

Mutual Mentorship Program – Fifth Meeting Report

The fifth virtual session of the Mutual Mentorship Program (MMP), held on 17 September 2025, focused on the theme **“Green Transition through MMP Lenses in the EU–MENA Region.”** The meeting convened 36 mentors from Europe and the MENA region to explore climate challenges, share insights, and strengthen cross-regional, cross sectoral and intergenerational dialogue on this critical matter.

Opening

The Swedish Dialogue Institute (SDI) welcomed participants and reflected on the value of reconvening given the rapidly evolving regional developments since the last meeting. The link between climate change and conflict was highlighted as an important aspect of the timing and relevance of this discussion. Mentorship program participants were further encouraged to continue dialogue and if relevant explore joint projects ahead of the upcoming in-person MMP gathering on 25 November 2025. **SDI** presented the schedule of upcoming MMP meetings: an online session on AI and peacebuilding on 14 October, followed by the final in-person gathering in Amman on 25 November, held on the margins of SDI’s November Conference. It was mentioned that the conference this year would bring together over 100 participants from government, civil society, and the private sector. **SDI** further emphasised the timeliness of the *Green Transition* theme, noting pressing challenges such as rising energy demand, water scarcity, and climate-driven food insecurity. Given the scale of the issues, it was necessary to deepen cross-sectoral, intergenerational, and cross-regional collaboration.

Insights from the mentors

On the question of the impact of climate change on a personal level, one participant underscored that nature shouldn’t be considered an abstract thing but as essential component of everyday life. The participant highlighted the responsibility of individuals as consumers in shaping sustainable futures. Another participant reflected on Italy’s focus on climate security, warning that deprioritising investments in this area risked instability. She stressed the need for continued

support for climate-related initiatives, while recognising the complexity and lack of straightforward solutions in addressing climate change.

Expert presentations

Amongst other things, guest speaker **Sarine Karajerjian** highlighted the differences in energy dependency across Europe and North Africa, noting Europe's reliance on imports from the MENA-region. She emphasised Algeria's strategic role as the EU's largest oil and gas supplier, pointing to the region's growing importance in Europe's energy landscape. Furthermore, she highlighted that it was important that governments in the MENA-region acted more transparently in dealing with external investments. **Anders Jägerskog** stressed the importance of long-term, sustainable projects involving the private sector. He noted that perceived risk remained a barrier to private engagement, and suggested risk guarantees and insurance mechanisms as ways to encourage investment. **Kareem Ayman Nour** spoke about the cross-sectoral nature of the green transition, drawing on his work in green fuels and climate policy. He emphasised the opportunities for young professionals in the MENA region to contribute not only as advocates but also as active partners in public-private collaboration. There was a notable convergence of perspectives between the public and private sectors regarding the environmental challenges facing the planet. Participants from both sectors acknowledged the urgency of these issues and expressed a shared commitment to collaborative efforts aimed at fostering a more sustainable and ecologically balanced future.

Discussions

The meeting concluded with a brief Q&A, where one of the questions posed to the experts concerned strategies for encouraging governments in the MENA region to recognize and respond to emerging challenges, particularly in the context of ongoing investments in their region. In response, **Sarine Karajerjian** emphasized the critical role of civil society organizations in advocating for greater transparency in governmental decision-making processes. She noted that many investments, especially those originating from the European Union, often fail to deliver tangible benefits to local communities. It was therefore up to civil society to actively and publicly highlight these shortcomings to ensure that future investments are both functional and socially impactful.

Concluding, SDI expressed appreciation to all participants for their active engagement in the MMP-program and hoped to welcome the group back at the next MMP session on 14 October.