



## CONCEPT NOTE

### EUROMED SUMMIT 2023

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#### 1. General overview

The Barcelona Declaration adopted by the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in 1995 stipulates that "*regular contacts among other European organs, in particular the Economic and Social Committee of the European Community, and their Mediterranean counterparts, would contribute to a better understanding of the major issues relevant in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. To this end, the Economic and Social Committee is invited to take the initiative in establishing links with its Mediterranean counterparts and equivalent bodies*"<sup>1</sup>

Since 1995, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has responded to this request by setting up a network of national economic and social councils of the EU and of the Mediterranean partner countries and by organizing the annual Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions. These summits are important occasions to gather the whole network and to debate common issues affecting organized civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

#### 2. Topics of the Euromed Summit 2023

Euromed Summits are dedicated to specific topics to ensure focused technical debates. In 2023, summit discussions will be dedicated to "**Energy transition** in the Euro-Mediterranean region". While gas will continue to play an important role in the energy mix on both shores of the Mediterranean, the region is also blessed with great renewable potential – increasingly attracting public and private stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from the work programme of the Barcelona Declaration.

The planned subsea power link between Egypt and Greece illustrates the increased interest to invest in green energy to stabilize energy prices and to improve supply security.

The connection of electricity grids between the Northern and the Southern shores of the Mediterranean is key to open European markets to solar and wind producers in the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood and to provide the latter with sufficient finance for the development of renewable energy. Bottlenecks for investors could be solved at relatively low cost by providing capacity building measures on a technical, managerial and regulatory level. The potential benefits of a successful North-South cooperation in the area of renewables are significant with an increase in employment and better access to energy in fragile regions.

In addition, the participants of the Euromed Summit 2023 will discuss the topic "**Water scarcity and desertification**", an issue closely linked to energy transition. The Mediterranean region is strongly exposed to climate change and faces fast-rising temperatures, water scarcity and desertification. Energy transition plays an important role in climate change mitigation on both shores of the Mediterranean. In addition, the production of renewable energy is much more water-efficient than the production of energy by coal or nuclear power plants. Renewable energy also allows for decentral water filtration plants in areas not connected to electricity grids.

Finally, the summit participants will learn about the EESC information report "**Digital transition** in the Euro-Mediterranean region". Digital transition is an important vector for inclusive economic development and job creation throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region. This transition will receive a further boost by the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood and its support of resilient, sustainable and connected economies with opportunities for all, especially women and youth.

The countries of the Southern Mediterranean have managed to improve connectivity significantly over the past few years. However, these improvements have occurred unevenly and significant gaps exist between countries as well as between urban and rural areas. The lack of high-speed internet connections in rural areas adversely affects the ability of rural populations to participate in the region's growing digital economy.

### **3. Participants of the Euromed Summit 2023**

The EESC attaches great importance to the participation of an Egyptian government representative at ministerial level to open the 2023 Euromed Summit. Summit delegations (120 participants in total) will include the national economic and social councils (ESCs) of Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Lebanon and Jordan as well as the EU's national ESCs. The Palestinian and Israeli delegations will be composed of representatives of the informal Palestinian Economic and Social Council and the informal Economic and Social Committee of Israel. As for the UfM member countries without an ESC, the EESC will invite the counterparts of its three groups (employer/business associations, trade unions and NGOs specialized in the topic of the summit). As for Egypt, the employers will be represented by the Federation of Egyptian Industries and NGOs will be chosen in cooperation with the Anna Lindh Foundation among its members. The Egyptian Mission to the EU will provide guidance for the choice of trade union representatives.

### **4. Date and venue of the Euromed Summit 2023**

The Euromed Summit will take place at the Great Library of Alexandria, the headquarters of the Anna Lindh Foundation, on 5-6 July 2023.

5. **Summit co-organizers**

The 2023 Euromed Summit will be co-organized by the European Economic and Social Committee, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Anna Lindh Foundation and Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

6. **Euromed Summit 2022**

In 2022, the Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions took place in Marrakesh on 31 May and 1 June 2022, co-organized with the Moroccan Economic, Social and Environmental Council. At that occasion, summit debates focused on "COVID-19: The role of civil society in the reconstruction and resilience of the Euro-Mediterranean region".