

Pact for the Mediterranean – October 2025

Introduction

The **Pact for the Mediterranean** is a renewed EU Southern Mediterranean partnership framework, intended to deepen integration, cooperation and mutual responsibility across what they call the **Common Mediterranean Space**.

It builds on prior instruments (e.g. the [1995 Barcelona Process](#); the 2021 Agenda for the Mediterranean and its Economic & Investment Plan) and seeks a new paradigm shift — moving toward co-ownership, cocreation and joint responsibility.

The Pact emerges from a broad consultation process involving the 10 Southern Mediterranean partner countries, EU Member States, EU institutions (Parliament, Committees, Regions), regional bodies (e.g. the Union for the Mediterranean), civil society, local and regional actors, youth networks, think tanks (including via the IEMed / EuroMeSCo) and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

The Pact is structured around **three interlinked pillars**:

- I. People: driving forces for change, connection and innovation;
- II. Stronger, more sustainable and integrated economies;
- III. Security, preparedness and migration management.

Implementation is designed to be flexible, allowing variable participation by partners, and will build upon existing initiatives (association agreements, regional partnerships, prior EU programmes).

All relevant EU financial instruments will be mobilized, along with contributions from Member States, partner countries, international financial institutions (IFIs), and private sector funding under a “Team Europe” approach.

Pillar I – People: driving forces for change, connection and innovation

Pillar I focuses on empowering people as the foundation for fostering connections, innovation, and resilience across the region. It aims to strengthen ties between the EU and southern Mediterranean partners by addressing demographic pressures, promoting social cohesion, and supporting vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees.

Some of the key elements are:

- **Investing in education and skills development to address migration challenges (I.1):** The Pact emphasizes higher education, vocational training, and skills development to tackle social, economic, and demographic pressures in the southern Mediterranean. It promotes circular migration and livelihoods to enhance access to decent employment in national, regional, and international labour markets. Initiatives include scaling up Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) ecosystems, supporting Youth Guarantee National Plans tailored to local contexts, and establishing a MED Skill Tracker to document and recognize skills for enhanced mobility opportunities.

- **Promoting cultural resilience and mutual understanding (I.2):** The Pact highlights the importance of cultural, artistic, and inter-religious dialogue to foster diversity, inclusion, and peaceful cooperation. It supports cultural resilience through arts, music, crafts, and cinema, while encouraging sustainable cultural tourism and heritage-driven development to strengthen community ties and economic opportunities.
- **Empowering youth, women, and local communities for social cohesion (I.3):** The Pact aims to empower civil society and local communities as vectors of development and inclusion. Key initiatives include establishing a **Youth Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean**, creating a Mediterranean Civic Service platform for volunteering opportunities, and empowering women-led organizations to actively participate in education, upskilling, and business support. It also strengthens media organizations through capacity-building and collaborative projects, while promoting social inclusion at local and municipal levels inspired by the Covenant of Mayors approach.

Pillar III – Security, Preparedness & Migration Management

Pillar III is central to addressing the region's complex security, migration, and disaster resilience challenges.

III.1 Peace and Security

The Mediterranean region faces diverse security threats: terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime, hybrid threats (cyber, disinformation, foreign interference), maritime vulnerabilities (e.g. substandard shipping), and risks to critical infrastructure.

The Pact aims to foster **common understanding and cooperation** on these threats: e.g. counter-terrorism, sanctions circumvention, maritime security, resilience of critical infrastructure, hybrid and cyber threats, defence capacity building, peace mediation and conflict resolution.

The EU's [Common Security and Defence Policies](#) (CSDP) missions already operating in the Mediterranean (e.g. *Operation IRINI*, *EUBAM Libya*) will play a key role in enhancing stability, border control, counter-trafficking, and cooperation with local authorities.

Proposed EU-Med Peace and Security Initiative:

- Establish a regional forum for situational awareness, policy dialogue, coordination on peace/security issues, and mediation support;
- Support partner countries' capacity building through the [European Peace Facility](#) (EPF), cooperation with **NATO** (where relevant), training via the European Security and Defence College, and better use of open-source intelligence tools to counter disinformation and interference;
- Dialogue on participation of southern Mediterranean partners in CSDP missions (via framework agreements);
- Maritime security cooperation: protecting submarine cables, addressing maritime risks, shipping practices, cross-regional cooperation;
- Cooperation on prevention of violent extremism, exchanges on cyber and health security, and enhancing coordination around sanctions, maritime and environmental oversight.

III.2 Increasing Regional Preparedness

The Pact frames **preparedness** as essential to resilience in the face of natural and human-induced hazards. The Mediterranean is especially exposed to climate change, extreme weather, droughts, floods, wildfires, water scarcity, etc.

Key proposed measures:

- Develop an **all hazards early warning system**, leveraging existing tools (e.g. Copernicus Emergency Management) and aligning with mechanisms like “Early Warnings for All” and the EU’s preparedness strategy;
- Strengthen food security preparedness (e.g. via response mechanisms for crises);
- Cooperation on disaster risk prevention with partner countries, including with risk-mitigation centres (e.g. chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear risk centres) through joint training, simulations, exchanges of best practices;
- Expand civil protection cooperation, establishing a European Firefighting Hub (to be based in Cyprus) and reinforcing regional disaster readiness via coordination and shared assistance;
- Exploring AI and data modelling support for crisis management, decision support systems, multi-hazard simulation tools, synergy with digital tools and crises management innovation.

III.3 Migration Management

Migration is framed as a **shared responsibility requiring comprehensive, rights-based, whole-of-route approaches**.

Key pillars in migration strategy include:

- Strengthening migration governance, border management, prevention of illegal departures, and combating migrant smuggling and human trafficking;
- Promoting legal migration pathways and mobility opportunities (seasonal work, labour mobility) in line with international law and human rights standards;
- Effective return, readmission, and reintegration mechanisms, as well as resettlement support for refugees and asylum seekers;
- Strengthening capacity of local authorities and host communities, supporting international organizations like UNHCR and IOM in operational roles.

III.4 Law enforcement, judicial cooperation and border security

This section sets out a comprehensive strategy for the Mediterranean region combining border security, migration-control, law-enforcement and judicial cooperation under one integrated framework. It links the **management of borders** and **search & rescue**, the fight against trafficking and organised crime, and the enhancement of institutional cooperation across states in the region — all grounded in respect for rights and rule of law.

Collaboration & Information-Sharing

- The pact promotes closer coordination in border and **maritime surveillance**, customs, and border control across the Mediterranean, including harmonised practices and intelligence exchange, building on global efforts against migrant smuggling.

Capacity-Building with Southern Partners

- The EU and southern Mediterranean countries will strengthen **border management** institutions through technical support, training, and pilot projects — all with a focus on human rights and digitalising customs for safer, smoother trade and mobility.

Law-Enforcement & Judicial Cooperation

- A unified approach is encouraged to tackle cross-border crime, with enhanced cooperation between law enforcement and judicial bodies (e.g. Eurojust, Europol, FRONTEX), including shared standards, joint operations, and legal coordination.

SAR operations are crucial for a **common approach** to integrated **border management and security**, 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 supporting the negotiation and implementation of working arrangements between FRONTEX and the border management authorities of southern Mediterranean partners.

Actors Involved & Governance Mechanisms

- The 10 Southern Mediterranean partner countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia);
- EU Member States and EU institutions (European Commission, High Representative, European Parliament, European Economic & Social Committee, Committee of Regions);
- The [Union for the Mediterranean \(UfM\)](#) plays a key role in institutional ownership of the Euro-Mediterranean space and is engaged in the consultation and implementation process;
- The Anna Lindh Foundation was involved in consultation efforts as a civil society network actor;
- Think tanks, research networks and consultative bodies (notably IEMed, EuroMeSCo) have been mobilized to generate proposals and host consultation circles;
- Regional and local authorities, civil society organizations, media, youth, academia and private sector actors have been engaged in the co-design phase.

Financing & Economic Instruments

The Pact is designed to be implemented through a **blended financing mix** combining:

- **EU financial instruments** (including those under the NDICI-Global Europe, the Global Gateway, and the [future 2028–2034 EU budget](#));
- **Contributions from EU Member States** and from the southern Mediterranean partner countries themselves to leverage greater resources and alignment;
- **Team Europe approach**, leveraging EU Member States' national development banks and financial institutions, plus mobilizing private investment;
- Use of **international financial institutions** (e.g. EIB, EBRD) to de-risk and co-finance large projects;

- **Blended finance, honour loans, crowdfunding, de-risking tools** especially for startup / MSME initiatives (e.g. under StartUp4Med);
- Investment platforms (e.g. T-MED investment platform for clean energy, regional investment pipelines) and technical assistance instruments for regulatory and project preparation support.

Timeline

The Pact is proposed for **political endorsement in November 2025**, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration. Following the endorsement, the Commission and its partners will roll out a **dedicated Action Plan in the first quarter of 2026**, which will detail participating countries, stakeholders and initiative-timelines. The Action Plan is designed as a living document, allowing new actions to be added over time and ensuring that civil society, youth organizations, regional bodies and EU institutions remain engaged and informed throughout the implementation cycle.

Consultations with the stakeholders

