



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Departament de Cultura**



## **Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space**

International Conference, Barcelona, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005

### **Final Report**

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**Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space**  
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## 1. Introduction

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of November of 2005 the International Conference *Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space*, an initiative of the Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia and the Interarts Foundation within the framework of the activities of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration which established the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, took place.

The main objectives of the conference were the following:

- ▶ To promote the debate on cultural and artistic aspects of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Declaration of Barcelona.
- ▶ To highlight some significant aspects of cultural creation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, especially those that are particularly relevant for the current goals of cooperation in this area.
- ▶ To establish a working agenda that allows for continuity of reflection by professionals in the sector, keeping in mind the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnerships, allowing for stronger links between cultural proposals and the general interests of the region.

The conference aimed to link the cultural sector with topics of general interest for all of the institutions and individuals that take part in Euro-Mediterranean relations, guaranteeing at the same time the commitment of the cultural sector towards the great challenges of the region and lending greater recognition to the role of cultural factors in the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. In order to achieve this, the dissemination of the event was directed as much towards cultural operators as towards the general public within the EU and the neighbouring countries of the Southern and Eastern banks of the Mediterranean, with the intention to build bridges between the concerns of the cultural and artistic sector and the general population of these territories.

Approximately 190 people from more than 20 countries attended the plenary sessions and workshops forming part of the conference *Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space* during one and a half days at the Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB) and the Centre for Culture Studies and Resources (CERC) of the Provincial Government of Barcelona. In addition to these institutions, the initiative was further supported by the Spanish Coalition for Cultural Diversity.

## 2. Format

The joint objective of debating general topics related to Euro-Mediterranean relations and allowing cultural professionals to evaluate the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the cultural area and realizing specific proposals to continue artistic and cultural cooperation in the region was the basis for structuring the conference into plenary sessions and workshops for professionals.

The plenary sessions explored the relation between culture and several transversal subjects that affect the entire region, that were of interest for a general public and allowed the expression of viewpoints from the cultural sector. Subjects including migratory processes, commercial and economic exchange in the Mediterranean, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the relation between Turkey and the EU were presented.

During the morning sessions of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, professional workshops took place concentrating on the following themes: creation and mobility, culture and social change, the work of the coalitions for cultural diversity since the approval by UNESCO of the Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of

the Diversity of Artistic Expressions, and the cooperation in cultural issues between local administrations throughout the Mediterranean.

The conclusions of the workshops were presented in the closing plenary session, which also included the contributions of various institutions (the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, the Organisation for the Arab League for Education, Science and Culture (ALECSO), the Interarts Foundation, and the Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia), who presented their working programs and their response to the concerns expressed by the participants in previous sessions.

### 3. Main Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Conclusions

The following are some of the main conclusions collected throughout the debates:

##### General reflections on the Euro-Mediterranean Space and Culture::

- ▶ The Mediterranean should be understood as a source of energy and creativity for cultural cooperation, not as a problem.
- ▶ The definition of the Euro-Mediterranean space, used during the conference comes from the institutional definition provided in the Barcelona Process, is insufficient if one wishes to promote cultural cooperation in Europe and the Mediterranean in the broad sense, including the Balkans and countries like Libya.

##### The last 10 years of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Cooperation:

- ▶ Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation as practised in the last 10 years has been affected by various problems, including a deficit in the transfer of memory and the accumulation of knowledge and other resources.
- ▶ It is still necessary to take into consideration that the most transparent form of cultural cooperation is not always a function of the state: a great variety of public and private agents, governmental and non-governmental, work within this system. Decentralised cooperation on the part of local and regional administrations is an increasing phenomena, as well as work of cultural entities and networks from the civil society.
- ▶ Despite this, the marginality that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has had in the foreign affairs of the UE, as well as the marginality that decentralised cooperation between local administrations has within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, together with the marginality of cultural cooperation between local operators on a decentralised level in the Euro-Mediterranean in general should be underlined. This has led to a situation in which cultural cooperation between local administrations in the Mediterranean has had to confront a "triple marginality."
- ▶ Cooperation also has often had to confront asymmetry between institutions and management styles between North and South Mediterranean countries (referring for example to NGOs or local administrations), the disconnection between cultural cooperation and social and economic discourse in governmental logic in international relations, the unequal recognition of the role of civil society, and the fact that many state and intergovernmental organisms keep local administration at the level of non-governmental agents.
- ▶ Programs for financial support established by the UE in the last 10 years have not been very adequate for small and medium-sized organisations. Frameworks for support which are better

adjusted to the reality of these agents and with a greater openness towards civil agents who for political reasons cannot register as entities in their countries should be established. It is precisely a federating effort on the part of small initiatives, working together as a network, which allows these agents to gain ground in EU programmes.

#### Mobility of people, training opportunities and circulation of information:

- ▶ There continues to be a shortage of resources for mobility for artists and cultural professionals, a fact which is particularly visible for South-South exchanges, but which also affects North-South exchanges.
- ▶ It is recommended that encounters of debate such as the one celebrated in Barcelona be organised in host countries located in the Southern part of the Mediterranean, as this will discourage mobility from being one-directional. In this sense, it is also recommendable to make more spaces available which can welcome artists and allow cultural operators from the North the possibility to get to know existing facilities in the South.
- ▶ Despite the abundance of information and the fact that some consolidated sources of information in relation to the cultural reality of the Euro-Mediterranean Space, a certain amount of dispersion of this information has been detected. For this reason, the creation of an "information platform" has been proposed which allows some informational resources to be centralised and facilitates access to those resources, especially to young people and educators.
- ▶ There is a deficit in the educational supply which is adequate for various local realities and the practical work that artists and cultural professionals undertake on a daily basis; there should be more opportunities oriented towards, for example, the design of international cooperation projects by young artists. The lack of resources for education and training especially affects countries of the South.

#### **Recommendations and proposals for action**

As previously mentioned, one of the goals of the conference was to define concrete proposals and a working agenda that would give continuity to the reflections made in Barcelona. Among the main measures and recommendations gathered, the following can be highlighted:

##### To the institutions of the European Union:

1. **European neighbourhood policy.** Granting a more central role to culture in the neighbourhood policy of the EU.
2. **Association agreements in the Mediterranean.** Stimulation of the cultural pillar in the action plans which the EU signs with associated states from the South and East of the Mediterranean.

##### To the European Union and the Member States of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership:

3. **Inter-state Cooperation.** Relaunching of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of the Ministers of Culture, who have not met since 1998, so that it can become a permanent forum of exchange.
4. **Participation of the Civil Society.** Overcoming the interstate logic in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership which has until now not managed to implicate the general population in Euro-Mediterranean relations to a sufficient degree.
5. **Funding Mechanisms.** Design of specific lines of funding for cultural cooperation (that can go beyond cooperation in the heritage and audiovisual areas, which are the current existing areas of funding) and for decentralised cooperation between local authorities in the Euro-Mediterranean space. These forms of support should be more open to small and medium-sized initiatives.

To all institutions and entities which participate in Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation:

6. **Cooperation South-South.** Establishment of cooperation between agents in the South, who often confront the same problems such as distance, lack of communication, or rivalry between countries.
7. **Mobility.** Design of new mechanisms to facilitate the circulation of artists in the Mediterranean: for example, a mobility fund that, in particular, facilitates the arrival of artists from the South to the North of the Basin.
8. **Multi- directionality and continuity.** New initiatives for mobility that go beyond the short-term exchanges and imply multi-directionality and joint design of projects.
9. **Information.** Greater collaboration between different agents that possess resources of information on cultural subjects in the Euro-Mediterranean Space, through a greater openness to each other, contributing to greater visibility for the work of other initiatives.
10. **Multi-direction information.** Among those aspects about which more information is needed are the facilities and initiatives from the South and East of the Mediterranean, which are not well-known in Europe.
11. **Debates and exchanges.** Greater frequency of meetings for Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation like the one celebrated in Barcelona. These events can also take place in countries located on the South and East banks of the Mediterranean.

In the course of the conference, various participating institutions indicated the measures that they foresee adopting in the upcoming period, which can be considered a result of this event:

- ▶ The Provincial Government of Barcelona agreed to organise a meeting on the theme of cities, culture, and Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation, with the aim to guarantee permanence and continuity of cooperation of this kind.
- ▶ The Coalitions for Cultural Diversity gathered in Barcelona agreed to ask the states of the region to ratify the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the adopting of cultural policies which favour cultural diversity within each state and between them, the promotion of the circulation of cultural goods and services and the drive for the creation of coalitions for cultural diversity in the region. They also committed to begin coordination between the different coalitions that operate in the region.
- ▶ The Interarts Foundation expressed their interest in continuing to create spaces for encounter between all kinds of agents that intervene in the area of Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation and act as a facilitator in process that respond to the needs detected in areas of information, training and exchange.
- ▶ The Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia mentioned the imminent signing of a collaboration agreement with the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for the qualification of cultural professionals in the Mediterranean area and declared its interest in seeing the conference *Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space* as a first step in a working process in this field.

#### 4. Session Summaries

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November

##### Official Opening

The opening session included speeches from the Minister of Culture of the Government of Catalonia, Caterina Mieras and the President of the Interarts Foundation, Rosa Maria Carrasco, in representation of



the institutions organising the conference. Also present was Josep Ramoneda, the Director of the Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB), the host location for the event.

Among other subjects, the speeches pointed to the importance and the difficulties of true intercultural dialogue and affirmed their will to arrive to concrete proposals which would permit further work and asked for the recognition of the importance of cultural aspects in the Euro-Mediterranean debates, and at the same time a stronger involvement of the cultural sector in the principle social, economic, and political challenges which affect the region.

### Inaugural Plenary Session

This session's goal was to connect the reflections of the cultural sector with some of the broader issues which currently affect Euro-Mediterranean relations, and review the results and current challenges of the Barcelona Process for the cultural sector. The first presentation given by Ömer Zülfü Livaneli, composer, writer and Cinema director, member of the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe and UNESCO Ambassador of Good Will. The session was moderated by Ridha Tlili, historian and President of Liaisons Méditerranéennes, in Tunis. After the presentations the floor was open for debate.

In his presentation, Mr. Livaneli highlighted common cultural aspects of the Mediterranean, a region which at the same time incorporates a notable diversity. His experience in projects of artistic collaboration between Greece and Turkey are a good example of this situation. The tendency of Europe to build up its borders separating its neighbours is an obstacle for cooperation. Cultural activity should be opposed to this and work to change the hearts of the people, to unite them and to approach common interests like the construction of peace: the cultural sectors should be able to debate topics beyond their strict field, taking up their part in economic development, social cohesion, and international cooperation.

One of the other topics which he touched upon was the importance of civil society, which is key for strengthening initiatives for cooperation, but which is very weak in many countries of the Mediterranean basin. Civil Society cannot substitute the role of politicians, but it can play a fundamental, complimentary role in the development of identity and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

After Mr. Livaneli's words, the debate was opened to topics such as the role of culture in areas of conflict of the Mediterranean, such as Cyprus and the Middle East, the ways that artistic activity relates to political discourse, the limitations of cultural action and its possibilities. The need for the cultural sector to confront demands that go beyond their strict scope of acting was another question which was analysed. Several topics appeared in this session which were treated in greater depth in subsequent debates.

### Plenary Session "Roots and Movements in Culture"

The main objectives of this session was to combine theoretical and practical perspectives with the aim of looking at aspects such as changes in cultural identity due to migration, cooperation, and forms of human exchange, such as trade and their affect on culture, or the relation between those human exchanges and political and economic factors. The session was moderated by Sinai Peter, theatre director in Haifa, and Isona Passola, Vice President of the Association of Independent Mediterranean Producers (APIMED); Zeineb Farhat, Director of "El Teatro" in Tunis; and Ferdinand Richard, Director of Aide aux Musiques Innovatrices (AMI) in Marseille participated.

In her speech, Isona Passola affirmed that when talking about the Mediterranean, the ideas of extremism and immigration usually come to mind. When the more than 400 associations that are part of APIMED film a picture, often this is done in places of conflict, and such topics are indeed usually dealt with. Whoever belongs to a certain culture should assume that the places that they visit also have their own culture;

mutual recognition and respect for cultures is the secret to peaceful co-habitation. The association works to make the Mediterranean more than just a word. Basically, the association works to see culture recognised as an essential element for personal well-being; the role of civil society is key in this sense, exercising a pressure on the public administration.

For her part, Zeineb Farhat presented the experience of “El Teatro” in Tunis, a centre which is open to all kinds of artistic forms and which has a progressive and lay character. “El Teatro” does not have a particular political ideology, but on some occasions they have hosted artistic activities that have had political implications. The initiative receives funding from public and private funds, such as the sale of entrance tickets, and has tried to get subsidies from European programs like MEDA, but there are many difficulties due to the excessive bureaucracy and the need to go through the filter of the state government, which gives priority to those entities which are close to the government. Although the centre feels close to the cultural sector within the civil society in Europe, currently there are North American organisations operating in Tunis that have abundant resources, something which could lead to a distancing from Europe. Finally, she talked about the experience she had meeting with Israeli artists as part of the “Between Cultures” theatre festival in Tortosa: although she accepted the possibility that to a certain degree there were points in common in artistic and human terms, the unequal political situation made it impossible to have a full collaboration.

In his intervention, Ferdinand Richard presented international cooperation activities in the area of music that AMI carries out. The high number of young people in the Mediterranean indicates that cultural training will be key for security, integration, and acceptance. As with all things, it is evident that cultural policies are often insufficient to counterbalance the inequalities of international cultural exchanges: it is precisely to put an end to the excessive centralization of the leisure industry and to make the work in the sector less precarious. The autonomy and mobility should no longer be left exclusively to the cultural elite; the training of cultural managers implies travel. Networks are key for securing an inclusive interpretation of culture and avoiding new colonialisms. The bilateral agreements within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, that reserve specific sections for cultural aspects, can be considered more advanced than some EU policies related to culture.

In the debate that followed, questions like the positive and negative aspects of multi-culturality, the effects of integrationism on these conceptions of multi-culturality, the possible strategies for confronting the dominance in the market of the US, the possible effect the division of Europe has on foreign affairs of certain states which prioritise the South and others the East, the ultimate responsibilities of the mistakes which have been made in the Barcelona Process: has there only been an error committed by the European states or has there been a general disinterest?; all of these questions were dealt with.

Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> November
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### Workshop 1: Creation and Mobility

The workshop was chaired by Jean-Marc Liverato, a consultant based in Valencia. Presentations were made by Fatma Ben Becher, the President of Echanges culturels en Méditerranée (ECUME) in Tunis; Laëtitia Manach, representing the Roberto Cimetta Fund; and Mahir Namur, President of the European Cultural Association in Turkey.

The session aimed to assess the outcomes and appropriateness of existing resources for cultural and artistic mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean area and to identify obstacles to that mobility. Presentations

thus aimed to present existing initiatives in this field and to foster a debate which led to specific proposals for enhancing mobility.

The lack of financial resources and its effects on North-South and particularly South-South mobility was widely discussed. The view of some participants was that during the past 10 years very little had changed regarding the difficulties found by cultural operators of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean to cooperate amongst themselves.

Therefore, participants sought to design specific measures which could improve the present situation. The notion of a cultural visa was discussed, although it was not perceived as the most relevant solution. Other proposals included the improvement of existing mobility funds, or the setting-up of new ones, to better suit the needs of culture and arts operators in the region. Generally it was felt that lobbying of politicians should be strengthened, in order to raise awareness about the relevance of cultural exchanges and mobility.

However, some participants argued that while mobility was important, it needed to be filled with content and a purpose – exchanges lead to nothing if those taking part do not know where to go or why. This linked with the discussion on the availability and dissemination of information. Although relevant sources exist, such as Babelmed, participants identified difficulties in the circulation of information concerning the cultural aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It is often difficult to be aware of where certain information can be found – to this end, a stronger *informational platform* to pool existing information and enabling to find, give and share information was suggested. Given the Mediterranean demographics, and the high rates of young population in the region, the Internet could offer an adequate environment for such information sharing.

Participants touched upon the training provision for cultural professionals and artists as well. Training suited to specific, practical needs of cultural managers operating at local level was deemed insufficient. This includes, among others, training young professionals in project design, fundraising, etc. The example of students in economics who receive support from chambers of commerce in their places of origin or in host countries, this rendering bureaucratic processes much easier to sort out, was suggested as one potential model on which to design training of young artists and future culture professionals.

Finally, the workshop dealt with the existing EU programmes in the field of cultural cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region and their relationship to cultural mobility. Among the relevant items identified were the difficulties encountered by small and middle-sized organisations in order to obtain EU funding. This led to a call for further strengthening coordination and aggregating small initiatives, in order for joint proposals to be drawn, and a call to require the European Commission to design funding programmes which are better suited to the needs of local operators.

## Workshop 2: Culture and Social Change

The workshop was chaired by Alessandro Stillo, Founder and Executive Secretary of the International Association for the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM). Presentations were made by William Wells, Director of the Townhouse Gallery in Cairo; Jordi Forcadas, Founding Director of the Forn del teatre Pa'tothom in Barcelona; and Ornella d'Agostino, Director of the Caravana dance company in Cagliari.

By presenting their initiatives, the session aimed to show how culture can contribute to social development at a local level, in order also to further cultural cooperation and mutual learning. A number of issues of common interest, including migration, shifting identities and economic reform, were also explored. This was ultimately expected to help to design an agenda between culture, social change and broader issues of interest in the Euro-Mediterranean space.

Among the conclusions which the workshop led to was the belief that working in the Mediterranean, and the cultural diversity in the region, should be understood as a resource of energy and creativity, rather than a problem or an obstacle.

Participants in the session also observed that reflections concerning the Mediterranean ought to deal with the whole region, rather than excluding North-Eastern countries (i.e. the Balkans) as was the case in the present event.

Reference was made to the existing information gaps (what someone termed a 'black hole of information'), which are particularly noticeable on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean but which affect the region as a whole. Participants called for the availability of interactive sites where more information on existing resources could be found.

Likewise, the lack of education and training supply for operators and artists across the Euro-Mediterranean space was noted, this being an issue of particular concern in the South. Efforts should also be made to guarantee a stronger connection between contemporary culture and heritage in the region.

In order to reduce regional differences, which often entail that meetings and events tend to be held in the Northern part of the region, participants remarked the need for investment coming from the North and aimed at travelling to the South. Future events like the conference in Barcelona should be held in Southern countries.

On a similar note, the imbalance which currently affects artistic mobility, with few professionals from the South and the East of the Mediterranean being able to travel to Europe, was highlighted. Problems found with regard to visas were one issue of concern.

The session discussed the availability and limitations of existing resources aimed at Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation. Difficulties found in raising additional funds and filling applications were identified. Among these was also the fact that applicants are required to be recognised associations, this implying that only organisations close to the governments are able to obtain funds in certain countries. The relevance of non-governmental organisations in cultural cooperation in the region was thence noted.

### **Workshops 3: Cultural Diversity**

After the adoption of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in October 2005 in UNESCO, the workshop related to cultural diversity allowed for the meeting of the representatives of the Coalitions for Cultural Diversity of various states of the Mediterranean and other regions, with the goal of defining a common working agenda. The approval of the Convention was a high point in the process that some states and various organisations from the civil society had been leading for years, with the objective of recognising a specific value for cultural diversity and establishing it as a principle of international law, with effect, among others, on the area of international trade. The process of ratification of the Convention at the state level and the design of local, regional, and state programs which serve to implement the principles of cultural diversity in practical terms are among the current challenges.

The session was chaired by Rufino Sánchez, coordinator of the Spanish Coalition for Cultural Diversity; and, in representation of already established state coalitions or those in the process of creation, Ahmed Attia (Tunisia), Silvana Buzzo (Italy), Slimane Hachi (Algeria), Geraldine Loulergue (France), Hassan Neffali (Morocco) and Robert Pilon (Canada) also participated.

The workshop participants approved a final declaration that asked the governments of the Euro-Mediterranean Space to do the following:

1. Ratify the Convention approved at the General Conference of UNESCO in October 2005 as soon as possible.
2. Adopt cultural policies which favour cultural diversity within and among the states of the region.
3. Favour the circulation of cultural goods and services within the region, especially from those countries which are less developed.
4. Facilitate and assist in the creation of coalitions for the defence of Cultural Diversity in the region.

The participants also agreed to:

1. Stimulate the creation of Euro-Mediterranean collectives for cultural diversity, and other regional collectives.
2. Ask intergovernmental organisations like ALECSO or ISESCO to support the coalitions of the countries of the region, especially their activities which support the ratification by the states of the region of the Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the 2003 Convention on Intangible Heritage.

#### Workshop 4: Cooperation, Cities and Culture in the Mediterranean

The main objective of the workshop was to bring together the local cultural administrators of the Mediterranean countries with the goal of getting to know the relevant experiences in the area of decentralised cultural cooperation and suggesting possible initiatives for networking in the upcoming years. The initiative was framed in the processes of the development of decentralised cooperation in the Mediterranean, referring to cooperation that has non-state agents as protagonists, and particularly in light of strengthening the cultural dimension of that cooperation.

The session was chaired by Eduard Miralles, from the Provincial Government of Barcelona. Further, Agustín Fernández de Losada, Director of International Relations of the Provincial Government of Barcelona; Gemma Aubarell, Director of Programmes of the European Institute for the Mediterranean; Juanjo Arranz, Director of Programmes of the Library Consortium of Barcelona; Pilar Robres, Chief of International Projects of the Institute for Continued Education of the Pompeu Fabra University; Mohamed Ennaji, Deputy Director of the Three Cultures Foundation; and Najet Fakhfakh, from the Municipal Government of Tunis participated.

The workshop focused on the presentation of certain conception frameworks ( the Euro-Mediterranean process and its impacts and consequences, the panorama of decentralised cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean space), as well as the presentation of significant projects and experiences of cooperation (in the sectors of public reading, the training of cultural territorial managers, artistic production, rehabilitation of urban heritage or community culture, reaching southern Mediterranean countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, or Lebanon, etc.). Although more time was needed to debate topics of new and better forms of cultural cooperation between cities, the workshop led to the following conclusions:

1. Despite the rhetoric, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has until today occupied a marginal position in the foreign policy of the European Union; decentralised cooperation between local administrations has occupied, until today, a marginal position in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership; and the cultural initiatives have occupied, until today, a marginal position in decentralised cooperation between local administrations with the Euro-Mediterranean in general.
2. In terms of local administration, the existence of multiple asymmetries between the North and the South of the Mediterranean was noted: true decentralisation (and not just decentralisation) continues to be a

pending issue for the cities of the South, local power is not strong enough, and management styles and cultures of the project are still too different, etc.

3. All too often cultural cooperation is conceived in terms of artistic diplomacy by the state governments, without managing to include culture in the logic of either the social or economic discourse. Moreover, cities are still on the sidelines of the non-governmental according to the criteria of most of the state and intergovernmental bodies, it being difficult to conceive of them as what they are, that is, as the first and closest step of the government with respect to citizens.

4. Consequently, placing culture on the local agendas and local matters on the cultural agenda is still a pending issue and a priority task.

Proposals for Continuity:

1. Work so that the recognition of the role of the local and regional authorities, both in the Barcelona Declaration and in successive and future public manifestations, is something more than a simple reference and leads to executable operative measures in the short and medium term.

2. Work so that in the new Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership occupies the central position it deserves.

3. Work for the achievement of specific funding lines both for cooperation between local administrations and for cultural cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean space, following in the wake of programmes such as the extinct Med-Urbs which in its day did not achieve the necessary continuity.

4. Work so that the future funding lines are accessible for medium and small scale projects and initiatives, generated both from the local and from the non-governmental artistic and cultural organisations.

5. Consider the importance not only of North-South cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean space, but also cooperation between cities of the various countries of the southern shore, frequently troubled by distances, rivalry and lack of communication of the states of which they form part.

6. The Provincial Government of Barcelona proposes a specific call on cities, culture and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean space throughout 2006, with the aim of exploring the conditions for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean network of cities for culture capable of generating permanence and continuity for the cooperative work of Mediterranean cities.

7. In the same context, continue the work begun within the workshop in terms of the identification and promotion of important projects and good practices of cultural cooperation between local administration in the Euro-Mediterranean space.

8. Finally, there is a need to hold new meetings similar to this conference (or the "Euro-Mediterranean Campuses of Cultural Cooperation" which Interarts has hosted in the past) periodically – annually or biannually - without having to wait for future anniversaries or events so that the agents involved in Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation can meet and re-meet each other, and undertake real and tangible initiatives of cooperation.

### Conversation "New Foundations for Dialogue between Cultures from the Perspective of Cultural Cooperation"

The session was envisioned as a conversation between the artist Raeda Saadeh and the curator of exhibitions Gilane Tawadros, with the aim of exploring points of connection between artistic practice, cultural cooperation, and dialogue between peoples. Therefore, the dialogue symbolised the goals of the

conference by debating the relations between the work of cultural professionals and some of the central topics of Mediterranean relations, like equality between men and women and the construction of mutual understanding between peoples.

Among other topics, the session noted the difference in support and incentives for artistic creation between the states of the EU and the rest of the territories of the Euro-Mediterranean space. While observing the characteristics of the work of the Palestinian artist, the artistic context was analysed through establishing comparisons with the context in which Ms. Saadeh works and the context in which many European artists work.

Such reflection served to identify a series of differences between the two contexts, such as the scarce state support for artistic creation in comparison with what exists in the EU, difficulties for mobility for the artist through Europe, due to visas and costs, complications for presenting the diversity of social and cultural realities of the Mediterranean Basin to a European public, as a consequence of the scarcity of means of distribution that the majority of artistic productions of the region have to contend with.

### Final Plenary Session

In this session the main conclusions of the conference were summarised and proposals for continuity were presented. Moderated by Ridha Tlili, the session also included contributions from Gianluca Solera, from the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures; Mercedes Giovinazzo, Director of the Interarts Foundation, and Gemma Sendra, General Secretary for the Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia. In addition, a written contribution from Mongi Bousnina, Director General of the Organisation of the Arab League for Education, Science, and Culture (ALECSO), was read as Mr. Bousnina unfortunately was not able to attend at the last minute.

To open the discussion, Mr. Tlili pointed out the extraordinary and privileged opportunity that was available through an event like *Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space*. On his own behalf, he highlighted the commitment to share with others the knowledge that he had gained, converting his individual privilege into a collective privilege. Underling the deficit of memory and the accumulation of knowledge that has affected the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership throughout the years, he requested to work to construct a collective memory, taking past achievements as a reference and assuring that the information resources would remain mutually open and efforts could be pooled together.

On the other hand, he added a series of reflections based on the ideas collected in previous sessions: the need for more financial and structural resources that can give more visibility and provide more efficiency to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and the need to extend the Partnership to take it out of an interstate logic and to be able involve the general population more, the importance of facilitating decentralised cooperation and to make the role of sub-state administrations more visible, the need to create an informational platform to facilitate the circulation of information, the demand for new mechanisms for the mobility of people and the urgency to give more space to the civil society and grant a key role to culture in the European neighbourhood policy.

Gianluca Solera referred to the artificiality of the concept of the Euro-Mediterranean space and talked about the European or the Mediterranean territories that remained at the margin. In this way, talking about "Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space" expects culture to give sense to a virtual container devised by the states of the region. The dialogue between cultures has to start with a dialogue between people; culture can be a factor in dialogue between individuals and social change. Although the 1995 Barcelona Declaration highlighted the value of tolerance between cultures, we should go beyond tolerance because this implies hierarchy: culture should become an instrument for co-existence, based on the principle of reciprocity. Therefore, the Anna Lindh Foundation supports initiatives in which at least 2 operators from the EU and at least 2 operators from the other Euro-Mediterranean states (2+2) participate. Mobility should reach not only people, but also ideas and perceptions.



On continuation, he presented the programme of activities of the Anna Lindh Foundation. In the period 2005-2007, 6 fields of action have been identified, some of which are defined by sector (education, culture, science, and communication), and others are transversal (human rights, sustainable development, the promotion of women). Examples of the actions already in place include school programmes, a scholarship programme to attend political debates, a journalism prize, music initiatives, and educational server on the Internet, and an encounter for young people to debate stereotypes related to women. Mr. Solera asked to give more time to spaces of reflection like this conference, to debate between the successes and the errors in the process of cooperation, and compared the role that culture could play in the Mediterranean such as was reached in Renaissance Europe.

Mongi Bousnina's contribution made reference to the working programme of ALECSO for the period of 2005-2010, which among other things reaffirmed the will to maintain dialogue with other cultures. In this sense, the Euro-Arab dialogue has a special place because ALECSO believes in particular in the link between Arab and European territories. Far from the affirmation that some say that the relations between Europe and the Arab world are based on rejection, we should remember that historically European culture knew how to assimilate a cultural heritage of Arab origin, the same as the European Enlightenment inspired the Arabic reformers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This ascertainment leads to frequent initiatives to promote dialogue between ALECSO and many European institutions, like the programme of activities for intercultural dialogue and cultural cooperation established a while ago with the Council of Europe.

Stating that cultural cooperation within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has been mainly centred on heritage, audio-visual production and the dialogue between cultures, he recognised the importance to maintain this support, at the same calling for more attention for other areas of cultural creation, such as translation or the plastic arts, as well as training for young artists. Other concrete proposals referred to the relaunching of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Cultural Ministers, the celebration of periodic meetings for planning and putting cooperation activities and projects into place, adding a Euro-Mediterranean dimension to state or regional cultural institutions, revitalizing cultural aspects in the action plans between the EU and the southern states of the Mediterranean region, and stimulating the role of the private sector and civil society in Euro-Mediterranean cultural action, through new networks of information.

For her part, Mercedes Giovinazzo emphasized the fact that the conference had chosen to mix publics and promote the exchange of perspectives, an option that carried risks but that was key to respond to the objective of the meeting. In this sense, she highlighted the will of the Interarts Foundation to facilitate dialogue and promote the common work of very different agents, fomenting a process of multilateral cooperation that incorporates all the significant operators. In any case, cooperation should be based on universal values and fundamental rights and the notion of individual and collective responsibility.

The Mediterranean has always been an integral element in one of the possible conceptions of Europe, and as such should affirm its positive aspects more than its negative one. It is in this way, affirming the potential for development and growth, that it is possible to stimulate new frameworks for dialogue and cooperation, lending special attention to the younger population. Ms. Giovinazzo emphasized the will to collect some proposals which emerged from the workshops, assuming for Interarts the role of facilitator of a broader process of cooperation and with concrete actions in the areas of training or the exchange of information. Finally, she thanked the collaboration with the other institutions which had contributed to the initiative and especially the Department of Culture for the Government of Catalonia, as well as the people who attended the event and the moderators of the sessions.

Upon closing, Gemma Sendra thanked the collaboration of the various entities and institutions that had contributed to the organisation of the conference, and showed the interest of the Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia in evaluating the achievements of 10 years of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, taking advantage of the centrality of Barcelona and Catalonia in this space, and initiating at the same time a working process in this area, recognising the transversal aspects of culture and especially



its relation with the contemporary challenges like those referred to such as cultural diversity, the integration of the peoples of the Mediterranean or social inclusion.

Among the activities that exemplified this will was the imminent signing of a collaboration agreement between the Department of Culture and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, directed towards the qualification of cultural professionals in the Mediterranean, the active participation in the international debates on the Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the representation of the rest of the autonomous communities of Spain that Catalonia should take within the Council of Ministers of Culture of the EU during the first semester of 2006.

## 5. Evaluation

As previously mentioned, the initial objectives of the conference were the following:

- ▶ To promote the debate on cultural and artistic aspects of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration.
- ▶ To highlight some significant aspects of cultural creation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, especially the current challenges to cooperation in this space.
- ▶ To establish a working agenda that allows for continued reflections by professionals from the sector, keeping in mind the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnerships, allowing for stronger links between cultural proposals and the general interests of the region.

At the end of the event, the participants were invited to send comments on the contents, the structure, and the organisation of *Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space*, and about the aspects which they found to be the most or the least interesting. In this section, some of the general conclusions on the initially established objectives, elaborated on the basis of the conclusions of the entities which led the event and comments provided by other participants are presented.

**"To promote the debate on cultural and artistic aspects of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration."**

In general, the selection of speakers and topics allowed the conference to respond to its first goal. The participation of speakers and participants from more than 20 countries and the relative echo in the press contributed to amplify the debate. Despite this, the diversity and the extension of the topics of the agenda made it difficult in some cases to be able to enter very deeply into the debate.

Among the comments made by the participants:

- ▶ *"Speakers and moderators did not go sufficiently deep into the discourse, as one would have expected from looking at the programme."*
- ▶ *"It surpassed my expectations for the dynamics and the content of the discussions and the workshops".*
- ▶ *"Although the structure seem very well planned at first sight, I think it didn't function as well in the end. The debates were a bit superficial and general. It is well known that there are big issues that appeared, like the difficulties to set-up a cultural agenda in contrast with the political and economic agenda, the contradiction of speaking about Euro-Mediterranean space and culture when in reality very different cultures and countries are included; the more simple relations North-South than between countries of the South of the Mediterranean, etc. In my workshop there were many more chairs than*

*participants, and the speakers were behind a table, on a stage, something which did not contribute to dialogue and the sharing of experiences."*

- ▶ *"What seemed the most interesting to me was the meeting of people with common interests and that were really interested and concerned about the future of relations between countries and their very relevant collaboration. The possibility and the conscientiousness that there is much to be done."*
- ▶ *"The content, which responded completely to my questions and seemed that they were posed very carefully and the different cultural contexts of the participants were the best aspect of the conference. I learned a lot and I hope to attend other similar events in the future."*

**"To highlight some significant aspects of cultural creation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, especially the current challenges to cooperation in this space."**

The link between the theme of the conference and the set of issues of interest for the Euro-Mediterranean space translated as well into the structure of the event and the participation of the representatives from different sectors. In general, it was managed to reflect the importance of cultural and artistic aspects in the wider context of Euro-Mediterranean relations. It could have been necessary to have a greater participation of artistic networks that during the last years have carried out activities of cooperation in the Mediterranean.

Among the comments made by the participants:

- ▶ *"The structure and the contents of the conference offered the opportunity to focus on cultural aspects of the relations in the region and improve the intercultural dialogue and the future artistic cooperation between various cultural and educational institutions."*
- ▶ *"The subject 'culture and social change' is very relevant and has given me a lot of information for my research and knowledge about the other participants is very enriching in itself."*
- ▶ *"The discourse did not point to the cooperation relations on the basis of the expectations and needs of each one. Every one of us has an experience, we are witnesses to certain emergencies, perhaps also of some proposals for cooperation; I believe that it would be useful to refer to them at some point."*
- ▶ *"It was a very good experience to share points of view and hope about the possibility of an international cooperation based on cultural values, underlining the basic needs and interests of the individual and civil society, reclaiming the need to put heritage next to hybrid, free and reflective characteristics of contemporary arts in a political space where economics rules the humanities. Sharing this general feeling with a audience with countries, experiences, and professional situations that are so varied and to feel part of a voice of common resistance is a precious and very uncommon opportunity."*

**"To establish a working agenda that allows for continued reflections by professionals from the sector, keeping in mind the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnerships, allowing for stronger links between cultural proposals and the general interests of the region."**

The set of proposals and recommendations contributed during the plenary sessions and the workshops and the commitments made by the participating institutions are evidence to the will to give continuity to the debates of the conference. Equally, the contacts between the participants should give rise to new initiatives and projects that for the moment are impossible to detail. Continued work is recommended to link these proposals with the set of policies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in a more firm way. Some participants indicated that the short duration of the event, in part owing to the joining of this conference with the other various events of the celebration of the anniversary of the Barcelona Process, made it difficult to reach a greater definition of the proposals.

Among the comments made by the participants:

- ▶ *"I liked the diversity of the participants (according to the country of origin, educational background and professional experience), especially because it is not easy to meet with people from the Middle East, northern Africa, and the Balkans in these conferences. However, I think that the conference was too short, and it was difficult to get to know the other participants. Perhaps it would be better to start in the morning, and I think the inaugural session was not that interesting."*
- ▶ *"The meeting was very interesting, because it allowed all the speakers to exchange experiences, competencies, doubts and hopes. My only wish would be that other exchanges would not be limited to utopian projects, in sterile, beautiful documents, that do not account for details."*
- ▶ *"I think it was a unique opportunity to be witness initiatives that encourage rapid and positive change in relation to culture in the Euro-Mediterranean space. We tried to get in contact with some entities which we have gotten to know to increase the cultural exchange and dialogue, and I think they have brought a priority to the world agenda."*
- ▶ *"I have missed people from the Balkans who could have expressed their opinion. I suppose that in the next edition they will be included. I hope these meetings do not wait for another summit, but that they will have an annual or biannual periodicity."*

Further, we have included some other comments made by the participants regarding more general aspects of the conference *Culture in the Euro-Mediterranean Space*. For reasons of space and clarity, we have not included all, but all the contributions have been taken into account in the general evaluation that we have made of the event.

#### Structure

- ▶ *"The structure could have been better in terms of time: it was very short in order to be able to absorb and digest all the topics that were dealt with. On the other hand, there was not enough time to get to know each other properly; a session could have been included where everyone was presented or a space for such an encounter."*
- ▶ *"What seemed most interesting to us was the contact between the participants, which is usually the case in these meetings, although other activities could have been organised (dinners, presentation of projects, etc.) to go deeper into the human aspect and to contextualise further the professional aspect. It seems to us that the conference has forgotten the most important thing: contact and exposition of work of all of the participants."*

#### Organization

- ▶ *"Very well organised; all of the formalities were very easy."*
- ▶ *"It was a good organisation and very interesting people from many countries participated."*
- ▶ *"It seems that the "South" of the Mediterranean" was not very well represented, and especially the Arabic language, which is spoken in almost half of the Mediterranean, even in various dialects."*
- ▶ *"Upon return, I would like to thank the organisers for their hospitality and the attention that was offered to us. It was an encounter of important artists and cultural operators, and I am sure it was very fruitful. The possibility to make this meeting and initial dialogue an activity full of cooperation and change depends on each and every one of us, but the role that (the organisers) have played has been immense. Thank you for that.."*

#### Least interesting aspects

- ▶ *"What I found less interesting was that many of the speakers decided to complain about the budgets and the subsidies, which did not allow us to take the discussion much further. In addition, I think that it*

*is quite clear that at the cultural level it is difficult to work due to the lack of resources and the conference should have paid attention to things less obvious."*

- ▶ *"The part that seemed less adequate was that there was not translation in all of the languages in all of the workshops."*
- ▶ *"Sometimes the dialogue was too focused on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The majority of the visitors from these other Euro-Mediterranean countries do not know well enough our cultural reality, which also should have been present in the framework of exchange and cultural diversity. The on occasion excessive dispersion of the theme in the workshops."*
- ▶ *"The repetition of the same ideas too often during the conference and the absence of real conclusions for the workshops, due to lack of time for debate"*
- ▶ *"It was not possible to participate in more than one workshop."*

<b>Most interesting aspects</b>
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- ▶ *"One of the most important aspects of this kind of event is the possibility to meet other people. It was possible to make some very interesting contacts, even though there was not much time."*
- ▶ *" Participation in the workshops: a more intense opportunity to deal with the themes of the conference, explore them with more time and interact with the other participants."*
- ▶ *"The workshops and the results extracted from them. In some way, they give an idea of the expectations of related cultural events in the Euro-Mediterranean context in the next years and especially the fact that they will produce some important changes."*
- ▶ *"Cultural diversity, contact with other countries."*
- ▶ *"The presentation of cases in the workshops seemed the most interesting in the concrete sense."*
- ▶ *"The fact of being able to contact with true professions from many countries and many different realities that showed us the main problems and hopes – this for me was the most interesting. Also that we could be up-dated about new resolutions at the level of the international institutions as far as culture is concerned."*
- ▶ *"The old and new contact that could be experienced during the conference and outside the conference. The knowledge of structures and foundations that work in relation to the theme of the conference."*

