

## Meeting in Rome to define priority areas for Cultural Heritage

The strategy document to be presented at ministerial level in Istanbul

10 Directors General from the Ministries of Culture of Mediterranean Partner countries accepted the invitation of the Euromed Heritage programme to actively contribute in drafting a strategy document for future interventions in the field of Cultural Heritage. This will be presented in its final version at the Euromed Heritage Forum: "Cultural heritage: a shared responsibility for the Mediterranean", in Istanbul, 27-28 October 2006. The high ranking officials were addressed by Italian Minister of Culture and Vice-Prime Minister Francesco Rutelli and received by ICCD Director Rita Sanzi Di Mino, and Gherardo La Francesca, Director General for Culture of the Italian Foreign Ministry, at

the ICCD premises in Rome. Sabri Abdel Aziz, of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Egypt, Awwaz Al-Khraysheh, Director General for the Department of Antiquities in Jordan, Elazar Cohen, Counsellor for Culture, Israeli Embassy in Rome, Fathi Bejaoui, Director of Research at the Institut National du Patrimoine in Tunisia, Orhan Duzgun, Director General for Cultural Heritage and Museums in Turkey, Frederic Hussein, Director General of Antiquities in Lebanon, Youssef Khiara, Director of Cultural Heritage in Morocco, Abdal-Razzaq Moaz, Deputy Minister of Culture in Syria, Walid Sherif, Director General of Planning Unit in the Palestinian Authority, Rachida Zadem Director of Cultural Heritage in Algeria shared comments and viewpoints on 15th September 2006 in Rome which were incorporated in the document.

Defining the priority areas for Cultural Heritage is the aim of the document "Strategy for

### "Rutelli's welcome to the DGs"

"I can assure you that the Italian Government intends to confirm and reinforce its own commitment. Also in areas affected by serious crises, of consolidating a true and proper "diplomacy of culture" thanks to the vocation and technical capacity of Italy in the field of cultural cooperation.

I will ask my colleagues the European Ministers of Culture their support."



Italian Minister for Culture Francesco Rutelli and ICCD Director Rita Sanzi Di Mino at the presentation of the initiative "Adopt"

the development of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Heritage: priorities from Mediterranean countries (2007-2013)". It reads, "the main objective of any promotion programme of cultural heritage has to be centred on the appropriation of Cultural Heritage by people themselves and therefore on education and access to knowledge of cultural heritage". This is particularly true of the Mediterranean region where cultural heritage has been identified as a priority field of action.



## Focus Groups in Morocco, Egypt, Israel and Syria

At the basis of the strategic document for cultural heritage priorities were four "Focus Group" meetings organised by the Regional Management Support Unit, during the first semester 2006, at the EC Delegations in Morocco, Egypt, Israel and Syria. The scope of the Focus Groups was to highlight the needs of South Mediterranean Partners in the Cultural Heritage sector, in terms of priorities for the future of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The participants for each Focus Group were around 25-30 which included: the Euromed Heritage partners in the selected country together with representatives from the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Planning / Budgetary policies, local Authorities, Universities and Civil Society organisations. The balanced composition of the Focus Group was a key factor in succeeding to obtain a global picture of each country's needs from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

The debate was structured over three levels: human resources, legislation, and institutional frameworks. The results of the Focus Groups provided elements of significant importance to the document "Strategy for the development of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Her-

itage: priorities from Mediterranean countries (2007-2013)" presented in Istanbul. They can be downloaded from

[www.euromedheritage.net/en/focus\\_groups/index.htm](http://www.euromedheritage.net/en/focus_groups/index.htm)

Roberto Carpano, RMSU Coordinator

Euromed Heritage

Forum

Cultural Heritage:  
a shared responsibility  
for the Mediterranean

Istanbul 27- 28 October 2006

[www.euromedheritage.net](http://www.euromedheritage.net)



THIS PROGRAMME  
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## Saving Genies

### Hoping to preserve the Djin Blocks in Petra through the Adopt a Mediterranean Heritage initiative

Within the magnificence of Petra, the ancient city carved in the rose-hued mountains of the Jordanian desert, the three-dimensional box-shaped structures known as Djin blocks stand out oddly against Petra's typically two-dimensional monuments. Some of the blocks are hollow, while others are solid, a few have some decorative features, but the question on everyone's mind is: what are they?

“We don't really know,” said Christopher Tuttle, field archeologist and Assistant Director at the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Jordan. “There have been several theories developed around them. They might have been tombs carved three-dimensionally -- unlike the rest of Petra's tombs and monuments -- because they were made for use by the elite. Or perhaps this is the construction style from an earlier period. One theory suggests that perhaps pyramid-shaped tombs were constructed from building blocks on top of the carved Djin blocks since many of them are solid with no chambers inside and there are remnants of constructed superstructure on some of the monuments.”



The carved stone facades at Petra are a familiar site, made famous in postcards and films. But many mysteries surround the Nabataians and their magnificent city Petra. Another theory Tuttle cited suggests that the blocks are large aniconic representations (those without images) of the Nabatean god betyl, like the smaller, two-dimensional betyls. Djin blocks were often built next to water sources, suggesting that water symbolism might have something to do with them.

The Bedouin thought the blocks were inhabited by djini (genies), hence the name Djin blocks. Nomadic Bedouin inhabited the ruins of Petra from around the time of the Islamic revolution 700 years ago until the late 1980s, creating their own historical narrative and myths based on their environment. Today the Djin blocks are neglected. Corrosion of the clay water management systems surrounding them has contributed to the weathering of the monuments, and erosion from wind, water and salt threatens to destroy these monuments before archeologists can begin to understand or appreciate them. The Jordanian Depart-

ment of Antiquities (DOA) is hoping to preserve the Djin Blocks - or at least one of them, known as Djin Block Number Nine - through the Adopt a Mediterranean Heritage program, an innovative initiative within the framework of the Euromed Heritage program aiming to facilitate the contact between cultural promoters of endangered Mediterranean heritage and international investors. Through this, private or public companies, NGOs and other legal entities working in the Middle East and North Africa can nominate pieces of tangible heritage for “adoption.” These can include monuments, archaeological sites and even individual sculptures, paintings, manuscripts or old musical instruments. After an item is listed with the program, then anyone - from individuals to companies and foundations - can adopt it and finance the help it needs. The Jordanian antiquities department added Djin block number nine to this diverse list because of their belief in the monument's unrecognized significance.

“When people come to Petra, the Djin blocks are being ignored,” said the DOA's Mai Al Shaer. “We want to show that they are significant monuments, worth being preserved and interpreted.”

*Razan Nasser, Winner of the Euromed Heritage Journalistic Award 2006*

## Adopt... “Le Hevra Kedosa Synagogue” in Izmir

*The Izmir Synagogue was one of the first 10 proposals selected by the Technical Committee of the ‘Adopt a Mediterranean Heritage’ initiative*

Izmir Metropolitan Municipality as the promoter of “Le Hevra Kedosa Synagogue Project” attaches importance to regain the area where the synagogue is located to world



cultural heritage. It is a memory of the 17th century. It is of vital importance to carry out static strengthening. The fact that 2/3 of its roof collapsed and its colons weakened due to moisture indicates that emergency intervention is of priority. The general aim of the project is to restore and integrate in contemporary life the Synagogues Area which is a part of world cultural heritage and one of the unique places where various civilizations meet. Izmir Metropolitan Municipality believes that the Synagogue not only belongs to the Jewish community or the city Izmir itself but also to the world civilisation. In this context, we are sure that any investor that feels responsibility and consideration for the great value of history and culture will give a helping hand. Contributions of the investing firm will be clearly shown with a banner throughout the works to be carried out in the Synagogue. The investing firm may utilize the residential space of the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality about the pres-

entation of posters and visual equipment, which will be prepared by being faithful to an agreement to be signed with the investing firm, underlining the importance it attaches to the cultural and historical heritage. At the opening ceremony that will take place upon completion of the works in the Synagogue, the investing firm will be given the opportunity to promote itself (opening stands promoting its products, posting posters and banners, etc.). If the firm considers arranging a promotion and advertisement campaign showing the importance it attaches to the protection of historical heritage, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality will offer its support in presenting the promotion. Promotions may be periodically repeated.

[http://www.euromedheritage.net/adopt/adopt\\_gallery/turkey.htm](http://www.euromedheritage.net/adopt/adopt_gallery/turkey.htm)

*Funda Sozer, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Project Development Bureau*

# Rehabimed has an epoch-making challenge in Cairo

The old medieval heart of Cairo is a series of atmospheres which take your breath away. If it were not for the multitude of parabolic satellite dishes and the huge amount of garbage on the sandy crumbling roofs even the most critical tourist would be astonished. And there, in the most incredible and fascinating chaos, the Rehabimed project team decided to launch their challenge, the architectural rehabilitation of a *wekaleh* - a typical residential and commercial unity - in order to improve the quality of life and work conditions of those living there. This is not an easy task. In the old part of the city, all seems to be free of the usual building speculation. With the circumstances that there, within the geopolitical limbo suspended between Africa and Middle East, the culture of recuperation does not exist already. On the contrary, it seems rather to be part of 'Dubai syndrome', the vertical, neo-gothic architecture. Indeed, the only possible intervention in the devastated city area, is the demolition and rebuilding. Of what? self-contained- and air-conditioned skyscrapers. Or hideous and depersonalised

living unities. For that reason, this Rehabimed pilot project is an epoch-making challenge. In a period of only three years, huge bureaucratic difficulties and mainly a limited budget do not really seem to worry the international working group running the project. Above all, among all the Euromed Heritage interventions since 1998 until now, this project will leave tangible signs on the territory. "We will create a precedent which will have obvious consequences on the destiny of other *wekaleh*", Xavier Casanovas said, Catalan coordinator of the project. In Cairo, we have on more than two hundred *wekalehs* whose origins are lost in the mists of time. Their commercial function, although only for living, is the characteristic item and this attracted the attention of the Rehabimed project. For centuries, in fact, they were places of production for highly specialised manufactures. Craftsmen used to work in laboratories leaning out on the courtyard, selling products in shop located on the streets. And they used to live with their families on the first floor. "Ahmed El-Khateep" *wekaleh* - the

collaborator on the project "... the revenue from the entire patrimony amounts to only ten Euros annually!" he adds while answering implicitly the reasons why he has no interest in architectonic recuperation but in a social one. With those premises, the know-how transfer - as well as the fund transfer - from Europe can only have positive consequences and make sure that the Barcelona Declaration on Euro-Mediterranean partnership does not remain only words. The old al-Qahirah, view from Qalawum minaret, beats with joy and desperation, at the same time slow and frenetic. The narghiles smoke and kabab, the spices smell, the rotten fruits and the gas of the antique Fiat 1100 are blended into an attracting and repulsive symphony, which cannot be described.

Mr. Casanovas shows me the overview of the project intervention. "As you can see, he says to me that it is only a drop in the ocean, but it could be a small start ..."

I am confident and I smile.

*Damiano Laterza, Winner of the Euromed Heritage Journalistic Award 2006*

\* Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs



one to which Rehabimed wants to give a new life - is inhabited by two families of craftsmen, one in textiles and the other a metalworker, and in spite of this, the building's conditions are poor. As of today, almost all *wekaleh* are in an advanced state of degradation and many of them are totally abandoned. "The major part of the buildings of the Medieval city is owned by awqaf\*..." Mahmoud Ismail said. He is the head of the Cultural Office of Egyptian Embassy, and is an active and passionate

## Award Winners

Jordan's Razan Nasser and Italy's Damiano Laterza, from Meda countries and from EU respectively, are the winners of the Euromed Heritage Journalistic Award 2006. The prizes will be awarded at a special ceremony during the Euromed Heritage Forum. A special mention of the jury was assigned to Amine Esseghir (Algeria) and Annalisa Monfreda (Italy). The ANSAMed price goes to Nadia Ben Sellam (Morocco).

## Cultural Heritage during armed conflicts

From the Euromed Heritage workshop in Amman to WATCH



A generalised lack of awareness among the wider public partly contributes to make it difficult for the concerned international and national authorities when they should play their role in safeguarding Cultural Heritage before, during and after conflicts. This is why it became a priority to organize a contribution from civil society in securing the implementation of the internationally agreed policies, as it has been often requested in several forums.

It is in this context that the 'World Association for the protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in times of armed conflicts' (WATCH) was created. Its official registration in Rome (Italy) was celebrated with the first meeting of the 12 members of the elected Board of Trustees. The meeting took place in Rome on 11-12 July 2006 and

it was hosted by the Central Institute for Cataloguing and Documentation of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

The association is an expression of the Civil Society engagement in reaction to the increased damage inflicted on Cultural Heritage during armed conflicts and illicit trafficking.

Officially founded in 2005 by a core group of 40 founder members from various countries, the Association was established after several months of studies and exchanges that culminated in April 2004 with the thematic workshop organised in Amman (Jordan) by the Regional Management Support Unit of the Euromed Heritage programme promoted by EuropeAid.

Information is available on the website: [www.eyeonculture.net](http://www.eyeonculture.net)

Direct contacts are possible via email: [info@eyeonculture.net](mailto:info@eyeonculture.net)

*Claudio Cimino, RMSU Project Manager*

## Medvoices

### Istanbul Reminiscences

#### "The Last Fifty Years of Istanbul

#### Districts: Changing sounds, colours, localities, and people"

The exhibition of the Medvoices project will be presented especially for the participants to the Euromed Heritage Forum, Istanbul 27-28 October.

<http://www.med-voices.org/pages/news.aspx>

## Patrimoines Partagés

### Launch of the book "Port-Saïd, architectures XIXe-XXe siècles"

François de Mazières, president of the « Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine », Mireille Grubert, director of the École de Chaillot, Mercedes Volait coordinator of the project « Patrimoines partagés », presented it the 12 septembre 2006 at the « Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine » in Paris. For all information: [cthepaut@citechailot.org](mailto:cthepaut@citechailot.org)

The project Patrimoines partagés has produced a series of publications dedicated to the topic of modern heritage in the Mediterranean. All project publications are presented on the new website

[www.patrimoinespartages.org](http://www.patrimoinespartages.org)

**This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the RMSU and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.**

## Euromed Heritage at the Euromed Committee in Brussels

*Mahmoud Ismail (Rehabimed) presented his project at the Euromed Committee on 12 July 2006, his presentation followed the one from Romeo Carabelli (Patrimoines Partagés) on 31 May 2006.*

The goal of the presentation was to show to the Euromed Committee, through concrete examples, the effects of continuity and durability of the Euromed Heritage programme by exposing the case of three projects: Corpus and Corpus Levant (EH phase I) then RehabiMed (EH phase III).

The project Corpus Levant based itself on the rich experience of inventory and research about the Mediterranean traditional architecture of the project Corpus, and this in the aim to spread these results toward the only two missing countries in the initial project, Syria and Lebanon. In addition to the very rich internet site, which is perfectly functional up till now after 6 years from the end of the project, the cd-rom and the encyclopedic book that had been realized by Corpus, Corpus Levant produced for the two countries practical help for rehabilitation and maintenance in the form of a manual with about sixty pictorial cards. In order to achieve concrete actions for the rehabilitation and the mise en valeur of the Mediterranean traditional architecture, the RehabiMed project invests networks, knowledge and actions of the two previous projects to organize seminars of vocational training on four themes and workshops on cultural heritage that come with four pilot projects of rehabilitation in four countries of the Mediterranean basin (Cyprus, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco).

*Mahmoud Nabil Ismail, Director of the Egyptian Cultural Center in Paris*

## Euromed Heritage compendium

The RMSU has published a comprehensive CD in which you will find the activities and the publications (PDF files) produced by the Regional Management and Support Unit (RMSU).

For further information: [info@euromedheritage.net](mailto:info@euromedheritage.net)



## Qantara

### New website online!

The Euromed Heritage III project, Qantara, has launched its website. The project "QANTARA - Mediterranean Heritage: Crossings between Orient and Occident" aims at creating a transversal data base implemented by the Euro-Arab partners of the project of the consortium coordinated by the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA). This data base will use the whole range of multimedia supports (pictures, videos, texts).

<http://www.qantara-med.org/index2.html>

## RehabiMed

Call for papers for the First Euro-Mediterranean Regional Conference: "Traditional Mediterranean architecture. Present and future". RehabiMed is launching a forum for debate in the rehabilitation of traditional architecture in Mediterranean countries, which will be held in Barcelona 12-15 July 2007. The deadline for the call for papers is 31 October 2006. The fundamental aim of the Rehabimed project in the framework of the European Euromed Heritage programme is to promote the rehabilitation of traditional architecture in all Mediterranean countries.

[www.rehabimed.net](http://www.rehabimed.net)

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The **Regional Management and Support Unit (RMSU)** has been set up for Euromed Heritage II-III on behalf of the EuropeAid Co-operation Office.

The role of the RMSU is to assist partners and beneficiary countries in achieving project objectives, ensure coherent implementation of projects and full exploitation of opportunities, promote visibility and exchange of information and results.

The RMSU is located at the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione (ICCD) in Rome and benefits from the technical know-how of the international Centre Città d'Acqua of Venice.

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