October15 2025

Dear Heads of State or Government of the MED9 group,

Ahead of your meeting on 20 October 2025, the business organisations of the MED9 countries wish to convey our common vision and shared priorities for strengthening competitiveness, cohesion, and resilience across the Mediterranean region and the EU in this crucial period.

Our organisations, which represent the industries and enterprises of the Mediterranean Member States, have established a close and constructive cooperation through an informal coordination framework to advance shared priorities at EU level and to promote a stronger, more integrated Mediterranean voice in shaping Europe's economic and social agenda.

The Mediterranean faces common challenges but also remarkable opportunities that call for decisive action to be fully realised. We strongly support the MED9 initiative and salute the priorities of the Slovenian presidency. We call for unity and renewed ambition to ensure that the voice of our region – and of its industry – is reflected in Europe's political agenda, and we stand ready to actively contribute to this endeavor. In this spirit, and while acknowledging the breadth of the matters on your agenda in this complex geopolitical context, we would like to share the following messages, which we would ask you to reflect upon during the important meetings ahead.

Enabling competitiveness through determined action

We call for urgent action and bold steps on key enablers for EU's competitiveness, which are a prerequisite for security and to preserve the European social model. We count on your commitment to:

- Engage in an ambitious roadmap for the completion of the Single Market which addresses persistent market failures, to unlock the full potential of European integration and strengthen cross-border growth opportunities. This should also give attention to imbalances arising from geographic conditions and connectivity challenges that hinder effective market integration, with special attention to remote areas, islands and island states.
- Accelerate regulatory simplification across all levels of governance, ensuring that the simplification effort initiated at EU level is also implemented effectively at national level.
- Advance in the Savings and Investments Union (SIU), to channel more private capital towards productive investments.

- Take urgent measures to reduce energy costs, which remains a key condition for safeguarding Europe's industrial base, while fostering energy interconnections in the Mediterranean region.
- Work for an ambitious Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) that responds to the current EU challenges with flexibility and simplified deployment tools, while preserving territorial cohesion and supporting the financing of measures that strengthen competitiveness, innovation (including AI), and sustainable growth, as well as enhancing productivity.

An ambitious MFF that boosts competitiveness through cohesion

Our organisations believe, indeed, that the next MFF should reflect the ambition of EU's priorities, be flexible and simple, focusing on measures that enhance competitiveness and support sustainable growth. It must avoid imposing any additional fiscal or administrative burdens on companies, as this risks creating a harmful precedent and could discourage investment at a time of economic uncertainty, while clearly contradicting the objective of making the EU an attractive location to do business. The MFF must therefore ensure that EU funding instruments effectively strengthen Europe's industrial base and economic resilience. In this respect, we believe that more ambition is needed considering the ever-growing challenges faced at EU level. For this reason:

- Cohesion policy must remain a core priority for the next programming period, with strong and structured involvement of private sector actors both in its design and implementation. While we support a performance-based approach, we believe that conditionalities should be linked to the specific objectives of regional policy and offer sufficient flexibility for the full utilisation of funds within the scope of cohesion priorities. Moreover, we express our concern regarding the proposed merger of structural funds with the Common Agricultural Policy, and the expected reduction of funds for cohesion policy.
- The next MFF should actively support the development of modern vocational education and training systems, including investment in infrastructure, apprenticeships, and strong involvement of social partners. To reach this objective, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) should prioritise upskilling, reskilling, and improving access to the labour market.
- We warmly welcome the renewed emphasis on competitiveness. The establishment of the new Competitiveness Fund, together with the proposed increase in resources for Horizon Europe and for transport and energy interconnections are highly positive developments that should be safeguarded during the upcoming negotiations in Council. In this sense, it is important to ensure that CBAM revenues are earmarked to support decarbonisation and the deployment of low-carbon technologies in the European industry.
- Likewise, we welcome the proposed doubling of funds for the MENA region under the Global Europe instrument. In this context, we urge you to ensure that the allocation for the Mediterranean is sufficient to allow the EU to pursue an ambitious economic diplomacy.

The new Pact for the Mediterranean as an opportunity for the whole region

In parallel to all the above, we support the EU focus on establishing new, trusted partnerships. For that, the new Pact for the Mediterranean will mark a pivotal step in reinforcing Europe's strategic partnership with the region and advancing shared prosperity. To translate all the above priorities into tangible results**,** the business community must be closely involved in the deployment of the new Pact, and we can confirm that we are willing to play our part in this common endeavor.

We hope that the points outlined above can also contribute to the discussions at the upcoming meeting of the European Council, ensuring that the Mediterranean dimension and our region's strategic importance is fully recognised within the broader EU policy agenda and remain central in the longer term, particularly in view of the forthcoming Cypriot Presidency in 2026, which may provide an opportunity to further advance these priorities.

We stand ready to engage in a structured and continuous dialogue with MED9 governments to jointly promote a more competitive, sustainable, and cohesive Mediterranean region within the European Union.

Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales - CEOE	Confederazione Generale dell'Industria Italiana - Confindustria	Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation - OEB
Confederação Empresarial de Portugal - CIP	Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry - MCCEI	Croatian Employers' Association - HUP
Mouvement des Entreprises de France - MEDEF	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises - SEV	Association of Employers of Slovenia- ZDS