

The Mediterranean Children's Movement

1st General Assembly

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Speech of Acceptance

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President

Firstly, I would like to thank you for the trust you have showed me. I feel truly humbled. I am confident that together with all my Colleagues on the Council, and with all the Children that will be willing to join, we will positively contribute to this important Chapter in our Mediterranean history.

This has been my dream, since I can remember. It took me time to share it and find the people that actually, believed in the same dream. I must thank from the bottom of my heart all members of the taskforce, and especially to Neziha, Yana and Ninetta.

We have been a group of like-minded people, who do not want just to dream, but most of all put our energies to the dream for action.

Therefore over these last couple of years we used the human disconnection that the pandemic brought on us, to connect, to connect in a way to put our concerns and worries to action.

This is the result of our endeavors over the past years.

We have just set up the Mediterranean Children's Movement.

This is history in the making.

Never before, was there, such an effort to create the necessary space to bring together Children from around the Mediterranean to manifest and celebrate their diversity. To bring change. To build a Mediterranean society that is based on respect.

Therefore today, together with the Children of the Mediterranean we will start a new chapter for our beautiful Mediterranean Region.

Our Mediterranean Sea has been the cradle of world civilization since the first settlements in Jericho in 9000 BC.

No other basin exists in the world such as the Mediterranean, with its unique location. It is big enough to house all of us and at the same time, with its unique shape, with its islands, bays and straits, it creates a natural means to connect people around it. and provides the means of connection between continents from east and west.

The Mediterranean has always been an inspiring space. It has provided over the millenia an environment that has bred outstanding people who have made remarkable contributions to the development of history in philosophy, art, music, literature, science, and technology.

Magnificent civilizations have scattered all around the Mediterranean from east to west.

We have reason to be proud of our region. We have reason to thrive to make it great for and with our Children and young people.

However, our beautiful region has been inflicted by wars and conflicts for centuries now. The Mediterranean region has historically been the scene of intense human activity and destruction. We have and still see in our region the fuelling of wars and wars taken up by proxy on Mediterranean soil.

We have seen so many horrendous situations unfolding. We have seen and continue to see millions of people, and in particular Children, being killed, persecuted, displaced and stripped off their rightful dignity and their fundamental rights and freedoms. We have been witness and still are of human degradation. We have been living and are still living with people and children in extreme poverty, due to wars, corrupt governments and greed.

The image of our Mediterranean today is far from reassuring. Its Northern shore trails behind the North of Europe, and it is the same if we compare the Southern shore with the European shore.

Wars and conflicts continue to divide the north and south and tear it apart our peoples; today in Palestine and Libya, and yesterday in Lebanon, Cyprus, the Maghreb, the Balkans, the former Yugoslavia, reflections of other more distant wars, such as that of Afghanistan, and of another even closer, Iraq and Iran.

We today, through the setting up of this Mediterranean Children's Movement, we want to be catalysts in providing a safe space for all the children of the Mediterranean, a space for the voices of all children to be heard. A space where the aspirations of peace, equality and equity and prosperity of all the children can be heard, reflected on, acted upon and fostered.

We want to invest in Children to build peace, unity, equality, equity and sustainable prosperity. We want to invest in Children so that they build holistic wellbeing and gain their rightful dignity.

We want to safeguard Children's Human Rights, to education, to health, and to safety.

This Movement aims to be the voice of reason, and unity. The voice of all without prejudice.

We want that our uniqueness to be showcased, not just on a geopolitical level, but we want to make our sea, a place of peace, a place where everyone can thrive, where everyone can be themselves, where shared prosperity and wellbeing will be the characteristics of our Mediterranean culture.

We want the Mediterranean, to be a means of role modelling to other regions in the world.

Children are able to manifest and work together to achieve all this.

We want to invest time and space for and with Children to bring in the much needed peaceful co-existence, by putting inequalities and wars to history.

We want to empower Children to speak to us and insist that their lives are worthwhile and that they have the right to have what is needed to live in peace, tranquility and respect, to prosper and grow together

One could sceptic and say that this is a dream. But dreams come true, if we are determined if we are untied, if we keep our eyes on objectives.

We will reach out to the farthest corners of our region. We will convince others to join. We will persuade the governments of our region that we can do much more if our Children's Human Rights are upheld and safeguarded.

We want Children to become a priority on the Mediterranean Agenda.

This is what the Mediterranean Children's Movement is all about. A space for all children without prejudice. A space for the voice of reason to resonate in every corner of the Mediterranean region.

Children living in our region must be the heart and soul of our Mediterranean Society.