

## EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE 2025

FROM VISION TO ACTION: REINFORCING CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT FOR AN INCLUSIVE MEDITERRANEAN

26 November 2025, Palau Macaya, Barcelona

The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Barcelona Process** represents a decisive opportunity to rethink the foundations of the **Euro-Mediterranean Partnership** and chart a new course for the region. The EuroMed Civil Society Conference 2025 will take place in **Barcelona on 26 November 2025**, as a **side event of the UfM Regional Forum**. Organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Government of Catalonia, and co-funded by the European Commission (DG MENA), the conference is framed within this moment of strategic transition, with a view to **setting the basis for an enhanced role of Civil Society within Euro-Mediterranean relations**.

The Conference seeks to build on the momentum of this pivotal milestone, bringing together **representatives of Euro-Mediterranean networks, programmes, and trans-Mediterranean alliances**, alongside representatives from the **UfM, the European Commission, and key regional institutions**.

The main objective of this event is to provide a platform to **reaffirm the strategic role of civil society** in the next phase of Euro-Med cooperation in terms of governance and participation. Around one hundred Euro-Mediterranean academic, professional, social organisations and economic actors, are expected to showcase how civil society's role has evolved from consultation to co-design and co-implementation and will examine new forms of partnership to better contribute to the **European Commission's New Pact for the Mediterranean** and the **UfM's new regional strategy**.

Three decades after the 1995 Barcelona Process, civil society has become central to an inclusive and resilient Mediterranean. In 2025, the Union for the Mediterranean's Strategic Vision 2025 has been shaped through an open consultation co-organised with IEMed in Barcelona (February 2025), bringing civil society voices directly into the strategy-making process. In parallel, the European Commission's new DG MENA is preparing a New Pact for the Mediterranean. IEMed/EuroMeSCo has injected diverse stakeholder input into this Pact through its 2024–2025 project, notably the 15<sup>th</sup> EuroMed Survey (with responses from 24 countries) and a series of Consultation Circles across the region, supported by DG MENA's Civil Society Facility for the Mediterranean. Both frameworks converge on co-ownership, inclusive governance, and partnerships that extend beyond governments to include financial institutions, networks, and communities of practice. The EU commitment for an in-depth engagement with civil society has only been reinforced under the recently launched Pact for the Mediterranean ([Joint communication on the Pact for the Mediterranean - Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf](#)).

This convergence sets the stage for the EuroMed Civil Society Conference 2025, to convene as a platform linking civil society actors with institutional stakeholders. Building on IEMed's knowledge-broker role and the EuroMeSCo network, the full-day programme combines high-level dialogues, thematic panels, and interactive working groups—run in plenary and parallel breakouts—to distil successful models of collaborative governance and to reaffirm the people-to-people approach envisaged in 1995 as key to addressing today's regional and global challenges.

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### Draft programme

*Simultaneous interpretation in Spanish, English, French, Arabic and Catalan is offered for the plenary sessions*

08:30 – 09:00 | **Registration and welcome coffee**

09:00 – 09:45 | Opening Session: **In Dialogue – Reinforcing Partnership**

This session will set the tone institutionally, marking the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process. The participant institutions will present their **shared vision for an inclusive Mediterranean** and formally acknowledge the **pivotal role of civil society** going forward. Key themes will include the rationale behind the UfM's Future Vision and the New Pact for the Mediterranean, and how both **envisage a stronger partnership with civil society**.

#### Institutional interventions

**Francisco Gaztelu Mesquiriz**, Director for North Africa, Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG MENA), European Commission (*video message*)

**Jaume Duch**, Minister for European Union and External Action, Government of Catalonia

**Nasser Kamel**, Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean

**Cecilia Garcia Gasalla**, Director of Cooperation with Africa, the Arab World and Asia, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and Cooperation

**Senén Florensa**, Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean

#### Facilitator of the session

**Anna Dorangricchia**, Programme Manager Gender Equality, Social and Civil Affairs Division, Union for the Mediterranean

09:45 – 11:15 | Plenary Session 1: **Euro-Mediterranean Governance with Civil Society – From Consultation to Co-Creation**

In this session, a panel of experts and practitioners will explore how the Euro-Med governance mechanisms can become more participatory and accountable by integrating civil society. Panellists will discuss the current state of play and present ideas for new governance models.

The discussion will also tackle how to measure success in this new approach (e.g. evaluating how “people-centred” and “participatory” our cooperation is). Crucially, the panel will identify obstacles (political, bureaucratic, or cultural) to structured inclusion and how to overcome them. The outcome of this session should be a set of recommended governance innovations – both formal (institutional changes) and informal (practices like info-sharing, shadow reporting by Civil Society actors, etc.) – to be addressed in the new Euro-Mediterranean agendas.

#### Speakers

**Roger Albinyana**, Managing Director, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

**Nadim Houry**, Director, Arab Reform Initiative (Civil Society leader)

**Neila Akrimi-Kemperman**, Director, International Development Center for the Innovative Local Governance (CILG – VNGi)

**Anna Dorangricchia**, Programme Manager Gender Equality, Social and Civil Affairs Division, Union for the Mediterranean

#### Facilitator

**Juan Enrique Nicolás**, Team Leader, CSFM

#### Discussants

**Philip Holzapfel**, non-resident fellow, CIDOB

**Mayssara Abdelkarim**, Co-president, Mediterranean Youth Council (MYC)

**Gihan Abou Zeid**, Arab NGO Network for Development

**Lurdes Vidal**, Team Leader, El-Hiwar Project

**Alícia Pérez-Porro**, Head of Policy Engagement & Institutional Relations, CREAM; Mediterranean Alliance of Think Tanks on Climate Change (MATTCCh)

**Oriol Barba**, Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation

11:15 – 11:30 | Coffee Break

**11:30 – 13:00 | Plenary Session 2: Inter-Institutional Cooperation – Building Bridges for Civil Society**

This roundtable will bring together Euro-Med institutions and networks to strengthen collaboration with civil society. Discussions will address mapping roles to avoid duplication, aligning UfM strategies with EU civil society support, and exploring how EU funding and UfM labelling can reinforce one another. The session will also highlight best practices such as CSFM's structured dialogues, aiming to identify actionable ideas for a stronger ecosystem where regional, European, and network actors work in concert to empower civil society. The objective of this session is to identify, actionable ideas on partnership between institutions – essentially a stronger **ecosystem approach** where all facilitators of civil society (regional, European, and network-based) work in concert

**Speakers**

**Josep Ferré**, Executive Director, Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF)

**Arnau Teixidor**, CSOs program manager, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN MED)

**Lara Panzani**, Desk for the Balcan Area; YOU(th)CARE Project Manager, COSPE

**Denise Mazzolani**, Head of Council of Europe regional office for the MENA region

**Facilitator**

**Iyad Aljaber**, Policy expert, CSFM

**Discussants**

**Davide Strangis**, Acting Secretary General, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CRPM) / MedCoop Alliance

**Rasha Fityan**, Executive Director, Politics and Society Institute

**Alessandra Sensi**, Head of Sector - Environment, Green and Blue Economy, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

**Zied Bousen**, Senior researcher, Pandora Consulting

**Michael Scoullios**, Chairman, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE)

**Sergio Ponsá**, Interreg Euro-MED Innovative Sustainable Economy

13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch Break (Networking Lunch)

14:00 – 15:30 | Session 3: **Parallel Working Groups – Civil Society Contributions to Key Regional Priorities**

In this segment, the conference will break into **three parallel thematic working groups**, each focusing on the priority sectors where civil society's role is critical and aligns with both UfM and EU agendas. These thematic priorities – distilled from the UfM's focus areas and the Pact's consultation priorities – will include:

### **Working Group 1: Inclusive Economic Development**

Views from the field

**Alessandro Miraglia**, MedWaves, Cat4Governance, ISE Mission – Interreg Euro-Med

**Asmae Diani**, Director, Moroccan Centre for Research and Studies on Social Enterprise (CMERES)

Facilitator

**Francesca Annetti**, COSPE

Rapporteur

**Jérémie Fosse**, EcoUnion

### **Working Group 2: Climate Action**

Views from the field

**Sarah Rabie**, Climate, Peace, and Security Specialist, CGIAR

**Filomena Annunziata**, Policy Advisor Mediterranean Policy, ECCO

Facilitator

**Sarine Karajerjian**, Program Director, Environmental Politics program, Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)

Rapporteur

**Ahmed Yassin**, Egypt Country Manager, Enaleia

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#### Working Group 3: People-to-people

##### Views from the field

**Najib Mattar**, UfM Consultant Youth Mainstreaming Plan, Independent Consultant

**Anne-Laurence Pastorini**, Project Manager, UNIMED

##### Facilitator

**Giulia Dimonopoli**, Project Analyst, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

##### Rapporteur

**Giulia Sostero**, Head of the ASWAT: Africa, SouthWest Asia, and Türkiye Department, European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)

#### 15:30 – 16:15 | Reporting Back plenary session

This final plenary session brings all participants back together to conclude the conference. Rapporteurs from each thematic working group will share the highlights and priority recommendations emerging from their discussions. A facilitated exchange will then allow participants to reflect on common threads across the groups and explore synergies. The session will also mark the launch of a **EuroMed Civil Society Engagement Process** as a longer-term platform for dialogue, capacity support and participatory input in terms of UfM monitoring mechanisms, implementing provisions of the Pact for the Mediterranean and related EU programming and IEMed knowledge platform.

##### Restitution / recommendations from the day

**Juan Enrique Nicolás**, Team Leader, CSFM; **Jérémie Fosse**, EcoUnion; **Ahmed Yassin**, Egypt Country Manager, Enaleia; **Giulia Sostero**, ALDA

##### Final remarks

**Senén Florensa**, Executive President, European Institute of the Mediterranean

**Katerina Wolfova**, Head of Unit, Egypt, Pact for the Mediterranean, DG MENA, European Commission (*online*)

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**Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Secretary of European, Multilateral and Development Cooperation Affairs, Government of Catalonia

**Amb. Meltem Büyükkarakaş**, Deputy Secretary General, Social and Civil Affairs Division, Union for the Mediterranean

### Facilitator

**Gemma Aubarell**, Director of the Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

### Conference's Coordination and Reporting

**Mariona Rico**, Programme Manager, Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, IEMed

### List of participants

