

The Anna-Lindh Foundation

Background

The Anna-Lindh Foundation (ALF) was created by the governments of the member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED), the political agreement established in 1995 between the European Union and its ten Southern Mediterranean partners in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Syria and Turkey. In Barcelona, 29 November 2005, the Heads of State and Governments of the 35 Member States of EUROMED welcomed the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures as the youngest institution of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The objective is to bring people and organisations in countries from both shores of the Mediterranean closer together and help to decrease the existing gap between them. The ALF was established to support organisations and individuals dedicated to inter-cultural dialogue and political initiatives of shaping the Mediterranean as a region of tolerance and equality.

How it works

The ALF is financed by the governments of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Each government nominated one head institution within its country to unite national civil society organisations working to develop multi-cultural communication. Located in Alexandria, Egypt, The Anna Lindh Foundation acts as a network of national networks and today brings together over 1500 member organisations from across the fields of civil society.

The ALF fulfil its mission through several programmes and projects. The main activity for 2008, the Euro-Mediterranean Year for Intercultural Dialogue, is *1001 actions for Dialogue*. This campaign is to mobilize people and actions dedicated to challenging racism and discrimination in the region.

Within the *Grant Programmes*, the ALF encourage and support best proposed intercultural projects in the region. Between 2006 and 2007 the ALF supported sixty-nine intercultural initiatives, including two important mobility focused projects. Within *Being 20 years old in the Mediterranean* eleven Mediterranean journalists meets in Barcelona to prepare a series of investigative reports on the lives of young women in the Mediterranean countries to be published in four Mediterranean newspapers. The other projects: *Food and intercultural exchange in the migration context* goal is an exchange between young people from different educational centres. The objective is to use food and the evolution of tastes and habits in other countries with the purpose of educating young people in cultural diversity. Within *Teacher Training* programme teachers from the Mediterranean region cross borders to meet jointly at training courses (e.g. in 2006 the course took place in Alexandria, Egypt, and lasted 4 days). The programme aims at providing teachers with the „pedagogical skills and materials on cultural and religious diversity, sustainable development, education for human rights and democratic citizenship”.

The ALF Network involves today 37 countries. To give an example of the ALF's activity in particular country, the case of Poland has been described below:

The Polish Network of the ALF consists of 28 organisations and one individual member. The Head of the Network is The Cultural Centre in Cracow. Since the Network has been established, several serious actions for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, tolerance and understanding have been undertaken. In such a homogeneous country, both ethnically and religiously, projects like *1001 actions for dialogue* campaign may result in the Poles encounter with other religions and cultural traditions.

In Poland 14 action proposals have been selected by the ALF and awarded with grants. Supported projects are focused on cultural exchanges, international dialogue and multi-cultural cooperation. Several of them have a direct effect on mobility of professionals, e.g.:

- *Culture Village* (Fundacja Together Polska) – multi-cultural event, where young artists from Poland, Germany, Portugal and Italy meet together on workshops in the German region Hunsrück.
- *World Rhythms – Universal Dialogue* (Academy of Music in Krakow) – workshops, rehearsals and concerts conducted by the Moroccan percussionist Rhani Krija to familiarize Polish students with musical styles of Africa, Andalusia and Latin America.
- *Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean Countries* (The International Cultural Centre) – an interdisciplinary event which gathers artists from 46 countries. Program includes workshops, exhibitions, performances and concerts, fashion designers' collections, film and literary presentation.

Results

The ALF annual evaluation report bases on three evaluation procedures. One evaluation procedure concerns effectiveness in increasing credibility of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The ALF role as a public service involving and bringing together organisations in 37 countries is a serious indicator to be assessed. A second evaluation is related to the efficiency in managing funds made available to the ALF. A third evaluation is linked to the effective number of final beneficiaries of the ALF activities.

The issue of the ALF appears in political discussions on the European Neighbourhood Policy. Hazaim Amirah-Fernandez, a senior analyst in the Mediterranean and Arab World Program points that even though the ALF is a significant initiative to increase inter-cultural contacts, „it will be a major challenge for the EU to prove that it has the political will to impose democracy-related conditionality, based on the mutually accepted principles and commitments”.

Despite that the ALF does not directly focus on mobility, meeting the idea of a shared multi-cultural dialogue increases exchanges and international meetings of cultural professionals. The art looks to be concerned as one of the most serious factors of cultural tradition and habits as well as a rich platform for cultural communication so artists and cultural workers benefit from many projects indicated by the ALF as worth supporting. The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation does not limit its Network to the Mediterranean region. Participation of such countries like Poland or Latvia prove that the goal is to spread the promotion of tolerance, common knowledge and understanding on other regions in Europe. Special need for its activity the ALF sees not only in culturally diversified countries but also in homogenous regions.

Sources

The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation: <http://www.euromedalex.org/>

The Euro-mediterranean Summit in Barcelona and the Anna Lindh Foundation: <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/europe/euromed/anglais/doc1.pdf>

International Development Organization: <http://www.idonet.org/>

Websites of national head institutions of ALF Network like:

Danish Center for Culture: <http://www.dccd.dk/>

Goethe Institut (Germany): <http://www.goethe.de/>

Alex-Med Centre (Egypt): <http://bibalex.org/english/researchers/Alexmed/alexmedcenter.htm>

Full list of institutions: <http://www.euromedalex.org/AboutUs/EN/NationalNetworks.aspx>

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