

The New Agenda for the Mediterranean and Its Green Policies

Lighthouse Europe

June 2021

By Axelle Helewa

[New Agenda to fulfil the ambition of a Stronger Europe in the World](#)

The ambition of a **stronger Europe in the world** lies at the heart of the **European Commission' six priorities** for the European Union from 2019 to 2024. The objective of the EU is to play a greater, more united and more proactive role within the international sphere to defend the principle of ruled-based multilateralism¹.

One of the key components of this strategy is the **New Agenda for the Mediterranean Union** encompassed in the **EU Neighborhood Policy (ENP)** and more precisely in Regional cooperation with the Mediterranean partners of the Southern Neighborhood. The southern neighboring countries concerned with the policy are: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

The construction process started at the 1995 Barcelona Conference that established the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). Almost ten years later, in 2004, the ENP was launched. This Partnership was reviewed in 2015 to further promote economic prosperity and openness, stability the rule of law, and security². The reviewed version of the agreement also encompassed the **Paris Climate Agreement** and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** adopted in September 2015, during the UN General Assembly of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development³ – and thus it also takes into account climate action and energy security.

The final step of this policy of cooperation between the EU and its southern partners was achieved through the New Agenda for the Mediterranean, presented by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign affairs and security policy. The Agenda was finally **adopted by the Council on April 19th, 2021** and has as its greater project the support of the **digital and green transition**. All of the policies promoted are to be founded around this dual transition.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world_en

² https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/joint-communication_review-of-the-enp.pdf

³ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>



The New Agenda for the Mediterranean's policies

At the core of the New Agenda for the Mediterranean lies a number of prime sectors that must be strengthened and promoted:

- **Human development, good governance and the rule of law** with an emphasis on the promotion of gender equality and youth empowerment:
 - **Erasmus+** to increase educational opportunities for youth.
 - **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** under **Horizon Europe** which are a set of grant programs to support research in the **European Research Area**.
 - **Creative Europe Programme** to promote the cultural and linguistic diversity of the European Union and to strengthen the competitiveness of the cultural sector.
 - **2021-2027 Digital Education Action Plan** to support the sustainable adaptation of education systems to the digital age.
 - **Platforms of Centres of Vocational Excellence** to develop "skills ecosystems" that contribute to regional, economic and social development.
- **Resilience and digital transition:**
 - **European Fund for Sustainable Development** Plus (EFSD+) to co-fund sustainable investments financed by sovereign recovery funds of partners.
 - **Addis Tax** initiative that acts as a partner of different actors to encourage collective action and enhance domestic revenue mobilisation (DRM) in partner countries to improve tax systems and address deficits in development finance.
 - **2021-2027 Euro-Mediterranean transport projects** to achieve climate neutrality in the Mediterraneans to ensure sustainable growth. The program will be rounded up around two cooperation strands, the thematic one and governance that will aim to achieve three missions: a "smarter Mediterranean", a "greener Mediterranean" and "living green spaces"⁴.
- **Peace and security:**
 - **Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorist Financing** processes (AML/CTF) to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism by imposing a number of obligations on the financial sector, the gambling sector, remittance services, bullion dealers and other professionals that provide particular 'designated' services.
 - **"Counter-Terrorism Inflow"** project that will be a partnership to counter terrorism through information exchange between decision-makers of the Southern Neighbourhood and CEPOL.
 - **Euromed police** to strengthen cooperation on security issues.
 - **"EU4 Monitoring Drugs"** to strengthen cooperation on drug-related issues and emerging threats to security and health.
 - **EuroMed Justice** to promote efficient and democratic justice systems.
 - **CyberSouth** programmes to strengthen legislation and institutional capacities on cybercrime and electronic evidence.

⁴ <https://interreg-med.eu/fr/a-propos-de-nous/futurprogrammeinterregmed/>

- **Common Security and Defense Policy** missions and operations (using Framework Participation Agreements) to enable the Union to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of international security.
- **Migration and mobility:**
 - Better asylum governance, border management, readmission capabilities, legal pathways on resettlements and labor mobility schemes, triangular South-South cooperation frameworks.

The New Agenda's Green transition

Another subject at the very core of this New Agenda is the **green transition**, hence, **the shift towards climate change resilience, the promotion of more sustainable energy and the protection of the environment**. This strengthened cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners will aim to encourage the latter to increase their climate ambition through the determination of measurable climate action measures in line with their **national determined contributions (NDCs)** under the Paris Agreement, **National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)** and the **external dimension of the European Green Deal**. The focus will be placed on supporting climate change resilience, climate-proofing investments, investing in preventive measures, nature-based solutions and risk management capacities.

The **selected priority objectives** will be:

- Massive deployment of **renewable energy and clean hydrogen** production, to attain at least 40 Gigawatts of electrolyser capacity in the EU Neighbourhood by 2030
- Stronger **interconnection of electricity systems**
- **Energy efficiency** efforts and measures, with a focus on buildings and appliances
- Policies to address **fugitive methane emissions** from fossil fuel production, transport and use - in line with the framework set in the EU methane strategy
- Measures to **protect and restore biodiversity** and **sustainable water management**
- Transition towards **sustainable food systems** with a strong support to regional integration of markets - under the **AfCFTA** and the **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)** framework.

To meet these ends, the EU and its southern partners will engage strategically with International financial institutions through international fora – like the **International Platform on Sustainable Finance** - that will help coordinate efforts on sustainable investments such as green taxonomies, environmental and climate disclosures, standards and labels for green financial products (including green bonds).

Climate change appears to be essential for the New Agenda due to the **overlapping implications on migration, conflict and cohesion** - which are a main factor of instability in the region. Many EU representatives, such as the First Vice-President of the European Parliament **Roberta Metsola**, have stated multiple times the need for a **clear commitment** from all parties **to tackle climate change**⁵. They have also repeatedly stated how climate change has to be understood in terms of the **green economy** - implying greater investment in the renewable energy infrastructure sector.

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjIjC-WFLtO&t=8s>

The Legislative and Economic Instruments to implement the New Agenda

The implementation of the New Agenda for the Mediterranean will mainly be done through the **Global Europe Instrument**, also known as the new **Neighborhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**, approved on March 18th 2021⁶. This Instrument⁷ was created to rationalize EU development spending. It regroups seven of the ten instruments previously used – such as the off-budget **European Development Fund (EDF)** – to provide for actions in support of the EU external action policies. It disposes of **€79.5 billion in current prices** with **€60.38 billion dedicated to geographic programmes** (with at least €19.32 billion for the Neighbourhood and €29.18 billion for Sub-Saharan Africa).

The Commission has proposed, with its next Multiannual Financial Framework for the period of 2021-2027, to mobilise up **€7 billion** under the NDICI for the New Agenda for the Mediterranean⁸. This budget includes supporting EFSD+ guarantees and the Neighbourhood Investment Platform to incentivize private and public investment up to **€30 billion**. However, critics suggest the budget allocated to the Agenda is too low compared to the challenges the Agenda intends to face⁹.

The New Agenda will also use the **EFSD+** under the **Global Europe Instrument** that will allow crowding in private sector investment. It will work in cooperation with the **European Investment Bank (EIB)**, the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**, Member State development banks, and international financial institutions. Finally, the EU will also promote **Joint Programming and Team Europe initiatives** on the ground and the future **European Financial Architecture for Development** that will help maximize EU efforts. Joint Documents will continue to frame external assistance under the **2021-2027 EU Multiannual Financial Framework**.

Conclusion

This New Agenda will have an important impact on private sector stakeholders. In line with this New Agenda, the European Commission will implement various initiatives to achieve the **dual digital and green transition** and the resulting objectives. Concrete measures, such as in the green sector, will be carefully implemented while taking into account the **democratic principles** promoted by the EU. For European enterprises, attention should be paid to the opportunities such a strengthened partnership with the Southern region could offer - especially with these increased stability, trade and investment opportunities created to support competitiveness and inclusive growth. Likewise, non-EU companies should be aware of the Agenda's current implications but also of its next steps. The New Agenda will likely be a means for the EU to **prioritise** both private and public institutions that comply fully with the Agenda's objectives and values while penalising, in terms of cooperation, those that do not. With the increased cooperation, trade and investment policies, that the New Agenda will call for, more **opportunities** will open up for companies, especially in the areas of renewable energy and agriculture.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1267

⁷ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/CJ19/AG/2021/03-18/1226377EN.pdf

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/joint-communication_review-of-the-enp.pdf

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjljC-WFLtO&t=8s>



Lighthouse Europe maintains a staff specialised in all areas and potential implications of the New Agenda for the Mediterranean who can help your business position itself in alignment with the EU's targets.

For more information: info@lighthouseeurope.com
