

## **Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)**

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Presidency: Libya

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Secretary-General: Habib Ben Yahia, Tunisia (appointed by the Council of the Presidency on 1 February 2006)

### **Purpose**

The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) was established under the Marrakech Treaty of 1989 with the primary purposes of: strengthening ties between the five member states; promoting prosperity; defending national rights; and adopting common policies to promote the free movement of people, services, goods and capital within the region.

Article 3 of the Treaty provides that the Union's objectives are to promote:

- Close diplomatic ties and dialogue between Member States while safeguarding their independence
- Mechanisms for Member States' industrial, commercial and social development including through common sectoral programmes
- Measures to support Islamic values and the safeguarding of the National Arabic identity through mechanisms such as cultural exchange, research and education programmes.

### **Structure**

UMA is a political-level body supported by a secretariat whose headquarters are located in Rabat, Morocco. The structures set out in the Marrakech Treaty are:

- Council of the Presidency, which is the supreme decision-making organ
- Council of the Prime Ministers, which coordinates policy
- Council of Foreign Ministers, which prepares Presidency sessions and examines Follow-upCommittee proposals

- Follow-up Committee, a national officials-level committee tasked with implementing UMA decisions
- Four Special Ministerial Committees, which deal with thematic areas
- General Secretariat, which is the executive for the Union and Consultative Council
- A consultative council, which is composed of legislative representatives from each country and tasked with sharing opinions and recommendations on draft Council of the Presidency decisions.

In addition, the Marrakech Treaty provides for a range of other institutions including the: Judicial Authority, composed of two judges from each state, and with the authority to interpret or rule on issues relating to UMA; Maghreb University and Academy; and Investment and External Trade Bank.

### **Meetings**

The Marrakech Treaty provides for the Council of the Presidency to meet once a year in ordinary session and in extraordinary session as required. The Council of the Presidency is the only decision-making body. Decisions are taken unanimously. Under the Treaty, the Presidency should rotate every year although it has not always done so.

In recent years, the UMA institutions have met infrequently. The most recent meeting of the Council of the Presidency took place in 1994.

### **Members (5)**

Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia