



The Italian Network for Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue (RIDE)

The **Italian Network for Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue (RIDE)**, under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), brings together associations as well as - profit and non-profit - public and private bodies, to implement the *United Nations Charter's* principles and, at the European level, the goals of the November 1995 *Barcelona Declaration's* Euro-Med partnership, in line with the objectives of the *Anna Lindh Foundation* (ALF), of which RIDE is the Head of the Italian Network.

RIDE is a non-partisan, non-profit, Association for social purposes aiming to actively involve all its members in order to become an authoritative network developing a shared vision based on the following principles: collegiality, mutual listening and respect, pluralism, democratic election of the internal governance, transparency and independence.

Its founding goals include the promotion of initiatives to develop cooperation and international solidarity, dialogue between peoples and their respective *collective identities*, identifying shared cultural values to support the development of harmonious and mutually respectful relations between majorities and national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, also by setting up a permanent *forum* (*think tank* of the *think tanks*) for meetings, research, analysis, and debates in order to produce, actions and publications aimed at facilitating coexistence in the context of political, economic, cultural and security interaction.

Mediterranean Perspectives (MP)

The Association, set up in Jerusalem in the year 2000, aims at developing activities and research about cultural, political and religious different *collective identities*, with special regard to the forms of coexistence of the Mediterranean peoples, in order to enhance its countless identities.

The two opposite modern *Westfalian* state-centric centripetal and *Glocal* trans-boundary centrifugal Western collective abstract identity models - both distant from the reality of human experience - have replaced the traditional and ancient natural forms of social organization. Therefore, the richness of deep-rooted Mediterranean identities risk to fall into oblivion, as a result of universalized stereotypes, and the need emerges to preserve and protect them. Through the reciprocal knowledge of the different Mediterranean identities, MP's activities try to preserve their historical music, art, and food heritage, including natural environment, as well as customs, lifestyles and local traditions.

RIDE and MP Initiatives and Projects

The annual Euro-Med inter-institutional *Prima-Med* initiative

MP is the leading organizer of the annual Euro-Med inter-institutional *Medi-Jer* initiative, which in 2021, under the name of *Pontine Medi-Jer*, received the medal of the Italian President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella - focused on science diplomacy and interreligious dialogue for sustainability, including climate change, circular economy, food security, *identitary cuisine*, women's empowerment, and gender equality.

The selection of the *Pontine Archipelago* as the main location of this initiative has a high symbolic value. The Italian fascist regime confined political dissidents such as Altiero Spinelli, Sandro Pertini, and Umberto Terracini on the island of Ponza (1937-1939), then deported them to the island of Ventotene (1939-1943), where Spinelli wrote the famous *Manifesto for a free and united Europe* in 1941, imagining the rebirth of a democratic and peaceful Europe.

On the occasion of the *Ponza Prima-Med* Second Edition the speakers at the annual Euro-

Mediterranean inter-institutional conference (Ponza, September 14, 2020) – including Amb. Miguel Angel Moratinos, High Representative of the *United Nations Alliance of Civilizations* (UNAOC), Amb. Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the *Union for the Mediterranean*, the late Dr. Nabil Al-Sharif, ALF Executive Director, and Prof. Angelo Riccaboni, President of the *PRIMA Foundation* – celebrated, for the first time all together, the values of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation inspired by the *Barcelona Declaration*.

The initiative in 2021 changed its name into *Pontine Medi-Jer* in order to emphasize how the various ambitious projects aim to fully include the entire *Pontine archipelago* in order to transform it into a point of reference for technological and cultural innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, thus increasing the symbolic prestige and the economic potential of the area.

The *Medi-Jer* initiative was held in the first three editions in Ponza: on September 23, 2019, on September 13-14, 2020, on the occasion of the Barcelona Declaration's twenty-fifth anniversary, and, on the occasion of the he third edition, on July 25-26, concluding on September 5, and on October 12, 2021, in the neighboring Ventotene Island. Its Fourth Edition also took place in Ventotene, on October 2, 2022, as well as in Pitigliano, on October 28, 2022, while the first event of its Fifth Edition will take place in Rome, on March 22, 2023.

• **The *Turtledoves Villa (La Villa delle Tortore)***

Mediterranean Perspectives has been involved in the renewal and redevelopment of the *Turtledoves Villa (Villa delle Tortore)* located in the Ponza Island, in cooperation with RIDE, the Lazio Region, the Municipality of Ponza, the *PRIMA Foundation*, and the *Union for the Mediterranean-UfM*.

The shared objective has been the relaunch of Euro-Med cooperation on the *PRIMA Foundation's* statutory themes, in particular transforming the restored Villa into a "Center for Higher Education and Scientific Diplomacy on Sustainability".

The renewed *Turtledoves Villa* may become a cutting-edge structure in terms of environmental sustainability and landscape insertion. MP, together with the other entities involved, intends to define the partners' roles and competences in order to coordinate and organize all the necessary activities to implement the planned Center. The regeneration and reorganization of spaces should respect the constituent elements and the natural landscape in which the *Turtledoves Villa* is immersed, favoring its use and enhancement, while preserving its vegetal and morphological structure.

• **Ponza Prima Med ALF Project**

The *Ponza Prima Med ALF* project ended with the conclusive "*Sustainable Development in Ponza*" event, held in hybrid form on July 26, 2021, in the context of the Third Edition of the aforementioned annual Euro-Mediterranean inter-institutional *Ponza Prima-Med* initiative, with the participation of distinguished experts and institutional representatives including, among others, Hon. Luigi Di Maio, then the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Hon. Gennaro Migliore, then the President of the *Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)*.

The event hosted the final international conference of the *ALF Ponza Prima Med* project, in cooperation with the three Heads of the Italian, Egyptian and Palestinian ALF national Network, presenting their three respective best practices on sustainable development in the fields of circular economy, community capacity building, and community need-assessment in the agro-food sector, representing different cultural backgrounds and traditions from the Mediterranean area, coming together to achieve a clearer vision for the future, respecting peoples and the environment.

• **Collective identities, sustainability, and science diplomacy in the Mediterranean**

This inter-institutional conference was held, in the context of the aforementioned 3rd annual edition of the Euro-Med inter-institutional "*Ponza Prima-Med 2021*" initiative, on September 5th, 2021, in the Municipality of Ventotene, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the *Ventotene Manifesto for a Free and United Europe* (1941), which Altiero Spinelli drafted while confined there.

The conference focused on *Science Diplomacy* activities aimed at fostering scientific cooperation, in view of the proposed renovation and transformation of the former Bourbon Prison of Santo Stefano in Ventotene and the *Turtledoves Villa* in Ponza into High Education Centers, for the benefit of youth and women in the Mediterranean region. In particular, a conference panel discussed the link between food, wellness and health, even more urgent with the recent pandemic crisis, in relation to the *Identitary Cuisine* initiative, highlighting the role of women as the main custodians of identitary culinary tradition, benefitting peace and security focused on environmental sustainability and the enhancement of collective memory, in a context aimed at emphasizing the significance of women empowerment processes.

The conference was the opportunity to present the research grant *Women, Europe and the Mediterranean*: this initiative is the result of the cooperation of MP and RIDE with the *Institute of Political Studies S. Pio V* (RIDE member).

• ***Religious Communities, Dialogue and Sustainability***

In the same context of the aforementioned *Ponza Prima-Med* initiative's 2021 edition, the event "*Religious Communities, Dialogue and Sustainability*" – including the Fourteenth Israeli-Palestinian Seminar behind closed doors and a public interfaith international conference - was an opportunity to renew the appeal for a *Mediterranean Breakthrough* that Card. Gualtiero Bassetti, President of the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI), launched on September 10, 2021, on the occasion of the Pitigliano International Conference, to bring Jerusalem back to the center of our region, taking into account its different *collective identities* and contradictions.

Mediterranean Perspectives, CoopERICA (both RIDE members), and the Representation of the *European Commission* in Italy have co-organized the event - under the patronage of RIDE, *PRIMA Foundation*, the Municipality of Ponza, and the Municipality of Ventotene, with the contribution of the *United Nations Alliance of Civilizations* (UNAOC), and of the Italian Secretariat of PRIMA.

The main topics of the conference, with experts and representatives of Jewish, Islamic and Christian religious communities, were the relaunch of inter-religious dialogue on *sustainable development*, in light of the multiannual Israeli-Palestinian initiative "Circular Economy in Gaza" (2018 XI and 2019 XII Israeli-Palestinian Seminars, held in Rome and Jerusalem/Tel Aviv, respectively), and the conclusions of the Israeli-Palestinian project "Re-made in Gaza", with CoopERICA, to minimize solid waste generation in order to improve local better living conditions.

CoopERICA in 2018 implemented, in cooperation with the *United Nations Relief and Works Agency* - UNRWA, a pilot project on collective composting, tackling waste respecting the "3R" (reduce, reuse, recycle), involving 70 families in the Nuseirat refugee camp. The project saw the construction of several collective composting bins (made entirely of wood in Gaza) and the introduction of a separate collection of organic waste. The located strategy for organizing waste management in the Gaza Strip is based on three main axes:

1. material recovery and circular economy
2. protection of health and the environment
3. involvement and active participation of several stakeholders, from families to productive activities, from local to central public administrations, as well as international organizations such as the EU and the UN.

Waste management should be dealt with local and regional projects. The opportunity lies in the possibility to develop regional cooperation that would benefit Palestinians and Israelis alike, as well as other neighboring countries directly and indirectly affected by the uncontrolled waste management of the Gaza Strip.

• ***The Mediterranean: a river with many tributaries. Identities, religious dialogue, and sustainability***

Representatives of the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, communities, experts, as well as local authorities, taking part on December 13, 2021, in the international conference held in hybrid form at the *Spazio Europa* Conference Room of the *European Commission's* and the *European Parliament's* offices in Italy, agreed on the creation of a *Centre for Higher Education and Science Diplomacy on Sustainability* planned at the *Turtledoves Villa (Villa delle Tortore)* in the Ponza Island.

The *Italian Network for Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue* (RIDE) and *Mediterranean Perspectives* co-organized - in cooperation with the *PRIMA Foundation*, and the *Anna Lindh Foundation* (ALF) - this international conference, with Enrico Molinaro, RIDE Secretary General and MP President, and Greta Spreafico, Assistant Coordinator of the Italian ALF Network moderating the two conference panels.

The Glasgow Covenant, adopted in the context of the XXVI Conference of the Parties (COP26) of the UNFCCC concluded in the Scottish city on November 20, 2021, highlighted the urgency of cooperation between religious communities and local authorities on sustainability issues. In this context, the shared conference speakers' ambitious goal is to set up a Euro-Med hub on sustainability in the *Pontine Archipelago*, the birthplace of the modern *European Union*, dealing with *sustainability* to face skill and labour mismatch, especially for Mediterranean women and youth, as Mr. Giuseppe Provenzano, Advisor for Research and Innovation of the *Union for the Mediterranean*, pointed out.

The Jerusalem Holy Places Center (JHPC)

Since 2006 *Mediterranean Perspectives* has been organizing a series of Israeli-Palestinian Seminars behind closed doors and public international meetings in Rome, Florence, Pitigliano, Ventotene, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Washington, on the Holy Places of Jerusalem, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Municipality of Rome, the Lazio Region, the *Institute for International Legal Studies* (ISGI) at the Italian Council for National Research (CNR), the Italian offices of the *European Commission* and the *European Parliament*, and of the *United Nations Alliance for Civilizations* (UNAOc).

• **Protect the Religious Sites**

Mediterranean Perspectives and CeSPI (both RIDE members), in cooperation with the Directorate General for Political Affairs and Security of MAECI, and the *United Nations Alliance for Civilizations* (UNAOc), in the context of the UN *Plan of Action to Protect Religious Sites*, "In Unity and Solidarity for Safe and Peaceful Worship", that the UN Secretary-General launched on 12 September 2019, organized on June 7, 2020, in Rome the XIV Israeli-Palestinian Seminar behind closed doors.

The *Protect Religious Sites* initiative is based on the assumption that parties with a recognized interest in religious sites consider a number of shared cardinal principles as internationally binding, whose full compliance would help to ensure a peaceful and dynamic future coexistence between the different collective identities concerned with such sites.

This initiative aims to involve the governments or administering authorities in discharging administrative obligations in religious sites' areas, and to pursue the following special objectives:

- To protect and to preserve the unique religious and cultural interests of the designed religious communities; to this end, to ensure that order and peace, and especially religious peace, reign in those areas;
- To foster cooperation among all the inhabitants of the country in their own interests, as well as to encourage and support the peaceful development of the relations between the interested religious communities throughout the relevant areas where religious sites are located, to promote the security, well-being and any constructive measures of development of the residents, having regard to the special circumstances and local customs of the interested peoples and communities.

Dr. Enrico Molinaro, MP President and RIDE Secretary General, has been promoting over more than fifteen years high level seminars behind closed doors and public international conferences between conflicting parties applying his original and innovative methodology, based on the awareness of the close connection between *collective identity* in its broader anthropologic meaning and the symbolic significance of the religious sites.

Identitary cuisine

• **Women for Collective Identities. Peace, Security and Identitary Cuisine.**

In the context of the *Identitary cuisine* initiative, in July 2020 four Italian partners, including *Mediterranean Perspectives*, promoted the project *Women for Collective Identities. Peace, Security and Identitary Cuisine*, an Euro-Med project with offline and online activities. RIDE and the ALF Italian Network offered their patronage.

This project, awarded under the call that the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) launched for the Third Plan for National Action on "*Women Peace and Security*", involved Italian, Egyptian, Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian women beneficiaries, to enhance their respective *collective identity* in an interactive friendly dialogue. The project aimed at promoting a constructive exchange, rediscovering the local cuisine and the emotions that emerged from the project activities, developing further awareness and cohesion. In this context, the role of women can be crucial, because *identitary cuisine* has a strong cultural and historical dimension. The project focused also on other related issues such as food security, environmental sustainability, and the enhancement of collective memory, as well as on the increasingly evident link between nutrition and health as *primary prevention* through a salubrious, natural and balanced lifestyle.

• **2nd World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet**

In the context of the 2nd *World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet* "Strategy towards more sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean region" (Palermo, May 15-17, 2019), RIDE co-organized a panel in cooperation with the Italian Foreign Ministry in view of the 5 + 5 Summit (*Sommet des Deux Rive*) held in Marseilles on June 23/24, 2019. On that occasion

Dr. Molinaro, in cooperation with the then MAECI Euro-Med Coordinator, Min. Pl. Enrico Granara (ALF BoG member for Italy), promoted the first inter-institutional meeting between the UfM Secretary General Amb. Nasser Kamel and the then ALF Executive Director Dr. Nabil Al-Sharif, leading to an unprecedented program of joint activities between UfM and ALF for the 25th anniversary of the *Barcelona Declaration* in 2020.

Scaena Mediterranea: Theaters, Cities, Identities and Cultures in the Mediterranean Area

MP and RIDE co-organized the *Scaena Mediterranea* initiative on the ancient Greek and Roman theatres, in the context of the *Cerealia Festival* on the Mediterranean food and culture (cerealialudi.org, winner of five Medals from the Italian President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella, which Ms. Paola Sarcina, President of the RIDE member *Music Theater International – MthI*, initiated), taking place in Rome and other Italian cities to enhance the intercultural exchange between *collective identities* and peoples of the Mediterranean region, twinning each year with a different country.

The *Scaena Mediterranea* initiative emphasizes the acknowledgement of the special relationship between theater and Mediterranean identities over time: a privileged space and place of expression to rediscover the golden thread that, between antiquity and modernity, links the various historical and cultural identities of the peoples flourishing around the Mediterranean basin.

The main objective of the French-Italian initiative - a contribution to the aforementioned *ommet des Deux Rives* held in Marseille on June 23/24, 2019, discussed also on the occasion of an on-line event held on June 18, 2021 - , is to support the training process of cultural enterprises producing stable employment results in the different Mediterranean areas. This initiative calls for a greater knowledge on material and immaterial value that the ancient Greek and Roman theatres and amphitheatres represent for the region, increasing the awareness of the local communities and also enhancing their business capacity.

