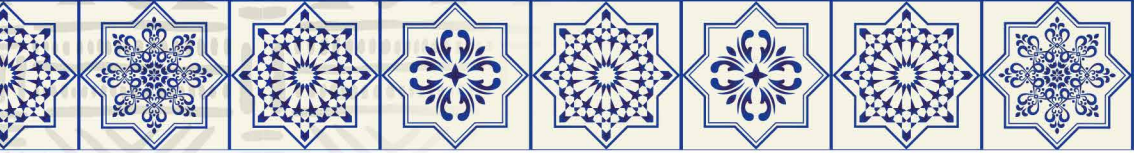


11TH EDITION HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM MOROCCO • SPAIN • PORTUGAL

A HISTORY THAT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE *JUNE 28-29, 2024 - ESSAOUIRA*

In parallel to the concerts and true to its commitment to stimulating dialogue and exchange, the Gnaoua and World Music Festival in Essaouira has always sought to open spaces for discussion and debate. Created in 2012, the Human Rights Forum quickly became one of the Festival's highlights, welcoming researchers, politicians, artists and civil society stakeholders every year to debate topical issues with total freedom of expression. Organised in partnership with the National Human Rights Council and later with the Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad, the Forum has addressed—over the past 10 editions—a diverse range of themes, including: culture and youth; the future of Africa, the women who create and take initiative, and the diasporas; creativity and cultural policy in the digital era; the imperative of equality; the power of culture against the culture of violence ; ..





The 11th edition of the Human Rights Forum of the Gnaoua and World Music Festival in Essaouira Forum will take place June 28-29 around the theme of “Morocco, Spain, Portugal: a history that looks to the future”.

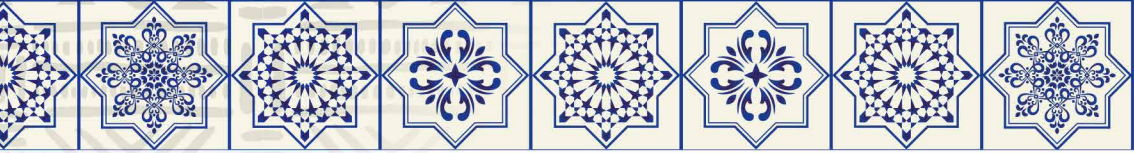
In 2030, less than six years from now, Morocco, Spain, and Portugal will conjointly organise the World Cup of football. This shared bid bears witness to the political relations that continue to develop and economic relations that grow stronger every day: Spain, for example, has been Morocco's leading commercial partner for over ten years. This shared World Cup will also crown increasingly close human relations, as demonstrated by recorded data for Moroccan tourists to the peninsula (nearly a million a year) as well as Moroccan migrants to both countries. Here too, the three governments seem optimistic, and intend for example to develop circular migration agreements.

The three neighbouring nations know each other well, and share a history that extends over a thousand years, with variable but virtually uninterrupted human, economic and cultural flows. This shared history, however, has also been fraught with friction, conflict, including armed conflict, and tensions of all kinds. In each of the three countries, the influence of the neighbour is present and clearly visible, but the effects of this long history are still real, and misunderstandings are at times persistent. Public opinion, so to speak, is not conclusively serene.

In this context, the strengthening of economic and political relations between Morocco, Spain and Portugal, and the joint organization of the 2030 World Cup, represent real advances and opportunities. But the challenges facing the three countries have also changed, requiring greater cooperation, understanding and mutual respect.

What impact will the joint organization of the World Cup have on future relations between the three countries? What role can civil society, intellectuals, artists and sportsmen and women play? How is mobility evolving between the three countries? How do diasporas evoke exile, community, and homeland?





KEYNOTE SPEAKER

THE MEDITERRANEAN ... BORDER OR CROSSROADS BETWEEN AFRICA AND EUROPE?

How can we strengthen bonds to make them resistant to shifts, or crises? How can we pull in the same direction, and privilege shared interests? What effect might the organisation of World Cup 2030 have on relations between Morocco and the European Union, between Africa and the European Union? What equilibrium between the Mediterranean and Morocco's Atlantic vision?

ROUND TABLE 1

1000 YEARS OF HISTORY, WHAT DO WE CARRY WITHIN US?

Muslims have been present on the Iberian Peninsula since the 9th century. This Portuguese and Spanish presence would later play a role in shaping the contours of contemporary Morocco. Heritage, culture, traditions...what parts of this history do we carry within us, on both shores of the Mediterranean Sea? How does this history contribute to shaping who we are today, and influence perceptions of our neighbours, whether next-door or across the sea? This round table will also decipher elements of recent and contemporary history, built upon crises and tensions as well as major accomplishments.

ROUND TABLE 2

SPORT, ART AND CULTURE ... FATUM NOSTRUM (OUR SHARED DESTIN)

And what if the tunnel connecting Morocco (and Africa) to Spain (and Europe) began to resemble this shared organisation of the World Cup? And if, in the end, appeasement and the serene development of these relationships were the work of athletes, artists, and intellectuals from both sides of the Mediterranean?

ROUND TABLE 3

HUMAN MOBILITY, ECONOMY, DIASPORAS ... NEIGHBOURING HISTORIES

For approximately 1000 years, flows between the three nations have never ebbed. Whether conquerors (centuries ago), migrants, intellectuals, merchandise, or cultural productions, the Mediterranean bears witness to these exchanges and crossings. This mobility must be considered in both directions. The face of it has shifted: the mobility of students, skills, capital, knowledge, tourists, and more. What has changed in the modes of mobility between these three countries? How can their bonds grow stronger? What new countenance will they present in the future?





SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero - (Spain)
Former President of the Government of Spain
(April 2004 – December 2011)

ROUND TABLE 1

Anouar Majid - (USA)
Professor, University of New England,
publisher, editor-in-chief, Tingis Magazine

Mohamed El Morabet - (Spain/Morocco)
Author and translator

Nieves Muriel García - (Spain)
Author and researcher

Oumama Aouad Lahrech - (Morocco)
Doctor of Iberian and Iberian-American Literature,
Former Ambassador of H.M. King Mohammed VI
to Peru, Bolivia and Panama

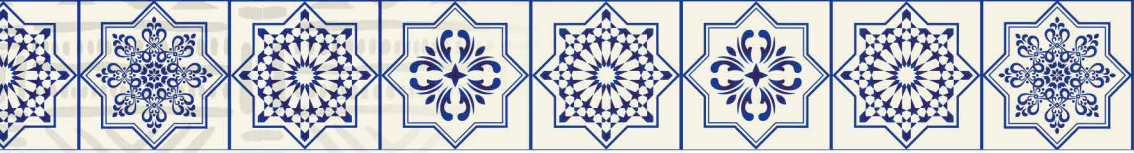
Rodrigo Sobral Cunha - (Portugal)
Author, researcher and university professor

ROUND TABLE 2

Carlos Martins - (Portugal)
Musician

Farida Benlyazid - (Morocco)
Producer, director and screenwriter





Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla - (Spain)

Professor, translator and author

Nadia Hafid - (Spain)

Comic author and illustrator

Youssef El Maimouni - (Spain/Morocco)

Author and educator specialising in social issues

ROUND TABLE 3

Abdallah Saaf - (Morocco)

Professor of political science, PhD in public law

Iván Martín - (Spain)

**Associate Professor at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain)
and Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P - Morocco)**

Laila Karrouch - (Spain/Morocco)

Author

Maria João Tomás - (Portugal)

Researcher and lecturer, international politics analyst and author

Mohammed Anouar Haidour - (Morocco)

Trade unionist and activist

MODERATORS

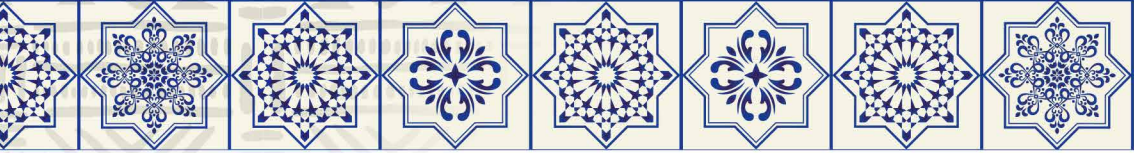
Driss Bennani - (Morocco)

Journalist and TV producer

El Arbi El Harti - (Morocco)

Poet and playwright





PROGRAM
FRIDAY JUNE 28, 2024
Hôtel Atlas Essaouira Riad Resort
“Salle La Caravelle”

9H30^{AM}:

WELCOME RECEPTION

10H^{AM}:

OPENING REMARKS:

- **Neila Tazi**
Producer of the Gnaoua and World Music Festival
- **Driss El Yazami**
President, Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad

10H15^{AM} - 10H45^{AM}: KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

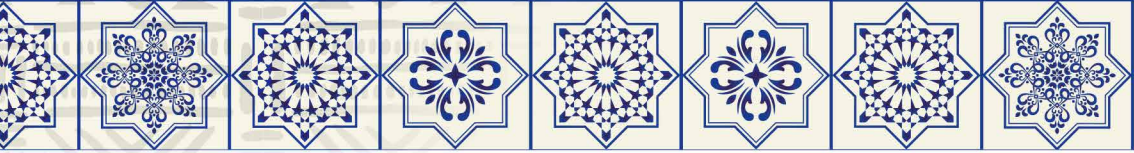
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

**The Mediterranean ... border or crossroads
between Africa and Europe?**

How can we strengthen bonds to make them resistant to shifts, or crises? How can we pull in the same direction, and privilege shared interests? What effect might the organisation of World Cup 2030 have on relations between Morocco and the European Union, between Africa and the European Union? What equilibrium between the Mediterranean and Morocco's Atlantic vision?

Question and answer session: 30 min





The 11th edition of the Human Rights Forum
is organized in partnership with the Council
of the Moroccan Community Abroad



11H15^{AM} - 12H^{PM}: **ROUND TABLE 1:**

**1000 years of history,
what do we carry within us?**

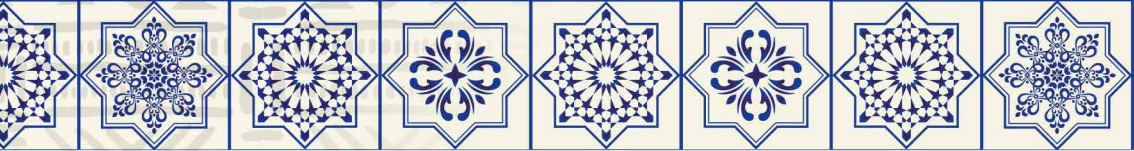
Muslims have been present on the Iberian Peninsula since the 9th century. This Portuguese and Spanish presence would later play a role in shaping the contours of contemporary Morocco. Heritage, culture, traditions...what parts of this history do we carry within us, on both shores of the Mediterranean Sea? How does this history contribute to shaping who we are today, and influence perceptions of our neighbours, whether next-door or across the sea? This round table will also decipher elements of recent and contemporary history, built upon crises and tensions as well as major accomplishments.

Moderator: **Driss Bennani**

Participants: **Anouar Majid, Mohamed El Morabet,
Nieves Muriel García , Oumama Aouad Lahrech and
Rodrigo Sobral Cunha**

Question and answer session: 30 min





PROGRAM
SATURDAY JUNE 29, 2024
Hôtel Atlas Essaouira Riad Resort
“Salle La Caravelle”

9H30^{AM}: **WELCOME RECEPTION**

10H15^{AM} - 10H45^{AM}: ROUND TABLE 2:

**Sport, art and culture ... Fatum Nostrum
(Our shared destiny)**

And what if the tunnel connecting Morocco (and Africa) to Spain (and Europe) began to resemble this shared organisation of the World Cup? And if, in the end, appeasement and the serene development of these relationships were the work of athletes, artists, and intellectuals from both sides of the Mediterranean?

Moderator: **El Arbi El Harti**

Participants: **Carlos Martins, Farida Benlyazid,**

Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla, Nadia Hafid and Youssef

El Maimouni

Question and answer session: 30 min





The 11th edition of the Human Rights Forum
is organized in partnership with the Council
of the Moroccan Community Abroad



11H15^{AM} - 12H^{PM}: ROUND TABLE 3:

**Human mobility, economy, diasporas
... Neighbouring histories**

For approximately 1000 years, flows between the three nations have never ebbed. Whether conquerors (centuries ago), migrants, intellectuals, merchandise, or cultural productions, the Mediterranean bears witness to these exchanges and crossings. This mobility must be considered in both directions. The face of it has shifted: the mobility of students, skills, capital, knowledge, tourists, and more. What has changed in the modes of mobility between these three countries? How can their bonds grow stronger? What new countenance will they present in the future?

Moderator: **Driss Bennani**

Participants: **Abdallah Saaf, Iván Martín, Laila Karrouch, Maria João Tomás and Mohammed Anouar Haidour**

Question and answer session: 30 min

12H30^{PM}:

CLOSING REMARKS: • Driss El Yazami



BIOGRAPHIES

SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



JOSÉ LUIS RODRÍGUEZ ZAPATERO (Spain)

**Former President of the Government of Spain
(April 2004 – December 2011)**

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero holds a law degree from the Universidad de León. He was a member of the Spanish Parliament from 1986 to 2011, Secretary General for León of the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) from 1988 to 2000, then Secretary General of the PSOE from 2000 to 2012. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero was President of the Government of Spain from 2004 to 2011. He was made Doctor Honoris Causa by Hankuk University (South Korea) in 2010, by Université Toulouse 1 Capitole (France) and Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (Bolivia) in 2015, by Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) in 2017 and by his alma mater, Universidad de León, in 2023. Zapatero has published several works, including *El dilema: 600 días de vertigo* (The Dilemma: 600 Days of Vertigo, Planeta) in 2013, *No voy a traicionar a Borges* (I Will Not Betray Borges, Huso) in 2021, and *Cronica de la España que dialoga* (A Chronicle of Spain in Dialogue, Navona) in 2024. At the present time, he participates in a diverse range of international debate forums and gives lectures in different countries on international themes relating to human rights, gender equality, conditions for peace, and the consequences of globalization. He is also an honorary member of the International Commission against the Death Penalty, President of the Advisory Council of the Onuart Foundation, and Chairman of the Gate Center Advisory Council.

ROUND TABLE 1



ANOUAR MAJID (USA)

Professor at the University of New England, USA

Publisher and Editor in Chief, Tingis Magazine

Anouar Majid was born in Tangier. After completing his university studies in Fez, he left Morocco to explore filmmaking in the United States, where he also obtained a PhD in American Literature from Syracuse University. Currently a Professor of English at the University of New England, Anouar Majid is the author of several works on Islam and the West, including *Islam and America: Building a Future Without*

Prejudice and We Are All Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusades Against Muslims and Other Minorities, both unanimously acclaimed by the press. Anouar Majid has collaborated with international news organizations such as *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Times Literary Supplement* and other European and Moroccan newspapers. His work and career have been featured in interviews on American, Dutch, and French television as well as on *Al Jazeera*. The academic novelist is also the author of *Si Youssef*, considered one of the pioneer works of English-language Moroccan fiction, published in 1995 and reprinted in 2005, as well as the recent *Second Chance in Tangier*, published by *Tingis Magazine*, the free online magazine of which he is co-founder and editor in chief.



MOHAMED EL MORABET (Spain / Morocco)

Author, translator

Mohamed El Morabet is a translator, political analyst and columnist. Born in Al Hoceima in 1983, he has lived in Spain since adolescence. Mohamed El Morabet belongs to a small group of young writers of North African origin who are not part of Spanish society but also Spanish literature, having adopted the language of their adopted country. He holds a degree in political science from Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), a regularly publishes his writing in reviews and cultural supplements. His first work, *Un solar abandonado*, was published by Sitara in 2018. His second work, *El invierno de los jilgueros* (Galaxia Gutenberg, 2022), received the Málaga Book Prize 15th edition.



OUMAMA AOUAD LAHRECH (Morocco)

Doctor of Iberian and Iberian-American Literature

Professor at Université Mohammed V

Ambassador for his HM King Mohammed VI to Peru, Bolivia, and Panama (2008-2021)

Member of the Board of Directors, Three Cultures of the Mediterranean Foundation (Seville)

Oumama Aouad Lahrech, who holds a PhD in Iberian and Iberian-American Literature at Université de Nanterre (Paris X, 1988), is a university professor and has taught Spanish and Latin American Literature and Culture at the Spanish Department of the Université Mohammed V-Agdal (Rabat). She has supervised many research projects (dissertations, post-graduate theses) on the Iberian and Iberian-American world. In 2006, she founded and directed the Institute of Hispano-Lusophone Studies at the Université Mohammed V- Agdal, Rabat (by Royal Dahir). In November, 2008, Oumama Aouad Lahrech was named Ambassador for His Majesty King Mohammed VI to Peru. She initiated and directed the Atlantic Andalusia Festival (Essaouira), and is a member of the Higher Education Council and the Moroccan-Spanish Averroes Committee. As an academic, she is the author of multiple works and articles in Spanish, French, and Arabic, on the subjects of Spanish-language literature and cultural dialogue between the Arab world and the Iberian and Iberian-American world. She is the recipient of several high distinctions, including the Medal of the Throne (Wissam Al Arch).



NIEVES MURIEL GARCÍA (Spain)

Author, researcher

Muriel Nieves holds a degree in Hispanic Philology and a postgraduate diploma in Women's and Gender Studies from Universidad de Granada. In 2005, she earned a master's in gender difference studies at the Duoda research centre (Universitat de Barcelona). She leads courses of cultural criticism and women's history, and has published in journals specialising in literary criticism, feminism and philosophy. She is the recipient of several awards for her work *La luz de las palabras*, an essay on contemporary Spanish poetry (Uned, 2013), as well as the María Telo Feminist Essay Prize (2016), bestowed by the Universidad de Salamanca, for her work *El árbol y la luna*. Her dissertation, *La lumbre obstinada. Poesía española del siglo XX* is a pioneering work on feminist poetry in Spain. She has published an anthology of poems, *La pequeña llama* (2013), received the IVth José Verón International Poetry Award. She has collaborated with literary criticism and philosophy journals, published articles and participates in forums, congresses and annual conferences on coeducation, interculturality and feminism.

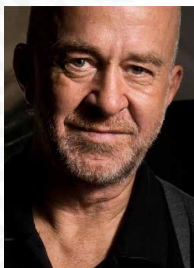


RODRIGO SOBRAL CUNHA (Portugal)

Author, researcher and university professor

Rodrigo Sobral Cunha is a Portuguese university teacher, with a post-doctorate in Rhythmanalysis (from the University of Lisbon), a doctorate in Philosophy (from the University of Évora), a master's degree in Philosophy (ethics, history, politics and religion, from the Portuguese Catholic University) and a diploma in Scientific Philosophy (from the Portuguese Catholic University). In addition to a hundred articles, he has published more than twenty books, including: *O Real Edifício de Mafra, Património Mundial* (The Royal Building of Mafra, World Heritage, Mafra Town Hall/UNESCO, bilingual Portuguese-English edition, 2021), *Seteais em Sintra* (Seteais in Sintra, Minor Continental, bilingual Portuguese-English edition, 2020), *Arte de Bem Caminhar* (The Art of Walking Well, MIL/DG Editions, Lisbon, 2020), *Filosofia del ritmo portoghese* (Portuguese Philosophy of Rhythm, A&G, Maat Studies, Catania, Italian edition, 2020), *O Essencial sobre Ritmanálise* (The Essentials of Rhythmanalysis, Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2010), *Teoria da Harmonia do Universo* (Theory of the Harmony of the Universe, Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2008).

ROUND TABLE 2



CARLOS MARTINS (Portugal)

Musician

Carlos Martins is a renowned Portuguese musician and one of the most innovative musicians in Portugal. He is a tenor saxophonist and composer and the Artistic Director of the Sons da Lusofonia Association (<https://sonsdalusofonia.com/en/home-en/>) since 1996, and President of the Portuguese Jazz Network. Carlos studied improvisation, contemporary music, composition and saxophone in Lisbon, Barcelona and New York. He has taught at the Conservatório Nacional de Lisboa as well as the Hot Clube de Portugal in Lisbon, and at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. He teaches now on Nova University a masterclass about Improvisation and Agility. He has founded some of the most significant Portuguese jazz groups and has performed at multiple national and international festivals. He has collaborated with many well-known international artists such as Bernardo Sassetti, Cindy Blackman, George Garzone and Carlos Santana. His music is deeply rooted in Mediterranean and Lusophone culture, including Portuguese music, as well as the musical traditions of other Lusophone regions like Brazil, Cape Verde and Mozambique. As a leader he has released 10 albums, several of which has earned best jazz album awards in Portugal and has contributed to many other albums as a musician. He's also the artistic director of the festivals Festa do Jazz and Lisboa Mistura, and an active member of the Europe Jazz Network. He's a consultant for urban cultural strategies and a producer of multimedia contents and its work on Sonic Environments in urban territories resulted on the first documentary for the national television of Portugal about the Sound of the City (Lisbon).



FARIDA BENLYAZID (Morocco)

Producer, director and screenwriter

Farida Benlyazid is a film director, producer and screenwriter. She earned a degree in Modern Literature at Paris VIII, then pursued film studies at the École Supérieure des Études Cinématographiques (ESEC). After participating in several internships in Paris, she returned to Morocco to produce *Une brèche dans le mur*, a film by Jillali Farhati, in 1978. Her 1988 directorial debut feature film, *Une porte sur le ciel*, was selected by several film festivals (Los Angeles, Bologna, Alexandria, Valencia, Carthage, and Angers). The film received an honourable mention at the Festival de Namur, Best Screenplay at the National Festival in Meknes, and the Bronze Anab in Algeria. Her second film, *Ruses de femmes*, was released in 1999, and once again selected for several festivals and received multiple awards, notably at the Marrakech National Film Festival and the Milan African Film Festival. From 2000 to 2003, she directed two TV movies for the Moroccan television channel 2M: *Nia Taghleb* and *Boukma*. Her film scripts include *Poupées de Roseaux*, directed by Jillali Farhati, which was selected for the “Quinzaine des réalisateurs” at Cannes and won first prize at Spain’s *Mostra de València*. Two of her film scripts, *A la recherche du mari de ma femme*—winner of best screenplay at the National Festival in Tangier—and *Badis*, were directed by Abderrahman Tazi. Since 2014, she has directed a documentary series on Amazigh culture, produced by Dounia Productions. In the framework of this project, she has produced an anthology of Amazigh music across Morocco, 5 documentaries on the same subject, and 2 documentaries about marriage. She is currently working on 3 documentaries about rammed earth architecture.



GONZALO FERNÁNDEZ PARRILLA (Spain)

Professor and translator, author

Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla is a professor, translator, and author of literary works such as the 2022 fictionalised travel diary *Al sur de Tánger: Un viaje a las culturas de Marruecos* as well as academic essays such as “La literatura marroquí contemporánea” (Contemporary Moroccan Literature). Since 2006, this specialist in Morocco and Hispano-Moroccan relations has taught at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, where he is the former Director of the Department of Arab and Islamic Studies (2016-2020). He is the co-founder of *Escuela de Traductores de Toledo* (1994), as well as the former Director (2002-2006). He has also taught at the École Supérieure Roi Fahd de Traduction in Tangier (Université Abdelmalek Essaadi), where he contributed to the establishment of the Spanish Department in 1992. He was a Visiting Professor at the Université Saint-Joseph (Beirut) and SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies, London University). He has translated works such as *Pensamientos de la mañana* by historian Abdallah Laroui. For his contribution to the dissemination of Moroccan culture, he has been decorated as Officer of the Order of Ouissam Alaouite by the Throne of Morocco.



NADIA HAFID (Spain)

Comic author and illustrator

Nadia Hafid holds a degree in Fine Arts from the Universitat de Barcelona, and studied Applied Mural Arts at École Llotja. She combines illustration and comic projects, and her drawings have graced the covers of the “Babelia” supplement of El País and have appeared in international publications such as The New York Times, The Economist, The New Yorker and The Washington Post. Her first graphic novel, *El buen padre* (Sapristi, 2020), won the Best

Emerging Author Award from the Comic Book Critics Association, and was included in the list of the 100 Best National Comics by Rockdelux. It has been translated into French by Casterman and into Turkish by Beta Basim Yayin Dagitim. She received nominations for her second work, *Chacales* (Sapristi, 2022), in the Comic category of “El Ojo Crítico 2022» Awards as well as Best Work in the 41st edition of the Salón del Cómic. In 2023 she received the Sento Llobell Emerging Talent Award, and participated in the group exhibition of experimental and avant-gardist graphic works, «Constelación gráfica» at CCCB (2022-2023). Nadia Hafid teaches editorial illustration as part of the Comics and Illustration master’s programme at the Elisava School of Design.



YOUSSEF EL MAIMOUNI (Spain / Morocco)

Author and educator on social issues

Youssef El Maimouni, born in Ksar El Kebir in 1981, is an author and educator specializing in social issues. With a degree in Arabic Philology from Universitat de Barcelona and a master’s in conflict resolution from Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, he currently combines writing with the management of a youth centre. He regularly collaborates with literary journal *Kopek* and *Radio Africa* magazine. His first novel, *Cuando los montes caminen*

(Roca Editorial, 2021), evokes the Spanish Civil War from the point of view of a young Moroccan. His second novel, *Nadie salva a las rosas* (Roca Editorial, 2023), brought him acclaim as an author, shortening the distance from one side of the Strait of Gibraltar to the other.

ROUND TABLE 3



ABDALLAH SAAF (Morocco)

Professor of Political Science

PhD in Public Law

Abdallah Saaf is currently a Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the Université Mohammed V in Rabat, and Affiliate Professor at the Faculty of Governance, Economics and Social Sciences at the Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P). He is Director of the Center for Studies in Social Sciences Research and Senior Fellow at the Policy Center for the New South. Founder of the Moroccan Association of Political Science, he was also Dean of the Faculty of Legal, Economic & Social Sciences in Mohammedia. Professor Saaf was formerly Minister of Education under the Government of Change (1998-2004) and member of the commission in charge of revising the Constitution in 2011. He is the author of many articles and works, including «Parcours marocains en Indochine». He has led consultations, communications, investigations and field research, with a focus on public policy.



IVÁN MARTÍN (Spain)

Adjunct Professor at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain) and Université Mohamed VI Polytechnique (UM6P - Morocco)

Iván Martín is an economist, Senior Fellow at the Policy Center for the New South, and Adjunct Professor at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona (Spain) and Université Mohamed VI Polytechnique (UM6P) in Morocco, where he teaches international migration. From 2013 to 2016, he was a professor at the Migration Policy Center of the European University Institute in Florence. He is a former senior researcher at Barcelona's CIDOB (2014). He is also the former Director of the Socioeconomic Forum at Casa Árabe (International Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies) in Spain (2006-2008). Iván Martín is an authority on international employment and labour migration and Euro-Mediterranean relations. He has coordinated multiple international research projects. Since 2011, he acts as consultant and trainer in labour migration, migration, development and employment, with a focus on North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, notably with multiple delegations from the European Union and the International Labour Organisation, as well as Swiss, Spanish, and German cooperation agencies.



LAILA KARROUCH (Spain / Morocco)

Author

Laila Karouch was born in Nador in 1977. At the age of eight, her family left Morocco for Spain, settling in Vic, near Barcelona. This migratory experience and cultural duality had a profound impact on her life and on her work. Her first work, *De Nador a Vic*, is a personal testimony that was well-received by both critics and readers. Twenty years after its publication, this book remains on required reading lists at many schools in Spain and Italy. Through her writings, such as *Un maravilloso libro de cuentos árabes* (2008) and *Huellas de Nador* (2017), Leila Karouch explores questions of identity, integration, and the daily life in the Moroccan communities of Catalonia. In addition to being a writer, she works as a nurse, combining her passion for literature with her vocation to serve others. Her work reflects the difficulties and rewards of life between two cultures, and contributes to intercultural dialogue.



MARIA JOÃO TOMÁS (Portugal)

Researcher and lecturer, international politics analyst and author

Maria João Tomás is an Associate Professor of Economics at Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE) and coordinator of the Library of the Middle East, São Lázaro, Arroios. Until 2020, she was Assistant Professor of History at the Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, and from 2014 to 2018 she was Director and Coordinator of the CASA ARABE, ISCTE-IUL project, dedicated to the study, research, and dissemination of North African and Middle Eastern countries

which encompasses: cultural and economic weeks, lecture cycles, exhibitions on political, cultural and economic themes in MENA countries, as well as literature and political classes dedicated to this region. She holds a PhD in Middle Eastern History and Culture from Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (FCSH-UNL), and a master's in Pre-Classical Society, Culture and Civilisation from Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa (FLUL). Maria João Tomás is the author of several works, including *Du Printemps à l'Hiver Arabe* (Temas e Debates, Círculo de Leitores, 2010) and *Internationalisation de l'économie portugaise* (Temas e Debates, Círculo de Leitores, 2017).



MOHAMMED ANOUAR HAIDOUR (Morocco)

Trade unionist and activist

Mohammed Anouar Haidour is a native of Tetouan, Morocco who lives and works in Spain. As a unionist who works in the area of migration and human rights. He is a member of the CCME, and active in the non-profit sector on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar, committed to improving migrants' living and working conditions in Spain, and involved in exchanges between Spain and Morocco in the fields of migration as well as cultural, artistic, and sports exchange.

MODERATORS



DRISS BENNANI (Morocco)

Journalist and TV producer

Driss Bennani is a journalist, TV producer and communications expert. He holds a diploma in journalism and communications, and was a feature reporter then News Bureau Director at Telquel magazine. In 2008, he co-founded and was Editorial Director of the daily newspaper, Le Soir Echos. He has produced and presented television programmes such as “Eclairages”, “Noqat Alal Horouf”, “Wash Hna Houma Hna”, and “Chaabi Food”, among others. In 2012, he founded the W5 Media agency, an independent creative studio that provides support for public and private companies in the areas of strategic and editorial communication, public relations, and brand content. In 2020, the agency received the “Les Impériales” Brand Content Award, then the African Digital Summit 2023 Award for Best Physical and Digital Campaign. Driss Bennani is also a member of the Parents and Friends of Psychotic Children Association (APAEP - Rabat).



EL ARBI EL HARTI (Morocco)

Poet and playwright

Hispanist, poet and playwright, El Arbi El Harti is committed to culture, and in particular to the heritage of theatre. He is a member of the Spanish Academy of Performing Arts. He has written and co-directed several plays with Spanish choreographer María Pagés, including Utopía (2011), Alegría de los niños (2013), Siete golpes y un camino (2014), Yo, Carmen (2014), Tribulaciones de Simbad el Marino (2021), and Una oda al azahar (2021). He has directed the International Institute of Mediterranean Theatre and the Instituto Cervantès in Casablanca. He also founded and directed the Festival Dos Orillas, and directed the Theatre and Cultures Festival in Casablanca, Alegría in Chefchaouen, Jawhara in El Jadida and Cinema and Human Rights (Madrid, Barcelona, Bogotá, and Medellín). He is the author of several works and novels such as Después de Tánger (2003), Utopía del buen lugar (2012), Utopía del desierto (2015) and El norte ya no es posible (2022). He has also contributed to collective works such as “La Puerta de los Vientos” (2004) and “Une Ambition Marocaine” (2009). In 2018, he founded the Centro Coreográfico Maria Page in Madrid. Since April 2024, he is the Artistic Co-director of the Centro Danza Matadero in Madrid.