WYD Lisbon 2023. Alves: "A new time to communicate the faith"

"The WYD in Lisbon will be the first for digital natives. In fact, most participants were born and grew up alongside the spread of new information technologies. That's why we must make sure that the platforms we use can welcome all users, both those who will be there in person and those who will stay at home. The challenge is to make the WYD a personal experience of faith, of cultural exchanges, friendship, unity and peace."

, Head of Communication for the World Youth Day in Lisbon (1-6 August 2023), thus described the efforts put in place by the Local Organising Committee (CoI), aimed at ensuring that the event is "given the utmost visibility." In this respect, the digital environment is a vast, undiscovered territory for proclamation. But Alves is not deterred by this challenge. She and her team explained to SIR the task they are carrying out: "We are working on the digital communication of the WYD, i.e., in the area of social media (Fb, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube) and websites providing the greatest amount of information. One of the goals is to expand the follower community and create content to attract young pilgrims from across the world, new volunteers and, most importantly, to encourage everyone to take part in this event." **Not just journalists, also influencers**. Therefore, it is no coincidence that for the first time in the history of the WYD even the so-called "influencers" are entitled to accreditation, although, as indicated on the official WYD website, they are required to register as "Pilgrims" on the registration portal in order to access the "Pilgrim Packages". Accreditation procedures opened yesterday, May 31 (ongoing until July 11.). Accreditation applications can be submitted by logging on https://register.wyd-reg.org/media/wizard?&lang=it available in the 5 official languages, Portuguese, English, Spanish, French and Italian. Accreditation procedures are solely online. **Young people from Africa.** Due to Lisbon's proximity to the African continent, along with its historical ties with a number of Portuguese-speaking countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe, participants from Africa are likely to attend in larger numbers than in previous WYDs. Global Africa Day was celebrated past May 25, and to mark the occasion, the WYD organising committee outlined the participation of young Africans in the WYD. According to the official website of the WYD, these include young people from Ethiopia, Burkina Faso-Niger, Rwanda, Guinea-Bissau and Gabon. Preparations for the WYD have been underway for some time, including many activities based on the theme of the Day, "Mary got up and went in haste" (Lk 1:39). A total of 75 people from Burkina Faso-Niger have registered so far, more than 60 from Gabon and 72 from Ethiopia. Registrations are expected to come in also from Rwanda. All these figures are bound to increase in the coming weeks. **Alves, who recently chaired a seminar** at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross **in Rome** on "World Youth Day: Managing the Communication of a Major Event", highlighted the importance of an event such as the WYD also from a professional perspective: " Narrating the WYD, which brings together so many young people and cultures, is a unique experience. Over a million young people from 200 countries will gather in Lisbon. Each one has embraced Pope Francis' invitation to set off and become a witness of the faith." The Pontiff's made his latest appeal on May 4, via a video message: "There are three months to go. I can imagine the things you must have on your mind... how you're going to: make it happen, request your work or

study permit, get what you need for your trip, so many concerns, but always looking towards that horizon, that dream. We don't realize it, but things remain inside us. Values remain, those we have discovered inside, relationships with youth from other countries... the encounters. It all remains inside us, and above all, to see the strength of the youth."