



September 29, 2026

Dear Heads of State or Government of the MED9 group,

As business organisations representing industries and enterprises across the MED9 countries, ahead of the Split Summit on October 7, we wish to bring to your attention a number of common priorities that should be reflected in your discussions.

The Mediterranean region plays an essential role in Europe's economic and industrial landscape. Its economies connect the European Union to global trade routes, energy corridors and the Southern Neighbourhood, while hosting key industrial value chains, ports, islands and coastal regions that are essential to Europe's long-term growth.

In this context, a stronger and more coordinated Mediterranean voice can help ensure that Europe's industrial and economic agenda better reflects these specific assets, needs and potential of our region, bringing benefits to the EU as a whole and contributing to a more resilient and competitive European economy. We believe **Europe's competitiveness agenda must fully harness the economic and industrial potential of the Mediterranean** and address the specific challenges that risk holding it back.

At a time when the EU is called upon to provide urgent and coordinated responses to interconnected challenges - from competitiveness, low productivity, security and technological development to the increasing impact of climate change, including more frequent and severe wildfires, floods and heatwaves across Europe - strong European cooperation and solidarity are more important than ever. We call on the MED9 countries to urgently strengthen cooperation on climate preparedness and resilience to ensure that the specificities of the impact of climate change in our region are fully taken into consideration within wider EU policies.

A common and stronger response to these challenges is also essential to preserve the **shared values** on which the European project is built. **As Businesses we stand ready to contribute to these efforts.**

Multiannual Financial Framework

We urge European leaders to agree on an **ambitious and modernised EU budget** that is commensurate with the Union's strategic ambitions and places greater emphasis on competitiveness and boosting productivity while preserving adequate resources to address economic and territorial divergences within the Union. **Cohesion policy**

remains essential to ensure that all regions can contribute to, and benefit from, Europe's competitiveness agenda. To that end, Cohesion policy must remain a central pillar of the next MFF and be supported by an adequate and dedicated budget, with resources clearly ring-fenced from other policy areas to guarantee continuity and predictability.

In addition, while acknowledging the need to simplify the EU budget framework, a genuine place-based approach, supported by multi-level governance and the active involvement of regional authorities and the private sector, is essential to ensure effective investments.

A strong European Competitiveness Fund should complement this framework by acting as a driver of industrial growth and productivity whilst ensuring that the benefits are distributed as widely as possible across the EU. Any agenda aimed at strengthening Europe's competitiveness must also address the issue of structurally **high energy prices**, which continue to undermine industrial investment, innovation and decarbonisation efforts. Moreover, we need to strengthen cross-border energy interconnections (electricity, gas and hydrogen) to secure supply chains, promote market integration and ensure Europe's energy independence.

Blue Economy

The Blue Economy should be recognised not only as an environmental and sustainability agenda, but also as a key driver of Europe's competitiveness, strategic autonomy and security.

This means developing a **European strategy that strengthens maritime ecosystems as a whole**, from ports and transport to coastal and island economies, while creating the conditions for investment, innovation and climate adaptation.

EU action should support the modernisation and decarbonisation of maritime value chains in a technology-neutral way, while supporting the competitiveness of islands, coastal regions and ports and avoiding traffic diversion towards neighbouring non-EU ports.

Moreover, the forthcoming **Circular Economy Act** should also take into account the specific needs of Blue Economy sectors, building on circular economy principles such as waste prevention, repairability, reuse and resource efficiency across maritime value chains. Equally, tourism must be considered as a strategic pillar of the Mediterranean Blue Economy and an essential contributor to European growth, employment and cohesion. We thus encourage MED9 governments to seize the momentum that will arise with the forthcoming EU Sustainable Tourism Strategy to further strengthen its role.

Pact for the Mediterranean

The Pact for the Mediterranean should help bring together and scale up initiatives already being developed, turning them into more structured partnerships and concrete projects with added value on both shores of the Mediterranean.

To achieve this, **its implementation should involve business organisations from the outset** and focus on strengthening value chains, improving infrastructure and energy connectivity, and developing sustainable economic projects.

In the current context, the Pact should foster a constructive but decisive approach at EU level to develop trusted partnerships with neighbouring States, creating legal pathways linked to skills and talent mobility, including through the EU Talent Pool and other mobility schemes.

ABOUT BUSINESS MED9

Business MED9 is an informal platform bringing together the leading national business confederations of the nine Mediterranean EU Member States – Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain – working together to promote shared business priorities and contribute to the European policy debate. The MED9 countries account for around 41% of EU27 GDP and 46% of its population, and are home to approximately 48% of EU businesses, underlining the significant economic and entrepreneurial weight of the Mediterranean region within the European Union.