

# REINVENTING EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS

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The third block of the Survey aims to be more operational than blocks 1 and 2. Questions relate mostly to existing frameworks such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (Questions 15 to 19) or the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) (Questions 20 to 24). More generally, this also touches upon the obstacles and shortcomings of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

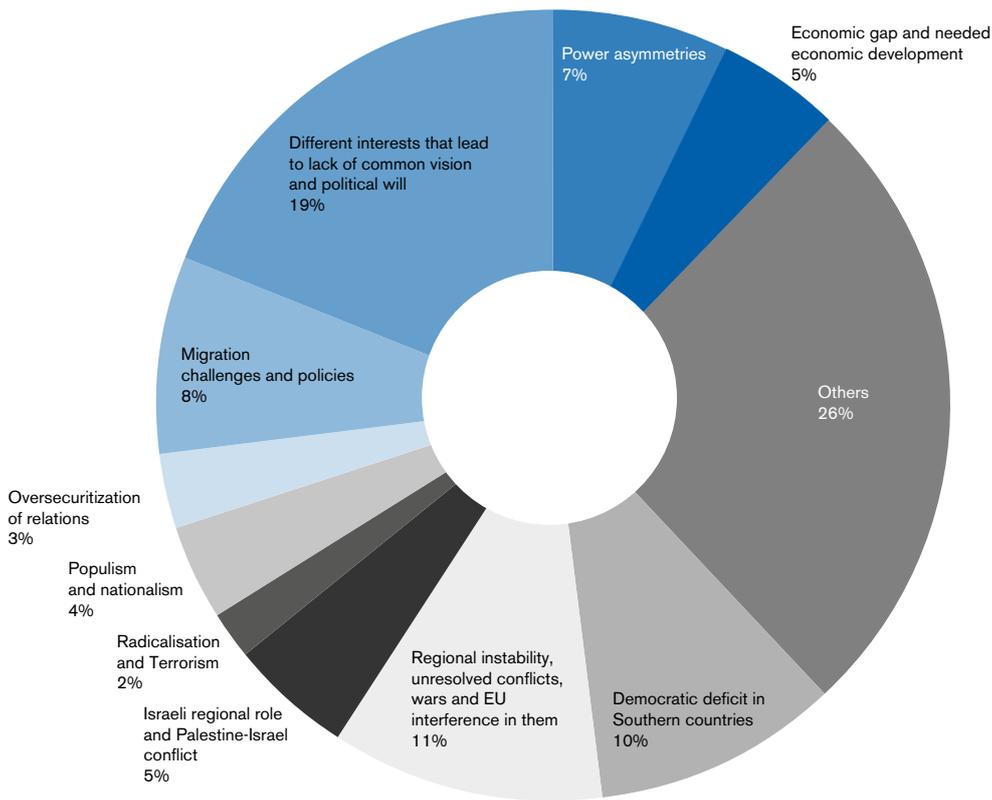
## Main findings:

- The difference of interests among countries (within the EU itself, within the MENA or between both shores) leading to a lack of common vision and political will, regional instability and unresolved conflicts, power asymmetries between the North and the South of the Mediterranean are some of the most recurrent issues mentioned by the respondents as impediments to greater Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.
- The ENP as reviewed in 2015 has not met the announced objectives.
- The ENP framework remains relevant but should be reviewed again in order to move further towards an equal footing partnership, better involve civil society actors, provide further financial assistance linked to political reforms, integrate a consistent approach regarding conflict resolution and offer more tools to differentiate approaches to different neighbours.
- Regarding the UfM, even though respondents point out the fact that it has not significantly succeeded in meeting the main objectives as stated in the 2008 Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, a strong majority states that it should be empowered and its mandate extended.
- From the main areas of actions identified in the 2017 UfM roadmap, respondents think that “Enhancing regional stability and human development” should be prioritised.
- Turkish respondents are the less critical category of respondents with existing Euro-Mediterranean policy cooperation frameworks.

## THE IMPEDIMENTS TO FURTHER STRENGTHENING EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS (Q14)

**Question 14** was an open question where respondents were invited to identify major impediments to further strengthening Euro-Mediterranean relations. Based on those answers, some categories were defined, as illustrated in Graph 28. The most common issue mentioned in answers is related to the divergence of interests between Euro-Mediterranean players (within the EU itself, within the MENA or between both shores) leading to the incapacity to come up with a long-term vision of Euro-Mediterranean relations. A significant number of answers also relate to unresolved conflicts and in particular the Palestine-Israel one, regional instability and in some cases the responsibilities of EU countries. Third, a large number of respondents blamed political trends in Southern Mediterranean countries. Power asymmetry also came up as a common pattern in answers, as did migration challenges.

**Graph 28: What is the major impediment to further strengthening Euro-Mediterranean relations?**



Here is a sample of some responses, illustrating the main patterns mentioned above but also the diversity of the answers:

La focalisation sur le volet sécuritaire qui impose le soutien des pouvoirs autoritaires.

Syrian respondent

I think there has been an ensemble of issues, including:

- Lack of coherence between human rights and economic interests.
- Securitization of migration and growing lobby by military and security European companies, using "old" discourses and models, which are proved as not working, diverting ODA funds, etc.
- Change of global stability with Trump in USA + CETA negotiations and loss of relevance as an actor in real politics. Growing criticism of the EU as benefiting from neo-colonial policies, etc.

Spanish respondent

Le rapport de force entre l'UE et les autres pays méditerranéens, les crises durables ainsi que le soutien des régimes autoritaires du sud et arabes par l'UE qui retarde la mise en œuvre de réformes politiques, économiques, sociales et institutionnelles afin de construire des États démocratiques, de droit, de la bonne gouvernance et de respect des droits de l'Homme.

Moroccan respondent

It is difficult to identify \*the\* major impediment to strengthening Euro-Mediterranean relations. The way in which the EU has reacted to the Eurozone and refugee-cum-migration crises has undoubtedly weakened its appeal in the eyes of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean partners, suggesting they look elsewhere. The EU's insistence on promoting reforms, economic and political, that have patently failed and are arguably part of the problem contributes to this growing distance, creating the space for other actors (especially GCC countries, but also China and to a lesser extent Russia) to become more credible partners in the eyes of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean rulers.

Italian respondent

Le contexte politique actuel en Méditerranée du sud avec un retour des vieux modèles de fonctionnement pour l'UE (soutien aux régimes dictatoriaux de peur d'avoir de nouveau de l'instabilité socio-économique pouvant déboucher sur de nouvelles migrations) n'est qu'une vision à court-terme. Si l'UE n'arrive pas à conditionner son soutien au respect des droits de l'Homme et ne prend aucune mesure à l'égard des violations commises par les régimes en place, cela créera de nouveau un cycle de violences dans quelques années car les inégalités continuent, elles, à se creuser.

French respondent

La stratégie de l'UE, qui consistait à améliorer les relations politiques et économiques avec ces régimes comme base pour favoriser les changements démocratiques, n'a pas porté ses fruits. Le principal obstacle à un renforcement des relations euro-méditerranéennes est lié à la complexité architectonique de la coopération euro-méditerranéenne.

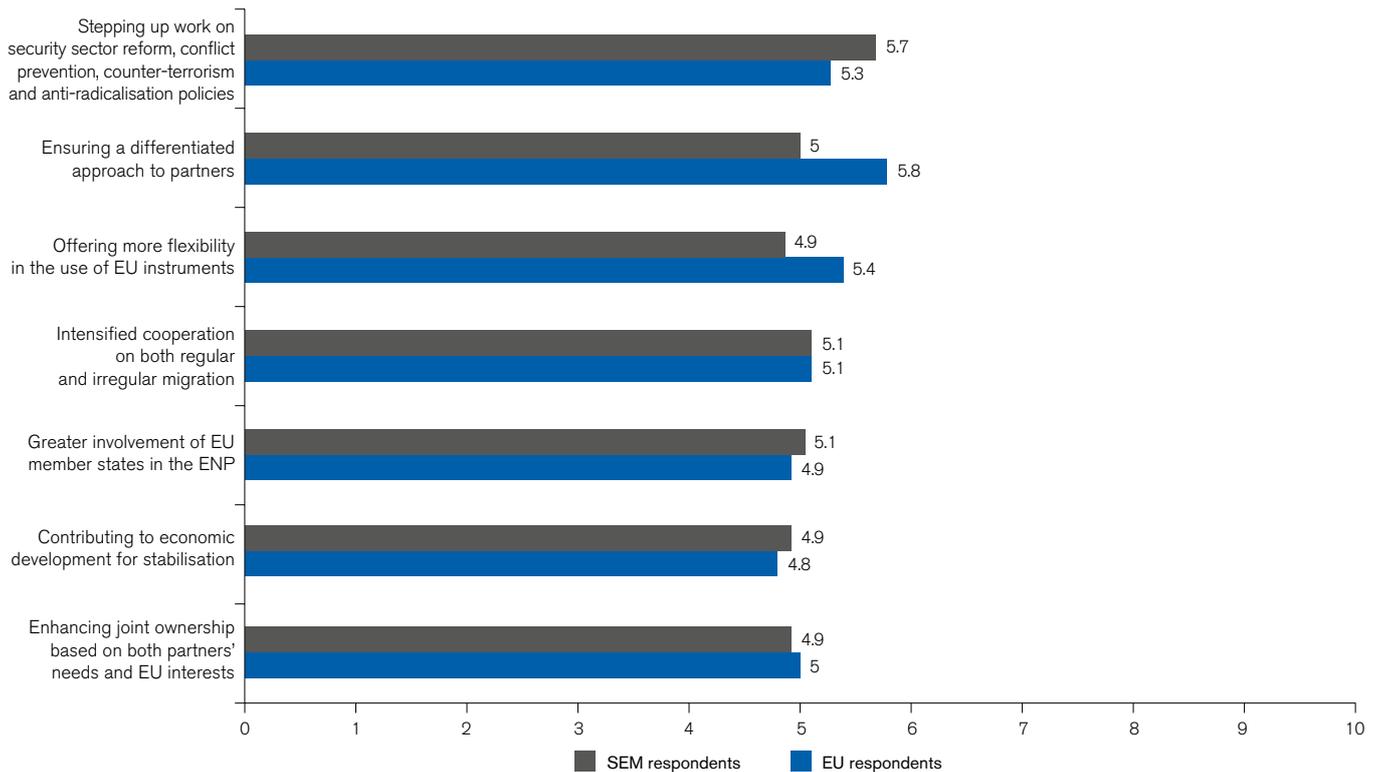
Mauritanian respondent

## ON THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY (ENP) AND ITS REFORM

Answers to Questions 15-19 provide a picture on how the ENP is perceived both in EU and SEM countries.

**Question 15** invited the respondents to evaluate the efficiency of the ENP more than two years after its 2015 review and, more precisely, to express their opinion regarding the degree of achievement of the main objectives mentioned in the review. Overall, the average support represented in Graph 28 points to a rather weak endorsement from the respondents, who do not seem to be very impressed with the achievements since 2015. Respondents are slightly less critical when it comes to acknowledging that the reviewed ENP has led to stepping up cooperation in security matters and in ensuring a differentiated approach to partners (see also Q19).

**Graph 29: More than two years after the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), to what extent has it been able to fulfil its main objectives:**  
 (mean 0-very low extent, 10-very high extent)

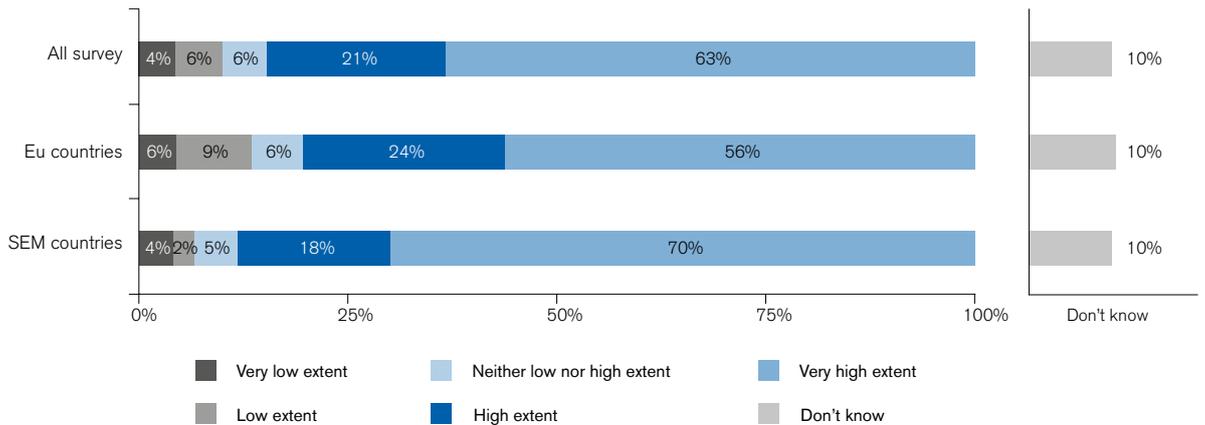


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 9th Euromed Survey

Algeria and Israel are the countries that evaluate these ENP objectives most negatively. Jordan, in contrast, is more positive.

As a natural follow-up to Question 15, **Question 16** aimed to analyse the extent to which the ENP framework either remains relevant or should be reviewed again. A clear majority of respondents stated that another review is desirable in order to build more effective neighbourhood partnerships (see Graph 29). A higher percentage of SEM respondents consider the ENP as an unsuited design.

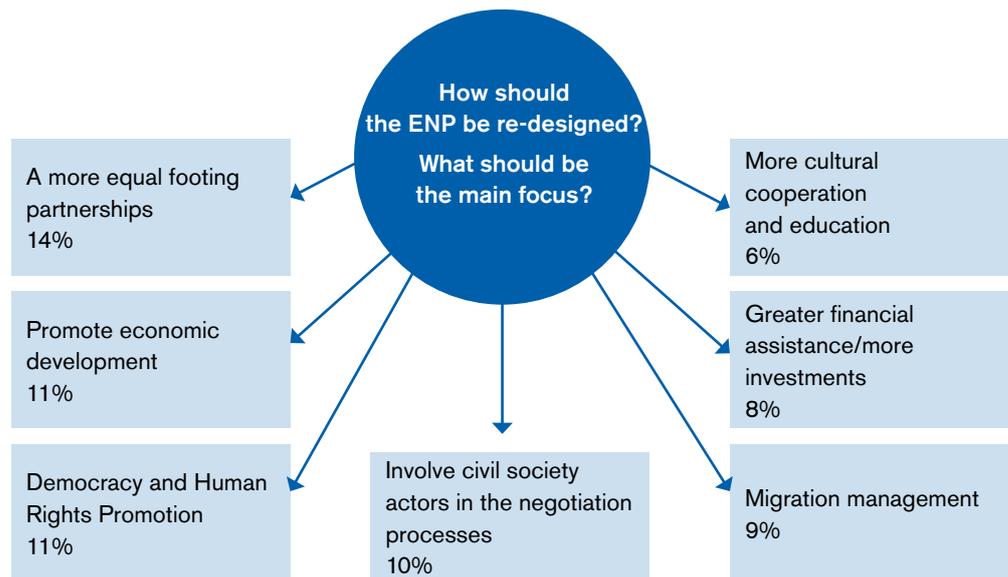
**Graph 30: To what extent would you agree with the following statement:  
There is a need for yet another review of the European Neighbourhood Policy?**



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 9th Euromed Survey

In order to properly understand the ENP shortcomings and how they should be addressed, those who answered that the ENP should be newly reviewed (either to a *high* or *very high extent*) were invited to express their views on how it should be redesigned and what the main focus should be (**Question 17**).

Some of the recurrent answers touched upon the following issues:



Here is a sample of the answers:

A new ENP should be freed from normative, Eurocentric approaches, which does not necessarily mean that it should be free of any norms and values. It should take the debates, expectations and grievances in the South more into consideration and include a “mutual-learning” instead of “our size fits all” approach.

Austrian respondent

- 1- Prendre en considération les intérêts de tous les partenaires.
- 2- Cesser de soutenir aveuglément Israël par crainte de représailles avec les Etats-Unis.
- 3- Cesser d'imposer aux Pays du Sud de la Méditerranée le rôle de gendarmes des frontières de l'Europe.
- 4- Réinventer le dialogue Nord-Sud.

Moroccan respondent

Le paramètre essentiel consisterait à changer de paradigme. La coopération doit cesser d'être *top-down* (EU-Sud), mais le fruit d'un compromis. Le point central c'est la concertation en amont. Ceci étant, cette réforme serait nécessaire mais insuffisante.

Algerian respondent

The EU should be ready to implement more tailor-made approaches (diversify the strategies) towards the countries of the region and stop seeing the Mediterranean through the prisms of migration and security alone. Education and youth unemployment are major common challenges in the region as well as the need for strong political and economic institutions and a resilience against state capture. The countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, on the other hand, should be assisted in identifying their actual needs and demands, and how the EU can try to fill some of these gaps.

German respondent

The policy should be based on a consultative approach with the neighbour countries including civil society. Projects and programmes should be prepared in close cooperation with beneficiary countries on a peer-to-peer approach.

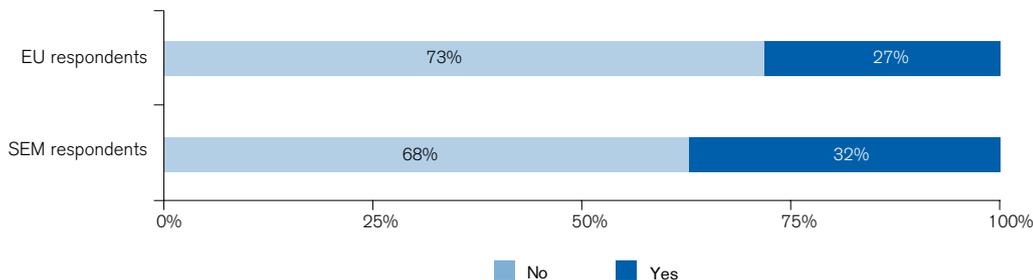
Moroccan respondent

More directed towards enhancing civil society and political reform. Financial assistance should be linked to political reform. This should be done consistently, not according to the interests at stake.

French respondent

While the ENP should be reformed, answers to **Question 18** show that respondents are not keen on replacing the ENP framework as such. A greater proportion of EU respondents, compared to SEM respondents, believe the current framework is worth maintaining (see Graph 31).

**Graph 31: Do you think that the ENP should be replaced by another framework?**



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 9th Euromed Survey

It is interesting to highlight the fact that Turkish and Israeli respondents stand out from the mean with a very high percentage of negative responses, i.e., supporting the ENP. 80% and 87.5% of the respective respondents stated that this framework should not be replaced by another one.

Those who answered that it should be replaced with another framework were asked two additional questions: *why* and *what do you propose instead* (**Question 19**).

There are some repeated patterns among the answers. Most respondents state that the evidence has shown that the ENP has not yielded relevant results, that there is a lack of a long-term vision, and that power asymmetries are too strong in the current framework.

On a l'impression qu'elle est conçue pour éviter les problèmes, pas pour créer les bases d'un avenir commun.

Algerian respondent

The ENP is also seen as an instrument unable to adapt as fast as needed to the new challenges and contexts:

Parce qu'il n'est pas approprié à la nouvelle donne, changement climatique, migration, chômage des jeunes, montée du fondamentalisme, lutte contre le terrorisme, exil des compétences, fuite des cerveaux...

Tunisian respondent

Among those who answered the *what do you propose instead* question, some 23% mentioned the need to apply differentiated approaches to different regional neighbours as a way to better adapt to different realities, away from the “one-size-fits-all” rationale.

La Méditerranée ne nous intéresse pas au même titre que la Baltique. Eliminer cette idée des macro-régions. Prendre en considération les particularismes culturels, les spécificités historiques.

French respondent

First things first: an EU real Defence Policy and an EU basic consensus on what it wants in its relationships with the region. There should be a split: an ENP for the West Mediterranean and another for the East. There is no wholesale “neighbourhood”. The EU should think pragmatically, tackling each set of problems depending on each country or geographical position, instead of big universal one size-fits-all mentality.

French respondent

Here are some other thoughts about *why* and *how* the ENP should be replaced:

Parce qu'elle continue à ignorer le troisième volet de la Déclaration de Barcelone, le volet social, culturel et humain.

Moroccan respondent

A framework that is not based on a fortress Europe and everything but institutions.

Israeli respondent

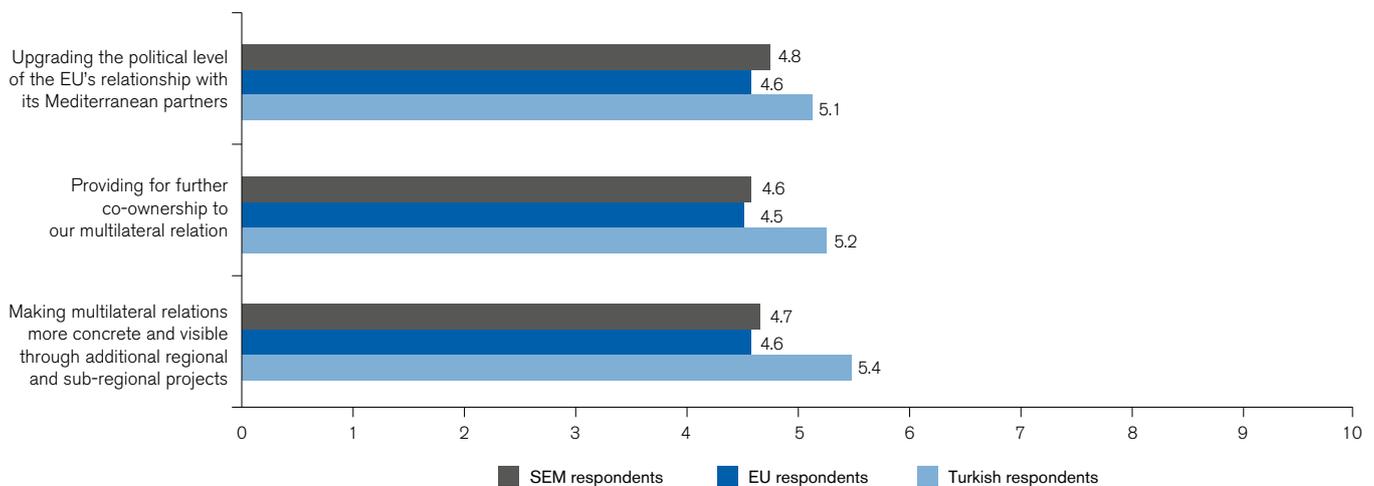
## THE ROLE OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (UFM)

In Questions 20 to 24, the Survey turned to the role of the UfM, how it is perceived, what its shortcomings are and how they could be overcome.

**Question 20** took as a point of reference the three main objectives to give a new impulse to the Euro-Mediterranean region as stated in the 2008 Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean. Respondents were invited to indicate to what extent the UfM had succeeded in meeting those objectives. The results point to a rather negative assessment (see Graph 31). Responses do not significantly differ geographically, even though EU respondents tend to be slightly more critical across the board.

A more detailed analysis of the results reveals some specific features. In relative terms, Turkish respondents are those who think in biggest proportions that the UfM successfully met the three objectives.

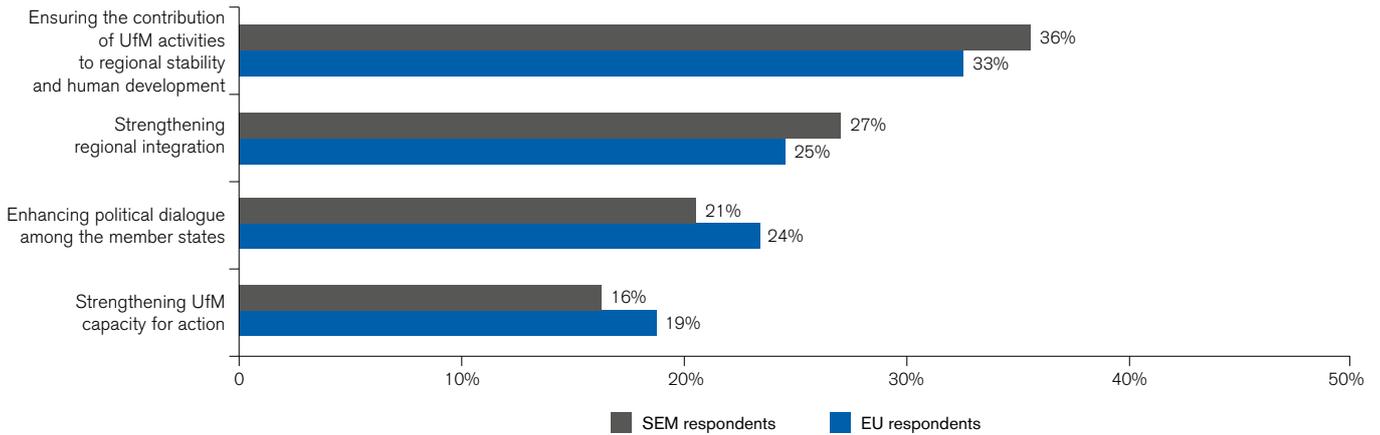
**Graph 32: To what extent has the Union for the Mediterranean succeeded, as stated in the Joint Declaration, in newly encouraging the following?** (mean 0=very low extent, 10=very high extent)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 9th Euromed Survey

In **Question 21**, the departing point is the 2017 UfM roadmap, and more precisely the four main areas of actions identified therein. Respondents were invited to rank those and identify which one should be prioritised. “Enhancing regional stability and human development” is the most common answer. North-South answers show some slight differences in the order of priorities.

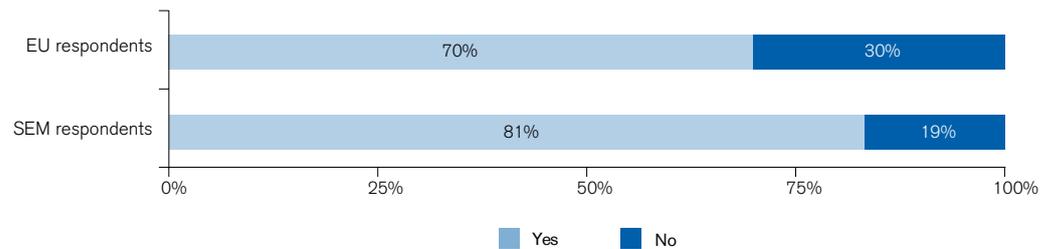
**Graph 33: Which ones of the four main areas of action identified in the Union for the Mediterranean roadmap adopted by the Union for the Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 23 January 2017 in Barcelona should be pursued as a matter of priority?**



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 9th Euromed Survey

In a more general way, **Question 22** aimed to assess the eagerness of the respondents for a further empowerment of the UfM and an extension of its mandate. As Graph 34 shows, a large majority of respondents call for an extension of the UfM mandate.

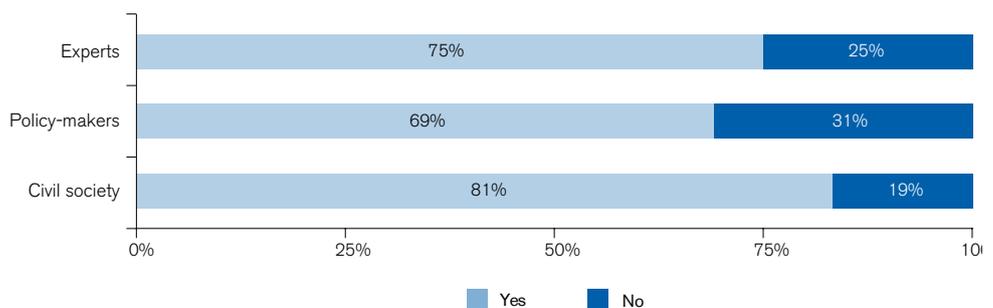
**Graph 34: Do you think that the Union for the Mediterranean should be empowered and its mandate should be extended?**



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 9th Euromed Survey

Policy-makers are the group of respondents that state to a greater degree that the UfM should not be further empowered and its mandate should not be extended (31% of policy-makers answered “no” to **Question 22**, compared to 19% for civil society respondents).

**Graph 35: Do you think that the Union for the Mediterranean should be empowered and its mandate should be extended?**



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 9th Euromed Survey

Those who answered *yes* were asked *how*. Below is a sample of some answers.

Il faudrait d'abord revoir ses principes fondateurs et ses objectifs initiaux. L'ouvrir véritablement aux instances non-gouvernementales et à la société civile, lui donner plus de moyens politiques et financiers, et la charger des vrais questions de développement et de démocratisation des pays et sociétés du Sud de la Méditerranée.

Moroccan respondent

It has to be more down to earth and to establish concrete rules and projects.

Egyptian respondent

En traitant les conflits politiques qui rendent ladite Union inopérante sur le terrain ; de la sorte, en séparant clairement les volets politique et technique (développement coopération), on contribuera à éviter que cette organisation continue d'agir comme un outil paradiplomatie supplémentaire aux mains des différents États membres.

French respondent

Those who answered *no* were asked *why*. Below is a sample of some answers:

Comme pour la PEV : Elle a démontré ses limites, elle a été initiée par une ou deux personnalités politiques, est excessivement stato-centrée et basée sur les intérêts européens. De ce fait, peut-être que son mandat devrait se concentrer uniquement sur le dialogue politique de haut niveau, et non sur le reste. Son mandat ne devrait pas être étendu.

French respondent

It failed on all fronts. It is an inadequate structure to deal with the regional challenges. The strategy it adopted is the wrong one. It is aimed at normalizing relationships between partners on the wrong bases. The major obstacle is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As long as the conflict exists, integration and full cooperation between members will remain a myth.

Palestinian respondent

Because it is quite hybrid as an institutional construct and its usefulness is questionable. At the same time, it seems to channel some of the energy and resources that should be dedicated to cooperation. It makes institutional relations more confused.

Portuguese respondent

As a framework for action it is empowered enough and has a sufficient mandate. Maybe the problem is to find ways to be more effective, and this is a matter of political will and determination.

Spanish respondent