

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 11 December 2025

European Parliament Hosts High-Level Conference on Implementing the Pact for the Mediterranean in Higher Education

The European Parliament today hosted the high-level conference “**Bridging Continents: Higher Education as a Tool for EU–Southern Mediterranean Cooperation,**” bringing together high representatives of the European Commission, EU Member States, Mediterranean countries, universities, and regional networks to advance the implementation of the **Pact for the Mediterranean in the field of Higher Education**.

The event was co-organised by **EMUNI University**, the **Euromed University of Fes**, and the Brussels-based **Slovenian Business and Research Association**, with the support of the **Union for the Mediterranean**.

EU’s Commitment

In her keynote address, **Tena Mišetič, on behalf of Dubravka Šuica, European Commissioner for the Mediterranean**, emphasised the European Commission’s commitment to making education a strategic pillar of neighbourhood cooperation under the New Pact for Mediterranean:

“Education is not only a social investment — it is a geopolitical tool. A Euro–Mediterranean Higher Education cooperation can be one of the EU’s strongest contributions to stability, opportunity, and human development in our neighbourhood.”

Sergej Možina on behalf of Igor Papič, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Slovenia, underlined the role of Member States in contributing to this shared agenda:

“Slovenia supports deeper Euro–Mediterranean academic cooperation. Through Mediterranean Mobility Mechanism, quality assurance, internationalisation, innovation and new alliances, our universities can help build a Mediterranean space of knowledge that empowers young people on both shores.”

Their interventions set the political direction for the conference and framed the Pact for the Mediterranean as a priority for Europe’s future engagement with the region.

Prof. Dr. Mostapha Bousmina, President of the Euromed University of Fes, emphasized EUROMED's commitment to defining and actively contributing to the development of scientific research and mechanisms encouraging innovation, as well as promoting the mobility of students and researchers on both sides of the Mediterranean: *“The Euromed University of Fes considers that applied research, innovation, and the valorization of scientific results, accompanied by the facilitation of incoming and outgoing mobility of researchers and students, must be at the heart of the Euro-Mediterranean multilateral collaboration framework.”*

Prof. Dr. Rado Bohinc, President of EMUNI University, expressed EMUNI's willingness to support all activities that would contribute to the successful implementation of political commitments in his introductory speech: *“EMUNI stands ready to transform political commitments into practical cooperation on the ground.”*

Conference Outcomes: A Practical Action Plan

Participants agreed on elements for a **draft Action Plan** that outlines concrete steps for implementing the Pact for the Mediterranean in higher education. Key priorities include:

1. South–North University Alliances

Institutions will work toward long-term partnerships, joint governance structures and shared degree programmes.

2. Balanced and Inclusive Academic Mobility

The Action Plan should propose simplified visas, circular mobility pathways, and targeted scholarships for women, youth, and students from crisis-affected regions.

3. Institutional Capacity-Building

Special attention will be given to strengthening quality assurance, digital learning, and governance systems in Southern Mediterranean universities.

4. Academic Resilience and Crisis Response

Concrete proposals include hybrid learning solutions, emergency mobility schemes, and a scholarship fund for students from conflict-affected areas, such as Palestine and Syria.

5. Joint Research and Study Programmes

Euro–Mediterranean degrees will be developed in fields crucial to regional resilience: climate adaptation, water and energy, digital transformation, peace and governance, and democratic resilience.

Next Steps

The conference outcomes will be proposed to consolidate into a **final Action Plan** of the New Pact for Mediterranean early in 2026. This plan will guide the work of the European Commission, the UfM Secretariat, national ministries, and regional university networks. It will also contribute to preparations for the **UfM Policy Event on Higher Education in 2026**.

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