

# Towards More Equal Societies

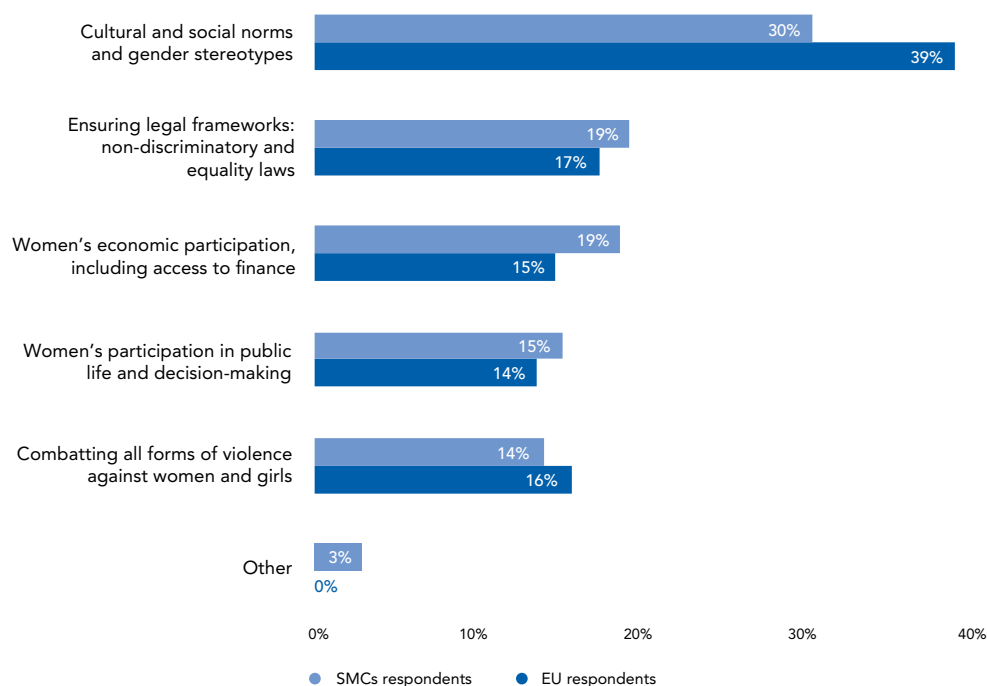
The third block of the questionnaire explored challenges and cooperation priorities dealing with gender equality, promoting youth citizenship, and identifying ways to promote the integration of immigrants into the social protection systems.

## Main findings:

- Results clearly show that cultural norms and stereotypes were considered as the main challenge while dealing with gender equality, followed by guaranteeing non-discrimination and equality laws.
- Regional (Maghreb-Mashrek) and gender (men-women) breakdowns of results display a differentiated pattern when assessing challenges on gender equality.
- The need to strengthen legal frameworks for access to equal opportunities was highlighted as a key priority for gender equality by all respondents. Women also underlined raising awareness to combat gender-based violence, whereas men considered the promotion of women's entrepreneurship as key.
- Unemployment and lack of decent employment perspectives is considered the main challenge when promoting active youth citizenship. However, a breakdown of results by Maghreb and Mashrek displays different perceptions of the challenges facing youth.
- Measures proposed to overcome these challenges are related to fostering educational and vocational training and developing job quality and opportunities.
- Covid-19 particularly affected migrants causing an increased dependence on smuggling for border crossings, a drop in remittances and the involuntary immobility of people on the move.

**Question 11** turned to challenges that SMCs encounter while dealing with gender equality. Results clearly show that “Sociocultural norms and gender stereotypes” were considered as the main challenge, followed by “Ensuring non-discriminatory and equality laws”. Results by geographical origin present almost the same pattern of results, with some nuances. Among SMCs respondents, “Sociocultural norms and gender stereotypes” had a lower percentage (9 percentage points less) than among EU respondents (see graph 16).

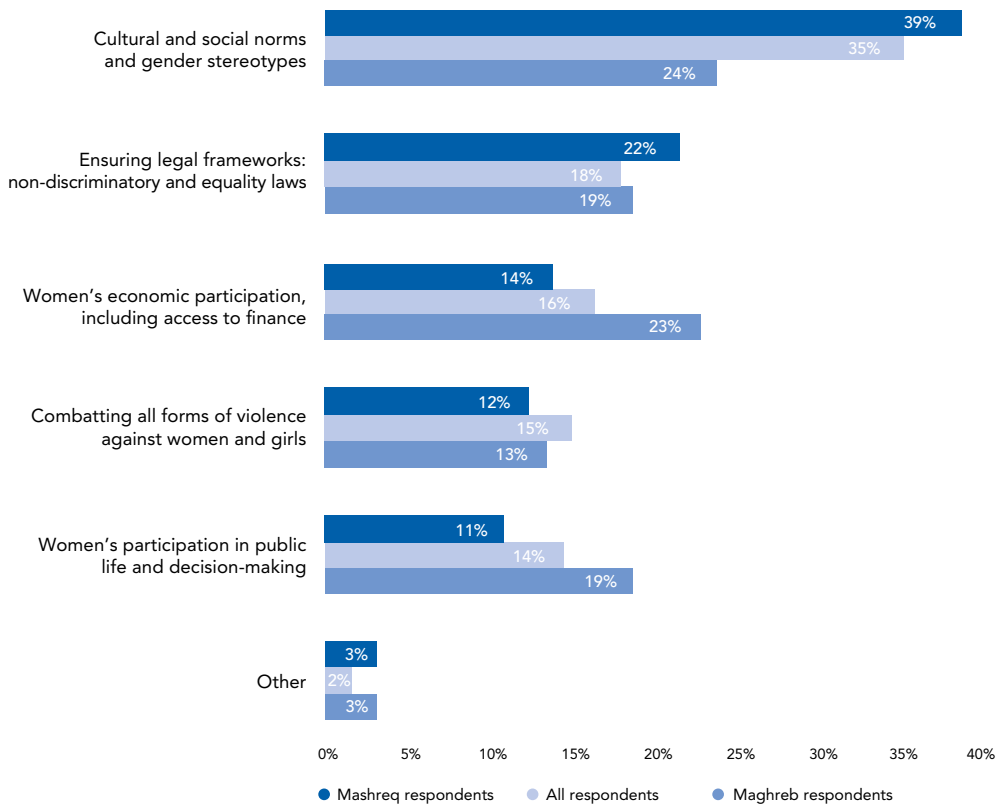
**Graph 16:** Q.11 In your opinion, what is the main challenge that SMCs countries encounter while dealing with gender equality?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

The breakdown of results from SMCs respondents between Maghreb and Mashrek showed some specificities on the results. Respondents from the Mashrek followed the survey’s general pattern of results, with a particularly higher percentage on “Sociocultural norms and gender stereotypes” (see graph 18) while Maghreb respondents considered it a slightly less challenging issue (15 percentage points less) and considered “Women’s economic and public life participation” in higher percentages (see graph 17).

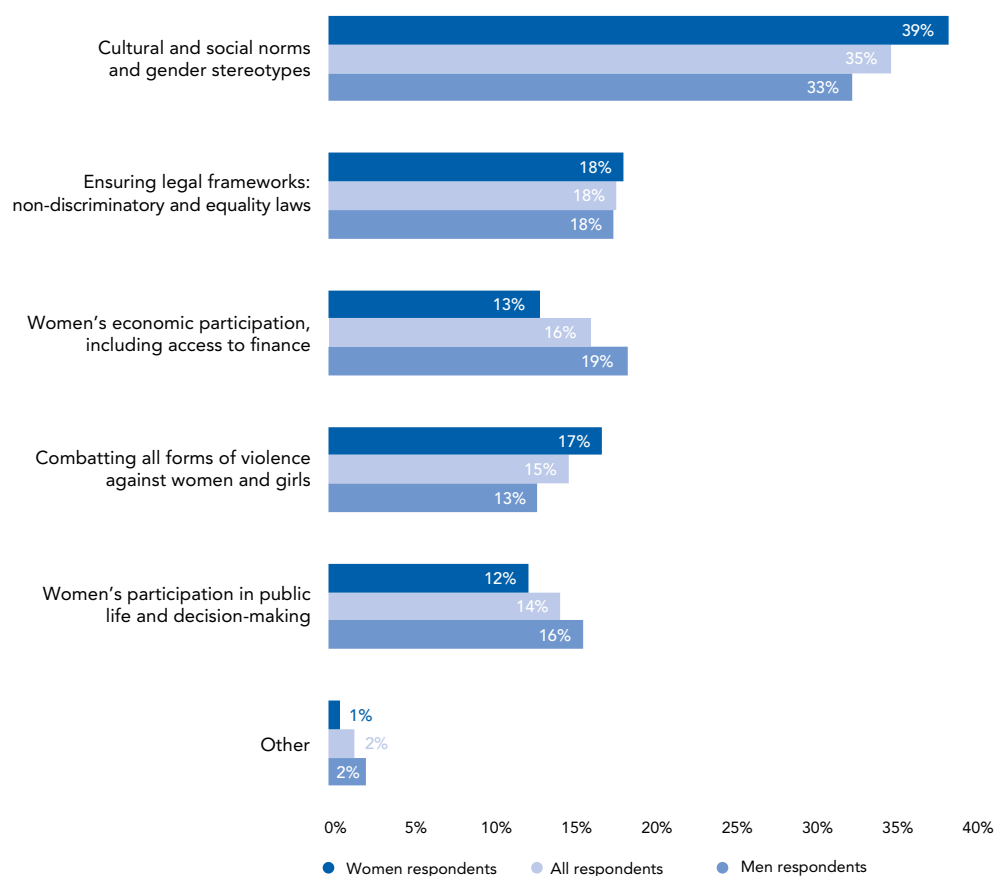
**Graph 17:** Q.11 In your opinion, what is the main challenge that SMCs countries encounter while dealing with gender equality?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

Some differentiated results appeared as well in a breakdown of results by gender. The first two challenges followed the same pattern as the survey answers, with women participants considering “Cultural norms and gender stereotypes” in higher percentages than men. Third challenge for women was “Combating all forms of violence against women” while men put “Women’s economic participation” in third place (see graph 18).

**Graph 18:** Q.11 In your opinion, what is the main challenge that SMCs countries encounter while dealing with gender equality?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

Comments pointed to the importance of the county-specific context and the implementation of existing laws:

The most significant challenge facing Southern Mediterranean countries in the area of gender equality is those sociocultural laws that possess some untouchable sanctity in their societies, as well as the gender stereotypes that prevail in the application of gender equality on the ground.

— Algerian respondent

EU policies in this area can be used as an inspiration but should be adapted to the problems and realities of the countries.

— French respondent

We have many laws that support women's rights, but the problem is that they are not implemented. Therefore, there is no point in more laws if they do not apply! We need real action to prevent all forms of violence against women.

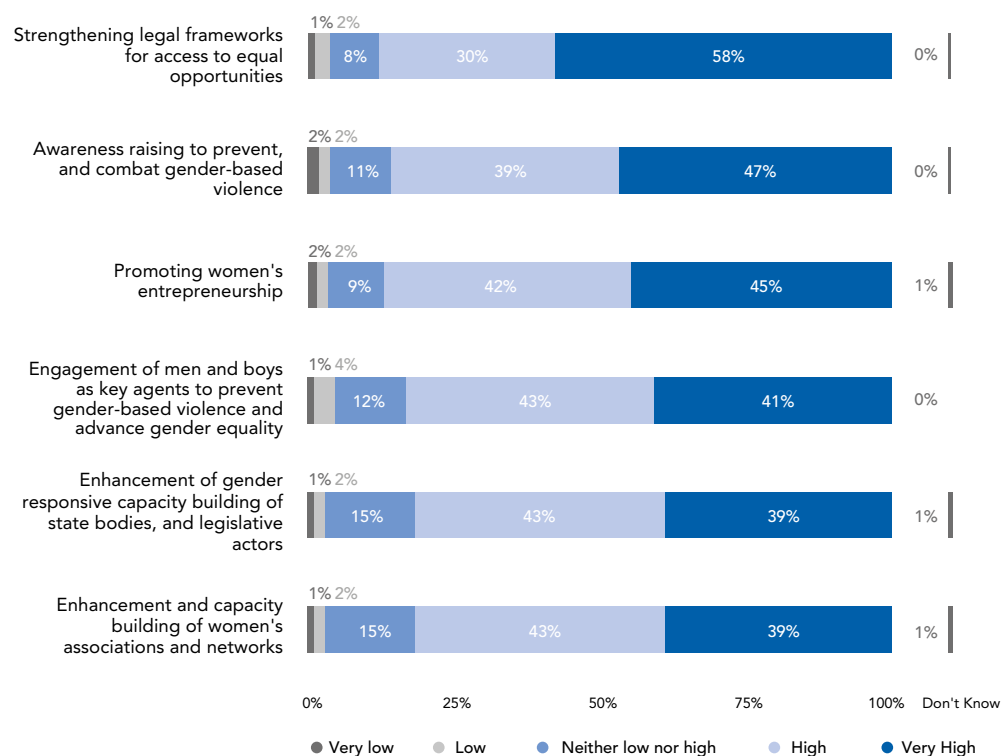
— Libyan respondent

According to the 2nd UfM Progress Report on gender equality, published in March 2022, in the last 10 years many countries have strengthened legal frameworks and developed new programmes and policies in order to increase women's participation in political, economic, and social spheres and to protect women from all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence. However, extra efforts are required to strengthen women's economic and political empowerment and to put an end to violence against women and girls in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

— Italian respondent

**Question 12** invited participants to identify EU-SMCs cooperation priorities on gender equality. Respondents deemed the top priority was “Strengthening of legal frameworks for access to equal opportunities” followed by two options that obtained almost the same percentages: “Awareness raising to prevent and combat gender-based violence” and the “Promotion of women’s entrepreneurship” (see graph 19).

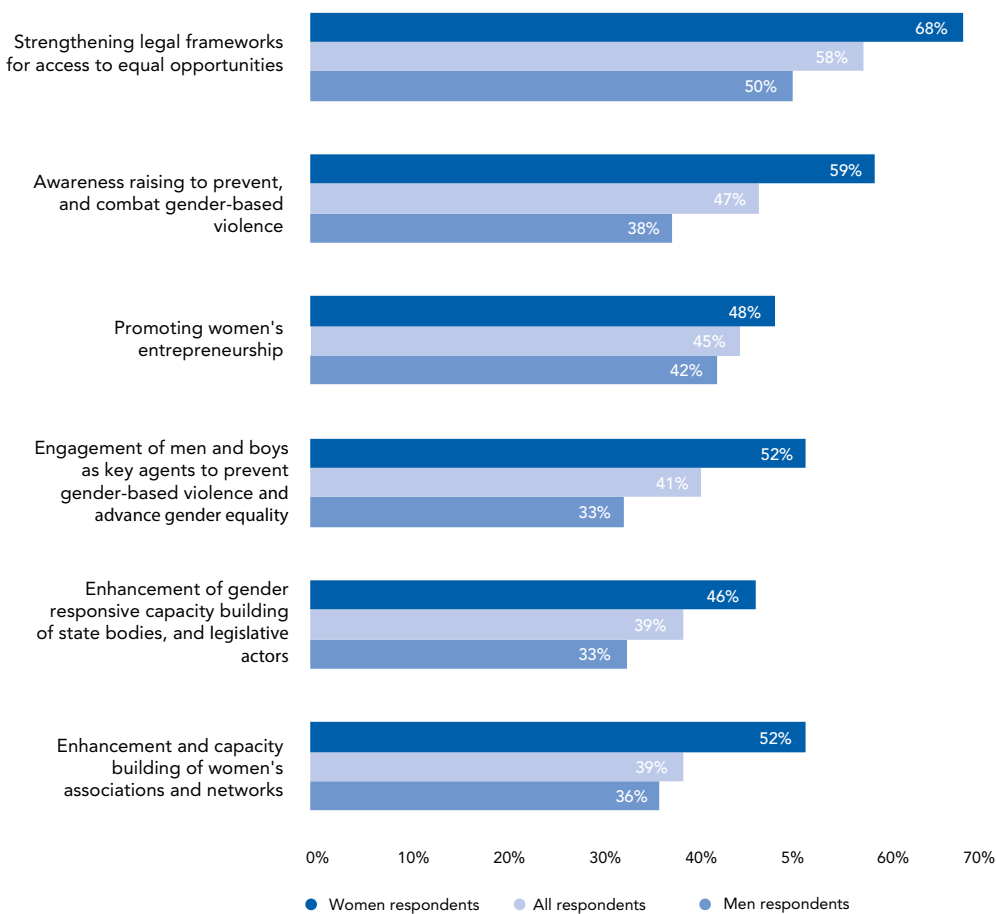
**Graph 19:** Q.12 To what extent should the EU-SMCs cooperation prioritise...



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

Sorted by geographical origin, results depict a similar pattern as previously described. It is worth noting, however, that priorities were different when comparing results by gender. Looking at “very high extent” answers (see graph 20), there are differences of almost 20 percentage points between men and women’s answers in priorities such as “Engagement of men and boys as key agents to prevent gender-based violence”, “Awareness raising to prevent and combat gender-based violence” and “Strengthening legal frameworks”. The order of priorities varies as well. Men considered the “Promotion of women’s entrepreneurship” as the second priority, while for women the second option was “Awareness raising to combat gender-based violence”. Women tended to give higher importance than men to “Enhancing the capacity building of women’s association and networks” and “Engaging men and boys to prevent gender-based violence”.

**Graph 20:** Q.12 To what extent should the EU-SMCs cooperation prioritise... (% of very high extent answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

In their comments some respondents further elaborated on proposals for gender equality:

Support for women leadership should be widespread across all ideologies and not restricted to one current. The aim is to showcase women's economic and political participation across all religious, cultural, tribal, ideological spheres. This will reduce a feeling of disenfranchisement by some groups and increase legitimacy.

— Lebanese respondent

Adopt measures that, in addition to working on equal opportunities, allow people in this situation to move towards autonomy.

— Spanish respondent

There has already been so much spent on awareness raising and supporting women's organisations, but we need to work more on women's economic empowerment and their political participation – these will have a greater impact than educational campaigns.

— Tunisian respondent

Communicate better on European achievements in terms of equality without acting as prescribers of what is to be done.

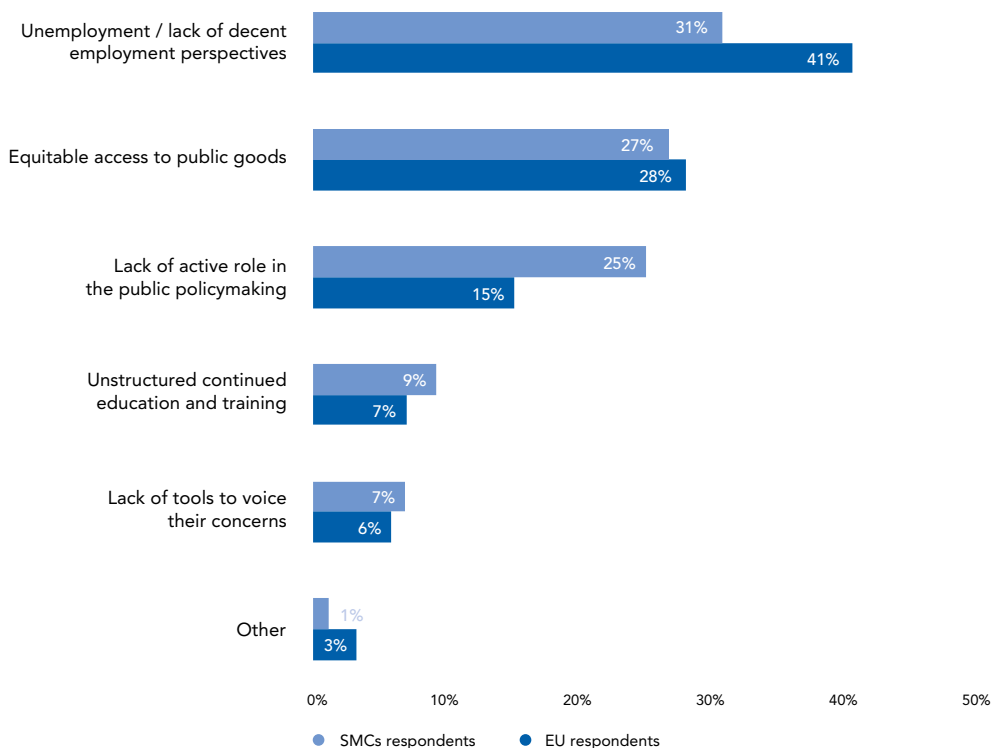
— French respondent



**Question 13** turned to the challenges that SMCs encounter while promoting active youth citizenship. More than a third of the answers (36%) considered that “Unemployment and lack of decent employment perspectives” was the main challenge to be faced. The second challenge was the “Equitable access to public goods” (28%) and “Lack of active role in the public policymaking” came in third place (21%).

It is worth noting that, although the order of results is the same, results by geographical origin show a different pattern (see graph 21). For SMCs respondents these three first challenges have a more homogeneous importance while EU respondents gave “Unemployment and the lack of employment perspectives” more importance (41%) and considered that the “Role public policymaking” was not as important as it was for SMCs respondents.

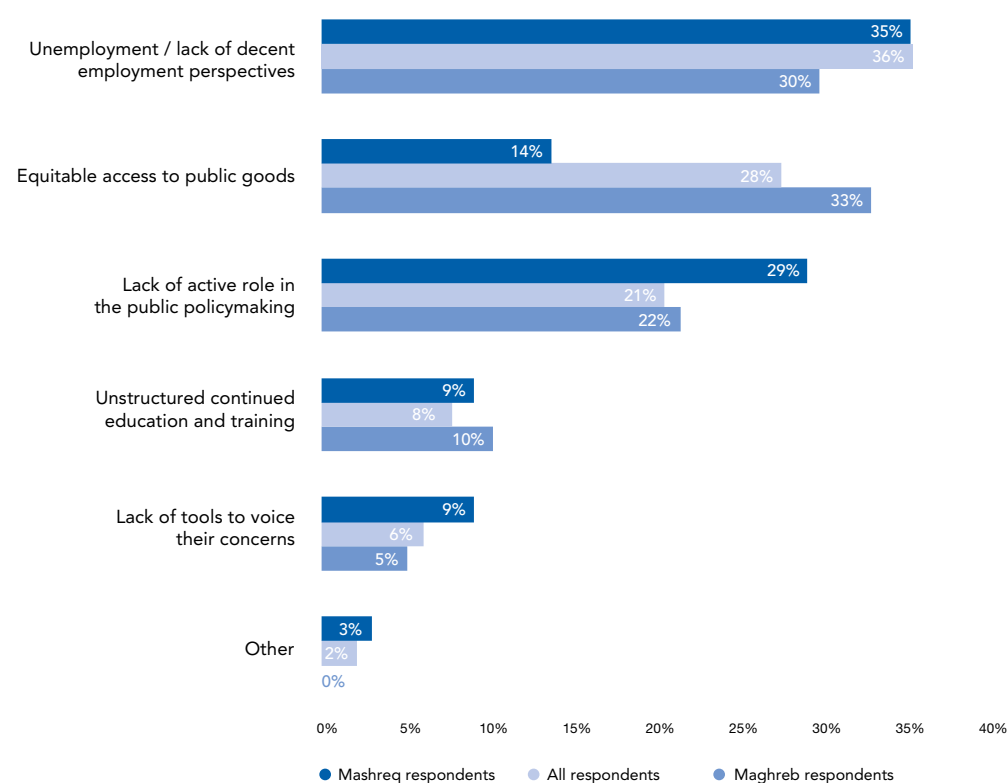
**Graph 21:** Q.13 In your opinion, what is the main challenge that SMCs encounter while promoting active youth citizenship?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

A breakdown of Maghreb and Mashrek results displays a clearly different order of the challenges (see graph 22), with 33% of Maghreb respondents designating “Equitable access to public goods” as the main challenge when promoting youth citizenship. In contrast, Mashrek respondents opted for “Unemployment and the lack of employment perspectives” (35%). It is worth noting how the “Lack of active role in the policymaking” is differently perceived in the Mashrek (29% of answers) and in the Maghreb (21%).

**Graph 22:** Q.13 In your opinion, what is the main challenge that SMCs encounter while promoting active youth citizenship?

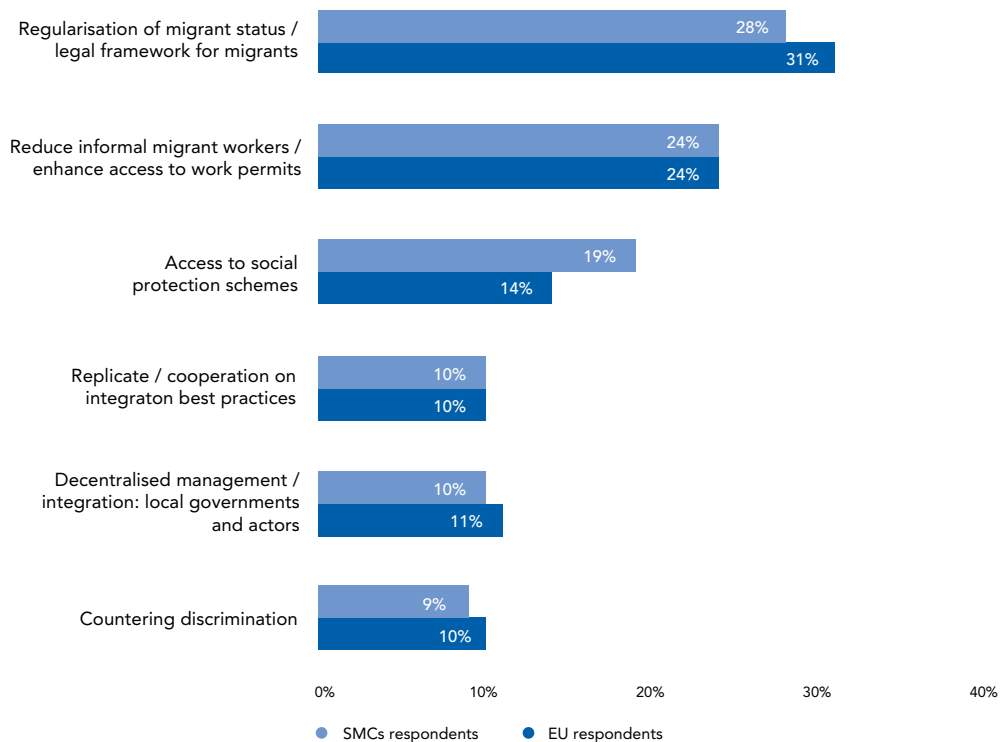


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

The open-ended **Question 14** aimed to grasp respondent's suggestions on EU-SMCs priorities to promote active youth citizenship. Respondents highlighted the importance of "Educational and vocational training" (30%) followed by "Development of quality and opportunities" (23%).

When considering a regional breakdown, results show a differentiated pattern. Answers from SMCs were less polarised (see graph 23) with similar percentages for the different cooperation priorities, particularly when considering "Enhancing youth as civil society actors", "Participation in the policymaking" and "Capacity building: communication, leadership, social activism".

**Graph 23:** Q.14 What should be the main EU-SMCs cooperation priority to promote active youth citizenship? (Categories developed from open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

### Open answers expanded on how to promote the active citizenship for youth:

It is necessary to expand political work with young people in the Middle East, in addition to finding solutions that compel decision makers to take young people seriously on the political side and not intimidate them on the security side.

— Jordan respondent

I think EU-SMCs cooperation should adopt a new beneficiary-centred and beneficiary-oriented approach. The idea is also to increasingly limit intermediaries and to target active youth organisations capable of uniting young people, of addressing decision-makers and implementing serious action plans in terms of public policies for young people.

— Moroccan respondent

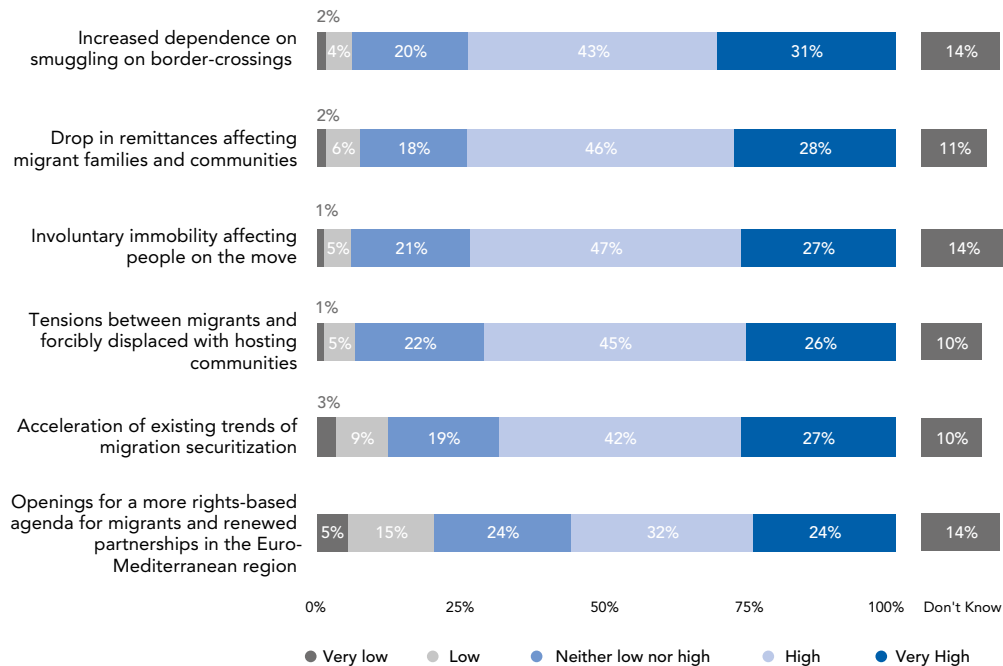
The main EU-SMCs cooperation priority to promote active youth citizenship is paying extra focus towards the disadvantaged groups among the youth, especially given that a large sum of them are within the lines of poverty and do not have access to basic education resources due to their fragile financial status.

— Lebanese respondent

The last questions of this block focused on the Covid-19 impact on immigration in SMCs since migrants, as a vulnerable group, have particularly been hit by socio-economic consequences and mobility restrictions of the pandemic. **Question 15** was designed to evaluate the main impacts while **Question 16** was an open-ended question on specific cooperation priorities to promote integration of migrants in SMCs social protection systems.

The overall results showed three main elements with very similar results. These were related to dependence on smuggling for border crossings, the drop of remittances and the involuntary immobility of those people on the move (see graph 24). Geographic breakdown of results didn't show remarkable differences. It is worth noting, however, that zooming in on results from Mashrek, in contrast to the overall results, the impact on the drop of remittances and on tensions between migrants and forcibly displaced with hosting communities, were considered the main ones.

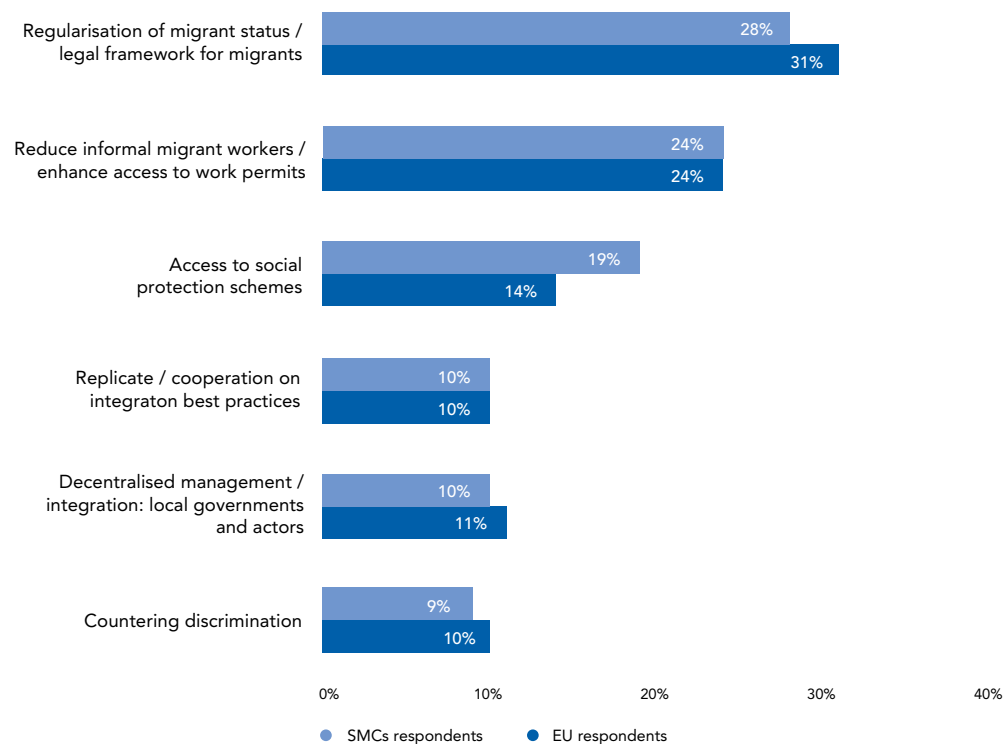
**Graph 24:** Q.15 Migrants, as a vulnerable group, have particularly been hit by the socio-economic consequences and mobility restrictions of the pandemic. In your opinion, to what extent has Covid-19 impacted the following migration-related elements in SMCs?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

Results of the open-ended question on priorities to promote the integration of migrants in SMCs social protection systems, clearly showed that “Regularisation of migrant status” and the “Reduction of informal migrant workers” should be the main cooperation priorities (see graph 24bis).

**Graph 24bis:** Q.16 In your opinion, what should be the main EU-SMCs cooperation priority to promote the integration of migrants in SMCs social protection systems? (Categories developed from open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

Comments on this question show a variety of arguments and proposals on finding ways to promote the integration of migrants in SMCs:

Migrants should be treated equally among all host communities. Best practice integration methods should be replicated throughout the region, to ensure decent quality of life for all migrants and to reduce the tendency to move from one country to the other.

— Jordan respondent

Exchange of experiences with communities where immigrants have been successfully integrated and development of NGO capacity-building programmes to develop projects for immigrant and refugee integration.

— Greek respondent

Unfortunately, in SMCs the social protection systems are often non-existent or non-operational.

— Lebanese respondent

Provide them a resident status with the associated rights. And of course, continue cooperation to allow the emergence of economic and social projects to promote their integration in the host country.

— French respondent

It should be possible to cooperate in the legislative field to develop laws that help in this integration, as well as cooperation in the economic fields that open the way for migrants to work.

— Egyptian respondent

