

Center of Excellence DIPLOWideMed

[Prof. Stefania Panebianco](#), Director

First Crash Course DIPLOWideMed: *A Research-to-Policy Lab*

Catania, 28 September - 2 October 2026

PROGRAM

TARGET: approx. 20 MA and PhD students majoring in Mediterranean Politics

WORKLOAD: 150 hour activity – 40 hours in class and 110 individual work preparation

CALL Deadline: 31 July 2026

SCHEDULE:

Time	Format	Objective
09:00–11:00	Morning lectures	Theoretical framework and key concepts, Q&A
11:30–13:30	Expert Dialogue	Practitioner perspectives, moderated discussion, Q&A
15:00–17:00	Interactive Project Lab	Participants apply the day's concepts through presentations and simulation

STRUCTURE

09:00–11:00 | Lectures: Conceptual and Analytical Foundations

Morning sessions provide participants with **theoretical frameworks and analytical tools to explore contemporary Mediterranean challenges**, diplomacy, migration, cooperation, and policy-making. Participants will be encouraged to apply these concepts to the development of their own research proposals.

11:30–13:30 | Expert Dialogues: Connecting Research and Practice

Experts will discuss **how academic knowledge can be translated into policy recommendations**, how researchers can engage effectively with different stakeholders, what practical implications research can have, and how the gap between theory and implementation can be bridged.

15:00–17:00 | Research-to-Policy Lab: Developing and Challenging Research Proposals

Participants will engage in a structured **workshop** that combines **research pitches, stakeholder role-play, and expert feedback**

➤ **Step 1: Research Pitch – Presenting the Policy Challenge**
15:00–15:30

Each participant presents their research proposal through a short **pitch** of up to **seven minutes**. The presentation should clearly explain **why** the topic is relevant to the Mediterranean region, identify the **research question**, the **key actors and stakeholders involved**, and the expected **contribution to the academic literature and/or to policy debates**.

➤ **Step 2: Stakeholder Role-Play – Testing Research Ideas Against Reality**
15:30–16:15

Participants receive **feedback through a role-play exercise** designed to expose their proposals to different stakeholder perspectives. They will assume the roles of policy-makers, civil society representatives, academic reviewers, practitioners, and funders. Participants will be encouraged to **defend their research choices, respond to critical questions, and refine their proposals**.

➤ **Step 3: Improving the Proposal – Individual exercise**
16:15–16:45

Participants are invited to reflect on the main strengths of their research, identify any challenges or limitations, and determine at least one aspect of the proposal that could be strengthened or further developed.

➤ **Step 4: Reflection and Collective Discussion**
16:45–17:00

The afternoon concludes with a **collective discussion** in which participants reflect on the learning gained throughout the session, and how academic work can contribute more effectively to diplomacy and policy-making.

Final Session: DiploWideMed Research Forum

At the end of the Summer School, participants present their revised research proposals in a **final interactive forum**.