

### **The Anna Lindh Foundation: Questions and Answers (December 2005)**

**Questions: Arch. Michele Capasso, President of Fondazione Mediterraneo and Head of the Italian Anna Lindh Network**

**Answers: Dr. Traugott Schoefthaler, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation**

**What is the role of the Anna Lindh Euro Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures?**

The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) has been established in November 2005 by all 35 Governments as the youngest institution of the Euro Mediterranean Partnership. It is the first common institution for the third chapter of the Barcelona Declaration (social and human partnership). The two other common regional institutions are the EuroMed Parliamentary Assembly (for political and security cooperation) and FEMIP, the European Investment Bank Facility for economic development.

The Anna Lindh Foundation was established as a network of 35 national networks; each country designed a lead organization in charge of bringing together national institutions for intercultural dialogue. The Anna Lindh Foundation Secretariat in Alexandria, Egypt, coordinates these 35 national networks and their common programme.

Priority group of the Anna Lindh Foundation are young people between 14 and 40 years; empowerment of women is an objective of all programmes. All activities must involve at least two partners from EU and two from Southern or Eastern Mediterranean countries.

**How can the Euro Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) help in the process of peace?**

The EMP with all its institutions such as the ALF is the only International Political Institution (outside the Arab League) in which Palestine has full membership status. Israeli and Palestinian partners are invited to take part in all regional meetings and projects. Although neither the EMP nor the ALF have a mandate for the Middle East Peace Process, the continued invitation to Israel and Palestine and the Arab neighbours to participate in Euro-Mediterranean meetings and activities is expected to contribute to confidence-building and cooperation which are prerequisite of peace.

The Anna Lindh Foundation provides opportunities to young people for their participation in the dialogue between cultures and provides them with skills necessary for living together in the multicultural world of the twenty first century.

**What are the concrete activities of the Anna Lindh Foundation?**

As a young institution, the ALF must be creative and innovative. The ALF promotes a new and dynamic concept of a dialogue between cultures: it is a dialogue between young people, respecting each other's rights and multiple cultural identities. And it is a platform for cooperation and building mutual confidence.

With the Napoli youth workshop in December 2005, the ALF invited for the first time young people to express their opinion on the EuroMed work programme approved by 35 Governments at their EuroMed Summit on 28 November 2005 in Barcelona.

The ALF brings the proposals of their workshop to the attention of all 35 Governments and invites them to pay more attention to the proposals of young people. Similarly, the ALF establishes teams of 2+2 schools, 2+2 young research teams, supports summer schools, young journalists and cultural activities.

All activities have a common theme: learning about cultural diversity and promoting a Euro Mediterranean citizenship, based on mutual understanding, respect and cooperation without frontiers. This theme has been proposed by the High Level Group of Experts convened by the former President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, in 2003.

#### ▣ What is meant by the "Network of Networks"?

The "Network of Networks" needs two to four more years to become fully operational. It started at the end of 2004 with mostly Government officials identifying interested national institutions. One year later, 26 out of 35 national networks are established with a minimum of five and a maximum of 70 national institutions. Most are now coordinated by a civil society institution serving as Head of the National Network.

The Anna Lindh Foundation, established top-down by 35 Governments, is on its way to mobilize civil society and increase citizens' participation in the EMP.

According to a resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2005, the national networks of the ALF are invited to "give the EMP face at national level." That means: all national partners of EuroMed programmes, youth, cultural heritage, women, media, university and research cooperation are invited to cooperation in each member country.

#### ▣ What are the developments for the future?

As of April 2006, the ALF will finance the first 50 to 100 regional projects for schools, universities, women, young researchers, artists and libraries. In June, the EuroMed universities network will be established. In September, the ALF will make its contribution to the new United Nations Alliance of civilizations.

Major challenges are:

- ▣ The provision of appropriate legal status and funding for the 35 National Networks, in particular through action by national Governments and the European Commission, as requested by the European Parliament and by a joint statement adopted by the Heads of the National Networks in Barcelona on 27 November 2005.
- ▣ The stabilization of the ALF as a network of networks, creating synergies and added value in the framework of other networks, programmes and projects of the EuroMed Partnership.
- ▣ The identification of appropriate resources for the Foundation after the end of its initial phase of three years (2008)
- ▣ The establishment of equal partnership between North and South which requires mobilization of three to four times more partner countries as compared to each of the 25 EU member countries.