

New cooperation framework launched by the Anna Lindh Foundation and European Youth Forum

The European Youth Forum and the Anna Lindh Foundation have launched a new cooperation framework to reinforce youth platforms and partnerships across Europe and its Southern Neighbourhood.

The cooperation was announced on the occasion of a special dialogue event co-organised in Brussels by the Foundation and the Youth Forum with the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a network of young change makers from across the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.

Speaking at the dialogue encounter, the EU's High-Representative, **Federica Mogherini**, praised the work of the Anna Lindh Foundation and European Youth Forum, underlining that the meeting represented a major milestone and "starting point to recognise and amplify youth voice, agency and leadership" already happening across the Mediterranean. As a first step, Mrs Mogherini committed to a new partnership with young Mediterranean voices to "transform debate into action" and ensure "we, as institutions, shape the right message and narratives."

The new partnership between the Foundation and the Youth Forum will have a strategic focus on rolling-out "Young Med Voices Plus", an initiative launched by EU HR/VP Mogherini this week aimed at strengthening a parallel track to existing youth-led debate and dialogue, and to "open all channels to youth agency".

Paul Walton, who heads partnerships at the headquarters of the Anna Lindh Foundation, spoke in Brussels about the timely nature of the collaboration that "responds to the call from young change-makers and growing recognition of institutions to invest in a generation," adding that "Beyond media and policy narratives, there remains an unprecedented convergence of values and interests among youth communities to the north and to the south of the Mediterranean. This must be the basis to a new era of far-reaching Euro-Med youth cooperation."

Tina Hočevár, member of the Board of the European Youth Forum, said: "Young people across the Mediterranean face many similar challenges from seeking employment, having access to education to having their voices heard. Development in the region requires not only young people building contacts among themselves, but also for decision-makers to establish structured dialogue especially with youth organisations as amplifiers and representatives of youth. This collaboration is therefore not only a good first step, but also an important one."

Partnership framework:

The partnership announcement also set out the initial scope of the long-term partnership, including:

Supporting the roll-out of "Young Med Voices Plus", the initiative of EU High-Representative Mogherini to "open all channels to youth agency across the Mediterranean". This will centre on large-scale, youth-led communication and

advocacy actions in partnership with the Union's Delegations and Representatives across Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and wider world. A task force of "Young Med Voices" will be appointed to ensure an effective follow-up with the EEAS and the EU Commission's services, with a next meeting scheduled for 3-4 May 2017 in Brussels during European Youth Week.

Initiating a large-scale mapping exercise aimed at inter-connecting existing youth organisations and youth participation structures and platforms across Europe and the MENA region. The new framework will be central to establishing, by 2020, the first inter-regional structured dialogue process among youth and with decision-makers. The dialogue will also aim at reaching diverse and marginalised youth voices across the Mediterranean and will include innovative networking initiatives and virtual exchange. The process will also further identify existing good practice in youth empowerment that can be amplified on the global stage.

Partnering with the UN on Youth, Peace and Security. Supporting the Progress Study on United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, the first resolution of its kind on Youth, Peace and Security. This includes supporting the European consultation for the Progress Study, scheduled for September 2017, represents the culminating event in a first a worldwide consultation process on the central role of youth in peace building, with the outcomes to be presented to the UN Security Council in January 2018.

Working together with the EU on its programming from 2020. This will focus on an enhanced collaboration with the EU's Directorates for Education and Culture (DG EAC), Neighbourhood (DG NEAR) and Development (DEVCO). The Anna Lindh Foundation and European Youth Forum are aligned in calling for an innovative new youth strategy to be backed by the EU Member States, and expanding the impact of "Erasmus Plus" (marking its 30 year anniversary this year) to reach diverse youth voices and communities across Europe and the Mediterranean.

For further information on the partnership, contact:

Paul Walton, Head of The Executive Office of the Anna Lindh Foundation
(paul.walton@bibalex.org)

Allan Päll, Secretary General of the European Youth Forum
(allan.pall@youthforum.org)