

Grasping the Scope of Expectations for the Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood

The first block of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey aimed to define which challenges respondents expect the renewed partnership to address and what Mediterranean resources and actors the European Union (EU) should mobilise for this endeavour. It also sought to collect respondents' assessments of the achievements and shortfalls of the partnership as well as their recommendations regarding the changes that should be implemented in the context of its renewal.

Main findings:

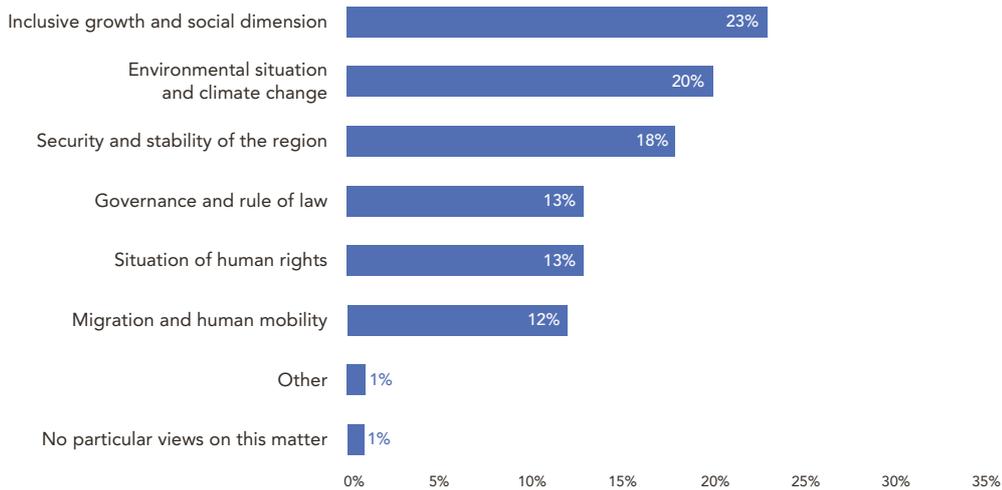
- There is a strong consensus amongst respondents of the Survey that inclusive growth and the social dimension is the challenge for which greater efforts are needed in the context of a renewed partnership between the EU and Southern Neighbourhood Countries (SNCs).
- Promoting an inclusive socioeconomic agenda for the benefit of youth, women and vulnerable groups is also seen as an opportunity that should be seized to give a new impetus to the partnership in the current situation.
- Respondents overall recognise the EU's contribution to sustainable and inclusive economic development as its main added value. EU respondents are more prone to highlight the EU's ambitions for climate neutrality than respondents from southern neighbourhood countries.
- Overall, environmental and climate change tend to be perceived as more pressing issues by EU respondents than by respondents from southern neighbourhood countries.

- The United Nations (UN) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) are by and large deemed the most effective partners for the EU in dealing with most of the challenges posed by the partnership, ahead of other regional organisations involving neighbouring regions (e.g. African Union, Gulf Cooperation Council).
- To further support regional (UfM) and sub-regional frameworks (e.g. Western Mediterranean Forum), before mentioning the need to increase its financial support, a majority of respondents were of the opinion that the EU should encourage the frameworks to be more inclusive by engaging non-state actors, academic institutions and youths.
- Corruption, insufficient governance and institutional capacity are identified by respondents from both shores as the main constraint on cooperation between the EU and its southern partners.
- The EU's support to civil society, diversity, culture and education is perceived by respondents from both shores as the EU's most successful action in the southern neighbourhood.
- By 2030 the EU partnership with its neighbourhood will need to be more inclusive in order to be perceived as successful.

Defining the Extent of Challenges and Opportunities

Question 1 of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey invited respondents to choose and rank three top challenges for which greater efforts should be made in the framework of a renewed partnership between the EU and its southern partners. Almost a quarter of respondents (23%), and amongst them a very large proportion of civil society representatives and experts, ranked inclusive growth and the social dimension as the first priority challenge to be addressed. The second most prioritised challenge (20%) is the one that focuses on the environmental situation and climate change, particularly favoured by policy-makers. Respondents were less inclined to prioritise migration and human mobility, the human rights situation, governance and the rule of law.

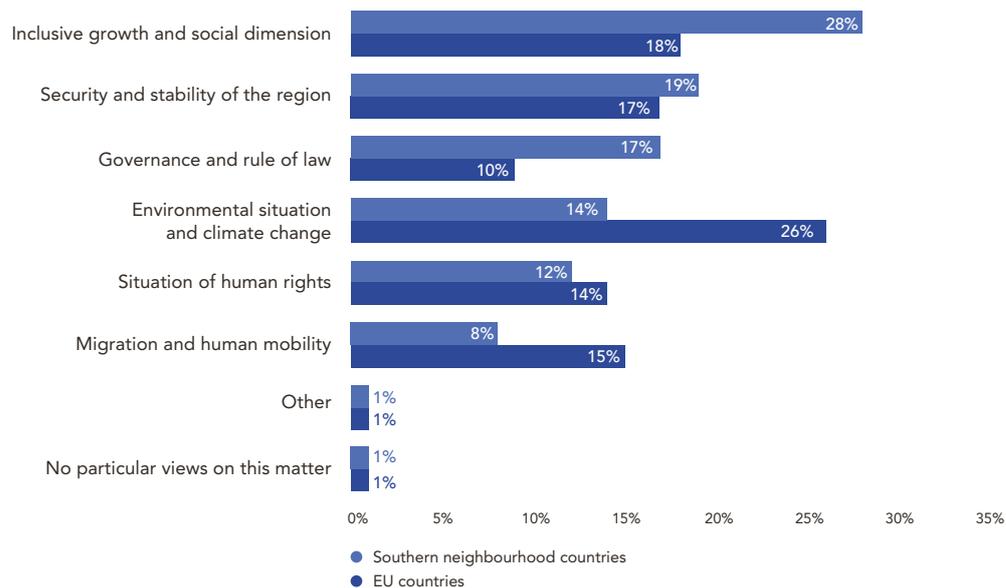
Graph 1: Q.1 For which of the following challenges are greater efforts needed? (Ranked as first option)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

There are significant differences between the patterns of answers from southern and northern participants. For instance, southern neighbourhood respondents prioritise the challenge of inclusive growth and the social dimension to a larger extent (28%) than EU respondents (18%). Conversely, the challenge of the environmental situation and climate change is significantly more important for EU participants (26%) than for southern respondents (14%) (see graph 2). In addition, EU respondents (15%) are more prone to prioritise migration and human mobility than southern respondents (8%).

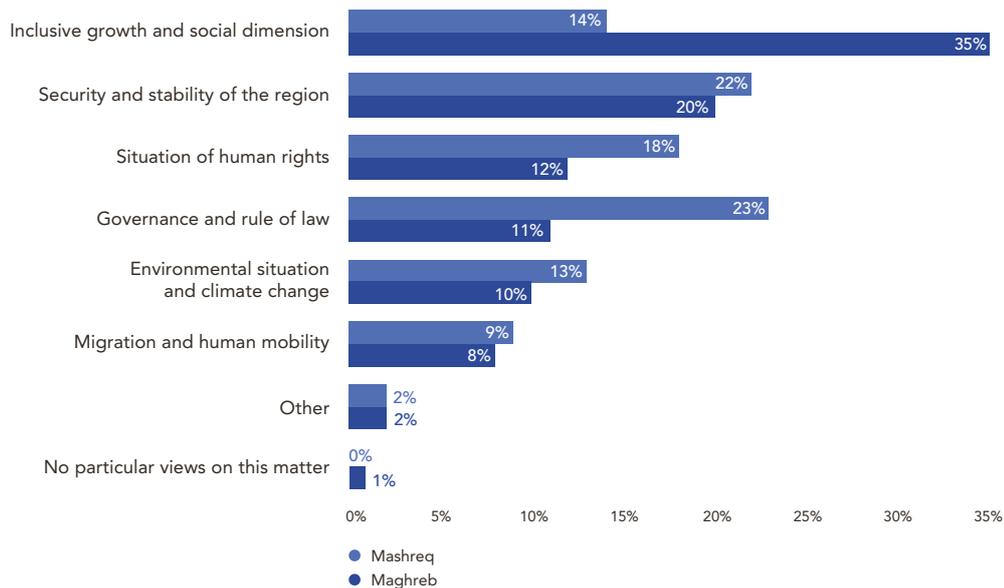
Graph 2: Q.1 For which of the following challenges are greater efforts needed? (Ranked as first option)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Another notable aspect of the breakdown of answers is that Maghreb respondents prioritise the challenge of inclusive growth and social dimension to a much larger extent (35%) than Mashreq respondents (14%) (see graph 2b). Conversely, the latter prioritise the challenge posed by governance and the rule of law to a larger extent (23%) than Maghreb respondents (11%).

Graph 2b: Q.1 For which of the following challenges are greater efforts needed? (Ranked as first option)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

In their comments, some respondents highlighted the inter-relationship between all the challenges listed:

Tous les défis cités sont étroitement liés et interdépendants, mais sans une croissance économique inclusive et sans aborder la dimension sociale il sera difficile de relever les autres défis.

— French respondent

All the areas abovementioned are very important; however, if the top three are addressed, then the rest will automatically follow.

— The West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Institute

Other respondents hinted at more specific aspects related to these challenges:

Migration should be tackled from an “inclusive growth and social dimension” perspective, and not from a securitisation angle.

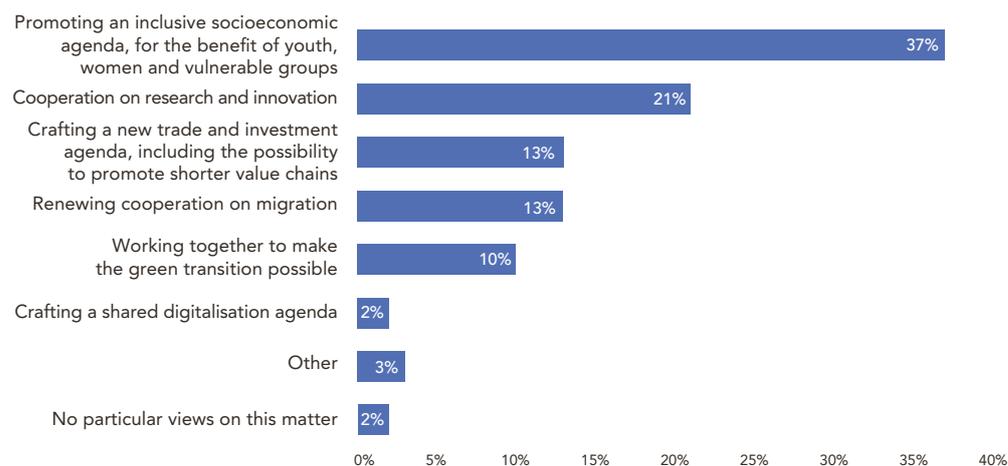
— Spanish respondent

Le principal problème au Moyen-Orient est le chômage, l'endettement et la création d'emplois pour les jeunes. Et ne pas laisser la jeunesse au vide, aux groupes extrémistes et terroristes. Bien entendu, sans stabilité, la région n'aurait pas une économie florissante. Et s'il y a un Etat de droit qui respecte les institutions, les lois et les valeurs, les choses seront excellentes.

— Hashemite University - International Relations and Strategic Studies Program

Building on the challenges identified in Question 1, **Question 2** invited respondents to identify the main opportunities to be seized in the context of a renewed partnership. Echoing the results of Q.1, more than one third of respondents (37%), including a majority of respondents representing civil society, ranked the promotion of an inclusive socioeconomic agenda, for the benefit of youths, women and vulnerable groups as the first opportunity to seize.

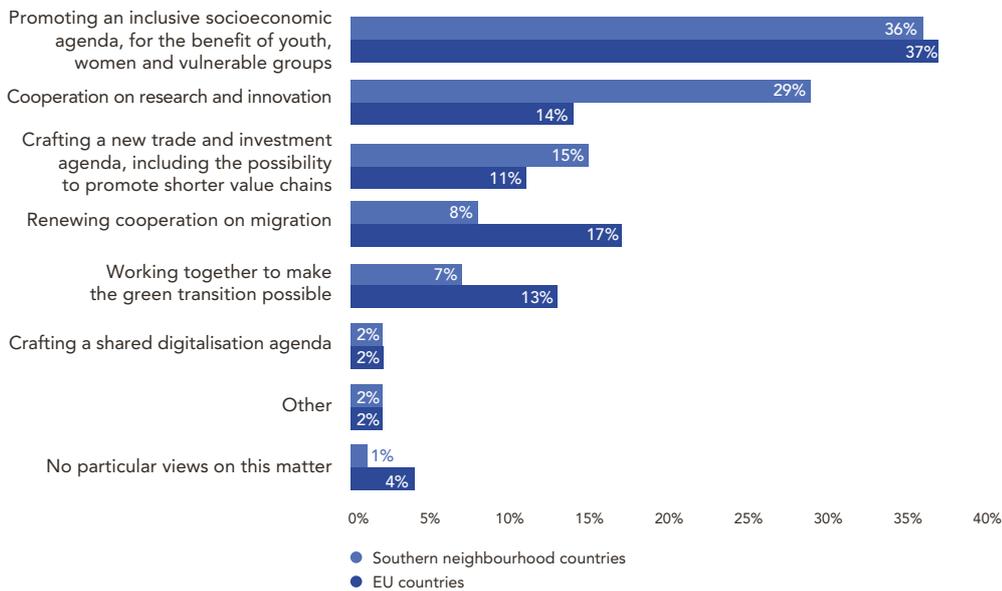
Graph 3: Q.2 While dealing with these challenges, what are the main opportunities that the European Union and its southern partners should jointly seize? (Ranked as first option)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

The ranking of top opportunities to be seized was quite similar on both shores of the Mediterranean. Interestingly enough, cooperation on research and innovation was ranked almost twice as high a priority by participants from the South (29%) as by those from the North (14%) (see graph 4). The differences of patterns in the ranking of EU respondents and respondents from southern neighbourhood countries with regards to the green transition and migration are the same as those observed in the first question.

Graph 4: Q.2 While dealing with these challenges, what are the main opportunities that the European Union and its southern partners should jointly seize? (Ranked as first option)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

In their comments, some respondents focused on inclusiveness as a method of co-operation and policy-making:

Institutionnaliser un mécanisme formel de dialogue entre la Commission européenne et le voisinage sud de la Méditerranée qui inclut des acteurs de la société civile pour une collaboration fructueuse à long terme.

— Majalat project

Reinforcing cooperation at all levels (from local to national to Mediterranean) between all actors (public, private, governmental and non-governmental) to reach a healthy and resilient Mediterranean Sea.

— Mediterranean Protected Areas Network (MedPAN)

Identifying Relevant Pathways and Actors to Enhance Cooperation

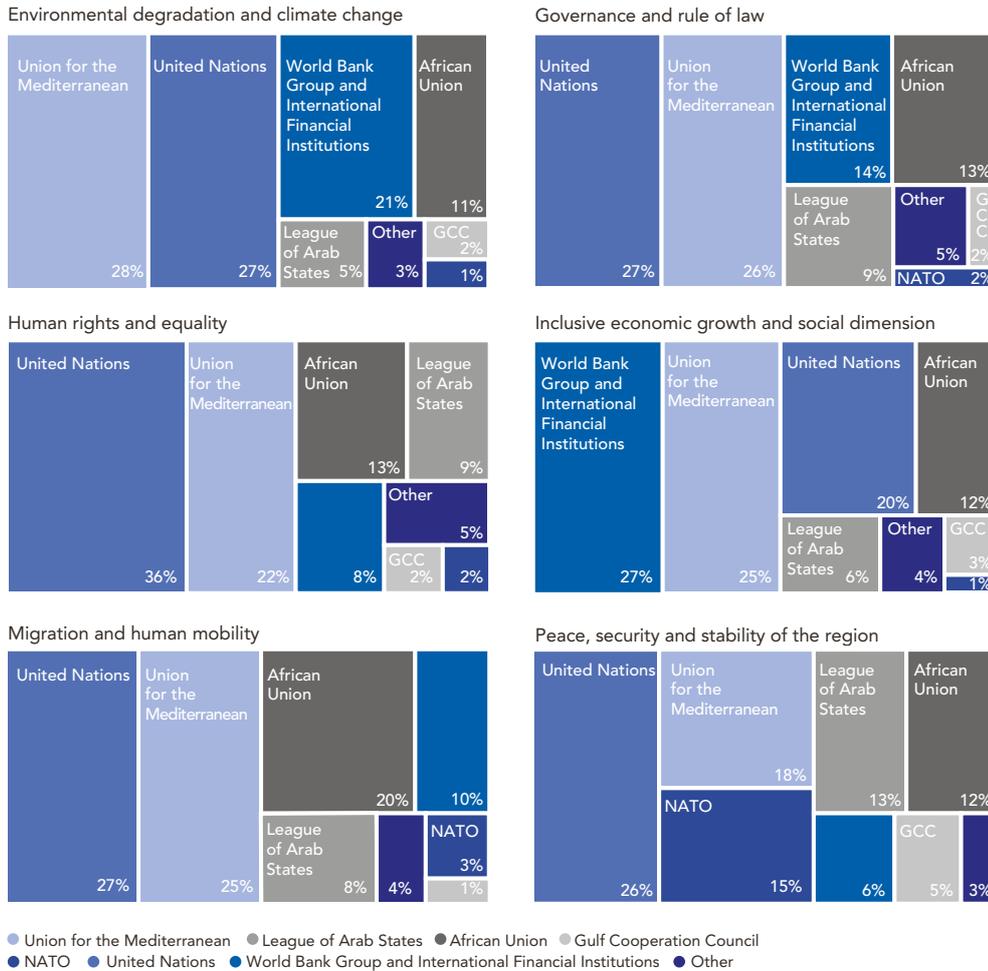
Questions 3 and 4 intended to highlight the salience of regional and international partners and to identify which pathways of cooperation the EU should support in the framework of its cooperation with the southern neighbourhood countries.

In **Question 3**, respondents identified which organisation would be most effective for the EU to partner with to deal with each of the challenges identified previously. The UN was most favoured by respondents with regards to challenges such as human rights and equality (36%), governance and rule of law (27%), migration (27%) as well as peace, security and stability in the region (26%). The World Bank Group and International Financial Institutions have been chosen as most effective partner regarding the challenge of inclusive economic growth and social dimension (27%). Finally, the UfM had, for each challenge listed, significantly high occurrences in the respondents' answers. It was ranked first concerning environmental degradation and climate change (28%).

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is mostly mentioned in reference to peace, security and stability in the region, as it is respondents' third most favoured partner in this area, right behind the UN and the UfM.

On the other hand, other regional subgroupings involving southern neighbourhood countries, such as the League of Arab States, and some of their own neighbours, such as the African Union (AU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), lag significantly behind in the respondents' rankings. Amongst these, the AU, although comparatively less favoured by respondents, is recognised as more effective with regards to the challenge of migration than other challenges (see graph 5).

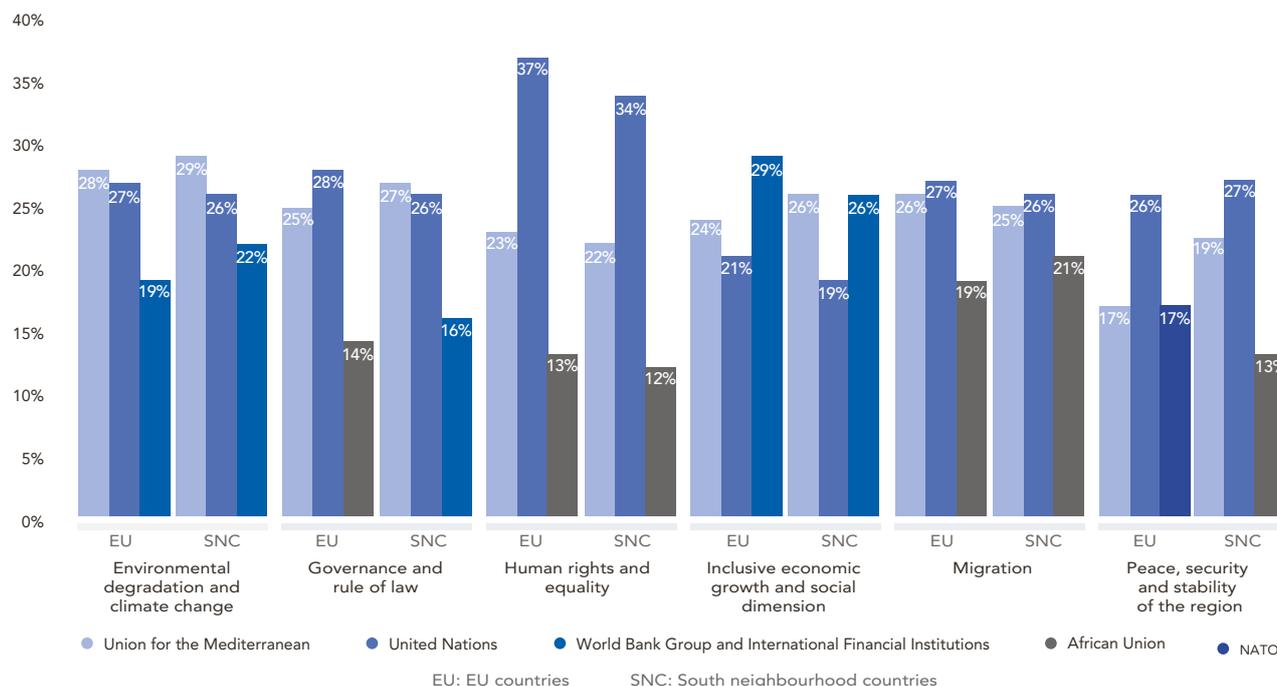
Graph 5: Q.3 Most effective regional and multilateral partner(s) for the European Union in dealing with:



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Taking a closer look at the breakdown of answers on both shores, patterns of responses are rather homogeneous, apart from two specific results. On the one hand, while respondents from both shores highlight the World Bank Group and International Financial Institutions as the most effective partner in dealing with inclusive economic growth and social dimension, EU respondents do so to a more significant extent than respondents from southern neighbourhood countries, who elevate them at the same level as the UfM. On the other hand, with regards to the challenge of governance and rule of law, southern neighbourhood respondents have slightly favoured the UfM over the UN whereas for EU country respondents, the UN stands out more clearly in the lead (see graph 6).

Graph 6: Q.3 Most effective regional and multilateral partner(s) for the European Union in dealing with:

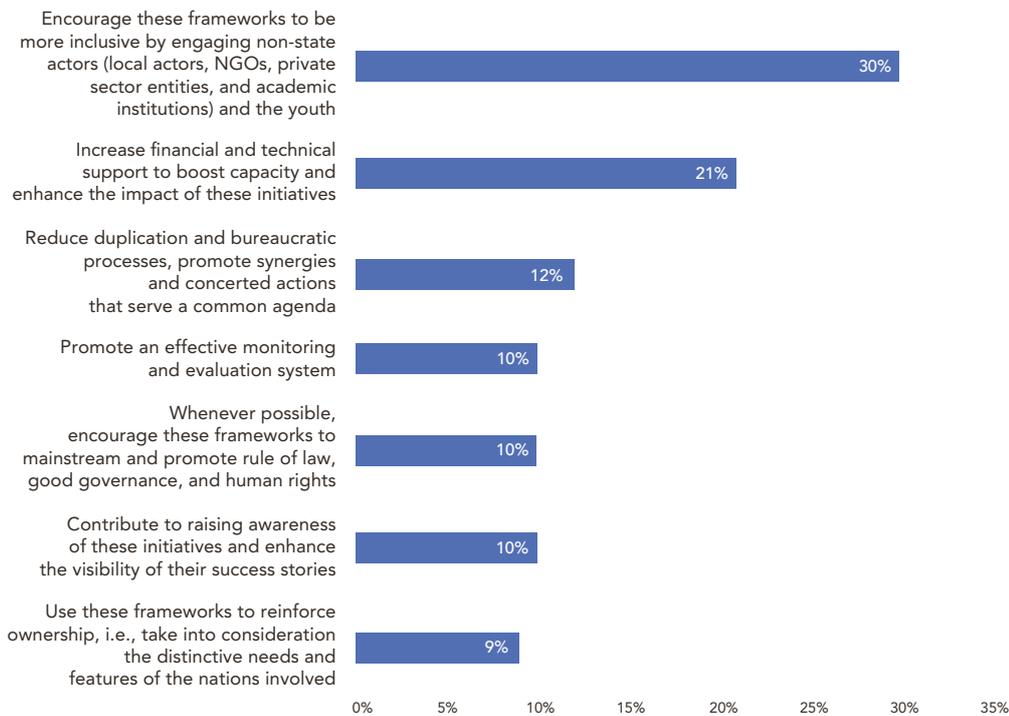


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Question 4 let respondents share their point of view on what the EU could do to further support regional and sub-regional frameworks – such as the UfM, the 5+5 Dialogue, the WestMED initiative, the EastMed Gas Forum or the Agadir Agreement – as well as their potential in addressing the challenges of the Mediterranean region.

This question was open-ended, i.e. respondents were invited to formulate their answer without having to choose among pre-defined categories. The following picture emerges from the analysis of all answers. Almost one third of all respondents' answers (30%) referred in one way or another to the necessity to encourage the frameworks to be more inclusive by engaging non-state actors, including local actors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector entities, academic institutions and youths. Meanwhile, 21% of respondents recommended increasing financial and technical support to boost capacity and thereby enhance the impact of these initiatives. The remaining answers were rather evenly distributed amongst four other categories developed on the basis of the open-ended answers to the question (see graph 7).

Graph 7: Q.4 What could the European Union do to further support these institutional frameworks and their potential in addressing the challenges in the region? (Categories developed from the open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Some answers provided further details on the kind of actions to be taken by the EU with regards to this specific aspect of the cooperation:

The EU could use its leverage as a trade partner for the promotion of and respect for human rights (including political-civil and socioeconomic rights) and international law.

— Western Sahara Resource Watch

As per my perspective, the European Union should be more inclusive in its policies as up to now all it has created is a division of 'us' versus 'them'. The EU should further foster the cooperation beyond the EU states.

— Albanian respondent

L'UE devrait limiter le nombre des initiatives et essayer d'harmoniser les objectifs de celles existantes ainsi que les soutenir financièrement.

— Moroccan respondent

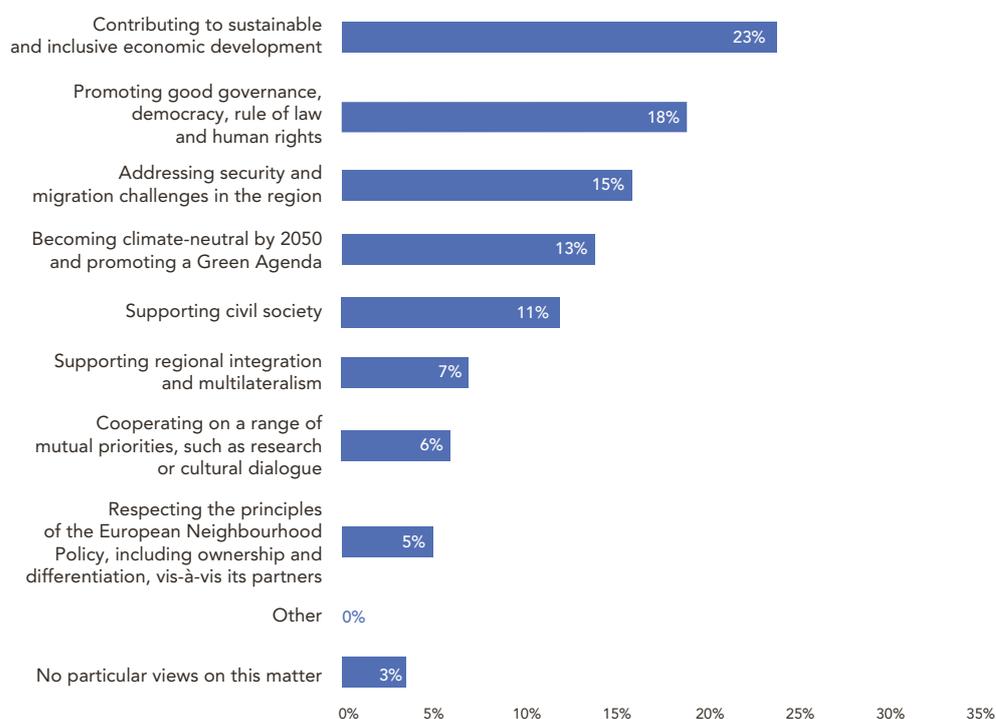
Assessing the European Union's Actions and Perspectives

Question 5 of the Survey invited respondents to choose and rank three options which represent the EU's added value compared to other global players increasingly involved in the Mediterranean region.

Almost one third of all respondents (23%) – with an even distribution of answers between experts, policy-makers and civil society representatives – designated the EU's contribution to sustainable and inclusive economic development first, just preceding the EU's promotion of good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights (18%). This latter option was preferred by a larger proportion of respondents representing civil society representatives than by policy-makers.

Principles and actions often branded as distinctive features of the EU's foreign policy and in particular in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), including ownership, differentiation and support for multilateralism and regional integration, are not perceived by respondents as the most distinctive added value of the EU in the framework of its involvement in the Mediterranean region.

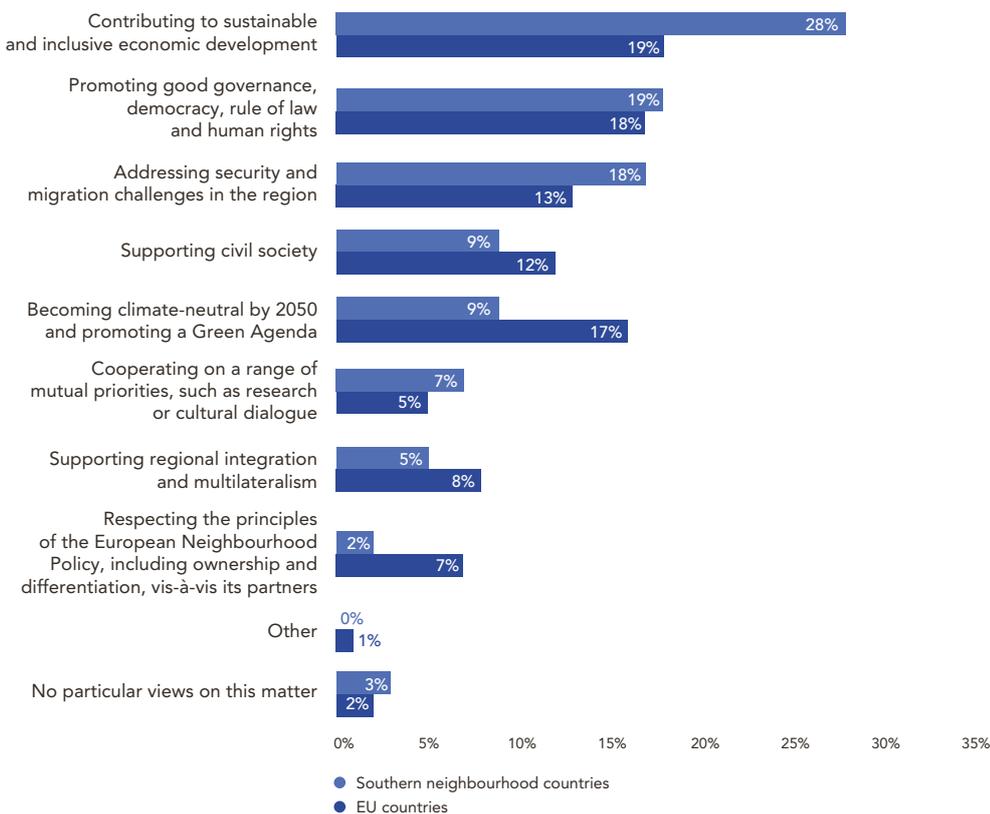
Graph 8: Q.5 What is the European Union's added value compared to other global players that are increasingly active in the region? (Ranked as first option)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Although both northern and southern neighbourhood respondents similarly considered these two options in the first rank of the EU's added values, the breakout of results for the first option between the two shores reveals a notable contrast as respondents from southern neighbourhood countries recognise the added value of the EU in contributing to sustainable and economic development to a much larger extent (28%) than EU respondents (19%). Indeed, for southern neighbourhood respondents the EU's capacity to address security and migration challenges of the region is recognised as an added value (18%) twice as much as the EU's ambitions for climate neutrality and Green Agenda promotion (9%). Reversely, EU respondents put more emphasis on becoming climate neutral and promoting the Green Agenda (17%) than on addressing security and migration challenges in the region (13%) as the EU's added values compared to other global players (see graph 9).

Graph 9: Q.5 What is the European Union's added value compared to other global players that are increasingly active in the region? (Ranked as first option)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

In their comments, some respondents highlighted the EU's comparative advantage to act in the Mediterranean region:

By virtue of the geographical proximity and the common cultural and civilizational heritage, we believe that the European Union is more qualified than other global actors to cooperate with the countries of the region to face the various challenges.

— Egyptian respondent

Other respondents pointed at necessary adjustments to be made by the EU while facing other global players in the Mediterranean:

Any of these goals need to become focused on outcomes that are benchmarked according to their effectiveness.

— The Mediterranean Growth Initiative / ELIAMEP

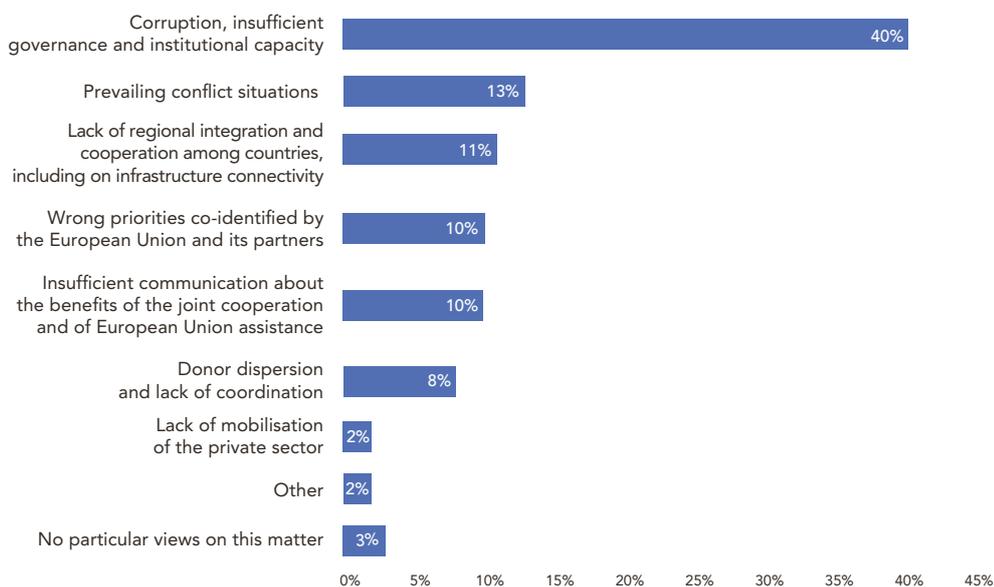
Let's not forget that the eastern Mediterranean is a highly problematic area, and it doesn't seem like Europe is doing much over there as compared to the US and Russia.

— Egyptian respondent

In contrast to the previous questions, **Question 6** aimed to expose the shortfalls of the cooperation framework between the EU and its southern partners and, to that end, proposed that respondents choose and rank three major constraints that limit its success and impact on improving the lives of peoples in southern countries.

Over one third of respondents (40%) – amongst which almost half from civil society, mostly represented by NGO-related respondents – ranked corruption, insufficient governance and institutional capacity as the first major constraint for the cooperation framework, way ahead of the second, namely the prevailing conflict situations and other items.

Graph 10: Q.6 What are the major constraints limiting the success of the cooperation between the European Union and its southern neighbours?
(Ranked as first option)

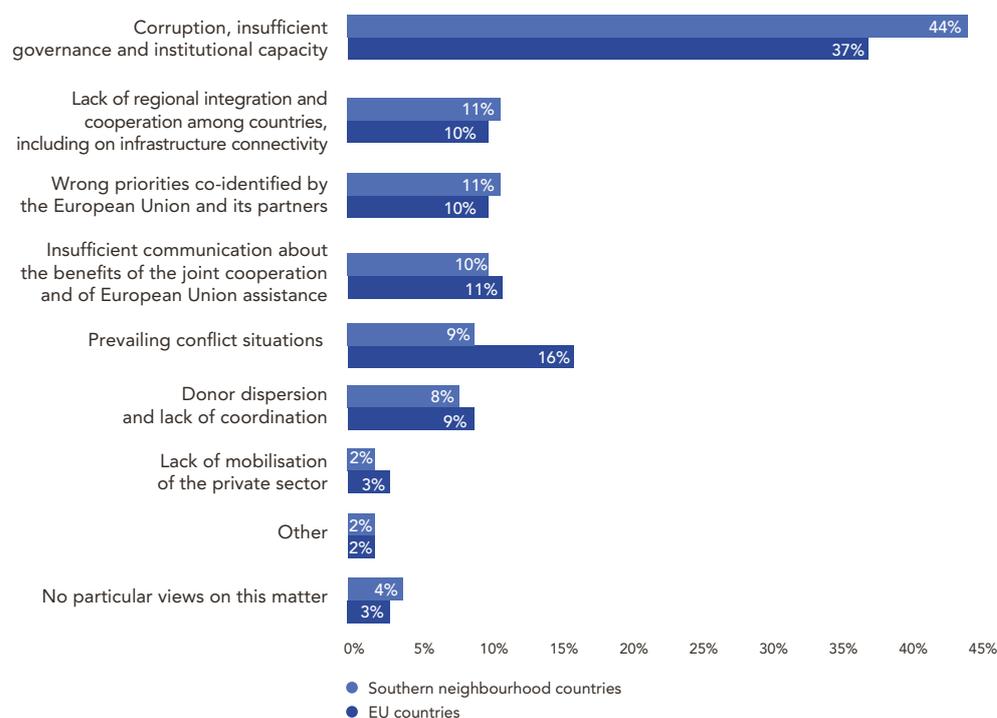


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

The comparison of answers of respondents from both sides of the Mediterranean reveals some relevant nuances. Respondents from both shores chose corruption, insufficient governance and institutional capacity as the first constraint, although this choice was more significantly marked for the respondents of southern neighbourhood countries.

In addition, EU respondents prioritise prevailing conflict situations as a first-rank constraint twice as much as respondents from southern neighbourhood countries. The first-rank answers opting for the remaining constraint were also notably more evenly distributed by southern neighbourhood countries respondents than by EU respondents.

Graph 11: Q.6 What are the major constraints limiting the success of the cooperation between the European Union and its southern neighbours? (Ranked as first option)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Some respondents hinted at some other relevant constraints to the cooperation framework. The following particularly reflect the recurring opinions of respondents:

Unequal trade agreements result in a net transfer of wealth from south to north. If this imbalance is not corrected, there will not be a rapprochement between the countries of the different shores but only distancing. This is also the case from a political point of view.

— Un Ponte Per / Medlink

En ce qui concerne les priorités de l'UE, le contrôle des migrations et la lutte contre le terrorisme ne sont que les symptômes d'autres problèmes qui devraient être priorisés par l'UE et ses partenaires comme la justice sociale, le développement durable et le respect des droits humains.

— Belgian respondent

Rather than wrong priorities, Europe continues to address the wrong people, the ones who have always been at the receiving end of funds and grants. Please revisit youth engagement, starting by not categorizing them as disadvantaged. Youth in the north of the Mediterranean need to work jointly with the youth in the south of the Mediterranean towards joint environmental and socio-political goals.

— Egyptian respondent

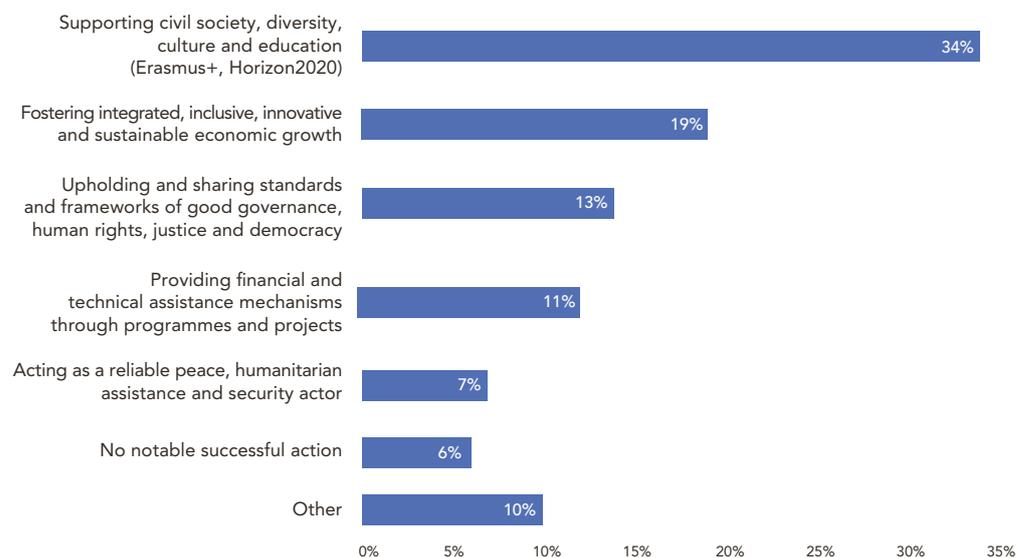
Identifying which NGOs and civil society groups to work with is essential since many are corrupt and act as fronts for money laundering. One thing for sure, working with organizations governed by current or previous politicians/government employees or any of their family members should be avoided at all cost.

— Institute of the Environment - University of Balamand

Question 7 invited respondents to identify in their open-ended answers (without any imposed pre-established categories) the most successful action of the EU in the southern neighbourhood.

Amongst all respondents, one third hinted in one way or another at the EU's support for civil society, diversity through female, youth and vulnerable groups' inclusion, culture and education as its most successful action in southern neighbourhood countries. However, in Question 5, when considered in comparison to other actors' role in the region, this particular aspect of the EU's action was clearly less recognised by respondents as one of its added values. Only 7% of respondents mentioned the EU's achievements as a security provider.

Graph 12: Q.7 What is the most successful action of the European Union in the southern neighbourhood or in your own country? (Categories developed from the open-ended answers)



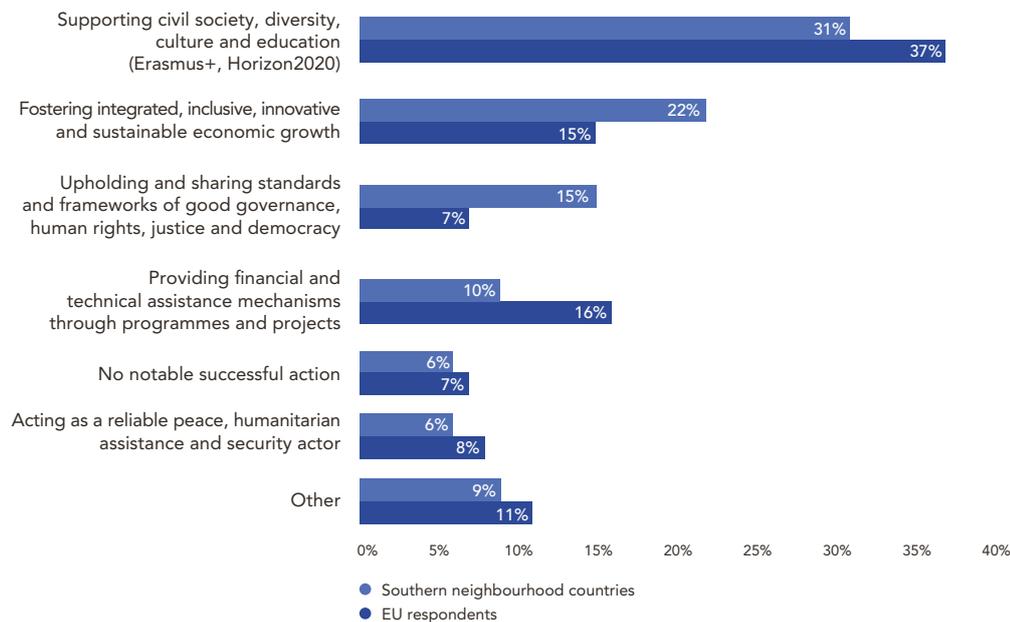
Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Respondents from both shores of the Mediterranean acknowledge in the largest proportion the EU's support for civil society, diversity, culture and education as the most successful EU action in southern neighbourhood countries (see graph 13).

However, and in line with other findings of the Survey mentioned above, respondents from southern neighbourhood countries identify the EU's fostering of integrated, inclusive, innovative and sustainable economic growth to a larger extent (22%) than respondents from EU countries (15%). Similarly, southern respondents acknowledged the successful action of the EU in upholding and sharing standards and frameworks of good governance, human rights, justice and democracy twice as much (15%) as respondents from EU countries (7%).

In turn, EU respondents chose the EU's provision of financial and technical assistance mechanisms through programmes and projects as its most successful action to a larger extent (16%) than southern neighbourhood respondents (10%).

Graph 13: Q.7 What is the most successful action of the European Union in the southern neighbourhood or in your own country? (Categories developed from the open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ are the programmes that respondents most cited in their answers to illustrate the EU's successful action in the southern neighbourhood. The comments of various respondents included specific examples of the EU's successful action and sometimes indicated how they could be further optimised:

Europe has been able to consolidate its interventions in the MENA region holistically within certain sectors (i.e. higher education). However, it should ensure that resources are rationally allocated with no overlap with further actors operating in the region and if possible should guarantee higher levels of authority on resources management and expenditures.

— Italian respondent

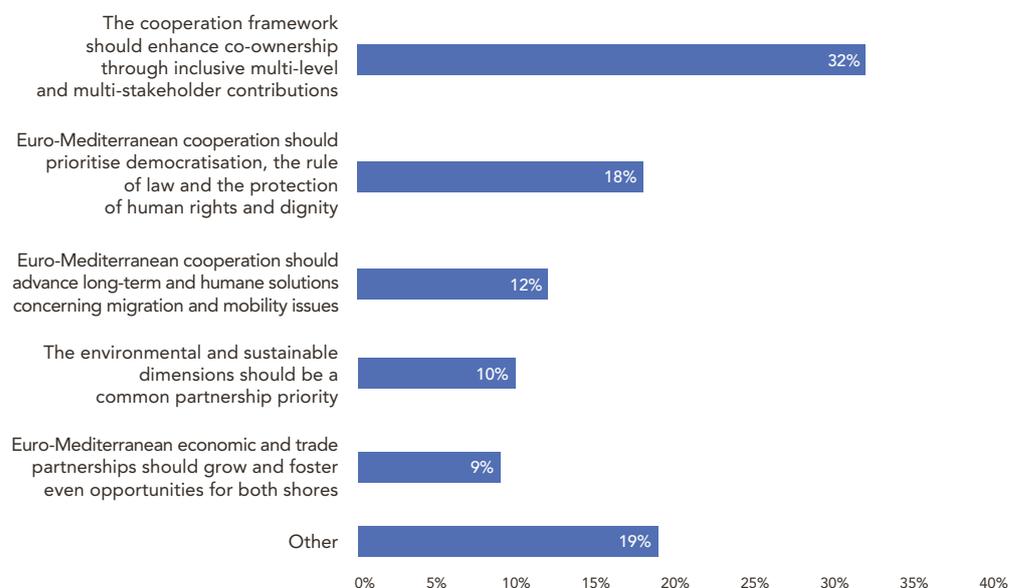
The inclusion of Israel in EU programs allow Israelis to be exposed firsthand to EU institutions and people, thus mitigating a popular notion in Israel (within selected socioeconomic communities) that the EU is not to be considered as a honest broker player.

— Israeli respondent

Through **Question 8**, respondents were given the possibility to indicate which changes could be implemented by 2030 to be able to assess that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation has delivered.

As for the previous question, the overall results revealed a clear tendency in favour of one category amongst those developed based on the open-ended answers. Indeed, approximately one third of all respondents (32%) assessed that the cooperation framework should enhance co-ownership through inclusive multi-level and multi-stakeholder contributions.

Graph 14: Q.8 What should change by 2030 in order for you to assess that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation has delivered? (Categories developed from the open-ended answers)

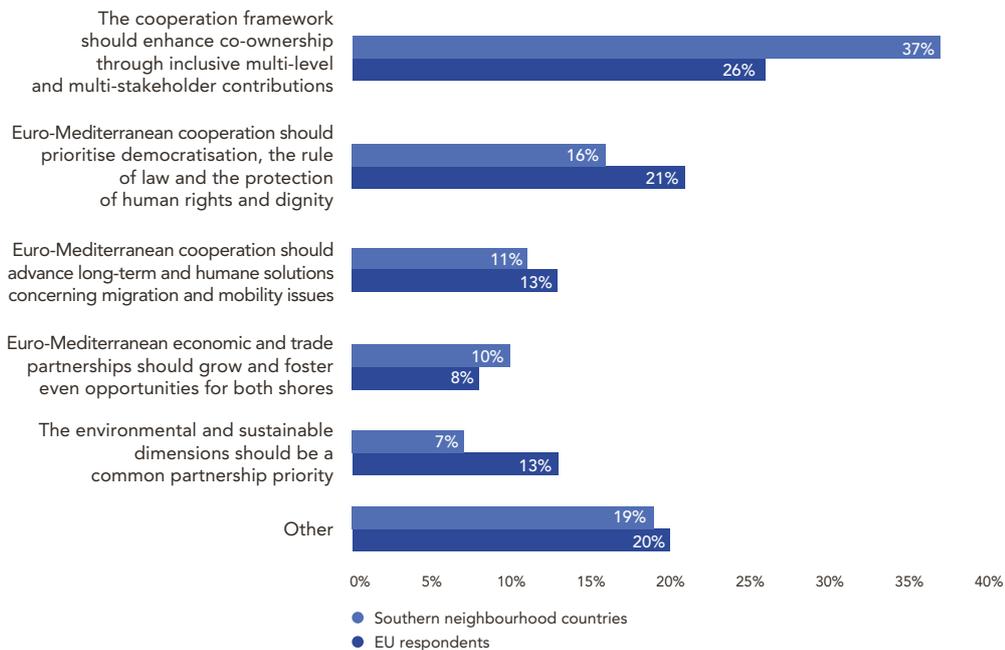


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

This assessment was more pronounced amongst answers from southern neighbourhood respondents than amongst answers from EU country participants.

Regarding other categories, the proportion of answers between both shores differed only slightly. However, it is worth noting that respondents from EU countries deemed that the environmental and sustainable dimensions should be a common partnership priority almost twice as much (13%) as southern neighbourhood country respondents (7%).

Graph 15: Q.8 What should change by 2030 in order for you to assess that the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation has delivered? (Categories developed from the open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

Some answers highlighted the need for the EU to reaffirm its action as a regional bloc:

The EU institutions at their top level should develop a strategy toward the Euro-Mediterranean region that responds to the superior interest of the Union, and not to those of the single member states. The way the EU has acted in helping negotiate the nuclear deal between Iran and the USA should serve as a reference.

— Italian respondent

Bien entendu, la géographie et l'histoire régissent les relations entre les deux rives. N'oubliez pas que les intérêts communs sont grands et nombreux, que ce soit en matière d'énergie (pétrole et gaz), de lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme, le commerce et les échanges économiques. Demeure aussi la nécessité aussi pour l'UE d'affronter d'autres blocs dans le bassin méditerranéen, caractérisés notamment par la présence russe, chinoise, voire américaine.

— Hashemite University - International Relations and Strategic Studies Program

Others hinted at the multidimensional nature of the change to be implemented, insisting particularly on the improvement of perspectives for youths and diverse actors:

A more equitable development platform that can generate deliverables to the target populations. For instance, investing in youth projects should be followed by investor fairs and opportunities in home countries rather than simply forcing brain-drains of talented youths in MENA to Europe.

— Luxembourg respondent

By 2030, the cooperation should ensure that funds are getting to the right parties who are transparent and who like to see achievements on the ground. Also, much more accountability to government institutions on the use of such funds. The EU should better identify who are the private institutions and groups that deliver on objectives and forge medium and long-term agreements to achieve results.

— Institute of the Environment - University of Balamand