum, during the last years, ASCAME has developed a strong basis on which to build its communication strategy. However, the tools available need to be better integrated and utilized. ASCAME’s greatest asset by far is its members. However, for ASCAME to be effective at communicating to its members and to use their expertise, it is required a greater degree of active engagement of members.

2. Events

2.1. Concept and benefits for members

In line with ASCAME’s structure, ASCAME Events reflect, materially, what the organization stands for, conceptually.

To date, this translates into over 15 years of regional flagship events – including ASCAME-branded events, as well as co-organized ones – with an average attendance of 1000+ participants per edition. As such, ASCAME Events today have become iconic high-level conventions.

ASCAME Events are recognized for their high quality on both a regional and international scale. This is largely due to 1) the Association’s extended network and 2) constant novelty surrounding the region’s timeliest topics.

ASCAME depends largely on its network. With more than 300 National and Regional Chambers, dozens of strategic and institutional partners, and strong alliances with leading political and economic entities in the region, ASCAME enjoys a solid base for producing quality events.

Concretely, this means being able to rely on the region’s private sector, at the highest level. ASCAME Events allows for Mediterranean political and economic leaders to voice their interests on an open platform, in view of a more united region.

In addition to its strong membership base and long-standing institutional relations, ASCAME also strives for innovative partnerships. Because ASCAME Events are constantly being re-invented, collaborations extend to new and strategic alliances as well. Depending on the topic at hand, ASCAME ensures top quality topics and speakers by collaborating with expert organizations in the given sector.

Collaborators always have a clear regional and/or sectorial purpose, in line with ASCAME’s mission and vision.

ASCAME’s flagship events are regional hubs in their respective fields, gathering experts from all over the world to share their views for a more integrated Euro-Mediterranean area.

Specifically, these are broken down into different types of events:

- **ASCAME Flagship Events**
  Events organized by ASCAME, with the support of institutional and strategic partners.
These are the organization’s most iconic events, and take place each year or every two years. Specifically, these are:

**Annually:**
- The Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders (MedaWeek Barcelona)
- MedaLogistics & MedaPorts Summit

**Every two years:**
- The MediTour
- The MedaFinance
- The MediTex
- **ASCAME Member Events**
  Events organized with the support of ASCAME’s membership base. The idea is to join efforts across the region, driven by collaboration among the organizations’ extended network. ASCAME’s strategic partnerships is a way to extend these events from a national to regional level, inclusive to all Mediterranean countries represented under the ASCAME flag.

Participants and panelists in ASCAME Events include the highest ranking political and commercial representatives from both within and beyond the region.

ASCAME Events are designed and developed to shine light on the Mediterranean’s most relevant socio-political and economic trends. In particular, these offer a centralized space for experts to convene and discuss the region’s emerging trends, business opportunities, and pressing challenges in the region.

**Benefits for Participants**
- Networking, B2Bs and matchmaking. Conferences like the MedaWeek Barcelona and the MedaLogistics Summit, provide the physical space to connect representatives from the private sector and high-level political figures interested in furthering business in the Mediterranean.
- Furthermore, panelists and participants alike, have the chance to further their visibility within ASCAME Events, through targeted promotional campaigns and tailor-made partnerships. Using ASCAME’s outreach and social media channels, or customized sponsorship packages, attendees have the opportunity to amplify the visibility of their brand/organization on an international platform.

**2.2 Events 2018-2022: Expansion & Cooperation**

Ultimately, throughout the next four years, ASCAME Events will continue to provide a regional platform for dialogue and networking for members and non-members alike. At the same time, ASCAME is looking to amplify its events-base on a wider, international scale, and to engage its members in organizing more shared events.

Among the novelties ASCAME is looking to introduce are:
• **ASCAME International Events I Unlimited Med (New!)**
  Given ASCAME’s success on a Mediterranean level, the Association is now looking to 
  amplify corporate events on an international scale. The idea is to continue with Me-
  diterranean-based contents, but extend the events to a wider public, including stake-
  holders from countries outside the Mediterranean, with a clear economic interest in 
  the region. Focus countries include: **Russia, China, Gulf, US** and **Brazil**

• **Maximizing the ASCAME Brand: Win-Win**
  Members are encouraged to propose and engage in joint events supported and 
  co-branded by ASCAME. Given the Association’s weight on a regional and inter-
  national level, collaborating with ASCAME and adopting its brand will heighten the 
  importance of the event in question – especially within a Mediterranean context. 
  From the Secretariat, organizational efforts will be shared, with a strong support from 
  the team in Barcelona. Organizing more joint-events of this sort, under a pan-regional 
  ASCAME umbrella, will 1) strengthen any given event from a national level to a region-
  al/international one and 2) help further the ASCAME brand, by increasing its visibility 
  through more events.

**Services & Added Values**
Members and stakeholders can largely benefit from ASCAME Events. Clear advantages 
include:

• ASCAME enjoys a strong **centralized database**, allowing to find **strategic synergies** 
  and **complementarities among and between members**. In addition to supporting 
  members with the organization of joint events, ASCAME can also help its network 
  collaborate on shared priorities – whether specific sectors, or political initiatives.

3. **Projects**

3.1. **ASCAME’s initiatives**
ASCAME aims to support initiatives and projects conducted by the Union European, the 
Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) or any other institutional entity which offers chances 
to create opportunities in the Mediterranean region.

ASCAME’s projects focus on economic and social development of the Mediterranean 
basin, such as: access to finance, Business support organizations (BSO) mentoring 
operations, blue growth, renewable energies, sustainable, transports and logistics and 
women entrepreneurs.

ASCAME General Secretariat follows up ASCAME’s participation in the ongoing projects, 
by implementing activities, organizing events and participating in consortium meetings 
in order to implement strategy oriented to members’ needs.
3.2. ASCAME’s project strategy

ASCAME’s main objective is to encourage new initiatives. Through its new projects ASCAME will boost the Mediterranean business ecosystem, promoting an inclusive economic growth and job creation by enhancing the private sector organizations among North and South Partner countries.

ASCAME will focus on projects whose targets are:

- To boost the Mediterranean business ecosystem promoting an inclusive economic development and job creation, by enhancing the private sector organisations in the ENI South Partner countries.
- To increase employability prospects for young people, women and high-level post-graduates in the region, and facilitate recruitment procedures.
- To stimulate, coach and fund cross-sectoral and trans-boundary innovation within the Mediterranean private sector.
- To improve services and activities dedicated to capacity training for BSO executives such as strengthening the ability of BSO staff to manage business organisations.
- To improve the quality of higher education institutions (HEIs) and enhance its relevance for the labour market and society.
- To study, test and capitalise innovative instruments and actions towards the enhancement of tourism sustainability in the Mediterranean.
- To deal with Blue Growth issues in order to increase their impacts towards common identified targets.
- To improve the collaboration of Mediterranean maritime clusters and their quadruple helix actors (research institutions, industry, government and civil society) and non-institutional new innovation.

ASCAME will offer a space for dialogue, by providing a unique platform to create valuable and sustainable business connections among the BSOs at a Mediterranean level, as well as the exchange of best practices surrounding key topics in BSO training today (internationalization and international cooperation).

3.3. Projects which serve as a tool for ASCAME’s members

ASCAME will work with its members in order to present innovative and sustainable projects proposals. To that end, ASCAME will offer dedicated services to its members.

In order to find new funding sources, the Association will enlarge its spectrum of possibilities while monitoring calls for European projects: Interreg - Med Program, ENI CBC MED, EuropeAid, H2020, PRIMA, EMFF EASME, Erasmus +, etc.
ASCAME, as a strategic partner of many regional cooperation projects, has built its expertise following a structured methodology which gives its members the opportunity to benefit from its expertise and institutional recognition. ASCAME will bring its expertise in projects proposals submissions to regional and European Programmes and share its know-how with members and carry its involvement in high level consortium partners.

The Association will give support to analyse projects opportunities. The idea is to provide “think tanks”, in order to launch debates and brainstorming on new project ideas with members and partners. ASCAME commissions will meet with recognized experts who will bring their knowledge on specific topics. The Association will also offer training and informative workshops to its members (focus on how to design and submit a project proposal etc.).

Projects are tools which will allow ASCAME to create synergies among the private sector by being the link between its members. That means the Association will offer to its members a strong database of project partners.

The main advantage for the members is to set-up new projects and to be involved in winning projects proposals.

C. NEWS INSTRUMENTS AND PROGRAMMES

1. Promo Meda – Promoting the Mediterranean outside the Mediterranean

The private investments should dominate economic growth in the Mediterranean region and stop inhibiting the development.

It is crucial to improve the Mediterranean emerging sectors’ capacities to present themselves to the investors; especially the energy sector that must become an element of competitiveness for the economies of the Mediterranean countries. Besides it is important to encourage strategic alliances on the industrial level so that the region can be able to compete with other world powers and attract investments.

By producing new programs of events and projects, giving companies arguments to be set up in the Mediterranean, ASCAME conforms to its strategic guidelines. The Association must be a key partner at shaping programs which encourage Mediterranean investments.

2. “Home Sweet Home” Mediterranean

As stated before, the Mediterranean basin needs to attract investors. One interesting way to do so, is by attracting the Mediterranean investors who decided to invest elsewhere for different obstacles, barriers or other reasons.
This objective can be fulfilled by creating events, projects and other concrete initiatives directed at the Mediterranean investors established elsewhere. The obstacles that made those investors find other places to invest must be fought and investors must be attracted back. ASCAME’s objective, in its condition of representative of the Mediterranean private sector is to be a key partner at shaping programs which encourage Mediterranean investments, and coming up with ideas such as this one, which must be developed in partnership with other public and private actors of the basin.


GEMED initiative was presented at the Executive Committee meeting of 24 November 2015 and has been approved and discussed along the following Executive Committee meetings. This Business Club initiative is a tool to allow and attract new members in order to increase the network and the revenues of the Association. GEMED aims at being an exclusive economic group made up of big multinational companies looking for main opportunities of consolidation in the Mediterranean Area. GEMED can offer big international companies opportunities to reach Mediterranean countries through the payment of another category of fee.

The creation of this Business Club will bring together international business leaders and representatives from economic financial companies acting in the Mediterranean to talk about an emerging model that has proved effective in a period of crisis and unemployment. Aligned with its focus on the international private sector, ASCAME can increase its attraction for large, multinational companies who can join as Associated Members and create a profit for ASCAME.

GEMED meets expectations from Mediterranean private sector and fits with ASCAME ambition to enhance its network and enlarge its business resonance. The purpose is to involve international companies within ASCAME network, pointing out business advantages from Mediterranean environment and making the Mediterranean a target for investment. This Multinational Business Club branded ASCAME, will hold biannual meetings and will take advantage of networking informal events. GEMED can benefit from ASCAME network and especially the assets resulting from the different categories of members of the Association.

4. Sponsoring

The next step to enhance ASCAME’s visibility and network is to develop win-win collaborations through sponsoring agreements. Those sponsorship agreements aim at increasing the Association’s revenues and reputation.

This will require developing partnership deals for events, building up partnership packages and setting up a sponsorship identified strategy.

Our primary focus are Banks and Economics Media.
5. ASCAME professional network – LinkedIn

ASCAME ambition is to develop new cooperation tools with the main actors of the economic development in the Mediterranean.

Those tools have to fit with the new digital era communication requirements. It is thus possible to exploit a social media as LinkedIn to create a platform connecting ASCAME members and partners.

This platform will bring together Executives from Mediterranean and will be dedicated to facilitate networking and business intelligence within the region.
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