



## **BRAINSTORMING MEETING**

**On the consequences of the war in Gaza in the relations among and  
within societies in the euromediterranean region.**

**Co-organized by  
the ANNA LINDH FOUNDATION and the ALLIANCE OF  
CIVILIZATIONS**

**Centre Culturel de la Fondation Gulbenkian, 51, Av d'Iéna, 75116**

### **CONCLUSIONS of the co-organizers**

A brainstorming meeting, co-organized by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance of Civilizations was held in Paris, on February 3, 2009. The meeting, co-chaired by President Jorge Sampaio, UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, and Mr. André Azoulay, President of the Anna Lindh Foundation, brought together some international organizations and bodies that are members of the Group of Friends of the Alliance and a number of civil society organizations, partners to the Anna Lindh Foundation (\*)

The aim of the brainstorming was twofold:

- to provide an exchange of views and an in-depth analysis of the possible causes and consequences of the war in Gaza in the relations among and within societies in the euromediterranean region.

- to address the rising intercultural tensions between both shores of the Mediterranean and assess the need for joint actions to heal the widening rift among societies in this region.

Although participants agreed that political problems require political solutions, as it is the case in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they stressed the need to restore trust and rebuild cultural and human bridges as the best way to prevent the aggravation of conflicts, avoid extremism and radicalization fueled by the instrumentalization of culture and religion. They also emphasized the urgent need to work with civil society and local authorities as well as to take appropriate joint actions in order to support and facilitate their initiatives.

Aware of the concerns raised during the meeting and the call for action coming from many civil society organizations and taking into consideration the Gaza Flash Appeal, announced by the U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator in Geneva on the eve, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance of Civilisations decided to launch a common initiative called

### **RESTORE TRUST, REBUILD BRIDGES**

They invited all the participants to be part of it, contributing to it with their ongoing programs or/and with new ideas for potential joint new actions.

The aims of the initiative will be:

1. To restore trust in Euro-Mediterranean dialogue taking into account the war in Gaza, the need for ending the siege of the Gaza strip, the necessary resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the urgency of recreating a perspective of peace in the region in line with the UN resolutions and the Marseille Declaration on the Union for the Mediterranean
2. To rebuild human and cultural bridges among societies and work for a culture of peace in the Euro-Mediterranean region, namely by contributing to a common and non partisan narrative of what happened in Gaza and in the region, and to fight against any kind of discrimination, racism and xenophobia, such as islamophobia and antisemitism.
3. To develop cooperation with civil society, focused on promoting people to people contacts in the Euro-mediterranean region, particularly between Israelis and Palestinians.
4. To support the consolidation of a wide platform of civil society groups and the reinforcement of city-to-city cooperation to help achieving the aims noted above.

Regarding actions to be implemented in the field of culture, education, youth and media, participants have been requested to make suggestions by February 16 which the Alliance of Civilizations and the Anna Lindh Foundation will collect.

The whole proposal may be announced at the Istanbul Forum of the Alliance, on 6-7 April.

*The conclusions were issued on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February in Alexandria and New York by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance of Civilisations.*

(\*) The following institutions and networks were represented at the meeting held in Paris on February 3 2009 co-organised by the Alliance of Civilisations and the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF):

European Commission; EMPA Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe; Council of the European Union; League of Arab States; Inter-Parliamentary Union; Organization of the Islamic Conference; UNESCO, Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; French Ministry of Foreign Affairs; International Organization for Migration; United Cities and Local Governments; Euromed Non-Governmental Platform; Biennale of Young Creators from Europe and the Mediterranean; Transeuropéennes; Babelmed; EU Institute for Security Studies; Euro-Mediterranean University; ALF Heads of Network France, Egypt and Turkey.