

YOUNG MEDITERRANEAN VOICES: 'VIRTUAL' EURO-MED DEBATE AND POLICY FORUM

21 September & 30 September to 5 October 2020



#25BCNProcess

#YoungMedVoices2030

An initiative of



Co-organised by



Co-funded by the European Union



Introduction



The Euro-Med Debate and Policy Forum, an inter-regional dialogue-based high-level event that is taking place virtually from **30 September to 5 October 2020 (with a preparatory meeting on September 21st)**, is a meeting of youth from the Mediterranean South and North, for a 5 days series of activities. Despite the limitations with mobility and physical meetings, we aim to create opportunities for dialogue and inter-cultural learning between young leaders from the Mediterranean north and south and breaking down barriers and stereotypes. Moreover, the Virtual Debate Forum will further develop capacity through learning from a variety of experiences, from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to business and politics, to build the networks for future collaboration. Through its various virtual innovative methods, the event enhances the dialogue on social engagement, and addresses issues of common concern to their communities. Finally, it naturally showcases Young Mediterranean Voices (YMV) and its importance in advancing the youth agenda and it advocates for its 'continuation'.

The Virtual Debate Forum is a continuation of the YMV contribution of Mediterranean youth to lead and drive the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are building on the successful forum held in Malta in July 2019. This year in addition to the 30+ young debaters and YMV programme participants from across the two shores of the Mediterranean, we are inviting relevant stakeholders, for joint events and participation in the Forum, as a means to generate dialogue and mentor the young debaters in sharpening their content in order to formulate more efficient policy recommendations.

Context



#YoungMedVoices2030 and #25BCNProcess

The overall objective of the Young Mediterranean Voices programme is 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.”**

As part of our collective responsibility to contribute to reaching the **Sustainable Development Goals** is to support those who will be in leadership positions by 2030, the young people we are developing today. #YoungMedVoices2030 which started in 2018 has become a movement of connected champions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and the Balkans. The foreseen dialogue with EU policy makers will act as a catalyst to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In addition, **the COVID-19 crisis is predicted to have long-lasting effects** on youth. Indeed, even though young people seem to be less affected by the health crisis, they will most probably be impacted by the upcoming worldwide economic crisis. The crisis will exacerbate the challenges already faced by young people around the Mediterranean when it comes to migration, access to employment or quality and affordable education, in addition to challenges posed by environmental factors. The Euro-Med Debate and Policy Forum could represent an opportunity for young people from all around the region to exchange their views on the COVID-19 crisis and its impacts on their societies, and to find innovative and sustainable solutions to be implemented to counter the effects of the crisis.

Finally, the event coincides with the celebration of the **25 years of the Barcelona Agreement**, and it can be a departure point for a renewed discussion by youth and relevant stakeholders, around the policies and orientations that have shaped the conversation on the Mediterranean, and how our priorities can be shaped now, for the next 25 years.



Contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This forum will bring new SDGs to the foreground of the dialogue, in addition to returning to some discussed in 2019, specifically themes around reducing inequalities and climate action. Moreover, the national debate cycles in 2019 have shown that there are common issues discussed in all YMV countries. These are around economic growth and employment, mobility and migration, youth participation in decision-making, education, sustainability and climate action.

Overarching: Gender Equality and Inclusion will be expressed across all 4 SDGs, as an essential and cross cutting theme that will be needed to ensure greater equality and justice. Biodiversity and Sustainability will be expressed under SDG13, as climate action policies.

Therefore, for the 2020 Forum we propose the following SDGs:

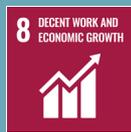
SDG 4 'Quality Education'

SDG 8 'Decent Work and Economic Growth'

SDG 10 'Reduce Inequality within and among countries'

SDG 13 'Climate Action'

SDG 16 'Peace Justice and Strong Institutions'



Debate to Action

The programme will prioritise online processes and methodologies that generate dialogue and foster intercultural exchange, centering on debates, feedback, networking, and policy recommendations -oriented opportunities. Young people forming debate clubs in the South Med have tested the action through their ability to highlight issues that their local community through hosting debates, and then pushing those in power to take actions, whether they are a local council member or the dean of a certain faculty. Young people from the Mediterranean North will bring their own voice to this forum drawing from their experience with inter-cultural dialogue through YMV activities around leadership and communications, to further enhance a culture of dialogue.

Each debate will feature mixed teams of young debaters from the South and North of the Mediterranean who will present evidence to validate their arguments for or against a policy motion linked to specific SDGs, generating in the process policy recommendations for the Policy Dialogue event and for dissemination to decision-makers in the Euro-Med.

¹ The Euro-Med Debate and Policy Forum in 2019, debate policies have targeted to SDG 4 "Quality Education", SDG 5 "Gender Equality", SDG 10 "Reduce inequality within and among countries", SDG 13 "Climate Action" and SDG 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions".



Methodology



We propose 3 phases for the Virtual Forum to be as impactful as possible:

- 1) **Capacity-building and Teambuilding:** a preparatory meeting, which will include a crash course in debating, a discussion around inter-cultural dialogue in the context of debating and the policy orientation of the debates, aiming at the generation of policy recommendations. Moreover, the Center for Mediterranean Integration will lead a discussion of research, through an examples based approach, relating to their work. Finally, the preparatory meeting will create the teams of debaters, and explain the methodology of the online event, meant to start on September 30th, and the Facilitator/ Head Adjudicator will follow-up with two preparatory workshops for all debaters.
- 2) The **Debate phase** where debates will take place and content will be generated in the form of policy recommendations. The debates have the format of a championship, whereby a winning team of debaters will be announced after 2 rounds of debates.
 - o The final debate of the Championship will be open to the public and it will be conducted following the Oxford style debate format whereby there is a system of voting (at the start and at the end of the debate) that determines the winner debating team.
- 3) The **Dialogue - Policy Lobbying and Networking phase** is a series of two discussions around policy recommendations generated in the Debate phase, with the involvement of high level guests and the broader YMV community, and a series of networking virtual meetings between debaters and other youth CSO representatives and Debate Hubs from the Euro-Med. The networking will center on sharing of ideas and formulating practical steps for the implementation of ideas and initiatives by the participants.



The after-forum phase is the phase where the ideas shared by the participants during the Virtual Forum can be further developed through action plans, with the support of mechanisms by individuals, institutions and frameworks from the Euro-Med. For teams that wish to develop their idea into a project, YMV, can incorporate their idea into the next phase of the implementation of the project, subject to budget availability.

Programme Agenda

Group Composition: 12 South Med, 12 North Med

Programme (CET: Central European Time / West Africa Time)

(Preparatory Session) Monday 21 September 2020 – 2hrs30 (private event)

- 9:00 **Test**
- 10:00 **Welcome**
- Welcome, agenda presentation and the debate format
- 10:15 **Introduction by event partners / stakeholders**
- Introduction on Young Mediterranean Voices, cycle of activities/how it works
 - Introduction by Center for Mediterranean Integration, Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange and British Council
 - Introduction by participants, facilitator/head adjudicator, adjudicators
- 10:30 **Introducing The Debate Forum format & Intercultural dialogue**
- Going through the methodology, sharing clips of best practices, division of debaters into teams, setting the rules and logistics of the debates, sharing the programme agenda, motions SDGs
- 11:30 - 12:30 **Research and Formulating Policy Recommendations: Youth Effectively Influencing Policy & Credible Research**
- Center of Mediterranean Integration reports on “Internationalization of Tertiary Education in MENA region” and on “Enhancing Mediterranean Integration”

(Day 1) Wed 30 September 2020 – 3hrs30

16:00 - 17:30 **1st round of debates – 4 parallel sessions (private event)**

Preparation time for teams: 15 minutes

Debate time: 45 minutes

Adjudicators deliberation: 15 minutes

Debrief: 15 minutes

1. Team A/B-Team C/D (Virtual Room 1)
2. Team E/F-Team G/H (Virtual Room 2)
3. Team I/J-Team K/L (Virtual Room 3)
4. Team M/N-Team O/P (Virtual Room 4)

17:30 - 19:00 **2nd round of debates – 4 parallel sessions (private event)**

Preparation time for teams: 15 minutes.

Debate time: 45 minutes.

Adjudicators' deliberation: 15 minutes.

Debrief: 15 minutes

1. Team A/E-Team I/M (Virtual Room 1)
2. Team B/F-Team J/N (Virtual Room 2)
3. Team C/G-Team K/O (Virtual Room 3)
4. Team D/H-Team L/P (Virtual Room 4)

Feedback on day 1, presentation of agenda day 2

(Day 2) Thursday 1 October 2020

16:00 - 17:30 3rd round of debates – 4 parallel sessions (private event)

Preparation time for teams: 15 minutes

Debate time: 45 minutes

Adjudicators deliberation: 15 minutes

Debrief: 15 minutes

1. Team A/F-Team J/O (Virtual Room 1)
2. Team B/G-Team L/M (Virtual Room 2)
3. Team C/E-Team P/H (Virtual Room 3)

30' Gap time (if needed)

18:30 Announcement of winning teams (public event)

- Teams that will go to the Semi-Finals will be announced

(Day 3) Friday 2 October 2020 2hrs30

10:00 - 11:30 Semi-Finals (public event)

1. Semi-Final 1: Virtual Room 1
2. Semi-Final 2: Virtual Room 2

12:30 - 13:30 Great Debate Finals (Oxford style debate) (Public event)

Preparation time for teams: 10 minutes

Debate time: 40 minutes

Voting: 10 minutes

(Day 4) Saturday 3 October 2020 – 2hrs30

10:00 - 12:00 Networking Activities (registration required)

- Morning Coffee: thematic networking activity
- Share your space (4 Debate Hubs, Debate Clubs Challenge – South Med / 4 CSOs – North Med)

10:00 - 11:30 **High-Level Policy Dialogue (public event)**

Revisiting youth priorities; current challenges and recommendations

The session will bring forward policy recommendations emerged from the debate discussions, involving high officials, policy makers and young people from the two shores of the Mediterranean.

10:00. Welcome by the Young Mediterranean Voices team, setting the stage for the event

10:05. Welcome of High-Level guests by **Elisabeth Guigou**, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation, who introduces **Opening Remarks** by:

Oliver Rentschler. Director, European External Action Service, Directorate for Interinstitutional Relations, Policy Coordination and Public Diplomacy

Fernando Gentilini. European External Action Service, Managing Director for the Middle East and North Africa

Sir Ciarán Devane. Chief Executive, British Council

Dr. Blanca Moreno-Dodson. Manager of the Center for Mediterranean Integration

10:20. Presentation of Policy Recommendations and discussion

11:30. Closing of the event

11:30 - 12:30 **Youth-led Consultation (public event)**

11:30. Welcome by the Young Mediterranean Voices team, setting the stage for the event.

11:35. Welcome by hosting organisations:

Dr. Nabil Al Sharif. Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation

Dr. Blanca Moreno-Dodson. Manager of the Center for Mediterranean Integration

11:45. Video address by **Olivér Várhelyi**, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement/Member of the European Commission

11:50. Facilitated discussion based on the following questions:

- How do we **bridge the gap between young people and institutions** in these times of crisis: putting youth at the core of the public policy decision making process.
- What should and could be the role of **youth to promote Euro-Med cooperation**?
- Reflecting on the **25th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration** what objectives could Mediterranean **youth programmes**, such as Young Mediterranean Voices, envision?

12:30. Closing of the event

The Young Mediterranean Voices Programme

Young Mediterranean Voices is the flagship debate and dialogue programme connecting civil society, education and policy-makers across the Southern Mediterranean and Europe. The programme is coordinated by the Anna Lindh Foundation, co-founded by the British Council, and developed in partnership with the Center for Mediterranean Integration, Friends of Europe, the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid, MEDAC and Soliya. The programme is funded by the European Commission (Directorate General of Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) and co-funded by the Government of Finland, World Bank Group and the British Council.

Coordinated by:



Co-founded by:



In partnership with:



Funded by the European Union:



Co-funded by:



Contributors

High-Level invited guests

Olivér Várhelyi

Olivér Várhelyi is Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement/Member of the European Commission (2019 - present).

Former, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the EU (2015-2019). Deputy Permanent Representative of Hungary to the EU (2011-2015). Head of Unit responsible for Industrial Property Rights, European Commission, Directorate-General Internal Market and Services (2008-2011). Head of the European Union Law Department, Ministry of Justice, Hungary (2006-2008). Head of the Legal Service, Permanent Representation of the Republic of Hungary to the European Union (2003-2006). Legal counsellor, Mission of the Republic of Hungary to the European Union (2001-2003). Head of cabinet, Head of the Legal Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cabinet of the Deputy Head of the State Secretary for Integration (1998-2001).

Oliver Rentschler

Oliver Rentschler is Director at the European External Action Service, Directorate for Interinstitutional Relations, Policy Coordination and Public Diplomacy (SG.AFFGEN), since 1 October 2019.

Former Deputy Head of Cabinet of HR/VP Federica Mogherini from November 2014 to September 2019. Member of the Cabinet of HR/VP Catherine Ashton since February 2012, Deputy Head of Cabinet since January 2013. From July 2011 to February 2012, Deputy PSC Representative for Germany. From March 2008 to June 2011, Private Office of Foreign Ministers Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Guido Westerwelle. June 2005 to February 2008: German Representative in the Council Working Group on Enlargement. Earlier assignments include postings in Africa and the Middle East for the German Diplomatic Service. Mr Oliver Rentschler holds a Master's degree in Political Economy from the Universität Bayreuth.

Fernando Gentilini

Fernando Gentilini was appointed in March 2018, as Managing Director for the Middle East and North Africa at the European External Action Service; he has taken up his new functions in Brussels on 1 July 2018.

Gentilini is an Italian diplomat with more than twenty years' experience in crisis management, peace negotiations, multilateral and European affairs. Fernando Gentilini was born in Subiaco (Rome) on 2nd March 1962 and joined the Italian Diplomatic Service in 1990. He has served in the Italian Embassy in Addis Ababa and in the Italian Permanent Representation to the E.U. in Brussels. In 1999, he was seconded to the Policy Unity of the Secretary General/High Representative for the CFSP in Brussels and deployed in several Balkan hot spots. In 2003 he served as head of the Balkan dept in the Italian MFA. In 2004 he became the personal representative of the High Representative for CFSP in Kosovo. In 2006, he was appointed Deputy Diplomatic Advisor to the Italian Prime Minister. In 2008, he was nominated NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan. In 2011, he was appointed European Union Special Representative in Kosovo. In 2012 he served as Director for Western Europe, Western Balkans, and Turkey for the European External Action Service. In 2015 he was appointed European Union Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process.

Elisabeth Guigou

Elisabeth Guigou is President of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures and Founding President of Europartenaires. Formerly President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly, Vice-President of the National Assembly; Deputy Seine-Saint-Denis (2002-17), Minister of Employment and Solidarity (2000-2002); Minister of Justice (1997-2000); Member of the European Parliament (1994-1997); Minister Delegate for European Affairs (1990-1993); Chargé de mission to the President of the Republic (1982-1990); Advisor to Jacques Delors, Minister of Finance (1981-82); Secretary General of the Paris Club; Administrator at the Ministry of Finance.

Nabil Al-Sharif

Nabil Al-Sharif is executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation. Former Senator and Ambassador of Jordan to Morocco and Mauritania, he has extensive experience in public service and international cooperation.

In the domain of media and communication, he held the post of Minister of Media Affairs & Government Spokesperson of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and member of the Upper House of Jordan's Parliament. Al-Sharif has also served Jordan's Foreign Service in the capacity of Ambassador to Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal.

Previously, Al-Sharif has also worked as Editor-in-Chief of the Ad-Dustour newspaper, which is an Arabic-language daily in Jordan. He was also the cultural editor of a local Jordanian daily and wrote extensively both in Arabic and English on the need for enhancing intercultural dialogue. Dr Al-Sharif obtained his PhD in English Literature from Indiana University in the US. He also taught at three Jordanian universities for a number of years.

Ciarán Devan

Sir Ciarán Devane took up the role of British Council chief executive in January 2015. Prior to this, Ciarán was chief executive of Macmillan Cancer Support from 2007 to 2014. He transformed the scale and impact of the charity, leading to Macmillan being the UK's 'Brand of the Year' in 2014.

Ciarán was educated at University College, Dublin where he gained first-class honours in biochemical engineering. He then started his career as an engineer and manager for Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) before becoming a management consultant. A specialist in complex change programmes, he has also worked with companies such as AstraZeneca and Rolls Royce.

With MA in International Policy and Practice from George Washington University, Washington DC, Ciarán has also held non-executive roles on the board of organisations ranging from small local charities to NHS England and was awarded a knighthood in 2015 for his services to cancer patients.

Blanca Moreno-Dodson

Dr. Blanca Moreno-Dodson is the Manager of the Center for Mediterranean Integration, the World Bank, Marseille, France. She is an experienced development economist with more than twenty four years of World Bank service, including operational work worldwide, with deeper regional expertise in Africa and Latin America. She is accomplished in macroeconomics and fiscal policy for developing countries, with a focus on growth, inequality and poverty reduction. She is skilled in public expenditure analysis, fiscal sustainability, public finance, tax policy reforms and transfer pricing. Previously, she worked as junior economist at the European Union (European Commission and European Parliament).

She has published three World Bank books: "Reducing Poverty on a Global Scale", 2005, "Public Finance for Poverty Reduction", 2007, and "Is Fiscal Policy the Answer? A Developing Country Perspective", 2012, as well as numerous papers on macroeconomics, public expenditures, tax policy and growth, and other development issues, at the National Tax Association Journal, Banca d'Italia Fiscal Policy Annual Volume, Hacienda Pública Española Journal, Bulletin of Economic Research, and the World Bank Working Papers series. She has been guest lecturer at the Duke University Tax Executive Program and at John Hopkins University, and a frequent speaker in a variety of international Development Conferences and Workshops.

Dr. Moreno-Dodson obtained her PhD in International Economics and Finance from the Aix-Marseille II (Université de la Méditerranée) in France and her Masters in Economics from the Autónoma University of Madrid, Spain. She is fluent in Spanish, French, English and Portuguese.

Debaters' bios

Profiles of the selected international debaters

Adnane Yousfi, Algeria

Adnane is a last-year student of English Literature and Civilization, he also works as an English part-time teacher. His interest in debating has grown progressively since his first year in college. He pursued strong steps in debating that put him on an international level of participation, as he was one of the participants of the Model United Nations Student Workshop in Norway, and was an ambassador for the Young Utopians programme as well.

Diana Mazen, Lebanon

Diana is a 19-year old Lebanese student majoring in Physics at the Lebanese University. Due to her strong belief in human rights, the importance of youth engagement, and democracy; Diana has joined "Together We Change Association" promoting youth engagement and volunteerism.

Diana's Young Mediterranean Voices debate team was ranked the first in the inter-hub round in 2019 and was qualified to debate in the national YMV competition in Lebanon. Unfortunately, the competition did not take place due to the country security situation at that time. Diana also took part in Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange online debates.

Ibrahim Abdelaziz, Egypt

Ibrahim is a senior Computer Engineering student, with a strong interest in intercultural dialogue and climate action. He considers these as key points for our future development.

Ibrahim is also a MAC debate club member, through which he was introduced to the Young Mediterranean Voices programme. He eventually became "MAC club best debater", and he also participated in previous Euro-Med debates. Ibrahim previously took part in the "Alexandria's model of the European Union" where he worked on teaching youth about the European Union, its history and institutions.

Georgios Verdi, Greece

Giorgos is a second-generation immigrant graduate of University of Piraeus in Athens, Greece. He has a strong interest in social inclusion, equality and artificial intelligence. Giorgos worked as an intern at the Bureau for Human Rights of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as, the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy. In addition to serving as policy researcher for the European Student Think Tank, Giorgos has received many scholarships from different organisations, such as Airbnb and the Council of Europe, to travel across different countries while doing research work. Finally, Giorgos has served as director of his university's debate club and as a delegate at the 2019 Malta New Leadership Seminar.

Hajar Maiach, Morocco

Hajar is a 22-year old Master student of Gender Studies in Morocco, she is also an English tutor for international students on the online platform, Engoo. After she graduated from the Bachelor's Degree of English Literature and Linguistics in 2019, she devoted her time to self development through participating in extracurricular programmes that are either related to public speaking, debating, or diplomacy. In the same year her Young Mediterranean Voices debate team won the National Debate Forum.

Hajar also won "Fatema Mernissi' Speech Contest" about sexual harassment and was labelled a Junior Feminist Leader. In 2020, Hajar passed the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) and was a host of an online programme initiated by the US Embassy in Rabat called "Learn English at Home", in which she delivered voluntary English and cultural courses for two months. She has recently graduated from the English Teaching Internship Initiative (ETII).

Israa Lama, Algeria

Israa is a Master's degree student specialised in English Literature and Civilization. She works as an English teacher and a translator. Israa was inspired by her deep love and care for art, literature and languages, which drove her endeavour in writing short stories and novels. In addition to her involvement in literature, Israa has a strong passion for debating. She enrolled in her university debate club and discovered the Young Mediterranean Voices programme. She was also trained at the Algerian debating center ECOUAT.

Mar López, Spain

Mar is a student of Energy Engineering at UPV University in Valencia, Spain. Due to Mar's exceptional performance in high school, she qualified for grants and scholarships and participated in several competitions, such as the "When I grow up I want to be like..." contest.

Mar participated in the "Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Euro-Med Debate Competition" and reached the semi-final with her team. Additionally, Mar is working in a youth-led project supporting the inclusion of differently-abled people, called "MOVEM-NOS", rewarded in Spain for its social impact.

Mohamed Najeeb, Libya

Mohamed is a 24 year-old student specialised in Engineering. He is passionate about debating and martial arts.

Mohamed is currently working as a social media administrator and agent supporter for communications services at Al-Madar Company, and he is also a member of the "Sejal Debating Foundation".

Mohamed was a representative of the Libyan Organization of Debating at the National Championship of Young Mediterranean Voices in 2019. He was also a supervisor and arbitrator at the Tawasul project, organised by the Libyan Organisation for Debating, with the support of Anna Lindh Foundation and the British Council.

Nuran Elsayed, Egypt/Oman

Nuran is a 19 year-old Egyptian student specialised in Robotics Engineering, based in Oman. Nuran's first exposure to intercultural dialogue was when she joined the Social Circles activity of the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange project. She felt inspired and motivated after long years of searching for her passion. Based on this experience, Nuran found that discussing different issues with a group of young people from all around the world was greatly fulfilling. Thus, she immediately joined the "Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Euro-Med Debate Competition".

Sarah Macherki, Tunisia

Sarah is a 20 years-old Law student in Tunisia. Sarah has been exposed to a variety of legal and political disciplines, which encouraged her to be more involved in youth-led initiatives. Therefore, Sarah joined the Young Mediterranean Voices programme in order to acquire a set of academic and professional skills needed for her career development.

Sarah is also engaged with civil society organisations and has participated at the "Model of United Nations Student Workshop". Furthermore, she has worked as a national journalist, and at the "Youth Clubs Association".

Katerina Tranova, Czech Republic

Katerina is a 21 year-old student specialised in architecture. She would like to follow her dream and provide environmentally sustainable living houses for people who need them. Katerina has spent most of her time volunteering, she joined Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange and Young Mediterranean Voices initiatives to learn more on debating and public speaking. Furthermore, Katerina took a big step and went for a one-year volunteering abroad. She is now seeking for new opportunities to develop her skills.

Ahmad Saddauna, Morocco

Ahmad is a 22 year-old ambitious master's student and a current member of the NGO "Atlas for Development". Ahmad has a special passion for diplomacy, debating and public speaking, which enabled him to participate in high-level events and winning remarkable awards. Ahmed became an ambassador of the first edition of the "2063 Academy" and he also won the Honorable Mention and Best Delegate Award at the "Model of United Nations Morocco". Moreover, Ahmad took part in the Young Mediterranean Voices programme and the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Euro-Med Debate Competition in 2019, he won the "Best Debater" award. Last but not least, Ahmed also joined this year's edition of the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Euro-Med Debate Competition as a team leader.

Salma Khaled, Egypt

Salma is a graduate of Science College, majoring in both Chemistry and Biochemistry. Salma is currently having a year-long internship with Nestle Egypt. She is a strong supporter of Sustainable Development and contributes to the implementation of the Global Goals. Salma worked at "Pharmia Egypt" on SDG4 - Quality Education. She helped young people in choosing the best and more-fitting major for their study. She also took part in the "Green Schools" project with the American University in Cairo, where she worked on SDG 4 & 15 by visiting public schools and raising the student's awareness on the environmental challenges. Finally, Salma is a Young Mediterranean Voices programme since 2019.

Gabriela Roznawska, Poland

Gabriela is an 18-year old student who is pursuing a career in medicine. Gabriela has always been fond of social activism, intercultural dialogue and social studies. Therefore, she got involved in different events and opportunities to grow her passion. She had founded her own youth-engagement project "Generation of Changes". Gabriela also took part in the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange project, the "United Nations Model in Poland", and participated in many virtual debating events and international volunteering opportunities.

Gabriela is also passionate about public speaking so she joined the debating club and theater department in her school. She is also planning to organise her own TED event.

Rawaa Ferjani, Tunisia

Rawaa is a Master student and a freelance translator, graduated in "Anglo-American Literature and Civilization". She is currently working on the topic of Libyan migration, and she is also managing the English department at the "Your Zone Academy" for languages and professional training.

Rawaa is passionate about policy-making and debating, which motivated her to participate in many debate competitions and programmes, including the Young Mediterranean Voices programme where she was awarded the "Best Speaker" recognition for the 2019 National Debate Forum in Tunisia.

Salma Mesbah, Egypt

Salma is a member of “Make a Contribution Club (MAC)” and a delegate of the Young Mediterranean Voices programme for the second year. It is worth mentioning that Salma qualified for the finals in last year’s YMV competition. After, she joined a number of debating opportunities with remarkable organisations, such as: the British Council, the Swedish Institute, the Library of Alexandria and AMIDEAST, engaging with policy makers, diplomats and political figures.

Julia Blake, Malta

Julia is a 21 year-old Law student. She is currently Vice President of the “Junior Chamber of Advocates” where she works on bridging the gap between students and legal professionals by providing internship opportunities. She has also worked as a broadcast journalist, specialised in local politics, therefore, Julia understands Malta’s political dynamics well. Julia is currently working as an intern in compliance at a well known gaming company (GIG), her role is to combat money laundering, fraud and general misconduct of players.

Bassma Maghraby, Egypt

Bassma is a 21 year-old dental student and a graduate in French Language. Due to her education in foreign languages, Bassma has been taught to welcomingly accept new ideas and embrace different opinions. She believes debating is the best way to practice acceptance.

Bassma has participated in many debates organised by Senghor University and the Library of Alexandria. She was awarded the “Best Delegate” certificate in Egypt’s European Union simulation in 2019. Bassma was also keen to share her passion for debates with young people around her, so she took part in the Young Mediterranean Voices programme and the National Debate Forum in 2019. She was awarded with the “Best Debater” certificate. Bassma has also participated in the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange project.

Wejden Ben Hsine, Tunisia

Wijdene is a primary school teacher and an active member at “The Red Crescent” organisation in Tunisia. Her passion for debating started with the Young Mediterranean Voices programme. She was awarded with the “Best Speaker” certificate in 2019. Wijdene considers being a debater and a teacher is the perfect combination for transmitting debating skills to the new generations.

During the COVID19 quarantine period, Wijdene participated in different debating online programmes. Lately, Wijdan became a Peer Facilitator with the Young Mediterranean Voices programme and she delivered trainings for English and Arabic speaking debating clubs.

Emile Fakhoury, Lebanon

Emile has taken part in Young Mediterranean Voices and Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange initiatives. He studied cinematography at the Holy Spirit University Kaslik and has solid experience in social media, image language and visual content.

Due to his involvement in many NGOs, such as the Lebanese Red Cross, Caritas Lebanon and Scouts; Emile is interested in politics and history and in the way it affects citizens' lives. Moreover, he developed a sense of solidarity with his society to overcome the difficult times the Lebanese community is facing.

Niklas Vaalgamaa, Finland

Niklas is a board member of the UN Association of Finland and a youth activist with several years of volunteering experience in different organisations dealing with peace, human rights and climate issues. It is worth mentioning that he is one of the founders of “Finnish UNSCR2250” a Youth, Peace and Security NGO/network, which is currently working on a national action plan.

As a representative of the “National Youth Council of Finland” and the “UN Youth of Finland”, Niklas had the opportunity to participate in high-level meetings and seminars regarding the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 and the Agenda2030 across Europe, Africa and Asia.