



Report – International Seminar on “Mobility and Artistic Development in the Mediterranean” – 6th May 2011 – Paris, France

with the support of the French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and the French Embassies in Madrid and Rome

On 6th May 2011, The Roberto Cimetta Fund (RCF) supporting the mobility of artists and cultural operators in Europe and the Arab states, organised an international seminar on the theme « Mobility and Artistic Development in the Mediterranean ». This seminar grouped together 46 participants from 14 countries with the support of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and the French Ministry of Foreign and European affairs.

Brigitte Favarel, Director of the European and International Affairs Department of the French Ministry of Culture and Ferdinand Richard, Chairman of the Roberto Cimetta Fund welcomed the participants by underlining the need to define a common framework for European and Arab cultural actors following the uprisings of civil society in the Arab states. These uprisings have led to the defeat of former dictators; a new era has begun bringing new aspirations but the situation is unstable and uncertain. What effect does the revolution have on youth, social networks and artistic creation?

The theory of the choc of civilisations still nourishes many clichés. Despite pressure from the media that undeniably contributes to a certain ill-ease between populations, the proximity of Mediterranean countries (European and neighbouring) calls for increased circulation between peoples to enrich, recognise and preserve cultural diversity, understanding, cooperation, peace and friendship between the Arab world and European countries.

Nawel Skandrani, Board member of the Roberto Cimetta Fund and choreographer based in Tunisia, reminds the participants that the Tunisian Government is temporary, elections will take place in two months, 70 political parties are presenting themselves, strikes and manifestations are on the rise and the presence of former members of the regime destabilises the situation: but aspirations are strong coupled with the conviction that there will no longer be a dictatorship or any form of power imposed by the West. Tunisia is a mosaic of cultures. It is time to support and maintain its artistic diversity. Free circulation between North and South is not yet a reality. Obtaining a visa is becoming more and more difficult and Schengen has become a wall dividing the Mediterranean in two. Europe is having troubling accepting 22 000 illegal immigrants when Tunisia is providing shelter to 270 000 Libyan refugees (official count announced by the Prime Minister two days ago). This is the current situation!

Free circulation from one Arab country to another is rendered even more complicated and even impossible by the visa issue, turmoil between neighbouring countries and the situation in Palestine (Syrians and Lebanese cannot go to Palestine, Iraqians cannot go to a large number of countries...).

Economic difficulties are persistent when it comes to Culture (even if Tunisia, compared with other countries is relatively privileged because the State through the existence of the Ministry for Culture and Safeguard of Heritage implements a form of cultural policy); lack of financial means for Culture slows down the circulation of works and artists and even if (since the creation of RCF) mobility funds have increased (Safar, Art Moves Africa, Mawred el Thaqafi, YATF...) the funds for producing performances have not developed to the same extent. This situation continues to create an imbalance. For example, a European or Arab artist living in

Europe who is invited to a Dance Festival like Bipod in Lebanon will have his or her transport covered as well as per diems and a fee, whilst Arab artists living in their own countries will have to accept to work free of charge or for a ridiculously small amount of money in they want to be programmed, even if it is their own country. Setting up an equivalent Tunisian organisation to the French national office of artistic distribution has been requested a long time ago. However the situation is progressing, the cultural sector is reorganising itself and proposals are being made that will be submitted to the government once it is elected (even if the transition government is currently taking a number of decision to face the crisis). There are many aims, but priority must be given to the young who must travel and learn about other cultures, other individuals, other customs and traditions, to exchange ideas, share experiences and energy...to dream and create freely! Virtual journeys through internet, facebook and the media can in no way replace meetings face to face.

Hadil Nazmy, expert for the Roberto Cimetta Fund and film director based in Alexandria, Egypt underlines that films have accompanied the changes in Egypt but the question for the film director is "Should I film and broadcast the events to tell the story of what is happening or should I also be out there acting for change so that the conditions of work for artists improve through artistic education and access to culture?" What is needed is better training for artists but the current cultural policy in Egypt is not in line with the needs of creators. There is the question of censorship too. We are witnessing a new feeling of liberation but the old barriers are still there. Energy and aspirations are strong but the reality is totally unproductive. A retrospective of the Egyptian revolution is necessary, but it is also time to define a strategy and a framework to help artists to develop their knowledge and talent.

Jumana Al Yasiri, expert for the Roberto Cimetta Fund and administrator of the Young Arab Theatre Fund underlines the difficult situation in Syria. There were many changes in the past but since 2009/2010 the situation has become even more difficult. Artistic events are cancelled, theatre schools and fine arts academies are shut down; artistic education is blocked and the cultural sector doesn't really understand why. Artists do not have any work and turn to other countries and regions abroad. Visa problems in the Arab world are terribly complicated. Artists search for opportunities to work in Lebanon, Turkey or elsewhere. The production chain in performing arts or visual arts is broken. Travel from South to North is increasing. The Young Arab Theatre Fund launched a programme to help performing arts tour between Arab towns but there were no requests! She calls on the sector to support the transition phase and anticipate problems that could occur.

Is there solidarity between artists? Artists have their opinion about the current regime: some are for, some are against and some are neutral. Officials are trying to group together the artistic and cultural sector and the revolution is frightening everyone. The situation is very worrying.

Serene Huleileh, Board member of the Roberto Cimetta Fund and Director of the Arab Education Forum in Amman explains her conviction that learning is at the heart of development within communities. Mobility, artistic and cultural production are closely linked to this process. It is very difficult and sometimes impossible to find funding for the research phase of a project in Jordan, whereas this phase is essential to develop learning and build projects that can have an impact on cultural, artistic and economic development. Travel grants allocated through the Safar Fund build up a community of grantees who gradually get to know one another and endeavour to help each other where possible. Mobility can be a difficult experience in certain areas between Arab states but the aim of Safar Fund is to show that mobility is a source of learning and enrichment that empowers and leads to project building.

Aylin Kalem, expert for the Roberto Cimetta Fund and Director of BoDig in Istanbul explains that in order to live from her work as a dancer, she has had to open up her 'creative space' and her capacities (learn to organise festivals, teach) and bring in new forms of art into her work (new technologies). Young dancers are not supported and cannot live from their art, but they support each other. "Istanbul, European capital of Culture 2010" gave energy and hope to the sector, but there was no funding for mobility only a little from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To live, small dance companies teach or become interdisciplinary. Aylin works at Istanbul University in a new performing arts department where a new programme has been developed to train cultural managers. There will be cultural operators in the future, but for the moment funding is scare and art venues are closing down. She presented her new mobility project "MADE - Mobility of Digital Arts in Europe » that she is currently developing with European partners.

Mobility is essential to her work because it is productive, a source of enrichment, meetings and enables you to remain active. Mobility and residencies are complementary.

Ahmed El Attar is the Director of the Studio Emad Eddin Foundation in Cairo and a member of the Istikshaf platform that groups together mobility operators in the arts and culture sector of the Mediterranean. The Tunisian revolution proved that the "Arab world" exists since the uprisings had a chain effect. Art and culture are thought provoking and change our ways of seeing others and ourselves. They contributed to the change in Arab thinking that brought about the revolution. The mobility of young Arab artists gives them the possibility to benefit from professional experience abroad. Mobility also allows foreign professionals to come to Arab countries. Mobility is the beginning of artistic professionalization but long term funding for two-year training courses for example is still non-existent in Egypt. If we continue to support artists, we continue to build up our culture for tomorrow and society will evolve.

Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes asks if the institutions in the South support the actors of change? Fabien Jannelle underlines that artistic recognition comes from institutions but **mobility is fundamental to open up spaces where civil society can meet and exchange, where democracy is alive, allowing artists to express themselves and become professionals.**

Brigitte Favarel underlines that borders are becoming more difficult to cross in order to channel or block immigration. **Mobility of artists and cultural actor must however be preserved as they are the actors of change.** Inès da Silva works in a different department of the Ministry from Brigitte Favarel but even though her work deals mainly with cultural professions she works closely with the cultural diplomacy issues run by Madame Favarel's Department. She congratulates RCF on this timely seminar and her aim is to understand the independent arts sector in the Arab world so that she can respond to the needs of French artists engaged in cooperation projects there.

Continuing on from the discussion about revolutionary movements in the Arab world, Donato Giuliani underlines the nature of revolution as the end of one cycle and the beginning of another. In this sense the word is quite appropriate to describe current administrative changes taking place in regional authorities where new ideas and concepts around the terms "territory" and "local actors" are taking shape. The Regional Council Nord-Pas de Calais has been developing initiatives on international cultural cooperation for 15 years and during this time many legal innovations have taken place allowing for more "trans-territorial" developments to emerge. The Regional Council has been able to develop relations from West to East of the EU and now will be working with the South. But what does the Council find "regionally" interesting about working with the Roberto Cimetta Fund? The first reason is that the Nord-Pas de Calais fully recognises that it has been at the crossroads of migratory flows for centuries. Many inhabitants of the North have Mediterranean origins. The second reason is that the governance of the Roberto Cimetta Fund is multicultural in the sense that the Board members are all from different countries around the Mediterranean. This implies that the governance of the Fund is truly Mediterranean and therefore gives it more legitimacy to operate as it does in an open, democratic and multilateral way.

Since 2003 the Regional Council has developed the mobility of artists as a cultural policy building up areas of cooperation within Europe but also with the Arab world, and with Latin America... The Region is developing mobility projects for its citizens for 2018 - 2020. This requires accepting diversity and recognising the links we can develop with other parts of the world, with other artistic projects... Finally, the collaboration with the Roberto Cimetta Fund questions the "territorial" nature of regional policy making and the return on investment we can and should be making elsewhere. The Region's partner regions are Rogaland in Norway, Silesia in Poland, Castilla la Mancha in Spain, the French and Flemish communities of Belgium. These regions are included in the RCF partnership. Legal problems inevitably arise but help us to face the changes that globalisation is bringing about.

Jean-Paul Lefèvre presents the political framework of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs that is based on the provision of useful instruments. The Euro-Mediterranean space must be seen as a shared space where cultural diversity must be respected and protected. The Ministry promotes artistic creation, accompanies societal evolution and provides opportunities for foreign artists to show their work in France (Tunisia is highlighted in 2011). The difficulties in obtaining visas are of concern to the Ministry. Mobility of artists within the Euro-Med area is necessary to support regional festivals. The Ministry is developing engineering in

this sector. Moreover, they support the setting up of networks of actors and French artists showing their work abroad. The Ministry supports debates and conferences through the Fond d'Alembert. The Institut Français provides French experts in international conferences throughout the region. In 2012 there will be a call for projects in the Arab world to encourage new ideas and listen to civil society. The Ministry supports training for teachers as well as residencies for international artists in France (Centre des Récollets, and Cité internationale in Paris...) now directly managed by the Institut français. Ministries from other European countries can also contribute financially for the hosting of their own artists. The Ministry invites RCF to work on the selection of artists and cultural actors of tomorrow; this action should be taken in consultation with the network of French cultural institutes abroad.

Jean-Marc Buisson, Director of international relations of the Conseil Général des Bouches du Rhône suggests that the metaphor "mosaic" is appropriate for his county that is a crossroads of cultures. International cultural policymaking is therefore very important. This policy has been based on building up and consolidating networks but this is not sufficient. Decentralised cooperation agreements with other local authorities abroad is a complementary tool allowing for cooperation and exchange with other territories in the Mediterranean basin (for example: Bethlehem and public reading). 70% of the requests for support from local cultural operators in the county are for international projects, and this is very high. The county is keen to work with the Roberto Cimetta Fund because we can build up a new tool that puts artists of the North in touch with artists from the South selected by experts from both sides of the Mediterranean sea. RCF is not a "model" but a simple, flexible and safe mechanism that is adaptable and measurable for a local governing body like CG13. Having a panel of experts brings an independent external eye on the requests. He hopes that other local authorities will become partners of the Fund to increase its effectiveness.

Julie Chenot underlines that from the very start of the candidacy project of Marseille-Provence 2013, international relations were at the heart of the project; create a platform of exchange and creativity between the Mediterranean and the EU. Marseille-Provence 2013 is not a local authority but a non-profit making organisation whose aim is to develop an artistic programme. It's a production house for collaborative projects with other organisations in the territory of Marseille-Provence and also with individual artists. Building a partnership with RCF is a way of developing sustainability of the project through mobility. The concept of the Fund we have developed is to address the issue of South>South exchange. This contributes to synergies and innovation in the region (example of Instants Vidéo). RCF is a key component of the production chain (mobility, training, accompaniment). Marseille-Provence 2013 works with many independent organisations in the South. MP13 will echo the transformations and current changes in Arab civil society.

Antonio Pinto Ribeiro, Board member of RCF, representing the Gulbenkian Foundation a longstanding partner of RCF, pinpoints contradictions in cultural cooperation: computer technology increases the speed of information sharing but we still cannot share our thoughts in Arabic with Arabs; it's easy to communicate through internet but how often do we visit our neighbours? The risk is that we invent new clichés. Supporting transdisciplinary work is vital: literature from North and South, thinkers and researchers from both sides of the Mediterranean sea, co-productions of all kinds... The weight of our past can prevent the Euro-Arab relationship from having a future. RCF is a vital tool to respond to these needs, to encourage dynamics, to be in line with the present. We must be careful that festivals do not retain diversity and create ghettos. It's important to develop festival programming that takes stock of the diversity of contemporary creation. Before being a representative of his or her own culture an artist is first and foremost an Artist.

The open method of coordination is a tool of the European Commission to group together experts and representatives of member states to formulate practice-based recommendations. There is a working group on artistic and cultural mobility that has recently published its recommendations. The sector must endorse these and suggest that they be rapidly implemented.

Ferdinand Richard underlines that local and regional authorities are developing initiatives in terms of mobility. They decide on an international policy but their territorial aims are different. When addressing the question of mobility it is important to consider geopolitical movements and artistic movements. Art works change; our methods of intervention must also change. The Arab spring is accelerated change and we must catch up.

Valérie Baran, expert for RCF, director of Tarmac, explains that public authorities have a tendency to replace cultural operators, thinking that they are capable of implementing their policies themselves and that they don't need to fund operators. This is false; Culture is the first democratic tool.

Richard Polacek, expert for RCF, evokes the respect for authors' rights in Arab countries. Indeed in Tunisia for example the law exists but the decree does not, therefore authors' rights are not respected.

Jean-Paul Lefèvre makes a statement concerning the role of public authorities. Their role is not to take the place of cultural actors. Institutions must apply political decisions. These decisions are sometimes blocked in institutions. The MAEE (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs) accompanies cultural actors. Public funding has decreased so they need cultural actors to implement the political decisions. This is why seminars such as this one are very important to clarify positions and possibilities for the future. Institutions need to implement coherent policies. They do not want to be counter productive. Working together with other institutions at European level is important. Networks such as EUNIC are interesting because they help new ideas and partnerships to develop.

Inês da Silva suggests that the role of RCF should be to clarify the situation of artists and cultural actors for institutions, especially the European Commission.

Joana Cardoso, from the Portuguese Ministry of Culture underlines that Europe is in a crisis of values. Mobility is a prerequisite for the European project. Institutions must position themselves clearly on this question and invest in exchange. Translation for example is essential. Portugal would like to invest in developing Mediterranean relations through mobility. Recurrent visa problems and lack of accurate information have been identified as key obstacles to mobility during a meeting in January 2011 in Lisbon to which RCF was convened. The next Council of Ministers of Culture will adopt recommendations in Brussels on 19th May to set up information services on mobility for cultural actors from all European countries. From 22nd to 24th June in Pecs, Hungary an informal meeting of Ministries of Culture (represented by the International Affairs Departments) and Ministries of Foreign Affairs (represented by their Cultural Departments) of Member States will take place for the first time to formulate integrated policies.

Michael Thoss indicates that the Allianz Foundation supports multilateral actions and is currently turning towards the Middle East. Working with RCF is of interest because it is a way of establishing contact with artistic networks in the South. He would like to work on training for cultural operators in these countries.

Isabelle Bourgeois presents the FNCC (Fédération Nationale des Collectivités territoriales pour la Culture – French Federation of Local Authorities for Culture). It's a network of French authorities that have a common goal: that of positioning culture in local politics. This network of large, medium and small local authorities is interested in the theme of mobility and cooperating with RCF. A meeting will be organised on 8th June in Paris to favour discussions. Elected leaders need to understand questions relating to visas, authors' rights, territorial cultural cooperation and RCF can help this network to understand these challenges.

Cécile Peyronnet underlines that l'Institut Français (former CulturesFrance), is moving away from bilateral thinking towards a more multilateral methodology. Her department has two assignments: to adapt the vision of French cultural institutions abroad so that they take into account questions related to markets and new strategic thinking and the other is to address EU programmes and develop partnerships. The network of French cultural institutions will be changing their position towards European institutions in the years to come. They will be able to play a more active role in the question of developing a European artistic policy. L'Institut Français will become a project leader, a service provider for technical issues relating to artistic project building and a key actor of a European cultural policy particularly with third countries. EUNIC is developing an international status; within this network there are « clusters » at national level in various countries (sixty or so at the moment) including in third countries (Lebanon, Jordan...). This network extends to other continents. These groups are developing strategies to examine the kind of work they can develop with cultural operators for example in the countries of Eastern Europe where they have provided their expertise for the current transition process.

Ferdinand Richard explains that many cultural professionals are not sufficiently engaged in defending culture at European level or for that matter in other European policies that have a direct impact on the cultural sector, sometimes with very harsh consequences. Elected leaders too are sometimes simply not aware of these issues. **RCF can help local and regional decision makers to understand that mobility is at the heart of these questions.** By addressing the issue of mobility inside and outside the EU, RCF can help provides a response to key political questions that are high up on the agenda (including Agendas such as the European Agenda for Culture, the UNESCO Convention and Agenda 21 for Culture). Cultural operators must be aware of this now.

Daphné Tepper, from the Culture Action Europe platform, invites the participants to sign the manifesto of the campaign "We are More" (www.wearemore.eu) supporting a European programme for Culture and a significant budget that will develop the cultural dimension of the European project. As many citizens, professionals, elected leaders and institutional representatives as possible should sign this manifesto particularly at a time when public spending is decreasing in many European countries jeopardizing cultural projects.

Anera Stopfer explains that the Croatian Ministry of Culture aims to facilitate actions for cultural operators. Her department works with the Council of Europe, the Anna Lindh Foundation and UNESCO. Croatia considers itself Mediterranean. As Croatia prepares to become a member of the EU in the accession process, the work with RCF is important to make their aims become reality.

Vélie Papa, of the Inteatro Festival, founding member of RCF and current Board member indicates that, despite Italy's non-engagement in current external cultural policies, she believes that Italian regions including Marche, can play a decisive role in this domain. Actions exist but institutional frameworks are no longer coherent; we are wasting valuable opportunities (example with East Jerusalem). RCF is a valuable intermediary in this regard because it saves time and energy for regional authorities.

Ferdinand Richard puts forward the idea of a European cultural Observatory that would provide a more organised vision of the sector. Currently, multilayered viewpoints are disturbing for actors who want to make headway. Programmes are superimposed and operators have to juggle with the different sources of information. Moreover, zones of influence are still in place and information is distorted.

Nawel Skandrani underlines that there are a lack of project leaders from the South capable of understanding all these challenges. There is a need for cultural management training of operators from the South.

Has headway been made on professional training in the South? Has this been studied?

Ahmed El Attar provides an example of lack of training: there is a new department of European Affairs at the Egyptian Ministry of Culture but the administrators there do not have any cultural engineering experience. The question of training is directly linked to mobility because you have to bring experts to Egypt. A programme such as "Courants du Monde" should be put in place for cultural actors in the South. It is also necessary to encourage intercultural "incubators".

On the question of the difficulty to adapt European funding to the specificities of the Mediterranean context, Jean-March Buisson suggests that we look at the work the Italians have been doing on project building. We must bypass our imagined dead-end and understand, interpret and rationalise the current context... He insists on the necessity of European consensus on questions related to the Mediterranean basin and the current situation in which a dynamic civil society is taking the lead should rapidly be responded to.

To conclude, Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes suggests a global frame of action based on the suggestions made during the course of the debate. The Arab revolution is a paradigm shift that affects Culture. In this respect, an action plan is legitimate. This plan of action take into account the following dimensions of the current context:

- Geographical and aesthetic diversity
- Intercultural dialogue exists

- We must abandon "dominant" thinking and "oriental" stereotypes
- Democracy needs mobility as an essential component

While the founding values on which the European Union was built are put into question as borders are reinforced, the cultural component is recognised as a key element of the making of conceptual processes that allowed Arab civil society to liberate itself from dictatorship and open up the path to democracy. Mobilising concepts and linking them to this process is what artists do best. In this context our plan of action should first foremost build a common understanding which can only take shape through equal conditions of work for artists from the North and from the South; recognition of artists from the South, recognition of their work.

Our action should follow common aims, which could be:

- Act in the framework of intervention models that do not lose sight of the action of the EU in the Mediterranean
- Develop a European cultural strategy that implies political mobilisation at all levels.
- Provide coherence between the EU framework/MED action/territorial action (national level being more involved in visa issues and economic policymaking).

Concerning mobility, our action should be to facilitate South>South, South>East and East>South mobility.

We must improve information circulation from donors to actors and in turn from actors to other actors who have remained invisible but who will become visible via multilateral actions.

We must respond to the lack of cultural data, make sure that public authorities do not replace "actors", build up solidarity, renew knowledge and reinvest instruments.