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[INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN]

The Cultural and Political differences in the Mediterranean have formed a unique region with differences and similarities in a common cultural identity. The following thesis is a discussion on cultural differences of North and South Mediterranean. The Intercultural dialogue could be a tool for stability and peace in the region. What is the role of the international institutions and how effective their programmes for intercultural dialogue are?

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ABSTRACT

In the following dissertation, we examine the intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean region through the scope of the various institutions that are connected with the area, such as the European Union, UNESCO, NATO. We examine what has been done so far for establishing peace and stability in the region, eliminating any cultural, political and religious differences.

Emphasis is given on the cultural diversity that can be a positive factor for the development and collaboration of different people, ideas and philosophies and the ways that xenophobia and fear can be eliminated through educational programs related to respect of the "otherness".

In the end of the dissertation, we conclude on the difficulty to ignore any political or economic interests of every nation on the particular region, and any obstacles these interests constitute for a smooth and peaceful co-existence in the region. These obstacles have continued throughout the centuries through empires and conquerors that cannot easily be forgotten.

What needs to be done is the creation of several co-operational programs in a global level to achieve peace and stability as well as open acceptance of the different "other" human being.

KEYWORDS:
- Intercultural Dialogue
- Cultural differences
-"Otherness"
- Cultural identity
- Peace and Security
- Interculturalism

ABSTRACT IN GREEK

Στην ακόλουθη εργασία, εξετάζουμε το διαπολιτισμικό διάλογο στην περιοχή της Μεσογείου, μέσω του πεδίου εφαρμογής των διαφόρων θεσμικών οργάνων που συνδέονται με την περιοχή, όπως η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, η UNESCO, το NATO. Εξετάζουμε τι έχει γίνει μέχρι στιγμής για την εδραίωση της ειρήνης και της σταθερότητας στην περιοχή, εξαλείφοντας τυχόν πολιτιστικές, πολιτικές και θρησκευτικές διαφορές.

Έμφαση δίνεται στην πολιτιστική πολυμορφία που μπορεί να αποτελέσει θετικό παράγοντα για την ανάπτυξη και τη συνεργασία των διαφορετικών ανθρώπων και ιδεολογιών και στις φιλοσοφίες και τους τρόπους με τους οποίους η ξενοφοβία και γενικότερα ο φόβος για το «διαφορετικό» μπορεί να εξαλειφθεί μέσα από εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα και προγράμματα που σχετίζονται με το σεβασμό στη διαφορετικότητα.

Στο τέλος της εργασίας, καταλήγουμε σε συμπέρασμα σχετικά με τη δυσκολία να αγνοηθούν και εξαλειφθούν οποιαδήποτε πολιτικά και οικονομικά συμφέροντα που έχουν πολλά κράτη στην συγκεκριμένη περιοχή, και τα εμπόδια που αυτά τα συμφέροντα συνιστούν για την ομαλή και ειρηνική συνύπαρξη. Αυτά τα εμπόδια έχουν κληροδοτηθεί ανά τους αιώνες και τα αποτελέσματα που έχουν επέλθει από τις κατακτήσεις των λαών δεν μπορούν εύκολα να εξαλειφθούν.

Αυτό που πρέπει να γίνει είναι μια παγκόσμια συνεργασία για την εξασφάλιση ειρήνης και σταθερότητας στην περιοχή, καθώς και μια καθαρή και ανοιχτή αποδοχή της διαφορετικότητας του «άλλου» ατόμου.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Introduction

"Culture takes various forms through time and space. This diversity is embodied in originality and plurality of identities that characterize groups and societies that make up humanity. The cultural diversity is not only a source of exchange, innovation and creativity. It is necessary for humans as biodiversity for the order of living. In this sense, it constitutes the common heritage of humanity and must be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations."[1]

Peace on an international level is established when someone, a society, a nation recognizes and accepts freedom of other people and nations. Security, safety and trust between nations are key factors for establishing peace.

The Mediterranean Sea has often been called the incubator of Western civilization. It is also known as the sea "between the lands" and throughout the ages it has been called with several names. Every nation, every conqueror, every period of time, have changed the name of the Mediterranean area in order to serve different interests. Its unique location has made it a special place for connecting different people and different cultures, ideas and symbols. Its transportation routes have hosted throughout times the development of ideas such as the philosophy, the sciences, the arts. Within its borders great civilizations have been created such as the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, the Phoenicians etc.

But in the present days the social and cultural differences are getting even more complex. "Official agents, such as the Eurobarometer (2001), for example, stereotype nations—measure, plot, and correlate 'national attitudes' in reports based in tiny samples. They essentially naturalise national identities as somehow 'fixed' and label each nation's citizens as 'racists' or otherwise, according to the survey question. This in itself can lead to the social construction of 'otherness' and even racism (Leontidou et al. 2002)." [LEONTIDOU 2004].

As years went by, the cultural variety of the Mediterranean and Europe increases due to several reasons: immigration, globalization as well as the European

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[1] UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural diversity
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf

Union's expanded interests. The Euro-Mediterranean zone is now one of the most culturally diverse areas of the world in terms of language, religious beliefs and ideas as well as cultural characteristics. The Mediterranean serves as a sort of geopolitical dividing line between Africa and Europe.

"Fernand Braudel […] gives a broader sense to the Mediterranean as both a local bridge and an area where human exchanges have been intense during the past and where diversity emerges from unity. The people living in the Mediterranean do have a shared ancient culture and established relations. However today, the sea has been transformed from a spiral of prosperity, full of life and tolerance to a sea representing a block between inter-continental conflicts and contrasts" [RIM 2009].

In the present thesis, several programs related to Intercultural Dialogue are examined, which are mainly created by the European Union as well as UNESCO's and NATO's special programs on the region. The method used is the literature review.

It is also examined if the programs have been effective and in what extent conclusions have been made through several reports about what people expect from the coherence of the Mediterranean area. A literature review based on the early findings of the Intercultural Dialogue have also been attempted in order to examine the results –if any- so far for the region and any aspirations for the future.

Moreover, reference is made to two important poles for the development of intercultural dialogue: Education and Technology.

1. Cultural and Political differences in the Mediterranean

Civilisations in the Mediterranean have evolved as a result of continuous movements of people for centuries in the area and a complex interconnectivity between them that has shaped the model of social organizations as we recognize them today. A key factor of co-existing in this area is the respect for the "otherness" through the centuries. The goal is not to globalise every single geographical point but to interact and accept the cultural differences that define

the presence of other nations as well as of the minorities. Besides, it remains undeniable that "diversity such as the language is fundamental for social, economic and cultural progress in the Mediterranean"[2] and everywhere. One cannot deny the existence of conflict and crisis that is born in the human nature and defines the evolution of the humanity. "Crisis and conflict have always existed and will continue to exist. Another point concerns multiculturalism, as applied in certain countries, which causes economic injustice because it only focuses on cultural differences rather than on the original structural differences in certain segments of the population".[3] There are two kinds of borders and boundaries in the Mediterranean, the actual borders and the differences of human communities. The word "frontiers" includes the sense of interaction, exchanges and coexistence between but different types of conflict too. This term dates deeply back in the past, even before the notion of the nation-state. [Bechev & Nicolaidis, 2010]

"The recognition of cultural diversity has dual benefits. For States, recognition of cultural diversity can reduce sources of conflict and promote 'coexistence'. It is a tool of peaceful coexistence between nations. For individuals, it allows both individual and collective rights [...]. It also involves reducing discrimination and provides access to tasks. The recognition of cultural diversity is a source of social recognition or as told by German philosopher Axel Choneth is a victory against society contempt''.[4]

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[2] *Shared Identities and Cultures in the Mediterranean*, Centre for Administrative Innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean Region
[3] As above
[4] *Report on the role of Public Arts and Cultural Institutions in the promotion of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, (2014) European Union

2. The Intercultural Dialogue

The intercultural dialogue should "take place not only between European societies but between Europe and the wider world."[5]

For all the above reasons and for protecting human rights, democracy, social justice, dissimilarities and uniqueness of every person or nation, it is important to develop human tools to fight racism and terrorism and to eliminate barriers between nations. One such human tool is the intercultural dialogue which can be achieved only through intercultural co-operation. In this way human rights will be respected and a common communicative instrument will be developed.

The intercultural dialogue is an important tool for maintaining the multicultural world that we live in. The official definition that has been formed from several institutions, "combines elements of different approaches: *Intercultural dialogue is a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or world views. Among its aims are: to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes".[6]*

The concept of intercultural dialogue has multiple dimensions. The recognition and understanding of interculturalism starts from the awareness of our own self and our existence. It is associated with values and balances between societies and cultures. Globalization, in not an absolute way though, creates new contexts in intercultural relations in a great extent. Therefore is a common understanding between people from different cultures feasible? In modern times, where culture is connected with economic dimensions and political implications, equal and fair recognition of cultural diversity is a complex process.

Undoubtedly the dual axis of globalization and multiculturalism makes us realize the need for maintaining the heterogeneity of every culture. It is absolutely vital

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[5] *Living together as Equals in Dignity*, White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue
[6] http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/intercultural-dialogue.php

to have a common understanding and cooperation line in order to preserve the uniqueness. Individuals, societies and cultures are developed only through cultural interaction.

Mutual understanding, peace and action in the field of culture, especially among people from completely different cultural backgrounds are possible only through understanding and cooperation. Respect for people diversity can develop constructive intercultural dialogue and actual interaction between cultures.

These values, which should primarily be cultivated among individuals of society, create feelings of a single, solid culture, in which everyone has the right to come together and interact peacefully with other people. European societies today are also multicultural and heterogeneous societies.

These findings raise questions and real problems in the management and implementation of intercultural cooperation, such as how feasible and easy it is to organize real intercultural dialogues that promote all aspects and dimensions of society and promote equality.

Modern cooperation institutions that promote and preserve the concepts of democracy, peace and development of cultures have included intercultural dialogue; fruitful and constructive namely dialogue between cultures, in their essential work areas. Considering the complex dimension of intercultural dialogue and the difficulties of its implementation in practice, we have presented a short definition formulated by international organizations and institutions such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union, which combine elements from different approaches.

3. The role of education

In this context, we must understand that the most important role for the development of understanding the heterogeneity between cultures is the pole of

education. The area of educational processes in a society is the one who can bridge the communication gap between cultures. Only through peaceful educational processes becomes possible to combat racism and xenophobia and nationalist sentiment that is often exposed people while cultivating feelings such as cooperation, empathy and respect.

"Education and intercultural learning in their diverse settings are crucial to ensure sustainable progress in the field of active citizenship. The issue of education should not just target in children and young people but also ensuring the involvement of all generations, in particular through lifelong learning opportunities. The diversity of learning structures and educators, including family, the community or the work environment, [...] must be embraced in order to achieve the goal of inclusive quality learning. It is also important to highlight the synergies between formal, non-formal and learning and the benefits of working at all levels in a coherent way, for example through inter-generational learning, peer-to-peer learning, family learning, work-based learning, on-line learning, museum learning, learning through the arts and sports, and learning outdoors."[7]

Through educational programmes for every country, the "image of the otherness" can be re-shaped and an intercultural dialogue could be facilitated. Personal and social insecurity and discriminations can also be eliminated.

4. The role of technology and media

Since cultural diversity if enriched by the contributions of all nations we must understand that in order to create a fruitful intercultural dialogue between nations it is essential to include all means of communication, such as media and New media as well as modern educational practices. Therefore one can understand that the use of technology influences the interaction among people and spreads cooperation. "With these frameworks in mind, it is important to

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[7] *Report on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values* (2015), European Parliament

emphasize that the use of information and communication to ensure that different cultures have the space to freely express themselves – on their own terms – is vital to advancing mutual understanding among peoples and between cultures. The media has the ability to facilitate this intercultural dialogue. By challenging prevailing attitudes and assumptions concerning the many "others" in our world, the media can move beyond scripted stereotypes…"[8]

"The economic dynamics of globalisation have intensified not only the transnational flows of cultural goods, media products and information, but also human transnational migration. For this reason Digital culture is another modern concept as it constitutes a common resource for knowledge society." [9]

5. The role of EU, UNESCO and NATO in the Mediterranean

5.1 The European Union

One of the main goals of the creation of European Union was the establishment of peace and security between country-states and furthermore between the E.U. and the neighbouring countries:

"The European Union is set up with the aim of ending the frequent and bloody wars between neighbours, which culminated in the Second World War. As of 1950, the European Coal and Steel Community begin to unite European countries economically and politically in order to secure lasting peace."[10]

The Maastricht treaty under which the E.U. was created and designed "to enhance European political and economic integration by creating a single currency (the euro), a unified foreign and security policy, and common citizenship rights and by advancing cooperation in the areas of immigration, asylum, and judicial affairs. The EU was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2012, in recognition of the organization's efforts to promote peace

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[8] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-press-freedom-day/previous-celebrations/worldpressfreedomday200900/themes/the-role-of-media-in-intercultural-dialogue/

[9] http://www.culturelink.org/conf/dialogue/dialogue.pdf

[10] https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history_en#1945_-_1959

and democracy in Europe."[11] Furthermore, the European Union's fundamental purposes are to promote greater social, political and economic harmony among the nations of Europe.

"The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) or Barcelona Process started in 1995 and has been the main venue for the EU's relations to its southern periphery. Involving most countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean sea, the EMP covers different aspects of regional and bilateral cooperation in the realms of politics and security, economics, and social and cultural affairs (Barcelona Declaration, 1995). Compared to the overly ambitious aim of the Partnership of creating an area of peace, prosperity, and stability, the achievements have been modest, and the EMP has been criticized on different accounts." [Del Sarto & Schumacher 2005].

The EMP was a wide multilateral framework of political, economic, and social relations that involved 700 million people in 27 countries or territories around the Mediterranean. In addition to the 15 EU states, the EMP included Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Palestinian Authority. One aspect of the EuroMed Partnership and collaboration was culture. This collaboration foresaw the cultural differences of the Mediterranean and promoted a dialogue between cultures and humans in terms of civilization, i.e. technology, science, language as these aspects can bring people together and enhance social understanding and acceptance.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is the development of the EMP program as described above. It governs the EU's relations with 16 of the EU's closest Eastern and Southern Neighbours. To the South: Algeria,Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*, Syria a ndTunisia and to the East: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Russia takes part in Cross-Border Cooperation activities under the ENP and is not a part of the ENP as such. The ENP has been launched in 2003 and

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[11] https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union

developed throughout 2004, with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all. It is based on the values of democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights.[12]

However, the ENP did not seem to be very effective. Following the "Arab Spring" uprisings there was a need to be reviewed in 2011. The reviewed ENP suggests a stronger policy regarding the stabilization of the region in political, economic and security terms. "Moreover, the revised ENP puts a strong emphasis on two principles: the implementation of a differentiated approach to our Neighbours, to respect the different aspirations of our partners and to better answer EU interests and the interests of our partners; and an increased ownership by partner countries and Member States."[13][14]

The Cultural Council of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was created in Paris in 2008 under Nicholas Sarkozy's official order in order to promote the relations and the intercultural dialogue in particular between the Mediterranean nations. Its main goal was to play an active role in the attempts to bring unity and peace in the region as well as "to promote and support public and private initiatives with a view to enhancing the cultural aspects of the UfM and forging a better understanding of the region's cultural diversity."[15] Open-mindedness and tolerance are two key terms for the success of the UfM. Undeniably, Nicholas Sarkozy wanted France to play an active role by gaining a role of a cultural stabilizer in the area and somehow soothe France's past as a great colonialist country.

Despite the fact that the launching of the Union for the Mediterranean tried to mobilise all the countries of the Mediterranean around major common causes, important facts such as the Arab Spring and the extreme circulation of migrants are not to be underestimated. Throughout the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, the matter of migrants is of great importance but the UfM has gradually removed the resolution of this subject from its priorities. "It is however

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[12] https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/overview_en
[13] As above
[14] Revised ENP available here: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1334_en.htm
[15] *The Preservation and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage in the Mediterranean*, European Union

difficult to imagine a real union if the circulation of people is highly restricted and if the 'middle sea' becomes a major cemetery for illegal migrants" [De Wenden 2009].

The European Commission has announced *a strategy of the E.U. for international cultural relations* in 2016 which is especially created for Foreign Affairs relations as well as Security Policies. This strategy is supposed to inspire the cultural collaboration between the member-states of the E.U. and third countries as well as the promotion of an international cooperation based on peace, justice, freedom of speech, mutual understanding and respect of important values.

With the Lisbon Treaty the intercultural dimension of the E.U. became the center of attention. There were announced initiatives such as programs for Romanies' communities or "Intercultural cities"[16] and the platform for Dialogue in Europe. There are also other fields in which the intercultural dialogue is promoted such as the audiovisual sector, polyglotism, youth, research and national relations.[17]

Intercultural cities is a programme of the council of Europe that enhances entrepreneurship and creativity associated with cultural diversity. The innovation of this programme is the range of cities across the continent. These cities have developed a concept of migrant integration which they call "intercultural integration".

"The *Intercultural cities* programme supports cities in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens and developing comprehensive intercultural strategies to help them manage diversity positively and realise the diversity advantage. The programme proposes a set of analytical and practical tools to help local stakeholders through the various stages of the process." [18]

The European's *agenda for Culture* initiated in 2007 is the basic E.U.'s strategic plan in the field of Culture. It is based on the promotion of three strategic goals:

1) cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue,

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[16] http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/
[17] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.13.1.html
[18] http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/about

2) culture as the activator of creativity,

3) culture as an important aspect of public and international relations.

There are methods for promoting the intercultural dialogue in an institutional basis as well as several programs of managing culture.

The year 2008 was officially *the year of Intercultural Dialogue* for the European Union. The E.U. promoted equal participation in cultural life and respect of human identity not only in terms of democracy but in human rights also especially within groups of people coming from different cultural backgrounds. The intercultural dialogue was considered as a bridge of communication and development not only within the member-states but in collaboration with other countries as well. This is an important tool for multinational societies with groups of minorities.

The programmes initiated during 2008 were building bridges of interculturalism through mass media and educational programs. In this way the label of "otherness" can be eliminated and acceptance, knowledge and understanding could take its place.

In the end of 2008, the Cultural Union for the Mediterranean (Conseil Culturel de l'Union pour la Méditerranée) was created with the aim of promoting the Euro-Mediterranean relations and especially the intercultural dialogue between the nations of the Mediterranean.[19]

The Union's projects were as follows:

1) the donation of 500.000 books in the Alexandria Library as a way of promoting "the French language in the Middle East".

2) a conference of the President of the Union for "a new humanitarian world",

3) a forum held in Cairo for institutions, politicians and economists for the preservation of ideas and the development of traditional crafts of the Mediterranean,

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[19] http://www.econostrum.info/Le-Conseil-culturel-de-l-Union-pour-la-Mediterranee-br-Ensemble-offrons-une-dimension-culturelle-a-la-Mediterranee_a3851.html#

4) the project MAARIFA in collaboration with French television for the creation of three Arabian television channels in order to establish an educational "quality television" that is addressed to young people of the Mediterranean.

In the official website of the Union, there is a section which serves as a think tank covering a variety of subjects such as: art and creativity, tourism and heritage, science, society and education, way of living and traditional professions, cinema, media and audiovisual. Anyone can participate - individuals, companies, institutions from across the Mediterranean - and add their own ideas.

The Union, among other projects accommodates the Mediterranean literature prize initially founded in 1984. In addition, it publishes the "Manifest for culture in the Mediterranean" with the collaboration of persons involved in the cultural sector across the Mediterranean. The aim of the manifest is the development of a "Mediterranean culture" through a framework of collaboration and a public opinion.

In the European Union's 2015-2018 programme for Culture, there were four priorities:

"1) accessible and inclusive culture,

2) cultural heritage, cultural and creative sectors,

3) creative economy and innovation,

4) promotion of cultural diversity, culture in EU external relations and mobility."[20]

In 2014 the Commission launched Creative Europe, a programme for the creative sectors of Europe. In 2016, there has been adopted a joint communication for international cultural relations.[21]

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[20] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework_en

[21] As above.

In addition, the promotion of the intercultural dialogue is also included in the educational programs of: Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci και Grundtvig which are mobility programs for all educational levels covering students not only from Member-States but of third countries as well. However, these programs do not include Mediterranean third countries.

European Union's programmes have not been very effective. The former Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairss, Miguel Angel Moratinos, stated at the first "EU Special Envoy to the Middles East Peace Process": "As regards the EU and the Med he pointed to the Venice Declaration of 1980 and the 1995 Barcelona EU Council of Ministers' support for an autonomous EU policy toward the Med. He then went on to outline what went wrong in the EU policy towards the Med: a.) lack of EU political will to solve Med problems, b.) lack of economic and financial support for the area and c.) Unending ME conflicts. The Med is back as a priority on the EU agenda, Miguel stressed, making reference to the Med's [refugee] problems spilling into Germany, Austria, Hungary, etc."[22]

5.2 UNESCO

UNESCO promotes Cultural Diversity as an important aspect of personal and social development. In its declaration, it is clearly stated that "it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity."[23]

UNESCO has been promoting the intercultural dialogue since its foundation in 1945. Its programmes promote international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication. For example in several African nations, UNESCO has created programmes for education, technology such as scholarships and degree programmes for students coming from low and middle income countries and teachers' educational programmes for poor countries.

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[22] http://www.defenddemocracy.press/eus-role-in-the-mediterranean-optimism-mixed-with-shattered-dreams/
[23] http://en.unesco.org/themes/intercultural-dialogue

Moreover, UNESCO has been supervising the "Center for Intercultural Dialogue" which is based in the U.K. with the following mission: "To facilitate connections among Communication scholars studying intercultural dialogue, as well as facilitate intercultural dialogue among Communication scholars throughout the discipline, by encouraging international collaborative research, serving as a source for grants, and serving as a clearinghouse for information."[24]

This center for Intercultural Dialogue has a range of activities promoting the Intercultural Dialogue such as programs and opportunities for collaboration between companies or individuals, connection opportunities for scholars who wish to collaborate in various research topics as well as other activities. In this way, it serves as a means for communicating the intercultural dialogue in every part of the world, bringing together people sharing the same goals and ideas.

5.3 NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created in 1949 by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union. As soon as the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 90's, tremendous changes in the policies of the states have taken place. The European Nations, the Nations of the Middle East and the North Africa and of course the states in the Mediterranean started to confront sensitive issues such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction proliferation, extreme fundamentalism and political/economic crisis. This resulted in NATO beginning to focus on regions with these phenomena.

The Mediterranean Dialogue was a result of a partnership between NATO and the Med States and was initiated in 1994. [25] In 1993 the NATO Foreign Ministers had established the Partnership for Peace (PfP). Now, the Med Dialogue involves seven non-NATO countries: Egypt, Israel, Jordan (part of the Mashreq countries), Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia (part of the Maghreb countries).[26] Each country has its own political and cultural history and long-standing conflicts have taken place in the past. By all means, there are members of the Med

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[24] https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/about/mission-and-objectives/
[25] http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_60021.htm
[26] http://www.maghrebarabe.org/en/uma.cfm

Dialogue that were affected by the Arab Spring, such as Tunisia or Egypt. With the absolute assurance that peace, security and stability in the Mediterranean can only be achieved through security alliances and cooperation, NATO develops the Med Dialogue under this scope. The goal of the dialogue is the contribution in the stability of the Mediterranean region by achieving a mutual understanding between NATO and the involved countries. The initiative is based on two pillars:

1) The dialogue in terms of politics in crucial issues
2) Cooperation in practice

The cooperation in practice is formed in an Annual Work Program that includes workshops and activities in fields such as science and environment. The corresponding programmes have been created in order to enhance the cooperation between nations, companies and individuals. They stress on scientific research, innovation and on knowledge exchange.

There is a new form of cooperation that has been initiated through these programmes: The right of every nation to cultural diversity and participation of every nation in the summits in equal terms and not based on economic power. This new form of cooperation reinforces existing forms of cooperation as analysed above such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the ENP.

Another initiative promoting political dialogue is the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG), "which oversees the future evolution of the dialogue. Political discussions between the individual countries participating in the dialogue and the nineteen member countries of NATO take place on a one-to-one basis."[27]

In 2004, in the NATO summit held in Istanbul, NATO leaders decided to introduce the Istanbul Cooperation initiative with a broader selection of countries in the Middle East. This new initiative was even stricter in fighting terrorism, illegal trafficking, drugs etc. A second important factor of the new initiative was the common goals and challenges of the states involved.

Cyber attacks, energy security issues, the hybrid warfare, the Arab Spring and other practices following new threats and challenges in the political scenery after

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[27] http://www.nato.int/docu/topics/2000/en/pdf/dialogue.pdf

2010 lead to an international collaboration in every level for big institutions such as NATO, the European Union and the U.N.

All programmes as described above are designed to promote the cultural diversity and ensure the unity of the region.

6. Initiatives

There are programmes outside the framework of the big institutions that aim in promoting Intercultural Dialogue. These programmes derive mainly from non-profit organizations.

"*MESOGEIOS SOS*" is a non-profit environmental organization created in 1990 that emphasizes in environmental issues of the Mediterranean and Europe. The organization promotes the intercultural dialogue through collaborations and innovative procedures. It is actually a network with supporters from all over the world open to ideas, proposals, educational and development programmes. In their website it is clearly stated that their programmes are designed for those who "know no borders and are not afraid to meet the 'others'."[28] Most importantly the supporters of this network believe in the intercultural dialogue as they recognize a tool through which cultural diversity, human values and democracy can be promoted. For people in the programme, the development of communities and a common identity in a multi-national society is important.

The *Istituto Affari Internazionali* in Rome is another Organisation promoting the Intercultural Dialogue. "Established in June 2014, New-Med is a research network of Mediterranean experts and policy analysts with a special interest in the complex social, political, cultural and security-related dynamics that are present in the Mediterranean region."[29] What is most important for the Organisation is the creation of a network and a platform where researchers can express new perspectives about cooperation.

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[28] http://medsos.gr/medsos/2008-08-12-07-23-34.htm

[29] http://www.iai.it/en

In September 2016, a seminar for the obstacles and opportunities of intercultural dialogue took place in Rome.[30]

The project *Lab for Culture.org* is an online platform for conversation where anyone from every part of the world can send their ideas about intercultural dialogue and all ideas are connected in a platform interface.[31]

The *Anna Lindh Founfation* is an inter-governmental Institution "bringing together civil society and citizens across the Mediterranean to build trust and improve mutual understanding".[32]   It is financed by the Union of the Mediterranean and the European Commission. Its representatives come from all the Mediterranean. The Anna Lindh foundation has a range of activities such as media, culture, education and networks and organizes forums where people from all over the world can meet and collaborate on issues concerning the Mediterranean. The platform is also very active on partnerships with the Arab world and issues reports about its activity in three languages: English, French and Arabic. [33]

The key findings of the report 2014 are very interesting: People in the region have a growing appetite to know more about the Mediterranean "other". They are interested in all aspects of life, such as politics, economy, culture and lifestyle, religious practices etc. Overall they have a positive perception of the Mediterranean: hospitality, food, common history, civil participation. They also believed that the Arab Spring would have positive results in the Euro-Med relations in the future. Finally they all share the same need for democratic values.[34]

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[30]The New-Med Research Network and the Anna Lindh Foundation invited a few international scholars to Rome to discuss obstacles and opportunities for intercultural dialogue. At the presence of several representatives of Italian institutions and the President of the Anna Lindh Foundation, Élisabeth Guigou, speakers and participants will explore alternative ways and options to promote intercultural dialogue. http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/newmed_160908.pdf

[31] Please read more at: http://openlines.labforculture.org/about.php

[32] http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/about

[33] Reports can be found here: http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/download-full-reports

[34] http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/about

The platform informs us about the knowledge opportunities that all European and Mediterranean citizens are eligible of but also about the xenophobia and restraints of people living in the Mediterranean that prevent social unity in the region. These findings were confirmed by a report conducted by the Anna Lindh Foundation in Alexandria with the member states of the Union for the Mediterranean and Albania: Belgium; Denmark; Egypt; Germany; Ireland; Italy; Jordan; Morocco; Poland; Spain; Tunisia; and Turkey. This poll informs us about the interests of the majority of Europeans as well as of citizens in the Mediterranean region. These interests are as political and economic as cultural. People believe that culture differences can be a positive tool for the development of the region. "The EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhouhood Policy, Stefan Füle stated that '*this new edition of the Anna Lindh Report, the first since the historic Arab uprisings, is an invaluable tool as we continue to adapt our strategies and programmes to take account of the new regional realities*,' adding that, '*a key finding for political leaders on both sides of the Mediterranean is that their citizens are looking to work together and find new, alternative ways to participate in their societies*'."[35]

A very important statement that we should take into consideration is that of André Azoulay, President of the Foundation, who underlines that "*top-down actions will be a solution and that unions on the region should be built among the citizens of the Mediterranean*", this means an absolute from down to top scheme. Young people are optimistic and believe that things in the region will be better in the future in every part of the Mediterranean. "*What is most important among the findings is the fact that people truly believe that the social change that we aspire in the region will come through individuality and efforts that derive from the democratic society, therefore one should be very careful with the political parties of one's country.*"[36]

There is finally, a shared image of the Mediterranean for all people living on the shores of the Sea which includes heritage, a specific way of living, food and

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[35] http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/report-analysis
[36] As above.

hospitality. Of course restraints are not only social but political too. Political and economic interests are key factors for the non-coherence of this part of the world.

Womed is an organization controlled by the Union for the Mediterranean concerning women of the Mediterranean and collaborations in terms of socio-economic empowerment, employability, growth and sustainable development. The program is based on gender equality and equal opportunities. Through this program, women from the Mediterranean region can strengthen their leadership skills through collaborations and enterpreunship ideas.[37]

Moreover, the Spanish Department of Foreign Affairs issues a magazine concerning the Mediterranean region with the title "Intercultural Dialogue between Europe and the Mediterranean". It is issued under the *European Institute of the Mediterranean*, a Spanish Institution for the Mediterranean founded in 1989. The magazine includes articles regarding the Intercultural Dialogue and ideas for a united Mediterranean.[38]

7. *Case Study: Greece and Great Britain*

According to Eurobarometer 2007 and a survey conducted within the member-states of the E.U. regarding the Intercultural Dialogue, most Europeans believe that different cultures enrich societies and in particular Greeks are pro intercultural dialogue. In percentages though, the 18% is negative towards cultural diversity and the 69% is positive but with the simultaneous preservation of the traditions. Greeks in general are not very open to different cultures.

All above results were included in Greece's National strategy for the year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008 which was expanded in four poles:

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[37] http://ufmsecretariat.org/priority-areas/

[38] For example Himmich Bensalem, "*What it needs is a global philosophy and a universal elaboration in terms of an intercultural communication*".

1) the relations with the minorities within Greece,
2) the relations with the E.U.,
3) the relations with the neighbouring countries and
4) the relation with third countries.

In Greece's programmes for the Intercultural Dialogue we found almost the same findings as in France's Cultural Union for the Mediterranean. The programmes are designed to emphasize in an ethnocentric image of Greece. This means that they are based on the image of Greece culture rather than emphasising in the creation of a common Mediterranean identity. [39]

Greece according to its strategy developed a programme where the importance of the new technologies and communication were underlined. These means offer great opportunities for creating a platform for intercultural actions. Furthermore, emphasis is given in Greece's traditional heritage, such as museums and monuments.

As part of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue, Greek developed programmes with countries outside the E.U., such as the program "Musical Dialogues" (2008-2009) aimed at bringing people from different cultures and different cultures together. The educational process was an integral part of this program, with activities throughout Greece. This program has not been very effective there are administrative and structural national problems such as structural changes in Education that should be resolved prior changes in intercultural activities.

The basic pole of this programme was the idea that music is the most direct way to connect people. People have different cultural backgrounds and are of different nationalities. This programme aimed in including a very large number of people in concerts and educational seminars and for the development of a European musical unity and identity. A goal was the creation of a platform with open access in the material. Indeed in this line several concerts and seminars took place, as well as an educational seminar. The programme however lacked in having an international identity. It promoted a Greek identity instead.

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[39] http://interculture.culture.gr/gr/strategy_greece.pdf

There are programmes and activities in a local level and others that cover cooperation between cities from different countries, however Greece has not shown remarkable results in relation to the promotion of intercultural dialogue. In order to achieve long-term results, eliminate xenophobia and racism and respect for individual rights, structural reforms are needed.

We have examined another Member – state of the EU with a long history of assimilation of immigrants and systematically-organized policy making intercultural activities. Britain's cultural policy is shaped under the idea of cultural diversity. "The intercutlraul dialogue is a matter of all ministries which have included in their programming strategies for intercultural dialogue and all the local authorities, local institutions and organizations promoting this idea. The main attraction of interculturalism is the educational system, which blocks the voids in common and uniform policy. Additionally, in Great Britain, the Ministry of Culture 'ensured diversity in all activities, creating with this way mutual understanding and respect. The activities promoting intercultural dialogue are of a wide range, related to the arts, museums, cultural heritage, the area of books and letters, etc.'."[40]

The Arts Council, the official representative of Arts in Britain run the «InterCulturalism Programme», for the promotion of the involvement in the arts of several communities and national minorities all over the country. The main initiative of the Arts Council England is the support and creation of a community from third countries. Nationalities such as Arabian, African, Caribbean and others are included.

Activities in the field of theatre in the U.K. are remarkable. In the performing arts there are productions promoting artists from every country of the world. On the contrary in Greece, a country with long tradition in theatre there is not any significant intercultural interaction, which could be particularly useful for intercultural dialogue.

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[40] http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/intercultural-dialogue-country-sheets.php?aid=121]

8. *Uprising of the Arab Spring and Terrorism*

The Arab revolutions of 2011 took the world by surprise. "Everyone, except, perhaps, artists and cultural agents. Indeed, the first tangible signs of the changes on the horizon appeared in literature, cinema and the arts. Indeed, the Arab world has experienced a groundswell of change on the cultural level over the past few years, thanks above all to the circulation of cultural productions throughout the Arab world. The role of the contemporary Arab novel, with its transgressions (religion, politics, sexuality), has been decisive."[41]

"At the outset of 2011, with the radical questioning of European realpolitik in the Mediterranean, it was asserted that 'the EU must not be a passive spectator' since 'there is a shared interest in a democratic, stable, prosperous and peaceful Southern Mediterranean.' The European Neighbourhood Policy has thus been the object of a revision that has led to a new approach. It is based on providing greater support to processes of democratisation in terms of financial means, unprecedented mechanisms and above all, contents. The most remarkable aspects reside in the new emphasis on civil society as a decisive agent of change and on the mobility of people, now considered an indispensable component of exchange in the Mediterranean."[42]

Has the Intercultural Dialogue been fruitful and has it resulted in a real dialogue in the North and South Mediterranean? Apparently not. "In the course of the last two decades, the terrorist menace in the Mediterranean region has greatly increased because of religious radicalism, which pursues religion not as faith – that is, the relationship between believer and Creator – but as ideology and therefore injects itself into the political sphere. While, in the course of history, no religion has been immune to degeneration by fanatical and violent minorities, at present it is Islamic radicalism that stands out, but must be distinguished from the common and peaceful practice of Islam."[43]

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[41] Tanzarella 2012
[42] Walton 2001
[43] Pisano 2011

We should take under consideration the sensitive political fact of colonialism from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries. The exploitation of inhabitants of third countries by mainly France and Britain could be a factor of today's international terrorism. "If these and other European powers had not crashed into countries around the world and sown the seeds of hatred, those seeds would not be flowering into the poisonous weeds that are now spreading across Europe. Cultural conflicts set in motion by colonialism have spiraled into anger and violence."[44]

Results and Conclusion

In the case of the European Union (EU), the understanding of the cultural differences as they exist today means understanding of the weaknesses of its previous policies towards the Southern Mediterranean region. "Europe was not vocal enough about defending human rights and local democratic forces," stated Štefan Füle, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, in his policy speech to the European Parliament at the end of February 2011. "Too many of us fell prey to the assumption that authoritarian regimes were a guarantee of stability in the region. This was not even Realpolitik. It was, at best, shorttermism – and the kind of short-termism that makes the long-term ever more difficult to build."[45]

Although there seems to be a common strategy for the intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean regions, we have noticed that individual efforts are not enough to build a solid ground for the emergence of a common Mediterranean identity and values that will be above any personal or cultural differences. The key factor to that is that we have to surpass any political and economic differences and interests and look at the big picture of global peace, safety and unity. Especially in the sensitive Mediterranean region where so many different cultures meet, this need for unity becomes imperative. What we lack is a common strategic language in order to handle cultural differences. "Although, there is a consensus in the region on what could be referred to as 'universal

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[44] Kinzer 2015

[45] Walton 2001

values' as well as a clear identification of the ills to handle in an intercultural dialogue, still there is a divergence in European and Arab perceptions on how to approach cultural differences in a common language. This challenge is further aggravated by the fact that there is no consensus among the two sides of the Mediterranean on the essence of basic fundamental concepts, such as 'security considerations' or 'threats' to the region" [Khalifa 2010].

The northern part of Europe is preoccupied with extremism and other issues that come from the south part of Europe. Every nation is preoccupied with its own safety whereas the E.U. and other Institutions do not realise that stability and safety of the Mediterranean is a matter of the whole world and not only of the countries involved.

Apart from the collaboration and unity ideas, there is also a reluctance problem. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai believes that "All dialogue is a form of negotiation and negotiation cannot be based on complete mutual understanding or a total consensus across any sort of boundary or difference. Thus, if we wish to move away from the misleading and dangerous idea of a 'clash of civilizations', especially where Islam is concerned, it is important to recognize that all dialogue is risky and that no great tradition or ideology is lacking in internal debates. The challenge becomes how to conduct dialogue about the relevant differences, not about any difference or all differences. After all, we value diversity. How can there be diversity without difference?" [Appadurai 2008].

One understands that in spite of the occasional efforts towards an intercultural dialogue in fields of education, culture, science, human rights the present agenda of collaboration is not enough to build solid ground for a continuous open dialogue and any activities seem to be epidermic and stay on the surface of the deep cultural problems that exist in the region. If political and economic issues are not stabilized within the region, then there will not be a solution.

The harmonious coexistence, respect and understanding between individuals and communities of different cultures are not an easy process. The way to intercultural dialogue is long and difficult. However, it can be realized through

joint efforts at an individual, collective, community, governmental and institutional level. The fruitful intercultural dialogue is of utmost importance as it can ensure the peace and prosperity of society, through understanding and respect, especially in times of crisis and wars.

However, intercultural dialogue should go beyond cultures and different religions. Throughout the twentieth century we have seen extreme influences of technology on every field. We could use technology as a tool for the intercultural dialogue. "Globalization imposes its own agenda on us, while the rejection of this process, passionately and perhaps clumsily, proposes another. Dialogue between different religions and cultures is therefore more than ever obliged to tread the narrow path that will lead to a place where an authentically pluralistic civilization has freedom to develop." [Mitri 1997]

Through our research we have found that the single and compact strategy that starts from the base of society, namely the education system, legislation, administration and institutions, is the only way to achieve effective results in intercultural dialogue.

As we saw in the case of Greece, it is not easy to accept the "otherness". Fear, mistrust and suspicion are deeply rooted sentiments that cannot easily change. People tend to blame migrants for incidents of criminality. Nowadays, things have become even worse because of the rise of the unemployment and the economic crisis. It is important to realise that what is different from us does not carry a label of negativity and surely does not threaten our identity. On the contrary, societies and economies develop when different cultures, identities and opinions are all mixed. In relation to the humanitarian aspect, borders are only territorial and exist within the human mind. This idea can be communicated through new technological means and mass media.

It is important to build the conditions for mutual recognition throughout the Mediterranean and hence a common identity for the region. The goal is the elimination of conflicts and establishment of security between nations. "With regard to peace, we are convinced that its sustainability depends upon

universally proclaimed human rights, which are the main token of our common humanity. The acknowledgement of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue help to defuse the tensions that can arise in multicultural societies when a majority and minorities confront each other over recognition of their rights. What favours cultural diversity, which is in no way opposed to the universality of human rights, is a governance of reconciliation, which is the surest guarantee of peace."[46]

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[46] http://www.un.org/en/events/culturaldiversityday/pdf/Investing_in_cultural_diversity.pdf

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