

Civil Society Perspectives on the Pact for the Mediterranean's Action Plan

23 July 2026

Albert Borschette Congress Center, Brussels

The [Pact for the Mediterranean](#) is founded on the principles of co-ownership, co-creation and shared responsibility. As the first iteration of the Pact's [Action Plan](#) enters its implementation phase, the European Commission is convening this meeting to gather the perspectives of civil society actors on possible priorities and approaches for future iterations of the Action Plan.

The event will provide a space for participants to share experience, expertise and field-based knowledge regarding opportunities, challenges and potential avenues for engagement across selected initiatives of the Action Plan: community preparedness and disaster-risk awareness under Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness; safe and effective community engagement under MED-SECURE; and inclusive entrepreneurship, social economy and decent job creation under StartUp4Med.

The event will bring together representatives from research institutions, think tanks, professional associations, social economy organisations, youth organisations, women-led organisations, community-based initiatives, as well as regional networks and platforms active across the Mediterranean region to explore how the initiatives of the Action Plan can be more informed, inclusive, and better tuned to the communities they engage.

PROGRAMME

09:00 - 09:30 Registration

09:30 - 10:00 Opening Session

Francisco GAZTELU MEZQUIRIZ, Director, North Africa (MENA.A), Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf, European Commission

Senén FLORENSA, Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean – IEMed

10:00 – 10:30 Setting the Scene

Juan NICOLAS, Team Leader, Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality II

Gemma AUBARELL, Director, Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean – IEMed

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 13:00 Parallel Focus Group Sessions

Focus Group 1: Community preparedness and disaster-risk awareness under Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness

The Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness initiative aims to strengthen Mediterranean civil protection cooperation, particularly on preparedness and response to wildfires and other major disasters, through institutional and technical cooperation with national civil protection authorities, including training, knowledge exchange, preparedness exercises, simulations and regional firefighting cooperation.

The session will explore how Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness can **draw on civil society knowledge to support realistic, inclusive and community-informed preparedness**. The discussion will focus on community awareness, preparedness gaps, trusted communication, inclusion of vulnerable groups, lessons from local practice, and practical formats through which civil society input can inform awareness, communication, preparedness and future reflection under the Pact Action Plan.

Facilitator:

- **Agnieszka MAJ**. Economist (Environment, Energy and Climate Change), Center for Social and Economic Research - CASE

Rapporteur:

- **Màriam LUTFI ROYO**. Board member, European Institute of the Mediterranean - IEMed

Focus Group 2: Safe and effective community engagement under MED-SECURE

The EU-MED Security Facility (MED-SECURE) aims to support security-sector governance and performance across the southern Mediterranean, in line with international standards and partner-country requests. The Facility primarily supports public institutions, including ministries of interior, police and relevant security-sector actors, through institutional support, regional exchange and community engagement.

The session **will explore how MED-SECURE can draw on civil society knowledge to support safe, realistic and trust-building community engagement by public security institutions**. The discussion will focus on civil society knowledge of community realities, the factors that make engagement credible and useful, lessons from national and sub-national experiences, inclusive perspectives from women, youth, independent media actors and local practitioners, and the risks, safeguards, formats and practical conditions needed to make community engagement safe and meaningful.

Facilitator:

- **Iyad ALJABER**. Policy Expert and Mashrek coordinator. Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean (CSFM) – DAI

Rapporteur:

- **Valentina GRUARIN**. PhD Candidate, University of Catania

Focus Group 3: Inclusive entrepreneurship, social economy and decent job creation under StartUp4Med

StartUp4Med supports inclusive growth and decent job creation by strengthening start-ups, entrepreneurship ecosystems, access to finance and policy frameworks, with attention to youth-led and women-led businesses, social enterprises, local actors and cooperatives.

The session will focus on **how StartUp4Med can better connect its entrepreneurship, access-to-finance and social economy agenda with the perspectives of women, young people and social partners**. The discussion will explore how regional instruments can better reach actors facing practical barriers to finance, investment readiness, mentoring, markets, formalisation and institutional recognition. The session aims to identify realistic ways for civil society, social economy actors and social partners to contribute local knowledge, outreach, mapping, feedback and dialogue, while supporting inclusive entrepreneurship and decent job creation across the Mediterranean.

Facilitator:

- **Alessia TIBOLLO**. Regional Coordinator, COSPE

Rapporteur:

- **Yasmine FALFOUL**. Project Manager, Tunisian Center for Social Entrepreneurship - TCSE

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 14:30 Plenary: Main takeaways of the breakout session

14:30 – 15:00 Concluding remarks

Francisco GAZTELU MEZQUIRIZ, Director, North Africa (MENA.A), Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf, European Commission

Roger ALBINYANA, Managing Director, European Institute of the Mediterranean – IEMed

15:00 Departure of Participants