

## Europe: Mediterranean Youth Council in Brussels “to tune in to the EU and plan future synergies”

The Governing Board of the Mediterranean Youth Council, the pioneering initiative born of the meeting of Bishops and Mayors of the Mediterranean (Florence, 23-27 February 2022), convenes today, 3 April, (until tomorrow, 4 April) in Brussels. The project was strongly encouraged and supported by the Italian Bishops' Conference. "It brings together more than 30 young men and women from 19 countries bordering the Mediterranean, with the aim of fostering the spiritual dimension, strengthening pastoral activity to face today's challenges, and building fraternal relationships. It is an authentic way of "investing" in young people, as Pope Francis says, also pursued by other bodies such as the La Pira Foundation and the John Paul II Foundation. Members of the board include Emile Fakhoury (Lebanon), Maher Dridi (Tunisia), Aleks Birsa Jogan (Slovenia) and coordinator Pilar Shannon Perez Brown (Spain).



told SIR. “We are also keen to have a better understanding of the functioning of the EU, its mechanisms, its offices, and to present our Council during the scheduled meetings. We will tell everyone that the young people of the Mediterranean region want to live in peace, in inclusive societies where dialogue and the common good are paramount. Indeed, one of the objectives of the Council is to unite the ecclesial communities of the Churches bordering the 'Mare Nostrum' in order to promote their unity, coexistence and ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. “For our part, through our work, we are committed to bringing Europe, Asia and Africa closer together, sharing the inherent and constitutive values of the Mediterranean region. In our small way, in our homes, in our schools, in our associations, we dedicate ourselves to prayer, to asking God for the gift of peace and the conversion of hearts. I would add that we also participate in the social and political life of our countries. An important European vote will take place next June. Voting is an important exercise of participation and citizenship.”



, coordinator of the Board, "this visit will be an important opportunity to meet with the representatives of the EU institutions in Brussels and to explain to them our project of the Mediterranean Youth Council in order to establish and plan future synergies and collaborations with young people working in the field of peace-building for a more just and united society". The meeting in Brussels, she told SIR, “will also be a time to engage with the European institutions. We young people want to share our experiences, the cultures of our countries of origin, and also listen to what the European institutions have to say to us.”

