

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



The Anna Lindh Foundation
VIRTUAL MARATHON
FOR DIALOGUE IN THE EUROMED

VIRTUAL MARATHON FOR DIALOGUE

*Promoting Social and Cultural Cooperation in the EuroMed Region
May-June 2021*

GENERATION #INSTA: THE NEW FACES OF POSITIVE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE EUROMED

MAY 19TH, 2021

DISCUSSION TOPIC

*The Impact of Youth-Driven Media
on Social Change
& Intercultural Dialogue*



PARTICIPANTS AND HIGH-LEVEL GUESTS

NAME	AFFILIATION/ROLE
MR. AISSAM BENAÏSSA	<i>Expert Moderator</i>
MS. ELEONORA INSALACO	<i>Head of Operations and Intercultural Research at ALF</i>
MR. ZLATKO LAGUMDZIJA	<i>Former Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Member of Club de Madrid</i>
MS. KRISTINA XHIVELI	<i>TakeItToTheCop, Albania</i>
MR. KRZYSZTOF WASILEWSKI	<i>Associate Professor of Political Science, Kozsalin University of Technology, Poland</i>
MR. HAMZA AL-SHAYEB	<i>Space for Sustainable Development, Jordan</i>
MS. KHADIJA AMAHAL	<i>Journalist, Morocco</i>

TOPIC

THE IMPACT OF YOUTH-DRIVEN MEDIA ON SOCIAL CHANGE & INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

THREE PILLARS

①

YOUTH & POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

*The challenges to
and solutions for
youth involvement in
the decision-making
process*

②

THE MEDIA & INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The shaping of media
narratives across the
region and the most
innovative solutions
to moving away from
stereotyping

③

INSTITUTIONS & BRIDGING THE YOUTH-MEDIA GAP

Measures to be
taken by institutions
to enhance social
dialogue and to
counter
misinformation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Main Recommendations Emerging from the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue on Generation #Insta: the new faces of positive social engagement in the EuroMed, tackling the challenges, solutions as well as roles of the media and of institutions in facilitating intercultural dialogue and connecting with the youth.

①

TO PROMOTE MORE INCLUSIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS WITH FOCUS ON YOUTH-LED ACTION

②

TO INCREASE COOPERATION AND COORDINATION AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS for continued involvement of youth participants and networking with other like-minded youth activists and future leaders from around the world.

③

TO ESTABLISH GOOD QUALITY AND EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP SYSTEMS in order to ensure sustainability of youth-led projects and retention of human capital.

④

TO UTILIZE BOTH MAINSTREAM AND SOCIAL MEDIA EFFECTIVELY in order to facilitate engagement and dialogue through youth capacity building.

⑤

TO TRANSFORM KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION by effectively using the media to call for action, such as existing campaigns for climate changes awareness and action calls

⑥

TO INTENSIFY INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT OF YOUTH-DRIVEN MEDIA because of their reach and impact.

CONTEXT

In the framework of the Celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process and the “Renewed Partnerships with the Southern Neighbourhood: a new agenda for the Mediterranean”, the Anna Lindh Foundation and its EuroMed civil society Network organized the Anna Lindh Foundation Virtual Marathon for Dialogue in the EuroMed region (VM).

The Virtual Marathon gathered activities of ALF civil society Network and partner organizations were set to take place during 42 days from the 19th of May to the 29th of June.

MAIN AIMS OF THE VIRTUAL MARATHON FOR DIALOGUE

The first aim of the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue is to **highlight the importance of the Intercultural Dialogue to build sustainable societies in the EuroMed Region**, taking into consideration the challenges and opportunities brought about by the Covid19 pandemic.

The second aim of the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue is to **develop and promote new ideas and policies towards better cooperation in the EuroMed region**.

The Public Virtual Dialogues will involve participants and panelists who play a major role in the economic, ecological, social, and cultural development of the region. Those include high-level policymakers, journalists, decision makers, young people, business & private sector, gender pioneers, academics, CSO representatives. The challenge is to create synergies with the civil society, especially the Youth and the Women, to create the conditions for positive social change.

ABOUT DIALOGUE 1

Dialogue 1 highlights the importance of dialogue as a driver for the improvement of social, political and economic conditions in societies across the EuroMed region, in light of the three main pillars.

As shown in the ALF “Intercultural Trends Survey 2020”, 90% of the people on the two shores answered that, to tackle polarization, hate speech and cultural divide, priority must be given to investment in youth Education programmes which foster youth participation in

societies” Ms Insalaco said. Consequently, dialogue 1 focuses on examples of positive influence by youth, and how the youth have helped shape policy and media narratives, contributing towards the green-deal objectives of 2050 and to ensuring a digital transition.



Eleonora Insalaco, Head of Operations and Intercultural Research at ALF

Pillar ①: YOUTH & POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

What are the *challenges* to and *solutions* for youth involvement in the decision-making process?

Institutional and legal barriers to youth engagement



Zlatko Lagumdžija
Former Prime Minister of Bosnia & Herzegovina
Member of Club de Madrid

Institutional and legal barriers to youth engagement have undermined the legitimacy of certain political processes and structures, forcing the youth to turn to alternative forms of engagement, like social media, for political purposes.

Mr. PM Zlatko Lagumdžija, Former Prime Minister of Bosnia & Herzegovina, believes that inclusive civic engagement is essential, and so it hopes to serve as a

bridge between young people and decision makers. For example, *Club De Madrid's* 'leadership for shared society' program aims at *building capacity for emerging young leaders to influence policy and affect change in their communities on matters of social justice and inclusion. It helps young people develop their social networks and leadership skills through social entrepreneurship activities and experience sharing from peers around the world.*

RECOMMENDATION 1.

To promote more inclusive civic engagement programs with focus on youth-led actions

The dominant traditional social structure in the Jordanian context



Hamza Al-Shayeb
Space for Sustainable Development, Jordan

The youth are frustrated due to the **dominant traditional social structure** which questions their capabilities in playing an effective role according to panelist Hamza Al-Shayeb. They are generally affected by the **economic situation**, the high levels of **unemployment**, as well as the **lack of funding and financial support**. This diminishes their passion and excitement in critical areas and increases their isolation, preventing them from being active in making positive change.

Space for Sustainable Development offers some help in preparing the youth for active leadership by aiding them to *develop digital skills*. However, even when a youth-engagement or capacity-building program is completed, the **youth involved are not effectively followed-up**, resulting in **youth isolation and demotivation** as well as the **lack of utilization of the skills acquired**. Therefore, there is a need to *increase cooperation and coordination among civil society actors as well as to establish good quality monitoring systems and effective follow-up approaches.*

RECOMMENDATIONS 2 & 3.

To increase social and cultural cooperation and coordination among civil society actors in the EuroMed for continued involvement of youth participants and networking with other like-minded youth activists and future leaders from around the world

To establish good quality and effective follow-up systems in order to ensure sustainability of youth-led projects and retention of human capital

Pillar ②: MEDIA & INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

What shapes media narratives across the region?

What are the most innovative solutions to moving away from stereotyping?

The media as a double-edged sword

Mass media and online media shape our understanding and perceptions of nationalities, cultures, and traditions, especially of foreign nationals and foreign cultures. Since the majority of people today still live in homogenous cultures and societies, the only way to learn about other cultures is through the media. But **the**



Krzysztof Wasilewski
Kozsalin University of Technology,
Poland

media can be a double edged sword. On the one hand, *the media can teach us and broaden our perspectives about other cultures and can have a great potential in facilitating intercultural dialogue.* On the other hand, *it could facilitate hatred, racism, disagreement and even wars, especially in the age of social media.*

Training the youth on effective storytelling and media production

The power of new media cannot be underemphasized. It has wide-ranging implications for democratic governance and political practices, radically altering ways in which institutions operate and political leaders communicate. New media has redefined the role of journalists, the way elections take place and how citizens engage in politics. Therefore, the **lack of knowledge about how to utilize the media in a positive and effective way can be a problem.** *The youth need*



Khadija Amahal
Journalist, Morocco

training on effective storytelling and media production, which panelist Khadija Amahal has undertaken. Her work focuses on providing tools for the youth from all over the world to tell their stories accurately, effectively, with positive impact to resist stereotyping and to have a clear call to (positive) action. Through an initiative called *Tahaqqaaq* (an Arabic word which means 'check' – if the information is true), participants are trained to detect and counter fake news.

RECOMMENDATION 4.

To utilize both mainstream and social media effectively in order to facilitate engagement and dialogue through youth capacity building

Media is directly related to action

The media plays a pivotal role in increasing public awareness, representing views and affecting people in societies. In the context of the *Peace on Climate's* (#TakeItToTheCop) project, through *focusing media attention on the connection between radicalization, conflict, and violence on the one hand, and climate*



Kristina Xhiveli
(TakeItToTheCop), Albania

change on the other, it is intended that the issue of violence and conflict will be tackled from an environmental perspective in the next COP26. She openly called for support on social media for the (#TakeItToTheCop) project, as it is a direct form of action.

RECOMMENDATION 5.

To transform knowledge into action by effectively using the media to call for action such as *Peace on Climate's* '#TakeItToTheCop' initiative

Pillar ③: THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS IN BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE YOUTH & THE MEDIA

What measures can be taken by institutions to enhance social dialogue with the youth in order to counter misinformation?

The role of institutions in bridging the gap between the youth and the media

Club De Madrid works on ensuring that the youth have reliable and open access to online media, as well as work on fighting suppression in media surveillance of online activities. They help equip the youth with proper skills to fight xenophobic and racist discourse, countering misinformation, as well as creating content and engaging constructively in communities while staying safe. *Club De Madrid* support consultation processes with the aim of facilitating interaction within and between civil society actor groups, digital activists and media activists. They support youth-based initiatives to identify and monitor democratic challenges (such as misinformation) because digital democracy tools are cost effective and innovative practices for amplifying the reach and impact and civil engagement effort.



Zlatko Lagumdžija
Former Prime Minister of Bosnia & Herzegovina
Member of Club de Madrid

Space for Sustainable Development is very active both locally and regionally in helping the youth create their own spaces to develop their digital skills.



Hamza Al-Shayeb
Space for Sustainable Development,
Jordan

Institutions should provide a platform for young people to express their concerns and to invite decision makers to host meetings to discuss these topics. These topics should also be discussed on a larger scale, so all media users can hear about these concerns, connect, and with the help of decision makers, implement initiatives that tackle these concerns. Finally, institutions and decision makers should also help monitor and assess the quality of the products that are promoted locally and nationally so that information which deserves attention receives an appropriate level of promotion and misinformation is detected.



Khadija Amahal
Journalist, Morocco

The Anna Lindh Foundation supports Youth led initiatives. Youth are the main target groups and they are considered the main actors for the dialogue, as it emerged from the broad consultation processes carried out by the ALF with governments, civil society, institutional partners and experts, as well as from its research on intercultural trends.



Eleonora Insalaco, Anna Lindh Foundation

RECOMMENDATION 6.

To intensify institutional support of youth-driven media because of their reach and impact