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26/05/22

Enhancing Access to Finance for MSMEs in the Mediterranean Region

Building the Basis for a Recovery Fostering Job Creation and Inclusive Growth

7-8 July 2022

Collège des Bernardins
Grande salle du cellier (salle G)
Paris, France

*Joint 2022 Annual Conference of the MED Confederation
& the Mediterranean Commission of the European League for Economic Cooperation*

INTRODUCTION


The **MED Confederation**, the alliance of Euro-Mediterranean institutions and organisations promoting socioeconomic cooperation in the Mediterranean region, and the **Mediterranean Commission of the European League for Economic Cooperation (ELEC/LECE)**, are joining forces to organise a joint 2022 Annual Conference untitled “**Enhancing Access to Finance for MSMEs in the Mediterranean Region: Building the Basis for a Recovery Fostering Job Creation and Inclusive Growth.**”

Co-organised by the **European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)** with the **MED Confederation** and the **ELEC** in Paris on 7 and 8 July 2022, this event will provide a space for dialogue where experts and practitioners from institutions and organisations across the Mediterranean region will debate the prospects and challenges for enhancing the financial inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) as the fundamental condition to spur the recovery in the Mediterranean region. Building upon a series of webinars on financial inclusion organised by the MED Confederation and acknowledging the key role that MSMEs play as the backbone of the Mediterranean economies, the conference will map the different measures and initiatives that aim at improving access to finance for small businesses (digitalisation, credit guarantee schemes) to establish a set of policy recommendations based on lessons learnt and successful experiences, that can contribute to enlighten policy-making processes. Moreover, participants will debate the ways to improve MSMEs’ access to sustainable finance, as a pre-requisite to align the recovery with the transition to sustainable, green and inclusive economies in both shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

Co-organised by:

IEMed.
European Institute of the Mediterranean

With the support of

 **“la Caixa” Foundation**

DRAFT PROGRAMME

7 July 2022

14.00 Accreditations

14.30 Welcome addresses

[Javier Arias](#), President, European League of Economic Cooperation (ELEC/LECE)

[Chris De Noose](#), President, MED Confederation

[Senén Florensa](#), Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). President, Mediterranean Commission of the European League of Economic Cooperation (ELEC/LECE). Board Member, MED Confederation

[Valérie Drezet-Humez*](#), Head of the European Commission Representation in France

15:30 Family photo

15.45 Session 1 - Tech for good: digitalisation and fintech solutions for financial inclusion

Innovations brought by digitalisation in the area of finance could be a game changer in the current context for businesses and MSMEs, specially by reducing some of the constraints on bank lending, easing the procedures to open a bank account online, and promoting a greater use of mobile digital wallets. Likewise, fintech start-ups and ecosystems have been blossoming in the region to offer innovative financial solutions and facilitate access to financial products and services at a lesser cost, prompting traditional commercial bank to adapt and invest in digital services.

Essential to ensure the resilience of MSMEs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, cutting edge digital technologies and innovative business models could become key drivers to close the MSME's finance gap in the Mediterranean region while reducing informal economy and creating jobs for educated youth.

Chair

[Olivier Klein*](#), President of the French Committee, European League of Economic Cooperation (ELEC/LECE)

Speakers

Wissam Fattouh*, Secretary General, Union of Arab Banks (UAB)

Meriem Zairi*, Senior Managing Director, SEAF Morocco. President of the Commission in charge of start-ups and Digital Transition, Confédération générale des entreprises du Maroc (CGEM)

Attila Kaiser-Yücel*, Regional Advisor for Financial Inclusion and Technology, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Amira Kaddour, Executive Board Member, African Women in FinTech and Payment

Comments

Nejia Gharbi, Director General, Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDC - Tunisia). Vice-President, MED Confederation

Joaquim Llimona, Lawyer, MES Advocats. Professor, University of Barcelona

17.15

Coffee Break

17.30

Session 2 - Enhancing access to sustainable finance to MSMEs to boost a green and inclusive recovery

The role of sustainable finance is crucial to spur the green transition towards a low-carbon, fair and sustainable economic model. As support to green entrepreneurship has become a priority within the Euro-Mediterranean area, ensuring that finance targeting sustainable businesses is easily accessible and affordable is necessary to encourage entrepreneurs to invest and innovate in green markets and solutions addressing environmental and sustainability challenges.

Developing dedicated financial products for MSMEs and entrepreneurs operating in the Mediterranean green economy sector is essential to ensure its growth and contribution to the recovery. What are the main challenges related to green finance in the region? What are the role of governments and financial regulators in stimulating the offer and the demand for green lending?

Chair

Philippe de Fontaine-Vive, Director General, Compagnie Financière Richelieu. Honorary Vice-President, European Investment Bank (EIB)

Speakers

[Redouane Najm-Eddine*](#), Chairman of the Management Board, Al Barid Bank

[Antonio Vila*](#), Director General, “la Caixa Banking Foundation”

[Massimo Deandreis*](#), General Manager, S.R.M. Economic Research Center, Intesa Sanpaolo Group

[Isabelle Bébéar](#), Director of European and International Affairs, Bpifrance

Comments

[Daniel Sorrosal*](#), Secretary General, European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks and Financers (FEBEA)

20.00 Dinner with keynote speech by

[Jacques Attali*](#), Founder, Positive Planet

Introduced and conducted by:

[Jaloul Ayed*](#), President of Honour, MED Confederation. Former Minister of Finance of Tunisia

8 July 2022

08:45 Accreditations

09.00 Session 3: Key role of Credit Guarantee schemes to unlock financial inclusion for MSMEs in Mediterranean countries

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Credit Guarantee Schemes (CGSs) have been on the frontline to channel credit to MSMEs, mitigating the liquidity shock that businesses in all countries of the region faced. CGS have contributed to the sustainment of jobs and continuity of economic activity for MSMEs, while closing a part of the widening finance gap generated by the COVID-19 crisis.

Now that the Mediterranean economies need a stimulus to return to a path of growth, credit guarantee instruments will remain crucial to ensure that weakened MSMEs can access finance to play their vital role for the economies of the region. At the same time, CGSs will have to face the legacy of the crisis while evolving their business models to contribute to more sustainable economies.

Chair

[Roger Albinyana](#), Managing Director, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Speakers

[Nagla Bahr*](#), Managing Director, Credit Guarantee Company (CGC Egypt). Lead Representative, Euro-Mediterranean Guarantee Network (EMGN)

[Rym Ayadi](#), President, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA)

[Khater Abi Habib*](#), Chairman of the Board of Directors and General Manager, Kafalat s.a.l.

[Fulvio Capurso*](#), Team Leader EU Guarantees and Private Investment, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission

Comments

[Katrin Sturm](#), Secretary General, European Association of Guarantee Institutions (AECM)

[Daniel Torrents](#), Head of Business Development, AIS Group

10.30

Coffee Break

11:00

Session 4 – The role of microfinance in supporting MSMEs: Challenges on the road to recovery

While the COVID-19 crisis has generated a lot of challenges for microfinance institutions (MFIs), including deteriorating their portfolio performance and increasing their needs of liquidity, microfinance has provided crucial services to small businesses throughout the crisis in Mediterranean countries. As economies start a recovery process, MFIs are likely to face a set of challenges related to access to liquidity, risk management, digitalisation, payment systems, which need to be addressed to allow them to perform their crucial role as financial service providers for low income microentrepreneurs, especially women, in rural areas and in the informal economy. Increased support from donors will be key to help microfinance players overcome the upcoming challenges in the Mediterranean region.

Chair

[Michel Gonnet*](#), President, GB2A FINANCE. Associated Expert, Mediterranean world Economic Foresight Institute (IPEMED)

Speakers

[Youssef Bencheqroun*](#), Chairman of the Board, Sanabel – The Microfinance Network of Arab Countries. General Manager, Al Amana Microfinance

[Reham Farouk*](#), Chief Executive Officer, Al Tadamun Microfinance Foundation

[Fadoua Boudiba*](#), Board Member, Enda Tamweel

[Ziad Halaby*](#), General Manager, Vitas Lebanon

Comments

[Xavier Echasseriau*](#), Deputy Head, Financial Institutions Department, PROPARCO

12.30

Closing Remarks

[Francesc Homs](#), President of the Spanish Committee, European League of Economic Cooperation (ELEC/LECE)

[Jean-Louis Guigou](#), President of the Strategic Committee, Mediterranean world Economic Foresight Institute (IPEMED)

13.00

Lunch