

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Conclusions of the Second Conference of the Ministers of Culture

Rhodes, 25-26 September 1998

The participants in the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference of the Ministers of Culture held in Rhodes on 25-26 September 1998,

- reiterate their commitment to the main principles set out and adopted by the Barcelona Declaration on 27-28 November 1995 which provides an overall framework for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in the political, economic and cultural field, giving special emphasis to the better understanding and the mutual respect between cultures and civilisations;
- reaffirm the concluding statement by the Presidency at the end of the ad-hoc Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Palermo on 3-4 June 1998;
- emphasize the importance of the First Meeting of the Ministers of Culture in Bologna on 22-23 April 1996, which gave broad guidelines for the Euromed Heritage regional programme and thus produced the first concrete action towards the implementation of the aims in the cultural sector of the Barcelona Declaration;
- stress the importance of the Thessaloniki Conference on 15 November 1997 which considerably contributed to promoting an organised and pluralistic development of the audio-visual sector among the Mediterranean Partners, particularly by means of co-operation between European and Mediterranean operators;
- welcome the fruitful discussion and the five point programme agreed upon during the workshop on Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations in Stockholm 23-24 April 1998, whose conclusions form part of the preparatory works of the Rhodes conference;
- acknowledge the progress achieved since the Barcelona and Bologna conferences by launching the first regional programmes (Euromed Heritage, Euromed Audio-visual) and by preparing complementary programmes in other cultural fields;
- welcome the relaunch of the decentralised co-operation programmes (Med-Campus, Med Media, Med-Urbs).

The Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Culture hereby agree to:

- confirm that the prevalence of peace and justice in the Mediterranean Region will affect in a positive manner the prospects of the Barcelona Declaration and will increase the chances of positive cultural co-operation among the Euro-Mediterranean countries;
- enhance the Euro-Mediterranean cultural dialogue in the framework of the Barcelona Declaration, recognising that « the traditions of culture and civilisation throughout the Mediterranean region, dialogue between these cultures and exchanges at human, scientific and technological levels are essential factors in bringing their people closer, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other »;
- stress the relevance of cultural dialogue and exchanges in the achievement of the objectives of the Barcelona Process, as an essential factor for promoting an improved perception of the evolving Euro-Mediterranean societies;
- reaffirm the key priorities defined in Stockholm in order to streamline activities and reach clusters of projects within the programmes to avoid diffusion: interaction between cultures and civilisations through research programmes in different cultural areas, co-operation in the fields of education and youth, media co-operation in audio-visual broadcasting and publishing fields, co-operation at civil society and government levels on the human dimension and cultural exchanges and co-operation ;
- consider the exchange of people, in particular young people, ideas and cultural activities as a common denominator for future projects, in particular through networking between cultural actors at the Euro-Mediterranean level which is a major factor in promoting exchange of experience, transfer of know-how and the emergence of joint projects;
- express their wish for and commitment to an efficient implementation of regional programmes;

- increase the visibility of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and reach the widest public possible, with special attention paid to target groups like women and young people, given that its participation guarantees the continuation of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural co-operation;
- continue to support action in the heritage sector; while developing in parallel, and on the same footing, Euromed Programmes in other important cultural, literary and artistic fields ; such as performing, fine and visual arts as well as translation, books, and literary events ;
- express their will to proceed with Euromed Heritage II, recalling that the Euromed Heritage programme covers both material and non material heritage and should be considered as a factor in the economic and social development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partners, including high level training and the promotion of high quality sustainable cultural tourism;
- assure an efficient follow-up by the Commission of the Thessaloniki conference conclusions by implementing the first Euromed Audio-visual regional programme and by encouraging the regular exchange of information and co-operation in regard to audio-visual regulatory and self-regulatory issues, and in particular by facilitating a broad participation of the Euro-Mediterranean actors in the audio-visual sector in the framework of the call for proposals issued by the Commission for the implementation of the Euromed Audio-visual programme ;
- assure an efficient follow-up of the Euromed Committee's decision to launch a new regional programme, Euromed Humanities, focusing in particular on networking at the Euro-Mediterranean level of Research and academic Institutes on the Mediterranean;
- note that coherence and co-operation between the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the European Union action in the field of culture as concerns their objectives and actions should be assured in order to reinforce the efficiency of these different actions;
- agree that it is necessary to pay particular attention to the problem of upgrading the cultural infrastructures of some of the Mediterranean partners to promote cultural exchanges.

The European Commission is charged with implementing EU financing in accordance with applicable policies and procedures (MEDA Regulation, MEDA Regional Indicative Programme).

The Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Culture take note of the annexed ideas and initiatives presented during the Rhodes Conference in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Intercultural Dialogue on the verge of the new Millennium.

Some participants have announced that they intend to add some further ideas and initiatives in the coming 4 weeks. They will be added in a revised version of the Annex. This list in no way excludes any Government from submitting new ones under the procedures of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

All ideas and initiatives will be examined through the procedures established within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

ANNEX

Ideas and initiatives presented during
the Second Euro-Mediterranean Conference of the Ministers of Culture
(Rhodes, 25-26 September 1998)

AUSTRIA

1. Annual Film Festival of the Euromed Television Companies

An annual film festival of important cultural TV productions shall foster the presentation and exchange of exemplary cultural programmes between Euromed Broadcasting Stations.

2. Global Summit on « Culture and Development » 2001 or 2002 in Vienna

A Global Summit on Culture and Development such as suggested by the Perez de Cuellar-Commission within the framework of UNESCO should foster the role of culture in the social transformation process in order to counterbalance the negative globalisation effects. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership could be strengthened by such a development, at the same time the Euro-Mediterranean dimension would be a great importance for a positive outcome of this summit.

CYPRUS

Establishment of an East-Mediterranean Youth Orchestra, which will take part in the celebrations of the year 2000.

EGYPT

Implementation of the project of translating one thousand books in the framework of Euromed cultural cooperation.

FINLAND

- Possible new initiatives in the context of its Presidency of the European Union during the second semester of 1999.
- Promotion of production, co-production and distribution of television documentaries on Mediterranean themes (history, culture, daily life, lifestyles, politics, social aspects, etc)
- Promotion of production, co-production and distribution of digital content about the themes mentioned above, including educational materials, using new information technology (CD-ROMs, network-base multimedia).

GERMANY

House of World Cultures (Berlin. August-October 2000)

« The Shared Garden », a project of the House of World Cultures (Berlin, August - October 2000) in co-operation with cultural institutions both from the Mediterranean and northern Europe. The project will include workshops of artists and a festival to rediscover common spiritual traditions (Music, Film, Theatre, Literature, Exhibitions, Debates).

GREECE

CULTURAL OLYMPIAD

The Athens 2004 Olympics will be organised in such a manner that it will incorporate the cultural dimension. The Cultural Olympiad, a permanent important new institution - approved by UNESCO and with the President of the International Olympic Committee and the Director General of UNESCO as founding members - is envisaged to comprise a range of cultural events of cultural importance during the period of the four years between two successive Olympic games. These events will focus on themes reflecting concerns of contemporary society such as: The culture of peace, coexistence and reconciliation, of social cohesion, of information society, and culture as the area in which tradition and innovation can be creatively combined. In this framework the Euro-Mediterranean dimension is expected to have a valuable contribution because the Mediterranean basin is a great womb of cultures from which many religious dogmas with the common features of monotheism and many cultural creations have sprung.

MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Establishment of an Institute for the Mediterranean Culture Heritage in Crete, a centre for the study of issues related to the preservation of the Mediterranean cultural landscape with special emphasis to the archaeological and architectural heritage of the area.

ISRAEL

1. On the preservation of the heritage.
 - A. Adopting a standard terminology in the presentation of historical sites
 - B. The computerisation of Semitic languages
 - C. The protection of coastal zones: the creation of teams of experts from several maritime fields -like history, archaeology, geology, the environment, etc.
2. Promoting an improved perception of the evolving Euro-Med societies
 - D. The creation of a common curriculum for youngsters of the schoolage and the examination of school manuals

- E. A Euro-Mediterranean Forum for the exchange of educational programs on societies in conflict
 - F. A Mediterranean Liturgical Music Festival in the Holy Land for the Year 2000 - including the participation of religious leaders.
3. Chamber dance Ping-Pong - a proposal somewhat similar to the idea behind the Ping-Pong matches that brought about the beginning of a dialogue between China and the Western world
 4. Ultra-Marine - an artistic project set to bring together creative young artists in the fields of fine Arts, Theatre and Dance - the youth from 6 countries in Europe and the Mediterranean will take part in art workshops held in a different country each time.

Each meeting focus on one particular field of art that will be chosen by the host country. Six meetings will be held, two meetings a year for three years.

ITALY

1. As to Euro-Mediterranean Heritage II Program, the following projects are suggested:

1.1 Creation of a high-level Centre for training in the fields of preservation, restoration and management of cultural heritage

1.2. Realisation of a comprehensive risk - evaluation survey of the most important historical sites. This initiative was suggested by Italy during the Euro-Mediterranean Seminar Culture and Civilisations (Stockholm, April 23/24, 1998) see annex 5 to the conclusions.

1.3 Creation of a data-bank collecting information on management policy existing in each Euro-Mediterranean Country.

2. With reference to « cultural exchanges », Italy suggests that the Med-Film Festival Workshop (presented in the Stockholm Seminar) becomes an Euro-Mediterranean event taking place regularly every year.

3. As to the ideas for the new Millennium's celebrations (in the year 2000), special attention should be reserved by Euro-Mediterranean partners to initiatives concerning liturgical music, poetry, literature, theatre, performing arts and other projects focusing on the social impact of the intercultural dialogue.

JORDAN

A common Action Plan for the convening in Amman in the year 2000 of a Seminar on the implementation of the Stockholm Recommendation n°1 concerning cultural policy being an essential component of cultural development.

LUXEMBOURG

Le Luxembourg accueille depuis mai 1997 l'Institut européen des itinéraires culturels du Conseil de l'Europe qui offre toute aide logistique et de documentation, de transmission d'informations et de bonnes pratiques sur les circuits culturels déjà existants et à créer.

Exemples de partenariat

- L'héritage AL ANDALUZ (Portugal, Espagne, Maroc) ;
- Festivals sur le baroque sur les deux rives de la Méditerranée ;
- Fêtes et rites populaires (Grèce).

Projet

LE FROMENT EN MEDITERRANE

MALTA

Development of a set of legal instruments by which the Mediterranean countries would collectively agree to protect the underwater archaeological heritage of the Mediterranean sea as an area of common concern;

Development of interdisciplinary Mediterranean regional studies within the framework of the co-operation between universities and research institutes throughout participating countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

The Bethlehem 2000 project constitutes an important tool to revive the basic elements upon which the cultural heritage of Europe and the Mediterranean region is based.

This project, co-ordinated by the Palestinian Authority, includes religious and cultural events and celebrations extending between December 1999 and Easter 2001 with the aim of transforming the city of Bethlehem where peace was born to an eternal international capital of peace.

PORTUGAL

Joint Celebration of the Year 2000 in the Mediterranean

Within the scope of the Joint Celebration of the Year 2000 in Mediterranean, cyberspace should and will play a very important role. To foster the Euro-Mediterranean Intercultural Dialogue on the Verge of the New Millennium, a project for collaboration among and between artists, cultural agents and many other people is proposed, in which the use of Internet and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) will be of major importance.

After the definition of the subjects to be treated, artists from different countries will develop projects at national and international levels, with the aim of creating sites on the Internet, which will be linked between them and connected to a major one, which will collect and manage all the information and creative work concerning this project for the Joint Celebration of the Year 2000 in Mediterranean. In these shared virtual places, artists will be able to work, alone or in collaboration with colleagues from the same country or from different nations, exchanging ideas and experiences, creating and innovating, promoting the Euro-Mediterranean culture and tolerance among different cultural identities.

SPAIN

The UNIVERSAL FORUM OF CULTURES, BARCELONA 2004, adopted by UNESCO as principal partner during its 29th Conference in 1997.

SWEDEN

The establishment by the Swedish government of an Institute in Alexandria, Egypt, with the task of e.g. functioning as a meeting place for further dialogue within the Euro-Mediterranean framework, also in the cultural and audio-visual fields.

TUNISIA

1. Dans le cadre de la revitalisation du patrimoine culturel méditerranéen et l'exploitation et la mise en valeur des sites historiques, la Tunisie propose le projet de Festival du Théâtre Classique Méditerranéen dans le site de Carthage dans le cadre des festivités de l'an 2000.

2. Afin de rapprocher et de favoriser la compréhension mutuelle et en vue de créer une dynamique d'enracinement dans les habitudes et réflexes culturels, de l'appréciation et de l'acceptation de l'autre, la Tunisie propose l'organisation d'une exposition des Grands Maîtres de la peinture Euro-méditerranéenne.

TURKEY

- Cupertino in cultural relations, especially within the framework of a draft program, relating to the return of the stolen or illegally exported cultural or natural property from their origin countries by incorporating, without delay, the Resolution n°3911/92 and 752/93 of the EEC, as well as article 6 of the UNESCO convention of 1970.
- Widespread adoption of the use of « EXPORT PERMITS » granted by the countries of origin for the transportation of cultural objects.
- A draft project to prevent the illicit traffic of cultural properties and introduce a standard inventory system for them.