

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

Strategic partnerships under pressure: Rewiring Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in an age of global competition

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Euro-Mediterranean space is undergoing a structural reordering shaped by global power shifts, intensified geo-economic competition, and the growing entanglement of security, technology, standards, and societal resilience. Competition over supply chains, sanction regimes, strategic infrastructure, and investment corridors have elevated connectivity—particularly maritime routes and critical infrastructure—into a central arena of contestation.

Climate and resource pressures, especially water resilience and food/price shocks, intersect with governance deficits and conflict dynamics, amplifying mobility pressures and political volatility. In this context, the region is increasingly best understood not as a set of discrete crises, but as an **interdependent strategic system** in which decisions taken in one sub-region quickly spill across others—through trade routes, energy markets, migration corridors, conflict economies, and information environments.

Across North Africa, the Levant, the Gulf and the wider Mediterranean, states and non-state actors are prioritising **issue-by-issue partnerships** over fixed alignments, recalibrating relations with the United States, China, Russia, Europe, and emerging middle powers. This multi-alignment shapes mediation formats, conflict trajectories, energy and connectivity choices, and the scope of external leverage.

For Europe, these shifts highlight a persistent challenge: while the EU remains a major economic and regulatory actor, its influence is often constrained by fragmented policy tools, diverging Member State approaches, and credibility limits in a polarised environment. A deeper strategic issue also emerges: **Europe does not face a single security dilemma**. Threat perceptions in Northern and Eastern Europe—often centred on territorial defence, deterrence, and high-intensity conflict—do not map neatly onto Southern European realities shaped by maritime insecurity, instability spillovers, climate-linked fragility, and energy/connectivity vulnerabilities. Bridging this internal gap is increasingly central to improving Europe's external effectiveness and the credibility of EU-Mediterranean engagement.

Against this backdrop, this Call for Papers invites evidence-based contributions on how **EU–Mediterranean engagement can be upgraded into credible, resilient, and deliverable partnerships**—moving beyond episodic crisis response toward sustained cooperation across **security (including maritime security and critical infrastructure), geo-economics and connectivity, governance, and resilience**.

Paper proposals may relate to the concepts and questions listed below. The list is only indicative and not exhaustive.

1) Conflict, transitions, and regional stability

Unresolved conflicts, fragile political transitions, and long-standing identity issues continue to shape stability across the Euro-Mediterranean region. This Call invites contributions that explore spillovers of conflicts and tensions into areas like security, borders, displacement, and governance. Papers may also reflect on what forms of cooperation are possible in politically sensitive or post-conflict contexts, including confidence-building initiatives that work despite mistrust. Additional angles on mediation formats under multi-alignment and external actor competition (US, China, Russia, and emerging middle powers), including implications for EU leverage and regional bargaining power could be explored.

2) Geo-economics, connectivity, and strategic competition

The growing global competition is reshaping Euro-Mediterranean partnerships through trade, infrastructure, finance, and economic policy tools. Contributions may examine contested connectivity, supply chains, sanctions, and investment choices, as well as the influence of external actors and emerging middle powers. Papers may explore the specifics of the Eastern Mediterranean, the growing importance of Gulf–Mediterranean linkages and corridor politics, and the strategic complementarities or tensions of initiatives such as IMEC with EU and regional priorities. The aim is to better understand how these dynamics affect policy options, leverage, and the prospects for meaningful cooperation across the region.

3) Resilience, mobility, and making cooperation work

The region faces shared challenges that put pressure on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, including migration, climate and resource stress, and maritime security. This Call welcomes papers that move beyond short-term crisis responses to explore how innovative, more credible, durable, and mutually beneficial partnerships can be built. Contributions may also consider EU coherence and what is needed for cooperation to be trusted, review Europe’s internal security dilemma and its external consequences, and what needs upgrading to strengthen political traction and results, connecting ambition to capacity and funding, including the implications of the MFF 2028–2034 for Mediterranean priorities.

ELIGIBILITY

The Call for Papers is open to experts and researchers affiliated to institutes from the EuroMeSCo network (which will be given priority), as well as to other researchers and experts from the Euro-Mediterranean region.

SELECTION AND PROCESS

- It will consist of two stages:
 1. Interested candidates will first submit a short description of the Paper proposed (up to **350 words excluding references** in English describing the theme, research objectives and scope of the paper as well as an indicative initial reference list) through this [APPLICATION FORM](#).
 2. Pre-selected candidates will be contacted and asked to submit a consolidated proposal in the form of short concept notes (2-3 pages).
- Selected candidates will receive formal guidelines for the submission of the Papers, and they will be asked to submit an advanced draft of their proposal.
- A minimum of **5 proposals** will be selected. Proposals will be selected based on objective criteria including: a concise and structured presentation of the research objectives and of the Paper, the originality of the topic and its policy relevance as well as the inclusion of an indicative list of references.
- All applicants will be notified by e-mail of the results of their application.
- Selected authors will be invited to present their Papers in parallel sessions of the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference **"Strategic partnerships under pressure: Rewiring Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in an age of global competition"**, taking place in June 2026. Authors will get feedback and inputs from other experts and researchers, to be used to finalize the Paper. Papers will be adjusted in light of the debates held at the Conference and/or consolidated based on the feedback received from the EuroMeSCo Secretariat. Flights and accommodation will be covered for selected authors.
- Following the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference 2026, authors will be expected to submit a revised and final version of their Paper which incorporates the feedback received. Each Paper should have a length of **5,000-8,000 words**, excluding final references and footnotes. It should have high scientific, policy and technical quality and should be an original work.
- The final version of the Paper will be **peer-reviewed** and if successful, will be published as part of the EuroMeSCo research Papers series.
- Each Paper will be awarded with **€1,800¹**, provided that the peer review is positive and that the provided Paper meets the established quality standards. The payment will be activated upon submission of the final document.

¹ Including VAT and any applicable social security and welfare costs. The amount is fixed, closed and without possible variations, on the understanding that it covers all the expenses necessary for the appropriate provision of the services until their completion. Consequently, in all cases, all the direct or indirect general expenses, licences, and state, regional or local taxes, including VAT and income tax, will be understood as included.

CALENDAR

This selection process will consist of the following stages (*indicative dates*):

1. Launch of the Call for Papers: **17 February 2026**
2. Deadline for Paper proposals submission: **28 February 2026, 23:59hrs CET**
3. Notification of Paper proposals pre-selection: **9 March 2026**
4. Submission of the concept note (between 2-3 pages) of the Paper proposals: **15 March 2026**
5. Notification of Paper proposals selection: **27 March 2026**
6. Submission of the advanced draft of the Paper proposals: **4 May 2026**
7. Submission of the final Paper: **14 June 2026**
8. Review and publication of the EuroMeSCo Paper: **June-July 2026**