



IEMed.

Freedom of expression, right to information, knowledge and culture, and the role of Media and culture in the democratic transition

Barcelona, November 30th – December 1st, 2012

Presentation

After the wave of revolts and the emergence of new actors gaining substantial political prominence during 2011, the path towards consolidating new state models and democratic and inclusive systems in North Africa is expected to be long and winding. The success or failure of these political transformations will determine the future of the entire region

Freedom of expression and the right to access information, culture and knowledge is one of the key elements for a successful democracy. Empowering plural media is crucial as they play an essential role in providing information and shape public opinion, allowing a healthy debate within society as a whole.

Traditional activism and journalism are not the only stakeholders. A whole new generation of young social activists and bloggers, who use new communication technology tools for advocacy and mobilization, are particularly relevant.

To tackle all these issues, the IEMed and the Regional Programme “Civil Society” are organizing this international seminar under the title “Freedom of expression, right to information, knowledge and culture, and the role of Media and culture in the democratic transition”.

The goal of this seminar is to engage in a fruitful dialogue, sharing experiences and promoting a set of recommendations about issues such as free of speech and freedom, free access to knowledge, information and culture, and the role of the Media and cultural actors in these matters and in the democratic transitions.

This project is funded
by the European Union



With the collaboration of



Programme

November 30th

8.45 -9.00 am Registration

9.00 – 9.30 am Opening session

Senén Florensa, President, Executive Committee, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Rania Kutteneh, Deputy Team Leader, “Euromed Civil Society Programme”

Dimitri Barua, Communications Officer, European Commission Representation in Barcelona

9.30 am - 11.00 am First session

Freedom of Expression, a Pillar for Democratic States

Censorship and control over free speech and cultural and artistic expression in all its aspects could have seemed overcome in the Mediterranean post 2011. But there are growing evidences is not. The opening of spaces for debate and for cultural expression are essential to consolidate the free flow of ideas and to shape a new narrative that accompanies the transition process in which citizens feel identified. What are the historical foundations of free speech? Which tools have historically defended it and how can it be done nowadays? What are the actors of civil society that deserve special attention with regards free speech? Which is the path that still remains to fully protect this right in the southern and eastern Mediterranean? Must there be limits to issues related to religion and traditions?

Moderator: **Giovanna Tanzarella**, Director of the Foundation of René Seydoux

Speakers:

9.30 am - 9.45 am: Xavier Mas de Xaxàs, journalist, newspaper La Vanguardia; member of the board of the Catalan College of Journalists.

9.45 am - 10.00 am: Anouar Moalla, Communications Officer, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, Tunisia

10.00 am - 11.00 am: Debate

11.00 am – 11.15 am Coffee Break

11.15 am – 1.15 pm Second session

Guaranteeing Access to Information, Culture and Knowledge

Building democratic states implies a new contract between citizens and institutions. These are committed to act with transparency and accountability. Many countries are establishing transparency laws to ensure citizens' right to require information to governments and public institutions. But a democracy also ensures access of its citizens not only to a good training

and education but also to culture and knowledge. These are essential issues that allow people adhere to common values and be committed and dynamic citizens. Are these rights guaranteed in other regions of the world? Are these rights guaranteed in the Mediterranean? Are the new governments putting in place new policies to assure these issues?

Moderator: Gerarda Ventura. Meridie. Italy

Speakers:

11.15 am – 11.30 am: Andrea Amato, President of Istituto per il Mediterraneo (IMED) and Head of the Consortium “Euromed Civil Society Programme”, Italy.

11.30 am – 11.45 am: Ridha Tlili, Fondation Atili Culture Démocratique, Tunisia.

11.45 am – 1.30 pm: Debate

1.30 pm – 3.00 pm Lunch

3.00 pm – 5.00 pm Third session

New Forms of Collective Action

The ability of the youth to set in motion protests through the use of Technological tools, including social media, has created new forms of civil resistance and civil society organisations. Social media is not only changing the nature of news but also of community engagement. How do we go now from promoting the spread of the revolt to defend the values of the revolution in the mid and long term? To what extent Mediterranean civil society organizations are adopting these tools? To what extent have these tools a real impact on public opinion?

Moderator:

Jordi Bertran, Press Officer, European Institute of the Mediterranean.

Speakers:

3.00 pm – 3.15 pm: Leila Nachawati, Professor of Communications, Universidad Carlos III (Madrid), Spanish-Syrian activist.

3.15 pm – 3.30 pm: Eman Mohammad Jaradat, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (Jordan)

3.30 pm – 5.00 pm: Debate

20.30 pm Dinner

December 1st

9.00 am – 11.00 am Fourth session

Processes of Reform for Media and Culture in Democratic Transitions

Are the processes of reform of legislation frameworks guaranteeing independent and free media? Which should be the role of Media and Culture in creating a new narrative for the countries? Role of the traditional and new media in democracy.

Moderator:

Georges Abi Saleh, Mouvement Culturel Antelias (Lebanon).

Speakers:

9.00 am – 9.15 am: Zeineb Farhat, director, ElTheatro-Tunis

9.15 am – 9.30 am: Gorka Knörr, director of the Catalan Institute of Cultural Enterprises (ICEC), Government of Catalonia

9.30 am – 11.00 am: Debate

11.00 am -11.15 am Coffee break

11.15 am - 1.15 pm Fifth session

Civil Society Role with regards Access to Information, Culture and Knowledge.

What actions should be undertaken by civil society organizations in this regard? At what extent the voice of civil society organisations is take it into account in media reports?

Moderator:

Hamid Lamrissi, Reseau Marocain Euromed des ONG, Morocco. *

Speakers:

11.25 am - 11.35 am: Rosa Mansouri, GNC-Algeria

11.35 am - 11.45 am: Massoud Bouhcine, GNC-Morocco

11.45 am - 11.55 am: Roula Mikeil, GNC- Lebanon

11.55 am - 12.05 pm: Mohamed Mahmoud, GNC-Egypt

12.05 am – 1.15: debate

1.15 pm – 2.00 pm Lunch

2.00 pm – 3.30 pm Sixth Session

Reports & Discussion on Recommendations

Reporters:

Rania Kutteneh - Free of speech and cultural and artistic expression*

Anouar Moalla - Civil society role with regards access to information, culture and knowledge

Emnah Alzoghbi - Role of the traditional and new media in democracy

3.30 pm – 3.45 pm Conclusions & Closing Session

Andrea Amato, President of Istituto per il Mediterraneo (IMED) and Head of the Consortium “Euromed Civil Society Programme”

Andreu Bassols, Director General, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Note: The working languages of the conference will be English, French and Arabic.