

# MEDITERRANEAN 2030

How the EU can deliver its New Pact for  
the Mediterranean.

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## INTRODUCTION

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In 2024 the European Union took steps towards redefining its engagement with the Southern Neighbourhood, reflecting a broader recalibration of its foreign policy priorities in the Mediterranean region. For the first time, a [European Commissioner dedicated to Mediterranean affairs, Dubravka Šuica](#), was appointed. The nomination was followed by the creation of the [Directorate General for the Middle East and North Africa](#) (DG MENA). In July 2024, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced, in her [speech](#) outlining the [Commission priorities for the 2024-2029](#), the launch of a New Pact for the Mediterranean, which is expected to be formally adopted in November 2025, as stated during Commissioner Šuica's confirmation [hearing](#).

The Pact aims at establishing comprehensive partnerships between the EU and Southern Neighbourhood countries with a focus on "[investment, economic stability, jobs, energy, transport, security, migration and other areas of mutual interest.](#)" Under the new Pact for the Mediterranean, the [Trans-Mediterranean Energy and Clean Tech Cooperation initiative](#) aims at stimulating large scale public and private investments in renewable energy and green infrastructure.

To support the development of the Pact, DG MENA has led a series of consultations at bilateral and multilateral levels across the region, engaging both institutional and civil society stakeholders. Embedding civil society and expert voices at the core of this process enhances the legitimacy, transparency, and effectiveness of the Pact, while enhancing the legitimacy and local ownership of the EU's foreign policy footprint in the region. Overall, a vibrant and engaged civic space, the respect and promotion for fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law are key preconditions for achieving the EU's ambitious agenda in an increasingly competitive Mediterranean.

The Pact comes at a key time: not only is it 30 years on from the 1995 Barcelona Process and the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean, but also at a moment when the Mediterranean region is increasingly facing interlocking challenges related to climate change, economic and debt crises, political and social instability and conflicts. In this context, the EU's ability to promote rule of law and civil society engagement - while safeguarding civic freedom and rights - will be essential to pave the way for sustainable development as well as thriving business and investment on both sides of the Mediterranean.



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# INTRODUCTION

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The New Pact for the Mediterranean is an opportunity for the EU to advance a more organic foreign policy approach in a region marked by interlinked challenges: climate change, economic volatility, political fragmentation, and ongoing conflicts. For the Pact to embed real strategic shifts in the region, climate objectives must actively shape the EU's overall foreign policy approach in the region, advancing a truly region-wide, pan-Mediterranean vision. If led equitably, the energy transition can become a key opportunity for sustainable development and deeper regional integration responding to interests of all partners involved while also reaffirming and upholding human security and the rule of law as core principles across all policy areas. Indeed, only by investing in projects that strengthen and support democratic governance and human rights can the EU foster the conditions for sustainable development, thriving business environments, and long-term stability.

Moreover, a new model of cooperation in the Mediterranean must be understood as a blueprint for European foreign policy that applies beyond the region, demonstrating how climate action, equitable partnerships, and shared prosperity can become the foundation of a renewed EU external strategy in a multipolar and climate-constrained world.

This brief includes inputs and recommendations for the New Pact formulated by the [Mediterranean Alliance of Think Tanks on Climate Change](#), the first network of think tanks from across the region to focus on shared climate challenges and solutions, and [EuroMed Rights](#), a network of 80+ organisations and actors committed to human rights across the Euro-Mediterranean region, though does not claim to represent the perspective of all members of these networks. This brief highlights the need to frame Euro-Mediterranean cooperation through the lens of climate considerations, recognising the links between climate impacts, stability and development in the region. It also calls on the EU to promote an integrated approach where energy transition and economic cooperation go hand in hand with commitments to supporting civic space and protecting human rights.

The brief is structured as follows: the first section offers insights on how to make the New Pact fit for purpose in relaunching Mediterranean cooperation. The set of technical policy recommendations address the three dimensions for a climate-based New Pact: adaptation and resilience, mitigation efforts and energy transition, means of implementation and financial instruments.

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# FROM VISION TO ACTION: PILLARS TO DELIVER THE MEDITERRANEAN PACT

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## **COMBINING BILATERAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH A REGIONAL VISION**

For the EU, embedding climate action in a regional framework requires a political investment. Developing a Mediterranean-wide vision that can overcome bilateral cooperation patterns will be critical to unlocking regional integration and addressing shared challenges, such as water stress, energy insecurity, and uneven economic development. Yet bridging this gap will require stronger political investment in multilateral platforms such as the Union for the Mediterranean, which remains the only political forum encompassing all Mediterranean countries. A renewed multilateralism should integrate civil society actors through structured dialogue and consultation mechanisms, making the Pact a platform for participatory and inclusive regional governance, not just state-to-state cooperation.

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## **FOSTERING INCLUSIVE AND BALANCED PARTNERSHIPS**

Strengthening cooperation should not follow an aid-based or conditionality-driven logic, especially not one based on migration and security concerns, which risks deepening asymmetries. Instead, the Pact must build positive patterns of co-dependence rooted in mutual benefits at national and sub-national levels alike. Incentives should be mutually defined, grounded in the perspectives of local communities, and extend benefits to vulnerable groups and sub-national actors. Participatory processes and meaningful channels for consultation and feedback that bring in diverse voices will be key to fostering implementation that resonates with lived realities. Civil society must be recognised not only as an implementer but also as a driver of innovation and policy-making to tackle the increasingly complex and interconnected challenges that both shores of the Mediterranean share.

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## **GROUNDING THE PACT IN PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE**

If the New Pact is to generate lasting impact, it must rest on a governance model that is rights-based, participatory, and locally embedded. Social justice should be a foundation for all EU-led initiatives. This entails an understanding of social justice shaped by a multi-level dialogue with Southern partners, including with national governments, with local communities, civil society organisations, and youth. A Pact that listens and adapts to the real-life implications of climate policies on livelihoods, rights, and agency will avoid top-down impositions.

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## **EXPANDING THE CONSTELLATION OF PARTNERSHIPS**

Finally, the Pact should embrace a broader constellation of actors and formats, recognising the complex dynamics of the region. Trilateral cooperation with Gulf countries or partnerships with China can expand financial and technical options, provided that Europe maintains its values- and rights-based engagement model. What sets the European model apart is not the scale of its financing alone, but the depth of its partnerships, its focus on social safeguards, and its commitment to engaging local actors. These principles should guide cooperation across the board, reinforcing the EU's credibility and distinctiveness in an increasingly contested space.

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# 1. CLIMATE RISKS, ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

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The Mediterranean basin binds its people through a shared history, geography and, more recently, a shared experience of climate breakdown. This is why the drafting of a New Pact for the Mediterranean is a key opportunity to mainstream climate considerations within the EU's strategic approach to the region.

As recognised by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), the Mediterranean region is a climate change hotspot, where climate is changing faster than the global average: average annual temperatures are already 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, 0.4°C higher than the average global increase, despite the fact that the region is responsible for just 6% of global emissions.

Climate change impacts in the Mediterranean propagate across countries through shared ecosystems, interconnected economies and human mobility patterns. From disrupted food and water supplies to climate-induced migration and trade instability, the region is increasingly exposed to [transboundary climate risks](#) that undermine both local resilience and regional security, with repercussions on the stability of the whole Mediterranean region, including the EU and its Member States. At the same time, adaptive measures designed in absence of regional coordination might simply shift vulnerabilities across geographies rather than reduce them, such as in the case of management of transboundary water reserves.

While all Mediterranean countries face similar climate risks, their ability to respond varies widely due to differences in governance, economic resilience, crisis response capacity, and access to finance. In fragile contexts, especially in parts of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, these challenges are intensified by conflict, weak institutions, and limited financial resources. As widely recognised now, climate change acts as a threat multiplier, compounding existing social, economic, and political stresses, and increasing the risk of instability. An integrated, regionally coordinated approach to resilience is therefore essential to the success of the New Pact.



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# 1. CLIMATE RISKS, ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

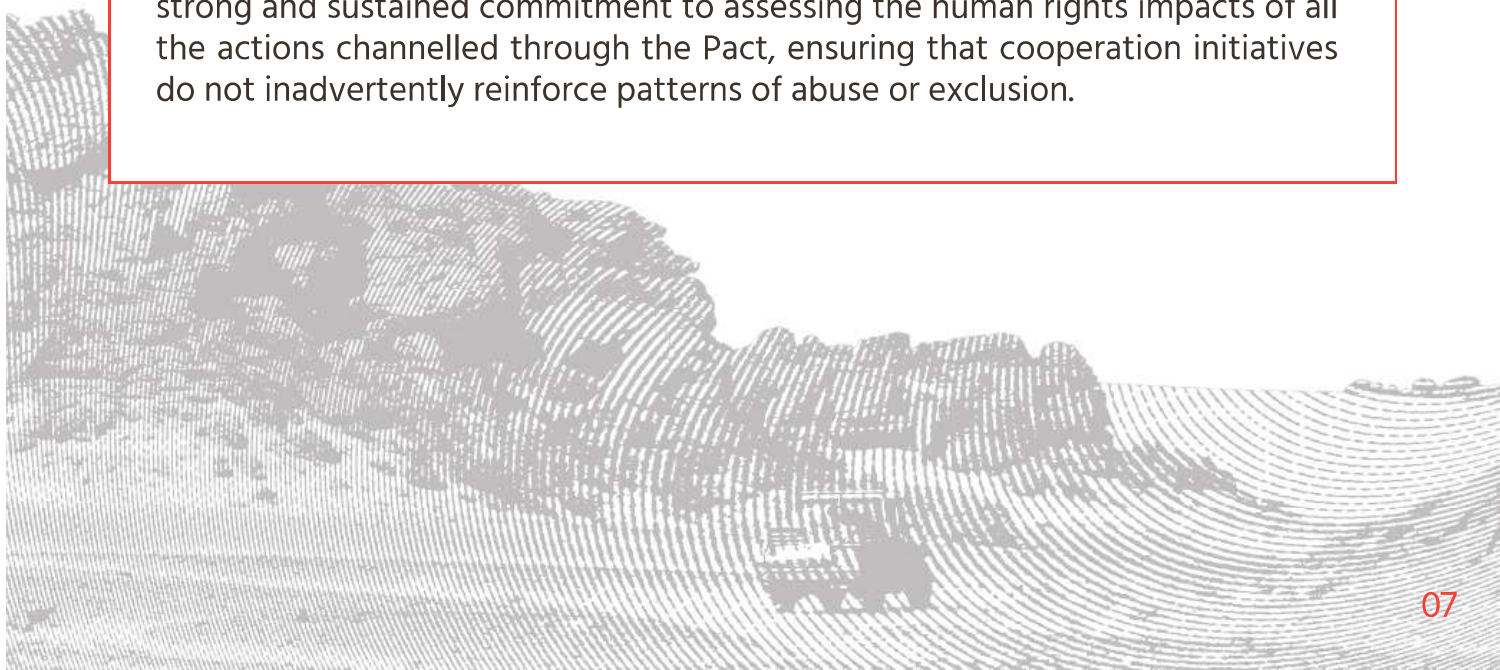
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## CASE STUDY: LIBYA

Libya is at acute risk of climate impacts; particularly water shortages, shrinking agricultural land, and extreme weather. The security situation has worsened these risks; with water and energy infrastructure in poor repair, difficult for many to access, and threatened by ongoing conflict. The country is also oil-dependent in both consumption and export terms. Climate change has made flooding in Libya many times more likely and more intense. In 2023, tens of thousands were killed and many more displaced by record floods which hit weakened infrastructure. Flooding impacts also prevented movement; trapping people in place. When the disaster subsided, there was a sudden increase of people attempting to reach Lampedusa, Italy. Local organisations lacked the infrastructure to respond and the story re-ignited migration politics in Europe, resulting in promises of further securitisation.

Systematic violations of human rights also take place in Libya, with a fragmented governance landscape, widespread abuses and little accountability. Future cooperation must include a strong human rights due diligence component to assess risks and adopt adequate measures for their prevention, mitigation, and remediation. EU funded projects and initiatives in Libya must not be pursued in violation of the do-no-harm principle, and a process needs to be established to follow up on information contained in its reports and suspend support when risks materialise.

An integrated approach to adaptation, peacebuilding, and decarbonisation efforts is essential for both local and wider regional stability. This requires a strong and sustained commitment to assessing the human rights impacts of all the actions channelled through the Pact, ensuring that cooperation initiatives do not inadvertently reinforce patterns of abuse or exclusion.



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# 1. CLIMATE RISKS, ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

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Within this context, it is the most marginalised – especially rural communities, women and youth – who bear the burden of the crisis. Structural gender inequalities, including restricted access to land, finance and decision-making, further compound on these social sectors' vulnerabilities to climate shocks. Gender-differentiated poverty is expected to rise: evidence from the region, including in post-disaster displacement contexts like Libya, highlights clear gender-specific gaps in security and humanitarian response. Addressing these intersectional vulnerabilities is essential to building long term resilience and ensuring that climate efforts do not reinforce existing inequalities.

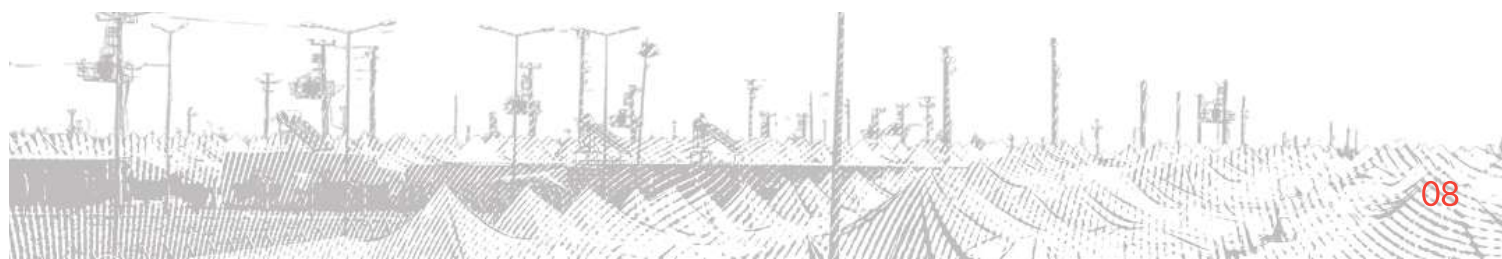
Disasters, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation are increasingly shaping patterns of human mobility. The links between migration, instability, and fragility are complex and multidimensional. In the wider Mediterranean region and across parts of Africa, migration is driven by a mix of factors, including population pressures, resource scarcity, insecurity, inequality, and limited economic opportunities. Climate-related stressors, such as water scarcity, land degradation, and sea-level rise, exacerbate these pressures, indirectly contributing to migration by undermining agriculture, food security, livelihoods, and public health.

Climate change has also been linked, through intermediate factors, to rising conflict and structural violence, further fuelling mobility. Most migration in low- and middle-income countries remains internal or to nearby regions, often from rural to urban areas. North African countries like Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia play a key role in this dynamic, hosting large numbers of migrants from the Sahel and West Africa regions.

While slow-onset changes drive long-term migration, displacement from sudden-onset disasters is growing in the Mediterranean region. In 2022, natural disasters displaced over 305,000 people in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean - a 30% increase from the previous year. Though often temporary, such displacement can become prolonged if changing climate conditions prevent voluntary return.

At the European level, the [Joint Communication on the Climate-Security Nexus](#) outlined key priorities to ensure that the climate-peace-security nexus is more effectively integrated into the EU's foreign policy, with the aim of moving towards a more systemic and preventive approach that aligns climate diplomacy, development cooperation and peacebuilding.

While the EU's security concerns are legitimate, an excessive focus on migration control risks reinforcing asymmetries in the relationship with Southern Mediterranean countries. Specifically, the European Union should recognise that economic stability, economic growth and geopolitical stability are tied to climate, energy and adaptation. These are not peripheral issues in the European foreign policy approach, but building blocks for long-term regional security and resilience.



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# 1. CLIMATE RISKS, ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

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## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW FRAMING RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION IN THE NEW PACT FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN**

1. Adopt a multidimensional approach to resilience that links infrastructure, community resilience, and sustainable economic development, recognising the interconnected nature of climate vulnerabilities, with special attention to nexus approaches such as the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) and transboundary risks to include agricultural vulnerabilities, food insecurity, and the impacts of water-intensive agricultural exports from the Southern shores to Europe.
2. Support the development of new regenerative economies, grounded in decarbonised, diversified, and climate-resilient business models. Nature-based solutions that restore ecosystems and generate sustainable livelihoods should be promoted as part of this transformation.
3. Embed support for the design of nationally led, locally tailored adaptation plans, backed by technical assistance, innovation programmes, targeted capacity building and inclusive stakeholder engagement into the Pact. Moreover, the Pact should promote coordination among countries and advocate for more adaptation-targeted support in the framework of UNFCCC processes.
4. The New Pact should mobilise private sector engagement in adaptation finance: use instruments like guarantees, blended finance, and de-risking mechanisms to unlock investments in water, nature-based solutions, and local resilience, bridging the gap into hard-to-finance sectors and aligning targets with current commitments to increase adaptation finance.
5. Reframe climate cooperation as a shared investment for regional stability and development, reflecting the broader objectives of the climate-peace-security-development nexus and avoiding a narrow, security-focused approach that could alienate Southern Mediterranean partners.
6. Design funding mechanisms to integrate short-term disaster response with long term resilience building. Specifically, the EU should allocate flexible resources for anticipatory action that protect vulnerable livelihood ahead of climate disasters and ensure that emergency aid is tailored to local needs.

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## 2. HARNESSING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ENERGY TRANSITION

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In line with EU's Strategic priorities, the new Mediterranean Pact is set to include energy and mitigation under the Trans-Mediterranean Energy and Clean Tech Cooperation Initiative. The rollout of renewable energy is essential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving long-term climate goals. Scaling up renewables across the Mediterranean, while managing the socio-economic implications of the global shift away from fossil fuels, is key to decarbonisation and a vector for job creation, industrial diversification, and more affordable, resilient energy systems.

The transition to climate-neutral economies is already reshaping global energy systems and economic models, including in the Mediterranean. In the Southern Mediterranean, where several economies remain heavily reliant on fossil fuel exports, Europe's accelerating shift away from oil and gas presents challenges. As European demand for fossil fuels declines due to renewable deployment and energy efficiency measures, the risk of stranded assets and revenue losses threatens public services, employment, and political stability. This is especially the case in traditional fossil fuels exporting countries, whose budgets are heavily dependent on fossil fuel exports and where diversification opportunities remain limited.

A just transition approach must be embedded in all mitigation policies, recognising the North-South divide and ensuring that equity, justice, and inclusion are central to the energy transition. Without coordinated fiscal and diplomatic efforts, the phase-out of fossil fuels could exacerbate inequalities and fuel new cycles of fragility and unrest across the region. Resilience in fossil fuel-exporting countries will require sustained efforts in economic diversification, domestic energy and fiscal reforms, and comprehensive adaptation strategies to manage ongoing climate disruptions.

A flagship opportunity under the new Trans-Mediterranean Energy and Clean Tech Cooperation Initiative is to adopt the vision of tripling renewable energy in the Mediterranean, in line with the commitment undertaken by countries at COP28, the UAE Consensus. The [TeraMed](#) Initiative, a bottom-up, civil society-led initiative, proposes a regional target of 1 terawatt of installed capacity by 2030, harnessing the technical potential for solar and wind energy, which in the region is estimated at around 4.5 TW. TeraMed is aligned to broader European and global climate commitments, with the vision of transforming the Mediterranean as a frontrunner in the **global** energy transition and a green energy hub, as echoed in the recent [MED9 Energy Ministerial Declaration](#).

According to ECCO, RCREEE, and IMAL joint [analysis](#), the TeraMed target is within reach: as per Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Mediterranean countries are on track to **double** their installed renewable capacity by 2030, reaching an estimated 250 GW. To meet the 1 TW target, the current pace of renewable deployment must **accelerate** closing the projected gap of roughly 374 GW by 2030.

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## 2. HARNESSING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ENERGY TRANSITION

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support the TeraMed Initiative as an opportunity for clean energy cooperation, regional security, and sustainable economic development across the Mediterranean. This ambition target should be framed as a platform for North-South mutual benefit and regional prosperity.
2. Invest in energy infrastructure and integration, including cross-border interconnectors, transmission networks, and energy storage systems. A more interconnected regional electricity grid enhances flexibility and security on both shores, reduces price volatility, and supports higher penetration of renewables. Infrastructure planning should emphasise bidirectionality, enabling Southern Mediterranean countries to both export and import electricity depending on domestic needs and pricing.
3. Embed industrial co-development and local value creation into clean energy cooperation. Mediterranean countries should not only host renewable generation sites but also play a key role in the manufacturing of green technologies and in energy-intensive green industries (e.g., green hydrogen, green steel). A Clean Trade and Investment Partnership (CTIP) model under the Trans-Mediterranean Energy and Clean Tech Cooperation Initiative could guide this cooperation, boosting regional supply chains, creating skilled jobs, and ensuring the energy transition delivers widespread socio-economic benefits.
4. Advance just transition frameworks that support affected communities and workers through social dialogue, re-skilling programs, and participatory planning. Ensuring that the energy transition is inclusive, transparent, and socially accepted is fundamental to long-term success.
5. Exploring operational frameworks for delivering co-benefits between mitigation and adaptation initiatives: from sustainable agriculture, water management, nature-based solutions and urban planning, the EU should aim at connecting resilience building and mitigation in all projects' pipelines.
6. Reinforce legal and regulatory harmonisation, supporting Southern Mediterranean countries in aligning with EU standards and facilitating technology deployment, market access, and investor confidence. Institutions such as MEDREG, MEDENER, and MED-TSO should be leveraged and strengthened to build a fit-for-purpose regulatory environment across the region.
7. Energy cooperation must not replicate past extractive dynamics; rather, it must uphold environmental and social justice, aligning investments with community needs, equity principles, human rights and meaningful local participation.
8. Mobilise a cohesive financial strategy for energy cooperation that aligns EU instruments (e.g., Connecting Europe Facility, Global Gateway) with Member State funding, while also catalysing domestic and private capital within Mediterranean countries. EU delegations should act as one-stop shops for financial coordination, and support should be extended to commercial banks and local stakeholders to scale up funding for small- and medium-scale clean energy projects.

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### 3. FRAMING MEDITERRANEAN CLIMATE COOPERATION AND ENSURING LONG-TERM, RIGHTS-BASED IMPLEMENTATION

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Climate action should be the cornerstone of renewed cooperation as a response to a shared existential threat and as a powerful driver of regional integration, economic opportunity, and stability.

To turn ambition into action, the New Pact for the Mediterranean must be equipped with concrete, well-resourced, and inclusive mechanisms of implementation. This requires aligning diplomatic commitments, financial instruments, and governance tools with the realities and priorities of partner countries in the region. As the European Union prepares for COP30 and the next Multiannual Financial Framework, there is a strategic opportunity to ensure that climate and cooperation policies are coherent, accessible and equitable. Central to these efforts must be the meaningful involvement of civil society from both shores of the Mediterranean, as they are the key drivers of innovation, accountability, and social transformation. Maintaining and developing structured dialogue mechanisms with civil society will be essential to provide regular and meaningful channels for consultation, feedback, and co-design of policies, ensuring that EU actions are responsive to the lived realities of communities in the region.

The EU's New Pact for the Mediterranean should also offer solutions in the context of the global retrenchment of other institutional donors. With the rollback of USAID under President Trump administration, the EU is increasingly seen as a primary source of support for civil society. The geopolitical turning point calls for the EU to expand its climate related development programmes, particularly those that centre local actors, promote inclusive participation and integrate multi-level governance strategies.

Finally, the New Pact for the Mediterranean must uphold and operationalise the EU's core values of human rights, democratic governance, and the rule of law. This includes a robust commitment to assessing the human rights impact of EU funded actions and investments across the region. To be successful and comply with a "do-not-harm" approach, climate cooperation must go hand-in-hand with a clear foreign policy approach that promotes open and inclusive civic space, accountability, and rights-based governance.



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## 3. FRAMING MEDITERRANEAN CLIMATE COOPERATION AND ENSURING LONG-TERM, RIGHTS-BASED IMPLEMENTATION

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The EU should uphold and implement its diplomatic climate commitments from COP29 towards COP30, particularly those outlined in the Baku to Belém Roadmap, and ensure Mediterranean countries can access a fair share of these resources.
2. Reflect strategic priorities in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF): anchor climate resilience and adaptation in long-term EU budgeting through quality financing that addresses the climate-security and climate-peace-development nexus in the Southern Neighborhood.
3. Simplify access to climate finance for recipient countries: reduce administrative burdens, increase transparency, and enhance technical support for project preparation and readiness.
4. Prioritise inclusion and equity in climate finance: ensure participation of vulnerable groups, uphold labour and social rights, and require socio-economic impact assessments for EU-funded projects.
5. Promote governance and accountability in climate finance: Support transparent financial governance and ensure that EU-funded initiatives deliver measurable, tangible benefits at the local level.
6. Maintain and develop structured dialogue mechanisms with civil society to ensure regular consultation, feedback, and co-creation of policies and actions.
7. Ensure that EU aid, investments, and agreements are tied to clear and measurable improvements in governance, transparency, and social outcomes. All EU-funded projects should adhere strictly to the highest social and sustainability standards, promoting inclusive development and long-term societal well-being.
8. Commit to systematically assessing the human rights impact of all EU funded actions and investments, and adopt adequate measures for violations prevention, mitigation and remedy where necessary.



**EuroMed Rights** represents more than 90 human rights organisations from across 30 countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The Network was founded in 1997, two years after the adoption of the Barcelona Declaration, and has since grown into one of the most active actors in the region on human rights protection and democracy promotion. Over the past 25 years, its membership has expanded, and its structure has been consolidated with offices in Copenhagen (headquarters), Brussels, Tunisia, and a presence in Morocco and Lebanon.

EuroMed Rights remains firmly committed to universal human rights principles and the belief in cooperation and dialogue across and within borders. Supported by its members and partners, the Network pursues its mission of protecting and promoting human rights and democracy in the region through exchange and networking, capacity building to strengthen civil society actors, monitoring and documenting human rights violations, and advocacy at both national and international levels.

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**The Mediterranean Alliance of Think Tanks on Climate Change – MATTCCh**

brings together more than 25 energy and climate policy and research institutions from across more than 10 countries in the Mediterranean Basin and Europe.

The Alliance was first announced at the MedCOP (2023) in Tangier, Morocco, and then officially launched during the 2024 Mediterranean Green Week, when it received the endorsement of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The Alliance is supported by the European Climate Foundation (ECF), the Pooled Fund on International Energy (PIE) and the Stanley Center for Peace and Security.

Led by ECCO, the Italian climate-change think tank, together with Imal Initiative for climate and Development, a Morocco-based think tank and Sefia, a Turkish environmental NGO and think tank, the MATTCCh aims at building trust and alignment across borders through ongoing dialogue and technical collaboration.

MEDITERRANEAN 2030: HOW THE EU CAN DELIVER ITS NEW PACT FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN.

