

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2020

The inclusion of women into the Mediterranean labour market would increase GDP by 47%

Barcelona, 9 March, 2020 - **Women entrepreneurs** are increasingly present in Mediterranean economies. Young and highly-trained people from the southern Mediterranean countries, including those that undergone the Arab Spring revolutions, claim the same opportunities as their counterparts on the north shore to get a job according to their training and even to start up their own businesses.

However, despite the progress made in some countries of the Mediterranean region, the **integration of women** in the labour market remains as one of its major pending issues, partly due to the low income per capita, the high poverty degree in some social strata and to a less favourable international political-economic situation.

Mediterranean women are called to play a key role in the construction of the region, because only through their **full labour inclusion** can regional integration objectives be effectively achieved. That is why today more than ever, specific programmes to promote and provide financing for female entrepreneurship are necessary. There is no doubt that the development of Mediterranean countries will not be feasible without the construction of a society based on equal opportunities that ensures women participation in business and economy.

In figures, support for women would result in an increase of **12 billion dollars to world GDP** by 2025. In fact, this is a trend which has already been observed in the last few years: since 2012, the business activity rate among women has raised by 7% in 61 countries around the world and the business deficit between men and women has been reduced by 6%, with the participation of women in business activity being 11% compared to 16% of men.

The part of the Mediterranean that presents the greatest inequality is its southern shore and the eastern region, since only 49.2% of the population in these areas participates in the labour market compared to 63.5% worldwide. And although educational standards in most countries have not stopped growing, figures

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reflecting young graduates' context are still alarming. According to Anwar Zibaoui, General Coordinator of [**ASCAME**](#) (**Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry**): "Unemployment has reached an unsustainable situation, especially among the female population. 45% of women do not have a job. If the presence of women in working life in the **south and east of the Mediterranean** increased, the **region's GDP would grow by 47% over the next decade**, compared to the current 18%".

The cultural and economic transition of the Mediterranean countries is now inevitable. It will only be through an inclusive society, in which women can fully develop their potential by creating innovative companies that provide a competitive advantage, the only way to overcome the obstacles the region faces. Benefiting from the talent of the other half of the population will undoubtedly be the most effective way for Mediterranean economies to grow.

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