

FEMISE

Call For Papers 2026

Annex 1: The Call for Papers General theme and Research topics to be addressed

Navigating Disruptions & Transitions in The Mediterranean: Policies for Resilient, Innovative & Inclusive Economies

CONTEXT

The Euro-Mediterranean region^[1] is navigating profound transformations and ongoing disruptions. Geopolitical tensions, trade fragmentation, climate pressures, energy shocks and rapid technological transformation are no longer temporary shocks but structural forces reshaping economic systems, labour markets and policy frameworks. These dynamics are transmitted through multiple channels, including the reconfiguration of global trade and supply chains, rising costs of logistics, finance, and energy, and growing economic and social vulnerabilities—particularly in employment, inequality, and resource security—while accelerating digital and technological transitions.

The reconfiguration of **international trade**, marked by geopolitical tensions, supply-chain restructuring, and increased emphasis on economic sovereignty, is reshaping global economic relations and redefining the position of the Mediterranean economies within global value chains. At the same time, accelerating **climate change** and the transition toward low-carbon economies are disrupting traditional sectors while creating new opportunities in renewable energy and sustainable industries. **Rapid technological advances**, particularly in artificial intelligence and digitalisation, are transforming production systems, labour markets, and competitiveness, offering significant productivity gains but also raising challenges related to employment, skills, and market concentration.

These transformations are unfolding alongside persistent **social challenges** across the region, including inequality, unemployment, particularly among women and youth, demographic imbalances, and labour-market informality. These challenges are placing growing pressure on social systems, calling for policies that promote inclusive growth that reduce inequalities and social vulnerabilities.

[1] Euromed region includes: 27 countries of the EU and the 8 South Mediterranean Partners (SMP): Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia

At the same time, ongoing geopolitical conflicts and the growing disruptions are generating significant uncertainty for the global economy, sending shockwaves across energy and commodity markets and exposing the region's structural dependency and amplifying economic vulnerabilities for businesses, households and governments. These dynamics underscore the urgency to **accelerate economic and resource diversifications and to design policies that promote inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic development.**

Undoubtedly, these shifts create **opportunities** for transformation, including deeper regional integration, green and low-carbon development pathways, and digital upgrading. In this evolving context, the central challenge is no longer recovery, but how Mediterranean economies can navigate these disruptions, sustain performance, manage systemic risks, and build resilience while leveraging transitions for more inclusive and innovative growth.

To do that, the region can count on significant strategic assets: geographic proximity between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East; complementary demographic dynamics; strong trade and investment links; and growing potential in renewable energy and connectivity.

In this evolving context, the key challenge is not only how Euro-Mediterranean economies navigate through these disruptions and manage ongoing transformations, but how they proactively leverage these dynamics to reduce structural vulnerabilities, and build policy-driven resilience while advancing sustainable, innovative and inclusive development.

Addressing these challenges requires new evidence-based policy approaches capable of navigating uncertainty while unlocking the region's long-term development potential.

1- THEME OF THE CALL FOR PAPERS

In this context, FEMISE is calling for researchers to submit concept notes of their research proposal in the framework of the 2026 Annual Conference "Navigating Disruptions and Transitions in the Mediterranean: Policies for Resilient, Innovative and Inclusive Economies," addressing one or more of the following four topics.

- **Topic 1: Reconfiguration of International Trade and Globalisation:**
Opportunities for the Euro-Mediterranean Region
- **Topic 2: Sustainability Transitions in Times of Disruption:**
Economic Resilience, Risk, and Systemic Transformation
- **Topic 3: Digital Transformation and Innovation:**
Drivers for Mediterranean Competitiveness
- **Topic 4: Inclusive and Sustainable Development:**
Reducing Socioeconomic Vulnerabilities and Strengthening Social Resilience

The Call adopts a vulnerability–resilience analytical framework to better understand how Mediterranean economies are exposed to economic, technological, environmental and social disruptions and transformations, and how policy-driven adaptation strategies can enhance resilience, sustainability and long-term development.

More details about each of these topics and what issues could be addressed can be found below. These are for guidance and researchers can address other issues within these topics.

Topic 1: Reconfiguration of International Trade and Globalisation: Opportunities for the Euro-Mediterranean Region

Global trade and investment patterns are being reshaped by rising geopolitical tensions and conflicts, strategic industrial policies, diversification of suppliers and partnerships, and growing concerns over economic security and supply-chain resilience. These transformations are also exposing structural vulnerabilities in global production and trade systems, with uneven impacts across countries depending on their degree of economic diversification, integration in global value chains, and institutional capacity to respond to shocks. A key question is how Euro-Mediterranean countries can leverage these global transformations while addressing their inherent economic vulnerabilities. Strengthening their capacity for policy-induced resilience will be essential to support sustainable and inclusive growth. In this context, the geographic position of the region, demographic complementarities, and emerging industrial and service capabilities provide a basis for deeper economic interdependence and value-chain upgrading. At the regional level, revisiting cooperation frameworks and balancing economic sovereignty with collective integration will be essential to enhance competitiveness, resilience, and shared prosperity in a more fragmented global economy.

Suggested topics include:

- How can the Euro-Mediterranean region position itself strategically amid rising trade reconfigurations and supply-chains disruptions to enhance competitiveness and attract investment?
- How can Mediterranean countries diversify trade and investment partnerships to reduce vulnerability to geopolitical tensions and supply-chain disruptions?
- What opportunities do current geopolitical and trade transformations create for strengthening Euro-Mediterranean economic integration?
- Which strategic economic partnerships and alliances—within and beyond the region—can help the Euro-Mediterranean space reduce exposure to external shocks and geoeconomics pressures?

- What role can Southern Mediterranean countries realistically play in reconfigured global and regional value chains beyond low value-added activities, and what industrial and trade policies are required to support this upgrading?
- What role can financial integration play in supporting investment, economic stability, and regional development in the Euro-Mediterranean region?
- How can migration contribute to economic development, labour-market efficiency, and regional integration?
- How can strengthened South–South economic integration within the Mediterranean contribute to diversification, risk-sharing, and long-term resilience?
- Which sectors and value chains (e.g. energy, agri-food, manufacturing, logistics, digital services) offer the greatest potential for regional value-chain development?
- What policy frameworks can facilitate cross-border investment, financial flows, and private sector development across the region?

Topic 2: Sustainability Transitions in Times of Disruption: Economic Resilience, Risk, and Systemic Transformation⁽²⁾

The transition toward sustainable, low-carbon, and digitally enabled economies is set to reshape Mediterranean economies. At the same time, Mediterranean economies face a growing landscape of disruptions, including climate change impacts, natural hazards, geopolitical tensions, economic volatility, and supply-chain shocks. These pressures make the sustainable transitions a key strategy for strengthening economic resilience and managing systemic risks.

While these transitions create opportunities for innovation, new industries, and productivity gains, they also introduce new vulnerabilities and transition risks. These sustainability transitions can attract investment, foster innovation, and create resilient jobs and value chains, while strengthening synergies across water, energy, and food (WEF) systems and enhancing long-term competitiveness. However, sustainability transitions also generate adjustment costs and transition risks, requiring policies that integrate climate adaptation, economic transformation, and resilience-building. Integrated policy responses connecting climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, economic transformation, and technological change within coherent policy frameworks are more needed than ever. Enhanced North–South cooperation within the Euro-Mediterranean space will be critical to mobilising investment, sharing risks, and building resilient, sustainable, and mutually beneficial development pathways.

(2) This research theme is organised in collaboration with the Resilience Economics and Sustainable Transitions Centre, Department of Economics, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, recently designated as an International Centre of Excellence (ICoE) under the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Programme, co-sponsored by the International Science Council (ISC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).

Suggested topics include:

- How do climate change, natural hazards, geopolitical instability, and technological disruptions interact to reshape economic resilience in Mediterranean economies?
- How can the sustainability transitions be leveraged as a core strategy to enhance economic resilience in Mediterranean economies facing climate shocks, resource scarcity, water and food insecurity, and external market volatility?
- How do rising costs of logistics, finance, and energy affect the capacity of Mediterranean economies to advance sustainability transitions and strengthen economic resilience?
- What lessons can be drawn from recent shocks (pandemics, climate extremes, energy crises, conflicts) for building more resilient economic systems?
- What policies and labour-market measures are needed to ensure just transitions, including effective skills development, vocational training, and protection for workers, MSMEs, vulnerable groups, and exposed regions?
- How can public and private investment frameworks incorporate risk and resilience considerations in supporting green and digital transitions?
- How can risk-informed economic policies support sustainable transitions while strengthening resilience to environmental, geopolitical, and technological shocks?
- How can economic models better assess the systemic and cascading impacts of disasters and climate shocks, and what do these shocks reveal about economic recovery and labour market dynamics in Mediterranean economies?
- What financing mechanisms, investment frameworks, and risk-sharing instruments are required to support green infrastructure, climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and resource-efficient technologies across the region?
- What role can enhance North–South and South–South cooperation, as well as regional frameworks, play in strengthening economic resilience through shared infrastructure, coordinated responses, and equitable distribution of sustainability transitions benefits?

Topic 3: Digital Transformation and Innovation: Drivers for Competitiveness in Mediterranean Economies

Digital transformation and innovation are becoming central drivers of productivity, competitiveness, and growth. The adoption of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, digital platforms, advanced manufacturing, automation, and data-driven innovation, also creates and vulnerabilities for firms, workers, and governments worldwide. Digital transformation can enhance productivity, foster innovation, and support new sectors, but it may also widen digital divides, exacerbate labour-market disruptions, and create new forms of economic concentration.

In the Euro-Mediterranean region, strengthening digital ecosystems, supporting innovation, and fostering private-sector development, particularly among SMEs and startups, will be critical to enabling industrial upgrading, structural transformation, and stronger economic competitiveness. Understanding how Mediterranean economies can adapt to technological disruptions while strengthening innovation capacities and ensuring sustainable development is therefore a key policy challenge.

Suggested topics include:

- How is digital transformation affecting productivity, competitiveness and economic structures in Mediterranean economies? Which sectors or populations are most vulnerable to disruption?
- What policies can support innovation ecosystems, technology adoption, and knowledge diffusion in the Euro-Mediterranean region?
- How can SMEs in the region leverage digital technologies to improve productivity, access markets, and scale up their activities? What measures can enhance their resilience against technological and market shocks?
- What policy instruments can support SME digitalisation, innovation, and access to finance?
- What role can entrepreneurship, particularly youth entrepreneurship, play in driving innovation and economic transformation?
- How can industrial clusters and innovation hubs strengthen competitiveness and regional economic development?
- What is the realistic innovation and adoption potential of the Euro-Mediterranean region in the global AI race? What are the risks of falling structurally behind leading AI economies?
- How can digital readiness be strengthened across the region, and what role should public policy, private investment, and regional cooperation play in closing digital and technological gaps between countries?
- How should education, training, and lifelong learning systems be redesigned to equip current and future workers with digital skills and reduce skill mismatches across sectors?
- To what extent do infrastructure gaps, data availability, energy constraints, and access to digital resources limit the digital transition in the region? What policy frameworks are needed to reduce these gaps? What strategic investments are required to overcome these bottlenecks?
- How can digital transformation and technological innovation contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth, absorb shocks, strengthen resilience and enhance productivity?
- What vulnerabilities and opportunities does the digital transition present for the green transition, and how can resilience be integrated into strategies for sustainable development?

Topic 4: Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Reducing Socioeconomic Vulnerabilities and Strengthening Social Resilience in the Mediterranean

Economic, environmental and technological transformations and disruptions are increasingly shaping social dynamics across the Mediterranean. Persistent inequalities, labour-market dualisation, economic transitions, informal employment, territorial and demographic imbalances, migration flows, and uneven access to quality jobs, healthcare, and opportunities for women and youth, are among the major sources of vulnerability challenging the resilience of welfare systems and social contracts in Euro-Mediterranean countries. At the same time, these disruptions and transformations create opportunities to strengthen migrant integration, promote gender equality, and improve access to essential services, contributing to more inclusive and resilient societies.

However, current fiscal constraints and changing labour relations require modernising and adapting traditional redistribution mechanisms. This raises fundamental questions about how inclusive growth can be achieved in practice, how social protection systems can be modernised, and how new forms of work and production can be reconciled with social cohesion, fairness, and equal opportunities for all.

Suggested topics include:

- How are economic, technological, environmental, and demographic transformations reshaping social cohesion, inequalities, and social contracts in Mediterranean societies?
- How can welfare and social protection systems, including health systems, be modernised to remain effective, equitable, and fiscally sustainable in the face of demographic change, labour-market transformation, and repeated economic shocks?
- What role can the social and solidarity economy (SSE) play in promoting inclusion, employment, social resilience, and territorial cohesion? Under what institutional and financial conditions can it scale up?
- Is the promise of green jobs materialising in the current Mediterranean context? What evidence from current national and local experiences in Mediterranean countries can be used to assess the scale, quality, and inclusiveness of green job creation?
- What policies and labour-market measures are needed to ensure just transitions, including effective skills development, vocational training, and protection for workers, MSMEs, vulnerable groups, and exposed regions?
- How can informal employment be reduced while improving job quality and social protection and reducing workers' vulnerability to economic and social risks?

- How can education systems and human capital policies enhance adaptation to economic, technological and environmental transitions? What policies can support migrant integration and maximise their economic contribution?
- How can demographic dynamics and migration be better integrated into inclusive development strategies, ensuring that mobility contributes to economic resilience and social cohesion rather than exacerbating inequalities?
- How can health systems be strengthened to improve resilience, expand equitable access, and respond effectively to demographic change, migration, and evolving social and environmental risks?
- How can inclusive policies support societal adaptation to climate change and the green economic transition?
- What role can education and vocational training systems play in addressing labour-market mismatches and preparing Mediterranean workforces for the green and digital transitions?
- What role can regional cooperation and knowledge exchange in social policy play in addressing shared socioeconomic vulnerabilities across Euro-Mediterranean countries?