

ANSA Conference: Italy's EU Presidency will be the occasion to re-launch cultural dialogue across the Mediterranean

Mon, 19/05/2014 - 13:53 -- Haitham Samy



An international conference on Mediterranean cooperation concluded today in the historic town of Pompeii, with a call to leverage the forthcoming Italian Presidency of the European Council for renewing cultural dialogue across the region. The conference, which brought together representatives of international organisations and media bodies engaged in Euro-Mediterranean affairs, was organised by the Italian News Agency (ANSA) as part of the Universal Forum of Cultures in Napoli.

Francesca Barracciu, the Italian government's Under Secretary of State for Culture, stated: "The Italian Presidency will be a unique opportunity to put cultural dialogue in the Mediterranean at the heart of the agenda of EU external relations. This dialogue should be centred on reinforcing a shared space for coexistence and exchange among and within the peoples and societies of our region."

One of the key events announced for the Italian EU Presidency will be the '10th Anniversary of the Anna Lindh Mediterranean Foundation', taking place in Napoli from 27th to 30th October with representatives from 42 countries. The event, set to mark a decade since the Member States of the Euro-Med Partnership took the joint decision to create its first common institution, will focus on the theme of the Next Chapter of Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean.

Paul Walton, Head of Communications at the Anna Lindh Foundation's Headquarters in

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Alexandria, underlined at the opening: "There is a growing appetite for mutual knowledge among citizens of the Mediterranean, also inspired by the dynamic social changes taking place in the region. This must be the basis for renewing the cultural dialogue agenda and supporting civil society actors in working together to face common challenges."

Khalid Chaouki, President of the Cultural Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, said: "New and emerging youth and civic movements to the South and North of the Mediterranean represent a spirit of change in the region, based on shared values. We must not miss the opportunity to invest in these movements at the base of our societies for leveraging Mediterranean cooperation."

The Italian Presidency of the European Council will formally begin on 1st July and run for six months until the end of December. At the start of January, the Foreign Ministers of Italy and of Greece – current hosts of the EU Presidency – jointly announced that 2014 would be labeled 'The Year of the Mediterranean'.

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The Anna Lindh Foundation is an international organisation which promotes intercultural exchanges and common projects among the civil societies of the Euro-Mediterranean region



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