



## DIALOGUE 5+5

THIRD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON  
RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION  
TUNIS, MARCH 30-31, 2017

**Promotion of research, innovation and higher  
education for social stability and economic growth**

## TUNIS MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

A series of handwritten signatures in blue ink, likely representing the ministers who attended the conference. The signatures are written in a cursive style and are located at the bottom left of the page.

The Ministers in charge of Research, Innovation and Higher Education in the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries of the Western Mediterranean, meeting on the occasion of the Third Ministerial Conference on Research, Innovation and Higher Education, in Tunis on March 31, 2017 in presence of the European Commission, the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union, and the General Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean:

**Considering** the recommendations of the Second Summit of the Heads of States and Governments of the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries, held in Malta in October 2012;

**Recognizing** the recommendations of the meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries, held in Tangiers on October 7, 2015 and in Marseille on October 28, 2016;

**Acknowledging** the recommendations of the previous Conferences of Ministers of Research, Innovation and Higher Education of Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries;

**Being aware** of the challenges facing the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries in the field of Research, Innovation and Higher Education, and convinced of the importance of these sectors in achieving development, progress and prosperity of their countries;

**Taking note of** the rich and constructive debates during the Conference sessions as well the interventions of the Member Countries, the European Commission, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Union for the Mediterranean;

**Reaffirming** the agreement during the First and the Second Ministerial Conference of the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries on Research, Innovation and Higher Education held in Rabat and in Madrid in September 2013 and March 2015, respectively, to organize the Third Ministerial Conference in March 2017 and to pursue the cooperation within the Dialogue 5+5;

**Underlining** the importance of research and higher education for the development of knowledge, the promotion of technologies and national innovation systems for the purpose of attaining socioeconomic growth and bearing the different challenges that the Member Countries face, such as, unemployment, economic underdevelopment, environmental degradation, shortage of natural resources and serious scarcity of water and energy.



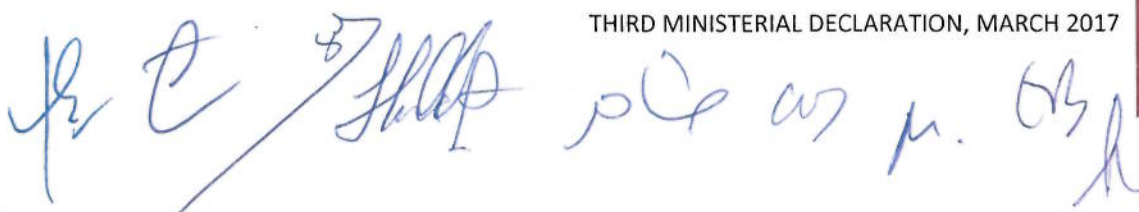
Moreover, research and higher education can be relevant and powerful means to face the migration challenge, which is admitted to be a long term phenomenon in the Dialogue 5+5 area.

### Recall

1. The Work Programme, prepared by the Group of Senior Officials during the Second Ministerial Conference whose preparatory meetings were constructed on principles and priorities;
2. The support to the principles set out in the Second Ministerial Conference for the successful implementation of the actions identified in the Work Programme:
  - a) To support research, the advancement of scientific knowledge and the advanced training of scientists in all areas of knowledge;
  - b) to minimize the gap between research and innovation. and support the smooth transition to the principle of "idea to market" integrated into the architecture of H2020 and gradually into national programs of research and innovation of the countries of the Dialogue 5+5;
  - c) to support a broader approach in raising awareness and motivation of researchers to meet the demand for PhDs in collaboration with industry, the consolidation of internship schemes for master's students in the private sector, and the promotion of entrepreneurship and improvement of the innovation skills profile in science and technology graduate programs;
  - d) to integrate the dissemination and sharing of knowledge and technology transfer as a cross-cutting issue in all proposed actions;
  - e) to adopt a variable geometry approach where the actions should escalate from bilateral to multilateral settings;
  - f) to establish a viable approach to financing activities using national budgets for international cooperation and for opening programs and projects to participants from other countries in the region, and to promote maximum synergy with the European funding programs, such as H2020, ERASMUS+ and COST.

### The Ministers:

**Agree** to consolidate the scientific and technical achievements within the Dialogue 5+5;





**Welcome** the launch of the Dialogue 5+5 Website [www.fiveplusfive-rihe.org](http://www.fiveplusfive-rihe.org), jointly developed by Tunisia, Spain and Italy, which is an essential instrument of communication through which the ongoing projects and activities within the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries and beyond can be showcased;

**Encourage** the continuation of the (ongoing initiatives) adopted in Madrid and to be developed in the next period 2017-2018;

**Call** for all Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries to maintain regular contact, through regular meetings, and to ensure the implementation of the agreed conclusions, monitoring and evaluation of launched initiatives, and the leveraging of synergies between different sectors, in particular research, innovation and higher education;

**Emphasize** their common determination to strengthen relations between the countries of the Western Mediterranean, and thus, justifying a new dynamic to their scientific cooperation, based on efficiency, performance and complementarity;

**Agree** that strengthening the potential of youth, is fundamental to the development and prosperity of the Mediterranean Region; ensuring that they are given full opportunities to access higher education;

**Recall** that training and professional integration of young people and job creation must remain a priority for projects within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean, and in the context of the EU-Africa partnership;

**Emphasize** the importance of enrolling students and young researchers at the heart of exchange mobility and scientific and technological cooperation programs between the two shores of the Mediterranean at the scientific, social and cultural levels, to foster mutual understanding and to combat radicalization, racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance;

**Acknowledge** the valuable contributions of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), and the European Commission (EC), as observers;

**Welcome** the development of the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) initiative to be undertaken by the European Commission and several Member States, Associated Countries and Third Countries Takes Note of the progress being achieved in the inter-institutional negotiations and looks forward to its timely adoption. The Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries fully support this initiative, which will

address the common challenges in food, water and migration in the Mediterranean Area;

**Welcome** the BLUEMED initiative for blue growth and jobs, and the efforts to open up this initiative to southern Mediterranean countries;



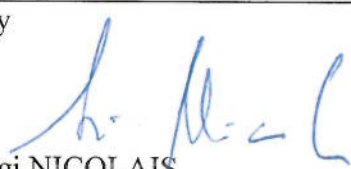
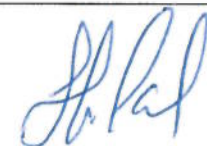

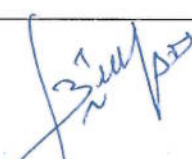


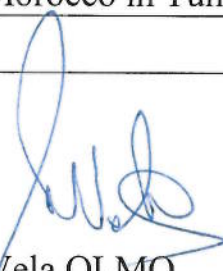
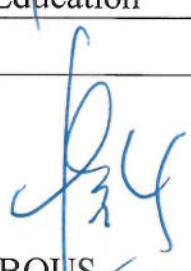
**Endorse** the Work Programme for 2017-2018 on Research, Innovation and Higher Education annexed to this statement;

**The Ministers** express their deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Tunisia for the warm welcome and hospitality and all arrangements that contributed to the success of this Conference.

**The Ministers** congratulate Spain for the work accomplished during its co-chairmanship of the Dialogue 5+5. The Ministers approve with pleasure the request by Italy to host the Fourth Meeting of Ministers in charge of Research, Innovation and Higher Education in the Western Mediterranean Dialogue 5+5 that will be held in 2019 in Rome chaired by Italy and co-chaired by Tunisia.

**The Ministers** acknowledge the intention expressed by Portugal to chair the next north turn of the Western Mediterranean Dialogue 5+5 Ministerial Conference.



<p>Algeria</p>  <p>Tahar HADJAR Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research</p>	<p>France</p>  <p>Najat VALLAUD-BELKACEM Minister of National Education, Higher Education and Research</p>
<p>Italy</p>  <p>Luigi NICOLAIS Chief Science Advisor to the Minister of Education, Universities and Research</p>	<p>Libya</p>  <p>Mohammed K.H. ALAZABI Minister of Education</p>
<p>Malta</p>  <p>Hon Evarist BARTOLO Minister for Education and Employment</p>	<p>Mauritania</p>  <p>Sidi Salem Mohamed EL ABD Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research</p>
<p>Morocco</p>  <p>Latifa AKHARBACH Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco in Tunisia</p>	<p>Portugal</p>  <p>Manuel HEITOR Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education</p>
<p>Spain</p>  <p>Carmen Vela OLMO Secretary of State for Research, Development and Innovation</p>	<p>Tunisia</p>  <p>Slim KHALBOUS Minister Of Higher Education and Scientific Research</p>

This declaration is originally written in English and French. In case of discrepancies in interpretation the English version will prevail.

Les versions originales de cette déclaration sont rédigées en anglais et en français. En cas de divergence d'interprétation, la version anglaise prévaudra.

## **ANNEX**

### **DIALOGUE 5+5 WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017-2018**

**Promotion of research, innovation and higher  
education for social stability and economic growth**



## Rationale

As a Trans-Mediterranean initiative, the “raison d'être” of the Dialogue 5+5 is to ensure closer cooperation between the five EU Member States and the five Arab Maghreb Countries through political dialogue and cooperation and by encouraging more effective resource management as a means of strengthening interdependence and regional development.

To stimulate growth and employment, the Dialogue 5+5 countries should deploy more efforts to promote entrepreneurship, a powerful engine of shared prosperity. In fact, the creation and growth of enterprises promotes employment and development of new skills, reinforces innovation and increases market potentials.

Many countries are engaged in processes of reforming their political, economic and social systems to stimulate investment, to encourage initiative and to foster strong economic partnerships that are essential throughout the Western Mediterranean region.

Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries need to revitalize their economies to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for the purpose of developing disadvantaged regions and enhancing job creation in line with international labour market standards. Research, innovation and higher education play a key role in job creation. There is a need for solid framework of cooperation and conducive synergies among the ten countries. Confronted with several challenges, the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries are invited to deepen their partnership to further stimulate economic growth and social stability.

In this context, Dialogue 5+5 countries are encouraged to continue cooperation with the Secretariat of the UfM and build on possible synergies with relevant UfM initiatives and projects such as the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs), the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes and the EMUNI University.

The Work Programme 2017-2018 aims to further consolidate the actions identified in the Work Programme 2015-2016, and proposes concrete collaborative programs/actions in-line with up-to-date priorities of the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries in the field of research, innovation and higher education. These actions necessitate financial resources that can be collected from national budgets with possible support from the private sector and regional and international donors.



The implementation of the Work Programme 2017-2018 calls for the collaboration of all stakeholders involved in cooperation in the fields of research, innovation and higher education.

The main objectives of the present Work Programme are:

1. Institutionalize partnership and scientific and technological cooperation among member countries of the Dialogue 5+5;
2. Consolidate the actions identified in the Work Programme 2015-2016;
3. Improve the nice atmosphere of scientific and technological cooperation, promote entrepreneurship and the quality of higher education;
4. Encourage higher education institutions to innovate, export, import and internationalize;
5. Develop activities in the Dialogue 5+5 priority research areas and higher education.

These objectives are structured into specific activities that are detailed in the following actions identified in the Work Programme 2017-2018 (other Dialogue 5+5 Countries may join additionally throughout the duration of the Work Program).

## NETWORKING ACTIONS

In the Western Mediterranean, the links between researchers from the Northern and Southern Shores have been forged for decades throughout long periods of training, teaching and research in the different training and research structures. They have gradually built a sustainable network through close relationships with symbiotic and complementary exchanges. This historical dimension of scientific networks of human flows and design of common scientific and intellectual projects is distinguishable and quantifiable.

- **A1.Setting-up of an instrument for networking and strengthening the potential of the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries to compete for available funding mechanisms (H2020 and other funding instruments)**

**Lead country: ITALY**

**Partnering countries: ALL COUNTRIES**

The objective of this instrument is to encourage researchers of the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries to developing North-South networks dedicated to the public and private research trough the formation of a panel of skills and disciplines defined according to the theme. These networks will address priority issues with anticipated scientific, technological and societal impact.

This instrument enables researchers from both shores of the Mediterranean to formulate European collaborative research projects and submit them successfully. Such instrument aims to strengthen academic and innovative leadership, facilitating researchers' access to European funding programs, namely H2020, ERASMUS+ and COST, as well as international programs of higher magnitude and multilateral initiatives involving countries of the Western Mediterranean Region.

Particular focus is reserved to

- establish specialized start-ups and/or forming teams of researchers and engineers in the Southern Shore for setting-up H2020 projects.
- reinforce the capacity of the Dialogue 5+5 in the design and setting-up of H2020 projects through the establishment of specialized offices involving the competences of Member Countries through training and coaching of project leaders and managers.

In addition, it is essential to financially support the consortium meetings and workshops dedicated to the design of projects and the development of research strategies. This is to ensure success of these projects in terms of planning, resources and indicators. These meetings and workshops will enable the attraction of new partners to reinforce team work and partnership.

This action will be supported by the UfM Secretariat.



## ACTIONS ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

### ▪ A2. Actions on entrepreneurship

**Lead country: SPAIN**

**Partnering countries: Algeria, Mauritania, Tunisia, Morocco, Italy, Libya and Portugal.**

Innovation is a process of flow of required knowledge and information to yield a product, process, service of management or marketing (the art of moving from the idea to the currency).

The diffusion of cultures of innovation and entrepreneurship is crucial. These cultures are in fact closely linked: visionary, risk taking, acceptance and learning from failure, power of initiative, project culture and desire for achievement are the main components. Finally, the ability to create companies with high growth potential (spin-off and start-up), some of which will become world leaders, sometimes in a few years, characterizes an effective innovation.

Research and innovation are essential for job creation, growth and competitiveness, and to address major societal challenges. To make research and innovation efficient and attractive with added value, they must rely on structures of interfaces and partnerships geared towards the real needs of priority areas for development. An important element of the strategy in this area is building partnerships with neighbouring countries in the first place. On the basis of its proximity to Europe, research institutions and universities in the Maghreb now need to develop, maintain and strengthen their cooperation with European partners. The Dialogue 5+5 will certainly provide a platform for cooperation and will add value to the partnership of proximity and better capture of opportunities and benefits.

In this context, possible actions by research centres and higher education institutions to be developed in coordination with relevant regional initiatives are listed below:

- Enhance existing international partnerships between Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries ensuring a dynamic monitoring of existing conventions and bilateral and multilateral projects and developing effective communication on their socio-economic impacts. Develop and

negotiate new strategic partnerships oriented to the creation of innovative companies in different economic sectors;

- Orient the use of research products to the creation of spin-offs and start-ups. Capacity building for young researchers by organizing brokerage events, B2B; spin-off and start-up competition supported by the network of Dialogue 5+5 (National Contact Points). Participants will have the opportunity to present their innovative ideas and projects to meet industrials and investors to create and develop entrepreneurship projects (internationalization developed innovative companies). This idea can be supported by an open gate to the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries to develop cooperation and the creation of innovative companies.
- Boost young researchers (innovating agents) to a new working dynamic and developing professional career based on RDI and boosting growth, employability and the creation of innovative enterprises (start-ups and spin-offs), and increase business competitiveness.
- Support the development of skills and specialized profiles in intellectual property (drafting of patent applications, copyrights, prototype design, etc.). Collaboration should be adapted toward training and capacity building in the management of intellectual property rights to be closer to compliance with international standards set by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Organization for Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

In this context, the 2017-2018 period includes the following:

#### ***A2.1. Spin-offs Creation Contest***

Dialogue 5+5 can launch annually/bi-annually calls for applications for the selection of researchers who possess innovative ideas leading to the creation of spin-offs. Successful researchers will be coached for intellectual property protection and setting-up their business plans.

#### ***A2.2. Summer School***

One of the challenges that researchers from the majority of Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries face is the lack of intellectual property skills. For this, it is expected to launch a summer school on entrepreneurship and gain knowledge on the process leading from idea to market.

This action will be supported by UfM Secretariat.



**A3. Actions on the access to infrastructures****Lead country: SPAIN****Partnering countries: Algeria, Portugal, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, Italy and Libya.**

There is significant evidence that the path to economic growth and competitiveness is largely linked to research and innovation. Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries (mainly North compared to South) present significant disparities in terms of performance in research and innovation. These trends are aggravated by the serious ongoing financial crisis and its impact on the budgets for research and innovation. Improving research and innovation performance must go through the acquisition of technology platforms (HGS sequencing, Big Data, ICP coupling, imaging, speciation, etc.). The pooling of platforms can partly solve the growing demand for certain institutions to acquire highly expensive heavy equipment. Research institutions of the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries with technology platforms and working in the framework of bilateral agreements can invite their counterparts to join the network sharing Dialogue 5+5 technology platforms to ensure better complementarity.

Research infrastructures are facilities or platforms supplying the scientific community services and explorations for research in their respective fields. Research infrastructures may be single-site or distributed or e-infrastructure

In the framework of the Dialogue 5+5, we suggest that research infrastructures in both North and South meet the following conditions:

- Create interconnected networks of platforms formed of national and international scientific instrument installations
- Facilitate transnational access to research infrastructures in the Dialogue 5+5 for the benefit of researchers, engineers, students and industrials whose actions are coordinated by the management of a set of infrastructures, which will set the schedule and appropriate rules.
- Provide scientific and technological performance of relevance through training and technical perfection.
- Open the access to laboratories or groupings of South-South and North-South platforms by promoting the mobility of researchers and innovative projects.

The development policy of infrastructures, especially in the South, is increasingly important for modern science in many research disciplines: humanities and social sciences, natural sciences, physics and engineering.

The creation of research e-infrastructure networks support the creation of transnational communities, and provide an opportunity to meet on a regular basis, to promote the organization of workshops to stimulate the development of research projects and promote educational activities analytically and technically (short courses, training schools) as well as entrepreneurship.

▪ **A4. Actions on technology transfer and improving Intellectual Property Management Capacity**

**Lead countries: SPAIN and TUNISIA**

**Partnering countries: Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania.**

To accelerate the mentality change of institutions (also to other stakeholders) located in the Western Mediterranean region towards the crucial role of accelerating knowledge transfer and exploitation of research results in order to increase socio-economic growth and high-quality employment.

- To strengthen the intellectual property management capacity at national and international level, and to promote intellectual property culture in the Dialogue 5+5:
  1. To perform training activities on the procedures of national and international invention protection for structures in charge of scientific research, innovation and intellectual property (administrative executives and researchers) in interested Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries; inviting WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) and EPO (European Patent Office).
  2. Actions for supporting and involving researchers at every stage of the intellectual property valorisation process in interested Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries;
  3. Sharing good practices in the matter of the establishment of intellectual property agreements between academic institutions and industrials (companies and private investors).



- To improve the exploitation of research results through sales and licenses of the (protected) intellectual property, and the generation of industrial proof of concepts to reimburse society the effort made in funding R&D.
- To discuss the most adequate internal organizational structures to support knowledge transfer at public universities and research centres. The action will also pay attention to shared formulas when critical mass is not sufficiently high to compensate for the implementation of isolated structures.
- To increase the involvement of public and private entities in stable partnerships for faster valorisation of research results in priority areas.

▪ **A5. Development and implementation of open innovation and smart specialization strategies in the Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries**

**Lead country: TUNISIA**

**Partnering countries: Spain, Morocco, Portugal, France and Libya.**

The Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries face major social and economic challenges, mainly those related to regional disparities and unemployment. Regional development and employment are key priorities for the Space. For this, the Dialogue 5+5 Governments are in the obligation to adopt a new model of more intelligent, sustainable and inclusive economic growth and public policies that strengthen regionalization to remedy these problems and consolidate social cohesion.

The Regional Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialization (RIS3) can be an appropriate response to help address the challenges of regional development and sustainable job creation since it seeks to enhance regional job creation, in general, and high value-added jobs, in particular. As a strategic approach to sustainable economic development, smart specialization aims at enhancing local and regional specificities and making the most of the preferential advantages available to each region through targeted support for education, research and innovation. The smart specialization strategy RIS3 is an initiative of the European Commission that focuses on investing in research, innovation and entrepreneurship in order to maximize the potential of each Member State and Region of the European Union (EU).

The intelligent specialization process includes identifying the characteristics and benefits of each country, developing the competitive advantages of each region, and bringing together stakeholders and regional resources around a vision of their future fuelled by excellence. This means consolidating regional innovation systems, maximizing knowledge flows and sharing the benefits of innovation across the regional economy.

Within the scope of promoting the Dialogue 5+5 economies, the intelligent specialization strategy can certainly offer new approaches to partnerships in the fields of education, research and industry in the regions. This interface constitutes an essential part of our ecosystems of research and innovation.

Regional development, human capital and development of skills, transfer of knowledge, innovation and business creation, and community development are the foundations of any smart specialization strategy.

Adapted to the specificities of each country, the concept of intelligent specialization could be a strategic lever in possession of the regions, enabling the pace and magnitude of the creation of value and employment in key sectors of the national and regional economy. This concept is not only concerned with technological innovation but also extends to non-technological and social innovation, thus benefiting the development of solidarity and social economy, which is very promising in terms of job creation in the regions.

In conclusion, the intelligent specialization process mobilizes all the components of the regional system of research and innovation: enterprises, research and public authorities in order to boost regional development and employment. Similarly, intelligent specialization can only accelerate territorial economic transformation by adapting development policy to regional contexts. It is also necessary to strengthen the culture of open innovation in the Dialogue 5+5.

This action will comprise the following:

- Organization of seminars/workshops on the role of open social innovation ecosystems as catalysts for growth and employment in the regions with the scope of strengthening regional innovation systems and preparing them to adopt RIS3.
- Establishment of common platforms for open innovation and social innovation



- Organization seminars of awareness, dissemination and training on research and innovation strategies for intelligent specialization (RIS3).
- Setting up pilot projects on intelligent and open innovation strategies.
- Link with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) with the aim of becoming a facilitator of innovation in the Dialogue 5+5 member countries.

Establishment of a patent exchange to allow start-ups in member countries to exploit patents not used by major accounts.

#### ▪ **A6. Strengthening the institutional capacity of research structure**

**Lead country: PORTUGAL**

**Partnering countries: Algeria, Mauritania, Libya, Tunisia, Italy, Spain and Morocco.**

This action intends to strengthen the capacity of research structures from 5+5 Member Countries, by stimulating the discussion of qualitative and innovative aspects on effective management and institutional capabilities, enhancing the dissemination of good practices.

Initiatives within this Action will cover, among others:

- i. Establishment of a close contact between national entities that regulate the research structures;
- ii. Collection of accurate information about national research facilities;
- iii. Sharing information gathered among Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries on good practices of institutional capacity;
- iv. Implementation of an institutional training visit at the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology;
- v. Organization of short term formation visits to selected research centres;

#### **Description of the work**

##### **Task A6.1 – National Entities contact**

The Leading country will receive the indication of the national entities that regulate research centre's activity at all participating countries, with a focal point from each one, and will establish a closed network to implement following initiatives.

#### **Task A6.2 – Gathering and sharing of information on research centres from National Entities focal points**

Each focal point will be responsible to collect information on national research centres and to transmit it to the leading country focal point that will assemble it and will disseminate it among the network.

The leading country will prepare a standard model for collecting the information.

The information to be collected for each participating country must include:

- i. Scientific fields of operation,
- ii. Facility special equipment,
- iii. Institutional associations (i.e. universities, international associations etc.),
- iv. Internal structure,
- v. Functioning rules and regulations,
- vi. Internationalization policies summary,
- vii. Institutional capacity good practices,

#### **Task A6.3 – Selection of research centres for interchanges and/or short-term formation**

A maximum number of two research centres will be selected from the leading country to actively participate in formation, training and staff interchanges within this Action. The selection will be transmitted to the national entities focal points of each participating country.

#### **Task A6.4 – Institutional training visit at National Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) - Lisbon**

This initiative includes the organization of a training visit to FCT in Lisbon in order to acknowledge and debate positive experiences on institutional



capacity, as well as updated information on national/bilateral/multilateral funding mechanisms, implementation of joint calls, in order to attain maximum added value.

The training visit schedule and agenda will be agreed among Entities focal points, but should preferably occur before the end of the first quarter of 2017.

#### **Task A6.5 – Staff visits and short-term periods of supervised practice at R&I Centres**

The staff visits will facilitate deeper knowledge of research facilities functioning rules and regulations.

Visits will gather a cluster of visitors from two or more country research structures (funding agencies and research centres), offering the possibility to build a broader network than a one-to-one visit can achieve. Participants will be expected to receive short term training and supervised practice in one of the research centres appointed to this initiative.

The acquired experience will be disseminated among all participating countries, aiming to prepare a preliminary manual on good practices for strengthening institutional capacity of research structures.

#### **Funding**

The host country will be responsible for providing infrastructures' access and human resources for institutional visits and short term training and supervised practice.

The sending countries will fund travel and accommodation costs for its visitors.

## **ACTIONS ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

- **A7. Creation of a Network of Higher Education Institutions within the Dialogue 5+5**

**Lead countries: TUNISIA, PORTUGAL**

**Partnering countries: Libya, Italy, Algeria and Morocco.**

The network of academic and research institutions in the Western Mediterranean will be established to encourage thematic cooperation between higher education institutions in the Western Mediterranean Basin. It is a regional organization that will bring together higher education institutions of the Dialogue 5+5 to reflect and act on their common challenges and concerns.

This action aims to stimulate student and researchers' mobility and promote the development of joint programs, specifically and among others:

- i. Providing accurate information on each national academic formation offer, by institution;
- ii. Transmitting details on conditions and requirements for foreign students to access higher education courses (local legislation, institution's regulations, visa requirements, availability of scholarships, etc.);
- iii. Supplying information on research centres associated with universities, by thematic area of intervention and type of research developed;
- iv. Providing updated information concerning internships and exchange programs designed to students and researchers;
- v. Supporting joint regional academic initiatives such as the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes, in particular for the development of international curricula with integrated mobility in partnership with higher education institutions from the Dialogue 5+5 member countries.

This network aims to:

- ✓ strengthen existing academic and research institutions linkages and developing newer partnerships for the set-up of novel cooperative projects;
- ✓ participate in the construction of the Dialogue 5+5 Space for research, innovation and higher education;
- ✓ support initiatives that promote institutional partnership by integrating the aspects of a sustainable cooperation: scientific networks, mobility of students, faculty members, researchers and administrators, multi-diploma or thesis co-supervision, development of online training and research.



## **Description of the work**

### **Task 1 Nomination of National Focal Points (NFP)**

Each participating country will nominate a Focal Point, being this the responsible person for all articulation with national entities and the other NFP within Dialogue 5+5. The leading country will nominate two NFP in order to assure accurate coordination.

### **Task 2 Contact with Rectors' Councils**

Each NFP will identify the institutional entities that represent the Universities and Polytechnic Institutes (Council of Rectors, Commission of Presidents ...), and will meet with them in order to present the current Action and jointly design a strategy to spread the initiative among the higher education institutions and collect their interest in actively participate in it.

The NFP will demand each institutional entity, a contact point dedicated to this Action, in order to integrate the forthcoming Dialogue 5+5 Rector's Network.

### **Task 3 Development of Dialogue 5+5 Rectors' Network**

The NFP will collect the contact point of each institutional entity and will transmit the information to the leading country NFP in order to set-up the Dialogue 5+5 Rectors' Network.

Communication within the Dialogue 5+5 Rector's Network will be exchanged either in a dedicated area of the Dialogue 5+5 Website (to be agreed with Italy), or in a closed circuit email listing.

### **Task 4 Gathering information from higher education institutions**

The NFP through the contact points on each institutional entity, will assure that the information stated on the Objectives of this Action is gathered and ready to be disseminated over the Dialogue 5+5 Rector's Network.

### **Task 5 Initiatives to be developed by the Dialogue 5+5 Rectors Network**

The Dialogue 5+5 Rectors Network will be responsible for, among other initiatives:

- Set-up an initial meeting (location to be determined) in order to prepare and launch a common agenda for fostering mobility;

- Spread the information stated in the Objectives of this Action, and keep it updated;
- Organize regular encounters between Rectors and Presidents from all Dialogue 5+5 countries, with visits to Universities and Polytechnic Institutes;
- Foster students and researcher' international meetings and the organization of conferences and seminars on mobility and academic interchanges;

This action will be supported by UfM Secretariat.

#### ▪ A8. Quality assurance and accreditation

**Lead country: FRANCE**

**Partnering countries: Algeria, Mauritania, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya.**

In many countries, higher education systems are deeply evolving: the need of training is increasing which is linked to some demographic trends and to the need of getting higher global knowledge. Moreover, usual paradigm of the teacher/learner relationship is changing because of the ease of accessing knowledge and new digital tools.

As revealed by the discussions among the Dialogue 5+5 member countries, there is a common need to share good practices into the quality assurance field in order to better face shared challenges.

The quality assurance system aims to ensure and continuously improve the quality of university activities, and promotes explicitly the development of a quality culture.

The quality assurance covers all the main functions of the university, in particular, education and research, as well as services related thereto. It is an integral component of the overall management of the institution. This implies to implement assessment and evaluation procedures and quality indicators in the areas of teaching, research and services as well as resources and learning support infrastructures. Relevant indicators is systematically collected, analysed and used to improve continually the universities activities. These are gathered within a periodic report, which is



internally communicated and finally published by the University on the programs and degrees it offers.

The level of application of these quality standards differs from one university to another within the Dialogue 5+5 space. Therefore, Northern universities can exchange with Southern universities in the development of an approach for quality assurance through joint projects within the framework of European programs (Erasmus+...).

### **Tasks of the Action:**

**Task 1:** Building the network of Quality Assurance among the 5+5 Countries

- Network of Dialogue 5+5 Ministries and Quality assurance agencies:

The action is intending to gather two kinds of networks by each country of the Dialogue 5+5. One is composed of national agencies in charge of Higher Education and Research Evaluation or any institution at the governmental level. The other network that should be merged with the previous one is the network of Ministries implementing internal procedures on Quality Assurance among the Dialogue 5+5 countries. This will imply to get from the countries concerned two representatives at least from one Ministry and one evaluation agency having applied or started to apply internal/external evaluation scheme. In such a way, the network which is intended to be settled will be able to report on both side of the higher education and research evaluation: national plans on evaluation and case studies on organizations implementing quality assurance procedures. The 5+5 meeting that took place in Paris the 10th of February 2016 built the foundation of such networks.

**Task 2:** Links with other initiatives of the 5+5 Action Plan 2017-2018, among these A.9 “Exchanges on Governance”.

The interactions between the actions listed (A.8, A.9) should be envisaged through the support of quality assurance to Governance arrangements in Universities and Research organisations (A.9).

Workplan A.8 and A.9 developed separately during 2017-2018 will settle exchanges through one common teleconference per year at least.

An annual report will be produced on the results and main achievements of the consortium and presented during the next GSO meetings.

A final workshop will be organized at the end of the period.

## ▪ A9. Actions on governance

**Lead country: FRANCE**

**Partnering countries: Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania and Morocco.**

The evolution of universities and research centres should be in the form of modern societies that guarantee autonomy and academic freedom. Exchanges on governance is highly valuable between Dialogue 5+5 Member Countries, with particular focus on the organization of teaching, research and innovation with the aim of better management, efficiency and financial autonomy, as well as the means for better use of resources. Exchanges of good practices in terms of governance must be implemented in the frame of integration of innovation policy at universities as well as lifelong learning programs including multilingualism chapter. This is in a view of providing opportunities for professional development for non-academic staff.

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**Objectives:** The objective of this action is to provide a network of contact persons allowing a better exchange of good practices on governance in Higher Education and Research. This will be implemented with the help of the new website that would be managed by Italy complemented by a closed circuit of e-mails among the countries involved within the network.

**-Task 1** Organizing the Network of counterparts involved in Higher Education and Research governance frame.

- 1.1 Nomination of contact persons by mid-2017: Gathering information, names, e-mail addresses, positions of the participants by



each country (appointed persons as contact point and one deputy). Each of these is expected to disseminate within each country the 5+5 Dialogue governance exchange of good practices.

- 1.2. Nomination of the chair of the network for year one by mid-2017, renewal of the chairman position in year two by electronic vote at the beginning of 2018.

- **Task 2** State of the art of the current national scheme by each country on governance of Universities and research operators

- 2.1 Local solutions or arrangements adopted by each country in terms of governance in Higher education and research.
- 2.2 Examples that could afford guidelines of good practices adapted to the local situation.
- 2.3 Typology of governance adopted in each country: from direct detailed control by central government to more autonomous scheme with many other arrangements in between, such as private profit-making organizations.

- **Task 3** Drivers of changes.

- 3.1 Expectations of Universities facing the business enterprises model.
- 3.2 Rise of mass education putting the Higher education system and its costs at the fore front.
- 3.3 The role played by the virtual universities tackling the overcrowding numbers of students: their management, as well as the use of MOOCs, may influence the way of managing higher education structure.
- 3.4 The growing internationalization of higher education is linked to the development of higher education and research, whose governance is specific. Moreover private entities tend to influence.

This action will be supported by UfM Secretariat.

#### ▪ **A10. Building capacities and developing skills on blue economy**

**Lead country: ITALY**

**Partnering countries: Tunisia, Portugal, Mauritania, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Malta, Spain and France.**

Italy will support an initiative on enhancing capacities and developing skills in sustainable blue growth. The action aims at promoting socio-economic development and creation of blue jobs in member countries of the dialogue 5+5 and the entire Mediterranean Region.

The initiative is focused on:

1. a yearly based summer school on sustainable blue growth in the Mediterranean,
2. a series of international workshops and conferences,
3. international mobility programme for the benefit of talented scientists and researchers,
4. a master degree on sustainable blue growth at the University of Trieste,
5. support activities to business development and creation of start-up and spin-off in the marine and maritime sectors in collaboration with Spain,
6. sensitising public opinion on importance of the role of the sea in socio-economic development while protecting marine resources and preserving the environment through museum, fairs and exhibitions and
7. access to research infrastructures.

This action will be fully supported by the Italian ministry of education, university and research (MIUR) and implemented by the OGS Trieste.

This action will be supported by UfM Secretariat.





## **DIALOGUE 5+5**

### **THIRD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION TUNIS, MARCH 30-31, 2017**

#### **CONCLUSION REMARKS**

The Heads of delegations, as stated in Tunis Ministerial Declaration signed on 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017 agreed

1. To approve the Ministerial Declaration and to endorse the Work Programme 2017-2018.
2. To mandate the Dialogue 5+5 GSO to concretise the actions identified in the Working Programme 2017-2018.
3. To mandate the Dialogue 5+5 GSO to identify specific support activities by Union for the Mediterranean, the Arab Maghreb Union and the European Commission included with the Dialogue 5+5 Work Programme 2017-2018.
4. To accept the kind proposal from Italy to host the 4th Ministerial conference on Research, Innovation and Higher Education during the first semester of 2019.