

Strategies, Governance and Cooperation Committee Meeting

MINUTES

Date: 30 January 2026

Venue: OMEC Offices, 17 Place des Vins de France, 75012 Paris

AGENDA (9h30 – 13h CET)

1. Welcome & Strategic Framing, Alberto Bianchardi and Marco Piredda
2. JustMed contract (new contract with DG MENA)
3. Collective Diagnosis on OMEC: Where Are We Today? Building a shared understanding
4. Committees & Task Forces: Do We Need to Evolve?
5. Membership Growth & Funding: Strengthening Our Base
6. Strategic Priorities & Next Steps : key actions to be launched within the next 12 months
7. Summary of key takeaways

PARTICIPANTS

Chair:

BIANCARDI Alberto GSE, Italy

Vice-Chair:

PIREDDA Marco ENI, Italy

SALAH Sally EGAS, Egypt

Members:

DASSA François EDF, France

LAMONIN Marianne EDF, France

DI COSTANZO Alessandra EDISON, Italy

GANETO Gabriele EDISON, Italy

MALGIERI Igor EDISON, Italy

MATTANA Fabrizio EDISON, Italy

VALENTINI Vittoria EDISON, Italy

AVERIANOVA Polina ENI, Italy

MANTINI Maria ENI, Italy

PACE Francesco ENI, Italy

MOUHCINE Benmeziane IRESEN, Morocco

DIAZ Ana NATURGY, Spain

GALLARDO David NATURGY, Spain

TRIGUEROS Emilio NATURGY, Spain

LAGTARI Khalil ONEE, Morocco

PECCHI Giorgio SNAM, Italy

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OMEC:

BEN JANNET Houda OMEC, France

ELABBADY Nour OMEC, France

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POTI Roberto OMEC, France

SAAB Assad OMEC, France

URBANI Matteo OMEC, France

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Purpose and expected outcomes

The Committee meets to reassess OMEC's strategic priorities, committees/task-forces structure, member value proposition, and financial sustainability in the context of evolving regional energy/climate dynamics and the forthcoming DG MENA contract ("JustMed").

1. Welcome & Strategic Framing

The Chair, Alberto Biancardi (GSE), opens the meeting and recalls the value of the pre-meeting strategic briefing held ahead of the Committee, featuring Mr. Ferid Belhaj (former World Bank Vice President) as guest speaker. Members consider the briefing useful to frame key strategic questions for OMEC, including: (i) which issues OMEC and its members should prioritize; and (ii) how OMEC could further strengthen its role and added value in the region.

Several members propose institutionalizing such briefings before each Committee meeting, inviting external speakers beyond OMEC's network to enrich the debate and challenge assumptions.

François Dassa (EDF) underlines the importance of respect and dialogue in the Mediterranean, viewing the basin as a connector between Europe and the Southern shore rather than a barrier. He stresses the need for realism in scenarios and for maintaining a balance between energy security and climate objectives, noting that climate adaptation increasingly forms part of energy security. He also encourages OMEC to better quantify the economic implications of scenarios.

Alberto Biancardi (GSE) questions why OMEC's value is not communicated more effectively and suggests that short, technical briefings also support visibility and potentially contribute to resource mobilization, including interest from non-member companies.

Marco Piredda (ENI) suggests narrowing the gap between ambition and delivery by looking back at what was expected five years ago and comparing it with what has been achieved to date. He also stresses the need to avoid ideological approaches and any paternalistic attitudes from the EU/Northern Mediterranean towards the Southern shore.

2. JustMed Action (new contract with DG MENA) – Introduction and discussion (MER/MEP focus)

Houda Ben Jannet (OMEC Director General) presents the upcoming four-year contract with the European Commission (DG MENA) and notes that signature is expected shortly. She explains that work under the UfM working group is structured around three pillars: gas, emissions abatement, and hydrogen. In addition, within JustMed, OMEC is expected to monitor the energy transition in the region as well as the progress of the T-Med initiative.

The overall contract amounts to EUR 2.5 million, including EUR 2.0 million for programme activities and EUR 0.5 million for a potential secondment of an expert to the UfM Secretariat in Barcelona.

On knowledge products, she informs that Mediterranean Energy Perspectives (MEP) remains a biennial flagship publication and next issue expected in 2027. In addition to MEP, JustMed includes a new annual publication: the Mediterranean Energy Review (MER). The annual Mediterranean Energy Review will monitor progress on a wide range of aspects of the energy transition related to renewable deployment, grid modernization, electrification, energy efficiency and more.

Key points from the discussion:

- Members welcome the new publication and confirm their support to MEP.
- Members identify data access and country-level inputs as critical success factors for MER and MEP and note that strong member support is required to collect and validate information. OMEC notes that the UfM framework could facilitate engagement with governments, for data and information sharing.
- François Dassa (EDF) calls for broader datasets and technology coverage (renewables, hydrogen, and nuclear, CCS and other system-relevant options) and advocates a “reality check” with the European Commission, complemented by a wider systems perspective beyond the contract pillars.
- Houda Ben Jannet (OMEC) emphasizes that contracted deliverables require strong member mobilization and that additional member-backed activities help convey broader messages and address topics not explicitly covered by the contract.
- Marco Piredda (ENI) stresses the importance of mid-term horizons to enable cross-checks and credibility, warning that an exclusive long-term focus risks becoming a paper exercise with limited accountability.
- Members agree that MEP Task Force will also deal with MER and the final decision whether a dedicated Task Force would be needed will be taken later.

3. Collective diagnosis on OMEC: Where are we today?

Members exchange views in line with the agenda guiding questions on OMEC's value proposition, what works well, what limits engagement, and where improvement is required.

Fabrizio Mattana (EDISON) encourages identifying a new flagship study/publication to raise OMEC's visibility, particularly through concrete, data-based products rooted in member contributions. Members agree MER could be a good start.

Roberto Poti (OMEC) recalls the importance of the “C” for Climate in OMEC's mandate and suggests strengthening activities at the energy-climate interface (including climate monitoring). He mentions exploring structured cooperation with CMCC through a Memorandum of Understanding to build complementarities between energy pathways and climate science. Members agree OMEC to go ahead with the MoU with CMCC and cooperation on topics of mutual interest. They also encourage cooperation with other organizations as far as mutual interest exists.

Sally Salah (EGAS) notes that OMEC's data assets are not yet delivered through a sufficiently accessible, user-friendly platform for members and proposes dedicated sessions to explain ongoing improvements and OMEC's efforts.

Marco Piredda (ENI) supports promoting OMEC capabilities while recalling that OMEC is not a service provider and that membership is based on mutual contribution and ownership.

4. Committees & Task Forces: Do we need to evolve?

Houda Ben Jannet (OMEC) invites members to converge on a pragmatic evolution of OMEC committees and task forces, clarifying which ones need to be maintained, to be upgraded, eventually merged, or modified, and identifying cross-cutting themes that improve delivery, engagement and visibility.

Marianne Lamonin (EDF) raises the issue of infrastructure and adaptation, suggesting OMEC better highlights what is already done, what initiatives are ongoing, and where tangible progress can be accelerated.

Houda Ben Jannet (OMEC) also expresses concern about uneven participation across committees and underlines the importance of in-person participation to ensure focused, active engagement.

Green Energy Technologies Committee – priorities and enhancements:

Igor Malgieri (EDISON), vice-chairman of the Committee, proposes launching an OMEC Mediterranean Grid Working Group, framed as a practical cooperation track between TSOs, technology partners and members, with three suggested pillars:

1. Digital technologies for smart and resilient grids – accelerating digitalization to support RES integration and supply security, including interoperability recommendations and a joint technical workshop with grid operators and technology partners.
2. Renewable hydrogen and sustainable biofuels – positioning the Mediterranean as a production/export hub through standards/certification work and the identification of corridors; supporting local, sustainable biofuel value chains with an R&D dimension.
3. Regional cooperation for local industrialization and skills – mapping critical skills and establishing a Mediterranean network of training centers; mainstreaming a “just transition” dimension.

Members agree that hydrogen and sustainable biofuels is a cross-cutting workstream, provided the work remains grounded in realistic demand/supply and infrastructure constraints.

François Dassa (EDF) stresses that critical minerals and batteries should enter OMEC's structured work at some stage (import dependence, industrial chains and system implications).

Marco Piredda (ENI) agrees that critical minerals are currently under-addressed and suggests structuring upstream natural resources and downstream battery/storage issues either in separate tracks or in an integrated approach that attracts both companies and European stakeholders.

Alberto Biancardi (GSE) considers that batteries and storage can be embedded within the Green Energy Technologies scope as part of system flexibility.

Igor Malgieri (EDISON) explicitly questions whether OMEC resources are fully taken by the European Commission new contract in order to assess what realistically could be added in OMEC Work Programme.

Houda Ben Jannet (OMEC) replies that the OMEC team won't be fully dedicated to the new contract and can undertake additional activities. However, strong support from members will be needed both for helping OMEC achieve its activities for the new contract and new

studies decided by the members. Additional expertise will be required and secondees are very much welcome, including part time and not necessarily in Paris.

François Dassa (EDF) stresses the importance of closer cooperation with Med-TSO, noting that recent experience highlights the critical role of grid stability.

Natural Resources & Energy Security (NRES) Committee

Emilio Trigueros (NATURGY), Chairman of the Committee, highlights the Committee's demonstrated value through pragmatic outputs on security of supply dynamics and infrastructure, including work related to LNG, gas advocacy initiatives, low-carbon gaseous fuels, repurposing of infrastructures, and a shared infrastructure database used as technical background for policy discussions. He underlines that the Mediterranean Energy Review (MER) (under the new DG MENA contract) is a timely tool to provide a short-term, transparent view of the region's energy situation.

To increase engagement and dynamism, he proposes:

1. Monthly 1-hour brainstorming "jam sessions" to collect company feedback and "fresh thinking".
2. Thematic meetings planned with invited speakers.
3. Two half-day in-person meetings per year (one in Paris, one in a Mediterranean city) to strengthen participation.
4. A structured approach to broaden membership and diversify profiles participating in the Committee.

Members agree more frequent thematic meetings and more meetings held in Mediterranean locations to catalyse broader participation. Energy security is highlighted as a growing priority.

Infrastructure Investments & Financing Committee

Gabriele Ganeto (EDISON) representing the Committee Chairman Matteo Restelli (EDISON), informs that a draft White Paper on "Supporting Long-Term Energy Connectivity in the Mediterranean: Overcoming Constraints to Deliver Euro-Mediterranean Energy Interconnectors for shared Security, Resilience and Prosperity" has been prepared. Committee members position the document as a potential flagship output and outreach lever. The proposed path foresees the arrangement of a high-level meeting with the participation of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Committees, to be held in the next weeks, to present the White Paper and gather their comments and suggestions on the best way to complement it and agree on the strategies for its dissemination at institutional level.

Based on the latest version, the White Paper:

- is addressed to the European Commission and relevant Euro-Mediterranean institutions and financial stakeholders, supporting institutional dialogue on the Mediterranean's pivotal role at a time of overlapping shocks (security, volatility, geopolitics, clean-energy acceleration);
- adopts a whole-basin perspective (both shores), explicitly including Southern Mediterranean domestic demand growth, industrial development and energy security priorities, and emphasizing that unlocking the region's potential requires the realization of energy infrastructures;

- focuses on introducing a shared framework to “co-support” the development and realisation of energy interconnectors across the Mediterranean;
- is structured around: (i) strategic value of interconnectors; (ii) constraints (technical; economic/financial; regulatory/procedural); and (iii) opportunities to be targeted across those three dimensions;
- underlines enabling policy context and instruments (e.g., REPowerEU and the need for infrastructure that keeps pace with transition/security objectives), while highlighting persistent bottlenecks such as permitting timelines and coordination gaps;
- explicitly stresses that a credible connectivity strategy combines South-North corridors with South-South reinforcements and “domestic grid readiness” in Southern Mediterranean countries as enabling conditions for resilient cross-border trade and higher RES integration.

Alberto Biancardi (GSE) suggests leveraging the White Paper to help attract new members.

Fabrizio Mattana (EDISON) underlines that the paper's narrative on interconnectors directly supports urgent needs: security of supply, diversification of energy sources, resilience under climate stress, system efficiency and Euro-Med complementarities.

Gabriele Ganeto (EDISON) also notes the intention to connect the White Paper's visibility track with the planned Rome moment linked to the MEP-related event and a back-to-back Committee meeting.

Hydrogen Task Force

Houda Ben Jannet (OMEC) informs that the Hydrogen Task Force is inactive and that SNAM resigned from its Chair position and questions the need to maintain the Task Force.

Marco Piredda (ENI) considers there is currently limited need to keep a standalone TF, citing slow progress and the imbalance between hydrogen supply and demand, and noting stalled pilots (including due to constraints such as water).

Alberto Biancardi (GSE) states that continuation depends on whether a member is willing to assume responsibility for convening the TF.

Fabrizio Mattana (EDISON) suggests hydrogen remains a decarbonization pathway but can be handled through a different format than the Task Force, with OMEC maintaining a neutral monitoring role. A possibility would be to include the topics regarding hydrogen in the *Infrastructure Investments & Financing Committee*.

Members agree not to maintain the Task Force, but instead hydrogen could be dealt with inside the committees.

Task Force on Circular Economy (TFCE)

Matteo Urbani (OMEC) informs about the progress of the ADEME-supported initiative on reducing plastic pollution in the Mediterranean and references the final project report as the basis for TFCE follow-up and dissemination.

On behalf of the TF Chair Maria Mantini (ENI), Matteo Urbani informs about the TFCE Discussion Paper, a first framing document and highlight opportunities for cross-cutting cooperation with other committees (including biofuels/biomethane, critical materials, and industrial value chains). The TFCE Discussion Paper:

- frames circular economy as a systemic pillar of the energy transition, covering both bulk materials (steel, aluminum, plastics, cement) and critical raw materials (e.g., lithium, cobalt, rare earths);
- structures the diagnosis around five core challenge areas: resource scarcity; end-of-life constraints/waste management; consumer behavior & demand-side dynamics; policy frameworks; enabling technologies/infrastructure;
- compiles member contributions and concrete actions/cases, including biomethane-related examples and network interface aspects;
- proposes a set of “Coordinated Actions to be promoted by OMEC”, including: policy briefs/position papers, recurring stakeholder dialogues, a resource hub (“who does what” mapping, toolkits), training programmes, and cross-sector partnerships/innovation networks.

A TFCE meeting is planned in February to present the ADEME project and discuss TFCE next steps and cross-cutting work opportunities.

MEP Task Force

François Dassa, Chair of the Task Force informs this Task Force should convene soon to discuss the next edition of MEP and how to improve this flagship publication. He stresses and active participation of all members is very important.

Members also agree the MEP Task Force will also support the first edition of MER and the decision will be taken later whether a dedicated TF would be required.

Cross-cutting topic: Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Members discuss whether AI should become a cross-cutting theme in OMEC work.

Fabrizio Mattana (EDISON) proposes addressing AI primarily through its energy-system impacts, especially its potential effect on electricity demand (including data centers).

Marco Piredda (ENI) supports this and adds that AI/data centers can be an attractive topic to engage new stakeholders (including potential members from the Gulf), suggesting a dedicated event bringing relevant actors together.

François Dassa (EDF) agrees AI is worth introducing as a new theme, framed within the broader energy transition and system resilience discussion.

In conclusion, all committees and TF will be maintained, except the Hydrogen TF.

To ensure smooth operation and performance of all Committees/TF, Chairs of Committees and Task Force will be sent to OMEC Director General their committee/TF objectives, scope of work and suggestions of priority activities and synergies with other committees/TF when deemed necessary, taking into consideration the input received from the members during the meeting. OMEC will then compile all input, and the result will be discussed in a next meeting gathering chairs and vice chairs of the committees and TF. The final draft will be shared with the Strategy Committee members and then submitted to the approval of the next EXCO and General Assembly.

5. Membership Growth & Funding: Strengthening the base

Houda Ben Jannet (OMEC) indicates that funding for 2026 is not yet fully secured, and that additional resources and new financing solutions are required, including topic-specific studies (confidential or collective). She notes that current membership fees are considered burdensome by some members and may deter potential entrants, while fee reductions create budget pressure unless compensated by additional revenue.

She informs participants about the request of David Gallardo (NATURGY) for OMEC DG to prepare a report for the board members on how (what would be required) to reduce fees to 30keuros instead of 60. The aim of this exercise is to discuss how to strengthen the organization and effectively attract new members.

François Dassa (EDF) questions whether fee reduction alone attracts new members and suggests piloting a temporary reduction (e.g., two years) while identifying solutions for both new and existing members.

Marco Piredda (ENI) proposes exploring fee-sharing within large corporate groups (affiliated entities join under a common umbrella) and notes OMEC fees are indeed higher than other associations but at the same time remain reasonable compared to some prestigious organizations. The most important criteria of being part of an organization are the targets and value.

Roberto Poti (OMEC) raises outreach to Gulf companies; this proposal receives broad support as a realistic avenue to explore, including in connection with Gulf investment initiatives in Mediterranean partner countries.

Marianne Lamonin (EDF) suggests a flagship annual event strengthens visibility and prestige and functions as a marketing tool, albeit requiring investment and careful positioning. Such event could bring important cash resources through sponsoring and fees to attend the event.

Houda Ben Jannet informs participants she will prepare the report requested by David and all support with ideas are welcome. Also, helping to attract new members is very much welcome.

6. Strategic Priorities & Next Steps

In concluding remarks, Houda Ben Jannet (OMEC) indicates she expects feedback from all committee chairs on revised proposals following the discussion, with the aim of presenting a consolidated proposal for endorsement by the Executive Committee and the General Assembly in June. She also notes that OMEC considers preparing short thematic sessions to further enrich strategic discussions.

7. Key takeaways (summary)

The Committee reaffirms:

- The strategic importance of the JustMed contract and the delivery of MER (2026) and MEP (2027);
- The need to improve data accessibility and member mobilization for data collection;

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- The value of pragmatically evolving OMEC's committee/task-force structure and strengthening cross-cutting themes (grids, critical minerals/storage, AI, energy-climate nexus);
- The urgency of reinforcing OMEC's value proposition and visibility (flagship outputs, targeted briefings, high-impact events);
- The need to identify sustainable funding solutions and strengthen membership growth, including Gulf outreach.