



MAISON de la PAIX



*LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES
PARLAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
ANNA LINDH EUROMEDITERRANEAN FOUNDATION FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN CULTURES
UNION DES JEUNES EURO-MAGHREBINS*

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. The Great Mediterranean
3. The Countries that offered to host the “Maison de la Paix”
4. The Maison de la Paix
 - 4.1. The Aims
 - 4.2. The Functions
 - 4.2.1. *Living the Greater Mediterranean*
 - 4.2.2. *Auditorium*
 - 4.2.3. *Conference Center*
 - 4.2.4. *Multimedia*
 - 4.2.5. *Library of Peace*
 - 4.2.6. *School for High Education*
 - 4.2.7. *Exhibitions*
 - 4.2.8. *The Path of Peace*
 - 4.2.9. *The Common History*
 - 4.2.10. *The Casket of Silence*
 - 4.2.11. *Bookshop*
 - 4.2.12. *The Residences of Peace*
5. Programme of Activities
 - 5.1. Periodical meetings of experts, persons responsible and decision makers concerned with the different thematic areas
 - 5.2. Annual Plenary Meeting
 - 5.3. Meeting of the Pondering Committee
 - 5.4. Coordination Secretariat
 - 5.5. The Annual Report
6. Places
7. The Totem de la Paix

1. INTRODUCTION

In our society, the medias set up their activity and their “audience” specially on tragedies and wars: pictures of dead, wounded, destroyed houses, violated and raped children invade our lives fuelling frustration and powerlessness, switching off the residual positive energy of our enthusiasm.

Analyzing the representation of our recent history, we notice that it is mainly founded on the memory of big wars, conflicts and victims of the past.

It is time now to build the “*Maison de la Paix*”: a place strongly representative, in which will convey the knowledge of the different identities and cultures, structuring permanently initiatives aimed to the spreading of peace, necessary for the shared development.

2. THE GREATER MEDITERRANEAN

The FONDAZIONE MEDITERRANEO since its foundation (1994) has as its main objective the institution of a Coalition of Shared Values and Interests among the countries which, through the centuries, have acted around the Mediterranean and which today, in continuing their social and cultural reciprocal influences – represented by the Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic cultures - and which today, in continuing their social and cultural reciprocal influences, represent the area of the “Greater Mediterranean”: a tradition of synergies, sometimes tumultuous and troubled, but from which an indissoluble interdependence arose, stronger than all contrasts, hostilities, and wars.

The FONDAZIONE MEDITERRANEO, which during the last fifteen years has made valuable these synergies, giving them importance, wishes now to go on in the name of peace and cooperation among the populations and in respect of the fundamental rights set forth in the UN charter. It is for this reason that, during the visit of the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdo an in 2005, the Fondazione Mediterraneo launched the “Manifesto for the Greater Mediterranean” that identifies Turkey as a leading Country for this process, proposing the realisation of the project “Maison de la Paix” in order to assemble most women and men, of organizations and Institutions of the countries belonging to the Greater Mediterranean and to set common targets and effective means to transform the “Dialogue among Cultures” into an “Alliance among Civilizations” through the creation of the “Maison de la Paix”.

In order to realize these “Alliances among Civilizations” of the Greater Mediterranean, a subject both historical and strategic which works in cooperation with the countries of the Middle East, the Gulf and the Black Sea, it is necessary promote international understanding through the promotion of awareness of the social, cultural, and self-identification realities that exist in the Greater Mediterranean. It is also necessary to encourage a closer interaction among these realities in respect of fundamental human rights and equality of the sexes and to develop human resources and intellectual cooperation in multidisciplinary fields.

The Greater Mediterranean has long been fraught with tensions, crisis and conflicts that have torn the fabric of an otherwise peaceful and prosperous cohabitation. Fresh outbreaks of terrorism and the risk of a schism between those who believe in dialogue and those who favour a ‘clash of civilisations’ mandate increased engagement of governments and calls from civil society to promote a coalition of shared values and interests.

The Coalition should act on the premise of developing models and programmes for cultural and material growth within the region, based on the concepts of equal dignity and mutual respect among different cultural identities – acknowledging that these peoples have their own principles and values, but at the same time must be open to exchange and discussion. All this work is based on the principles of equality, sovereignty, and dignity of peoples, and it works in respect of pluralism and cultural diversity. Furthermore, these actions are committed to the principle that fundamental human rights – including gender equality – constitute a common denominator among all peoples. This is the aim of the “Maison de la Paix”.

3. THE COUNTRIES THAT OFFERED TO HOST THE “MAISON DE LA PAIX”

Among the Countries that offered to host the “Maison de la Paix” there are:

- The Sultanate of Oman;
today, the Sultanate of Oman is one of the Countries that mainly can fuel a real dialogue and a profitable cooperation between the Arab-Islamic World and the Occident
- The Republic of Portugal;
which represents the door of Europe to the Occident and to the Arab World
- The Kingdom of Morocco;
with its ancient culture and traditions is one of the Country mainly able to promote Peace through intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

4. THE MAISON DE LA PAIX

The “Maison de la Paix” is a project conceived by Michele Capasso.

Architect and engineer, he practised for twenty years, realizing manifold works in different Countries; in 1994 he created the Fondazione Mediterraneo with its main two actions – the “Maison de la Méditerranée” and the “Maison des Alliances” – which have their main seats in Naples.

It is an architecture that keep the memory of the Peace activities which described history, often more than the wars, but – above all – a space where to “build” Peace.

It is a difficult process, because Peace is not an abstract concept: it is a complex collection of actions to be nourished daily. Specially recounting and remembering the centuries during which the Islam and the Occident lived in peace fuelling cultures, civilizations, sciences and knowledge which are the foundation of our civilization.

The architectonical complex has an important symbolic worth: it represents the Countries of the World engaged in the Peace process and the Countries victim of the conflicts.

Proposed by the Fondazione Mediterraneo with the Maison des Alliances – together with the main adherent organisations, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the League of Arab States, the Anna Lindh Foundation and others – the project foresee a big multifunctional covered area, which will have the shape and the proportions of the hosting Country.

In this area there will be the “Virtual Interactive Museum”, the “Auditorium”, the “Library of Peace”, the “Theatre”, the “Path of Peace” and other spaces for exhibitions, workshops and other activities. On this “base” of almost 30.000 square meters covered and a height of 15 meters, will be realized the main building which will have the shape and colours of the “*Totem de la Paix*” by the Italian sculptor Mario Molinari.

4.1 The Aims

To promote culture as a medium of access to the world, to the knowledge and to the know-how, giving to men and women the means to express their ambitions and to build a necessary dialogue for the future of peoples.

To realize activities which emphasize the contribution of the different cultures to the shared heritage and knowledge, bringing to light the potential, not yet expressed, of the exchange of experiences and diffusing knowledge of the reciprocal influences that fuelled traditions, habits and costumes of the project of a new Humanism as foundation of comprehension among Peoples.

To facilitate the cooperation among Institutions, Research Centres, Universities and organisations for the updating of knowledge and the realization of joint initiatives to contrast prejudice and to diffuse the innovations of thought and science as well as the examples of good practice connected to the new technologies applied to the sustainability of the development.

To promote studies and the activation of experiences aimed to facilitate cohabitation and interaction of people and groups with different cultural backgrounds.

To promote, systematically, information and communications about the different initiatives undertaken for the cooperation between Europe and Arab World to avoid duplications and waste of resources.

4.2 The Functions

Among the main functions of the MdP are cited:

4.2.1. Living the Greater Mediterranean

It is an interactive museum space which make use of modern three-dimensional technologies to narrate the history of the Mediterranean and to let “live” the cultural, archaeological and environmental resources of this region, one of the most beautiful places in the world. Doors of about ten meters high introduce in the respective main cities (Barcelona, Marseille, Marrakech, Athens, Alexandria, Algiers, Istanbul, Napoli, Valletta, Tripoli, etc.) through a virtual trip which astonish the observer.

A trip through history, geography, traditions, religions, art crafts, mysteries, destiny...

4.2.2. Auditorium

In the MdP will be realized a big auditorium (3000 seats) where will take place International conferences, seminars and events connected to art and creativity (music, dance, etc.).

4.2.3. Conference Center

Conference rooms (from 50 to 1000 seats) will be created on the first floors of the MdP allowing the carrying out of more work sessions at the same time.

The rooms will be equipped with the most modern technologies and with sophisticated videoconference systems which will consent a simultaneous connection with up to 30 Countries in the world.

4.2.4. Multimedia

The Multimedia space will have an apposite building. Here will be created the *Audiovisual Library of Peace*, where the pictures about peace processes and initiatives will be collected. It also will be possible, through interactive systems on the internet, to dialogue with the Countries in conflict to promote the knowledge and the perception of peace.

4.2.5. Library of Peace

The *Library of Peace* will collect documents, books and multimedia tools concerning peace, peace processes, peace negotiation.

A database which will help scholars, diplomats, men and women of the world interested in “building” peace.

4.2.6. School of High Education

It is a school for diplomats conceived with a new strategy established on peace and not war. Diplomats were trained on mediation concepts and on interventions aimed at the promotion of peace where there was a conflict. Now we have to invert the problem and make the diplomats “expert maintenance operators of peace”: peace is not an abstract concept, it is a dynamic and fluid process which needs daily cares, assistance and maintenance through the promotion of dialogue, exchanges and a real interaction of shared values and interests.

4.2.7. Exhibitions

In the MdP will be created many spaces for exhibitions. Among the permanent exhibition will be planned “*A for P – Artists for Peace*” which will collect artworks of artists form all

over the world, “*Photo-Exhibitions of Peace*”: pictures can change history, but today they are used in an aberrant way; it is necessary to learn “how to see” pictures. The problem is that pictures control our lives, showing only one side of the reality.

We need to ask how to do new, real pictures encouraging photographers – with exhibitions and publications – to think, and then to produce, the “pictures of peace” and not only those of the war.

4.2.8. The Path of Peace

The *Path of Peace* passes through the architectural spaces of the MdP narrating the peace processes assuring a methodology to diffuse the examples of good practice with the analysis of the results obtained along history.

4.2.9. The Common History

The *Common History* is one of the main actions of the MdP. One of the cause of conflicts is just the lack of a common history. Every People write his own history, with his winners and losers. To propose a common history of the Greater Mediterranean, an history that is not only the history of a single Country (for example Italy, Spain, Egypt, etc.), means that a “common future” established on Peace and mutual respect is possible.

An example of this method has been realized in the Countries of former Yugoslavia where a team of historians wrote the common history of the Countries in conflict: Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia with absolutely positive results.

4.2.10. The Casket of Silence

To nourish the inner silence as a condition for Peace will be created in the MdP a space where it will be possible to reflect, meditate and read the most important writings about peace and peace processes written through the centuries.

4.2.11. Bookshop

In the MdP will be created many spaces that will host bookshops of the different Countries which will distribute mainly books, multimedia products and videos having as main theme peace, dialogue and mutual respect.

4.2.12. Residences of Peace

In the MdP will be created residences for young men and women for young men and women born in conflict areas, to build Peace experiences.

5. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

The main activities of the *Maison de la Paix* are:

5.1. Periodical meetings of experts, persons responsible and decision makers concerned with the different thematic areas.

Meetings will be held, systematically and periodically (once in a year), with the participation of the main persons responsible and decision makers concerned with the different thematic areas. This action is the first example of “harmonization” of the ongoing initiatives, which too often represent unnecessary duplications and continued waste of resources.

For instance, as to the Alliance among civilizations and cultures, the persons responsible and the decision makers concerned with this thematic area will include : the president of Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, the representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, the coordinator of the Council of Europe, the person responsible for the European Parliament, the person responsible for the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the person responsible for Unesco, the person responsible for the League of the Arab States, the president of the NGO Euromed Platform, the persons responsible for youth and women networks, etc.

During the meeting – divided into 4-5 working days - the participants will summarize the activities of each institution, analyze the documents produced, detect shared strategies, promote examples of good practices and, finally, they will produce a common paper synthesizing the positions of each of them.

The informal climate of the meeting, the warmth of places and welcome, the availability of all the most important texts and documents on the subject will favour a fruitful dialogue and a good result of the works; periodical meetings and systematic filing of all documents – inside the Maison des Alliances – will provide representation and legitimacy to the action, at the same time ensuring the necessary continuity.

The representatives and decision-makers concerned with the other thematic areas will be convened in the same way.

5.2. Annual Plenary Meeting

Once in a year, a plenary session will be held with the participation of the experts, the persons responsible and the decision-makers concerned with the different thematic areas who have participated in the different meetings per each area. This plenary meeting, which will be extended to other subjects involved, is meant to synthesize the problems of the different thematic areas so as to produce essential contributions for the redaction of the “Europe – Arab World Annual Report”.

5.3. Meeting of the “Pondering Committee”

The “Pondering Committee” established by the Fondazione Mediterraneo (made up of intellectuals, economists, artists, political decision-makers, etc.) will meet more than once in a year and its works will be object of a multi-language publication and of video interviews, both published on the web portal.

5.4. Coordination Secretariat

For the organization of the annual meetings of the representatives of the different thematic areas, of the annual plenary meeting and for all the other activities concerning the *Maison de la Paix*, there will be a secretariat made up of a coordinator and 8 multi-language persons.

6. THE PLACES

The *Maison de la Paix* will have its seat in a Euro-Mediterranean Country, in a building of unique architecture and of high symbolic worth.

The seat will be composed of many levels including an interactive museum space (*Living the Greater Mediterranean – Exhibitions*), an *Auditorium*, a *Conference Centre*, a multimedia space (*Multimedia – The Audiovisual Library of Peace*), a library (*The Library of Peace*), a meditative space (*The Casket of Silence*) and a *Bookshop*.

Moreover, the structure will host some residences for young men and women born in conflict areas (*The Residences of Peace*).

The project of the seat is still now ongoing, so it will be possible to modify it as necessary for an optimal success of the aims set by the *Maison de la Paix*.

7. THE TOTEM DE LA PAIX

[The *Totem de la Paix*](#) is an art work by the Italian sculptor Mario Molinari, chosen as symbol of Peace by many Countries and by the *Maison des Alliances*, of which the *Maison de la Paix* is the main action.

This art work will be realized in all the Countries, in the cities desirous to give a message of peace to the World. The cities hosting the *Totem de la Paix* will constitute the “*Cities of Peace*”.

Among the cities already realizing the *Totem*: Napoli (on the Vesuvius), Amman, Marseille, Marrakech, Ispica, Rutino, Paris, Lecce.