



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2022)0318

Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – a new agenda for the Mediterranean

European Parliament recommendation of 14 September 2022 to the Commission and the Commission Vice-President / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – a new agenda for the Mediterranean (2022/2007(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 9 February 2021 entitled ‘Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – a new Agenda for the Mediterranean’ (JOIN(2021)0002),
- having regard to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of 27-28 November 1995, establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and accompanied by a detailed work programme,
- having regard to Article 8 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to UN Resolution 70/1 entitled ‘Transforming our World – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ (2030 Agenda), adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York on 25 September 2015 and establishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to SDG 14: ‘Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development’,
- having regard to the Paris Agreement, adopted by means of Decision 1/CP.21 at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and to the 11th Conference of the Parties (COP11),
- having regard to the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the UNFCCC, held in Glasgow, UK, from 31 October to 13 November 2021,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),

- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention),
- having regard to the eight fundamental conventions of the International Labor Organisation (ILO), namely: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948; Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949; Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (and its 2014 Protocol); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957; Minimum Age Convention, 1973; Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999; Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951; Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958,
- having regard to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the related EU protocols and decisions,
- having regard to the Ministerial Declaration of the Mediterranean coastal states, (MedFish4Ever Declaration), adopted in Valletta, Malta, on 30 March 2017,
- having regard to the joint staff working document of 9 February 2021 entitled ‘Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood Economic and Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbours’ (SWD(2021)0023),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 16 April 2021 entitled ‘A renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A new agenda for the Mediterranean’,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 10 and 11 December 2020,
- having regard to the statement of the members of the European Council of 26 February 2021,
- having regard to the Committee of the Regions opinion entitled ‘Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean’ adopted at its 145th plenary session of 30 June and 1 July 2021,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 March 2019 entitled ‘The post-Arab Spring: way forward for the MENA region’¹,
- having regard to the opinion by the Committee on International Trade in the form of a letter,
- having regard to Rule 118 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0220/2022),

¹ OJ C 108, 26.3.2021, p. 90.

- A. whereas in November 1995 the then European Community signed the Barcelona Declaration, with 12 Southern Mediterranean countries promoting the emergence of a common area with the ultimate objective of peace, stability and prosperity;
- B. whereas in 2004, as a result of the EU enlargement which saw the accession of new Member States from the East and South, the EU decided to launch its European Neighbourhood Policy, covering the EU's eastern and southern dimensions and seeking to advance dialogue and cooperation with its neighbouring countries; whereas the European Neighbourhood Policy was subsequently updated in 2015; whereas the policy was for many years complemented by a dedicated financial instrument for the EU's external action, providing resources and overall objectives, as well as a mandate for the Commission to propose multiannual and annual programming for EU assistance; whereas the EU's financial instrument for the European Neighbourhood Policy has now been replaced by the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI);
- C. whereas 2008 marked the beginning of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), an intergovernmental organisation created as a continuation of the Barcelona Process and providing an important venue for dialogue and cooperation at political level and at the level of civil society organisations and relevant policy stakeholders; whereas the UfM is complemented by a Parliamentary Assembly (UfM-PA), which provides an essential opportunity for political dialogue and convergence, as well as multilateral cooperation among elected representatives of the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partner countries;
- D. whereas on 9 February 2021, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) endorsed a joint communication for an ambitious and renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood on a new agenda for the Mediterranean and an accompanying joint staff working document establishing an economic and investment plan focusing on, inter alia, five priorities, namely: human development, good governance and the rule of law; resilience, prosperity and the digital transition; peace and security; migration and mobility; and the green transition: climate resilience, energy and the environment; whereas this new agenda for the Mediterranean is a positive step in the right direction towards further economic and policy integration with the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood; whereas the Abraham Accords Declaration reaffirms the Abraham Accords signed in August 2020 and refers to the agreements that followed, seeking to normalise relations between Israel and other Arab states;
- E. whereas the Mediterranean region is an area of vital and complementary strategic importance to the EU; whereas the so-called Barcelona Process launched in 1995 included the objectives of creating a common area of peace, stability and shared prosperity, launching a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area, working to strengthen democracy and respect for human rights, and developing a Euro-Mediterranean partnership for greater understanding and proximity among people; whereas more than 25 years after the Barcelona Declaration, most of the objectives have not been fully achieved; whereas relations between the EU and its Mediterranean partners need to be reinvigorated in order to address common challenges, take advantage of shared opportunities and unlock the potential of our shared region; whereas the Southern Neighbourhood countries are facing common challenges, and yet each has a specific

political and economic situation and particular problems that must be acknowledged in EU policies on respective regions;

- F. whereas the new agenda for the Mediterranean is supposed to lay out an overarching policy framework as a way to facilitate the preparation of bilateral political frameworks, which can be joint documents, partnership priorities or equivalents, establishing jointly agreed political and economic reform agendas and related implementing tools; whereas it is essential for Member States' policies to be coherent with the Southern Neighbourhood policy in order for the EU to achieve its foreign policy objectives in the region;
- G. whereas the EU and its Southern Neighbourhood partners share a common interest in supporting a revitalised and fit-for-purpose multilateral system, with the UN at its core, to address common challenges such as conflict resolution and prevention, peacebuilding, climate change, corruption, organised crime and terrorism, and violence against women;
- H. whereas the EU must invest in its Southern Neighbourhood as a matter of priority; whereas the security, stability, prosperity and climate resilience of the EU's Southern Neighbourhood will reinforce the security, stability, prosperity and climate resilience of the EU; whereas renewed investment in the Southern Neighbourhood and intensified political and policy dialogue between the EU and Southern Neighbourhood countries will provide a valuable opportunity for close cooperation and policy synergies for the benefit of both the EU and its Member States, on the one hand, and the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood, on the other; whereas the Southern Neighbourhood should not be seen in a vacuum, but in close correlation with the Eastern Neighbourhood and broader European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as defined in the 2015 ENP Review, and an overall strategic reflection on how to pursue closer mutually beneficial and balanced relations between the EU and its neighbours; whereas both the EU's Southern and Eastern Neighbourhoods are strategic for the EU in various fields, such as stability and security, energy security, managing conflicts and the risk of terrorism, combating climate change, trade, the security of supply chains and diversified access to markets, and managing migration, among others, and in that they can promote human rights and democratic reforms and, therefore, ensure a more secure and effective space for economic relations and investments, e.g. shorter supply lines; whereas the EU should pursue a common regulatory space that includes its Southern and Eastern Neighbourhoods, and therefore ensures access for its neighbouring countries to the highest policy, anti-corruption and human rights standards, which are not only multipliers of economic investment and fair and sustainable economic growth, but also crucial for the improved security and political stability of Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood countries and the EU, and for environmental protection;
- I. whereas the COVID-19 crisis and the food security implications of the war in Ukraine have increased the risk of further destabilisation, as its socio-economic consequences are severe for Southern Neighbourhood countries; whereas the EU should recognise the diversity and heterogeneity of the region and adapt its relationship to the individual contexts of each state;
- J. whereas the Southern Neighbourhood policy should provide Southern Neighbourhood countries with an effective policy framework and access to resources and investments, with the aim of fostering real socio-economic integration at large, economic

development, employment and a capacity-building process, including in terms of democracy, for the relevant institutions; whereas Southern Neighbourhood policy should contribute in the short and medium term to de-escalating conflicts in the European Neighbourhood and preventing them in the future; whereas women and children are hit particularly hard by the conflicts in Mediterranean countries;

- K. whereas in 2021, 1 924 people died or went missing on the Central and Western Mediterranean migration routes, while an additional 1 153 perished or went missing on the Northwest African maritime route to the Canary Islands, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; whereas 1 776 people died or went missing on the three routes in 2020; whereas 23 000 people have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean since 2014, according to the Missing Migrants Project, the initiative implemented in 2014 by the International Organization for Migration;
- L. whereas the EU has sought a comprehensive approach to migration and asylum, based on the EU values of solidarity and the protection of human rights and the rule of law;
- M. whereas the war in Ukraine has had dramatic consequences in many vulnerable countries on the price, production and supply of and access to cereals, particularly wheat; whereas Southern Neighbourhood partners are structurally dependent on imports of cereals and the war in Ukraine is having a substantial impact on wheat and cooking oil commodity supply chains, with implications for food security; whereas the International Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM) was launched on 24 March 2022, in conjunction with the EU, the G7 and the African Union, to prevent the disastrous effects on world food security of the war waged by Russia in Ukraine;
- N. whereas the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is having, and will continue to have, devastating effects for the region in terms of food security; whereas the war in Ukraine has underlined and is the latest illustration of the threat posed by third countries seeking political and economic control of the Mediterranean region and the EU's neighbourhood, to the detriment of the democratic aspirations and territorial integrity of target countries; whereas the EU's Southern Neighbourhood has been a playground for major powers, including Russia, China and Iran, among others, which are all seeking to increase their ability and capacity to exercise political and/or economic hegemony in certain Southern Neighbourhood countries, which therefore poses a serious challenge to the EU, its Member States and the Southern Neighbourhood countries in their capacity-building for fighting disinformation and promoting democratic values such as freedom of the press, freedoms of association and assembly and the pluralism of the media, which are all crucial and key components of the rule of law and need to be scaled up; whereas a free, strong and independent civil society is fundamental to the development of any country in the region;
- O. whereas the EU's efforts to counter third party attempts to destabilise the region are ongoing; whereas the EU must reaffirm its role as a privileged partner and the primary political, economic and democratic anchor for the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood in matters such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, security, migration, the fight against climate change, and research and development; whereas this fundamental role of the EU is, and should continue to be, reflected in the level of commitment and the policy stance at EU level related to the Southern Neighbourhood;

- P. whereas the fight against organised crime and all forms of terrorism, including Islamist terrorism, remains a priority; whereas the fight against the Islamic State has been ongoing in the region since 2015; whereas some of the root causes of radical movements, including social and political marginalisation, remain unaddressed to this day;
- Q. whereas the war in Ukraine and the resulting need to further diversify and decarbonise the EU's energy supply have shown the essential role of the Southern Neighbourhood in becoming a crucial partner of the EU in achieving the European Green Deal, but also in securing sufficient gas and oil supplies to the EU in the short term, with mutual benefits for both the EU and the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood; whereas the discovery of significant natural gas reserves and the abundance of renewable energy sources in the countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, especially the Sahara with its considerable potential for renewable electricity production, provide an opportunity for economic development in the countries concerned and for clean energy cooperation with the EU, including hydrogen from renewable sources of energy; whereas the revenues from natural resources should be fairly distributed and used to benefit local populations; whereas these gas reserves and supplies require partnerships, investments and the sharing of know-how between the countries of the Southern Mediterranean and the EU and its Member States; whereas, in turn, this partnership is already proving to be an opportunity for dialogue and cooperation among all the Southern Mediterranean countries concerned, leading to more stability in the region; whereas the Southern Neighbourhood is therefore not only essential for reasons of regional security and stability, but also as a primary partner for access to reliable energy sources, including renewables; whereas true partnership with mutual benefits, notably for people in the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood, is key to guaranteeing access to renewable, affordable and local energy in an inclusive way;
- R. whereas the effects of climate change are set to provoke the further displacement of populations living in the Middle East and North Africa; whereas Egypt will host the 27th UN Climate Conference, COP27, in November 2022; whereas, according to the UN Environment Programme, the Mediterranean is warming 20 % faster than the world average; whereas spring and summer rainfall is expected to decrease by 30 % by 2080;
- S. whereas the Mediterranean region is home to 510 million people and is the most polluted major sea in the world, with 1,25 million plastic fragments per km²; whereas marine litter is a major factor in the biodiversity crisis and is costing the tourism, fisheries and maritime sectors around EUR 641 million a year; whereas according to the 2019 World Wildlife Fund report, 0,57 million tonnes of plastic enter the Mediterranean every year, a figure which will quadruple by 2050; whereas, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 75 % of Mediterranean stocks for which validated assessments are available are fished at biologically unsustainable levels;
- T. whereas development, security, stability and democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood are closely correlated with the real socioeconomic integration of women, young people and discriminated groups such as LGBTQI+ persons, fundamental rights for religious, cultural and ethnic minorities, and open spaces for citizens and independent civil society in which to express themselves, act, and share ideas and opinions freely; whereas studies have shown that their capacity to access education, vocational training, employment and adequate longer-term professional development is crucial; whereas women's civil, political, social and economic rights and their promotion in the Southern

Neighbourhood should be a priority on the new agenda for the Mediterranean; whereas women's integration into the labour market remains significantly lower than in other parts of the world, standing at 19 % on average according to the 2020 UN Women report, which provides a situational analysis of women in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region;

1. Recommends that, in the implementation of the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, a new agenda for the Mediterranean, the Commission and the VP/HR:
 - (a) secure adequate resources for timely and effective implementation of the new agenda for the Mediterranean based on the objectives and priorities jointly determined with Southern Neighbourhood partner countries, building on valuable synergies through transparent cooperation and the programming of the external action for the region under the NDICI and pursuing close coordination with Member State programming as well as facilitating as much as possible opportunities for blending through partnerships between the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other relevant international financial institutions; takes the view that the new agenda for the Mediterranean can introduce a positive conditionality under which active EU support for a closer and effective policy interface with Southern Neighbourhood countries can lead to further partnerships and convergence on other policy priorities for the benefit of both the EU and Southern Neighbourhood countries and their citizens; present annual updates on the implementation of the new agenda for the Mediterranean and ensure EU visibility in all EU financial resources allocated to the region directly or indirectly through partnerships with the UN, other international organisations, and other traditional and non-traditional partners, taking a Team Europe approach, while ensuring financial accountability, based on the existing methodology for performance management and the reporting system for EU programmes, including an incentive-based approach; include a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget; stress that the civil societies of Southern Neighbourhood countries have strong expectations of the EU and its Member States as important political, economic and cultural anchors for political and economic reforms and for longer-term prosperity; warn that, given the strategic importance and economic potential of the region, the capacity of the EU to be the main partner is not without its challenges and, therefore, adequate visibility for the EU's commitment to the region at large is essential, both directly and through funds allocated to other organisations such as the UN;
 - (b) strengthen EU dialogue and cooperation with Southern Neighbourhood countries in relevant policy areas and promote conflict prevention and peacebuilding, counter-piracy, maritime security, and the countering of terrorism, radicalisation and extremism;
 - (c) develop and conclude joint documents or partnership priorities as a matter of priority to replace the previous documents, building on the five key priorities of the agenda of the Mediterranean, in particular those on human development, human security, good governance and the rule of law;
 - (d) re-establish the position of the EU Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood, who should report to both the VP/HR and the Commissioner for

Neighbourhood and Enlargement (NEAR), in order to increase the EU's unity and action in the region, and promote and defend our common values and interests;

- (e) intensify diplomatic outreach and dialogue with the states of the Southern Neighbourhood, including in the framework of the UN General Assembly, and address, as a matter of priority, the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on Southern Neighbourhood countries in terms of food security, with particular reference to countries most vulnerable because of dependence on food imports, a lack of social security or their economic model; engage with Parliament on ways to ensure food security for countries in the Southern Mediterranean that face difficulties in this regard and draw up a robust, resilient and sustainable policy and assistance response for this purpose without further delay, also building on the Food and Resilience Facility in order to address food security in the region, including to promote sustainable local agricultural systems, and less output-intensive and more climate-relevant agricultural practices; recall that food insecurity in the region is exacerbated by the consequences of the climate emergency, especially droughts and the increase in extreme temperatures; recall the importance of adequate visibility for EU efforts and resources when channelling assistance through other organisations such as the World Food Programme and of continuous monitoring of actions and resources in order to review the progress made;
- (f) recognise the multiple challenges such as climate change, the economic crisis and terrorist attacks facing the region; highlight that the water stress resulting from increased freshwater needs, coupled with strategic control of rivers, can lead to the most serious of conflicts; establish a political strategy to facilitate solutions in the areas with high destabilising potential;
- (g) implement, as a matter of priority, strategies to alleviate poverty, strategies dedicated to programming for broader youth and women's access to education and higher education together with adequate funding for access to education for the population at large, and strategies to support the establishment and development of efficient higher or vocational education structures in the Southern Neighbourhood countries; work with partner countries so that their school curricula uphold the UNESCO standards of peace, tolerance and non-violence; work to eliminate and deter hate speech that incites discrimination and violence, and support policies and initiatives aimed at protecting minorities and combating manifestations of intolerance, racism, homophobia, xenophobia and forms of religious intolerance; stress that curricula development is critical to fostering tolerant societies; recall that youth migration and professional brain drain are a matter of serious concern for our partners in the region, as well as a serious threat to the longer-term capacity for economic growth and the economic viability of Southern Neighbourhood countries; underline, therefore, the importance of promoting investment and advancing economic growth in the region in parallel with broader access to education, professional training and employment opportunities, so that young people in Southern Neighbourhood countries can have real prospects of access to employment and real socio-economic integration; stress the importance of expanding access to the Erasmus and Erasmus+ programmes for participants from Southern Neighbourhood countries, including those who have fled Ukraine, and increase the funding for such exchanges; prevent these policies from negatively impacting Southern Neighbourhood

countries through the phenomenon of brain drain; recall the importance of circular mobility, including South-South exchanges and mobility partnerships, so that professionals from Southern Neighbourhood countries can have concrete opportunities to further enrich and expand their professional training and skills in the EU and return to their country of origin to share and build knowledge;

- (h) pay attention to the existing methodology for performance management and the reporting system for EU programmes, including the incentive-based approach, in the mainstreaming of the socioeconomic integration of women in the region and of gender equality in all EU policy areas wherever possible; target EU support for women, with the objective of improving and ensuring their access to education, training and employment and, more generally, promoting equal professional and socioeconomic opportunities, thus advocating their financial independence and promoting equal rights; incentivise bilateral and trilateral partnerships between Southern Neighbourhood universities and EU universities, including through wider distance-learning opportunities for Southern Neighbourhood students and wider exchange opportunities for academic staff; secure broader access to EU-based online media, including through public digital hubs, and EU cultural content for interested audiences in Southern Neighbourhood countries;
- (i) support the implementation and ratification of international conventions to combat violence against women; work to ensure that all the Member States and the Southern Neighbourhood countries sign, ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW; taking note of the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 25 November 2020 on the third Gender Action Plan (GAP III) (JOIN(2020)0017) and the EU Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security, encourage all Southern Neighbourhood partners to eradicate, investigate and prevent gender-based violence and discrimination, and ensure the meaningful and equal active participation of women in all spheres of public life and decision-making, and the promotion of women's rights; advocate the full implementation in all Southern Neighbourhood partner countries of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which takes stock of the disproportionate impact of conflicts on women and girls and guides work and actions to promote gender equality and strengthen women's participation, protection and rights throughout the conflict cycle, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction;
- (j) recognise the importance of orderly migration between the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood and Europe which is managed on the basis of the principles of solidarity, balance and shared responsibility, while also fighting smuggling and human trafficking;
- (k) make sure that the EU, its Member States and its Southern Neighbourhood partners pursue migration policies that fully respect the human rights of migrants and refugees as enshrined in international, regional and national law; step up EU engagement in countries where human rights defenders and civil society and community-based organisations, including those that are protecting the lives of migrants and asylum-seekers, are under threat; recognise and adequately fund the important and indispensable work of humanitarian agencies, making sure that EU funding to this effect has ample visibility;

- (l) guarantee that NDICI funding dedicated to migration in the Southern Neighbourhood is allocated as a matter of priority to programmes aiming to address the root causes of forced displacement, including by enhancing living standards in the region;
- (m) call for the EU and its partners in the Southern Neighbourhood to take a more coordinated, holistic and structured approach to migration, taking into account the importance of addressing the root causes of forced displacement; seek to decrease irregular entry into Member State territory; prioritise the readmission of migrants without the right to remain in the EU in relations with third countries, with due respect for the obligations of non-refoulement and international law; recall that progress is only possible through a combination of local human capital and external development support, that migration should not lead to brain drain and that migration is a challenge that affects stability in Southern Mediterranean countries; stress that ‘refugee’ is not equivalent to ‘economic migrant’ and that the EU should therefore adopt different approaches to the two categories; stress that the EU should facilitate safe routes for asylum-seekers and refugees into the EU; call for continued engagement with Southern Neighbourhood partners to ensure sustainable solutions for refugees; recall that the Southern Mediterranean and its young democratic systems are subject to tensions such as economic underdevelopment, conflict, a lack of opportunities for young people, structural unemployment and, in addition, the challenge of intra-Africa migration and the impact of climate change; take all these factors into account in the EU’s permanent dialogue with local actors;
- (n) urgently step up and pursue partnerships and cooperation with relevant Southern Neighbourhood countries in order to tackle and fight the immediate and long-term adverse impacts of climate change, promote environmental protection and devise solutions to address water scarcity, focusing on resilience-building efforts, and work toward the advancement and acceleration of the green transition, in line with the Paris Agreement, the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda, by mainstreaming adequate climate conditionality in all EU assistance to third countries in line with the climate commitments made by the EU; recall that the EU strategy on climate action and climate mitigation will not be as effective without sizeable investment and considerable improvements in the EU’s neighbourhood; support the flagship initiatives on climate preservation in the economic and investment plan for the Southern Neighbourhood; warn of the impact of climate change on the Maghreb region, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the issue of decreasing access to water in the Maghreb and Mashreq regions; recall that access to water, reforestation, decarbonisation, the circular economy, the adoption of a business model based on renewable energy sources and access to such sources will be essential for the climate neutrality of the Southern Neighbourhood and in protecting it against the effects of climate change; recall, further, that this, in turn, will increase the EU’s capacity to achieve its objectives of climate neutrality; support regional dialogue and cooperation on sustainable water management, technology and access to water, such as water saving, reclaimed water and desalination plans, through renewable energy, and support further investment in renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar and green hydrogen in the region; stress the importance of partnerships with relevant Southern Neighbourhood countries on reforestation and sustainable agricultural practices resulting in reduced water consumption; stress that best practices in the

field of agriculture exist not only in the EU, but also in the Southern Neighbourhood, and takes the view, therefore, that the EU could play an important role in promoting and advancing dialogue, cooperation and South-South partnerships on the exchange of such practices;

- (o) actively support common measures to conserve, protect, restore and sustainably use the rich biodiversity of the Mediterranean basin, a unique centre of diversification for species of fauna and flora, ensure sustainable resource management, including water, and strengthen sustainable food systems; help improve the monitoring and control of and effective regional cooperation on the management of marine biological resources;
- (p) prepare an analysis of the positive role that the EU and deeper EU relations with Southern Neighbourhood countries can play in reducing their carbon emissions and the joint efforts they can make to diversify their energy resources and increase their energy supply from renewable and sustainable energy sources; present in due time a strategy for further enhancing the role of the Southern Neighbourhood in advancing the implementation of the European Green Deal in a manner consistent with the commitments of the Paris Agreement; support the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood technically and financially in their efforts to diversify their energy supplies by intensifying the production of renewable energy, with a particular focus on solar and wind energy; highlight that the development of the green energy market has the potential to contribute to the creation of new jobs and therefore increase the employment rate in the countries embracing the energy transition;
- (q) pursue an active EU role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation among all the countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean in the field of energy, promoting, where necessary, the capacity for understanding, dialogue and final settlements on maritime border demarcation in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); pursue an active EU role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation in this regard to safeguard the territorial integrity and exclusive economic zone of the countries concerned, promoting respect for international law and negotiated final agreements on maritime border demarcation;
- (r) further promote and urgently take measures to strengthen the interconnection capacity between the EU and countries in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean that produce natural gas and other types of energy, through relevant EU hubs; consider, in particular, adequate pipeline, harbour and other infrastructure and technology that are green hydrogen-ready to avoid a lock-in effect both in the EU and in Southern Neighbourhood countries, for the benefit of all producer countries and all Member States; reaffirm that the dependencies on oil and natural gas should be reduced in due time through an all-encompassing green transition in line with the European Green Deal, and also support green transitions in the countries in the Southern Neighbourhood; note that the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) serves as a platform for positive regional cooperation;
- (s) also promote electrical interconnection within the scope of diversifying the EU's energy resources and increasing its energy supply from renewable energy sources;

- (t) take into account the potential of the blue economy to promote sustainable growth and economic opportunities on both sides of the Mediterranean, duly integrating it into economic development planning;
- (u) build on the very positive experience of some Member States in supporting start-up companies and further advancing their work through dedicated incubators or accelerators, especially in key sectors such as health, renewable energy, artificial intelligence, new technologies and education; set up and support incubators or accelerators in relevant Southern Neighbourhood countries, support the creation of local start-up companies, and increase their digital and green capacities; concur on the importance of further improving the digital infrastructure of relevant Southern Neighbourhood countries and including these countries in the EU's digital agenda; point out that this is a prerequisite for economic development, socioeconomic integration and wider access to education; lead in promoting investment and partnerships between EU telecom companies and telecom companies in relevant Southern Neighbourhood countries for providing access to modern digital infrastructure, in particular 5G mobile networks, based on EU technology, and warn that failure to do so will give third countries seeking to build leverage and an economic and political presence in the region a competitive advantage, including in political terms; recall the importance of close policy dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Southern Neighbourhood countries in developing adequate cybersecurity policies that protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all users in line with EU values, and partnership in international forums on cybersecurity standards, in order to achieve an open, secure and reliable cyberspace; build on the StratCom Task Force South with the aim of further developing a concrete strategy for combating disinformation, as well as countering fake news and propaganda from Russia, China and other regional powers in our Southern Neighbourhood countries, as well as in the EU; express deep concern over the domestic impact, in the EU Member States, of disinformation campaigns aggressively led by Russia and China on social media platforms and in conventional media; urge the governments of Southern neighbours to allow unfettered access to the internet and uphold the freedom of expression of dissenting voices without fear of reprisals; call on the governments of Southern neighbours to respect and protect freedom of expression and information and press freedom both online and offline; finance programmes in support of freedom of expression and privacy, internet access and online ethics;
- (v) secure adequate resources for the timely and effective implementation of the new agenda for the Mediterranean, also as a way to support longer-term investment and partnerships by EU-based companies in the Southern Neighbourhood; point to the fact that, as a consequence of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, many EU-based companies are either reshoring or nearshoring their supply and production lines; acknowledge that this provides a unique opportunity for both the EU and the Southern Neighbourhood, through the timely and full implementation of the new agenda for the Mediterranean and the economic and investment plan, to secure an environment able to support those EU-based companies that want to nearshore and to promote longer-term investment in the Southern Neighbourhood, thereby establishing closer political links and stronger cooperation with the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood;

- (w) include economic and labour rights in the new agenda, innovate and encourage strategies based on in-depth analysis of what is occurring on the southern border, and focus on decent work, sustainable development and international labour standards; effectively include the trade union movement in national consultations and encourage social dialogue; work towards ending child labour and guaranteeing the right to a salary and compensation and the freedom to unionise, and put an end to situations of slavery and discrimination, looking also at the need to provide adequate protection for refugees in the region; encourage social dialogue and collective bargaining, and promote the inclusion of women and young people in trade union structures and political spaces;
- (x) promote regional, sub-regional and bilateral integration in the Southern Mediterranean, in particular with a view to the removal of any border, transport or trade barriers between the countries of the region and actively promoting closer links and partnerships; establish as a strategic priority the improvement of the trade relationship between the EU and the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood by working towards a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area for goods and services; maintain a focus on the facilitation of investments, services and sustainable development;
- (y) reiterate the EU's longstanding commitment to the relevant UN resolutions, more specifically the UN Security Council resolution of January 2022, and recall Parliament's resolution of 17 February 2022 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy, in the context of the Middle East Peace Process, based on the two-state solution, with a secure State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security on the basis of 1967 lines, with mutually agreed equivalent land swaps and Jerusalem as the capital of both states; recall that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law; call for an end to actions that could undermine the viability of the two-state solution on the ground, and not proceed with settlements and terrorism, as they constitute a violation of international law and do not contribute to lasting and comprehensive peace; warn that in the current geopolitical context the Middle East Peace Process can only advance with strong political commitment and investment by the EU and the US; promote direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians;
- (z) continue to support, both politically and financially, the work of relevant UN bodies, such as the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, with adequate visibility for EU funding and support to this effect and in synergy with the EU's objectives;
- (aa) recognise the importance of EU financial assistance to the Palestinian National Authority and Palestinian civil society on the ground, particularly in providing support for people in times of severe food crises and energy shortages, and promote the right conditions to alleviate the consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, as underlined by President Ursula von der Leyen during her last visit to Ramallah on 14 June 2022; underline that funding must not be suspended for civil society organisations without evidence of misuse;

- (ab) continue to support cooperation throughout the region; note the Abraham Accords, which have resulted in the mutual recognition of Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Sudan, and that they provide an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between those states;
- (ac) encourage regional cooperation and support the normalisation of relations between Israel and the Arab states, and promote the full inclusion of the Palestinian National Authority, in line with EU and US efforts to achieve peace, security and stability in the region and in accordance with the UN framework, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Oslo Accords; use this momentum to advance dialogue and cooperation in the region to support the Middle East Peace process and the two-state solution as well as respect for international law;
- (ad) actively support, within the framework of its Global Gateway strategy and in synergy with the economic and investment plan for the Southern Neighbourhood, initial plans to develop a seamless trade link, via rail and sea interconnectors, between South East Asia and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jordan, Israel, Palestine and Greece as entry points for traded goods and energy resources into the EU and as an alternative to the Belt and Road initiative; recall that this alternative route would further diversify the EU's supply lines and add to the EU's energy security, and would reinforce the Southern Neighbourhood's potential for economic growth, as well as further enhance the process of regional integration and regional dialogue and promote long-standing partnership, cooperation and peace among all the countries in the region;
- (ae) implement the new agenda for the Mediterranean by reinforcing EU support for free, strong and independent civil society across the Mediterranean, and through dedicated dialogue and consultation with local and regional authorities and communities; reinforce the links between EU delegations and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM); recall that these are important and essential drivers for sustainable and fair economic and human development and are closer to the people, so that implementation strategies can reach all communities, including those most disadvantaged geographically or in socioeconomic terms, as well as human rights defenders; insist that EU support to civil society organisations should not be conditional on the approval of national authorities and is essential in all countries of the region without exception; mandate delegations in the Southern Neighbourhood to increase contact with local and regional authorities and a cross-section of society, as drivers for territorial development, especially in consultations on EU priorities for partnership and investment in Southern Neighbourhood countries; further mandate EU delegations in Southern Neighbourhood countries to set up high-level advisory councils reflecting the social, economic and political diversity of the countries concerned and comprising economic, media, cultural, academic, civil society and prominent youth leaders, as well as social partners and leading human rights defenders from the countries concerned, and providing more reflective input from key stakeholders as regards EU policy priorities and the policy architecture devised by the EU;
- (af) address the human rights situation and challenges faced by civil society and support concrete initiatives that reinforce civil society organisations, human rights

defenders and independent media; ensure that partner countries effectively implement labour standards and address violations of ILO standards;

- (ag) incentivise and assist reform through the Southern Neighbourhood policy in the fields of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, good governance and anti-corruption for the benefit of people and stability in the region;
- (ah) call on all Southern Mediterranean countries to allow for a free, secure and transnational space for science and civil society organisations ahead of Egypt's hosting of the COP27;
- (ai) present an ambitious EU action plan to tackle impunity for crimes against humanity, as requested by Parliament in March 2021, giving immediate priority to Syria which has seen the region's deadliest conflict in decades, and stress the need to work to achieve a stable, secure, united and prosperous Libya, which is in everyone's interests;
- (aj) present annual updates on the implementation of the new agenda for the Mediterranean, with particular regard to the disbursement of financial resources made available for the economic and investment plan; regularly consult Parliament on the annual and multi-annual programming related to the implementation of the new agenda for the Mediterranean and the economic and investment plan; regularly brief Parliament on the state of play of the new agenda for the Mediterranean, especially the implementation of its five priorities and the conclusion and fulfilment of joint documents and partnership priorities, and keep it informed about said implementation and the response to its recommendations in all EU policy areas, as well as on additional projects and programmes that will boost the EU's partnership capacity with Southern Neighbourhood countries;
- (ak) invest relevant efforts in advancing intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a valuable opportunity to promote human rights and freedoms, jointly address religious fundamentalism, discrimination, anti-Muslim hatred and antisemitism, and jointly fight against radicalisation, incitement to hatred and violence, and terrorism; recall the intention of the President of Parliament to appoint an envoy for interreligious dialogue and closely involve the existing Commission and Parliament envoys for interreligious dialogue in joint efforts for interreligious dialogue with the Southern Neighbourhood countries;
- (al) seize the opportunity of the new agenda for the Mediterranean to create a strong framework for dialogue and cooperation across the Mediterranean for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, and for raising awareness of its value, including with a view to further promoting tourism and economic opportunities; enhance the preservation and promotion of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in which the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood also participate, including the Andalusian Legacy Routes, the Aeneas Route, the Routes of the Olive Tree, the Iter Vitis Route and the Phoenician Route;
- (am) seize the opportunity to further expand the EU's capacity for outreach and dialogue with the governments and parliaments of Southern Neighbourhood countries through Parliament's long-standing and effective capacity for inter-parliamentary dialogue, democratic support and parliamentary diplomacy, with

particular reference to Parliament's inter-parliamentary delegations and their capacity to promote, in close coordination with relevant Parliament committees, democratic and policy dialogue in closer cooperation with Southern Neighbourhood countries;

- (an) ensure a positive link between the new agenda for the Mediterranean and the capacity of the EU and its Member States to build a coalition of like-minded countries to support a rules-based, effective multilateral system capable of boosting the capacity of the international community to address global challenges; include in the new agenda for the Mediterranean a strengthened dialogue on the value for Southern Neighbourhood countries of converging with the EU not only on policy dialogue, stability and economic growth, but also on the capacity to promote peace and stability, uphold the principles of and respect for international law, as in the case of the war of aggression against Ukraine, combat extremism, and uphold democratic values, fundamental freedoms and human rights in the UN system and relevant multilateral forums;
 - (ao) engage with all Southern Neighbourhood partners to develop policies based on the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, and aimed at strengthening the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights and international law;
 - (ap) encourage the Council to make full use of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime in the event of serious human rights violations in the region; work to extend the scope of this important instrument to include acts of corruption;
 - (aq) condemn once again the use of the death penalty; call on the Southern Neighbourhood partners concerned to introduce an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a step towards abolishing it and to commute all death sentences;
2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean and its Parliamentary Assembly, as well as the governments and parliaments of the Member States of the European Union and the States that are members of the Union for the Mediterranean and its parliamentary dimension.