

Under the framework of



MONDIACULT 25
ESPAÑA



A SEA of words

INTERNATIONAL SHORT STORY CONTEST

17th edition

THE MEDITERRANEAN WE IMAGINE: Young Voices and Narratives in a Context of Crisis

Barcelona, 28–30 September 2025



Abstract

A Sea of Words is a Euro-Mediterranean creative writing competition launched in 2008 by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) and the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF). It gives young people a platform to share their views through literature while fostering dialogue, peace, and mutual understanding. Each year focuses on a key theme, from diversity and gender equality to climate change and intercultural dialogue. The 2025 edition, “The Mediterranean We Imagine,” invites youth to envision alternative futures in the face of conflict, inequality, and climate crisis, in resonance with MONDIACULT 2025’s vision of culture for sustainable development.

With the support of





A Sea of Words 2025

A Sea of Words is a creative writing competition aimed at young people from the Euro-Mediterranean region. Launched in 2008 by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), in collaboration with the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), it offers young people the opportunity to express their perspectives through literary creation, while promoting dialogue, peace, and mutual understanding.

Each year, the competition focuses on a different theme, inviting participants to reflect on key issues affecting the Mediterranean region. Over the years, it has addressed topics such as diversity, climate change, gender equality, and intercultural dialogue.

The 2025 edition is dedicated to the theme: **“The Mediterranean We Imagine: A Space for Young Mediterranean Storytellers to Envision and Build the Future.”**

This year, the competition invites young authors to imagine alternative futures for the Mediterranean at a time of deep, interconnected crises—from armed conflicts and inequalities to the climate emergency and forced migration. Through storytelling, participants are encouraged to explore both challenges and opportunities, helping to rethink our shared identity and collective future.

The competition is also closely aligned with the reflections promoted by **MONDIACULT 2025**, UNESCO’s World Conference on Cultural Policies, taking place this year in Barcelona. MONDIACULT 2025 places culture at the heart of sustainable development and social transformation. It brings together cultural actors from around the globe to debate how cultural policies can contribute to building more resilient, just, and inclusive societies—a vision that fully resonates with the spirit of *A Sea of Words*.

Cultural Programme in Barcelona: Connecting A Sea of Words with MONDIACULT 2025

Every year, the 10 finalists of *A Sea of Words* are invited to Barcelona to take part in a rich programme of cultural activities and to attend the public award ceremony.

The 2025 edition will be held in the framework of the MONDIACULT 2025 Forum, offering finalists a unique opportunity to engage in global cultural debates, meet other young creators, and bring their voices into international conversations on culture and social transformation.

The programme will also be enriched by the participation of young digital communicators and content creators from the Anna Lindh Foundation’s **Mediterranean Youth in Action (MYA)** programme, fostering exchange among young creatives from across the Euro-Mediterranean space.



Programme of Activities

Thematic Axis

The Mediterranean We Imagine: Young Voices and New Narratives in a Context of Crisis

In a time of war, inequality, and climate emergency, the A Sea of Words 2025 programme will provide young people from across the Mediterranean with a space to reflect, share experiences, and engage in dialogue through literary creation.

The activities in Barcelona will connect the voices of the finalists with the broader reflections of MONDIACULT 2025, highlighting the role of youth and culture in building more inclusive, sustainable, and cooperative futures for the region.

Friday, 26 September 2025

Podcast Creation Workshop (online) (11:00 – 12:00 CEST time)

A link to join the meeting (Zoom) will be sent to invited participants.

Sunday, 28 September 2025

Arrival of participants in Barcelona

- The 10 finalists of the A Sea of Words 2025 competition
- 5 young digital communicators and content creators from the Anna Lindh Foundation's Mediterranean Youth in Action (MYA) programme
- Youth representatives of Young European Federalists (JEF) Catalunya
- Jury members and partner organisations

Monday, 29 September 2025

Morning

Podcast Creation Workshop (9:00 – 13:00 CEST time)

Led by José Carlos Cabrera, migration policy analyst and creator of *Ruta Mediterránea*, an intercultural radio magazine. Drawing on his experience in projects such as *Youth Voices: Podcasting for Participatory Democracy*, the workshop will equip young participants with the skills and tools to transform their creative stories into sound-based narratives.

Venue: European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Carrer de Girona, 20, 08010 Barcelona



13.30h - Lunch at Restaurant Mussol – Casp (For SoW finalists and MYA participants)

Carrer de Casp, 19, L'Eixample, 08010 Barcelona

Afternoon

Award Ceremony

Venue: Sala Moragues – El Born. Barcelona History Museum

The central event of the *A Sea of Words 2025* programme. This ceremony will celebrate literary creativity, youth dialogue, and cultural diversity, in line with the spirit of MONDIACULT 2025.

19:30–20:00h Cocktail reception

20:00–20:25h Welcoming remarks

Senén Florensa, Executive President of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Josep Ferré, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF)

Lorena Elvira Ayuso, Secretary General of the Department for the European Union and External Action

Juan Lugo Sanchiz*, Ambassador-at-Large for Mediterranean Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation

20:25–20:50h A Sea of Words 2025 Award Ceremony. Official recognition of the 10 finalists and announcement of the 3 winners by jury members: Elisabetta Bartuli, Zineb Mekouar, Mireia Estrada, Mohamad Bitari and Nadine Zammit.

Announcement of the Best Short Story in Arabic

by **Mohamed Ould Amar**, Director-General of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)

20:50–22:15h Dialogue: “Storytelling in Times of Crisis”. A conversation with three renowned Mediterranean women writers and journalists and finalists of the competition, with active participation from young representatives of regional networks.

Speakers

Maram al-Masri, Cristina Rivas, Karima Ziali & 3 finalists of the 2025 SoW edition.

Discussants

MYA representatives (Aly Abdelazem, Mathias Charles, Brian Rocca, Nisrine El Kettani, Amina Temmam), *JEF representatives* (Irene Guirado Muñoz, Flavia



Villanueva, Zineb El Ouazani Bittich, Paula Cristóbal, Jordi López López), and *Rym Benarous* (Information and Communication Expert, EU Neighbours South).

22:15–23:00h Mediterranean concert, featuring L'Beel, an emerging singer-songwriter who blends contemporary pop sounds with North African musical traditions. Her songs address themes such as identity, migration, and intercultural dialogue, offering a powerful and moving musical finale

The awards ceremony will be moderated by Bernat Reher.

Tuesday, 30 September 2025

Complementary Activities

- 09:00h** **Policy Seminar “Culture, Heritage, and Crisis in the Mediterranean: Collective Action for Peace and Sustainability”**
- Venue:** Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC)
Carrer del Carme, 47, Ciutat Vella, 08001 Barcelona
- 12:00h** **Participation in MONDIACULT – UNESCO’s global conference on cultural policies**
- Venue:** Barcelona International Convention Center (CCIB)
Plaça de Willy Brandt, 11-14, Sant Martí, 08019 Barcelona)
- 17:00h** **Guided cultural tour of Barcelona.** An immersive cultural experience and informal meeting space to conclude the programme.

*** The event will count on English, Catalan and Spanish translation*