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In accordance with its policy position, FCM (Fédération des Experts Comptables Méditerranéens) calls for a second EuroMed Market Programme to continue the EuroMed cooperation activities in the field of Auditing and Accounting.

Until this year, the new Union for the Mediterranean (UpM) bodies established have been preparing for the commencement of activities. During this preparatory phase, the work on Euro Mediterranean co-operation activities has been on standby.

FCM now calls for the continuation and further development of Euro Mediterranean cooperation activities to create a free trade area, in accordance with the Final Conclusions of the Euro Med Market Programme and the objectives of the Barcelona Process - Union for the Mediterranean and the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of July 13, 2008 (Final Statement, Marseille, 3-4 November 2008).

Indeed the EU Guidelines and Proposal for a Work Programme for 2010 (as drafted by the High Level Mashrek/Maghreb Working Party and approved by the EU Council) proposes initiatives and objectives for the follow-up of the Economic and Financial Partnership, towards the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area.

The initiatives proposed by the High Level Working Party include, in particular, that Euro-Mediterranean trade relations should move beyond tariffs to encompass regulatory issues such as the "horizontal" issues dealt with by EuroMed Market Programme (i.e. Auditing and Accounting, Customs, Competition Rules, Public Procurement, Intellectual Property Rights, and Financial Services: Banking and Insurances) so as to allow real market access and to contribute to a more favourable investment climate.

The convergence of regulation on accountancy and auditing is a fundamental development for the creation of a free trade market. FCM believes that the most efficient and productive way to achieve such a development is through regular regional meetings such as those that were held by the first EuroMed Market Programme.

In light of all of this, FCM calls for a second EuroMed Market Programme in the new institutional context that will offer to the UpM Secretariat the possibility of continuing the role of promoting, in a regional perspective, the convergence of internal market regulations in the Mediterranean region.

The EuroMed Market Programme - in which FCM participated as regional expert - was concluded at the end of April 2009. As regards Auditing and Accounting, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) It would be necessary to use the study carried out in the framework of the EuroMed Market Programme as a basis to draft national action plans in this field in each Mediterranean Partner.
- 2) The participants would welcome the setting up of a central Euro-Mediterranean entity comprising both representatives of the public and private sectors, with a view to coordinating action in this field. The Federation of Mediterranean Accountants (FCM), established in 1999, should start working as a hub for the EuroMed cooperation activities in the field of auditing and accounting and be the starting point to create an Accountancy and Auditing Central EuroMed Entity.

The members of the Working Group on Auditing and Accounting furthermore agreed that it would be important to promote convergence in the Mediterranean region towards high quality financial reporting standards, with special attention to the needs of SMEs.

FCM fully supports these conclusions and believes in the positive impact of the Euro Mediterranean cooperation activities, and in the enormous potential of the Mediterranean region.

FCM is committed to promoting economic growth and integration in the Mediterranean region through reliable and comparable financial information and a developed accountancy profession.

FCM believes that sound financial reporting is essential for financial stability and growth, for avoiding crises and protection of investors, to attract foreign and domestic investments, and to develop capital markets. The financial reporting infrastructure is also a crucial factor for the development of a more integrated regional market. Accounting and auditing standards are one of the key elements of the financial reporting infrastructure, but equally important are the system of governmental regulation and the system for education and certification of professionals, i.e. the accountancy profession.

FCM believes that the EuroMed Market Programme was a very important step in starting an effective convergence process towards the creation of a Euro Mediterranean free trade area. As highlighted in the conclusions of the EuroMed study, effective actions should now be planned to ensure that this process continues.

References

The study "Towards the Free Trade Area", the Final Conclusion and as well as other relevant documents can be freely downloaded from the Euro Med Market Programme's website:

http://www.euromedmarket.org/ingles/FC2009_list.asp in English

http://www.euromedmarket.org/frances/FC2009_list.asp in French



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About FCM:

The Federation of Mediterranean Accountants / Fédération des Experts Comptables Méditerranéens, was established in 1999. It is the only regional organisation for the accountancy profession in the Mediterranean Region. FCM represents more than 320 000 professional accountants. FCM is an Acknowledged Accountancy Grouping of IFAC.

FCM Members:

- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- The Albanian Institute of Authorized Chartered Auditors (IEKA)
- The Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Bulgaria (IDES)
- The Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Cyprus (ICPAC)
- The Egyptian Society of Accountants and Auditors (ESAA)
- Conseil Supérieur de l'Ordre des Experts Comptables (CSOEC)
- Compagnie Nationale des Commissaires aux Comptes (CNCC)
- The Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Greece (SOEL)
- The Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Israel (ICPAS)
- Consiglio Nazionale Dottori Commercialisti e degli Esperti Contabili (CNDCEC)
- Society of Certified Accountants and Auditors of Kosovo (SCAAK)
- The Malta Institute of Accountants (MIA)
- Ordre des Experts Comptables du Royaume du Maroc (OEC)
- Palestinian Association of Public Certified Accountants (PACPA)
- Corpul Expertilor Contabili si Contabililor Autorizati din Romania (CECCAR)
- Serbian Association of Accountants and Auditors (SRRS)
- Consejo General de Colegios de Economistas de Espana (CGCEE)
- Consejo Superior de Colegios Oficiales de Titulados Mercantiles y Empresariales de Espana
- Ordre des Experts Comptables de Tunisie (OECT)
- Union of Chambers of Certified Public Accountants of Turkey (TURMOB)
- Expert Accountants' Association of Turkey (EAAT)

FCM Associate Members:

- Fédération Internationale des Experts Comptables Francophones (FIDEF)