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AGORA DIPLOCAT 7

Coexisting in the Mediterranean

Interculturality as a tool for dialogue

DIALOGUES + 25

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European Institute of the Mediterranean



**Generalitat
de Catalunya**
Government
of Catalonia

25
1995 - 2020
PROCÉS DE
BARCELONA
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Ajuntament de
Barcelona



Report by Lisa Hamou, Social and Cultural Anthropologist, with a master's degree in International Relations (European Union and Mediterranean) and researcher and technician of projects related to intercultural dialogue, management and promotion of diversity and cooperation between the European Union and Arab countries.

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1. Introduction

DIPLOCAT and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) have organised at Pedralbes Palace in Barcelona, the conference "Mediterranean intercultural dialogue: recognising ourselves in the culture of others", the fourth debate organised in the framework of the commemoration of 25 years of the Barcelona Declaration and the Mediterranean strategy. The conference aims to build bridges between Catalonia and the rest of the world, people, ideas, citizens and institutions, reaffirming Catalonia's commitment to the Mediterranean and the effort to build an intercultural and inclusive Mediterranean community on the basis of the well-being of people, societal progress and the value of dialogue and rights.

The aim is to debate and highlight the role of Mediterranean societies and cultures in tackling the great global challenges.

Alfonso González Bondia, Director General of European and Mediterranean Affairs, explains that the Catalan Government 25 years ago opted for economic progress as a tool for change, but it has been insufficient. The values of pluralism, inclusion, dignity and recognition are increasingly appearing as necessary tools in the construction of spaces for reconciliation and dialogue, which address real threats such as climate change and pandemics, banishing narrative of violence, conflict, misunderstandings and enhancing social inclusion. This is how we must consider dialogue as the most relevant instrument for getting to know and listen to ourselves and through which to form solid relationships across the Mediterranean. The intercultural strategy is a decisive step in affirming the commitment to the protection of plurality and dialogue as the backbones of Euromed relations. In this context, the city of Barcelona plays a decisive role. As stated by Khalid Ghali, Commissioner for Intercultural Dialogue and Religious Pluralism at Barcelona City Council, this global host city must integrate a dialogue based on mutual recognition of all citizens and combat ignorance and prejudice against cultures.

Josep Ferré, Director General of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) emphasises that for this we must overcome concepts such as tolerance, coexistence and be more proactive: get to know each other and recognise the difference. It is about acquiring an individual and collective commitment, of inclusion, interaction, change of mentalities and fight against stereotypes.

Societies are increasingly diverse and complex, but there are inequalities that have exacerbated the precariousness of the most vulnerable communities such as the immigrant population, women and



young people at risk of exclusion. In this interconnected and ever-changing environment, we must face these new challenges to move towards essential sustainability through the 2030 Agenda.

Laura Foraster i Lloret, Secretary General of DIPLOCAT, adds that these types of events are important in order to strengthen the capacity to build bridges between Catalonia and the rest of the world. She states that the goal of DIPLOCAT of coming together and pooling effort is shown in events like this and that cooperation and coordination between institutions is one of the bases of international dialogue and for internationalisation. Another pillar of this dialogue is listening to the public to reach the desired audience. Foraster also recalls that Catalonia has the will to provide solutions to global challenges and wants to join in the international arena. Focusing on the Barcelona Process, which began 25 years ago, she recalled that one of the main axes was and continues to be to bring the two shores of the Mediterranean closer together and that we must continue to pursue this vital project.

2. What future for intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean?

The initial debate focused on the different aspects that will mark the future of intercultural dialogue. The question that Andreu Claret, journalist and executive director of the Anna Lindh Foundation between 2008 and 2015, posed to the three representatives and experts was intended to identify the keys and elements needed to establish real and effective dialogue between the European Union and the Mediterranean. In addition, participants were invited based on the contexts of the Southern Mediterranean and the role they play, their experiences and their perception of dialogue: Nabil Al Sharif as the executive director of the Anna Lindh Foundation network, Nayla Tabbara as vice president of the Adyan Foundation and a Muslim woman, and Tahar Ben Jelloun as a writer and intellectual. From this table arise two priorities and lines of action that the Euro-Mediterranean institutions must take into account to face the future of the region by betting on intercultural dialogue.

Promote cooperation and solidarity to meet the challenges of Covid-19

The future of this dialogue is undoubtedly marked by the pandemic situation, by the challenges facing both the EU and its partners and which impact on our ways of life and our relations. To tackle the new risks and challenges arising from the crises caused by Covid-19, Dr Nabil Al Sharif stresses that cooperation and solidarity between the people of the North and the South must be promoted, as well as within their own societies.

> Facing new difficulties and challenges

As Tahar Ben Jelloun states, the pandemic affects us all beyond differences and inequalities by integrating new difficulties into the context. Closure of borders, restrictions on mobility, as well as confinement and restricted freedoms are factors that affect all Mediterranean societies, and in particular young people. In addition to bringing new challenges, the pandemic has exaggerated all the existing problems in the Northern and Southern Mediterranean. Risks for marginalised populations, such as refugees and migrants, as well as for gender issues, are increasing. We must continue to confront racism and hate speech.

> Exchange good practices

New obstacles make physical exchanges less and less possible. The director of the Anna Lindh Foundation states that the development of creative methods and the exchange of practices and experiences between people and entities are tools that will allow us to continue with our commitment to intercultural dialogue. In this sense, Tahar Ben Jelloun emphasises that sharing our resources, our research and our knowledge allows us to find a way to end this clear sign of suffering on the part of the planet: “This immense health crisis has put things in place: the need to share is inherent in culture, dialogue and respect for others, as they form the basis of a creative, inventive and living democracy”.

> To support civil society

As highlighted in the Barcelona Process, civil society is a key player in reaching the population and building democratic, inclusive and participatory societies, and its role must continue to be supported by Euro-Mediterranean institutions. The results of the survey launched by the Anna Lindh Foundation on civil society at the beginning of the pandemic to identify their challenges and needs, highlighted the need to support organisations, their resilience and innovation through funding and support for the development of digitalisation.

Recognise, understand and listen to different points of view to be able to build together

As Tahar Ben Jelloun points out, “Diversity is not comfort or tranquility, but a movement that shakes certainties and provokes reflection”. The participants in this first table have spent time rethinking Euro-Mediterranean relations in terms of their effectiveness and the role of institutions in their contribution to the recognition of the other and have made a series of recommendations.



> Emphasise common values

Among the elements that characterise the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue are common and shared values. Tahar Ben Jelloun and Nayla Tabbara believe that a greater effort should be made to promote these values at both the European and Euro-Mediterranean level, in order to reduce the risk of negative consequences.

On the one hand, Tabbara reveals that Europe is based on the values of democracy, citizenship, freedom and human dignity and that, nevertheless, the South's feeling towards European countries is that there is a clash between their values and actions. This mismatch can be seen in particular around the issue of refugees and migrants, a dynamic that, according to this expert, also occurs between neighbouring countries and two neighbouring communities, particularly in Lebanon. Ben Jelloun highlights racism and hate speech particularly in France. Economic interests prevail over the values of equality, and this also translates to the Euro-Mediterranean level.

On the other hand, decisive data shows that we should emphasise these values. The Anna Lindh Foundation report on intercultural trends, prepared in 2018, posed the following question to citizens of the South and the North: "Do you think that people belonging to different cultures or religions should have the same rights and opportunities?". 7% of European respondents said they were against and 23% mostly agreed to have the same rights. That is, 30% of Europeans are not entirely convinced that people of other religions and cultures should have the same rights. In the South, 39% do not believe in this equality / human dignity.

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> Recognise wounds and memory

Within Euro-Mediterranean relations there is a common desire to promote the same discourse of the "Mare Nostrum" of shared values and ways of life in the Mediterranean. However, according to Nayla Tabbara, intercultural dialogue has been constructed leaving aside stories and voices from the South, we must take into account other discourses that have been set aside and that have not been recognised and constitute wounds in the collective memory of the countries of the South. Among those wounds, the colonial period and legacy, which according to the same author needs recognition by the North to move towards an egalitarian dialogue. Tahar Ben Jelloun also points out that the Palestinian question has disappeared from discourse.

To rebalance dialogue, discourse must be rethought on the basis of issues of importance to the countries of the South.



> Take into account the religious component

Interreligious dialogue is an important tool because, as Nayla Tabbara points out, religion influences our ways of thinking and the interpretations and understanding we have of the world. The vice president of the Aydan Foundation recommends integrating interreligious and intercultural dialogue in order to establish a real dynamic of dialogue and overcome preconceived ideas. These generalisations based on the religious component prevent the establishment of a real dialogue.

> To support intercultural dialogue as a political will

Tahar Ben Jelloun stresses that culture is seen as a secondary aspect and is not a political priority to deal with through dialogue. For example, the case of the Maghreb shows that, although there is a linguistic and economic similarity, there is a division with no political will to build a dialogue.

In Lebanon, public policies are not clear and powerful enough to sustain intercultural dialogue. Interculturality is linked to geopolitical and identity issues. This is also the case for populists who work on the basis of issues of identity and fear.

One of the reasons why policies do not correctly integrate intercultural dialogue is, according to Andreu Claret, that intellectuals no longer participate in this exchange.

3. Coexisting in the Mediterranean: interculturality as a tool

Migratory mobility and digital communications have highlighted the challenges in managing diversity to combat misunderstandings in personal perceptions, the generation of stereotypes and the manipulation of religious and cultural aspects. This table asks experts how they believe that the exceptional situation of the Covid-19 has brought us into a new area in which we need to highlight the shared elements and build spaces of shared vision of reality to meet common challenges.

History and knowledge

José Enrique Ruiz Domènec, Professor of Sciences of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, UAB (Barcelona).

Examples from the past show us that epidemics can change the course of events and history. He emphasises the role of historians in the present moment, as they look for similar situations in the past that can help us. He remembers three pandemics and how they were managed. At this point we need to think about how we will deal with the day to day after the crisis and how to manage it. Ruiz Domènec believes that we are facing a change of era, but the important thing is to focus on how long it will take to manage it. It took 30 years to control the Spanish flu, and we can't afford that now. In the Mediterranean it is essential to opt for the path of doing over the path of being. That is, prioritising action in all fields and not the creation of an essentialism of identity is what will allow us to leave the present moment and change paradigm. This action is what will allow the harmony of diversity. In short, it will be necessary to reflect in depth and take advantage of opportunities.

Values

Mohamed Tozy, director of the School of Governance and Economics of Rabat (Casablanca).

We are facing a virus that ignores borders. The health crisis calls into question the way in which globalisation is thought and allows progress to be made towards local and regional solutions. In particular, rethinking industrial and economic relocations. It is necessary to refocus the ecological question as opposed to the economic one, to return the importance to the health and viability of our environment. For Tozy, the system of states has become obsolete and responsible individuals are needed, with collective responsibility. For the "day after", he proposes the "hedgehog culture", in which the most essential element is the clan or the family. This crisis has also brought about a change within communities and social connection through virtuality. Solidarity initiatives are those that have allowed people to face the situation. Two aspects must be prioritised: the regional perspective, where solidarity must be grouped, in which states often leave no room for diversity and therefore intercultural dialogue will fail, and on the other hand the change in representation and the values, in which we need to overcome the stereotypes we have. So he would advise:

"The Mediterranean must at the same time call for similarities and differences, solidarity and antagonism", says the political scientist. There are shared values that need to be consolidated through public policies that trigger transfers of resources, ideology and knowledge. Obstructing the movement of people for the benefit of goods is a major obstacle to this problem. While it is true that there are shared aspects, we continue to treat and organise the information based on stereotypes. For example, by establishing categories such as European countries and the countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean by interpreting them as two homogeneous categories. Common values may exist in Southern and Northern countries and differ in the same category around geopolitical issues as shown by the Anna Lindh Foundation Trends Report. There are fractures within the North and South that need to be identified.

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Migration

Ricard Zapata-Barrero, Professor of the Department of Political and Social Sciences, UPF (Barcelona).

Immigrants currently continue to arrive in Europe via the three Mediterranean routes. Reports show that traffic is continuous and vulnerability is increasing, leaving a devastating situation. Fake news about migration, stereotypes and prejudices encourage narratives that justify human rights violations. The Mediterranean is the region where there is more diaspora and more deaths caused by the migration process. Zapata-Barrero has stressed the need for long-term policies, which are the ones that will really solve the problems in the area. To address this crisis, the expert proposes doing so at the city level, and not at the state level. It calls for a local agenda on the governance of Mediterranean immigration. That is, to focus on immigration governance at the local level, to build an urban agenda in the Mediterranean. Euro-Mediterranean cooperation must develop *urban thinking*. In addition, Covid-19 is affecting the mechanisms established to deploy Mediterranean cooperation at the regional level, build regions and share values and interculturality, mechanisms that promote Mediterranean identity through the promotion of joint action, at the level of young people, civil society and women; as the three fundamental pillars of the Anna Lindh Foundation.

Young people

Esmat Elsayed, founder of *Young Mediterranean Voices* (Cairo).

The current context is an opportunity to strengthen the education and participation of young people in conversations about digitalisation, climate change, education, and so on. We need to make young people aware of the challenges of society, teach them so that they can face the bureaucracy and also train them. Today's youth will be tomorrow's politicians, the teachers who will educate the youngest in schools. For this reason it is important to create policies to empower, and allow them to participate in policy formulation, by listening to and integrating their contributions. Faced with the pandemic situation and digitalisation, virtual dialogue is becoming a tool that allows more young people living outside cities to be reached. This should allow us to reach all young people and not just those who have languages, training, who have travelled and are aware of the importance of intercultural dialogue. In conclusion, funds are needed to carry out the dialogue, visas to bring young people closer, and investment in leadership to drive change.

4. The practice of dialogue: testimonies and proposals from the world of Mediterranean associations

In the current context of deteriorating social crisis, civil society is a key piece in activating those spaces for participation and collaboration between the two shores. This round table provides an approximation of some practices of this associative fabric to vindicate its potential in the construction of a shared

interculturality and in the elaboration of proposals for the future to achieve a Euro-Mediterranean policy at the service of the citizens. Cristina Mas, a journalist, asked the speakers what the role of associations is in the context of the pandemic, which made the need for more inclusive and resilient societies more urgent, and how to strengthen them.

Driss Khrouz, Director General, Fondation Esprit (Fez).

Indeed, the pandemic has shown that the associative fabric has been the basis of a movement, within cities, neighbourhoods, families and also between communities from one country to another. However, it also showed the fragility of associations in the face of worsening observable inequalities in terms of access to medicines, the ecological problem, mobility, the rupture of relations and the closure of borders. We have also seen that public policies and institutions go beyond civil society. Globalisation, especially relocation, has weakened societies. Civil society cannot be effective on its own, as we are grappling with global issues and it needs to be strengthened.

Intercultural dialogue really helped to consolidate the associative fabric of the Euro-Mediterranean region during the first decade of the Barcelona Process. This dialogue made it possible to generate relations between East and West, South and North, allowing many young people to get to know each other and have a dialogue, in particular through social networks and virtual spaces. Then, interculturality, exchange, knowledge of the other, the mirror that others return to us in relation to ourselves has effectively allowed the development of associative movements, of this reflection around democracy human rights outside the traditional political paradigms. However, in the last ten years the political and economic aspect has been prioritised and this has blocked this dynamic of knowing others and the complicity that can be generated.

We need to go beyond the current dynamics of dialogue. Dialogues often share the same horizons of values and currently this dialogue has not included young people who do not share this Euro-Mediterranean identity. We need to integrate the diversity and plurality of ideas and visions of the region, especially religious diversity.



Interculturality is knowing others and seeing them as they are and this has made it possible to create an associative movement and learn lessons about human rights and democracy. Khrouz concludes with a defence of the struggle of young people and the importance of joining them in intercultural dialogue, with the help of academia at a time when politics is blocked.

Mercedes Giovinazzo, Director, Interarts (Barcelona).

We are facing a time of crisis that questions and puts at risk our entire economic system, welfare, health, as well as the system of governance based on the rule of law, democracy and human rights. In addition, freedom of association and expression and the right of access to culture and participation in cultural life, a fundamental right enshrined in Article 27 of the Declaration of Universal and Constitutional Rights, are also at risk. This loss of fundamental rights affects culture due to low participation, which has always been an essential factor in human development. Faced with these problems, the civil society sector shows its willingness to continue exercising its participation in political action. The current crisis is like a war that affects the system of governance, it is tense and it will change our system of life in the northern Mediterranean. The crisis has endangered participation in cultural life as it is not enough for culture to be open and digital. Care must be taken to ensure that everyone can enjoy culture in a defined place and time, which is ephemeral and difficult to reproduce, which requires contact and dialogue from the experience of the human being. The digital gamble makes some existing cracks even more visible and social responsibility is needed to combat them.

There is a risk of polarisation and social inequality between different regions. These inequalities must be the subject of political reflection and action by political actors and civil society. The cultural sector must participate in the political environment and continue to work to create spaces for dialogue, reflection and criticism that allow for a response in such a way that there is work from the individual. The Interarts organisation promotes cooperation and networking in order to move towards these common goals. Asked about the role of culture in creating the new mentality, she says there is no clear answer due to the economic dependence of the public sector on culture and the fact that economic and social emergencies currently need to be prioritised. However, she emphasises that culture cannot be stopped, we must continue to work for creation, reflection and dialogue, which makes the individuals involved participate as critical and responsible citizens in politics.

Mohamed El Amrani, President, Azahara (Girona).

The issue of digitalisation is one that requires a process of training and empowerment of civil society so that in turn civil society can train the families and people who need it. Second, civil society needs to review the issue of communication and how to communicate in times of crisis from social entities. Finally, public-private collaboration is needed in the face of the lack of coordination between the public administration, companies and civil society. To move towards a better future it is important to humanise technology, learn to communicate and coordinate in a crisis situation.

Asked about the vision of interculturality from the perspective of a child on either shore of the Mediterranean and the role of young people, he explains that we must begin to see and treat young people as political subjects who think, act and lead initiatives and social movements. In addition, youth leadership is not usually hierarchical, but horizontal and networked. As for interculturality, he believes that it is a curious process due to the fact that different vital processes are mixed under concepts such as reception, inclusion and coexistence, without trying to naturalise identity. In schools it falls too often into folklore and the stereotyping of diversity. The president of AZAHARA says that we need to understand and listen, but until the covert racism that exists everywhere is accepted and these young people do not have a political and communicative voice, things will not change. Its commitment is not limited to coexisting and striving to build a single plural society.

Anis Boufrika, Coordinator of the Anna Lindh We Love Sousse Foundation Network (Tunisia).

The crisis in the Mediterranean, paradoxically, has always been an opportunity for openness, for greater cultural diversity and dynamism, for example, crisis due to migratory waves, wars and humanitarian crises. It is through these crises that the populations of the Euromed space create and develop solutions to survive. The Mediterranean has always played a pioneering role in relation to all these incubators, human experiences of cultural and social development. However, in the face of the current rise of extremism, the values of pluralism, inclusion and recognition are even more necessary and vital to preserving civilisation and its development. The Anna Lindh Foundation plays a very important role in maintaining interculturality, as well as in promoting and exchanging between rulers and politicians.

He explains that in Tunisia, civil society works in parallel with the authorities to contribute to the healthcare and administrative system, and therefore these actors are pioneers and best placed to contribute to the Euro-Mediterranean area despite the problems of mobility. Intercultural dialogue needs to be revived and brought back to universities, because it is one of the great victims of Covid-19. Digital presence is a solution, but it is still an impoverished exchange. It will also be necessary to work with the different authorities to tackle the situation on the ground and develop the healthcare and administrative system. For this, it is essential to find solutions to the problem of mobility in the Mediterranean, which is a human rights principle, but does not allow activists, young people and women to circulate and exchange.

Asked about the legacy of the Arab Spring, he says that “dignity” resonates but has taken different forms in these eleven years. The revolution was in favour of dignity but also against war, famine or marginalisation. However, crises, war and many policies curb interculturality and encourage denial of the other. That is why it is necessary to support young people and women, who continue to fight for their emancipation. Today, Tunisian society is open to new technologies and associations must evolve towards a digital logic, with advanced tools that attract young people. The values of recognition, dignity and plurality make it possible to reach agreements and encourage interculturality and when women lead and take the initiative, barbarism and extremism fall. Boufrika believes that young people in Tunisia are experiencing interculturalism in a renewed way. As for the concept of identity, he points out that in the Mediterranean it is not unique but plural and that for this reason it is not possible to speak of the south as if it were homogeneous, which according to him is very common in the north.

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5. Launch of the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue of the Anna Lindh Foundation

Nabil Al Sharif, Executive Director, Anna Lindh Foundation (Alexandria) presents a new initiative launched by the Foundation that aims to invite civil society networks, cultural operators, opinion leaders, educators, think tanks, universities, partners, young people and women to reflect on intercultural trends. The virtual marathon will address issues that analyse the future directions of Euro-Mediterranean relations. The programme emphasises the relevance of intercultural dialogue for the sustainability of Euromed finances, economic growth, social cohesion, the exchange and mobility of youth development and gender equality, the media and social networks for countering stereotypes, civil society and empowerment, intercultural education, virtual exchange and research. Future guidelines aim to encourage intercultural citizenship that opts for digital tools and a green recovery from the Covid-19 crisis.

Josep Ferré highlights the importance of the Forums organised by the Anna Lindh Foundation, platforms attended by more than 1000 participants from all countries in the region exchanging knowledge and practices.

Cristina Mas points out that there are common challenges in Euro-Mediterranean societies and that civil society uses common tools to organise and provide answers. The media is an important factor in giving visibility to these challenges and tools. The media are not always visible but they have more power than you think, because they have the ability to bring us closer or separate us.

Hajar El Hawari adds that women and young people also provide alternative narratives and are not objects of inclusion but subjects of action. We need to include younger ones so that they can approach the differences out of curiosity and not out of fear, so that they can feel that being different is a positive thing.

6. Conclusions

Bernat Solé, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Institutional Relations and Transparency, concludes the event with new recommendations and commitments to move forward based on the contributions that have been made. He adds that in these sets of conversations, organised by institutions that guarantee and encourage dialogue, ideas are collected that allow us to identify future directions, know where we want to go and how to move forward together.

They all agree that the Barcelona Process has the merit of having created dialogue. But after 25 years, the contexts are different, and there are new challenges and scenarios marked by violent conflict. These include the war in Syria, populism, refugee camps and deaths in the Mediterranean Sea that unites us. Catalonia, committed to life and fundamental freedoms, wants to continue to be part of the reception response, welcoming refugees and crossing borders with more flexible and agile governance.

Affirming that exchange enriches us, the Minister highlights three ideas to improve dialogue:

- Mediterranean citizenship as a key concept to put back on the agenda the issue of shared rights and freedoms between the north and the south. Create an innovative and inclusive Mediterranean community in which democracy, the rule of law and good governance are promoted. These values must guide actions and dialogues in the field of the Mediterranean to move towards a model of transformative development, solidarity that promotes the role of civil society. A model in which young people and women generate this change.
- New perspectives on coexistence: Building a “we” is not just about welcoming but about learning to live together, knowing who we are, an inclusive society that interacts and values diversity is a society that allows us to build a sense of belonging, a bond with a shared “us” that puts the bases for the exercise of a full and committed citizenship. In this sense, we must work for a European agreement that allows us to share experiences and promote that this intercultural mission is applied through the policies of different territories. He mentions a cooperation project with MedCities in Tunisia, Morocco and Libya, strengthening the training of municipalities in socially innovative policies to promote the participation and inclusion of vulnerable groups such as young people and migrants.
- Strengthen the intercultural agenda in spaces for dialogue and the fight against racism, violent extremism and xenophobia and support the exchange between schools and the educational community.

"Connecting, looking at one another, and sharing lives through dialogue" thus concludes this event with the intention of continuing to work to create more just and egalitarian, sustainable and responsible societies, guarantors of peace and human rights.



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Annex. Participants



> NABIL AL SHARIF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION

Dr Nabil Al-Sharif was executive director of the Anna Lindh Foundation for Intercultural Dialogue, former senator, ambassador, minister and advocate for intercultural dialogue.

With extensive experience in public administration, including positions as Minister of Media Affairs and spokesman for the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and a Member of the Upper House of the Parliament of Jordan.

Al-Sharif also served in Jordan's foreign service as Ambassador to Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal. Previously, Al-Sharif also worked as editor-in-chief of the *Ad-Dustour* newspaper, which is an Arabic-language newspaper in Jordan. He was also the cultural editor of a local Jordanian newspaper and wrote extensively, in both Arabic and English, on the need to improve intercultural dialogue.

Dr Al-Sharif earned his doctorate and master's degree in English literature from Indiana University in the United States. He was also a professor at three Jordanian universities for several years.

Dr Nabil Al-Sharif died on 6 March 2021. Rest in peace.



> HAJAR ALHAWARI
HEAD OF THE AZAHARA ASSOCIATION IN BARCELONA

Hajar AlHawari is a 21-year-old student studying for a degree in Political Science and Law at Pompeu Fabra University. She is currently in charge of the delegation in Barcelona of the Azahara Association, where she has promoted a project in Community Leadership for Women in the rural area of ChefChaouen, Morocco. In addition, she is also a member of Deba-t.org and is part of the Pompeu Fabra University Legal Clinic.



> TAHAR BELL JELLOUN
WRITER (PARIS - TANGIER)

Novelist and poet born in Fez (Morocco) in 1944. His works have been translated into more than thirty languages. From the age of 6 he attended a bilingual French-Moroccan school. He began studying Philosophy at Mohamed V University in Rabat, but had to drop out on suspicion of organising student demonstrations and due to this accusation had to attend an army disciplinary camp for two years. After his release, he resumed his studies and began working as a teacher. Later, thanks to a scholarship, he moved to France to specialise in psychology.

He wrote his first poem, *L'aube des dalles*, during his captivity in the disciplinary camp and published it in 1968 in the magazine *Souffles*.

He also published the book of poems *Hommes sous linceul de silence* (1971). He wrote his first novel, *Harrouda*, in 1973, in which his vision of Islamic culture can be seen reflected.

Some of his plays, such as *La réclusion solitaire* (1976), were adapted for the theatre. In addition, he also wrote pedagogical novels such as *Racism Explained to My Daughter* (1997), which was a great international success, being translated into more than thirty languages (including Esperanto).

Source: Casa Àfrica



> ANIS BOUFRIKA NETWORK COORDINATOR, ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION

Degree in International Economics, Development, Entrepreneurship and Creative Entrepreneurship. He joined the African Development Bank in 2007 as head of development, supervision and coordination of the bank's NGO database.

In 2011, he created the *We Love Sousse* association, a multidisciplinary youth association. The programmes implemented by *We love Sousse* aim to meet the needs of populations affected by social and / or economic or even cultural crises. Once launched, he greatly increased meetings and developed the idea of creating with various actors of Tunisian and Arab civil society the network of associations "we love" which was officially created in February 2012 with the help of 10 associations in 6 different countries.

In 2012 he was elected leader of the Tunisian network of the Anna Lindh Foundation and currently coordinates several associations throughout the country. In 2015, it launched its own development box through which it manages various projects and provides training and expertise on socio-cultural and socio-economic development and governance, as well as various other expertise in different fields.



> MOHAMED EL AMRANI PRESIDENT, AZAHARA (GIRONA)

Mohammed El Amrani (Xauen, October 7, 1992) is a Catalan entrepreneur, communicator and social activist of Moroccan origin. He was born in Xauen, but has lived in Roses since the age of three (1995). In 2008 he was a finalist for the Fiction Prize with the novel *La flor de la vida*. In 2007 he collaborated on the weekly *L'Empordà*, on *Empordà Televisió*, and the programme *Anem de tarda* on *Ràdio 4d* and *Radio Nacional d'Espanya*. In 2009, at just 17 years old, he created the *Xarxa de Convivència*, a social platform that aims to revolutionise the way we understand coexistence and social cohesion and is committed to generating new references among young Catalan Muslims. He is also president of the Association for Development Cooperation AZAHARA, an entity based in Salt that promotes a large network of cities, companies and people for global

social transformation.

In 2013 he received the Young Social Entrepreneur Award from the European University of Madrid and the International Youth Foundation, in 2014 he received an award from the Princesa de Girona Foundation in the social category, and in 2016 one of the Lluís Carulla Foundation's Civic Action Awards. He is also a member of the Advisory Boards of the Chair of Social Responsibility at the University of Girona of Adolescents.cat and anti-bullying projects of Fundació Futbol Club Barcelona. Source: Wikipedia



> ESMAT ELSAYED
CO-FOUNDER, *YOUNG MEDITERRANEAN VOICES* (CAIRO)

Esmat is a graduate of the College of Europe with a master's degree in European Interdisciplinary Studies focused on European Neighborhood Policy. She also has a joint Erasmus Mundus master's degree in Euro-Mediterranean Migration and Intercultural Mediation; a master's degree in Advanced European International Studies; and a degree in Strategic Communication and Mass Media. Her research focuses on European integration and the fight against violent extremism and hate speech against minorities, and she has written three master's theses focusing on hate speech, political exclusion speech, Islamophobia and the emergence of otherness in Europe.

In addition to her academic experience, Esmat has been a youth activist since 2008, co-founder of two youth leadership and debate initiatives (E youth & Debat for Life) in Egypt in collaboration with USAID and the State Department of the United States in Cairo. In addition, Esmat is a co-founder of the *Young Arab Voices Debate project* and the *Young Mediterranean Voices* programme, managed by the Anna Lindh Foundation of the British Council and funded by the European Commission. She has facilitated / moderated 72 training courses, conferences, virtual sessions and workshops on debate and dialogue as tools for conflict resolution and intercultural mediation.

Esmat has nine years of experience in promoting youth in the Euro-Mediterranean and EU-Africa spheres.



> MERCEDES GIOVINAZZO
DIRECTOR, INTERARTS (BARCELONA)

Director of Interarts, an NGO specialising in international cultural cooperation and president of the Biennial of Young Artists of Europe and the Mediterranean - BJCEM.

Degree in Archaeology (Università degli Studi "La Sapienza", Rome, Italy) and a master's degree in Arts Management (École Supérieure de Commerce de Dijon, France).

The positions prior to the current position include: Director of Services and Deputy Director of Customer Services, Universal Forum of Cultures, Barcelona; administrator of the Division of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage,

Council of Europe, Strasbourg; director of the *Mastère Européen Management des Entreprises Culturelles, École Supérieure de Commerce* de Dijon; member of the Board of Directors of the Teatre di Roma (2013-2016); President of *Culture Action Europe* (2008-2015); President of the Platform “Access to Culture”, European Commission (2008-2011). She led the global campaign for culture at the 2030 SDGs.



> DRISS KHROUZ
GENERAL MANAGER, FOUNDATION ESPRIT (FÈS)

Professor Driss Khrouz is a former director of the National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco, Professor of Higher Education in Economics at the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences - Mohamed V-Agdal University - Rabat, member of the Board of Directors of the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM), Secretary General of the *Groupement d'Etudes et de Recherches sud la Méditerranée* (GERM), Rabat, leader of the Moroccan Network of the Anna Lindh Foundation for Intercultural Dialogue until the end of 2011, member of the International Advisory Committee “Memory of the World” of UNESCO and President of the Association “Under the sign of Ibn Rochd”. Since July 2017, he has been the general director of the Esperit de Fez Foundation and the Sacred Music Festival.

Source: Economics - HEM Research Center



> CRISTINA MAS
JOURNALIST

Journalist in the international section of the newspaper ARA.

She covered the 2011 Arab uprisings, Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece, where she covered both the euro crisis and the refugee crisis.

She has reported on migrations in the Mediterranean aboard the NGO Open Arms ship on the central Mediterranean migration route and also on the border between Morocco and Spain. She is a member of Mitjans en Lluita.



> JOSÉ ENRIQUE RUIZ DOMÈNEC
PROFESSOR OF ANTIQUITY AND MIDDLE AGE STUDIES,
UAB (BARCELONA)

José Enrique Ruiz-Domènec (Granada, 1948) is a historian and one of the most prestigious Spanish medievalists, a disciple (and friend) of the teachers of the School of Annals Georges Duby and Jacques Le Goff, who brought history closer to everyday life. Catalan by adoption, and a professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, he is first and foremost a European citizen, who has taught for many years in Paris. His book *Europa. Les claus de la seva història* is a leader in its field, and has made him one of the sages in

the history of the continent. He is the author of many other essays and also carries out important outreach work as editor of National Geographic History. Source: El País



> NAYLA TABBARA
VICE PRESIDENT, AYDAN FOUNDATION (BEIRUT)

Dr Nayla Tabbara is Vice President of the Adyan Foundation, Director of the Institute for Citizenship and Diversity Management and a founding member of Adyan, Foundation for Diversity, Solidarity and Human Dignity. She is also co-chair of Religions per la Pau. She holds a PhD in Religious Studies from the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* (Sorbonne-Paris) and Saint Joseph University (Beirut) and is a University Professor of Religious and Islamic Studies.

She is also co-chair of Religions per la Pau, co-chair of Religions per la Pau, Muslim theologian and university professor of Religious and Islamic Sciences.

Her research and publications are on Koranic commentary, Sufism, women in Islam, and the theology of religions and dialogue. She has publications in the fields of Islamic theology of other religions, Islamic feminism, education on interreligious and intercultural diversity, Koranic exegesis, and Sufism. She also works on education textbooks for diversity in formal (school and university) and non-formal settings. She has received the Gold Medal of the French Renaissance (2019), as well as the Special Jury Mention of the Jacques Hamel Prize (2019), the *Ecritures et Spiritualités* Prize (2019).



> MOHAMED TOZY
DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMICS OF RABAT (CASABLANCA)

Professor at the Hassan II University of Casablanca and Sciences-Po, Aix-en-Provence, France. Researcher at the Mediterranean Laboratory of Sociology (*Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme*) and director of the Moroccan Center for Social Sciences at Hassan II University, he is also a visiting professor at New York University, Sciences-Po Paris, the Autonomous University of Madrid and the University of Venice. He works as an expert for many institutions such as the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies, the World Bank, etc. He is the author of *Monarchie et Islam politique*, Presses de Sciences-Po Source: World Policy Conference.



> RICARD ZAPATA-BARRERO
PROFESSOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, UPF (BARCELONA)

Ricard Zapata is a full professor in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona-Spain). Director of GRITIM-UPF (Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration) and of the master's degree in Migration Studies. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the European Network IMISCOE (International Migration and Social Cohesion in Europe) and chairs the Committee on Foreign Affairs. He is currently

the coordinator of EuroMedMig (Euro-Mediterranean Migration Research Network) and the Jean Monnet EUMedMi “Mapping European Mediterranean Migration Studies” Network. In addition, he is a member of the editorial boards of various academic journals and occasionally contributes to media and policy debates.

His lines of research deal with contemporary issues of liberal democracy in contexts of diversity, especially the relationship between democracy, citizenship and immigration. He promotes interdisciplinary knowledge about immigration, combining theory and case studies, and follows contextual, conceptual, and interpretive approaches. His conclusions always seek to contribute to social and political change, and to the European and Mediterranean approach to migration studies. He is currently working on Migration in the Mediterranean, Migration Cities and on the development of the Paradigm of Intercultural Citizenship.

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- Tarragona City Council
- Girona City Council
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- Tarragona Provincial Council
- Girona Provincial Council
- Lleida Provincial Council
- Conselh Generau d'Aran
- Catalan Association of Municipalities and Counties
- Federation of Municipalities of Catalonia

» Entities of the business sector

- General Council of the Official Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Catalonia
- Entrepreneurs association Foment del Treball Nacional
- Association of Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises of Catalonia (PIMEC)
- Confederation of Cooperatives of Catalonia
- Multi-Sector Business Association (AMEC)
- Private Foundation of Entrepreneurs (FemCAT)

» Entities of the social, trade union and sports sector

- The Group of Entities of the Voluntary Sector of Catalonia
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