

JULY 2018

YOUNG MEDITERRANEAN VOICES & EYL40 YOUNG LEADERS

LISTENING AND LEARNING:
A TWO-WAY STREET

BRUSSELS SEMINAR REPORT



"Young Mediterranean Voices" seeks to empower young people to enhance a culture of dialogue, to contribute to public policy and shape media discourses, and to create a shared understanding with peers across the Mediterranean on how to address issues of common concern to their communities. "Young Mediterranean Voices" is coordinated by the Anna Lindh Foundation, in partnership with the British Council, Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), Friends of Europe, the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid, MEDAC and Soliya, funded by the European Commission and co-financed by the Government of Finland and World Bank Group.

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The European Young Leaders (EYL40) programme, led by Friends of Europe, is a unique, inventive and multi-stakeholder programme that aims to promote a European identity by engaging the continent's most promising talents in initiatives that will shape Europe's future. As of 2017, the programme has also organised exchanges with young leaders from the MENA region and from the USA and Canada.

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This report reflects the seminar rapporteur's understanding of the views expressed by participants. These views are not necessarily those of the organisations that participants represent, nor of Friends of Europe, its board of trustees, members or partners.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Government, education and institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean region need to do a better job of including young people in order to forge a better future. Art and education can help. Amid widespread discontent, there are signs of hope.

That's a broad generalisation of the message from a two-day conference held on 22 and 23 May in Brussels. The event brought together Young Mediterranean Voices from the Anna Lindh Foundation and some of Friends of Europe's EYL40 Young Leaders. Speakers included Abdelbasset Ben Hassen, President of the Arab Institute for Human Rights; Michael Köhler, Director of Neighbourhood, European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations; Elisabeth Guigou, President of the Anna Lindh Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue and former Minister of Justice of France; and Sherin Khankan, Denmark's first female imam, and founder of the women-led Mariam Mosque in Copenhagen.

The European Young Leaders (EYL40) programme was launched in 2011, with the goal of bringing together 40 of Europe's brightest minds every year – aged 40 and under – to debate challenges facing the continent and search for solutions. The programme was initially conceived by Friends of Europe in partnership with EuropaNova.



Young Mediterranean Voices is a leading network of young change-makers established in 2011 after the historic Arab uprisings. The network brings together young teachers, journalists, environmentalists, social entrepreneurs and peace and democracy activists from across North Africa, the Middle East and now Europe. It is coordinated by the Anna Lindh Foundation, which was set up in 2005 by the foreign ministers of EU and Mediterranean partner countries and is named in honour of the Swedish Foreign Minister who was murdered in 2003.

The first day's meeting on 22 May provided an intimate, relaxed setting in which the 38 participants from the EYL40 and YMV programmes could connect and learn from one another in an informal environment. Those present represented more than 22 countries, including: Algeria, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, France, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Tunisia, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Syria, Poland, UK, USA.

The discussions focused on ways to empower young people as key actors for community dialogue and peace-building – and to ensure that they are not excluded by negative media and political discourse. Discussion topics included listening and learning from the arts and intercultural exchange; empowerment of women through business; skills and education for the digital age; city leadership on climate change; and a conversation with Sherin Khankan.

Following the meeting, the group was also hosted by the King and Queen of the Belgians for a dinner at the Royal Castle of Laeken, acknowledging the importance of these two youth programmes as drivers for social change.

On the second day, a public, high-level dialogue was held with over 168 senior representatives from business, politics and civil society, to discuss and highlight the increasing role of youth in bringing innovative ideas to conflict prevention, governance and peace-building, and identifying ways to empower them as key, equal partners in dialogue across the Euro-Mediterranean region. It also provided an opportunity for youth to give voice to the issues that they feel are most affecting their generation, and to engage with senior representatives present on ways to improve the relationship between the EU and Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries.

Participants recommended elevating the role of the arts in getting young people to collaborate to confront some of the transnational challenges facing the world. One participant noted that the populist right has often been more successful this century at using narratives to drive change. Many young people feel alienated from political processes in the Euro-Mediterranean region – but it is essential to encourage greater involvement, and to treat the young as solutions to the region's problems rather than as a problem.

Time to design the future

The Arab Spring was, in part, a cry of frustration from a young generation that wanted its world to change. So far, the results have not met some of the original hopes.

The upheavals have identified some big challenges that are providing focus for the younger demographic to become more socially engaged – many are unemployed and education systems are not always serving them well. They feel underrepresented, yet increasingly know what they want and understand some of the possible solutions. Inevitably these involve politics. But education, business and the arts can be important levers for change.

Young Mediterranean Voices from the Anna Lindh Foundation and some of Friends of Europe's EYL40 Young Leaders discussed these themes at a conference in Brussels on 22 and 23 May. European Young Leaders (EYL40) was conceived by Friends of Europe in partnership with EuropaNova and launched in 2011. It brings together 40 of Europe's brightest minds every year – aged 40 and under – to debate challenges facing the continent and search for solutions.

Young Mediterranean Voices, too, was established in 2011. It followed the historic Arab uprisings and brings together young teachers, journalists, environmentalists, social entrepreneurs and peace and democracy activists. They come from across North Africa and the Middle East, and also Europe. YMV It is coordinated by the Anna Lindh Foundation, which was set up in 2005 by the foreign ministers of EU and Mediterranean partner countries and is named in honour of the Swedish Foreign Minister who was murdered in 2003.



The first day of the conference focussed on ways to empower young people as key actors for community dialogue and peace-building – and to ensure that they are not excluded by negative media and political discourse. Participants then had dinner at the royal palace with Their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians. The second day’s programme focused on what youth really want and how to engage them.

There’s a severe need for jobs in the Mediterranean region – but also for qualified staff to fill the jobs that are available. That implies changes in the education system. “The Arab world has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world – around 25% on average,” said **Abdallah Absi Halabi**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer Zoomaal and MENA Young Leader 2017. “More than 80 mn jobs are needed and that’s a challenge. However, in fast-moving industries, like technology, business management, marketing and fashion, things are always changing. Whatever you learn in college is going to be obsolete by the time you graduate.”

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Abdallah Absi Halabi
 Founder & Chief Executive Officer
 at Zoomaal and MENA Young
 Leader 2017



Coding is important, because it teaches a way of thinking about how things could transform with data. “So is the ability to learn by yourself,” said Halabi. “One common thing is that the people who are tech savvy and get to know how to use Google and know their way around the web can learn faster than those who just use Facebook. One major thing is the ability to change careers. Someone who might have developed skills in a field that will die in the next five years. So people should have the ability to change their careers and see how they can be more dynamic with their career choices.”

Part of the problem for educators is the speed at which technology is advancing, which makes it hard for schools and universities to keep up. “The pace of technology change is immense, and we don’t realise how much it will change communities and the industrial base,” said **Dharmendra Kanani**, Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe. “Digital technology will be a driver of economic growth. Yet significant communities are either digitally excluded or don’t have the right skill sets. That is going to get worse if our systems don’t adapt and change.”



One solution is training environments that do not form part of traditional educational establishments. Molenbeek became known worldwide in 2016 as the commune of Brussels where some disaffected young people from immigrant backgrounds had been recruited into extremist cells, such as ISIS. That same year, MolenGeek, a tech incubator and coding school for youth in the area, was set up to offer the commune's young people an alternative means of empowerment: "Many dropped out of school at 13 or 14 years old. They dreamed of becoming bus drivers or jobs with low added value," said **Julie Foulon**, Co-Founder at MolenGeek. "We said OK, to become an entrepreneur is a question of mindset and hard work. So we launched a coding school. Now we have had three classes with amazing results – 100 people with positive exits. After six months these young people can get a job or an internship or launch their own company. For the fourth promotion, of 20 students there are eight women. We can create female role models who are accessible, and more and more women are coming. We have also started a programme in Morocco – in the east of the country, which is where the families of the young people in Molenbeek come from. The people there want to create jobs in Morocco."

“To become an entrepreneur is a question of mindset and hard work”

Julie Foulon
Co-Founder at MolenGeek

Wanted: coding skills plus...

Developing skills fit for the 21st century is not, however, as simple as teaching people to code. Some of the most useful skills will be those that machines cannot easily replicate – such as social skills and critical thinking.

“At the OECD we test digital skills,” said **Andreas Schleicher**, Director for Education and Skills at Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). “If you look at younger people, even in the industrial world, only about every second is fit for the flat world – as a consumer, not even to think about coding. The bottlenecks are a lot less about techniques than about the underlying cognitive and social experience. Can you think creatively? Can you anticipate new developments? This is where the real bottlenecks are. It’s about co-constructing knowledge. Can you work with other people, people who think differently from you? Can you connect the dots to where the next idea is going to come from?”

Not many countries have been good at preparing young people in this way. “If you look around the world there are very few countries where you can say that education is preparing for that world,” Schleicher said. “One is China. In Shanghai, the poorest kids in the poorest neighbourhoods are better prepared than many in Europe in those kinds of tasks. They can think like a mathematician, like a scientist or like a philosopher. You can give them complex tasks that they have never seen before and they can actually manage those kinds of things. I agree with this idea that coding is an important skill today but there is a risk that we do exactly what we



have done with maths and science and history – that we end up educating students for our past and not for their future. The hardest thing today is not to learn things but to unlearn and relearn things when the context changes. Try to convert a truck driver who loses his job into a software engineer – that’s where the difficulties arise.”

Unfortunately, the Mediterranean region has fallen behind here, according to Schleicher. “This is where the Middle East is very badly prepared. If you look at education in the region, it is very much about reproducing the prefabricated knowledge that most assessments are based on. If you look at why those countries perform badly on PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests, it is not because students don’t go to school for long days; the school days are much longer than in some countries in Europe or America or China. It is because they are filled with the accumulation of dead knowledge and not the capacity to extrapolate. What you need now is not how to learn the wisdom of our times but to question the wisdom of our times. The world region that is really on the fast track there is Asia – China and Singapore.”

“Coding is an important skill today but there is a risk that we do exactly what we have done with maths and science and history – that we end up educating students for our past and not for their future. The hardest thing today is not to learn things but to unlearn and relearn things when the context changes”

Andreas Schleicher

Director for Education and Skills at
Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development (OECD)



1. Rory Newbery, The Complete Freedom of Truth-Europe (TCFT)
2. Elisabeth Guigou, Anna Lindh Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue with Jamila Aanzi, Dutch Women's Council, EYL40



3. Shada Islam, Friends of Europe
4. Mary Fitzgerald, Lybia Analyst,
Journalist, EYL40
5. Paul Walton, Anna Lindh
foundation



Women's digital future



“We need creative, innovative people that know how to construct and reconstruct knowledge at the bridge of computer science and the humanities. I hope we don’t get stuck on coding, which is a low-level skill. AI is going to take it over”

Sana Odeh
 Founder and Chair of Arab Women in Computing

One problem with the digital age has been its overwhelming domination by men – at least in the United States, the home to the world’s tech giants. But that generalisation does not hold elsewhere. “There are negative images for women’s place in the Arab world,” said **Sana Odeh**, Founder and Chair of Arab Women in Computing. “But in most of the Arab world more women study computer engineering than in the west. They are 25% to 30% in Lebanon and 50% to 60% in Palestine. In the US it is 15% – and Silicon Valley is so sexist and misogynistic. We have many companies in the Arab world led by women. We need creative, innovative people that know how to construct and reconstruct knowledge at the bridge of computer science and the humanities. I hope we don’t get stuck on coding, which is a low-level skill. AI is going to take it over.”

Still, women are underrepresented in business and the workforce in general, especially in the Mediterranean region. “It is clear that full participation of women



everywhere in the world would be good for everyone – for families and for national economies,” said **Shada Islam**, Director of Europe and Geopolitics at Friends of Europe. “What is the problem? Anticipatory obedience and traditional families? Some countries’ laws? Access to finance is also a challenge, because you need it if you are starting up a business.”

One issue might be well-meant encouragement for women to develop skills they can use at home. “Do you still have the mental image of a woman doing a few craft things? Or of a woman leading a business based on innovation?” asked **Yostina Boules**, Founder & Managing Director, Taqa Solutions and MENA Young Leader 2017. “Access to finance is a challenge. People say, ‘Start and money will follow.’ But no, there’s a need for investors prepared to burn money. You can’t just tell an entrepreneur to think big without having the right resources.”

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Yostina Boules

Founder & Managing Director,
Taqa Solutions and MENA Young
Leader 2017



“For access to finance, we find that for a bank it makes a difference whether you have a female or male name when you are asking for a loan. Business angels are mainly male, so we are now trying to foster women business angels”

Ulla Engelmann

Head of Unit, European Commission Directorate-General for the Internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs

Even when women have ideas, it can be hard for them to get the financing needed to turn them into businesses. “For access to finance, we find that for a bank it makes a difference whether you have a female or male name when you are asking for a loan,” said **Ulla Engelmann**, Head of Unit, European Commission Directorate-General for the Internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs. “Business angels are mainly male, so we are now trying to foster women business angels. We are not only talking about cute handicrafts and textiles, we want to encourage high-tech start-ups.”

One factor could be a more-cautious attitude among women to asking for loans. “When I worked at BNP Paribas, we tried to make them more sensitive to women,” said **Assita Kanko**, Author, politician & founder of #Polin, a political incubator. “Men tend to be more confident, and women wanted to be perfect before they asked for credit. In general, access to credit is more difficult for women due to a lack of networking in the right environments and a lack of training. You cannot stay in your own silo. You need to go out and find your own network, including male clubs – because their money is important too.”



Women held back by social pressure – and laws

Another problem is that women are still expected to carry out most domestic chores. “Why are women not more represented as entrepreneurs in Belgium?” Kanko asked. “The fact is that men are not doing the dishes. You need someone who will say, ‘I will take care of the kids so that you can look after your business.’ As long as we don’t share responsibility at home we will struggle.”

More fundamentally, however, in many countries women are not treated equally under economic laws. “Around 2.7 bn women in the world are legally restricted in their decision of what job to take,” said **Silvana Koch-Mehrin**, President and Founder of Women Political Leaders Global Forum (WPL). “We need to get rid of laws that treat men and women differently in economic activities. The International Trade Centre in Geneva says that if you remove these, you add another China to the world economy. High-income countries are doing quite well, but countries in Middle East and North Africa are still the lowest on this scale. I am just talking about laws, not tradition or social pressure.”

“You need someone who will say, ‘I will take care of the kids so that you can look after your business.’ As long as we don’t share responsibility at home we will struggle”

Assita Kanko
Author, politician & founder of #Polin



“The idea among the majority of the population is that it would be better if women stayed at home. Those who are in public life have got to prove much more than their male colleagues”

Elisabeth Guigou

President of the Anna Lindh
Mediterranean Foundation for
Dialogue

Examples of successful women are important to motivate others, said **Elisabeth Guigou**, President of the Anna Lindh Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue. “For all the restrictions in all countries, at the root is the fact that there are not enough women in public life. The idea among the majority of the population is that it would be better if women stayed at home. Those who are in public life have got to prove much more than their male colleagues. In politics, you have to attend all these meetings throughout the weekend. This will not change unless we have more women in politics. If we have more women everywhere, new ways of working will become quite natural.”

The arts as social inspiration

Public life is important because in many ways it sets the tone for a society and gives people ideas about how a society should or could be. The arts, too, have a vital role to play in the ideas of the public sphere and in intercultural exchange, and can provide tools and opportunities to challenge social norms and values in creative ways, sparking new conversations and providing a space for collaboration, open expression and community-building.

“There is a very strong emotional component in every decision we take every day,” said **Eduardo Portal-Martin**, Conductor of Antares Ensemble and European Young Leader. “I can’t stop being amazed by how some people have managed to create passion and emotion for something like electronics: people outside a shop because they want to get the latest iPhone. If Apple can do that, are artists not entitled to get a much greater result from things like theatre, which are very human? All religions in the world sing when they pray. The arts make us feel more alive and they make each of us feel like a better person. We need to use this for the right purposes.”

In Tunisia, the revolution was symbolised by a song and by a picture of an old maid holding bread and trying to shoot a policeman, said **Rihab Mejri**, a civil society activist and Member of Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV), Tunisia. “These are the two things that stay in our minds,” she said. “Art reaches our soul and then we cannot forget.” More recently, an internationally-recognised Tunisian film dealt with the subject of rape and contributed to the repeal of an old law that allowed



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“When you are engaged as an art director or a curator, in the first place you look for quality. But for me it is important to go beyond this and make a better human. The best artists are very responsible people”

Paul Dujardin
CEO and artistic director at BOZAR

rapists to marry their victims. “This movie raised the topic and this law has been changed,” Mejri said. “Art is the key for change and for inclusiveness.”

However, making art politically relevant means first making it widely available. So far, Europeans have paid relatively little attention to what’s going on in Africa, said **Paul Dujardin**, CEO and artistic director at BOZAR. “There is a global shift in our cultural experience towards America and Asia but not to the south – the Mediterranean and Africa. How can we share better these different activities?” Even within Europe, the kind of art produced at cultural centres often reaches only a small part of the population, he said. “There are museums, but we are not sharing them with the people who live there every day. We need to have another, more engaged approach. When you are engaged as an art director or a curator, in the first place you look for quality. But for me it is important to go beyond this and make a better human. The best artists are very responsible people.”

Xenophobia in Europe

With painful irony, the populist right has often been more successful this century at using narratives – often twisted – to push change. In the Netherlands, Pim Fortuyn managed in 2001 to turn some of the Dutch population against people of immigrant origin, said **Jesse Klaver**, leader of GroenLinks and a Member of the Dutch House of Representatives. “My father is from Morocco and my mother is of Indonesian descent,” he said. “When I was 12 years old I wondered where I was from. My grandfather, who was white Dutch, told me to say I was a citizen of the world. When I was 16, in 2001, Pim Fortuyn’s populist movement took off. My grandmother from Indonesia loves to cook, and before 2001 people thought that the way she cooked smelled bad but tasted great. After 2001 people thought it tasted bad too and said she should go back to own country. In 12 months there was just one political leader who changed the narrative in a wrong way – a right-wing populist.” Fortuyn was assassinated in 2002. “If he can do it, why can’t we?” asked Klaver. “Populists in the EU have been better than progressives at telling a story about change. My wish is that we as new generation will tell a story of hope.”



“It is difficult to hold on to the narrative that Muslim women are suppressed when they can see Muslim women taking the lead and disseminating a more spiritual approach to Islam”

Sherin Khankan

Founder of Denmark’s first women-led mosque, the Mariam Mosque

Sherin Khankan founded Denmark’s first women-led mosque, the Mariam Mosque. Though there was some opposition from within the country’s Islamic community, the real hostility came from Islamophobes. “I had death threats from right-wing parties,” she said. “I think it was because we are actually able to change the concept of Islam in Denmark. It is difficult to hold on to the narrative that Muslim women are suppressed when they can see Muslim women taking the lead and disseminating a more spiritual approach to Islam. So I think they see us as a greater threat than Islamists because we are actually able to change.”

The European Young Leaders and Mediterranean voices were split into groups on the first day of the event and asked to come up with ideas about change. “Change is messy” said Dharmendra Kanani, Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe. “We have come to know that over time. We can’t design it. It often comes out of adversity or from brave souls. What are the steps to

achieve change?” The groups came up with a number of suggestions, which could be roughly divided into triggers for change and circumstances in which change is more likely to take place.

Triggers for change

- Social injustice and inequality: those who have direct experience of this tend to become more motivated to advocate for change.
- Dissatisfaction with the status quo
- TED talks: these can sometimes inspire people to get involved and give people hope
- Thinking about the next generation
- Figuring out a need – something you want but don't have

Circumstances that facilitate change

- Awareness: you can't change something unless you fully understand it
- Opportunities in schools: such as when students are taught to give their opinions and participate in school elections
- Giving women and youth more opportunity for political representation
- A happy, hopeful state of mind
- Creativity and personal thinking
- Having tolerance for others

Youth empowerment



“As young people, we suffer a lot from the negative narrative. We can also be the alternative narrative”

Esmat Elsayed

Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV)
and delegate to the Africa-EU Summit

Young people need to be involved more in political processes if their energy is to be channelled in a positive way. In recent years, reactionary political and media discourse on global terrorism have characterised youth as at being at risk of violent extremism, rather than empowering them as partners for dialogue and peace-building. A survey by the Anna Lindh Foundation revealed a disconnect between government and the governed in the region, distrust of government, and the need to involve young people in actions to promote peace and prosperity.

The first lesson is to let young people participate in politics rather than just trying to impose solutions on them. “I have learned that we should listen to rather than talk to youth,” said Elisabeth Guigou, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation. “Any political project will fail if there is not a link with civil society.” New online tools can help with this, she said. “But nothing will replace physical contact.”

Positive results are unlikely to emerge from treating the young as a problem. Instead, they should be seen as contributors to a brighter future. “As young people, we suffer a lot from the negative narrative,” said **Esmat Elsayed**, Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV) and delegate to the Africa-EU Summit. “We can also be the alternative narrative. This is how we could step further into inclusive societies. Youth can be the ones who are peace builders. Youth can be part of security issues. The Arab Spring was an opportunity for me and a challenge. The hopes of many people were at a peak and now they’re going down. I noticed that change happened when youth was observing and willing to participate in a dialogue and express a different point of view. It opened up space for people to talk and reflect on what they want to do.”

Digital technology could help the region’s youth by letting them communicate more easily with young people in other parts of the world, said Elsayed. One example is the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange, which facilitates meaningful intercultural experiences online as part of either formal or non-formal education. “We are all super-connected through Facebook and Skype,” she said. “Now we have platforms where we actually have a room and can have intercultural exchanges, so people in small cities can chat and have a dialogue with people from all over the world.”

Dealing with extremism and injustice



“Conflict sells. On the Internet there is clickbait, and newspapers depend on selling ads. This is not the best model for figuring out how society works”

Bjorn Ihler
 Founder of the Khalifa-Ihler Institute
 and a Kofi Annan Extremely Together
 Young Leader



Bjorn Ihler – Founder of the Khalifa-Ihler Institute and a Kofi Annan Extremely Together Young Leader – survived the mass shooting on 22 July 2011 in Utøya, Norway. He has since said that the shooter, Anders Breivik, should be treated humanely by the Norwegian prison system. “Even though Scandinavia is perceived as a peaceful place, things do happen because of people with radically different political and world views,” he said.

Media are a big factor in problems such as populism and the noisy disagreements that divide societies. “Conflict sells,” said Ihler. “On the Internet there is clickbait, and newspapers depend on selling ads. This is not the best model for figuring out how society works. A lot of social media are funded by venture capitalists who are essentially in it for the money – Facebook, for example.



What are these companies? They are money-making vessels for the investors.”

Fadi Quran, Senior Campaigner at Avaaz and MENA Young Leader (EYL40), grew up as a youth activist in Palestine. He said he had been shot, put in prison and lost people he cared about. One problem, he said, was that Israel was extracting natural resources. He founded a renewable energy company, but this had suffered because of corruption in the Palestinian Authority. Now, he thinks that all people ultimately want the same things: freedom, justice and human dignity. The challenge is to deliver these. “It is not hard to define what the people around me want. But change is about power, and power is defined by four pillars: economic, military, organisational and alliances and soft power.”

“Change is about power, and power is defined by four pillars: economic, military, organisational and alliances and soft power”

Fadi Quran
Senior Campaigner at Avaaz and
MENA Young Leader (EYL40), grew
up as a youth activist in Palestine



“In Tunisia we have a Kafkaesque bureaucracy. There is a surplus of government jobs and to get anything done you have to go to five offices. But the education system is bleeding because there are not enough teachers. This is mismanagement”

Hella Grichi
Young Mediterranean Voice

One barrier to the involvement of young people in politics is the alienation they feel towards traditional political institutions. “The representative parliament in Tunisia doesn’t really represent,” said **Hella Grichi**, a Young Mediterranean Voice. “Sometimes I see people calling for things, but then they ignore it and it feels like talking to a wall. In Tunisia we have a Kafkaesque bureaucracy. There is a surplus of government jobs and to get anything done you have to go to five offices. But the education system is bleeding because there are not enough teachers. This is mismanagement.” A World Bank study has shown that Tunisian youth are engaged, but not with formal politics, she pointed out. “They join NGOs, but if you want to change something you have to change laws, which means politics. It doesn’t seem like a space that would really accept me.”

By contrast, the young can find acceptance in artistic initiatives, such as one Grichi started in order to promote English-language theatrical poetry. One poem that participants wrote together spoke of “A great journey to follow, a quest to begin / For all to join in / Full of hope and confidence / Full of passion and perseverance”. It continued with an appeal to solidarity among diverse groups of people: “From the beginning of times, you were my sister, you were my brother / Our differences actually bring us together / It is a difficult endeavour / But our ties shall never sever”.

*A shift that is long due
And a change but not for the few
A great journey to follow
A quest to begin
For all to join in
Full of hope and confidence
Full of passion and perseverance
Lots of love and tolerance
Consideration, respect and acceptance
I see bright faces in the horizon
Seeing them is just so amazing
It's their era, it's their time
They are united in time and space
Taking the time to reflect and feel each other
All barriers have fallen, showing oneness for peace
But isn't this how it was supposed to be
From the beginning of times
You were my sister, you were my brother
Our differences actually bring us together
It is a difficult endeavor
but our ties shall never sever!*



We are going through a kind of situation where diversity is not recognised. One of our main missions now is developing the possibility to integrate values. Values are the basis of human rights.”

Abdelbasset Ben Hassen
President of the Arab Institute for
Human Rights

The effects of public discourse can be seen in the difficulties in embedding human rights into law. “We are going through a very difficult situation with a lot of marginalisation,” said **Abdelbasset Ben Hassen**, President of the Arab Institute for Human Rights. “We are moving from politics to a political discourse based on populism and radicalism. We are going through a kind of situation where diversity is not recognised. One of our main missions now is developing the possibility to integrate values. Values are the basis of human rights.”

Europe's role in its southern neighbourhood

However, there are growing doubts about how much Europeans can help in the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. “The region and Europe are becoming decoupled from each other,” said **Tarik Yousef**, Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development programme at Brookings Institute. “I spent most of my life being a cheerleader for Europe-Mediterranean integration, working and talking in policy debates and initiatives – trying to bring these two regions together. The results have been very modest. Events have overtaken us, and our problems are now far bigger and more complicated than before. As a result, it has become very difficult for Europe to engage. I am seeing Europe becoming less relevant in the region. Most of the invitations that I receive from Europe are not to talk about integration and trade but to talk about crisis management: how to stem flow of illegal immigrants, ensure that counterterrorism is defeated. I refuse to accept that these are our priorities. We don't have the institutions or resources. Terror and ISIS are priorities for us – but they are not the priorities. The next rounds of political protest in the Arab world will be led by hungry, destitute people – by people who have lost all hope.”



“Should Europe continue down this path of incremental engagement and modest economic and financial links, you will wake up one day and find that China has taken over not just Africa but the Middle East too”

Tarik Yousef

Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development programme at Brookings Institute



While the old relationship between Europe and the Mediterranean region suffers, others are moving in, Yousef said. China wants to develop the Middle East’s resources and is thus exporting industrialisation. “That to me – with all of its flaws and all of its problems – is a project that is likely with time to gain traction and fill voids,” he said. “Should Europe continue down this path of incremental engagement and modest economic and financial links, you will wake up one day and find that China has taken over not just Africa but the Middle East too. We want to deal with China by defining our national interests.”

Europe is still more deeply engaged in the region than other outsiders, said **Michael Köhler**, Director of Neighbourhood in the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations. “It is absolutely normal that there are more players than just two in the region,” he said. “You have more players in the region, and the region seems like less of a region. Turkey, Israel and



Morocco don't want to be part of a Mediterranean region. They say the real stuff is in their bilateral relations. China doesn't have a project for the Middle East; China has a project for China. But if there is still anyone who speaks about investment promotion and human rights, it is the European Union. You don't hear about this from the U.S. or China or Turkey. It takes two to tango and after 20 years of dancing you get tired and want to have a pause. But who is by far the biggest investor in the region? The European Union. Some people who tell us that we not relevant come to ask us in times of crisis."

“If there is still anyone who speaks about investment promotion and human rights, it is the European Union. You don't hear about this from the U.S. or China or Turkey. It takes two to tango and after 20 years of dancing you get tired and want to have a pause”

Michael Köhler
 Director of Neighbourhood in the
 European Commission's Directorate-
 General for Neighbourhood and
 Enlargement Negotiations



Conclusions

The conference yielded calls to action on several fronts.

Firstly, in the southern Mediterranean region, education systems should adapt to a world in which workers are expected both to be digitally literate and to think critically. While some jobs will be taken over by IT, there will be increasing demand for people capable of navigating the relationship between the digital, physical and human worlds.

At the same time, political institutions need to evolve so that they channel people's needs into policies that address them. Only then are the young likely to see politics as a natural vector of change. Non-political activities – such as the arts – can help. But ultimately these have to move government institutions, which are where laws are made and justice administered. Institutions also need to tackle concrete problems such as discrimination against women and injustice in general.

Meanwhile, Europe has its own problems with the rise of populism and xenophobia, and proponents of tolerance and rationality have so far failed to generate the popular appeal of some of the reactionaries. Progressives need to find more-effective ways to connect with people.

Ultimately, The EU is often seen as a reluctant partner of the region encompassing the Middle East and North Africa. Many European leaders appear more concerned with limiting migration than with helping deal with the region's underlying challenges and improving the lives of its people. However, geographical proximity means that the regions are bound together. Challenges for one are also challenges for the other – and so are solutions.





About Friends of Europe

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Friends of Europe is a leading think tank that connects people, stimulates debate and triggers change to create a more inclusive, sustainable and forward-looking Europe.

CONNECT

Friends of Europe is an independent think tank with a difference – we believe innovation is a mindset, behaviour and action. We aim to be catalysts for change and believe that real solutions come from transforming mindsets through the confrontation of ideas and the breaking down of silos between politicians, businesses and civil society.

Believing that change is achieved through inclusive policies and action, we reach out to and work with a wide network of policymakers, international organisations, civil society representatives, business leaders, academics, the media and citizens across Europe and beyond.

We have no national or party political bias and ensure that all viewpoints are represented in our activities and publications.

DEBATE

We foster open, insightful and provocative debates to stimulate fresh ideas and creative thinking.

Our portfolio of events and reports means that Friends of Europe contributes ideas and leads the debate on a wide range of EU-related issues, including:

Climate and Energy | Health | Asia, Africa and Emerging Economies | Digital, Skills and Inequalities | Peace, Security and Defence | Education and Skills | Migration and Integration | Citizens' Europe.

Our European Young Leaders (EYL40) programme connects Europe's most promising talents, and our Board of Trustees brings together the knowledge and experience of European leaders who include Presidents, Prime Ministers, European Commissioners and Presidents of the European Parliament.

The Development Policy Forum (DPF), the Asia programme and the Europe-China Forum build bridges to foster global partnerships.

Europe's World, our policy journal, is the only pan-European publication which offers a unique insight into the views of leading policymakers and opinion-makers on European and global challenges.

Our online platform Debating Europe encourages citizen-led debates with policymakers. In less than five years, it has built up a 3.5m-strong community of citizens across Europe and over 320,000 social media followers who put their questions to high-profile decision makers.

CHANGE

We offer Europe's citizens an opportunity to take an active transformational role in shaping their environment. We use ground-breaking online brainstorming to bring different stakeholder groups together from all over the world and constantly innovate in how we convene and shape discussions. Through our debates, conferences, working groups, reports and recommendations we provide bold and ambitious but practical solutions for a more inclusive, sustainable and forward-looking Europe.

FRIENDS OF EUROPE IN FIGURES (2017-2018)

Over 1.131 million unique visitors to its websites

Over 320,000 strong social media community

Over 65 events

Over 5000 senior participants and speakers

Nearly 100 publications

Over 195 op eds published

About the Anna Lindh Foundation



annalindhfoundation.org



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The Foundation is the central institution for intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean, with a long-term strategy for investment in a generation.

The Foundation was established in 2004 by the Foreign Ministers of the EU and Mediterranean Partner countries, making it a common institution of the “Euro-Med Partnership”. It builds connections among people, promotes shared values, and focuses on the root causes of cultural divide.

The Foundation was created on the initiative of Romano Prodi, then President of the European Commission, to “take action to restart dialogue and defuse the risk of a clash of civilizations” in the post 9/11 world. A High-Level Advisory Group was formed by Prodi to explore the roots of polarisation, taking into account the impact of conflicts in the Mediterranean and broader context of economic globalisation, immigration and “identity”. In its Report, that serves as operational blueprint for the Foundation, the High-Level Group stress education, skills and media to renew cultural dialogue.

During its first decade, the Foundation built the largest South/North network for Mediterranean dialogue, involving directly many thousands of young leaders, women entrepreneurs, educators, artists, journalists, researchers, local mayors and policy-makers. Its strategic focus is on preparing the next generation with the skills, attitudes and commitment to create together lasting change in the face of the region’s most pressing challenges.

RESEARCH AND OPINION-LEADERSHIP

The Foundation, in partnership with leading polling organisations (Gallup, Ipsos-MORI), conducts the only comparative analyses of its kind on the evolution of perceptions, values and behaviours in the Mediterranean: the “Anna Lindh Trends Report”. From its research and evaluation in the field, the Foundation takes local insight to international policymakers, including its role as member of the steering group for the UN-mandated Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security.

YOUTH-LED DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE

The Foundation coordinates the flagship programme “Young Mediterranean Voices” that uses youth-led debate to develop critical cognitive skills and challenge negative mutual perceptions. The Foundation is also co-founder of the “Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange”, a pioneering project that engages diverse youth from the Southern Mediterranean in facilitated interaction with European peers.

RESOURCES AND NETWORKING PLATFORMS

The Foundation coordinates MED FORUM, the largest civil society gathering and most influential process of its kind for intercultural dialogue across the Mediterranean, and facilitates large-scale Cross-Network Actions involving CSOs and youth associations. It also runs the Mediterranean Journalist Awards, the leading regional prize and recognition programme for cross-cultural reporting.

THE ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION IN FIGURES:

Over 40 Euro-Mediterranean
Member States

Over 5,000 civil society member
organisations working for dialogue

126,000 youth trained in debate
and dialogue since 2011

42,000 people interviewed for
intercultural trends research

Young Mediterranean Voices

 youngmedvoices.org

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Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV) is the flagship debate programme connecting civil society, education and policy-makers across the Southern Mediterranean and Europe. The programme provides a pioneering platform to open doors for young influencers to shape policy and media narratives.

Building on more than five years investment in the field, as well as established networks, evaluated methodologies and independent research, the overall objective of Young Mediterranean Voices programme is to: empower young people to enhance a culture of dialogue, to contribute to public policy and shape media discourses, and to create a shared understanding with peers across the Mediterranean on how to address issues of common concern to their communities. To achieve this, the partners focus on four specific objectives (a) a cadre of young influencers with enhanced skills for dialogue and debate will be created; (b) debating practices will be embedded in education institutions and CSOs; (c) platforms and mechanisms for young influencers will be enhanced to shape public policy, influence decision-makers and shape media narratives; (d) exposure among young debaters for shared understanding and capacity will be enhanced to develop shared responses with peers to socio-cultural challenges.

YMV brings the experience of a successful pan-Arab programme (“Young Arab Voices”), launched in Alexandria in 2011 by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the British Council, to other parts of the Euro-Mediterranean region. The programme expansion was announced in October 2016 by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini, on the occasion of the landmark Anna Lindh Foundation MED FORUM in Malta, with Mrs Mogherini opening up an enhanced policy track in March 2017 through the Inaugural Dialogue with YMV.

European Young Leaders (EYL40) programme



The European Young Leaders (EYL40) programme led by Friends of Europe is a unique, inventive and multi-stakeholder programme that aims to promote a European identity by engaging the continent's most promising talents in initiatives that will shape Europe's future. The European Young Leaders represent a promising European leadership from all over the continent and with a wide variety of backgrounds including politics, business, civil society, academia, arts, science and the media.

From trailblazing biochemists to budding political leaders, and from dot.com entrepreneurs to NGO 'stars' who are shaping the social and environmental policies of tomorrow, the European Young Leaders are a unique community that crafts innovative responses to European challenges and positively affects the lives of future generations.

Every year, they meet during two 3-day seminars that take place in symbolic European cities, joined by decision-makers, stakeholders and key European actors, to discuss issues of common concern and develop concrete proposals and recommendations to tackle the challenges facing Europe and its citizens.

The relaxed tone and out-of-the-box nature of the European Young Leaders (EYL40) programme have brought about salient and open discussions that have facilitated the development of a strong network of committed Europeans.

This programme also turns ideas into actions. That means ongoing interactions between young leaders, alumni and outside participants to boost innovative ideas and have a bigger impact on the European stage by forwarding projects that matter to the community. The programme was initially conceived in partnership with EuropaNova, a Paris-based think-tank.

The 2017 Autumn seminar in Tallinn also increased the programme's outreach by inviting North American and Middle East and North African (MENA) Young Leaders to join the discussions for the first time. The aim is to create synergies, promote structural dialogue and foster better mutual understanding between established leaders from the three regions and develop an inter-regional, multidisciplinary network of alumni to support the leaders of tomorrow.

**YMV & EYL40
PARTICIPANTS**



JAMILA AANZI

Netherlands · 2017 Dutch UN Women's Representative,
Dutch Women's Council · EYL 2014

Jamila has positioned herself as one of the leading innovators in the fields of youth involvement and social outreach in the Netherlands. She has participated in numerous programmes aimed at encouraging cooperation between diverse backgrounds and envisioning a new social and political vision. In 2017, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, appointed Jamila as the Dutch women's representative at the United Nations. As a senior international trainer for the Max van der Stoel foundation she trains political parties and politicians in Eastern Europe, the Middle-East and North-Africa. Jamila is an alumni of several international leadership programs like the Israeli 'future European leaders' programme and the US State Department's 'international visitors leadership' programme.



NABEEL ABBOUD-ASHKAR

Israel · Co-Founder & Artistic Director of the Polyphony Foundation · MENA
Young Leader 2017

A gifted violinist and visionary champion for youth and community development, Nabeel has led and inspired people from all walks of life across Israel, Europe and the U.S. He performed with, and was a spokesperson for, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra for a decade as well as performing as a soloist with the Jerusalem Camerata and the Haifa Symphony orchestras. In 2006, Nabeel gave up his music career and returned to his hometown, the Arab-Israeli city of Nazareth, where he founded and led the Barenboim-Said Conservatory - now known as the Polyphony Conservatory - to answer the need he saw in the community for quality music programming. Nabeel has been awarded the Yoko Ono Award for Courage in the Arts for his lifelong-commitment to fostering a sense of community between young pan-Arab and Jewish musicians.



ABDALLAH ABSI HALABI

Lebanon · Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Zoomal · MENA
Young Leader 2017

Abdallah is founder and CEO of Zoomal, the leading crowdfunding platform in the Middle East, which involves the top VCs in MENA, and co-founder of GivingLoop, a sustainable fundraising platform that helps non-profits focus less on fundraising and more on changing the world. Abdallah did not complete his university education, but went on to see huge successes in the entrepreneurial world, being covered by CNN, WSJ, Forbes, and others. He is also an Ashoka fellow, a Global Shaper for the World Economic Forum in the Beirut Hub, and a Startup Weekend organizer of the Kauffman foundation, and describes himself as a social mission-driven tech entrepreneur on a mission to redefine global philanthropy using tech.



HIND ABU SHKHADIM

Palestine · Project Coordinator and Trainer at the Community Development & Continuing Education Institute · Young Mediterranean Voices

Hind is a Project Coordinator and Trainer at the Community Development & Continuing Education Institute, a non-governmental organization promoting the values of human rights, equality, good governance, and civic participation within the Palestinian society. Hind has led many trainings and projects in the fields of education, human rights, entrepreneurship, youth engagement, and intercultural dialogue, which helped dozens of Palestinian youth be both empowered and knowledgeable about their rights and the rights and culture of others. Hind is the Middle East-Africa 2013 winner of the Google+ Social Media Marketing Competition for a campaign to empower women and fight the negative stereotypical images of women in Palestine, and worldwide.



MOHAMED ABU SNAINA

Libya · Co-Founder, Vice President & CEO of the Dialogue & Debate Association · Young Mediterranean Voices

A young entrepreneur and security expert, Edoardo started working as a political and security risk consultant after graduating from the University of Bologna. In 2010, he established the International Security Observer, a web-based think tank seeking to foster the next generation of security experts. At the time, he was also working as a research analyst at the Italian Institute of Strategic Studies Niccolò Machiavelli, where his activities focused on insurgency, intelligence, national security policies and organised crime. Edoardo is the co-founder of Hozint (Horizon Intelligence), a consulting firm providing location-based media and social media monitoring services on political, safety and security risks. He is frequently interviewed on security issues by media in Italy and across Europe.



LINA ALMAEENA

Saudi Arabia · Co-founder & Director of Jeddah United · MENA Young Leader 2017

Lina is a leading figure in the sport industry in Saudi Arabia, who co-founded Jeddah United (JU), the first Saudi private sports company to train girls and boys in team sports to promote sports culture. Lina was captain of the Jeddah United Women's basketball division up to 2012, a columnist for Almadina newspaper, and climbed to Everest Base Camp as part of a breast cancer awareness campaign. Her efforts are an example of grassroots efforts challenging the strict gender rules in Saudi Arabia, and Lina has been listed as one of the 200 Most Powerful Women in the Middle East by Forbes Magazine 2014.



MAZEN ALZARO

Palestine · Lawyer at the Palestinian Bar Association · Young Mediterranean Voices

Mazen is a lawyer and trainer specialized in European Studies. He is also the Palestinian representative of the International Debate Education Association (IDEA). Mazen is considered to be a peacebuilder by the United Nations Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC). He has also worked with many international associations and universities such as Virginia University and was a scholar at the Risk Network "SAR" in the field of human rights and legal research. He coaches debate at more than 10 Palestinian universities, schools and NGOs and has won many prizes such as the title of Best Debater in Palestine in 2014. He is interested in the fields of human rights and youth empowerment.



INES AMRI

Tunisia · Senior Development Consultant · MENA Young Leader 2017

Ines is a high-performing, award-winning executive with 10 years of experience founding and establishing socially-minded NGOs in the Maghreb region. She is the Founder and Chair of Organisation Volonté et Citoyenneté, a community-based non-profit in the South of Tunisia. She also served as Managing Director of the Maghreb Economic Forum, a Swiss-Tunisian Think-Do-Tank. She currently serves as a Senior Development Consultant at national and international organizations like the Arab Institute of Business Leaders, CANDID Foundation, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Global Projects Partner and Hilfswerk Austria. She is a member of different networks including EYL40, BMW Foundation Responsible Leader, Bosch Foundation, UNAOC, US DOS Professional Fellows and the US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program. Ines was a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University and is now embarking on an Executive MBA program at ESMT Berlin.



HAIA BAKO

Jordan · Junior Associate at Qara law firm · Young Mediterranean Voices

Haia has been an active volunteer with the "Madrasati Initiative", which focuses on schools in Jordan. She finds joy in giving to others. Haia has always been an active member in civic and social associations and, as a believer in feminism and female empowerment, came up with an initiative during her sophomore year with a group of youth that aims to raise awareness of early marriage issues among under age girls. Haia also participated in Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot, which was held in Vienna in March 2018. Furthermore, she is involved in international initiatives such as Young Arab Voices and Young Mediterranean Voices Plus. The former is an international debate competition and over the years, she has attained the title of Master Trainer and, together with her team, won several international competitions. The latter is the initiative of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the EU Federica Mogherini regarding MENA and Europe which aims to redefine EU South politics through youth participation.



KHALAF BEN ABDALLAH

Tunisia · Vice President of the Al Montada Organization · Young Mediterranean Voices

Khalaf is a medical student at the Faculty of Medicine of Tunis and has over four years of experience with Tunisian and international civil society. An education and youth inclusion advocator and social entrepreneur, Khalaf has successfully co-founded various social start up projects in Tunis and internal regions in Tunisia, empowering more than 500 high school students with entrepreneurial thinking skills. Khalaf is currently the Project Manager and Vice President at Al Montada, an organization that aims to rethink higher education in Tunisia. He led the Forum Project which aims to increase students' inclusion in the reform process by bringing together the different stakeholders in the field (students, professors, deputies from the Parliament, university presidents, employers and civil society representatives) in order to achieve quality education. He is currently lobbying the Tunisian parliament for students' inclusion in the reform process. Khalaf is also working on implementing a Policy Incubation Lab in Tunisian universities. He recently became an Ashoka Changemakers for MENA, Europe and Turkey and had the chance to be a part of the Tunisian Delegation.



AHMED BEN MUSSA

Libya · Chief Commercial Officer at Tatweer Research · MENA Young Leader 2017

Ahmed is an energy expert with ten years of experience in operations and business development of the oil service industry in the United States, Egypt and Libya. Most recently, Ahmed was nominated as the Chief Commercial Officer at Tatweer Research, a leading Libyan technological organisation with a focus on nurturing the country's young potential, supporting entrepreneurs and attracting international expertise and investment. Prior to that, he worked with the UN World Food Programme in Libya where he conducted food security assessments on the field.



FATIMA BOULAHDOUF

Morocco · European Volunteer at Die Villa Sociocultural Center Leipzig · Young Mediterranean Voices

Fatima is a social worker in Morocco, with a degree in linguistics and experience from working for national and international organisations. She is Co-Founder of the Debate Club of the South in the frame of Young Arab voices programme and has occupied different positions during her professional career. Currently, she leads a project on citizen journalism in the southern cities of Morocco, which aims to train 50 young people from five cities in journalism to make the voices of their communities heard. Moreover, Fatima has been involved with other projects related to children, education, culture and citizenship, with a particular focus on youngsters through two projects by her organisation Radijojo for children, "We are the future of Morocco" and "Asalamo Alaykom". In 2012, she received the World Summit Youth Award in Canada for her work with the Radijojo organisation in the field of media-based education and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.



YOSTINA BOULES

Egypt · Founder & Managing Director of Taqa Solutions · MENA Young Leader 2017

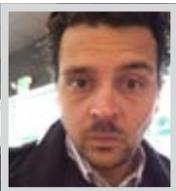
Yostina, dubbed “the magic machine” by farm owners, is Founder and Managing Director of Taqa Solutions, an Egyptian based organisation that aims to provide a clean and independent energy source to farmers by producing energy from poultry waste. By doing this, the Taqa solutions simultaneously addresses the problem of waste management from one of Egypt’s main agricultural industries, while maximising clean energy production. Yostina was selected as a Pioneer of Egypt after becoming a finalist on El Mashrou3, an entrepreneurship reality television competition.



HALA BUGAIGHIS

Lybia · Co-Founder of Jusoor · MENA Young Leader 2017

Hala is a lawyer and co-founder of Jusoor, a non-governmental organisation committed to independent policy research and human development projects for women with focus on the economic and social empowerment. As a lawyer with 15 years of experience, Hala focuses on commercial, banking, civil and investment laws, and has a sound understanding of law practice in an international context. Through her private companies, Hala has worked as a consultant to many international companies as well as Libyan private and public entities, focusing on development and capacity building. In 2015, Hala was nominated a UN Women Champion for Women Economic Empowerment – an initiative that aims to improve women’s economic standing and potential around the world.



MARTIN BUXANT

Belgium · Senior Writer at L'Echo · EYL 2015/16

With two master’s degrees in Communication and European Integration (Economics), Martin first entered the world of journalism in 2002 initially as a European correspondent and later a political journalist. He has been a reporter for La Libre Belgique and De Morgen, as well as an editor for the television programme “Politiquement Correct” on RTL-TV during the most recent legislative and regional elections in Belgium. He is currently a Senior Writer at the daily business newspaper L’Echo where he serves as both a political journalist and an editor. Martin appears daily on the Bel-RTL television channel where he conducts a political interview every morning. He is an accomplished author having most recently published a biography of the current Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Didier Reynders.



EDOARDO CAMILLI

Italy · Co-Founder & CEO at Hozint · EYL 2017

A young entrepreneur and security expert, Edoardo started working as a political and security risk consultant after graduating from the University of Bologna. In 2010, he established the International Security Observer, a web-based think tank seeking to foster the next generation of security experts. At the time, he was also working as a research analyst at the Italian Institute of Strategic Studies Niccolò Machiavelli, where his activities focused on insurgency, intelligence, national security policies and organised crime. Edoardo is the co-founder of Hozint (Horizon Intelligence), a consulting firm providing location-based media and social media monitoring services on political, safety and security risks. He is frequently interviewed on security issues by media in Italy and across Europe.



JASMINA CIBIC

Slovenia · Artist · EYL 2014

Jasmina works across a range of media including photography, performance, installation and video. Most often characterised as a visual artist, her artwork is focused on the positioning and analysing of space vis-à-vis other societal categories. She is the author of numerous exhibitions which have been shown all over Europe, as well as the recipient of prestigious Slovenian, European and international awards, including the Bevilacqua la Masa (Venice 2002 and 2005), the Slovenian Trend Award for Outstanding Achievements in Visual Art (2011), and the Catlin Commission Award (London, 2011). She represented Slovenia at the 55th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.



ESMAT ELSAYED

Egypt · Core Team Member and Co-Founder of Young Mediterranean Voices

Esmat is passionate about structured cross-cultural dialogue and debates. She is a founder of the Young Arab Voices Project in Egypt, which started in 2011 with the Anna Lindh Foundation and the British Council. She is also a debate trainer and adjudicator. Esmat has co-founded 2 national initiatives in Egypt: “Debate for Life” and “Engaging-Empowerment Egyptian Youth (EYouth)”, which worked on training Egyptian youth in debating, dialogue and entrepreneurial skills. Esmat is one of the 36 Youth Fellows of the AU-EU Youth Plug initiative who designed and wrote the Youth Agenda presented to heads of states at the Abidjan Summit in November 2017. Esmat worked on the Governance and Political inclusion section, which created three initiatives to enhance AU–EU cooperation in the areas of decentralization of governance, illicit financial flows and utilizing e-governance tools to enhance transparency and accountability across AU and EU member states.



MARY FITZGERALD

Ireland · **Libya Analyst, Award-Winning Journalist** · EYL 2013

Mary is a journalist and analyst specialising in the Euro-Mediterranean region with a particular focus on Libya. She has worked on Libya since 2011 and lived there throughout 2014. Her work has appeared in publications including the Economist, Foreign Policy, the New Yorker, the Washington Post, the Financial Times and the Guardian. She has conducted research on Libya for the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMED), among others. She is a contributing author to an edited volume on the Libyan revolution published by Oxford University Press. In her previous role as Irish Times foreign affairs correspondent, she reported from 40 countries across the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe. She is a member of the Global Women's Forum 'Rising Talents' network.



HELLA GRICHI

Tunisia · **Assistant of the Liaison Officer of the Bundespolizei Embassy of Germany to Tunisia** · **Young Mediterranean Voices**

Hella's experience with Young Arab Voices started in 2014 and inspired her to immerse herself in civil society, grassroots activism and women's empowerment. With the École Normale Supérieure debate team, she won the Tunisian national debate competition and was the fourth best debater.

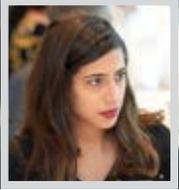
Hella is also a Co-Founder of Aspire to Inspire, an initiative aiming to promote English Spoken Word poetry in Tunis and is currently very active with the socio-cultural grassroots initiative called "Blech 7ess" (Without Noise), focused on pairing the promotion of art with social dimensions. Being a writer herself, she recently published a few works and is also writing lyrics for local bands. She has worked for the German embassy in Tunis since 2017.



SAMI HOURANI

Jordan · **Executive Director at Leaders of Tomorrow** · EYL 2017

Sami is medical doctor and serial social entrepreneur. He is the founding director of the well-known educational platform For9a.com. Sami is also the Founder and the Executive Director of the regional organisation Leaders of Tomorrow and the innovative social initiatives Diwanieh, Mo7aka and the new and creative qualitative research methodology FADFED. He is a fellow at Ashoka, largest hub for social innovators worldwide. He received King Abdullah II Demograti award in 2014 and EUROMED youth award in 2013. He was also elected as the Jordanian Role Model of 2011 and received the Jordanian title "Knight of Change" in 2008.



SAJA HUSSEIN

Egypt · Consultant at Albalsam Bookstore · Young Mediterranean Voices

Saja works on adolescent and youth development in Egypt, with a special focus on inclusive education. She is the co-founder of “Albedaya-Men-Hena,” an NGO focused on providing economically restricted and under-privileged children with modern methods of education. She is also the co-founder of the ‘Refqan’ awareness campaign, designed to advocate for women's rights in Islam and of the Hypatia women debates club, with which she participated in the Anna Lindh Forum in Marseille 2013, and debated along with Martin Schulz. She has been part of the “Culture Corner Initiative” which aimed at spreading culture and awareness among Egyptian youth. Saja was part of the selected team of the Young Arab Voices who met with High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the EU Federica Mogherini in March 2017.



ZANDA KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA

Latvia · Parliamentary State Secretary for European Affairs at the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Young Leader · EYL 2017

Zanda started her professional career at Jurmala’s city council in 1998. She then worked at the Ministry of Regional Development before joining the Strategic Analysis Commission, where she advised Latvian President Valdis Zatlērs on strategic planning. She was elected to the Latvian Parliament in 2011. During her mandate, she chaired the Committee on European Affairs and the Reform Party parliamentary group. In 2014, Zanda was appointed Parliamentary State Secretary in the Latvian government. Her role is to ensure cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Latvian Parliament and the European Parliament.



JESSE KLAVER

The Netherlands · Leader of the Dutch green party ‘GroenLinks’ and Member of the House of Representatives · EYL 2018

Jesse currently serves as the green-left party leader in the Dutch Parliament, with a mandate focused on environmental and educational issues. In his time as party leader, Jesse was responsible for the party’s most recent general election campaign during which he gained additional 10 parliamentary seats for the party, rising to an all-time high of 14, and making GroenLinks the fifth most important group in the House. Previously, Jesse was the spokesperson for Finance, Environment and Education and sat on a wide range of parliamentary committees. He has publicly opposed tax evasion and has co-authored a memo on protecting the Dutch flora and fauna.



ANDRÉ LOESEKRUG-PIETRI

France · Lead of the Joint European Disruptive Initiative (J.E.D.I.) · EYL 2013

André is a former Special Advisor to the French Minister of Defence and Founder, ACAPITAL. He has held leadership positions in private equity, government, industry and as an entrepreneur. Starting as assistant to the CEO of Aerospatiale-Airbus, he then spent 15 years in private equity and venture capital, including 10 years in China, investing in European companies with global ambitions. In 2017, he paused from the private sector to become Special Advisor to the French Minister of Defense, responsible for European Defense policy as well as technology and innovation. He is now managing the Joint European Disruptive Initiative, aiming to accelerate France and Germany's leadership in disruptive innovations. A graduate from HEC and from Harvard Kennedy School, he also attended Sup-Aero aerospace engineering school, and is a private pilot and Colonel with the French Air Force People's Reserve.



ADELE LUTA

USA · Scientist at Eleda International · North American Young Leader 2017

Adele is an expert in strategic cognitive skills, advanced theory of mind, and applied physics. Her research focuses on operators in time-limited, life-critical, restricted communication environments and how they employ Theory of Mind (ToM) in their mission. Adele's previous experience includes working as a NASA Flight Controller/Astronaut Instructor. In this role she provided support for over 90 US Space Shuttle, International Space Station (ISS), and Russian spacewalks, and trained five Shuttle crews and two ISS increments in Extra Vehicle Activity (EVA). In addition to her current work as a Research Affiliate at MIT, she has also recently been appointed by the United States of America as a technical team member to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Science and Technology Organization through its Collaborative Support Office.



RIHAB MEJRI

Tunisia · Civil Society Activist · Young Mediterranean Voices

Rihab is an English teacher and civil society activist. She also co-founded the youth initiative 'Aspire to Inspire', which has organised numerous events for Tunisian youth, the most important of which is an annual spoken poetry event that gives young people a platform to express their concerns and passions in a creative way. As a teacher, Rihab is also in charge of educating and supervising students in remote areas of the country and introduces them to the world of debate. She has been a debater and judge in the Young Arab Voices programme since 2013 and a member of the focus group that helped upgrade the programme into Young Mediterranean Voices+.



AYMAN MHANNA

Lebanon · Executive Director of the Samir Kassir Foundation · MENA Young Leader 2017

Ayman is Executive Director of the Beirut-based Samir Kassir Foundation, one of the leading press freedom NGOs in the Middle East. In this capacity, he oversees the foundation's advocacy, monitoring, research and training activities. Ayman has previously held the position of Executive Director of the Global Forum for Media Development, focusing on monitoring violations targeting journalists and providing them with the necessary support. He has also extensively worked with issues related to election observation, electoral reform and civil society involvement. Until recently, he was a lecturer on policy development and communications at Saint Joseph University in Beirut. In 2016, he was appointed Secretary-General of the Democratic Renewal Movement, a secular, social-liberal political party in Lebanon.



NEGAR MORTAZAVI

Iran · Journalist & Media Analyst · MENA Young Leader 2017

Negar is an Iranian-American journalist covering Iran in English and Persian. She writes, reports and tweets on Iran extensively and is a frequent commentator on Iran at MSNBC, BBC, PRI, New York Times, Aljazeera, Huffington Post, and international outlets across the world in Lebanon, Iraq, Israel, Turkey, Switzerland, and Japan. She worked as a TV presenter at Voice of America Persian where she hosted a daily hour-long interactive show that discussed current affairs with Iranians across the world.



KATARZYNA NAWROT

Poland · Assistant Professor Poznan University of Economics · EYL 2017

Katarzyna Nawrot is an Assistant Professor at the Poznan University of Economics and Business and a member of the Committee for Future Studies "Poland 2000 Plus", in the Polish Academy of Sciences. Previously she was a research fellow at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (2013–2014). Katarzyna was awarded 'Women of the Decade' in development economics by the Women Economic Forum in 2018. She recently co-edited the book "The Rise of megacities. Challenges, Opportunities and Unique Characteristics".



RORY NEWBERY

United Kingdom · Intercultural Exchange Coordinator at The Complete Freedom of Truth-Europe (TCFT) · Young Mediterranean Voices

Rory is a coordinator of intercultural exchange for young artists and cultural producers across Europe and the MENA region at TCFT, which won the EU Citizens Prize in 2015. He is a student of Arabic & Middle Eastern Studies, with a research focus on Cultural Policy in the MENA region. Through his work at local and European level, Rory advocates for increased institutional support for cultural exchange across the EU and wider Euro-Mediterranean region and works with policymakers and civil society leaders to encourage support for more intercultural opportunities and more sustainable resources for existing youth-led initiatives. With NGO experience across the EU, Morocco & the United Arab Emirates, Rory's aim is to encourage more young people in rural and post-conflict communities to contribute to civic life and experience new cultures.



BAHA EDDINE OBEIDI

Algeria · Co-Founder, Souf Academy; Project Coordinator, YEP project · Young Mediterranean Voices

Baha is a power engineering graduate and Co-Founder of Souf Academy, a social enterprise working on youth employment and entrepreneurship. Committed to youth involvement in policy making and economic development, Baha is part of the Young Mediterranean Voices+ initiative and several other non-profit organisations and initiatives. Baha, a certified Silatech career guidance advisor, is also the current project coordinator of World Learning's Youth Employment Project in El Oued, where he also serves as a volunteer English teacher and soft skills and debate trainer at Souf Academy Career Center. Baha was chosen in 2017 with seven young people from Algeria to be part of Young visitors Leaders Program led by the U.S. Embassy, a four-week programme focusing on unemployment issues and best practices of managing career centres in Algeria.



EDUARDO PORTAL MARTÍN

Spain · Conductor and Founder of Antares Ensemble · EYL 2017

Over the last few years, Eduardo has made a great impression on audiences and orchestras alike. Since graduating as conductor and violinist, he has conducted multiple orchestras across Europe and the Americas, such as the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra. In 2015, his presentation with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales included a broadcast on BBC Radio 3. For the third season in a row, he has returned on multiple occasions to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to conduct concerts all around England. Widely acclaimed by musical critics, Eduardo is particularly committed to the contemporary repertoire and is the founder of the Antares Ensemble in Spain, whose focus is on the performance of new music and research into its links with historical and rarely-performed masterpieces.



YOUSRA QAWASMA

Palestine · Programme Development Consultant at The Hebron Youth Development Resource Center (YDRC) · Young Mediterranean Voices

Yousra is a programme development consultant and debate trainer at Hebron YDRC Organisation in Palestine. In this role, she is working on developing debate programmes in the city of Hebron. As a result of her good work, YMV staff chose her to be the contact person for Palestine, and she participated in writing the new YMV manual in Tunisia (March, 2018). Furthermore, she is a news editor at Al-Hurriyah Network Agency in Palestine where she covers youth events and activities as well as political and social news. Yousra is also a Dabka trainer (Palestinian Folk- Dance) and regularly teaches people, especially girls, how to dance Dabka. She has participated in many youth conferences, such as the Policy Dialogue with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the EU Federica Mogherini in Brussels in 2017.



FADI QURAN

Palestine · Senior Campaigner at Avaaz · MENA Young Leader 2017

Fadi is the face of the new Middle East. As Senior Campaigner at Avaaz, an international online campaigning network, he has been promoting numerous campaigns on issues such as human rights, poverty and conflict, becoming an unofficial leader of the Electronic Intifada. Fadi is also a Popular Struggle community organiser, a policy member of the Al-Shabaka Palestinian Policy Network and a leading figure in the burgeoning Palestinian youth movement committed to achieving freedom, justice and dignity for the Palestinian people, having previously served as UN Advocacy Officer with Al-Haq's legal research and advocacy unit. Apart from his work in advocacy and international law, he is also an entrepreneur in the alternative energy field, where he has founded two companies bringing wind and solar energy power to Palestine and other countries in the region.



SOUFIYAN SAAOUDI

Morocco · Reporter and Founder at the Youth Empowerment Society · Young Mediterranean Voices

Soufiyan is Founder of the Youth Empowerment Society (YES) in Tiflet, Morocco and also works there as a reporter. YES is an independent youth initiative, and their vision is based on creating a small society that gathers young people to enable them and to exchange expertise and skills in the domain of debates by spreading the culture of dialogue. They also aim to embed the principles of democracy and gender equality by working on women empowerment projects, such as "Make Your Voice Heard", which is financed by IRI. He also works as a reporter for the website, IJNET.



ROBA SALAHEDDIN

Lebanon · Pharmacy Student at the Lebanese International University · Young Mediterranean Voices

Roba is a pharmacy student at the Lebanese International University who is particularly interested in women's rights and youth empowerment. In 2017, she participated in the EU High-Representative for Foreign Affairs "Regional Youth Policy Forum", as well as the EU Info Soiree in Beirut. Her interests have also led to her participation in the "Arab Feminist Conference" and in the Dafa Campaign, which supports people in Lebanon, whether Lebanese citizens or Syrian refugees.



CHRISTIAN SCHARLING

Denmark · Youth Activist and Student at Sciences Po · Young Mediterranean Voices

Christian is a youth activist who is currently finishing his second master's degree at Sciences Po. Having been elected President of the International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY) at age 20, he is the youngest person in history to have held the presidency of a major international political youth federation. From 2014-2016, Christian was an elected member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe, where he worked on young people's participation and access to local democracy. He also played a key role in the adoption of the first European legal document on young people's access to human rights, a resolution by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2016. Christian is an advocate for LGBT rights, having volunteered for several years with a local organisation in Denmark that empowers LGBT youth. He was recently awarded best orator of the 2018 French rounds of the Jessup.



IBRAHIM SORRI

Jordan · Journalist; President at Zarqa Youth Council · Young Mediterranean Voices

Ibrahim is a journalist, coordinator and news director at "ENTIKHABATE Initiative", the Al Waseet Company for Community Development and Awareness, which is a local non-profit organization. He works in the fields of democratic and political awareness in Jordan with a focus on the empowerment of youth and women. In his work, he focuses on simplifying election laws for citizens to ensure that they exercise their right to vote and to monitor the councils they have elected. He is also the president of Zarqa Youth Council (Shadow Municipality Council) to empower young people and integrate Syrian refugees. He recently became a founding member of the Community Protection Network - Zarqa, to reduce violence and extremism. He was also the leader of a campaign that succeeded in revoking article 308 of the Jordanian Penal Code, which exempts a rapist from prison once he is married to the victim. In addition to being a master debate trainer, he seeks to spread the culture of debate in his community. He has participated in many local and international events and won second place in the Jordanian Youth Voices debate championship.

**JAZIL ZEHANI**

Algeria · Project Coordinator at Career Development Center Biskra · Young Mediterranean Voices

Jazil is a social activist and young entrepreneur. He is the General Secretary of the Youth Capacities Development Association in Biskra. Jazil has been debating since 2013 and became a trainer in 2016. Recently, he launched a private language school in his city. He also works as project coordinator at the Career Development Center Biskra in partnership with World Learning and the US Embassy in Algeria. His mission is to guide and help young job seekers to find the right job. Jazil is a certified trainer from the North-South Center.

**JAKUB ZIENTALA**

The Netherlands · President Young European Federalists Netherlands · Young Mediterranean Voices

Jakub is dedicated to the European cause, and has been an active member of JEF in Maastricht for several years. In January 2018, he became President of Young European Federalists of Netherlands. His work as an activist is focused on combating social injustice and poverty, and achieving gender equality, fair education and a united Europe. He believes that problems can only be solved through peaceful dialogue.

1. Left to right: Negar Mortazavi, Journalist & Media Analyst, EYL40; Nathalie Furrer, Friends of Europe; Katarzyna Nawrot, Poznan University of Economics, EYL40; Eduardo Portal-Martin, Antares Ensemble, EYL40
2. Jesse Klaver, Dutch green party 'GroenLinks' and EYL40



SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

ABDELBASSET BEN HASSEN

President, Arab Institute for Human Rights

Abdelbasset Ben Hassen is the President of the Arab Institute for Human Rights. Abdelbasset is also the Chairman of the Tunisian national committee for the support of refugees and served as a member of the high committee for the realisation of the objectives of the revolution, political reform and democratic transition. Previously, he taught human rights in Tunis and Strasbourg, and has written extensively on human rights, human rights education and culture. He was a member of the drafting committee of the United Nations World Programme on Human Rights Education.

ANNA LISA BONI

Secretary General at EUROCITIES

Anna Lisa Boni is Secretary General of EUROCITIES, the leading network of European cities. She has over 20 years' experience in EU public affairs in the field of local and regional government, having been director of the Brussels office of the French region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. In addition, Anna Lisa has worked for the city of Bologna in Italy, with European and international networks and the European Parliament. Anna Lisa is committed to working for a stronger recognition of urban challenges within the European agenda, as well as finding constructive ways to solve these challenges.

GEERT CAMI

Co-Founder and Managing Director of Friends of Europe

Before co-founding Friends of Europe, Geert was Managing Director of Forum Europe and before that worked for a few years at the European Commission to help set-up the Information and Communications Unit of ECHO to raise the profile of the EU's humanitarian efforts. At the outset of his career, he also worked for two music programmes at Belgian Radio 1, and very briefly as a teacher and TV journalist.

PAUL DUJARDIN

CEO and Artistic Director at Bozar

Paul Dujardin is CEO and artistic director of the Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR) in Brussels, and under his direction the Centre has turned into an internationally recognised, multi-and-interdisciplinary arts centre. Paul is involved in driving forward the European project and has developed BOZAR into a platform to initiate debate between citizens, decision-makers and other sectors. He is also the animator of the steering committee of the 'New Narrative for Europe' project, which aims to give Europe a more cultural vision for the future. Previously, Paul was CEO of the Société Philharmonique de Bruxelles, and in charge of the annual Ars Musica festival. In 2016, Paul received the Lobby Award 2016 Brussels Leader of the Year for his work in re-energising Brussels.

ULLA ENGELMANN

Head of unit, European Commission Directorate-General for the internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs

Ulla Engelmann is Head of Unit of Clusters, Social economy and Entrepreneurship at DG Grow, the European Commission Directorate-General for the internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs. Previously, Ulla worked at the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the in-house science service of the European Commission. She began working at the JRC as a post-doc in fusion research, and moved on to manage various units (communication, international relations, and others) in Ispra and Brussels.

JULIE FOULON

Co-Founder of MolenGeek

Julie Foulon is Co-Founder of MolenGeek, a socially conscious tech ecosystem based in one of the poorer Brussels neighbourhoods. It aims to make technology and entrepreneurship more accessible, especially to youth who lack academic backgrounds. It is also a start-up incubator and offers coding lessons for free. They pursue a vision in which young people take active roles in shaping the future rather than adapting to it. Before MolenGeek, Julie founded Girleek, a platform seeking to promote female engagement in tech. She also was the head of BetaGroup, the largest tech ecosystem from Belgium, composed of over 8000 members.

ELISABETH GUIGOU

President at Anna Lindh Foundation

Elisabeth Guigou is president of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, a network of civil society organisations dedicated to promoting intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean region. Before this appointment, Elisabeth served as French minister of European Affairs, MEP, and member of the French National Assembly, among numerous other posts. In addition to this, Elisabeth was the first female to be appointed Minister of Justice in France, where she distinguished herself for her fight for a more independent justice system. She is also a trustee of Friends of Europe.

BJØRN IHLER

Founder Khalifa-Ihler Institute and Kofi Annan Extremely Together Young Leader

Bjørn Ihler is an international counter extremism expert and activist working as a filmmaker, editor and writer to develop spaces for dialogue and peace-building between different people and communities. In 2016, he co-founded the Khalifa Ihler Institute that works for peace through knowledge, technology and design. Since 2016 Bjørn has also been part of the Kofi Annan Foundation initiative Extremely Together, and he explores means of countering violent extremism as one of ten young leaders in the field from across the world. Bjørn is building his work on a foundation in communication, technology, data and computational sociology as well as his academic background in peace and conflict studies.

SHADA ISLAM

Director Europe & Geopolitics

Shada works on issues related to the future of Europe, minority and integration challenges as well as on Europe's relations with emerging nations. She set up the Asia Programme for Friends of Europe in 2011 and also leads its work on development issues. She is the former Europe correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review and continues to write for leading international publications.

DHARMENDRA KANANI

Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe

Prior to joining Friends of Europe, Dharmendra Kanani was director of policy at the European Foundation Centre (EFC). He was the England director at the Big Lottery Fund, the largest independent funder in the UK and fourth largest in the world. Dharmendra has held senior positions in the public and voluntary UK sector and advisor to numerous ministerial policy initiatives across the UK.

ASSITA KANKO

Author, politician & founder of #Polin, the political incubator

Assita Kanko is elected town councillor in Ixelles, one of the largest districts of Brussels, and Founder of Polin, a political incubator aimed at encouraging and supporting women in politics. She is also a columnist for the Belgian Newspaper De Standaard. Assita has gained recognition for her work as author of two books, 'Parce que tu es une fille, histoire d'une vie excisée' (Because you are a girl, story of a circumcised life) and 'La deuxième moitié, plaidoyer pour un nouveau féminisme' (The second half, advocacy for a new feminism) as well as in the media, as a spokesperson for women's empowerment.

SHERIN KHANKAN

Founder of Mariam Mosque

Sherin Khankan is Denmark's first female imam, and Founder of a women-led mosque in Copenhagen, where she aims to provide a more welcoming atmosphere for female worshippers and challenge growing islamophobia and misconceptions surrounding the religion. She is also an activist on Muslim issues including female integration and extremism, and has written extensively on the relationship between Islam and politics. Sherin is a sociologist of religion and philosophy, specialising in contemporary Islamic activism in Europe and the Middle East. Previously, she founded Critical Muslims, an organisation that promotes female Muslim leadership. Sherin has also stood for parliament as a candidate for the Radical Left Party.

SILVANA KOCH-MEHRIN

President and Founder of Women Political Leaders Global Forum (WPL)

Silvana is the President and Founder of the Women Political Leaders Global Forum (WPL), a worldwide network of female politicians, which works towards increasing the number and influence of women in political leadership. Silvana is a former MEP and Vice-President of the European Parliament, working on gender equality among others. In addition to her work for WPL, Silvana is senior advisor to EY Ernst & Young, Senior Policy Advisor to Gplus Europe, and consults on EU regulatory issues to a number of companies and governments.

MICHAEL KOEHLER

Director of Neighbourhood, European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

Michael Köhler has been Director of Neighbourhood Policy since 2015, in this capacity he is responsible for cooperation with Mediterranean Arab countries and Israel. Since joining the European Commission he has held many positions including Director for the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood in the Directorate General for Development and International Cooperation; Head of Cabinet to the Commissioner for Energy; and Head of Cabinet to the Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. He previously worked as a representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation in Morocco and Tunisia, and in the Policy Planning Department of the Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development in Germany. He has authored numerous books and articles on international Islamic studies and foreign policy. He is also a Professor of Europe and the Mediterranean at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium.

SANA ODEH

Founder and Chair of Arab Women in Computing

Sana Odeh is Clinical Professor of computer science at New York University, and Founder and Chair of Arab Women in Computing, the New York City Girls Computer Science and Engineering Conference, and International Hackathon for Social Good. Sana is also an Affiliated Faculty of Computer Science at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) where she set up the computer science department and created successful international collaboration projects in the same field. Her research focuses on information systems for the developing world and assessing the effectiveness of e-learning systems.

ANDREAS SCHLEICHER

Director for Education and Skills at Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Andreas Schleicher is Director for Education and Skills, Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary-General at the OECD, where he heads the Programme for International Student Assessment, the Survey of Adult Skills, the Teaching and Learning International Survey, and the development and analysis of benchmarks on the performance of education systems. Before joining the OECD, Andreas was Director for Analysis at the International Association for Educational Achievement. He is the recipient of numerous honours and awards, including the Theodor Heuss prize, awarded in the name of the first president of the Federal Republic of Germany for exemplary democratic engagement.

PAUL WALTON

Director of strategy and partnerships at the Anna Lindh Foundation

Paul is director of strategy and partnerships at the Anna Lindh Foundation. Through his work at the Foundation, he has played a central role in building the first common EU-Mediterranean institution, and adapting the institution's programme to unprecedented changes in the region including co- founding the flag-ship project "Young Arab Voices". Prior to the Foundation, Paul was Executive Director of the international NGO "Global Voice" that pioneered award-winning, multi-country projects across Latin America, Africa and Asia, and as an analyst of international affairs, he has been interviewed in the BBC, Al-Arabiya and the New York Times.

TARIK YOUSEF

Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development Programme at Brookings

Tarik Yousef is a Senior Fellow in the Global Economy and Development programme and the Director of the Brookings Doha Center. He has worked extensively in the academic world, as well as in the public policy arena, with experience from the IMF, the World Bank and the UN, and more recently from the NGO Silatech. He is a development expert on the economies of the Middle East and North Africa. Tarik has also served on the advisory boards of development organisations and boards of directors of financial institutions.



AGENDA

With more than two-fifths of the global population being under the age of 25, young people have a key role to play in building and shaping the world we live in. They can either be empowered as key actors for community dialogue and peace-building, or be excluded from the conversation by negative media and political discourse.

It's time to acknowledge the importance of the contribution made by young people to build and maintain peace, bringing innovative ideas to conflict prevention and resolution, and to recognise that young people's voices need to be heard and respected as equal partners for dialogue.

This unique programme invited young people from across the Euro-Mediterranean region to meet in Brussels, discuss their experiences with influential representatives from politics, business and civil society, and give voice to the issues that they view as crucial both to their generation, and to their societies as a whole.

It also provided an opportunity to discuss some of the findings of the first Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security launched at the UN Security Council in April 2018 and pioneered with a global coalition of young leaders and regional organisations including the Anna Lindh Foundation and Young Mediterranean Voices.

DAY 1

TUESDAY 22 MAY

PLENARY SESSION

TIME FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT

Welcome by:

[Geert Cami](#), Co-Founder and Managing Director of Friends of Europe

[Paul Walton](#), Director, Strategy and Partnerships at the Anna Lindh Foundation

Introductory remarks by:

[Jesse Klaver](#), Leader of GroenLinks and European Young Leader (EYL40), Netherlands

PLENARY SESSION

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

EYL40 and YMV will have an opportunity to engage with one another in an ice-breaking activity. This will centre around exchanging experiences and sharing stories of their leadership journeys.

Led by [Dharmendra Kanani](#), Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe

GROUP ACTIVITY

BEYOND CLICHES

Listening and learning from arts and intercultural exchange

If “education, cross-cultural skills and critical thinking are the basis of political participation and active citizenship” then the arts and intercultural exchange have a vital role to play in broadening the scope of perspectives in the public sphere. The artistic domain provides a key space in which to challenge social norms and values in creative ways, sparking new conversations and providing a space for collaboration, open expression and community-building. This session will also explore the role of virtual exchange in connecting youth leadership, and offer a preview of the pilot “Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange” programme.

What does it take to create the right conditions for artistic expression and intercultural exchange to flourish? In what ways can the arts be a driver for inclusivity? How can the arts and creative thinking be better mobilised as a lever for positive social change?

Introductory remarks by:

[Paul Dujardin](#), CEO & Artistic Director, “Bozar” Centre for Fine Arts, Belgium

[Eduardo Portal Martin](#), Conductor and Founder of Antares Ensemble and European Young Leader

[Rihab Mejri](#), Civil Society Activist, Member of Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV), Tunisia

Moderated by: [Dharmendra Kanani](#), Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe

PLENARY SESSION

WOMAN POWER

Empowerment through business

Promoting gender equality is transformational across all levels of society. Both the European and MENA regions seemingly remain male dominated but the economic inclusion of women is being prioritised in many countries as we see women's confidence increasing and women taking more active and leading roles in business. The potential for increased diversity and innovation in industry as well as economic growth is evident, yet women's creativity and entrepreneurial potential are still untapped. How can we ensure that women's contribution to small businesses and start-ups is facilitated? What are the main challenges faced? What difference, if any, do women make when they are at the table? What is the influence of social norms, culture, education, preconceptions and stereotypes on women's access to and participation in business?

With:

[Yostina Boules](#), Founder of Taqa Solutions and MENA Young Leader (EYL40), Egypt

[Ulla Engelmann](#), Head of Unit Clusters, Social Economy and Entrepreneurship at the European Commission directorate general for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

[Assita Kanko](#), Author, politician & founder of #Polin, the political incubator, Belgium

[Silvana Koch-Mehrin](#), President and Founder of the Women Political Leaders Global Forum (WPL)

Moderated by: [Shada Islam](#), Director of Europe and Geopolitics, Friends of Europe



PARALLEL SESSION

TECH TALK

Skills and education for the digital age

Shaping education in line with often rapid technological developments could be a key driver for growth in Europe and the MENA region. We need to lead technology rather than be driven by it to keep up with competitors such as the US and China, to create new jobs and to avoid poverty for young and growing populations. Digital education is a chance to ensure better employability among the younger generation, to improve the abilities and productivity of workers and to strengthen social and economic equality. Europe and the MENA region must change the narrative on education and work and speed-up their adaptation to the needs of the future. How can Europe and the MENA address the high demand for digital skills in the labour force? How can we make the most of our human capital, ensuring that both the younger and adult generations are prepared for the future needs of the digital age? Which successful models can be replicated on a wider scale? Europe and the MENA are multi-speed with many differences within the regions. What's the best way to ensure every country benefits equally when moving forward?

With:

[Abdallah Absi](#), Founder & CEO of GivingLoop and MENA Young Leader (EYL40), Lebanon

[Julie Foulon](#), Co-Founder, MolenGeek, Belgium

[Sana Odeh](#), Founder of Arab Women in Computing; Founder & Chair of the New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) Hackathon for Social Good in the Arab World, United Arab Emirates

[Andreas Schleicher](#), Director, Education and Skills, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), France

Moderated by: [Dharmendra Kanani](#), Director of Strategy, Friends of Europe

A CONVERSATION
WITH**SHERIN KHANKAN**

Sherin is Denmark's first female imam who has led the foundation of a women-led mosque in Copenhagen called Mariam Mosque. She is also an activist on Muslim issues including female integration and extremism, and has written numerous texts discussing Islam and politics.

Interviewed by [Dharmendra Kanani](#), Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe

PEER-LEARNING

MASTERCLASS ROUNDTABLES

Small groups' conversations on issues that matter to the EYL40 and YMV, to gain expertise and learn from each other in an informal setting.

1 - Climate change —how cities can save the day

[Anna Lisa Boni](#), Secretary General of EUROCITIES, Belgium

2 - How tech and an entrepreneurial spirit can help save free media

[Ayman Mhanna](#), Executive Director Samir Kassir Foundation and MENA Young Leader

3 - As US walks away, can Europe (really) save the Iran nuclear deal?

[Negar Mortazavi](#), Iran analyst and MENA Young Leader (EYL40), U.S.A

EVENING PROGRAMME

DINNER AT THE ROYAL PALACE

The dinner will be hosted by [their Majesties King and Queen of the Belgians](#).

It brings together delegates from the worlds of politics, industry and civil society, representing the Young Mediterranean Voices and European Young Leaders' programmes.



DAY 2

WEDNESDAY 23 MAY

PLENARY SESSION

LISTENING AND TAKING ACTION

What youth really want

The session will explore youth-driven analysis of shared challenges and opportunities faced by young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region, identifying cross border commonalities and differences, discussing action-oriented proposals to develop more positive policy narratives. This is an opportunity to listen to the voices and experiences of youth in order to critically evaluate the role Europe plays in shaping and influencing their lives, and suggest ways in which Europe can learn to play a more constructive role in its southern neighbourhood.

- What are the hopes and dreams of Euro-Mediterranean youth?
- What are they looking for from their societies and what do they expect from their governments?
- How do they see the relationship between the MENA and European regions?
- What do they want to achieve in their own lives and what prevents them from moving forward and reaching their goals?

With:

[Elisabeth Guigou](#), President of the Anna Lindh Foundation Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue

[Bjorn Ihler](#), Founder Khalifa-Ihler Institute and Kofi Annan Extremely Together Young Leader

[Esmat Elsayed](#), Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV) and delegate to the Africa-EU Summit

[Fadi Quran](#), Senior Campaigner at Avaaz and MENA Young Leader (EYL40)

Moderated by: [Shada Islam](#), Director of Europe and Geopolitics, Friends of Europe

PLENARY SESSION

LEARNING AND ACTING

Walking the talk on youth engagement

The session will explore youth-driven analysis of shared challenges and opportunities faced by young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region, identifying cross border commonalities and differences, discussing action-oriented proposals to develop more positive policy narratives. This is an opportunity to listen to the voices and experiences of youth in order to critically evaluate the role Europe plays in shaping and influencing their lives, and suggest ways in which Europe can learn to play a more constructive role in its southern neighbourhood.

- National governments and international organisations have started extolling the virtues of youth engagement but are they also walking the talk through policies and actions?
- What are the real benefits of bringing young people into the policy and decision -making machinery at the national and multilateral level?
- In which areas would such youth involvement be especially beneficial and why?
- Given the growing disengagement of young people from national and international institutions, which governance models at all level could help bridging the gap?

With:

[Hella Grichi](#), Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV)

[Abdelbasset ben Hassen](#), President, Arab Institute for Human Rights

[Michael Koehler](#), Director for South Neighbourhood at the European Commission Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

[Tarik Yousef](#), Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development programme at Brookings

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