



Union for the Mediterranean
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Anna Lindh
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HIGH LEVEL MEETING

On Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

Institutions working closer together, jointly building bridges for mutual understanding in the Euro-Mediterranean region

22-23 July 2015, UfM Secretariat, Barcelona

BACKGROUND

In 1995 the Barcelona Process was initiated as an innovative alliance based on the principles of co-ownership, dialogue and co-operation, seeking to create a Mediterranean region of peace, security and shared prosperity.

The Barcelona declaration *“reaffirms that the dialogue and respect between cultures and religions are a necessary precondition for bringing the peoples closer”*. It highlights as one of its main principles the *“respect for diversity and pluralism in societies, promotion of tolerance between different groups in society and the combat of manifestations of intolerance”*

In 2004 the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was introduced to strengthen the European Union’s partnership with its neighboring countries, its Southern dimension being conducted through the Partnership for Democracy and shared prosperity as well as in the context of the UfM, which builds on the Barcelona declaration and the acquis of the Barcelona process and gathers all countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region based on the principle of co-ownership.

The current revision of the ENP includes the analysis of the approach to *“religious dialogue and respect for cultural diversity”* including *“countering prejudice”*.

In this context, and in view of the existing challenges in the region, intercultural and inter-

religious is perceived as a most potent tool for resolving disagreements, countering intolerance, extremism and radicalism and forging a culture of mutual respect and understanding. Interreligious and intercultural dialogue initiatives have a unique role in influencing communities and promoting diversity and peace.

In this regard, there is a perceived need to showcase best practices and discuss existing challenges with a view to encouraging positive and collaborative approaches to promote mutual understanding as well as promoting the establishment of a network of institutions and organizations.

In this regard, at the initiative of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Spanish MFA) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), in partnership with the European Union, the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Dialogue (KAICIID), a High-level meeting on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue will take place on 22-23 July in Barcelona

This is the first meeting in a long-lasting, action-oriented process that is aimed at strengthening the capacity of organizations and fostering their cooperation in order to significantly contribute to countering discrimination and intolerance .

22 – 23TH JULY HIGH LEVEL MEETING

On the **22th and 23th of July 2015**, at the initiative of the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Spanish MFA), a High-level meeting on Inter-cultural and Inter-religious dialogue will be held at the headquarters of the Union for the Mediterranean in Barcelona.

This meeting falls within the framework of the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, the ongoing consultation regarding the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) review, and responds to the growing importance assigned to inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region as powerful tools for achieving stability and peace, fighting against intolerance and extremism while upholding values of peaceful coexistence.

This meeting represents a unique occasion to map and evaluate existing tools, instruments and institutions for inter-religious and intercultural dialogue; position inter-religious and intercultural dialogue as a central goal within a renewed multilateral policy approach to the Mediterranean; set out a roadmap ahead involving main institutions for a shared intercultural and inter-religious dialogue strategy.

OBJECTIVES

1. To **raise awareness** of the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.
2. to **map existing initiatives** with a view to significantly scale-up the visibility and resourcing of identified high-impact successful programmes and tools for intercultural dialogue in the region;
3. to **consolidate an alliance of partners** seeking to leverage the impact of their initiatives drawing on existing synergies and complementarities between them.
4. To set up an **action plan for future activities of the network**, based on a common agenda and calendar of activities framed around the major initiatives planned over the coming years

DINNER DEBATE WITH A KEYNOTE SPEAKER

- ◇ Welcome remarks by H.E. José Manuel García-Margallo, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.
- ◇ Keynote speech by Ambassador Aly Maher El Sayed, Official spokesman, Bibliotheca Alexandrina

THEMATIC PLENARY SESSIONS

- I. Investing in Youth And Women as central actors for Intercultural Dialogue
- II. The challenge of building inclusive societies through intercultural and interfaith dialogue
- III. Making institutions collectively stronger than challenges: providing a counter-narrative to violent extremism

CLOSING SESSION

Roadmap ahead: Action plan for future activities

Wednesday 22 July - Palau de Pedralbes (C. Pere Duran Farell , 11)

19:30 **Arrival of Participants**

20:00-22:00 **DINNER DEBATE**

Welcome remarks by H.E. José Manuel García-Margallo, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

Keynote speech by Ambassador Aly Maher El Sayed, Official spokesman, Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Thursday 23 July - Palau de Pedralbes (C. Pere Duran Farell , 11)

08:30 **Arrival of Participants and Registration**

09:00-10:00 **OPENING SESSION**

Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

Elisabeth Guigou, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF)

Faisal Bin Abdulrahman Bin Muaammar, Secretary General of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)

José Manuel García-Margallo, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

10:00-10:10 **FAMILY PHOTO**

10:30 *Press Conference*

10:10- 11:40 **Plenary session 1: Investing in Youth and Women as central actors for Intercultural Dialogue**

Moderated by: Ambassador Hatem Atallah, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation

Speakers:

Senén Florensa, President, European Institute for the Mediterranean (IEMED)

Fadi Daou, Chairman and CEO of ADYAN, Lebanese Foundation for Interfaith Studies

Alison Coburn, Common Purpose / Itijah Programme

Ellada Evangelou, Founder and President of the Board of Rooftop Theatre Group

Haythem Kamel, Co-founder of the Sustainable Development Association (SDA) and "Young Arab Voices" trainer

Questions to be discussed:

- *What are the barriers to address in order to extensively enhance the leadership role of youth and women in driving a “culture-centric” approach to a renewed European Neighbourhood Policy?*
- *What are the proven examples of regional good practice in youth participation, public voice and exchange which can be significantly scaled-up for impact and visibility?*
- *Which are the national policy good practices among the UfM Member States in the domain of women leadership, cultural enterprise and intercultural dialogue action?*
- *How could youth and women play a more central role in working with institutions and decision-makers in bridging political cooperation policies with the grass-root societies?*

11:40-12:00 Coffee Break

12:00-13:30 Plenary Session 2: The challenge of building inclusive societies through intercultural and interfaith dialogue

Moderated by: Professor Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Senior Adviser, KAICIID; Professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution, School of International Service, American University

Speakers

Ahmet Hadi Adanali, lecturing at Ankara University on philosophy and theology

Pastor/Dr. Mitri Raheb, President Diyar Consortium

Samira Luka, Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS)/Forum for Intercultural Dialogue (FID)

His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople; Member, KAICIID Board of Directors

Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee; Member, KAICIID Board of Directors

Questions to be discussed:

- *What are the challenges related to the positioning of initiatives of interreligious and intercultural dialogue closer to formal political institutions in order to increase its recognition and enhance its effectiveness?*
- *What structures do these initiatives need in order to contribute to inclusiveness and social cohesion?*
- *What mechanisms exist to strengthen the integration and coordination among various interreligious and intercultural initiatives and sociopolitical movements who share the common goal of fostering inclusive societies?*
- *How can interreligious and intercultural initiatives gain visibility through media outreach? What are the modalities of building capacity in this field in order to achieve leverage?*

15:00-16:30: Plenary Session 3: Making institutions collectively stronger than challenges: providing a counter-narrative to violent extremism

Moderated by: Nihal Saad, Spokesperson & Senior Advisor for the High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

Speakers:

Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of Organizations for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director General of Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)

Abdel Hay Azab, Head of Al-Azhar University

Laura Thompson, Deputy Director, International Migration Organization (IOM)

Jean Paul Laborde, Counter-Terrorism Executive Committee, United Nations

Questions to be discussed:

-How can the various institutions and other stakeholders effectively support means to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue?

-What practical strategies can be devised to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue through a multi-lateral approach that would also include people-centered measures avoiding exclusionary approaches?

-How can religious and community leaders engage with international and regional institutions?

-What role do the stakeholders have in building a narrative to promote the basic tenets of shared well-being?

-Taking stock : what were the areas of success and the areas of failure– and their reasons- in the efforts to counter extremism and promote tolerance, diversity and intercultural dialogue?

16:30-17:00: PLENARY CLOSING SESSION

Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of Organizations for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Ignacio Ybáñez, Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

The aim is to have a free-flowing discussion. This clearly places a premium on active moderation, both to launch the discussion and to spur debate.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Language

The conference will be simultaneously translated into English, French, Arabic and Spanish

Venue

The meeting will be held at premises of the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat, Carrer Pere Duran Farell 11, Barcelona



Recommended accommodation

Hotel Princesa Sofia is five minutes walk from the premises of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Please find the link to book the Hotel for the High-level Conference on intercultural and inter-religious dialogue: <https://www.expohotels.com/en/events-and-meetings/high-level->

Dinner Debate

On Wednesday, July 22nd, we will have the opening reception and dinner at premises of the Union for the Mediterranean. Please confirm your attendance to: Giulia.omodeo@ufmsecretariat.org.

Contact Details

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