



FEMIP seminar on human capital

European Investment Bank, Luxembourg, 18-19 November 2008

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Matching skills and market needs:
The human capital challenge in the Mediterranean region

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Welcome to the FEMIP seminar on human capital



Philippe de Fontaine Vive
EIB Vice-President

The European Investment Bank welcomes you to the FEMIP Seminar: *Matching skills and market needs: The human capital challenge in the Mediterranean region*. The seminar, which builds up on previous FEMIP Conferences, aims at contributing to enhanced dialogue in the Mediterranean region by addressing the main challenges posed by labour market in the partner countries.

The provision of education services is one of the Mediterranean region's main challenges and has been at the heart of the economic debate in the last few years. Education and training help foster knowledge-based economic growth. Higher education standards do also improve living conditions of the population through wider opportunities and access to skilled labour market positions. Moreover, education services are also proved to reduce poverty incidence thus resulting into stronger social cohesion, which is a key plank in order to achieve long-lasting and sustainable economic growth.

The strategic importance and value added of education was recognised by the Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government at their Summit

in Paris under the umbrella of the *Union for the Mediterranean: Barcelona Process*. The commitment of the signatory-countries to *enhancing quality and to ensuring the relevance of vocational training to labour market needs* is a step forward towards the improvement of labour market conditions in the Mediterranean region. This reinforced partnership will serve as well to increase the potential for regional integration and cohesion.

The European Investment Bank, through the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership, has also played a very pro-active role in the promotion of higher education and training skills in the Mediterranean region.

FEMIP support has gone far beyond financing education-related projects in the Partner countries. As a matter of fact, initiatives such as the FEMIP Internship Programme have proved to be very successful to improve the skills as well the experience of participants in an international and multicultural environment.



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The FEMIP Internship Programme has become, in the most recent times, one of the hallmarks of the Bank's involvement in the Mediterranean Partner Countries. Launched in 2006 under the financial umbrella of the FEMIP Trust Fund, the initiative has borne very interesting and positive fruits for those students and young professionals who have already taken part in the Programme.

However, there is still a long way ahead and the measures to adapt population's skill to labour market's requirements are not straightforward. Indeed, the challenges posed by human capital and labour markets continue to generate debate, in particular on the policy actions to be implemented in the years to come.

The interest of the topic is mirrored in the great variety of speakers and attendants who will meet today at the Bank's premises, including a wide range of representatives, from Member States' officials to multilateral organizations, private sector or academics.

Against this background, the European Investment Bank is delighted to count on your presence at this seminar which is held as a key part of the FEMIP Internship Programme, with the purpose to further construe on the Euro-Mediterranean initiative.

I am convinced that today's meeting will help to improve our understanding of the Mediterranean countries labour markets and will bear very interesting and fruitful conclusions on the challenges to be faced by the Mediterranean Partner Countries in the years to come.

With this spirit, I would like to welcome you all to this FEMIP event and warmly thank all who have participated and supported this initiative.

Philippe de Fontaine Vive

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Preliminary programme



DAY 1 – Tuesday 18 November 2008

14:00-15:00 **Registration**

15:00-15:30 **Opening session**

- **Philippe de Fontaine Vive**, Vice-President, EIB
- **Eneko Landáburu**, Director General (Relex), European Commission

15:30-17:30 **Session 1**

Assessing the needs: the job creation challenge

Moderator: **Isabel Riaño**, Head of the Economy and Financial Area, Permanent Representation of Spain to the European Union (member of the EIB Board of Directors)

Keynote speaker: **Roula Khalaf**, Associate Editor and Middle East Editor, the Financial Times

- **Maroun Chammas**, President of Berytech
- **Murat Yalçintas**, Chairman, ASCAME
- **Slim Othmani**, General Manager, Nouvelle Conserverie Algérienne

Despite the strong growth experienced in the region over the past five years, youth employment figures are of great and growing concern. The current overall rate of youth unemployment is 25%. In this session, participants will discuss the employment challenge and the main bottlenecks preventing the generation of sufficient jobs for the region's expanding workforce. Participants will also discuss the types of jobs that need to be created and hence the economic models and priority sectors that should be promoted.

17:30 **Reception-Cocktail**



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DAY 2 – Wednesday 19 November 2008

08:30–09:00 **Welcome Coffee**

09:00–10:30 **Session 2**
Looking for solutions: what are the needed skills?

Moderator: **Jacques Huntzinger**, Ambassador, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Keynote speaker: **Marcello Scalisi**, Deputy Director general, UNIMED

- **Anthony Gribben**, Team Leader, Entrepreneurial Learning, European Training Foundation
- **El Hassane Benmoussa**, Secretary general, Department of Professional Training, Moroccan Ministry of Employment and professional training
- **Manfred Diehl**, Team Leader, EU-Egyptian Assistance to Reform the Technical and Vocational Education and Training System, GTZ

The education systems across the region have produced more and more graduates but many of them remain unsuitable for the demands of the job market. This session will look at ways to better match educational curricula with labour market needs. Discussion will focus on the appropriate skills that need to be developed such as critical thinking, innovation and entrepreneurial skills. An increased involvement of the private sector, notably through public-private partnerships, could be one way to further adapt education systems.

10:30–10:45 **Coffee break**

10:45–12:15 **Session 3**
Looking for solutions: how to increase the labour demand?

Moderator: **Frederic Blanc**, Economist, Institut de la Méditerranée
Keynote speaker: **Mats Karlsson**, Director for the Maghreb Department, World Bank

- **Monia Skhiri**, Secretary General, UMCE- Business Med
- **Ghazi Al-Daboubi**, Executive Director for Development and Coordination Unit, Jordanian Ministry of labour
- **Henri-Bernard Solignac Lecompte**, Head of Unit, External Cooperation and Policy Dialogue Unit, OECD Development Center

Unless sufficient progress is made in creating productive jobs in the dynamic sectors of the economy, improving education systems may be counterproductive as it creates expectations that cannot be met. Governments must work towards removing excessive and costly regulations in order to support job creation by the private sector in new and dynamic activities. This session will focus on the reform of the labour markets and the measures enable that will enable the development of private sector enterprises in the region.

12:15–12:30 **Concluding remarks**
Philippe de Fontaine Vive, Vice-President, EIB

12:30–14:00 **Lunch-buffet**

Seminar format

The seminar will be **interactive**. After the opening session, which will provide a broad outline of the topics to be discussed, each session will be introduced by an expert in the field, and a panel will then comment briefly on the subject, before opening the floor to discussion with the participants.

Discussion documents prepared by the speakers will be posted on the FEMIP seminar website (www.eib.org/femip/conference) and may be consulted both in the run-up to and after the seminar.

Contact

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Seminar venue

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