

PROGRESS REVIEW 7/9/2016 - ROME

Advisory Council 2016

The progress review of 7/9/2016, to be delivered on the occasion of the 2016 Advisory Council meeting in Rome, presents an overview of key milestones in relation to the Board adopted ALF Strategy "Working Together Towards 2025". The review focuses in particular on the actions taken to put in place the first pillar of the new strategy "Communication and Visibility" which was defined through the 2015 Advisory Council meeting of 11/9/16 and presented to the Board on 28/10/16.

The ALF strategy towards 2025 sets out to "open up a long-term perspective for the ALF and creating the conditions for strategic planning; increasing the focus within our action and the emphasis on quality, impact and visibility; reinforcing a sound and transparent management; ensuring a return on the investment we are making in people, from the staff to the Networks and beneficiaries; and, ultimately, addressing those elements which are essential to ensure the Foundation's long-term credibility and visibility as the region's central institution and reference point for intercultural dialogue".

EMBEDDING A NEW STAGE OF COMMUNICATION

In line with the policy that communication and visibility will be the strategic priority for the tenure of office of the new leadership team, we worked during the second half of 2015 to put in place a comprehensive communication plan and strategy for the ALF. This began with the implementation of the first communication audit (July and August 2015), with the support of external expertise, followed by the meeting of the ALF Advisory Council in Rome (10th-11th September 2015) and the production of the Foundation's first comprehensive communication plan.

Following the presentation by the ALF President of the main outcomes of Advisory Council to the Board of 28/11/2015, and the articulation of the main communication guidelines resulting from the Council meeting, the Foundation has registered the first areas of impact of this new approach to visibility. Firstly, the evidence of increase in "name recognition" through a series of policy declarations resulting from a renewed level of institutional engagement and international partnership work (eg. references in the EU Neighbourhood Policy Review, policy dialogue forums of the UN, UfM, Club de Madrid, LAS). Secondly, there has been a measurable increase in mainstream and digital media impact resulting from the first capacity-building initiatives with regional youth networks (eg. 224.2% increase in individual Tweet impressions and 400% increase in Facebook reach in February 2016, and more than 20,000 television viewers during the same month from new live broadcast debates). Thirdly, the presentation to the European Commission of the very first communication plan for the EU Action Grant, with a new policy of concentrating media resources on high-impact projects and strengthening ALF internal capacity for communication. Fourthly, the evidence provided through external review of a "cultural shift" in the organisation when it comes to embedding sustainable communication processes (information bulletin system, production of media products, effective follow-up to activities).

DELIVERING ON PRIORITY INVESTMENT IN YOUTH

Investment in youth has been identified as a central operational pillar of "Working Together Towards 2025", with a strategic focus on equipping young women and men with the dialogue skills to work with peers across the Mediterranean to build and lead their own narratives in the face of common transnational problems.

Following the endorsement of the Board of Governors, the ALF secretariat has worked actively with strategic partners to prepare the ground for the expansion of the flag-ship debate programme "Young Arab Voices" (YAV). Firstly, through the organisation of the "Thessaloniki Partners Forum" of 30/11/15 which brought together key stakeholders (Networks, regional institutions, YAV alumni) to develop the contents for the next phase of YAV with

a focus on strengthening the project pillars related to “communication and media” and “euro-med exchange”. Secondly, working through an enhanced cooperation with the European Commission to ensure the programme can have a central, sustainable contribution to a renewed European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in which “intercultural dialogue”, “people-to-people cooperation” and “partnerships for youth” are key dimensions. Thirdly, bringing together and building synergies for the first time between the alumni networks of YAV and the Journalist Award as the basis for media programming with young CSO leaders and young journalists.

In preparation of this new phase, the Foundation also secured funding support from the British Foreign Office (FCO) for the strategic research and development project (“Debate to Action”) which has acted as a catalyst for bringing a stronger evidence-base to ALF strategic programming through expert analysis. The “Debate to Action” project has also led to a series of high-level outputs during this phase of reporting: (i) the creation of new tools and methodologies to support the enhanced communication skills of youth alumni, and delivery of the first regional media training programme; (ii) securing for the first time the participation of youth alumni on live television and radio debate shows; (iii) opening up new, innovative models of partnership (eg. Facebook); (iv) launching a series of national youth debates which culminated in the first YAV regional forum in Tunis. The Forum, which involved more than 80 Arab youth with peers and policy-makers, has had a significant media impact as well as backing from high-profile personalities such as Wided Bouchamaoui, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize with the Tunisian Dialogue Quartet.

TRANSFORMING PARTNERSHIPS INTO ACTION

All of this programming approach remains founded on the new strategic emphasis of “Working Through Partnership” with the region’s leading institutions and networks. Following the BoG of 28/10/15, ALF has focused on transforming the newly established cooperation agreements into a programme of action:

UNESCO: The ALF and UNESCO have united for the first time alumni from “Young Arab Voices” with UNESCO’s “NET-MED Youth” as part of a regional communications training (Amman, 14-18 February 2016), with national cascade capacity-building planned in the coming months. UfM-Secretariat (UfM-S): The regular process of interaction has been embedded, including ensuring presence at respective meetings, and the UfM-S actively participated in formally launching the preparations of the Anna Lindh Forum 2016 as a member of the inter-institutional steering committee (Valletta, 4 March 2016). Council of Europe (CoE): The CoE was a main partner in the “Thessaloniki Youth Forum” (Thessaloniki, 30 November 2015) to prepare the ground for collaborating on joint “alternative narrative” public campaigns and a first collaboration on the “Mediterranean University” linked to the ALF education programme. League of Arab States (LAS): the ALF jointly partnered with LAS and the United Nations Regional Information Office in an initiative on reinforcing the role of youth in challenging extremist narratives (Cairo, 2 February 2016).

World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid: As a follow-up to the ALF participation to the “Madrid+10 Global Forum” of 27/10/15, the ALF involved for the first time a former Head of State (Prime Minister Zlatko Lagumdzija of Bosnia Herzegovina) from Club de Madrid in a mentoring initiative with regional youth alumni (Amman, 14-18 February 2016). Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA): The ALF and BA co-organised a first regional event on social enterprise training for educators in partnership with the University of Manchester (Alexandria, 7-12 February 2016). The Swedish Institute and a delegation from the Swedish MFA, the ALF organised a first round-table youth debate aimed at also opening up an engagement of Nordic European networks with YAV (Alexandria, 17 March 2016). Friends of Europe (FoE): ALF and FoE co-organised a first working group session (Brussels, 13 January) resulting in joined-up programming to publication and outreach work with opinion-leaders aimed at bringing the intercultural debate to wider audiences. As a follow-up to the ALF participation to the OSCE Conference of 21/5/15 on “Promoting Dialogue to Prevent Radicalisation”, the Foundation is collaborating with the “New-Med” network of academics with EuroMeSCo a workshop to be hosted at the BA on the definition of intercultural dialogue today in the face of unprecedented regional challenges. With the Euro-Med University EMUNI and the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ALF is organising the first high-level conference on translation to be hosted in Portoroz on 23 and 24 June 2016.

In partnership with the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the ALF reached a co-organisation agreement for the next edition of the Mediterranean Forum, to take place on 24th and 25th October 2016 in Valletta at the internationally renowned Mediterranean Conference Centre (MCC). The Foundation launched on 4th March 2016, in

Valletta, the formal preparations for the Malta Forum, including the first meeting of the Forum's inter-institutional steering group involving representatives of the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), UfM-Secretariat, EEAS, EU NEAR, League of Arab States (LAS) and MEDAC. There was a strong consensus among the institutional partners that the Forum must be the anchor moment in a wider process aimed at reaffirming intercultural dialogue as a central component of Euro-Med cooperation and a major contribution to the Maltese EU Presidency in 2017, which has "Mediterranean" as a central theme. The Forum preparation meeting was also an occasion to consolidate a consortium of partnerships aimed at enhancing the local impact and 'legacy' of the Malta Forum, among them the Malta Arts Council, Valletta 2018 (European City of Culture) and the ALF Maltese Head of Network (The Germinarie Group).

This strategic approach has continued to be coherent with the Anna Lindh Foundation's core mandate for intercultural dialogue and its unique role as a "Network of Networks". From 19th to 20th November 2015, the Foundation organised in Brussels the annual meeting of the Heads of National Networks, representing now more than 4,500 civil society organisations across the 42 Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean. The meeting was also an occasion to focus on how to implement the new strategic approach at the national level and in a deepening collaboration with the Networks focused on the quality and impact of intercultural actions. Part of this approach is leveraging the potential of the existing ALF support schemes for civic engagement and mobilisation: more than 500 CSOs have been involved in the ALF call for proposals and 187 applications were submitted from 37 Euro-Med countries (17 projects were selected from 14 countries in the domain of "Education for Intercultural Citizenship"; and 13 projects from 11 countries for "Intercultural and artistic co-productions"; and a total of 276 activities will be organised by the Networks with the support of the Network support scheme.

THE ROAD TOWARDS VALLETTA

The Mediterranean Forum of the Anna Lindh Foundation, set to take place in Valletta on the eve of the first Maltese EU Presidency, represents the catalyst for the new coalition of partnerships and the anchor in a process to build the Foundation's next phase of strategic programming. Conceived from the outset with the Maltese partners as a process, as opposed to a 'fire-work event', the Forum preparation has created a framework for defining intercultural dialogue, identifying priority themes for the Foundation's future programming, and mobilizing members across its Networks around a common dialogue agenda.

The Mediterranean Forum was announced on 26th November 2015 in Barcelona by President Élisabeth Guigou alongside EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini in the framework of the high-level Ministerial meeting in Barcelona, marking 20 years since the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Following the announcement, the ALF established on the one hand a cross-unit task-force to ensure the preparation and development of the programme and on the other an inter-institutional steering group (Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UfM-Secretariat, EEAS, EU NEAR, League of Arab States and MEDAC). On 4th of March, a regional preparation meeting took place to consolidate the core objectives, structure of the programme and main strategic contents. During this preparation phase, the ALF launched calls for participation to the Med Forum, which have had an unprecedented level of participation. Through the first call for participation, launched and then evaluated by an international committee, ALF received 855 individual applications including good practices and project ideas, from which 191 were finally selected. Through the second call for registration, 549 applications were received and 150 have been preliminarily selected. There has also been a specific call for a youth sector initiative in partnership with Facebook with 142 applicants; a total of 30 young people have been selected for this activity.

The Forum agenda is now taken shape with confirmations of keynote speakers such as the Nobel Peace Prize Quartet for Dialogue, and high-level officials including the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UNESCO Director-General, UfM Secretary-General, and members of the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid. ALF has also established partnership agreements with global audio-visual networks (EBU, ASBU, Deutsche Welle, France 24), and with Facebook HQ for a 'counter-narrative' outreach campaign involving Youth.

With the Mediterranean Forum well-positioned to shape the policy agenda ahead of the Maltese EU Presidency, the work of the Advisory Council in 2016 takes on renewed importance in terms of defining the central values, messaging and intercultural dialogue agenda to be driven through the Forum and into the Presidency (first semester 2017).