

Cultural Policies
in the Arab Region Programme

Second Quarterly Report
October 1st -
December 31. 2012



Current Developments in Cultural Policies Cultural Policies in the Arab Region

The General Summary of the Report

Current Developments in Cultural Policies

Morocco | Algeria | Egypt | Syria

Current Developments in the Program of Cultural Policies

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This report was drafted by Ettijahat. Independent Culture in the framework of the cooperation agreement between Ettijahat and Cultural Resource (Al-Mawred Al-Thaqafi) and with the support of the European Cultural Foundation. It is aimed at monitoring the actual developments of cultural policies in the Arab world in cooperation with Cultural Resource and in consultation and discussion with the responsible National Groups and the information provided by them. We thank the coordinators and members of all the groups for the efforts they made in order to realize this report.

General Summary

The 2nd Quarterly Report covers the period between October 1st and December 31st 2012. It consists of two main parts:

1. Present developments in cultural policies in the four countries Morocco, Algeria, Egypt and Syria. The 3rd Quarterly Report will focus on Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon. We also hope that it will contain the monitoring of the first work steps in Lybia and Yemen.¹ This division is due to the fact that the cultural policies groups in Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon are still under formation and therefore not capable of producing a sufficient flow of information at this stage.
2. Monitoring crucial developments in the cultural policies programme in the Arab World, specifically those related to the 2nd Meeting of the National Cultural Policies Group in Arab Countries and the results achieved.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the programme is taking on new dimensions: in 2009 it has started out with building a knowledge base for cultural policies in the region groping its way ahead in this field of work that is rather new to the Arab World. The programme however developed further not only to introduce new concepts and build the knowledge of cultural operators in the region through supporting them in preparing the ground for the creation of national data bases, but to aim at becoming an effective means of pressure on decision-making. Accordingly in Egypt and Algeria a general framework for new cultural policies was created and the Arab Group of Cultural Policies decided in its last meeting in Cairo to disseminate the Egyptian experience with its media campaign "Culture for all Egyptians" throughout the Arab region. The Arab work group furthermore emphasized the need to build the capacities of cultural operators in the region in the field of cultural policies.

Latest developments in cultural policies:

The cultural sector in **Morocco** is approaching important changes with regard to organizational structures and decision-making as it is awaiting the announcement of the establishment of the national council for Moroccan languages and culture. The council is expected to have a strong impact on decision-making procedures on a governmental level, though the main weak points that negatively influence Moroccan culture remain unchanged. Accordingly the funding of culture is still scarce and there is little training and formation for human resources working in the cultural field which demonstrates the official sides' lack of interest in this area.

In its international relations Morocco focuses on two countries with which it shares a long history, France and Spain, while cooperation with other countries is still rare. The private sector's support for culture and arts remains limited although there are some promising individual initiatives, like a family that has made their home in Germany available as an exhibition space for Moroccan and foreign artists. In the same respect, Morocco is

¹ Representatives from Lybia and Yemen participated in the 2nd meeting of the National Cultural Policies Group in Arab Countries on December 14th 2012 in Cairo in preparation for the programme's development to include those two countries as well.

witnessing a growth in the variety of cultural and artistic activities that are taking place in the country. Furthermore two training institutions were funded recently, the High Institute for Audio-Visual Professions and Cinema, and the establishment of a Master programme for literary and cultural studies in the faculty of literature and humanities, which is considered an important development on the level of professional and academic training in the cultural and artistic fields.

In **Egypt**, a new constitution was approved and is expected to be followed by numerous legislative amendments. There are changes on the level of government institutions and instability witnessed by the Ministry of Culture with five successive ministries since the Revolution of 25 January. Also a number of leaders in the ministries and heads of sectors were changed in accordance with the change of ministers, although these changes did not affect the ministry staff in terms of number or qualification. Moreover no clear or pronounced developments with regard to the ministry's strategies or work processes were introduced. In the meantime the Supreme Council of Culture witnessed a decision to restructure its 26 standing committees.

Boards of trustees for a number of museums and institutions of the Ministry of Culture and others were formed but their role and power is still unclear as well as the criteria for selecting the members. The Ministry of Antiquities was separated from the Ministry of Culture which led to a shortage of the Ministry of Culture's budget which used to depend on the income from the antiquities for financing the cultural development fund which in turn financed non-governmental cultural events. Hence came the statement by the Minister of Culture to halt the funding for non-governmental cultural activities as a result of the decreased budget of the Ministry.

Contrary to what is happening in Algeria, the governmental cultural institution is moving towards organizing festivals through the institutions of civil society. The government furthermore finances intermittently independent cultural initiatives that are not legally registered, such as the monthly festivity "Al-Fann Midan" (Art Square) which is organized by a number of individuals belonging to cultural institutions on a voluntary basis and without a legal framework. This facilitates an increase in the activity of independent cultural institutions in terms of finding sources of funding, or even in terms of number and quality of activities provided. Since the reduction of security control by the Ministry of the Interior and a pressure towards abolishing the previously demanded security clearances, festivals and artistic performances have moved to the streets and public squares which led to a development of the presentation techniques and communication with the audience. Hence the non-governmental cultural activities in public spaces have multiplied and independent institutions have begun to put pressure on the Ministry of Culture to fund these activities and have emphasized the fact that the ministry's budget is not exclusive to government activities. Moreover, it can be observed that the rate of networking among independent cultural institutions in the implementation of activities and events has increased considerably.

Algeria, on the other hand, is witnessing an on-going adherence to the old mechanism of decision-making in the Ministry of Culture despite the foundation of the "National Council for Culture and Arts". It is a council of national figures from various artistic fields whose main task it is to think and reconsider the laws governing the work of an artist in terms of fundamental rights (social security, for example).

On a legislative level, it does not appear that the newly issued laws and decrees are concerned with the democracy of cultural work. There was a decree issued for the film industry in Algeria focusing on the law that Algerian film should not affect the national identity of Algeria and will be banned otherwise. On the other hand, the issuance of a regulation that offers tax deductions to private-sector institutions financing or supporting cultural institutions or events is considered a positive development. It is however negatively affected by the long and complicated administrative and bureaucratic chain linked to the process, which may lead many business owners and managers to refrain from participation.

Algeria, which has one of the toughest laws of associations in the region, did not witness the establishment of new independent organizations or institutions in the past months. And since the beginning of 2012 an additional amendment of the law provisions increased present difficulties, as it prohibits civil-society organizations and institutions to receive any funding from external sources.

However, this does not prevent the observation of a growing awareness for the independent cultural sector in Algeria in terms of moving outside the government sector for culture which can be felt through the fact that some Algerian artists were able to get funding grants from regional donor institutions, such as the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC). Moreover, some Algerian artists were able to reap awards in the last edition of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival.

While the overall size of the public budget to Algeria in 2012 amounted to the equivalent of \$ 254 million, a special budget was approved for the festivities of Independence Day (an approximate figure for the amount cannot be given). But in general the independent cultural sector accounted for 0.02% of the size of the budget mentioned above. There was no announcement of new programs, grants or awards for the purpose of providing more funding for cultural work, nor for the establishment of new financial structures such as a cultural fund, not to mention that funding through the private sector is very weak.

Since the era of independence the artistic educational and academic institutions in Algeria are still the same, out of which the School of Arts and the School of Dramatic Arts are the most important. But in 2012 a new department in the Faculty of Architecture of the country's capital was established that specialized in the restoration of heritage buildings. And, as happens in almost every year, the students of the Institute of Drama organize a strike addressed to the Ministry of Culture in objection to their academic status after graduation. For decades the graduates of the School of Dramatic Arts have been complaining that their certificate is not recognized by the Ministry of Education in Algeria, but until now the situation remains unchanged.

And the phenomenon of officialising festivals still continues. It targets festivals and takes a mandatory character aiming in its entirety towards making official culture dominate over the independent cultural scene in Algeria. In this manner the Ministry of Culture converts a festival from being independent to being governmental and provides it with financial support. But after a year or two or more the Ministry attempts to change the management of the festival and replace them with people selected by the Ministry itself. In that way the founders of the festival find themselves completely removed from the festival they initiated.

Of the most famous examples of the phenomenon of officialising: turning the Rai Music Festival in the city of Oran, where it was registered, official. After 3 years its management was replaced and it was transferred from the city of Oran, the festival's original place of origin, to another city, Tlemcen.

And in **Syria**, the Ministry of Culture stepped up its long played role as a tool for promoting the regime's political line. Accordingly it contributed to the creation of the image that life in Syria is continuing "normally", through implementing the familiar artistic activities.

The legislative level witnessed intensive work (in the context of what the authority called political reform plan) as a "referendum" on a new constitution was held, raising the cultural diversity to be one of the basic principles that must be protected. Furthermore the lifting of the state of emergency was announced and replaced by terrorism laws, in addition to the ongoing work on the NGO law, the issuance of a new media law and the development of the first draft of the Electronic Media Act.

The independent cultural sector has witnessed changes that can be considered as "precursor" of structural change expected to reflect later on this sector and on cultural and artistic work in Syria in general. A final break with the political power took place which drained the frameworks regulating cultural work from all power, especially governmental institutions and sponsors close to the regime. This led to a vacuum that was quickly filled with alternatives directly linked to political and social changes in Syria leading to the fact that independent art outside Syria became an important part of the country's cultural landscape. Accordingly, new cultural operators emerged, who were not on the map of the independent sector formerly. These transformations affect the concepts before eventually affecting the mechanisms of production.

Today Syria is a country from which the contributions of foreign bodies are completely absent. All the cultural centres closed their doors, keeping in my mind, that they were to a great extent the sole supporters for Syrian artists before the revolution, apart from the contribution of a few regional organizations that offered production grants for young artists. All these developments constitute a critical situation for the little production that is still taking place in the country.

Part One – Current developments in Cultural Policies

Morocco

Firstly – The developments on the governmental level

Moroccan cultural policy is awaiting the restructuring of the constitutional convention stipulated by the Constitution of July 1 2011 regarding the National Council of Moroccan Languages and Culture. It regulates the development of a structure for the old institutions and bodies and even those that will arise in future and what responsibilities, powers and decision-making mechanisms they will have following the legislative provisions which will be applied later. But perhaps entrusting Mr. Mohamed Al-Kohl in October 2012 with the conduct of affairs of the General Inspectorate was one of the most important developments at the level of the governmental cultural institutions in Morocco at the moment; he is an administrative heavyweight who accumulated considerable experience in cultural work inside the Ministry.

But it is still possible, despite the difficulty of accurate monitoring, to talk about positive elements related to the role adopted by the governmental institutions in its current form:

- The King's speech at the opening of the new legislative year on October 12, which called for the legislative institution to accelerate the issuing of a regulatory law on implementing the official status for the Berbers and the updated regulatory law concerning the National Council of National Languages and Cultures, the council that is expected to give cultural work in Morocco a new start.
- A royal message sent to the national debate on Moroccan cinema held in Rabat October 17, 18 and 19 2012, was considered very important in view of the positive perspective of cinema as a cultural and artistic act and industrial and commercial activity it contained.

Furthermore the National Foundation of Museums is expected to take on work in Morocco in 2013 concentrating on the sites assigned to it as soon as it receives the full authority from the Ministry of Culture. It is also expected that the Foundation of Moroccan Archives takes up work soon.

However, apart from that, the basic problem in cultural practice remains that the financial resources are to be 1% of the state budget at least and the implementation of the king's message concerning the support of theatre allowing for the allocation of 1% of the budgets of local communities to support culture and arts (message addressed by Hassan II to the first debate on professional theater in 1992). Furthermore there is still need to train human resources for implementing cultural affairs and expand the involvement of the private sector in interaction with the cultural sector and its support.

The cooperation between official bodies:

The Ministry of Culture hosted the "Sharjah Forum for Young Playwrights" in Marrakech, on the 19th and 20th October, under the supervision of Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, in collaboration with the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Culture of the region Marrakech-Tensift-El Haouz. This event, which is organized annually by the Department of Culture and Information in Sharjah in several Arab cities aims to discover the creative youth and introduce their visions, ideas and motivate them financially and morally. The aim of this activity on the other hand is to strengthen the cultural relations between the Department of Culture and Information of the United Arab Emirates, and Moroccan cultural institutions interested in theater specifically.

Official and independent institutions:

For the first time in Morocco, two events took place promoting the relationship between institutions of the government/public sector and civil/independent cultural institutions, namely:

1. The National Committee for the Prevention of Traffic Accidents (a government committee under the Ministry of Transport) received a delegation of the Union of Writers of Morocco in October 2012. This meeting stood out as both parties agreed on an initial set of projects entrusted to the Union of Writers to supervise and direct delivery and implementation. This project, supported by the above-mentioned Committee desires to involve the Writers Union of Morocco, represented by its creative minds, writers and artists, to prepare a file on road safety, involving the stimulation of writers and creators to express their interest in social issues and human rights in open expressive forms, notably the right of life in public road space.

This may be achieved through the promotion and support of children's literature, education, arts, painting and theatrical expression and direct communication with the students at educational institutions, furthermore through creating awards for motivating them as well as supporting the Union's publications (and of others) in accordance with the work program. This plan shall take further shape in the partnership agreement between the two parties, which will be signed at an official ceremony on the occasion of the celebration of the National Day of Road. Safety.

2. The director of the National Bureau of Railways (a public institution) received a delegation from the Union of Writers of Morocco who introduced a cultural strategy designed to encourage reading in public spaces in Morocco through the "Reading Train." The plan includes the free of charge distribution of the Union's publications, printed with funds from the Railways Bureau, in the railway stations. The meeting also resulted in an agreement to create a major national prize for a Moroccan novel written in Arabic with the support of the bureau, as well as to create a framework for partnership and cooperation whereby some cultural projects proposed by the Executive Office of the Writers Union of Morocco will be implemented.

Secondly - Developments at the level of the independent cultural sector

1. **The Eighth National Congress of the Union of Writers in Morocco**² in Rabat on September 7th and 8th 2012 and the official election of the critic Abdul Rahim Allam as the Union's director. The election of Mr. Allam caused fear among many participants as a result of his proximity to power on the one hand, and the Gulf on the other hand. This led to the fundamental question of whether this institution is able to play its role in full independence of the superior instructions and directives of political power, that has kept away the voice of writers and intellectuals from social and political movements in the past and present. For the first time women represented 30 % of the members in the decision-making units, enabling 4 of 11 women from being in the Executive Office of the Organization. This decision was considered the most important result of the congress.

2. **The establishment of two new frameworks:** first the "Association of Women Writers in Morocco" by a group of female Moroccan creative minds and writers with an animated cultural presence in Morocco, in proximity to the national cultural democracy movement. The writer Aziza Ahoudeh was elected for the presidency of the

² The organization "Union of Writers of Morocco " which this year celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding was always known as an independent leftist stronghold. Its previous conferences were always given the power's full attention because their statements were characterized by a sharp dissection of the political and cultural situation and often contained harsh criticism of the political power. The Union has fought fierce battles for the abolition of the bans on a number of cultural magazines or books.

Association, which has received more than 285 applications for membership. The purpose of establishing this framework is:

- enhancing communication between female Moroccan writers and making their work known, as well as following-up on it through the creation of bibliographies of their work.
- seeking to gather all serious women writers from different parts of the Kingdom and celebrate their creativity and writings, as well as introducing them within a framework that ensures their continuity and communication.

The second is the creation of a civil institution, a **center for modern studies affiliated with the magazine "Modern Times"**³ under the management of Mr. Abdullah Albulgithi, the magazine editor. The founders are political, cultural and intellectual personalities with a well-known presence in public life, some of them who have already assumed the responsibilities of ministers in the government, for example Mr. Moulay Ismail Alaoui, who was Secretary of the Party of Progress and Socialism (left). Hence, we can say that they come from intellectual and cultural backgrounds that are inclined to the multiplicity and diversity of culture and democratic and liberal thought. In addition to preparing the future work of the magazine and spreading the spirit of debate among intellectuals, the magazine aims to publish research and studies in the areas of Arabic and Islamic philosophy, as well as Western and Anglo-Saxon philosophy and new evolving research. It aims furthermore at translating texts of Arab and Western philosophical thought into other languages; its interests are mainly reflected in the discussion of the situation of culture in Morocco, and the attention to topics of thought and openness to its humanitarian gains.

3. Important Meetings: when talking about independent cultural life in Morocco we need to talk also about some important meetings organized by independent civil associations associated with cultural issues:

- The participation of the Moroccan Union for Theater Professionals in the proceedings of the 20th International Conference of the International Federation of Actors held in Toronto, Canada, between 25 and 30 September 2012. The conference dealt for a whole week with many of the issues associated with professional, legislative and social conditions of actors and performers around the world.
- The convening of a meeting on "Moroccan culture, obstacles and challenges", organized by the Association of Former Pupils of Imam Al-Osaily, and held under the patronage of the Hassan II Center for International Forums in Asilah on September 15 2012. In this meeting, poet Abdellatif Laabi (poet and cultural actor, winner of the French Goncourt Award and former political prisoner) opened fire on the Moroccan political and cultural scene, considering that a cultural renaissance cannot be achieved without a genuine democratic transition. According to him, what Morocco is witnessing, is solely a renewal of mechanisms for control and tyranny with what could be described as some positive accumulation through a number of individual initiatives of Moroccan intellectuals who were able to withstand marginalization and exclusion on the one hand, and temptation and containment on the other hand.

Thirdly – International Cultural Cooperation

1. Morocco has participated with an important delegation headed by the Minister of Culture in the International Symposium on "Living with World Heritage in Africa," Johannesburg, South Africa, on September 26 – 29 2012, held in the framework of the commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for the

³ The Magazine "Modern Times" is a quarterly concerned with intellectual and cultural affairs by contributing to the opening up to the achievements of modern and contemporary thought; among its objectives is the spreading of free and critical thought. 5 numbers have been published so far with themes observing the situation of culture in Morocco.

Protection of World Heritage. This symposium organized in partnership between the host country South Africa, the World Heritage Fund for Africa, and the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO, is considered a platform for dialogue between governmental institutions, heritage organizations, representatives of local communities and the private sector.

According to a communiqué issued by the Ministry of Culture, the symposium focused on discussing the tools and strategies needed to make African heritage a real vehicle for sustainable development as well as for the development of management systems that enable the protection of this heritage and preserve it in the face of the constant pressures of global growth. Morocco promised during the symposium a new contribution for the World Heritage Fund for Africa, which is used to support projects for preserving and protecting heritage in Africa.

2. With regard to the role of cultural diplomacy in Morocco the most important activity that be can be referred to is the start of the event "Daba Morocco" (Daba, a slang word meaning: Now) hosted by Belgium in the period between October 9 2012 and January 31 2013. The event extends over a period of three months, and is considered a cultural and artistic season aiming to introduce Moroccan culture. With the participation of 150 creative artists it will present sixty performances from the field of literature, music and cinema, without losing sight of modern creative expressions such as modern dance.

The event (according to the organizers of the Moroccan and Belgian side, namely: The Moroccan Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Ministry in charge of Moroccans residing abroad and the Council for the Moroccan Community abroad and its international partners, the Delegation of Wallonia and Brussels, the Ministry of Culture and Audiovisual in the Federation Wallonia – Brussels) aims to highlight the cultural and artistic modernity of Moroccans in both Morocco and Belgium through listening to the emerging innovations, especially regarding the practices and creativity of the second and third generation. Different creative styles are showcased, as well as open discussions with the generations addressing current problems that the community is interacting with, as well as the North-South relationship.

3. Continuing cultural cooperation between Morocco and Spain: on October 15 a project was launched to create and equip the Heritage Center in the old city of Tetouan in the presence of a delegation from the Spanish city of Malaga. The project aims to preserve the rich urban heritage of the ancient city, including oral and written tradition as well as maintaining the material and immaterial heritage of the city and fostering its appreciation as a factor for local development.

The project also aims to incorporate this heritage into the context of a sustainable development strategy, as well as to create new spaces for the reception of traditional industry activities and rehabilitate spaces to revive the intellectual and cultural heritage of the city.

This project is also classified as part of the framework of the international cooperation program, which brings together the Malaga area of southern Spain and northern Morocco to develop heritage structures of the ancient city of Tetouan and to rehabilitate the history and tourism of the city.

4. Although Sweden as a country is not among the cultural priorities of Moroccans (contrary to France or Spain) the National Library of the Kingdom has received a gift from the Embassy of Sweden in Rabat, a book translated into Arabic and French by a Swedish poet and Nobel laureate of 2011. This gift is considered to perpetuate diplomatic relations between Morocco and Sweden. It consists of the author's complete works 1954 - 2002, including eight translated into Arabic. These titles will be shown in the portal of the National Library and displayed in the Great Hall, the readers and researchers space.

5. From 22 to 25 October 2012 Morocco hosted the Russian cultural days. The event included musical and lyrical evenings in the cities of Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Meknes, as well as a photo exhibition representing Russian civilization.

Fourthly - Foreign Organizations (foreign centers, institutions, institutes, etc.)

It is evident that the cultural centers in Morocco continue with their usual dynamics the programming of cultural, artistic and linguistic activities throughout the year. Three important activities are noteworthy, the first by the French side (Embassy of France in Rabat), the second by the Spanish Cultural Centre and the third by the German Cultural Center:

1. The French Embassy in Rabat has awarded the High Atlas Award for the year 2012 to Mohamed Al-Wardi for his novel "Cursed village" in the category of a Francophone work of fiction, as well as to Mohamed Lamari for the translation of the novel "Life in another place," by writer Milan Kundera.

This award, granted by the French Embassy, and which reached this year its nineteenth session, targets literature published in Morocco between January 2010 and June 2012. The works are proposed by publishers and evaluated by a selection committee that is keen to balance the representation of the publishing houses, and check the submitted works' compliance with the given criteria.

2. The Cervantes Institute in Rabat presented for the first time its new programme "More Culture," which combines a series of practical workshops.

The program will be launched with the project "Free School of Movement Arts ", organized in partnership with the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Morocco and the Ministry of Popular Forces of the Bolivarian government. The project consists of three dance workshops that are organized at the Cervantes Institute in Rabat, starting October 18 2012.

3. On 19 and 20 October 2012, Goethe Institute and the British Council, in partnership with the French Institute and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Morocco organized an initiative under the title: "Meetings with European and Arab funds to finance the Moroccan cinema and programs integrating young talent in the professional field in Rabat ", for the benefit of film sector professionals and students of film schools in Morocco.

4. Starting the nomination process for the residency grants 2013 of the Cité des Arts in Paris. The residency program, which is supervised by the Ministry of Culture and the cultural interests of the French Embassy in Rabat, targets Moroccan artists, writers and scriptwriters who are starting their professional careers in order to benefit from a period ranging between 3 and 9 months (it is the right of the Commission to determine an additional length of stay, depending on the nature of the project submitted by the candidate) providing them with a space for living, meeting, work and study.

The outcome of the artist's residency is evaluated by the Ministry of Culture and the cultural interests of the Embassy of France at the end of the stay, based on a detailed report submitted by the artist during the first month after returning to Morocco. The artist is then received by the selection committee for collective assessment of the outcome of his residence. The files are studied by a committee composed of persons by virtue of their qualification in the fields of arts and literature. Members of the Committee are appointed for a period of two years subject to renewal by the Minister of Culture, including members selected by the cultural interest of the Embassy of France in order to be represented in the Committee.

Fifthly – The Funding of Culture

No new budgets were allocated for cultural work in Morocco, neither were any new international conventions signed in this regard, but new programs were announced to provide more funding opportunities, namely:

1. The Ministry of Culture announced a new cycle of support for the Moroccan song, in the second endeavour of

this support project, which was officially launched in 2011. The Committee is made up of poets, composers, singers, distributors, critics and representatives of the trade unions of art. This Committee is to choose 15 projects out of the 32 short-listed nominees that will benefit from the Moroccan song support program for the season 2012. The total sum allocated for this project this year is estimated to be four and a half million dirhams (the equivalent of half a million dollars).

2. The Moroccan Writers' Union announced that it will introduce a major national prize for literary creativity sponsored by the Foundation and the Institute of the Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion (CDG, a financial institution, established in the form of a public institution under the Dahir, royal decree, in February 1959, manages and preserves institutional savings which require by their very nature and sources special protection. The CDG group intervenes in the most important structural projects in Morocco and is considered today the first institutional investor in Morocco and a key player in the national economy). The Foundation CDG, a parallel institution, aims to embrace activities that support the promotion of culture and knowledge, as well as activities of solidarity and social and sustainable development. For this purpose, it handles all financing activities and the preparation and implementation of related projects and events, public or private, as well as communicative activities with high multiplier effect which contribute directly or indirectly to achieve its objectives.

When talking about the contribution of the private sector in Morocco to cultural funding, we can here refer to:

1. An Initiative of "Dar al-Ma'moun", a private institution, working to provide support for innovation in the field of visual and literary arts, and promoting the cultural identity of Morocco and African countries through cultural exchanges. The Dar has recently launched with the support of UNESCO the 2013 cycle of the "UNESCO - Aschberg Award" offering grants for creative projects in the field of literature, music and visual arts, with a special focus on audio – visual, publishing and concert projects. The program, which promotes young artists' mobility, in order to "enrich their creative projects and give them the opportunity to practice dialogue within the cultural diversity", offers creators aged between 25 and 35 years residencies around the world, including Morocco through the Moroccan International Residencies Center "Dar al-Ma'moun".

2. The Initiative of a Moroccan family city from Rabat who put its house in Berlin, Germany, at the disposal of artists and sculptors to display their art for free. This initiative is a precedent of its kind in Morocco, where it was welcomed by the interested public and encouraged by art lovers.

Sixth – Cultural Projects and Activities

Morocco witnessed a significant increase in cultural events (official and civilian), most importantly:

- Launch of the tenth session of the Mediterranean Short Film Festival in Tangier, on October 1 2012 with a strong competition of 52 films from 21 Arab and Western countries which were selected from a total of 800 short films received by the organizers.
- The Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the Mohammed V National Theatre organized the opening of the theatre season 2012/2013 2nd to 6th October 2012 with theater performances for adults and children in the Mohammed V National Theatre and the Bahnini Hall in Rabat.
- The Ministry of Culture and the Urban Community of Taza (eastern Morocco) in collaboration with the labor bureau of the province of Taza organized the thirteenth session of the International Festival of Children's Theatre between 10th and 12th October 2012. This event is considered an international annual meeting point for professionals specialized in spectacles for children and youth. It consists of various artistic forms, such as puppet theatre, narration and circus. Many artistic groups from various countries attended, including Iraq, Bulgaria,

Palestine, Cote d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Indonesia, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco. This session also honored leading representatives who contributed to the enrichment of children's theater in Morocco.

- In October 2012 the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in M'sik, Casablanca hosted thinker Abdullah Laroui who held the university season's opening lesson under the title "The Historian and the Judge" in the new campus space that bears his name. Dr. Abdallah Laroui is a prominent Moroccan intellectual and researcher with cultural and intellectual impact acclaimed in the world.
- Launch of the sixth edition of the International Festival of University Theater in Tangier from October 15th until 20th under the slogan: "Tangier, the Capital of the University Theater."
- Launch of the National Debate on Film, which was organized in October 2012 by the Ministry of Communication in partnership with the Moroccan Cinematographic Centre under the auspices of the King of Morocco. The debate is considered a historic milestone which monitors the reality of Moroccan cinema and fathoms future prospects through workshops attended by more than 300 contributors in the sector, with the aim to prepare a White Paper on the film industry. The debate was held under the slogan "Moroccan Cinema, Challenges and Prospects" and included nine scientific workshops attended by academics and specialists in the field of the seventh art. It was concluded with recommendations preparing the ground for a clear action plan for a new start for the cinema in the Kingdom. The workshops were: National production, new technologies and prospects of technological development. Infrastructure, distribution, investment and exploitation. Technicians and parallel professions. Training and rehabilitation. Cinema and audiovisual means of communication, promotion and marketing issues. Film festivals and impact. Copyright, intellectual property and the fight against piracy. Legalizing and regulating the sector. The actor and professional issues in film production.

Seventhly – Culture and other Sectors

- Morocco did not witness any public orientation toward the integration of cultural work in the development process or in any of the other sectors of social and economic work.

Eighthly – Academic and Professional Training in the Field of Culture and Arts

1. October 2012 witnessed the opening of the Higher Institute for Audiovisual and Cinema offering a professional education in cinema. An updated decree regarding the Institute has been issued in the Official Gazette in March 2012 declaring its status as a public institution of higher education separate from the universities and under the tutelage of the Ministry of Communication. The ministry had announced via national press and in its website the opening of 8 vacancies for professors of the following specialties: audio, production, directing, image and dramatic writing.
2. Start of the "Master in Cultural and Literary studies" at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in M'sik, Casablanca, for university season 2012/2013.

Ninthly – Current Issues

In October 2012 a group of Moroccan intellectuals signed a statement calling for the unity of the Moroccan left. The statement, which bears the signature of 46 names, mostly of leftist orientation, stresses the need for political and ideological clarity as a necessary requirement for leading the community out of the so-called state of "permanent disability". The statement criticized the left's avoidance of the subject of religion, and its focusing on a secular position and disdain, and considered that "duty and conscience" demands today, to critique those options without any inclination for justification, especially since it centered around the own ego which was clearly visible (exaggerated secular tendency, alienation and contempt for heritage under the pretext of modernity, total ignorance of religious history and cultural diversity of the people and the nation, Francophone elites' control over state institutions and over the decisions in most parties).

The statement also called for the need to develop a community-based battle plan for the left, putting an end to self-important and technocratic programs, and return to the "organizational traditions and ethics that distinguish left organizational and combative experiences, first and foremost to serve the citizens and work directly with them, furthermore to care perpetually and keenly to expand popular party cadre and the leaders among them, instead of the regulatory volatility, elitism and isolationism, and unethical behaviors rampant today in the leftist scene.

Cultural life in Morocco witnessed a large debate initiated by the Amazigh (Berber) League for Human Rights, which centred around the Salafists's attempts to destroy historical monuments, specifically damaging the Amazigh historic rock engraving called "solar panel" in the Aogor area which dates back to before the arrival of the Phoenicians in Morocco. It was pointed out that the local population took the Salafists into custody and handed them over to the local authority which released them without charges. However, the Moroccan Ministry of Culture declared these claims in an official communiqué as untrue and denied them. Not only that, but three government ministers were charged with traveling to the site to visit and check on it.

A royal message addressed to the participants of the National Debate on Cinema, which started its proceedings in October in Rabat, can be considered an important event in a context characterized by the arrival of the Islamists to power and their responsibility for the portfolio of the Ministry of Communication with its official and administrative supervision of the film sector.

The message represented a road map for the advancement of cinema in Morocco, as it called for taking the national debate as an occasion for enriching and developing the cinema while continuing to provide support and care for productions, film initiatives and film events. It is a clear signal to all religious-oriented or salafist parties and bodies who stand in opposition to art or call for "clean" art.

Egypt

Firstly – The developments on the governmental level

The cultural scene in Egypt is awaiting the promulgation of the new Constitution to deal with the new decrees and legislation following the January 25 revolution, but so far the Ministry of Culture witnessed since the revolution a succession of five culture ministers (Gaber Asfour, Mohamed El Sawy, Imad Abu Ghazi, Shakir Abdul Hamid and Saber Arab, who returned as culture minister to the current ministry, after he had submitted his resignation before its composition). There has also been changes regarding a number of ministry leaders and heads of sectors in accordance with the change of ministers, but there has been no change of the workers in the ministry in terms of numbers or qualification. And there has also been no clear or announced evolution in the ministry's strategies and mechanisms of action.

Among the most important outcomes of the development process at the level of government cultural institutions is a decision to restructure the 26 Standing Committees of the Supreme Council for Culture until the end of the session of the Board Committees for 2013. The Committees of the Council are: archeology, economics, history, education, translation, scientific culture, geography, social studies, literary and linguistic studies, film, poetry, political science, architecture, philosophy, fine arts, folk arts and cultural heritage, law, narration, writing and publishing, theater, citizenship and human rights, music, opera and ballet, environment, children's culture, psychology, administrative sciences. The ministry has included as members of these committees a large number of

independent and relatively young intellectuals, but the criteria for the selection of new members and the selection mechanism were neither declared nor known.

There was also the formation of boards of trustees for a number of museums and other institutions of the Ministry of Culture but the role and powers of these councils is unclear as well as the criteria for selecting their members. The Ministry of Antiquities and the Ministry of Culture were separated, which led to a shortage in the budget of the Ministry of Culture, which was dependent on the income from the Antiquities for financing the Cultural Development Fund, which contributed to the financing of non-governmental cultural activities. Hence, came a statement by the Minister of Culture about a month ago to stop funding non-governmental cultural activities because of this shortfall in the budget of the ministry. The ministry also funded, intermittently, some independent, legally unregistered cultural initiatives, such as the monthly event "Art Square" organized by a number of individuals belonging to cultural institutions on a voluntary basis and without a legal framework. The Ministry also provided some in-kind contributions for the establishment of art workshops in the framework of the festival, in addition to presenting some art groups. The governmental cultural institutions have moved towards organizing festivals through the institutions of civil society, after the many years they has been monopolized by the Ministry of Culture. This is what happened with the "Luxor International Festival of African film" implemented by the Youth Foundation of Independent Artists and the Egyptian - European Luxor Film Festival. It can be observed that cultural centers are making attempts to open up to independent cultural initiatives in the post-revolution phase and allocating a percentage of their funds to support it.

Secondly - Developments at the level of the independent cultural sector

It is easy to note an increased activity of independent cultural institutions in terms of finding sources of funding, or even in terms of the number and quality of activities provided, as well as new performance mechanisms and methods to communicate with the audience. This can be attributed to the departure of festivals and artistic performances to the streets and public squares, after the change in the extent of security controls by the Ministry of the Interior and the pressure in the direction of abolishing security clearances. Accordingly, non-governmental cultural and artistic initiatives began to increase in public spaces, and independent institutions began to put pressure on the Ministry of Culture to fund these activities and stressed that the ministry's budget is not exclusive to government activities. Networking among independent cultural institutions in the implementation of many events and activities increased as well, especially after the initiative of forming a coalition for independent culture led by Al-Mawred Al-Thaqafi (Cultural Resource), which formed a bloc of more than 28 independent cultural entities and more than 200 artists and activists in the independent cultural field. There is a remarkable development in culture funding mechanisms by individuals; some cultural and artistic initiatives in post-revolution Egypt are based mainly on the voluntary contributions of individuals, especially the celebration of "Art Square" which lasted a year and a half thanks to the voluntary contributions of individuals. However, the scene did not witness the appearance of any specific civilian institution, but saw instead the raise of a large number of independent cultural youth initiatives connected directly to the street, as the "Art Square," a monthly celebration held in Abdin Square (in front of one of the presidential palaces), or "Wall of Stories" that targets marginalized slums and urges citizens in addition to a large number of graffiti artists to participate in the drawing on the walls of the region. As we mentioned earlier the cultural scene has seen increased activity in the independent artistic production, and a development of the activities of organizations that already exist (for example Eltakeiba Center, Plants or Trail 1718). But at the same time adverse movements can also be observed, for example, in the withdrawal of the private sector and its orientation towards the government, e.g. the Cairo International Film Festival, which has seen repeated failures over the years. The Ministry of Culture recovered the right of

management after it had been entrusted to the Foundation "Cairo Festival", an institution independent from the ministry.

Thirdly - The Funding of Culture

It remains difficult to get confirmed data concerning the budget allocated to culture or the number of employees in the Ministry of Culture or the internal regulations, as was the case before the revolution of January 25.

Fourthly – Culture and the other Sectors

Despite the increased activity and the large interest in arts and culture in the period following the revolution, we cannot talk about any attempts to integrate cultural work in the new development process in Egypt except for those attempts by the National Group for Cultural Policies through a cultural policy proposal, seminars, workshops and a media campaign.

Algeria

Firstly – The developments on the governmental level

Except for affirming the decision-making mechanisms within the official cultural institution through the reinstatement of the Minister of Culture Khalida Toumi again until 2014 there are no major developments at the level of state cultural institutions in Algeria worth mentioning. Perhaps the Ministry of Culture's decision to convert the institution responsible for organizing the annual book fair in Algeria from a temporary body to a permanent body extending its work throughout the year a few months before the fair can be considered a break in the stagnation in government developments. For example, there has been a project proposed some time ago about creating the so-called "National Center for the Book", but there aren't any additional information confirming this matter!

The so-called "National Council for Culture and Arts" was established, a council consisting of distinguished national personalities from various fields of arts; the council's objective is to think about and reconsider the laws governing the work of the artist in terms of fundamental rights (social security, for example). But since its inception and until now the council is still in the process of meetings and discussions, without any actual or announced results so far.

Cooperation between official bodies:

No cultural agreements or cooperation agreements with governmental agencies or international non-governmental organizations have been signed in Algeria, but there was a large official launching of the "Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Independence" between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the Mujahideen.

Initiatives of cultural diplomatic bodies were limited to events of arts and culture in a number of Algerian embassies in some capitals within the framework of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of Algeria, perhaps the most important event among them the one organized and carried out by the Algerian Cultural Center in Paris. Some indicators that have been monitored recently suggest a decrease in the level of cultural exchanges with the three countries that experienced revolutions in the past two years, namely Egypt, Tunisia and Libya.

Official and independent institutions:

As part of joint publishing projects between the Ministry of Culture and a number of publishing houses, the Ministry of Culture offered relatively substantial financial support for publishing houses to print and issue book titles recommended and provided by the Ministry. It is noteworthy that the books published in the framework of these projects do not have any real chance to being broadly distributed to points of sale and reading in Algeria, reinforcing the conviction that the book publishing projects are pro forma projects with the goal of spending financial allocations without paying attention to the cognitive and social dimension of the publishing and distribution process.

Secondly - Legislation and Laws Governing the Work of Culture:

- A decree was issued regarding the laws governing the cinema sector in Algeria. It focused on the rule that Algerian film should not affect Algeria's national identity and otherwise will be banned. The law can be found in full under the link: <http://www.joradp.dz/FTP/jo-francais/2011/F2011018.pdf>
- A new regulation concerning cultural funding by the private sector was issued, which provides fiscal discounts to private sector institutions when offering support and funding to organizations and events of the cultural sector. There are advantages and disadvantages to this law: the long and complex administrative routine that regulates the implementation process of this law could push many owners of special events to abstain from participation or hesitate. An analytical study on this law showing that the economic feasibility of it is very weak can be found under the following link: http://alger-culture.com/readarticle.php?article_id=550

Thirdly - Developments at the level of the independent cultural sector

There are no noteworthy developments at the level of independent and civil cultural institutions, since their number is very few in Algeria (5-6 independent cultural institutions only). Civil society in Algeria is very weak for many reasons, most importantly because of the Law of Association's complexity, which establishes associations and independent civil institutions in Algeria. It is known that this law ranks among the toughest Association laws in the region, and since the beginning of 2012 there was a further amendment on the provisions of the Act which increased its complexity, namely the imposition on civil associations and institutions of all kinds a prohibition to receive any financial support from external sources. The Law of Association of Algeria can be viewed on the site http://www.joradp.dz/SCRIPTS/Jof_Rec.dll/AffPost

At the same time, while Algeria did not witness any new art projects launched by independent and civic initiatives, we know that an independent theater in the city of Mostaganem was torn down! The theater had been operated by a theater group for 30 years, but the State Department decided its demolition for reasons linked to "tourism" in spite of the objection expressed by many artists.

There seems to be a growing awareness of the independent cultural sector in Algeria in terms of moving outside the governmental framework for Culture. This can be felt through the efforts of some Algerian artists who were able to get funding grants from regional donor institutions such as the Arab Fund for Culture and Arts (AFAC), or received awards in the Abu Dhabi Film Festival last year.

Fourthly - Foreign Organizations (foreign centers, institutions, institutes, etc.)

The French Cultural Center in particular is offering small funding grants for the implementation of theater performances and projects during the year, but no clear standards define the mechanisms of selecting and distributing the grants. Every new management of the center supports people with whom it has a professional or personal relationship.

Fifthly – The Funding of Culture

The total volume of the general budget of Algeria in 2012 is equivalent to \$ 254 million; in addition to that a special budget for the Independence Day Celebrations was allocated, the “actual size of which cannot be given.” Generally the independent cultural sector receives 0.02% of the sum of the budget mentioned above. There was no announcement of programs, grants or new awards for the purpose of providing more funding for cultural work, nor the establishment of new financing structures such as cultural funds, not to mention that funding coming from the private sector is very weak.

Sixth – Cultural Projects and Activities

It is difficult to estimate the size of artistic production during the past period, but in general artistic and cultural production repeated themselves in the form of official ceremonies and festivals. In almost every year there is a major cultural event being organized by the Ministry of Culture. In 2007, Algiers was the capital of Arab culture, in 2009 Algeria experienced the African Cultural Festival, and in 2011 Tlemcen was the capital of Islamic culture. Thus, official production dominates and even conceals the cultural scene in Algeria. No changes occurred regarding the nature and style of productive activities; they vary between theater, dance and visual arts, but the past phase was characterized by a focus on Arab cinema as festivals were organized for Arab cinema in Oran and Algiers.

The year 2012 did not witness any major cultural projects (except the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of Algeria, which included a large number of festivals and artistic and cultural events in a large number of Algerian cities), but it should be noted that the year 2011 witnessed the event "Tlemcen Capital of Islamic Culture," a government project par excellence aimed at publicizing and highlighting the state and systems in Algeria. During that year, some cultural facilities in the Tlemcen were built and constructed but they remained government buildings free of genuine cultural action. It is noteworthy that the independent associations and cultural institutions in Algeria took no part in the mentioned celebration.

Three new government projects are currently under study: "African Institute for the Arts", "Latin Arabic Library" and "African Museum."

Seventhly – Culture and other Sectors

There are no plans or projects that include the integration of cultural work into other sectors, such as the social, economic or even development sector.

Eighthly – Academic and Professional Training in the Field of Culture and Arts

Since the era of independence the educational and academic arts institutions in Algeria remain the same, most importantly the School of Fine Arts, and the School of Dramatic Arts. In 2012 however, a university department at the Institute of Architecture in the capital was established specializing in the restoration of historic heritage buildings. And, as happens in almost every year, the students of the Institute of Drama organize a strike addressed to the Ministry of Culture in objection to their academic status after graduation. For decades the graduates of the School of Dramatic Arts have been complaining that their certificate is not recognized by the Ministry of Education in Algeria, but until now the situation remains unchanged.

Ninthly – Current Issues

And the phenomenon of officialising festivals still continues. It targets festivals and takes a mandatory character aiming in its entirety towards making official culture dominate over the independent cultural scene in Algeria. In this manner the Ministry of Culture converts a festival from being independent to being governmental and provides it

with financial support. But after a year or two or more the Ministry attempts to change the management of the festival and replace them with people selected by the Ministry itself. In that way the founders of the festival find themselves completely removed from the festival they initiated.

Of the most famous examples of the phenomenon of officialising: turning the Rai Music Festival in the city of Oran, where it was registered, official. After 3 years its management was replaced and it was transferred from the city of Oran, the festival's original place of origin, to another city, Tlemcen.

Syria

Firstly – The development on the governmental level

- As most government bodies in Syria today, the Ministry of Culture is not an actor on the political level but implements the ultimate political orientation within the process of “facing the conspiracy or crisis”. It was evident that the Ministry of Culture contributed diligently to the creation of the picture that life is continuing normally through implementing the familiar cultural activities. The focus was on activities for children, regardless of the fact that the event halls remained empty from visitors. It was also striking that the announcement of the Damascus International Film Festival 2011 was postponed twice before it was finally cancelled. This role is, in essence, not a new one for the official cultural institution but it has become more acute. For example, the General Cinema Organization in Syria (the only official body responsible for production and film distribution in Syria for decades) issued in July 2012 a decision to dismiss three Syrian filmmakers on the pretext "absences of more than 15 days from the official working hours without providing an excuse" in accordance with the provisions of the law. The artistic circles considered the decision of dismissal a distinctly politicized one as the directors subjected to the decision were known for their standing up for the popular movement in Syria and their opposition to the regime. The director Oussama Mohamad for example, stood up in the international film festivals carrying pictures of young Syrian intellectuals arrested in the cellars of Syrian Security bodies, or Nidal Hassan, who was arrested during the famous demonstration of intellectuals in Damascus and was brought to trial on various charges. In response to the media, the Director General of the Organization, Mohammed Al-Ahmed, said that the decision is a legal matter, which came in implementation of a common personnel law that is applied in the event of an employee's absence for a limited period without formal justification. He added that the decision was made in implementation of the recommendation of the prime minister after a long correspondence. The organizers of the Damascus Film Festival decided to suspend the 19th edition of the event, which was due to take place from twenty to 27 October 2011. Mohammed Al-Ahmed, Director of the Organization had said: “The festival was suspended and not cancelled; the 19th edition of the festival might take place as soon as the conditions are appropriate and very likely before the date of the festival's next year edition.” He also said that in parallel alternative artistic events have been prepared to compensate for the festival's temporary absence this year. He explained that a number of events planned for the festival as special activities will be shown, such as the screening of Syrian films produced this year along with the implementation of film weeks, especially dedicated to Chinese cinema, which was scheduled to be honored in this year's festival edition.

- The end of the tenth Five-Year-Plan (2006 – 2011), its evaluation and the approval of the eleventh Five-Year-Plan (2011 – 2015), which centers around the following four objectives:

1. Promoting the cultural level of citizens and the adoption of cultural development in the broadest sense based on the guideline "Culture for All".
2. Preserving the diverse cultural heritage and promoting it.
3. Development of the cultural product and dissemination of knowledge and culture among citizens
4. Facilitate access to sources of knowledge and culture and reduce costs for the individual and society.

- A unit was created to support and develop national museums and cultural heritage sites. Although this body is a unit within the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of the Ministry of Culture, the importance of its development comes from the related background. Years ago, a so-called "museum project" was under discussion which was directly linked to the office of Asma al-Assad and the institutions of civil society created by her. In the end it was approved to link this project, "which was supposed to be inaugurated and begin its implementation in 2010," to an official government institution. Hence came the decision to establish this unit which is, not coincidentally, currently located in the former headquarters of the Secretariat of Damascus, Capital of Arab Culture 2008.

Secondly - Legislation and laws governing cultural work

- Constitution: The draft of the new constitution in the Syrian Arab Republic, which was adopted through a "referendum" in the beginning of 2012, was favorable for the cultural landscape, even though, unlike the current constitution, it does not describe if the cultural sector is service or development oriented. The constitution considers the cultural diversity as one of the essential principles in need of protection and it appears in the introduction on the same level as national unity, public freedoms and human rights. There are also inherent principles mentioned, such as the equality of opportunity and citizenship, the principles necessary to strengthen the work on the protection of cultural diversity.
- Lifting the state of emergency and its replacement by the terrorism law and demonstration act: Bashar al-Assad issued during the year 2012 three special anti-terrorism laws.
- Law of civil society organizations: this law has not passed until the moment, but it is under discussion.
- Media Law: The year 2011 witnessed the issuance of the new media law through Legislative Decree No. 108. This law canceled entirely the Publications Law promulgated by Legislative Decree No. 50 of 2001, the Communication with the public law on the network issued in Legislative Decree No. 26 of 2011 and Legislative Decree No. 10 of 2002 on private commercial radio stations. The law also eliminates all contradictory provisions in Law No. 68 of 1951. The issuance of this law requires that the Ministry of Information amends its rules of procedure in accordance with the new law. The law also necessitated the issuance of Resolution No. 654 / m. by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, which includes the executive instructions to the media law on 21/01/2012.
- Draft law on electronic media: The Ministry of Communications distributed during the year 2012 the draft law on electronic media to all heads of electronic newspapers in Syria. This law considers communication on the network free and its liberty is not restricted provided it respects the rights of individuals and communities and their properties, and the requirements of national sovereignty and national security as regulated by law. The law takes into account the rights of copyright and ownership, as to any content placed on the network the laws on the protection of copyright and related rights and the protection of intellectual property rights, commercial and industrial patents are applied.

Thirdly - Developments at the level of the independent cultural sector

• "Independent" artists and political power through "political" capital

Since 2000 political power sought, and specifically with the arrival of Bashar al-Assad to the top of the pyramid of power, to start a conciliatory stage with the independent Syrian artists putting an end to the long period of estrangement between the artist and political power. What prevailed before this date are two types of artists: Either artists of power who are a class of artists which teamed up with the political system and worked directly and clearly as part of its political and media machine or the independent artists who are not connected with political authority but are clearly antagonistic towards it. After 2000 the political system worked, mediated directly by influential persons and specifically the owners of capital, on building strong alliances with artists. This

development was part of changing the look of the Syrian community and even international communities to power in Syria. And here the model of the “sponsor” of cultural policies on the artistic and cultural life in Syria became apparent. The officials directly responsible for creating personal relationships with artists are the second generation of influential persons within the country’s political system (they are the sons of the political, security and economic class ruling in Syria). They founded a network of friendly and personal relationships, exclusive to a large extent, and thus laid the foundations for implicit coexistence and reconciliation benefitting both parties. And thus with the start of the revolution, the political system and the revolutionary movement with its revolutionary opponents became enemies. The conflict of the artist’s relationship with the political power and his assessment of it evolved. And here appears what is today called "secession" in the category of artists. The reactions fell under three categories: either adopting the public discourse and promoting it, as done by those called the “loyal”, or those who distanced themselves, i.e. the artists who chose to be absent from the battle field or the third category: the numerous artists who joined the Revolution clearly and without hesitation; they believe that the support they have received during the past ten years is a right not a "favor" and that is goes without saying that an artist is offered production opportunities by his country and they considered the system’s support for them as a kind of “social responsibility”, especially as it already came through commercial companies allied with political power. This picture represents the general structure but there are exceptions and different cases. It should be noted however, that within this system the official institutions generally remained outside the context of this relationship without playing a role at the political level. They not even benefited from this form to get support for their work or to be a player in the system that virtually altered the "productive area" of the cultural sector. And in this context the Ministry of Culture contended itself with playing the role of a service provider or facilitator at best.

- **The independent cultural sector outside Syria**

It is rather unconventional to talk about the culture of a country which is located outside the country, unless it is related to the context of “cultural diplomacy”, or “cultural exchange”, or “external cultural relations” or other terms that depict arts and culture outside the country borders often serving to create a desired picture for a country or “stimulating the own culture through the culture of another country” or “building the own capacity and enhancing creative skills” etc. or other goals that are behind regional and international cultural exchange projects. Since March 2011 Syrian art, and specifically the art of the opposition, is imposing a growing presence at the regional and international level in contrast to the very weak (to the extent of scarcity) production and artistic activities inside Syria. This scarcity is a direct result of the deterioration of the political, security and humanitarian situation in Syria since the start of the revolution until the date of the completion of the report.

- **Forms of artistic expression outside the independent cultural sector**

With the start of the Syrian revolution, and as a form of "peaceful struggle", activists, demonstrators and civilian actors invented expressions strong and capable of influencing, very similar to the collective expressions associated with various communities that developed throughout history art forms that gradually separated themselves from the communal, spontaneous dimension. In the same manner, Syrians are unlocking a new dimension in their relationship with the forms of artistic expression and what is more, to their relationship with public spaces as they transformed through the demonstrations and civilian activities to become the owners of public space. It is important to point out that it might be problematic to characterize what is happening in the Syrian streets as "art". Accurately it is a form of artistic expression with a primarily political purpose, which contributes to the development of a civilian discourse through which the activists address the fellow Syrians before the rest of the world.

Through these activists the forms of artistic expression now belong to all; anyone can draw a caricature that is carried by the demonstrators through the streets, and any poet can write two verses of poetry that will be put on a banner, or other innovative artistic expressions such as coloring the waters of the fountains in Damascus red as a metaphor for the flows of Syrian blood.

- **The new interaction with urban spaces:**

Clear artistic elements evolved in all types of popular movement for people to express themselves and their opposition to the regime, from chants to banners and songs down to the forms of association and collective movements. And resorting to more innovative solutions for expression and delivery of messages and continuing the protest increased with the increasing harassment and repression by the regime forces. But the main incubator for all the new forms of expression was the "city", either the big cities and towns or large or medium-sized cities down to the villages. The regime occupied the major squares thus the people retreated into the lanes and narrow back streets. After being a space for escape, these streets have become spaces for gathering and expression.

- **Virtual space as a free space for expression**

As in all countries of the Arab revolutions, virtual space formed an important space for exchange. A special feature of the Syrian Revolution - and as a result of its length and the fact that the social networks were not chiefly used for organizing the protest - is its almost complete transformation to become a tool for "free expression" (as far as possible) through writing, visual arts or video, etc.

- **Civil/Opposition media**

Print media, electronic media and audio media abounded with the Syrian revolution, all independent, meaning non-governmental and non-licensed. It was founded, for the most part, by activists not specialized in media work who saw the need for independent (civil) media to cover the events of the revolution and to contribute to it.

Fourthly – Foreign Organizations (foreign centers, institutions, institutes, etc.)

On the seventh of February 2012 was the official announcement of the closure of the U.S. embassy in Damascus for a number of political and security reasons. Among the reasons advertised was "the inability of Damascus to provide adequate security protection for the embassy building and its surroundings," according to the U.S. comments. Furthermore many countries such as Malaysia, Greece, Brazil, withdrew all members of the diplomatic missions of Syria "out of fear for their safety."

After a month and odd of the beginning of the events in Syria, (most) Western countries began to close their embassies or reduce the levels of diplomatic representation in their missions as well as to ask their nationals to leave Syria. These measures were then classified as increasing political pressure on Damascus along with increased economic pressure through successive packages of economic sanctions.

The British Council: language classes stopped at the center about two months after the start of the events and activities at the administrative level were cut back. Most of the British staff left and soon afterwards the center closed almost entirely. A number of the Council's administrators moved to Beirut to close the remaining files. The British Council continued to support and fund a number of events and artistic and cultural activities, whether in theatre or in visual arts.

The French Cultural Center: Usually the French Cultural Center closes during the month of August of each year. But in the year 2011 it closed its doors in July before the usual annual holiday, to examine the possibility of re-opening after the Eid al-Fitr (coincided with the month of Ramadan). During this period, the French government

advised its citizens in Damascus and all Syria to leave, but did not force them. After closure, the French Cultural Center continued to support some cultural projects and completed some pending work, such as returning paintings to the artists since the center closed on the very day at which the opening of an exhibition for graduates of the Faculty of Fine Arts was scheduled.

The Spanish Cultural Center (Cervantes): The Spanish Cultural Center continued during the first months of the revolution to open its doors for students of the language, in addition to implementing its cultural and artistic activities as usual. But that case did not continue as the center abruptly and fully closed and final sessions stopped in February 2012.

The German Cultural Center (Goethe): The homepage of the German Cultural Center's website provides the following information: The Goethe Institute in Damascus and its branch in Aleppo have closed their doors temporarily.

The Danish Cultural Center (Beit Akkad): On the twelfth of April 2012 Dr. Anders Hastrup former cultural attaché at the Danish Embassy and the Director of the Danish Institute (Beit Akkad) received a message from the Syrian Foreign Ministry including the explicit request to leave the country as his "presence is not desired". Since then activities at Beit Akkad stopped for good.

Part II: Current Developments in the Program of Cultural Policies

The period covered by the report witnessed two important events at the level of the "Cultural Policies in the Arab Region Programme": The second meeting of the Arab Group for Cultural Policies on December 14th 2012, in addition to the conference, "Independent Culture for Democracy", which is expected to have a significant impact on the program and work of the national groups of cultural policies. The participants agreed during the conference that the phase of political and social change experienced by the Arab region requires a fundamental re-examination of the cultural policies of the official institutions in the different countries, which still form a continuation of the policies of the old regimes. Accordingly they put culture in the service of political power and monopolize all production and distribution processes and concentrate culture in the major cities where it serves only a limited sector of society, and deprive most institutions and independent artists of financial, artistic and media opportunities and support. Thus the participants recommend:

- In countries that are undergoing radical political change, a transitional mechanism for the governmental cultural sector will be laid down to ensure - with the participation of independent cultural institutions - uninterrupted cultural services for citizens and their access to the largest possible number of people; these services should keep up with the needs of the stages of political and social change; while at the same time an approach should be agreed on to develop a cultural policy on the long term.
- In all Arab countries, new cultural policies will be proposed that are built on the foundations of the democratization and decentralization of culture, the fair distribution of cultural services, the support of freedom of creativity and an emphasis on the importance of cultural diversity, and the multiplicity of forms and sources of cultural expression, taking into account that these new cultural policies derive their legitimacy from being the result of an open and broad dialogue among all governmental and civilian parties concerned with culture.
- Al Mawred al Thaqafi (Cultural Resource) will spread and activate the model of the "National Cultural Policies Groups" and enhance the role of the youth. It will support the work of these groups, which are working in a number of Arab countries, so that they can lead the national dialogue on cultural policy.
- The advancement of the Arab Group for Cultural Policies with the task of studying and researching common forms in different countries to restructure the cultural sector, including national arts councils and institutions of quasi-governmental nature, and to make the results of this study available to all those who are concerned with drawing up cultural policies in the Arab region. To achieve this, the Arab Group is drawing on all the necessary expertise in order to complete this study within three months.

Meeting of the Arab Group for Cultural Policies:

The agenda of the meeting was set based on the results of the first quarterly report, to discuss the most important challenges facing the national groups, in terms of organizational structure and mechanisms of action in addition to the level of influence on decision-making at the political level in different countries. Three main themes are to be included:

1. Development of cultural policies in the light of political developments in the Arab region.
2. The organizational aspect in the work of the national groups
3. Future themes of the work (the broad lines of the groups' action plans during the year 2013)

The meeting clearly showed the disparity between the national groups regarding their current position and vision of their role. While we find the more established groups, such as Egypt primarily and Algeria in the second place, pushing towards regional projects in an effort to achieve the development of cultural policies (at the official as well as the popular level) we find that other groups tend to focus on internal affairs, and strengthening its structure until the completion of the foundational phases.

The meeting concluded with the approval of the following concrete steps:

- Ettjahat. Independent Culture will prepare a manual offering guidance in the formation and working mechanisms of the national work groups and models for internal organization before the end of March 2013. Basma will then participate in the section that is dedicated to the standards of representation in the group and its credibility.
- Fairouz Karawiya (member of the Egyptian national group) will send an outline of the Arab Document on the Right to Culture and Guarantee of Freedoms before the end of March 2013.
- Marwa Hilmi will send a request to the national group coordinators to submit a plan and budget for the work of 2013 to be received before the end of March 2013.
- Khaled Mattawa (Libya) and Alaa Younis will present an idea for the joint Arab campaign before mid-March 2013.
- Al Mawred Al Thaqafy (Culture Resource) will provide an answer regarding the possibility of organizing training workshops for cultural actors interested in the development of cultural policies and members of the national groups by mid-March 2013.
- Sami Abdul Jerfy (Algeria) will create a page for the Arab group of Cultural Policies on Facebook in order to continue to communicate, exchange information and experiences and to ensure the continuation of the debate.