

Human Development, Governance and Migration

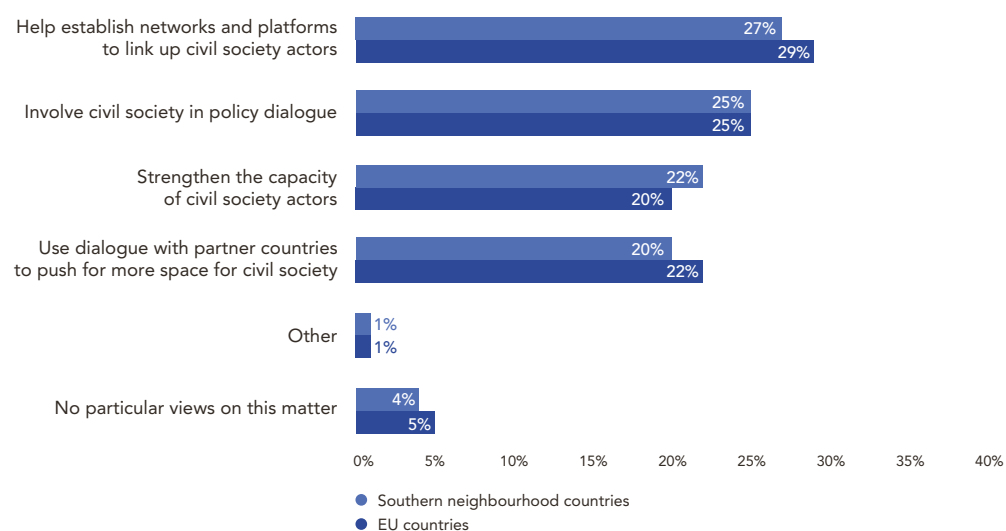
Questions 9 to 11 aimed to assess the respondent's perceptions of the EU's action in terms of supporting civil society democracy and good governance, human rights, as well as implementing external aspects of its New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Main findings:

- EU support for civil society should be mainly focused on establishing networks and platforms linking up civil society actors, according to a majority of respondents, who also recognise the importance of involving civil society in policy-making.
- In order to support reforms in the fields of good governance, a majority of European respondents think that the EU should be more assertive and make use of conditionality, a method that is also supported by a significant number of respondents from southern neighbourhood countries. However, the latter are more prone to considering that this result would best be achieved through enhanced engagement with civil, economic and social actors.
- Concerning the priorities of the external dimension actions outlined by the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, respondents clearly agree that building economic opportunities and addressing root causes of irregular migration should be the top priority.

Question 9 proposed several options by which the EU could further support civil society to fully play its role. Answers show limited variation among the four options, with no significant differences between northern and southern respondents. A majority of respondents were of the opinion that “helping to establish networks and platforms to link up civil society” actors would be the best option for the EU to continue supporting civil society. Echoing other results of the Survey related to inclusive policy processes, more than a quarter of respondents also identified the “involvement of civil society in policy dialogue” as their top option (see graph 16).

Graph 16: Q.9 What could the European Union do to further support civil society in Southern Mediterranean Countries in fully playing its role? (Ranked as first option)

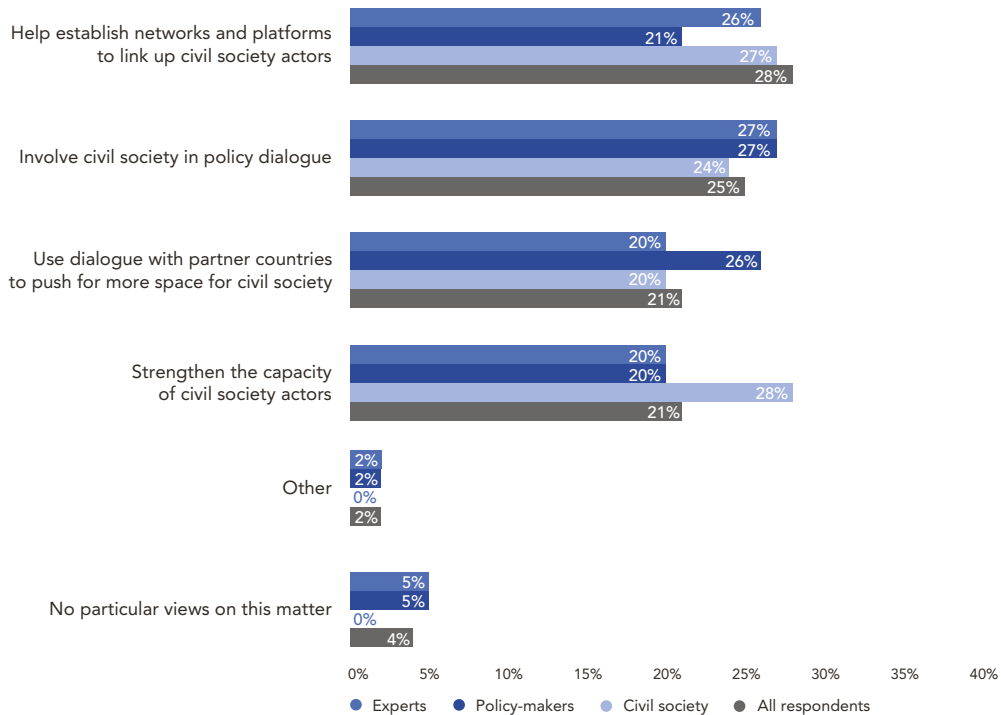


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey

In a regional breakdown of answers from southern neighbourhood respondents, Mashreq respondents prioritise the involvement of civil society in policy dialogue (31%), while Maghreb respondents prioritise the establishment of networks and platforms.

In turn, there is more variation according to the professional affiliation of respondents. Civil society respondents were more prone to identify “strengthening civil society actors’ capacities” as their top option, while, rather predictably, policy-maker respondents considered that the priority should be to involve civil society in policy dialogue (see graph 17).

Graph 17: Q.9 What could the European Union do to further support civil society in Southern Mediterranean Countries in fully playing its role? (Ranked as first option)



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

In the open comments, some respondents elaborated on the sequence between these options, and in particular the importance of empowering civil society organisations (CSOs) as a required step to fully contribute to policy dialogue:

The dialogue should be established between the civil societies and the policy-makers of the relevant countries without interference or supervision of the EU. That is why the EU must empower and strengthen the capacities of the civil societies first so they can be involved in a policy dialogue.

— Algerian respondent

Strengthening the capacity of civil society actors is the most important as all other issues derive from it, such as establishing networks, or involving civil society in policy dialogue.

— Belgian respondent

Comments also reflected how platforms and dialogue can help to improve the role of civil society:

It's a delicate matter, and pushing for dialogue per se with countries will not possibly have the expected outcome. The impulse needs to also come from the bottom and through specific joint initiatives that can gradually change processes and mindset, empower key actors, etc. This is to generate gradual and peaceful changes rather than revolutions.

— Italian respondent

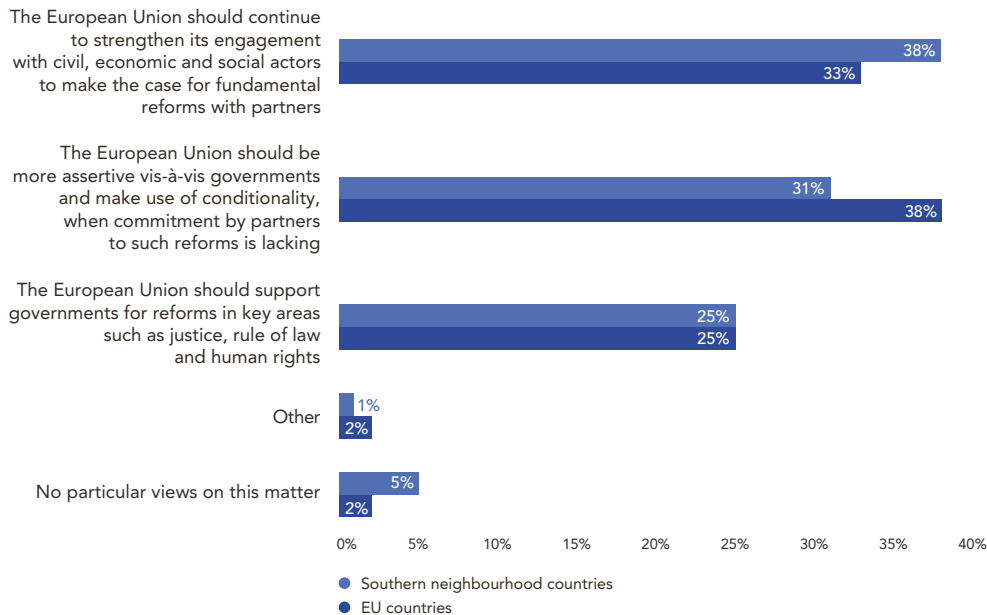
Establishing platforms bringing together civil society representatives from both shores of the Mediterranean and consulting them systematically can help develop ownership, address joint concerns and design joint strategies (e.g. Majalat project). The dialogue with partner countries can indeed be used to push for more space for civil society, but this should be done by 'walking the talk', i.e. condition support on respect for human rights and protection of this space – in law and practice.

— EuroMed Rights

Question 10 was focused on how to support reforms in the fields of good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The three options proposed related to different engagement modalities, ranging from the use of conditionality when reforms are lacking to direct engagement with civil, economic and social actors.

The majority of respondents from southern neighbourhood countries chose as first priority that the EU should enhance its "engagement with civil, economic and social actors to make the case for fundamental reforms with partners". The majority of EU respondents prioritised the use of conditionality to foster partner countries to commit to reforms on good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, while the majority of southern neighbourhood respondents prioritised the engagement with civil, economic and social actors (see graph 18). A southern neighbourhood breakdown shows that Mashreq respondents consider conditionality (39%) as important as the engagement with civil and social actors (39%), while Maghreb ones clearly prioritise the latter (42%).

Graph 18: Q.10 When it comes to supporting reforms in the fields of good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights (Ranked as first option)



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

A breakdown of results by professional affiliation shows that 26% of civil society respondents identified the use of conditionality as the best avenue for the EU to pursue in order to support reforms in the field of governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Meanwhile, 48% of respondents favoured engagement with civil, economic and social actors.

Open comments introduce interesting insights into how to operationalise the principle of conditionality and articulate it with other actions.

I do not see any importance to European conditionality, and up to the present time the European Union has not been able to use this tool effectively in light of its double standards, and the influence and emergence of international and regional actors that can offset European support, especially the Gulf states and China, which will be reflected in European policies in the future.

— Algerian respondent

This is an impossible choice to make between these different options, as they are intertwined and reinforce each other. They can be related in a sequence: (1) the EU strengthens its engagement with independent civil, economic and social actors, (2) taking civil society views into account, the EU supports governments for reforms in key areas such as justice, rule of law and human rights, (3) if this soft power approach does not work, the EU is more assertive vis-à-vis governments and makes use of conditionality.

— EuroMed Rights

We believe that the three options referred to can be used at the same time, according to each individual case and according to the issues raised. In some cases, government support is necessary for introducing reforms in the areas of justice and rule of law. In other cases, it may be indispensable to benefit from conditionality when partners are less committed to reforms.

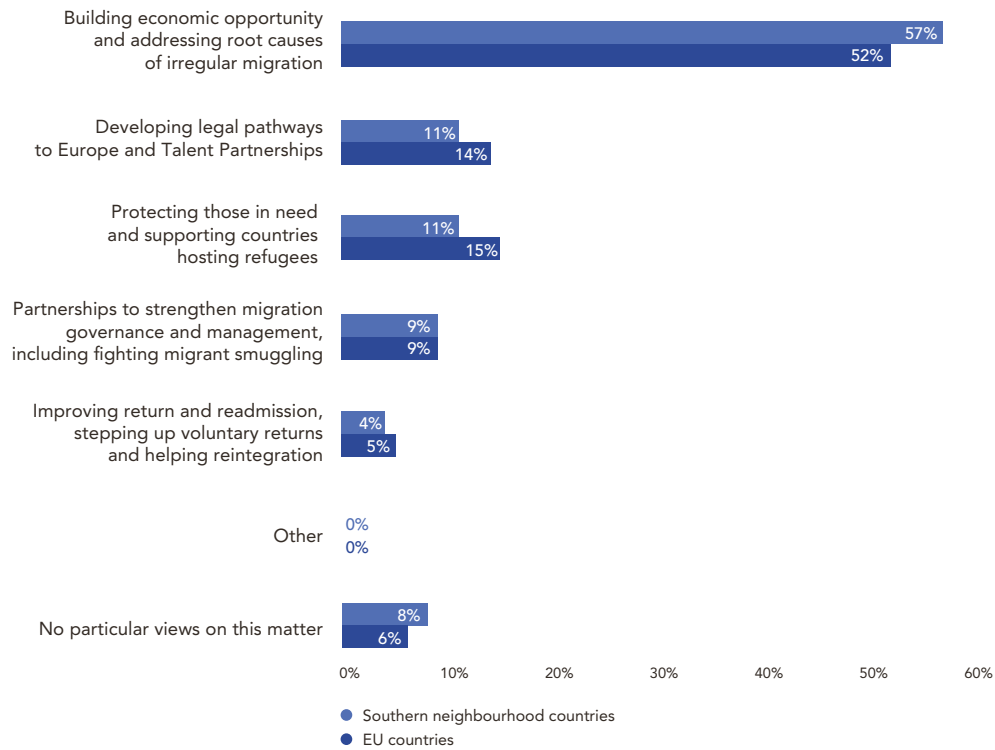
— Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs

While emphasizing the importance of always supporting drivers of change, it is necessary to decisively support reforms in terms of governance that make change possible. Instruments such as the 2030 Agenda can be deployed as agents of change, rather than conditionality or changes at the level of institutions that can be sterile.

— Spanish respondent

Question 11 aimed to assess the perceptions in relation with the five priorities for action on the external dimension outlined by the New Pact on Migration and Asylum presented by the EU in September 2020. Respondents unequivocally agreed that building economic opportunities and addressing root causes of irregular migration was the most important pillar (see graph 19).

Graph 19: Q.11 Most important external dimension actions of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (Ranked as first option)



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

The dispersion of answers between EU respondents and respondents from the southern neighbourhood was rather limited. The percentage of respondents from southern neighbourhood countries choosing “building economic opportunities and addressing root causes of irregular migration” as their top option was five points higher than for EU respondents, reaching up to 65% in the case of Maghreb respondents. In turn, EU respondents were slightly keener on referring to legal pathways or to the protection dimension as their top priority.

A number of respondents formulated concerns about how the external dimension of migration management is conceived:

Des préoccupations existent quant à l'externalisation accrue du contrôle aux frontières et de la gestion des migrations. Cette situation ne peut que conduire à une augmentation des violations des droits de l'homme. En effet, la « coopération extérieure » de l'UE sur les questions de migration avec des pays tiers a lieu dans des pays qui ne disposent pas d'un cadre efficace pour la protection des droits des personnes en déplacement, comme la Turquie ou la Libye.

— Majalat project

It is not sufficient to subcontract transit countries, or to externalise migration policies, or to create hot spots and to harmonize asylum policies. The EU should, in partnership with the Arab League and the African Union, translate the Malta migration recommendations into concrete actions, mainly be devising, inclusive economic policies and co-development strategies.

— Belgian respondent

Other comments elaborated on the need to think about causes of migration from a more complex and global perspective and more generally to reassess the link between various paradigms (migration and root causes, on the one hand, development and talent partnerships, on the other):

Building economic opportunity and addressing root causes is essential, but it is not helpful to link it so directly to migration and asylum. It is necessary for other reasons – to promote energy transition, manage the impact of climate change, reduce security challenges and more.

— Swedish respondent

Il est regrettable dans les discours de l'UE d'associer le développement de la migration légale à l'attraction des talents, ce qui est en contradiction flagrante avec les objectifs de développement de ces pays qui ont plus que jamais besoin de leurs talents pour la mise à niveau de leurs économies.

— Moroccan respondent

Legal pathways should concern broader population strata than simply “talent partnerships”. People have transnational families, friendships, etc.

— Tampere Peace Research Institute