

AUTUMN 2019

The future is here

Unlocking the next generation's vision

EVENT REPORT



Cover photo by T. Chick McClure

The seminar is run in association with the “Young Mediterranean Voices” and “European Young Leaders” Programmes

“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 co-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.

Coordinated by:



Co-funded by:



In partnership with:



Funded by:



Co-funded by:



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.

With the support of:



The authors in this discussion paper contribute in their personal capacities, and their views do not necessarily reflect those of the organisations they represent, nor of Friends of Europe and its board of trustees, members or partners.

Reproduction on whole or in part is permitted, provided that full credit is given to Friends of Europe, and that any such reproduction, whether in whole or in part, is not sold unless incorporated in other works.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union

Publisher: Geert Cami

Director: Nathalie Furrer, Dharmendra Kanani

Programme Managers: Marthe Krijger, Clara Casert

Programme Officer: Julien Tate-Smith

Programme Assistant: Verity Hubbard

Editor: Arnaud Bodet

Design: Lucien Leyh

© Friends of Europe - November 2019

Table of contents

Executive Summary	1
Making a Difference	2
The Big Heat	6
Farming for the Future	9
Rights, Inclusion and Culture	12
Bursting Bubbles	15
Making it in the Mainstream	20
Bridges	22
YMV and EYL40	26
List of participants	33

Executive summary

Youth around the world are demanding change. From the streets of Beirut, Santiago and Hong Kong, to the global frontlines of the battle against climate change and the swelling ranks of millennial politicians with a foothold in government, the generation of the future is impatient for a slice of power right now.

Against that backdrop, Friends of Europe (FoE) and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation (ALF) drew young leaders from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East for a unique two day-seminar to share experiences, debate pressing issues, and exchange ideas with influential figures from government, business, civil society and the arts.

The seminar sent a positive message on the strength of people power led by youngsters who, despite being under-represented at the political level, can still be a driving force for change and innovation. Participants from north and south of the Mediterranean underscored the importance of partnering to confront issues that cut across borders: inequality, gender rights, migration and inclusion, sustainable agriculture and the climate crisis.

There were warnings about the risks of “slacktivism” and the dangers of all-powerful social media platforms, fake news and cyber-repression. However, with the world’s 1.8bn young people forming history’s most-interconnected generation, mainstreaming youth participation in global decision-making was highlighted as a key tool for rebooting regional cooperation and countering the polarisation that increasingly blights political discourse in regions around the world.

Key objectives involved breaking down silo-based thinking by bringing together participants from different backgrounds, views and expertise; forging new networks and, most importantly, translating these discussions into collaborative action that can make a real difference.

Making a Difference

Engagement was a key word running through the debate. Speakers from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) related their frustration with the conflicts and entrenched authoritarianism that continue to grip much of the region almost a decade after the upswell of hope brought about by the Arab Spring. Yet, undaunted, they continue to campaign for freedom, shared values and a better world.

Merna Nasralla, a legal researcher and delegate from Egypt in ALF's Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV) programme, summed up the dedication and commitment. "There is a disconnect between the governed and the government," she said. "We see that participation is now meaningless. Sometimes you vote for a member and you see programmes and ideology, but you don't see change. So, you say 'no', I'm going to find another way to represent my voice."

Addressing senior policymakers, Nasralla said it's time to move beyond discussion and get



“Youth are really a source of very creative initiatives and they want to be actors, they want to be citizens

Élisabeth Guigou, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) and former French minister

younger people directly involved in shaping policy. “They keep on saying you are the leaders of tomorrow, but I have to have my voice heard and be a framer of the policies of today,” she insisted. “It is time to take debate to a different level, to actually start working on training and equipping youth with the tools that they need to be policymakers.”

Such ideas won full support from many of the more senior decision-makers attending. “Youth are really a source of very creative initiatives and they want to be actors, they want to be citizens,” said **Élisabeth Guigou**, President of ALF and former French minister. “We are not taking into account sufficiently what they could bring as actors for peace, for development, for the creation of jobs, for mutual understanding ... We are missing something absolutely essential.”

Youth needs to look at where it can deepen its policy-shaping role at the global, regional and national levels said **Joyce Msuya**, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. “Youth should start their own initiatives, advocacy, but also influence to drive policy projects rather than being given initiatives,” she told the seminar via a video link from Nairobi. “Look to where the levers of power are, where you can influence ... we see young ministers, young politicians across the world that are stepping up.”

One way of reaching those levers of power is through lobbying. **Andrea Boccuni**, Head of Partnership and Education at The Good Lobby, a start-up committed to fostering assertive citizenship, led a workshop on how citizens and civil society can effectively lobby to make

a difference in their communities.

He explained how The Good Lobby provides legal and lobbying advice on a pro bono basis to help civil society get their message across to policymakers. “NGOs are out there, they are doing a great job, they just need to be more professional,” Boccuni said. “NGOs are good at campaigning, they need to be better in legislative, judicial and administrative work ... understanding law will make your case much stronger.”

In a troubled region and a troubled world, **Geert Cami**, Co-Founder and Secretary-General at FoE, stated that each citizen has the potential and a duty to work for change. “All of us have a responsibility in our own communities to take leadership and to show example,” he said, quoting the Dalai Lama: “If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a room with a mosquito.”

Looking at how one small incident can race around the world through social media, **Mary Fitzgerald**, Libya analyst, award-winning journalist from Ireland and an alumni of FoE’s European Young Leader (EYL) programme since 2013, looked at the “baby shark” moment of Beirut’s street demonstrations.

She showed a video where a mother tells protesters surrounding her car that her small child is frightened by the noise. That triggered an impromptu performance of the popular children’s song and dance “Baby Shark” to entertain the toddler. The video has gone viral and been an inspiration for protesters elsewhere in the region.

Seminar participants debated the incident's significance and how it reflects on pathways to change. "Any change or development should be done in a way which does not risk harming the weakest people in a community, and that is the case in that video," commented YMV **Petr Kolban**, a judicial trainee specialising in International Criminal Law from the Czech Republic. **Kawtar El Outmani**, YMV and Co-Chair of the National Board of Model of United Nations in Morocco, took a similar line. "We try to find a common ground for our aspirations, what we want, taking into consideration what the protesters want, what the mother wants and what the baby wants," she said. "We think of a solution that is a gain for all of us."

Some of the Young Mediterranean Voices who joined for the two-day seminar in Brussels





1. **Guido Gryseels**, Director-General of the Africa Museum
2. **Sophie Schriever**, YMV Alumna and Editorial Assistant at Europamagazin
3. **Samir Akacha**, YMV Alumnus from France and **Jamsine Ferrugia**, YMV alumna from Malta
4. **Burak Yusmak**, Assistant to MEP Von Wiese and YMV Alumnus
5. **Hala Bugaighis**, Co-Founder of Jusoor and MENA Young Leader, Responsible for the MENA Desk at BOZAR



The Big Heat

Kawtar El Outmani linked the mother's primary concern for her child to a debate within the group on why climate change was not gripping young people in the MENA as much as it is in other parts of the world, despite the fact that the region risks being one of the hardest hit by global warming. She was among many who pointed out that, although young people there care about the climate, they have more pressing primary concerns.

“When you have half of the population on the poverty line, unemployment hitting unprecedented levels, thousands of youth leaving the country to find decent conditions, of course you can talk to those people about climate change, but they will tell you: ‘let me shout for my basic rights first’,” said **Larissa Abou Harb**, YMV and research assistant at the Common Space Initiative for Shared Knowledge and Consensus Building in Lebanon. “I do understand climate change is urgent, I shout for that too, but for now, at least for my people, we have a different fight; at least for now.”

Looking beyond the global implications of the climate emergency to focus on how it is impacting local communities is the way to increase awareness and promote action, several speakers argued. “There are actually local climate-related protests that have been going on in Iran, and it has to do a lot with water,” said **Negar Mortazavi**,



“When you have half of the population on the poverty line, unemployment hitting unprecedented levels, thousands of youth leaving the country to find decent conditions, of course you can talk to those people about climate change, but they will tell you: ‘let me shout for my basic rights first’

Larissa Abou Harb, YMV and Research Assistant at the Common Space Initiative for Shared Knowledge and Consensus Building in Lebanon

Diplomatic Correspondent for The Independent, media analyst and an alumnus of FoE's MENA Young Leader programme. "There have been a lot of protests, not by the young metropolitan Greta types, but just by locals where changes in the local climate is having an effect upon their lives."

Amro Ali, Professor of Sociology at the American University in Egypt, said local people in his city of Alexandria are increasingly aware of the danger faced by rising water levels and temperatures. "Even the fishermen of Alexandria have more knowledge of climate change than a Republican senator in DC," he said. "They might not give it that language, but they can see the problem happening. You sense this existential crisis that the city is facing."

Those climate impacts mean that the region has to look beyond its immediate problems. "It is a region that will be most impacted by the climate emergency in the future, with very real issues related to water shortages, desertification, the movement of people, climate migration," said Mary Fitzgerald. "The challenge is that we get so caught up in the current car crash that we fail to plan and think about the long term."

In a dedicated session on how communities around the Mediterranean can work together against climate change, Joyce Msuya from the UNEP said young people had a key role to play by building bridges across frontiers and generations, and by leveraging technology to put pressure on politicians to take action (or by putting pressure on parents to make sustainable consumption choices.) "With the numbers that you can mobilise globally across geographical

boundaries, the opportunities are enormous," she said. "The coupling of technology plus the ability to actually leverage technology to connect with others and mobilise others is extremely powerful. Most politicians do listen to young people."

From Jordan, **Mustafa Hashem**, YMV and Master student in Sustainable Energy Solutions at the University of Edinburgh, also made the call for the international community to listen to the youth on climate. "We need to ... step up to the stage of working on policy projects that are submitted to the international community and to the United Nations in order to push more on governments," he said. "The youth nowadays have a very high understanding of what are the scenarios of where the world will be in 30 or 40 years from now, but the policymakers need to be pushed by youth."

Education is crucial for raising climate awareness but, warned **Luc Bas**, European Director at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), it's the older generation that needs to be taught. "We think we have to educate you, but it's the other way round, we have to be much more bold and say: 'hey guys, it's the youth that has to educate us because our generation and my parents' generation have been making a lot of mistakes that have brought us to where we are'," he told the group. "The youth starts to understand that something has to change." Bas underlined the need for a change in mindsets in order to reduce unsustainable consumption and rethink models of economic growth.

A major effort is needed to convince people that they must make the lifestyle changes needed to limit global temperature rises said **Erica Hope**,

Senior Associate at the European Climate Foundation (ECF). She said bringing citizens in through exercises in direct democracy to discuss the steps that are needed was essential, and accentuated the role young people can play in pushing forward innovative behaviour such as using greener technology, changing diets and reducing travel. “It’s going to get more and more important to bring people on board and have people support what it is that we are actually trying to achieve,” she said. “There is going to be a bigger role in Europe and other regions like MENA for citizen participation.”

In very practical ways, **Yostina Boules**, Founder and Managing Director at Taqa Solutions and 2017 MENA Young Leader from Egypt, hosted a roundtable discussion on how blockchain technology can transform the use of green energy. “My dream is a decentralised world where everyone owns their own energy and can sell it to their neighbours,” she said.

Farming for the Future

Intrinsically linked to climate change is the question of food security, as the world population is expected to increase to 9bn by the middle of this century, requiring an estimated 28% increase in food supply. How to achieve that in ways that don't aggravate the climate crisis was the focus of another session within the seminar.

Olivier De Schutter, Co-Chair of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), says current production systems – not least the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – are based on outdated objectives of intensive protein output that do not respond to today's needs to protect the environment and provide healthy diets.

He urged a switch to smaller production units and a change in consumption habits towards less meat and more locally produced, seasonal food. "Our ways of producing food have led to a loss of biodiversity, to a significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions from food production, processing, transport, packaging etc., and the health of our soils and the ability of our soils to capture carbon is severely undercut," he said. De Schutter urged a change in trade patterns to promote development in the Global South and said reforming the CAP to promote more sustainable farming need not result in higher prices for consumers or less revenue for farmers.



“Small farmers cannot benefit from that help ... they are the ones that are bringing life to the rural communities, but those subsidies are going to huge farm companies that are killing the small businesses

Carmen Cuenca del Olmo, YMV and PhD student in Health and Poverty at the University of Alicante

There was backing for that from **Carmen Cuenca** del Olmo, YMV and PhD student in Health and Poverty at the University of Alicante, who pointed out that CAP subsidies mainly went to large-scale producers. “Small farmers cannot benefit from that help ... small farmers are the ones that are bringing life to the rural communities, but those subsidies are going to huge farm companies that are killing the small businesses,” said Cuenca, whose parents are farmers in eastern Spain.

That theme was taken up by **Tomáš Ignác Fénix**, former vice-president of the European Council of Young Farmers and a 2019 EYL from the Czech Republic. He said current systems in Europe were producing excess waste and contributing to unhealthy diets among the poorest citizens, while large-scale farmers soaked up most CAP funding.

He also noted that more funds were needed to promote countryside regeneration and reassure conservative rural people that they are not getting left behind by social change or adversely affected by climate change measures which are often perceived as being generated by urban elites. “They are somehow different from the metropolitan people living in the cities and this is still a very important part of the European public,” he said. “We need to find some answers for these people, and we need to make their lives better.”

Taking an innovative approach to food security is **Syrine Chaalala**, Co-Founder and Managing Director of nextProtein which produces insect-based protein for animal feed. “Producing insects on an industrial scale has never been done and it’s a challenge,” she said. Her business uses vertical farming that takes up little space and little water, her insects are raised on farm waste and the farm has almost no carbon footprint. “We are talking about something healthy; we are talking about a process that is 100% natural,” she said. “You end up having animals that consume a product which is healthy for them.”



1



2



3



1. **Myriam François**, Broadcaster, News Reporter for the BBC and 2017 European Young Leader
2. **Yostina Boules**, Founder and Managing Director of Taqa Solutions and 2017 MENA Young Leader
3. **Negar Mortazavi**, Iranian-American Journalist, 2017 MENA Young Leader
4. **Kawtar El Outmani**, YMV and Co-Chair of the National Board of Model United Nations (MUN) Morocco and **Tomáš Ignác Fénix**, Farmer, Former Vice-President of the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) and 2019 European Young Leader

4



Rights, Inclusion and Culture

Other issues that cut across borders and generations were discussed in smaller roundtable groups led by EYs. **Hala Bugaighis**, Co-Founder of Jusoor, an NGO in Libya committed to independent policy research and human development projects for women, and a 2017 MENA Young Leader, focused on how to close the gender gap, giving the example of the drafting of a new constitution in Libya which was “a nightmare for women”. It failed to give equal rights after being drafted by a committee that had just one-in-six seats for women and many of those selected for their stance against women’s rights. “I am pro-quota, I think it is a positive thing, but they brought in women who don’t believe in the cause.”

Joining the roundtable, **Élisabeth Guigou**, France’s first female Justice Minister, said men had to realise equality was a win-win situation. “How can you convince men that it’s in their interest to have equality?” she asked. **Myriam François**, academic, BBC broadcaster and news reporter and EYL, called for a greater effort to change attitudes towards rape survivors. “I know a lot of women who have suffered some form of sexual assault, but have said nothing because they feel ashamed,” she said. “We can change that.”



“I would like to see a world, or Europe, or my country where it’s not assumed that because you are a migrant you are taken into a migrant discussion, I want to see people who have an Arab background, Somali background, talking about the health sector, about IT

Ozan Yanar, City Councillor, Board Member of the Helsinki City Council and 2017 European Young Leader

Another roundtable was hosted by **Ozan Yanar**, City Councillor, Board Member of the Helsinki City Council and 2017 European Young Leader. He looked at migration, integration and inclusion. “What I understand from integration to different societies, is that people adapt to those societies, they feel well in those societies and they live their normal lives in those societies,” he said. “I see integration as a place where people can be comfortable and go forward.”

The discussion looked at how Far Right thinking has framed the debate in Europe, hindering the recognition of people of migrant backgrounds, it urged greater representation of minorities in the media to promote role models and lamented that society too often views minority citizens as defined by their otherness or as representatives of their communities or origin. “I would like to see a world, or Europe, or my country where it’s not assumed that because you are a migrant you are taken into a migrant discussion,” said Yanar, who has Turkish roots. “I want to see people who have an Arab background, Somali background, talking about the health sector, about IT.” Prof. Ali from Egypt pointed out that such issues are not limited to Europe. He referred to his own country’s issues with its Coptic and Nubian minorities. “The more power is centralised, the more rights are diminished,” he said.

The role of art in breaking down barriers and forcing a rethink in attitudes formed the theme of discussions over dinner in Brussels’ BOZAR cultural centre. **Paul Dujardin**, BOZAR CEO and Artistic Director, explained the history of the building designed after the First World War

by Art Nouveau architect Victor Horta and the concept behind its function as one of the city’s premier cultural hubs. “We have more and more a geopolitical approach,” he said.

Louma Salamé, Director-General of the Boghossian Foundation, explained how its award-winning cultural centre in Brussels’ iconic Villa Empain promotes bridge-building between east and west. “If you ever have the chance to become a leader ... don’t underestimate the power of art,” she told the group. Finally, **Guido Gryseels**, Director of the Brussels Africa Museum, recalled how that institution, founded in the 19th century as a showcase for Belgium’s colonial empire, recently underwent an extensive modernisation. “De-colonisation is a difficult process,” he said of the museum’s overhaul.



1. **Una Mullally**, Writer and LGBTQ activist and European Young Leader (EYL40); **Thomas Myrup Kristensen**, Managing Director for EU Affairs and Head of the Brussels Office at Facebook
2. **Olivier De Schutter**, Co-Chair of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food)
3. **Luc Bas**, European Director at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
4. **Joyce Msuya**, Deputy Executive Director of UN Environment (UNEP)
5. **Louma Salamé**, Director of Fondation Boghossian



Bursting Bubbles

While the three figures from the Brussels art world spoke of how culture can bring people together, earlier debates in the seminar focused on the polarisation in modern politics. From migration to climate action and international relations, rational, fact-based debate is often drowned out by entrenched, extreme views based on identity and fixed ideas. How to counter that polarisation and search for common ground was a central theme of the seminar.

“We need to have a culture of dialogue and we need to see people as people, and that’s the opposite of polarisation ... where we see people who disagree with us as caricatures, as stupid people or ignorant people,” said **Kris De Meyer**, Research Fellow in Neuroscience at King’s College London.

He pointed out that polarisation has been around for a long time and that many of the concerns over how social media helps spread hard-line views were also expressed in the days when radio was becoming a means of mass communication. However, De Meyer warned that today’s proliferation of media sources means that it’s easy to take your information only from sites that share your view, and that can be dangerous. “Beware of your own bubbles,” he said. “We are all living in social media bubbles, and it’s not a nice thing to read the Daily Mail or Breitbart or another website that has a very different view, but, with a professional hat on, I do that almost daily.”



“We need to have a culture of dialogue and we need to see people as people, and that’s the opposite of polarisation ... where we see people who disagree with us as caricatures, as stupid people or ignorant people

Kris De Meyer, Research Fellow in Neuroscience at King's College London

Murad Demaidi, YMV and Project Manager at Palmec International in Palestine, agreed on the risks of developing bubble mentalities. “It is a big problem, for example if I am an extremist I would stay in the same bubble and I would stay with other extremists,” he said. “People stay in their comfort zone and I think this is a big problem.”

Much of the debate focused on social media's role in encouraging polarisation. There was much criticism about social media platforms' failure to crack down on hate speech, fake news and other abuses, especially as the online world has become so central to many people's lives. “We know less about our neighbours than the people we connect with on Facebook,” noted **Dharmendra Kanani**, Director of Insights at FoE who moderated the seminar. “Generations and generations are growing up with [a smart phone] in their hands or a MacBook or an iPad. I've seen parents putting an iPad in front of their kids at the age of two or three, and that creates a very different emotional context.”

Una Mullally, writer and LGBTQ activist from Ireland and EYL, pointed out that there is a simple way to deal with the negative effects of digital platforms. “The single best thing you can do for your own independent thinking is spend the least time possible on social media and online,” she said. “As systems they are completely corrupted ... The option exists and the freedom exists to not engage.”

However, several participants pointed to the positive role social media can play in the MENA region, despite government attempts to weaponise them for social control, to spread



“The biggest issue is that the government cannot keep up with how fast digitalisation goes, I don't think the problem is social media, it's finding a way to frame it better in a legal way to empower governments to protect their citizens.

Karen Bocqué, YMV and Communication Officer at the Brussels Regional Informatics Centre

propaganda, monitor dissidents or limit free access. In the absence of a free traditional media, social media often provides the only public space where people can organise or spread ideas.

Prof. Amro Ali explained that social media were essential for maintaining contacts in the region. “It’s difficult to be without it. I say that in the context of the MENA region, where there is no vibrant public sphere that you can actually access other than cyberspace,” he said. “In Egypt, Facebook can save your life.”

Other participants highlighted positive social media stories from their experience. **Ferran Dalmau**, YMV and Secretary-General of deba-t.org, a platform that promotes critical thinking in Spain, pointed to a project that uses bots to identify and counter potentially violent attitudes among individuals online; Negar Mortazavi recalled how young female politicians in the United States, like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar had used social media to raise their profiles and promote their ideas; and Márton Krolopp, YMV and law student at the University of Konstanz in Germany, pointed to a YouTube video by the Green Party there that “single-handedly ... won the European elections for the Greens” by appealing to a “Generation that lives on social media.”

From North Macedonia, **Ana Vasileva**, women’s rights activist and a member of the feminist collective Fight Like a Woman, explained that her work combines online and offline activities. Although sceptical of social media’s claims to neutrality, she said it can be used positively, for example in the way the #MeToo movement has

managed to give a great visibility to things that were previously swept under the carpet in her country such as sexual harassment.

Social media also gives women access to a new kind of public space. “Traditionally, women have been more confined to private spaces, like in the home, while men used to have, and still have, much more power and access to public spaces. Public spaces are often boys’ clubs, whether it’s the local pub or a golf club, or whatever kind of club,” Vasileva said. “Women were generally confined to the home and having social networks really elevated their gains in terms of organisation.”

Although many stressed the positive side of social media, there were also calls for regulation to control abusive use of digital platforms. “The biggest issue is that the government cannot keep up with how fast digitalisation goes,” said **Karen Bocqué**, YMV and Communication Officer at the Brussels Regional Informatics Centre. “I don’t think the problem is social media, it’s finding a way to frame it better in a legal way to empower governments to protect their citizens.”

Negar Mortazavi agreed. In her talk to the group, the Iranian-American journalist said social media was here to stay and has done “noble things” connecting people around the world and giving voices to disenfranchised sections of society. But rules are needed. “Why do these companies have so much power with so little rule and regulation? I don’t think we are talking about this enough,” she said. “We can’t go back ... we have to live with it but have to make it better. We have to talk about regulation, regulation,

regulation, and that's not a bad thing, it's not regulating your free speech."

While highlighting the success of youth-led online campaigns to mobilise opinion in areas such as climate change or gun control in the United States, the seminar examined how over-reliance on "Facebook activism" risks diluting traditional democratic structures, reinforcing the power of giant social media companies, and developing "slacktivism" that undermines youth engagement in real-world politics.

Una Mullally told the group about her experiences as a prominent figure in successful campaigns to secure referendum votes in Ireland in favour of marriage equality for same-sex couples and legalised abortion. "Those changes came about through protest; through grassroots movements; through very much DIY, small scale activities," she said. "There was a tremendous amount of social media activity and activism around those referenda ... but the main work and the most important work was the offline work. Online activism has to have that combination." She highlighted the creation of citizens' assemblies to discuss the issues and door-to-door canvassing by volunteers to reach out to voters. "While social media amplified that and made it more colourful and allowed for viral campaigns, really it was about understanding the issues and the connecting with people on a personal experience level," she concluded.

Although the context and issues are different, participants from the MENA region saw that combination of approaches as something that could also work in their countries. "It's definitely a

process that I could see happening, that solution and what you did there is really intelligent, and you can apply that to whatever subject that we want to reach," said **Heba Elsheikh**, YMV and postgraduate student in Linguistics and Translation at the University of Benghazi. Her fellow Libyan, Hala Bugaighis said real world action is needed to achieve results on the ground. "So much is going on online, but it doesn't really affect the policy makers. The real effect on what can be done is through offline activity," she said. "If we want to make change, we will do it offline."

For a spirited defence of social media, the group heard from **Thomas Myrup Kristensen**, Managing Director of EU Affairs and Head of the Brussels office at Facebook. He acknowledged that the company had been slow to react in the past to manipulation and the posting of misleading information but was now taking effective action to stamp out hate speech, incitement to violence, voter suppression and fake news.

However, he defended the right to free speech, including in political advertising. "I am a believer in technology, I have always been. I think technology is a force for good, and I think technology does good things for us as human beings and I think Facebook does," he said. "Facebook is a platform that provides a voice for people ... for those that already have a voice maybe that's not so important, but for those that don't, a platform like Facebook can mean everything."



1



2



3



4

1. **Erica Hope**, Senior Associate at the European Climate Foundation (ECF)
2. **Amro Ali**, Lecturer in Political Sociology at the American University in Cairo
3. **Syrine Chaalala**, Co-Founder and Managing Director of nextProtein and **Dharmendra Kanani**, Director of Insights at Friends of Europe
4. **Maciej Popowski**, European Commission Deputy Director-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
5. **Ana Vasileva**, Women's Rights Activist and a member of the feminist collective Fight Like a Woman



5

Making it in the Mainstream

Whatever the platform, participants from both sides of the Mediterranean were adamant that the voice of youth will increasingly resonate. “This generation will be heard,” insisted **Márton Krolopp**, from Germany. “It is taking action, it’s just that it is taking a form that a lot of, especially older, politicians do not see and do not want to see, but this will be heard in the future.”

How to mainstream the youth perspective and acknowledge the importance of young people’s contribution as agents of change was a key theme, not only of this seminar but of the broader work of the YMV and EYL initiatives. “This programme, for us, is a flagship programme to put youth voices at the heart of the EU policies,” said **Sabrina Saoudi**, Partnership Manager at ALF. “We really do believe that we should transform the debate and move from debate to action. This is one of our principal objectives.”

In the concluding public session of the seminar that brought in policy makers from around Brussels and more Mediterranean voices via video links, young participants from Europe and MENA came through with clear messages of where they see the problem.

“We don’t trust the people who are ruling us,” said Larissa Abou Harb, from Lebanon. “We



“It’s important you speak the truth, that you are transparent, and you don’t make promises you cannot fulfil

Feran Dalmau, YMV and Secretary-General of Critical Thinking Platform deba-t.org

want to be part of the process of policy making. Unfortunately, our politicians are deaf, they are not hearing what we are saying.”

Nihad Ould Ali, Head of Communications at Djazyer El Khir, a non-profit that tackles poverty and supports orphans and abused women in Algeria, said the older generation was frightened of the power of youth. “It’s not really the lack of trust, it is fear. Fear maybe because we are more aware, because we know we won’t make the same mistakes that they did, so maybe they are just trying to save face, because they know that this generation will make the world better,” she said.

From Spain, Feran Dalmau appealed for honesty from politicians, warning that young

people can see through deceit: “It’s important you speak the truth, that you are transparent, and you don’t make promises you cannot fulfil,” he said. “Speak truth and don’t lie to us anymore because we are not stupid, and we do realise things.”

Such ideas were taken on board by the senior politicians in the debate. “The frustration is there, there is always frustration towards politics,” said Elisabeth Guigou. “The main thing is to empower youth, to channel their messages to the main political bodies. ... this is what we do. It is very important that the message of the youth can be passed forward.”

Heba Elsheikh; Gaelle Tawk; Larissa Abou Harb



Bridges

The EYL and YMV programmes not only empower youth and give them a chance to speak to Europe's policy makers, they also build bridges between countries and regions. Participants said more efforts are needed to forge such ties between societies. Dharmendra Kanani spoke of using youth as part of "alternative channels of diplomacy" that create such links.

Guigou proposed visa facilitation to ease travel between Europe and MENA, as well as expanding the Erasmus student exchange programme both to include more MENA students and to broaden its remit beyond the university level, for example by promoting exchanges between sports associations.

Erasmus was enthusiastically supported by **Maciej Popowski**, European Commission Deputy Director-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations. "It is not only the jewel in the crown, it is probably the best of the best that we have in Europe," he said. "If we spend money on people's minds, that's the best investment we can think of."

He pointed out that there have been 30,000 Erasmus exchanges in past five years between Europe and the southern Mediterranean



“There is a real opportunity here to harness that power, particularly the younger members of those diaspora communities, because I think they are key to bridging the MENA and the European Union

Mary Fitzgerald, Libya Analyst, Award-Winning Journalist, 2013 European Young Leader

and that the Commission has proposed a “significant” increase in Erasmus spending. Popowski said that the EC is already looking into ways to take Erasmus-style exchanges into other realms where young people from less-well-off backgrounds will find more space for participation.

Another issue where the incoming Commission wants to promote ties is creating legal pathways for people seeking jobs in Europe. He said there will be a “reality check” on proposals for an EU “blue card” for legal migration and other efforts to facilitate entry for migrants who fill skill gaps in the European labour market. “We have been thinking of something of a talent partnership,” Popowski explained. “We will encourage European business to offer employment opportunities, but also training opportunities ... if we make demand and supply meet, it will be mutually beneficial.”

Another plan is to step up support for new businesses in the MENA region. “There is such a vibrant start-up scene in places like Jordan and Egypt and others, and they need a little bit of a push, seed money or access to different programmes of the European Union. That is something we are going to do,” he said.

As for the idea of youth as an alternative channel of diplomacy, Popowski said the Commission already has a scheme to train up young volunteers to act as ambassadors for the EU in eastern European countries outside the Union. That could be the inspiration for something similar in the south, he said.



“What is the point of Erasmus+ when my own government holds a gun against me. If I die, Erasmus+ is for nothing

Gaelle Tawk, YMV and Assistant Project Manager at PRODES, an NGO in Lebanon

Among other ideas that came out of the debate was a call to exploit the potential of the MENA diaspora in Europe. “There is a real opportunity here to harness that power, particularly the younger members of those diaspora communities, because I think they are key to bridging the MENA and the European Union,” said Mary Fitzgerald, from Ireland.

Despite the positive ideas, many of the young participants called for a more engaged EU foreign policy to support democratic change in the region. “What is the point of Erasmus+ when my own government holds a gun against me. If I die, Erasmus+ is for nothing,” said **Gaelle Tawk**, YMV and Assistant Project Manager at PRODES, an NGO in Lebanon.

“The EU prefers to sell guns to our governments and still prefers to deal with our governments as legitimate powers even though the people ... don’t want those governments. Europe is talking about exchange programmes and inviting guests and everything, and that’s beautiful and we thank them, but that’s not enough and we cannot just act like it’s enough because we all know that it’s not,” she added. “We need more action on a political level, we need more unity.”

Burak Yusmak; Myriam Francois; Ozan Yanar; Negar Mortazavi & Yostina Boules





1. **Heba Elsheikh**, YMV and Postgraduate Student in Linguistics and Translation at the University of Benghazi; **Nihad Ould-Ali**, YMV and Head of Communications at Djazyer El Khir

2. **Mustafa Hashem**, YMV and Master Student in Sustainable Energy Systems at the University of Edinburgh

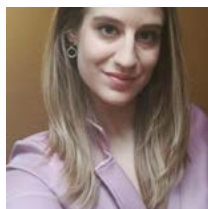
3. **Merna Nasralla**, YMV and Legal Researcher

4. **Murad Demaidi**, YMV and Project Manager at Palmed international"

5. **Petr Kolban**, YMV and Judicial Trainee specialising in International Criminal Law; **Marton Krolopp**, YMV and Law Student at the University of Konstanz



YMV and EYL40

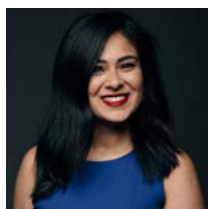


KAREN BOCQUÉ
Young
Mediterranean
Voices

Communication Officer Brussels Regional Informatics Centre

BELGIUM

Karen is currently working as a Communication Officer for the Brussels Regional Informatics Centre, which provides the people of Brussels with efficient and coherent IT services, thereby ensuring digital inclusion. In the past, she has volunteered as a Dutch teacher for Syrian refugees. She is an active member of Brussels Debaters, in which participants discuss a range of political and ethical issues. In her spare time, she volunteers at FairWork Belgium, an organisation which ensures that migrant workers understand their social and labour rights.

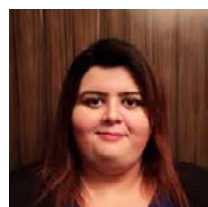


**YOSTINA
BOULES**
2017 MENA
Young Leader

Founder and Chief Executive Officer Taqa Solutions

EGYPT

Yostina, dubbed “the magic machine” by farm owners, is Founder and Chief Executive Officer 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, 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**
2017 MENA
Young Leader

Co-Founder Jusoor

LIBYA

Hala is the Co-Founder of Jusoor, a non-governmental organisation committed to independent policy research and human development projects for women focusing on 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.



CARMEN CUENCA

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**PhD Student in Health and Poverty
University of Alicante**

SPAIN

Carmen holds an undergraduate degree in Nursing and a postgraduate degree in Public Health. She is pursuing a career in science, having been awarded a fellowship from the Spanish Ministry of Education to develop her PhD thesis related to poverty, health, and politics at the University of Alicante. She has been a member of YMV since 2018. Carmen is the coordinator of GEA Alicante, a local NGO which promotes equality at the local level through youth participation, intercultural dialogue, and intergenerational projects.



FERRAN DALMAU

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Secretary-General
Critical Thinking Platform deba-t.org**

SPAIN

Ferran began studying Industrial Technologies Engineering, later transitioning to Philosophy, Politics and Economy. He combines his interest in technology with his passion for education in order to initiate social change. He is currently involved in a social innovation project and is part of the Partnership Management Team for the Ashoka Foundation Office in Barcelona. Ferran is also the Secretary General of deba-t.org, a platform aimed at promoting critical thinking and sound political debate among young people from a diverse ideological background.



MURAD DEMAIDI

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Project Manager
Palmec International**

PALESTINE

Murad is a civil engineer and Project Manager at Palmec International. He is a dedicated activist who works with multiple NGOs and political parties in the Middle East, Europe and the U.S, advocating for social justice and the rights of women and young people. On several occasions, Murad has represented Palestine internationally, giving a voice to Palestinian youth. Within civic organisations, Murad took the lead on the Jerusalem Unites Us initiative, which aimed to enhance the non-violent movement to protect the Palestinian national project. He is also a certified facilitator in conflict resolution, diplomacy and peace-building fields.



**KAWTAR EL
OUTMANI**

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Co-Chair - National Board of Model of
United Nations (MUN) Morocco**

MOROCCO

Kawtar is a Business Student and a Trainer with the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Project. She is actively engaged in Mediterranean affairs, acting as the adjudicator in the first online Euro-Med Debate Competition. Kawtar is a national champion of YMV in Morocco and she was a participant in the Euro-Med Debate and Policy Forum in Malta. She is Co-Chair of the National Board of Model of United Nations (MUN) Morocco and President of World Merit Casablanca.



HEBA ELSHEIKH

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Postgraduate Student in Linguistics and
Translation - University of Benghazi**

LIBYA

Heba is completing her postgraduate degree in Linguistics and Translation at the University of Benghazi. She has worked for two years as the Head of Training Unit in the HR Department at The General Authority of Communication & Informatics in Libya. Heba holds a CELTA certificate and works as a part-time English teacher. In her free time Heba volunteers in projects that serve her local community. She participated in the YMV session in Malta, which served as a turning point for Heba, broadening her perspective on national dialogue and the importance of diverse ideas.



**TOMÁŠ IGNÁC
FÉNIX**

2019 European
Young Leader

**Farmer and former Vice-President
European Council of Young Farmers**

CZECH REPUBLIC

Tomáš is the former Vice-President of the European Council of Young Farmers—the voice of Europe's next generation of farmers towards the European institutions. He also runs a 50-ha organic fruit and wine family farm in southern Moravia and cooperates with agricultural and environmental institutions as part of his farm business. The motivation to farm in this less favoured region is a holistic approach to (re-)build the countryside. Previously, Tomáš actively engaged in the NGO Antikomplex, working on the German Czech reconciliation. In addition, he led the LGBT Christian community called Logos for four years. His ambition is to advocate for a sustainable agricultural policy and a strong bond of the European nations and between rural areas and cities.



**MARY
FITZGERALD**
2013 European
Young Leader

**Communication Officer
Brussels Regional Informatics Centre**

IRELAND

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.



**MYRIAM
FRANÇOIS**
2017 European
Young Leader

Academic, Broadcaster and News Reporter **UNITED KINGDOM**
BBC

Myriam is an Academic, Broadcaster and Writer specialising in issues related to Islam and the Middle East. She is a regular contributor to the Middle East Eye, the New Statesman and the Telegraph. In 2014, she broke a headline story on an exclusive 36-page document written by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the Al-Qaeda militant behind the 9/11 attacks. Since then, she presented two BBC documentaries, 'The Muslim Pound' (2016) and 'A Deadly Warning: Srebrenica Revisited' (2015) nominated for the Sandford St Martin religious programming award. Myriam was also a Research Associate at the Centre of Islamic Studies at SOAS University, where she focused on British-Muslim integration issues. She completed her doctorate at Oxford University on the subject of Islamic political movements in Morocco.



**LARISSA ABOU
HARB**
Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Research Assistant - Common Space Initiative
for Shared Knowledge and Consensus Building**

LEBANON

Larissa is a Political Researcher, Translator, and Interpreter. She is currently working as a Research Assistant at the Common Space Initiative for Shared Knowledge and Consensus Building, where she provides assistance to the Lebanese–Palestinian Dialogue Forum. Her work focuses on the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon and the provision of human rights to vulnerable communities. Her team won the Young Arab Voices National Debate Championship in 2017 and she is an active member of YMV. Larissa is also a member of the Young Mediterranean Voices National Advisory Group, a meeting of sector leaders to empower young people to bring about national change.



**MUSTAFA
HASHEM**

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Master Student in Sustainable Energy Systems
University of Edinburgh**

JORDAN

Mustafa is currently a joint Chevening and Said Foundation Scholar, studying Sustainable Energy Systems at the University of Edinburgh. He has professional experience as a mechanical engineer in the energy and power sector in Jordan. Mustafa began his activism in 2014 in the Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development—Ruwwad Al Tanmeya, in the Youth Enrichment Program—Debates and Dialogue. Mustafa is an active debater with the Young Arab Voices project and participated in the YMV Malta leadership training. Mustafa's activism focuses on developing the role of youth in policy-making processes, especially in the energy and environment sector.



PETR KOLBAN

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Judicial Trainee Specialising in
International Criminal Law**

CZECH REPUBLIC

Petr is a graduate from the University of Helsinki and from the Law School of Charles University in Prague. He works as a Judicial Trainee, specialising in International Criminal Law. He has participated in international competitions, mooted in the final of the Themis and European Court on Human Rights competitions. In his free time, he teaches law at a high school where he also writes textbooks for students. He is socially active in the municipality parliament, volunteers as an actor in the theatre and works as a ski instructor.



**MÁRTON
KROLOPP**

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Law Student
University of Konstanz**

GERMANY

Márton is currently studying Law at Konstanz University in Germany, with a focus on International and European Law. As part of his studies he interned with the Ombudsman for basic human rights in Budapest. Besides his studies, he is working with the Red Cross emergency medical services, achieving an Emergency Medical Technician qualification. He is an active member of the debating society of his university and in his free time volunteers with the Red Cross's disaster relief unit. His work for the Red Cross is inspired by his passion for advocacy and interest in international politics.



**NEGAR
MORTAZAVI**
2017 MENA
Young Leader

Diplomatic Correspondent for The Independent and Media Analyst

IRAN

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.



UNA MULLALLY
2019 European
Young Leader

Writer and LGBTQ Activist

IRELAND

A leading voice on LGBTQ rights and politics, Una is one of Ireland's most reputable young activists. As a Journalist, Broadcaster and Author, she has written for prominent news outlets such as the Guardian and the Sunday Tribune, in addition to contributing a weekly column to the Irish Times. Her two books, *In The Name Of Love*, and her anthropology, *Repeal the 8th*, trace the historical developments which culminated in the two separate referenda on marriage equality and reproductive rights in Ireland. She was the Independent Chair of Ireland's National 2018 LGBTI+ Youth Strategy, which is the first of its kind. A Poet and Screenwriter, she has authored the *I Am Irish* documentary, co-founded a music documentary film festival, co-created the pro-choice podcast, *Don't Stop Repealin'*, and co-founded the *Irish Times Women's Podcast*.

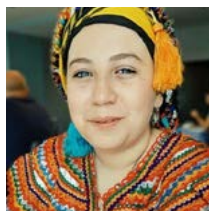


**MERNA
NASRALLA**
Young
Mediterranean
Voices

Legal Researcher

EGYPT

Merna is a Legal Researcher focusing on terrorism and migration. She has an LLM in International Human Rights Law from Queen Mary University of London. Merna is a former Legal Intern at Redress, a human rights organisation seeking justice and reparation for torture victims. She has been active with Young Arab Voices and YMV as a debater and trainer since 2016, representing Egypt in summits in London and Malta. Merna is also an alumna of the Middle East Partnership Initiative programme (MEPI) at the University of Delaware and a former Congressional Intern at Senator Kristen Gillibrand's office in Washington DC.



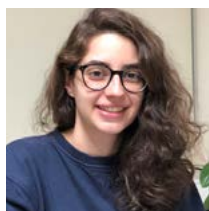
NIHAD OULD ALI

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Head of Communications
Djazyer El Khir**

ALGERIA

Nihad is currently a student in Didactics and Applied Linguistics. She is Head of Communications for Djazyer El Khir, a non-profit organisation that tackles poverty, supporting orphans and abused women. At University, Nihad is a keen debater and Co-President of Polyglot, a language club. Her experiences in the YMV programme inspired her to start a new project called Djazyer Ihadra in her home town, aiming to make it a green destination in Algeria. She is actively involved in local human rights organisations.



GAELE TAWK

Young
Mediterranean
Voices

**Assistant Project Manager
PRODES**

LEBANON

Gaelle is a graduate of Notre Dame University in Lebanon with a BA in International Affairs and Diplomacy. She is currently working as Assistant Project Manager at PRODES, an NGO that works on rural development, female empowerment, and migration. Gaelle is also a Peer Facilitator for the British Council as part of the YMV programme in Lebanon. In 2018 she created Crossing Borders – Lebanon with a group of friends. Crossing Borders is an NGO which creates a culture of dialogue in order to empower young people. Through her work in NGOs Gaelle hopes to create a more just and peaceful world.



OZAN YANAR

2017 European
Young Leader

**Member of the Helsinki City Council and
former Member of Parliament**

FINLAND

Ozan is a Finnish economist and politician. He has researched issues relating to unemployment and wage differences. He has worked at the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions and in the Labour Institute for Economic Research and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. He was the Co-Chair of the Federation of Green Youth in 2015. At the age of 27, he was elected as a Green League Member of the Finnish Parliament. As an MP, he campaigns for social equality and spearheads the fight against discrimination. In 2017, he was in Forbes' 30 under 30 list.

List of participants

Larissa Abou Harb

YMV and Research Assistant, Common Space Initiative for Shared Knowledge and Consensus Building, Lebanon

Alessandro Accorsi

Strategic Communications Officer, European External Action Service (EEAS), Secretariat General

Samir Akacha

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, France

Amro Ali

Professor of Sociology, American University in Cairo, Egypt

Mayssa Allani

YMV Alumna, Anna Lindh Foundation, France

Khadija Amahal

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Morocco

Ana Inés Arizti-Bonaldi

Journalism and Communication, Association Royale Belge de la Presse Nord-Sud

Lucia Stefania Badea

Assistant, Ludwig von Mises Institute Europe

Léo Bary

Digital Content Creator, Jeunes d'Habay pour le Climat

Luc Bas

Director, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), European Regional Office

Andrea Bocconi

Head of International Partnership and Education, The Good Lobby

Karen Bocqué

YMV and Communications Officer, Brussels Regional Informatics Centre

Yostina Boules

EYL40 and Founder & Managing Director, Taqa Solutions, Egypt

James Bradbury

Assistant to the Deputy Director General, European Commission, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO)

Hala Bugaighis

EYL40 and Co-Founder & Executive Director, Jusoor, Libya, Libya

Geert Cami

Co-Founder and Secretary General, Friends of Europe

Clara Casert

Programme Executive, Friends of Europe

Marjus Cevoli

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Italy

Syrine Chaalala

Co-Founder & Managing Director, NextProtein, France

Weimin Che

Minister-Counsellor, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Carmen Cuenca del Olmo

YMV and PhD Student in Health and Poverty, University of Alicante, Spain

Wael Dahesh

YMV Alumna, Anna Lindh Foundation, Tunisia

Ferran Dalmau

YMV and Secretary General, deba-t.org, Spain

Kris De Meyer

Research Fellow in Neuroscience at the Department of Neuroimaging, Kings College London, United Kingdom

Olivier De Schutter

Professor of Law, Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Catholic University of Louvain, Faculty of Law

Asma Dekna

YMV Alumna, Anna Lindh Foundation, Libya

Flora Demaegdt

Junior Officer, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Murad Nabil Demaidi

YMV and Project Manager, Palmec International, Palestine

Nura Detweiler

Policy Officer, Bahá'í International Community

Jose Diez-Verdejo

Policy Officer, European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture (EAC)

Sid Ali El Mohri

YMV and Digital Content Creator, Podcastic, Algeria

Kawtar El Outmani

YMV and Co-Chair, National Board of Model of United Nations (MUN), Morocco

Mohammed Elhabib Khercha

YMV and Teacher, US Embassy Programme Access, Algeria

Heba Elsheikh

YMV and Postgraduate Student in Linguistics and Translation, University of Benghazi, Libya

Christopher Evren

Senior Associate, Westphalia Global Advisory, The Netherlands

Tomáš Ignác Fénix

EYL40 and Vice President, European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)

Eva Fernandez

YMV Alumna, Anna Lindh Foundation, Spain

Jasmine Ferrugia

YMV Alumna, Anna Lindh Foundation, Malta

Mary Fitzgerald

EYL40 and Researcher and Consultant in Euro-Mediterranean Affairs, Specialising in Libya, Individuals, France

Myriam François

EYL40 and Journalist, Mirror Door Productions

Nathalie Furrer

Director of Programmes and Operations, Friends of Europe

Hannah Garrett

Account Manager, Incisive Health

Guido Gryseels

Director-General, Africa Museum

Élisabeth Guigou

President, Anna Lindh Foundation, Egypt

Mustafa Hashem

YMV and Master Student in Sustainable Energy Systems, University of Edinburgh, Jordan

Renate Heinisch

Member, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Section INT (Single Market, Production and Consumption)

Erica Hope

Senior Associate, European Climate Foundation (ECF)

Yi Hu

Second Secretary, Education and Culture, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Verity Hubbard

Programme Assistant, Friends of Europe

Yahya Ichakdi

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Morocco

Annemarie Ionescu

Policy Adviser, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Brussels Office

Carl Jauslin

Academic Associate, Mission of Switzerland to the EU

Dharmendra Kanani

Director of Insights, Friends of Europe

Abdellahi Bah Nagi Kebd

Ambassador, Mission of Mauritania to the EU

Peter B.M. Knoope

Associate Fellow, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Netherlands

Senaid Kobilica

Representative for EU Affairs, Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Petr Kolban

YMV and Judicial Trainee Specialising in International Criminal Law, Czech Republic

Marton Krolopp

YMV Delegate, Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV), Anna Lindh Foundation, Egypt

Gregor Küpper

Events & Partnerships, Press Club Brussels Europe

Nadia Lamlili

Chargée de mission, Office of the Chairman, OCP Group, France

Roberta Lusardi

Head of European Associations and Stakeholders, ENEL

Blidaru Madalin

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Romania

Achwak Madini

YMV Alumna, Anna Lindh Foundation, Algeria

Tarek Mahmoud

Journalist, Middle East News Agency (MENA)

Federica Marra

Project Assistant, ThinkYoung

Ana Martin

Communications Officer, Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures

Ralph Matar

Diplomat, Mission of Lebanon to the EU

Irene Miguelsanz Villanueva

Secretary-General's Assistant, European Youth Forum (YFJ)

Ola Miklasinska

Communications Officer, European Schoolnet

James Moran

Associate Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

Negar Mortazavi

Consultant Editor, Washington, The Independent, United Kingdom

Joyce Msuya

Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Kenya

Una Mullally

EYL40 and Writer and LGBTQ activist, Ireland

Thomas Myrup Kristensen

Managing Director EU Affairs, Head of Office, Facebook

Nacer Nafea

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Morocco

Merna Nasralla

YMV and Legal Researcher, Egypt

Patrycja Nolbrzak Ostrowska

Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU

Syna Osmanollaj

Senior Officer to the Minister, Ministry of European Integration, Republic of Kosovo, Kosovo

Nihad Ould-Ali

YMV and Head of Communications, Djazyer El Khir, Algeria

Anna Podsiadlo

First Secretary, Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU

Maciej Popowski

Deputy Director General, Southern Neighbourhood, Turkey, Migration, Refugees and Security Issues, European Commission, Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

Lisa Präauer

Office of Representation of Salzburg to the EU

Rami Ramadan

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Syria

Adel Ramdani

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Lebanon

Irinie Reda

YMV Administrative Executive, Anna Lindh Foundation, Egypt

Michèle Ritz

Academic Associate, Mission of Switzerland to the EU

Francesco Rocchi

Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, Representative Office in Brussels

Khampheng S. Phabmixay

Ambassador, Mission of Laos to the EU

Louma Salamé

Director, Fondation Boghossian, Villa Empain

Sabrina Saoudi

Partnerships Manager, Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures

Lea Schomaker

Trainee, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)

Sophie Schriever

YMV Alumna and Editorial Assistant at Europamagazin

Stephanie Siklossy

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Project Manager, Search for Common Ground

Phoukhong Sisoulath

Ambassador, Mission of Laos to the EU

Vladimir Somen

Counsellor, Youth and Sport, Permanent Representation of Croatia to the EU

Arjeta Tahiri

Embassy of Kosovo to Belgium

Julien Tate-Smith

Programme Officer, Friends of Europe

Gaëlle Tawk

YMV and Assistant Project Manager, PRODES, Lebanon

Vesselin Valkanov

Head of Office, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

Isabelle Van de Gejuchte

Senior Advisor Policy Engagement, British Council

Tomas Van Respaille

Responsible for MENA Desk, BOZAR

Martine Vandeputte

General Manager, Friends of Europe

Aliki Varella

Coordinator, European Office of Cyprus

Ana Vasileva

Fight Like a Woman, North Macedonia

Paul Walton

Director, Strategy and Partnerships, Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures

Benjamin Wilhem

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Austria

Ozan Yanar

EYL40 and City Councillor and Board Member of the Helsinki City Council, City of Helsinki, Finland

Ahmed Yassin

Chief strategy Councillor, Make A contribution Club, Egypt

Burak Yusmak

YMA Alumna, Anna Lindh Foundation, Belgium

Souad Zanati

Senior Political Officer, Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the EU

Quan Zhu

Second Secretary, Mission of the People's Republic of China to the EU

Zinab Zidan

YMV Alumnus, Anna Lindh Foundation, Egypt

Jakub Zientala

Strategic Advisor, Khalifa Ilher Institute, Norway

Friends of Europe

Connect. Debate. Change.

+32 2 300 29 92

info@friendsofeurope.org

friendsofeurope.org

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.

