

## **Creation and media in the Mediterranean: what can be done?**

>From both sides of the Mediterranean, we have been witnessing, for several decades now, a recession of the 4<sup>th</sup> estate personified by the media, as well as a dangerous curb of critical thought. The journalists of our Southern neighbours are constantly threatened by censorship and repression, whereas in Europe, the great media powers guided by commercial logics, parcel out a fragmented information for the benefit of political manipulations (Berlusconi is a fine example of this situation).

Consequently, we can only observe in total impotence the increasingly deep fracture separating the civil societies from the media, which disregards the expressions, practices and engagements (including artistic ones) of the former, or just bluntly relays the discourses of political radicalisation that are getting ever more popular in our societies (stereotypes, single-sided cultural information, refusal of others and of cultural diversity, etc.).

Furthermore, we must add a distressing lack of shared information tools, which would allow a circulation of knowledge in Europe and in the Mediterranean under various forms of artistic creation.

To try and contrast this trend, the European Commission launched several programmes, which however were most often designed for the media (radio and TV) and already financed within their own national spaces by their government.

Moreover, this kind of inter-governmental mechanism has perverted the greater part of the third pillar of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, disregarding the civil societies and the cultures of the two shores of the Mediterranean which in principle had to play the most important role in the Barcelona process.

Confronted with such a gloomy scenario, Mediterranean artists organised themselves through meetings, like the one we are invited to in Bari, or by networking. They have also fought their way on the net's "far west" to achieve a place for exchange, debate and expression, as well as to show their works in...

But is this enough? Doesn't cultural information suffer from this virtual and sometimes questionable profusion - you can really find everything on the net, from the best to the worst - or on the contrary doesn't it risk staying confined within a myriad of internet communities, isolated one from the other?

Does the proliferation of blogs and sites really fulfil our expectations on cultural information? Those of the artists for a start, who have the right to claim a professional journalistic criticism on their work, but also those of the people interested in acquiring a deeper knowledge of the Mediterranean cultural mosaic.

Finally, which tools of cultural information do we actually possess today? Can we make them interact or can we improve them for a better visibility of the creation in the Mediterranean? Which independent or alternative communication practices can we use to this end?

We wish to meet these issues, among others, by questioning ourselves on the relationship between media and creation, by assessing what can concretely be done to ensure greater space to cultural creations within the Euro-Mediterranean area.