

Environment, Energy and Climate Change Resilience

This section of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey aimed to assess respondents' top priorities on policies to be implemented in order to support the energy transition in southern neighbourhood countries and on measures to address climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean region.

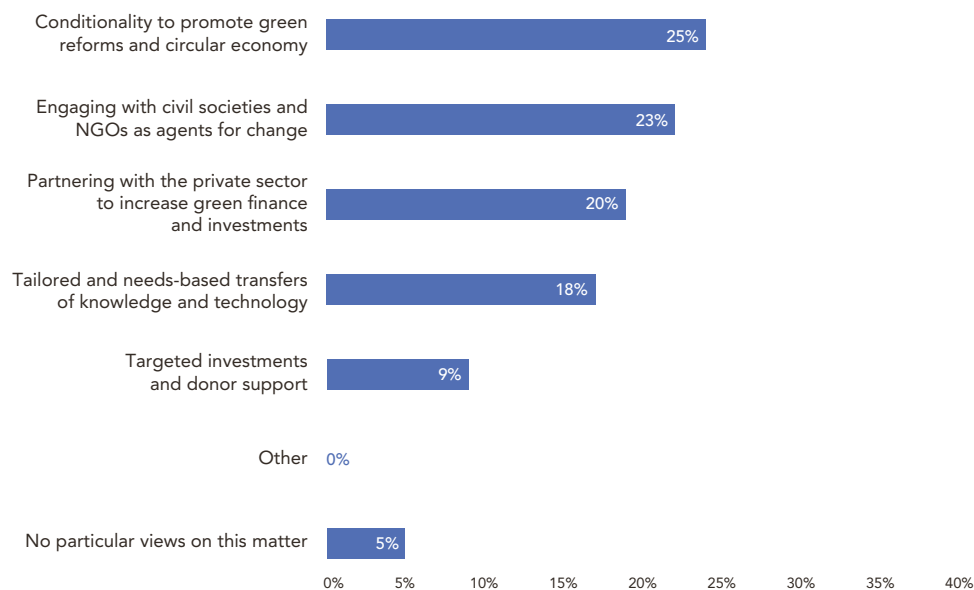
Main findings:

- A significant number of respondents think that conditionality to promote green reforms and circular economy is the most efficient measure that could support the green transition in southern neighbourhood countries.
- When coming to the role of the EU in accompanying the energy transition in southern neighbourhood countries, a majority of respondents believe that the EU should concentrate on smaller-scale and more centralised projects.
- Respondents mostly agree on the need to integrate approaches to promote sustainable water security as the top priority to address climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean region.

Supporting the Green Transition in SEM Countries

Question 17 invited participants to choose and rank their three preferred options out of five different ways to support the green and sustainable transition in the southern neighbourhood countries in terms of efficiency. A quarter of respondents (25%) chose conditionality to promote green reforms and circular economy as their first preference (see graph 29). The second and third options ranked as first preferences were engaging with civil societies and NGOs as agents for change (23%) and partnering with the private sector to increase green finance and investments (20%).

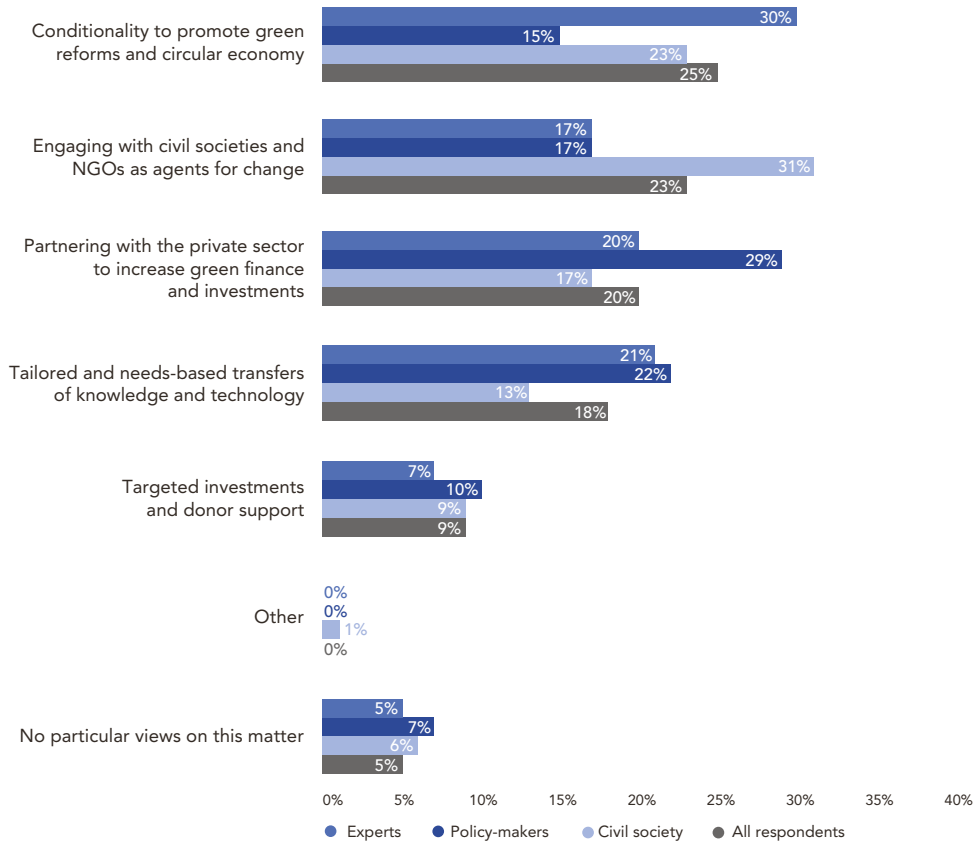
Graph 29: Q.17 Effective ways to support the green and sustainable transition in the southern neighbourhood countries (Ranked as first option)



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

It is worth mentioning that 30% of the experts responding to this question chose conditionality to promote green reforms and circular economy as their top priority, while only 15% of the policy-makers selected the same option as their favourite. Instead, 29% of the policy-makers chose partnering with the private sector to increase green finance and investments as their top priority. Lastly, 31% of respondents from CSOs selected engagement with civil society and NGOs as agents for change as their preferred option (see graph 30).

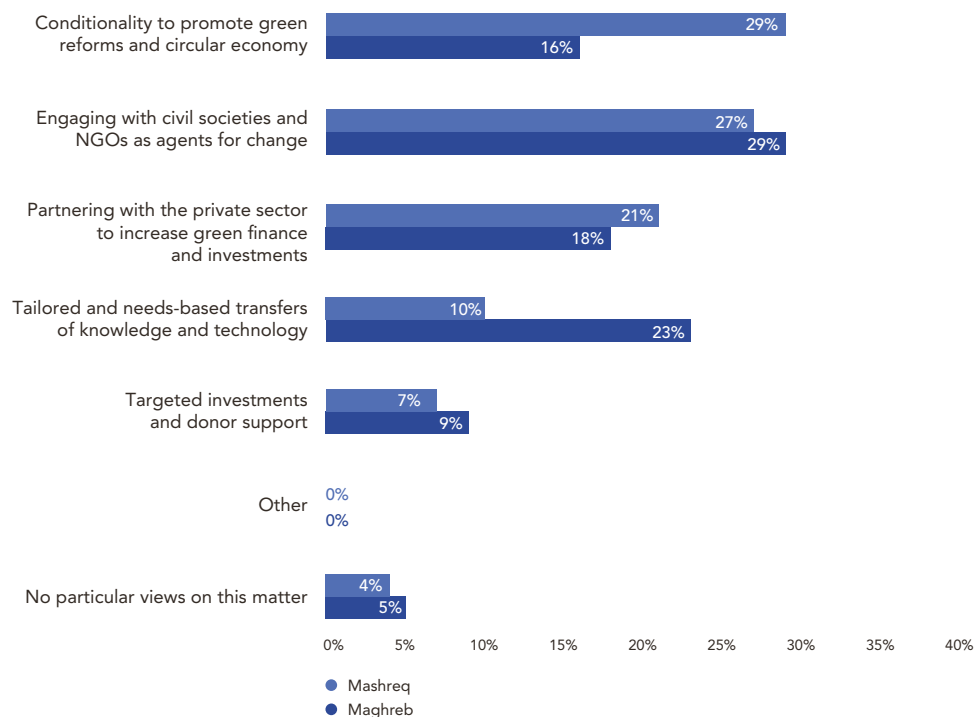
Graph 30: Q.17 Effective ways to support the green and sustainable transition in the southern neighbourhood countries (Ranked as first option)



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

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that almost 29% of respondents from Mashreq selected conditionality to promote green reforms and circular economy as their top priority, while only around 16% of respondents from Maghreb selected the same option as their preferred one (see graph 31).

Graph 31: Q.17 Effective ways to support the green and sustainable transition in the southern neighbourhood countries (Ranked as first option)



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

In open comments to these questions, some respondents expressed the view that the focus on the green transition in the southern neighbourhood was misplaced, while others stressed the importance of communication and awareness-raising:

I think there are more important problems than a green transition in the southern neighbourhood countries: education, health, economic and career opportunities. The focus on the green issue is misplaced.

— Institute for Growth and Fluctuations, University of Hamburg

En matière de transition écologique, la coopération de l'Union européenne avec ses voisins du sud devrait, en outre, porter sur la mise en valeur appropriée des terres arables grâce au savoir-faire technologique des pays d'Europe, la promotion de l'économie bleue qui peut constituer une source de richesse capitale et mettre, au-delà du voisinage sud de l'Union européenne, l'ensemble du continent africain sur la voie du développement durable.

— Institut Royal des Études Stratégiques (IRES)

Conditionality should come after a large awareness campaign with private and public stakeholders on the positive effects of greening the industry and means of implementation (including possible ad-hoc financial support).

— Italian respondent

Other comments focused on the role of civil society in supporting the green transition in the southern neighbourhood:

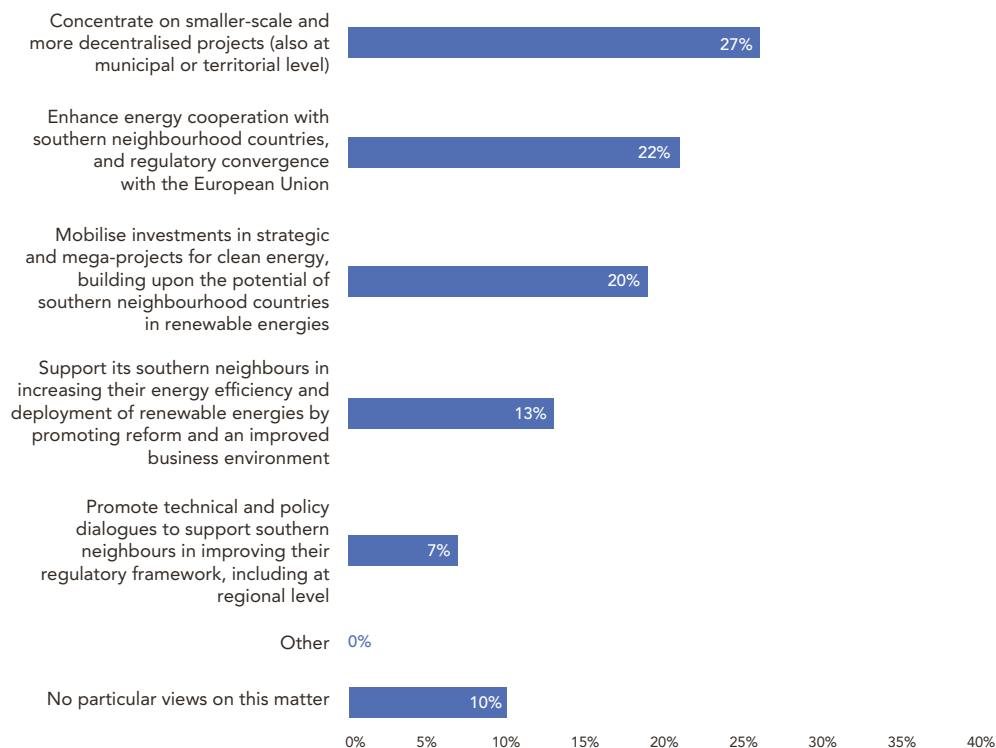
Local actors, including civil society and NGOs, are key partners and watchdogs for the EU to avoid greenwashing and misuse of funds earmarked for the green and sustainable transition.

— EuroMed Rights

The Role of the EU in the Energy Transition of Southern Neighbourhood Countries

Question 18 was designed to identify which actions the EU could consider to accompany the energy transition in southern neighbourhood countries. Participants were asked to choose and rank their three top preferences out of five different types of policies or actions. Slightly more than a quarter of respondents (27%) think that the EU should concentrate on smaller-scale and more decentralised projects (also at municipal and territorial level) as a top priority (see graph 32). 22% of participants, instead, believe that the EU should prioritise the enhancement of energy cooperation of southern neighbourhood countries and of regulatory convergence with the EU. In 20% of cases, respondents chose as their top preference mobilising investments in strategic and mega-projects for clean energy, building upon the potential of southern neighbourhood countries in renewable energies.

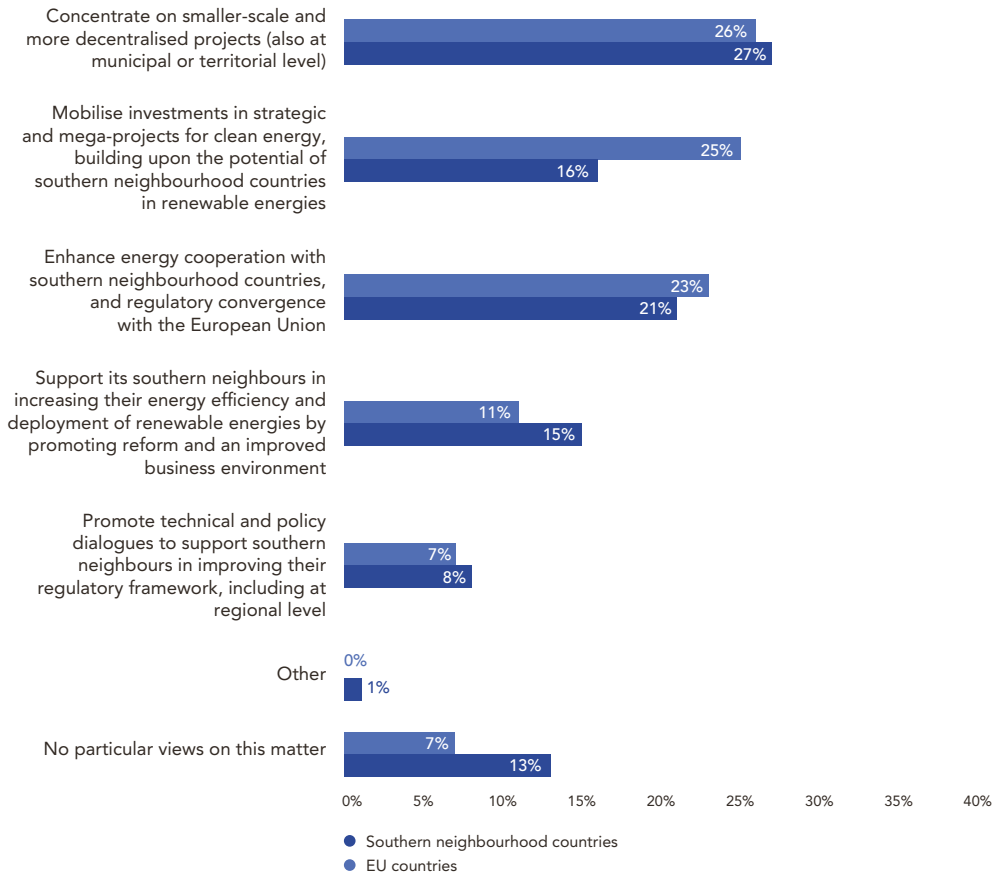
Graph 32: Q.18 What should the European Union do to accompany the energy transition of the southern neighbourhood countries? (Ranked as first option)



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

While more than 25% participants from both EU and southern neighbourhood countries chose the need to concentrate on smaller-scale and more decentralised projects as their first preference in a similar percentage, EU respondents are less prone than southern neighbourhood participants to consider the mobilisation of investments in strategic and mega-projects as their top priority (16% and 25%, respectively) (see graph 33).

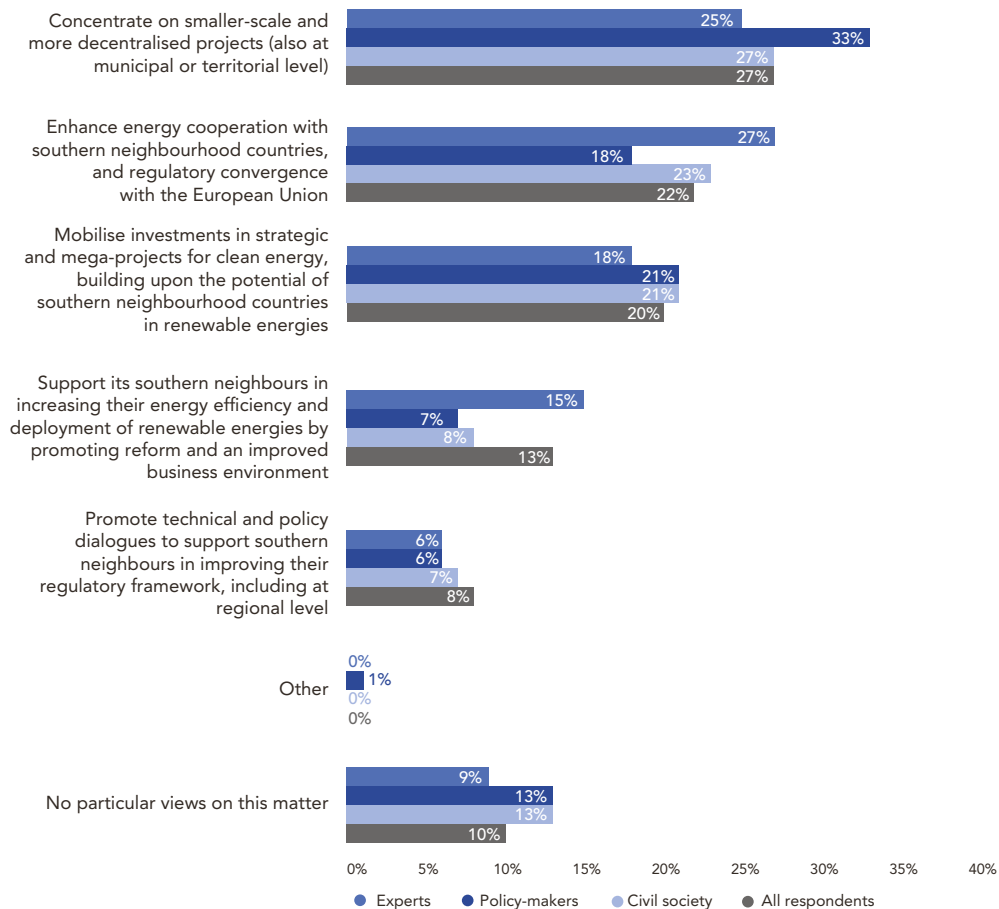
Graph 33: Q.18 What should the European Union do to accompany the energy transition of the southern neighbourhood countries? (Ranked as first option)



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

In addition, policy-makers appear to prioritise concentration on smaller-scale and decentralised projects in larger proportions than experts (33% and 25%, respectively), while experts prefer the option of enhancing energy cooperation with southern neighbourhood countries and regulatory convergence with the EU more than policy-makers (27% and 18%, respectively) (see graph 34).

Graph 34: Q.18 What should the European Union do to accompany the energy transition of the southern neighbourhood countries? (Ranked as first option)



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

In their comments, some respondents further elaborated arguments and proposals on the energy transition:

La transition énergétique des pays du voisinage sud devrait être abordée dans une approche collective, dans un cadre régional (voisinage sud) ou continental (Afrique). La coopération devrait alors porter sur l'accroissement des capacités du voisinage sud en matière de valorisation et d'utilisation rationnelle des ressources énergétiques locales, particulièrement les énergies renouvelables, notamment l'hydro-électrique, le solaire et l'éolien. Le développement des énergies renouvelables ainsi que l'amélioration de l'efficacité énergétique pourraient répondre à la fois aux impératifs de la transition énergétique en Europe et de la sécurité énergétique des pays du voisinage ainsi qu'aux exigences d'adaptation au changement climatique.

— Institut Royal des Études Stratégiques (IRES)

Les examens des feuilles de route des Organisations de la Société Civile (OSC) devraient mieux s'aligner sur les acteurs et les priorités des OSC en matière de climat et de justice sociale, et créer des synergies avec les stratégies par pays en matière de droits de l'homme, le plan d'action pour l'égalité des sexes, la convention d'Aarhus dans chaque contexte national, avec une sensibilisation des parties prenantes concernées. En outre, les délégations de l'UE devraient mener des consultations régulières pour atteindre un large éventail d'acteurs de la société civile issus de la base, des groupes de jeunes et des réseaux régionaux, y compris ceux qui ont des liens avec les défenseurs de la justice climatique dès le début du processus de programmation. Les consultations devraient comprendre des orientations et des informations claires et être transparentes sur les attentes et les résultats; des informations régulières sur les opportunités et le processus devraient être fournies, en s'appuyant sur le processus du site de suivi de la programmation conjointe.

— Majalat project

Other comments formulated alternative ideas:

Making the UfM Energy Cooperation Platform really effective is also a priority.

— Italian respondent

Invest in formal and non-formal education that builds the knowledge and skill base for the energy transition.

— Committee for International Voluntary Service

Promote EU best practice examples via exchange and education programmes.

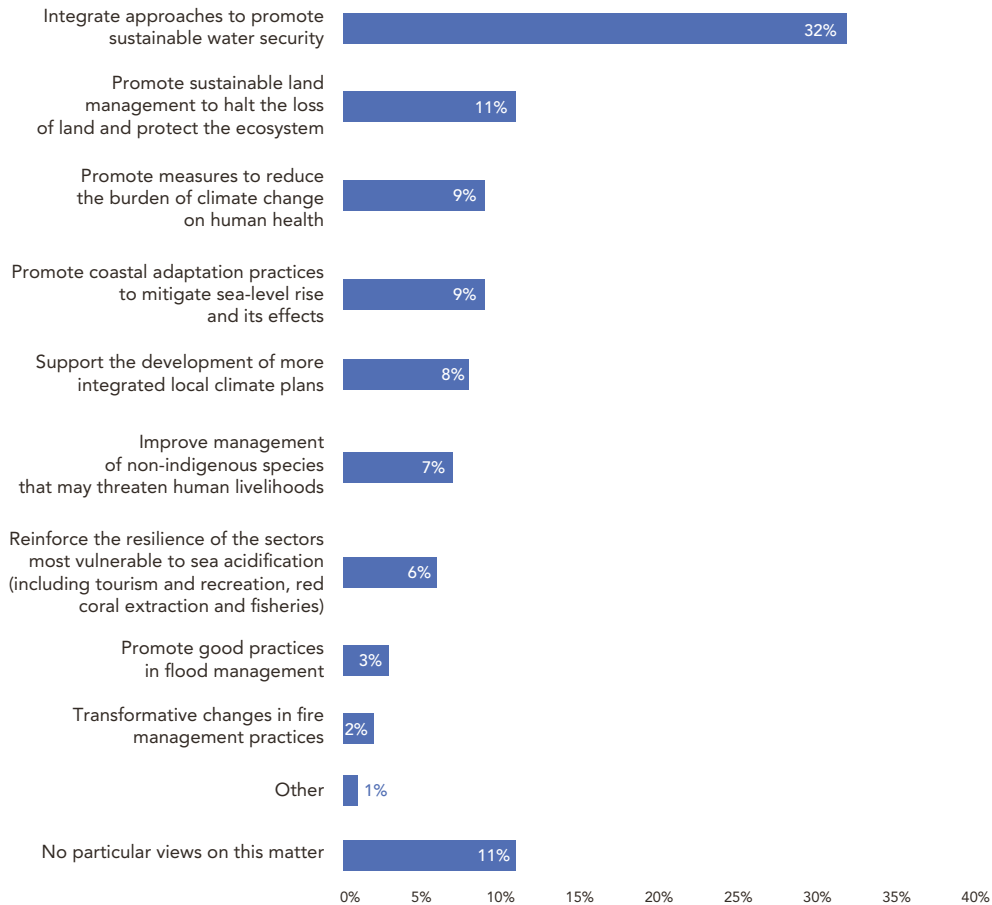
— German respondent

Addressing Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean

Question 19 turned to the measures to be adopted to address climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean region. Respondents were invited to choose and rank their three top priorities out of nine potential actions to target the issue.¹ It is worth noting that a significant majority selected water security as their top priority, while the other eight options were chosen by a much lower number of participants. Specifically, 32% of respondents identified the need to integrate approaches to promote sustainable water security as their first preference, while 11% chose the promotion of sustainable land management to halt the loss of land and protect ecosystem as their top priority. All the other options were selected by less than 10% of the participants (see graph 35).

1. MedECC 2020 Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin – Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report [Cramer W., Guiot J., Marini K (eds.)] Union for the Mediterranean, Plan Bleu, UNEP/MAP, Marseille, France, 34 pp., in press

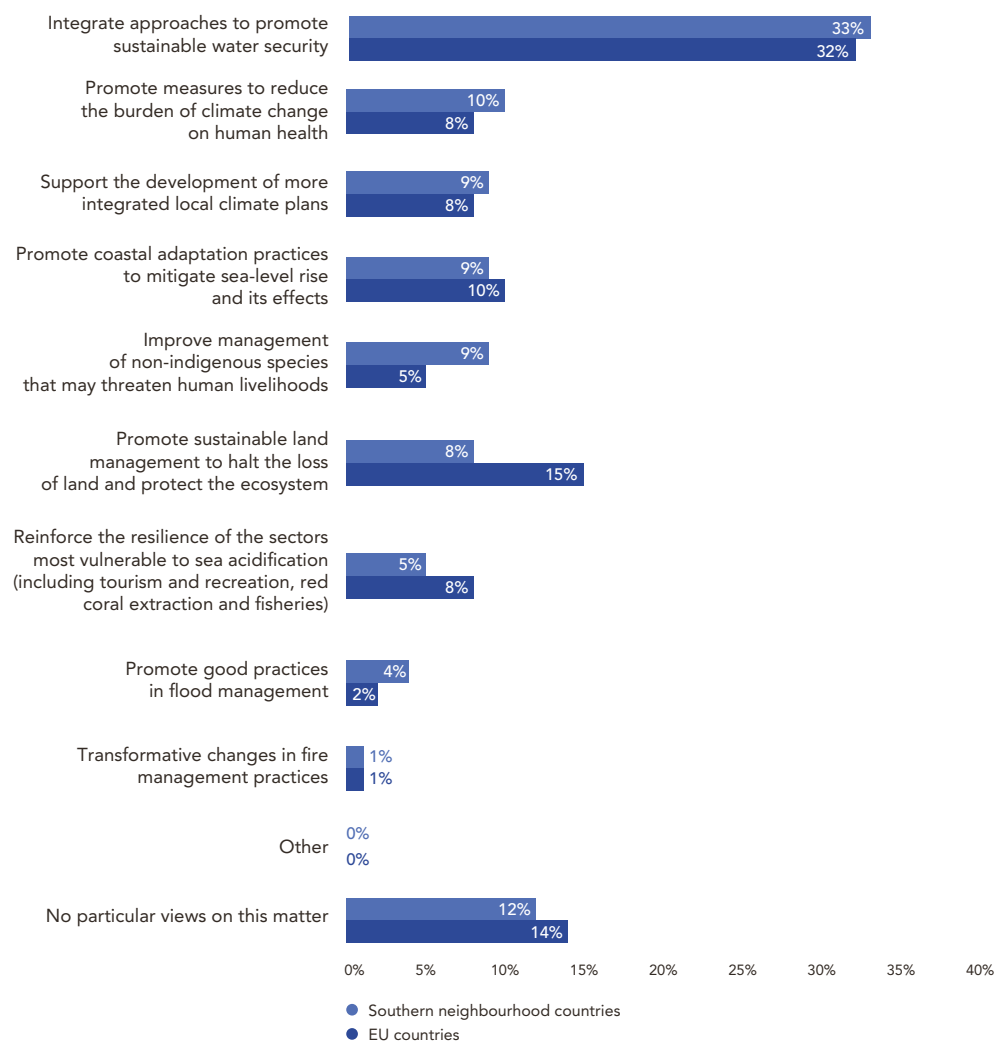
Graph 35: Q.19 Priority measures to face climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean (Ranked as first option)



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

While more than 30% participants from both EU and southern neighbourhood countries chose the need to integrate approaches to promote sustainable water security as their first preference, EU respondents were more inclined than southern neighbourhood participants to consider the promotion of sustainable land management to halt the loss of land and protect the ecosystem as their second priority (15% and 8%, respectively) (see graph 36).

Graph 36: Q.19 Priority measures to face climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean (Ranked as first option)



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

In the following comments, respondents elaborated on their answers on how to address climate change in the region:

La gestion de l'eau est un paramètre inéluctable des stratégies d'adaptation au changement climatique. De fait, la question de l'eau revêt une importance critique dans le contexte sud-méditerranéen et africain, dont les pays sont menacés par le stress hydrique à l'horizon 2040. Il en découle l'impératif de mettre en place une agenda et des plans climatiques locaux intégrés, construits selon une approche Nexus et permettant une coordination poussée entre les politiques sectorielles et les stratégies locales et nationales dédiées à la question. Du fait de son expérience en la matière, le soutien de l'Union européenne pourrait s'avérer crucial pour les pays de son voisinage sud pour l'élaboration et l'harmonisation de tels plans.

— Institut Royal des Études Stratégiques (IRES)

A massive review of the situation within each country is needed. What competences are available in each country and which competences are needed but are missing? Supranational/regional plans need to be put in place to face these issues concertedly with an active participation of civil society.

— Egyptian respondent

All the points listed have their importance on the environment and the impact of climate change. The southern region, within the framework of the international events, promotes its engagement in MEDCOP and the recommendations resulting from the dialogues of the Mediterranean of the future. The issue of plastic waste, which mobilised project stakeholders and policy-makers, is also of a great interest.

— Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur