



Brussels, 17 October 2025
(OR. en)

14203/25

MAMA 247	COHOM 152
MED 77	JAI 1476
CFSP/PESC 1493	MIGR 383
COPS 509	COTER 173
WTO 93	TRANS 477
ENV 1051	EMPL 445
ENER 537	DIGIT 202
ECOFIN 1367	EDUC 390
DEVGEN 182	POLMAR 62

COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	17 October 2025
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

No. Cion doc.:	JOIN(2025) 26 final
Subject:	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS The Pact for the Mediterranean One Sea, One Pact, One Future

Delegations will find attached document JOIN(2025) 26 final.

Encl.: JOIN(2025) 26 final



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

HIGH REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNION FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
SECURITY POLICY

Brussels, 16.10.2025
JOIN(2025) 26 final

**JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL,
THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**The Pact for the Mediterranean
One Sea, One Pact, One Future**

1. INTRODUCTION

Together, the European Union (EU) and partners across the southern Mediterranean¹, share a space of common opportunities, challenges and responsibilities: it is **our Common Mediterranean Space**. We work in partnership for a stable and prosperous Mediterranean.

Since the establishment of the **Barcelona Process**² in 1995, creating an area of common peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean region has been a strategic goal for the European Union. Building on an existing set of institutions and formats for cooperation, the **2021 Agenda for the Mediterranean and its Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)**³ has provided a further boost, mobilising an EU's total funding to the Southern Neighbourhood under the EIP of approximately EUR 6 billion, thus triggering around EUR 27 billion in investments for several concrete flagship projects.

The appointment of the first ever **European Commissioner for the Mediterranean**, working in close cooperation with the **High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**, highlights the EU's ambition to step up and have a more focused approach to the Mediterranean.

The **Pact for the Mediterranean ('the Pact')** reflects this strategic ambition. We want to strengthen this relationship and achieve **deeper integration within the Common Mediterranean Space**. The aim of the Pact is to bring about a paradigm shift, which is necessary to realise the full potential of our partnership and to work together based on the principles of co-ownership, co-creation and joint responsibility.

The Mediterranean region stands at the crossroads of three continents - Europe, Africa and Asia - and is a vital bridge for economic partnership, cultural exchange, and dialogue between these diverse regions. The current global and regional geopolitical context calls for closer political relations and a reinforced partnership. In particular, the effects of the war in Gaza reverberate in the Middle East and beyond leading to increased insecurity and instability. The recent agreement on ending the Gaza conflict is a historical milestone and offers a chance for Israel, Palestine and the broader region to forge a credible political path towards lasting peace and security, based on the two-state solution. While the immediate EU priority is to ensure sufficient humanitarian aid reaches Gaza, the EU will also contribute by providing support for the governance and reform of the Palestinian Authority, funding for the reconstruction of Gaza, including through convening the Palestine Donor Group, and by strengthening the presence of its EU CSDP missions.

Recent conflicts and unrest - including in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iran - have further escalated tensions, impacting on maritime security and international trade. The Mediterranean region also faces the threat of spill-over effects from the insecurity and instability in Africa, especially in the neighbouring Sahel region, which is of strategic importance for North African

¹ The southern Mediterranean encompasses the 10 partners of the Southern Neighbourhood: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*, Syria and Tunisia.

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

² Barcelona Declaration and Euro-Mediterranean partnership | EUR-Lex.

³ JOIN(2021)2.

countries. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine also impacts the region in particular as regards food security.

The Pact is **an opportunity to reshape our essential relations** and to **underline our commitment to peace, security and the multilateral rules-based international order, providing a clear political signal of partnership on the global stage.**

The Pact will establish a **practical framework of cooperation** combining strong political commitment with a bottom-up approach through the implementation of joint initiatives in priority policy areas of mutual interest. These initiatives can deliver tangible results for people of all ages, in particular for young people, women, small businesses and entrepreneurs. The Pact will promote the cooperation of the regional and local levels in the Common Mediterranean Space. Ongoing societal and economic transformation in the region offer a wealth of opportunity for cooperation that can benefit people. At the same time, addressing climate, environmental and security challenges together can help build and further strengthen the region's resilience, while refocusing our partnership on the industries of the future. The Pact is an opportunity to direct efforts towards areas that can have a **lasting and transformative impact** on the wider region and globally.

The Pact is the result of an **extensive consultation process** with the 10 southern Mediterranean partners, EU Member States, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, non-EU neighbouring countries, UN agencies and other international organisations. Given its unique composition as an inter-governmental organisation where all EU and southern Mediterranean partners are members, the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** has been closely involved. The **Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF)** has also played an important role in the consultations.

Consultations were also carried out with a wide range of stakeholders representing different components of civil society, including economic, cultural and social actors, academia and think tanks. Special attention was given to the regional and local dimension, also in light of the fact that they will be instrumental in the implementation of the Pact. Young people were closely involved in consultations through a series of events, most notably through the **Euro-Med Youth Dialogue**.

The outcome of these consultations was discussed as part of the **EU–Southern Neighbourhood Ministerial meeting** of 14 July 2025, where the 10 southern Mediterranean partners and EU Member States confirmed their willingness to work together pragmatically on the concrete initiatives and actions of the future Pact.

Over time, the Pact has also the potential **to expand its scope beyond the southern Mediterranean**, building on synergies with other EU initiatives. Participation in actions of mutual and strategic interest for the Gulf partners, neighbouring Sub-Saharan African countries, notably Mauritania and Senegal, Türkiye as well as the Western Balkan partners and the Black Sea⁴ will be explored and encouraged as appropriate. Cooperation with **regional organisations** – the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council – will also be pursued.

⁴ The European Union's strategic approach to the Black Sea region, JOIN(2025) 135

The Pact will support the further stepping up of **triangular cooperation in particular with Gulf partners**. This is of key relevance as these countries represent an important bridge between Europe, Asia and Africa and can play an important role in addressing political, economic, development and humanitarian challenges in the southern Mediterranean, and in the Middle East in particular. Many focus areas of the Pact align with the priorities of the EU's Joint Communication on a Strategic partnership with the Gulf⁵, in particular on the green transition, trade, transport, regional stability and global security.

2. THE THREE PILLARS OF THE PACT

The Pact marks the beginning of a process, open-ended in nature, creating a **practical framework for cooperation** structured around three pillars:

- I. **People: driving force for change, connections and innovation**
- II. **Stronger, more sustainable and integrated economies**
- III. **Security, preparedness and migration management**

The three pillars are **closely intertwined**. Each one encompasses an initial set of new and **actionable initiatives**, as well as proposals to **scale up existing actions** that can have a transformative impact and bring an added value. The Pact is based on the **principle of flexibility**, which will allow for variable participation by partners in the implementation of the various initiatives.

The Pact will **build on existing initiatives**, including the Economic and Investment Plan, the Association Agreements, Partnership Priorities, Strategic and Comprehensive Partnerships, other regional cooperation frameworks, as well as Member States' national strategies⁶.

All relevant EU financial instruments will be mobilised to support the implementation of the Pact, which is aligned with the priorities of NDICI-Global Europe⁷, the Global Gateway and the future Global Europe⁸. Contributions from EU Member States and southern Mediterranean partners will be sought to maximise the impact and synergies of actions. Similarly, in a Team Europe approach, EU Member States' financial institutions, international financial institutions (IFIs)⁹ and private sector funding will be used, with a view to creating opportunities for people and businesses.

The EU and the southern Mediterranean partners will work towards upholding human rights, good governance and fundamental freedoms, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They will simultaneously promote **gender equality, non-discrimination and the rights of persons with disabilities**. This will underpin the implementation of the initiatives and is an essential element in maintaining a vibrant civil society and promoting a healthier and more conducive business environment.

⁵ JOIN(2022) 13.

⁶ Including the Mattei Plan for Africa and the related Rome Process.

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2021/947.

⁸ [EU budget 2028-2034](#).

⁹ Notably the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

I. People: driving force for change, connections and innovation

The Common Mediterranean Space starts with its people: it is a shared cultural, historical and human space. Connecting people creates bridges that foster mutual understanding and provide opportunities for growth and development, bringing stability and highlighting the benefits of working together.

While in the EU, we are confronted with declining demographic trends impacted by a combination of high life-expectancy and decreasing birth rates, the southern part of the Mediterranean region faces social, economic and demographic pressures. With the Pact, we have an opportunity to invest in education, skills, circular migration and livelihoods¹⁰. Education has a clear and demonstrated impact on development and economic growth. While young people in the southern Mediterranean are keen to engage in **higher education and vocational training**, lower graduation rates¹¹, uneven recognition of qualifications and limited mobility as well as job and entrepreneurship opportunities constitute obstacles to their access to decent employment in national, regional and international labour markets¹².

By investing in people, **supporting their choices for learning, growth and mobility**, the Pact will help strengthen cultural, academic, social and economic ties which will make cooperation between the EU and the southern Mediterranean even stronger and more resilient.

1.1. Higher education, vocational training, development of skills, research and innovation

In line with the Union of Skills¹³, the Pact will support the **development of skills and access to labour markets** through education and vocational training. Forging collaborations with institutions and private sector in the Common Mediterranean Space will aim at positioning the region as a hub for transnational education, innovation, research and development, contributing to resilience and reconstruction. Universities, education and training institutions, research and technology infrastructures, industries, foundations and cultural actors will have an important role to play in this context.

The Pact will build on the high-level political dialogue on higher education at ministerial level, as well as successful cooperation with southern Mediterranean partners under Erasmus+, to create a more integrated and inclusive higher education and skills development environment in

¹⁰ JRC143548. Data show that, approximately in three decades, the southern Mediterranean region will transition towards similar demographic patterns as those currently observed in the EU. Currently, most of the countries in the southern part of the Mediterranean have a ratio between working age population and older person (over 65) between 12 and 15%. However, by 2060, this ratio is expected to fall to around 5%, just above the levels observed in the EU. These changes will require the shift in economic growth models from a reliance on an expanding workforce to a focus on boosting labour productivity.

¹¹ JRC143548. The average gross graduation ratio from first degree programmes (ISCED 6 and 7) in tertiary education for the 6 southern Mediterranean countries with available data is 32.7%, versus an EU average of 44.1%.

¹² The ratio of the active population (i.e. people either in employment or actively looking for employment) to the working age population is below 50% in southern Mediterranean countries, and only 30% for women. This compares with almost 75% in the EU. Ratio of active population to working age population 15-65, 2023, Eurostat.

¹³ COM(2025) 90.

the Common Mediterranean Space including through the launch of the **new Mediterranean platform** on higher education.

In addition, education efforts can benefit from intergenerational fairness offering the chance to unite the energy of youth with the experience of older generations, turning diversity of age into a shared strength for innovation and cohesion.

Higher education, skills, research and innovation

The initiative will create a more integrated and inclusive environment for higher education and skills, notably by:

- **Establishing a Mediterranean University**, which will be an institution with campuses in the Common Mediterranean Space, with programmes on humanities, natural and technical sciences. This will build on the experience of higher education institutions in the region and the European University alliances, making use of and complementing existing capacity-building actions under the Erasmus+ programme. It will promote staff and students' exchanges across selected universities and business schools from the region, in an inclusive manner, and aim at developing joint curricula/programmes, joint degrees, as well as other educational activities, such as summer schools and joint micro-credentials.
- **Enhancing student and staff mobility in higher education** under the Erasmus+ programme, as well as promoting the mobility of **researchers** under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of the Horizon Europe Programme.
- **Establishing and further developing Innovation and Research Centres**, bringing together universities and the private sector to improve knowledge and technology transfer, involving innovators, startups and investors.
- **Establishing a Mediterranean Science Diplomacy Centre** to bridge science and policy, and to train diplomatic and technical staff in cross-border negotiation, joint project design, and evidence-based policy advice.
- **Supporting intergenerational mentoring programmes** for sharing knowledge and experience with youth.

Bridging the gap between education and vocational training, on one hand, **and equal and decent employment opportunities**, on the other hand, is key to ensuring a smooth transition to, and within, labour markets and enhance competitiveness. Promoting women's empowerment and addressing the gender employment gap is essential to unlock the potential of economies and societies across the Common Mediterranean Space. Expanding **labour migration pathways** between the EU and southern Mediterranean, including for seasonal workers, remains of crucial importance to match offer and demand in labour markets and promote economic growth¹⁴.

¹⁴ JRC143548. Migration has a beneficial effect for the welfare of countries in the southern Mediterranean and alleviates labour market pressure in the EU. Studying in the EU represents an increasingly important channel of entry into the EU labour market for nationals from the southern Neighbourhood.

Bridging the skills and qualification gap in labour markets

The initiative will aim at supporting the smooth transition of workers in southern Mediterranean partners to regional, national and international labour markets. It will cover different employability areas, notably by:

- **Scaling up existing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) ecosystems** by aligning vocational training with the needs of the labour market to cover sectors of mutual interest, including in agriculture and food processing, the digital and cultural sectors, and innovative tourism.
- **Supporting the development of schemes modelled on Youth Guarantee¹⁵ National Plans** tailored to regional and local contexts to ensure that young people find opportunities in labour markets.
- **Establishing a MED Skill Tracker** to document the skills acquired by beneficiaries of EU or partners' projects. The MED Skill Tracker will facilitate the recognition and transferability of skills and enhance international and circular mobility opportunities under existing programmes and initiatives¹⁶. This will contribute to Talent Partnerships.
- **Enhancing quality apprenticeships and improved work-based learning models**, notably by promoting southern Mediterranean partners' participation to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

1.2. Culture, sport and tourism

The Mediterranean has an impressive breadth of both **tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage**. With over 60 UNESCO World Heritage sites and a dynamic contemporary architectural and artistic scene,¹⁷ the southern Mediterranean region offers a powerful testimony to our joint roots and offers a foundation for future cooperation through culture, sustainable cultural tourism, including food traditions¹⁸, education and heritage-driven development.

Cultural sites and institutions, as well as museums, should be more than exhibition venues, acting as drivers of change, economic development and inclusive growth, having the potential to trigger rehabilitation and revitalisation of urban, coastal and rural areas. Engagement with the public and private sector, as well as local and international donors and foundations, is key to unlock their potential. By promoting sustainable tourism and management of heritage sites, regions can ensure that their heritage becomes a lasting source of economic and social benefits. Protecting art, cultural and natural heritage from pillage and trafficking (and protecting the rights of contemporary artists) remain areas of mutual interest.

¹⁵ [The reinforced Youth Guarantee - European Commission](#).

¹⁶ Such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, PRIMA, THAMM+, MPF programmes, Medusa Connectivity Network and with the support of the ETF Mediterranean Skill Observatory.

¹⁷ [UNESCO World Heritage Centre - World Heritage List](#).

¹⁸ Including through the possible extension of the [AfrIPI - International cooperation project](#).

Cultural heritage sites and museums can become **spaces for reflection and dialogue open to a variety of communities**, thus offering opportunities for cultural resilience and cohesion. **Arts, music, traditional arts and crafts, and cinema have the ability to** promote mutual understanding, diversity, inclusion, and socio-economic development. The Pact will foster actions including the launch of a high-level dialogue on cultural cooperation, which will also focus on cultural heritage.

Investing in sport strengthens cohesion, overcomes social divides and promotes inclusion. Further to the health and economic benefits, it plays a key role in engaging youth and fostering a sense of belonging. Upcoming important sports events¹⁹, which bring together countries across the region offer promising opportunities for regional cooperation, sustainable connectivity and help promote equality and non-discrimination.

Deepening inter-religious dialogue contributes to mutual understanding and peaceful cooperation to address common challenges.

Building on lessons learned from Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Horizon Europe, the Pact will explore avenues to further enhance cooperation building on existing EU initiatives in the field of research, culture, youth and sport.

Euro-Med initiative for culture, sport and tourism

The initiative will foster a multi-stakeholder network of public and private sector, civil society, foundations, tourist operators and universities to promote cultural heritage and creative industry, cultural tourism and sport, notably by:

- **Protecting and valorising cultural heritage:**
 - **Establishing a dedicated mechanism to protect and promote the Mediterranean cultural heritage** by pooling public and private resources.
 - **Creating Mediterranean Cultural Pathways** to reinforce the shared cultural Mediterranean space.
 - **Extending the common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage** to southern Mediterranean partners, with the objective of advancing digitisation and preserving their cultural heritage.
- **Building a collaborative digital platform ‘CulturIT’** to promote the matchmaking of cultural activities.
- **Ensuring participation to major cultural events and improving residencies for artists and other cultural actors**, including through regional networks for talent.
- **Ensuring participation to activities linked to the #BeActive Campaign and European Week of Sport** to raise awareness about the benefits of sport for physical and mental health.
- **Collaborating with the Mediterranean Games** to further raise the profile of this established event, in particular among young people, to promote the benefits of sport and its positive impact in combating stereotypes and fostering inclusiveness.

¹⁹ Such as the Mediterranean Games and World Cup 2030

1.3 Empowering civil society, youth and local communities

Civil society and local communities are deeply rooted in the reality on the ground. Their work - supporting local communities in delivering social and community services, in raising awareness about key societal challenges, enhancing democratic participation, empowering women and young people, and in supporting digital literacy - contributes to a more inclusive society. They are also key in improving the situation of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities.

An active and empowered civil society, alongside parliaments and public institutions, can facilitate local dialogue, and enable better design and implementation of policies to the benefit of citizens. A thriving **media environment** is essential for ensuring an open and inclusive discussion space. Similarly, advancing development at regional and local level through integrated and participatory approaches can support balanced growth, both across urban and rural areas.

The Pact will enhance efforts to promote an enabling environment for civil society and help local communities to build capacity to perform their roles effectively.

Empowering civil society, youth and local communities

The initiative will aim to support a vibrant civil society and local communities as vectors of development and social cohesion. It will empower key actors that can concretely support their communities, notably by:

- **Establishing a Youth Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean** to gather the voice and input of the youth.
- **Supporting the development of a Mediterranean civic service** through the creation of a platform designed to connect young individuals across the Mediterranean region with a diverse range of volunteering opportunities both within their own countries and throughout the region. This initiative will build on volunteering initiatives and complement other mobility initiatives, fostering a deeper mutual understanding among young people in the Common Mediterranean Space.
- **Empowering women-led organisations as pivotal influencers within their communities** by actively involving them in the design and execution of initiatives across various sectors, such as upskilling, higher education, and business support. The action will build also on the experience developed to support women-led start-ups notably in rural and remote areas.
- **Strengthening support for media organisations**, by facilitating capacity-building initiatives, providing opportunities for collaborative projects and fostering the exchange of experiences. The action will strengthen our ongoing cooperation to support young influencers in the region.
- **Enhancing cooperation mechanism at local level**, inspired by the Covenant of Mayors approach, to promote social inclusion at local and municipal level for citizens of all ages, including for people in vulnerable situations.

II. Stronger, more sustainable and integrated economies

Deeper trade relations and economic integration help ensure stability and economic resilience. The EU and southern Mediterranean partners have strong and long-standing economic ties and enormous potential to further increase the economic integration of markets across the region to create sustainable growth and job opportunities. Our economies are complementary and can offer significant mutual benefits.

The success of the Pact will also rely on the capacity to mobilise public and private investment at large scale. The **Global Gateway²⁰ in the Mediterranean** can boost smart, clean and secure investments in the digital, energy, water resilience, innovative farming and transport sectors, while strengthening health, education and research systems in alignment with the EU's Clean Industrial Deal²¹.

II.1. Trade and investment opportunities

The EU is the first trading partner of the southern Neighbourhood (accounting for 41% of the region's trade in goods with the world in 2024). Southern Mediterranean partners often point out the need to develop value chains and attract and retain higher volumes of direct investments. At the same time, trade and investment require predictable environments, macroeconomic stability, regulatory convergence and a level-playing field between public and private sectors.

The region presents substantial economic and trade opportunities underpinned by its human capital, competitive renewable energy and transport costs, and accelerating digital transition. The restructuring of global trade opens new opportunities, as the southern Mediterranean can play a role in the diversification of supply chains. Building on bilateral partnerships, the Pact will contribute to intensify the joint work to build a robust economic landscape, promoting sustainable trade and investments, and **further integrate supply chains**, including in the health and agriculture sectors as well as on clean energies and technologies, crucial to boost competitiveness and decarbonisation prospects of the Common Mediterranean Space. The Pact will reinforce cooperation on critical raw materials to ensure resilient, transparent, and sustainable supply chains in key sectors, such as fertilisers.

²⁰ JOIN (2021) 30.

²¹ COM(2025) 85.

Modernisation and strengthening of trade and investment relations for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable growth

The initiative aims at leveraging the potential of **existing trade agreements**²² and engaging in new initiatives to strengthen economic integration, notably by:

- **Supporting the modernisation of bilateral trade relations in a more flexible and targeted manner**, through new forms of engagement in key sectors of mutual interest, while ensuring effective implementation of commitments to remove non-tariff barriers to trade, in order to increase predictability and build investors trust.
- **Exploring Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreements** with interested partners for the attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI).

The initiative will promote and attract **investment** to support innovative and digital economies, and enhance supply chain integration, notably by:

- **Enhancing the business and investment environment, regulatory convergence, and simplification of customs' procedures**, including through technical assistance to support economic reforms of partner countries²³.
- **Scaling up national and thematic investment platforms**, bringing together the private sector, IFIs and national financial institutions.

II.2. Leveraging startup ecosystems

Despite many structural challenges, the southern Mediterranean region has experienced a rise in entrepreneurial activity, relying on a young, tech-savvy population and growing investor interest. **Gradual diversification and structural transformation of the economy are taking place at the local level**, including both, urban and rural areas, creating new opportunities to develop national and regional value chains while increasing complementarity for economic integration. To fully harness this potential, it is essential to support local production and businesses, including in agriculture. This will require further exploration of the role of local social entrepreneurship and alternative business models as key drivers of inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

²² These include the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean Convention on preferential rules of origin.

²³ Including in the context of the EU macro-financial assistance where relevant.

StartUp4Med

The initiative will unlock the growth and job creation potential of startups, and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs),²⁴ providing opportunities to expand economic participation, in particular for youth and women. It will establish links with existing sectoral mechanisms²⁵ and align with the EU Startups and Scaleups Strategy.²⁶ This will be achieved by:

- **Setting up a regional startup support mechanism** to improve access to finance and investment mobilisation. European financial institutions, through a Team Europe approach, will be mobilised combining with alternative financing channels, such as honour loans, crowdfunding, and blended finance²⁷.
- **Setting up an Open for Business programme** addressed to the private sector to identify areas of concern and facilitate legal and regulatory simplification.
- **Developing a Policy Toolkit** to promote the formalisation of MSMEs, including through simplified administrative procedures, financial incentives, and social protection linkages. Informal micro-entrepreneurs will benefit from targeted support such as coaching, legal assistance and skills certification.

II.3. Digital infrastructure and cybersecurity

The **digital and artificial intelligence (AI) revolution** is reshaping economies and societies. There is a strong incentive to partner in this area to unlock the potential of digital, data and AI solutions to enhance the competitiveness and efficiency of our economies and societies, while also ensuring security, sovereignty and alignment with core values, human rights and good governance principles.

A true interconnection through secure and trusted digital infrastructures across the Mediterranean is a fundamental goal not only to bring our economies and citizens closer together but also to increase shared security and seamless communication. Data flows are vital for economic and societal development and will open new opportunities for people, businesses and organisations across the Mediterranean.

Improving access to online public services, coming forward with e-governance and digital public infrastructure (DPI) solutions, securing critical infrastructure, improving digital governance and regulations and protecting digital rights remain paramount in this context.

The availability of open data and information by the EU-owned space systems, such as Copernicus, enabled by digital infrastructures, can contribute to increasing business opportunities in the region.

²⁴ According to World Bank statistics, MSMEs in the southern Mediterranean accounts for 90% of the total number of businesses and contribute two-thirds of GDP and 75% of employment.

²⁵ BlueInvest is open to innovative blue economy start-ups and tech SMEs from the Med.

²⁶ COM(2025) 270.

²⁷ The Regional Start-up Mechanism could leverage the experience of the European Innovation Council- EIC venture Capital Funding to support European Deep Tech Innovation in particular for the countries in the region associated to Horizon Europe and are already benefitting from it.

Tech Business Offer for integrated digital and data economies

The initiative aims to **put forward a Tech Business Offer** for southern Mediterranean partners²⁸, notably by:

- **Supporting the roll-out of secure and trusted digital infrastructure in the areas of subsea-cable systems, 5G networks, rural broadband connectivity, and data centre infrastructures by:**
 - **Connecting all interested countries in the region through submarine cable systems such as Medusa and Blue-Raman**, with the possibility to also extend it to Gulf partners. This will facilitate secure and seamless exchange of data, including through interconnections with existing initiatives such as the EU-Africa-India Digital Corridor, also linking it to IMEC and T-MED.
 - **Offering technical and financial support for the roll-out of secure and trusted 5G and data centres** in the region by involving IFIs, EU and national financial institutions, **in line with the 5G Toolbox and other relevant legislation**²⁹ and provided by trusted suppliers.
- **Launching a regional telecommunications capacity building programme and exploring the potential for appropriate telecom frameworks, including cooperation on roaming**, among the interested southern Mediterranean partners.
- Building on the model of the **EU Digital Innovation Hubs and the EU AI factories**³⁰, **accelerating the build-up of AI ecosystems**, including the deployment of AI and data infrastructure and support to universities, SMEs, industry and startups to develop and apply AI across various sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, or climate.
- **Sharing expertise and concrete e-Governance solutions in the areas of digital identities and DPI by:**
 - Making use of open-source **trust services, digital identity**, and secure and data protection compliant **DPI solutions**.
 - Simplifying cross-border government and business exchanges while also facilitating citizens' mobility.
- **Increasing technical exchanges and cooperation on cybersecurity**, including to support capacity to **detect, prepare for and respond to cybersecurity threats and incidents**.

II.4. Investing in renewable energy and clean technology

The Mediterranean is a **climate change and biodiversity hotspot**, at risk from increasing **environmental challenges and pressures**. The Pact will set out a **common agenda to unlock the southern Mediterranean's renewable energy potential and deliver a triple-win**: accelerating regional decarbonisation, improving energy security and enhancing industrial competitiveness. A **transition towards an efficient, reliable and sustainable energy model**

²⁸ In line with the EU International Digital Strategy, JOIN(2025) 140.

²⁹ [The EU toolbox for 5G security](#).

³⁰ [AI Factories | Shaping Europe's digital future](#).

is essential for the region. In line with the Clean Industrial Deal, a resource-efficient circular economy, including renewable energy development and clean-tech manufacturing, offers significant socio-economic benefits and attracts FDI. These objectives will be pursued through flexible and modernised bilateral trade frameworks and new forms of engagement, such as sustainable investment facilitation agreements and partnerships on clean trade and investment in the context of the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy and Clean Tech initiative. This will be developed also via stronger cooperation with Gulf partners, as well as with Sub-Saharan Africa.

Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy and Clean Tech Initiative (T-MED)

The initiative will support mutually beneficial trans-Mediterranean cooperation by advancing domestic energy transition and clean-tech developments in southern Mediterranean partners, while creating economic opportunities and facilitating renewable energy trade and industrial partnerships across the region, notably by:

- **Establishing a T-MED Investment Platform**, which will serve as a coordination tool to develop a pipeline of projects in renewable energy generation, grid infrastructure, including domestic transmission and distribution grids in southern Mediterranean partners, that are related to Projects of Mutual Interest identified pursuant to the TEN-E Regulation, and clean-tech manufacturing. The platform will bring together project promoters, IFIs, EU and national financial institutions, EU financial instruments and private investors to catalyse large-scale investment with a focus on blending and de-risking solutions.
- **Creating a dedicated regulatory mechanism** to support southern Mediterranean partners in implementing targeted regulatory and energy sector specific reforms³¹ linked to investment readiness and access EU financial instruments.
- **Modelling energy systems** to better assess economic, sustainability and security impacts of higher penetration of renewables as well as new energy infrastructure projects for the region.
- **Giving access to a Technical Support Instrument**, serving as one-stop portal for renewable energy, energy efficiency, electrification, and clean tech-related technical assistance.
- **Establishing a certification and renewable energy trade support programme** to enable cross-border trade in renewable electricity and renewable hydrogen. A practical **handbook** will be launched to guide implementation of certification schemes and pilot cross-border Guarantees of Origin.³²
- **Boosting industrial collaborations in clean tech** to foster robust industrial partnerships between European and southern Mediterranean companies across critical value chains. This can include solar and wind energy, electrolyzers and clean

³¹ These may include grid access for third parties, power purchase agreements, tariff transparency and reform including cost-reflectivity, unbundling, liberalisation of wholesale and retail markets, cross-border trade and regional integration).

³² Regulatory cooperation with southern Mediterranean countries will be needed to enable uptake of requirements for both renewable electricity and fuels, compatible with EU framework. Specific agreements with third countries will be needed to enable mutual recognition of guarantees of origin.

hydrogen production, as well as heating and cooling technologies, grid and storage technologies, heat pumps and energy efficiency technologies in the industrial and building sectors.

- **Supporting the establishment of country-specific European energy and clean tech business organisations on the ground.** This can be done in cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and European industrial clusters. A **dedicated stakeholder platform** will be established to pinpoint priority sectors, develop comprehensive, gender responsive action plans, and actively engage the EU private sector. This platform will also play a central role in facilitating co-investment opportunities and negotiating off-take agreements that underpin long-term collaboration in synergy and complementarity with the EU Energy and Raw Materials Platform.
- **Developing a T-MED Skills Agenda³³**, which will be instrumental to address workforce and gender gaps and align training with the needs of industry and employers.

II.5 Towards a sustainable and resilient Mediterranean

Climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss heavily affect the Mediterranean region and its resilience. The clean transition also represents an opportunity to boost sustainable competitiveness in the region. The Pact will allow to harness the benefits arising from such transition, while addressing growing climate change impacts and environmental degradation, including in the framework of a possible Global Treaty against plastic pollution. The Pact will also address the region's vulnerability to climate change and environmental degradation by supporting effective planning and mobilising available funding streams for sustainable investments, both international and domestic, private and public.

Partnership for clean transition, sustainable growth and resilience

The initiative aims to support regional cooperation and local partnerships on environment, including in the context of the Barcelona Convention³⁴, and on climate in advancing clean transition and climate-resilient economic development, notably by:

- **Enhancing collaboration** with interested southern Mediterranean partners **on climate solutions**, through dialogue and by promoting knowledge sharing as well as delivering targeted technical assistance on climate mitigation instruments, including carbon pricing.
- **Developing climate adaptation investment pipelines** by strengthening national and local capacities to develop and implement projects, while leveraging partnerships with IFIs, climate funds, and private stakeholders.
- **Establishing a regional plan to facilitate investments** in modern wastewater treatment and solid waste management.

³³ Action linked to existing renewable energy partnerships (Pact for Skills) and related Erasmus+ projects such as SHOREWINNER.

³⁴ [Barcelona Convention and Protocols | UNEP MAP](#).

- **Launching new Partnerships for Water Resilience** to strengthen cooperation on integrated water resource management, in particular water reuse.
- **Reinforcing the Green Forward initiative**, empowering in particular SMEs, to promote circular economy and resource-efficiency, eliminate single use plastics, support bioeconomy and promote regulatory dialogue on circularity, including for example on textiles.
- **Supporting the joint implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework** notably the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and the creation, expansion and management of protected areas, in particular marine protected areas.

II.6. Promoting a sustainable Blue Economy

The Mediterranean Sea sustains millions of livelihoods but faces growing environmental and economic pressure. The Pact will foster a fair, sustainable, and competitive blue economy in line with the **European Ocean Pact**³⁵, including in the framework of the next MedFish4ever Ministerial Declaration, shaping the next General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) beyond 2027. Moreover, in line with the **EU Water Resilience Strategy**³⁶, the Pact will strengthen water governance and promote efficient, sustainable use of water through the water–energy–food–ecosystems nexus.

Blue Mediterranean health and wealth

The initiative aims to restore natural resources of Mediterranean ecosystems, strengthen its resilience, improve sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture practices and international fisheries governance, as well as boost blue tech innovation, notably by:

- **Supporting investments in sustainable blue economy solutions** through the Blue Mediterranean Partnership and the BlueInvest platform.
- **Launching the Community of Practice for the EU Blue Economy**³⁷ to offer guidance based on data collection, development of data standards, methodologies, as well as analysis and research.
- **Enhancing ocean diplomacy** to work together with southern Mediterranean partners in promoting adherence to international governance standards³⁸ and improving legal frameworks related to regional fisheries management.
- **Developing a new project to increase the control and inspection capabilities of coastal states** in order to enhance regional fisheries governance and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through capacity building, in monitoring, control and surveillance.
- **Strengthening regional cooperation to ensure more coherent and sustainable use of marine space through maritime spatial planning**, as enabler for nature protection and coexistence of activities at sea.

³⁵ COM(2025) 281.

³⁶ COM(2025) 280.

³⁷ European Union Blue Economy Observatory.

³⁸ Notably to ratify and implement the BBNJ Agreement.

- **Launching the ‘From Water to Market’ initiative**, to support producers, cooperatives, and associations in the aquatic sector to expand the value added of their production, improve processing and reach new market, including access to finance and investment.
- **Strengthening joint research and innovation on water-energy-food-ecosystems (WEFE) nexus** building on PRIMA.³⁹
- **Scaling up the ‘Blue Mediterranean Mission’⁴⁰ for restoration and resilience**, providing research and innovation solutions to restore the Mediterranean Sea and water’s ecosystems and biodiversity, halt pollution at sea and from land-based sources, reduce ocean noise, increase climate- and water- resilience, and preparedness of coastal communities to extreme events.

II.7. Sustainable transport and increased connectivity

A well-connected region is key to supporting trade and emerging sectors while boosting the decarbonisation of economic activities. The Common Mediterranean Space often suffers from transport and regulatory fragmentation, underinvestment, and lack of planning capacity. This has substantial implications for the cross-border mobility of people, goods and services. It is therefore vital to addressing capacity gaps and regulatory misalignment in the areas of customs, efficiency, safety, security, and environmental standards. This will make it easier to reach the objective of extending the EU’s Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) and, where relevant, further increasing connectivity to neighbouring regions, such as the Gulf and beyond. In particular, further coordination and expansion of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) would enhance reliable transport and secure digital connectivity in the Mediterranean, while contributing to the economic security of the region.

Sustainable transport for a better-connected region

The initiative aims at providing reliable and sustainable transports solutions, notably by:

- **Stepping up joint efforts to promote the production and uptake of renewable and low-carbon fuel for transport** (maritime and aviation), in line with the principles laid out by EU regulations on Sustainable Aviation Fuels⁴¹, on Sustainable Marine Fuels⁴² and in the EU Ports Strategy⁴³. This will also include seeking alignment of sustainable practices in line with international standards (ICAO, IMO), thereby also supporting the actors in the Mediterranean in their efforts on prevention of pollution from ships as well as encouraging cooperation efforts through the regional Sea Conventions⁴⁴ to foster a clean, secure, and safe Common Mediterranean Space.

³⁹ [Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area \(PRIMA\)](#).

⁴⁰ [BlueMissionMed](#)

⁴¹ PE/29/2023/REV/1, Regulation (EU) 2023/2405.

⁴² PE/26/2023/INIT, Regulation (EU) 2023/1805.

⁴³ P9 TA(2024)0025 – Building a comprehensive European port strategy.

⁴⁴ Several EU Member States (Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia and Spain) as well as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia are participants to the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), administered by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and operating under the framework of the UNEP-administered Barcelona Convention.

- **Improving connectivity across the region via the expansion of multimodal transport links and through improved interoperability and regulatory alignment**, thereby making progress towards the extension of the TEN-T to countries of the southern Mediterranean and also linking with IMEC, T-MED and Sub-Saharan Africa. Connecting ports to other, low-carbon modes of transportation will provide a better integration of coastal hubs with inland markets. Improved regulatory alignment can be ensured by supporting technical assistance projects and enhanced policy dialogue.
- **Improving air connectivity**, in line with environmental standards, through continued work on existing or new EU-level air transport agreements with southern Mediterranean partners and supporting the single African aviation transport market.
- **Supporting urban and rural mobility projects with EU expertise and technology** to complement efforts made on multimodal transport by implementing the concept of TEN-T urban nodes⁴⁵ and to promote sustainability – including through climate adaptation and mitigation – and liveability in the rapidly expanding cities in the Mediterranean.

II.8. Evidence-based policy making and knowledge sharing

The promotion of evidence-based policymaking and knowledge sharing remains of crucial importance. In particular, the EU Copernicus system offers services on the state of the Earth's environment, based on a full, free and open data policy and can thus support evidence-based decision making. Moreover, the availability of relevant and comparable official statistics and data is essential for evidence-based decision and policy making.

Knowledge sharing and statistics for better decision-making

The initiative aims to improve statistics, knowledge and data sharing between the EU and southern Mediterranean partners, notably by:

- **Establishing an ad hoc mechanism** to exchange information and assess cross-border impacts of respective legislation.
- **Further developing cooperation** with the National Statistical Institutes of the southern Mediterranean countries **to provide relevant and comparable official statistics and data** on the areas covered by the three pillars of the Pact.
- Sharing best practices and experiences, **using new data sources and modern technologies, including AI**, to develop new statistical insights and relevant statistical tools.
- **Fostering public sector innovation** by relying on available data and information from the EU space systems to prepare evidence-based decisions in many of the areas covered by the Pact.

⁴⁵ The concept of TEN-T urban nodes ensures (1) the recognition of the important role of cities in the overall transport network, (2) the drawing up of sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) for the functional area around cities, (3) collecting data on safety, sustainability and accessibility, and (4) the construction of multimodal hubs.

III. Security, preparedness and migration management

The Common Mediterranean Space is confronted with challenges related to security, natural and human-induced hazards, illegal migration and border management. Instability in regional hotspots creates insecurity, putting a strain on societies' resilience.

Growing border pressures, cross-border crime and shared challenges from illegal migration along key routes, demand coordinated efforts to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, while ensuring safe, orderly, and rights-based approaches that ensure the protection of migrants and refugees' rights and promote mobility pathways, while addressing these interconnected issues requires sustained and collaborative cooperation to foster stability and prosperity throughout the region.

III.1. Peace and security

The rules-based international order is experiencing severe strain. Alongside traditional threats like terrorism and violent extremism, and organised crime, new cross-border threats are emerging, such as cyber and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) – often as part of broader hybrid campaigns – or the radicalisation of minors and young adults. The increased exploitation of the maritime domain exposes new vulnerabilities, whether the risks associated with substandard shipping practices or the increasing importance of maritime infrastructure.

These threats are among the **most serious and complex common security challenges**. The EU and southern Mediterranean partners need to engage more closely with each other and build resilience, also in line with the commitments of the EU Maritime Security Strategy⁴⁶.

The Pact will aim to achieve a **common understanding of regional and international security landscapes**, fostering cooperation, including on areas such as preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, circumvention of EU sanctions, maritime security, resilience of critical infrastructure, hybrid and cyber threats, FIMI, defence capacity building, peace mediation, and conflict resolution.

In the Mediterranean, EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) civilian and military missions and operations, particularly Operation IRINI and the EU Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya), play a central role in fostering cooperation with Libya, enhancing regional stability implementing the UN arms embargo on Libya, countering illicit trafficking and human smuggling. Beyond the Mediterranean, the EU supports its partners in the region through further CSDP civilian and military missions⁴⁷.

⁴⁶ [Maritime security strategy - European Commission](#).

⁴⁷ These include EUNAVFOR ATALANTA and EUNAVFOR ASPIDES in the Red Sea, the EU Advisory Mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (EUAM Iraq), the EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM Rafah), and the EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS).

EU-Med Peace and Security Initiative

The initiative will support a coordinated approach to concrete peace and security topics, notably by:

- **Setting up a regional forum for the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries on peace and security.** The forum could provide an informal setting to foster joint regional situational awareness, share views and coordinate approaches on issues of common interest, such as the regional security situation and respective peace and security activities, including peace mediation, and to identify potential support for strengthening partners' capabilities.
- **Advancing dedicated dialogues and consultations on peace, security and defence** with southern Mediterranean partners.
- **Exploring potential contributions by southern Mediterranean partners to CSDP missions and operations, notably through new framework participation agreements⁴⁸.**
- **Strengthening partners' capabilities, including through European Peace Facility (EPF) assistance measures, and further coordination and synergies with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) capacity building activities,** in respect of EU's and NATO's decision-making autonomy.
- **Trainings under the auspices of the European Security and Defence College,** for example in the area of climate change environment, and peace, security and defence.
- **Expanding the use of the Open-Source Intelligence Toolkit to detect and analyse identity-based disinformation (IBD)-focused FIMI⁴⁹** and increasing situational awareness to better address the specificities of FIMI in the region.
- **Setting up a dialogue with southern Mediterranean partners on the security of submarine cables,** and in line with the EU Action Plan on Cable Security⁵⁰, which includes actions on detection, response, and recovery measures.
- **Increasing cooperation on threats to maritime security,** such as substandard shipping and risky navigation practices, including as part of the International Maritime Organisation.
- **Enhancing exchanges and cooperation** on prevention of violent extremism under relevant global initiatives, including **the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of radicalisation** framework.
- **Facilitating cross-regional exchanges** between the EU and the southern Mediterranean region **on cyber and health issues.**
- **Enhancing cooperation with national authorities** by addressing sanctions circumvention and the maritime, environmental and competition risks posed by substandard shipping and risky navigation practices.

⁴⁸ The agreements define the terms of the participation of non-EU countries in EU crisis management operations and the relationship of those countries with the EU in carrying out the missions and operations.

⁴⁹ [How to Detect & Analyse Identity-Based Disinformation/FIMI: A Practical Guide to Conduct Open Source Investigations | EEAS](#).

⁵⁰ JOIN(2025) 9.

III.2. Increasing regional preparedness

Building a secure Common Mediterranean Space requires **increasing the preparedness of the region to both natural and human induced disasters and hazards**. In a region warming 20% faster than the global average, climate change is expected to increase the current risk landscape, acting as a threat multiplier and leading to more frequent and severe disasters that impact both the environment and socio-economic systems, especially threatening coastal and island communities.

Wildfires, droughts, water scarcity as well as floods and extreme weather events are already affecting soil health and food security, which are the key factors for political stability and social cohesion in the region. Innovative agriculture plays an important role in enhancing preparedness to natural and human induced disasters and hazards.

The risk of health-related hazards underscores the critical importance of strengthening health security measures to ensure resilience against emerging threats. In this context, besides building a culture of preparedness by design, strengthening the capacity of and cooperation between public and private partners to respond to unexpected events, and increasing prevention of and joint response mechanisms to extreme weather conditions, including floods and droughts, in line with the recently adopted EU Preparedness Strategy⁵¹, remains a priority. Following a ‘whole-of-government’ and ‘whole-of-society approach’, effective decentralisation and links with local authorities, alongside with active participation of civil society organisations, are essential to ensure prompt responses, leveraging local knowledge and fostering community-based resilience.

Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness

The initiative aims to improve regional preparedness and strengthen response capabilities across the Common Mediterranean Space through an all-hazards approach. This will be achieved, notably by:

- **Supporting the development of an all-hazards early warning system** building on existing tools (e.g. Copernicus Emergency Management Service) in line with the ‘Early Warnings for All’ initiative and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism’s disaster resilience goals linked to anticipatory action strategies.
- **Supporting food security preparedness**, building upon the model of the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism⁵².
- **Reinforcing existing bilateral agricultural policy dialogues** and establishing new Agri-food policy partnership dialogues with southern Mediterranean partners in line the Vision for Agriculture and Food⁵³.
- **Strengthening synergies on disaster preparedness** with the EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative, through trainings and simulations exercises, sharing of best practice and increasing awareness.

⁵¹ JOIN(2025)130.

⁵² [Ensuring global food supply and food security - European Commission](#).

⁵³ COM(2025) 75 final

- **Expanding cooperation in civil protection**, by building on existing regional initiatives and capitalising on Interreg cooperation programmes⁵⁴. A **new European Firefighting Hub based in Cyprus** will also support regional neighbours⁵⁵.
- **Exploring opportunities provided by AI** modelling in disaster preparedness, in particular **advancing crisis management and emergency response capabilities** by integrating AI algorithms in existing services and developing multi-hazard Decision Support Systems under the umbrella of AI for Public Good⁵⁶.

III.3. Migration management

Migration is a global reality. Managing it is a joint responsibility that requires close cooperation and a **comprehensive, whole-of-route and rights-based approach** in line with the external dimension of the Pact on Migration and Asylum⁵⁷. This includes strengthening migration governance, improving border management, preventing illegal departures, supporting efforts to fight against migrants' smuggling and trafficking in human beings, as well as fostering legal migration and mobility, in line with international law and human rights. Facilitating effective return, readmission and reintegration activities, as well as supporting resettlement efforts and providing solutions to ensure the protection of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers along the routes, are also an integral part of this approach. As local authorities and host communities are at the forefront of this work, it is essential to strengthen their capacity in this area, including by supporting international organisations such as UNHCR and IOM.

⁵⁴ [Home - Programme Interreg Euro-MED](#).

⁵⁵ Existing regional initiatives include for instance, building on the established cooperation in the domain of firefighting between Cyprus, Jordan and Egypt. The creation of a new European firefighting hub was proposed by Commission President von der Leyen in her State of the Union 2025 speech.

⁵⁶ For instance, AI algorithms could be integrated in European Forest Fire Information System and Global Wildfire Information System. [AI for Public Good | Shaping Europe's digital future](#).

⁵⁷ COM(2024) 251.

Implementing a whole-of-route approach to migration management

The initiative will support a joint approach on migratory routes leading to and across the Mediterranean. It will also strengthen and complement bilateral cooperation on migration, notably by:

- **Strengthening the capacities to adequately manage migration and better address the consequences and challenges for local communities.** Greater cooperation with relevant actors will lead to increased capacity to prevent and respond to migration crises, through the development of early warning systems, risk monitoring tools and multi-stakeholders' contingency plans.
- **Stepping up dignified voluntary returns and the reintegration** of migrants from southern Mediterranean partners to their countries of origin.
- **Strengthening cooperation on effective returns and readmissions** of people staying illegally in the EU.
- Enhancing cooperation on preventing illegal migration, countering migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings through **operational partnerships**, and relevant projects, including as part of the **Global Alliance**⁵⁸.
- **Organising regional awareness raising campaigns on short-stay visa procedures** to limit hindrances and facilitate visa issuance, with the involvement of EU Member States issuing visas in the concerned southern Mediterranean partners.
- **Scaling up Talent Partnerships**⁵⁹ **and launching the EU Talent Pool** to facilitate links between EU employers and job seekers from partner countries, including by facilitating visas for students, skilled workers, researchers and academics.
- **Enhancing the protection space** for vulnerable migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the southern Mediterranean in line with international obligations, notably through a **new regional protection project for the southern Mediterranean**, which will promote exchange of good practices on specific protection issues.
- **Supporting Member States' voluntary efforts on resettlement and humanitarian admissions.**

III.4. Law enforcement, judicial cooperation and border security

An **effective, rights-based and integrated Mediterranean cooperation on border management** and search and rescue is crucial to transform borders into safer areas and gateways for prosperity and security of the people.

On the basis of the activities carried out as part of the **Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling**, increased collaboration and information sharing will aim at harmonised approaches on border and maritime surveillance, as well as checks at border-crossing points and during customs controls. This increased collaboration and intelligence sharing will also

⁵⁸ [Call to Action on a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling](#).

⁵⁹ Already launched in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

strengthen coordination among law enforcement actors at the borders to intensify the fight against criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings and prevent movements of individuals likely to pose security threats.

Substantial cooperation between the EU and southern Mediterranean partners is in place to improve partners' capacities to manage borders effectively. The increasingly cross-border and global nature of security threats exacerbated by rapidly evolving technology, call for strengthened and more effective cooperation. The initiative aims at disrupting and countering illicit activities, providing a secure and safe environment and protection for persons and goods in the Common Mediterranean Space.

Secure borders

The initiative will put in place a **common approach to integrated border management and security**, notably by:

- **Strengthening institutional and operational border management capacities** while ensuring compliance with human rights standards, through targeted technical assistance and by creating synergies with existing programmes. This assistance will include support for capacity building activities and the collaborative development of standard operating procedures.
- **Selecting small- to medium-scale pilots** for implementation, based on the actions and exchanges above, which could have the potential to evolve into longer-term projects.
- **Aligning standards and expediting customs clearance** through digitalisation to reduce congestion and shorten transport time.
- **Raising awareness and sharing knowledge**, such as through the EU Common Information Sharing Environment for the maritime domain, starting with study visits and exchanges for middle to high-level management from border management authorities.
- **Fostering cooperation between border and coast guards in the Mediterranean**, to enhance capacity building and skills in tackling maritime situations by optimising the use of the Mediterranean Coastguards Functions forum and other EU-Southern Neighbourhood cooperation mechanisms and fora.
- **Supporting the negotiation and implementation of working arrangements** between the European Border and Coast Guard Agency ('Frontex') and the border management authorities of southern Mediterranean partners.

Crime knows no borders. It is essential to ensure a collective and coordinated response to fight corruption, transnational organised crime and terrorism. Greater judicial and law enforcement cooperation is critical to ensure appropriate investigations and the effective prosecution of crime. Such cooperation requires a solid framework for the protection of personal data, procedural rights and comprehensive criminal justice frameworks. Various actions are already in place to support police and justice cooperation in the region. Nevertheless, bridging the gap between capacity building, collaboration and tangible operational outcomes remains a significant challenge that requires further convergence of goals. To address this, enhanced cooperation and the exchange of information, expertise and early warnings between the EU

and our southern Mediterranean partners are essential, to strengthen preparedness on drug trends and reinforce operational cooperation against trafficking with the Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre – Narcotic.

MED-OP: Judicial and law enforcement cooperation

The initiative will aim to strengthen our collective response in the fight against serious and organised crime and terrorism by strengthening cooperation in law enforcement and judicial cooperation. It will promote convergence of standards within and across the region to enable operational cooperation and provide stronger safeguards for citizens and their rights. This will be achieved, notably by:

- **Putting in place a regional dialogue on internal security** to be regularly convened among senior security policy officials from the Common Mediterranean Space, modelled on the EU's Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security. The work under the Regional Dialogue should lead to the adoption of a roadmap for operational cooperation in areas of shared interest, which will be periodically updated.
- **Guiding collaborative efforts** in combating serious and organised crime and terrorism including with the support of EU Member States and EU agencies, by:
 - promoting convergence of goals and key reforms on justice and data protection, including through dedicated technical assistance;
 - addressing key operational training gaps;
 - setting up regular experts' dialogues;
 - carrying out study visits and deployment of short-term national experts;
 - making use of dedicated technical assistance.
- **Supporting the negotiation and implementation of international agreements and working arrangements** including with Europol, CEPOL, Eurojust and the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The **implementation and monitoring of the Pact** will be overseen by a **two-layer structure, at the EU level and at the Euro-Mediterranean level.**

At the **EU level**, the Commission services and the European External Action Service will ensure coordination and technical oversight of the implementation of the Pact. A discussion on the roll-out of the Pact will take place at the **Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)** every semester, on the basis of an implementation update provided by the Commission and the High Representative. These discussions will allow for the preparation of the **yearly EU-Southern Neighbourhood ministerial meeting.**

The European Parliament will be regularly updated via its relevant committees and interparliamentary delegations. The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions will also be kept informed. The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly will serve as a key institutional channel for regional and local contributions.

At Euro-Mediterranean level, a **joint group at senior officials' level** will convene twice a year to monitor the implementation of the Pact through a dedicated **action plan**. The group will bring together representatives of the European Union and southern Mediterranean partners. The group will also contribute to the preparation of the **yearly EU-Southern Neighbourhood ministerial**. Other actors, such as national financial institutions and IFIs, civil society representatives, and representatives of other countries and international organisations, could be invited to participate in the group's discussions, where relevant.

The initiatives proposed under the Pact will be transposed into **a dedicated action plan**, which will specify the participating countries and stakeholders for each initiative. The implementation of the action plan will be assessed jointly. It will be a living document and new initiatives will be added over time.

The initial action plan will be presented in the first quarter of 2026 by the Commission services and the European External Action Service at the joint group at senior officials' level and will be updated and reviewed jointly on a rolling basis.

The **Union for the Mediterranean** has experience in building regional networks and leading flagship projects. With its convening power, the UfM will support the joint group meetings, and it will also be a partner in the roll-out of the Pact⁶⁰, including through its ministerial meetings.

The **Youth Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean** will provide an important guidance for the implementation and development of initiatives under the Pact. Similarly, **regular dialogues will be organised with civil society organisations**, including academia, researchers, social, cultural and economic actors, as well as the business community.

4. CONCLUSION

The Pact is proposed for **political endorsement by the EU with the southern Mediterranean partners in November 2025** on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona declaration.

With the Pact, we will shape our joint future in a spirit of partnership and joint ownership, developing a **more deeply integrated, resilient and secure Common Mediterranean Space**.

⁶⁰ The UfM has developed expertise in specific areas such as Education, Employment and Economic Development, Water, Environment and Blue Economy; Crisis management and civil protection.