

Call for Applications

Mediterranean Youth in Action, MYA

VOICING YOUTH KNOWLEDGE - VYK

CALLING ALL ENTHUSIASTIC RESEARCHERS IN THE EURO-MED!

Application deadline: 23 MAY 2026 (23:59 CET)

Read the full call and application form here.

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About the MYA Programme

The Mediterranean Youth in Action (MYA) Programme embodies a dynamic approach towards fostering positive change in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Grounded in the principle of experiencing through action, MYA empowers young individuals to become catalysts for transformation and advocates for societal progress. With a steadfast commitment to peer sharing and learning, MYA cultivates a vibrant community where young leaders collaborate, exchange ideas, and harness their collective potential.

Embracing a Euro-Med vision, the MYA Programme bridges cultural divides and promotes dialogue, understanding, and cooperation across borders. Through initiatives aimed at empowering young people to shape public policy and promoting active citizenship, MYA positions youth as the true agents of change, envisioning a future where they play a pivotal role in shaping the societal landscape of the Mediterranean region.



About MYA - Voicing Youth Knowledge

Voicing Youth Knowledge is the policy-oriented research pillar of the Mediterranean Youth in Action Programme. It supports young researchers in producing evidence-based, policy-oriented knowledge on key Euro-Mediterranean issues. Through research, mentoring, training and dialogue, VYK enables participants to contribute meaningful recommendations that can inform more inclusive and future-oriented policies around the region.

Research Areas

The VYK programme for its third cycle is accepting research proposals under three thematic research pillars. These clusters reflect key priorities shaping Euro-Mediterranean cooperation today, including the recent Pact for the Mediterranean (2025).

- 1. Mobility, international cultural relations, and dialogue in the Common Mediterranean Space.**
 - o **Higher education cooperation and mobility in the Common Mediterranean Space.** How Euro Mediterranean academic partnerships, mobility schemes and joint curricula can foster intercultural dialogue, shared values and mutual recognition across shores.
 - o **Intercultural dimensions of the green and blue transitions: energy, climate and coastal communities.** How renewable energy, clean technology and sustainable blue economy initiatives can be designed and implemented to respect local knowledge, protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage and ensure a just transition for vulnerable communities.
 - o **Culture, sport and sustainable tourism as drivers of shared narratives.** Ways in which international cultural relations, cultural cooperation, creative sectors, sport and sustainable tourism policies can counter polarisation, prevent negative stereotyping and promote inclusive narratives about the Mediterranean's diversity.
 - o **Civil society–local authorities cooperation and youth participation for inclusive governance.** How cooperation between civil society organisations and local authorities can strengthen inclusive and participatory governance, foster youth engagement in decision-making and policy-making, and enhance social cohesion and intercultural dialogue in Euro-Mediterranean communities.
- 2. Skills for inclusive green and digital transitions, connectivity and innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean.**
 - o **Bridging skills gaps for inclusive green and digital transitions.** Policy options to address skills mismatches in labour markets, especially for youth and women, so that green and digital transitions are socially just, participatory and conducive to social cohesion.
 - o **Inclusive startup and innovation ecosystems.** How to design and connect startup ecosystems and research–innovation networks in an intercultural way to reduce inequalities between and within Euro-Med societies.
 - o **Digital infrastructure, Artificial Intelligence, and data economies with a human-centred, intercultural approach.** Governance models for digital connectivity and technological innovation that respect fundamental rights, address trust gaps between partners, and bridge digital divides affecting vulnerable communities across the Mediterranean.



- o Sustainable transport and connectivity corridors as spaces for exchange and cooperation. Policy options to make Euro-Mediterranean transport and connectivity more sustainable and also more conducive to people-to-people contacts and fair access to opportunities.
 - o Evidence-based policymaking and shared knowledge platforms. Mechanisms and tools (e.g., observatories, joint data spaces, knowledge hubs) that support evidence-based policies, while embedding intercultural dialogue, transparency and co-production of knowledge with academia and civil society.
- 3. Fostering peace, trust-building, and enhancing security in the Euro-Mediterranean.**
- o Building a people-centred Mediterranean disaster preparedness and resilience community. Approaches to disaster risk reduction, early warning and climate adaptation that foster cross border solidarity, integrate local and traditional knowledge, and strengthen trust among communities around the Mediterranean.
 - o Peace, security and trust-building through youth and civil society cooperation. The role of youth, civil society and academia in preventing violent extremism, countering hate speech and disinformation, and promoting a culture of peace and mutual understanding in the Mediterranean.
 - o Intercultural dialogue in migration governance. Strategies to move beyond purely securitised approaches by using dialogue between origin, transit and destination communities, diasporas and local authorities to improve protection, inclusion and social cohesion.

VYK: Step-by-Step Guide

Joining VYK means becoming part of a research and policy journey that combines knowledge production, advanced skills development, mentoring, dialogue, and public engagement. Participants strengthen their research, writing, public speaking and networking skills while contributing to policy thinking across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

More specifically, the VYK journey includes the following stages:

1. Applications' submission and evaluation

Applications are evaluated based on pre-identified selection criteria ([see relevant section below](#)) leading to the selection of up to 75 researchers.

2. Online Skills Enhancing Workshop (for up to 75 pre-selected researchers)

The selected researchers attend an advanced online workshop that aims to enhance their skills on and knowledge of, on the one hand, [policy research and analysis](#), as well as policy briefs' writing, and, on the other hand, of [Euro-Mediterranean institutions, key policy areas and cooperation frameworks](#).

3. Extended research proposals' submission and evaluation

The researchers that successfully participated in the online workshop are required to submit an extended



version of their original policy-oriented and evidence-based research proposal. The extended proposal should be **up to 1,000 words** (excluding references) and accompanied by **a short abstract of 200-300 words**. It should elaborate on the **research question, methodology, Euro-Mediterranean relevance and added value** of the proposed research, as well as on **the direction of the policy recommendations** the proposed research aims to expand to. Based on the evaluation of the quality of submitted proposals, about 30 researchers will be selected to proceed to the next step.

4. Online Mentoring on research progress, in group and individual settings

Following their selection, the 30 selected researchers are invited to attend **a series of online mentoring meetings** to support them in the draft of their brief. The mentoring process entails **group meetings** (to engage with their peers and receive **targeted thematic feedback** from ALF mentors); and **individual meetings** (an one-to-one conversation and feedback session with their ALF mentor).

5. Face-to-Face Research Workshop (for up to 35 selected researchers)

The selected researchers attend an immersive in-person research workshop that enables them **to present their policy-oriented research to Euro-Mediterranean stakeholders**, including policymakers, academics, researchers, and practitioners, and to receive **constructive feedback**.

6. Elaboration and peer review of policy briefs (for up to 35 selected researchers)

Following the in-person workshop, the selected researchers are required to submit their first full draft policy brief to the ALF Secretariat. Based on the quality of the submissions, as well as the overall evaluation of their performance, **up to 15 young researchers will be selected to draft a policy brief of 3,500 words, with ALF financial support (€1,000)**. This step includes an in-depth **internal and external peer review** process of the selected policy briefs, the successful undergoing of which is a prerequisite.

7. Publication and dissemination of policy briefs (for up to 15 selected researchers)

Upon validation of the final text, the selected policy briefs undergo **editing and are then published on the ALF website** and, in due course, in print, and are translated into French and Arabic to ensure wider dissemination.

8. Organisation of Academic Dialogues and Civil Society Outreach Dialogues (for up to 15 selected researchers)

The 15 selected young researchers are invited **to organise, with ALF financial support, two events aimed at the wider dissemination of their research**. Namely, they will organise an **Academic Dialogue** (in direct cooperation with their affiliated institution to foster a constructive academic discussion on their research topic); and a **Civil Society Outreach Dialogue** (in direct cooperation with a member of the [ALF Civil Society Network](#) of their country of origin/residence to foster a broader discussion among civil society representatives).

9. Elaboration of blog post and audiovisual material (for up to 15 selected researchers)

The 15 selected young researchers are invited to elaborate **a blog post** and produce relevant **audiovisual**



material, with ALF financial support (€300). These products aim to ensure the presentation of the researchers' policy briefs' findings in format and language understandable by both **non-expert and expert audiences**, and to enhance the wider **dissemination** of their policy recommendations.

10. Face-to-Face Evaluation and Results Sharing Meeting and ALF Youth Conference

The 30 selected researchers that attending the in-person workshop participate in the **ALF Youth Conference**, bringing together youth from across the MYA Programme, experts and stakeholders from across the Euro-Mediterranean region, and held at the end of the Programme's cycle. Moreover, selected researchers have the opportunity to connect with beneficiaries and alumni of the other strands of the MYA Programme, and participate in further Euro-Mediterranean policy and youth dialogues, organised by ALF in cooperation with key Euro-Mediterranean institutions and stakeholders.

Benefits of Participation

Selected researchers will benefit from:

1. **Funded online & face-to-face capacity-building workshops:** Selected researchers take part in fully funded expert-led online and in person capacity-building workshops on policy research, writing, Euro-Mediterranean relations and cooperation frameworks, and receive a certificate of attendance.
2. **Financial support for policy brief, blog post and audiovisual material:** Selected researchers receive €1,000 to develop a policy brief, and €300 to draft a blog post and create other communication outputs.
3. **Funded academic & civil society outreach dialogues:** Selected researchers receive financial support to organise academic and civil society outreach dialogues in collaboration with their affiliated institution and the [ALF Civil Society Network](#) of their country of origin/residence.
4. **Enhanced visibility for your research:** Selected researchers disseminate their evidence-based research to policymakers, practitioners, and the public through ALF's regional networks and communication channels.
5. **Networking & Euro-Mediterranean engagement opportunities:** Selected researchers have the opportunity to connect with peers and stakeholders, as well as with the beneficiaries and alumni of the other strands of the MYA Programme, receive targeted and individual research mentoring, and participate in Euro-Mediterranean policy and youth dialogues, organised by ALF in cooperation with key Euro-Mediterranean institutions and stakeholders.
6. **MYA Alumni:** Being pre-selected and completing the online training programme automatically grants you membership in the MYA Alumni scheme, a growing and dynamic community of young change-makers from across the Euro-Mediterranean region. As a MYA Alumnus/a, you will have the opportunity to attend and actively participate in Alumni activities, keeping you connected to the MYA network well beyond your initial engagement with the Programme.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be of age between 18 to 35;



- Be affiliated with a university, a think tank, a specialised research centre, or a civil society organisation that has a concrete research component or unit;
- Be nationals of one of the 43 Member States of the [Anna Lindh Foundation](#).

Applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria will be disqualified.

Application Procedure

Interested researchers can apply online before **23 May 2026, 23.59 CET**. When applying, you should confirm the fulfilment of the application criteria and **submit an evidence-based policy-oriented research proposal that falls under one of the abovementioned research areas**, demonstrating your commitment to driving positive change in the Euro-Mediterranean region. More precisely, you will have to submit:

- A research title;
- A short abstract of your proposed research;
- A brief explanation of the Euro-Mediterranean relevance of your research proposal;
- A brief explanation of the research hypothesis, objectives, and methodology of your proposal;
- A short explanation of the added value and originality of your research proposal;
- A brief presentation of your academic and professional background and its connection to your topic.

Only complete applications, meeting the criteria and submitted before the deadline will be considered. Please note that it is not possible to save the application as a draft or to make any changes after submitting it. At the close of the call, the most recently submitted version of the application will be processed. The same applicant cannot submit more than one proposal under this call.

Applicants may only apply to ONE call under the MYA Programme that best reflects their profile. Submission of applications under more than one MYA call may result in the disqualification of all applications submitted.

Due to the high volume of expected applications, responses to individual requests will not be provided. Only pre-screened candidates will be contacted.

In case of technical problems or questions related to the call, please contact: myaprogramme@alfsecretariat.org

Selection Criteria

Applications successfully submitted under the VYK Call will be evaluated and undergo a selection process that is designed to ensure fairness, diversity, and relevance. The following criteria will be taken into account to select passionate young researchers who will contribute meaningfully to the Euro-Mediterranean vision:

- **Euro-Mediterranean scope of the research proposal (35%):** Potential impact of the research proposal on Euro-Mediterranean public policies.
- **Relevance of the research proposal (30%):** Degree of alignment of the proposed research with the selected research area, as well as with current trends in Euro-Mediterranean relations.
- **Added value and originality (20%):** Originality and added value of the research approach, including methodology, proposed by the applicant.
- **Academic and professional background (15%):** Applicant's academic and professional history.



The proposed research must be original, unpublished, and developed without the use of Artificial Intelligence. The use of AI tools for grammar and vocabulary support is permitted, provided it is clearly disclosed in the application. The ALF retains co-ownership of the publishing rights and intellectual property of the final knowledge product.

A gender and geographical balance between regions and countries will be observed. This commitment underscores our goal to create a diverse and equitable community, fostering sustainable and inclusive development in the Euro-Med region.

Important note: Due to the large number of applications expected, the limited resources available, and the aim of diversifying the beneficiaries, priority will be given to applications that did not receive funding in the previous "Mediterranean Youth in Action" and "Young Civil Society Leadership" Programmes calls launched in 2023, 2024 or 2025.

Indicative Timeline*

- **23/04/2026** Launch of the call
- **05/05/2026** Online Information Session
- **23/05/2026** Deadline for applications
- **07/06/2026** Publication of the pre-screening results of 75 researchers
- **June 2026** Online Workshop on Policy Research and Analysis & Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation Frameworks
- **June 2026** Deadline to submit the extended research proposal, followed by evaluation and selection of 25 researchers
- **July-September 2026** Individual and thematic group mentoring online meetings
- **September-October 2026** Face-to-Face Research Workshop
- **September-October 2026** Deadline to submit the 1st full draft of the policy brief
- **October-December 2026** Peer review process of submitted and approved policy briefs
- **December 2026** Deadline to receive the 2nd full draft of the policy briefs, after the incorporation of the peer review feedback
- **January-March 2027** Final editing, quality control, and publication of selected policy briefs
- **January 2027-March 2027** Organisation of Academic Dialogues and Civil Society Outreach Dialogues and development of Blog Posts by selected researchers
- **April-Mai 2027** Face-to-Face Evaluation and Results Sharing Meeting

*Please note that the timeline is indicative and may be subject to adjustments depending on the number of applications received and the overall evaluation process. The ALF Secretariat will make every effort to follow the proposed schedule while ensuring a fair and comprehensive selection process.

Background: The Anna Lindh Foundation

The ALF, (<https://alf.website/en/>), created in 2005 as an international intergovernmental organisation based in Alexandria. The ALF, inspired by Anna Lindh's legacy, is committed to fostering intercultural dialogue within its mission of nurturing inclusive societies where diversity is celebrated, and everyone's voice is valued. By promoting peace, justice, and strong partnerships, the Foundation strives to create a world where people from diverse backgrounds live in harmony through open and meaningful intercultural exchanges.





ALF brings together organisations, institutions, policy makers, and other change makers from all Euro-Med countries to open dialogue and cooperate. People meet, learn, and collaborate, through the Foundation's different projects and initiatives in different fields to empower them to create a chain of positive change that touches more lives and communities. Its action grounds on the two main bodies of the Foundation: Its Civil National Networks with more than 4,500 members and the 43 Members States of its Board of Governors.

Framework and Financial Allocation

The Mediterranean Youth in Action Programme is developed in the framework of the EU grant NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2023/448-134 funded by the European Union. The indicative overall amount allocated to this call is 105.500 euro. The ALF Secretariat reserves the right not to disburse all available funds.



Section 1: Personal Information Questions

- 1) Full Name:
- 2) Date of Birth
- 3) Gender:
- 4) Nationality
- 5) Country of residence:
- 6) Email:
- 7) Phone Number with international country code:
- 8) English language level -proficiency is required-: (drop down menu)
- 9) Please upload your CV

Section 2: Affiliation Questions

- 1) Are you affiliated to a think tank, a specialized research centre or a university or a civil society organisation having a clear research component?
- 2) If yes, please provide the following
- 3) Name of the institution:
- 4) The institution address:
- 5) Links to the institution webpage or/and any other available links:
- 6) In what capacity are you affiliated with this institution?
- 7) Is your institution a member of one of the ALF National Civil Society Networks? Yes/No
- 8) If yes, please paste your profile link on the ALF corporate website
- 9) If no, have you submitted an application to become an ALF member? Yes/No
- 10) If yes, when? (Please note that membership is offered free of charge)

Section 3: Short Abstract

Your short abstract is a concise summary of your proposed research, aiming to capture the essence of your research in up to 300 words in English. Follow these guidelines to structure an effective short abstract:

1) Research Areas: (Choose one of the topics from the list)

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NOTE: In filling out the following questions, please note that we are looking for evidence-based and policy-oriented research proposals. Please avoid theoretical research questions. Please also make sure to suggest realistic methodologies and research questions in terms of resources and time available to conduct this research.

2) Title: Try to be as concise as possible and to the point – max 20 words

3) Euro-Med Scope (35%): Explain the Euro-Mediterranean dimension of the research topic proposed - max 100 words

4) Relevance of the research proposal (30%):

Relevance: Briefly outline the main objective or hypothesis of your research and its significance (15% – max 100 words)

Methodology: Provide a concise description of the research approach you plan to apply (15%) – max 100 words

5) Added value and originality (20%):

Originality: Describe the novelty of your approach or method proposed (10%) – max 100 words



Added value: Explain the added value that your research proposal provides in relation to the chosen topic (10%) – max 100 words

6) Academic and Professional Background (15%):

Briefly describe your academic and professional background and its connection to your research topic – max 100 words

Please note that the proposed research must be original, unpublished, and developed without the use of Artificial Intelligence. The use of AI tools for grammar and vocabulary support is permitted, provided it is clearly disclosed in the application.

Did you make use of AI during the writing of this application?
(Yes/No)

If yes: why?

Where did you hear about this call?

By participating in this call, the applicant accepts the provisions of the ALF regarding patents, privacy and intellectual property and the protection of personal data [link to the legal text] [Mandatory check box to be able to submit the application] and accepts to be subscribed to receive updates about the Foundation's activities and future opportunities [Mandatory check box to be able to submit the application]

