



DECLARATION

OF THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF THE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE INITIATIVE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Algiers, 4 December 2018

We, the representatives of Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia, in the presence of the representative of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM):

1. RECALLING the WestMED ministerial declaration adopted by the 10 participating Western Mediterranean countries on 30 November 2017 in Naples (Italy) approving the governance and management structure for the implementation of the initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean;
2. RECALLING the UfM Ministerial Declaration on the Blue Economy adopted in Brussels on 17 November 2015, which invited participating countries to explore the added value and feasibility of appropriate maritime strategies, including at sub-regional level, and build on the experience of the 5+5 Dialogue and relevant UfM ministerial declarations;

3. RECALLING the Valletta Declaration adopted in Malta on 4 May 2017 on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation;
4. BEARING IN MIND the importance of the concept of the blue economy, which encompasses the set of human activities depending on the sea and/or underpinned by land-sea interactions in the context of sustainable development, and notably including industrial and service sectors such as aquaculture, fisheries, blue biotechnologies, coastal and marine tourism, shipping, ship-building/repair, ports, ocean energy and marine renewable energy, including offshore wind, which are among the main traditional and emerging economic maritime sectors in the Mediterranean region;
5. STRESSING the Algiers Ministerial Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of the 5+5 Dialogue (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia), held on 21 January 2018, supporting the establishment of the Steering Committee of the initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean, which is in charge of implementing the initiative with the support of the European Commission and the Union for the Mediterranean;
6. WELCOMING Algeria's initiative to host this ministerial meeting on the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean;
7. RECOGNIZING that the WestMED initiative focuses on the Western Mediterranean region in order to address the needs and priorities identified by consensus and shared by participating countries; and recalling that the initiative's actions will remain open to the participation of other Mediterranean countries subject to prior approval by the WestMED initiative members;

8. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the need to take into account the priorities, needs and specific circumstances of each participating country when selecting and implementing projects;
9. **UNDERLINING** that the initiative's success depends on a collective effort on the part of participating countries, with support from the European Commission and the contribution of the UfM Secretariat and other relevant regional organizations/processes, including private investors;
10. **WELCOMING** the leading role of Algeria and France, which assumed the first co-presidency of this Committee and established a solid foundation for future cooperation between Western Mediterranean countries on the blue economy; welcoming the efforts of the members of the WestMED Steering Committee during the first year of the initiative's implementation, which made it possible to adopt the Committee's rules of procedure, identify national action priorities and develop a roadmap; and thanking the European Commission and the UfM Secretariat for their support for the initiative;
11. **WELCOMING** the establishment of a WestMED Assistance Mechanism by the European Commission to support the initiative's implementation and the work of its Steering Committee; and inviting the European Commission to ensure the necessary continuity in the years to come;
12. **THANKING** the various observers and stakeholders for their useful contribution to the work of the Steering Committee and in particular the efforts made by managing authorities of cross-border and transnational programmes in order to align their priorities with those of WestMED;
13. **INVITE** the European Union to consider appropriate and specific support at sub-sea basin level for the initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean

under the future European Territorial Cooperation programmes for the period 2021-2027;

14. REITERATE the commitments made at the ministerial meeting in Naples to:

- Favour the relevant actions at the appropriate level – fully respecting and in synergy with the legal and institutional framework of each country and the specificities and competences of the administrative structures – aimed at the appointment and empowerment of the relevant key implementers; notably the national coordinators and members of the WestMED Steering Committee,
- Ensure the political leadership and ownership of WestMED and provide appropriate means and resources, including institutional and administrative support, taking into account each country's capacity,
- Ensure coordination with the work of existing regional institutions and encourage the involvement of relevant international, European, national, regional and local stakeholders, including civil society and private investors, in all steps of the initiative's implementation,
- Coordinate policies and funds at national level, with local, regional, international and European funding and financial instruments, to support the implementation of the initiative and the achievement of its objectives;

15. ADOPT the roadmap for the WestMED Initiative and identify six joint priorities for action by participating countries, specifically: maritime cluster development, biodiversity and marine habitat conservation and restoration, sustainable consumption and production, development of coastal communities and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, skills development and circulation, maritime safety and the fight against marine pollution,

16. WELCOME the launch of the first WestMED projects;

17. COMMIT TO:

- Actively exploring the possibilities offered by the Western Mediterranean to develop a sustainable blue economy that generates growth, creates jobs and provides a better living environment for Mediterranean populations, while preserving the services performed by the Mediterranean ecosystem,
- Continuing and intensifying cooperation efforts for the implementation and success of the WestMED initiative, in partnership with the European Commission and the UfM Secretariat, with a view to carrying out the projects identified under the WestMED initiative and ensuring their added value and impact,
- Working assiduously to achieve the goals set in order to improve the quality of life of people living in the WestMED region and beyond,
- Ensuring the implementation of the joint action priorities contained in the roadmap,
- Identifying tangible and achievable projects that are in line with the priority actions set down in the roadmap,
- Coordinating the human and material resources required to carry out the actions defined and the projects identified;

18. CALL FOR enhanced synergies and coordination between the WestMED initiative and other relevant regional initiatives, particularly those in connection with the blue economy like BLUEMED;

19. CALL ON the WestMED Steering Committee to continue its efforts, particularly in identifying pilot projects, exploring new opportunities and fundraising to carry out new WestMED projects;

20. CALL ON the Steering Committee to establish and present an annual activity reports to ministerial meetings;
21. THANK Algeria for its hosting and excellent organization of the second ministerial meeting on the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean;
22. WELCOME the incoming French-Moroccan co-presidency, which will start on 1 January 2019.