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Answer given by Ms Šuica
on behalf of the European Commission
(28.3.2025)

The New Pact for the Mediterranean¹ will strive to refocus the partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood region around mutual interests and with a clear objective to put people at the centre. The Mediterranean region is home to an exceptional cultural and religious diversity. Upholding the EU values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law will remain at the core of the engagement. In partnership with regional counterparts, the Commission will aim at co-creating an inclusive framework that safeguards the rights of all individuals. Through open dialogue and mutual understanding, the Commission will work to strengthen protection for vulnerable groups against persecution, discrimination, violence, and forced displacement.

The EU has all the assets to support the right of people in the Middle East, regardless their religious belonging, to live in peace and security, and it will make sure to use its voice to uphold fundamental values. The Commission will reinforce its role as an essential actor of constructive dialogue with governments, religious leaders and civil society organizations, to promote mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for human rights. Providing financial and technical assistance to support projects and initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue will remain a core strand of cooperation, while also integrating human rights and protection of minority groups into development programmes and projects across the board.

¹ A Joint Communication is under preparation by the European Commission.