

Climate Change and Security in the Mediterranean

by Flavia Fusco



ABSTRACT

This report summarises the proceedings of the international conference "Climate Change and Security in the Mediterranean: Exploring the Nexus, Unpacking International Policy Responses" organised in the framework of the New-Med Research Network in Barcelona on 17 December 2021. Convened to discuss the multidimensional security implications of the climate emergency in the Mediterranean, the event was co-organised by New-Med, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the OSCE Secretariat and took place in a hybrid format at the UfM's Headquarters in Barcelona. Part of a larger work programme of research, outreach and dissemination activities on the OSCE's 2nd dimension of environmental & economic security carried out by New-Med over the past year, the conference provided the occasion to assess climate trajectories in the Mediterranean and discuss present and future policy options to help mitigate its adverse effects on states and societies in the area.

Mediterranean | Climate change | Security | OSCE | UfM | European Union

keywords

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Introduction

On 17 December 2021, the New-Med Research Network, in partnership with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the OSCE Secretariat, organised a one-day international conference entitled "Climate Change and Security in the Mediterranean: Exploring the Nexus, Unpacking International Policy Responses". Held in hybrid format, with scholars gathering in person at the UfM's headquarters in Barcelona and connecting remotely via Zoom, the event saw the participation of 22 speakers from the broader Mediterranean area, including practitioners and policy-makers, academics, scientists, diplomats and activists, who gathered to analyse the nexus between climate change and security in the Mediterranean.

Organised in the framework of the New-Med Research Network, a research, outreach and dissemination project run since 2014 by the Rome-based policy think tank, the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), the event fits within a broader cycle of activities conducted by New-Med during 2020-2021 specifically tackling the multidimensional challenges of the climate emergency in the Mediterranean.¹ Supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, New-Med sets out to trace the evolution of broad geopolitical trends in the wider

¹ For more information on the New-Med Research project, including its past publications, volumes and reports, please consult the dedicated webpage: <https://www.new-med.net> and <https://www.iai.it/en/node/2004>. For recent New-Med publications tackling the climate emergency and its impact on multilateral cooperation in the Mediterranean see, Bernardo Venturi and Andrea Dessì (eds), *Bologna Peacebuilding Forum 2021. Peacebuilding and Climate Change*, Bologna, Agency for Peacebuilding, 2021 (Event report), <https://www.iai.it/en/node/14256>; Andrea Dessì, Daniele Fattibene and Flavia Fusco (eds), *Climate Change and Sustainability: Mediterranean Perspectives*, Rome, Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2021, <https://www.iai.it/en/node/13843>; Anis Germani and Rania Masri, "The Covid-19 Crisis and the Mediterranean Basin: Overcoming Disparities, Promoting Genuine Cooperation", in *IAI Papers*, No. 21/41 (September 2021), <https://www.iai.it/en/node/14053>.

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Mediterranean, analysing these developments from a non-Eurocentric perspective and engaging with key international organisations to foster dialogue and multilateral cooperation in the area. Since its inception, New-Med has developed a specific focus on the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership for Co-operation, engaging with OSCE officials, the Secretariat and Mediterranean partner countries to examine modalities to re-launch effective multilateral cooperation, including in the domain of climate diplomacy.²

Structured around an introductory session, a high-level segment and two expert panels, the international conference provided an opportunity to approach the climate-security nexus in the Mediterranean from various perspectives and fields of study (see Appendix for the full conference agenda). Convened weeks after the conclusion of the COP26 summit in Glasgow, and amidst increasingly worrying global climate events, the conference allowed officials, researchers and academics to provide assessments of future climate trajectories in the Mediterranean and discuss present and future policy prescriptions to adapt to and mitigate its most adverse effects on states and societies in the area. Against this backdrop, invited scholars delved into the political and diplomatic, socio-economic and human security dimensions of the present climate emergency in the Mediterranean, spurring a fruitful debate on the role that regional and international organisations may play in fostering climate cooperation in an area widely recognised as a climate change “hotspot”.

Welcoming remarks

Conference proceedings were opened by the institutional supporters of the conference and the broader New-Med project. **Andrea Dessì**, Scientific Director of the New-Med Research Network and Head of Italian Foreign Policy Programme at IAI, welcomed participants, briefly introducing the overarching topic of the conference as well as the objectives and mandate of New-Med before passing the floor to Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the UfM, and Nicolás Russo Perez, International Relations Coordinator at the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, who introduced the respective roles of the two organisations and their support for the present event.

UfM Secretary General H.E. **Nasser Kamel** addressed conference participants via video link, contextualising our understandings of environmental and climate fragility in the Mediterranean and providing insights into the role and activities of the UfM in these domains. Referring to the First Mediterranean Assessment Report (MAR1) prepared by the independent network of Mediterranean Experts

² See for instance, Sandra Sacchetti, *The OSCE and Effective Multilateralism in the Mediterranean: A Comparative Analysis*, Rome, IAI, December 2021, <https://www.iai.it/en/node/14475>; Monika Wohlfeld and Fred Tanner, “Comprehensive Security and New Challenges: Strengthening the OSCE”, in *IAI Papers*, No. 21|23 (May 2021), <https://www.iai.it/en/node/13457>.

on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC) and supported by the UfM, as well as discussions held within the 6th UfM Regional Forum on regional integration in the Mediterranean (29 November 2021), the Secretary General outlined recent scientific data on the climate emergency in the Mediterranean.³ In framing the Mediterranean as a climate change hotspot, Ambassador Kamel pointed out that average temperatures in the Mediterranean have already increased by 1.5°C compared to preindustrial times and that the region is currently warming 20 per cent faster than the global average. In the absence of mitigating strategies and significant cuts to global emissions, some areas of the Mediterranean are expected to record temperature increases of up to 2.2°C by 2040 and as high as 3.8°C in 2100, a scenario that holds far reaching implications for the future. Along with temperature increases, the Mediterranean Sea is also warming faster than other localities and sea levels are expected to increase by 20 cm by 2050, with serious consequences on regional agriculture (particularly in exposed areas such as the Nile Delta) and major coastal cities. Water scarcity and its connection to agricultural production and food security are further areas of concern, particularly given the rapidly growing Mediterranean population, with up to 250 million people potentially being affected by water shortages in the region by 2040.⁴ In emphasising the socio-economic, political and security implications of such developments, Ambassador Kamel underscored the need for long-term cooperative frameworks and mitigating strategies across Mediterranean Basin states, reaffirming UfM's strong commitment to prioritise such actions and engagements, not least given that climate change is believed to threaten not only the sustainability but also the very identity of Mediterranean communities.

In thanking participants and invited speakers for gathering in Barcelona, **Nicoló Russo Perez**, International Relations Coordinator at the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, focussed his welcoming remarks on the activities and objectives of the New-Med Research Network, a project supported by the Foundation since its inception in 2014. Speaking via video link, Russo Perez underscored the complementarity of New-Med's research and outreach engagements with the present focus of the conference, outlining how the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security matches New-Med's efforts to engage a multitude of governmental and non-governmental realities to promote genuine understanding and cooperation across the Mediterranean. Having addressed topics such as migration, intercultural dialogue, cultural heritage and radicalisation, as well as

³ See, Wolfgang Cramer, Joël Guiot and Katarzyna Marini, *Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin. Current Situation and Risks for the Future. First Mediterranean Assessment Report*, Union for the Mediterranean, Marseille, UfM/Plan Bleu/UNEP/MAP, November 2020, <https://www.medecc.org/?p=3506>; UfM, *UfM Foreign Affairs Ministers Gather to Discuss the Untapped Potential of Regional Integration in the Mediterranean*, 29 November 2021, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/?p=127882>.

⁴ See for instance, UfM, *Mediterranean Countries Share Water Emergency and Recovery Plans to Tackle the Aftermath of COVID-19*, 6 May 2020, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/?p=96137>; Marianela Fader et al., "Water", in Wolfgang Cramer, Joël Guiot and Katarzyna Marini (eds), *Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin*, cit., p. 181-236.

youth empowerment and multilateral cooperation in New-Med's previous cycles of activities, the decision to focus on climate change reflects the project's ongoing commitment to tackle contemporary trends of significant importance for the region and support the activities of key international organisations, such as the OSCE and UfM, in promoting dialogue and cooperation in this region.⁵

Against the backdrop of profound changes within the Mediterranean and the broader international system, Russo Perez noted how efforts to re-think Mediterranean cooperation through the development of track II initiatives involving practitioners, academics and the private sector from a variety of Mediterranean localities are today particularly valuable to widen perspectives and bridge understandings on mutual challenges within this region. In this regard, the Compagnia di San Paolo is pleased with the collaborative network developed by New-Med and views the evolving cooperation between research centres, international organisations, academia and civil society as an important investment for the development of new ideas to relaunch effective multilateral cooperation in a shared Mediterranean space, including via the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership for Co-operation.

In thanking the previous speakers for their insights and generous support for New-Med's activities and the hosting of the present conference, **Andrea Dessì**, Scientific Director of the New-Med Research Network, again took the floor to stress how diversity, plurality and multidisciplinary approaches have long stood at the centre of New-Med's research activities and network of scholars. By briefly outlining the objectives and mandate of the network, the speaker emphasised the importance of integrating non-European perspectives on present challenges affecting states and societies in the broader Mediterranean, describing this effort as indispensable to build bridges and foster increased understanding across Mediterranean Basin states and a necessary precondition to developing genuine multilateral cooperation within the area. For this reason, New-Med has developed a flexible, diverse and multidisciplinary network of scholars, research centres, organisations and universities spanning the broader Mediterranean, which can help develop policy recommendations and targeted engagement efforts on a multitude of themes and topics with a high degree of academic rigour and policy relevance.

Turning to the specific topic of the conference, Dr. Dessì underscored how New-Med's cycle of activities over the past two years was specifically directed at engaging with the OSCE's second dimension ("basket") of security (i.e., environmental and economic dimension), and that New-Med remains committed to following up on its recent activities with a new cycle of research, outreach and engagement efforts for 2022-2023. In this regard, Dr. Dessì outlined how New-Med has already published one edited volume in 2021 – *Climate Change and Sustainability: Mediterranean*

⁵ For access to previous New-Med research outputs see, <https://www.new-med.net/category/publications>.

Perspectives – as well as partnering with the Agency for Peacebuilding to co-organise the two-day Bologna Peacebuilding Forum 2021 on “Peacebuilding and Climate Change” in May 2021.⁶ A further New-Med edited volume, expected in early 2022, will gather insights and contributions delivered by a number of speakers at the present conference, with individual chapters written by scientists from the MedECC, academics and policy researchers on different dimensions of the climate change-security nexus in the Mediterranean.⁷ In concluding his remarks, Dr. Dessi thanked all speakers as well as the New-Med, IAI and UfM research teams and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the OSCE Secretariat and the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation for their generous support and collaboration in making this event possible before passing the floor to the high-level segment panel.

High-level segment: The climate-security nexus in the Mediterranean

Chairing the proceedings of the high-level segment, **Emiliano Alessandri**, Senior External Co-operation Officer from the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, began by highlighting the ongoing cooperation between the OSCE Secretariat and the UfM, underscoring the shared objective of the two organisations to foster genuine multilateral cooperation in the Mediterranean. Recalling the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the OSCE and UfM on the margins of the OSCE Mediterranean Conference in Malaga in 2018,⁸ Dr. Alessandri stressed the added value of the two organisations and their overarching complementarity in seeking to foster collaborative frameworks to tackle the multidimensional effects of the climate emergency across Mediterranean states and societies. Benefiting from overlapping but distinguished membership as well as a different programmatic emphasis on a number of policy areas, the two organisations are well placed to pool their expertise to better engage Mediterranean Basin countries, mixing comprehensive security approaches that are a hallmark of the OSCE’s activities with the UfM’s focus on sustainable development and human security in an effort to develop shared policy prescriptions to tackle the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation in the area.

Having introduced the topic and individual speakers on the high-level segment, the floor passed to Ambassador **Grammenos Mastrojeni**, Senior Deputy Secretary General of the UfM, who opened the panel by framing the climate emergency in the Mediterranean and outlining the work and mandate of the UfM on these domains.

⁶ See, Bernardo Venturi and Andrea Dessi (eds), *Bologna Peacebuilding Forum 2021*, cit.; Andrea Dessi, Daniele Fattibene and Flavia Fusco (eds), *Climate Change and Sustainability: Mediterranean Perspectives*, cit.

⁷ Andrea Dessi and Flavia Fusco (eds), *Climate Change and Security in the Mediterranean: Exploring the Nexus, Unpacking International Policy Responses*, Rome, Nuova Cultura, 2022 (forthcoming).

⁸ See, UfM, *UfM Secretariat Active in 2018 OSCE Mediterranean Conference to Reinforce Euro-Mediterranean Synergies and Regional Cooperation*, October 2018, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/?p=71410>.

Specific emphasis was placed on the UfM's support for the MedECC network and the latter's first-ever assessment report on climate and environmental change in the Mediterranean.⁹ Delving into some of the report's findings, Ambassador Mastrojeni reiterated that the Mediterranean was the second fastest warming region on earth and that its waters were the fastest warming in the world. The Ambassador stressed the security implications linked to the current climate crisis in the region, underscoring the importance of understanding these implications not as a mere collection of data or separate scenarios but as inherently interconnected fragments of the same problem that should be addressed comprehensively.



From left to right: Almotaz Abadi, Grammenos Mastrojeni, Emiliano Alessandri and Igli Hasani. On screen: Natasha Meli Daudey.

Ambassador Mastrojeni focussed on the threats that climate change poses to Mediterranean balances and identities, providing insights on the role the Mediterranean's mild climate historically played in shaping regional identities and interests. In this regard, it is no coincidence that the agricultural revolution occurred in the Mediterranean area roughly 10,000 years ago, a process that was spurred by conducive climate realities and high levels of climate predictability. Similarly, today's changing climate is transforming interests and identities in the region and, if left unchecked, has the potential to produce divisive trends within and between Mediterranean states as well as Europe, where north-south dynamics within the European Union will also be similarly impacted by changing climate trends. At the same time, opportunities and unifying trends brought about by climate change in the Mediterranean and beyond were also underscored, with cooperation being a determinant in turning challenges into opportunities and building complementarity across state and societal actors, international organisations and the private sector. The forestry sector was cited as an important, albeit often overlooked example of fruitful cooperation between the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean.¹⁰

The global nature of the climate emergency was also addressed, highlighting the dramatic consequences that climate-induced disruptive trends occurring in far off localities can have on the Mediterranean itself. Examples range from desertification in the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa or the melting of Himalayan glaciers, developments that are understood as having direct implications for Mediterranean Basin countries in multiple domains. Positioned at the intersection of three

⁹ For more information on MedECC and its research outputs see, <https://www.medecc.org>.

¹⁰ See for instance, UfM, *International Forest Day 2021: UfM Works to Build Regional Capacity for Large-Scale Forest Restoration*, 19 March 2021, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/?p=115368>.

continents and placed at the crossroads of various crises, the Mediterranean is indeed particularly exposed to these broad, global challenges connected to climate change, making multidimensional and multilateral cooperation fundamental to mitigate its most adverse effects. In this regard, Ambassador Mastrojeni specifically noted the need to pool expertise and share knowledge and resources to allow for the delineation of adaptation and mitigating strategies in the Mediterranean and further afield. This process should also re-think the concept of technology transfer, expanding the notion from the digital sphere and north-south trajectories to also include techniques developed over centuries in regions and localities exposed to harsher climate realities. In this respect, the Ambassador pointed to the example of the Yakhchal – an ancient construction dating back to 400 BCE that served as an ice house and cooling devise capable of capturing and storing ice in desert climates first developed in Persia – as one example of the way inputs from across the world can help develop new and innovative techniques capable of fostering resilience and sustainability in the context of a changing climate. Ultimately, given the breadth of the climate challenges that lay ahead and their multiplying effects on a whole range of social, economic, political and security domains, it is clear that only genuine multilateral and global cooperation can hope to mitigate these phenomena. Cooperation in the climate sector, including in the domain of technology transfers, is therefore fundamental to enhance the capacity of Mediterranean states and societies to adapt and mitigate the challenges of climate change, fostering integration and limiting the risk of asymmetries across Mediterranean states.

The second speaker on the high-level segment, Ambassador **Igli Hasani**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), discussed the evolution of the OSCE Mediterranean partnership for Co-operation and focussed on the two main tracks around which the OSCE's work in the area of climate change have been structured. With regards to the former aspect, Ambassador Hasani outlined the historical context of the OSCE's evolving engagement with the Mediterranean, tracing the origins back to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which explicitly recognised that security in the OSCE area was closely interlinked with that in the Mediterranean. The Lisbon Summit Declaration in 1996¹¹ together with the Madrid Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation in 2007¹² and the more recent Milan Declaration on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean in 2018¹³ were identified as important milestones in defining the current relationship between the OSCE Secretariat, OSCE Participating States (PS) and the six OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. In this regard, Ambassador Hasani also pointed to the 2019 decision to rename both the Asian and Mediterranean partnerships of the OSCE, utilising the more formal naming:

¹¹ OSCE, *Lisbon Document*, 1996, <https://www.osce.org/node/39539>.

¹² OSCE, *Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Co-operation* (MC.DOC/1/07), 30 November 2007, <https://www.osce.org/node/29532>.

¹³ OSCE, *Declaration on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean* (MC.DOC/4/18), 7 December 2018, <https://www.osce.org/node/462073>.

"OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group".¹⁴ Over the years, the OSCE Mediterranean partnership has been further enhanced through regular review of cooperation modalities carried out through regular meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council, as well as the yearly appointments surrounding the Mediterranean Partnership Group itself.

Ambassador Hasani informed the meeting on the landmark Decision "Strengthening co-operation to address the challenges caused by climate change" adopted by consensus at the 28th OSCE Ministerial Council in Stockholm on 3 December¹⁵ and emphasised its importance in intensifying dialogue and co-operation to tackle climate-related challenges among the OSCE's 57 pS as well as with its partner countries in the Mediterranean (six partners) and Asia (five partners).¹⁶

Framing the current climate emergency as a shared challenge across the Mediterranean Basin, Ambassador Hasani, moved to examine the OSCE's main engagement tracks. In this respect, he underscored the role played by the OSCE since 2007 as a platform for formal and informal dialogue on climate change. Ambassador Hasani gave a recent example of the OSCE Mediterranean Conference held in Vienna in October 2021 – in which climate action was discussed within the framework of sustainable recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as a way to contribute to common security in the Mediterranean.¹⁷

As for the programmatic work carried out by the OSCE, Ambassador Hasani highlighted the current project "Strengthening Responses to Security Risks from Climate Change in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia" being implemented in close collaboration with the OSCE field operations and in partnership with adelphi – a Berlin-based think tank. The project has been supporting pS in turning the shared climate challenges into opportunities for co-operation. Enhancing the understanding of potential security risks stemming from climate change, increasing co-operation among regional stakeholders to jointly address these risks through concrete initiatives on the ground, and raising awareness and capacities for an integrated, multi- sectorial

¹⁴ See, OSCE, *Decision No. 2/19: Renaming the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation and the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation* (MC.DEC/2/19), 6 December 2019, <https://www.osce.org/node/441515>.

¹⁵ OSCE, *Decision No. 3/21: Strengthening Co-operation to Address the Challenges Caused by Climate Change* (MC.DEC/3/21), 3 December 2021, <https://www.osce.org/node/507050>.

¹⁶ For more on the OSCE Mediterranean and Asian partnerships see, Tara Rhomberg, *The OSCE Mediterranean Partnership for Co-operation. A Compilation of Relevant Documents and Information*, Vienna, OSCE, December 2014, <https://www.osce.org/node/132176>; Marietta S. König and Liliya Buhela, *The OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation. Reflections and Perspectives*, Vienna, OSCE, December 2020, <https://www.osce.org/node/197801>.

¹⁷ See for instance, OSCE, *Immediate Action Offers Chance to Build a More Resilient Mediterranean Region According to Participants at OSCE Mediterranean Conference*, 12 October 2021, <https://www.osce.org/node/500677>; OSCE, *Annotated Agenda 2021 OSCE Mediterranean Conference*, 12-13 October 2021, <https://www.osce.org/node/500614>.

and multi-stakeholder approach to climate change are some of the aims of this project.¹⁸ So far, through this project and earlier initiatives, 42 climate hotspots were identified in the project regions with the participation of governmental agencies, civil society and academia as well as regional and international partners, specialised organisations and donors.

In his remarks, Ambassador Hasani stressed the crucial role of cooperation in developing risk analysis, early warning and joint action to foster climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation strategies across borders, emphasising the importance of inclusiveness and the need to focus on most disadvantaged and exposed groups, underscoring how women and youth tend to be disproportionately impacted by the adverse effects of climate change. In concluding his speech, Ambassador Hasani pointed to the ongoing collaboration between the OSCE and UfM within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Malaga in 2018, underscoring the importance of research and collaboration on climate change as a concrete way to invest in the common prosperity of this shared region, simultaneously also helping to address other challenges that affect states and societies in the Mediterranean and further afield.

In line with what was said by the previous speakers, Ambassador **Luca Franchetti Pardo**, Senior Deputy Political Director of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, framed climate change as a threat multiplier and stressed the need for inclusiveness and dialogue in cooperation efforts. Initiatives supported by the Italian foreign ministry in this domain were outlined, with specific reference to the recent Youth Forum organised on the margins of the annual Rome MED Dialogues on 3 December and which gathered youth representatives from EU and Mediterranean Basin countries to discuss the challenges and the opportunities of the green transition.¹⁹

Benefitting from previous experiences as Ambassador to the Political and Security Committee of the European Union and Deputy Chief of Mission at the Italian Embassy in Washington DC, Ambassador Franchetti Pardo recognised the growing focus on climate change by international organisations such as the EU and NATO. He also echoed the previous speakers' appreciation for the suitability of organisations such as the OSCE in playing a decisive role in building awareness, capacity and mutual understanding on climate change as indispensable to foster enhanced cooperation with other international and regional organisations engaged on broader issues of global planetary security. The OSCE's comprehensive security

¹⁸ See for instance, Lukas Rüttinger et al., *Regional Assessment for South-Eastern Europe. Security Implications of Climate Change*, Berlin/Vienna, adelphi/OSCE, 2021, <https://www.osce.org/node/484148>; adelphi website: *Strengthening Responses to Security Risks from Climate Change in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia*, <https://www.adelphi.de/en/node/58341>.

¹⁹ For more information see, Rome MED website: *Youth Forum Contest 2021*, <https://med.ispionline.it/?p=11523>; website of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation: *Rome MED - Mediterranean Dialogues 2021*, <https://www.esteri.it/en/?p=65716>.

approach and initiatives such as those on climate change and security in South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the southern Caucasus jointly implemented by the OSCE and leading organisations such as the UN, the UfM and others, were regarded as a viable template for engaging OSCE Mediterranean partners in tackling climate change.

In this regard, Ambassador Franchetti Pardo specifically mentioned the December 2021 OSCE Stockholm ministerial declaration as an important stepping stone for future engagement. Moreover, the Milan declaration in 2018 that recognises “the crucial role that sustainable development [...] play[s] in fostering common security”²⁰ and the proactive role played by Italy in rejecting a narrow view of the Mediterranean as a mere source of challenges and instead embracing an alternative viewpoint that looks at the region as a “unique platform of opportunities and joint work” were underscored by the Ambassador. In concluding his address, the speaker drew the audience’s attention to the necessity of effective multilateralism, co-ownership and increased participation of civil society and the private sector in seeking to foster resilience to the threat of climate change in the region. In this, the Ambassador pointed to the EU’s New Agenda for the Mediterranean as a step in the right direction, providing avenues for joint ownership and burden sharing across the Mediterranean Basin states.²¹ Before ending, the Ambassador outlined a call for unity and cooperation, describing comprehensive security approaches as a positive means to go beyond the representation of the Mediterranean as a region defined by two opposing shores and instead promote joint visions and frameworks to develop a genuinely shared space across Mediterranean Basin countries.

The fourth speaker on the high-level segment panel, **Natasha Meli Daudey**, Malta’s Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Austria and Permanent Representative of Malta to the OSCE and International Organisations based in Vienna, joined the conversation remotely, outlining Malta’s long-standing emphasis on the threats and challenges of climate change. Ambassador Daudey drew a historical parenthesis on the climate change-security nexus by recalling the adoption of the political agenda for climate change by the UN in the 1980s. For the first time, thanks to a Maltese initiative, climate impacts on stability and security were explicitly recognised by the world body. Building on that recognition, in 1988, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution “Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind”,²² another important milestone in international efforts to tackle the multidimensional effects of climate change. This, together with important regional initiatives being carried out by organisations such as the UfM, OSCE and the Small Islands and Developing States

²⁰ OSCE, *Declaration on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean*, cit., point 8.

²¹ For more on the EU’s New Agenda for the Mediterranean see, European Commission, *Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood. A New Agenda for the Mediterranean* (JOIN/2021/2), 9 February 2021, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52021JC0002>.

²² UN General Assembly, *Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations of Mankind* (A/RES/43/53), 6 December 1988, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/43/53>.

(SIDS) among many, are all part of an enduring effort to raise awareness and entice global action on the enduring climate emergency.

Moving to contemporary times, Malta's ambassador turned to the recent discussions at the UN Security Council (UNSC) on a resolution aimed at integrating climate-related security risks into the UN's work on conflict prevention, that failed to garner approval by council members on 13 December 2021.²³ Strongly supported by Malta among others, the resolution underscored the Maltese government's enduring commitment to global action on climate change, not least given Malta's geographic location in the heart of the Mediterranean and upcoming membership of the UNSC during 2023–2024. In this regard, Ambassador Daudey also recalled Malta's historic proposal to recognise the world's deep sea-bed and ocean floor as a common heritage for mankind.²⁴ With regards to the recent failure of the UNSC to adopt the above mentioned resolution on climate-security risks, Maltese ambassador stressed the differences between the UNSC framework and the OSCE's comprehensive and holistic approach to security, including its climate related dimensions, pointing to the recent adoption of the Stockholm declaration as a positive first step.

Turning to the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership, a dimension that is strongly supported by Malta, this framework was presented as a bridge across the shared Mediterranean space, with Ambassador Daudey calling for renewed efforts to further strengthen and elevate the partnership, noting how climate change can represent a promising domain on which to build such cooperation. The need for a developmental perspective and for integrating climate policy into post-pandemic recovery plans, as opposed to adopting a short-term emergency approach, was also emphasised, underscoring the importance of relating any effort within the green and energy transition to the SDGs and Paris Agreement in order to ensure a just and sustainable transition. In concluding her remarks, Ambassador Daudey returned to emphasise Malta's ongoing commitment to tackling climate change, reminding participants about Malta's decision to double its climate funds contribution and develop a low-carbon development policy addressing both internal mitigation commitments and support for developing states through national funds and EU partnerships. The value of culture and knowledge exchanges across the shared Mediterranean was reinforced by the speaker who stressed the role Malta could play in offering its experience, especially in the water management and diplomacy sectors, with scalable water management and desalinisation technologies transferable to other states facing water insecurity.

²³ See, UN, *Security Council Fails to Adopt Resolution Integrating Climate-Related Security Risk into Conflict-Prevention Strategies*, 13 December 2021, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14732.doc.htm>.

²⁴ The proposal was first advanced by Malta's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in 1967, during a speech at the UN General Assembly. See, UN General Assembly, *22nd Session: First Committee, 1515th Meeting*, 1 November 1967, https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/pardo_ga1967.pdf.

The final speaker on the high-level segment was **Almotaz Abadi**, Water Managing Director at the UfM. The speaker centred his presentation on water-related issues and how the UfM is acting to enhance regional cooperation and achieve stability, peace and integration in the Mediterranean. The speaker started his talk by providing data on the importance of water for livelihoods and figures on the scarcity of such a vital resource in the Mediterranean, especially across its southern and eastern shores, where three of the most water-scarce countries worldwide are located. Citing World Bank and FAO data, the speaker pointed out that 70 per cent of available water in the world is consumed by food production and climate-related water scarcity is expected to cause losses estimated up to 6 to 14 per cent of GDP in the MENA region by 2050.²⁵ With data from the Water Resource Group suggesting that by 2050, 50 per cent more water, 60 per cent more food and 80 per cent more energy would be needed globally and that by 2030 the world may face a 40 per cent water deficit under a business-as-usual policy scenario, the speaker outlined the linkage between such scenarios and a worsening of security, or even conflict via the weaponisation of water, across the Mediterranean.²⁶ The speaker made clear that the solution does not simply consist in making more water available. What is needed is a comprehensive rethinking of water management and governance structures, developing new cooperative frameworks to tackle this shared challenge.

Dr. Abadi further noted how cooperative solutions to address water scarcity and improve the management of water resources would only be possible by addressing the interlinkages between sectors – water, food, energy, ecosystem – and natural resources (water, land soils, energy). Adopting variable geometry for water management cooperation and transboundary water resource management was recognised as essential to move forward together with the transfer of success stories from region to region. That said, financial challenges remain a major obstacle towards cooperation in water security. In this regard, the speaker presented the UfM Financial Strategy for Water²⁷ as an attempt to rethink water investment projects for water security. Abadi drew several policy recommendations from the P.R.O.A.C.T.I.V.E. model, suggesting to Prioritise climate adaptation and Resilience by drafting projects based on empirical evidence and identifying measures to do more with less water; leveraging Opportunities and fostering Adaptive solutions by enhancing south-south cooperation; promoting Coherence among initiatives in different sectors and supporting data sharing and Technology transfer and Innovation for a common Vision embracing a long-term approach able to identify adequate pathways for Early recovery.²⁸

²⁵ See for instance, FAO, *Water Scarcity – One of the Greatest Challenges of Our Time*, 20 March 2019, <https://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1185405>.

²⁶ See for instance, Water Resources Group (WRG), *From Dialogue to Action, the Road to 2030. 2030 WRG 2021 Annual Report*, Washington, World Bank, November 2021, <https://www.2030wrg.org/?p=13908>; WRG, *Valuing Water, Enabling Change. 2030 WRG 2020 Annual Report*, Washington, World Bank, November 2020, <https://www.2030wrg.org/?p=13027>.

²⁷ UfM, *UfM Financial Strategy for Water. Version 2*, August 2020, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FS-WEB-EN.pdf>.

²⁸ For more on the P.R.O.A.C.T.I.V.E. model see, Hassan Aboelnga and Almotaz Abadi, *The Many*

Session I: Mediterranean security through a climate lens: Challenges and prospects

Following the high-level segment, **Bernardo Venturi**, Director of the Agency for Peacebuilding (AP) and Associate Fellow at IAI, moderated the first expert panel. The four participating panellists dug deeper into the relationship between climate change and security, assessed the state of international climate diplomacy and identified the priority areas of multilateral engagement in the realm of the climate emergency, which was also addressed from a human security perspective. Benefitting from the participants' variegated backgrounds, the debate was informed by a truly multi and cross-disciplinary approach.

The first speaker, **Wolfgang Cramer**, Research Director at CNRS Mediterranean Institute for Biodiversity and Ecology (IMBE) in France and Lead Author of the MedECC network, offered an overview of the current climate emergency in the Mediterranean providing concrete policy recommendations to address its multidimensional effects on states, societies and living ecosystems in the area. In outlining the climate crisis as it manifests today and discussing a number of model predictions about how it may develop in the near future according to different policy scenarios, the speaker focused on climatic and non-climatic risks of climate change in the Mediterranean. Among the former, sea level rise was given particular attention as it clearly shows how interconnected the Mediterranean is with regions far away such as Antarctica and how developments such as the melting of glaciers in those distant regions may prove disruptive for the Mediterranean. In this regard, Professor Cramer specifically mentioned that current predictions of climate variability outlined by the IPCC and MedECC with regards to emission reduction targets may in fact be closer to wishful thinking, given that optimistic scenarios of meeting the 1.5°C rise remain way off track and the melting of glaciers, a widely recognised climatic tipping point, were today well underway. With regards to non-climate related risks, Professor Cramer pointed to the unsustainable use of the land (unsustainable agriculture) and sea (overfishing), as well as pollution. The unequal and asymmetric impact of climate change on people within and across societies in the region were also stressed, with young and elderly people being mentioned as particularly vulnerable categories. Instances of areas at risk were also drawn from the northern shore, with the city of Venice being presented as a glaring case of the limits of costly adaptation strategies against the backdrop of a dramatically changing climate and sea-level rise.

Adaptation and resilience were underscored as crucial in tackling climate change. The main obstacle to climate action, however, is the difficulty in mobilising the needed financial resources, particularly those available in the north, and which are needed to address the adaptation gap (i.e., the gap between the current adaptation

Challenges of Water Security in the Mediterranean Region. The Need to be PROACTIVE, Global Water Forum, 18 February 2021, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/?p=114207>; or <https://globalwaterforum.org/?p=17665>.

strategy and the actual risks in place especially in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries). Coastal system protection and sustainable, resilient and “radically different” urban and peri-urban development plans were identified by Professor Cramer as the top priority for financial mobilisation. As the regional and global levels were recognised as inherently interconnected, the speaker emphasised the necessity for a substantial revision of international



Wolfgang Cramer, Research Director at CNRS Mediterranean Institute for Biodiversity and Ecology (IMBE) in France and lead author of the MedECC network.

engagement related to the UN Climate Convention and, citing the recent COP26 summit in Glasgow, referred to the reluctance to make commitments and take action in climate-related issues as highly problematic.

Underscoring the gap between declarations and action, Professor Cramer stressed the importance of connecting regional resilience to global engagement and attaching a security dimension to political commitments and the broader climate discussions to create a sense of urgency. A critique on the way developed countries in the north continue to skirt their responsibilities for the climate crisis while simply promising new technologies to tackle the issue without taking substantial action in revising their own unsustainable productive models was also discussed by the speaker. In this regard, the importance of reconnecting the discussion on climate change with global consumption models and recognising the role and responsibilities of multinational corporations in both directly and indirectly contributing to the climate emergency was also emphasised by the speaker. In concluding his remarks, Professor Cramer reiterated how the scenarios of global emission reduction targets emanating from global summits and fora invested in tackling climate change remain highly optimistic and that much higher levels of global warming are instead expected in the coming decades in the absence of fundamental change.

Connecting remotely as the second speaker on the panel, **Simone Borg**, Malta's Ambassador for Climate Action, shared her experience in climate negotiations and presented an international law perspective on the core theme of the conference. Ambassador Borg began by acknowledging that despite the perceived slowness of developments in climate negotiations – from the UNFCCC process to the original treaty, the mother treaty, the Kyoto protocol and the Paris Agreement – in legal terms, such developments were actually occurring rather quickly. Pointing to the example of the law of the sea, which took centuries to be developed and agreed upon, progress towards international climate agreements was secured in three decades. In the wake of the COP26 summit in Glasgow, Ambassador Borg acknowledged some shortcomings but also highlighted the important progress secured with the adoption of the so-called Paris Rulebook – which sets out detailed

rules to underpin the delivery of the Paris Agreement²⁹ – and the agreement on the annual rather than quinquennial revision of climate commitments.³⁰

At the same time, the serious urgency of the climate crisis and the fact that international law and pledges to tackle the emergency are hardly enough to keep the world on track in dealing with issues such as global warming were underlined by the Maltese Ambassador. Emphasising the security implications of the climate emergency was useful in this respect, as it brings the issue of climate change to the UNSC and other security fora such as the OSCE and UfM. International law was seen as a useful tool for drawing this connection through existing legal parameters and finding pathways to act pre-emptively were emphasised as important stepping stones for international action. Ambassador Borg further noted how the issues of sea level rise – and its impact on legally defined territorial integrity and existing maritime borders –, food security, water security and extreme weather events – with their impact biodiversity, agriculture and food supplies –, and the spread of vector-borne diseases due to deforestation and the tropicalisation of the Mediterranean, were all elements linked to climate change with clear security implications. To effectively address these issues, a shift towards prevention and mitigation in environmental and climate law was identified as crucial. Ambassador Borg concluded her talk on a positive note by mentioning the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change³¹ impacts in developing countries and called for enhanced dialogue and cooperation between science and climate diplomacy to more effectively tackle these impacts in the Mediterranean. The adoption of an integrated approach able to address environmental problems in tandem with other social, economic and political issues, a multi-layered and multi-stakeholder engagement, and youth inclusion, were also stressed by the speaker as a guarantee for the continuity of climate action despite the short-term perspective of governments and political actors.

The floor then passed to **Luca Raineri**, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Law, Politics and Development at the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa, Italy, who focused his talk on the Sahel, a region that is part of the enlarged Mediterranean and increasingly framed as an important case study for assessments of the climate change-conflict nexus. Professor Raineri began by providing a brief overview of the overlapping and interlinked crises occurring in the region, ranging from climate change to the demographic and security crises currently underway in the Sahel. In this respect, the speaker emphasised how a Malthusian reading, according to which climate change leads to environmental degradation, dwindling natural resources,

²⁹ See for instance, UNFCCC website: *Cooperative Implementation*, <https://unfccc.int/node/521>.

³⁰ For more information see, UNFCCC website: *Outcomes of the Glasgow Climate Change Conference. Advance Unedited Versions (AUVs) and List of Submissions from the Sessions in Glasgow*, <https://unfccc.int/node/311120>.

³¹ UNFCCC website: *Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM)*, <https://unfccc.int/node/16493>.

competition over those resources and therefore may enhance the possibility of conflict, is attractive yet hard to prove empirically. Scientific studies and data do not allow us to draw a clear correlation or causation between climate change and the outbreak or revival of armed conflict, as these phenomena interact in a complex way with a whole range of other variables and possible conflict drivers. In this regard, the key challenge for academic and scientific

research is to understand and unpack this nexus, examining why, how and to what extent climate change mixes with other political, economic and security challenges within a given context to enhance (or not) the chances of conflict.



Luca Raineri, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Law, Politics and Development at the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa, Italy.

Professor Raineri emphasised the need for alternative methodologies to explore and unpack this nexus, also noting how the prevalence of econometric approaches in trying to prove this causation have tended to dominate recent analyses but often fail to capture the full extent of developments, particularly when adopting a longer temporal prism. To build on these points, the speaker outlined two empirical examples from the history of the Sahel that contradict such linear assumptions about a direct causal relationship between climate change and conflict. A first example was taken from the droughts and famines occurring in the 1970s and 1980s in the Sahel, which the speaker noted did not actually lead to conflict, but rather to a period of unusual calm and relative peace in the region. In a similar fashion, the argument according to which hunger, migration and conflict over access to land and/or natural resources are the outcome of increasing desertification is also anything but linear. Indeed, recent scientific evidence suggests that rather than increased desertification, large parts of the Sahel are today greener and with more water availability compared to past decades, but this has by no means translated into more security and stability in the Sahel.

In explaining such apparent paradoxes, Professor Raineri outlined how a political ecology approach may be better suited to capturing the complexities of such phenomena. Political ecology provides a perspective that, differently from the Malthusian lenses, allows for a cross-temporal inquiry and is better placed to intercept long-term socio-political struggles that trigger protracted processes of political contention and in turn may lead to conflict. In this regard, one may indeed identify a tenuous, non-linear causality between climate change and conflict in the Sahel, but only if approached from a long-term perspective that accounts for a multiplicity of variables. Indeed, with regards to the mentioned events of the 1970s and 1980s in the Sahel, and the massive displacement and dispossession they produced, an argument can be made that these events did contribute to the outbreak of violent insurgencies and conflict during the 1990s. Yet, in proposing such readings, Professor Raineri also warned against over-simplistic explanations

of the existence of such a nexus, reminding audiences about the multiplicity of other intervening variables – political, socio-economic, governance and so on – which should also be factored into any such assessments. Regarding desertification, the speaker noted how international interventions, even if driven by the best of intentions, do not always result in positive outcomes, something that the history of the Sahel has proven repeatedly. In this respect, international efforts to plant trees and/or re-green parts of the region to enhance food production and counter desertification have largely been achieved through the expansion of agriculture to the detriment of pastoralism, an aspect that may lead to other non-intended consequences and may in fact increase, as opposed to decrease, frictions and the potential for conflict. In line with this argument, Professor Ranieri also offered similar considerations concerning international policies aimed at reducing mobility from and within Africa, noting the negative impact they may have on local societies' ability to cope with climate change.

In wrapping up his talk, Professor Raineri stressed the importance of not losing sight of other interconnected variables, particularly the availability and access to weapons and the supply of political narratives and ideologies that legitimise the resort to violence. Clearly, climate change and environmental degradation do play a role but more often than not it is the way in which these climatic changes interact with other pre-existing realities and fragilities that can better explain the occurrence or re-occurrence of violence. Examining the material and immaterial drivers contributing to violent mobilisation may prove helpful to add depth to assessments focussed excessively on control over or access to scarce natural resources. Ultimately, the often-utilised narrative that promotes external interventionism as a means to achieve a multitude of goals, from stabilisation, to governance reform, growth, sustainable development and support for energy and green transitions, also carries some risks. Such narratives tend to distract from pre-existing challenges, including the role of past interventionism, and also become an excuse utilised by local governments or ruling elites to depoliticise conflicts and skirt their own responsibilities in creating a conducive environment for crises to break out. This in turn not only obfuscates the root causes of insecurity and conflict in the Sahel, but also leads to erroneous policy prescriptions on how to mitigate its effects while preventing possible relapses in the future. In this respect, emphasis was put on the importance of re-politicising the climate-conflict nexus not only in terms of theoretical consistency, but also political expediency.

Zeina Khalil Hajj, Head of the Global Programme at 350.org and former Executive Director at Greenpeace MENA, joined the debate as the final speaker on the first panel. Drawing on her experience and knowledge of international climate action and grassroots movements across the MENA region, Khalil Hajj began by stressing the awareness and interest gap between European and MENA countries when it comes to the climate emergency. Across the Middle East and North Africa, climate change does not represent a priority for governments and this notwithstanding the reality that these countries are among the most exposed to the adverse effects of climate change, with a particular emphasis on water, food and energy. In this regard, the speaker reminded participants how 11 of the 17 most water insecure areas

in the world are found in the MENA, which also imports 50 per cent of its calories intake, an aspect that carries problematic implications in terms of food security and sovereignty in a region already widely exposed to conflict and violence. Increasing extreme weather events in the region were also recalled by the speaker, who lamented the lack of preparedness and adaptation capacity in most of the region and displayed concern as for the disruptive impact that floods and droughts can have on agriculture, with significant effects across the socio-economic and sustainability domains, elements deemed clearly essential to ensure security and stability in the region.



Zeina Khalil Hajj, Head of the Global Programme at 350.org and former Executive Director at Greenpeace MENA.

Turning to the main obstacles to effective climate action in the Mediterranean, Khalil Hajj pointed to the inadequate involvement of key stakeholders and a more general lack of governance capacity at the local level. As for the first aspect, the speaker underlined the importance of engaging local governments and sub-national groups, civil society organisations and the private sector, particularly small-scale entrepreneurs who are well placed to become agents for change among their local communities. The speaker provided examples of success stories where key stakeholders have effectively been involved in decision making, such as the bottom-up campaign against the World Bank-funded construction of the Bisri dam in Lebanon, which was cancelled in September 2020 after years of protests due to its adverse environmental effects.³² The risks related to operating as a civil society organisation in the region were also acknowledged, with recent examples drawn in particular from the repression of the anti-fracking campaigners in Algeria serving to underscore this point. On top of these challenges, the aspects of funding (especially for adaptation initiatives) and monitoring also cannot be disregarded, given the hardship facing these organisations with regards to fundraising and support for their activities, particularly if there is a need to preserve independence both locally and internationally.

While a sense of urgency to tackle the climate crisis is still largely lacking across the MENA region, particularly at the level of governing élites and media, there are some glimmers of hope when it comes to efforts by local grassroots movements to build awareness and partnerships on these themes. In this regard, Youth awareness and involvement are one to be looking up to as they are fighting for their future. Fridays for Future movement is active within the region, and is increasingly also raising awareness in nations that are somewhat less used to such examples of citizen-based activism, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt. This was interpreted

³² See for instance, Tarek Ali Ahmad, "Bisri: Lebanon's Dam of Contention", in *Arab News*, 5 September 2020, <https://arab.news/5kwjrm>.

as a promising starting point for wider public engagement and debate on climate justice in the region, a fundamental precondition for genuine collaboration on these issues, and one which could help to raise awareness as the region prepares to host the 2022 COP summit in Egypt and the 2023 COP summit in the United Arab Emirates. Such appointments, combined with ongoing citizen-based activism and efforts to build new partnerships both within the region and further afield, perhaps also by engaging with diasporas, could help to launch new discussions and debates on how best to implement mitigating and adaptability strategies in the region. The speaker stressed the importance of having a shared sense of urgency in dealing with the climate emergency to have a practical, effective impact on climate action. In this domain redistribution and a radical rethinking of the current economic model completely dependent on fossil fuels were mentioned by the speaker as essential ingredients for a just climate transition in the Mediterranean.

Session II: Fostering climate and environmental cooperation in the Mediterranean

Chaired by **Ines Duarte**, Project Manager within the Energy and Climate Action Division at the UfM, the second session focussed on cooperation efforts in the climate and environmental domains across the Mediterranean. In introducing the panel, the moderator reviewed a number of achievements in terms of raising awareness about the impact of climate change in the Mediterranean during 2021. In this respect, Ms. Duarte recalled the EU's New Agenda for the Mediterranean; the three ministerial meetings and corresponding declarations from the 42 member states of the UfM on sustainable blue economy, energy and environment and climate action;³³ and the recent COP26 Summit in Glasgow, where important steps were taken regarding the ambition of phasing out inefficient and highly polluting fossil fuels to reach net-zero by 2050.³⁴ The chair also recalled upcoming opportunities for further cooperation on climate issues, including on climate finance, pointing to the next COP summit that will take place in 2022 in Egypt, a longstanding member of the UfM.

The floor subsequently passed to **Niklas Bremberg**, Associated Senior Researcher at Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and Associate Professor of Political Science at Stockholm University, who provided an overview of engagement efforts by relevant international and regional organisations in the domain of climate change as well as prospects for cooperation efforts to address climate-related risks across Mediterranean Basin states. His intervention built

³³ See, UfM, *UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy*, 2 February 2021, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/?p=112124>; UfM, *UfM Ministers Announce Reinforced Cooperation on Ambitious Targets for Energy Sustainability in the Mediterranean*, 14 June 2021, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/?p=120940>; UfM, *UfM Member States United in Strong Commitments to Face the Climate and Environmental Emergencies*, 4 October 2021, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/?p=125338>.

³⁴ The COP26 final declaratory text is available: *Glasgow Climate Pact*, 13 November 2021, <https://unfccc.int/documents/310475>.

on research carried out at SIPRI and within the framework of the MISTRA Geopolitics Programme.³⁵ By underscoring the fundamental importance of international cooperation and joint action to tackle climate change, Dr. Bremberg focussed on the important work and cooperative frameworks being developed by a number of international organisations. In this respect, specific focus was directed at the activities of the UN, the OSCE, the EU and NATO with regards to climate diplomacy in the Mediterranean as well as at the global level. Beginning from the United Nations, the speaker underlined the importance of the UN Climate Security Mechanism, launched in 2018 during Sweden's term at the UNSC, recalling how this mechanism has become an institutional home for issues related to climate and security within the global body.³⁶ Over the years, the mechanism has gradually helped raise awareness and even overcome some obstructionism within the UN when it comes to recognising the links between climate change and security. Clearly, while progress has been made, a number of challenges remain, as evidenced by the recent failure of adopting a UNSC resolution aimed at integrating the security implications of climate change in the Security Council's agenda.³⁷



From left to right: Pier Paolo Raimondi, Ines Duarte and Roula Majdalani.

Turning to the OSCE, the speaker echoed previous emphasis placed on the Stockholm ministerial declaration adopted in December 2021. This was interpreted as a strong political signal on the growing importance – and recognition – of climate change's multidimensional security implications generally speaking and within OSCE. As for the European Union, the New Agenda for the Mediterranean was highlighted as a potential new starting point for EU efforts to support southern and eastern Mediterranean states to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through the provision of investments and financial assistance. Finally, with regards to NATO, the speaker underscored the growing shift within the alliance concerning the importance of integrating climatic events into ongoing security discussions. Relatedly, Dr. Bremberg recalled how the NATO Secretary general

³⁵ For more information see, SIPRI website: *Mistra Geopolitics*, <https://www.sipri.org/taxonomy/term/420>.

³⁶ For more information on the UN Climate Security Mechanism, see, Patrizia Albrecht, "Joint Efforts for Sustaining Peace: Meet the UN Climate Security Mechanism", in *UNSCC Blog*, 23 August 2021, <https://www.unssc.org/node/238806>. The 2021 Climate Security Mechanism Progress Report is available in UNEP website: <https://www.unep.org/node/30357>.

³⁷ For more on the recent UNSC Resolution see, Crisis Group, "How UN Member States Divided Over Climate Security", in *Crisis Group Commentaries*, 22 December 2021, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/node/18638>; Florian Krampe and Cedric de Coning, "Does Russia's Veto Mean Climate Security Is Off the Security Council Agenda?", in *IPI Global Observatory*, 13 December 2021, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/?p=21896>.

has increasingly focussed on the security implications of climate change in his public remarks, attending key international summits on the climate, including the COP26 in Glasgow.³⁸ The more recent commitment by NATO to tackle the security implications of climate change was recognised as illustrative of the growing relevance of these issues among traditional security actors.

Building on this preliminary overview of key international actors involved in the domain of climate diplomacy in the Mediterranean, Dr. Bremberg pressed home the need to examine the context-specific dynamics with which climate change interacts as well as its impacts beyond the state-level on human societies and communities. Acknowledging how the Mediterranean is recognised as a climate change hotspot, the speaker also emphasised the continuing existence of north-south divides as well as the long history of conflict and socio-political grievances present across Mediterranean Basin states, highlighting these aspects as important when developing context-specific climatic risk assessments for the Mediterranean. In this regard, key sectors to foster enhanced regional cooperation on climate change were the institutional capacity of states, civil protection mechanisms, cooperation and coordination among various international organisations with different mandates and the need to bridge the science-policy divides. With regards to institutional capacity, Dr. Bremberg underlined the need for a broad understanding of the notion and definitions of good governance, with a particular emphasis on the need to strengthen oversight and regulatory capacity of states and international or regional organisations, the enduring importance of the rule of law in defining such capacity as well as the need for accountability and shared ownership across government, society and private sector to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of any reforms. Turning to cooperation, the speaker noted how collaboration between and among the civil protection agencies of various Mediterranean states represents a good entry point to enhance cooperative frameworks in the region, and represents one important area of action by organisations such as the UfM and the OSCE, as well as other regional organisations. In this regard, building on the traditional role played by Sweden within the OSCE and other international organisations, states participating in major organisations also need to enhance their commitments, working together within and beyond existing organisations to build shared ownership and networking on the common challenges of climate change and international security. In concluding his talk, Dr. Bremberg made specific reference to the MedECC network and its recent assessment reports on the implications of climate change in the Mediterranean. The network was awarded by North-South Prize by the Council of Europe on 9 December 2021,³⁹ another indication of the rising international awareness about

³⁸ See for instance, NATO, *NATO and the Security Implications of Climate Change. Virtual Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg*, 28 September 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_178355.htm; NATO, *Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Leaders Summit on Climate*, 22 April 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_183257.htm; NATO, *NATO Secretary General Attends United Nations COP26 Climate Change Conference*, 2 November 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_188258.htm.

³⁹ See, MedECC, "North-South Prize of the Council of Europe awarded to the MedECC", 9 December

these phenomena as well as an important example of the way in which science and policy can collaborate in promoting new common agendas for international action on the climate.

The second speaker, **Silvia Pariente-David**, Senior Advisor at the Center for Mediterranean Integration and MedECC Lead Author, focussed her talk on the challenges of the energy transition in the Mediterranean, with a particular emphasis on decarbonisation strategies and the benefits of integrating Mediterranean energy markets to scale up the use of renewables in the area. Having underscored the importance of the EU's carbon neutrality pledge for the whole Mediterranean, including particularly southern and eastern Mediterranean states which, while continuing to rely on fossil fuels, have some of the best renewable energy resources in the world, Dr. Pariente-David examined the external dimension of the EU Green Deal, emphasising the broad complementarity across the two shores of the Mediterranean when it comes to renewable energy dynamics. In this regard, the speaker made clear that the EU Green Deal goes beyond energy, as it represents a broader industrial strategy to innovate and develop new technologies while creating new markets, within and beyond Europe. Summarising the key aspects of the EU Green Deal's international dimension, the speaker made specific mention of the New Strategy on International Energy Engagement, which is due to be presented in the Spring of 2022; the previously mentioned New Agenda for the Mediterranean;⁴⁰ the Green Agenda for Western Balkans;⁴¹ the Initiative for coal regions in transition in the Western Balkans and Ukraine;⁴² the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) for trade partners to adopt the objective of carbon neutrality, implement carbon pricing and align with EU electricity market rules;⁴³ the EU's Hydrogen Strategy;⁴⁴ and a whole set of regional agreements and pledges for cross-border infrastructure investments to increase clean energy trade with third countries.

In the wake of the EU's pledges on carbon neutrality, Dr. Pariente-David underlined how many southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, including Turkey, Israel and Jordan, have recently committed themselves to carbon neutrality. Meanwhile,

2021, <https://www.medecc.org/award-ceremony-of-the-north-south-prize-of-the-council-of-europe-awarded-to-the-medecc-9-december-2021-lisbon>.

⁴⁰ See, Council of the European Union, *A New Agenda for the Mediterranean: the Council Approves Conclusions on a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood*, 19 April 2021, <https://europa.eu/!jM69pJ>.

⁴¹ See, European Commission, *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans* (SWD/2020/223), 6 October 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52020SC0223>.

⁴² For more information see, European Commission website: *Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition in the Western Balkans and Ukraine*, <https://europa.eu/!6BhgKn>.

⁴³ For more information see, European Commission, *Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Questions and Answers*, 14 July 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_3661.

⁴⁴ See, European Commission, *A Hydrogen Strategy for a Climate-Neutral Europe* (COM/2020/301), 8 July 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52020DC0301>.

in global terms, all major economies (accounting for more than 80 per cent of global GDP) have committed to carbon neutrality by 2050–2060. While clearly much remains to be done, a glimmer of hope is identifiable in terms of the broad complementarity of energy needs in the Mediterranean, where the south and the east are rich in renewables, especially solar and wind, while the north, which also has important renewable potential, has the technical capabilities and financial resources that could help to spur enhanced integration and cooperation in these domains.

In this regard, the speaker underscored how regional integration in the energy market, starting from the sub-national level, remains the key challenge, but also represents a potential opportunity to ensure cleaner and more sustainable energy usage in the Mediterranean. Benefits that would flow from such integration range from an increased power system flexibility, improved energy reliability and thereby security as well as lower costs and new economic and employment opportunities. In concrete terms, this implies enhanced focus on efforts to bridge the hardware-software gaps in the region when it comes to energy connectivity and related infrastructure. Recent progress with regards to hardware was illustrated by pointing to existing electricity interconnectors across the Mediterranean, such as those present in the west (between Morocco and Spain) as well as in the east (between Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria). Further emphasis was placed on other projects that are presently being explored or planned, including those in the central Mediterranean connecting Tunisia with Italy, or the Israel, Cyprus and Crete and Egypt–Cyprus–Crete connections and the Algeria–Spain and Algeria–Italy lines. A further element of hardware that could be exploited to entice further market integration in the Mediterranean is that of the gas transport infrastructure which could be re-purposed for the use of hydrogen. Turning to the aspect of “software”, Dr. Pariente-David underlined the fundamental need for interoperability between power systems across the region, together with the necessity of improved market harmonisation, convergence in market operations, enhanced cooperation between national system operators and regulators. Most importantly, political will and concerted action to overcome existing geopolitical rivalries and governance obstacles are needed to make a genuine difference.

Dr. Pariente-David concluded her talk by using the metaphor of an orchestra to frame the importance of energy cooperation in the Mediterranean. Having good musicians and instruments (hardware) is not enough as the outcome can still result in cacophony if a conductor or good coordination (software) is missing. In this regard, final thoughts were directed at the European Union and its historical experience of integration, achieved through a gradual, incremental process in which key natural and productive resources were pooled as a means to favour compromises and cooperation. Something similar may occur in the Mediterranean, where renewable energy and hydrogen do have the potential to offer similar pathways for regional cooperation and integration if complemented by joint ownership and a degree of burden sharing. In this regard, the European Green Deal may be able to provide such a platform, and indeed Dr. Pariente-David, together with colleagues and scholars at the Center for Mediterranean Integration

have recently proposed pathways to favour the development of a “Mediterranean Green Deal” which integrates a number of the proposals outlined by the speaker at the conference.⁴⁵ Finally, while acknowledging past shortcomings and the failure of old initiatives aimed at fostering energy interdependence and cooperation in the Mediterranean, Dr. Pariente-David emphasised how hydrogen likely represents the most promising sector to foster novel forms of integration in the area. The Clean Hydrogen Alliance,⁴⁶ together with stronger financial mechanisms such as a Mediterranean IFI Clean Energy Forum, represent promising means to strengthen the software of Mediterranean energy cooperation, directly involving industry and the private sector in this endeavour.

Building on Dr. Pariente-David’s presentation, **Pier Paolo Raimondi**, Research Fellow within IAI’s Energy, Climate and Resources programme and Researcher at the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM), delved deeper into one of the most discussed technological solutions for decarbonisation strategies in the Mediterranean: hydrogen. Shedding light on the flexibility of hydrogen as well as the limits of electrification as a decarbonisation strategy for the EU, the third speaker examined the issue of energy cooperation linking his presentation on hydrogen to the challenges posed by growing energy demand and climate change risks in the Mediterranean. Hydrogen was moreover described as an effective resource to foster socio-economic growth in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, including in the domain of industrialisation and job creation, while at the same time also aligning to one of the EU’s top priorities encapsulated in the Green Deal and the EU Hydrogen Strategy.⁴⁷ In this regard, Raimondi emphasised how existing infrastructure is suitable to create a new Euro-Med energy scheme that would shift current exchanges between the two Mediterranean shores, mostly centred on fossil fuels, towards clean energy, creating an alternative source of revenues for southern and eastern Mediterranean states at a time when the EU will decrease fossil fuel imports.

Despite this potential, the challenges related to hydrogen production and development remain significant. Raimondi highlighted the need to increase and expand significantly renewable capacity to produce green hydrogen. Among other challenges, water scarcity, with water abundance being fundamental to hydrogen production and desalinisation – one of the technological solutions to water

⁴⁵ See, Blanca Moreno-Dodson, Silvia Pariente-David and Constantin Tsakas, *A Mediterranean Green Deal for an Effective Energy Transition as Part of the Sustainable Post-COVID Recovery*, Marseille, Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), November 2021, <https://www.cmimarseille.org/node/4998>; Julia Choucair Vizoso et al., “A Euro-Mediterranean Green Deal? Towards a Green Economy in the Southern Mediterranean”, in *EuroMeSCo Policy Studies*, No. 18 (March 2021), <https://www.euromesco.net/publication/a-euro-mediterranean-green-deal-towards-a-green-economy-in-the-southern-mediterranean>.

⁴⁶ For more information see, European Commission website: *European Clean Hydrogen Alliance*, <https://europa.eu/!GfQW9G>.

⁴⁷ For more information on the EU’s Hydrogen Strategy see, European Commission website: *Supporting Clean Hydrogen*, <https://europa.eu/!DMxrQj>; European Commission, *A Hydrogen Strategy for a Climate-Neutral Europe*, cit.

scarcity – being itself an energy-intensive activity mostly powered by fossil fuels was highlighted by the speaker, who also mention regulatory barriers; a financial gap in which the EU should play a role to remedy the obstacles found in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries; and regional fragmentation as pertains to strategies, purposes and objectives in the hydrogen sector. In his final remarks, Raimondi warned against neo-colonial attitudes which might end up endangering, rather than supporting the decarbonisation goal in itself. To avoid such a risk, the speaker recommended prioritisation of domestic decarbonisation in southern and eastern Mediterranean states before thinking about developing export strategies for the EU's clean energy needs.

The final speaker on the panel, **Roula Majdalani**, Former Director of ESCWA's Sustainable Development Policies Division and an expert in the sustainable management of natural resources, emphasised the important and strategic role played by multilateral, regional and intergovernmental organisations (MNOs, ROs and IGOs) operating around the Mediterranean Basin in fostering knowledge exchanges and North-South cooperation to address climate change and security, in their complexities and regional specificity emanating from their very own development priorities for achieving sustainable development. Three UN Regional Economic Commissions – UNESCWA for Western Asia, UNECE for Europe and UNECA/NA for North Africa as well as UNEP-MAP –, and the UfM were recalled for their potential to raise awareness and mobilise high-level political commitment at the global level on climate change-related issues. These organisations were recognised for their long-standing commitment to addressing climate change through a development lens as well as for their extensive context-specific knowledge of Mediterranean states and societies. In this regard, while recognising the relevant interlinkages between security and climate change, Dr. Majdalani underlined the need for a broad prism tied to the notion of comprehensive security, one that does not distinguish between hard and soft dimensions of security or overlooks the continued importance of traditional cooperation frameworks spanning the governance, socio-economic and political fields. Ultimately, sustainable development remains a fundamental ingredient for any cooperative framework in the Mediterranean, and for this reason policies that aim to foster green energy transitions and mitigate the challenges of climate change must remain closely intertwined with broader objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals through an inclusive and rights-based approach.

Building on these points, Dr. Majdalani outlined five targeted strategic interventions that MNOs, ROs and IGOs can pursue to enrich the narrative on the climate-security nexus. Firstly, the need to continuously synchronise between the global and regional discourse in a way that reflects regional priorities. In the MENA/Med Basin's case, temperatures rise higher than the global average increasing water scarcity in an already water scarce region, are exposing more people, sectors and regions (particularly coastal sub-regions) to negative impacts of climate change, with low adaptive capacity. Hence, while adaptation is the regional story in terms of climate action, why then do funding and programs continue to be skewed to

mitigation?

Secondly, MNOs IGOs and ROs need to make science “talk” to policy-makers. Various modelling and impact and vulnerability assessments have established that anthropogenic factors are unequivocally leading to climate change, but the challenge remains in quantifying the risks and costs of inaction and developing clear globally recognised criteria to measure adaptive capacity, resilience and investments needed to do so. While there is a clear target of maintaining global warming at 1.5°C, nothing similar exists yet for a global goal on adaptation. Initiatives such as ESCWA’s RICCAR project on climate modelling in the Arab region⁴⁸ were mentioned for their relevance in providing context-specific insights and quantification of the impacts of climate change in the region. In this respect, it was pointed out that only 13 out of 22 Arab countries that had submitted their NDCs provided quantifiable targets, costs and investments needed for adaptation or mitigation.⁴⁹ Another strategic role that these organisations play is guiding young researchers on how to prepare high quality peer-reviewed research material on the region that can be considered by IPCC and other research channels influencing decision-making and global development agendas and hence funding flow to the region.

Thirdly, while there is a proliferation of capacity-building programmes only a few are well anchored in processes of institutional development. Capacity building needs to target people on the job with real-life cases; link the programs with funding cycles of donors and multilateral development banks; and synchronise capacity building programmes with the global agendas (COP, SDGs, FfD). ESCWA’s experience in this domain is a case in point, supporting the Arab Group for Climate Negotiations in the COP26 process since 2013.⁵⁰ Fourthly, MNOs, ROs and IGOs can support their member countries in accessing funding opportunities, not just through the development of robust bankable projects, but also by improving the capacity of MCs to understand the climate finance architecture, the key players and their agendas and on these bases, negotiate funding agreements that reflect their priorities. Dr. Majdalani underlined how the Arab region receives barely 6 per cent of the global climate finance and receives 8.5 times more debt financing compared to grants and 3.5 times more funding for mitigation than adaptation. The gap in the quantity and quality of funding coming to the region was also underlined as a key area for improvement. The speaker noted how many positive projects at the regional level related to water often fail to attract climate funding due to

⁴⁸ For more information see, UNESCWA website: *RICCAR. Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region*, <https://www.unescwa.org/riccar>; and RICCAR website: <http://www.riccar.org>.

⁴⁹ For an overview of Arab states NDCs see, UNDP’s NDC Support Programme website: *Arab States*, <https://www.ndcs.undp.org/content/ndc-support-programme/en/home/our-work/geographic/arab-states.html>.

⁵⁰ See for instance, UNESCWA, *ESCWA Support to Arab States at COP 26*, 16 November 2021, <https://www.unescwa.org/node/40017>; UNESCWA website: *Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies*, <https://www.unescwa.org/acccp>.

shortcomings in attributing climate change to the deteriorating water situation.

Fifth, MNOs ROs and IGOs can support MCs to enhance access to funding for both climate mitigation and adaptation through public-private partnerships (PPPs). The relevance of PPPs should not be misunderstood as an exclusive reliance on private funding and/or as a substitute to Official Development Assistance by developed countries. Criteria for funding should ensure that funding agreements are transparent, sustainable and affordable. PPPs could also be utilised, in synergy with international and regional organisations, to help states and governmental or non-governmental actors navigate different financial mechanisms that can provide helpful assistance to fund adaptation projects and their prioritisation. Adaptation projects tend to be less lucrative compared to mitigation and carry certain risks, hence the speaker could assist indebted countries to mitigate such challenges.

Finance mechanisms options included risk mitigation finance, where investments are guaranteed against political risks and default on payments and facilitate the engagement of global players; blended finance, which combines concessional with non-concessional private finance and has a clear accountability mechanism and is used mostly for SDGs-related projects; debt for climate swaps; and green and sukuk bonds, with the former being issued for any project having environmental benefits and the latter being directed at projects in line with the principles of Shari'a law. The speaker concluded by emphasising the role regional organisations can play to unlock the potential for clean and green energy cooperation in the Arab world and between this region and Europe. In this regard, regional organisations like ESCWA can support MCs to prepare robust adaptation projects, but at the same time showing co-benefit with mitigation and ensuring that developmental goals are not undermined by the security agenda tied to climate change. Finally, prioritising capacity building, access to finance and institutional support for Mediterranean states remains crucial to allow the region, as well as Europe, to progress on the road to sustainability, in terms of aligning with the climate agenda, achieving economic growth, social wellbeing and good governance.

Concluding remarks and next steps

Marking the end of the international conference, the final session provided an opportunity for scholars and participants to take stock of the proceedings and outline a number of pathways for further engagement and cooperation. **Andrea Dessì** (New-Med/IAI), chaired the session, thanking the participants for their detailed presentations and briefly outlining a number of key takeaways from the various panels. Particular emphasis was placed on the work carried out by New-Med and IAI over the past year and, more broadly, since the 2014 launch of the New-Med Research Network. In thanking the institutional partners of the project, Dr. Dessì underlined New-Med's commitment to following up on the work and conference topic with further research, outreach and dissemination activities. In this regard, New-Med welcomes the articulation of the ongoing UfM-OSCE partnership on

climate change in the Mediterranean and looks forward to building on the present experience of jointly co-organising the conference with further initiatives, always retaining New-Med's traditional focus on human and comprehensive security approaches as best suited to tackle these multidimensional challenges. Before passing the floor, Dr. Dessì reminded conference participants of the upcoming publication of a new edited volume on climate change and security in the Mediterranean, containing contributions from a number of the speakers present at the conference in Barcelona.⁵¹



From left to right: Javier Benosa Lalaguna, Grammenos Mastrojeni, Andrea Dessì and Igli Hasani.

In joining the other participants on the panel, Ambassador **Grammenos Mastrojeni**, Senior Deputy Secretary General at the UfM, delivered his final remarks and thanked all the experts for their valuable insights. Ambassador Mastrojeni echoed the chair's emphasis on the relevance of the event as a crucial moment of reflection but also noted the importance of connecting such exercises to a broader process leading towards concrete actions. Acknowledging the legacy of the ongoing collaboration between the UfM and the OSCE Secretariat, including particularly the OCEEA, the speaker emphasised the recent shift towards more concrete forms of cooperation as the world emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions are slowly lifted. In underlining the broad complementarity between the two organisations, the key challenge looking to the future revolves around the necessity of attracting funding and institutional support for new actions and concrete initiatives in the of domain climate security in order to maximise the real-world impact of such endeavours.

Joining the UfM Senior Deputy Secretary General in thanking participants and the hosts for the convening of the conference, **Igli Hasani**, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) outlined five takeaways from the event and overall topic of climate change and security in the Mediterranean. Ambassador Hasani underscored the need to reinforce dialogue to drive a positive agenda that recognises risks but also opportunities and that showcases the benefits of climate cooperation as a means to build relations of confidence and trust. Secondly and thirdly, the speaker underscored the complex nature of climate challenge, the need for an integrated approach to tackling these challenges, and the importance of. Fourthly, emphasised the need for further work to better assess climate-related risks, advance work on preparedness and early warning, raise awareness and share knowledge for capacity building, with a particular focus on

⁵¹ The volume will be published in March 2022 and will be available for download from the New-Med and IAI websites. See, <https://www.new-med.net>; <https://www.iai.it/en/node/2004>.

women and youth. Finally, Ambassador Hasani underlined the need for the OSCE and other organisations to work on the implementation of the important decisions and declarations made at the regional and global level – from the Paris Agreement, to the Glasgow Climate Pact and the recent OSCE Ministerial Council Decision adopted in Stockholm – by fostering collaborations with OSCE Participating States, Partners for Co-operation and other collaborating organisations such as the UfM and the EU as well as civil society, academia and the private sector. Ultimately, it is indispensable that all players work towards similar or complementary goals when seeking to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change while at the same time promoting sustainable development and security.

In a similar fashion, **Mario Bartoli**, Head of the OSCE Unit within the Directorate General for Political Affairs and Security at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, joined other speakers via video link to share Italian perspectives and provide outlooks for next steps and engagements. Having thanked participants and the organisers, the speaker underscored the importance of developing a strong consensus on the existence of a climate-security nexus and its multidimensional repercussions across the political, economic, social and governance domains. While of course there are nuances and the relationship may not be one of direct causality, there are multiple ways of framing the growing security implications of climate change and its effects across the broad spectrum of definitions of security. In this regard, growing international consensus on the necessity of expanding cooperation to address the security implications of climate change in a comprehensive manner and with the objective of fostering collective security arrangements as an enabling factor for sustainable development, political stability and the consolidation of democratic institutions was underlined as a positive signal, albeit one on which more work will be needed in the coming months and years.

Moving to focus on the OSCE, the speaker underscored the important role the Organization can play in supporting ongoing processes due to its convening power, large membership and extensive expertise in various domains of security. The OSCE, however, can also promote novel approaches and engagements by leveraging instruments such as the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership for Co-operation to further entice collaborative frameworks between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Building on this dimension, the speaker stressed the unique nature of the OSCE Mediterranean partnership compared to other organisations and engagement frameworks in the region and expressed support for the OSCE's continued engagements with government authorities, civil society and other actors in Mediterranean partner countries, a dynamic that helps the Organization expand the reach of its engagements beyond the Viennese paradigm and broader OSCE area. In this regard, the speaker ended by expressing Italy's support for the ongoing dialogue and cooperation frameworks being developed between the UfM and OSCE on climate-related security risks in the Mediterranean, underlining how such cooperation helps maximise the visibility and impact of both organisations by pooling their respective networks and expertise. Ultimately, events such as the present international conference and the work being carried out by the New-Med

Research Network also play important roles, helping to bridge both the academia-policy and science-policy divides and provide concrete inputs that can inform the development of new approaches and policy frameworks aimed at fostering genuine multilateral cooperation on common challenges.

Echoing much of what was said by the Italian official, his Spanish counterpart, **Javier Benosa Lalaguna**, Head of Unit OSCE/Council of Europe at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and International Cooperation, provided a Spanish perspective on the climate change-security nexus in the Mediterranean, underscoring Spain's longstanding emphasis on the need for multilateral action as the best means to address common challenges in the shared Mediterranean space. Recalling Spain's support for multilateral fora and institutions in the Mediterranean (from the Barcelona process in the 1990s to the UfM), the Spanish official underscored his country's continuing support for the OSCE and efforts to strengthen cooperation between organisations, including the UfM. In this respect, the speaker noted the importance of the recent Stockholm ministerial declaration not only for its intrinsic value as a declaration on the so-called second basket of the OSCE but also for the political signal it represents in breaking with a complicated period of internal divisions within the organisation since 2014. In this, Spain's support for the activities of the OSCE will continue, including specifically within the second dimension of security, which tends to receive less emphasis from other Participating states which instead tend to prioritise the first and third OSCE dimension in their engagements with the Organization. Against this backdrop, the speaker emphasised Spain's ongoing commitment to continue working and supporting the OSCE's endeavours, pointing to Madrid's chairing of the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue of the OSCE (2020-2021) as an important opportunity to keep climate change high on the OSCE agenda looking to the future.⁵²

The final speaker on the panel, **Gorica Atanasova-Gjorevska**, Minister Plenipotentiary at the Permanent Mission of North Macedonia to the OSCE, shared her insights on the preparatory work being done by North Macedonia in lieu of its role as incoming chair of the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group in 2022 and, subsequently, of the OSCE in 2023. In thanking participants and the organisers for the fruitful discussion on the important theme of climate change and security in the Mediterranean, Minister Atanasova-Gjorevska underlined her country's commitment to promote OSCE engagement on these themes and to deepen the ongoing dialogue between the OSCE Secretariat, OSCE Participating states and Mediterranean Partners in an effort to find points of convergence to address common goals and challenges. Climate change and security will continue to be a priority for North Macedonia in the context of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership and in this regard, an important agenda of meetings and engagements

⁵² For more information on the Structured Dialogue of the OSCE and Spain's role in chairing the Informal Working Group see, OSCE website: *The OSCE Structured Dialogue*, <https://www.osce.org/node/415298>.

is being prepared for 2022, including a specific focus on the youth and women in the Mediterranean. On top of these activities, North Macedonia looks forward to promoting further initiatives including ambassadorial retreats, training courses and more structured dialogue with Mediterranean partners, not only within the Mediterranean Partnership but also through the OSCE's other structures, including the Secretariat, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR), as well as with the UfM, civil society and the private sector.

Ultimately, North Macedonia sees its role for the coming years as one aimed at building bridges and creating unity of intent across Participating states and Partner countries when it comes to the key challenges affecting Mediterranean states, building on the experiences and engagements of previous country chairs of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership, including the outgoing Polish chair (2021). Wrapping up her talk, Minister Atanasova-Gjorevska mentioned the importance of good faith dialogue and mutual understanding to safeguard and further promote OSCE principles and commitments, starting from the concept of comprehensive security which stands at the heart of the OSCE's mandate. In this regard, the speaker ended by congratulating participants and the organisers of the conference for providing a valuable opportunity to discuss such important and contemporary themes from a variety of perspectives while also debating actionable policy recommendations that can be of interest for a number of countries and actors involved in seeking to promote sustainability, development and security across the OSCE area and its outlying regions.

In closing the conference proceedings, **Andrea Dessì** took the floor to thank speakers and congratulate invited scholars and practitioners for their in depth and frank discussion on complex and sensitive themes of clear contemporary relevance. New-Med looks forward to a new cycle of research, outreach and dissemination activities for 2022-2023 and to build on the fruitful collaboration put in place with the OSCE, UfM and other organisations involved in the convening of the conference and the drafting of its connected edited volume, whose expected publication is due in March 2022. This new research agenda will be in continuity with New-Med's long-standing commitment to support the second basket of OSCE as well as the important cooperation between the organisation and other crucial players in the region such as the UfM. New activities will also have a focus on women and youth, echoing the importance attributed to these categories by many participants during the conference. In conclusion, the Scientific Director of New-Med Research Network emphasised the network's ongoing commitment to building bridges between the two shores of the Mediterranean, bringing the perspective of Mediterranean states and societies to these debates and working to include a wide range of viewpoints to contextualise the evolution of key socio-economic, political and security dynamics across the shared Mediterranean space.

Conference Programme

Barcelona, 17 December 2021

Opening Session

Welcoming Address

Nasser Kamel, Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

Nicolò Russo Perez, International Relations Coordinator,
Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation

Andrea Dessì, Scientific Director, New-Med Research Network/
Head of Italian Foreign Policy Programme, Istituto Affari
Internazionali (IAI)

High-Level Segment

The Climate-Security Nexus in the Mediterranean

Chair **Emiliano Alessandri**, Senior External Co-operation Officer,
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Panelists **Grammenos Mastrojeni**, Senior Deputy Secretary-General, Union
for the Mediterranean (UfM)

Igli Hasani, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental
Activities (OCEEA)

Luca Franchetti Pardo, Senior Deputy Political Director, Italian
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Natasha Meli Daudey, Malta's Ambassador to the Federal
Republic of Austria and Permanent Representative of Malta to the
Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe

Almotaz Abadi, Water Managing Director at the Union for the
Mediterranean (UfM)

Session I

Mediterranean Security through a Climate Lens: Challenges & Prospects

Recognised as a climate change hotspot, the Mediterranean Basin is witnessing magnified environmental effects that are acting as threat multipliers across the political, socio-economic and migration domains. What is the state of international climate diplomacy and what are the priority areas of engagement? How can climate security practices be improved and what is the role of international organisations in fostering multilateral cooperation on the climate emergency from human security perspectives?

Chair **Bernardo Venturi**, Director, Agency for Peacebuilding (AP) and
Associate Fellow, IAI

Panelists **Wolfgang Cramer**, Research Director, CNRS Mediterranean Institute for Biodiversity and Ecology (IMBE), France
Simone Borg, Malta's Ambassador for Climate Action
Luca Raineri, Assistant Professor, Institute of Law, Politics and Development, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies of Pisa, Italy
Zeina Khalil Hajj, Head of Global Programme 350.org & Former Executive Director Greenpeace MENA

Session II

Fostering Climate & Environmental Cooperation in the Mediterranean

Climate change is attracting increased policy attention as awareness grows regarding its multidimensional effects. These policies require careful collaboration between science and policymaking to improve preventive measures and enhance the resilience of states and societies across the Mediterranean. What impact will climate diplomacy have on multilateral frameworks in the Mediterranean? What priority sectors can be identified? What role can public-private partnerships play in this domain?

Chair **Ines Duarte**, Project Manager, Energy and Climate Action Division, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

Panelists **Niklas Bremberg**, Associated Senior Researcher, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute & Associate Professor of Political Science, Stockholm University
Silvia Pariente-David, Senior Advisor, Center for Mediterranean Integration; International Energy Consultant and MedECC Lead Author, France
Pier Paolo Raimondi, Researcher, Energy, Climate and Resources programme, IAI & Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM)
Roula Majdalani, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources expert & Former Director, ESCWA Sustainable Development Policies Division

Concluding Remarks & Next Steps

Chair **Andrea Dessì**, Scientific Director, New-Med Research Network/ Head of Italian Foreign Policy Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Grammenos Mastrojeni, Senior Deputy Secretary-General, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

Igli Hasani, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)

Mario Bartoli, Head of the OSCE Unit, Directorate General for Political Affairs and Security, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Javier Benosa Lalaguna, Head of Unit OSCE/Council of Europe, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and International Cooperation

Gorica Atanasova-Gjorevska, Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of North Macedonia to the OSCE, Incoming Country Chair of the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group

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