

Press Release

Mediterranean stakeholders look back at the past three years and discuss plans for the next phase at the UfM Gas Platform Conference in Brussels



Paris, 18 December 2019 – Enhancing a regional structured dialogue allowing the progressive development of a more secure, transparent and predictable Euro-Mediterranean gas market.

On December 16, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Gas Platform Conference, entitled **Summing up of the activities in the 2017-2019 period and plans for the next phase**, took place at the Cercle de Lorraine in Brussels, Belgium. Organised by the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie (OME) with the support of the European Commission, the event reviewed the achievements of the platform over the last three years and the planned topics and activities to be covered during the 2020-2022 period.

Opening the conference, Anne-Charlotte Bournoville, Head of Unit at the DG for Energy of the European Commission, recalled the ambitious climate and energy objectives of the European Union and key points of the recently unveiled “European Green Deal.” She then acknowledged the important steps that have been made by the UfM Gas Platform since its launch in June 2015 and highlighted the major role of the platform as the “gathering place of reference” to strengthen regional dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean gas sector.

Houda Ben Jannet Allal, UfM Gas Platform Secretariat, Director General of the OME, gave an overview of the activities carried out over the past three years within the framework of the approved platform work programme.

During this first phase, activities of the UfM Gas platform were of four kinds: development of studies and ad hoc background documents; capacity-building through specific training sessions on gas-

related matters; awareness raising and public outreach through different communication tools; and management of the platform and support activities.

Between 2017 and 2019, for all studies of the approved work programme, the UfM Gas Platform Secretariat launched dedicated working groups (WGs).

The studies on the existing and future of the gas supply-demand balance in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and on the role of LNG in Euro-Mediterranean gas supply security have been updated with 2019 data and forecast. Studies on gas infrastructure projects and usages (backed-up by a second version of an infrastructure database), on gas hubs, and on institutional and regulatory framework are also completed. The main features as well as the key findings of those studies were presented in two sessions during the conference. On 9 and 10 December 2019, the OME organised a Mediterranean Energy Scenarios meeting to discuss and define a common UfM-OME energy scenario.

Ms. Allal also reminded participants about the launch of the UfM Gas Platform website and the quarterly newsletters during this first phase. Both website and newsletters are available in English, French and Arabic.

In the last two sessions, looking at next steps, delegates were first briefed on the role of gas in the decarbonisation of energy systems. And then a roundtable, moderated by Luca Giansanti, SVP - Head of European Government Affairs at ENI, discussed emerging trends and challenges in the gas industry (established role of gas in the energy mix, phasing out of financial institutions from gas projects, etc.) and how they could be addressed during the next phase of the activities of the UfM Gas Platform (refocus works of the platform at technical level, further develop capacity building, etc.). Also debated, the place of gas in the energy security/transition of the Mediterranean region; the importance of regional cooperation to work together towards an effective energy transition in the Euro-Mediterranean; and the role of the UfM Gas Platform. All future work of the gas platform will feed the new UfM Energy Ministerial Declaration planned in June 2021.

On December 17, concluding the first phase of the gas platform initiative, OME as the secretariat of the UfM Gas Platform, organised a workshop gathering almost all the Gas Infrastructure Operators (GIOs) in the South and East Mediterranean region to examine how they could all beneficially cooperate in long term planning of system development with network investments and monitoring the developments of transmission network capacities. The participants discussed the need and the necessity for increasing cooperation on different issues and proposed the creation of a GIOs forum within the umbrella of the UfM Gas Platform, which all participants considered as the most appropriate avenue for facilitating such a cooperation among the GIOs in the Mediterranean region.

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Initiated in Malta in July 2014, confirmed in Rome in November 2014 and launched in June 2015, in Brussels, the objective of the UfM Gas Platform is to enhance the cooperation in the Euro-Med. region between all stakeholders of the gas chain, in a bottom-up approach to improve gas security by identifying barriers and opportunities. The "Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie" (OME) runs the Platform's secretariat in close coordination with the UfM co-presidency.

The UfM Gas Platform is one of the three UfM Energy Platforms (The two others are on regional electricity market and on renewable energy and energy efficiency) established by EU Energy Ministers, Ministers of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, and the European Commission to further strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean for ensuring secure, affordable and sustainable energy for the region and beyond.

More information about the UfM Gas Platform available at <https://www.ufmgasplatform.org/>