

## **International Conference**

### ***Climate Action in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East: Regional Cooperation Empowered by Science and Innovation***

#### **Concept Note**

The International Conference “Climate Action in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East: Regional Cooperation Empowered by Science and Innovation,” is being organized as an integral activity within the framework of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union (to take place during the period January–June 2026), bringing together leading government officials, prominent scientists, policymakers, and international organizations in order to advance scientific cooperation and foster science diplomacy within the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME), a region widely recognized as one of the world’s principal climate-change hotspots.

The Conference will critically examine the scientific foundations, model projections, and policy implications of societal challenges with emphasis on the climate crisis as it unfolds in the EMME. Strategies for mitigation and adaptation will be presented and debated, encompassing their scientific, financial, legal, and ethical dimensions. The overarching goal is to empower action through cooperation, grounded in robust science and innovation, with a specific emphasis on transboundary actions.

#### **Background**

The 2026 Conference stems from the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Climate Change Initiative (EMME-CCI), which was launched by the Government of Cyprus in 2019 and has been significantly reinvigorated over the past year.

A crucial reference point for this event is the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration of the EMME-CCI, signed in 2022 during the 27th Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 27). The Summit leading to this declaration was co-hosted by the Presidents of Egypt and Cyprus, and was attended by heads of state and other high-ranking government officials and organization representatives. The Declaration, signed by ten participating countries of the region, formalized a Regional Action Plan (RAP) proposed by the EMME-CCI. Developed through the collaborative work of over 240 scientists across 13 thematic task forces, the RAP provides a science-based policy framework for coordinated regional responses to climate change, as well as concrete recommendations and capacity-building measures for implementation via regional cooperation and cross-border projects.

Co-organized by the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy under the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU, the present Conference is a major high-level follow-up to the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration of the EMME-CCI, which marks the transition from planning to implementation. Considering the new realities that have emerged in recent

years, the Conference aims to evaluate the progress achieved since 2022, strengthen partnerships among participating countries and organizations, and catalyze new joint instruments and projects aligned with the RAP and the priorities of the EU Green Deal.

Furthermore, in light of emerging regional and challenges the Conference will address the need for a structured mechanism to coordinate Science Diplomacy efforts. It will examine governance models capable of aligning policies, priorities, and funding instruments in support of sustained regional cooperation in science and innovation.

Enhancing the mechanisms and instruments for the support of the cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the EMME region to combat challenges and adapt to climate change constitutes one of the strategic priorities of the Cyprus EU Presidency.

## **Objectives**

- Review scientific evidence, projections, and adaptation pathways specific to the EMME region.
- Highlight progress achieved under the EMME-CCI since COP27 and identify opportunities for joint implementation.
- Strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms among the European union, governments, research institutions, and private stakeholders.
- Promote science diplomacy, innovation, and financing mechanisms essential for regional challenges, including examining structured governance models and potential coordinating mechanisms to support these efforts.
- Contribute to the upcoming EU Informal Summit with leaders of the Southern Neighborhood Countries (which will take place in Nicosia on April 23rd, 2026) by providing evidence-based recommendations and concrete proposals for regional collaboration.

## **Dates and Venue**

- Main Conference: 8–9 April 2026
- Pre-Conference Workshops: 6–7 April 2026
- Venue: Filoxenia Conference Center, Nicosia, Cyprus

## **Themes**

- Scientific understanding: observations and model projections
- Mitigation strategies: pathways to decarbonization
- Impacts and adaptation: water, food, health, and cultural heritage
- Regional and EU action plans for resilience

- Science, technology, and innovation for climate solutions
- Financing, governance, and legal frameworks
- Toward an actionable regional plan with emphasis on transboundary actions
- Quest for suitable organizational schemes

### **Expected Outcomes**

The Conference aims to deliver evidence-based recommendations, including pathways for strengthening regional Science Diplomacy, and examining options for a structured coordination mechanism. These outcomes will support coherent and long-term joint action and scientific cooperation to address regional challenges, with particular emphasis on those arising from climate change.

- Consolidated scientific and policy messages for the EMME region, which will feed directly into the 2026 EU Informal Summit with leaders of the Southern Neighborhood Countries.
- Identification of flagship cross-border projects for climate resilience and green transition.
- Strengthening the monitoring and implementation framework for the Regional Action Plan.
- Expansion of the network of international partners and donors supporting the EMME-CCI.
- Exploration of governance models and potential establishment of a coordination mechanism dedicated to Science Diplomacy in the EMME region.

***Due to limitations in venue capacity, this event is by invitation only***

To request an invitation, please email us at: [emmeclimate2026@cyi.ac.cy](mailto:emmeclimate2026@cyi.ac.cy)

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QR code, or visit our website:



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