

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE COMPONENT OF EU'S GREEN DEAL A MENA PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released in 2018 a special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above preindustrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways¹. This very impacting report was elaborated with the objective of providing sound orientations for the global response to the threat of climate change, to boost sustainable development and increase efforts to eradicate poverty. This report, known as the “SR1.5”, came five years after the release of the 5th IPCC’s Assessment Report “AR5”² that provided to the global community the scientific evidence and the robust argumentation that catalyzed the nearly universal signature and ratification of the Climate Paris Agreement “PA”. In August 2021, IPCC released its 6th Assessment Report³. This latest, is based on physical science evidence that shows that the climate situation is becoming worst and that the human factor is first responsible of this unprecedented degradation.

One of the flagships of the PA⁴ was to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by “holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”⁴. After 5 years of this historic agreement, developing countries are still waiting for strong signals from developed countries to put on the bilateral and multilateral cooperation tools. The most important one was the pledged 100 billion USD/Year committed in Paris in December 2016. One of the obstacles that impede reaching the pledged climate finance targets towards supporting developing countries National Determined Contributions “NDC” implementation is the remaining divergences, specially between developed countries and the MENA region, related to finding a wise balance between mitigation and adaptation. While developed countries and specially EU countries consider mitigation projects as the most promising to achieve the 1.5°C target, the southern regions such as MENA countries are highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of Climate Change and thus demand more support for adaptation projects to build their resilience. It should be noted that according to the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change “MedECC” 1st assessment Report released in 2020⁵, the MENA region is one of the hottest spots in terms of climate change. The MedECC report shows that almost all countries of the Mediterranean Basin, starting by coastal areas, are impacted by recent anthropogenic changes in the environment. One of the principal drivers of these changes are: temperature increase, precipitations, extreme events, sea-level rise, sea water temperature, salinity and acidification⁵. On the other hand, population increase, pollution, unsustainable land and sea use practices and non-indigenous species are some additional factors increasing MENA countries vulnerability to climate change effects. In most areas, both natural ecosystems and human livelihoods are affected. The MedECC report⁵ stresses that due to global and regional trends in the drivers, impacts will be exacerbated in the coming decades, especially if global warming exceeds 1.5 to 2°C above the pre-industrial level⁴. Under

these situations, MENA countries need to enhance their adaptation efforts. They need to explore external funding opportunities to build local resilient infrastructures and enhance integrated natural resources management. In this regard, a constructive and well-balanced cooperation with the European Union is a strategic choice for most of the MENA countries. For such reason, the EU Green Deal⁶ comes at a perfect time as it could offer new opportunities for both shores to reach their climate goals on a win-win basis knowing that most countries in the region are in the process of revisiting their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)⁷.

This critical paper was mandated by The Regional Programme Energy Security and Climate Change- MENA Region of the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation (KAS – REMENA) in Rabat. It will provide a rapid analysis of the 6 key actions of the Climate Ambition Component of the Road Map to EU's Green Deal (GD)⁶. It comprises a short survey among non-governmental experts from a variety of countries in the MENA region Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon (we are including one perception from Mauritania as well), in order to incorporate their perspective on the EU Green Deal, indicating how it could be complemented and how their respective countries could benefit from it. Through this critical paper, we would like to examine the extent to which cooperation between the countries of the MENA region and the EU could be strengthened by the EU Green Deal. As an example, in the MENA region, high targets for the further development of renewable energies have already been set. With a view to the common goal, further opportunities for cooperation could therefore open up with the EU Green Deal. Indeed, Europe will be obliged to import renewable energy in the future due to its limited land availability and increased population energy needs. In an article published online in 2020 on behalf of the Initiative on Foreign Affairs and International Relations (IFAIR)⁸, the author Eimen Hamedat explains that the nearest conceivable location for the large-scale production of green energy (focus on Green Hydrogen) and its export to Europe is the MENA region and especially Morocco⁸. Thus, there is no doubt a new beneficial cooperation horizon is just ahead of us.

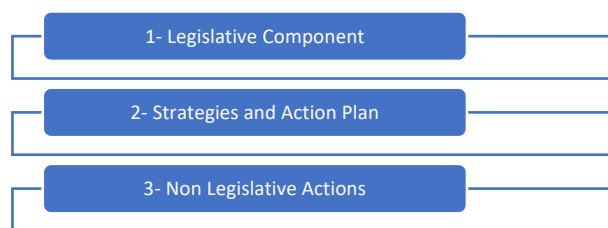
1- PRINCIPLES AND KEY ELEMENTS OF THE GREEN DEAL

In 2019, the European Commission made an announcement of a European Green Deal for the EU countries⁶. The philosophy of the EU Green Deal came from the fact that climate change constitutes a serious threat to Europe. As a result of that, elaborating a new growth strategy that will allow for a sustainable economy to develop an urgent dossier for Europe. Thus, the Green Deal could become the translation of that growth transformation. It is the European Commission's political roadmap for making its continent's economy sustainable. This framework aims at leading Europe

toward a climate-neutral continent by 2050⁶. It also aims at improving people's health and quality of life in an inclusive manner. The cross-cutting nature of climate change is well recognized in the new deal, and it emphasizes that its delivery requires restructuration of EU's policies across a number of different areas. This includes principally renewable energy supply, industry, production and consumption, transportation, Agriculture, construction, and other social benefits⁶.

At this stage, and view “from a southern perspective”, Europe’s economic growth should be entirely decoupled from intensive natural resource use. In this respect, we hope that the 500 billion euros climate action plan agreed upon in the Brussels summit of the head of European governments in July 2020⁹, will open novel cooperation channels with the MENA countries focused on support to multi-sectoral and multi-country projects based on mitigation-adaptation synergies along with natural resource nexus approaches.

In May 2020, Eoin McLoughlin, and Paul Deane from University College Cork, published a paper in which they explicated the 3 key elements of the EU Green Deal¹⁰. These are:



The 3 key elements of the EU Green Deal

- 1- The Legislative component is based on a European Climate Law highlighting the 2050 climate neutrality objective.
 - Revisions of relevant climate-related legislative measures such as the Emissions Trading System Directive; Effort Sharing Regulation; Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Regulation; Energy Efficiency Directive; and Renewable Energy Directive.
 - Carbon border adjustment mechanism for selected sectors.
 - Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive.
 - More robust air pollutant emissions standards for combustion-engine vehicles and a revision of CO2 emission performance standards for cars and vans.
- 2- GD's Strategies and Action Plans are constituted of the following elements:
 - Plan to increase the EU 2030 climate target to at least 50% and towards 55%.
 - New EU strategies on adaptation and forestry.
 - Action Plans on the circular economy and zero pollution for air, water and soil.

- EU strategies on industry, chemicals, offshore wind, sustainable and smart mobility, 'Farm to-Fork', and biodiversity

- 3- Finally, there are some few non legally binding initiatives that the EU GD aim at deploying in various fields such as: The Just Transition Mechanism and the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan; the Launch of the European Climate Pact, etc.

To summarize, the EU Green deal will be for the next decades a reference policy framework for all member states to achieve their sustainable development leading to a totally decarbonized economy.

But from a non-European perspective, we believe it is of high importance to ask ourselves how this deal is perceived by other countries such as those in the Middle Eastern and North African ones. What effects and aspects does such a deal have for Europe's southern neighboring countries? We will attempt to answer some of these questions through a critical author review and, as indicated, by unpacking results from a short survey conducted during two weeks, among non-governmental experts from within the region.

2- CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE 2030 CLIMATE TARGET PLAN

In September 2020, in a communication from the European commission to the European parliament and other EU governing bodies, the commission established a road map for stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition¹¹. The objectives stated for the Europe GD were: "to set a more ambitious and cost-effective path to achieving climate neutrality by 2050, boost the creation of green jobs and continue EU's trajectory for cutting greenhouse gas emissions without exacerbating its economy, and finally, put in harmony international partners with the Paris Agreement's long term global temperature objective of well below 2°C by increasing their respective mitigation ambition to avoid the most severe consequences of climate change". However, what concrete actions did the Green Deal took to encourage international partners such as MENA countries to increase their climate ambition and increase their climate resilience? Did the Green Deal consider climate priorities of those countries? MENA countries' climate vulnerabilities are mainly water scarcity, land degradation leading to a decrease in agricultural yields and thus food insecurity, and last but not least the lack of fulfilling good disaster risk reduction policies. Did the Green Deal tackle these issues? This is what we would like to find out through this paper in which we will attempt to share some insights from within this region.

According to a recent study conducted by the Union for the Mediterranean “UfM”, a large part of MENA countries experienced in the last few years serious difficulties to access climate finance¹². Turkey, Egypt, and Morocco were the top 3 recipients of climate finance, comprising 75% of total commitments (USD 6 out of 8.3 billion). The lowest commitments were identified for Syria and Libya, but also Algeria (totaling more than USD 40 million). Most of this finance was oriented towards transport and storage (most specifically, the rail sector), energy generation (using renewable energy resources), and water and sanitation. This funding targeted predominantly mitigation (transport and energy generation), whilst adaptation activities were the weakest link with less investments (the focus being agriculture, water and energy generation). In terms of adaptation projects, the major funders were Germany, the EU and the Green Climate Fund “GCF”¹³. This confirms that preparing bankable projects that inevitably contain climate adaptation components is quite difficult to receive eligibility, especially from the GCF. Even if the projects are eligible, the overwhelming process that MENA countries need to follow in order to see some funds coming push them to step back and seek some other sources of climate funding with easier access. In this regard, we would like to raise the attention of the EU GD decision makers of the “double opportunity” for the GD’s Climate Target Plan to be successfully deployed by filling the funding gaps MENA countries are facing, and engage with those countries in projects of mutual benefit. This could be achieved by slightly downscaling eligibility criteria so those joint projects can boost EU’s Climate Action on a win-win basis.

3- CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE 6 KEY ACTIONS OF EU’s CLIMATE AMBITION COMPONENT

The six key actions to be deployed within the new EU Green Deal are⁶:

- 1- A European ‘Climate Law’ adopted in March 2020 aiming at putting EU countries on track towards the 2050 climate neutrality objective
- 2- A plan to increase the EU 2030 climate target to at least 50% and towards 55% in a responsible way by October 2020
- 3- Review and revise where needed all relevant legislative measures to deliver on the increased climate ambition by June 2021
- 4- A revision proposal of the Energy Taxation Directive by June 2021
- 5- A carbon border adjustment mechanism to be applied by June 2021 for some selected sectors
- 6- The establishment of a new Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change in (2020/2021)

It is clear that the 6 components of EU's GD climate ambition are coherent and well-articulated. If implemented partially towards the southern neighborhood these elements could unlock the abundant and cheap renewable energy potential in the MENA region. Obviously, large transfer and use of this energy will enhance and accelerate EU's climate neutrality objective. However, we flag that the main fear that could be felt in MENA countries would still come from two elements:

- 1- The proposal for a carbon border tax. Officials at the commission consider that as Europe increases its climate ambitions, the rest of the world should follow! In case non-European countries do not comply, Europe will certainly use severe customs measures to protect its industry against competition⁶.
- 2- The remaining ambiguity in terms of how the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change can integrate some of the adaptation priorities in the MENA countries. Basically, we think the 5th and 6th elements of the climate plan could be a concern for the southern countries once projects start to be implemented.

For the particular point about adaptation, and as a reminder, article 7 of the 2015 Paris Agreement¹⁴ promotes climate change adaptation as one of its key goals by enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development. In its aim to achieve a global response to climate change to protect people, livelihoods and ecosystems, the agreement takes into account the needs of developing countries, which are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change³. On the light of this multilateral statement, we are keen to see how the announced new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change is aligned with the PA Global Goal on Adaptation "GGA" (Art. 7.1)¹⁴ which principal objectives are: **Enhancing** adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal referred to in Article 2 of the Paris Agreement⁴.

4- SHORT SURVEY AMONG SOME EXPERTS FROM MENA COUNTRIES

As stated earlier, in this paper, we have attempted to reach out to some non-governmental experts from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Mauritania to answer the following questions:

- How is the GD perceived in your country?

- Is there anything that could be changed to improve it?
- How could the GD be more beneficial for your country?

The short survey was conducted during two weeks from January 4 to January 18, 2021. Some of the experts said they had no information about this new EU program, and some others apologized for not being able to respond due to the lockdown situation in their country. In the Annex, we present the full responses of the experts that managed to share with us what they know so far about this program and we would like to thank them for taking the time to do so during the pandemic difficult times.

5- SURVEY ANALYSIS

As a general impression, from our short survey, it appears that in some cases MENA countries respondents either lack information about the program, lack visibility in terms of how this new GD will reach out to their respective countries, or even tend to confuse the GD with the with the European research and innovation program “Horizon 2020”. Most of the respondents do not know how it will be implemented and how they could benefit from it. *We would like to raise the attention that due to the actual socio-political-sanitary situation in Lebanon, inducing some understandable frustration among colleague experts, we had difficulties to collect accurate responses related to perception of the EU GD (see comments in the above table).*

This being said, we have attempted to synthesize the survey responses by trying to elaborate further more on the following interrogations:

- Are the identified scope and the pathways appropriate based on MENA countries national circumstances?
- What are the gaps and other aspects that need to be included?
- Are there any aspects in the EU Green Deal that may disadvantage MENA countries?
- Does the EU Green Deal elaborate on how Water and Agriculture issues are going to be supported and how does it address synergies between energy, water, and food security sectors?

The outcomes of this analysis are as follow *(All respondent names are in the acknowledgments)*:

How is the GD perceived in your country?

The responses show that most respondents are keen to see their respective countries engage in post-covid19 relief projects. Although this sample is not representative of official countries positions and thus we do not intend to generalyz, but according to respondents answers, the EU GD is perceived as a great opportunity to establish partnerships and strengthen cooperation between MENA and the EU via implementation of mega projects to produce renewable energy, and transfer of new technologies that can put national and local industries on a sustainable development trajectory.

Algeria respondents think the GD will have financial implications on national budgets, but represents an opportunity for Algeria in the implementation of the National Climate Plan and its roadmap for the circular economy. On the other hand, Algerian respondent considers as a necessity to reduce its dependence on hydrocarbons, both for its exports and for its own consumption, but considers that in the future the natural gas exportation to Europe will increase because this energy form constitutes an essential instrument towards energetic transition. Algerian respondent state that her country represents an enormous potential of renewable energies and an important source close to Europe, especially in solar energy and thus can play a role in the European energy transition.

Respondent from other countries, such as Morocco, see that the new 2030 target set by the EU is quite ambitious and would be difficult for MENA countries to honor unless an ambitious cooperation in renewable energy between EU and Morocco is put as a priority. This should be based on solar, wind but also Green Hydrogen. Tunisian respondent, considers that as a privileged partner of the EU and as a country associated with the Horizon 2020 program, Her country is willing to integrate the EU GD into its new national growth strategy. For Tunisia this would allow the country to reduce pollution, to better adapt to climate change, while creating jobs and therefore wealth. Jordanian respondent considers the Green Deal as an opportunity to build back better in a sustainable manner. As it is the case with all countries Jordan's already suffering economy was badly affected by COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown conditions. Accordingly, the GD is looked at as an opportunity and a good plan to make the recovery of Jordan's economy as sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible. For Egyptian respondent, it is perceived as a great opportunity to establish partnerships and strengthen cooperation between Egypt and the EU via implementation of mega projects to generate renewable energy, adaptation of new technologies, and apply circular economy for different industries in Egypt. For the Mauritanian respondent, the GD is seen as just a European pact aimed at reducing the EU's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to at least 50%. Finally, for the Palestinian respondent the EU leadership in responding to climate change challenges will be a catalyzer for other countries to act.

Is there anything that could be changed to improve it?

The Algerian respondent thinks that bilateral cooperation between Algeria and EU member's countries cannot be reduced to trade. It should be extended to investments and technology transfer for the development of national capacities. For Egyptian respondent, GD should include capacity building in terms of introduction to new technologies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change and should boost social inclusion and awareness. For Jordanian respondent, although they claim not having detailed information about the new EU GD, they suggest to focus on small and medium scale programs will result in positive impacts (such as empowering SMEs in agriculture, business and industry). Mauritania respondent suggests that enforcing cooperation among Maghreb countries around structuring projects would be an added value for the GD. Morocco respondent stress the need for GD to embark in a strong and communication awareness raising campaign to present its objectives and components through webinars, seminars, along with initiating discussions between EU and MENA stakeholders/experts. Moroccan respondent also suggest that climate change adaptation must be mainstreamed into GD climate components to achieve coherence and synergies, and to avoid counter-productive actions. Palestinian respondent hopes that no one should be left behind when it comes to the implementation of the GD outside EU borders.

Finally, Moroccan respondent would like to see Non-State-Actors such as municipalities, universities, research centers, and local NGO's involved in the deployment of the GD. They are key implementing players to help decrease the emissions gap necessary to reach the Paris Agreement Temperature goal along with the needed concrete territorial actions to reach the Global Goal on Adaptation.

How could the GD be more beneficial for your country?

For Algerian respondent, the Green Deal should help restore our natural environment by stopping climate change, protect country's flora and fauna by ending biodiversity loss and pollution, and create new economic opportunities and improve citizens' quality of life.

For Egyptian respondent, GD could be beneficial by conducting cooperation and implementation of shared projects between the EU and Egypt to have a win-win long-term agreement to lower carbon footprint via generation of renewable energy, managing resources, water desalination, etc. For instance, both EU and Egypt can benefit from available desert lands that have high potential for solar energy systems, and upon agreement, part of this energy can be transmitted to the EU. In such project, both Egypt and EU can benefit from a sustainable source of renewable energy replacing fossil fuels and enable EU to achieve their carbon emissions goals by 2030. The Jordanian Royal Scientific Society claims that for the GD to fully benefit the country, it

should be more focused on improving the livelihoods of people at the local level, focus on poverty alleviation and employment, improving the overall living conditions in health and environment, along with priority sectors such as Agriculture (small and medium farm holds), and public transportation. The Tunisian respondent would like the GD to ensure GDP growth and stimulate a dynamic of economic recovery, to create research and employment as well as to put in place a strategy to respond to societal challenges. On the other hand, she expects this Green Deal to help investments in cutting-edge research and innovation (especially waste management; renewable energies), and help elaborate bankable projects that will compete for funds. For Tunisia respondent, the GD could be beneficial for the MENA region by coping with most known climate disasters, and favorizing innovative adaptive strategies for the various impacted sectors. For Moroccan respondent, the legislative aspects of the GD could be of interest for the MENA countries to endorse similar ones in order to align to the GD objectives. This could only facilitate the cooperation, trade and the exportation/importation and perhaps open a window for a free Trade Agreements between the EU and the MENA countries, in particular in relation with products like cars and manufacturing, and sustainable mobility. This geopolitical engagement, will certainly help MENA countries achieve their SDGs in particular SDG6, 7 and 13, tailor innovative solutions to prevent and manage natural disasters, and achieve their respective national energy transition targets. On the other hand, Morocco thinks although MENA countries are not big Green House Gaz emitters, some of them are on track to reach the PA 1.5°C target by means of developing large scale renewable energy plants. Morocco is a good example in the MENA region with ambitious mitigation target that makes it the second country at the global level on its way to achieve 1.5°C Paris Agreement temperature target. For Mauritania, GD should manage to support Mauritania's rural drinking water supply projects using photovoltaic pumping. This will help rural economies affected by COVID-19 pandemic and preserve fragile ecosystems. For Palestine the New EU GD must leverage developing countries efforts in implementing their ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions, which most of them are conditioned by external funding when it comes to technology transfer and capacity Building projects.

6- SWOT ANALYSIS OF EU GD VIS-À-VIS MENA COUNTRIES

From the outcomes of the conducted survey, along with a deep analysis of the various facets of the EU Green Deal, we present here our point of view on the climate component of this framework from a pure MENA perspective in a SWOT format. The results are summarized in the following table:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU GD's 2050 Climate neutrality ambition is a real asset for MENA countries. - Renewable Energies are put as first priority in both shores. Example: the EU and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) have launched recently the North Africa green finance initiative to increase support for renewables and other green investments in Egypt, and Morocco¹⁶. - The existing European Neighborhood Policy "ENP"¹⁷ is an excellent vehicle for channeling projects towards the 8 eligible countries that constitute most of MENA countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate Adaptation aspects that should feed the Global Goal on Adaptation (Art. 7.1 of the Paris Agreement) are still not well emphasized within the GD package. - Lack of consideration for water, energy, food security NEXUS approach in projects' design with the MENA countries. - Nearly no prior consultation with MENA countries in the GD preparation process.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU GD can accelerate climate legislation and climate neutrality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposal for a carbon border adjustment mechanism might negatively

<p>strategies and policies implementation within MENA countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU GD can help fill the climate finance gaps MENA countries are facing. - The EU GD opens a window of opportunities with MENA countries for the development and trading of Renewable Energies - The promising future of Green Hydrogen production that Morocco can offer to the EU will be able to boost EU's 2050 climate neutrality within the energy mix. 	<p>impact selected export sectors in some MENA countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The uncertain global post COVID-19 situation can slow down implementation in MENA countries - It is still unclear whether the financial allocation for the GD will be sufficient to cover also extra-EU projects implementation.
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7- POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the general impression among our MENA country survey participants is that the GD has been conceived unilaterally without incorporating external “parameters” and without prior consultation with southern partners, which is understandable to a certain extent, we still believe there are key essential elements the EU GD should consider in terms of cooperative engagement with the MENA countries. They are as follow:

- 1- Cooperative projects with MENA countries should ensure outcomes are aligned with the Paris Agreement, the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. As stressed in the 2015 Paris Agreement⁴, multilateral cooperation must assess actual and future projects toward their implication on the global warming. Sustainable development and disaster risk reduction policies must work in synergy. On the other hand,

EU Green Deal should also create synergies between the three UN frameworks to create the needed environment for a long-term Carbon free economy leading to the well-being of Europe and the MENA region.

- 2-** EU GD Climate Component should consider incorporating Paris Agreement's Global Goal on Adaptation "GGA" within its new Adaptation Strategy and thus allocate some EU funding in this direction. We believe this should provide a sort of incentive to MENA countries and provide a new starting point for assessing progress on adaptation in these highly vulnerable southern regions and ensure an adequate adaptation response in the context of the ENP framework. Presumably, this is to be achieved through implementation of MENA Countries National Determined Contributions "NDCs" and National Adaptation Plan "NAPs".
- 3-** EU GD Climate Component should ensure synergies between adaptation and mitigation (PA Art. 2.1(b))⁴. Indeed, addressing climate change challenges from only one angle (adaptation or mitigation) can cause imbalance and one could undermine the other. It is on that basis that the PA took a holistic approach of increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and foster climate resilience and low emissions development, in a manner that preserves food security in the developing countries.
- 4-** Cooperative projects with MENA countries should not be limited to solely north/south renewable energy development and transfer but foster also the Water-Energy-Food security Nexus approach by ensuring mitigation-adaptation synergies
- 5-** Mainstreaming 2050 climate neutrality into relevant national policies, programs and strategies is still a challenge for many MENA countries. This offers an opportunity for the EU to engage in diplomatic bilateral discussions via its national representations by providing the needed expertise to speed-up the finalization of their Low Emission Development Strategies "LEDS".
- 6-** EU GD should consider engaging with MENA countries in large-scale deployment of Climate Smart Agriculture "CSA" and promoting resilient agriculture, so mitigation and food security are both addressed simultaneously. Moreover, CSA projects should be accompanied by Early Warning Systems (EWSs) as they are extremely important in the efforts to manage impacts of land degradation. They are effective systems for understanding, monitoring and forecasting drought and land degradation as well as strategic approach for identifying and prioritizing appropriate responses, and evaluating the impact of the GD climate interventions.
- 7-** The conventional wind and solar energy are quite important either for the EU and the MENA countries, however, the EU is counting also on hydrogen to achieve its ambitious climate goals. We think, the promising future of Green Hydrogen production that Morocco can offer to the EU

will be able to boost EU's 2050 climate neutrality within the energy mix. In this regard, we suggest that the EU broaden the geographical scope for the development of this technology within the MENA region.

- 8- EU GD should favor replication of successful Renewable Energy projects in other MENA countries where there are potential resources for wind /solar energy.

A fact supporting our last recommendation is an article published in *ReNews* in June 2020¹⁸. The paper indicated that the EU committed 61.3 m Euros in grants to support 3 EBRD programs to help businesses in markets such as Morocco and Egypt to develop projects in energy efficiency which will help cut their emissions. This will help introduce green technologies, as well as improve legal frameworks of these countries in aspects related to clean energy investments.

On the other hand, and beside the fact that Morocco being considered one of the 3 world's proponent Hydrogen producers, a study conducted by Van Son and Isenburg in 2019¹⁹, showed that Jordan, and other countries in the region could potentially become major green hydrogen exporting countries.

8- CONCLUSION

As the saying goes "*the devil is in the details*". This is what we have attempted to explore through this modest review. Although complete information is still not available as the strategy's details are still being tailored in Brussels, our exercise here was very constructive as it has allowed us to explore and imagine what is hidden in between the lines of the various components of this new Deal. this review also helped us to assess the level of awareness and perception of experts from within the MENA region.

Another objective was to explore which policy and technical key elements of the EU Green Deal are able to bring change and induce a successful energy transition in both shores of the Mediterranean. The SWOT analysis presented in this paper was very instructive as it highlighted some worth seizing opportunities. For example, the EU GD can accelerate the implementation of climate legislations and climate neutrality strategies and policies within MENA countries provided it helps fill the climate finance gaps MENA countries are facing by allocating EU support to do so. The Green Deal could then open a window of opportunities with MENA countries for the development and trading of Renewable Energies.

On another aspect, the promising future of Green Hydrogen production that Morocco can offer to the EU will be able to boost EU's 2050 climate neutrality within the energy mix.

To summarize, these are some policy niches the EU should consider starting 2022:

- Deploying win-win renewable energy projects based on a Water-Energy-Food Security Nexus approach
- Accelerating Green Hydrogen Energy development with MENA countries starting by the most advanced one, Morocco, then spread out the approach with other countries
- Favor mitigation-adaptation synergies in projects development with the MENA region
- Allocate sufficient funding to collaborative projects based on Integrated water management and Climate Smart Agriculture. Focusing on the development of non-conventional water resources will be a must.
- Some specific and territorial projects should be inclusive and involve non-state-actors such as municipalities, universities and civil society organizations. The role of those actors has been well encouraged and became even part of the UNFCCC process at COP22 in Marrakech as the "Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action"²⁰.

MENA governments need to improve their institutional capacities, line ministries coordination, foster transparent reporting and verification, and invest in societal behavior change in order to be a good receptacle for EU GD support. The extent of the challenges are quite important and will vary from one country to the other. This is, in our opinion, a serious pre-requisite for the EU Green Deal to deliver the needed support for those countries.

Finally, we believe the unprecedented global crisis due to COVID-19 should offer a unique opportunity to accelerate MENA-EU collaboration toward a more climate-neutral development by working hand in hand through investment in the necessary policies and technologies that ensure global good health and welfare for all. We hope the Next Generation EU recovery plan can keep these elements in its radar! Global climate challenges will continue to hit us even stronger than COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we need to foster more north-south cooperation to find common solutions.

ANNEX

Raw Survey results (Sic)

Country	How the GD is perceived in your country?	Is there anything that could be changed to improve it?	How could the GD be more beneficial for your country?
Algeria	<p><u>Sarra Bensari :</u></p> <p>Today climate change does not affect the citizens of Europe, or Asia, or others. However, it is all the citizens of the world who are affected by this climate change.</p> <p>Hence to act in this direction becomes an emergency and a business of all states of the world.</p> <p>The Green Deal is a very ambitious project, but it is proving to be very complicated not only for Europe but also for African countries.</p> <p>It is a long and complex process, and when it comes to developing</p>	<p><u>Sanna Abdessemed:</u></p> <p>Bilateral cooperation between Algeria and EU members countries cannot be reduced to trade. It should reduce the unsustainable asymmetry that characterizes the exchanges between the two parties and extended to investments and technology transfer for the development of national capacities. It is necessary to give priority to horizontal (inter-sectorial) programs with the option of budgetary support, through a quality and substantial European contribution, likely to strengthen national institutional</p>	<p><u>Sarra Bensari :</u></p> <p>We need support and leadership in order to find economic alternatives, especially for countries dependent on coal. Help create green industrial policies and texts more suited to our countries, which will put the green deal on track, transition agencies, think about creating transition pensions, access to energy-efficient and ecological housing, professional conversion, rethinking public and private sector aid.</p>

	<p>countries, the journey is possible but long because the stakes are high. Especially for the Maghreb countries, where the transition to a green economy and energy seems to be very delayed because of several and multitudes of factors.</p> <p>The goodwill and the awareness of the ecological emergency today, it is there! Everyone is aware of the transition and climate change, but we have no action or plan for financing and the economy to really respond to this emergency.</p> <p>The European Green Deal is a major plan to fight against climate change, it is a complex system, its components of which are interrelated and interdependent on each other, it is a transversal plan in which all sectors are affected.</p>	<p>and human capacities and support for the diversification of the national economy.</p>	
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	<p>and concerned, It requires rethinking the entire Strategy for this ecological transition, hence the real question is:</p> <p>Do the countries of Africa have the means to finance this green deal without going into debt!</p> <p><u>Sanna Abdessemed:</u></p> <p>The EU GD represents an opportunity for Algeria in the implementation of the National Climate Plan and its roadmap for the circular economy.</p> <p>Also, the necessity to reduce Algeria's dependence on hydrocarbons, both for its exports and for its own consumption, as an economic necessity.</p> <p>Complementary, because in the future the natural gas exportation to Europe will increase for the</p>		
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	<p>reason that natural gas constitutes an essential instrument towards energetic transition.</p> <p>Algeria represents an enormous potential of renewable energies and an important source close to Europe, especially in solar energy. Algeria can play a role in the European energy transition.</p>		
Egypt	<p><u>Ghada Amine:</u></p> <p>It is perceived as a great opportunity to establish partnerships and strengthen cooperation between Egypt and the EU via implementation of mega projects to generate renewable energy, adaptation of new technologies to apply circular economy for different industries in Egypt.</p>	<p><u>Ghada Amine:</u></p> <p>Building capacities in terms of introduction to new technologies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change and boost social inclusion and awareness.</p>	<p><u>Ghada Amine:</u></p> <p>Via conducting cooperation and implementation of shared projects between the EU and Egypt to have a win-win long-term agreement to lower carbon footprint via generation of renewable energy, managing resources, water desalination, etc. For instance, both EU and Egypt can benefit from availability of available desert lands that have high potential of installation of solar energy systems, and upon agreement, part of this energy can be transmitted to the EU. In such project, both</p>

			Egypt and EU can benefit from a sustainable source of renewable energy replacing fossil fuels and enable EU to achieve their carbon emissions goals by 2030.
Jordan	<p><u>Royal Scientific Society:</u></p> <p>Jordan considers the Green Deal an opportunity to build back better in a sustainable manner. As it is the case with all countries our already suffering economy was badly affected by COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown conditions, accordingly the GD is looked at as an opportunity and a good plan to make the recovery of Jordan's economy as sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible.</p>	<p><u>Royal Scientific Society:</u></p> <p>I don't have detailed information about the GD, but I would imagine focusing on small and medium scale programs will result in positive impacts (such as empowering SMEs in agriculture, business and industry).</p>	<p><u>Royal Scientific Society :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being more focused on improving the livelihoods of people at the local level. - Focus on poverty alleviation and employment. - Improving the overall living conditions (health and environment, green spaces - Priority sectors to focus on: Agriculture (small and medium farm holds), health sector readiness and public transportation.

			<p><u>Nuwar Tareq El Husseini</u></p> <p>The Green Deal will be a catalyst and a plan that will put Jordan on an accelerated path to decarbonization . It will expand markets for renewable energy i.e, it will aid in providing an improved and more affordable delivery of energy and lead to faster technology improvement that could increase productivity and private opportunities, while some projects on energy resilience could offer Jordanians and Syrians training and job opportunities. Jordan is exceptional in having national plans for response and resilience to channel aid and funding towards managing the socio-economic and environmental pressures associated with the presence of large numbers of refugees, and improving the lives of both refugees and Jordanians. According to a technical note published in December 2009 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs¹⁵ “The result will be a “virtuous</p>
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			<p>cycle” of expansion, learning, and cost reduction.</p> <p>Jordan expects that the Green Deal will include low interest loans, and this will help in the development of many sectors as grid expansion, financial assistance for capacity building and institutional development, technical assistance, and subsidized access to technological information”. In addition to this the GD will raise awareness of Private sector, CBOs, NGOs, on green projects and available local & international funds and incentives.</p> <p>The green deal will be like a commitment to the green transition that will unleash an enormous burst of innovative energy. The Green Deal will create a network of innovation centers on both a local and a regional level and this will contribute to better cooperation among countries in the region helping in the recovery of economies and improving the living standards and livelihoods. There will be</p>
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			<p>tens of billions of euros to make homes more energy efficient, to decarbonize electricity and phase out petrol and diesel vehicles.</p> <p>Moreover, and looking at its contribution to the business sector the GD will be an engine that will drive entrepreneurship through inspiring new innovative and sustainable business models this will create an opportunity for businesses to differentiate and capture new markets and help companies become world leaders in clean products and technologies and eventually accelerate a global transition to a clean energy future. The next Climate Conference COP26 in Glasgow was the last chance for Parties to the convention to show concrete commitment towards a carbon free transition.</p> <p>The world is now preparing for a hugely important follow-up climate summit, COP26, in Glasgow in November 2021. Scientists warn that the world has only</p>
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			about a decade to embrace a green transition.
Lebanon	<p><u>Vera Noon</u></p> <p>Energy and transport in Lebanon sectors remain problematic ever since the Civil War ended: With the energy sector highly reliant on informal diesel engines to complement the partial provision of electricity by the national infrastructure, and with a very weak public transport system leading to a major reliance on private passenger cars, the National Determined Contribution (NDC) intention to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions by 15% in 2030 is highly ambitious. Under the current financial, economic, political and sanitary crisis the country is drowning in, solving these two major issues seems quite far-fetched, let alone</p>	<p><u>Vera Noon</u></p> <p>In the current dramatic situation, the country is going through, this calls for international support as national funds are scarce. The remaining actions that can be taken such as raising awareness and investing in environmental reporting can help raise the issue for the public's eye. However key actions remain in the hands of the – unborn – government.</p>	<p><u>Vera Noon</u></p> <p>First of all, through channeling investments in human and economic capital, as well as research and development. This first step can help set the baseline for what is needed to be done.</p> <p>Indirectly, the GD can help raise the issue of Climate Change and hence prioritize the environment whilst aiming high to reduce increasing pollution levels, mainly in the densely populated capital city Beirut.</p> <p>The GD can promote adaptation/mitigation measures that can help enhance the urban resident's quality of life (greening the city, environmental remediation, restoration of rivers and wetlands) which in return can stimulate O₂ production and CO₂ sequestration.</p> <p>Promoting sustainable mobility such as walking, cycling and carpooling can</p>

	<p>meeting the 40-50% target set by the EU.</p> <p>That being said, and to answer the question, the Green Deal is currently far from being a national priority. The Green Deal is currently far from being a national priority!</p>		<p>contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions stemming from the transport sector.</p> <p>Promoting renewables (mainly solar power, and exploring wind energy production especially in the North) can also help reducing the demand on traditional polluting fuel-based energy production.</p> <p>The Lebanese experience in building hydroelectric dams has proved to be a failure (both on an environmental level and on a production level), and has led to the – fortunate – withdrawal of World Bank funds from the creation of another environmentally destructive dam (Dam of Bisri). For this reason, my personal view is to promote less destructive energy sources, perhaps explore tidal/wave energy from the sea even! Individual initiatives can be promoted since political deadlock is going to take a while to be solved.</p>
Mauritania	Saadoun Beih:	Saadoun Beih:	Saadoun Beih:

	The GD is seen as a European pact aimed at reducing the EU's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to at least 50%	Cooperation with the countries of North Africa and the Maghreb could constitute an added value to GD through the implementation of structuring projects.	The financing of rural drinking water supply projects using photovoltaic pumping is a national priority to support rural economies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and to preserve fragile ecosystems
Morocco	<p><u>Jaouad El Kharaz:</u></p> <p>The new target set by the EU 2030 climate action is quite ambitious and would be difficult for the MENA countries to stick to it.</p> <p><u>Charafat Afilal :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foster multi country projects with focus on both sub-regional similarities, and energy water agriculture - EU Green Deal should devote part of its southern neighborhood climate 	<p><u>Jaouad El Kharaz:</u></p> <p>To get a perception of the EU green deal and its climate target plan in the MENA countries, that needs a good awareness campaign to present it through: webinars, seminars, discussions between EU and MENA stakeholders/experts.</p> <p><u>Charafat Afilal:</u></p> <p>Climate change adaptation must be mainstreamed into existing policies to achieve coherence</p>	<p><u>Jaouad El Kharaz:</u></p> <p>The tools to be used by the EU to commit to the GD and its 2030 climate target would be useful for MENA countries. In addition, the legislative aspects could be of interest for the MENA countries to endorse similar ones, and the alignment to the GD objectives could only boost the cooperation, trade and the exportation/importation or the free Trade Agreements between the EU and the MENA countries, in particular in relation with products like cars and manufacturing, etc. It will also help the MENA countries achieve its SDGs in particular SDG6, 7 and 13, and also help them achieve their national energy transition targets (the shifting to</p>

	<p>policy toward enforcing resilience of populations, sectors and policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Green Deal should build capacities of MENA countries to put in place MRV systems (example of Morocco) - A perfect vehicle for enforcing cooperation in renewable energy between EU and Morocco. This cooperation should be put as a priority and should be based on solar, wind but also green hydrogen. <p><u>Soumaya Graine:</u></p> <p>From a personal perspective the deal has been widely praised from my network globally (not merely in</p>	<p>and synergies, and to avoid counter-productive actions.</p> <p><u>Dounia Bouchta:</u></p> <p>Involve Non-State-Actors such as municipalities, universities, research centers, and local NGO's in the deployment of the GD. They are key implementing players to help decrease the emissions gap necessary to reach the Paris agreement Temperature goal along with the needed concrete territorial actions to reach the Global Goal on Adaptation.</p>	<p>renewables or the increase of renewables in the energy mix). The economic and legal instruments used by the EU GD will be also of great relevance to the MENA countries.</p> <p>I believe the GD could be beneficial to the national policies in the MENA countries where some aspects could be adopted or rather adapted to the local conditions</p> <p><u>Dounia Bouchta:</u></p> <p>Although MENA countries are not big Green House Gaz emitters, some of them are on track to reach the PA 1.5°C target by means of developing large scale renewable energy plants. Morocco is one good example in the MENA region with ambitious mitigation target that makes him second country at the global level on his way to achieve 1.5°C Paris agreement temperature target.</p>
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	<p>the MENA region) because of two main aspects:</p> <p>1) it will help stimulate the economy post COVID-19 in a variety of ways, including large investments in renewable projects and new technologies (including ones that would make green hydrogen projects more scalable), capacity building of the workforce to develop the skill set required for a climate neutral continent and job creation</p> <p>2) it will showcase the way for other parts of the world including the MENA region and inspire them, collaborate with them to do the same and succeed in the energy transition (including monetary support of local industries to innovate and to be decarbonized, roll out of cleaner</p>		<p><u>Charafat Afilal:</u></p> <p>Seek innovative solutions to prevent and manage natural disasters.</p> <p>Promote resilient agriculture</p> <p>Promote public transport and sustainable mobility.</p>
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	<p>forms of transport, knowledge transfer and know-how).</p> <p>Given that the EU is the most important trading partner of Morocco, the 100 billion stimuli will definitely have an impact if Morocco is ready to seize the countless opportunities that could be created through it (supply cheap energy to Europe or manufacture parts needed for energy projects, such as panels, fuel cells...etc.).</p>		
Palestine	<p><u>Nedal Katbeh-Bader</u></p> <p>This is very welcomed by our country since it shows EU leadership in efficient response to climate change challenges.</p>	<p><u>Nedal Katbeh-Bader</u></p> <p>Yes, indeed it should go beyond EU borders aiming at supporting developing countries efforts in tackling climate change challenges. NO ONE should be left behind must be applicable for all people out of the EU region.</p>	<p><u>Nedal Katbeh-Bader</u></p> <p>It should be extended and spreading out of EU region to target at least the neighboring countries. It must leverage developing countries efforts in implementing their ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions, which most of it is conditional to receive needed means for</p>

			implementation, Technology, Capacity Building and Finance.
Tunisia	<p><u>Tasnime mansouri:</u></p> <p>Tunisia, as a privileged partner of the EU and as a country associated with the Horizon 2020 program, took advantage of this European green pact to integrate it into its new national growth strategy. This would allow us to reduce pollution, to better adapt to climate change while creating jobs and therefore wealth. This European pact therefore commits Tunisia, both directly and indirectly, since it underlines the importance of international cooperation, in particular with North Africa. Moreover, we hope that it will take the scope of a Euro-Afro-Mediterranean pact or even that of a global pact, in the context of the Paris agreements</p>		<p><u>Imene Fatnasi:</u></p> <p>For Tunisia, the Green Deal is above all a mean to reduce pollution and recover waste. Tunisia, for example, in sustainable and smart mobility</p> <p>Low-carbon innovation and the reuse of biomass will act as a stimulus for the development of the bioeconomy in North Africa and as a substitute for products from the petroleum industry.</p> <p>Tunisia proposes projects using IT to manage water.</p> <p>Project to fight climate disasters</p> <p>Innovative adaptive strategies for water management, floods, desertification, land degradation, droughts, emergence of new diseases, sea level rise.</p>

	as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.		<p>The use of space technologies and ITs for alerting, monitoring and managing risks in its territories.</p> <p>On the Tunisian level, we expect this Green Deal to provide us with a new growth strategy, allowing us to create jobs, invest in cutting-edge research and innovation (in particular waste management; renewable energies)</p> <p>Creation of a committee within the MENA region made up of scientists and NGO representatives in order to assess the extent to which our countries have respected their commitments (on the basis of the information provided by our countries to the United Nations Framework Convention United Nations on Climate Change).</p> <p><u>Tasnime Mansouri:</u></p> <p>Tunisia's objectives in this regard are to ensure GDP growth and stimulate a</p>
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			dynamic of economic recovery, to create research and employment as well as to put in place a strategy to respond to societal challenges. The most significant impact could be the creation of a deeper pipeline of projects that are competing for funds.
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