

REPORT from the workshop

EVENT: Societies and culture in Euro-Med: Creative and active citizenship education

LOCATION and DATE: Poligon, Ljubljana, 17 May & EMUNI, Piran, 29 May 2019

The workshop took place over two days and was divided between Piran and Ljubljana. On 17 May the workshop took place in Ljubljana (Slovenia). The special focus was on the Euro-Mediterranean region and representatives from policy, university and creative spheres discussed to what extent cultural and creative sectors can be the drivers of social change. On 29 May, the workshop took place in Piran (Slovenia) and was on citizenship education and active citizenship in the Euro-Mediterranean area, involving predominantly academics and policy makers, but also some students.

The *speakers* contributing to the discussions on this topic were:

Mohammed Elrazzaz (Union for the Mediterranean), Paul Walton (Anna Lindh Foundation), Primož Kristan, (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia), Dr. Guiseppe Borruso (University of Trieste, Italy), Dr. Mounir Ghribi (National Institute of Oceanography and Experimental Geophysics, Italy), Dr. Danica Purg (IEDC Bled, Slovenia), Dr. Alenka Fikfak (Faculty of Architecture Ljubljana, Slovenia), Samer Yamani (Creative Dialogue, Syria/Spain), Nataša Zavolovšek (Exodos Ljubljana, Slovenia), Romana Zajec (Zavod APIS, Italy), Žiga Vrtačič (Danes je nov dan, Parlameter, Slovenia), Miha Šuštaršič (Slovenian Press Agency, Slovenia), Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry (President of the Euro-Mediterranean University, Slovenia), Giuseppe Cataldi (Jean Monnet Chair, University of Naples "L'Orientale", Italy), Eva Klemenčič (Educational Research Institute, Slovenia), Anca Draghici (Politehnica University of Timisoara, Romania), Susana de Juana-Espinosa, Universidad de Alicante, Spain, Nada Trunk Širca (Jean Monnet Chair, ISSBS, Slovenia), Mojca Kleva Kekuš (former Member of the European Parliament, and Secretary General of the University of Primorska, Slovenia), Špela Majcen Marušič (Communications, Outreach and External Affairs Manager, EMUNI).

Panellists discussed the role of youth as vehicle for change in Europe as well as in the wider Euro-Mediterranean region. They talked about how citizens of various EU Member States and countries from the Southern rim of the Mediterranean understand citizenship education and active citizenship, what matters to youth around the Euro-Mediterranean and how they could be better motivated to engage (outside the comfort of their smartphones) on public issues that matter to them such as climate change, migration, international exchanges and other. The discussion focused also on how citizenship education could be better integrated in national (and international) curricula to enable a considerable amount of young people from the region to work towards what they consider their future.

It built on the recognition that cultural and creative sectors are important for ensuring the continued development of societies and are at the heart of the creative economy. Not only are they knowledge-intensive and based on individual creativity and talent, thereby generating considerable economic wealth, but they also contribute to shaping our individual and common societies. This means promoting values such as human rights, democracy, international cooperation and social cohesion, among many others. This workshop aims to look at ways that creative industries contribute to creating active youth in the wider Euro-Mediterranean region. In aftermath of EU elections, panelists, including representatives from academia, policy sphere and businesses, will discuss to what extent creative industries are the drivers for social change in the sense of activating young people in their civic duties and how young Europeans and their peers from the Southern shores of the Mediterranean could harness creative industries to work towards better understanding and creation of trust and tolerance in the wider region. This could in turn lead to a creation of a true intercultural/global citizenship.

The roundtable was attended by representatives of political, university and creative sector from different Mediterranean countries. They talked about how cultural and creative industries can promote active citizenship among young people, and about other problems they face. The representative of policy makers (Ministry) confirmed their commitment to the notion of creative industries. For instance, the Foreign Affairs Ministry has a desire to integrate culture and creativity in all its foreign and development policies. The Cultural Ministry had cultural industry and the creative industries already included in the strategy

document of the national program for culture 2014-2017. They both play an important role in the current and future policies. In the EU, projects related to the cultural and creative industries are for the most part funded by the European Cohesion Fund. The 36 percent of Europeans who are never in touch with culture constitute a challenge – promoting active citizenship and culture to them is difficult.

The cultural industry is defined as performing arts and visual arts and cultural heritage, and the creative industry involves graphic design, fashion and advertising, but they increasingly interweave. On the other hand, creative activism has been defined as innovative, non-commercial, sustainable and open source.

Creative activism works to empower the young. It is not possible to operate with the same pattern in every environment, and the context needs to be taken into account. The process needs to be built from the bottom up. Young people sometimes say that they do not need empowerment, but the empowerment is a process that begins with observation of the realities and structures of the society and the creation of a suitable environment.

There was a critique of the notion of “cultural industry”, which is believed to be an adaptation of the arts to the rules of the free market. This is problematic because the value of art is immeasurable in the market, where the value and contribution of cultural artists and the workers are in the field of public good and common.

The well-known fact of the gap between the university teaching and the needs of the market was noted again. Young people study at universities but do not find jobs afterwards. Universities should be more attuned to the job market, noting that moving people from poorer to richer countries is not just about brain drain, but also about the loss of capital, as people who have been educated with taxpayer’s money go to work elsewhere. Universities are experiencing ongoing difficulties in preparing the students for the job market. It is not sufficient to only educate them but also to integrate creativity, cultural and other elements, and to create new, different jobs that do not exist today.

The *policy findings/recommendation* of workshop:

- Further opening up of the space for youth in political sphere is needed.
- Intercultural dialogue has become too institutionalised, a shift back to real inter-cultural dialogue based on personal relations is needed.
- Further measures are needed to strengthen the right to access culture.
- Establishment of Erasmus-like programme for the Mediterranean would represent a good basis for circular mobility in the region.
- Funding for projects and ideas is to be strengthened to enable that those practices that are recognised as good, also receive financial support, including in their production stage.
- Create more contact with youth using their own communication channels, i.e. social media and online
- Diversity should not be communicated as a burden but as an advantage.

The *curricula and university organization findings/recommendation* of workshop:

- Circulation of knowledge between industry and academia should be further supported
- Internships should be further supported to allow students to gain experience and managers should be in touch with students and studying to allow for their continuous education
- Creative and cultural topics should be included in all curricula. Good practice: center for the integration of migrant students within universities can be established
- Establishment of career services after graduation for migrant students
- Intercultural university environments are beneficial: better research, better teaching; cultural variety is improving student and teacher's performance.
- The existing Erasmus student system prove that solutions for better inclusion of migrant students is possible. The challenge of present time is: how to include/integrate refugee students. The universities can benefit from existing Erasmus student mobility system experiences.
- More positive and diversified approach toward migration and presentation of migrants in curricula is needed.

- Culture and civilisation courses should be included for all programmes, including engineering etc.
- Discussion perceptions of poverty would bring an added value to understanding general contexts of Euro-Mediterranean affairs
- Happiness stemming from diversity should be underlined through curricula, diversity should not be communicated as a burden but as an advantage.