PARTICIPANTS' BIOS

Abu Zeid, Gihan

Feminist activist and policy advisor, Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)

She also leads its feminist working group. With more than 30 years of experience across the Middle East and North Africa, she has advanced gender equality, human rights, and social justice through policy advocacy, research, movement building, and institutional reform. Her work has contributed to national legislation, parliamentary processes, and civil society programmes.

She is also a research fellow at the International Institute for Socio-Informatics (IISI), University of Siegen, where she examines how high-tech warfare, AI-enabled surveillance, and digital infrastructures affect civilian life in the Arab region, drawing on feminist, intersectional, and post-colonial perspectives.

Ait Zai, Nadia

Founder and Director, CIDDEF

She is a lawyer, academic and human rights activist, campaigning for women's and children's rights since the early 1970s. She was first deputy mayor of Algiers Centre (1979-1984), holds a doctorate (2021) on the impact of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Algerian law, and taught at the University of Algiers 1 (1984-2022).

She chairs the Foundation for Equality (CIDDEF), founded in 2002, which documents Algeria's women's movement and advocates for repealing discriminatory laws, including a women's quota in elected assemblies. She is an expert on gender-based violence for the Council of Europe's North-South Centre and advises the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Aljaber, Iyad

Policy Dialogue Expert, EU-funded Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality II

He is a policy dialogue and civil society expert, facilitator and consultant with over twenty years of experience in civil society development, youth empowerment, participatory governance and policy dialogue across the Euro-Mediterranean region. His work focuses on strengthening dialogue between civil society organisations, public institutions and international partners, promoting inclusive and intersectional approaches to policy processes, with particular experience in youth participation, gender equality and civic engagement. Based in Amman, he is also the founder of IDare for Sustainable Development, a civil society organisation promoting social innovation and the active engagement of young women and men in their communities.

Alkhalil, Zainab

Program Manager for Women's Access to Justice and Education Programs; Executive Coordinator of the Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF) at the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD), Jordan

She brings over 20 years of humanitarian and development experience across the MENA region. Her work centres on localising the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Jordan, translating national commitments into community-level action, and on strengthening civil society networks so that local and women-led organisations help shape policy rather than only being consulted. Regionally, she serves on the Steering Committee of the UfM Climate-WPS Network and is particularly interested in how cooperation and networks can sustain women's leadership amid intersecting crises.

Anani, Ghida
Founder and Director, ABAAD

She works to strengthen sustainable systems for gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and protection in Lebanon and the MENA region. Her expertise spans gender equality, child protection, case management, policy reform, advocacy and programme design. At ABAAD, a civil society organisation advocating for gender equality, she engages men and boys, parliamentarians, ministries, and community and religious leaders.

She has led public campaigns including #Undress522, which helped secure the repeal of Article 522, the so-called “rape-marriage” provision, from the Lebanese Penal Code; in 2019 it won first prize in the UN SDG Action Award. She serves on international boards, including ICVA and the CHS Alliance.

Andolz, Sonia
Coordinator of the Security Alternatives section, International Catalan Institute for Peace (ICIP)

She is an analyst in Security, Defence and International Conflicts, specialising in the Mediterranean and the Middle East regions. Her areas of specialisation include the construction of group identities, refugee studies and international security. She worked in post-conflict zones and humanitarian crises and serves as an international electoral observer for the OSCE.

In 2013, she was awarded a CESEDEN fellowship by the Spanish Ministry of Defence’s Centre for Security and Defence Studies. From 2021 to 2024, she served as Director General of Security Administration for the Government of Catalonia. She currently combines her role as Head of Security Studies at the International Catalan Institute for Peace (ICIP) with analysis, public outreach and teaching at the University of Barcelona and IBEI.

Aubarell, Gemma
Director of the Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

She has extensive experience in Euro-Mediterranean relations, civil society engagement, gender equality, cultural diplomacy and intercultural dialogue. From 2009 to 2016, she was Head of the Programmes and Networks Unit at the Anna Lindh Foundation in Alexandria; previously she was Director of Programmes at IEMed and Head of the Mediterranean Service at the Government of Catalonia, where she coordinated the MedCat 2030 Mediterranean Strategy.

She currently leads the MedWE Policy Series, developed with the UfM, on emerging gender-related challenges in the region. She is Associate Professor of International Relations at Blanquerna–Ramon Llull University and Associate Researcher at GRITIM (UPF).

Aweidah, Sama Fayez
General Director, Women’s Studies Centre (WSC)

She is a Palestinian researcher, writer and women’s rights advocate. She is currently the General Director of the Women’s Studies Centre (WSC), a Palestinian NGO based in East Jerusalem, with branches in Nablus, Hebron and Ramallah. She holds an MA in Management from City University, London.

She is one of the founders of the Palestinian Federation of Women’s Action Committees and has been elected three times as General Coordinator of AISHA (The Arab Women’s Forum). She is certified by the ILO as a Participatory Gender Audit Facilitator and has published a book on daily life during the Second Intifada, 15 children’s books and numerous articles. In 2022, she received the Franco-German Human Rights Defenders Award.

Ayhan, Tutku

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in International Security, Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI)

She holds a PhD in Security Studies from the University of Central Florida. Her research draws on feminist security studies and feminist international relations to examine gender, conflict, displacement, peacebuilding, and the everyday experiences of insecurity among marginalised communities.

Her work focuses on gendered violence, women's agency and resilience, and civil society activism. She has conducted qualitative fieldwork with Yezidi women affected by genocide and displacement, and research on Rohingya women's activism in Bangladesh and on Iranian women's diasporic activism under transnational repression.

Barakat, Hala

Senior Director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI), American University in Cairo's Onsi Sawiris School of Business

She leads initiatives advancing inclusive economic development, entrepreneurship, and women's empowerment. Her work focuses on strengthening the economic participation of women in underserved communities through entrepreneurship, access to finance, and market digitalisation, and on advancing women's leadership through mentorship, capacity building, and corporate governance initiatives. She has extensive experience designing and leading programmes with public institutions, the private sector, and international development organisations.

Barrios Trullols, Leticia

Officer, General Directorate of Development Cooperation (DGCD) - Department for European Union and External Action

She is currently the focal point for feminism at the DGCD, where she has worked since 2019. She holds a degree in Political Science and Public Administration from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), a Master's in Development Cooperation from the Free University of Brussels and a postgraduate degree in Culture of Peace (UAB).

She has more than 20 years of experience in development cooperation, mainly with United Nations agencies in Brazil and Senegal, on gender justice, peacebuilding and citizen security, and has worked with human rights organisations in Mauritania, The Gambia and Colombia.

Ben Mansour, Khouloud

Program Officer, African Women Leaders Network Program; Support to the Office of the Special Envoy of the African Union on WPS

She is a young Tunisian expert in multilateral diplomacy and in youth, peace, and security. She previously served at the African Union Commission as the Youth Ambassador for Peace for North Africa, advancing youth inclusion in peace and security processes and participation in decision-making across Africa.

She has collaborated with the Governments of Namibia and Germany on multilateralism, UN reform and peace dialogues, supported peace negotiations within the AU and the UN, and worked with the AU Peace and Security Council on climate, migration and transitional justice. She is a committed voice for intergenerational dialogue and inclusive multilateralism.

Ben Said, Ikram

Founder and Honorary President, Aswat Nissa (Voices of Women)

Aswat Nissa is a Tunisian feminist organisation promoting women's active participation in political life and advocating for gender-sensitive public policies. She is also the co-founder of New Visions, an organisation dedicated to reviving political imagination and strategic foresight in the Arab world.

An award-winning feminist activist and opinion writer, Ikram has worked for 14 years in senior roles at Search for Common Ground, Save the Children International, UN Women and Interpeace. Her initiative "Women's Political Academy" won the 2014 Madeleine Albright Award. She served on the Advisory Group of Experts on Youth, Peace and Security appointed by Ban Ki-Moon, and holds an MA in Gender, Sexuality and Global Politics from SOAS.

Benseny i Albà, Mar

Programme Director, NOVACT – International Institute for Nonviolent Action

She is an expert in nonviolence and peacebuilding. For nearly two decades she has worked in international cooperation, peacebuilding, human rights advocacy and civil society strengthening, mostly in the Mediterranean and the MENA region.

Her work focuses on the humanitarian–development–peace nexus and on strengthening the role of women and young people in conflict-affected contexts, within the framework of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2250. She holds a degree in Journalism and a Postgraduate degree in Culture of Peace from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Breil, Adélie

Coordinator, Women Leading Change project, Aix-Marseille University

Her work focuses on gender equality in higher education across the Mediterranean. She works with academic and institutional partners to strengthen women's leadership and support institutional change towards greater equality on both shores of the Mediterranean.

She previously spent ten years working with NGOs in West, Central and North Africa, supporting the professional integration of people facing multiple barriers, including refugees, early school leavers and women. Her experience spans social inclusion, employability and access to opportunities. She is a graduate of Aix-Marseille University.

Brouma, Anthi

Deputy Regional Coordinator and Theme Leader on Water Governance, Sustainable Financing and Gender+, GWP-Med

With more than 25 years of Mediterranean professional and academic practice, and management of more than 17 multi-funded regional projects, Anthi has worked on water and climate governance, policy and financing across territorial levels and within different frameworks (UfM, EU, UN, IFIs, OECD), with a focus on the MENA region.

Deeply committed to transformative leadership for under-represented groups, Anthi is co-founder of the Initiative on Women in Water Diplomacy in the MENA region and Co-Chair of the Technical Working Group on Women and Youth Leadership of the UfM Network on Climate, Women, Peace and Security.

Budó Roger, Glòria

Senior Policy Officer, Euro-Mediterranean and European Networks, Ministry for European Union and Foreign Action, Government of Catalonia

She holds a Degree in Law (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1988), a Master's degree in European law (Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1989) and an Executive Master's Degree in Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2014).

She has extensive experience in the Catalan Administration since 1990, especially in European and Euro-Mediterranean affairs and European projects. She worked in the Catalan Delegation in Brussels (1990-1995) and was director of the Europe Research Programme in the Catalan Ministry of Universities, Research and Information Society (2003-2004).

Bugaighis, Hala

Development, Policy and Governance Expert

Hala Bugaighis is a researcher, policy analyst, and development specialist with over 20 years of experience designing and executing development and research projects in Libya. Her work focuses on governance, inclusive socioeconomic development and women's rights in fragile and post-conflict contexts.

She is currently a Non-Resident Fellow at the Institute for Middle East Options and played a central role in international mediation processes, including the UN Structured Dialogue and the Economic Track of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), where she also co-led the women's track. She is Co-founder and Executive Director of the Jusoor Center for Studies and Development, a Libyan independent think and do tank.

Chekrouni, Nouzha

Senior Fellow, Policy Center for the New South (PCNS)

She is also Academic Director of the Executive Master in Leadership and Public Management (LMP) at the Public Policy School, UM6P, and Senior Fellow in Advanced Leadership at Harvard University. A former Moroccan minister (Moroccans residing abroad; Women and Social Affairs) and member of parliament, she served as Ambassador of Morocco to Canada. She holds a Doctorate in linguistics from the Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3. Since 2020, she has been a member of the Arab and Moroccan network of women mediators for the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda. Her expertise covers gender equality, African governance and Mediterranean geopolitics.

Costafreda Quesada, Andrea

Director General for Development Cooperation, Generalitat de Catalunya

She holds a degree in Political Science and Public Administration from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and a master's in Information Society from the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, with a specialisation in political conflict resolution from the London School of Economics. Since 2016, she has led the Latin America and Mediterranean programme at Oxfam Intermón.

She has worked as a consultant and researcher for the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Barcelona City Council, UNDP and the Inter-American Development Bank, and was responsible for planning and evaluation at the Catalan Directorate General for Development Cooperation (2009–2011). She is Associate Professor of International Relations at Blanquerna and affiliated professor at IBEI.

de Felipe Lehtonen, Maria Helena

Founder and President, Federation of Mediterranean Women Entrepreneurs (AFAEMME)

She is a Spanish-Finnish lawyer, business leader and Senior Strategic Advisor specializing in European affairs, international business relations, SME advocacy and Mediterranean cooperation. She is the Founder and President of AFAEMME, established in 2002 and representing 63 member associations across 23 countries, and serves on the Advisory Board of ASCAME.

From 2015 to 2025, she was a Member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), holding leadership positions in external relations, fundamental rights, gender equality and SME development. She previously served as Vice-President of Foment del Treball, the Catalan employers' Confederation, where she currently chairs the Equality Committee.

de Garidel-Thoron, Camille

President, Euro-Mediterranean University Consortium TETHYS; Director of Strategic Projects and Networks, Aix-Marseille University

She holds a PhD in Earth Sciences from Paris-Saclay University, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, and pursued research in climatology and geochemistry at Columbia University, New York. She subsequently specialised in scientific coordination, European research networks and international cooperation.

She is committed to strengthening Euro-Mediterranean partnerships and promoting universities as key actors in fostering inclusive societies and resilience. She has been particularly involved in advancing gender equality and women's leadership in Mediterranean higher education, notably through the Erasmus+ WE4LEAD project and the Women Leading Change initiative.

Dorangricchia, Anna

Programme Manager in the Human Development Division, Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

In this role, she coordinates the UfM Regional Policy Dialogue on Women Empowerment and has overseen the UfM Gender Monitoring Systems since 2020. She leads regional initiatives focused on women's economic empowerment, climate and WPS, and dialogue with CSOs.

Faus Onbargi, Alexia

Programme Manager, Sustainable Development and Regional Integration Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

At IEMed she leads the Institute's initiatives on climate change. Her areas of expertise include just transitions, policy coherence for sustainable development and climate governance, combining policy research, analysis and advice across international and regional contexts. Before joining the IEMed, she spent almost five years as a Policy Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) in Bonn, publishing in journals including Climate Policy, Applied Energy and Sustainable Development. Dr. Faus Onbargi has also contributed to international policy processes, including UN climate negotiations. She holds a PhD in Global Sustainability Governance from Utrecht University and an MPhil from the University of Oxford.

Ferré Trad, Nuria

Director, Chair on Refugees and Forced Migrants, Director, Master in International Migration at Universidad Pontificia Comillas

She is a Human Rights Professor and Senior Investigator at the University Institute for Migration Studies (IUEM), focusing on international protection and human rights law. She previously spent four years at the Spanish Commission for Refugee Assistance (CEAR) and sits on the Board of the NGO Rescate. She supervises doctoral research on violence against women human rights defenders in contexts of political conflict and on Sahrawi women in the diaspora. Her recent projects include IMPACt (EU Agency for Asylum), BREAKING, on hostility towards migrants, and RELATA, on credibility assessment in asylum claims.

Galán, Susana

Ramón y Cajal Assistant Professor, Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI)

She is also the co-Principal Investigator of the research project Anti-Gender Politics in the Southwest Asia and North Africa Region (ANTIGENDERSWANA), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (2026–2030), and the WG2 co-lead of the COST Action CA23149 on anti-gender politics (Antigender-Politics). Her previous research has examined activism against public sexual violence and the politicisation of discourse in personal blogs in Egypt, as well as mobilisations for the right to drive in Saudi Arabia. In 2024-5, she also participated in a project on femicide observatories in Colombia funded by the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD).

García-Arcos, Sergio

SWANA Regional Head of Programmes, Oxfam International.

He is an international development and humanitarian professional with over twenty years of experience leading regional programmes across Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA). At Oxfam, he oversees multi-country initiatives, strategic partnerships and programme development.

He previously held senior roles with DANIDA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, managing programmes on displacement, resilience, humanitarian response and social cohesion in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and other contexts. His expertise spans programme design, donor coordination, policy analysis, organisational development and conflict-sensitive programming.

Geha, Carmen

Co-Founder and Managing Director, Soltara Consulting; Research Fellow, European Insitute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Soltara Consulting is a Barcelona-based firm that turns gender equality commitments by organisations and leaders into policy and practice. She is Senior Fellow in Gender and Culture at the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) and Associate Fellow of the Chatham House Middle East and North Africa Programme.

She holds a PhD in International Relations and is a scholar-practitioner with 20 years of experience in women's rights, governance and civil society across the Arab region. She held a tenured Associate Professorship at the American University of Beirut, was a Visiting Fulbright Scholar at Harvard, and served as Senior Gender Consultant to UN Women Lebanon.

Gutiérrez Zárate, Laura

Consultant on gender-based violence and governance, GWL Voices

She is a political scientist and gender policy researcher with a decade of experience in state and municipal government in Mexico. At GWL Voices, she advises on gender equality and multilateral reform, helping institutions put policy commitments into practice. In government, she led a multisectoral initiative that brought public agencies and civil society together to improve access to public services in marginalised communities.

Her research examines how feminist movements shape legislation on violence against women and why political parties contest these reforms, and has been published in Social Movement Studies and the European Journal of Politics and Gender. She holds a PhD from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and a master's from the London School of Economics.

Hamdai, Ilham

Professor of Law at the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences of Rabat-Agdal (Mohammed V University).

She also teaches at the University of Bordeaux. She coordinates the Rabat–Bordeaux international Master's in Euro-Mediterranean Trade Law, developed in partnership with the Union for the Mediterranean, and chairs her faculty's Law Clinic. She is Vice-President of IEDJA (Paris) and of the Moroccan Legal Institute.

A specialist in human rights (women's and children's rights, family law, family mediation), she worked with the Ministry of Justice and civil society on a guide for women victims of violence and contributed to work on Morocco's draft new Family Code.

Holmes, Melinda

Program Director, International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

Melinda Holmes is a Program Director at ICAN, where she leads advocacy and capacity-building initiatives to advance women's leadership in peace and security. A peacebuilding specialist focused on gender, political violence, and inclusive approaches to security, she has played a key role in fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange across the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), a global network of women-led peacebuilding organisations spanning more than 40 countries. Previously, she has collaborated with organisations including the United States Institute of Peace, the LSE Centre for Women, Peace & Security, and The Carter Center. She holds a master's degree from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

Ismail, Zeinab

Senior Policy Analyst and Project Lead, SMEX

She is a Lebanese journalist. SMEX is a non-profit organisation advancing human rights in digital spaces across West Asia and North Africa. Her work covers a wide range of digital rights issues, including gender-based violence, content moderation, media and cybercrime laws, digital authoritarianism, and AI ethics. Combining journalism with policy analysis and project leadership, she examines how technology, legislation, and government practices affect human rights and civic space. She has written about the pressures facing civil society and digital rights organisations in Egypt, Iraq, and Tunisia, and engages with researchers and activists through public discussions and regional events, including Bread&Net.

Jarrous, Lina

Managing Partner and Programs Manager, SEEDS for Legal Initiatives

SEEDS is a Lebanese nonprofit working to advance access to justice and protect civic space through legal knowledge production, capacity building, policy development, and legal reform. She brings over 15 years of experience in journalism and communications, including work with France 24, Alhurra TV and L'Orient-Le Jour.

At SEEDS, Lina leads programmes that make legal information more accessible and strengthen participation in public life, and designs and facilitates dialogue and training on inclusive leadership and civic participation. Her work has supported proposals for gender quotas and stronger policies against sexual harassment. She hosts Hkini, a podcast exploring rights and social issues through a gender lens.

Lutfi Royo, Màriam

Head of the Euro-Mediterranean and European Networks Service, Ministry for the European Union and Foreign Action, Government of Catalonia

Lawyer specialising in EU external action, with expertise in Euro Mediterranean affairs and territorial, interregional and cross-border cooperation. She holds an LLB from the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, an LLM from the Open University of Catalonia and a Master's in EU external action and Euro-Mediterranean studies from the College of Europe. Within the Catalan Government since 2019, she coordinates the MedCat 2030 Euro-Mediterranean strategy, follows the EU's Pact for the Mediterranean and steers Catalonia's participation in networks such as the CPMR and the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion. Her career also spans EU diplomacy at the EU Delegation to Costa Rica and consultancy on the gender dimension of Horizon Europe projects.

Menna, Mosbah

Ecofeminist and specialist in gender, social inclusion and climate mitigation

She has over a decade of experience at the intersection of women's and youth's empowerment within blue and green economies and sustainable development, in the international development and non-profit sectors. She has an academic background in Engineering and Innovation and an MSc in Sustainability and Business Innovation from EADA Business School in Barcelona. She brings both technical rigor and feminist frameworks to complex social and environmental challenges. Her work spans fragile and conflict-affected settings across the Mediterranean and Red Sea, where she has led gender-integrated programming to amplify vulnerable voices and build inclusive communities. She is an alumna of the Anna Lindh's Mediterranean Youth in Action programme and has authored scientific papers and policy briefs across the Euro-Med region.

Mohammed, Donia Tarek Abdelwahab

Assistant Professor of Mass Communication at the Canadian International College (CIC), Egypt; Manager of the Media Impact Lab – MENA Region

She holds a PhD in Mass Communication from Cairo University and is an alumna of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). She also serves as Head of the Scientific Research Department at the Union of Media Women in Egypt and is a member of the Volunteer Media Committee of the National Council for Women in Egypt. Her research focuses on gender and media, women's representation, digital transformation, artificial intelligence and women's economic empowerment, and she has contributed to initiatives with DW Akademie, the Arab Council for the Social Sciences and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

Morgan, Charlotte

Senior Communications Officer, International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

She leads ICAN's communications work, highlighting the organisation's approaches and impact and the work of women peacebuilders within the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL).
She began her career with the United Nations Department of Peace Operations, working on advocacy and strategic communications with a focus on Women, Peace and Security. Her experience also spans disability justice, humanitarian response and community resilience, often integrating a gender perspective. She holds an MSc in Gender, Peace and Security from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Neiiendam, Juliane Marie

Danish member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Vice-President of its Civil Society Organisations' Group (Group III) and Vice-President of the EESC Equality Group

She served as rapporteur for the EESC opinions on the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030 and inclusive entrepreneurship, focusing on removing structural barriers and creating equal opportunities. An engineer with an MBA, she has extensive experience promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly in women's leadership, entrepreneurship and STEM. She is also the author of articles addressing gender equality, women's economic participation and the barriers to leadership. Her work focuses on turning European policy commitments into meaningful opportunities and strengthening civil society's influence on decision-making.

Nicolás Adán, Juan Enrique

Team Leader, EU-funded Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality II

He is a consultant specialising in civil society engagement, democratic governance and human rights, with over twenty years of international cooperation experience, particularly across the Middle East and North Africa. He leads Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality II, supporting DG MENA and EU Delegations in strengthening dialogue with civil society.

His work combines strategic advice, programme design and facilitation, with expertise in EU Civil Society Roadmaps, inclusive consultation and sustained mechanisms for participation and accountability. Based in Amman, he brings regional experience to discussions on how civil society, including women's organisations, can influence policies and cooperation priorities.

Pavlou, Susana

Directorm Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS); President of Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE)

She is a gender equality expert with over 20 years of experience in research, policy development, institutional reform and feminist advocacy, specialising in violence against women and girls.

She has contributed to studies and policy processes for EIGE, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and UN Women, previously served on the Board and Executive Committee of the European Women's Lobby, and coordinated the establishment of Cyprus's Woman's House. Her work connects feminist civil society advocacy with institutional change, focusing on how laws and policies translate into effective protection, support and equality for women.

Rabie, Sara

Portfolio Manager for Climate, Migration and Gender at the Arab Foundations Forum

Sara Rabie is a peacebuilding and climate security specialist with more than seven years of experience across the Middle East and Africa. As Portfolio Manager at the Arab Foundations Forum, she leads its work at the intersection of climate action, human mobility and gender equality in the Arab region. She previously served as Climate, Peace and Security Specialist at CGIAR, leading research on how climate shocks and conflict dynamics drive displacement. At the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA), she led the Climate, Peace and Development programme and the COP27 Presidency Initiative Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP). She holds an MSc in International Relations from the University of Glasgow.

Ramzy Zaatout, Chaymaa

Executive Director of Shelter Art Space in Alexandria, Egypt

She is a cultural strategist and policy researcher with over two decades of experience across the Middle East, Africa, and the Mediterranean, spanning cultural cooperation, intercultural dialogue, creative economy development, and community engagement.

She leads Mapping Visual Arts in Upper Egypt, an initiative documenting and safeguarding traditional Egyptian art, and serves on the Advisory Council of IEMed's Quaderns de la Mediterrània. An international speaker and mentor, she has served as an AFAC juror and is a DeVos Institute international fellow, with an interest in how culture and civil society can strengthen women's leadership and community resilience.

Reyes Iborra, Cristina

International Relations Officer, Barcelona Provincial Council

She is an expert in international development cooperation and gender equality. She manages decentralised cooperation projects in the Mediterranean and Latin America and coordinates the EqualMED programme on local gender equality policies. She previously led eye health cooperation projects in Africa and Latin America at the Ulls del Món Foundation, where she also coordinated its Gender Strategy. She holds a Master's in International Relations, Security and Development from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and two Master's degrees in Sociology and Anthropology, specialising in gender, from Université Paris 7 Diderot. She has also published on women's activism against violence in Mexico.

Rico Santacreu, Mariona

Programme Manager, Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed).

She works on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, gender equality and civil society participation, combining programme management with research coordination and policy dialogue. She contributes to the MedWE programme, a joint initiative of IEMed and the UfM promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

She has managed EU-funded projects including CONNEKT, on drivers of violent extremism among young people in the MENA region and the Balkans, MAGIC, on gendered Islamophobia in media narratives, and CLUSTER, on the inclusion of young people, particularly women. She currently coordinates at IEMed the Interreg NEXT MED project MedYCI.

Saadi, Fatimah
Researcher, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

She completed her PhD at the Department of Political and Social Sciences of Universitat Pompeu Fabra, with a dissertation on the gendered implications of power-sharing arrangements in sectarian post-conflict polities and women's political representation. Her research interests include gender and politics, feminist institutionalism, gendered political violence, sectarianism and representation in identity-based power-sharing systems, and authoritarian settings.

She has contributed to research projects on protest, civic engagement and civil society in the Arab world, as a junior researcher at the LSE Middle East Centre and as a researcher at the Arab Reform Initiative on the Horizon Europe EMBRACE project. She is a member of the Feminism and Institutionalism International Network.

Santonja Mayor, Paqui
Senior Advisor, Casa Mediterráneo

She has over 25 years of experience in Spanish public administration and international organisations, focusing on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, European affairs and public governance. From 2000 to 2009, she worked at Barcelona Provincial Council, responsible for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, and later held senior advisory posts in the Spanish Government, including during Spain's Presidency of the Council of the EU (2009–2010).

Between 2015 and 2018, she was a Project Manager at the OECD in Paris. She joined Casa Mediterráneo in Alicante in 2022 and is currently Senior Advisor, responsible for relations with Euro-Mediterranean institutions and cooperation networks. She holds a Law degree from the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Selham El Khammari, Rania
Intern, Department for European Union and External Action of the Government of Catalonia

She holds a degree in English Studies from the University of Barcelona and is pursuing a master's degree in International Relations at the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI). In her internship, she supports work on European affairs, Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and European networks.

She has experience teaching languages and translating literature from English into Spanish. A native speaker of Catalan, Spanish and Arabic, she has C2-level English, basic French and is learning Turkish. Her interests centre on migration, refugee protection and human rights.

Sostero, Giulia
Coordinator, ASWAT Department (Africa, Southwest Asia and Türkiye) and its Euro-Mediterranean networks, ALDA

ALDA (European Association for Local Democracy) is a French-registered association promoting good governance and citizen participation at the local level in the EU, its Neighbourhood and beyond. Her expertise is focused on participatory democracy, youth engagement and women's empowerment, with a background in migration and international cooperation studies.

She has managed and trained in many gender equality initiatives in the Mediterranean, such as PARFAIT in Tunisia and WE ACT in Turkey, EU-funded projects increasing women's participation in politics at the local level. She is co-head of the French network of the Anna Lindh Foundation.

Suero Bodas, Marta

Development Cooperation Project Officer, Barcelona's Provincial Council

She holds a BA in Sociology from the University of Barcelona and an MSc in International Policy Analysis from the University of Bath (UK). She currently serves as an International Relations Officer at the Barcelona Provincial Council, working on development cooperation initiatives in the Mediterranean region. Previously, she was Equality Officer in the same institution, a focal point for international feminist policies, project management, gender research and training.

With more than 25 years of professional experience, she has developed expertise in feminist and municipalist cooperation, working in public institutions, civil society organisations and consultancy on the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and projects promoting gender equality and development.

Tarazi, Rania

Gender Team Leader, United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Arab States

She leads regional policy and programming on gender equality and women's empowerment, with more than 20 years of international development experience spanning gender equality, Women, Peace and Security, socioeconomic policy and sustainable development. Her work advances gender-responsive approaches to climate-related risks, conflict and protracted crises, inclusive recovery and women's economic empowerment.

She has held positions with UNDP, UN Women and Oxfam GB, where she worked with women's civil society organisations to advance women's transformative leadership and political participation. She holds an MSc from the LSE and an MA from Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Traidi, Aida

Project Advisor, Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

She is a sociologist whose work combines international cooperation and research on political violence, gender, intersectionality and human rights. At IEMed, she previously worked on CONNEKT, a Horizon 2020 project examining violent extremism among young people, and co-authored its policy paper on the gender dimensions of violent extremism.

Before joining IEMed, she collaborated with NOVACT on preventing violent extremism in Tunisia and with the Muslim Human Rights Association on a project addressing Islamophobia. She holds a degree in Sociology from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and master's degrees in Human Rights and Democracy in the MENA Region and in Project Management.

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She is Principal Investigator of the Legitimacy and Civicness in the Arab World project and Director of the Syria Conflict Research Programme. Her research examines how legitimate bottom-up governance and civic agency are constructed and contested in authoritarian and conflict contexts.

She is particularly interested in civil society inclusion in peacemaking and peacebuilding. She played a central role in designing civil society and women's participation mechanisms in UN-led peace processes, including the Syrian Civil Society Support Room and the Women's Advisory Board to the UN Special Envoy for Syria, of which she was a member. She co-founded several civil society organisations and coalitions, and 1+1, an Arabic-language civic media initiative.

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She leads El-Hiwar III, a training programme on Euro-Arab relations. She teaches International Relations at Blanquerna (Ramon Llull University), the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) and Pompeu Fabra University. She was previously scientific coordinator of the H2020 project CONNEKT on violent extremism among youth in the MENA region and the Balkans, and until August 2022 Director of the Arab World and Mediterranean Area at IEMed.

She co-directed the Spanish Observatory on Islamophobia in the Media (2017–2021) and was scientific coordinator of the EU-funded MAGIC project on gendered Islamophobia. She is a member of the Council of Novact and of the Governing Board of the International Catalan Institute for Peace (ICIP).

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She coordinates regional initiatives within DG MENA's Regional Economic Cooperation Unit. Her work focuses in particular on socioeconomic inclusion and the economic empowerment of women and young people.

Her previous experience includes work with non-governmental and decentralised cooperation organisations and with the United Nations, specialising in support to local actors.