# EuroMed Civil Society Conference 2025

## From vision to action: Reinforcing Civil Society engagement for an inclusive Mediterranean

26 November 2025, Palau Macaya, Barcelona

**Organised by:**

Generalitat de Catalunya
Government of Catalonia

IEMed.
European Institute of the Mediterranean

Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

**Cu-funded by:**

European Commission

**The 30th 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) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in collaboration with the Government of Catalonia and co-funded by the European Commission (DG MENA), 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 15th 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 conference will showcase how civil society's role has evolved from consultation to co-design and co-implementation and will examine new forms of partnership for the next phase of Euro-Med cooperation. 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.

**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. In a conversational format, the UfM and EU leadership will discuss 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**.

**9:45 – 11:15 | Session 1: *Euro-Mediterranean Governance with Civil Society – From Consultation to Co-Creation*** *(Plenary Panel)*

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.

**11:15 – 11:30 | Coffee Break**

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

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

**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**
(Issues: job creation, entrepreneurship including social/solidary economy, digital economy, reducing socio-economic gaps, migrants as creators of innovation)

**Working Group 2: Climate Action**
(Issues: climate change adaptation, just transition, water management, climate migration)

**Working Group 3: People-to-people**
(Issues: education quality, brain drain, civic engagement of youth, intercultural dialogue, women empowerment, inclusion, community development)

These themes mirror the **common sectors of engagement** that both the UfM and the EU's Pact have identified. This alignment provides a strong basis for cooperation: **civil society can serve as the bridge connecting high-level policy goals with community needs and innovative solutions** in each of these sectors. Indeed, the consultation processes have demonstrated that Civil Society actors are not only demanding action but also offering expertise and partnerships – from drafting policy recommendations to piloting projects on the ground – to achieve tangible progress in these areas. Civil society's message to the institutions is clear: **make us partners, not just beneficiaries**.

Outcomes from these discussions will feed directly into defining **sector-specific roles for civil society** in the Euro-Med context and will be reported in the next session.

In a facilitated discussion, groups will work around overarching questions (common to each group, tailored to theme) related to the role, challenges and solutions of Civil Society actors in co-designing, mainstreaming and monitoring mechanism of public policies.

**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