

## Strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage: priorities from Mediterranean countries (2007–2013)

### At regional level this document will inspire the future programme

The "Strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage: Priorities from Mediterranean countries (2007–2013)" was drafted by the RMSU in late 2006 following a participatory approach with selected Mediterranean Partners Countries (MPCs) from Morocco, Egypt, Israel and Syria. The document was then presented at the Euromed Heritage Forum (Istanbul, October 2006) at the level of the Directors General from the Ministries of Culture of the concerned countries. Four are the main working areas of the Strategy: Public awareness and education, Social and Economic impact, Legislative reinforcement and Institutional Capacity building. The Strategy has been presented at the Euromed Committee held in Brussels on 17 January 2007. It is hoped that the strategy, now endorsed, will serve as a frame of reference for future cooperation in the field of Cultural Heritage, whether it is regional, bilateral cooperation or cross-border cooperation. Here follow some excerpts from the document.

#### The role of Culture on the international level

There has been a growing recognition from partner countries and donors of the importance of the cultural dimension on external relations and policy development. As a result, there is today a broad consensus at international level on the necessity to integrate culture in development strategies and aid programmes as a key issue (...)

Concerning the Mediterranean region, cultural actions are part of Chapter III "Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs" of

the 1995 Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Barcelona Process) where the Dialogue of cultures is the core of the third pillar. The "Barcelona Process" started in November 1995 with the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (...)

Since the Barcelona Process, two main regional initiatives dealing with culture have been launched:

- Euromed Heritage funded by the MEDA programme has been one of the main financial instruments for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

- The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures based in Alexandria (Egypt), as an institution jointly established and financed by all 35 members of the Euro-Mediterranean

#### Partnership (...)

Taking into account its richness in the Mediterranean area, Cultural Heritage, both tangible and intangible, is considered as a crucial element of human development strategies and an essential tool of cultural diversity as the main condition of intercultural dialogue (...)

#### Objectives for the promotion of the cultural heritage in the Mediterranean for the future (2007-2013)

Considering the recognised role of Cultural Heritage on human development and cultural diversity and the more recent evolution of the political orientations concerning this aspect of development policy, it is clear that the main objective of any promotion programme of cultural heritage has to be centred on the appropriation of Cultural Heritage by people themselves and therefore on **education and access to knowledge of cultural heritage**. This is particularly true of the Mediterranean region where cultural heritage has been identified as a priority field of action since it is both an essential factor in the identity of each country and a privileged means of facilitating mutual comprehension between countries in the region and between Europe and Mediterranean countries.

In particular this involves a true meeting of the people concerned with their own successive memories, a true reconciliation, in certain cases, **between tangible and non tangible heritage**. To this end, architectural cultural heritage, museums and all cultural areas must become places of life for the local populations. Synergies between past Cultural Heritage and contemporary creations, live arts and craft industry should be promoted in order to encourage the dialogue between generations, and the integration of Cultural Heritage in local daily life.

This involves encouraging the **economic and social local repercussions of Cultural Heritage**. Regarding the safeguarding of the sites and the encouragement for vocational training in the fields of conservation and manage-

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ment of cultural heritage, these objectives remain relevant, as elements of a development policy, since they support the central aim of public awareness-raising and cultural heritage promotion. However, it goes without saying that the aims of conservation can become imperatives per se in emergency situations like natural disasters or armed conflicts which threaten the existence of cultural heritage.

**General orientation**

**Cultural Heritage as Public Wealth.** The case for public financial support of patrimony assets as public wealth is currently being strengthened by expanding the debate on this subject. Since heritage assets are public and universal wealth, they require public support. The theory of “public wealth” identifies similarities between “cultural wealth and environmental wealth” (...)

**Strategic priority areas in the Cultural Heritage domain**

• *Public awareness*

Generally speaking awareness measures at different levels are essential to the strategy to be followed. Promotion to increase civil society involvement should tackle three levels: civil servants, general public and local actors.

With reference to civil servants the importance of Cultural Heritage as a cross-cutting issue in the national policy should be underlined (...)

• *Vocational training courses*

The following training subjects have been identified as priority areas: restoration and conservation, promotion, classification, documentation and cataloguing. (...)

• *University courses*

Developing university courses (MA/Msc and PhD) in Cultural Heritage, preservation and integrated management and valorisation, IT in Cultural Heritage, site management and regional planning, cultural tourism. The targets are professionals in the field of cultural heritage from the public and private sectors (...)

• *Social development*

- Encourage active participation of local publics
- Encourage effective communication strategies
- Paying more attention to national languages
- Facilitating collection and access to consultation of studies

• *Economic and regional development:*

- Promotion and valorisation activities of Cultural Heritage require a partnership approach capable of integrating the different stakeholders
- Stimulating Public/Private Partnership (PPP) for preservation and valorisation of Cultural Heritage sites and museums
- PPP is to be reinforced at institutional and legal framework introducing incentives for the private sector in the Cultural Heritage protection or promotion
- Concerning the tourism sector, local de-

velopment benefits from Cultural Heritage tourism initiatives

- Supporting the implementation of pilot projects on preservation and promotion

• *Legislative reinforcement*

The reinforcement of the institutional framework has to be accompanied by upgrading the legislative framework. The implementation of International Conventions and recommendations should be secured with the necessary flexibility into revised, upgraded or totally new national legislations (...)

• *Institutional capacity building*

- Reinforcing the planning and coordination capacity of Cultural Heritage Ministries with respect to the other Institutions involved
- Promoting measures towards administrative and feasible decentralisation of Institutions and Museums dealing with Cultural Heritage
- Improving the operational capacities of middle-level-management
- Implementing national master plans for Cultural Heritage preservation, promotion and management
- Setting-up an effective mechanism to reinforce inter-Institutional cooperation
- Promoting actions to protect Cultural Heritage in times of conflicts and in times of natural disasters
- Networks at professional and senior level

The full text will be available on [www.euromedheritage.net/en/strategy](http://www.euromedheritage.net/en/strategy)



**Euromed Heritage Forum, Istanbul 27-28 October 2006**

Remembering a fruitful meeting in Istanbul...

Photos, contributions by the speakers, press review, participants list and other documents on the International Forum, *Cultural heritage: a shared responsibility for the Mediterranean* all available online. [www.euromedheritage.net/forum/index\\_en.htm](http://www.euromedheritage.net/forum/index_en.htm)

## Lifting the Veil

Countless pieces of ancient Islamic art housed in 40 different countries will soon be unveiled in a virtual museum promising the largest collection of Islamic art on the Internet. Razan Nasser traveled to England to see some of the objects first hand, and to find out why organizers feel this cyberspace exhibit is to the entire world.

[www.discoverisalmicart.org](http://www.discoverisalmicart.org)

A carved ivory casket lies on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. People pause by it for a second or two admiring the flawless engraved designs and beautiful silverwork.

But if the average person admiring this object were to be told that this casket was made in Spain's Cordoba during the Spanish Umayyad period around AD1000–1020 as a storage box for jewelry, and that the silver mounts were added as recently as the 17th or 18th century, would they really care?

Millions of similar objects are scattered in museums all over the world, each representing its own vast history and culture. But even their rich histories and fascinating stories often cannot attract the attention of the wider public.

How can we get people to be more interested? The key to the appreciation of these objects, according to Noorah Al-Gailani, Curator of Islamic Civilisations at the Glasgow Museums' Burrell Collection, is context.

That's why some forty museums from fourteen countries in Europe and the Mediterranean have joined forces within the framework of the Museum With No Frontiers

(MWNF), to launch a virtual museum entitled Discover Islamic Arts, with funding from the European Commission's Euromed Heritage programme. When completed in the spring of 2007 it will be the largest virtual Islamic art exhibition to have ever been created on the Internet displaying 1235 items from the fourteen countries.

"Visitors to the site will be able to view monuments and objects from various museums individually and in relation to each other," explains Ulrike Al-Khamis, a participant in the programme through her work at the National Museums of Scotland as Principal Curator for Middle East and South Asia. The website will allow the visitor to view objects belonging to a specific era such as the Umayyad or Abassid, or a specific theme like pilgrimage, water or women in Islam.

This way the multilingual website will offer installations which cannot be paralleled in any other permanent or temporary exhibition. For example on the website the Mushatta Palace in the Jordanian desert can be seen along with its beautiful façade that is exhibited at the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin, Germany; also Crusader swords belonging to knights who occupied the Crac de Chevalier in Syria which are exhibited in Glasgow can be seen along with the castle itself.

Al-Khamis hopes the virtual museum will do more than make museum exhibitions more appealing.

"Until recently, museums have relied on visitors coming through their doors, and much effort is being exerted to ensure that such visits are as easy and comfortable for as wide an audience as possible.

## The Power of Art

Why did organizers choose to focus on Islamic art?

Islam is in the news for all the wrong reasons," says Al-Khamis. "People are eager to know more about it. Those who go online and search about Islam may be led to our website. Eventually, we may be able to counterbalance the dark and distorted image. Art is attractive because it is beautiful so people are not scared of it. If you do an awareness seminar in a mosque people might be hesitant to go but if they came to a museum to look at the beautiful objects they might be drawn to find out more."

Mohammed Najjar, President of the Friends of Archeology society in Jordan says he is also hopeful the website will offer a thought-provoking and positive reflection on Islamic history and art. "Islam as a culture is part of European Heritage either directly or indirectly. Maybe this exhibition can highlight our similarities in these times of cultural confrontations."

*Razan Nasser, Winner of the Euromed Heritage Journalistic Award 2006*



## Byzantium, a wind of peace blowing from the East

"Mr. Koniordos, are you something like the Kofi Annan of cultural heritage?". The answer comes from Elena, a punctual and caring collaborator: "If Annan worked like Vassilis does, the world would be better!". Touché!

The team spirit coming out of Thessalonica, home of the coordinator of the Byzantium Early Islam project - the most politically ambitious among the Euromed Heritage project - is all in this sincere and immediate exchange.

This is the reason why research, training initiatives, the creation of a database, common action plans, or publishing, are not a simple corollary to what is the true spirit of Byzantium: intercultural dialog.

To gather a Palestinian named Osama, a Jew with the kippah, a Greek proud of Hellenism and a daring Turkish teacher, and afterwards invite even Cypriots, from the two sides of the island... If it were not

true, we would immediately think of it as a joke. If then they all meet on the green border at Nicosia, to kindly discuss a common strategy for the safeguarding of Byzantium Heritage and of first Islam, we could even come to the idea that a unification of culture starting from Macedonia - like Alexander did - would still be possible.

The main driver, the "coordinator" of the project, is Vassilis Koniordos. A smart tall man, who by the way speaks perfect Italian, even in the typical intonations of some expressions. An esteemed architect endowed with an Euro-Mediterranean sense of humour. While travelling towards Thessalonica, Vassilis seems at ease with everybody: from the beautiful lady with Greek cheekbones, to architect colleagues making fun of him because he will spend the summer in a caravan. From Elena's mother, met by chance at a traffic light, to the Director of the local Modern Art Museum, invited in a smart café with a view of the sea for a "frappuccino", a delicious blend of café frappé and cappuccino so fashionable on the Aege.

Vassilis is always smiling for everyone. His

diplomatic ability seems to be the true secret of Byzantium, a project hard to imagine, if not through the noble art of public relations. And through the enthusiasm of partners who must spend the larger part of their energy fighting against vetos, radical traditions, their taboos, common places and all that prevents discussions.

Byzantium Early Islam is a real experiment of cultural cooperation pulling down barriers. Mr. Koniordos tells a multitude of stories - always funny, one agrees - revealing the daily difficulty of bringing the project into the light. And not only due to the limited budget or to the ordinary obligations everyone has. Calling Osama Hamdan on the phone, for example, is a torment: communication is systematically interrupted by questioning who is this Osama and why a Greek is looking for him!

"Initial scepticism between Palestinian and Jewish seemed to be insuperable ... Now, they are friends and they get in touch several times a day to talk about strategies of intervention for their respective projects".

*Damiano Laterza, Winner of the Euromed Heritage Journalistic Award 2006*

## Prodecom

**The project unveils a new CD and a book**

The Prodecom (Product-Development-Communication) project recently issued an educational CD-ROM entitled "Motifs from Here and There" ("Motifs d'ici et d'ailleurs") and a two-volume book on "From Tradition to Design" ("De la Tradition au Design").

The CD-ROM in four languages (French, Arabic, Turkish and Greek) is aimed at schoolteachers, educationists and trainers in the countries of Europe and the Mediterranean. The CD-ROM is divided into four sections: "Handicrafts, a living heritage"; "Mediterranean motifs as cultural symbols"; "How to reproduce traditional motifs"; and "Design your own motifs." The book "From Tradition to Design", also available in the four languages of the Prodecom project (French, Arabic, Turkish and Greek), is intended as an information and sensitising tool on the principles of an integrated approach to handicrafts and, at the same time, a contribution to the sustainable development and preservation of cultural heritage.

[www.chbeauxarts-prodecom.org](http://www.chbeauxarts-prodecom.org)

## Patrimoines Partagés

**All project publications presented on the new website**

In cooperation with several publishers, and through the financing of the EC, the project has produced a series of publications dedicated to the themes of modern heritage in the Mediterranean area. Topics are: Knowledge of Modern Heritage in the Mediterranean area, Instruments and practice of Heritage Management, City Portraits.

[www.patrimoinespartages.org](http://www.patrimoinespartages.org)

## NEW PUBLICATION

[www.euromedheritage.net/forum/eh2006\\_en.pdf](http://www.euromedheritage.net/forum/eh2006_en.pdf)

### Euromed Heritage 2002-2006

#### Activities Achievements Testimonials

This publication has been prepared by the Regional Management Support Unit (RMSU) for the Euromed Heritage Programme with the aim of providing tangible evidence of all the Programme's achievements, as evidenced by the activities of

the 15 Euromed Heritage projects, phase II and III. Aim of the document is to highlight Achievements, Activities and Testimonials of the programme by Understanding the Programme's Achievements, and by presenting Selected Project Stories and Project Fiches.

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Euromed Heritage  
2002-2006

Activities  
Achievements  
Testimonials



## Discover Islamic Art

**Historical Cross Referencing: a new service online**

The Discover Islamic Art Virtual Museum offers the opportunity to cross reference (or to contextualise) 1,235 artefacts, monuments and archaeological sites from 14 countries with 1000 historical events covering the period between 500 and 1900 AD. A link from the Virtual Museum's Permanent Collection provides access to the Historical Cross Referencing service that is already available in English and French; an Arabic and Spanish version will be completed until May 2007.

[www.discoverislamicart.org](http://www.discoverislamicart.org)

**This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the RMSU and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.**

## Rehabimed

**Rehabimed in Israel: Rehabilitation of Traditional Mediterranean Architecture**

In the area of raising awareness of the tradition Mediterranean Architecture Rehabilitation, the Rehabimed project is organizing a Conference on 27 March 2007 with the collaboration of the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Local Council of the Village Deir Hana and the Council of preservation of Building and Historical Sites. The Rehabimed conference in Israel will take place in a small folklorist village, Dier Hana in the Galilee. In the village there

are about 8500 habitants divided into Muslims, Christians and Bedwines. There are many historic sites such as the old fortress of Dahar el Omar (18 century), old Mosque and old Greek Orthodox church. Contact: Michael Cohen [mic401@bezeqint.net](mailto:mich401@bezeqint.net)

[www.rehabimed.net](http://www.rehabimed.net)

### RMSU Last training course in Rome! 20 - 23 March 2007

The RMSU has the pleasure to announce the last training sessions on « Project Design ». This edition is open to partners of the Euromed Heritage Programme and to prospective stakeholders. The course will be delivered in English. and will take place in Rome from 20 to 23 March 2007. On the RMSU web site under "training session" you will find the application form to be returned by fax or e-mail, not later than 20/02/2007. All the expenses relating to the participants' stay in Rome (flight and hotel) will be paid by the RMSU.

[http://www.euromedheritage.net/en/rmsu/rmsu\\_training.htm](http://www.euromedheritage.net/en/rmsu/rmsu_training.htm)

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The **Regional Management and Support Unit (RMSU)** has been set up for Euromed Heritage II-III on behalf of the EuropeAid Co-operation Office.

The role of the RMSU is to assist partners and beneficiary countries in achieving project objectives, ensure coherent implementation of projects and full exploitation of opportunities, promote visibility and exchange of information and results.

The RMSU is located at the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione (ICCD) in Rome and benefits from the technical know-how of the international Centre Città d'Acqua of Venice.

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Monica Robelo *Administrator*

Chiara Caporilli *Project Manager Assistant*

Elena Cesati *Financial Assistant*

## Just Married

The RMSU wishes all the best to Lama Mussa (from Syria) and Sevastos Christofidis (from Greece). Lama and Sevastos met through the Euromed Heritage project Defence System on the Mediterranean Coasts and now live on the beautiful island of Lesvos, offering a most tangible example of intercultural dialogue.