

MAECENATA STIFTUNG



HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA
Governance Platform



in cooperation with



Περιφέρεια Κρήτης

Region of Crete

**Remember for the Future –
The Mediterranean As a Memory Space**

**A Conference in the Framework of the Maecenata Project
“Europe and the Mediterranean –
Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together”**

Heraklion, Crete, 24 – 27 April, 2017

The Scenario

On 10 and 11 November, 2015, a meeting took place in Malta with delegates from the European Union and African States. Its topics did not only include urgent issues regarding refugees and immigration. The meeting also had the goal of laying the foundations for a new pact between Europe, the Mediterranean area and Africa. Once more the Mediterranean symbolised a space of encounter and exchange, at the centre of attention and of far-reaching plans for the future.

None other than the Spaniard Miguel Ángel Moratinos, long-standing EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process and former Spanish Foreign Minister, judged as “favourable” the odds of such a far-reaching plan. Beyond the chaotic present situation he looked at the essentials: confronted with the migration streams European politicians have rediscovered their “south” – and by that also those European values which exert such a strong attraction for the people of the south.

Track Record

Against the backdrop, on one side, of a reform, which is necessary for historical reasons, of the relationship framework among the Mediterranean countries – and behind these of the bordering areas in Europe, the Middle East and Africa – and, on the other side, of a lack of action by government organisations and official political institutions, the Maecenata Foundation, in 2012, started its project “Europe and the Mediterranean” in the framework of its Europe Bottom-Up Programme. The goal of this Project is to provide a tangible impulse to the vision of dialogue and cooperation within and beyond the Mediterranean area.

In order to allow for the participation of a broad spectrum of citizens from very different origins and holding very different positions in the society, the topic of the Project has intentionally been worded in general terms: “Europe and the Mediterranean” – Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together”. In a first workshop at Villa Vigoni’s German-Italian Centre for European Excellence on Lake Como in 2013 the background and the goals of the undertaking were laid down.

A second larger conference was held at Villa Vigoni from 20 – 22 April, 2015, in cooperation with the Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform’s Center for the Middle East and North Africa, and supported by the Mercator Foundation and the Allianz Cultural Foundation. Specific topics were addressed which are relevant for the advancement of the Mediterranean and people, among them the migration issue, new forms of political and economic interaction and the role of the civil society and the media. In the context of the conference two publications were issued in the Maecenata Foundation’s Europe Bottom-Up series. The publications are available online free of charge at:

http://www.maecenata.eu/images/2015_EBU_11.pdf (Conference Report)

http://www.maecenata.eu/images/2015_EBU_12.pdf (Contributions)

A third conference is planned for April 2017. This conference will focus more precisely on cultural aspects than the previous ones and encompass a range of topics under the heading: The Mediterranean as a collective cultural place, with a collective history, and memory.

The organizers can look back on a long-standing experience to do with intercultural communication, collective memorial experiences and European affairs:

<http://www.maecenata.eu/europa-bottom-up>

http://www.maecenata.eu/images/resources/2014_op74.pdf

<http://www.maecenata.eu/images/MO-06.pdf>

Prof. Dr. Udo Steinbach, former director of Deutsches Orientinstitut, Hamburg, has published widely on Middle East and North Africa affairs (see: <http://www.udosteinbach.eu>).

The Theme

Fernand Braudel’s familiar dictum that “Mediterranean means route” lies in the heart of the process of understanding the transformations running through the economic, social, political and cultural history of the Mediterranean region. Since the Bronze Age, the maritime routes have made a decisive contribution to the exploration, knowledge, and formation of the lands and their cultures around the compass of the sea. The world understood through early colonisations. The initiation of colonialism started from the knowledge of the seas. Lands understood through the seas that surrounded them.

Thus, to be on-the road in the Mediterranean area or to live in the Mediterranean area has always meant the equivalent of being on the way from and to somewhere. What myths and narratives have determined the past – and which of them determine the present? The foundation of Rome cannot be dissociated from a fugitive from Asia. Aeneas' image carrying his old father Anchises on his shoulders and holding the hand of his son Ascanius with burning Troy in the background has inspired many painters. On his way to Italy he stopped by the Queen of Carthage who had founded the city after fleeing from Phoenicia. Charlemagne sent a myth-enshrouded delegation to the Caliph's court at Baghdad, who reciprocated with the famous elephant delivered to the Emperor's court at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Memories – in the widest meaning of the word – are not always peaceful and free of strife. What they indicate for the future depends on the specific context in which they are set. The context of the future, which is just once more sharpened by the wave of flight and migration, is the inevitable one of coexistence in the political, economical and cultural dimension. This coexistence was outlined in the above mentioned EE-Africa extraordinary summit in Malta between EU and African countries – it must only be filled with content. Memories document the common ground on which we can build upon. On them Moratinos' optimism is based according to which the conditions for a paradigm change in the Mediterranean project are "favourable".

The Conference

The initiators of the Conference (Dr. Eleftherios Ikonou, former Director of the Greek Foundation for Culture in Berlin, Prof. Udo Steinbach of the Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform in Berlin and Dr. Rupert Graf Strachwitz, Director of the Maecenata Foundation, Munich/Berlin) have defined its subject as follows: "Remember for the Future – The Mediterranean As a Memory Space".

Approx. 40 delegates (academics, politicians, practitioners, representatives of civil society and the media, others) should attend the conference on Crete. They should come from all littoral states of the Mediterranean with an emphasis on the younger generation. Participants of the 2013 and 2015 conferences at Villa Vigoni, who are professionally engaged in relevant areas, should be reinvited. In this way it will be possible to build a solid core group which is able to address a wider public. The Heraklion Prefecture will put premises for the venue at the disposal of the Foundation.

The conference will take 4 days (24 – 27 April, 2017). A public section should be foreseen (it is conceivable to organise a presentation of the results).

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