

LEADING MEPs WELCOME NEW EU AGENDA FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

"The EU can only gain from deepening our relationships with our southern neighbours."

Joint statement by the European Parliament's Chair of the Delegation for relations with Israel (D-IL), [Antonio LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE](#) (EPP, ES); the Chair of the Delegation for relations with Palestine (DPAL), [Manu PINEDA](#) (THE LEFT, ES); the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries (DMAG), [Andrea COZZOLINO](#) (S&D, IT); and the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries (DMAS), [Isabel SANTOS](#) (S&D, PT)

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Following the publication of the European Union's new Agenda for the Mediterranean, the Chair of the Delegation for relations with Israel (D-IL), [Antonio LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE](#) (EPP, ES); the Chair of the Delegation for relations with Palestine (DPAL), [Manu PINEDA](#) (THE LEFT, ES); the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries (DMAG), [Andrea COZZOLINO](#) (S&D, IT); and the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries (DMAS), [Isabel SANTOS](#) (S&D, PT) said:

"In recent years, the Mediterranean has increasingly become a place of geo-strategic and geo-political interest. If the European Union does not focus sufficiently and allocate adequate resources to the region, we will fail to be a key actor in our own neighbourhood. We therefore welcome the adoption of the new [Agenda for the Mediterranean](#). The allocation of funds through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the development of an 'Economic and Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbourhood' provide some of the necessary tools to support the EU's work with our southern neighbours. We also welcome the Agenda's focus on common values and dialogue and its grounding in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal.

Ten years on from the 2011 uprisings, southern neighbourhood countries still face many challenges, including growing unemployment and high levels of discontent among the countries' youth. The focus on achieving stability in the southern neighbourhood countries is therefore crucial at a time when the region is mired by conflict, and political and economic crises. But real stability can only be achieved through democracy, respect for the rule of law and human rights. The EU needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that stability is achieved by reinforcing our shared values of human rights, human development, good governance and the rule of law - the first policy area of the new Agenda. This work must include civil society organisations at all levels.

While the new Agenda is timely and provides a useful roadmap for our engagement with our southern neighbours, there are two policy areas or tools that are missing from the note. First, we should not underestimate the role of parliaments in delivering this new Agenda for the Mediterranean. Parliaments in the southern neighbourhood countries will have a key role to play in delivering all aspects of the Agenda, through effective legislation, budgetary scrutiny, holding the executive to account and more. Parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation must be key tools in the implementation of the Agenda. Second, we believe the EU can work more with local authorities in countries that are affected by conflict or political/economic crisis to delivery support and services to citizens.

Finally, in order to define the implementation of the Agenda with our partners and achieve a real, joint appropriation of its objectives, a summit between the EU and the southern neighbourhood countries should be organised. Such a summit should include civil society organisation, who will be key partners in the implementation of the Agenda.

As the Chairs of the Delegations for relations with the southern neighbourhood countries, we look forward to work with the national parliaments from the region to help deliver this new Agenda for the Mediterranean."

Background

To relaunch and strengthen the strategic partnership between the European Union and its Southern Neighbourhood partners, the European Commission and the High Representative have adopted a joint communication proposing an ambitious and innovative new Agenda for the Mediterranean. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_426

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