

## Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean in 2018

The Croatian Network for Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean (member of the Anna Lindh Foundation for Intercultural Dialogue - ALF) promotes dialogue, knowledge and diversity among the cultures of the Euro-Mediterranean region by developing tolerance and openness to new insights, religions, cultures and values. The Anna Lindh Foundation covers 42 countries as a form of multilateral partnership within the Union for the Mediterranean, institutionally building on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, better known as the Barcelona Process. As a coordinator of the Croatian Network, the National Foundation has been managing the national network since 2009, providing membership and the general public with information on ALF activities and tenders, assisting in finding project partners and applying for projects. ensures the promotion of activities, organizes coordination meetings for members of the Croatian Network, maintains daily communication with the ALF Secretariat and contributes to the development of annual and three-year ALF programs.

Given that the previous ALF funding cycle ended at the end of 2017 and that there was some uncertainty about the continuation of ALF operations in the coming period, the National Foundation decided to take the initiative related to the organization and maintenance of activities for the next three-year period of Croatian Network.

Immediately after the Croatian Network was established, the National Foundation drafted a Development and Action Plan to strengthen partnerships, increase visibility and invest in building the identity of the Croatian Network. In accordance with these new circumstances and the need to redefine the development plan itself, the National Foundation has decided to develop a new Development and Action Plan based on the activities that members of the Croatian Network - with the coordination and possible financial support of the National Foundation as the Network coordinator - would implement in the Republic of Croatia, with the aim of emphasizing the Mediterranean identity of the Republic of Croatia, connecting all Euro-Mediterranean countries as well as strengthening the connection between the civil society organizations with organizations from those countries, respecting diversity and sharing experiences and good practice examples of work with beneficiaries.

In this regard, the National Foundation organized a meeting of representatives of member organizations of the Network, which took place on 13 and 14 September 2018 at IMPACT - European Center for Cross-Sector Partnerships in Zadar. The main topic of the meeting was to define the activities related to the possibilities of implementation of the Program Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area (a framework for future support to such initiatives).

In addition to receiving information on the activities of the ALF Board of Directors from Ms Tamara Krupski, Coordinator for the Union for the Mediterranean at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Croatian member of the said Committee, the participants had the opportunity to hear about the activities of the members in the past as well as plans for the next period and jointly devise possibilities for further integration through the Program Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean Area. Cvjetana Plavša-Matić, Director of the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, spoke more about the possibilities for implementing activities through Program Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean Area, intended to support the activities of the Croatian Network.

During the meeting, an agreement was reached on joint development of program activities of the Croatian Network by 2021, and after the meeting some representatives of the organizations of the Croatian Network members sent their specific proposals and plans of activities.

Building on what has been said, the regular Annual Meeting of the ALF National Coordinators was held from 10 to 12 December 2018 in Brussels, focusing on strategic considerations for the coming period of the Anna Lindh Foundation as a network of networks in the Euro-Mediterranean area, with the participation of the Croatian Network for Cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean.

Considering that the ALF Secretariat's plans for future actions were presented at the above meeting and that the new Executive Director, Dr. Nabil Al Sharif, presented an ambitious but also inspirational blueprint to support the development of new activity programs and further strengthening national ALF components,

including announcing calls for tenders and similar forms of financial support to member organizations of national ALF networks, a definitive stride is expected from the uncertainty surrounding the survival of this international platform, as well as the impetus for expanding quality programs that have been neglected in the meantime.

For the Croatian Network, the most interesting part of the meeting was the one dedicated to the announcement of the next ALF MED Forum, which is organized to bring together several hundreds of representatives of national ALF networks in one place, with the announcement that - given that its organization planned for 2020 - it would fit into the period when the Republic of Croatia holds the EU Presidency. This large international gathering will be held in our country, in [April 2020](#) in Šibenik.

The National Foundation, as well as the Croatian Network, will participate in the preparation of the meeting during 2019, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, and the preparations will include a series of [preparatory meetings](#), about which the members of the Croatian Network will be informed in due time and will have an active role in all events.

Certainly all these activities will contribute to the promotion of dialogue among the cultures of the Euro-Mediterranean region, as an indispensable part of the international integration of the Republic of Croatia, which is of great importance for civil society organizations as well.