

The Marseille Statement on culture, politics and dignity in the Mediterranean

Mediterranean Cultural Parliament

Marseille, May 11th, 2011

We met in Marseille from May 10 to May 11th, 2011 and recalled our founding statement adopted in Strasbourg in June 2008, where the concept of “artivism” was launched according to which arts and culture are the key for responsible social transformation in the Mediterranean,

We adopted the following statement and a Plan of Action.

We are living a period of intense and significant challenges. Sweeping changes happen in the Mediterranean, a region that offers an unprecedented opportunity to redefine the role and significance of culture (meant in its various aspects) as the main foundation of a true and respectful relationship among peoples and between peoples and nature.

Confronted with a multiple crisis, both political and economical, peoples are reclaiming their central role in shaping history and reconstructing a transnational public space based on collective responsibility and mutuality.

This is the time for us, members and founders of the Mediterranean Cultural Parliament, to contribute to the reversal of culture into politics, and to advocate for the recognition of supporting culture as a priority for politics. By doing this politics can be re-founded on collective and individual responsibility.

Our vision is based on solidarity, sharing, respect and recognition of the other, true and effective participation and direct engagement. We strongly believe that no recognition of the other can be possible without the recognition of the individual self, his or her specificity, values and dignity.

In this sense culture to us is the lymph that gives substance and meaning to dignity as the fundamental human right and to a respectful and fair relationship with nature. It is the key pillar of all freedoms, meant as responsibility and engagement for social transformation and mutual understanding.

We remain committed to support, consolidate and enlarge participatory processes where the peoples of the Mediterranean can find opportunities to express and represent their needs and aspirations.

Putting culture into politics is the antidote to authoritarianism and to any sort of fundamentalism, be it a secular or religious one.

We will stand by artists and people of culture that suffer censorship and physical or intellectual restriction in the Mediterranean, calling for their immediate release and the respect of the human right to free expression and association.

We believe that spirituality, together with arts, plays a significant role in the reconstruction of a common path among peoples in the Mediterranean. This is our responsibility towards the generations to come, since we are heirs of the memories of the past and we will create the memories of future generations.

We intend to put our contribution and experience at disposal of those social and cultural movements that are building new political, economic and cultural relations based on peace, respect and solidarity in the Mediterranean.