

Beat: Politics

LAURENT FABIUS FRENCH FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER MEETS THE MEDITERRANEAN GROUP

DEBATE WITH UFM AND UE ABOUT SECURITY

Paris, 20.02.2015, 21:54 Time

USPA NEWS - The informal ministerial meeting of the UFM (Union For the Mediterranean), and the so called "Mediterranean Group" represents the European countries around the Mediterranean sea (Greece, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, and Malta) was held today in Paris today february 20.

UfM Secretary General, Fathallah Sijilmassi, along with the President of the Anna Lindh Foundation, Elisabeth Guigou, participated in the discussions. The Informal Ministerial Meeting was held, in the presence of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, and the Secretary General of the European External Action Service, Alain Le Roy.

WHAT IS THE UNION FOR MEDITERRANEAN (UfM)?

-----The Union for the Mediterranean is a multilateral partnership aiming at increasing the potential for regional integration and cohesion among Euro-Mediterranean countries. The Union for the Mediterranean is inspired by the shared political will to revitalize efforts to transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity. The creation of a joint secretariat is a keystone in this partnership. The Secretariat is contributing to reinforcing co-ownership of new Mediterranean relations through concrete regional cooperation projects. The Union for the Mediterranean was created by 43 Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government in Paris on 13 July 2008. Foreign Affairs Ministers in their meeting in Marseille on 4th November 2008, decided that the headquarters of the Secretariat would be in Barcelona. The Statutes of the Secretariat were adopted on 3rd March 2010 by the Senior Officials of the Member States of the UfM. A headquarters agreement was signed between the UfM and the Government of Spain on 4th May 2010, granting the Secretariat the privileges and immunities of an international organisation under Spanish law. The meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean are chaired by a co-presidency, one from the European Union side and the other from the Mediterranean side. The co-presidency applies to all levels: summits, ministerial meetings, and officials' level meetings. The European Union assumed the northern co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean after the decision of the Council of EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 27th February 2012. Jordan assumes the southern co-presidency since June, 2012.

ROLE OF THE UNION FOR MEDITERRANEAN (UfM)?

-----The members of the Union for the Mediterranean meet on a regular basis at the level of Senior Officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the 43 countries, EU institutions and the League of Arab States. The Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) oversee and coordinate the work of the Union for the Mediterranean. They approve the budget and the work programme of the Secretariat and prepare ministerial meetings. They also discuss the project proposals submitted by the Secretariat for approval and endorsement. Senior Officials take decisions by consensus. The mandate and mission of the Secretariat have been defined in the Paris and Marseille Declarations as well as in the Statutes adopted on 3 March 2010. It is recalled that the mandate of the UfM Secretariat focuses on identifying, processing, promoting and coordinating regional projects, which are in line with the principles and rules of international law, and that enhance and strengthen cooperation and positively impact the lives of citizens. For more information see <http://ufmsecretariat.org>, www.diplomatie.gouv.fr

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-3369/laurent-fabius-french-foreign-affairs-minister-meets-the-mediterranean-group.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Rahma Sophia Rachdi

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