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New EU support for regional cooperation in the Southern Mediterranean

The European Union has announced two new programmes to boost regional cooperation in the Southern Mediterranean. The first will target young women and men from the region to empower them and encourage them to take a more active role in political and social processes. The Net-Med Youth project will also focus on provide training and expertise to youth organisations from the region and enhancing networking between them.

The second programme will provide support to the Union for the Mediterranean (the Union for the Mediterranean is a multilateral partnership aiming at increasing the potential for regional integration and cohesion among Euro-Mediterranean countries) projects and initiatives. Financing will be provided in six priority areas (transport and urban development, energy, environment and water, higher education and research, social and civil affairs, business development), developed by the Secretariat of this Organisation.

This additional support for Regional programmes in the Southern Mediterranean amounts to €12.21 million.

NET-MED Youth project - €8 million

NET-MED Youth is a new project aiming to improve the access and effective participation of young people in politics and national planning in the Southern Mediterranean. The project includes strengthening the capacities of youth organisations in partner countries and improving networking among them in order to reduce the fragmentation of efforts and harness the collective potential of young people in achieving democratic transition towards active citizenship, political participation and social inclusion.

Support for the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean - €4.21 million

This support to on-going and new specific actions developed by the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean is co-funded by the Member states of the European Union and aims ultimately to strengthen the regional links between partner countries from the Southern Mediterranean.

Background

The EU policy responses to the challenges of the Southern Region of the European Neighbourhood Policy are guided by the European Neighbourhood Policy, its bilateral Action Plans and the bilateral Association Agreements, as well as the policy orientations laid down in the Joint Communications on 'A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity' and 'A new response to a changing neighbourhood' and the related Council conclusions.

The programmes for regional co-operation tackle challenges with a regional dimension and promote interstate co-operation on issues of mutual interest. The actions identified in this Regional Action Programme result from the conclusions of the Euro Med Ministerial Conferences which were held in the various cooperation areas and/or are the continuation of previous EU regional programmes.

The 2011-2013 Regional Programme for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is focused on the following main challenges:

- political challenges in a region where conflicts continue to hamper development and regional cooperation;
- economic challenges in a region that needs to create 22 million jobs in the next ten years, where labour productivity is still low, and where south-south economic integration is insufficient and only 5 % of international trade among southern Mediterranean partners is intra-regional trade;
- social challenges linked to the need to confront poverty, improve income distribution, fight exclusion, cope with migratory flows and promote gender education;
- the global challenge of sustainable development and the need to face the threats of climate change, environmental degradation and scarcity of water.

For more information

[IP/13/1136](#): EU boosts support to democratic reforms and development in the Southern Neighbourhood

Website of the DG for Development and Cooperation DG-Europe Aid:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

Website of the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

Štefan Füle: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/

On support to the European Neighbourhood:

www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood

EU Neighbourhood Info Centre: <http://www.enpi-info.eu>