

TAPPING THE POTENTIAL OF THE SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN:

Policies and Practices to Accelerate the Sustainable Transformation

Sala do Senado da Reitoria, Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal)

7-8 November 2022



Almotaz Abadi, *Deputy Secretary General for Water, Environment, and Blue Economy, Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfM)*

Almotaz Abadi is the UfM Deputy Secretary General in charge of Water, Environment and Blue Economy since September 2022. He was UfM Acting Deputy Secretary General for same division between Sept 2015-Aug 2016. At the UfM, he had led the initiatives to revitalize the water political process in the Mediterranean, including achieving a Ministerial Declaration and approving a regional water strategy. Before the UfM, he was the director of the Aid Coordination & Management Unit with the donor community and the Government of Palestine in the water and related sectors. He has a master's degree in water resources management and in Governance, leadership, and multilateral cooperation on resources



Roger Albinyana, *Managing Director, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)*

Roger Albinyana has been working at the IEMed since 2016 and as an associate professor at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Barcelona, where he teaches international economic policy. He has published numerous papers and articles in his fields of expertise. Roger is also a board member at CIDOB and a member of the Advisory Council of EMEA. Prior to joining the IEMed, Roger served as Secretary for Foreign and EU Affairs of the Government of Catalonia (2013-2016) and was a member of the EU Committee of the Regions. From 2010 to 2013 he served as an advisor on private sector development at the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. He holds an MA in Economic History from the University of Barcelona, a BA in Economics from Pompeu Fabra University and a BA in Business Administration and Management from the Open University of Catalonia (UOC).

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Leila Ben Hassen, *Founder, Africa Blue Economy Forum (ABEF). Founder, Women in Maritime Association in Tunisia (WIMA Tunisia)*

Leila Ben Hassen is the International Ambassador for the Women in Maritime Association in Africa (WIMAfrica) and the Founder of Women in Maritime Association chapter in Tunisia, as well as Founder of the African Blue Economy Forum (ABEF). She launched Blue Jay Communication agency in December 2017 as a ground-breaking communications initiative specialising in Africa to embrace sustainability. Before setting up her own company, she was General Manager of one of the biggest pan-African media groups: IC Publications. In 2016, she organized the first New African Woman Forum, a unique pan-African platform for women's empowerment and gender equality in Africa. Previously, she was Director of the Tunisian National Tourist Office for the UK and Ireland. She secured a record number of holidaymakers visiting Tunisia by working closely with trade and media.



Inès Boujmil, *R&D&I Project Coordinator, AquaBioTech Group*

Inès Boujmil is currently the R&D&I Project Coordinator at AquaBioTech Group, operating in marine pollution, detection systems, digital technologies, and blue cultural heritage excellence Hubs projects. She previously worked on modelling plastic accumulation areas at the National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies (INSTM) in Tunisia. She is also part of the SciNMEET programme as an expert in the Task Team "Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building" and a Youth Mediterranean lighthouse contributor to the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters". As a BlueMed ambassador in Tunisia, she produced a short outreach documentary, "The story behind the "ghost" plastic traps" in Kerkennah islands. Inès developed the start-up "Cyber Litter", tackling marine litter by gamification in the frame of the Pilot Action on marine litter Hackathon team challenge. She is a Fisheries and environmental Engineer and holds a Master's in Geomatics applied to physical oceanography.



Aomar Bourhim, *Blue Economy and Maritime Spatial Planning Expert*

Aomar Bourhim was Head of the Multilateral Cooperation Service at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Morocco, as well as National Coordinator of the WestMED initiative. Expert in Blue Sustainable Economy planning of maritime space and Blue

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Ports, he is also a consultant to the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation between African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT). Prior to July 2022, he was National Coordinator of the WestMED/BE initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean, the Morocco focal point of the IOC-UNESCO global MSP project for cross-border maritime spatial planning and representative of Morocco at the Co-Presidency of the Steering Committee of the WestMED/BE initiative between 2019 and 2020. He is a graduate of Maritime Safety and Environmental Protection from the World Maritime University (WMU) in Malmo, Sweden.



Ana Brazão, Project Manager for the Blue Economy, Oceano Azul Foundation

Ana Brazão is the Project Manager for the Blue Bioeconomy of Oceano Azul Foundation coordinating Blue Bio Value, an entrepreneurship programme co-promoted with Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The programme includes an accelerator dedicated to scaling up innovative and decarbonizing marine biotechnology start-ups and an Ideation dimension, which aims at bringing entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers, techs, and managers together to create business ideas based on R&D blue biotech projects. She is a “water passionate”, having joined the Foundation in 2020 following six years working in freshwater conservation, and two years in sustainability in the corporate sector. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Chemistry from the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon and a master’s in Environmental Engineering from NOVA School of Science and Technology.



Giovanni Caprino, President, National Technology Cluster “Blue Italian Growth” (BIG – TC)

Giovanni Caprino is currently President of the National Technology Cluster “Blue Italian Growth” (BIG – TC) since July 2021, after being Vice-President for three years. He also holds other positions, including support to the President, CEO and Head of Quality Processes of CETENA (Maritime Research and Consultancy), General Manager of the Distretto Ligure delle Tecnologie Marine (DLTM). Prior to that, he was an adjunct professor at the University of Genoa between 2002-2005 and held various courses at the Italian Academy of the Merchant Navy in Genoa from 2006 to 2019. In 2000, he was appointed Director of Modelling and IT sector, where he was responsible for the

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design and research activities in many sectors. Previously, he was elected member of the Propulsor Committee of the International Towing Tank Conference and later served on its Advisory Council. He started his career in 1983 at CETENA as a Researcher in the Hydrodynamic sector. He graduated in Naval Architecture and Mechanical Engineering from the University of Genoa.



José Maria Costa*, *Secretary of State for Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Maritime Affairs, Government of Portugal*

José Maria Costa is Secretary of State for Maritime Affairs at the Ministry of Economy and Maritime Affairs of Portugal since March 2022. Between 2009 and 2021, he was mayor of the Portuguese municipality of Viana Castelo. On behalf of this position, he was a member of the Board of Directors of Resulima; Vianapolis Society; Society Polis Litoral Norte; Northwest Waters; and member of the Governing Bodies of the Association for Collaboration between Ports and Cities – RETE (2013 to 2017). In addition, he was President of the Executive Board of the Conference of Atlantic Cities (2017-2021), Member of the Council for Territorial Coordination (2014-2021) and President of the Alto Minho Intermunicipal Community – CIM - (2013-2021). He began his career as Senior management of the Shipyards of Viana do Castelo in 1986 and became assistant to the Mayor of Viana do Castelo in 1994 and Councilor in 1998. He graduated in Chemical Engineering from the Instituto Superior de Engenharia do Porto.



Ruben Eiras, *Secretary General, Fórum Oceano – Associação do Economia do Mar*

Ruben Eiras is the Secretary General of Forum Océano. During the previous year and a half, he served as Coordinator for the Blue Economy, Innovation, Investment and Financing of Forum Oceano. He is the mentor of the Ocean Stream start-up programme at the Canadian-based Creative Destruction Lab, as well as a mentor of the Sustainable Ocean Accelerator and coacher of the European Commission's Blue Invest Platform. He served as Director-General of Maritime Policy of the Ministry of the Sea of Portugal, promoting an innovative and sustainable blue economy and as Advisor for Industry, Innovation and Energy of the Minister of the Sea of Portugal. Prior to that, he was a Science and Technology Manager at Galp Energia and Director of the Energy Security Programme of the Luso-American Foundation for Development. He holds a

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PhD in Energy Security Policy in History, Defense and International Relations, from the Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e Empresa – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa and the Military Academy and an Executive Master's degree in Sustainable Energy Systems from the MIT-Portugal Programme.



Javier Fernández, *Project Manager, Central Team, WestMed Assistance Mechanism*

Javier Fernández is the Project Leader of the WestMED Assistance Mechanism since October 2018. In addition, he is the Technical Director of ECORYs in Spain and Project Leader of a UfM contract for the preparation of a Roadmap to set the path towards the implementation of the 2021 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy. Prior to that, he was the Director of the Asturias EU office in Brussels for over 3 years, where he was a member of the Bureau and of the Regional Development Committee (COTER). He is also a member of the Spanish Association of Public Policy Evaluation, and he is member of the European Commission's Team Europe in Spain. For 3 years, he was the WestMED focal point for the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Platform and has been involved in several maritime studies, including the ESPON European Research for Maritime Eco(nomic) clusters governance Strategy – ERMES.



Senén Florensa, *Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)*

A diplomat and ambassador, Senén Florensa is currently Executive President of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). He was previously Ambassador Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN and the International Organisations in Vienna (2018-2020) and Consul General of Spain in Rome from 2017 to 2018. From 2006 to 2017, he was Director General and then Executive President of European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). Author or director of a long list of books and articles on Euro-Mediterranean and international affairs, he has been President of the World Congress of Middle Eastern Studies WOCMES in 2009, Secretary for International and European Affairs of the Generalitat of Catalonia and Member of the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games Barcelona 1992. During his diplomatic career, he notably served as General Director of the Institute for Cooperation with the Arab World, the Mediterranean and Developing Countries (ICMAMPD) of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (1996-2000), and as Spanish Ambassador to Tunisia (2000-2004)

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Jérémie Fosse, *Co-founder and President, eco-union*

Jérémie Fosse is an international expert on sustainable development with a specific focus on green and blue economy, supporting the transition to sustainability for organisations, cities and territories in Europe, the Mediterranean region and globally. He is co-founder and president of eco-union, an independent environmental Think and Do Tank based in Spain (Barcelona), that aims to catalyse the socio-ecological transition towards sustainable development in the Euro-Mediterranean region. He is also the founder and director of the Global Eco Forum, an annual and international multi-stakeholders conference on sustainability in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Moreover, he regularly advises international institutions on Green and Blue Economy as well as Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean region. He holds an Msc in Industrial Engineering at INSA Lyon (France) and an Executive MBA at ESADE Business School (Spain), completed by short courses from major universities on Economics, Sustainability and Energy Transitions.



Mounir Ghribi, *Director of International Cooperation and Research Promotion (ICAP), National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics (OGS)*

Mounir Ghribi is currently the Director of International Cooperation and Research Promotion (ICAP) at the National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics. He is also the Director of an advanced master's in Sustainable Blue Economy, jointly organised by OGS and the University of Trieste and Coordinator of the Blue Skills project for developing skills in the Blue Economy sector in the Mediterranean, a project labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). In addition, he is a professor of Sustainable Development and Science Diplomacy at EUCLID Intergovernmental University. He is a former United Nations officer and Member of the Union for the Mediterranean advisory board. He represents Italy in various international initiatives, namely, the intergovernmental forum for the Western Mediterranean Forum (5+5 Dialogue) for Research, Innovation and Higher Education and the G7 Future of the Seas and Oceans and he coordinates the internationalisation of the national Blue Italian Growth (BIG) cluster. He holds a Ph.D. in methods for monitoring environmental change, from the University of Trieste; a Master's in Open Innovation and Knowledge Transfer, from the Politecnico di Milano; a Master of Sciences in environmental management from the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, and an Engineering degree from the ESAM School of Engineering.

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Samir Grimes, National Hub Algeria, Western Mediterranean Initiative (WestMed)

Samir Grimes is a professor of marine science with over 25 years of research, training, and consulting in the field of the marine environment in the Mediterranean region. He has participated in various programmes and projects on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Maritime Spatial Planning and Blue Economy (UN/MAP, EU/IMP/Med, PEGASO, MEDINA, SMAPIII, UfM). He was Advisor to the Minister of Environment in Algeria, Director of Biodiversity, Coastline and Climate Change and Focal Point for GEF, UNEP/MAP, Plan Bleu, and the IUCN (2014-2016). He has participated in various COPs on climate change and the Barcelona Convention. Trainer of the MedOpen virtual course on ICZM (PAPRAC-UN-MAP), he is currently the National Hub Algeria of the WestMed initiative on the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean, and he is part of the UNESCO/ COI on Maritime Spatial Planning and member of the Blue Plan expert group on the MED50 Prospective.



Emmanuel Maniscalco, Senior EU Programmes Officer, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)

Emmanuel Maniscalco has been working for the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) for over 6 years, first as Policy Analyst, then as Programme & Policy Officer and now as Senior EU Programmes Officer since January 2019. He is responsible for developing CPMR's strategy for EU programmes and ensuring the financial and legal monitoring of EU programmes. He also coordinates the participation of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission in several Interreg MED projects, notably BLUE GROWTH COMMUNITY and BLUE BIO MED. In addition, he teaches a course on "Cooperation in the Mediterranean" within the Master in European and International Studies of the Aix-Marseille University. He holds a BA in Hispanic Philology and another in Applied Foreign Languages (EN-ES). He obtained a master's degree in European studies at the University of Aix-Marseille in 2015.



Xavier Matheu de Cortada, Director ad interim, European Training Foundation (ETF)

Xavier Matheu de Cortada is Director ad interim of the European Training Foundation. For 14 years he worked on technical assistance projects in the fields of VET reform and employment. From January 2015 to December 2020, he was Head of the Policy

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Unit under the Operations Department. From January 2021, he is Head of the Knowledge Hub Department. The Knowledge Hub Department ensures co-creation, management and sharing of ETF knowledge on Human Capital Development (HCD) in partnership with the partner countries, EC services and international community stakeholders, and provides updated and relevant factual information, monitoring, analysis and assessment on HCD in the countries under ETF responsibility. He holds qualifications in geography and history, social education and in-company training management.



Élodie Nunes, *Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)*

Elodie Nunes is a Public Policies and International/European cooperation expert, with more than 9-year experience in territorial, transnational, and decentralized cooperation working with local and regional communities. Elodie has joined the team of the CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission in 2014, where she has been fulfilling the role of Executive Secretary since 2019. Her activities include networking and lobbying actions with more than 35 member-regions on themes linked to: governance, territorial cooperation, blue innovation, marine energies, sustainable tourism, biodiversity protection, as well as social and youth issues, among others. All activities continuously aim at an improved cohesion for the whole of the Mediterranean basin. She has a Research background in Humanities and Languages from the University of Lyon/University of California, as well as an International Relations/European Studies specialization with a focus on Project Management from the University of Strasbourg.



Marta Pascual*, *National Hub Spain, Western Mediterranean Initiative (WestMED)*

Marta is currently a Senior Environmental Consultant at ECORYS Spain as the National Hub Spain for the Western Mediterranean initiative. She is a former participant of the EU MSP Platform and has also been working as a Senior Associate Expert for the EU Commission and ECORYS in works related to MSP for Blue Growth and Blue Economy. She is a former Ikerbasque Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3, Spain). Her experience in research includes various lines of marine and coastal research

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applied to maritime environments such as MSP; SEA; MSFD; EBA; Ecosystem Services Mapping/Modelling; ARIES (Artificial Intelligence for Ecosystem Services Modelling); Socio-economic Assessment of MPAs; Value Chain Analysis; Spatial Prioritization Tools (Spatial Multi-Criteria Analysis – SMCA, Marxan, INVEST); Land-Sea Interactions; Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM); Multi-Use Platforms; Climate Change Adaptation in Coastal Areas; Blue Carbon; Fiscal Mechanisms applied to Conservation; Biological Valuation (BV) and Ecosystem Services Valuation (ESV).



Alessandro Pernice, Head of Unit for European Programmes, ARCES

Senior Project Manager at ARCES, Alessandro Pernice is currently Head of Unit of European Programmes in charge of supporting the management of four EU-funded projects and project design of several actions to be supported with EU Funds. He is a consultant on EU Public Affairs, EU policies and Programmes and Project management for Research & Innovation projects. Previously, he joined two international networks (UNIMED and HERIMED) where he had Business Development and Project management responsibilities and developed several collaborative EU projects (NARPIMED, MEDINS, METANIR, POLIRISK, UNIMED CULTURAL HERITAGE II) liaising with the European Commission and the Managing authorities of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. He holds a bachelor's degree in Political Sciences from the University of Palermo and a master's degree in European Political and Administrative Studies from the College of Europe of Bruges.



Paqui Santonja Mayor, Executive Advisor, Casa Mediterráneo

Paqui Santoja is Executive Advisor at Casa Mediterráneo. From October 2021 to April 2022, she was an advisor in the Cabinet of the Minister of Finance and Public Administration of the Government of Spain. In the General State Administration in Madrid, after passing through the Office of the Secretary of State for the European Union of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the preparation and development of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU (2009-2010), he has had various positions in the Ministry of Territorial Policy: advisory member in the DG for Regional and Local Cooperation (2010-2015)

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and advisor in the Cabinet of the Minister of Territorial Policy and Public Function (2018-2021). From February 2015 to August 2018, she was Project Manager at the Public Governance Studies Unit at the OECD Directorate for Public Governance in Paris. She graduated in Law from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, specialising in international relations.



Ana Santos Pinto, *Executive Director, Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI), Universidade NOVA de Lisboa*

Ana Santos Pinto is Assistant-Professor at the Department of Political Studies – NOVA University of Lisbon, Researcher and Executive Director of the Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI-NOVA) and Research Fellow in the National Defence Institute (Portugal). Previously, she worked as Research Consultant to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (2008-2010), Advisor for International Relations of the Ministry of National Defence of Portugal (2006-2009) and Research Assistant at the Portuguese Institute of Strategic and International Studies (2001-2003). She holds a PhD in International Relations and develops her research on identity in International Politics and Security issues, mainly regarding the European Union and Middle East and North Africa (MENA). She has authored various academic publications on European Union Security and Defence Policy, MENA geopolitics and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

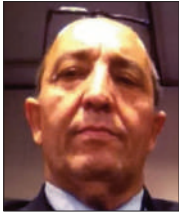


Alessandra Sensi, *Head of Sector of Environment and Blue Economy, Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfM)*

Alessandra Sensi is Head of Sector, Environment and Blue Economy, at WEBE – the Water, Environment and Blue Economy Division of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean since March 2013. She was Programme Manager of the environment/green economy/climate change portfolio at the European Commission, EuropeAid, between 2009 and 2012. Before, she worked for FAO, Rome; for UNEP/GEF in Nairobi and Geneva; for the Development Cooperation Office of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hanoi, Vietnam; and for Eurostat - the Statistical Office of the EU, Luxembourg. She holds University Degree in Political Science/Economic Branch and a master's degree in Management and Economics of Energy and Environment.

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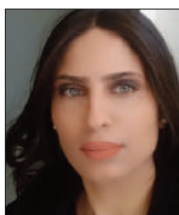
Ali Shagrune, *Representative and Libyan National Hub, General Authority of Marine Wealth of Libya. WestMED Initiative Co-Presidency*

Ali Shagrune is currently the Libyan National Hub and Representative of the WestMed Initiative. Prior to that, he was Director of the Fisheries Department of the General Authority of Marine Wealth of Libya from 2015 to 2019. He was also chairman of the Follow-up Committee for the Mediterranean Commission of Libya and a member of the scientific committee for the Marine Biology Research Centre, as well as General Director of the Libyan fishery company in Mauritania from 20007 to 2014. He holds a bachelor's degree in Engineering.



Pedro Soares de Oliveira, *Director of Middle East and Maghreb Services, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Portugal*

Pedro Soares de Oliveira holds the position of Head of Middle East and Maghreb Department at the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs since August 2022. Having initiated his diplomatic career in 1992, as desk officer at the European Department, he took up the position of deputy Diplomatic Advisor in the Cabinet of the Prime Minister between 1995 and 1998. He was posted at the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the OSCE, in Vienna, between 1998 and 2003, a period that included the Portuguese Chairmanship of the Organization. Between 2004 and 2008 he was seconded at the European Commission Delegation in Maputo, Mozambique, as Political Advisor. Upon returning to Lisbon in 2008, he took the positions of Head of the Bilateral Relations Division at the Directorate General for European Affairs, Head of Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Portuguese Communities Abroad, and General Coordinator of the cross-cultural season "Year of Portugal in Brazil and Year of Brazil in Portugal". He was posted in 2013 as Consul-General of Portugal in Newark, USA, and in 2018 returned to the field of multilateral affairs, as Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to UNESCO, Paris.



Emma Sohlobji, *Secretary General, Cluster Maritime Tunisien*

Emna Sohlobji is a consultant in Law of the Sea and is currently Secretary General of the Tunisian Maritime Cluster. In addition, she is the founder of a company with a Tellus Advisory mission on issues related to the blue economy and the author of scientific

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publications related to the Law of the Sea, the Law of Pleasure and Boating, and Regional Fishing Organisations. Prior to that, she worked for 4 years in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in North Africa on gender-sensitive fisheries development projects. With her experience in the management of development projects, she has supported CSOs in networking and setting up development projects on several themes linked with adaptation and mitigation. She is a jurist in International Law and Maghreb-Europe relations and a specialist in the Law of the Sea.



Nuno Severiano Teixeira, President, Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais (IPRI), Universidade NOVA de Lisboa

Nuno Severiano Teixeira is Full Professor at the Nova University of Lisbon, as well as the President of the Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI). Prior to that, he held the position of Minister of Interior in the XIV Constitutional Government of Portugal (1999-2002) and Minister of Defence in the XVII Constitutional Government of Portugal (2006-2009). He was also appointed Vice-Rector at Nova University of Lisbon (2013-2017). As a guest Professor, he taught at Georgetown University (2000), the Institute for European Studies at the University of California, Berkeley (2003-2004), and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies of the European University Institute in Florence (2010). With several national and international publications, he is specialised in the fields of International Relations, History of Portuguese Foreign Policy, Military History, and matters of Security and Defence.



Victoria Tur, Head of the Department of Cooperation with the Arab World and Asia, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)

Victoria Tur is head of the Department of Cooperation with the Arab World and Asia at the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation since 2022. Prior to that, she had been appointed Advisor for EU affairs at the Spanish Embassy in Berlin. Between 2015 and 2017, she was Deputy Assistant Director General for Sub-Saharan Africa at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Previously, she had been Minister-Counsellor at the Spanish Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica (2012-2015) and in Harare, Zimbabwe (2009-2012). She holds a bachelor's degree in Law from Rovira I Virgili University (Tarragona) and a postgraduate in International Relations from the Complutense University of Madrid.

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Alberto Ucelay, Director General for the Maghreb, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Government of Spain

Alberto Ucelay Urech is Director General for the Maghreb, the Mediterranean and the Middle East at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation of Spain since July 2021. He entered the Diplomatic Career in 1996. In the central services of the Ministry, he was Chief of the Legal, Social and Humanitarian Affairs Service (1996) and Deputy Director General for the Middle East (2007-2019). He was assigned to the diplomatic representations of Spain in Gabon, with accreditation in São Tomé and Príncipe (1997-2000), Paraguay (2000-2003), and was Deputy Consul General in Jerusalem (2003-2006). He worked as Advisor to the Special Representative of the European Union for the Middle East Peace Process (2006-2007). He was also assigned as Deputy Head in the Spanish Embassies in Morocco (2010-2013), Kuwait (2013-2016) and Tunisia (2016-2018). Before his current posting, he was Ambassador of Spain to the Republic of Sudan since August 2018, also accredited to Eritrea that same year. He holds a Law Degree.



Stéphanie Vella, National Hub Malta, Western Mediterranean Initiative (WestMED)

Stephanie Vella is currently National Hub for Malta at the Western Mediterranean Initiative (WestMed). She is also an executive director in a leading economic consultancy firm and lectures part-time at the University of Malta. As an economic consultant, she has worked on several projects and consultancy assignments with institutions including the EU Commission, Commonwealth Secretariat, Government ministries and authorities and private sector entities. She has experience in various funding programmes including European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Social Fund, Rural Development Programme and OP Fisheries. In addition, she has worked on various maritime-related projects including the economic and financial feasibility of onshore power supply at the Grand Harbour and Malta Freeport Terminal.

*to be confirmed