



Italy backs the Anna Lindh Foundation intercultural dialogue strategy for the Mediterranean, as a long-term response to rising radicalisation and the region's refugee crisis

Sun, 13/09/2015 - 11:26 -- Press Office



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The newly appointed Advisory Council of the Anna Lindh Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue met for the first time in Rome on the 11th of September, hosted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Council, which is chaired by the President of the Foundation, Elisabeth Guigou, is comprised of leading figures from Europe and the Mediterranean partner countries, and is responsible for the strategic direction of the Foundation.

The focus of the Advisory Council's debate in Rome was the role of the Anna Lindh Foundation, as the region's institution and reference point for intercultural dialogue, in the face of the regional challenge of extremism and radicalisation, and the refugee crisis impacting on Europe and the Mediterranean.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting in Rome, Dr Mario Giro, Undersecretary of State at the Italian Ministry of Affairs, said: "The work of the Anna Lindh Foundation is central to changing the narrative about our region today, bringing new inputs for the partnership between the EU and the Mediterranean, and bringing the civil society in to the heart of this partnership. Italy is backing the long-term work of the Foundation to build this counter-narrative to the headlines of extremism and radicalisation promoted by a loud minority."

H.E. Mrs Stefania Giannini, Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research, underlined at the opening the importance of a culture-centric approach to a renewed EU Mediterranean policy and the importance of scaling-up exchange among peoples. "Europe has failed so far to find the effective solutions to the regional challenges we are facing today across the Mediterranean. It is for this reason that the work and inputs of the Anna Lindh Foundation are central to creating an ambitious regional programme which can represent the future framework of Euro-Med cooperation."

Elisabeth Guigou, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation, stated: "We know from our experience in the field and our Report on Intercultural Trends that there is a convergence of values and an appetite for exchange across the Mediterranean. The extremists who promote an alternative vision, of region of division or a clash of values, are a minority but they are vocal, and

we have a responsibility to empower the silent majority with the tools and platforms to make their voices heard.”

The Advisory Council work in Rome is centred on putting in place in new communication strategy for the Anna Lindh Foundation’s intercultural dialogue work which can leverage the visibility of the existing cooperation across the Mediterranean. Following the opening session, the Anna Lindh Foundation’s Executive Director, Ambassador Hatem Atallah, chaired a session on communication planning, with inputs from leading media organisations and experts from both shores of the Mediterranean.

Among the forthcoming actions being discussed is a regional programme of communication aimed at providing youth leaders with the skills, tools and platforms to have a voice and create a counter-media narrative in the face of the negative trends impacting the region.

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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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