

I Press Release

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‘Invest in Med’ brings concrete answers to the needs of EU-Mediterranean business

81% of businesses in the EU and in the Mediterranean believe that the potential for trade and investments in the Mediterranean region is untapped, and demand that concrete measures are taken to raise awareness of the existing opportunities and overcome the persisting obstacles.

According to a survey carried out by the MedAlliance in the framework of the “Invest in Med” project, the Mediterranean is a highly appealing market, with increasing potential for export and job creation, but which suffers from the absence of a VISA policy allowing the free movement of businesspeople, from insufficient regional business-support programmes and from complicated access to Technical Assistance instruments.

As far as Euro-Mediterranean trade is concerned, 96% of respondents believe that it could be increased with more matchmaking instruments, simpler finance tools and modernised ports, airports and logistics.

The business community also denounces the lack of involvement in Euro-Mediterranean trade and investment negotiations, and asks to be an active operator rather than a passive spectator in this regard.

Commenting on these findings, Murat Yalçintas, president of ASCAME, said: *“This survey highlights the need for more awareness-raising among the business community with regards to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and for specific actions to be taken at political level for its potential to be released. Business-support organisations have already played a major role in this respect, and will continue doing so in the months to come, thanks to the Invest in Med programme.”*

Invest in Med to date: 150 partners, 200 initiatives, 7000 SMEs

18 months since its launch, the ‘Invest in Med’ programme has already carried out over 200 initiatives to foster the volume and quality of Euro-Mediterranean trade and foreign direct investment. Overall, 7000 small and medium enterprises and other stakeholders were involved in the numerous business meetings, investment fora, staff exchanges, workshops and trainings organised so far. More than 500 business partnerships were identified as a result of these initiatives. The MedAlliance is already considering further actions to boost SME development across the Mediterranean, looking for synergies with existing programmes in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Launched in April 2008 for a three-years period and with a 12M€ budget (75% European Commission funded), Invest in Med is operated by the MedAlliance consortium, uniting Chambers of Commerce, Federations of Industry and Investment agencies. The programme aims to improve investments and business partnerships among European and South Mediterranean SMEs. It involves the 27 EU Member States and the 9 Southern ENPI partner countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia).

More information on the Invest in Med programme and on its results can be found on www.invest-in-med.eu. The full survey can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=2142

Members of the “MedAlliance”:

1. **ANIMA** – ANIMA Investment Network is a multi-country platform supporting the economic development of the Mediterranean. The network gathers around 40 governmental agencies and international networks. The objective of ANIMA is to contribute to a better investment and business climate and to the growth of capital flows into the Mediterranean region.

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2. **ASCAME** – ASCAME (Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry) brings together more than 200 Chambers from 22 Mediterranean countries. Its goals are: to create a network of Chambers of Commerce and organisations working in the field of cooperation and economic exchange between countries in the Mediterranean region; to promote and search for synergies between these countries' economies; to assert the Mediterranean identity and contribute to creating an area of peace, tolerance, security and prosperity.

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3. **BUSINESSMED** – The Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises (UMCE-BUSINESSMED) is a regional professional organisation created thanks to the will, determination and militancy of the national federations' presidents of the 12 founding members. Its aims are: to create a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area; to establish an economic and social climate that favours the development of investment flows; to increase SMEs' competitiveness among member countries; to promote North-South and South-South investments; to establish a formal link with Mediterranean and European professional organisations (BUSINESSEUROPE).

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4. **EUROCHAMBRES** – EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.

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5. **Euroméditerranée** – Établissement Public d'Aménagement Euroméditerranée

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6. **GTZ** – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

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7. **UNIDO** – United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

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