



## **Civil society and cultural heritage in the Mediterranean - Introduction**

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Thank you to CERISDI for the co-organisation of the conference in the city of Palermo which means so much in terms of Intercultural dialogue between people of the Mediterranean... Just by a walk through the city, one can feel how the influence of the Southern med is strong, Islamic architecture mixed with Christian... but also on more intangible basis (the couscous which is a typical dish here has for sure many links with the traditional dish served in Algeria or Tunisia... Thank you also to the Technical Assistance, Christiane Dabdoub Nasser and her team who were involved very much in the organisation of this conference...

### **1- What is this conference?**

Mid-term conference of the programme Euromed Heritage 4. Most of the projects started in January 2009, have first results, have experimented already some problems, so it is a good moment to share experiences but also to go beyond the activities of each project and think together on the general objective of the Euromed Heritage 4.

For us, it is important that this conference would not gather only projects partners, but also representatives of civil society entities involved in heritage, and officials from public authorities and international institutions. The public-"private" partnership is important especially for sustainability of the projects we are funding. A special thanks to representatives of ministries of culture from Mediterranean Countries (but also from France) which took their time to participate to this gathering.

This conference has been conceived as a platform to introduce state-of-the-art theories, methodologies and good practice in mobilising civil society around cultural heritage, and their impact on its healthy development within the EuroMed region.

### **2- Why does the EU fund a Programme such as Euromed Heritage?**

- Reference to the **Barcelona Process** where the third pillar, dealing with the "Social, cultural and human partnership", focuses on facilitating a dialogue between cultures and bringing together stakeholders from both shores of the Mediterranean.

- Reference to **UfM**: In July 2008, at the Paris Summit launching the Union for the Mediterranean, Euro-Mediterranean Heads of States and Government – underlining that this new initiative aimed at achieving a future of peace and shared prosperity in the entire region – acknowledged its human and cultural dimension. The Paris declaration also highlighted that the Union for the Mediterranean would build on the acquis and reinforces the achievements and successful elements of the Barcelona Process. The Barcelona Declaration, its goals and its cooperation areas remain valid and its three chapters of cooperation (Political Dialogue, Economic Cooperation and Free Trade, and Human, Social and Cultural Dialogue) will continue to remain central in Euro-Mediterranean relations.

- Reference to the **ministerial meeting on Culture**

Ministers of Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership met in Athens on 29/30 May to exchange views on the cultural dimension of the partnership. They regarded Heritage as an important element of Culture in the Mediterranean. Another outcome of the event was represented by the decision to launch a process leading to the elaboration of a Euromed Strategy on Culture, consisting of two main dimensions: dialogue between cultures and cultural policy.

- Reference to the **Strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage**: priorities from Mediterranean countries: The strategy paper is the outcome of a consultation process which was carried out on the basis of the experience gained during the previous phases of the Euromed heritage programme and with the participation of all 10 Mediterranean partner countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey). For the first time, partner countries had the opportunity to articulate their priorities concerning cultural heritage in the special sectors of education and public awareness-raising, economic and social impact, legislation and institutional framework. Participants representing the Ministries of Culture, Education and Budget, universities, as well as non-governmental organisations, foundations and organisations of civil society, were brought together, in four different countries, to initiate this innovative consultation process. The directors-general of the Ministries of Culture then met in Rome to finalise the strategy paper, which was endorsed in Istanbul on 28 October 2006 during the Cultural heritage: a shared responsibility for the Mediterranean forum. This is now a reference for future regional, bilateral or cross-border cultural cooperation in the Mediterranean area.

## **2- Other programmes funded by the EU related to Euromed Heritage, and this conference:**

### ***Civil Society Regional Programme***

It aims to strengthen the capacities of the Southern Mediterranean civil society so as to allow it to make a better contribution to a more democratic debate at national level and within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.

It seeks to strengthen the institutional capacity of civil society, in order to promote dialogue and coordination mechanisms within civil society and between civil society and public institutions; it also aims to promote debates and activities at national and regional levels on the policies, institutions and mechanisms of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.

### ***Tres-Med - Civil Society Dialogue***

Enhances the consultative role of economic and social partners and their contribution to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, through training, study visits, seminars, networking and exchange of experiences

### ***Programme regional Info and Communication.***

The media is being enhanced, as a key player in promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding, improving communication and in making the Partnership known.

### ***Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures***

The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures is the first institution to be jointly created and co-financed by all member countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It offers opportunities to work together on projects in the fields of culture, education, science, human rights, sustainable development, the empowerment of women and the arts. The programme functions as a 'network of networks' with a national network in each of the 43 member countries. It encourages networking, education and the use of IT, promotes cultural debate through cooperation with journalists, writers, artists and filmmakers and organises youth workshops. It encourages partners to organise and participate in cultural events, seminars and debates and supports initiatives aimed at eradicating xenophobia and racism and promotes synergies and joint partnerships among organisations, networks and platforms at local and regional levels.

### ***Euromed Audiovisual III***

Contributes to intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity through support to building cinematographic and audiovisual capacity in the Mediterranean Partner Countries. It has just been launched but links exists already with one of the Euromed Heritage IV project: Medmem

### **3- What has been done so far?**

Through the MEDA financial instrument, the Euromed Heritage regional programme has committed since 1998 a total of 57 million of euro to fund partnerships between conservation experts and heritage institutions from the countries of the Mediterranean Sea. Almost 400 partners from the Member States of the EU and Mediterranean Partner countries have benefited from the Programme during its past phases:

Euromed Heritage I (1998-2004)

Euromed Heritage II (2002-2007)

Euromed Heritage III (2004-2008)

The main objective of Euromed Heritage 4 is to facilitate the appropriation of cultural heritage by populations themselves and to favour the access to education and knowledge of cultural heritage. A budget of 13.5 million euros was allocated for this purpose and 12 projects, all represented in the room have been chosen and received funding to implement projects related to the appropriation of both tangible and intangible heritage. (not to be described as participants are representatives of the projects)

But also one of the fortes of Euromed Heritage 4 is also its institutional support to authorities in Mediterranean partner countries and the sharing in an exercise that could lead to upgrading their legal and institutional frameworks. A methodology was adopted to address the issue of legislation and the institutions, taking into account new ideas and techniques and the specific needs of each Mediterranean partner country. This methodology operates at many levels and dialogue and exchange are its fundamentals. We have identified areas of expertise that need addressing and developed accordingly cultural policy exchange seminars. This is built on the achievements of previous European co-operation programmes in the Mediterranean area, and not just Euromed Heritage, and we are engaging the contributions of representatives of international organizations specialized in the field of cultural heritage such as UNESCO (United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation), ICCROM (International Council for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments) and the Council of Europe among others. The implementation of institutional and legislative strengthening actions is an on-going process, whose results come to light only in the medium term. Three workshops have taken place already:

- legal workshop on cultural heritage inventories in Mediterranean Partner countries organised in collaboration with the France-UNESCO Cooperation Agreement
- seminar on "Prevention and fight against illicit traffic of cultural properties", in November 2009, in Beirut, organised in collaboration with the Beirut Office of UNESCO, under the patronage of the Lebanese Directorate of Antiquities
- seminar on "Planning regulations and urban rehabilitation", in December 2009, in Rabat, under the patronage of the Morocco Direction of Antiquities



Euromed Heritage  
التراث الأورو متوسطي

**Regional conference**  
Civil society and cultural heritage in the  
Mediterranean

*Palermo, 24 & 25 February 2010*

#### **4- Conclusion of the speech**

- an important moment to share good practices, exchange experiences, discuss maybe also with the EU potential problems with the interim reports
- an important moment to discuss about the role of civil society in all the activities we are working on in terms of Heritage, not only within the 12 projects which received a grant for the EU but also to discuss it also with representatives of International organisations and ministries of Cultures of the countries of the
- this conference is also an important step towards the implementation of the **Strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage** where importance of dialogue with civil society has been an important elements defined to contribute to the development of the Heritage of the Med region.



**Annex: presentation of the Conference**

**Civil society and cultural heritage in the Mediterranean: EH 4 Regional Conference**

*(Palermo, Italy, 24-25 February 2010)*

**The active involvement of civil society, the best way to safeguard Mediterranean heritage and create opportunities for human and economic development**

This conference, organised by RMSU-EH 4 in collaboration with “CERISDI-Centro Ricerche e Studi Direzionali” of Palermo, is a platform to introduce state-of-the-art theories, methodologies and good practice in mobilising civil society around cultural heritage, and their impact on its healthy development within the EuroMed region. It will gather EH 4 projects partners, representatives of civil society entities involved in heritage, and officials from public authorities and international institutions.

The main objective of the conference is to highlight the role civil society as main stakeholder, can have in the promotion and development of cultural heritage. It will highlight the value of cultural heritage as a factor for converging public and community interest for the common good, and as an increasingly important lever for economic development for local communities, particularly in the tourism sector and through the development of women enterprise in Mediterranean Partner countries.

It is RMSU’s belief that a fruitful collaboration between public authorities and civil society components is paramount for the implementation of good policies for the safeguard of cultural heritage and the carrying out of related activities for human and economic development. Activities such as sustainable cultural tourism, traditional arts and crafts industry, etc., could help develop the raising of micro, small and medium enterprises as well as market and labour opportunities with positive effects on the democratic process and the emergence of a stronger, richer and more involved civil society. At the same time, to operate in a suitable way civil society needs an appropriate framework that only the public sector can provide: protection laws, urbanisation regulations, building rights, recognition of intangible heritage value, integration of international instruments at the national level, policies of respect of the difference, awareness and education, etc.

Through interventions of eminent speakers, and analysis of case studies and best practice, the debates will revolve around themes such as how to mobilise local groups in community based tourism and youth to guarantee the sustainability of cultural heritage projects and actions; how to sustain women involvement in enterprise and create micro-funding facilities; how museums can play a role as spaces for discussions, debates and promotion of cultural heritage encouraging local ownership and stimulating pride and civic responsibilities; and how to improve institutional frameworks for the recognition of civil society by public authorities.

The conference will formulate recommendations addressed to the wider Euromed Heritage network and to the public authorities in Mediterranean Partner countries.