

OUTCOMES OF MED FORUM 2016 PRESENTED IN VALLETTA: Malta backs the outcomes of MED FORUM 2016 on the eve of assuming the EU Presidency

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- *The outcomes of last month's "landmark forum" for Mediterranean Dialogue (23-25 October 2016) reaffirm the centrality of the ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION as a credible long-term institutional player in the face of unprecedented regional challenges.*
- *MED FORUM participants' survey, carried out in November 2016, provides evidence that the Forum has been a catalyst for youth and civil society mobilisation underway for intercultural action, and confirms an "appetite" and commitment for enlarging north, south partnerships to counteract conflict, extremism, unemployment, and the public discourse on migration and a refugee crisis.*
- *The Forum has been a "defining event and process" for the forthcoming Maltese Presidency of the EU which is backing a series of actions initiated by the Anna Lindh Foundation and partners to scale-up and widen the participation of intercultural action across the societies of Europe and the southern Mediterranean region, and to shift the policy discourse "beyond extremism" to addressing long-term underlying causes.*

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, Dr George W. Vella, has backed the outcomes of last month's landmark Anna Lindh Foundation MED FORUM. Dr Vella was speaking in the last days at a special event in Valletta to present the FORUM outcomes, exactly one month on from the regional gathering and on the eve of Malta assuming the Presidency of the European Council.

"Med Forum has truly been a watershed moment in bringing the Anna Lindh Foundation and its mandate for intercultural dialogue to the centre of the political debate on how to address common challenges of security and migration across the Mediterranean," stated Minister Vella. "We have witnessed first-hand how the Anna

Lindh Foundation represents today a true north, south partnership, and the Foundation has demonstrated on the global stage its unique capacity as a credible, serious and committed actor with a defined long-term strategy and unique mandate for dialogue action."

Minister Vella also underlined that last month's MED FORUM, which resulted from 18 months of preparation undertaken by the Foundation and partners, was conceived from the outset as a far-reaching process to bring cultural relations and people-to-people cooperation to the heart of the policy rethink on how to effectively construct relations between Europe and its southern Mediterranean neighbourhood and has been a "defining event for the future Presidency". "We have the evidence today that this renewed partnership between Malta and the Anna Lindh Foundation delivers, and the forthcoming Presidency is a unique opportunity to ensure the Foundation has the tools and capacity to fully assume the long-term mandate reaffirmed here through MED FORUM".

These remarks were echoed by the Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation, Ambassador Hatem Atallah, who presented the outcomes of MED FORUM alongside Minister Vella at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Valletta. "The Forum marks a turning point for the Anna Lindh Foundation. There is today a global consensus for the centrality of intercultural dialogue to address common challenges of conflict, extremism, unemployment, and certain media and political narratives on migration and a refugee crisis. There is equal consensus for the long-term approach for working through a grand coalition of partnerships, investing in a new generation of actors, and shifting strategic focus to new domains such as cities, media and enterprise."

Ambassador Atallah also highlighted the global reach of MED FORUM, evidenced by the high-level institutional backing now secured including the UN Secretary-General and EU High-Representative for Foreign Affairs, and the unprecedented communication impact of the process to date, with MED FORUM LIVE globally trending during the main three-day global gathering in Valletta and evidence of an emerging media movement.

Advancing the policy outputs of MED FORUM already began on 28th October in Marseille with a group of youth sector leaders from the Forum presenting the conclusions to Foreign Affairs Ministers at the "5+5 Dialogue" which backed the expansion of Young Mediterranean Voices. Next, on the 8th December, the League of Arab States will host the next of the inter-institutional steering group meetings with the ALF and partners, the EU, League of Arab States, Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat, MEDAC and the Maltese Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Among the key conclusions of MED FORUM presented in Valletta:

Taking a long-term approach and investing in a generation. Investing in a generation of intercultural actors is the only viable, long-term root to promote mutual understanding and prevent conflict and radicalisation.

Shifting strategic focus to intercultural cities and reaching communities. The establishment of a “Mediterranean Capital for Dialogue” was recommended as a first operational step to increase visibility and bring together existing city-to-city networks around an intercultural dialogue agenda.

Reach impact and growth through enabling partnerships. MED FORUM called for sustainable and effective partnerships. According to the Forum participants’ survey, carried out in November 2016, 57.3% of the delegates are in the process of establishing collaborations through partnerships with other Forum delegates, and 60.6% recommend the Anna Lindh Foundation to focus its activities on partnerships and policy advocacy.

Media is a crucial sector for the Anna Lindh Foundation. Preliminary results from the latest Euro-Med survey on intercultural trends and perceptions highlight there is scope to invest in more research and analysis, dialogue, exchanges and mentoring of journalists to counter negative media narratives.

Young Med Voices can be a catalyst for a real north-south partnership. Building on “Young Arab Voices”, it is the first time such a Pan-Arab programme extends to Europe, reshaping the traditional Euro-Med dynamics, as highlighted by the EU High-Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini: “This is not only a geographical expansion, but opening up new channels for youth-led agency.”

Mobility remains the central challenge, right and opportunity. At the heart of the Forum debate was how to ensure an exponential increase of opportunities for young people to communicate exchange and collaborate across all kinds of borders – physical or cultural.

Dialogue requires competences and a capabilities approach. There are competencies required to ensure dialogue is effective. A capabilities approach offers a valuable analytical lens for exploring the challenge and complexity of intercultural dialogue in contemporary settings.

Key actions underway through MED FORUM which could be advanced through the Maltese EU Presidency and beyond:

Shifting the policy and media narrative “beyond extremism”

- **Policy Outreach.** The Anna Lindh Foundation will now partner with the United Nations on the inter-agency steering group for the Progress Study on UN

Resolution 2250 (Youth, Peace and Security) which will provide a global platform for public policy outreach.

- **Major debates with next-generation.** The analysis of the latest intercultural trends report commissioned by the Anna Lindh Foundation will be the basis for launching through the Maltese Presidency a series of major debates with next-generation influencers as well as policy-makers, thinkers and decision-makers in the current 'authority' generation.

- **Youth-led Campaigns.** The trends data presented in Valletta provides evidence that investment in youth-led initiative is the most effective way to challenge extremist narratives. The strategic partnership with Facebook launched at MED FORUM, along with newly established media partnerships, will be the basis for launching a region-wide programme of "innovation labs" aimed at empowering youth sector leaders with the tools to run large-scale communications campaigns.

Launching a new era of young Mediterranean voices

- **Youth Platform.** The launch of "Young Mediterranean Voices" at MED FORUM 2016 represented a major milestone. The programme has now received financial backing by the European Commission, the World Bank Group and Member States such as the Finnish Government, and will be roll-out from January 2017. It will provide a platform for enhanced youth debate and dialogue action.

- **Mogherini Dialogue.** As announced in Valletta, the EU's High-Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will invite to Brussels in the first quarter of 2017 delegates from Young Mediterranean Voices. The purpose of the meeting will be "to start a conversation, and to bring about real change" with a focus on policies which can be advanced at the regional level.

Working through a new partnership with media

- **Media analysis.** The latest survey on intercultural trends points at a new line of activity with senior media executives and policy makers, which could initiate policy changes required to significantly influence the media narratives when reporting on the 'other'. In this regard, the milestone 10th edition of the Anna Lindh Foundation Journalist Award, to be organised in 2017, will put a strong emphasis on media coverage of issues related to migration and the refugee crisis.

- **Partnerships for media networks.** MED FORUM secured a commitment among large scale media networks to enhanced cooperation, support media advocacy and invest in areas of mentoring. Among them: COPEAM, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), ASBU and the Euro-Med Media Network (EMMN).

Ensuring the Mediterranean legacy

- MED FORUM has been a catalyst for embedding institutional partnerships in Malta for the Anna Lindh Foundation. For example, leading to a new cooperation agreement between the Foundation and the Mediterranean Academy for Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) aimed at reaffirming the MED FORUM connections between youth, civil society, institutions and policy-makers. Joint action in 2017 will lay the ground for an annual event in Malta.
- **City recognition.** One of the large-scale initiatives proposed through MED FORUM has been the establishment of a first Dialogue Award for Cities through the new collaboration with Valletta 2018 Foundation with the aim of raising visibility and embedding best practices on intercultural dialogue. The criteria for this award scheme will be pioneered as a basis for a regional programme.
- **Estonian Presidency.** Discussions are being initiated with the Estonian authorities and Anna Lindh Foundation's civil society network regarding the preparation of the Presidency of the European Council to follow Malta in the second semester of 2017 to ensure the "Mediterranean legacy".

Note to editors:

MED FORUM 2016 gathered 640 delegates from 50+ countries, including representatives of civil society organisations, youth leaders, media networks, and policy-makers. The Forum followed an 18-month strategy and programming process initiated in April 2015 by the Anna Lindh Foundation and Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Malta, in partnership with the main regional institutions working for dialogue in the Mediterranean. The main aim of the strategy was to reaffirm the centrality of intercultural dialogue in the face of unprecedented regional challenges. This is a direct response to the call of the EU Foreign Affairs chief Federica Mogherini and institutions for collective action.

The reach and impact of MED FORUM was significantly higher compared to the previous editions, with more than 15% increase in requests for self-financed delegates (1224 CSOs from 42 countries competed to participate in the initial call). The media outreach (MED FORUM LIVE) reached an unprecedented level of people and communities world-wide: #MedForum2016 was a global trending topic during the three main days of the Forum, with 2,805,141 Twitter accounts reached and 12,375,744 impressions (potential reads).

The event formed on a unique participatory process involving, on the one side, the 4500+ local branches of the Anna Lindh Foundation, representing civil society, cities and local authorities, cultural bodies, artistic and youth organisations, media networks; and, on the other side, an inter-institutional steering group involving for the first time

together, the Foundation's Secretariat and its partners, the EU Central and External Action services, the League of Arab States headquarters, the UfM-Secretariat, MEDAC, and the Maltese Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA).



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