

Chronologies

Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

1. NATO Mediterranean Dialogue + Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

Due to the link between Mediterranean and European security, NATO created a network of partnerships with seven southern Mediterranean countries under the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and four countries of the Gulf region through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), with the aim of sharing insights and intelligence and contributing to missions, training or research, all from a gender perspective. The MD was launched in 1994 and enjoys the participation of seven countries: Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Jordan. It is progressive and flexible, with bilateral (NATO+1) and multilateral (NATO+7) meeting formats allowed. The MD also offers political cooperation (seminars and workshops on diverse fields) and military practical cooperation (observation and participation in military exercises, and trips to NATO facilities and bodies). Furthermore, the Partnership Interoperability Initiative and the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative were adopted in 2014 to improve partner cooperation and tailor commitments. Unlike the MD, the ICI only focuses on practical cooperation and was launched in 2004 with the participation of Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The Initiative offers equally accessible bilateral activities related to security, fostering the participation of ICI partners in NATO-led operations as security providers, such as the role of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya. Finally, within the Parliamentary dimension of NATO, a Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) was created in 1996 as a forum for parliamentarians of NATO and the MENA re-

gion to discuss security issues and provide an annual report.

Main Events in 2025

- *28-29 January, Algiers:* NATO's Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood, Javier Colomina, visits Algeria to discuss ways to strengthen NATO's cooperation with Algeria. The Special Representative emphasizes the importance of developing practical cooperation aligned with Algeria's priorities, which include tackling a range of shared security challenges in North Africa and the Sahel.
www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/01/30/natos-special-representative-for-the-southern-neighbourhood-visits-algeria.
- *7-8 April, Tunis:* NATO's Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood visits Tunisia to discuss NATO's relations with Tunisia and exchange views on regional security issues. The Special Representative and the Tunisian authorities discuss opportunities to further deepen political dialogue and enhance practical cooperation, on the basis of NATO's strengthened approach to the southern neighbourhood, approved at the NATO Summit in Washington, in July 2024.
www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/04/10/natos-special-representative-for-the-southern-neighbourhood-concludes-his-visit-to-tunisia.
- *9 April, Brussels:* NATO Deputy Secretary General Radmila Šekerinska chairs a high-level briefing with representatives of the four ICI partners (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates) to discuss common security challenges, specifically in the Gulf region, and to reaffirm NATO's commitment to its southern neighbourhood.

www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/04/09/nato-and-southern-neighbourhood-partners-boost-dialogue-and-cooperation-on-regional-security-challenges.

- *23-24 April, Kuwait:* Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, pays an official visit to Kuwait to meet with Crown Prince Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah and the Minister of Defence. Both sides reflect on 20 years of the NATO-Kuwait partnership and evaluate strategic opportunities for deeper military cooperation. The Admiral also visits the NATO-ICI Regional Centre (NIRC) in Kuwait City.
www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/04/25/chair-of-the-nato-military-committee-visits-kuwait.
- *12 June / 16 September, Amman:* In a historic geopolitical breakthrough, NATO formally establishes its first-ever diplomatic presence in the Middle East. Following the legal signing in Brussels on 12 June by Special Representative Javier Colomina and Ambassador Yousef Bataineh, the NATO Liaison Office (NLO) in Amman officially opens on 16 September to serve as the permanent hub for regional security dialogue and Defense Capacity Building.
www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/06/12/nato-jordan-statement-on-the-signature-of-the-legal-agreement-for-the-establishment-of-a-diplomatic-nato-liaison-office-in-amman;
www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/09/16/nato-opens-liaison-office-in-amman.

2. OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation

The OSCE recognized the link between Mediterranean and European security

since the Helsinki Final Act (1975), inviting Mediterranean non-participating states to specific meetings and, eventually, including Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia as partners for cooperation in 1995, and Jordan in 1998. In this context, a group of experts known as the Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG) began to conduct meetings with MPCs, while other Mediterranean-related events included the annual OSCE Mediterranean Conference, the OSCE PA Mediterranean Forum and the visit by the Secretary General (SG). The OSCE Mediterranean Conference is generally attended by international organizations, parliamentarians, academics and NGOs, whereas the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting consists of high-level reunions with the OSCE Troika and the SG. In 2003, the OSCE fields of cooperation expanded to include counter-terrorism, border issues, economic and environmental activities, trafficking in human beings, election observation and media freedom. The MCG serves as the main venue for regular dialogue with the Partners. It meets seven times a year at ambassadorial level and its chairman is the incoming chair of the OSCE. It discusses topics relevant to OSCE Partners in three dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental, and human. MPCs are invited to participate in OSCE PA conferences, and also to country observation missions, offering them the opportunity to study best practices and democratic processes.

Main Events in 2025

- *29 September / 10 October, Vienna/ Warsaw:* Selected delegates from the OSCE Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (including Israel and Jordan) participate in the annual two-week Study Visit Programme at the OSCE headquarters in Vienna and attend the OSCE Warsaw Human Dimension Conference. For the first time, the curriculum incorporates a “Youth & Diplomacy in Action” exchange with international students from the Diplomatische Akademie Wien.
www.osce.org/partners-for-cooperation/593609.
- *14/17 November, Bishkek:* The OSCE Secretariat, in collaboration with the

OSCE Academy in Bishkek, convenes 26 young experts from central Asia, southeast Europe, and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation regions for a comprehensive four-day seminar on inclusive project design and digital research, supported by the Embassy of Switzerland in Kyrgyzstan.

www.osce.org/secretariat/601827.

- *19 November, Istanbul:* The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly holds its 23rd Autumn Meeting at the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye under the central theme “The OSCE at 50: Revitalizing Multilateralism through Dialogue and Co-operation.” The Mediterranean Forum, chaired by Pere Joan Pons (Spain), dedicates its session to the situation in the Middle East and Gaza, gathering parliamentarians from 14 nations to address humanitarian access, stabilization efforts, and long-term peace frameworks.

www.oscepa.org/en/news-a-media/press-releases/2025/osce-pa-mediterranean-forum-debates-situation-in-gaza-and-the-wider-middle-east.

3. 5+5 Dialogue

The 5+5 Dialogue was set up on 10 October 1990 in Rome. It gathers the 10 countries of the western Mediterranean Basin: five countries from the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Libya and Tunisia) and five members of the European Union (France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Malta). Over the years, it has become a strong form for regional and multidisciplinary cooperation in the western Mediterranean. Its flexibility and informality have enabled a gradual opening up, with more diverse issues being discussed between its participants, ministers and senior officials. Originally just a political compromise between foreign ministers dealing with security and stability, as well as economic integration, it later expanded to include other spheres, such as Education, the Environment and Renewable Energies, Home Affairs (since 1995), Migration (since 2002), Inter-parliamentary Relations (since 2003), Defence (since 2004), Tourism (since 2006) and Transport (since 2007). Due to its practical and operational nature, it is a forum

for the exchange of ideas and the launch of new initiatives. It can also capitalize on its restricted geographical scope, which is limited to the western Mediterranean. This initiative has encouraged the integration of Libya and Mauritania in the regional context.

Main Events in 2025

- *3 October, Tunis:* Tunisia, holding the rotating presidency of the 5+5 Defence Initiative for 2025, hosts the 17th periodic meeting of the chiefs of staff of the member countries. Under the chairmanship of Habib Dhif, Director General of Tunisia's Defence Intelligence and Security Agency, senior military officials identify key shared priorities, including counter-terrorism, transnational organized crime, irregular migration management, and maritime route protection.

<https://apanews.net/tunisia-hosts-chiefs-of-staff-meeting-for-55-defence-initiative/>

4. Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII)

The fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia and the growing tensions in the Balkan area prompted the EU to promote the “Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe” for southeastern European countries to join the Union in the future. At the Summit on the Development and Security of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas (2000), the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII) was established and the “Ancona Declaration” was signed to promote regional cooperation and stability, solidifying the process of European integration. Today, the AII has nine members: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia. The Initiative's Chairmanship rotates every May/June according to alphabetical criteria. Greece held the Chairmanship from June 2024 to May 2025, followed by North Macedonia from June 2025 to May 2026. In 2010, the AII started working on the idea of a Macro-Region for the Adriatic Ionian Region, while the EU Commission presented a new “Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region” (EUSAIR) in 2014. The first “Adriatic and Ionian Council / EUSAIR Ministerial

Meeting" was held in Dubrovnik in 2016. Since then, the two exercises (All and EUSAIR) have been inseparable and mutually beneficial. As a result, the geopolitical environment has deeply changed, with Slovenia in 2004 and Croatia in 2013 entering the EU and the other Adriatic-Ionian countries gradually approaching the EU within the Stabilization and Association Process framework.

Main Events during the Greek Chairmanship

- *6/7 May, Georgiopolis, Crete:* The 10th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) convenes under the slogan "Bridging Horizons: Strengthening Cooperation, Resilience and Cohesion." The simultaneous Adriatic Ionian Council/EUSAIR Ministerial Meeting concludes with the adoption of the *Crete Declaration*, which solidifies commitments to the EU enlargement process and deepens civil society engagement. The rotating Chairmanship is officially transferred from Greece to North Macedonia. www.aii-ps.org/news/455.
- *22/23 May, Ioannina:* The 19th Conference of Presidents and Speakers of Parliaments of the All brings together parliamentary leaders from All member countries to reaffirm their commitment to dialogue, cooperation, and shared European values through parliamentary diplomacy. The conference is structured around two main sessions: one focused on the European perspective and the future of the Western Balkans and the second one focused on the diversification of tourism supply in the region. www.aii-ps.org/news/456.

Main Events during the North Macedonian Chairmanship

- *27 June, Ancona:* The historic Mole Vanvitelliana in Ancona hosts the high-level celebration marking the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, bringing together regional partners to honour a quarter-century of sub-regional diplomatic and economic alignment. www.aii-ps.org/news/459.
- *22 September, New York:* On the sidelines of the 80th session of the

United Nations General Assembly, the first meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the All takes place. The meeting is organized by the Republic of North Macedonia, under the motto "Strengthening regional unity, advancing the European future."

www.aii-ps.org/news/466.

- *27 September, Pescara:* The 25th General Assembly of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities takes place in Pescara, concentrating on urban sustainability, the blue economy and shared cross-border cultural frameworks. www.aii-ps.org/news/467.
- *18 November, Skopje:* The All holds a high-level Round Table 2025 dedicated to the implications of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum for the Western Balkans. The event gathers representatives of EU institutions, Frontex, IOM, MARRI, civil society organizations, academia, and public authorities from All participating countries. www.aii-ps.org/news/472.

5. League of Arab States

The League of Arab States (LAS) is an association of 22 countries established in 1945 with the aim of improving coordination among its members on matters of common interest. The founding members of the League (Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Yemen) agreed to seek closer cooperation on issues regarding economics, communication, culture, nationality, social welfare and health. Embodying the ideas of Pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism, the LAS achieved the 1950 Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty; the 1995 Draft Agreement on turning the Middle East into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction; and the 1999 Arab Agreement on Combating Terrorism. The highest body of the League is the Council, composed of representatives of member states, generally foreign ministers. Each member state has one vote, regardless of the size of the country. The Council meets twice a year, in March and September, but it may also convene a special session at the request of two members. The General Secretariat runs the daily activities of the League. It is the executive

body of the Council and administrative body of the League. The current SG is the Egyptian Ahmed Aboul Gheit, who has held the position since July 2016 and succeeded Nabil Elaraby. www.leagueofarabstates.net/

Main Events in 2025

- *4 March, Cairo:* The League of Arab States convenes an Extraordinary Arab Unity Summit convened upon the request of the State of Palestine to address the recent grave developments relating to the Palestinian cause. The summit concludes with the adoption of the *Cairo Declaration*, establishing a unified three-phase Arab blueprint for the early recovery, infrastructure rebuilding, and long-term housing reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, while strictly rejecting any forced displacement of the Palestinian population. www.leagueofarabstates.net/ar/summits/Documents/Palestine%20Summit%20Comm.%20Eng_ED.pdf
- *17 May, Baghdad:* The 34th Arab League Summit opens in Baghdad, Iraq (the first ordinary LAS summit hosted by the Iraqi capital since 2012). The discussions focus extensively on the crisis in Gaza. The concluding *Baghdad Declaration* calls for an immediate, sustainable ceasefire, explicitly rejects any forced displacement of Palestinians, and endorses an Arab-led reconstruction framework. Arab leaders reaffirm their commitment with Arab unity, regional stability and respect for state sovereignty. www.leagueofarabstates.net/ar/summits/Documents/Eng%20Summit%2034.pdf.
- *20 June, Istanbul:* An Extraordinary Session of the Arab League Council at the ministerial level is held in Türkiye at the request of Iraq. Chaired by Jordan's Foreign Minister, the Council issues a unified statement condemning military strikes against Iran as a blatant violation of sovereignty and calls for an immediate international reduction of regional military tensions. www.leagueofarabstates.net/ar/councils/lascouncil/Pages/LasCouncilMinistrialDetails.aspx?RID=244.
- *8 July, Cairo:* the League of Arab States and ICESCO hold the International Conference on Combating Islamo-

phobia at the headquarters of the Arab League. The conference discusses the rise of Islamophobia, its impact on social cohesion, dialogue and coexistence, and calls for stronger regional and international cooperation to counter hatred, discrimination and religious intolerance. <https://icesco.org/en/2025/07/10/icesco-and-league-of-arab-states-hold-international-conference-to-combat-islamophobia/>.

- *16/17 July, Cairo:* The General Secretariat of the League, in direct partnership with Eurojust, hosts an intensive security and judicial workshop at its Cairo headquarters. Legal experts and judicial delegates focus on expanding cross-border operational coordination, modernizing legal aid treaties, and developing joint capabilities to disrupt transnational organized crime networks and combat international terrorism. www.eurojust.europa.eu/news/eurojust-and-league-arab-states-strengthen-ties-fight-against-transnational-crime.

- *28/30 July, New York:* The High-level International Conference on the Implementation of the Two-State Solution takes place under the joint chairmanship of Saudi Arabia and France, with the participation of the League of Arab States and the European Union. The conference reaffirms international support for the two-state solution, calls for an immediate end to the war in Gaza and renewed political negotiations, and promotes concrete and irreversible steps towards the establishment of an independent Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel. www.un.org/unispal/high-level-conference-two-state-solution-july2025/.

- *4 September, Cairo:* The Council of the League of Arab States holds its 164th Ordinary Session at the ministerial level. The meeting reviews the implementation of previous Arab League decisions and discusses key regional developments, with particular focus on the war in Gaza, the Palestinian question, and crises in Syria, Sudan, Libya and Yemen. It reaffirms support for the two-state solution, calls for an immediate ceasefire and expanded humanitarian access to Gaza, and adopts a broad set of resolutions aimed at strengthening Arab coordination on regional security and political affairs.

www.leagueofarabstates.net/ar/councils/lascouncil/Pages/LasCouncilMinistrialDetails.aspx?RID=248.

- *15 September, Doha:* An Arab-Islamic Emergency Summit is held in Doha in response to the Israeli aggression against the State of Qatar. The Summit, held in coordination with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), issues a joint declaration condemning violations of international law following targeted cross-border military strikes affecting regional diplomatic security.

www.leagueofarabstates.net/ar/summits/Documents/Final%20Comminque%20-%20Adopted%20by%20the%20Arab%20-%20Islamic%20Emergency%20Summit.pdf.

- *21/23 September, New York:* On the sidelines of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, LAS Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit meets with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to discuss cooperation on regional challenges, including Gaza, Syria and Sudan. In a separate meeting, Arab League and OIC leaders convene with US President Donald Trump at a multilateral summit focused on a Gaza ceasefire, humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts.

www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/readouts/2025-09-21/readout-of-the-secretary-generals-meeting-he-mr-ahmed-aboul-gheit-secretary-general-of-the-league-of-arab-states.

- *4 November, Brussels:* The European Union Political and Security Committee and the League of Arab States Permanent Representatives hold their 10th Political Dialogue under the EU-LAS Strategic Dialogue framework, discussing regional and international crises and reaffirming their commitment to multilateral cooperation, international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/league-arab-states-10th-political-dialogue-between-political-and-security-committee-european-union_en.

6. Summit of the Southern European Union Countries (MED-9)

The 1st Mediterranean EU Countries' Summit took place in September 2016 in Malta to enhance their cooperation

and contribute to the dialogue on the future of the EU. The recovery from the crisis, high migration flows, instability in the southern Mediterranean, Brexit and Euroscepticism need a united response from southern European countries. With the Athens Declaration, the Heads of State and Government (HoSG) of the Republic of Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain underlined their strong commitment to European unity and its values of freedom, democracy and tolerance. The countries proposed the following priorities and measures: ensuring the internal and external security of Europe, reinforcing cooperation in the Mediterranean and with African countries, fostering growth and investment in Europe, strengthening programmes for youth and addressing the challenge of migration.

Athens Declaration 2016: <https://south-eurosummit.com/about/athens-declaration/>.

Main Events in 2025

- *1 January, Ljubljana:* Slovenia formally assumes the rotating annual Presidency of the MED-9 group for the first time since its inclusion. The Slovenian leadership outlines an agenda focused explicitly on economic resilience, macro-regional competitiveness, the green transition, inter-state energy connectivity, Western Balkan EU enlargement and youth empowerment.

<https://slovenia.si/excellence/slovenias-med9-presidency-a-stronger-mediterranean-for-a-stronger-europe>.

- *20 October, Portorož:* Slovenia hosts the 12th MED-9 Leaders' Summit. The summit brings together the nine MED-9 heads of government, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and a special regional guest, King Abdullah II of Jordan. Strategic discussions focus on long-term European industrial competitiveness, the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), cross-border energy market integration, and Middle East security dynamics. The resulting *Portorož Declaration* successfully reinforces southern European priorities within the broader EU legislative agenda.

www.gov.si/en/events/2025-10-20-med9-leaders-summit-in-portoroz/.