

Culture at the Heart of Relations between the Mediterranean and Europe

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The cultural dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations, according to Thierry Fabre, has been significantly marginalised and not given the central position it merits. There remains an essential need to recognise the shared heritage on which the Region has been built and to promote and defend the culture in daily life, whether related to food or design and architecture. Fabre advocates for the circulation of artistic works and cultural producers to facilitate a real knowledge between people and societies.

Camus wrote in his *Carnets*: "Ask the question of the absurd world amounts to asking whether we would accept despair without doing anything. I suppose that no honest person can answer with a yes." This is where we stand today, with the possibility that with one leap we could come up with a common future between the Mediterranean and Europe. Given the results of the Anna Lindh/Gallup Poll on the common representations of European and Mediterranean societies, it would be absurd and totally dishonest to despair, as Camus says. There is a whole future for relations between the Mediterranean and Europe to invent and build, particularly at the level of cultural relations where a world of common significance could be instituted. It is simply a matter of giving them shape, meaning and consistency.

This is the real *raison d'être* of the Anna Lindh Foundation: putting culture at the core of relations between the Mediterranean and Europe. Yet, fifteen years after the Barcelona Process was launched and two years after the Paris Summit, which gave birth to the Union for the Mediterranean, we still are quite far from this objective. The cultural dimension has been really marginalized in Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The Anna Lindh Foundation may be - and wishes to be - an actor which is valued on the scene of international cultural relations. In fact, it will fully achieve its objective of becoming what it is by attempting to imagine what it will - or what it should become - based on which grounds, according to which priorities and in the name of which project? How can it contribute to putting culture at the core of relations between the Mediterranean and Europe?

At least three strata can be distinguished in the cultural field: 'memories', 'means' and the 'works' (or intellectual and artistic products). These three strata are not isolated: they are porous, in permanent interaction with each other, but nevertheless easily distinguished, allowing imagination of a horizon, sketching a strategy at the scale of cultural relations

between the Mediterranean and Europe and attempting to define a future project in which the Anna Lindh Foundation would be the driving force.

Towards a Policy of Recognition

"Nothing is forgotten in the Mediterranean", this adage could be considered the compass for imagining the future. It is not a matter of counting the multiplicity of conflicts of memories in the Mediterranean world: the list would be too long and the exercise vain. The idea is to sketch two main strategic orientations around which a policy of recognition is to be built. For a long time the Mediterranean world has been profoundly divided by opposing discourses between major cultural heritages: Greco-Latin versus Judeo-Arab, Athens and Rome versus Jerusalem and Cordoba. This long-standing antagonism between cultural heritages is still continuing and legitimizes face-to-face confrontations. With such exclusive discourses, no common Mediterranean world would have existed. There is 'Them' and 'Us' and nothing in between, Greek, Latin, Jewish and Arab sources would never mix however this has not stopped to happen across history. Recognition of these pluralistic genealogies and woven links between great heritages from the past is an indispensable base to build the future.

Far from denials that intentionally seek to separate and oppose - true ruptures in transmission - one should aim at encouraging initiatives and projects founded on the recognition of these shared heritages. It is a primary essential memory task, a foundation based on which it becomes possible to assemble fragments forming the diversity of the Mediterranean world. Coming out of the face-to-face confrontation between 'Them' and 'Us' depends on the recognition of genealogies and affiliations between the big cultural heritages. It is a way to associate large symbolic capitals - Athens and Rome, Jerusalem and Cordoba - which are the foundations of relations between Mediterranean and European sets.

The second main priority in the field of memories is to stop avoiding 'memory nodes' where the past is not passed and - on the contrary - ponder on it with the greatest care. Denying hurtful memories only nurtures future conflicts. "We never get rid of dead people; we are never done with them" said Paul Ricœur the philosopher who strongly opposed a 'history duty' to a 'memory duty'. There is a huge need to know in the face of numerous nurtured intentional silences. One of the priorities is to maintain an active policy of recognition of what has happened in the past and undertake a memory task, encouraged by the large cultural hubs around the Mediterranean linked with the Anna Lindh Foundation. This priority is particularly important for the young generations which need landmarks and which aim at leaving conflicts of the past to invent the future. To move towards a policy of recognition, on the path of memories, is one of the priorities in order to put culture at the core of relations between the Mediterranean and Europe.

Towards a Mediterranean Life-style

For the Anna Lindh Foundation, another priority intervention is the field of culture in daily life, means of doing, places and forms which sketch a Twenty Century Mediterranean lifestyle. This cultural field is even more significant because it does not stop at the elite and reaches the depth of large layers of the population. There exists a possible alternative to the American way of life, whose consequences will be unlikely to be borne worldwide soon. Instead of being on the defensive, caught in a perpetual logic of catching up as if caught defaulting about Western modernism, the Mediterranean should defend its values and lifestyle. One good example is the field of nutrition: the 'Mediterranean Diet' has proven itself on public health, reaching as far as the United States. Even though Western societies are struggling with the growing phenomena of obesity, particularly among younger generations, finding another nutritional balance is a possible solution. Fast food is disastrous for physical health and lifestyle and could easily be superseded by 'slow food'. This movement, launched in Italy by Carlo Petrini, could be a successful idea at the scale of the Mediterranean and Northern

and Southern Europe. An original and a good omen for the Anna Lindh Foundation would be to encompass the cultural dimension of nutritional matters and this mode of life. In the end, this could re-establish the link with a larger philosophical tradition from the Mediterranean world, a philosophy of *savoir vivre*, which would inspire a way of life. This taste of life is encountered in the Mediterranean, around a table, in the *convivencia* that may appear around a meal taken together instead of individually, as is the case with fast food. Western modernism is best characterized by the phenomenon of acceleration (Rosa, 2010). "We hardly have time, though we are gaining more of it". A Twentieth Century Mediterranean '*savoir vivre*', applied in daily living, may be a simple way to regain control of our relation with time.

'Urban condition', that is the art of living in places and not simply let one self be traversed by flows - flows of globalisation, information, financial flows, commercial flows - is another fertile field in which the Mediterranean world, heir of the art of making cities - the polis - has much to teach us for today and tomorrow. Design and architecture are major cultural fields where our 21st Century manners and living are woven. Why not invest in these fields? Urban actors and creators teaming up to change the shape of towns and cities, more and more disfigured with a totally irresponsible urbanism. The task is daunting for sure, but one has to start by giving an impulsion of thought and culture to get people to meet because these careers are dispersed and knowledge interspersed. The Anna Lindh Foundation could be an opportunity for a get-together, an organisation which would favor fertile meetings between urban actors and artists, designers, architects involved in conceiving tomorrow's cities. The Anna Lindh Foundation could become the meeting point which encourages Twenty-first Century Mediterranean lifestyle. However, it is not an exclusive world of reclusion or a Mediterranean geographical entity where one would withdraw. The horizon is open to favor values, manners and living that everyone could adopt and that in addition can stroll on world roads in the trail of diasporas and the international dimension of imagination.

Palestine - Study on Post-Conflict Communities

The project which ran from November 2009 to July 2010, consisted in a joined research between Austria and Palestine about post conflict mitigation through a comparative study, after which a wide conference was held in Gaza about the research findings. An initiative of Civitas Institute, the objective was to enrich the Palestinian experience in the field of human response to social transformation in conflict areas through producing a significant and pioneer research study, by designing a training curriculum in conflict resolution and transformation, and community peace building. A training course was conducted for twenty students from different Palestinian universities, including workshop techniques. Simultaneously, 1,500 copies of project booklet handout were produced, which contain the research findings. Students held 40 debates and study circle discussions among Palestinians in 40 non-governmental organisations in Gaza Strip. Furthermore, two radio episodes were conducted on the topic. Due to the success of this model, cooperations with new partners are foreseen.

www.annalindhreport.org/goodpractice/postoconflictstudies

Towards a Policy of Inter-Knowledge.

The layering of works – products of intellectual and artistic creation – is obviously more suited for an international cultural institution, but what are its priorities? The first objective – in my opinion – would be to encourage the circulation of works, authors and artists between the Mediterranean and Europe. There are numerous and diverse fields, of which I shall mention three as priorities for the future:

Umberto Eco had beautifully formulated this concept by saying "The real language of Europe is translation". We can clearly state it also, "The language of the Mediterranean is translation!" It is a possible common language, a new type of lingua franca in the relations between the Mediterranean and Europe. One of the main stakes is to circulate thoughts and literature, which is best achieved by a vast and thoughtful translation initiative, built on reciprocity and in the framework of a multilateral perspective. This reaches the foundations and shared references which would have a traceable impact and which would not be the simple flow of ephemeral cultural traditions. A policy of inter-knowledge, based on translation, is a strategic priority. This spans from the literature for children to critical and philosophical thoughts, thus covering a wide array of works to translate. The priority of works to translate remains to be defined in common, based on a sound knowledge of existing works. Thus, an international type of translation would be born at the hands of the Anna Lindh Foundation. A genuine pollinization of culture and thought may be born from such an initiative, away from thriving identity fallbacks, rejects and fears, and an initiative that has already been launched with the project of Translating in the Mediterranean.

We are currently witnessing an emergence of contemporary urban musical scenes in Istanbul, Casablanca, Beirut, Marseille, Essaouira or Berlin. These new areas and new musical expressions reach for a huge public of young generations which form the majority of people in the Mediterranean perimeter. These contemporary musical urban scenes are already in contact, but it would certainly be more useful to connect them and develop systems that

would enable them to better work together. Away from the backward looking and nostalgic Mediterranean, wreckage and ruins, away from the commonalities and common places of the 'cultural dialogue' or the 'cradle of civilizations', it is high time to lend some attention to the Mediterranean of the 20th century. Parallel to a destructive Mediterranean, torn by violence and hatred which spread in the trails of international political conflicts, there exists a creative Mediterranean. "Inventions from the unknown call for new forms" the striking spirit of Arthur Rimbaud paves the way for young artists of the Mediterranean world, seeking a new life. It is about enabling researches, introducing new forms to the event, particularly in the musical field and encouraging a 20th century Mediterranean that chooses the taste of life rather than that of death, a living and creative Mediterranean in the face of all immobilizing trends. It is this type of Mediterranean, linked to Europe that we wish to encourage. Contemporary urban musical scenes will be its theater stage, and all is needed now is to link its actors. Circulation of works cannot be a virtual thing. It involves the circulation of men and women from around the Mediterranean as well as artists to create common projects. Though digital systems may establish real connections and favor cultural hybridizations, nothing equates the power of people meeting face-to-face. Nothing is worth living art and the inter-knowledge born from working in common, which implies artist mobility. However, we are very far from this reality today, given that we are increasingly ensconced in the 'Citadel of Europe', which fears its neighbors from the South, consequently hindering the free circulation of people. The Anna Lindh Foundation plays a major role in encouraging the mobility of artists, making possible intellectual and artistic and intellectual meetings, to help borders crossing, from the South to the North and also between Southern countries where borders are also laid down. A policy of inter knowledge, encouraging the circulation of works and artists, is a priority future project of the Anna Lindh Foundation. Its credibility holds mainly in its capacity to make possible such mobility.

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Portugal - Book on Ideas for Dialogue

First issued in May 2007, the concept of the publication is to provide 'Forty-Four Ideas' how dialogue and diversity can be applied and promoted in the daily life of people. Whether as citizens and professionals, mothers and fathers, a range of simple ideas are presented which could be recreated and adapted to the reality people face in their communities. The publication, an initiative of ACIDI, also contains an educational section entitled 'Did You Know?' which provides information about the one hundred and seventy four nationalities coexisting in Portugal and background data on a number of the religious communities and dates which are of importance to them. In addition, there is information on services supporting immigrants, institutions offering free language and culture courses for foreigners, and specific agreements adopted within the EU concerning the protection of rights of immigrants and ethnic minorities. The overall approach is to ensure that ideas and resources are presented in a way which is engaging for the reader and as straight-forward as possible to implement.

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