

Second Intercultural Morning Coffee

November 24, 2020 – 09:30 am to 10:05 am CET Time

Attendees:

Participants: Nada Abdelsamad, Journalist and TV presenter at BBC Arabic (Lebanon); Nadia Moulai journalist and author at Meltingbook (France); Shadi Abu-Ayyash Dean of the Faculty of Media, Al-Quds Open University (Palestine)

ALF Representatives

Chair of the meeting: Eleonora Insalaco - Head of Operations and Intercultural Research

Facilitator and rapporteur: Johannes Jauhiainen – Social Media Executive

Co-rapporteur: Racha Omeiri - Intercultural Research Officer



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Background of the meeting

The Second Intercultural Morning Coffee brought together a group of members of the Intercultural Trends and Media Platforms. The aim of the meeting was to offer professionals working with media narratives and cross-cultural interactions from different Euro-Mediterranean countries a space to discuss and reflect on issues relating to diversity in cities and the media's portrayals of cultural, religious and ethnic minorities.

The meeting

The plenary was briefed on the findings from the most recent Intercultural Trends Survey concerning cross-cultural reporting, interest in news and information about the Mediterranean other and interest in environmental issues. According to the Public Opinion Poll conducted by Ipsos MORI in 2020, especially interest in the environmental issues was high in European and countries located in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, which according to Eleonora Insalaco, Head of Operations and Intercultural Research could be explained by the fact that environmental issues are a global phenomenon that concerns people in a somewhat similar way on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Concerning mutual interests in cross-cultural issues, Insalaco also revealed that interest in national issues such as political or economic issues was lower than interest in cultural issues. It was also revealed to the participants that media consumption and trust displayed towards different media sources, shows somewhat different patterns in the Northern versus the Southern shore of the Mediterranean,

Lastly, Insalaco called on the participants to reflect together on new working methodologies and types of contents that could be used to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Summary of the main challenges, issues and recommendations

This report summarizes the key outcomes from the exchange during the second virtual Intercultural Morning Coffee on the 24th of November 2020.

The following issues and challenges were identified in the meeting:

- More discussion is needed regarding how media discourses fuel tensions, also outside of hate speech but rather within simple mainstream media discourses that are increasing tensions in a more discrete and subtle way.
- People and particularly experts with diverse backgrounds still face challenges in receiving coverage in Europe and particularly in France.
- In Europe, the media still frames people from migrant backgrounds as a monolith instead of a diverse mosaic of cultures, individuals and practices.
- Security measures could curtail media freedom and a focus of discussion was around the current related debate in France.

Recommendations for civil society, media outlets and the Anna Lindh Foundation:

- Cross-cultural reporting and collaboration involving journalists from both shores of the Mediterranean could increase mutual understanding and combat stereotypes in the Euro-Mediterranean. These could be carried out as collaborations by journalists covering similar stories in Italy and Palestine or Tunisia and France - from different perspectives enriching the nuance of the coverage. These stories could focus on themes such as youth unemployment or cultural activities - in other words stories that touch people and particularly youth on both sides of the Mediterranean.
- Universities are introducing courses and initiatives to combat fake news and to promote media literacy. Both of these were perceived as positive initiatives for change.
- More resources should be allocated to develop better coverage of issues that increase tension such as the recent events in France.
- Digital software and applications to facilitate fact-checking were applauded.
- New initiatives are needed to diversify the pool of people interviewed by the mass media on current affairs. This in turn will bring nuance to the public discourses.
- Initiatives facilitating connections between journalists and the grassroots level were welcomed - in order to promote nuance and diversity in the media.
- International NGOs and organisations working to promote dialogue would benefit from content-collaboration with media outlets such as Deutsche Welle or the BBC.

Annex I Press release

The second Intercultural Morning Coffee on the 25th of November aimed, like the first Intercultural Morning coffee on the 9th of October, to encourage discussions among journalists, academics and civil society on current affairs relating to cross-cultural reporting in the Euro-Mediterranean and to sustain the EuroMed network brought together with the Intercultural Trends and Media Platform.

The Intercultural Trends Survey 2020 reveals that 89% of respondents in Europe and 76% of respondents in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean reported to be either very interested or somewhat interested in news on environmental issues from the other side of the Mediterranean. Furthermore 70 – 83% of respondents, South and North also reported an interest in information on lifestyle and culture on the other side of the sea.

Regardless of these observations regarding cross-cultural interests demonstrated in the Survey, the public discourses in the Euro-Mediterranean continue to include narratives that fuel division and mistrust. With that in mind, the Anna Lindh Foundation aims to encourage reflections among professionals in the media field to generate recommendations and ideas for all actors in the Euro-Mediterranean can actively contribute to shaping nuanced cross-cultural images of one another and promote dialogue.

About the Anna Lindh Foundation Intercultural Trends and Media Platform

The Intercultural Trends and Media Platform brings together media, academia and civil society to create a network and to discuss how perceptions between Europeans and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean people have evolved in recent years as a result of the growing migratory and refugee movements, the rise of populist's discourses and phenomena of violent extremism.

If you are a journalist, member of civil society or academic who would like to participate in a future edition of the Intercultural Trends and Media Platform, please do not hesitate to contact us (johannes.jauhiainen@annalindhfoundation.org - Intercultural Research Social Media Executive)

For more information on the Intercultural Trends and Media work at the Anna Lindh Foundation you can contact: Eleonora.Insalaco@annalindhfoundation.org - Head of Operation

Annex II Schedule of the meeting.

Time CEST	Item
09:30	Welcoming short introduction by moderator
09:35	Start of plenary
10:00	Wrap up of session with concluding remarks from the Head of Operations and Intercultural Research at the Anna Lindh Foundation.
10:05	End of session.