Final Evaluation MAJALAT 390-881
SIEA-2018-3671 Version 1

EuropeAid/138778/DH/SER/Multi
Lot 3 – Human Rights, Democracy and Peace

Final report

Client: European Union, on behalf of beneficiary countries

ECORYS Consortium

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Rotterdam, 11-02-2022
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# List of acronyms and abbreviations

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANND</td>
<td>Arab NGO network for development</td>
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<td>ATUC</td>
<td>Arab trade union confederation</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil society organisations</td>
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<td>CSF</td>
<td>Civil Society Facility</td>
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<td>CSP</td>
<td>Country Strategy Paper</td>
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<td>DG</td>
<td>Directorate General</td>
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<td>EEAS</td>
<td>European External Action Service</td>
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<td>ENP</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood Policy</td>
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<td>ENPI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood policy instrument</td>
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<td>EP</td>
<td>European Parliament</td>
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<td>Eqs</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European commission</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European union</td>
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<td>EUds</td>
<td>European union delegations</td>
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<td>FMAS</td>
<td>The Forum for Alternatives, Morocco</td>
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<td>FPAs</td>
<td>Framework partnership agreements</td>
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<td>IISG</td>
<td>Inter-Institutional Service Group</td>
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<td>IL</td>
<td>Intervention logic</td>
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<td>IP</td>
<td>Implementing Partner</td>
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<td>Majalat</td>
<td>South Neighbourhood Civil Society Enhancing Dialogue Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and Northern Africa region</td>
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<td>MFF</td>
<td>Multiannual Financial Framework</td>
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<td>NDICI</td>
<td>Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisations</td>
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<td>NS</td>
<td>Neighbourhood south</td>
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<tr>
<td>REF</td>
<td>Réseau euromed France</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Structured dialogue</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
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Executive summary

Different cycles of structured dialogue have taken place between the EC/EU and the civil society since the start of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (1995) with varying levels of political clout and impact. The 2011-2015 process was particularly intense following the Arab Spring and the next upgrade of EU engagement strategies with civil society. In 2016, it was decided to delegate responsibilities for organizing and facilitating the dialogue to the civil society from the region. The resulting Majalat program assumed that the shift from a largely EU controlled process to a bottom-up approach would enhance ownership, impact and sustainability.

Five years later, the independent evaluation of Majalat is quite sobering. The decentralized approach created more space for civil society to elaborate its agendas, involve more associations, enhance networking and generate qualitative exchanges with the EU. However, overall implementation was hampered by weak political foundations (on both sides) and inadequate institutional arrangements.

The Majalat building had weak pillars as the EU did not (I) adequately incorporate lessons learned in past dialogues; (II) properly integrate changed political economy dynamics in the region, including the shrinking space for civil society in most countries; (iii) define more precisely what political results the various EU institutional actors wanted to get out of this dialogue and hence weakened the ‘buy-in’ of crucial political players; (iv) explore potential, mutually beneficial linkages between ‘regional’ and ‘national’ processes of dialogue (driven by EU Delegations); (v) clarify what role it wanted to play in a decentralized system of managing the dialogue; and (vi) specify the added value of the Majalat process compared to other existing dialogue initiatives at the regional or national level.

On the other hand, the consortium approach also had structural weaknesses and far too complex internal management systems to allow for optimal effectiveness in delivering on its mandate. The overall impact of Majalat was limited in terms of reaching out to broader societal actors, promoting truly shared regional agendas, linking up with national dynamics or ensuring effective policy uptake by the EU.

Despite the limitations encountered by Majalat, both EU institutions and regional civil society actors see the importance of continuing the structured dialogue. There is even some sense of urgency as the region is increasingly volatile and fragile, including the space available for civic action.

The Majalat evaluation identifies five main challenges that will need to be addressed by the parties involved to put in place a more solid and effective dialogue:

(i) Making (first) clear political choices on the EU side on the rationale, added value and conditions for the success of the structured dialogue (i.e. “why such a dialogue, who wants it, who will engage and to achieve what?”).

(ii) Agreeing with civil society on ways and means to revitalize the political nature of the dialogue, underpinned by precise arrangements for an effective co-management;

(iii) Reversing the logic of defining regional agendas by starting from national dynamics and the specific interests and demands of the various actors;
(iv) Ensuring greater **outreach and inclusion** of societal actors, citizens and sources of expertise (including through strategic mappings);

(v) Adopting **demand-driven, differentiated and iterative approaches** to dialogue.
1 Introduction

The objectives of the evaluation are:

**Overall objective**
According to the ToR, the overall objective is to conduct a final evaluation of the EU Majalat program, which aims to enable CSOs from the Neighbourhood South to engage in a more structured, inclusive, continuous and sustainable regional dialogue between civil society, EU institutions, regional entities and authorities.

**Specific objective**
- Providing an overall independent assessment of the EU and South Neighbourhood Civil Society: Enhancing Dialogue (MAJALAT) paying particular attention to its results measured against its expected objectives; and the reasons underpinning such results;
- Drawing up key lessons learned, conclusions from Majalat experience and solid recommendations for future dialogues.
2 Methodological approach and limitations

Scope
Building on lessons learnt from initial structured dialogues in the Neighbourhood South - which the EU predominantly steered - it was decided to decentralise responsibilities for organising and facilitating these processes. A restricted call for proposals was launched in 2016 to create a “Regional hub for structured dialogue” for the “Empowerment of young women and men in the Neighbourhood South”. It led to the establishment of a consortium comprised of leading civil society organisations from both sides of the Mediterranean that would be entrusted with the facilitation of a “bottom-up” approach to mobilising civil society actors for a structured dialogue process, connecting the national and regional levels as well as the Brussels-based institutions. The underlying assumption of the related Majalat program considered that the move from a top-down to a bottom-up approach would enhance the chances of ensuring ownership, impact and sustainability. This hypothesis was at the core of the present evaluation and determined its scope. It was translated into seven evaluation questions around three clusters (political basis and strategy; implementation; results).

Prospective focus
The evaluation process entirely took into account that the primary purpose of this evaluation is to draw lessons and implications for future structured dialogue processes between the EU and the civil society of the Neighbourhood South. The specific focus on learning lessons has been included in answering several evaluation questions (EQs).

Sources of information: documentary analysis and wide range of core actors from EU and civil society. Overall, the team had no difficulties ensuring interviews and the majority of stakeholders consulted were open, frank, and constructive. Only a few EU actors did not respond to repeated invitations for an interview. A survey was elaborated (in Arabic, French and English) and posted to 200. Despite a user-friendly format (short and easy to answer), sufficient time to respond (3 weeks), and several recalls, only four responses were received (see Annex 3).

Limitations encountered. Besides the minimal return on the surveys (which hampered the collection of evidence on their views of the whole process), the evaluation team was also confronted with the limited documentary basis on the genesis of the Majalat process and related decision-making processes, a lack of institutional memory and the rotation of actors involved on both sides.
3 Context analysis

There are key contextual dimensions to understanding the background of the ‘Majalat program and the overall framework in which this evaluation has to be conducted:

**EU policy discourse (at political and policy levels) to engage strategically with civil society**

Enhancing regular dialogue and consultations with Civil Society (CS) is one of the principles stated in the Lisbon Treaty, intending to ensure consistency and transparency of EU policies, and make civil society participate and contribute to policymaking and its implementation. The EU values a dynamic, pluralistic and competent civil society and recognizes the importance of constructive relations between authorities and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

The EC has gradually built up a comprehensive policy framework for dialoguing and engaging civil society. These efforts got momentum in the mid-2000s with the first initiatives for a ‘structured dialogue’ with primarily Northern NGOs and their partners in the ‘Palermo processes’. The 2007-2008 thematic evaluation on EU support through the channel of civil society observed a systematic deficit in dialogue on policy and cooperation matters with civil society actors (beyond projects). It recommended that the EC clarify why, when, and how it wanted to strategically engage with local civil society at country, regional and global levels and deepen opportunities for a structured dialogue involving all relevant actors. The EU adopted these recommendations, which launched a new set of consultations with civil society and local authorities to better define (political and institutional) engagement, culminating in the 2011 Budapest statement. The landmark 2012 Communication on engaging with (local) civil society provided a reinforced political framework to underpin the renewed attempts to ensure an effective structured dialogue.

The 2015 review of the *European Neighbourhood Policy* reinforces the EU commitment to further expand outreach to civil society in its broadest sense and further support civil society fora to more structured dialogue at national and regional levels. The June 2016 *EU Global Strategy* reiterates the EU's commitment to civil society support. The new MFF framework 2021-2027 and related simplified financing instrument (NDICI) further purport the need for the EU to engage in a strategic, coherent and sustainable manner with civil society actors from the global south (and their partners in Europe) to promote better development and governance outcomes as well as address core EU concerns.

Following the Arab Spring, the EU reviewed its overall ‘stability first’ policy towards the region. The Joint Communication on “A new response to a changing Neighbourhood” of May 2011.

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1. The EU considers CSOs to include all non-state, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non–violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Operating from the local to the national, regional and international levels, they comprise urban and rural, formal and informal organisations. The EU values CSOs’ diversity and specificities and it engages with accountable and transparent CSOs which share its commitment to social progress and to the fundamental values of peace, freedom, equal rights and human dignity.

2. These dialogue initial processes were facilitated by one of the evaluators in the current bid (Jean Bossuyt).


5. Including by integrating dialogue as a core objective of the civil society roadmaps, to be elaborated by each EU Delegation.


8. The template for the programming process 2021-2027 includes a specific section on support to civil society.


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outlined a new approach towards the EU’s neighbours, based on mutual accountability and a shared commitment to respecting universal values, international human rights standards, democracy and the rule of law. To achieve this, it was fundamental to empower civil society organisations (CSOs) to ensure that public services were better targeted to local needs, enhancing democratic participation and reinforcing accountability in governance. This led to the creation in 2011 the Civil Society Facility to empower CSOs in the Southern Neighbourhood region by:

- Strengthening their involvement in policy-making processes and enabling them to become reliable partners in the policy-making;
- Creating strong links between CSOs and citizens through engagement in public policy and dialogue in all areas;
- Strengthening economic development through the promotion of employability and social inclusion, innovation, and dialogue.

Since then, the EU has provided significant political and financial support to multi-stakeholder cooperation processes, notably by empowering CSOs and particularly their platforms and representative organisations active at national, regional and global levels, to participate effectively in dialogues and all phases of policy-making. Civil Society Fora have taken place annually since 2014 intending to create space for dialogue among all partners. Since then, events have taken place both in the Neighbourhood South and in Brussels.

**Political economy barriers to civil society engagement**

The 2011 Arab Spring gave a major boost to EU engagement with civil society as the main political leitmotiv became fostering human dignity, prosperity and democratisation in the Neighbourhood South (rather than ‘stability’ and related endorsement of authoritarian rule). It also led to a proliferation of support programmes, at both national and regional levels, aimed at capacitating or empowering a hugely expanded and diversified set of civil society to express voice, participate in policy-making and demand rights and accountability.

However, the conducive environment for engaging with civil society proved short-lived in most countries of the region. The current situation in the majority of Neighbourhood countries is characterized by conflict, instability and social tensions, which followed the great hope induced by the Arab spring. In addition, some countries have been hugely affected by the Syrian war and 200 million Arabs -which represents more than half the total population of the region- live under difficult conditions with limited human security and prospects for a decent life. The COVID-19 crisis has further exacerbated underlying inequalities and structural fragility.

All this also affects the role of civil society and the opportunities for external agencies such as the EU, to promote constructive state-society relations or to empower civil society to engage in policy-making processes. These political economy conditions have brought along a major paradox: in order to restore trust between citizens and governments, the intermediary role of civil society (as brokers and advocates) is increasingly vital. At the same time, power-holders across the region tend to adopt controlling/repressive approaches towards civil society, resulting in shrinking or even closed civic space. These political economy limitations of overall EU-civil society

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engagement strategies (including in terms of mobility of civil society actors at the regional level\textsuperscript{12}) have been taken into account in all phases of the present evaluation.

Other well-documented structural features of the civil society in the region were incorporated in the analysis, including:

- The exponential growth of civil society organisations following the Arab Spring and related massive increase in donor funding. While this brought along promising dynamics, many civil society organisations quickly found themselves confronted with major challenges of identifying their role and added value, their place in society and space in the public arena. Following the reduction in donor funding, survival and diversification (including in service delivery) have become imperatives, often resulting in sharpened competition and diminished collective action capacity;
- Closely linked to this non-organic growth of the civil society sector, is the limited networking at national and regional levels, reflected in the scarcity of credible and solid networks and platform;
- The rapidly evolving nature of civic engagement - beyond traditional NGOs donors use to deal with. This includes informal social movements, bloggers and activists, youth organisations, etc. which often have more mobilisation power than established and donor-dependent civil society organisations. Ways and means will have to be found to integrate these actors in EU dialogue processes;
- The place and role of religious civil society in the region; in the aftermath of the Arab spring, religious civil society has emerged as a key actor mobilising wide sectors of the population; yet, most of these religious entities are outside the dialogue with the EU;\textsuperscript{13}
- The limited number of genuinely ‘regional’ civil society players - partly linked to the low degree of regional integration in the political and economic spheres.

\textsuperscript{12} This was a recurrent problem encountered in the above-mentioned EU regional facility for civil society capacity development, evaluated by Amar and Bossuyt (2017).

\textsuperscript{13} Nicolas, Juan, E. 2015. Concept Paper on issues to be addressed and choices to be made for the definition of a governance and management model to enhance regional civil society-related dialogue in the ENP South.
4 Answer to Evaluation questions (EQs)

The evaluation questions allowed the evaluators to provide overall assessment of the EU and South Neighbourhood Civil Society: Enhancing Dialogue (MAJALAT) paying particular attention to its results measured against its expected objectives; and the reasons underpinning such results, but also to draw key lessons learned, conclusions from Majalat experience and solid recommendations for future dialogues.

4.1 Cluster 1: Political basis and overall strategy

EQ 1: How solid were the political foundations of the new EU-civil society dialogue approach, as conceived in 2016?

Engaging in a mutually beneficial structural dialogue over time is a complex process. This holds particularly true when the parties involved are a supranational entity, on the one hand, and a diverse and fragmented group of civil society actors from both shores of the Mediterranean, on the other hand. They may have common interests in organizing such a dialogue yet the relationship will inevitably be characterized by an asymmetry of power and diverging institutional logics. All this implies that both parties are well-advised to clearly define, right from the outset, their fundamental political agenda (“why do we want this structured dialogue?”). The first EQ assesses to what extent and how each party spelled out its core political interests and ensured buy-in before engaging in a new round of structured dialogue.

Political foundations and buy-in at EU level. It is not easy to precisely reconstruct the reflection and decision-making process at EU level in 2015-2016 around the renewal of the structured dialogue with civil society. The internal processes are documented only in a fragmentary manner, key actors have rotated and the institutional memory is confined to a few. However, through triangulation of sources (mainly interviews) it is possible to trace back the main steps of the process and some of the key factors that influenced the EU’s position regarding the future dialogue cycle:

- The period 2015-2016 was a challenging time for the overall EU approach to the Neighbourhood South. The optimism regarding the region’s future had waned as authoritarian rule, chaos or war had taken over in many partner countries. Both the 2015 Review of the Neighbourhood Policy and the EU’s 2016 Global Strategy reflect Europe’s choice for a less ambitious, more realistic and pragmatic policy stance towards the region;
- The EU could look back to different cycles of dialogue with civil society that had taken place since the start of the Euro-Mediterranean partnerships (1995) and which had varying levels of political clout and impact. Particularly the most recent dialogue cycle (2011-2015) had been quite intense, following the 2011 Arab Spring and the ensuing, quite drastic upgrade of EU engagement strategies with civil society. This provided quite some scope for drawing lessons to inform future dialogue approaches;
- The EU set up a process to prepare the new round of structured dialogue, to be driven by an ‘Inter-Institutional Service Group’ (IISG). Feedback received suggests the group was quite dynamic in the initial phase (e.g. enjoying an active participation of the EEAS). Content-wise, the IISG focused primarily on the issue of delegating responsibility for the future dialogue process to civil society actors. By 2015, this was an explicit demand from regional civil society groupings\(^{14}\), who considered that the EU had been “too much in the driving seat” in the

\(^{14}\) Interview with regional civil society actors.
ongoing dialogue cycle (i.e. in terms of deciding on themes, agendas, participants to be invited, etc.). They reclaimed “ownership” of the process -as a condition for achieving a more balanced, meaningful and mutually beneficial dialogue. All sources indicate there was political support for such a delegation, amongst others because the EU considered the capacities to manage such a complex process were lacking internally.  

- To underpin the discussions within the IISG, a ‘Concept Note’ was commissioned to an external consultant. The resulting document, based on consultations with various categories of actors, provides an assessment of evolving civil society dynamics in the region as well as a stock-taking of lessons learnt in organizing dialogues. Interestingly, it also invites the EU to address a number of thorny political questions before embarking on a new, more decentralized cycle dealing with the ultimate purpose of the dialogue, the expected results, the choice of suitable regional agendas and themes, the selection of meaningful civil society interlocutors in the context of an increasingly fragile region and growing diversity within civil society (e.g. between ‘old’ and ‘young’ organisations; between ‘activist’ or more knowledge driven organisations or in terms of thematic specialization);  
- Available sources indicate that there was quite a solid exchange within the IISG on this note. However, the reflection process was apparently cut short, as the various EU actors involved did not manage to make clear political choices on the rationale and added value of the new dialogue cycle (“why we want this dialogue, who wants it at EU level and to achieve what?”). The focus was diverted towards operational questions involved in transferring the conduct of the dialogue process to civil society;  
- Having made this choice, the next step in the process for the EU was the production of ‘guidelines’ for a restricted call for proposals from interested regional civil society groupings. The call was launched in 2016 to create a “Regional hub for structured dialogue”. This type of documents, logically, focuses on giving essential information for possible applicants. The guidelines limit themselves to spell out an overall as well as a specific objective for the future structured dialogue process, to be handed over to civil society.  

From an evaluative perspective, it is important to stress that the incomplete decision-making process at EU level regarding the future dialogue cycle -heavily skewed in favor of implementation modalities- meant that strong political foundations were largely missing at the outset of the decentralized experiment that Majalat represented. A new format for the dialogue was proposed (i.e. a ‘bottom-up’ approach to organizing and facilitating the structured dialogue) but the building had weak pillars as the EU did not:  

- adequately incorporate lessons learned in past dialogues;  
- properly integrate changed political economy dynamics in the region, including the shrinking space for civil society in most countries;  
- define more specifically what political results the various EU institutional actors wanted to get out of this dialogue and hence weakened the ‘buy-in’ of key political players;  
- explore potential, mutually beneficial linkages between ‘regional’ and ‘national’ processes of dialogue (driven by EU Delegations);  
- clarify what role it wanted to play in a decentralized system of managing the dialogue.  

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15 Interview with EC official.  
16 Nicolas, J. 2015. Concept Paper on issues to be addressed and choices to be made for the definition of a governance model to enhance regional civil society dialogue in the ENP South.  
17 The global objective is “to promote citizen engagement and political participation of young women and men, empowering them to assume a central and visible role in addressing common social challenges in partnership with peers to the South and the North in the Mediterranean”.  
18 The specific objective is to “enable CSOs from the Neighbourhood South to engage in a more structured, inclusive, continuous and sustainable regional dialogue between the civil society, EU institutions, regional entities and authorities”.
The limited clarity provided by the EU on fundamental ‘upstream’ political choices underpinning the future structured dialogue would, in many ways, impact negatively on the ‘downstream’ implementation of the whole Majalat process (see below in analysis of other evaluation questions).

Political foundations and buy-in at the level of civil society. The regional civil society actors involved in discussions with the EU on the future format of the dialogue - a group that largely coincided with the members of the consortium that would win the bid\(^{19}\) had a stronger common vision on the rationale and added value of the process. The regional actors involved were all highly conscious of the deteriorating overall political climate and worried about the EU’s possibly flagging commitment to keep its values agenda on top of the partnership relation with governments in the region. They agreed on the imperative to safeguard the ‘political’ nature of the dialogue with the EU (rather than getting stuck in technical issues or programming related questions). In the spirit of the 1995 Barcelona process, they were equally keen to reinforce the “bridge” between civil society actors on both shores of the Mediterranean\(^{20}\). The other glue that kept them together was the belief that a meaningful dialogue with the EU had, by definition, to be organized in a bottom-up manner. This was required to allow the civil society actors to get first properly prepared internally within the region (including to meetings restricted to them) and second to jointly construct agendas and recommendations to be presented to the EU.

While this provided more solid political foundations to enter into the new dialogue (compared to the EU) and take the lead, the consortium of regional civil society actors also preferred not to dwell too much on thorny political issues. There were a number of “elephants in the room” that were deliberately not addressed upfront. First: the conflict of interest that consortium members (all well-established regional groupings with a longstanding pedigree and status regarding dialogue with the EU) would have to really open-up to the ‘new’ civil society actors or to “young women and men”. That specific objective was formally embraced, but the commitment to properly confront diversity in civil society representation and push forward the ‘generational shift’ would prove rather limited. Second: the divergence of interest, approaches, working methods and expectations between ‘northern’ and ‘southern’ partners within the consortium. This issue was also largely “swept under the carpet” in a concern to show unity, only to re-emerge quite during implementation and in the governance of the consortium during the period 2017-2021 (as we will see below, primarily in EQ 5).

**Suggestions made for the future dialogue**

- Reinforce the political basis of the future regional dialogue by associating other EU institutions (European Council, European Parliament);
- Give a clear role to EUDs in the choice and roll out of regional dialogues to enhance relevance and impact;
- Explore the possibility to involve governments of the region that are open to a genuine dialogue and have an interest in the themes covered by the regional dialogue;
- Define a strategy to reach out much more meaningfully to the various categories of ‘new’ civil society actors.

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\(^{19}\) Only two consortia introduced a bid.

\(^{20}\) Interview with core member of the Majalat consortium.
During the final global dialogue event of the Majalat process (June 2021) several sessions reflected on the achievements of the structured dialogue. Different opinions were expressed, depending on the background and experiences of each participant. In one of the panels, a speaker from the Neighbourhood South made the following statement: "It is quite difficult to say something about the results achieved by Majalat as both parties did not define and agree at the start what exactly the dialogue was supposed to achieve".

This reflection brings us back to the beginnings of Majalat and to the quality of the design process undertaken by the EU and the civil society consortium to spell out how the decentralized dialogue approach would work. This was largely "a jump into the unknown" so both parties had a major interest in putting in place a robust strategic and institutional framework to effectively manage the new innovative, experimental scheme. The present evaluation question seeks to assess how and to what extent the EU and the civil society actors involved could forge a solid consensus on essential building blocks for Majalat.

Various sources of evidence collected clearly indicate that the process of designing an adequate framework was ill-conceived and flawed on crucial points, both in terms of core strategic choices and institutional arrangements.

Regarding the strategic choices made during the design phase, the evaluation team observed several missing elements and weaknesses -which would later on hamper effective implementation (see other EQs below). These include:

- Absence of a jointly defined theory of change based on solid assumptions and adequate risk analysis/mitigation approaches (factoring in the abovementioned political economy constraints linked to the fragility and volatility of the region);
- Limited alignment of mutual expectations regarding the outcomes that Majalat should / could produce. This induced many civil society actors to have unrealistic ambitions at the start of the new dialogue cycle, highly overestimating the degree of influence they could have on EU decision-making processes or on the powers available to the EU to effectively implement recommendations;
- Absence of a clear and coherent results framework validated and owned by both parties (which led to the above reflection of the panellist during last civil society forum organised by Majalat);
- Absence of a differentiated approach which would have allowed to make linkages with opportunities at national level in countries with a more conducive environment;
- Unclear specification of the added value of the Majalat process compared to other existing dialogue initiatives at regional or national level.

Regarding the choice of suitable institutional arrangements, both parties were confronted with the challenge of devising a new set of governance and management rules that would (i) respect the lead role of civil society and (ii) redefine the roles the EU should (legitimately) play in the decentralized set-up of Majalat and during the implementation phase. This, admittedly, is not an easy thing to do, amounting to a delicate balancing act between delegation (to ensure civil society ownership) and a set of joint responsibilities (to ensure that also the interests of the EU are adequately integrated).

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21 View expressed by a panelist during final dialogue event organized by Majalat.
Evidence suggests that \textit{this part of the design process was equally quite flawed, primarily because too many complex and sensitive governance and institutional issues were left open}. As a result, no clarity was provided \textit{at the outset} on the formal rules of the game that would guide implementation in relation to the following crucial points such as:

- the definition and delineation of roles the EU was supposed to play in the governance and management of the structured dialogue;
- the process of ensuring a recurrent an open dialogue between both parties in order to align, in a dynamic way, mutual concerns and expectations (in between and beyond specific dialogue events);
- the process of agenda-setting for the dialogue events, including clarity on the degree of involvement the EU could have (e.g. on content matters or selection of suitable participants);
- the role division regarding communication;
- the existence of conflict resolution mechanisms.

The lack of clarity on the new rules of the game in the decentralized set-up of Majalat caused problems at various levels:

- It inevitably led to confusion and misunderstandings on "who could do what" during the process of implementation. This, in turn, tended to create frustrations on both sides, with EU officials resenting being "excluded" from the whole preparation of joint dialogue events while civil society actors criticized the EU of "interference" (e.g. when it proposed topics for the Forum), "micro-manage" things or even of censorship (e.g. when the EC argued that some issues - such like the question of visas - could not usefully be discussed as this falls outside the area of competence of the officials invited to the dialogue).
- Tensions also arose in agenda-setting processes, with again reciprocal criticism (e.g. "the EU is imposing its themes" or "there is no scope for the EU to influence the agenda and the content put on the table");
- The absence of mechanisms to engage in joint programming on a recurrent basis meant important windows of opportunities were missed for fruitful interaction (beyond planned dialogue events). As a result, the overall Majalat process was increasingly driven in some kind of a silo, disconnected from mainstream EU political processes;
- The absence of a conflict resolution mechanism meant there was limited scope to jointly discuss difficult issues and find acceptable solutions for both parties;
- All these elements together, inevitably, reduced the scope for Majalat to produce meaningful outcomes satisfying both parties. DG NEAR largely ended up considering Majalat as “a project” rather than as a political partnership. It may partly explain the gradual loss of interest for the structured dialogue among senior EU policy-makers and practitioners.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Suggestions made for the future dialogue} \\
\hline
\textbullet Forging a common understanding between the two parties on the rationale and added value of the regional dialogue is key, including in terms of aligning expectations and results to be achieved; \\
\textbullet A meaningful structured dialogue requires ownership of the civil society. The Majalat approach may need to be changed, but the imperative of putting civil society in the driving seat remains valid. Therefore, a recentralisation of power and responsibilities to the EU (in terms of agenda setting, choice of participants, etc) should be avoided; \\
\textbullet Risk of fragmenting the SD too much, resulting in a loss of the broader (political and multi-dimensional) integration agenda within FPAs model. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
4.2 Cluster 2: Implementation of the structured dialogue

**EQ 3: To what extent and how did the civil society actors in charge of the Majalat process ensure effective governance and management of the structured dialogue?**

The capitalisation of past dialogue experiences clearly indicated the limits of having an EU-driven process (whereby EU institutions largely determined the agenda, selected the civil society participants, drew the conclusions and defined follow-up actions even with support of external technical assistance). In order to enhance both the civil society ownership of the process and its overall relevance/impact, it was decided to delegate the primary responsibility for organising and conducting the structured dialogue to a consortium of civil society organisations, selected through a competitive Call for Proposals. This EQ seeks to assess how well the consortium performed its complex mandate to be “in the driving seat” by looking at the overall effectiveness/efficiency of the internal governance processes and its ability to adopt inclusive approaches and mobilise relevant forms of expertise establishing strategic partnerships.

On the whole, the main challenge of the Majalat consortium was how to deal with the challenges of inclusion, representation and the production of relevant inputs to perform the assigned mission of conducting the structured dialogue. The consortium was composed of 6 significant organizations with a specific focus on human rights and social dialogue, namely:

- **EuroMed Rights**, leader of the consortium, was implementing a major EU funded program in Tunisia for dialogue between civil society, the EU and the Tunisian authorities (including Government, assembly and Presidency on 4 thematic: migration, Economic and social rights, justice reform and women’s rights.
- **SOLIDAR** who supported the dialogue between regional civil society development and relief actors, CONCORD Europe and European institutions - closely monitoring the workings of EU delegations;
- The Forum for Alternatives, Morocco (FMAS – Forum des Alternatives Maroc) has implemented several EU funded projects in Morocco on social movements, community radios and media outlets;
- **Réseau Euromed France (REF)** was leading the “Mediterranean Youth” project bringing together once a year 70 representatives of CSOs aged under 30;
- **ATUC**, representing 4 million members, is a member of the ‘High level group of expert on social dialogue and employment’ which was established by the EU (DG Employment) in 2014;
- **ANND** actively participated in relevant discussion spaces at EU level, including Policy Forum for Development and Civil Society Forum South. In addition, since 2012 every two year ANND develops the Arab Watch Report, a resource tool presenting a CSO perspective from the region on specific policy areas.

This consortium had only partial coverage of both NS region and targeted themes which hampered the effective mobilization of relevant civil society actors and experts in some countries and level of interest towards particular relatively new themes such security.

The evaluation team could not find evidence of a set of clear ‘rules of the game’ that would guide the governance and management of the consortium. However, there was a **clear division of tasks** among the consortium since the beginning of the implementation of Majalat as shown in the table below.
Table 1: Division of roles among the Majalat consortium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consortium members</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Assigned tasks</th>
<th>Thematic leading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euromedrights</td>
<td>Belgium / Tunisia</td>
<td>Coordination, financial management</td>
<td>Governance, human rights and security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidar</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Subgranting / Developing and implementation of a Quality Plan and monitoring and evaluation system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réseau Euromed France (RF)</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Political referent, annual Youth workshops</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANND</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Annual NS South seminar, thematic roundtable at country level</td>
<td>Economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAS</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Thematic roundtable at country level</td>
<td>climate justice migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATUC</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Digital platform / data base/Communication group coordination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In reality, according to several members of the consortium, this (formally agreed) division of tasks was rather inequitable in terms of both thematic and resources. A short review of the Majalat budget distribution clearly shown an unequal allocation of both human (= number of staff) and financial resources (= level of remuneration) among consortium members. This created frustrations among members as budget allocations were not always in accordance with the tasks assigned.

Likewise, it seems that at the start, the consortium coordinator underestimated the workload required by the implementation of the structured dialogue. Subsequently, a position of Director of Majalat was established. However, the consortium members were reluctant to genuinely empower the Director of Majalat who did not have sufficient scope and leeway to strategically and pro-actively manage the process, including to solve problems within the consortium. This led to internal management challenges, e.g. huge turnover of directors (3 over the period) which also impacted on project delivery.

The consortium has set up a mechanism for governance and collective decision-making through a board where all members were represented, and an advisory board extended to other organizations (from the competing offer). However, there was an overlap between the Board and the advisory group as well a communication problem between representatives of the same organization within these two bodies.

A quorum of 4/6 for the validation of decisions was formally agreed upon, but in reality the unanimity was required which in fact leads to a heavy internal validation procedure. This is all the more restrictive in the absence of a transparent mechanism for resolving internal conflicts -in particular those linked to the division of resources and tasks.

From the evaluation perspective, it can be concluded that the internal governance and management processes were too complex, lacked transparency and prevented strategic decision-making (e.g. on the need to engage in strategic partnerships) as well as flexibility in relating to the EU as partner (e.g. in terms of accommodating EU concerns).
Regarding the challenge of ensuring inclusive approaches in the mobilization of participants, compared to other dialogues, the consortium had sufficient latitude to select them independently, while sometimes taking on board suggestions from the EUDs. However, the absence of a clear definition of the scope of the program on the national / regional dialogue and the perception of the added value of the regional dialogue among stakeholders (e.g. scepticism in Tunisia) had a negative impact on the connection with various national dynamics. In addition to that, the consortium did not invest in mappings of the civil society including social movements in the targeted countries -which hampered its capacity to reach out, involve new actors and understand their interests and ability to engage in various type of dialogue at different levels. For the selection of the participants to the Brussels based fora, the final decision was taken by the BoT of the consortium of the basis of proposal made by the partners. However we noted that in the absence of an updated mapping of potential candidates and emerging initiatives as mentioned before, the selection was done mainly in the near circle of the main consortium partners (most of them are the holders of EU funds). Few criteria’s mainly related to geographic, gender and thematic representation have been used to refine the selection.

On behalf of the consortium ATUC organized a promotion campaign towards CSOs through the use of social medias which contributed to enhance the visibility of Majalat (see below).

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The audience of the website increased significantly (+450%) in 2019, with : 1809 users (45% from S.N. countries), 24000 page views, 4081 sessions, 1422 downloads of documents, 38% of acquisition via social media.

Followers of the Majalat social media:
- Facebook: 2781 subscribers (+ 445%) 1812 page likes (+ 225%)
- Twitter: 250 followers (+ 120%)
- Instagram: 197 followers (+ 130%).

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Majalat (successfully) sought to increase the number of associations involved in the dialogue. It also made a clear choice to avoid the participation of Gongo’s and CSOs that do not share universal values. However, there is limited evidence of consortium efforts to establish strategic partnerships and alliances. According to several interlocutors, it seems there was a resistance on the side of the consortium to “go beyond their own circles”, mainly driven by a concern to protect their own interests and privileged access to the EU.

The consortium faced also recurrent implementation challenges such bringing together actors from the Europe and those from the Neighbourhood south region and difficulties to ensure synergies between regional and national dynamics in the absence of real implication (and assigned roles) to the EUDs.

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**EQ 4: To what extent and how did the EU institutions concerned organise themselves to ensure effective political steering, coordination and management of the structured dialogue?**

Placing the civil society actors in the driving seat from 2017 onwards required a *recalibration of roles and responsibilities of EU institutions*. This EQ will assess to what extent and how the EU adapted its modus operandi and internal organization to fit the new reality.

This first adaptation consisted of moving away from past approaches (perceived to be top-down and control-oriented) by allowing enough freedom to the newly formed civil society consortium to roll out the various strands of the Majalat process according to its own approaches, methods of work and rhythm. While some civil society voices claimed recurrent interference by the EU, there
is a broad recognition that genuine space was provided to the civil society actors to manage the structured dialogue process. The EU was not involved in national and regional dialogue processes, organized by Majalat, which targeted only civil society actors with a view to ensuring that proposals emanated from the bottom-up. Regarding the global (Brussels-based) events, there were instances in which the EU sought to influence things. However, most of these interventions (e.g. putting forward specific policy concerns for upcoming dialogues, making observations regarding participants to be invited, requesting a timely transmission of the agenda, etc.) can be considered as coherent with the roles and responsibilities that the EU could legitimately assume as ‘partner’ in the structured dialogue. The delegation of lead responsibilities to civil society does not mean the other party is reduced to being a mere spectator or silent actor. The EU also left the civil society consortium and related stakeholders in control of the production of its own recommendations towards the EU. The internal evaluation, conducted by the civil society consortium at the end of the cycle, notes that the decentralization of this function “contributed to better recommendations compared to previous similar processes”.

Both parties had jointly agreed upon five thematic priorities to underpin the regional structural dialogue for the period 2017-2021: (I) democracy, human rights and the rule of law; (ii) economic affairs and trade; (iii) climate change; (iv) security and (v) migration. However, during the implementation process of Majalat, several civil society actors expressed the opinion that the EU was privileging too much the issues of migration and security, reflecting its own foreign policy priorities in the region - at the expense of the more traditional domains of previous structured dialogue processes. These had primarily focused on the democracy and human rights agenda which had always been at the heart of the civil society agenda towards the EU (issues on which regional civil society actors could display a critical mass of expertise). Furthermore, within these two domains (migration and security) the EU was perceived to push a rather narrow set of policy issues, primarily aligned to its own pressing domestic concerns (e.g. fight against terrorism) rather than to the priorities faced by the citizens of the region. This civil society perspective on prioritization is not shared on the EU side. The EC view is that there was no particular push to privilege themes. The reason for security and migration getting a high profile was linked to the competence and strong engagement of the officials involved. Furthermore, while the EC did put forward specific issues that were high on their agenda (such as the fight against terrorism) it was also open to accommodate priority concerns of the CSOs (e.g. violence against women).

A major paradox emerged during the implementation of Majalat. Civil society was firmly put in the driving seat of the dialogue and could propose concrete political recommendations on the major challenges affecting the region and on expected EU responses. Yet at the same time, the civil society actors involved found it more and more difficult to engage with high level policymakers of the EU. They saw how the EU respondents were increasingly actors involved in programming aid or middle level task managers.

This brings us to the second adaptation required at EU level, i.e. to ensure an ongoing political interest in mobilizing the various institutional players to participate in a civil-society led structured dialogue. The evidence collected in relation to this point is quite consistent and indeed confirms a decreasing level of support for investing in regional dialogue processes. This is clearly reflected in the failure to ensure the Inter-Institutional Service Group properly functioned in its aim to be a multi-stakeholder body bringing together representatives from the EC services, experts in the various sectors and representatives of the Majalat ‘community’. Four main factors may help to explain this:

23 See the internal report on the outcomes of the Majalat process coordinated by SOLIDAR.
Several EU officials interviewed attributed this loss of interest primarily to the mismatch between the recommendations prepared by the civil society actors and the capacity of the EU to effectively take them on board. All too often the proposals put on the table were far too ambitious and reflected a major lack of knowledge on “how the EU works” and on the relative powers of the supranational entity (e.g. in terms of own competences and mandates). This, in turn, strongly reduced the relevance of the inputs from civil society and the incentives of high-level policy makers to effectively engage;

Another disincentive was the unclear added value of regional dialogues. By nature, national dialogue processes with civil society are seen to harbor more potential, as they relate to concrete issues and actors. EUD staff interviewed claimed that they can see a more direct link with their work. Not surprisingly, political support and levels of engagement tend to much higher for national dialogue processes;

In terms of synergies with national dialogue processes, EUDs had varying degrees of knowledge and involvement in the MAJALAT process. The evaluation team identified several factors that contributed to this situation:
- Initial program design focused on the regional level;
- The activities organized in the neighbouring countries were mainly targeting countries where members of the consortium have a strong presence (in particular Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco). This was partly linked to the impossibility of organising activities in other countries for security and political reasons (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Israel, Palestine). Majalat sought to reach to these countries via subgranting and by inviting CSOs representatives of these countries to all the events organised.
- Frustration in general with regional programs among EUDs;
- EUDs not necessarily well-informed about Majalat processes and specific events which they could attend;
- The number of activities organized and short time allowed to disseminate information;
- The place and weight of regional dialogue disconnected from daily work of EUDs.

While the previous factors can partly help to explain the disengagement, a more profound issue also emerged from the consultations. It relates to the declining political interest at higher EU levels regarding the regional dialogue processes. It concerns a less visible reality - as the EU continues to put forward a progressive discourse on the role of civil society as crucial policy interlocutor whose views and insights matter in a wide range of EU external action issues (beyond development cooperation processes) - yet in practice, it is difficult to discern an effective and coherent commitment, pushed from above, to mainstream civil society participation in all relevant sectors and themes. EU actors have engaged proactively and creatively with regional dialogue processes in the framework of their own work, but the overall incentive structure at EU level to consistently apply it as a central and corporate priority appears to be much weaker now, particularly at the level of DG NEAR. The documented institutional culture to work in silos further compounds the problem.

The lack of high-level political support and steering meant the Majalat process over time became increasingly a “tick the box” exercise. Furthermore, the burden of mobilizing high-level EU actors and expertise ended up too much on the shoulders of the small DG Near unit in charge. It led also to situations whereby it was primarily technical, middle level EU staff who

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24 Interviews with EUD staff in Morocco and Tunisia.
25 Despite by efforts by DG NEAR to inform CSO focal points during the yearly gathering. Furthermore, it was suggested that Majalat would get in touch with EUDs, yet this appears to have happened only in the third year of the process.
26 National and thematic workshops in the South were not open to EUDs
27 Source: several interviews with EU officials and other actors.
responded to the political recommendations put forward in global dialogue events. This was a major source of frustration for the regional civil society actors and a clear sign of the EU’s limited commitment to a true political partnership.

**EQ 5: To what extent and how did the EU and the civil society organisations in charge manage to jointly steer the dialogue processes so as to ensure relevance for both parties?**

In the new format of the structured dialogue, a consortium of civil society organisations was put in the driving seat of the implementation process, requiring innovative governance and institutional arrangements (see EQ 3) as well as adjustments on the EU side (see EQ 4). However, the linchpin of the new dialogue approach resides in the ability of both parties to continue managing the process as a joint endeavour with respect for the division of roles and responsibilities agreed upon. This EQ therefore seeks to assess how both parties ‘co-managed’ key aspects of the implementation process so as to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes.

The first thing to assess under this EQ is whether the decentralised model (with the consortium in the lead) also allowed to accommodate the concerns of the EU through appropriate ‘co-management’ modalities. The track record is balanced on this point.

On the positive side, both parties could agree on a set of priority themes, several of which rather reflected specific EU policy concerns. This reflects goodwill among civil society in the region to enter into a logic of co-construction. Furthermore, Majalat has been perceived at the level of the DG Near operational services as an opportunity given to civil society to express its opinion on important themes less considered in the southern neighbourhood region, such as migration, trade and climate change policies.

However, the evaluation could also note the existence of recurrent points of friction regarding the whole organization and facilitation of the global dialogue events. This tended to originate from poor and untimely communication by the consortium (e.g. on agendas, list of participants, experts involved) as well as limited preparedness to accommodate suggestions (e.g. in terms of content, selecting the right mix of participants, etc.) or other possible critical remarks by EU officials. This was compounded by a constant fear among civil society actors that the EU would “take back control” or start micro-managing as well as by the limited capacity of the (divided) Majalat governance structures to be flexible and look for pragmatic compromises (despite appeals to this end from successive directors). All this caused frustration and disengagement on the side of the EU.

From evaluation perspective, in practice there was no real co-management of core dialogue events.

Beyond considerations related to the co-management of actual dialogue events, the evaluation also sought to assess whether both parties could also have a ‘political’ discussion at an appropriate level with the EU on the overall progress in the structured dialogue, the challenges encountered, the required adjustments as well as the forward strategic planning of future joint actions. This dialogue with the political level at the EU is crucial in terms of avoiding a disconnect between the civil society ‘forum’ and political dialogue and with the complex machinery of the EU.

Following the less than optimal functioning of the ‘Institutional Inter-Services Group’ (IISG) from 2017 onwards -as a political coordination mechanism at EU level- Majalat suffered from the lack of an (institutional) connection between the fora-related activities and the political sphere of the EU. This also hampered Majalat’s ability to ensure an effective uptake and policy influencing.
Furthermore, consortium members could observe of a gradually decreasing interest in the whole process from high-level policy makers on the EU side - as reflected in a reduced participation in the various events organized by Majalat. This means there was a gap between the programmatic needs of DG Near and the more political interest of the CS, compounded by a limited political steering of the regional support to civil society.

**Suggestions made for future dialogue**
- The challenge will be to keep the civil society in the lead while ensuring an effective co-management of the political and strategic dimensions of the dialogue
- The co-management should be institutionally embedded both at the political and the technical level in the EU.

### 4.3 Cluster 3: Results achieved

**EQ 6: To what extent has the Majalat process contributed to enhanced ownership of the structured dialogue process by a broader and more diverse set of civil society actors?**

This EQ seeks to assess the contributions of Majalat to increasing ownership levels of the civil society actors from the region and related willingness of relevant actors to engage in the structured dialogue process over time. It implies an evaluation of the way in which the consortium played an effective ‘catalyst’ role in widening the circle of civil society actors in the structured dialogue (beyond the usual suspects) and to building a stronger regional movement. It equally calls for an examination of the strengths and capacities of this regional civil society movement to produce and defend a credible advocacy agenda towards the EU institutions.

As for the mobilization of CSOs, there was a great diversity of participants (see Box below) who had not been in previous dialogues. In particular, many young people and women participated in the various events organized by Majalat. However, the evaluation team observed at the last online civil society forum organized by Majalat that there was little presence in workshops on “relatively new” topics in the dialogue such as trade. The session on security was also cancelled for lack of participants.

**Majalat’s outreach to a more diverse group of actors**

At the South Seminar and Brussels Civil Society Forum, a variety of actors (university, social actors, NGOs, etc) were involved with a wide geographical representation. In particular, there was a good participation of youth (average age of 42 years and 37% participants with less than 35 years) and a balanced gender representation (45% women and 55% men). People with disabilities were also represented although this can yet be improved alongside with the representation of non-traditional actors such as private sector, rural areas etc.

Staff from **one hundred nine (109) CSOs** have declared that they had in 2018 or 2019 the opportunity, to a high extent, to share and/or collect relevant information of their interest during meetings that they had with EU interlocutors.

According to the available records, participants and moderators to Majalat events were chosen by the Board as a whole. However, the evaluation team could not find written evidence of the type of criteria used to select participants - despite references to the existence of such formal criteria in the annual reports.

Other key findings include:
- A relatively limited mobilization of actors in some thematic areas such as security and trade is observed. This appears to be linked to the novelty of the topic (compared to themes traditionally covered in regional dialogues, such as democracy and human rights) or limited efforts by the consortium to identify and mobilize the relevant actors and experts;
- The ad hoc nature of civil society participation, with no clarity on how the engagement might continue beyond dialogue events and after the end of Majalat.

With regard to the outcomes of Majalat, several actions have recorded some success, in particular:

- **Webinars**: focused on specific themes related to the SDGs in order to fuel the dialogue;
- **Learning and capacity building**: the e-library section on the website was activated and includes some first learning and capacity building materials. A proper e-learning section has been activated and developed in 2020 -though it remained challenging to effectively use the digital space to gather CSO contributions for feeding the dialogue process;
- **Targeted thematic research** and thematic round tables in countries very well prepared and with quality content;
- **High quality website** (e.g. database, users-friendly, relevant content);
- **Tendency of Majalat to get closer to young people** and women (staff and participants);
- **Work on recommendations**: Formulation of more coherent deliverables through mobilization of experts who structured the raw content developed by civil society actors.

Finally, it should be noted that the evaluation team faced difficulties in measuring the Majalat’s impact in terms of ensuring ongoing levels of interest and willingness to further engage after the end of the implementation of the program. Indeed, the survey organized as part of this evaluation targeting 200 participants at various events in Majalat from 8 countries received only 4 responses. This could be explained by the fact that most of CSOs considered Majalat as a temporary platform (now closed) for organization of ad hoc events -not necessarily linked to long-term process.

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**EQ 7: To what extent have the various dialogue processes contributed to influencing EU policies and practices?**

A core component of Malajat was to organize a set of interconnected dialogue processes at various levels (national, regional, Brussels-based) to elaborate internally shared agendas and subsequently exchange them with EU institutions. The ultimate goal of all these dialogues was to influence EU policies and practices in order to make these more responsive to the challenges of the region. Hence, this final EQ first assesses the *upstream* political/policy uptake of civil society proposals as well as the level of more *downstream* influence on EU practices such as the programming process. It then examines how much progress has been achieved in pushing forward a genuine ‘regional’ agenda.

Assessing the contribution of the structured dialogue to influencing EU policies and practices is methodologically a challenging exercise. A judgement on performance achieved is tricky as it depends on a number of factors that intrinsically tend to complicate matters:

- **Measuring results**: Once put in place, the regional consortium elaborated its own results framework. The overall impact Majalat sought to achieve is quite ambitious: “to address key social and political challenges in the Neighbourhood South (NS) and in EU-NS relations through engaging citizens, including young men and women, in policy-making processes relevant to civil society, EU institutions, regional entities and authorities”. To monitor progress, Majalat identified a set of indicators, including one pertaining to its advocacy work towards the
EU, which would look at the “level of responsiveness of the EU to the views of the civil society”. At first sight, this appears a smart indicator. Yet it proved difficult to measure actual progress achieved in policy uptake or effects on programming.

- **The match between the ‘supply’ of qualitative inputs and ‘demands’ and needs.** This is a recurrent challenge encountered in evaluations of policy advocacy work. It is the responsibility of the civil society actors involved to organize themselves in such a way that they can produce qualitative material ‘fit for purpose’ to be put on the table of policy-makers (= the ‘supply-side’ dimension). However, there is no guarantee that good advocacy inputs provided by civil society (in this case Majalat) find their way into policy-making processes. This heavily depends on the specific needs, interests and evolving priorities of the other partner in the equation (in this case the EU);

- **Policy influencing and uptake are messy processes.** Policy dialogues, even when structured, tend to be messy, non-linear and unpredictable in terms of outcomes. This holds particularly true for dialogue between actors with asymmetric powers and diverse institutional logics -such as the EU and the civil society community of the Neighbourhood South. Furthermore, there can be an important time lag between the moment interesting civil society views reach the ear of policymakers and the concrete uptake of these proposals in a complex institution like the EU. An example was given of valid civil society inputs regarding cybercrime and data protection, raised during a dialogue event. EU staff involved highly appreciated the insights provided and started to find ways and means to get these “translated into the system”. It inevitably took some time before advances could be made, but these were real. However, this was not necessarily visible to Majalat actors and this, in turn, may have contributed to the widespread idea that “the EU is not responsive” to civil society inputs.

With these caveats in mind, a first evaluative finding is that Majalat managed to elaborate valuable advocacy products in the various thematic priorities and to organize several appreciated policy exchanges with EU officials. Positive feedback was received for EU participants involved in thematic dialogues on the relevance of the recommendations made and the usefulness of these inputs for their own work. Logically, it is difficult to pinpoint direct, visible and tangible contribution, but there is evidence from various sources that civil society views did influence the thinking of EU actors and then also “found their way” in the system and various policy-making processes.

In its internal evaluation report, Majalat considered results achieved regarding levels of responsiveness of the EU to the views of civil society. Two main outcomes are reported. First, the Majalat project claims credit for having influenced the draft document of the new Agenda for the Mediterranean (April 2021) “thanks to the dialogue implemented in the frame of this project and in particular thanks to the engagement of a large representation of the civil society from the Neighbourhood South”. The report also sees a contribution at more downstream level: “despite the low or no progress as regards the civic space and the collaboration and responsiveness of the partner-country governments […], the topics of interest and concern of the civil society […] have been taken into account by the EC services in the future programming”.28

While there are clear contributions of the Majalat process, the evaluation identified various factors and structural constraints which hampered direct influence and uptake, including:

- The challenges encountered by the regional consortium (composed of larger organisations with an established pedigree and privileged ties with the EU) to effectively reach out to an increasingly diverse and dynamic civil society in the region. In some instances, this may have

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28 Solidar report mentioned above.
weakened its legitimacy (in terms of representation), proposition capacity (as it could not adequately mobilise existing sources of expertise, particularly on newer, less familiar themes) as well as its lobbying power (as it largely failed to establish solid strategic partnership and alliances with other civil society movements);

- The nature of the recommendations produced may have responded to relevant political agendas in the region. Yet they were not sufficiently translated into more concrete and feasible proposals, that corresponded to the competences, mandate and power of the EC (on which they could therefore act) or into incremental implementation strategies to reform (reflecting the way policy-making generally proceeds). This created a mismatch between the supply of advocacy inputs and the demand by EC services, hampered effective uptake and contributed gradually to an erosion of EU interest in the dialogue processes;

- The growing difficulty of engaging high-level EU policymakers in the overall Majalat process resulted in the task of promoting the uptake of sound civil society inputs being increasingly delegated to middle and technical EC staff, with limited access to senior level management and related decision-making processes;

- The weak linkages between the regional dialogues and national dynamics/actors further reduced levels of influence. Valuable regional civil society views and proposals were generated by Majalat. Yet to achieve impact, these have to ‘land on fertile ground’ and this is primarily the national level (particularly in the Neighbourhood South where there are no strong regional bodies). Such a landing was highly complicated as Majalat only had weak structural linkages with crucial actors at national level, such as governments and EU Delegations. In some cases, these connections existed (e.g. Morocco, Tunisia) as members of the regional consortium were also in charge of the tripartite dialogue in their home country. However, the potential advantages of this ‘double hat’ could not necessarily be exploited as other stakeholders such as the EU felt that the whole process was too much dominated by a single organization.

Regarding the contribution of Majalat to forging stronger regional agendas, the key finding can be summarized in two messages.

First, Majalat clearly helped to give more substance to key regional challenges, older and newer ones. The various internal dialogue processes allowed civil society actors from the region to have their own space to discuss core issues, have their voice heard, and put proposals on the table. This “raw material” coming from the bottom-up was thereafter refined and made fit for advocacy purposes by external experts properly accompanied by Majalat to respect the civil society core messages. As a result, there are now much better civil society driven analyses available.

However, second, these valuable regional insights, painstakingly collected and translated, are not sufficiently shared with the broader civil society movements from the region. There are obvious limits to harmonizing policy views in a highly diverse world of civil society actors, but even so Majalat missed windows of opportunity to upscale the attractiveness and influencing power of these regional agendas by not engaging in structured partnerships and alliances with other civil society actors working on the same issues. As mentioned above, the Majalat recommendations have been able in several cases to influence EU policy thinking at some levels. But there is no evidence of genuinely ‘shared’ or consolidated regional agendas. If anything, there are growing doubts, particularly among EU officials, that regional policy dialogue can really add value considering the political conditions prevailing in the region, the heterogeneity of the countries involved and the disconnect between regional and national dynamics.

**Suggestions made for future dialogue**
• To increase relevance and impact the regional dialogue should be 'territorialized', i.e. better connected to national dynamics, promising avenues, actors and EUDs;
• Adequate mechanisms for joint strategic steering, planning and monitoring a key to manage the regional dialogue in a mutually beneficial and result-oriented manner.
5 Conclusions

5.1 Overall assessment

Previous structured dialogues in the Neighbourhood South were predominantly controlled by the EU and led to limited ownership of civil society actors. It was decided to decentralize responsibilities for organizing and facilitating these processes to the civil society of the region. The assumption was that the move from a top-down to a bottom-up approach, embodied by Majalat, would:

1. enhance the chances of ensuring ownership of the process by civil society;
2. allow the inclusion of a more diverse set of civil society actors (particularly young women and men);
3. facilitate a bottom-up production of solid analyses and recommendations towards the EU;
4. strengthen the quality of the dialogue with EU institutions;
5. forge stronger shared regional agendas, thus showing that organizing a dialogue at this level makes sense and adds value to national dialogue processes; and ultimately;
6. contribute to influencing EU policies and practices.

Four years later, the track record of Majalat is mixed. On the positive side, the decentralized approach has allowed civil society actors from both shores of the Mediterranean to find their ‘own space’, prepare regional advocacy agendas and produce generally solid recommendations towards the EU “from the bottom-up”. This strengthened the overall ownership of the structured dialogue by civil society.

However, Majalat was less successful with regard to the other core objectives mentioned above:

- Despite efforts undertaken by the consortium, particularly towards youth, the outreach has been rather limited, of an ad hoc nature and of limited sustainability;
- While the dialogue events generated quality exchanges, there was often a mismatch between agendas, needs and expectations of both parties, which hampered mutually beneficial outcomes, buy-in and concrete follow-up. It also reduced interest in further engaging in the process (particularly among high-level EU policymakers);
- Regional agendas received more substance, but remained insufficiently shared and consolidated, thus largely failing to produce added value. A solid ‘bridge’ between regional dialogues and national dynamics was not constructed;
- There was only a limited ‘uptake’ by the EU institutions of the policy inputs and recommendations provided by Majalat on the various priority themes. Evidence of effective policy influencing is scarce.

Several factors explain the weaknesses that emerged during the implementation of Majalat. At the outset, both parties failed to clearly spell out why they wanted this structured dialogue (beyond generic broad goals) and to achieve what kind of results (considering the difficult political economy realities in the region and the shrinking space for civic action). The lead consortium managed to elaborate valuable products and carry out a wide range of useful and appreciated activities (such as sub-granting). However, it was too divided internally to provide the required leadership and capacity to deliver on the more challenging parts of its mandate (e.g. opening-up participation to the other civil society actors, addressing the generational gap, engaging strategically with the EU). This was compounded by heterogeneity and fragility of the wider civil society involved, particularly its poor knowledge on how the EU works, what it can do and not do, and what policy influencing entails in practice. Another key factor was the lack of effective co-management of the
structured dialogue -in a way that respected the lead role of the consortium while ensuring legitimate concerns of the EU were taken on board. Underlying all this were growing doubts about the commitment of the EU to politically engage in regional dialogue processes. Civil society actors see a dilution of the political dimensions of the dialogue in favor of a more instrumental, primarily technical approach (e.g. around EU programming choices).

The Majalat process may not have yielded the expected results and the delegation format adopted may have proved unsustainable, but this does not mean the need for a strategic and structured dialogue between the EU and the civil society is no longer there. The deteriorating situation and the deepening governance challenges in the region, make such a dialogue more imperative than ever. There is a broad-based and genuine demand for a new cycle of regional dialogues, yet on the condition that its rationale, added value and modus operandi are profoundly reframed and renegotiated, amongst others by embedding it much more in national dynamics.

This overall assessment can be spelled out in seven conclusions, presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN CONCLUSIONS</th>
<th>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **C.1 The experiment of delegating responsibilities for the dialogue yielded positive dynamics within civil society** | • Effective use of the ‘space’ provided to civil society for developing its own vision, spelling out reform agendas and providing policy inputs towards the EU;  
• Improved communication flows;  
• Enhanced networking;  
• Higher levels of ownership of the dialogue process. |
| **C.2 The weak political foundations and institutional arrangements underpinning Malajat hampered effective implementation** | • No clear political choices were made by the EU at the start on the rationale and added value of the new dialogue cycle;  
• Absence of a theory of change and shared results framework;  
• Limited strategic ‘co-management’ of the structured dialogue leading to a less than optimal match of mutual expectations;  
• No mechanism to facilitate dialogue on a more recurrent basis (in between formal processes);  
• Weak involvement of EU Delegations;  
• Limited political steering by EU all along the process. |
| **C.3 The civil society consortium delivered valuable products and services yet its wider strategic roles were hampered by flaws in internal governance and management** | • Effective mobilization of civil society, organization of dialogue processes and supervision of knowledge production and elaboration of recommendations;  
• Limited strategic capacity and flexibility to accommodate key EU concerns and requests;  
• Limited openness to reach out in a structured manner to civil society actors beyond their own sphere of influence; |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN CONCLUSIONS</th>
<th>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reluctance to enter into strategic partnerships and wider civil society alliances.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C.4 Civil society actors had unrealistic expectations towards the EU and did not master the art of policy influencing</strong></td>
<td>• Despite capacity development initiatives, the knowledge of civil society on how the EU works and what it can do remained limited; • Production of unrealistic policy recommendations; • Limited real dialogue on how to go for incremental and feasible changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C.5 Regional dialogues under Majalat were too much pushed forward 'in a bubble'</strong></td>
<td>• Limited ownership levels of the regional agendas; • Weak linkages with national dynamics and actors; • Absence of connections with other regional dialogue processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C.6 The overall impact of Majalat was limited</strong></td>
<td>• Positive effects in policy formulation capacity and ownership of the regional dialogue; • Limited coalition building; • Limited effective uptake and policy influencing towards the EU; • Unsustainable model to delegate responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C.7 Existence of a shared demand for a different type of regional dialogue</strong></td>
<td>• Frustrations and fatigue regarding current approaches to regional dialogue; • Wide recognition of the ‘weight’ and influence of regional dynamics in the Neighbourhood South; • Civil society fears of having a fragmented, depoliticised and largely technical approach to regional dialogue; • Calls for reinventing the regional dialogue approach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6  Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Clarify the political ambitions and commitment of the EU regarding the future regional dialogue

This recommendation is linked to Conclusions 2, 5, 6 and 7

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EEAS, EUDs

Main associated actors:

Core lessons and learning

In all core EU policy documents there is a systematic reference to the crucial role of civil society and the added value it can bring as policy interlocutor. This holds particularly true for the Neighbourhood South, where the EU stepped up its engagement with civil society after the Arab Spring. However, a key lesson learnt is the existence of a major gap between EU policy discourse and practice, as reflected in the experience of the Civil Society Facility (2012-2016). A wide range of useful initiatives were funded, generating promising dynamics. Yet the potential of these processes remained under-utilized due to lack of effective political engagement and steering by the EU. The Majalat experience suffered from the same structural weakness. The EU launched this new cycle of regional dialogue with an important innovation in approach, i.e. the delegation of responsibilities for the structured dialogue to civil society actors. However, this major shift was not underpinned by a set of fundamental political choices before the start of the experiment (i.e. “why such a dialogue, who wants it, who will engage and to achieve what”). As a result, Majalat was built on weak political foundations. During implementation, there was equally a lack of political support and steering for the whole regional dialogue process, reflected in a growing disengagement of high-level EU officials. This situation is resented by civil society actors who express doubts about the EU’s real commitment to a politically-oriented regional dialogue.

As the EU prepares the ground for a new round of regional dialogue, it seems imperative to avoid doing the same mistakes again. Both the credibility and the possible success of the future scheme will depend heavily on clear political choices by the EU ab initio regarding the rationale and added value of the regional dialogue and its institutional embedment

What should be improved? How could this be done?

Make explicit the EU’s political expectations regarding the future regional dialogue

- Top level management to specify why it wants such a regional dialogue, what political use it wants to make of it and what results it wants to achieve.
- It will be particularly important to clarify if the EU is prepared to go beyond the now dominant use of the regional dialogue for instrumental, programming-related issues and restore the primacy of a more politically oriented approach (as expected by the civil society of the region);
- In spelling out the EU’s political ambitions, it will be crucial to integrate the political economy realities of the region (including shrinking space for civil society) and identify the resulting implications for the future dialogue. Such choices
### Recommendation 1: Clarify the political ambitions and commitment of the EU regarding the future regional dialogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Effective buy-in from key institutional players</strong></th>
<th>need explicit and shared with civil society, so as to avoid a mismatch of expectations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- It is not sufficient to spell out more clearly EU levels of commitment towards the regional dialogue. It is equally important to assess the levels of interest within the various EU institutions for effectively engaging in a regional dialogue;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- This implies mapping the domains, agendas or processes where the different EU players see potential for working with the regional civil society. The purpose is to get a good view of the “demand-side” from within the EU;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- It also requires the identification of strategies to provide incentives for engagement to the various institutional actors and reinforce overall buy in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Equally important is to clearly define and agree upon the <strong>expected outcomes</strong> of a new cycle of structured dialogue.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Anchoring the regional dialogue in the ‘EU machine’</strong></th>
<th>- Malajat ended up being primarily managed as ‘a project’ pushed forward by a small unit of DG NEAR;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- A clear indicator of EU commitment to a more politically oriented and steered regional dialogue is the degree in which it will embed it “in the right place in the EU system” and effectively link to core political and policy processes;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- In order to achieve this, there should be strategic planning of regional dialogue priorities and outcomes, involving all relevant actors;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- To avoid the problem experienced by Majalat that all the energy is concentrated on formal dialogue events, identify suitable mechanisms to have a recurrent, needs-based and dynamic approach to regional dialogue with civil society (with opportunities to meet “in-between” events, as this is the case with the dialogue in the Eastern partnership;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Need to revitalize the IISG to ensure ongoing political steering.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Recommendation 2: Investment in better knowledge of civil society arena in the region

This recommendation is linked to Conclusions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EUDs

Main associated actors:

Core lessons and learning

If the EU chooses to revitalize the political foundations of the future dialogue and enhance its direct relevance for the various EU institutional actors (recommendation 1) then it needs to invest in better knowledge of the evolving civil society arena including social movements and informal organizations. The Majalat consortium had not really invested in such mappings and this hampered its outreach, inclusivity, representation as well as its capacity to identify ‘the right interlocutors’ for the various topics of the regional dialogue. This investment in “knowing who is who”, “what are the promising regional / national dynamics topic-wise, where are the relevant sources of expertise, etc. is even more important if the future dialogue wants to be more demand-driven, flexible and differentiated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should be improved?</th>
<th>How could this be done?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the CS arena in the NS region</td>
<td>- Conducting mappings and other relevant tools to give the EU a better knowledge of the structure, interest, location, capacities, etc. of the CSOs working at both national and regional level in the targeted region.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Collect and analyse available data on existing national and regional dynamics linked to targeted themes of the structured dialogue.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Elaboration of database of local and regional experts research institutes (universities, think tanks, etc.) and facilitators having a real added value on various topics linked to the structured dialogue.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Mapping of other structured dialogue initiatives in the region to find synergies et avoid duplications.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Recommendation 3:** Consultation and negotiation with relevant actors - including civil society - with a view to define a common vision, shared objectives, aligned expectations as well as an agreed implementation model for the future regional dialogue

This recommendation is linked to Conclusions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EEAS, EUDs

Main associated actors: relevant civil society actors, potential FPAs

### Core lessons and learning

Evidence collected clearly demonstrates the whole Majalat experiment rested on weak political foundations and ill-adapted institutional arrangements to ensure buy-in from various EU institutional actors and to allow for a smooth implementation process that would be mutually beneficial. The absence of a clear vision and agreement on the rationale and added value of the regional dialogue on both sides is a main explanatory factor for the limited impact and the growing frustrations on both sides on the lack of relevance of regional dialogues.

The task at hand is not merely to agree on an alternative implementation model to succeed the consortium format used during Majalat. This obviously has to be done, but it should come after having made first a number of fundamental political choices regarding the rationale and added value of the regional dialogues. Otherwise, the future scheme will repeat the flaws of the Majalat design process and possibly recreate poor conditions for effective implementation. Hence, the need for open, frank, well-prepared and inclusive consultations and negotiations with civil society representatives, the relevant EU entities and the EUDs in Neighbourhood south region.

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<tr>
<td>Consultation and negotiation with civil society to agree on shared vision, solid political foundation and buy in of the future dialogue</td>
<td>- Set up an inclusive process civil society to agree on a common vision, fundamental objectives, added value, mandate, rationale and expected results of such dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Similar consultations should be done with various other relevant actors EU entities such as EEAS, other DG NEAR UNITS, European parliament and EUDs in the Neighbourhood south region.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding an alternative model to ensure an effective steering and management os the structured dialogue</td>
<td>- Establishment of Framework Partnership Agreements with several organizations to organize activities related to structured dialogue as well as for capacity building and input to the forum;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attention should be paid to the elaboration of shared steering and management rules of the FPAs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ensure the implementation of the principle of differentiation in order to be able to carry out actions in a small group of neighboring countries where the conditions are favorable;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Avoid that the FPA approach leads to thematically fragmented regional dialogues, incurring the risk of diluting the systemic and integrated nature of the regional challenges as well as of adopting primarily 'technocratic' approaches.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendation 4: Reverse the logic and construct the regional agendas from the bottom up (national dynamics)

This recommendation is linked to conclusions 5, 6, 7

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EEAS, EUDs

Main associated actors:

Core lessons and learning

A core lesson learnt is that the way regional agendas have so far been constructed (also under Majalat) is not conducive to ensuring optimal relevance, outreach to policymakers, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The identification of relevant agendas, priority themes, entry points and potential actors to be involved/targeted happens too much “in a bubble”. This leads to important disconnects with ‘upstream’ political processes (in the EU external action or among governments in partner countries) as well as ‘downstream’ dynamics at national level and among EU Delegations. As a result, regional dialogues do not often ‘land’ properly and fail to really influence ongoing processes at national level.

The recommendation is to inverse the logic of defining suitable regional dialogue agendas from above and in a relative “silo” and rather go for an approach that starts from national dynamics and interests of the various actors. This should provide a stronger foundation to identify promising avenues for regional processes that complement and reinforce national dynamics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure genuine ownership of regional agendas on both sides, including among potentially interested national actors</td>
<td>- Identify much more targeted (especially regarding themes) and realistic regional agendas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proceed to a bottom-up process at national level to identify promising avenues for regional dialogue</td>
<td>- Build future regional dialogue primarily on the basis of relevant national dynamics; - Ensure alignment of the choice of topics with the interests of involved /targeted actors; - Fully associate EUDs from the outset to ensure effective link with EU actions in the NS countries; - Explore the space to also meaningfully involve national governments; -Based on national dynamics and the content defined above, relevant national actors will then be able to carry out the dialogue at the regional level -together with relevant regional actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply variable geometry approaches</td>
<td>- Use the opportunities in some countries where there is more space and potential to experiment differentiated regional dialogue actions involving a limited number of countries.</td>
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</table>
**Recommendation 5: Co-management of the different steps of the structured dialogue leading to mutual understanding and trust**

This recommendation is linked to Conclusions 5

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EEAS, EUDs

Main associated actors:

**Core lessons and learning**

The experiment of the delegation to the civil society structured dialogue with the EU contributed to improve the stakeholder ownership but faced many limitations. It is a necessary that the future structured dialogue should be based on an institutional mechanism leading **to an effective co-management.** Also, civil society must be more realistic by making effort to improve its knowledge of the complex EU sphere as well as in policy influencing techniques. The commitment of the different services and entities of the EU which was variable during the previous phase should be strengthened as well.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should be improved?</th>
<th>How could this be done?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-management of the structured dialogue</td>
<td>-Establishment of a SD steering and monitoring committee with representatives of CS and the EU to jointly agree on the preparation and implementation of dialogue events to avoid fragmentation or dilution of actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the realism of civil society</td>
<td>-More awareness of the CS south partners on EU works to increase mutual understanding; - Capacity building on targeting thematic and in policy influencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen EU commitment</td>
<td>-Establishment of an Institutional Steering Committee with representatives of the different EU entities to relay the results of the SD to EU decision-making bodies; - Organising High-level political dialogue with civil society on this basis within the existing frameworks of the partnership with neighbouring countries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendation 6: Adopt a result-oriented approach to (co-) managing the regional dialogue

This recommendation is linked to Conclusions 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EEAS, EUDs

Main associated actors:

Core lessons and learning

The impact of Majalat has been quite limited in relation to core objectives such as greater outreach and inclusion, enhancing the quality of the dialogue, forging shared regional agendas or influencing EU policies and practices. Several factors contributed to these less than optimal results, including the lack of a result-oriented approach to managing the whole dialogue process. The lessons learnt from the Majalat experiment show that several building blocks to ensure such an approach were missing. There was no clear definition of concrete objectives, no theory of change or shared results framework. The limited impact of the civil society’s policy influencing can be partly attributed to the deficient knowledge about the functioning of the EU and the lack of methods/capacities for effective policy advocacy. One of the consortium members was in charge of M&E, but this was primarily done to track the outputs of the various activities, less on outcomes and learning. Furthermore, mechanisms to identify the real demand for regional inputs among the various stakeholders or for joint learning were lacking. All this puts an onus on the EU to put in place a genuine system to ensure a result-oriented approach to managing the new dialogue processes.

What should be improved?  | How could this be done?
---|---
Define a clear set of objectives, a realistic and context sensitive theory of change | - The scope to put in place a result-oriented system for the new regional dialogue will depend on the political choices made by EU regarding levels of ambition and related institutional arrangement (see recommendation 1 above);
- If the EU opts for a politically-driven approach to the regional dialogue and a clear embedment in relevant institutional units and processes, the task at hand will be to jointly define a set of political objectives and targets for the dialogue;
- considering the huge volatility of the overall situation in the region and the structural limitations of the EU, linked to its powers, competences and own institutional environment, a realistic theory of change is a condition sine qua non to ensure a strategic and result-oriented approach;
- Adopt a dynamic approach to identifying needs, understanding the ‘demand side’ for civil society inputs or promising avenues for regional dialogue.

Develop a results framework and share relevant parts of it with the civil society partners | - Elaborate and validate the results framework at political level and with the involvement of all relevant institutional actors (based on the theory of change adopted);
- To the extent possible share the results framework with civil society partners;
- Foresee possibilities to adapt the results framework.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recommendation 6: Adopt a result-oriented approach to (co-) managing the regional dialogue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rethink capacity development approaches for civil society geared at better understanding the EU and engage in effective policy influencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Critically review why past efforts had less than optimal effects;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Explore more suitable strategies to disseminate relevant information on the EU to regional civil society actors;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Detect relevant expertise from the region that could be mobilised for capacity development on effective advocacy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Put in place a strategic M&amp;E system</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Avoid activity-driven approaches to M&amp;E;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Develop a system to track the quality of the regional dialogue processes (in terms of content, actors involved, connection with national dynamics, uptake, follow-up, etc.);</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Associate high-level policymakers in reviewing progress achieved and considering adjustments.</td>
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## Annex 1 Evaluation questions (EQs)

### Cluster 1: Political basis and overall strategy

| EQ 1: How solid were the political foundations of the new EU-civil society dialogue approach, as conceived in 2016? |
| Description/ Rationale | Engaging in a mutually beneficial structured dialogue over time is a complex process. This holds particularly true when the parties involved are a supranational entity like the EU, on the one hand, and a diverse and fragmented group of civil society actors from a neighbouring region, on the other hand. They may have common interests in organising such a dialogue yet the relationship will inevitably be characterized by an asymmetry of power and diverging institutional logics. All this means that both parties need to clearly determine, right from the outset, their fundamental political agendas (“why do we want this structured dialogue?”). EQ 1 seeks to understand how both parties spelled out their fundamental political interests and goals - building on lessons learnt from past structured dialogue processes- and ensured political buy-in (JC 1.1) and ownership as well as the existence of shared vision among civil society actors in the region on the added value of such structured dialogue with the EU (JC 1.2). |

| Main evaluation criteria covered: Relevance |
| Methods and sources of information: | a documentary review including EU policies to engage with civil society, documents related to external action (e.g. the 2016 Global Strategy) or to the Neighbourhood South (e.g. the updated 2015 ENP), guidelines of the call of proposal related to structured dialogue/ interviews key stakeholders (DG Near/EEAS/EUDs/ Majalat consortium/ civil society in the region, other strategic documents (EU its member states). |

| JC 1.1 | Existence of a clear EU political vision on the rationale and added value of the structured dialogue with civil society in the Neighbourhood South |
| Indicator 1.1.1 | Lessons were drawn from past experiences with structured dialogue between the EU and civil society and used to define a coherent new engagement strategy. |
| Indicator 1.1.2 | A clearly spelled out and shared political mandate was agreed upon with all relevant actors on the political objectives of the structured dialogue, underpinned by suitable institutional arrangements to ensure buy-in. |

| JC 1.2 | Existence of a shared vision among civil society actors in the neighbourhood south region on the rationale and added value of the structured dialogue with the EU |
| Indicator 1.2.1 | An inclusive and transparent process was followed to draw lessons from past dialogue experiences and identify possible alternatives. |
| Indicator 1.2.2 | A clear and cohesive common position among relevant actors was forged on the political objectives of the structured dialogue and suitable institutional arrangements.29. |

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29 The restricted call for proposals format and choice for a consortium approach imposed on limitations on such an exercise. Still, consortium members had to consider the feasibility of playing the catalyst role and develop a cohesive vision on purpose and modus operandi.
**EQ 2: To what extent and how did the EU and the civil society actors involve align their interests, political objectives and expected results to forge a common vision on how to organise and conduct a renewed, mutually beneficial structured dialogue?**

**Description/ Rationale**

Within this cluster, EQ 2 will assess how both the EU and the civil society actors involved managed to reconcile their respective visions and political agendas (see EQ 1) and forge a solid consensus on essential elements of the new approach to the structured dialogue they wanted to set up together -taking into account the prevailing political economy conditions in the region and resulting limitations in terms of civic space and constructive state-society relations. The focus is on the design process and related outcomes in terms of the overall intervention logic, underlying assumptions and results framework as well as the choice of core implementation approaches (JC 2.1). By looking at how these various crucial decisions were made during the conception phase of the new approach, we may be able to determine how robust the overall framework was for the renewed structural dialogue at the start of the process. The second JC focuses on lessons learnt with the new dialogue mechanism and the implications for future approaches.

**Main evaluation criteria covered:** Relevance, coherence

**Methods and sources of information:** a documentary review including EU policies to engage with civil society, documents related to external action (e.g. the 2016 Global Strategy) or to the Neighbourhood South (e.g. the updated 2015 ENP), guidelines of the call of proposal related to structured dialogue/ interviews key stakeholders (DG Near/EEAS/EUDs/ Majalat consortium/ civil society in the region, other strategic documents (EU its member states)

| JC 2.1 | Quality and coherence of the overall strategic and institutional framework agreed upon by parties to revitalise the structured dialogue |
| Indicator 2.1.1 | The strategy adopted to delegate the renewed structured dialogue to civil society organisations (i) rests on solid assumptions and adequate risk analysis / mitigation approaches (factoring in political economy constraints); (ii) is based on a realistic intervention logic (theory of change) shared by both parties and (iii) specifies the added value of this initiative compared to other existing dialogue processes. |
| Indicator 2.1.2 | Adequate governance and institutional mechanisms were elaborated to jointly manage the structured dialogue, based on clear rules of the game, e.g. in terms of explicit roles for the EU in the new scheme, agenda-setting, decision-making processes, role division during implementation, communication conflict resolution mechanisms. |

| JC 2.2 | Lessons learnt and implications for the design future dialogue processes |
| Indicator 2.2.1 | Stakeholders views on lessons learnt and implications for the governance and institutional mechanisms underpinning the future dialogue process as well as on coping strategies to deal with a deteriorating overall regional climate for constructive civil society engagement. |
Cluster 2: Implementation of the structured dialogue

**EQ 3: To what extent and how did the civil society actors in charge of the Majalat process ensure effective governance and management of the structured dialogue?**

| Description/ Rationale | The capitalisation of past dialogue experiences clearly indicated the limits of having an “EU-driven” process (whereby EU institutions largely determined the agenda, selected the civil society participants, drew the conclusions and defined follow-up actions even with the support of external technical assistance). In order to enhance both the civil society ownership of the process and its overall relevance/impact, it was decided to delegate the main responsibility for organising and conducting the structured dialogue to a consortium of civil society organisations, selected through a competitive Call for Proposals. This EQ seeks to assess how well the consortium performed its complex mandate to be “in the driving seat” by looking at the overall effectiveness/efficiency of the internal governance processes and its ability to adopt inclusive approaches, mobilise relevant forms of expertise and establishing strategic partnerships (JC 3.1).

Main evaluation criteria covered: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness and Efficiency

Methods and sources of information: documentary review those related to the implementation such as contracts, narrative and financial reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, reports of Brussels and regional forums/interviews key stakeholders (DG Near/EEAS/EUDs/ Majalat consortium/partners in countries, beneficiaries and participants to dialogue events, other implementing documents

| JC 3.1 | The consortium of civil society organisations ensured an **effective, transparent and cohesive functioning of the internal governance mechanisms** (in terms of planning, agenda-setting, decision-making, communication and follow-up of structured dialogue activities) while fostering **inclusive approaches**, mobilising relevant forms of expertise, establishing strategic partnerships and connecting regional and national dynamics

| Indicator 3.1.1 | The division of roles and responsibilities of the various actors and spheres of influence within the consortium is clearly defined and effective mechanisms are in place to ensure an ongoing dialogue internally, monitor implementation, identify bottlenecks, adjust response strategies and resolve potential conflicts.

| Indicator 3.1.2 | Existence and quality of policies and approaches for effective outreach (including mappings), expert mobilisation, partnership development and linkages between regional and national dynamics.

| JC 3.2 | Lessons learnt and implications for the future dialogue process

| Indicator 3.2.1 | Stakeholders views on lessons learnt and implications for the future dialogue process in terms of outreach approaches, expert mobilisation, partnership development and linkages with national dialogue processes.
**EQ 4: To what extent and how did the EU institutions concerned organise themselves to ensure effective political steering, coordination and management of the structured dialogue?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description/ Rationale</th>
<th>Putting the civil society of the Neighbourhood South in 2016 in the driving seat was a major strategic reorientation of EU approaches to structured dialogue. While it could be justified from a perspective of ensuring greater ownership by the civil society of the region and overall relevance/effectiveness of the process, it implied a recalibration of roles and responsibilities of EU institutions in the newly envisaged partnership. This EQ will assess to what extent and how the EU adapted its modus operandi and internal organisation to fit the new reality by allowing a genuine devolution of responsibilities to civil society (JC 4.1) while ensuring coherent political steering, buy-in from the different EU institutions and mobilisation of relevant EU actors in the dialogue processes (JC 4.2).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main evaluation criteria covered:</td>
<td>Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness and Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and sources of information:</td>
<td>documentary review those related to the implementation such as contracts, narrative and financial reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, reports of Brussels and regional forums/interviews key stakeholders (DG Near/EEAS/EUDs/ Majalat consortium/partners in countries, beneficiaries and participants to dialogue events, other implementing documents)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| JC 4.1 | The EU helped to create the conditions to put the civil society in the driving seat of organising and conducting the structured dialogue |
| Indicator 4.1.1 | Existence of a genuine space for civil society organisations to set the agenda, organise and steer the various dialogue events (at national, regional and Brussels-based levels) and ensure an effective follow-up of recommendations. |
| Indicator 4.1.2 | Preparedness and ability of the EU institutions involved to accommodate to the devolved system of responsibilities under Majalat while making constructive proposals to also integrate legitimate EU concerns into the overall process. |

| JC 4.2 | The EU maintained the political interest for engaging the various institutions in a civil society-led structured dialogue all along the implementation process |
| Indicator 4.2.1 | Adequate levels of political support and incentives from the top of the various EU institutions involved for investing in the structured dialogue with the civil society of the Neighbourhood South. |
| Indicator 4.2.2 | The overall capacity of the steering and coordination mechanisms involved (i.e. the Inter-institutional Steering Committee or the unit in charge in DG NEAR) to mobilise relevant political interlocutors and expertise for the dialogue processes. |
**EQ 5: To what extent and how did the EU and the civil society organisations in charge manage to jointly steer the dialogue processes so as to ensure relevance for both parties?**

| Description/ Rationale | In the new format of the structured dialogue, a consortium of civil society organisations was put in the driving seat of the implementation process, requiring innovative governance and institutional arrangements (see EQ 3) as well as adjustments on the EU side (see EQ 4). However, the linchpin of the new dialogue approach resides in the ability of both parties to continue managing the process as a joint endeavour with respect for the division of roles and responsibilities agreed upon. This EQ therefore seeks to assess how both parties co-managed key aspects of the implementation process to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes and a political dialogue on progress achieved (JC 5.1) while drawing lessons and implications for the next phase of the dialogue process (JC 5.2).

Main evaluation criteria covered: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness and Efficiency

Methods and sources of information: documentary review those related to the implementation such as contracts, narrative and financial reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, reports of Brussels and regional forums/interviews key stakeholders (DG Near/EEAS/EUDs/ Majalat consortium/partners in countries, beneficiaries and participants to dialogue events, other implementing documents

| JC 5.1 | Adequate institutional mechanisms and capacities for planning and coordination are in place to facilitate the accommodation of the political agendas and specific concerns of both parties (including reactivity to EU requests)

Indicator 5.1.1 | The organisation of the dialogue processes has been inclusive, transparent and participatory and responded in a balanced manner to the expectations of the various EU institutions and civil society organisations involved while ensuring that the planned outputs were effectively delivered.

Indicator 5.1.2 | Adequate institutional mechanisms and capacities are in place to have a political dialogue on progress achieved, consider bottlenecks encountered and adjust the overall intervention strategy in a flexible and result-oriented manner.

| JC 5.2 | Lessons learnt and implications for the future dialogue process

Indicator 5.2.1 | Stakeholders views on lessons learnt and implications for the future dialogue process in terms of joint responsibilities and adequate role division between EU and civil society.
Cluster 3: Results achieved

**EQ 6: To what extent has the Majalat process contributed to enhanced ownership of the structured dialogue process by a broader and more diverse set of civil society actors?**

| Description/ Rationale | This EQ seeks to assess the contributions of Majalat to increasing ownership levels of the civil society actors from the region and the related willingness of relevant actors to engage in the structured dialogue process over time. It implies an evaluation of the way in which the consortium played an effective ‘catalyst’ role in widening the circle of civil society actors in the structured dialogue (beyond the usual suspects) and in building a stronger regional movement (JC 6.1). It equally calls for an examination of the strengths and capacities of this regional civil society ‘movement’ to produce and defend a credible advocacy agenda towards the EU institutions (JC 6.2).  
Main evaluation criteria: Relevance, coherence, impact  
Methods and sources of information: documentary review those related to the implementation such, monitoring and evaluation reports, capitalisation reports, reports of Brussels and regional forums/interviews key stakeholders (DG Near/EEAS/EUDs/ Majalat consortium/partners in countries, beneficiaries and participants to dialogue events, other implementing documents. |

| JC 6.1 | The consortium Majalat has acted as an effective catalyst in bringing together the civil society of the region in the structured dialogue process while ensuring greater diversity inclusion and diversity of actors (particularly young women and men) involved all along the chain and over time.  
Indicator 6.1.1 | Evidence of enhanced levels of outreach, representation and diversity of civil society organisations actively engaged in the various dialogue processes (e.g. through a transparent selection of participants).  
Indicator 6.1.2 | Effectivity of the capacity development support provided (e.g. on how to advocate, on how the EU functions) and evidence of positive impact with sub-granting system.  
Indicator 6.1.3 | Evidence of improved coordination and networking among civil society organisations as well as citizens. |

| JC 6.2 | The Majalat process has contributed to an enhanced collective action capacity of civil society and citizen from the region to push forward a credible advocacy agenda towards the EU institutions  
Indicator 6.2.1 | Evidence of collective action resulting in successfully producing qualitative and realistic policy proposals and recommendations on the various priority themes of the dialogue process.  
Indicator 6.2.2 | Evidence of collective action resulting in successfully defending the regional advocacy agendas in the dialogue with the EU institutions. |
**EQ 7: To what extent have the various dialogue processes contributed to influencing EU policies and practices?**

**Description/ Rationale**
A core element of the Majalat process was to organise a set of interconnected dialogue processes at various levels (national, regional, Brussels-based) to elaborate internally shared advocacy agendas and subsequently exchange them with EU institutions. The ultimate goal of all these dialogues was to influence EU policies and practices. Hence, this EQ first assesses the level of (high-level) political/policy uptake of civil society proposals in the various thematic priorities agreed upon as well as the level of (more downstream) influence on EU practices such as the programming process (JC 7.1). It then examines how much progress has been achieved in pushing forward a genuine ‘regional’ agenda (JC 7.2)

*Main evaluation criteria covered: Relevance, Coherence, Impact*

*Methods and sources of information: documentary review those related to the implementation such, monitoring and evaluation reports, capitalisation reports, reports of Brussels and regional forums/interviews key stakeholders (DG Near/EEAS/EUOs/ Majalat consortium/partners in countries, beneficiaries and participants to dialogue events, other implementing documents.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JC 7.1</th>
<th>There has been an effective uptake of civil society proposals by relevant EU institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 7.1.1</td>
<td>Evidence of influence exercised by civil society inputs in EU political positions and or major policy orientations (formally and informally).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 7.1.2</td>
<td>Evidence of influence exercised by civil society inputs in EU programming processes, operational approaches and working methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 7.1.3</td>
<td>Evidence of enhanced levels of dialogue between EU and civil society “in-between” formal dialogue events (e.g. more permanent channels for conveying key messages to EU institutions).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JC 7.2</th>
<th>Progress has been achieved in forging stronger regional agendas and dynamics between the EU and the civil society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 7.2.1</td>
<td>Evidence that specific regional policy agendas (providing added value to national dynamics) are becoming more substantive, shared and consolidated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 7.2.2</td>
<td>Evidence of growing political relevance of genuinely regional dialogue process for both the EU and civil society (in terms of a critical mass of actors involved, the prominence of regional issues and the potential to change EU policies and practices).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex 2 List of persons interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution / Organisation</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>DG Near</td>
<td>Henrike TRAUTMANN</td>
<td>Head of regional programs unit B2, acting director B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pascal ODUL</td>
<td>Head of sector, unit B2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kristina PRUNEROVA</td>
<td>Majalat Project manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gaby Hagmuller</td>
<td>Inter-institutional group, Good governance CoTE, civil society</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Francesca Fabbri</td>
<td>Inter-institutional group, Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cristina Cassela</td>
<td>Inter-institutional group, environment and climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Morgane Buttiens</td>
<td>Inter-institutional group, Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brigita Salkute</td>
<td>EaP Civil Society Forum, Project manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEAS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diana Senczyszyn</td>
<td>MENA 5 unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Euromed rights</td>
<td>Vincent FORET</td>
<td>Advocacy and communication Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yon Janssen</td>
<td>Malajat coordinator (April 2019 – April 2021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah Zahrou</td>
<td>Malajat coordinator (May – September 2021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paula Bula Galiano</td>
<td>Financial controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Réseau euromed France (REF)</td>
<td>Giovannia Tanzerella</td>
<td>REF vice-President and BoT Majalat consortium –</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nathalie Mehdi</td>
<td>Majalat staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Olivier CONSOLO</td>
<td>Independent consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Solidar</td>
<td>Sergio Basoli</td>
<td>BoT Majalat consortium- In charge of internal evaluation of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>Leandro Medeot</td>
<td>Civil society focal point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>ATUC</td>
<td>Hind Benammar</td>
<td>Majalat consortium – in charge of Majalat database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>Roula Abbas</td>
<td>Program officer – Civil society - tripartite dialogue project manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANND</td>
<td>Ziad Abdel Samad</td>
<td>BoT Majalat consortium – Responsible of CS regional forum south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>Severin Strohal</td>
<td>Head of governance section</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sophie Huet-Gueriche</td>
<td>Program officer – Youth</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cristina Fernandez</td>
<td>Program officer – tripartite dialogue project manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FMAS</td>
<td>Kamel Lehbib</td>
<td>BoT Majalat consortium – Director of tripartite dialogue EU funded project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>Tom ASHWANDEN</td>
<td>Head of governance section</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Piergiorgio Calisti</td>
<td>Civil society focal point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Euromedrights</td>
<td>Lilia Rebai</td>
<td>Liaison officer between Majalat staff and Euromedrights BoT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3 Survey for participants/beneficiaries of Majalat

BACKGROUND

There is a long history of dialogue between the European Union and the civil society of the two shores of the Mediterranean, dating back to the Barcelona process (1995) and then taken forward under the Neighbourhood South partnership. In 2016, it was decided to delegate the organisation and conduct of the new cycle of the structured dialogue process to civil society in order to enhance ownership, relevance and impact. A consortium of six leading regional civil society networks was put in place to this end. Over the past 4 years, a wide range of dialogue events were organised at various levels (national, regional, Brussels-based) allowing an expanding group of civil society actors to set their own agendas and formulate recommendations towards the European Union. The Majalat consortium also invested heavily in communication with stakeholders and was in charge of providing sub-granting and capacity development support. The COVID crisis inevitably impacted upon the whole process.

The Majalat process ended in September 2021. Discussions are underway to define the format and modus operandi for the future structured dialogue in the period 2022-2026. In this context an independent evaluation has been launched in June 2021 to assess the achievements and challenges encountered by Majalat and above all to draw conclusions for the future dialogue arrangements.

This survey is part of the evaluation exercise. It seeks to reach out to the civil society stakeholders (including structured organisations, informal movements, youth, citizens) that participated in the structured dialogue process over the past four years. Your insights will be of great help in charting the path for the future. Hence, we kindly invite you to answer this survey which has been kept short on purpose, focusing on four key questions (see below)

Practical information

• The survey will be online between Monday 8 November and Wednesday 18 November.
• It should not take you more than 15 minutes to fill in the form
• All answers will remain confidential
• For more information, please contact Zakaria Amar (za@ecdpm.org)

Required Information

SOME GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE RESPONDENT

1. Identification

   Title
   
   Full Name
   
   Gender
   --Select--

   Email Address
2. Location?

Characters Remaining: 100

3. Type of organization?

Characters Remaining: 100

4. Size of the organisation?

Characters Remaining: 100

5. Level of engagement

- national
- regional
- global
- mix of these

6. Years of experience of your organisation regarding the structured dialogue with the EU?

Characters Remaining: 1000

7. Domains / themes of expertise?

Characters Remaining: 1000

8. Did you engage as a citizen?

- man
- women
- youth
- Other (Please specify)

QUESTION 1: How did you participate in the Majalat process during the period 2017-2021?

9.1.1. How did you got involved in the Majalat process?

- Through previous engagement in the structured dialogue with the EU
- Through invitation by the consortium
- Through members of the networks to which you belong
- Through the website of Majalat and expression of interest
- Other (Please specify)
10.1.2. What was the nature an intensity of your engagement in the Majalat process?
- Ongoing, strategic and structured over time
- Selective on issues of specific interest
- Rather ad hoc
- Sporadic
- Other (Please specify)

11.1.3. On what themes did you primarily engage?
- Human rights, democracy, governance
- Economic cooperation and trade
- Security
- Climate change
- Migration
- Other (Please specify)

12.1.4. At what level did you participate?
- In national dialogue events organised by Majalat
- In regional dialogue events specifically for civil society organised by Majalat
- In the Brussels-based dialogue with the EU
- In a mix of the above dialogue events
- Other (Please specify)

QUESTION 2: Quality of the dialogue events / activities organised by Majalat

13.2.1. What is your overall appreciation of the preparation and organisation of the dialogue events by the Majalat consortium in which you participated:
- Highly effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not effective
- Variable quality of preparation, organisation and conduct of the dialogue events

14.2.2. Can you specify the above answer by indicating your levels of appreciation for various aspects of the preparation and organisation of the dialogue events? Please score each of these dimensions according to following grid: 1 (poor), 2 (fair), 3 (good) or 4 (excellent)

(a) Timely information and communication on a planned dialogue event (including list of participants)
(b) Timely elaboration of a relevant agenda responding to the expectations of participants
(c) Information on how the EU functions and takes decisions (= management of expectations)
(d) Representativity / adequate mix of participants
(e) Quality of the expertise mobilised

(f) Effective methodology to ensure interactive debates and quality of the facilitation

(g) Quality of the recommendations towards the EU that were produced

(h) Timely reporting after meeting on key outcomes

(i) Information on follow-up actions

(j) Logistics for travel and accommodation

15.2.3. How do you appreciate the communication of the Majalat consortium « in between » dialogue events, amongst others through their website

- Highly effective
- Somewhat effective
- Of an adhoc nature
- Ineffective

16.2.4. Did you participate in capacity development activities initiated by Majalat ?
YES/NO
- Yes
- No

17. If you answered « yes », please specify which activities and give an appreciation :

Characters Remaining: 100

QUESTION 3: Relevance, added value and impact

18.3.1. How useful and relevant was your engagement in the Majalat process? Please score the following possible benefits that you derived from your engagement according to the following grid: 1 (poor), 2 (fair), 3 (good) or 4 (excellent)

(a) Better access to information on the politics of EU-civil society relations

(b) Higher profile of your organisation

(c) Improved regional networking

(d) New partnerships and alliances with CSOs

(e) Improved knowledge of shared regional agendas

(f) Improved knowledge of how the EU works

(g) Improved capacities
19.3.2. How do you appreciate the added value of the « regional » dialogue compared to national dialogue processes with the EU in which you engaged?
- High added value
- Moderate added value
- Limited added value
- Unclear added value

20.3.3. How do you appreciate the impact Majalat could achieve in terms of influencing EU policies and practices?
- High
- Moderate
- Limited
- Unclear

21. Please briefly motivate your reply below:

22.4.1. Is it your intention to continue engaging in future dialogue processes between EU and the civil society at regional level?
- YES, …. because it is crucial to have this dialogue and make it more effective
- YES, but in a more reduced way… because there is a cost attached to it and the results are less than expected
- YES, but on condition that the set-up of the dialogue is transformed into a more effective and outcome-oriented process
- NO,… because the added value of (also) engaging at regional level is not clear or not sufficient
- NO, … because the return on investment of time and energy is not satisfactory
- Other (Please specify)

23.4.2. Looking back, what have been the three main strong points of the overall Majalat process from your perspective:

Characters Remaining: 1000
24.4.3. Looking back, what have been the three main weak points of the overall Majalat process from your perspective:

Characters Remaining: 1000

25.4.4. Based on the above assessments (of strong and weak points) what are your three main recommendations for a more effective and mutually beneficial dialogue in the future?

Characters Remaining: 1000