





TUNISIA COUNTRY REPORT

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COUNTRY REPORT WRITTEN BY: Damien Helly

EDITED BY: Yudhishthir Raj Isar

GRAPHICS & LAY OUT BY: Guillemette Madinier, Laura Gardes and Maiken Høj

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tunisian society, still characterised by a strong traditional culture and very visible economic and social inequalities, is experiencing numerous transformations that have strong implications for culture in the country's external relations. Since the 2011 revolution, the government and the cultural sector have functioned in a context of great uncertainty: first a revolutionary phase of cultural liberation or westernisation followed by the coming to power of a coalition in which religious extremists have attempted to control the cultural sector. Since October 2011, culture and the way it is dealt with in relation to international partners has thus become part and parcel of the Tunisian political chessboard.

State bodies in charge of culture still play a significant role through a subsidising policy operating on principles similar to those that were applied before the revolution: nation branding abroad and patronage networks and the priority given to heritage, tourism and large-scale cultural promotion events. The independent sector, which played an instrumental role in the 2011 revolution as well as cultural organisations and initiatives that emerged during the ferment and enthusiasm of that period are now facing the challenges of the post-revolution era: the need to be sustainable and autonomous both from internal forces and foreign influences. Because of the geographical proximity of the European Union, a lot is expected from Europeans despite a certain disillusionment vis-à-vis traditional European cultural operators.

OVERVIEW

In 2013, two years after its revolution, Tunisia is still very much a country in transformation where everyone in the field of culture and external relations is still redefining their roles and strategies while struggling with the acceptance of new practices. Most Tunisian stakeholders in the cultural field are probably too busy attempting to survive both personally and artistically to be interested in thinking about international connections.

The country remains marked by strong popular traditions, the sequels to the 2011 revolution and widespread poverty. In this context, some of our informants underlined the fact that culture in Tunisia is first and foremost still an issue of education, access to basic knowledge and support for the development of critical thinking.¹ At the same time, the revolution and the role cultural actors played in it have led some secular Tunisian thinkers to see their country as a symbolic power ignoring itself, a potentially new epicentre for the Arab world and for a new form of humanism.

Notions of cultural exchange and cultural dialogue are frequently used in various public spheres to describe the work conducted on culture in external relations. Some philosophers note however that the word 'tedbir' in Arabic (understood as 'cultural economy' or the practical wisdom consisting of being in charge of culture in one's home or one's country) has a special meaning, one that is different from European concepts related to culture in external relations. As a matter of fact, the prominent concept seems to be 'cultural creation', expressing the typhoon-like energy existing within the youth and cultural sectors. On the contrary, it is also acknowledged that increased ties with Europe are probably seen by religious extremists as a new form of 'cultural colonisation'.

In the Ministry of Culture, culture is seen as a tool for development and dialogue with a view to promoting Tunisian culture. The main trends in terms of state structures and the independent scene are: fragmentation, transformation and uncertainty, also applicable to the political scene in general, still caught in a lengthy national dialogue on the future of the country's political regime.

At state level, various structures deal with culture in external relations.

The Ministry of Culture is the official body dealing with bilateral and multilateral cultural relations with international partners. Its budget for international relations amounts to around 425,000 euros.² It supervises a number of public agencies conducting their own international relations: the Institute on Heritage, the National Agency for Cultural and Heritage Promotion and the Bardo Museum (see more below).

¹ This was stated by Ms Meriem Bouderbala in a letter sent to the author. Raja Ben Ammar, an actor and dancer, also emphasised the value of cultural education in an interview with Johannes Odenthal published by the Goethe-Institut.

² Interview with an official from the Ministry. October 2013.

The Ministry of Tourism manages the tourism policy and its cultural components via the Office for Tourism. The Ministries of Culture and Tourism sometimes cooperate on an ad hoc basis on specific occasions such as when Tunisia participates in international book fairs.

A number of universities and specialised schools (e.g. in cinema) function under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of cultural attachés abroad (sometimes also attached to the Ministry for Social Affairs) as well as of the archives of cultural agreements with third countries and multilateral organisations.

De facto, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the police force and the Ministry of Justice also play very important roles in culture and external relations in deciding whether to interfere or not in the work of cultural stakeholders, as has been the case since 2011 with controversial arrests and trials.³

The government's priority for culture in external relations consists of developing ties with direct neighbours in the Maghreb and in Europe.

According to consulted experts, the poor quality of the regulation of the audio-visual and media sector reflects the lack of professionalism and expertise of those responsible. It suffers from a gap between the political elites, who hardly understand how television, cinema, radio and new media work, and the real practice of the people, who are already internationally connected and have extensive recourse to media piracy. The television sector still functions in a legal quasi-vacuum. State and private authorised TV companies buy TV products on international markets and broadcast popular TV programmes, series and reality shows. The experience of Nessma TV, a private Tunisian enterprise that has created a Maghreb-wide TV holding, is a notable example of an internationalised commercial cultural initiative.⁴ Professional journalism is, according to a Tunisian expert, still largely inexistent, despite massive international support, because of repeated failures, the polarisation of the political scene and the lack of serious training policies.

The cinema sector is struggling to reach audiences and is still very much dependent on international partners, partly because of a dramatic fall in the number of cinema venues from 120 in 1956 to only 10 in 2013. As a result, a number of young cinema directors, actors and artists have started to work for TV companies.

Among the main cultural organisations supported by the government, experts estimate that 80 per cent of them do not have a clear legal status, which results in their full dependence on and vulnerability vis-à-vis the authorities.

The renovation of the archaeological Bardo Museum started in 2003 in the framework of a 10 million euros funded project of The World Bank, but went through a managerial crisis in the aftermath of the revolution. The number of visitors peaked to 600,000 in 2005, but went down to

³ Sarah Ben Hamadi, 'Tunisie: Les artistes en procès', *Al Huffingtion Post Maghreb*, 23 September 2009. Online. Available at: http://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/2013/09/23/tunisie-artistes-proces n 3975733.html.

⁴ Nessma Al Hamra TV website: <u>www.nessma.tv</u>.

100,000 in 2011 and is now slowly increasing again. The Institute for the Conservation of Heritage has not recovered its full potential of activities and international partnerships, with some exceptions such as links with the Marseilles-based Museum of the Mediterranean and European Civilisations (MUCEM) and through the Louvre Museum, Paris, but these efforts are taking off only slowly.⁵

The Carthage Festival (mostly music related) is the most visible and biggest publically supported event in Tunisia. Seen as an emblematic cultural accomplishment of the Ministry of Culture, the Festival is directed by Mourad Sakli, a musicologist, while a public agency manages its finances. In 2013, its budget reached 1.3 million euros, with close to one third being funded by the Ministry of Culture and the rest coming from box office sales and sponsorship.⁶

Among other internationalised cultural events or organisations supported by the government one can cite the Journées théâtrales de Carthage (Carthage Theatre Days), the Journées cinématographiques de Carthage (Carthage Cinema Days), the National Library, and the Centre National d'Art Vivant (National Centre for Performing Arts). Other public bodies such as the Office for Tourism or the events financed by the Municipality of Tunis such as the Octobre musical de Carthage (a music festival) or even private initiatives like Dream City (a dance and performance show displayed in the medina of Tunis) are examples of involvement by public authorities. The Tahar Haddad club, located in the Tunis medina, is a cultural centre that has been in operation since 1974.

With the coming to power of religious parties after the elections of 23 October 2011, directors of several state-funded cultural organisations have become the target of criticisms and pressures. Groups of religious activists create turmoil around cultural events, interrupting the proceedings, even forcing some of them to cancel or threatening the lives of the organisers. In the summer of 2013 the director of the Centre National d'Art Vivant, Sana Tamzini, lost her position, the Boukornine Festival was cancelled, and during the Hammamet Festival some rappers were beaten-up and arrested.

An independent cultural sector with an international perspective is vibrant in Tunis, but also among Tunisian diaspora in France (Marseilles), Belgium (Hainaut) and Italy, where very active non-governmental organisations (NGOs) engage public and private stakeholders in cooperation initiatives between communities. Well known cultural structures such as the Théâtre Phou (led by Raja Ben Ammar and Moncef Essayem) located in the Mad'Art premises in Carthage are now working side by

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⁵ Claire Bommelaer, 'Le Musée du Bardo à l'heure du réveil islamiste', *Le Figaro*, 9 July 2013. Online. Available at: http://www.lefigaro.fr/arts-expositions/2013/07/09/03015-20130709ARTFIG00209-le-musee-du-bardo-a-l-heure-du-reveil-islamiste.php;

^{&#}x27;Le nouveau musée du Bardo ouvre ses portes à Tunis', *Lapresse.ca*, 18 May 2012. Online. Available at: http://www.lapresse.ca/arts/arts-visuels/201205/18/01-4526648-le-nouveau-musee-du-bardo-ouvre-ses-portes-atunis.php.

⁶ 'Deuxième droit de réponse de Mourad Sakli : Les dessous du Festival de Carthage', *BusinessNews.com.tn*, 21 September 2013. Online. Available at : http://www.businessnews.com.tn/deuxieme-droit-de-reponse-de-mourad-sakli--les-dessous-du-festival-de-carthage,526,40959,3;

^{&#}x27;Mourad Sakli répond aux questions et aux accusations qui lui ont été adressées', *BusinessNews.com.tn*, 13 September 2013. Online. Available at: http://www.businessnews.com.tn/details_article.php?t=526&a=40783&temp=3&lang=.

⁷ Journées théâtrales de Carthage website: http://www.jtcfestival.com.tn/fr/index.html.

side with newcomers. The creation of the Ciné Mad'Art by young professionals in early 2012 is a case in point.8

Muzaq, an NGO created by Selma and Sofiane Ouissi, has created Dream City, a biennale of performing arts spectacles in public spaces, and Laaroussa, a know-how transfer platform on traditional handcrafts of pottery connecting women from urban and rural Tunisia with women in Europe.9

Other recent and remarkable initiatives in contemporary cultural practices can be singled out such as the electronic music festival (Lefest) operating thanks to the support of non-governmental partners, but also Arts Solution, a new hip hop non-for-profit organisation set up by young artists mostly with support from European cultural agencies (see infragraphic).¹⁰ In the visual arts, the B'chira Art Centre located in the North-West outskirts of Tunis has found itself a niche thanks to the work and the international connections of its promoters and managers.¹¹

Despite an impressive blossoming of creative initiatives, the independent Tunisian sector is still looking for sustainable and diverse financing modalities in a country where private sponsorship and philanthropy are not well-established.

Rania Massoud (L'Orient-Le-Jour), 'La danse comme arme de résistance', Courrier international, 13 December 2012. Online. Available at: http://www.courrierinternational.com/article/2012/13/la-danse-comme-arme-de-resistance;

Frida Dahmani, 'Tunisie: la danse, art du combat', JeuneAfrique.com, Tunis, 27 February 2013.Online. Available at: http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2719p090.xml0/.

⁸ Souad Ben Slimane, 'Tunisie: Il y a un an, naissait Ciné Mad'art – Une salle parallèle', allAfrica.com, 23 October 2012. Online. Available at: http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201210240640.html.

⁹ Dream City Tunis Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dream-City-Tunis/70991923781; Augustin Le Gall, 'Laaroussa, action artistique et citoyenne', Afrique in Visu, 18 May 2011. Online. Available at: http://afriqueinvisu.org/laaroussa-action-artistique-et,616.html.

¹⁰ E-FEST website: http://www.lefest.org/partenaires-2-2;

[«] Je danserai, malgré tout » dans les rues de Tunis, Institut français de Tunis. Online. Available at: http://www.institutfrancais-tunisie.com/?q=node/3906;

¹¹ BAC Art Center website: http://www.bchirartcenter.com/.

THE CULTURAL POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RELATIONS WITH THE EU

Since the 2011 revolution, culture has become increasingly politicised and polarised in Tunisia, becoming a political stake in itself. Since the revolution, the Ministry of Culture and the government have been caught between a rock and a hard place, facing both religious violence against free artistic expression as well as strong criticism from the creative sector itself.12

State policies and the international dimension of their cultural action/relations with the EU

Support to artistic creation is part of the Tunisian cultural policy model but experts say the Ministry is more an 'assistance agency' than a policy-making body. In 2013 it was roughly and intuitively estimated by our informants that 80 per cent of the internationalised cultural activity in the country was being implemented by independent actors against 20 per cent supported and managed by the public sector. Since the revolution, the role of state structures is changing: one can notice more diverse, community-based and decentralised cultural practices.

Tunisia's cultural relations network in its embassies abroad has always been limited and mostly viewed as a 'cultural police' force rather than a cultural policy. In Paris, a building was acquired to create a Tunisian cultural centre that has so far not become operational. A cultural centre was opened in Brussels after the revolution and is developing mainly community-based cultural activities. New international partnerships have been launched with a variety of bilateral partners and multilateral organisations in the Middle East but also in Africa, including with the Arab League Educational Cultural and Science Organisation for Culture (ALECSO) that has its headquarters in Tunis.13

Under the Culture Programme of the EU, Tunisia benefitted from the Special Actions 2009 and 2010 (as have all the ENP countries that have ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions) but did not participate in the programme itself. Tunisia has also long been included in regional Euromed programmes in the audio-visual and heritage sectors. A number of these programmes and projects are detailed in the Annexes. Tunisia will have the opportunity to participate in the Creative Europe programme 2014-2020.

In the country itself, artists and creative people are asserting themselves in different ways, often challenging existing state structures and institutions in the street by occupying public spaces and directly reaching out to the public. Street art and doing culture in the street has become a motto that is perceived as a challenge – sometimes a threat – both by religious extremists and institutions such as the police (who have reacted by arresting emblematic figures of Tunisian hip hop). These tensions

¹² See various positions and statements in 2012: Priscille Lafitte, 'Le minister de la Culture peut-il rassurer les artistes tunisiens?', France24, 23 November 2012. Online. Available at: http://www.france24.com/fr/20121122-tunisie-ministreculture-mehdi-mabrouk-retablir-relation-confiance-artistes-jcc.

¹³ Medina Tunis website: http://www.medinatunis.com/index.php/fr/equipe-projet.

between governmental bodies and the cultural sector signal a destructuring of the pre-revolutionary cultural policy landscape, with no clear end state in sight.

Tensions and controversies about repressive policies against alternative and politically critical forms of cultural expression, notably among and by young people, show that the country has not yet managed to develop adequate policies to promote contemporary arts and creation either nationally or internationally.14

In these circumstances, Tunisian stakeholders are still struggling to formulate collective independent strategies for culture in external relations. They often remain trapped by the status quo based upon a divorce between the policy world and civil society.

The transformation of the civil society sector and their relations with the EU

Even though it is fragmented, and despite internal politics and pressures from the public authorities, the Tunisian cultural sector seems as vibrant and free as ever, even while desperately seeking sustainability.

In the view of the philosophers we interviewed, post-revolutionary Tunisian society is short of ideas to fully transform itself as well as the rest of the Arab world. For instance, although the young have been at the forefront of the cultural revolution that has taken place, some feel their conceptual horizon, despite far greater access to new media, remains limited by their lack of experience in civil society practices in other societies.

As for older artists, they need to redefine their work after the revolution. A comedian and dancer such as Raja Ben Amar spoke of new basic questions on self-perception and the feeling of one's body after decades of authoritarianism.

For many independent cultural operators, setting up their own organisation and managing it is a completely new experience, a huge challenge for which they have rarely been trained. The postrevolution phase in Tunisia is therefore also a 'baptism of fire' for numerous unprofessional NGOs and non-for-profit cultural organisations. Yet there are some attempts from civil society to organise itself as a lobby. As a result of an international conference funded by the German Commission for UNESCO held in Hammamet in 2012, some cultural operators created the Tunisian Cultural NGOs Forum (FACT - Forum des Associations Culturelles Tunisiennes) as a first sounding board to discuss issues of common interest.¹⁵ FACT's first president was film director Elyès Baccar and organiser of the Human

¹⁴ See at: http://www.lapresse.tn/18082013/71285/la-controverse.html; Priscille Lafitte, 'Une exposition d'art contemporain à l'origine des heurts à Tunis ?', France24, 14 June 2012. Online. Available at: http://www.france24.com/fr/20120612-tunisie-heurts-tunis-exposition-art-contemporain-printemps-marsasalafistes.

¹⁵ German Commission for UNESCO, Connexxions pour une vie culturelle plus riche et le développement humain. Perspectives, actions, Engagements, October 2012. Online. Available at: http://cdcccd.org/IMG/pdf/121031 FR CONNEXXIONS Hammamet Resultats.pdf; FACT Tunisie – videos on Youtube.

Rights Film Festival, Human Screen. He was succeeded in 2013 by Sana Tamzini, the former director of the Centre National d'Art Vivant.

In the context of transformation and uncertainty, Europeans have had to adapt and be flexible to continue their cultural work with Tunisia. This is a challenging task requiring a detailed understanding of the evolving political dynamics there.

New synergies between Tunisian public and private actors are appearing. They sometimes involve European cultural operators. One example is the first edition of Expo Lugha on 18-19 November 2013, a public fair on languages and job opportunities supported by the government and involving EUNIC and its members as partners.¹⁶

Since the revolution, the EU has extensively funded projects and programmes supporting Tunisian civil society in the field of social policies, democratisation and culture, through a variety of instruments as indicated in the 2012 EU-Tunisia Cooperation Report.¹⁷ In 2011-2012, many programmes supporting civil society focused on electoral processes and training in media and journalism¹⁸ but other projects also had some cultural focus on heritage or youth.¹⁹ The rationale of such an engagement is that 'cultural activities such as the ones organised by the EU, aim at creating a space of dialogue, awareness, and contact with the EU at least and beyond (writers meeting included representatives of PEN international) in a polarised political climate, which the religious factor often tries to confine'.20 More research would be needed to thoroughly analyse the impact of these grants on culture in external relations.

The electronic music festival benefited once from an EU grant of approximately 100,000 euros. In 2013, the EU Delegation engaged directly in the artistic sector with two initiatives inspired by the Algerian experience of the Head of Delegation, Ms Laura Baeza: the Sfax Project of Euro-Maghrebian photographic residency and the first Euro-Maghrebian writing encounters in Tunis from 9-11 November 2013.21 The EU Delegation launched these initiatives to implement the communication on supporting closer cooperation and regional integration in the Maghreb as well as in the spirit of the

¹⁶ Expo Lugha website: http://www.expolugha.tn/.

¹⁷ EU Delegation in Tunisia, Rapport sur la coopération Union Européenne-Tunisie 2012. Online. Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/documents/projets/rapport cooperation uetn 2012 fr.pdf.

¹⁸ The quality of the work done in the media sector by international and European donors is criticised by some experts arguing that many initiatives were not context-sensitive or managed by competent enough staff.

¹⁹ EU Delegation in Tunisia, Matrice de Projets, Groupe de coordination des bailleurs de fonds et organisations internationales pour l'appui à la société civile tunisienne. Online. Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/documents/projets/2matrice projetstecivile fr.pdf.

²⁰ Consultation and email exchange with the EU Delegation in Tunis, December 2013.

²¹ Initiatives funded by the budget of the EU Delegation: Première résidence euromaghrébine de photographes, Le Projet Sfax. Online. Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/documents/cultural activities/projet sfax 2013 fr.pdf; Première rencontre euromaghrébine d'écrivains, 'Les Identités Plurielles'. Online. Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/documents/cultural activities/programme rencontre ecrivains 2013 fr.pdf

intercultural dialogue promoted by the Barcelona Declaration of 1995.²² Exchange of information on ongoing respective cultural activities occurs during regular working party meetings of EU cultural attachés held at the EU Delegation in Tunis. In addition, the Hammamet Forum, the Euro-Maghrebian Film Festival, the Sfax Euro-Maghrebian photographic residency and the Euro-Maghrebian writers meeting were organised in 2013 in close collaboration with EU Member States.²³ Tunis also hosts the Euro-Mediteranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF).²⁴

The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures (ALF) supports, among others, the Laaroussa project by the Muzaq association mentioned above.

European cultural institutes and agencies

There are around a dozen active European cultural institutes/operators in Tunisia. Some operate at arm's length from their embassies, for example the British Council and the Goethe-Institut, others have a stronger political and diplomatic identity, e.g. the Institut français, or those of the Netherlands, Finland and Austria. French is still a dominant language in foreign cultural work and most of the representatives of European cultural institutions are francophone, with some exceptions. The trend in the last few years has been to host European initiatives and activities in Tunisia rather than hosting Tunisian cultural operators in Europe.

Soon after the revolution, European cultural institutions began supporting innovative cultural initiatives led by remarkable Tunisian cultural figures (for instance many of them supported the launch of the hip hop dancer Chouaib Brik and his organisation Arts Solutions, especially in its early days), while trying to maintain ties with public bodies. In 2013 however, European expenditures on work with Tunisia diminished somewhat, both for financial reasons (the impact of the crisis being increasingly felt) and political causes (internal tensions in Tunisia on cultural controversies present higher risks for diplomacy).

In the framework of EUNIC, under the leadership of Wallonie Bruxelles, a dynamic of cooperation and dialogue has been created, resulting sometimes in creative and flexible modes of coordination. For example, the Swiss Embassy in Tunis is part of some EUNIC discussions, while Portugal suggested the participation of Brazil in Expo Lugha on the theme of Portuguese-speaking practice. The fact that the EU Delegation demonstrated strong interest and invested enthusiastically in cultural action has generated some frustration among EUNIC members. There is room for more synergies between Member States, EUNIC and the EU Delegation in the cultural field in Tunisia.

The Institut français de Tunisie (IFT) is Tunisia's biggest European cultural partner, with offices in Sfax and Sousse and several documentation centres and a research centre on contemporary Maghreb based in Tunis. It focuses its work on three priorities: (i) enhancing closer relationships between Tunisian and French civil societies, (ii) decentralising cooperation, (iii) supporting

²² JOIN (2012) 36 final of 17-12-2012.

²³ More detailed information on these activities is provided in annexes.

²⁴ Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders website: http://www.emhrf.org/.

democratisation and contributing to the improvement of socio-economic conditions. At regional level, the Institut français has launched the Safir Lab conceived of as an incubator for young leaders from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.²⁵ French language diffusion is also a very strong component of IFT's work.

The Goethe-Institut (GI) has supported the Tunisian cultural sector in various ways, through country-based projects as well as through region-wide programmes such as its MENA cultural managers programme, cited as a best practice. Other regional programmes in the MENA region include a magazine on cultural dialogue with 'islam-orientated' publics, a book translation (from German to Arabic) facility, a regional residency for cinema directors in Beirut and the 100 Voices project.²⁶ It cooperated with the Centre d'ArtsVivants for the 'Façades' project, putting its building's façade at the disposal of artists for some projections on it. The GI Tunisia has a Facebook page with more than 9,000 followers. It also facilitates the cooperation between German experts and the Tunisian Ministry of Culture, following a request made in 2012, to transfer know-how in the field of heritage protection and preservation.²⁷

The Austrian Embassy in Tunis has contributed to contemporary art exhibitions and exchanges between the Graz Museumsakademie Joanneum and the Centre d'Arts Vivants on the use of 'public space as museums'.28

The Marcel Hicter Foundation offers training to cultural managers and is frequently quoted as an active European organisation in Tunisia.²⁹

²⁵ 'SAFIRLAB 2013', Institut français: http://www.institutfrancais.com/fr/actualit%C3%A9s/safirlab-2013.

²⁶ 'Fikrun Wa Fann', *Goethe-Institut*: http://www.goethe.de/ges/phi/prj/ffs/enindex.htm; 'Kutub:na', *Goethe-Institut*: http://www.goethe.de/ins/eg/prj/kut/deindex.htm.

²⁷ '« Me3marouNA » - Patrimoine Architectural en Tunisie', *Goethe-Institut Tunesien*: http://www.goethe.de/ins/tn/tun/kue/arc/fr10067634.htm.

²⁸ 'In Transition. City as a Museum', *Museumsakademie*. Tunis, 30 September-4 October 2013. Online. Available at: http://www.museum-joanneum.at/en/museumsakademie/in-dialogue/in-transition-city-as-a-museum.

²⁹ Assication Marcel Hicter pour la Démocratie culturelle website: http://www.fondation-hicter.org/spip.php?rubrique3.

CONCLUSIONS, PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Given the ongoing turmoil within Tunisian society since the 2011 revolution, Tunisian cultural stakeholders are still very much focused on internal dynamics marked by uncertainties, instability, risks and activism. In that sense, as one intellectual noted, 'Tunisians don't believe in the potential of international links because they consider themselves as badly perceived from the outset'.

The vulnerability of the socio-economic situation and the prominence of religion and traditions make some experts consider that in contemporary Tunisia, cultural work should be understood in its broadest sense and be directed mostly towards education. The failure to do so would be tantamount to supporting a small elite in a narrow artistic niche, which would be wrongly perceived by the havenots and all those who see Western culture as a new form of domination.

In the ultimate analysis, the future of Tunisia's cultural relations with Europe will depend on how reciprocal perceptions are managed.

A number of informants expressed some interest in the Preparatory Action on Culture in EU External Relations, understanding it as the result of a process of cultural Europeanisation within Europe itself, making the former colonial power France and other European States more open to mutual cultural relations. For them, many controversies and misperceptions between Tunisians and Europeans, but also amongst Tunisians themselves, are linked to enduring language and mental barriers. Engaging in culture with Tunisia could consist of 'injecting knowledge into Arabic language' so as to improve mutual perceptions. The translation of books but also sub-titles for TV and broadcast products in Tunisia and Europe is seen as an essential means of building cultural bridges. It was recommended that Europe help itself in investing more in translation from Arabic to European languages.

Those consulted for this study hope for more recognition through positive perceptions from Europe, beyond the typical donor-recipient relationship. The cultural sector has been looking at Europe and outside Tunisia to try to reinvent itself and society, but the visa barriers and the view of Europeans as money providers are so deeply entrenched that they are very much discouraging and strengthening harmful clichés.

Informants hope that Europe could act as a bridge to other cultures (in the Maghreb, Africa, the Arab world, but even to Latin America and Northern European societies such as Iceland or Sweden). As one theorist acknowledged, for Tunisia, Europe is a strategic priority, a natural partner, and both are aboard the same ship. Europe, he suggested, must make Tunisia 'a close country and not just a neighbour' through an equal exchange, without limiting the European understanding of Tunisia to its geographical location. Otherwise, its action will be perceived as the creation of new hierarchies reminiscent of 'colonisation and cultural protectorate'.

The challenge is therefore to identify spaces in which cultures can interact so as to make common values emerge. Stronger relations between twinned cities of Tunisia and Europe, engaging new generations on social networks, intensified direct training and the transfer of knowledge between

cultural professionals and managers from the public and non-governmental sphere in relevant cultural fields (NGO management, lobbying practice, cinema, heritage, socio-cultural work) in-depth dialogue on internet and media regulation at national and global levels were evoked as options to explore in the case of Tunisia.

While internal politics are on standby, culture in Tunisia's official and societal external relations is developing and connecting to new worlds abroad. Europeans have tried to accompany and foster this trend but with enduring austerity they may not be able to afford it in the long term.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Methodology and list of people consulted

The consultation mission took place between 8-10 October 2013 and consisted of four rounds of meetings co-organised with and hosted by the Wallonia Brussels as president of the EUNIC cluster in Tunisia. Four types of stakeholders were targeted: 1) philosophers, 2) state and public officials, 3) independent cultural managers and artists, 4) European organisations in charge of culture in Tunisia, i.e. cultural councillors, EU delegation representatives and cultural institutes. Other individuals were invited at other occasions during the Preparatory Action.

In total, 19 people were consulted.

Wednesday 9 October, 11h-13h: academics/philosophers

- Fathi Triki, Professor of Aesthetics, El Manar University; culture philosopher; exhibition curator
- Ikbal Zalila, Professor at the ISAMM; cinema critic
- Riadh Ferjany, Professor at the IPSI; member of the HAICA
- Abdelattif Labib, Professor, El Manar University

Wednesday 9 October, 15h-18h: artists and independent cultural managers

- Sana Tamzini, visual artist; cultural events organiser
- Samia Chelbi, Director, private school Netinfo de Nabeul (3D)
- Chawki Kniss, Exitproduction (cinema)
- Moez Mrabet, actor; Academic Dean, ISAD
- Sofien Ouissi, creator of the DreamCity event

Thursday 10 October, 10h-13h: public cultural institutions representatives

Samira Ben Badr, International Cooperation Attaché, Ministry of Culture

Two other interviews were conducted:

- **Tahar Ben Guiza**, Professor of Culture Philosophy, El Manar University
- Brick Chouaib, organiser of a breakdance event in Tunis

Annex II: EU-Tunisian joint programmes and initiatives

A. EU-Tunisian cultural cooperation activities run by the EU Delegation³⁰

Name	Brief description / Overall objectives	EU Funding / Duration	Contacts
Forum sur la déontologie de la presse maghrébine (Forum on Maghrebi media ethics)	On 22 and 24 January 2013, in Hammamet, the EU Delegation to Tunisia, in cooperation with the 'Realités' International Forum and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and with the support of the Association des Directeurs de journaux de Tunisie (Tunisian Association of Newspaper Directors), brought together, for the first time, Maghrebi media executives (representing the media in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania), editors-in-chief, representatives of organisations and associations, and a few Maghrebi journalists, with the participation of international experts. The goal of the conference was to agree on a code of ethics for all media groups in attendance.	40,000 € 22-24 January 2013	In partnership with the Association Tunisienne des Directeurs de Journaux (Tunisian Association of Newspaper Directors) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation
	After two days of intensive work, the participants at the Forum adopted a Code of Ethics . In addition, the signatory group formed a Hammamet Forum, which they will try to extend to other media executives and professional organisations in the region. It was agreed that the next Forum meeting would take place in 2014, also in Hammamet, and that a monitoring committee would oversee the implementation of the adopted code. The participants also adopted a 'Déclaration du Forum de Hammamet' (Hammamet Forum Statement), in which the participants call on Maghrebi governments not to censor the profession and to promulgate new democratic laws, easing access to information and protecting journalists. They consider the Code as a set of rights and duties governing the profession following the changes that have taken place in the new media landscape of the region.		
	The participants agreed that the Hammamet Forum would meet every year on a fixed date, called 'professional ethics day'. In addition to adopting the texts, the participants recognised the symbolic significance of this regional meeting, which should also help develop de facto solidarity arrangements between professionals.		
Première Résidence Euromaghrébine de Photographes – 'Le Projet	From 20 to 23 May 2013, the EU Delegation to Tunisia held the first Euro-Maghreb photographers' residency, called the 'Sfax Project'. This initiative is an example of the cultural cooperation set out in the 2012 Joint Communication of the European Commission	125,000 € 20-23 May 2013	EU Delegation to Tunisia

 $^{^{\}rm 30}$ Information provided by the EU Delegation to Tunisia.

Sfax' (First Euro-Maghreb Photographers' Residency – 'Sfax Project')	and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton, concerning strengthening EU relations with the Maghreb. The aim of the Sfax project is to support the city's efforts to have its Medina declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and to support its bid to host the 2021 Mediterranean Games. Over four days, 31 professional photographers from the Maghreb and Europe worked with the authorities and the people of Sfax to showcase the tangible and intangible heritage of the city. This residency was an opportunity for sharing and dialogue, as much between the European and Maghreb artists as with the residents of Sfax, who rallied to assist the photographers during their stay. The resulting photographic work is of a high quality and should benefit the citizens of Tunisia and Europe. The first exhibition was held in the Kasbah of Sfax on 13 November 2013, in the presence of the mayor, who attested to the enthusiasm and interest that the exhibition had garnered among the city's residents. The exhibition is planned to travel to Tunisia, Paris, Barcelona, Marseilles, Luxembourg and Brussels. A superb publication containing the best photos from the exhibition has been produced.		
Le Festival de Cinéma Euro- maghrébin (Euro-Maghreb Film Festival)	The EU Delegation to Tunisia and the ambassadors of its Member States in Tunisia held, in collaboration with the Tunisian Ministry of Culture, the Euro-Maghreb Film Festival in five of Tunisia's cities from 28 May to 12 June 2013.	60,000 € 28 May – 12 June 2013	EU Delegation to Tunisia
	This Film Festival presented quality works by producers from twelve European countries: Poland, France, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Germany, Hungary, Belgium-Wallonia-Brussels, Romania, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Excellent proof of a pluralist Europe!	In five Tunisian cities	
	To give substance to the Euro-Maghreb cultural partnership, an original selection of feature films and short films from five Maghreb countries was presented during the session. So as not to exclude young artists from this major film event, a special session dedicated to them was held in the five above-mentioned cities.		
	Also during this festival, two prizes for best European and Maghreb feature film were awarded by the public at a closing ceremony for the festival.		
	Alongside the festival, master classes, round tables, workshops and debates were organised with European, Tunisian and Maghrebi film professionals in the presence of a number of directors and actors. Film critics and fans participated in these events, which were facilitated by some leading names in the Maghrebi film industry in the five cities.		

	This major film festival supports the cultural dialogue of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It is the event of choice for all film fans from the country's five biggest regions. For more than two weeks they had the opportunity to see a total of more than 40 films for both young and older audiences. Several of these have been screened at major international festivals.		
Première Rencontre Euromaghrébine d'Écrivains (First Euro-Maghreb Writers' Event)	The first Euro-Maghreb writers' event, held in Tunisia by the EU Delegation to Tunisia with the PEN International competition from 9 to 12 November 2013, aimed to promote intercultural dialogue between Europe and the countries of the Maghreb. The event brought together some forty Maghrebi and European authors who debated the topic of 'multiple identities'. This event aimed to connect intellectuals from the region in order to raise awareness of their literary works, and increase the dissemination of Maghrebi literature in the Maghreb and in Europe. This event will be held once a year.	50,000 € 9-12 November 2013	EU Delegation to Tunisia In collaboration with the Tunisian Ministry of Culture, the Union Des Écrivains Tunisiens (Union of Tunisian Writers) and the town hall of Tunisia
	In addition, the participation and contribution of PEN International (independent non-profit organisation founded in London in 1921, with 140 regional offices and represented in 101 countries), as well as the PEN clubs in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, made it possible to take advantage of their vast networking experiencing to discuss possibilities for the development and dissemination of Maghrebi literature.		
	The themes presented and debated during the succession of panel discussions tackled topical subjects such as the impact of tradition, modernity, respective heritages and culture on an individual's identity: issues that concern intellectuals on both sides of the Mediterranean on more than one count, particularly at a time when political upheaval in the Maghrebi region is posing a challenge, especially to the freedom of expression.		
	The contributions and speeches by the writers during the event will be compiled and published by the EU Delegation to Tunisia.		
Conference on 'Le Patrimoine Culturel: Vecteur de Développement Durable' (Cultural Heritage: Vehicle for Sustainable Development)	A conference on the theme of 'Cultural Heritage: Vehicle for Sustainable Development', initiated by the EUNIC network and coordinated by the Delegation of Wallonia-Brussels to Tunisia, in collaboration with the Tunisian Ministry of Culture and the EU Delegation to Tunisia, was successfully held in the presence of several Maghrebi and European experts, from 27 to 30 June 2013 in Sbeitla in north-western Tunisia, a region rich in cultural heritage but one that remains disadvantaged and is lagging behind in terms of development despite its major potential and its vast heritage.	5,000 € 27-30 June 2013	EUNIC network-Delegation Wallonia-Brussels-Tunisia (contact: Daniel Soil) and EU Delegation to Tunisia In collaboration with the Tunisian Ministry of Culture
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B. EU-Tunisian cultural cooperation activities run by the Commission Headquarters

Euromed Heritage IV³¹

Euromed Heritage IV (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 €, 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 'Strategy for the Development of Euro-Mediterranean Heritage: priorities from Mediterranean Countries (2007-2013)' 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.

Duration: 2008-2012 Budget: 17 million €

www.euromedheritage.net

Name	Brief Description/Overall Objectives	EU Funding / Duration	Contact
Mutual Heritage:	Within the Mediterranean region, historical studies as well as realities on the ground testify to	01.03.09 - 01.12.12	www.mutualheritage.net
From historical integration to contemporary active participation	the presence of a substantial 19 th and 20 th centuries' heritage, which is the product of inter- cultural exchanges and the sharing of technical know-how during that period. The modernisation of the urban fabrics of the south Mediterranean was the outcome of local processes compounded by external inputs from Ottoman and European colonisation.	1,609,363€	
	This project aims at implementing activities that would help train various professionals and heighten awareness among the populations; these include training, workshops, targeted activities, and info days. The actors within this project will be responsible for the preparation of technical documents for the authorities of Casablanca, which would be used in their application to UNESCO for the title of "Deco" for the city centre. It also aims to produce a series of publications to heighten awareness of this heritage, which is generally unknown. Five exhibitions will be organised around the core of the project, its objectives and activities, and these will contribute to make this heritage better known to the larger public.		
	The project consortium includes Citeres (France), Casamémoire and ENA (Morocco), ASM Tunis (Tunisia), Riwaq (Palestinian Authority) and Oikos (Italie), and aims at integrating this recent heritage in the day-to-day reality of life in partner cities through processes that are respectful of their heritage value, both tangible and intangible.		

³¹ Regional Programme covering the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia.

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Mare Nostrum A heritage trail along the Phoenician maritime routes and historic port-cities of the	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 areas of competence.	15.01.09 – 01.03.13 1,365,272 €	www.eh4- marenostrum.net/
Mediterranean Sea	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.		
	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.		
	The action, whose main result will be the revitalisation 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 & MAJAL/Academic Observatory for Construction and Reconstruction/ University of Balamand in Lebanon; Paralleli in Italy — coordinated by DIRES University of Florence in Italy.		
Athena Ancient theatres enhancement for new actualities	The interest that ancient theatres often raise among the public, has been a key factor for their survival. However, this interest, represented by current uses of theatres, creates a continuous impact on these structures originally designed for needs very different from contemporary ones. Moreover, the lack of awareness among the local population can sometimes play a role in aggravating the situation, whereby little or no cultural value is attached to the asset itself.	01.02.09 - 01.05.13 1,452,302 €	www.athenaproject.eu
	Ancient theatres can play a crucial role in the Mediterranean culture and cultural heritage. The enhancement and improvement of sites would in fact determine an increase of their relevance as tourist spots, while the proper management of these sites would help in minimizing negative impacts.		
	The <i>main objective</i> of the 'Athena' project is minimizing the progressive decay of ancient theatres in terms of physical, cultural and socio-economic aspects by endorsing proper management plans. Additionally, the aim is also to support the revival of theatres as a part of a wider archaeological site or urban context, and to establish an overall strategy for dealing with tangible and intangible heritage aspects. Capacity building activities will also be designed in order to maximize the project's impact.		

	The project, whose aim is to increase general knowledge and awareness of theatre's cultural value as material and immaterial heritage, gathers four partners from universities of both North and South Mediterranean countries and targets different stakeholder groups, notably youth.		
Montada Forum for the promotion of traditional architecture in the Maghreb	Historic city centres and rural Mediterranean areas bear witness to the history and tradition of their inhabitants. Traditional Mediterranean architecture is important for many reasons and above all represents the living heritage that houses millions of people. However, due to a lack of knowledge and awareness, politicians and the population alike often consider traditional architecture more of a hindrance from the past than a potential for future development.	01.03.09 – 01.06.13 1,812,376 €	www.montada- forum.net/fr/montada/mo ntada.htm
	Montada sets out to address a comprehensive preservation of this heritage. To this end, it proposes recognition by politicians, governments and the population of the value of traditional architecture as an element of cultural identity and a potential source of social, economic and environmental development at local level.		
	Montada plans to work within a new framework of governance with a wide range of activities to develop recognition of the value of traditional architecture. The principal features of Montada are the Forums of Citizen Participation set up in each of the cities involved (Salé, Marrakech, Ghardaïa, Dellys, Sousse and Kairouan) and EIDEM, the international multidisciplinary team of experts that provides the necessary support for the Forums and their work.		
	This project, implemented by a partnership specialised in the field of rehabilitation and conservation in different cities of the Mediterranean, aims at targeting civil society by emphasising the value of traditional architecture, so that its inhabitants can enjoy living and working in it.		
REMEE Rediscovering together the water heritage in the	Water heritage in the Mediterranean region reflects the way rural and urban populations coped with the scarcity of water and how they organised local structures around water management.	01.01.09 – 01.06.12 1,070,560 €	www.remee.eu
Mediterranean region	Today, most of this vernacular heritage is unprotected and recent developments, both societal and economic, including the mechanisation of agriculture, migrations from rural areas, and unruly urban expansion, threaten its survival. Legal protection runs short of meeting current needs and an awareness campaign targeting decision makers as well as the general public is necessary.		
	This project aims to promote the preservation of vernacular heritage linked to water management in the Euro-Mediterranean region; intensify public awareness, particularly among the youth, of the value of this heritage and the need to protect it; promote water		

management techniques linked to this heritage; and promote, together with local populations, local development projects based on the principle of valorising this heritage.

This project is based on the development of a common methodology for the protection and management of water heritage resources. It involves seven partners who are active in the field of mobilising civil society towards heritage preservation. It includes eight interrelated activities where the participation of local populations, particularly youth, is elemental.

Euromed Audiovisual III³²

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.

Developped 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, 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

Media and culture for development in the Southern Mediterranean region³³

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?

³² Ibid.

³³ Implementation starts in 2014.

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

Special Action 2009-Culture Programme

Objectives

Support cultural cooperation projects aimed at cultural exchanges between the countries taking part in the Programme and *Third Countries*, which have concluded association or cooperation agreements with the EU, provided that the latter contain cultural clauses. Every year one or more *Third Country(ies)* is/are selected for that particular year. The action must generate a concrete international cooperation dimension.

For the special action in 2009, the European Commission proposes to concentrate on the EU Neighbourhood and the eligible third countries are: Armenia, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Moldova, occupied Palestinian Territory and Tunisia.

Duration: 2009-2010

Budget per project: 50.000-200.000 €

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2009/call_strand_13_2009_en.php

Name	Brief Description/Overall Objectives	EU Funding / Duration	Contact
Euromedinculture(s) Arts Forum: sharing & creating 2011/2013	EUROMEDINCULTURE(s) is a network of public authorities, universities, research centres and non-governmental cultural organisations, which are all located in Europe and the Mediterranean region. To date, it comprises 29 members representing 21 countries. The objective of the network is the exchange and cultural cooperation between performers and artists, distributors, and people involved with culture in countries in this region which makes up a patchwork of artistic identities rich in shared history.	200,000.00€	www.euromedincult ure.org
Lutherie : Facteur de développement dans le Caucase et au Maghreb	N.A.	200,000.00€	N.A.

Special Action 2010-Culture Programme

Objectives

The Special Action in 2010 is open for EU Neighbourhood countries which have concluded association or cooperation agreements with the Community and ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The eligible third countries are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Moldova, occupied Palestinian Territory, Tunisia and Ukraine.

Azerbaijan and Ukraine have been added as from the first of March as they have signed the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural **Expressions**

Duration: 2010-2011

Budget per project: 50.000-200.000 €

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2010/call strand 13 2010 en.php

Name	Brief Description/Overall Objectives	EU Funding / Duration	Contact
E-FEST	E-FEST is dedicated to electronic music and culture. Bringing together the worlds of music, image, entertainment and media arts, the programming is open to the diversity of innovative art forms that use digital technologies. Investing in prestigious heritage sites and involving musical and visual programming, E-FEST promotes artistic diversity in Tunisia and opens the door to new ways of expression, combining creativity, meetings and experiments.	144,200.00€	http://www.lefest.or g/
Miniatures 2009-2011	The idea of the project is to reflect the entire meetings and artistic affinities woven in the network 'Dans un Bassin Méditerranéen'. The partners have imagined constructing a series of creations on the theme of love and relationships carried out by ten artists from Mediterranean countries and supported by five partners. The idea is to offer these artists a framework for production and dissemination. The creations will be called Miniatures.	98,640.00 €	http://www.officina.f
Transmission	N.A.	153,175.00€	N.A.