

# Media and Intercultural Perceptions in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

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Media has been chosen as the thematic focus of the first Anna Lindh Report on Intercultural Trends due to the great importance it represents in relation to the promotion of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Naomi Sakr, coordinator of the media chapter, presents an insight into the work of the media sector today, from editorial policies to journalism practice, and introduces the 'country in focus' articles which shed light on key challenges and emerging positive practices in reporting across cultures.

Any written discussion of the way diverse neighbours in the Euro-Mediterranean region talk about each other through their media faces an immediate challenge: if the subject is to be broached in an interesting way it is liable to adopt some of the very same characteristics of media talk that ought to be scrutinized as part of the discussion. The temptation exists, for example, to grab the reader's attention at the outset by quoting a shocking statistic from the Opinion Poll that the Anna Lindh Foundation commissioned about the kind of media images that people in two groups of countries making up the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) see of each other. It emerged from the Poll that nearly four-fifths of people questioned in eight European countries and two-thirds of those questioned in five countries in the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEM) were unable to recall coming across anything in the media recently that had enhanced their view of people in the 'other' group. The statistic is arresting and no doubt justifies examination in the present article. Yet how legitimate is it to highlight the negative dimension of this piece of news?

To do so is to risk perpetuating a cycle of negativity that the Anna Lindh Foundation's aim of intercultural dialogue within the UfM seeks to overcome. If people are more accustomed to hear negative rather than positive news about their counterparts in another group of UfM countries, it is logical from a news media perspective to lead with negative information because that is what is easily digestible, since it fits an existing negative frame. It is equally logical from a news media point of view to present the information in terms of 'sides' — in this case the European 'side' and the SEM 'side' — because, like startling statistics, any implication that the story is about opponents injects a narrative with momentum that compels the reader to read on. To disrupt such potentially divisive reporting practices requires us to stand back from the statistics and the practices to gain a more holistic view of how media are used to represent inhabitants of the Euro-Mediterranean regions to each other. That is what this section of the Anna Lindh Report 2010, with its individual country

chapters on media openness to intercultural dialogue and spotlight on promising initiatives, sets out to provide.

## Cultural Overlaps and Multiple Levels of Analysis

One prominent feature of the UfM, which forms an essential backdrop to any study of Euro-Mediterranean media treatment of intercultural issues, is a long history of migration and of resulting overlaps in cultures and religions. This phenomenon falsifies any notion of distinct European and SEM cultural groupings, even though their status as political entities may be relatively clear cut. In a recent five-country study of how Europe is represented in the media of 'Muslim majority' countries and how Muslims and Islam are represented in European media, a scholar at Oxford University concluded that the terms 'European' and 'Muslim-majority' were unhelpful in describing France, Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt and Turkey. Instead she suggested that they "might be more accurately described as two European Union countries with minority Muslim populations, two Muslim-majority countries and one European country with a large Muslim community" (Abou-El-Fadl, 2009). Today, after half a century of migration into Germany from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, former Yugoslavia, Morocco, and elsewhere (Nötzold and Dilli, 2009) immigrants and their descendants — many of whom have German citizenship — make up some 20% of the German population. In France, where collection of data on ethnic backgrounds has traditionally been subordinated to a policy of assimilation, the population is no less diverse. Already, back in the mid-1970s, *Mosaïque*, a pioneer French television programme for viewers of diverse origins, was attracting an audience of some 4.5 million (Frachon and Sassoon, 2008). As the Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll reveals, well over half of respondents in Turkey, Morocco and Lebanon said they had friends or relatives living in Europe.

Yet the German example also demonstrates that migration is more multifaceted than flows across the Mediterranean sea. If, therefore, we are to assess media openness to intercultural

dialogue, multiple strands of media content need to be addressed. On one level there is media treatment of people who move across frontiers in search of work and security, and here there is as much to say about their image in the countries they leave as the countries they travel to. Thus British media coverage of Polish communities in the United Kingdom (UK) or Swedish media coverage of Bosnians in Sweden (and vice versa, in terms of Polish or Bosnian media coverage of these same communities) is as relevant as Lebanese media coverage of Syrians in Lebanon or Moroccan media coverage of Moroccan expatriates in Germany or France. On another level there is the question of space available for minority ethnic groups in different parts of the UfM to create and enjoy their own media, and whether these outlets are inward or outward looking. On a third level there is the issue of how different populations and regions of the UfM are portrayed to each other. Are we only informed about our partners in the UfM when they are hit by crises, and is that why so few Poll respondents in the Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll recalled media coverage that left a favourable impression of people in the 'other' country group? Questions like those above are tackled in the individual country chapters that follow. The purpose of the present chapter is to survey the field to consider which aspects of media practice are deemed to be most and least conducive to the effective conduct of intercultural dialogue across the UfM space.

## Assessing the Potential of Mediated Entertainment

Editorial practices obviously differ across different types of media, from broadcasting and print to film, and from information and current affairs to entertainment. A number of studies in recent years have drawn attention to the potential for non-news or entertainment formats such as television drama or feature films to increase intercultural understanding, because of their scope for intimacy in exploring background issues and personal stories (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, 2002). This recommendation seems persuasive; indeed this Report's chapters on Greece and Germany mention examples of TV fiction that reflect cultural diversity issues such as migration, mixed marriages and religion. On the other hand, there are

clearly limits to the current impact of entertainment genres if we are to take the Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll findings as an indication. The minority of respondents who said a media item had improved the image of the other country group (not as migrants but in their home countries) were then asked about the source through which they had received the positive image. Of this minority, most cited news and information on television or in print media. The figures for television were 58% and 55% for people living in Europe and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries respectively, while for print they were 27% and 12% respectively. For documentaries the equivalent figures were 20% and 13%. For feature films, however, these ratios were reversed: 20% of people living in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Turkey cited films as having given them a positive impression of people living in European countries, whereas only 9% of people questioned in Europe referred to film as a medium through which they had received a positive impression of people living in the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

Pending further investigation into the reasons for this finding, some pointers can be drawn from existing research. One possibility is that media users find just as much negativity and unsatisfactory representation in entertainment media as they do in news and current affairs. Films dealing fairly with challenges of mutual incomprehension between different communities in the UfM or exorcising bitter memories of historic injustice are rare, not least because a judgement as to a film's 'fairness' ultimately depends on the predisposition of the viewer and the way they interpret details of narrative and characterisation. Someone who has not experienced a particular kind of discrimination or marginalisation may regard a film about it as fair and progressive, but a victim will see nuances that may seem to perpetuate a sense of inequality. Evidence suggests that, even on the small screen, apparently positive fictional portrayals of minorities in society can evoke dissatisfaction among groups whom the scriptwriters and producers are attempting to portray (Dhoest, 2009). Several scholars attribute such dissatisfaction to a tendency to tokenism in screen productions, whereby in the absence of a greater diversity of roles and functions a single character has to 'carry the burden of representation'

## Anna Lindh Journalist Award

This award was established in 2006 by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the International Federation of Journalists. It is the Region's leading prize for reporting across cultures and on issues of cultural diversity. The award programme was created as a response to the challenge journalists in the field are facing in reporting on the rapid transformation taking place across the Region from once mainly homogenous societies to vibrant multi-cultural and multi-religious communities as well as on increasingly complex conflicts and wars. The Award's Jury is composed of international media experts, with former Chairs including renowned Mediterranean personalities including Amin Maalouf and Edgar Morin, and winners of the annual prize are invited to work as 'ambassadors for cultural dialogue' through events organised across the 43 Anna Lindh National Civil Society Networks. Partners involved in the initiative include the COPEAM Audiovisual Platform, the European Commission, the United Nations-Alliance of Civilizations and the Monaco Mediterranean Foundation.

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

## Euro-Mediterranean Media Task Force

Bringing together journalists and editors from across the two shores of the Mediterranean, the Euro-Mediterranean Media Task Force is a network of media practitioners involved in analysing issues across the media sector, developing joint initiatives and providing policy recommendations to decision-makers. The initiative began in September 2005 at the Dead Sea in Jordan as part of the European Commission's 'Euro-Mediterranean and the Media' conference which aimed to give a voice to journalists within regional cooperation work. Since then, participation has grown to over 500 media practitioners and has led to a wide range of events on issues including conflict reporting, press freedom, reporting on terrorism, and the media and migration. As part of this region-wide network, a 'Task Force' of journalists has been engaged to consult on policy developments within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, to advise the Commission, as well as deliver recommendations at Forums related to intercultural relations.

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on behalf of an entire group.

For similar reasons, perhaps, disparate judgements have emerged about the potential for so-called Reality TV to counteract prejudice. Reality TV, or popular factual entertainment capable of turning non-professionals into instant celebrities, took off during the early 2000s, with broadcasters north and south of the Mediterranean buying up formats for social experiment shows like Big Brother and singing contests like Fame Academy. Given commercial broadcasters' interest in boosting advertising revenue by tapping into new audiences (Tsagarousianou, 1999), reality formats gave producers a chance to assemble on-screen reflections of the viewing public's ever-widening ethnic and cultural composition without being forced to seek out qualified professional performers from the relevant ethnic groups. The trend was so marked that in 2005, Trevor Phillips, then Chair of the UK Commission for Racial Equality, declared that reality TV had given many British people a chance to "encounter people from other ethnic groups in a way they would never do in their own everyday lives". Not everyone agreed, however. Audience responses both to Big Brother and its French version, 'Loft Story', were equally capable of questioning Phillips' contention that the programme had managed to confound stereotypes (Fayard, 2003).

In the same way, as is pointed out in this Report's chapter on Germany, praise heaped on the award-winning comedy series 'Turkish for Beginners', for its treatment of conflict in a cross-cultural household, was counterbalanced by criticism that it actually reinforced stereotypes. For an answer to the problem of tokenism in representing minorities and marginalised groups, many scholars of gender, class and ethnicity in the media look to the Jamaican-born cultural theorist Stuart Hall. He advises occupying the terrain that has been "saturated by fixed and closed representation" in order to "open the stereotypes up in such a way that they become uninhabitable for very long" (Hall, 1997). In other words, it is not a matter of trying to reverse stereotypes to create positive images, but rather of creating a multiplicity of images and exposing the practices that naturalise certain representations and exclude others. There seems to be an argument here for

rethinking how to promote intercultural communication through fiction, with media literacy on the part of audiences and self-questioning on the part of producers being a key ingredient. For example, media interviews could place more emphasis on asking film or television directors to reflect on their narratives and casting decisions. This is an alternative to asking them to make entertainment according to some kind of intercultural formula, since audiences quickly see through formula. Audiences do not generally appreciate propaganda or didacticism; they want entertainment that is genuinely creative. At the same time, the harsher their immediate circumstances, the more they may rely on entertainment for temporary escape from the realities of everyday life. That was a point made about a ten-part television drama made by and for Palestinians in 2008, with funding from Germany and the European Union, under the name Matabb (meaning Speed Bump). Modelled on a combination of popular Turkish and German soap operas, but produced on a fraction of their budgets, Matabb was welcomed by critics in Europe, who believed that the series opened a window onto the world of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. But they also noted that European viewers would need local knowledge of the West Bank in order to understand the jokes, while others predicted that local Palestinian audiences, who actually face the endless problems depicted in Matabb, would not choose to watch these problems reproduced on screen (Frenkel, 2008).

Sympathetic critiques of Matabb exposed a further fundamental challenge that faces any attempt at intercultural communication through fiction and comedy. This challenge, known as the 'cultural discount', lies in the fact that viewers in particular communities share common histories, beliefs, humour, physical environment and so on. Thus programmes made from the viewpoint of other communities with other sets of common knowledge have much less appeal, especially if there is also a language barrier to be overcome. It is precisely this phenomenon that gives the Hollywood film and television industry one of its biggest competitive advantages. Because the United States (US) has the largest domestic market in the world, ample profits can be made from big-budget movies at home before the cultural discount

comes into play (Hoskins, McFadyen and Finn, 2004). By the same token, small countries face major hurdles in generating finance for films or television series that are remarkable enough to be seen in distant parts of the UfM. On the other hand, as seen from the Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll statistics on film as a source of positive impressions, the hurdles do not seem to be faced equally across the Region: many more people living in SEM countries seemed to have received a positive impression of their counterparts in Europe through film than the other way round.

This imbalance indicates that there must be additional obstacles holding back the flow of films from south to north. One possible factor could be tough constraints on distribution experienced by film and programme makers, even in those southern and eastern Mediterranean countries with a domestic market large enough to encourage investment in film and from which, in consequence, film exports are more likely. Independent film production is booming in Turkey and Turkish film makers have won prestigious prizes abroad. But at home they complain about limited screenings, while their success in Europe seems mostly attributable to word-of-mouth recommendations among Europe's Turkish-speaking residents. It remains to be seen whether other Europeans will develop a taste for Turkish film. In Egypt, a populous country whose film industry has a history of success, multiple contemporary layers of direct and indirect censorship ensure that only a fraction of indigenous creativity gets reflected on screen (Farid, 2006). In particular there are restrictions in Egypt, and elsewhere, on portraying social divisions in fiction, for fear that such portrayal will aggravate disharmony rather than stimulate the kind of rational and well-intentioned public debate that can eventually culminate in consensus.

To overcome such restrictions, film-makers in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries have the option of seeking European sponsorship to make films about social issues. But those who take it come under subtle pressures to modify scripts and purposes in order to suit European tastes and prejudices, which limits the film to European distribution and starves the film-maker's own industry of re-investment through self-generated profits (Menicucci, 2005). In other

words, the image of people that audiences in Europe see in 'Arab' films may well be one that has been crafted under European influence. 'Paradise Now' (2005, dir. Hany Abu-Assad), a Palestinian-directed film that was nominated for the Oscars in 2006, was a Palestinian, Israeli, French, German and Dutch co-production. Caramel (2007, dir. Nadine Labaki, Arabic title Sukkar Banat), a Lebanese-French co-production heralded in Europe as counteracting prejudices by depicting a peaceful slice of Lebanese everyday life, was edited in France during the Israeli-Hezbollah war that caused massive casualties and destruction in Lebanon in July 2006.

## Conflating Nation and Culture: News Media and Nation-Building

Under norms of journalistic professionalism developed in parts of Europe and the US, death and injury make headline news. Hence there is a structural reason why reports of war and violent conflict travel more rapidly across long distances in the UfM than other kinds of news, even though the other kinds could fundamentally alter the knowledge base that media users bring to bear when trying to make sense of conflicts in the absence of either firsthand experience or historical background (Sakr, 2008). Much has been written about modes of conflict reporting that rank casualties according to their relationship to the reporter's audience, or offer simplistic, under-researched explanations of the kind that refer to 'ancient hatreds' without examining tangible contemporary inequalities. There is also a rich literature on 'peace journalism' that can frame conflict in ways that help to transform and resolve it (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005). Less has been said on the way media have historically been implicated in a process of nation-building in most parts of the UfM, so that the imagined national community remains entrenched in media practices despite population movements across borders and despite the rise of transnational media spaces through satellite television and the Internet.

As a framework for political participation and vehicle for democratic practice, the nation state can offer practical mechanisms for its constituent cultural communities to build mutual understanding and trust. In his work on

## Rapid Response Media Mechanism

As part of a joint strategy for responding to intercultural crises in the Mediterranean region, the Anna Lindh Foundation, European Commission and United Nations Alliance of Civilizations have developed a programme aimed at supporting the work of journalists in reporting across cultures. One of the key approaches in this regard has been to provide media practitioners working across the Mediterranean region with fast, free and direct access to some of the world's leading analysts, academics and commentators. This is done through promotion of online resources as well as through organizing 'rapid response' forums with journalists, academic experts and civil society leaders, as was the case of the 'London Media Forum' convened following the outbreak of the Gaza War. Through the joint strategy, the Foundation, Commission and Alliance are also involved in facilitating joint reporting projects between journalists from the two shores of the Mediterranean in order to tackle issues of common concern including migration, globalization and culture.

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

multiculturalism, Bhikhu Parekh identifies trust as a key to dialogue, because reciprocal commitment to self-questioning and working together on a basis of equality is needed to alter the context of any intercultural clash so as to defuse it (Parekh, 2006). It becomes apparent from analysis of those UfM countries where media production and consumption are aligned with ethnic divisions in society that cross-cultural national media could offer more effective platforms for building intercommunal trust and intercultural dialogue than those that currently exist. By contrast, national media in some other UfM countries are used to spread homogenising and exclusive versions of national identity. The risk in those cases is of "pathologiz[ing] heterogeneity as a condition" and portraying change as "undermining heritage" (Georgiou, 2005). Where media are complicit in the 'invention of tradition', for example in ritualistic treatment of leaders' speeches to the nation or major sporting events, they help to reproduce a vision of the nation state as continuous and unchanging, so that the possibilities for social cohesion are seen to be linked to a sense of continuity with the past (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992).

In Europe after World War II, the model of public service broadcasting was developed in part to forge a sense of national unity. In many countries single state broadcasters retained a dominant position for several decades. In the southern and eastern Mediterranean, broadcast media were deployed to mobilise and unify nations after they had gained independence. Today the legacy of those approaches is sometimes seen in a preoccupation with national cultural identification that cannot 'think outside the [national] box'. Research with communities in Europe who consume media from non-European sources reveals that they develop new pluralistic practices of media use — ones that "involve them in an imaginative and intellectual mobility across cultural spaces" (Robins, 2009). Yet sometimes the pervasive and homogenizing imagination of national community creates a perception that diasporic groups who consume media in their own language are engaging in a form of 'long distance nationalism', as a 'unified community plugging into a unified cultural space'. Commentators who call for an alternative recognition — namely that diasporic groups "draw together elements of old and new homeland cultures as well as cultural perceptions that they themselves originate" (Browne, 2005), — are echoed on the southern side of the Mediterranean by those who are impatient to see intellectual movement away from a situation "where there has always been a social equilibrium that overlooks anything different on the pretext of a post-independence cohesiveness", towards a situation where talk of "pluralism and representative" is translated into concrete proposals (Naji, 2009).

Inevitably, openness to pluralism and dialogue through news media is influenced, just as it is in the case of entertainment media, by the concrete experience of those taking part. Intercultural dialogue is hardly likely to seem an immediate priority to people under siege or physical attack.

The media do not manufacture events; in situations of violent conflict and insecurity, relief and resolution are the responsibility of politicians and the military, not the media. It is reasonable to expect media workers to report accurately and constructively, but ultimately they can only report what happens. In light of assaults affecting Palestinians, Afghans, Iraqis and Lebanese, it is not surprising that a three-month content analysis of three different political talk show series, on a pan-Arab news channel owned by a pro-US Saudi entrepreneur, turned up almost no positive portrayals of US or European policies (Hroub, 2009). The rare exceptions included a programme that mentioned loans to Lebanon and another devoted to an interview with Ahmed Aboutaleb, a Dutch citizen of Moroccan origin and first Muslim mayor of Rotterdam, who had just been appointed secretary of state in the Netherlands Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Since populations who live amidst conflict and insecurity are forced to rely more heavily on news media than those who do not, there is a structural imbalance in the possibilities for increasing intercultural understanding through news media, in the sense that not all parties to the desired dialogue share the same hunger for news. This in turn creates a cycle (highlighted in this report's UK chapter) in which a perceived lack of audience interest deters editors in politically stable countries from commissioning the gathering of news about unstable ones. The imbalance is further aggravated by the fact that news-gatherers or documentary film-makers from the southern and eastern Mediterranean face more restrictions on entry to Europe than their European counterparts travelling in the opposite direction.

### Building on Positive Practice: Pointers for Future Action

Several possibilities for future action emerge from the factors discussed above. If, for example, it is accepted that true intercultural diversity in media content and recruitment is intrinsically different from mere tokenism, the imperative that follows from this is to push for a multiplicity of images and open-ended representations that acknowledge the same degree of complexity in others' individual and communal identities as media producers would claim for their own. If it is recognised that the phenomena of the cultural discount and unequal media flows give locally produced media an advantage over imports in terms of their ability to communicate effectively about cultural diversity, this places a huge responsibility on local media to address topics that are relevant to co-existence in the Euro-Mediterranean space. That in turn means that they have to safeguard the volume and quality of foreign reporting and not allow it to be decimated under the guise of budget cuts. It means establishing benchmarks for inclusiveness in recruitment and coverage and regularly measuring performance, on the basis of 'what gets measured gets done.' It also means ensuring that practitioners in both news and entertainment are urged at every step to reflect critically on what they do. According

to one published 'Agenda for Responsible Media Practice', the acquisition of 'intercultural [communicative] competence' requires that all media workers should be helped to acquire a "critically reflexive understanding of the belief structures and feelings they bring into their relationship with ethnic diversity" along with opportunities to "reflect upon the adequacy of their own behavioural repertoire" (Downing and Husband, 2005). This is not an abstract exercise. It can be operationalised through initiatives like the pairing of journalists in minority and mainstream media, or the 'Rapid Response Media Mechanism' (see 'Media Good Practice'), and exposed to public scrutiny through Question and Answer sessions with directors and editors. In the digital era, there is no shortage of communication channels through which to share such reflection and scrutiny.

As for who is well placed to promote intercultural dialogue through the media, successful actions have been undertaken at both at the micro level of individuals and small groups to the macro level of intergovernmental bodies. Examples were listed and recommended in a European Commission publication of 2009. Entitled 'Taking the Pulse of Media Diversity', the study covered the twenty-seven EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It recorded 472 relevant responses to an invitation for nominations of projects that seek to promote diversity and equality through the media. After shortlisting 150, the study team finally selected 30 projects launched by media bodies, civil society organisations and governments, in fields such as training, recruitment, mentoring, consciousness-raising, monitoring, content production and rebuttal of misinformation. Several features of this exercise are relevant to action for intercultural dialogue. One is that, even though the media initiatives addressed many aspects of diversity, including age, gender and disability, nominations were most numerous in the fields of national, ethnic or 'racial' origins and diversity of religion and belief (European Commission Unit G.4, 2009). Another is that the 30 initiatives were chosen in part because their methods were deemed easy to emulate.

Meanwhile there is much scope for action that is not project-based. This lies in the need for more awareness of, and engagement with, existing instruments, in the form of cross border institutions and treaties, an awareness and engagement that media practitioners should be equipped (perhaps by Anna Lindh Foundation Networks) to promote. Among existing media institutions that straddle the Mediterranean is the Conférence Permanente de l'Audiovisuel Méditerranéen (COPEAM). Created in Cairo in 1996, it groups major public broadcasters as well as the European Broadcasting Union and Arab States Broadcasting Union, and aims to provide a forum for cooperation among all stakeholders in broadcast media, private and public. COPEAM's Seville Charter of May 2005, signed by 26 Euro-Mediterranean broadcasters so far, called for the "new multiethnic and multicultural pattern", which has been developing through migration in Mediterranean societies,

to be considered as a "fundamental factor of social and cultural development". They called on media to spread knowledge in an innovative 'free-of-stereotypes' way, to privilege 'open and pluralist TV programming' and to pay special attention to the "topics of intercultural dialogue and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" through new programme genres and technological tools that suit young people and the 'new generation'. The Charter's sentiments have been put into practice with projects such as the Festival 'Plural Plus' (UN Alliance of Civilizations), which invites media makers under 25 years old to send in videos addressing community issues relating to migration, inclusiveness, identity, diversity, human rights and social cohesion. But commitments enshrined in the Seville Charter are voluntary and there is no enforcement mechanism. This means it is up to publics in countries represented in COPEAM to remind broadcasters of their promises, as happened when critics of Spain's March 2010 General Law of Audiovisual Communication pointed out discrepancies with undertakings made through COPEAM.

### UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity

Other opportunities to follow up on existing commitments to intercultural dialogue through the media are provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Cultural Diversity Convention of 2005. In its full title, the Convention aims at the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; its objectives and guiding principles include encouraging "dialogue among cultures with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world", and fostering "interculturality in order to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples". The Convention is an international treaty, which is legally binding on countries that have ratified it or acceded to it. Hence there is action for domestic constituencies to take, not only in countries like Turkey, Lebanon and Morocco that have yet to sign or ratify the convention, but also across the Union for the Mediterranean to ensure that its objectives are widely publicized and fulfilled.

Similarly the forty-seven member Council of Europe has articulated a policy that sees intercultural dialogue as the means to build a 'vibrant and open [European] society without discrimination'. It advises that intercultural competences should be taught and learned, spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened, and intercultural dialogue should be taken to the international level (Council of Europe 2008). The Anna Lindh Report 2010, being focused on media openness to intercultural dialogue, aspires to achieve the same aims.

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