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The current political situation and the time constraints in place for the Preparatory Action's enquiry have not allowed for a proper consultation process to be undertaken in Syria. This note is the result of desk research and online consultation with a limited number of stakeholders. It therefore provides only a single snapshot at the given moment. It is not a full-fledged analysis of the cultural relations between Europe and Syria.

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## OVERVIEW

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Relations between Syria and Europe have been marked by the hostilities resulting from armed opposition to the regime of President Bashar al-Assad. The level of violence has forced millions of Syrians to leave their homes and move to neighbouring countries.<sup>1</sup>

Following the violent repression which started in 2011, the European Union froze the draft Association Agreement under negotiation with Syria and suspended its cooperation.<sup>2</sup> In parallel, the EU introduced restrictive measures against the regime and is now providing humanitarian assistance to displaced persons.<sup>3</sup> Most European embassies have been closed or have been operating with minimal staff since 2012.

Prior to the crisis, relations with Europe had mostly been tense – Syria being one of the few Neighbourhood countries that had not signed an Association Agreement. An easing of tensions could be seen in the late 2000s.<sup>4</sup> Donors and external cultural organisations had signed cultural agreements and started projects in Syria: the EU was the most important external funder for culture (see annex).<sup>5</sup> Several foreign cultural centres were present in Syria, often working on cultural heritage and archaeology.

At present, artists in Syria are faced with constant challenges, from censorship to finding venues to showcase their art and perform.<sup>6</sup> While some are still active in Damascus, many artists and cultural professionals have moved to Lebanon and some to Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> According to UNHCR data there are about 2.5 million Syrians refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq while 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced within Syria. See: 'Syrian Refugees', *Migration Policy Centre*. Online. Available at: <http://syrianrefugees.eu/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>2</sup> For detailed information, see the EEAS Factsheet, *The European Union and Syria*, Brussels, 14 March 2014. Online. Available at: [http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131018\\_01\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131018_01_en.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> For detailed information on EU humanitarian assistance see: ECHO Factsheet, *Syria Crisis*, 26 June 2014. Online. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria_en.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> For an overview see: Jörg Dostal and Anja Zorob, *Syria and the Euro-Mediterranean Relationship*, St. Andrews: Centre for Syrian Studies, Lynne Rienner, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> R. Al Khatib and R. Yazaji, 'Syria Country Profile', in *Cultural Policies in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia*, Amsterdam: Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy), European Cultural Foundation and Boekmanstudies, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural and theatre professional, June 2014.

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## THE CULTURAL POLICY LANDSCAPE

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After the start of the uprisings, cultural activists noted ‘the emergence of dozens of cultural civil institutions out of the traditionally-approved laws, legislation and unprecedented activities of civil communities’.<sup>7</sup>

The role of culture and arts has changed: they have become tools to make a political statement or to provide relief and help.<sup>8</sup>

A new generation of Syrian creative activists has emerged: often self-taught, they use new art forms such as digital photography and are active on social media.<sup>9</sup> As the perception of the arts has changed, being no longer principally for aesthetic purposes but with a clear political agenda in mind, ‘it is difficult to say who is an artist now’ said an interviewee.<sup>10</sup>

Examples of cultural activism thrive. In the words of playwright Mohammed Al Attar, writing is a tool of protest: ‘At the start of the uprising I was totally detached from writing because it seemed like a luxurious act [...] I started to see that writing could be a contribution rather than cowardice. We all have different tools, and writing is mine’.<sup>11</sup>

Cartoonist Ali Ferzat, whose subtle critiques of the regime had been tolerated for years, was beaten and his hands were broken by supporters of the president.<sup>12</sup> From the early stages of the uprising, graffiti and street art became a tool of protesters.<sup>13</sup> A well-known example is the town of Kafranbel where each Friday the citizens protest peacefully in the streets with banners and cartoons, often criticising the inaction of international powers.<sup>14</sup>

Promoting change takes on different forms. In the first year of the protests, a group of Syrian cultural activists created Ettijahat.Independent Culture,<sup>15</sup> an organisation aimed at promoting an

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<sup>7</sup> Ettijahat.Independent Culture, *Current developments of cultural policies in the Arab Region*, Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy) and European Cultural Foundation, June 2013. Online. Available at: <http://mawred.org/wordpress1/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Cultural-Policies-3rd-Report-Jan.-2013-to-June-30.-2013.pdf>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural and theatre professional, June 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Phone interview with an international expert on Syrian cultural movements, June 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural professional and playwright, June 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Mohammad Al Attar, ‘Writing as a tool of protest’, *The Economist*, Beirut, 10 June 2012. Online. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospere/2012/06/ga-mohammad-al-attar>.

<sup>12</sup> Sebastian Usher, ‘Ali Ferzat: Revolution redefines art in Syria’, *BBC News*, 25 March 2012. Online. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-17491184>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>13</sup> For the role of graffiti sparking in the protests in Deraa in 2011 see: Kelly McEvers, ‘Revisiting The Spark That Kindled The Syrian Uprising’, *NPR*, 16 March 2012. Online. Available at: <http://www.npr.org/2012/03/16/148719850/revisiting-the-spark-that-kindled-the-syrian-uprising>.

<sup>14</sup> The movement grew out of the initiative of Raed Fares who made the first protest poster at the beginning of the uprising in 2011. At different stages the town was occupied by both the Syrian Army and ISIS. For more details see the website: <http://www.occupiedkafranbel.com/>.

<sup>15</sup> See official website: <http://www.ettijahat.org/site/index>.

independent cultural movement through research and advocacy, supported by several Arab and European partners and donors. As an example of its research and policy work, Ettijahat.Independent Culture took part in a first mapping of cultural policies in Arab countries<sup>16</sup> and acts as regional editor and coordinator of the WorldCP, an international database of cultural policies.<sup>17</sup> In the context of the crisis, Ettijahat.Independent Culture has collaborated with other organisations to bring culture into the relief work taking place in refugee camps in Lebanon and to provide outlets for Syrian arts in Lebanon and in Europe (see below on Action for Hope and Miniatures).

In the early stages of the uprising, cultural centres in Damascus tried to support certain cultural initiatives, for instance through exhibitions and performances, though often not successfully, owing to the security situation.<sup>18</sup>

Since the level of violence has worsened, cultural actors are constantly faced with a dilemma: 'how can we even talk of culture?'<sup>19</sup> Cultural activities and arts work still take place within Syria, though conditions are difficult because of censorship, repression and insecurity.

As access to the country has become limited, reliable and trusted sources of information both within and outside Syria have acquired importance. The border between culture and media work is increasingly blurred as cultural actors reach out through new media. A notable example is Syria Untold, a web supporter of grassroots work on 'creative resistance' curated by Syrian and international journalists and experts.<sup>20</sup>

Filmmaker Talal Derki shot the documentary *Return to Homs*, filmed over 3 years in the city of Homs following a group of young revolutionaries. The film, produced thanks to a contribution from the IDFA Bertha Fund,<sup>21</sup> was produced by Owra Nyrabia, who was arrested and held in Syria for 11 days until an international campaign put pressure on the regime to release him. He subsequently moved to Egypt and then Germany.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The initiative was launched by Al Mawred Al Thaqafy which is a non-profit Arab cultural organisation founded in 2003 in Cairo and supported by several American and European donors. See the official website: <http://mawred.org/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>17</sup> 'WorldCP editor announced for Arab Region', *IFACCA*, 9 November 2012. Online. Available at: <http://www.ifacca.org/announcements/2012/11/09/worldcp-editor-announced-arab-region/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural and theatre professional, June 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> The names of journalists, experts and activists cannot be divulged because of security reasons. See the official website: <http://www.syriauntold.com/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>21</sup> IDFA Bertha Fund website: <http://www.idfa.nl/industry/idfa-bertha-fund.aspx>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Jenkins, 'Syrian filmmaker Orwa Nyrabia speaks about his new film, "Return to Homs"', *The Washington Post*, 22 April 2014. Online. Available at: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/syrian-filmmaker-orwa-nyrabia-speaks-about-his-new-film-return-to-homs/2014/04/22/4cf240a0-ca3a-11e3-95f7-7ecdde72d2ea\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/syrian-filmmaker-orwa-nyrabia-speaks-about-his-new-film-return-to-homs/2014/04/22/4cf240a0-ca3a-11e3-95f7-7ecdde72d2ea_story.html). Accessed in June 2014.

The organisation Dawlati, created by civil rights activist Mustafa Haid, launched a series of online short videos in Syrian dialect and referring to Syrian culture to introduce the concept of transitional justice.<sup>23</sup>

Cultural heritage is also at risk: UNESCO's World Heritage Committee has placed six Syrian World Heritage Sites on the list of endangered heritage.<sup>24</sup>

Many artists choose to move to neighbouring countries, in particular Lebanon, where Beirut experienced a boom of cultural activities by Syrians in the first years of the uprising.<sup>25</sup> For instance, choreographer Alaa Kreimid and some dancers of his company relocated to Beirut and set up the Sima Dance Studio.<sup>26</sup>

In Lebanon, the Arts Residence Aley<sup>27</sup> has been a space for Syrian artists since 2012. Established by Raghad Mardini who himself funded the project, which has now received a grant by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC), the Residence hosts two Syrian artists per month, providing them with a safe place to live and work, a weekly subsidy, and arts equipment. The Arts Residence Aley connects the artists with Lebanese society, with potential markets for their work, and training and residency opportunities abroad. The works produced have been exhibited in Lebanon and abroad, notably in an exhibition in Washington hosted by the World Bank. This experience can empower those still living in Syria as they are promoted via social media and by artists that go back to Syria after the end of their residency programme.<sup>28</sup>

'Miniatures: A Month for Syria', organised by the cultural organisations Ettijahat.Independent Culture and Shams Cultural Association in 2013, provided a platform for a selection of mostly Syrian artists to present their work at the Sunflower Theatre of Beirut. Supported by the British Council, SIDA, Ettijahat.Independent Culture, Al Mawred Al Thaqafy and Shams, Miniatures presented 'works related to the current situation in Syria, even indirectly'.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> 'Syria: Roundtable discussion with Mustafa Haid on the role of "Dawlaty" in raising awareness of transitional justice', *No Peace Without Justice*, Brussels, 24 January 2013. Online. Available at: <http://www.npwj.org/MENA/Syria-Roundtable-discussion-with-Mustafa-Haid-role-Dawlaty-raising-awareness-transitional-justi>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>24</sup> The sites are: the Ancient City of Damascus: Site of Palmyra; Ancient City of Bosra; Ancient City of Aleppo; Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din; Ancient Villages of Northern Syria. 'Syria's Six World Heritage sites placed on List of World Heritage in Danger', *UNESCO World Heritage Convention*, 20 June 2013. Online. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1038/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural and theatre professional, June 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Iante Gaia Roach, 'Miniatures', *Art & Culture Today*, 8 February 2013. Online. Available at: <http://artandculturetoday.wordpress.com/theatre/lebanese-theatre-2/2786-2/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>27</sup> See the official website: <http://artresidencealey.com/index.html>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural professional, June 2014.

<sup>29</sup> See interview with Abdullah Alkafri: <http://artandculturetoday.wordpress.com/theatre/lebanese-theatre-2/2786-2/>. Accessed in June 2014.

The Cairo-based organisation Al Mawred Al Thaqa<sup>30</sup> launched the initiative Action for Hope in Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon, to which the Syrian cultural organisation Ettijahat.Independent Culture contributed. This project, run by Arab volunteer artists, includes workshops on theatre, music, visual arts, film and creative writing, for primary and preparatory school children. The aim is to provide support and empower children and communities distressed by war and displacement.<sup>31</sup>

Similar experiences are taking place in refugee camps in Jordan and in Turkey. Syrian director Omar Abu Saada adapted Greek dramas for a cast of refugees at the Zaatari camp in Jordan.<sup>32</sup> The Greek dramas selected touch upon themes that are of immediate relevance to the refugees.<sup>33</sup>

Culture can also help to connect the Syrian population and the community hosting them. In Istanbul, a group of Syrian artists has recently opened a cultural house, Hamisch ('margin' in Arabic). Started as a library to find and read Arabic books, the idea of the founders is to reverse the stereotypical image of Syrians and 'make Syrian culture more visible, creating knowledge about Syrians in Turkey'.<sup>34</sup>

Exchanges in person between Syrian artists living in neighbouring countries and those inside Syria are still possible, though social media is also used. Some artists still go back to Syria after their residency in Lebanon.<sup>35</sup> There are however more restrictions on movement compared to a few months ago when some artists were able to go back and forth and do performances in schools in the free zone.<sup>36</sup>

Syrian art is being showcased abroad in exhibitions supported by international and European organisations. For instance, in 2012 the Prince Claus Fund Gallery in Amsterdam organised 'Creating Spaces for Freedom: Continuing Traditions of Satire, Art and the Struggle for Freedom in Syria'<sup>37</sup> and the Danish Centre for Culture and Development hosted the 'Syria's Art of Resistance' in the Round

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<sup>30</sup> Al Mawred Al Thaqa<sup>30</sup> is a non-profit Arabic cultural organization founded in 2003 in Cairo and supported by several American and European donors. See the official website: <http://mawred.org/>.

<sup>31</sup> For press coverage see: 'The Second Action for Hope Reaches Syrian Refugee Camp', *Al Mawred Al Thaqa<sup>30</sup> Culture Resource*. Online. Available at: <http://mawred.org/press-room/the-second-action-for-hope-reaches-syrian-refugee-camp-in-tripoli-lebanon/>; and

'Action for Hope Concludes its 4<sup>th</sup> Round in Al Marj Syrian refugee camp', *Al Mawred Al Thaqa<sup>30</sup> Culture Resource*. Online. Available at: <http://mawred.org/events/2013-events/action-for-hope-concludes-its-4th-round-in-al-marj-syrian-refugee-camp-lebanon/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>32</sup> For press coverage see: Charlotte Eagar, 'Syrian refugees stage Euripides' "The Trojan Women"', *The Financial Times*, 3 January 2014. Online. Available at: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/858d0bbc-7205-11e3-bff7-00144feabdc0.html#slide0>.

<sup>33</sup> 'Life imitates art: Syrian refugees stage Greek tragedy in Jordan', *The UN Refugee Agency*, 6 January 2014. Online. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/52caab976.html>.

<sup>34</sup> See interview with Sherry Alhayek, by Karen Leigh, 'Arts + Culture: A Syrian Cultural House Opens in Istanbul', *Syria Deeply*, 25 April 2014. Online. Available at: <http://www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2014/04/5228/arts-culture-syrian-cultural-house-opens-istanbul/>.

<sup>35</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural professional, June 2014.

<sup>36</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural and theatre professional, June 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Prince Claus Fund Gallery, *Continuing traditions of SATIRE, ART and the struggle for FREEDOM in Syria*, 4 June-23 November 2012. Online. Available at: <http://www.princeclausfund.org/files/docs/2012%20Culture%20in%20Defiance.pdf>. Accessed in June 2014.

Tower in Copenhagen in 2013.<sup>38</sup> Syrian, Middle-Eastern and European artists donated artworks for charity auctions to raise funds for Syrian refugees.<sup>39</sup>

Syrian artists take part in international and European exchanges, for instance, in theatre. Theatre director Mudar Al Haggi worked in partnership with the German organisation Kultur im Turm in the framework of the Tandem/Shaml pilot exchange programme.<sup>40</sup> His play, *Now T\_here*, is a research and performance project dealing with the question of staying or leaving that Syrians face.<sup>41</sup> The play *Damascus Aleppo*, an exploration around questions of homosexuality and family in Damascus, by playwright Abdullah Alkafri, premiered in Glasgow and Edinburgh in May 2014.<sup>42</sup> The Zoukak Theatre Company, a collective of Lebanese and Syrian artists, produced and performed a play as a result of a three weeks laboratory in Beirut and Skien, Norway, supported by Ibsen Awards.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Exhibition and Symposium 'Syria's Art of Resistance', Copenhagen, 21 March 2013. Online. Available at: <http://www.cku.dk/en/wp-content/uploads/Syrias-art-of-resistance.EXHIBITION.pdf>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>39</sup> An example is the auction organised by Syri-Arts Beirut in November 2013 with Lebanese and international partners and support. See <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/06/world/meast/artist-auction-bids-to-help-syrias-child-refugees/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>40</sup> This programme, funded by Robert Bosch Stiftung, Stichting DOEN and Mimeta, is a year-long collaboration between two artists of Mediterranean and European organisations that work in pairs ('tandems') to carry out a cultural project. See the official website: <http://tandemexchange.eu/about-tandem/tandem-shaml/tandem-shaml-2012-13/>. Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Written material provided by a Syrian cultural professional and playwright, June 2014.

<sup>42</sup> 'Damascus Aleppo', *National Theatre of Scotland*. Online. Available at: <http://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/content/default.asp?page=s894> Accessed in June 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Zoukak Theatre Company, 'An enemy of the people and pillars of society: the tragedy of the individual', *Ibsen Conference*. Online. Available at: <http://www.ibsenawards.com/conference/program/an-enemy-of-the-people-and-pillars-of-society-the-tragedy-of-the-individual/>. Accessed in June 2014.

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## CONCLUSIONS, PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

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Since the start of the uprising, culture and the arts in Syria have played a role first as tools to promote peaceful change, then as means to denounce violence and repression. As such, they have also been a form of cultural resistance. Since the situation has worsened, artists have also taken on the role of providing emotional relief through their work and have drawn the attention of the international community to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. In the context of increasing polarisation of Syrians in opposing camps, the space for artistic voices is shrinking.<sup>44</sup>

In their work on conflict and crisis, Syrian artists are faced with the issue of the relevance of the arts. For instance, when setting up arts projects with refugees, they ask themselves: 'should we make art or should we provide basic assistance and help cover living costs?'<sup>45</sup> For this reason, artists organise activities in partnership with other institutions that bring different expertise, so that the arts complement a broader set of actions.

However, artists themselves are victims of the conflict as well. Cultural professionals are losing work since audiences are scarce and 'they have to think about surviving'.<sup>46</sup> But in the words of one interviewee, 'in times of war it is important to protect the artists; they are the ones that will protect the society'.<sup>47</sup>

Syrian artists leaving the country are also faced with basic, but pressing needs. Interviewees note that artists need official papers (passports, residence permits) and means to sustain themselves in order to remain in the neighbouring countries. In particular, in Lebanon, Syrian artists have been selling their work at a lower price than Lebanese artists.<sup>48</sup>

So far, Syrian artists and organisations have benefited from international and European support on an ad hoc basis.<sup>49</sup> While the European and international presence in Beirut have showed interest in the situation of Syrian artists, long-term support from the embassies and cultural centres has been scarce. The same can be said of support in European capitals: arts exhibitions and short media training have been financed, but support to help structure growing organisations is lacking.<sup>50</sup>

The provision of support has often depended on individuals managing to create momentum and using personal connections. Self-funding and small donations are a reality for many initiatives according to interviewees.

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<sup>44</sup> See for instance Volker Perthes, 'Three years of conflict in Syria: No proxy war, no solution without society', *Al Jazeera*, 15 March 2014. Online. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/03/three-years-conflict-syria-no-p-201431411423566230.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural professional and playwright, June 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural professional, June 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural professional and playwright, June 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Phone interview with an international expert on Syrian cultural movements, June 2014.

More structured support and predictable funding is needed for initiatives to become sustainable and professional in the long-term. Programmes should be based on a sound analysis of needs and should be aimed at reinforcing existing capacities, building on local experiences.<sup>51</sup>

Europe is also seen as a source of inspiration: Syrian artists and cultural actors are eager to learn from the professional experiences of their European peers.<sup>52</sup> One interviewee noted that Europe has its own experience of reconciliation and dialogue, notably in Eastern Europe: these lessons learnt could provide inputs to Syrian cultural operators who are thinking of how the arts and culture can help rebuild the broken social contract among people.<sup>53</sup>

However, frustrations are also growing. The arts have been used to ring alarm bells about the Syrian crisis, but artists feel that those calls have been left unheard. European capitals hosted exhibitions and theatre plays, but what matters for people in Syria is when humanitarian assistance will arrive.<sup>54</sup>

In the Syrian crisis, culture and the arts have lost their value *per se*. The polarisation of the conflict means that the space for artists and cultural professionals has been reducing. Caught between politics, diplomacy, and war, culture and the arts have found their purpose as tools for political dissent, advocacy, and relief.

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<sup>51</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural professional and playwright, June 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Phone interview with an international expert on Syrian cultural movements, June 2014.

<sup>53</sup> Phone interview with a Syrian cultural professional and playwright, June 2014.

<sup>54</sup> Phone interview with an international expert on Syrian cultural movements, June 2014.

## ANNEX

### EU-Syrian joint programmes and initiatives, run by the Commission Headquarters

Euromed Heritage IV <sup>55</sup>			
<p><b>Euromed Heritage IV</b> (2008-2012) carries forward the achievements of Heritage I + II + III, in the process of recognising culture as a catalyst for mutual understanding between the people of the Mediterranean region. Today embedded in the European Neighbourhood Policy and with a budget of 17 million euros, Euromed Heritage IV contributes to the exchange of experiences on cultural heritage, creates networks and promotes cooperation. It is based on the objectives defined in the <a href="#">‘Strategy for the Development of Euro-Mediterranean Heritage: priorities from Mediterranean Countries (2007-2013)’</a> and focuses on local populations’ appropriation of their cultural heritage and favours access to education on this subject. It supports a framework for exchanging experiences, channelling the dissemination of best practices and new perspectives aimed at the development of an institutional cultural environment.</p> <p>Duration: 2008-2012            Budget: 17 million €  <a href="http://www.euromedheritage.net">www.euromedheritage.net</a></p>			
<p><b>MedLiHer</b>   <b>Safeguarding Mediterranean Living Heritage</b></p>	<p>In 2003, the UNESCO adopted the text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, a multilateral binding instrument to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. Amongst the Mediterranean partner countries, seven participated in the Convention: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. However, no coordinated information about structures, programmes and experience connected with managing intangible cultural heritage is available to date in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. For this reason, the Medliher project intends to reinforce the institutional capacities of these four partner countries, and facilitate their effective participation in the international mechanisms established by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>The envisaged strategy is in three phases: the first phase will be devoted to drawing up surveys of existing structures and programmes connected with safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the countries mentioned above, the second phase will involve developing national projects conceived on the basis of the needs of each partner country, the third phase to implementing national projects, and to preparing</p>	<p>05.01.09-01.04.13             1,338,279 €</p>	<p><a href="http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00233">www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00233</a></p>

<sup>55</sup> Regional Programme covering the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia.

	<p>candidatures for inscription on the UNESCO Convention lists.</p> <p>The project, addressed to the partner countries' governmental communities and institutions, will lead to the safeguarding of the regional intangible cultural heritage according to the Convention's criteria, as well as with the reinforcement of governmental institutions' capacities. The Medliher project is lead by the UNESCO, in partnership with the 'Maison des cultures du Monde' Association and the concerned ministries in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.</p>		
<p><b>Hammamed</b></p> <p><b>Raising awareness for the hammam as a cultural heritage for the Mediterranean area and beyond</b></p>	<p>The whole Mediterranean region shares a common object of cultural value – the hammam, the public Turkish bath.</p> <p>The hammam has very specific features which reflect its importance and call for its promotion among the public: it is an architectural legacy and a living cultural heritage and as such it combines tangible and intangible heritage; it is well embedded in urban communities, filling an important role for neighbourhoods and, in many cases, for the Medina as a whole, and yet it runs the risk of disappearing.</p> <p>The main aim of Hammamed project is to raise awareness of the hammam as a common cultural heritage in the Mediterranean area and beyond, mostly through public awareness raising activities, conferences and workshops, dissemination activities and specific actions for two selected hammams (Hammam Ammuna in Damascus and Hammam Saffarin in Fez).</p> <p>Among the expected results: social studies, rehabilitation design on ecological basis, hammam and neighbourhood days in Mediterranean cities, an exhibition and a documentary film.</p> <p>The target group will be the scientific community of hammam related disciplines, selected governmental agencies and local population (especially youth, students, and women) and stakeholder representatives (teachers and hammam staff).</p> <p>The partnership of Hammamed project is headed by Oikodrom, the Vienna Institute for Urban Sustainability, in association with the University of Liverpool, the French Institute for Near East of Damascus and ADER (Agence pour la Dédensification et la Réhabilitation de la Medina de Fès).</p>	<p>01.01.09-01.04.12</p> <p>1,193,470 €</p>	<p><a href="http://www.hammamed.net/index.html">www.hammamed.net/index.html</a></p>
<p><b>Mare Nostrum</b></p> <p><b>A heritage trail along the Phoenician maritime routes and historic port-cities of</b></p>	<p>The Mediterranean port-cities and their correspondent archaeological sites within the Mediterranean Phoenician routes share a lack of awareness by the local population towards the value of their heritage and the importance of their preservation and a lack of valorisation by the local authorities of the tangible and intangible heritage of their</p>	<p>15.01.09-01.03.13</p> <p>1,365,272 €</p>	<p><a href="http://www.eh4-marenostrum.net/">www.eh4-marenostrum.net/</a></p>

<p><b>the Mediterranean Sea</b></p>	<p>areas of competence.</p> <p>MARE NOSTRUM intends to contribute to the promotion and awareness-raising of the heritage value of historic port cities of the Mediterranean Sea, scattered along the Phoenician maritime routes.</p> <p>MARE NOSTRUM aims at providing a sustainable mechanism for the protection and management of cultural heritage resources in the targeted countries, leading to an awareness of cultural heritage in the public conscience. In order to enhance cultural heritage as part of the sustainable development of Mediterranean cultural heritage, the action will adopt a holistic approach which satisfies economic and social objectives as well as high quality cultural tourism needs.</p> <p>The action, whose main result will be the revitalization of the targeted areas, turning them into places of life for the local people (which is the main target group of the action), enhancing synergies between past and present, will be implemented by a team of project partners – Medieval City of Rhodes in Greece; City of Tyre in Lebanon; Université Saint Joseph &amp; MAJAL/Academic Observatory for Construction and Reconstruction/University of Balamand in Lebanon; Paralleli in Italy – coordinated by DIRES University of Florence in Italy.</p>		
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**Euromed Audiovisual III<sup>56</sup>**

*run by EC Headquarters*

**Objectives:**

The programme aims to contribute to intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity through support for the development of cinematographic and audiovisual capacity in the Partner Countries. It promotes complementarity and integration of the region’s film and audiovisual industries, while seeking to harmonise public sector policy and legislation. Developed on the basis of the Strategy for the Development of a Euro-Mediterranean Audiovisual Cooperation, it builds on the achievements of Euromed Audiovisual I and [Euromed Audiovisual II](#), aiming to tap into the potential of a developing audiovisual market in the region, and to assist Mediterranean films in securing a place on the global scene.

**What does it do?**

The programme contributes to the reinforcement of a Southern Mediterranean film industry through actions supporting the emergence of an audience for such films and the creation of a market for their distribution. It contributes towards a job-creating film industry through the sharing of technologies and know-how, the encouragement of cooperation between producers, distributors and other operators at a Euro-Mediterranean level, and assistance towards the harmonisation of legislative frameworks and professional practices. It also seeks to prepare the ground for a regional support mechanism for the film industry, which will examine the implementation of a regional financial support mechanism,

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

update existing financing systems in each country and make easier co-productions between the Partner Countries and Europe.

Duration: 2009-2014

Budget: 11 million €

[www.euromedaudiovisuel.net](http://www.euromedaudiovisuel.net)

### Media and culture for development in the Southern Mediterranean region<sup>57</sup>

#### **Objectives:**

The overall objective of the programme is to support the efforts of the Southern Mediterranean countries' in building deep-rooted democracy and to contribute to their sustainable economic, social and human development, through regional co-operation in the fields of media and culture.

Specifically, the programme seeks to reinforce the role of media and culture as vectors for democratisation, and economic and social development for societies in the Southern Mediterranean.

#### **What does it do?**

In the media field, the programme embraces people as well as public and private organisations that provide online and offline news reporting/journalism. Inter alia, the programme targets the mainstream public media in the Southern Mediterranean (e.g. print, TV and radio, and online) as well as independent media outlets including community media.

The programme develops capacities of the media operators as a vector for democratisation and human rights, and also supports efforts to improve media legislation and enhance the capacities of media regulators.

The programme supports activities fostering cultural policy reform and reinforcing the capacity of cultural policy makers, as well as promoting investment and the development of cultural operators' business capabilities. In the context of the programme, culture covers core arts areas (performing arts, visual arts, cultural and architectural heritage and literature), cultural industries (film, DVD and video, television and radio, video games, new media, music, books and press), and creative industries (industries, which use culture as an input but whose outputs are mainly functional, including architecture, advertising, design and fashion).

Duration: 2013-2017

Budget: 17 million €

[www.enpi-info.eu/mainmed.php?id=486&id\\_type=10](http://www.enpi-info.eu/mainmed.php?id=486&id_type=10)

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<sup>57</sup> Implementation starts in 2014.