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An Eastern Mediterranean Compact for Security, Energy and Connectivity

A practical diplomatic framework for maritime stability, resilient infrastructure and
shared economic benefit.

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EXECUTIVE JUDGEMENT

The Eastern Mediterranean needs a project-based compact that separates immediate cooperation on maritime safety, energy and connectivity from disputes that require longer political negotiation, while ensuring that practical gains do not prejudice legal positions.

Key findings

- Regional escalation can disrupt energy, shipping, airspace and migration management simultaneously.
- Practical projects can create incentives for restraint when they are legally neutral and transparently governed.
- Energy cooperation should include grids, storage, efficiency and infrastructure security rather than depend on a single export concept.
- A durable framework needs structured participation from governments, the EU, commercial operators and affected communities.

A region of connected exposure

The Eastern Mediterranean links European security to Middle Eastern conflict, maritime commerce, energy systems and climate pressure. Policy is often organised around separate files even when a single escalation affects them together. A compact should begin with a shared risk register covering navigation, airspace, ports, cables, energy facilities, emergency response and uncontrolled displacement.

Cooperation without prejudice

Many politically useful projects fail because participants fear that technical cooperation will be interpreted as concession on sovereignty or maritime claims. Agreements should state explicitly that participation does not alter legal positions. This allows joint search and rescue, pollution response, cable protection, grid planning and crisis communication to proceed while formal disputes remain subject to established diplomatic and legal channels.

A balanced economic offer

Energy should be treated as a system of generation, grids, storage, efficiency, shipping and industrial demand. Projects should be selected for resilience and mutual benefit, with transparent procurement and local economic participation. The EU can add value through finance, standards, technical expertise and a predictable link to the wider Pact for the Mediterranean.

A modular compact

Cooperation should proceed in modules that deliver shared protection without requiring prior settlement of every sovereignty dispute.

A maritime-safety module can connect incident communication, search and rescue and protection of commercial navigation. An infrastructure module can address cables, ports, energy facilities and emergency restoration. A civil-protection module can coordinate wildfire, earthquake and displacement contingencies. Participation may vary by module, but standards for transparency, civilian protection and dispute management should remain common.

The compact should operate without prejudice to legal positions. Technical cooperation must not be presented as recognition of contested claims, and data-sharing rules should specify permissible use. A small diplomatic steering group can address incidents that exceed technical authority, preserve channels during political tension and commission quiet expert work on options that are not yet ready for public negotiation.

- Launch modules with defined deliverables, participants and review dates.
- Use no-prejudice clauses and protected records for contested questions.
- Link infrastructure investment to local benefit, environmental review and recovery capacity.

Economic legitimacy

Projects endure when affected communities can see lawful participation and shared benefit.

Connectivity and energy projects should publish ownership, financing, environmental safeguards and local-benefit arrangements. Procurement and revenue expectations need sufficient transparency to resist political capture. European participation should add standards, finance and diplomatic continuity while avoiding the impression that technical projects can substitute for conflict-sensitive politics.

- Require transparent ownership and financing for compact-supported projects.
- Create community consultation and grievance mechanisms proportionate to project impact.

Policy recommendations

- Launch an Eastern Mediterranean risk register and annual civil-protection exercise.
- Create legally neutral working groups on cables, grids, search and rescue and port security.
- Use shared transparency standards for cross-border energy and infrastructure projects.
- Establish a standing regional crisis-communication network supported by the EU.
- Publish annual delivery results under the Pact for the Mediterranean.

Indicators to watch

- Maritime incident frequency
- Cross-border project delivery
- Crisis-communication use
- Infrastructure outage duration

Scope and analytical method

A practical diplomatic framework for maritime stability, resilient infrastructure and shared economic benefit. The paper tests the issue against institutional authority, delivery capacity, political sustainability and the interests of affected partners. It separates confirmed developments from interpretation and identifies the conditions under which recommendations would need to change.

The analysis is based on a structured review of official institutional material and current primary sources. It distinguishes formal decisions and verified facts from institutional assessment and forward-looking judgement. Recommendations are tested against authority, delivery capacity, timing, political sustainability and the interests of external partners.

Public sources cannot capture classified readiness data, commercially sensitive contracting information or confidential diplomatic exchanges. Time-sensitive figures and legal developments should therefore be refreshed by responsible authorities before an operational decision is taken.

Sources and method

The sources below establish the public evidentiary basis for this paper. Interpretation and recommendations remain the responsibility of the Research Directorate. Principal public sources:

- European Commission, Pact for the Mediterranean
- European Council conclusions on the Middle East, 19 March 2026

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