**Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – a new agenda for the Mediterranean**

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2. **Reference number:** 2022/2007 (INI) / A9-0220/2022 / P9\_TA(2022)0318
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 14 September 2022
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

Overall, the resolution welcomes the adoption of the Agenda for the Mediterranean, as a positive step towards further economic and policy integration; it renews its call to invest in the South Neighbourhood’s security, prosperity, climate resilience as it is in the EU’s interest and in line with EU values; it enumerates the new factors of fragility that worsen the situation in the region (political instability, socio-economic crisis, COVID-19 and impact of Russia’s aggression of Ukraine); it points to the need of securing adequate resources for implementing the Agenda; it calls for strengthened dialogue and cooperation with Southern Neighbourhood countries; it insists on supporting access to education and training to broaden access to employment; it asks to address orderly migration, respecting fully human rights and tackling root causes through programmes; it asks to step up cooperation on climate change and environmental matters (including water resources), and to facilitate regional dialogue and cooperation in the field of energy and interconnection capacity between the EU and the South Neighbourhood countries.

**6. Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

Most of the points raised in the resolution are covered by the Joint Communication on a new Agenda for the Mediterranean. In response to the resources theme (*paragraph a*), the Neighbourhood, Development for International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) South budget for 2021-2027 is of approximately EUR 12 billion. This doesn’t take into account the amounts that could eventually be mobilised through the emergency funds and the macro-financial assistance inside the EU budget. Besides, blending and guarantees have a leverage effect that will trigger additional funding. High-Level Geopolitical Dialogues with the European Parliament are held twice a year to report inter alia on its implementation (*paragraphs a and aj*).

To ensure relevance of programming, constant dialogues are held with national authorities to ensure relevance and complementarity of support with national plans. Civil Society Organisations’ (CSO) opinions are sought in the process and support to CSOs is ensured (*paragraph ae*). Two new Partnership Priorities (PP) have already been adopted together with Egypt and Jordan, while the Annual Plans for Palestine and Israel have been extended and consultations are ongoing with the other countries (*paragraphs b, c and g*). Existing old Partnership Priorities (jointly agreed documents) have been extended with all the other countries (Algeria, Lebanon, Tunisia), with the exception of Morocco. No PPs are in place for Libya and Syria.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIP) for the period 2021-2027 have been adopted for Algeria, Egypt and Jordan, in addition to the Regional Neighbourhood South MIP. A Multi-country MIP on Migration is under adoption. Cooperation with partner countries that do not have a MIP in place works through either individual (Morocco and Tunisia) or special measures (Libya and Syria).

To mitigate the effects of potential emerging food crises due to the high dependence on food imports disrupted by the Russian aggression of Ukraine, the EU has set up a Food and Resilience Facility worth EUR 225 million, from the 2021/2022 NDICI South Neighbourhood envelopes. This comes in addition to the EU support earmarked for sustainable food systems development and social safety nets in the Southern Neighbourhood until 2024 (*paragraph e*).

Regarding economic development and alleviation of poverty (*paragraph g*), the Joint Communication is accompanied by an Economic and Investment Plan, which includes proposals for flagship initiatives to support efforts in various policy areas, such as growth and jobs, trade, support to Small and Medium Enterprises, sustainable economies including green, blue and circular economies, energy and digital transitions and infrastructure projects, to quote but a few. Cooperation with most of the partner countries includes a component for support to economic growth, including job creation and digital transition.

The EU will continue its work with the European Financing Institutions to which the EU will offer guarantees or contribute to blending to finance infrastructures as well as to offer financial instruments to support private sector investment activities.

Through different Team Europe Initiatives, the EU and its Member States will team up to increase the European impact and visibility.

A significant part of the population in the Southern Neighbourhood is younger than 25 years old, and the programmes financed by the EU address youth issues, education and access to employment, including through Vocational Education & Training (VET). For instance, in Algeria, a new youth entrepreneurship programme in the tourism sector started in 2022, similarly in Palestine where targeted support for youth has started early 2022. In addition, the Erasmus programme for 2021-2027 will dedicate EUR 335 million to promoting different strands of education in the Neighbourhood South, including mobility, higher education, youth projects and VET. Support to education was paramount in assistance of refugees in countries surrounding Syria (*paragraph g*) as well as for Palestinian refugees in the respective host countries.

Despite some positive changes to improve gender equality, discrimination and hostility towards women and vulnerable groups, this topic remains a concern in the Southern Neighbourhood. Further work is required to ensure equality between women and men, including tackling domestic and gender-based violence, and ensuring equal opportunities for women. For instance, at regional level, a programme is ongoing to prevent and to combat gender-based violence and a new programme on women economic empowerment is being set-up (*paragraphs h and i*).

As regards migration (*paragraphs k, l and m*), the resolution is in line with the Commission’s actions in the framework on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and the Agenda for the Mediterranean. The Commission has been working closely with partners, in view of forging comprehensive, mutually beneficial and balanced partnerships on the basis of a whole-of-route approach including by addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement and seizing the benefits of legal migration efficiently and effectively.

The programming process undertaken in 2021 and 2022 factored in the indicative 10% migration spending target, with relevant migration and forced displacement considerations integrated in a tailor-made yet flexible manner, touching on protection, legal migration, border management, as well as on return and reintegration. In cooperation with UN Agencies and International non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the EU works in difficult contexts to improve the living conditions and resilience of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people.

The EU condemns any violation of the human rights of migrants and refugees. These will continue to be addressed by further strengthening monitoring systems, and by regularly engaging with relevant authorities to prevent any such violations, and to hold the responsible people accountable.

Regarding regional cooperation (*paragraph x*), considering the strong interdependence within the region, the Agenda proposes to enhance regional, sub-regional, inter-regional and cross-regional cooperation initiatives, with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), and other regional partners such as the League of Arab States and to take advantage of the Southern Neighbourhood strategic location as a bridge to sub-Saharan Africa and the Gulf. In addition to funding projects, the EU promotes regional policy cooperation by exercising the co-presidency of the UfM and through policy dialogue with its partners, including using the instruments of climate and water diplomacy. Complementarily, the EU finances an important part of the operational costs of the UfM.

In the domain of climate change and green transition (*paragraphs n, o and p*), as the Mediterranean Region is among those more seriously hit by climate change, the Commission is committed to support our Southern Neighbours in their efforts to develop and implement Nationally Determined Contributions. The newly adopted PPs with Egypt state that “the EU and Egypt will cooperate in the diversification of energy sources and the transition towards a low-emissions economy […]” while the EU-Jordan PPs state that “the EU and Jordan will enhance collaboration in dealing with climate change and environmental degradation by joining efforts to foster green growth and energy transition towards climate neutrality”. Besides, Morocco and the EU has recently signed a Green Partnership to provide a strong political basis for further cooperation in this area.

Regarding the Middle-East Peace Process (*paragraphs y to ac*), the EU will continue to push for the resumption of meaningful peace talks and to halt any unilateral steps which could undermine the feasibility of the two-State solution, including settlement expansions, demolitions and settlers’ violence and to continue to gear its financial cooperation towards the establishment of democratic, viable, sustainable and independent Palestinian State. The EU has also started to look actively into supporting the normalisation process between Israel and some Arab neighbours. The process can have a positive impact on regional prosperity and stability, including on the Middle East Peace Process, as it promotes regional peace and creates opportunities for new partnerships in a wide range of policy fields, for instance in the areas of climate, renewable energy or agriculture with Jordan and Morocco.

The EU will continue to offer political and financial support to the Palestinian Authority, including through the European Joint Strategy 2021-2024, which has just been adopted. The EU will also continue to be a reliable and predictable supporter of UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), including in its internal reforms process, fully committing to the Joint Declaration 2021-24 signed with UNWRA last year.