

SOUTHERN EUROPE MEDITERRANEAN NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 1 · Third Quarter 2026

Editorial

*It is a pleasure to present the first issue of the **Southern Europe Mediterranean Newsletter**, a new publication of the Mediterranean Arc Network of Economic and Social Councils. Conceived as a platform for information, reflection and analysis, the newsletter will provide regular updates on developments affecting our territories.*

The Mediterranean is a shared region of remarkable economic, social, cultural and environmental richness. At the same time, it faces increasingly complex challenges, ranging from the green transition and climate change to the management of natural resources, energy security, mobility, innovation and social cohesion. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated responses and a shared vision that goes beyond administrative borders.

Through this newsletter, we aim to bring our members and the wider public a selection of the most significant initiatives, policies and developments affecting the Mediterranean, with particular attention to issues that influence sustainable development and the well-being of its territories. Our ambition is to provide reliable and accessible information that contributes to a better understanding of the Mediterranean while promoting knowledge exchange among the Economic and Social Councils that make up the Network.
We hope this publication will become a valuable tool for strengthening dialogue, fostering cooperation and helping us work together towards a more prosperous, sustainable and cohesive Mediterranean.

Juan Marín
President of the Mediterranean Arc Network of Economic and Social Councils
President of the Economic and Social Council of Andalusia

The Mediterranean: A Shared European Priority

The Mediterranean continues to consolidate its position as one of the European Union's key strategic regions. The Euro-Mediterranean agenda is currently shaped by three main priorities: the green transition, regional security and economic connectivity.



Throughout 2026, the European Commission has accelerated the implementation of the new “Pact for the Mediterráneo”, an initiative designed to strengthen cooperation with North focusing on energy, innovation, migration and logistics.

Key Developments

Brussels launches the first projects under the Pact for the Mediterranean

he European Commission has launched 21 pilot initiatives under the new Pact for the Mediterranean. These include:

- The establishment of a future Mediterranean University.
- The development of green maritime corridors.
- Enhanced cooperation in energy and digital transformation.
- Joint civil protection and crisis management systems.

The programme is structured around three pillars:

- People and Innovation.
- Sustainable and Integrated Economies.
- Regional Security and Resilience.

Union for the Mediterranean adopts its 2030 Climate Disaster Action Plan

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has formally adopted its 2030 Action Plan for the management of wildfires and climate-related risks.

The plan prioritises:

- Early warning systems.
- Regional coordination.
- Shared civil protection.
- Response to wildfires and extreme weather events.

The initiative responds to the increasing frequency of wildfires, droughts and severe climate events across the Mediterranean basin. ([SWI swissinfo.ch]).

Concerns over the state of Mediterranean fisheries

Representatives of the Mediterranean fisheries sector have expressed concern about the economic and social impact of European restrictions on bottom trawling.

Following extensive negotiations among Mediterranean Member States, the European Union ultimately agreed to allow 143 fishing days for 2026.

The Mediterranean and European energy security

Mediterranean cooperation is now recognised as a strategic European priority. The MED9 countries (Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Malta, Cyprus, Croatia and Slovenia) have strengthened their coordination in response to:

- Tensions in the Middle East.
- Maritime security.
- The protection of energy infrastructure.
- Migration and climate-related risks.

Green corridors and Mediterranean ports

Marseille hosted the MEDPorts Forum 2026 on 20-21 May, the annual meeting of the Mediterranean ports association, held this year under the theme *Mediterranean Ports*.

Port authorities and logistics companies called for stronger action to promote:

- Maritime decarbonisation.
- Green shipping corridors.
- Port digitalisation.
- Logistics resilience.

The Port of Algeciras and other major hubs in the Western Mediterranean also called for faster implementation of the TEN-T railway network and the Mediterranean Corridor.

Mediterranean Agenda 2026

Upcoming priorities:

- Implementation of the Pact for the Mediterranean.
- Development of new green energy corridors.
- Maritime security and migration.
- Coastal climate adaptation.
- Euro-Mediterranean university cooperation.
- Modernisation of ports and rail infrastructure.



Selected Mediterranean Socioeconomic Indicators

Indicator	2026 Situation
Mediterranean region population	Approximately 530 million
Share of global maritime trade passing through the Mediterranean	Approximately 20%
Average regional temperature	+1.5°C compared with the pre-industrial era
International tourism	Recovery exceeding 90% of pre-COVID levels
Youth unemployment in the southern Mediterranean	Above 25% in several countries
Renewable energy	Strong growth in solar and wind power
Mediterranean migration	Record mortality on maritime routes in 2026

Sources: UfM, OECD, European Commission, IOM. [Investing.com]

The Mediterranean in the News



Mar Menor: A Symbol of the Mediterranean Ecological Crisis
Ten years after the so-called “green soup” episode, the Mar Menor remains one of the clearest examples of environmental degradation in the Western Mediterranean.

The Spanish authorities continue to implement a €675 million restoration programme, although scientists have warned of renewed risks of anoxic episodes during the summer of 2026. ([El País]).

Useful Links

- European Commission
- Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- European Parliament
- European Investment Bank
- OECD
- Interreg NEXT MED