

Study on the status of artists in the non-European Mediterranean (2007) – an example for a valuable contribution to promote the artistic sector within the subject “How civil society introduces contents to the work of political decision-makers”

1. Context

The study on professional artistic and cultural profiles in the non-European Mediterranean focuses on the legal and social measures concerning the work of South-Mediterranean artists. Furthermore it addresses the process of social recognition and the mobility role required for the recognition of the artist within intercultural dialogue.

This study is meant to tackle several fields of analysis on the artistic and cultural creation in the Mediterranean. It thus aims at formulating strategic recommendations, within a perspective of regional and Euro-Mediterranean action, devised for the benefit of international funding organisations and, more particularly, the European Commission.

The outcome of this work shall also be submitted to the Ministers of Culture during the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, to be held in spring 2008.

Though often overlooked, artists are playing an increasingly important role within the human and cultural development of the societies of the South of the Mediterranean and in cultural diversity.

The lack of factual data on artists and on their working and living¹ conditions does not allow to realize what the necessary conditions would be to fulfil their work and to grant political, economic and social guarantees they are entitled to as cultural workers and creators.

This study is necessary in consideration of:

- The lack of quantitative and qualitative data regarding the artistic sector and mobility within the cultural sector of the South of the Mediterranean
- The nature of debates on artistic creation and mobility within this region
- The lack of a sound reflection and analysis on this subject.

That is why the Roberto Cimetta Fund, in collaboration with its partners (UNESCO, Council of Europe, Anna Lindh Foundation and European Cultural Foundation) has launched a study on “the profile of artistic sector professionals in non-European Mediterranean”. This work aims at defining the typologies of the beneficiaries of possible specific fostering devices for artistic creation and mobility, as well as the means of recognition of the latter.

2. Objectives and elements of analysis

The study on professional “profiles” of the artistic sector, aims at gathering, completing and comparing information on contemporary artistic creations within the various European Partners Countries (**scenic arts – dance, theatre, circus – and contemporary visual arts – photography, video, cinema**). This work will be based on the assessment of the acknowledgement of professional figures of non-European artists of the Mediterranean perimeter.

By “artist” we mean, artists supported by or linked to public structures (national theatres, opera, choreographic centres...) and independent artists of the private sector, who are not linked to any structure and are not easily identifiable.

In pursuit of the activity launched by the UNESCO World Observatory on the Social Status of Artists, this study is structured along the following issues:

¹ The only work carried out was by the UNESCO on 3 Arab countries, see http://portal.unesco.org/culture/fr/ev.phpURL_ID=32692&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

- The **legal recognition** of professionals of the artistic and cultural sector: to analyse the legal contexts ruling the artistic sector in non-European countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
- The **public recognition** of professionals of the artistic and cultural sector: to analyse the fostering actions implemented by the policies on creation and on artists
- The **social recognition** of professionals of the artistic and cultural sector: by focusing on the analysis of the position granted to artists in civil societies
- The **role of mobility in the recognition process**: the mobility of professionals is increasingly considered as an essential step for the development of the professional course of the artists of the region. This study is meant to analyse this selfsame dimension of the mobility within the development of artistic careers.
- The **contribution of the artistic sector and artistic and cultural mobility to intercultural dialogue**: thanks to the exchanges operated from one side of the Mediterranean to the other within the framework of mobility, artists can contribute to dialogue between cultures. In relation to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the study means to identify and assess the contribution of artistic mobility to intercultural dialogue.

Conclusions and final recommendations of the study are submitted according to the issues tackled.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

This study is the first research of this kind carried out in non-European Mediterranean Countries. The areas explored and the data gathered thanks to the support of the persons and institutions consulted, allow for a first identification of the political, social and artistic working and living conditions of artists. This process deserves a further development as well as to be extended to other countries of the Mediterranean in order to meet the objective: an action at Euro-Mediterranean level to support artists, their mobility and the circulation of their works.

Recommendations regarding legal recognition

Recommendation 1

To encourage the countries that have chosen to follow the recommendations of the UNESCO on the status of the artist (Morocco, Tunisia) to follow this action and **invest on the improvement** of the "conditions of social security, work and taxation of the artist, whether employed or independent artist" as defined by the UNESCO² and to create transfer mechanisms and **share experiences** within the various countries in terms of legal measures meant to define and improve the status of artists

Recommendation 2

To encourage artists' professional organisations to set **follow-up tools** in order to ensure the minimum established by law (code of work, artists status, artists rights)

To strengthen the applications of laws concerning author's rights and to inform artists of their rights

Recommendations regarding public recognition

Recommendation 1

To introduce "**cultural policies**" which, further to a mere budgetary and administrative management of culture, may also privilege the reflexion, long term strategic planning and structuring and professionalization of the artistic sector, to complement the simple cultural

² Idem

action. The skills of the political decision-makers of the countries should be reinforced (strategic planning, data collection, analysis and research, prospective approach...)

Recommendation 2

Support public cultural spaces in need of **reinforcement** as regards management, planning, communication, production... The latter could thus become attractive for a public with little artistic preparation and awareness, by transforming themselves in actual sites of cultural mediation and acquaintance with artistic creations.

Recommendation 3

To improve the quality of professional training, notably of trainers, whose weaknesses are partly due to obsolete methodologies, a lack of qualification of the teachers, the need to update the pedagogical contents and a religious influence of the environment. A support to the strengthening of the trainers' capacities (pedagogical, management of training structures, drafting of pedagogical material, etc.) is necessary.

Institutional actors, and especially those belonging to the foreign cultural institutes, should **publicise** the selection criteria of artists for study grants abroad

Recommendation 4

In consideration of the fact that the contribution of independent actors is essential to the cultural development and continuation of cultural diversity, a certain degree of **trust** and **collaboration** between **institutions** and **independent structures** should be **re-established**; thus there is a need to **grant access to State assistance and support to artists and independent structures**, in areas where the artistic scene is dominant (Egypt, Syria and to a certain extent Tunisia). Solutions should also be envisaged in order to break free from the limits imposed by a centralist (and all powerful) system, and lay out spaces (physical and intellectual) allowing for some independence.

Recommendations regarding social recognition

Recommendation 1

To consider the **private sector** as an important ally of the public sector, as it may intervene in cases where the government lacks competences and means. Coalitions should be created and proposals should be spurred while ensuring that artistic and aesthetic criteria are maintained.

To propose forms of support to the independent sector, which as of today should operate like a private enterprise (Tunisia, Egypt, Syria) to warrant plurality and diversity.

Recommendations regarding the role of mobility in the recognition process

Recommendation 1

Mobility is an **incontrovertible evidence** for artists. **Mobility routes remain the same** (France-Morocco etc.). Means should be sought to foster circulation towards other countries including **South to South routes**. A sturdier work should be carried out for Syria, who does not benefit much from international mobility.

Recommendation 2

To propose an **integrated approach** to overcome mobility barriers on administrative formalities, economic and financial issues and structural defaults. Within this context, applicable solutions should be proposed (regional funds for mobility, resource centres for mobility, etc.)

To conceive **solutions for visa problems**: a cultural passport reserved to culture professionals, long term visas for artists, cultural services within consular services, visa quotas for artists, etc.

Recommendations regarding the contribution of the artistic sector and of artistic and cultural mobility to intercultural dialogue

Recommendation 1

To strengthen dialogue between individuals and professionals – “people to people” – as it allows to listen and to better know one another, and to complete them by State action (“cultural diplomacy”).

To allow artistic projects to define the moments, subjects and themes of the dialogue for themselves; to abandon projects exacerbating identity claims in favour of projects that integrate hybrid and diverse cultural forms of expression that may lead to cultural and societal change.

4. Follow-up and advocacy

Appropriate follow-ups to the outcome of this study are:

1. **Unesco follow-up:** on line insertion of some data of the study on the site of the Unesco Observatory on the Social Status of the Artist. As regards the quality of the study, UNESCO is interested in supporting a second study on the countries that were not taken into consideration by the first one
2. **Council of Europe follow-up:** presentation of the outcome of the study on intercultural dialogue within the (49th) Conference of the Ministers of Culture due in November 2008 in Baku. The CE is also interested in supporting a second study on the countries that were not taken into consideration by the first one
3. **Anna Lindh Foundation:** Following to the achievement of the synopsis of the study, this foundation wishes to submit a joint paper with the Roberto Cimetta Fund during the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference of the Ministers of Culture next May 2008 on the artistic sector and on mobility in this sector. This paper is, among others, an advocacy for the support of the artistic sector.
4. **European Cultural Foundation:** in consideration of the quality of the study, this foundation wishes to support a second study on the countries that were not taken into consideration by the first one
5. **Roberto Cimetta Fund**
 - The study should be extended to the other non-European Mediterranean countries. The action started should be followed on and be completed to ensure suitable and reliable data on the artistic sector of the region. That is why this fund is currently looking for partners for this follow up
 - The Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference of the Ministers of Culture due in May 2008, represents an important and crucial moment for the support of the artistic sector of the area. The Ministers last met in Rhodes in 1998 and probably won't convene too soon after 2008. Since the launch of the Euromed Partnership and the neighbouring policy, no framework was proposed in terms of regional support to the artistic sector. The Fund and the ALF seize this opportunity to advocate this cause. Further to the joint paper with the ALF, the Fund has contacted the DG for External Relations of the CE and provided them with the results and recommendations of the study. As of now, the RELEX has integrated at least two recommendations of the study in the Ministerial concept paper: the one concerning cultural policies and the one on the support of the artistic sector especially as producer of employment and revenue.
 - The fund also grants importance to the new policy of the DG on Education and Culture on: The European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World which pleads for the reinforcement of cultural cooperation for Third Countries. The president participated to the first consultation meeting with the European civil society, then the Fund contacted the EU Slovenian Presidency which organises the Ljubljana Conference on the Agenda and has

communicated the results of the study to them. The Fund will participate to this Conference and contribute actively to it

- Some recommendations will be applied to the Fund's work, as for example the issue on mobility for Syrian artists.

To conclude, the Roberto Cimetta Fund did not only search for the "mere result" which consists in studying the actual state of the artists in the Mediterranean. It has turned the study into a tool of political advocacy and awareness. Apart from the aim of providing reliable data on the artistic sector, a campaign should be launched in effective support to the sector by taking into account real problems, urgent needs and specificities of the area and of each country.

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Judith Neisse
President
Roberto Cimetta Fund