Empowering Mediterranean Youth for Climate Action: Showcasing Interreg NEXT MED Eco-youth Projects

Side event

COP31 - Antalya

Mediterranean Pavilion

14 November 2026

1:00-2:00 PM (Antalya Time)

Agenda

#everythingMEDpossible

The Interreg NEXT MED Programme is the only Interreg Programme that has financed specific cooperation projects for the youth. Under the name of "Youth-oriented projects" and "Eco-youth projects" the Programme has approved 17 projects led by the Mediterranean youth and for the Mediterranean youth accounting for over € 20 million.

The majority of these projects are addressing challenges linked to climate change and the Programme has set high expectations on them to find out how EU Institutions or any other relevant institutional donor can empower the youth adapting the traditional instruments used for decades in territorial cooperation.

While it will take some time for these projects to finish their implementation, the Programme is already thinking about how we can improve our experience and on the type of projects or cooperation activities that would suit better the youth in addressing climate change.

The objective of the event is to present this novel initiative that has put the youth in the heart of Mediterranean cooperation and fight against climate through direct responsibilities (including financial) and to engage youth present at COP31 into the debate of how to commit the Mediterranean youth entities into regional cooperation through an interactive and innovative format.

Agenda

0'-05'. **Welcome and opening remarks**, **Alejandro Lafarga**, *Interreg NEXT MED Programme (Moderator)*

05'-10'. The **Interreg NEXT MED Eco-Youth Projects**: Empowering Mediterranean Youth to tackle Climate Challenges, **Alessandro Pischedda**, *Interreg NEXT MED*

10'-15'- **Beyond Awareness: turning youth capacity into climate action** across the Mediterranean - **Emma Fernández**, *biologist and Energy & Climate Action Youth Delegate at the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM),*

15'-20'- **Climate Finance in the Mediterranean Region:** What financial instruments can be developed to promote greater youth inclusion in climate finance? - **Emirhan Tekin**, *economist and Energy & Climate Action Youth Delegate at the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM),*

20'-25'- **Lessons Learned from the Field**: Insights from an active partner in three Interreg NEXT MED Eco-Youth projects. **Youssef Aroog**, *President of the Mediterranean Youth Foundation*

25'-30'- **Climate Negotiations Explained**: How Young People Can Shape the Climate Agenda - **Ms. Elsy Milan**, *UN Climate Change Negotiator*

30'-35'- **Youth as partners in regional cooperation**: lessons from the Youth Climate Diplomacy Forum- **Ms. Eirini Sampson**, *Youth Climate Diplomacy Forum*

35'-55'- **Round table:** Identifying priority actions for future projects. Interactive exchange with the audience:

55'-60': **Closing remarks**