



## Concept Note

### Expert meeting on the occasion of the launch of *EuroMedMig Working Paper Series*

#### ***Deep roots of migration, environmental and climate change: Exploring emerging drivers of human mobility in the Mediterranean***

*UfM Secretariat, 17 December 2019*

**Background.** The UfM has recently presented at the margins of the UfM Regional Forum the preliminary conclusions of the first-ever comprehensive scientific report on the impact of climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean region. This report is under preparation by the MedECC network and will be published after an external review. Sea-level in the Mediterranean is projected to increase by 1 meter or more by 2100 and the temperature in the Mediterranean is projected to increase by 2.2°C above pre-industrial levels. While some impacts of these and other environmental changes on human population living along the Mediterranean coasts still need to be quantified, it is highly likely that they will drive additional and strong migratory pressures. These factors evolve in relation to other elements such as the rapidly growing urbanization of the Mediterranean coasts, notably in the South and the East. According to IOM, “very often, urbanization is primarily the result of migration” (IOM, 2015<sup>1</sup>). Urban populations in countries around the Mediterranean Sea increased from 152 million to 315 million between 1970 and 2010 (an average rate of 1.9% per year). By 2030, the Mediterranean Basin will be the global biodiversity hotspot with the highest percentage of urban land (5%). There is thus a need to deepen the understanding of the potential impacts of environmental and climate change on human settlements, particularly spatial mobility within the Mediterranean.

Within a specific partnership with UNCCD, UfM has engaged into addressing desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers of migration. In particular, UfM has contributed to the now published study on Land degradation and migration by UNCCD and IOM, helping identifying Mediterranean good cases/practices.<sup>2</sup>

These factors should be addressed and further researched for the major subregions of the basin, in line with the Valetta declaration on Strengthening EuroMediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation (Ministerial meeting held in Malta in 2017), approved by UfM Ministers of Research, which upheld “the key role that research and innovation play in developing an understanding of the root causes of migration and the inter-dependencies between different drivers of migration including economic, political, social, demographic, conflict-related and environmental drivers.”

With respect to social stability and migration, human security around the Mediterranean is highly dependent on the overall socio-political situation but it is also impacted by environmental change. Overall, climate change provokes decrease in available natural or financial resources and thereby tends to exacerbate regional human

<sup>1</sup> [http://publications.iom.int/system/files/wmr2015\\_en.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/system/files/wmr2015_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The publication is available at the: <https://knowledge.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2019-08/IOM%20UNCCD%20Desertification%202019%20FINAL.pdf>



conflicts. Although a straight relationship between development and migration has not been identified yet, it is widely recognized that both environmental and socio-political changes lead to forced human migrations toward regions less exposed to risks in many parts of the world. Environment is one of the key indicators of quality of life, stability and cohesion in societies. Change in the conditions on how societies can organize themselves may then affect directly the main conditions of sociability.

These debates demonstrate the need for an interdisciplinary approach on human mobility in the Mediterranean in order to mutually reinforce research agendas in different sectors. Placing the people and their demands at the heart of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, the UfM Secretariat gives emphasis to work related on the root causes affecting migration and to sustainable development as a regional solution to involuntary migration. In this regard, the UfM encourages coordinated and collaborative approaches for research in the Euro-Mediterranean area on migration and integration related aspects, as it has shown by supporting the launch of the *Euro-Mediterranean Research Network on Migration (EuroMedMig)* on the occasion of the 2018 IMISCOE Annual Conference held at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona.

On the occasion of the launch of the new *EuroMedMig Working Paper Series*, and as part of its currently developing activities within a three-year (2019-2022) Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Network Program (Ref. 611260-EPP-1-2019-1-ES-EPPJMO-NETWORK) aiming at “Mapping European Mediterranean Migration Studies” (#EUMedMi), the UfM has the pleasure of hosting an expert exchange meeting on the status of knowledge and research on climate change, environment and Mediterranean migration.

When it comes to highlighting possible solutions for increasing the resilience of migration-impacted areas, research and education have always had a key role, whether in rural/coastal areas development, skill development and employability, and other tools for addressing the roots of migration. The role of targeted education activities, such as trainings and internships, is fundamental. Other actions can involve mainstreaming resilience development solutions based on water, green/blue economy, and entrepreneurship in countries of migration origin, transit and hosting.

### **Rationale, key questions and outputs of the expert meeting**

The main purpose of the event is to facilitate the exchanges of experts and researchers across Mediterranean countries and fields of expertise. The event will try to better define, assess and identify the main points in relation to environmental and climate change as possible future drivers of Mediterranean Migration.

It also has the purpose to examine this new trend from a multi-scale level, considering that the process of urbanization in the Mediterranean can offer us new ways to define regional shared concerns, and from the point of view of possible solutions based on resilience and development.

- What are the main legal, political, social and economic challenges of environmental and climate change in the Mediterranean?
- How far a multi-scale analysis is necessary, at the rural and city levels?



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- How can we assess impact on the Mediterranean region in general, and/or specific sub-regions in particular?
- What possible solutions based on sustainable development should be underlined and upscaled?

**Outputs from the meeting will feed into a policy paper for the *EuroMedMig Policy Papers Series*.**

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