

Civil society and cultural heritage in the Mediterranean - Presentation

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This conference comes at an opportune time in the life of the programme when some projects are almost halfway through the implementation of their activities and when **we can already see some interesting results emerging on the scene at the various levels at which the programme is operating**, first at the level of the projects partners and implementation of their activities to date, including the authorities responsible for cultural heritage policies and actions, the many actors at the level of civil society, and the wider public.

At this juncture of the programme, RMSU and its projects partners can take a pause and assess the situation and draw some conclusions that would help us better steer the next stretch to the termination of this phase and even beyond.

This presentation is therefore not just about what has been accomplished, but about accomplishments in the context of the programme requirements. It addresses the how and the why, but also, and more importantly, the whereto.

First, however, there are a few things I would like to point out:

1. EH 4 was designed in a way so as to take work accomplished during the previous phases a whole leap forward. **We are all leaning on the accumulated knowledge, experience, outputs and networks of previous projects and other programmes through exchange of information and sharing of best practices.** What we accomplish through this phase should therefore serve a next phase of Euromed Heritage, if there is to be one, or future actions in the field of cultural heritage programmes designed for the region, and why not, beyond the Mediterranean.
2. The second thing I would like to point out is that the partners that this programme gathers **reflect the sort of partnerships needed for an effective preservation of cultural heritage and its integration within community life and development planning actions.** Indeed, among our Lead Partners we have academic institutions, NGO's, and departments representing government authorities, and each of them brings along a consortium that includes more NGO's and associative civil society groups, more academic and educational institutions, and more government authorities at both the central and local levels. The skills and know-how that all these partners bring in, the ideas and approaches they stir, the exchanges they pursue, and the results all of this brings along is not to be underestimated. A collaborative approach within each of these projects, and within the programme, with the support of the Delegations and the Commission, will lead this programme to achieve its goal.
3. In this respect, **RMSU acts as an important facilitator of all the interactions between the projects, between the projects and the authorities in MPC, between the projects and the EU, and between the EU and the authorities.** It is not an easy task but it is crucial if results are to be achieved.
4. Thirdly, it is the delicate process **of maintaining the balance between matters of 'substance' and matters of 'process'** that will make all the difference in leading this programme to a

successful end and to opening new perspectives for the future. And all sides concerned, the Commission, the projects, and the RMSU are vigilant to make sure that this is the process being pursued.

5. Finally, we all know **how challenging the issue of awareness raising is**, and how difficult it will be, when the programme comes to its end, to measure the successes in achieving it. In addition to the quantitative indicators, which are rather obvious, there are qualitative aspects that are of course less obvious and will therefore not be easy to measure. And I believe that it will take time, if ever, to really assess the impacts that our programme will have and the changes, if any, that it will bring along. But more about that later.

General objective

The general objective is to strengthen and consolidate mutual understanding and dialogue between cultures by the promotion of Mediterranean cultural heritage and public awareness-raising. The Euromed Heritage Programme IV is centred on the appropriation of cultural heritage by the population themselves and on education and access to knowledge of cultural heritage.

Specific objectives

- (1) Contribute to **awareness-raising** in the Mediterranean partner Countries in particular to the importance of cultural heritage and its diversity; encourage the **accessibility** to and the knowledge of cultural heritage, and promote an effective **and integrated management** of this heritage;
- (2) Encourage the **social and economic repercussions** at regional and local levels;
- (3) Provide technical assistance to Mediterranean authorities in order to improve the legislative and institutional framework in this sector.

KEY Words: Awareness-raising, accessibility, and integrated management

Capacity Building and Training

They have proliferated across the programme and have contributed in a major way to **awareness-raising** among partners, actors, etc. The following list is indicative and should by no means be considered as exhaustive:

1. MedMem: 2 training courses on digitisation, and indexing
2. Mutual Heritage: 2 training courses on connecting heritage sites, and definition of urban heritage
3. RMSU: training in management and intra-programme communication, in collaboration with the Delegations of Morocco and Syria
4. RMSU: training in communication through the various media in partnership with WTO and with the valuable participation of ENPI Info Centre.
5. RMSU: training in the exploitation of project results for awareness and appropriation at various levels of user groups, and to ensure their sustainability through creative and cost-effective means

6. RMSU: training on recording and safeguarding the intangible in tight collaboration with Medliher project partners.

Another training workshop is in the planning by RMSU; it involves community and cultural mapping.

Training for youth: extremely important because youth are an especially targeted group for many of the EH 4 projects. Some organised accompanied visits to cultural sites, others volunteer work, etc. Much has been achieved:

1. Remée: volunteer work on conservation sites of water fountains
2. Foundations for a strong future: training the trainers and training youth on CH identification, appreciation and capturing through media... in view of creating education tool kits
Both projects are working on revitalising museums as hubs of activities...
3. Elaich: training for youth in cultural heritage education

Integrated cultural heritage management → Specialised workshops

Part of these workshops aim to **improve and widen knowledge** on aspects of CH that are important to the intellectual content of projects and hence to **enrich their outputs**, including the publications. They pay special attention to the outstanding aspects of the programme: aspects of conservation and management of heritage sites and heritage 'goods', aspects of public awareness and appropriation and the exploitation of results and tourism development. Others go beyond the project and target more particularly authorities in MAC with the aim to reconsider and **up-grade legislation, institutional structures and services**.

Here again, these activities have been implemented through a collaborative effort with the authorities, projects partners and transnational organisations working in the field of cultural heritage and the preservation and development of its assets for socio-economic regeneration. UNESCO, ICCROM, UNIDROIT, Interpol, ALECSO and ICOM, ICOMOS, the Agha Kan Trust...

RMSU: Workshop on inventories in partnership with Convention France-UNESCO

RMSU: Workshop on illicit traffic and circulation of cultural goods, with the contribution of Manumed

RMSU: Workshop on historic cities and urban rehabilitation regulations, in partnership with the authorities in Morocco

RMSU: Workshop on maintenance and preventive conservation, in partnership with the Office du Patrimoine de la Vallée du Mzab in Algeria as well as the Ministry of Culture, authorities from the region and the projects.

ELAICH: workshop around the testing of an educational tool addressed to high school students

Few more specialised workshops are in the planning by RMSU. One involves the management of heritage sites and artefacts, another funding of cultural heritage and last but not least, a workshop on norms in conservation.

Movable heritage: manuscripts, audiovisual, artefacts are tackled by some of the projects and two workshops have been organised to address issues related to movable heritage - its preservation, its maintenance and management, and its protection against illicit traffic.

1. Manumed: management and interpretation of written heritage

2. RMSU: Workshop on inventories
3. RMSU: Workshop on illicit traffic and circulation of cultural goods

Many projects pay **special attention to intangible heritage** as oral history, traditional skills, traditional practices, etc. and RMSU organised a training on recording and safeguarding intangible heritage in collaboration with UNESCO, lead partner in the project MEDLIHER.

Institutional and legislative strengthening: this objective is mainly incumbent upon RMSU but some projects, if only through their partnerships, are contributing to achieve this objective with the aim of securing sustainability of their actions in Mediterranean Partner countries.

This objective was defined as a result of the *"Strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean cultural Heritage: priorities from Mediterranean countries (2007-2013)"*

Obviously the authorities in MPC are important partners in this programme and as already mentioned, some of the specialised workshops target their specific needs.

As we have seen, our relationship with the Authorities works at many levels and in order to guarantee the sustainability of the recommendations of the specialised workshops and ensure their integration within the legislation and services of MPC, we have established a modus of technical consultancies where partner countries can submit a request through their respective delegations, for tackling issues of interest to them, like planning, management and implementation, legislation, guidelines and by-laws, etc...

But we are also working on synergising relationships and exchanges between the Authorities and our projects partners as a way of securing the sustainability of our actions and their impact.

Awareness activities / Launchings and visibility actions

It becomes sometimes hard to draw the line between awareness activities and visibility activities. Both categories are in essence dissemination activities and while they contribute to export project results and outputs, putting into focus Mediterranean heritage, they also contribute to programme visibility.

Most projects organised a big launching event with more or less wide participation of the various stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the programme or likely to benefit from it. Some projects have targeted awareness activities with youth, with women, with local communities, with school children. Foundations for a strong future has already organised an exhibition; Montada has established the concept of creating neighbourhood forums; and Remée organises volunteer workshops as a means of raising awareness among youth.

Communication

RMSU organised two training workshops (already mentioned above): one training on internal communication, valuable for proper management, but also for establishing a climate of exchange and synergies across the programme, and communication with the wider public, particularly the media.

The EH 4 website and its Restricted Area is a major window to the programme. Projects have also established their own websites. Also, newsletters, articles, email alerts, contributions to conferences and seminars constitute major tools of communication.

In general, much more to be done if we are to better achieve our objective of reaching out to the larger public with well targeted and well planned actions.

Social and economic impact

As the programme is focused on appropriation, the social and economic impact is essential; however it is a tricky objective which is difficult to measure.

Many of the activities mentioned contribute indirectly to social and economic development but there are projects that are more focused on this aspect.

1. Athena is working on developing management plans for ancient theatres;
2. Mutual Heritage is assisting the city of Casablanca in the preparation of the nomination documents of the Art Deco city on the WH list;
3. Mare Nostrum is working on tourism itineraries... including the training of guides;
4. REMEE is working on the Orange orchard of Hammamet;
5. Mare Nostrum : has established a methodology for participative action for the old city of Rhodes, which will be replicated in other partner cities;
6. Siwa-Tangier is working on the development of an open air museum in Siwa.

These activities are developed and will be implemented in co-operation with the public and private sectors and civil society. They should contribute to the promotion of tourism activities and will have economic repercussions among the host communities.

Conclusions

What are the criteria that we can put forward to assess the programme at its mid-term?

1. Managerial aspects: they could be improved for some projects.
2. Technical aspects: we are going strong, building on lessons learnt, crossing expertise with other organisations/programmes, hopefully adding new knowledge, and yet we could do still more...
3. Awareness: although well targeted and well designed to fit target needs, our awareness activities operate at the micro level and there is a great deal to be done to radiate out and reach the larger public. Grand scale exploitation of the media is an answer but on the longer term, and if we are thinking beyond the life of the programme, we have to think in terms of education programmes, development programmes etc.
4. Visibility and dissemination.
5. Social and economic impact.

What are we to do, as a programme, in order to multiply the prospects of CH?

1. Our projects partners and our team should consolidate our work with the authorities, at several levels, national, regional and local, and according to the prescribed guidelines.

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2. We continue working at building capacities in the different areas that connect directly or indirectly with CH preservation. As much as has been accomplished there is always room for more.
3. We continue with our awareness activities, wielding more efforts to reach out to the larger public. As mentioned earlier, a large scale mobilisation of the media with well-targeted goals will be necessary.
4. We multiply efforts at visibility and dissemination, within and beyond the region. And that should help serve awareness raising and mobilisation of different sections of the public around cultural heritage actions.
5. We continue with networking...

And beyond EH4?

1. The axes around which are working and which go back to the beginnings of EH are still on the CH agenda. If there is to be an EH 5, it will have much to build on, but it will have operate according an all-encompassing development strategy both geographically and thematically ...
2. We need to revisit the Barcelona Process and examine where we stand in terms of promoting an alliance based on the principles of joint ownership, dialogue and co-operation. And not just where CH is concerned, but linking with other areas in which the EU is investing manpower and funds and in which the whole region has a vested interest.
3. And linking with other networks and initiatives ...
4. Involve the authorities in EU member states with their counterparts in the MPC: much work has been done with the Authorities in the MPC but the potential for exchanges between them and their counterparts in EU member states is tremendous...
5. The media has to become a full-fledged partner...

We have to acknowledge that development requires a transformation of society; we also have to recognise the power of systemic change within the context of the social and cultural realities within which we operate, to keep away from the possible corrosion of the social fabric. Properly tackled, and with all the right parametres in place, we can achieve proper development through cultural heritage actions. This is what we will explore during the two days of the conference.