



The 2026 Nicosia Call for Climate Action

Implementing Climate Action in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East: Regional Cooperation Empowered by Science and Innovation

The International Conference “*Climate Action in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East: Regional Cooperation Empowered by Science and Innovation*” was held on 8-9 April 2026 under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It brought together leading government officials, policymakers, prominent scientists and representatives of international organizations to discuss scientific cooperation and science diplomacy within the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME), a region widely recognized as one of the world’s most affected regions by climate change.

The Conference noted ongoing regional and international initiatives, including the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the European External Action Service entitled “**The Pact for the Mediterranean-One Sea, One Pact, One Future**”, as a practical framework for cooperation with robust actions based on both existing and new initiatives and emphasizes the importance of coherence, complementarity and alignment of efforts, including through existing regional cooperation mechanisms such as the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Climate Change Initiative (EMME-CCI).

The Conference underlined that the EMME region, as part of the wider Mediterranean space region remains a strategic space linking Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, and that its future must be shared through balanced, inclusive and mutually beneficial cooperation. It also emphasized that addressing shared challenges, including climate change, environmental degradation, economic disparities, migration pressures, and security risks require strengthened and sustained regional cooperation to safeguard ecosystems and livelihoods across the region. That challenging agenda even entails societal changes in consumption behavior and responsible utilization of natural resources by citizens and industries.

The Conference further recognizes that progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is critically dependent on effective and timely action on climate change, particularly in vulnerable regions such as the EMME region.

The conference underlined the crucial role of science and innovation in addressing the climate challenges of the EMME and emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation across key domains such as energy, climate-friendly urban planning, water, food, health and cultural heritage.

The Conference emphasised that science diplomacy provides a practical framework for cooperation in addressing shared transboundary challenges, by anchoring engagement in scientific evidence, joint risk assessment and collaborative knowledge production, including in contexts where political dialogue may be fragmented and limited.

The Conference adopted *The Nicosia Call for Climate Action*, reflecting the shared scientific understanding and discussions held, and highlighting priority areas for strengthened cooperation across the region.

The Conference invites relevant authorities and stakeholders across the Mediterranean and Middle East - including governments, regional and international organisations, EU institutions, Academies of Sciences in the region, partner countries, research centres, financial institutions, and civil society actors - to take note of the *Nicosia Call for Climate Action* and reaffirm their commitment to strengthened cooperation in the field of science and innovation on climate change across the Mediterranean basin.

Strategic Priorities for Climate Action

1. Empower People and Communities as the Driving Force of Mediterranean Cooperation

The Conference highlighted the importance of investing in education, research and infrastructure capacity building, skills, youth empowerment, mobility, and cultural exchange across the EMME region and the Mediterranean. Strengthening links among universities, research institutions, civil society, local communities and innovation ecosystems can expand opportunity, foster mutual understanding and support a stronger sense of shared ownership across Mediterranean societies.

Particular focus should be applied to science capabilities, skills development, vocational training, entrepreneurship, and initiatives that empower youth and women in shaping the region's environmental, economic and social future.

2. Build Stronger and Durable Science and Innovation Cooperation

The Conference emphasised the need to strengthen durable cooperation in science and innovation across the Mediterranean region, including between universities, research centers and industry. Priority actions should include:

1. Accelerating the energy transition and cooperation on renewable energy and clean technologies.
2. Strengthening regional value chains in sectors such as agriculture, health, cultural heritage, and critical raw materials.
3. Focusing on improved resource management, improving conditions for circular economy and sharing best practice examples
4. Advancing digital and transport connectivity, linking Mediterranean economies.
5. Reducing dependence on fossil fuels and promoting a sustainable and regenerative blue economy.
6. Enhancing resilience to climate change and water scarcity, notably in urban areas.
7. Developing the environment and health risk management scheme of natural disasters (fires, floods, even droughts and desertification), including post-disaster community vulnerability assessment and resilience strategies.
8. Advancing interdisciplinary research in highlighting the public health and climate/environmental benefits of green transition and decarbonization priorities, especially for socially disadvantaged populations.

Particular importance was given to the development and sharing of scientific infrastructures, data systems and regional modelling capabilities as common platforms for evidence-based policymaking and cooperation.

The Conference further underlined that effective climate action in the EMME region requires integrated systems transformation across interconnected domains, including energy, water, food systems,



ecosystems, health, cities, infrastructure and the related socio-economic transitions, rather than isolated sectoral interventions.

In this context, the Conference emphasized that the Sustainable Development Goals provide an integrated framework for action, linking climate mitigation and adaptation with resilience, equity, health, social cohesion and long-term economic prosperity. “In this regard, particular importance is attached to ensuring a just transition, whereby climate action is implemented in a socially inclusive manner, supports vulnerable communities, and promotes equitable economic opportunities, including through skills development, employment pathways, and regional cohesion.”

3. Strengthen Governance, Coordination and Finance Arrangements

The Conference highlighted the need for establishing inclusive and robust governance arrangements to ensure sustainable funding for cooperation in the field of science and innovation, focusing on climate change and its effects on the Mediterranean region, with particular emphasis on coordinated transboundary action, including through regional cooperation mechanisms such as the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Climate Change Initiative (EMME-CCI). These arrangements should foster co-ownership, improve coordination among existing initiatives and help align scientific knowledge, public policy and investment priorities. Priority initiatives should include:

1. Strengthening inclusive and participatory governance to ensure long-term stakeholder buy-in from stakeholders.
2. Enhancing governance at national and local levels to ensure a coherent approach across the numerous initiatives and projects in the region.
3. Developing stronger investment cases for climate-related science and innovation cooperation.
4. Mobilizing public and private finance, including through partnerships with development and financial institutions.
5. Supporting implementation pathways that connect research outcomes with practical policymaking and investment decisions.

Governance approaches should remain flexible and inclusive, allowing for differentiated participation and the gradual deepening of cooperation according to shared interests and capacities, while also aligning national priorities with regional agendas to enable coherent, place-based implementation.

Implementation should, where appropriate, be underpinned by measurable targets, common indicators, periodic review, and transparent monitoring frameworks, so that shared ambition is translated into practical and accountable progress. It is also important to establish operational mechanisms that bridge research, policy, and investment at the territorial level, ensuring that scientific knowledge is converted into concrete project pipelines and investable initiatives.

In this context, recovery and reconstruction efforts—whether in response to climate impacts or conflict-related disruptions—can provide opportunities to build more resilient and sustainable infrastructure, including, where appropriate, transboundary systems that support regional cooperation and shared resilience

4. Mobilize Partnerships on a Regional, European and International level, through Science Diplomacy

The Conference highlighted the role of science diplomacy, that is both diplomacy for science and science for informed diplomacy, as a mechanism to connect scientific cooperation with policy dialogue, enabling collaboration across diverse political contexts and supporting the translation of scientific knowledge into coordinated action. It stressed that the successful implementation of the Pact will require strong partnerships at scientific and political level among governments, international organizations and research institutions.

Large-scale regional initiatives, including energy interconnections, research and innovation networks, climate services, water cooperation frameworks and other cross-border infrastructure and resilience projects, can serve as flagship examples of the benefits stemming from deeper transboundary cooperation when supported by sustained political commitment.

Such flagship initiatives should be developed in close cooperation with the scientific community and respond to concrete regional needs, including sustainable water management, climate-resilient agriculture, climate friendly urban planning, renewable energy and clean technologies, and protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity, public health resilience, and the safeguarding of cultural heritage.

Final Appeal

The EMME region has long been a crossroads of civilizations, cultures, and economic exchange. Today it must also become a **space for strengthened cooperation, grounded in scientific knowledge and shared responsibility**.

The Conference calls for sustained commitment and inclusive, science-based climate actions, across the EMME, recognising that shared environmental challenges require collective action to build resilience, prosperity, peace and stability for present and future generations.

The Conference recognizes that the EMME region is also characterized by political instability and recurring conflicts, which exacerbate environmental and humanitarian vulnerabilities. As such it calls for all relevant stakeholders to promote the protection of infrastructures, critical for the well-being of citizens and critical for maintaining climate resilience, regional stability and sustainable development efforts.