İSTANBUL DECLARATION

UNION OF MEDITERRANEAN ARCHITECTS (UMAR)
25 SEPTEMBER 2026 – İSTANBUL / TURKEY

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UNION OF MEDITERRANEAN ARCHITECTS (UMAR)

Istanbul, 25 September 2026

Adopted at
Union of Mediterranean Architects (UMAR)
Inaugural edition of Architecture Award Program and Extraordinary General Assembly

ISTANBUL DECLARATION

Union of Mediterranean Architects (UMAR) has been established in 15thJanuary 1994 by the Declaration of Rabat and the constituent general meeting of 1st July 1994 in Rethymnon, Crete.

Since its establishment, the Union aimed at fulfilling the common goal of regenerating and consolidating the ties inherent in their adhesion to the Mediterranean Basin, the common birthplace of civilisation. The objectives of UMAR have focused on promoting the ‘Mediterranean’ concept as the basis for a debate on architecture, proclaiming architecture to be of public interest, ensuring the co-ordination of Mediterranean architects’ organisations with a view to supporting them in their joint actions and consolidating the ties between UMAR and other international architects’ organisations.

In 2026, the Union of Mediterranean Architects (UMAR) held the inaugural edition of its biennial UMAR Architectural Award program. The program is designed to recognize excellence in architecture that fosters social, cultural, and environmental values while emphasizing Mediterranean culture and architecture.

Announced in May 2026, the international jury completed its evaluation in September 2026, and the Award Ceremony was held in Istanbul, at the Chamber of Architects of Turkey (CAT), Istanbul Metropolitan Branch on September 25, 2026.

The Award created an opportunity for dialogue and international relations among Mediterranean architects, establishing a platform for communication and debate on contemporary architecture.

In its report, the Jury mainly emphasizes remarkable architectural qualities, contextual-territorial sensitivity, environmental commitment, and the harmony between Mediterranean heritage values and modern architecture. Furthermore, the Jury underscores ideas of transformation, contributions to social values, and successful interpretations of the relationship between the historical and the contemporary.

Through this Award program, UMAR and CAT aim to support dialogue among architects and promote sustainable approaches by presenting methods that are affordable, environmentally sensitive, user-friendly, and respectful of local identities.

The inaugural edition of the program, titled *“Living the Mediterranean Culture - Residential Buildings”*, focuses on both,

- the importance of innovative ideas in residential projects and on housing rights -which is also the theme for UIA World Architecture Day 2026-
- and on highlighting commonalities and shared values across the Mediterranean region.

Following the UMAR Award Ceremony, hosted by CAT, the exhibition organized, and the core messages shared, on September 25, 2026, the CAT Executive Board, the UMAR Council and General Assembly members agreed to further support dialogue and communication within the Mediterranean region. By signing the Istanbul Declaration, they affirm their commitment to serving as a role model for the world’s architects to foster peace, human rights, and equity in the Mediterranean basin.

25 September 2026, Istanbul

AMİR TURKİ
President of UMAR

ZEYNEP ERES ÖZDOĞAN
President of CAT