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**Technical Assistance Unit of Med Culture Programme
for the promotion of culture as vector of Human, Social and
Economic Development in South Mediterranean Countries**

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Tunisia Country Report

By

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1 Context and introduction

Tunisia is the smallest country of the Greater Maghreb in terms of area (163,610 km²) and its population in 2013 was 10,886,000 inhabitants (NIS). Due to its geographical position, the territory was the target of many colonial and expansionist civilisations. Tunisia was first Phoenician, then Roman, Christian before becoming Vandal and Byzantine, Arab and Ottoman. Finally, it was under the French tutelage formalised May 12, 1881 by the Treaty of Bardo. Independence was achieved in 1956 after 75 years. There then followed a proclamation of the republic and the appointment of Habib Bourguiba as president on July 25 1957. An amendment of the constitution grants him life Presidency on 18 March 1975. In 1987 he left power, deposed by Prime Minister Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. The latter gets 99.3% of votes during the 1994 elections. He was re-elected in 1999, 2004 and 2009.

Faced with an uprising triggered by the immolation of Tarek Bouazizi (said Mohamed) in Sidi Bouzid, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled the country on January 14, 2011. Tunisia thus was the instigator of the "Arab Spring". However, the flip side of this period "post-revolutionary" was characterised initially by great political instability, which continued until the first free elections were held on October 23, 2011. The context of political confusion and of the identity discourse partly fed into Ennahdha's victory without encountering any real opposition. In 2015, according to Finance Minister Slim Chaker (Tunisie numérique of 05/01/2016) the socio-economic context that remains highly uncertain in Tunisia is that "Tunisia's debts increased from 26 billion dinars in 2010 (over 11 billion euros) to 41 billion dinars in 2014 (over 18 billion euros) (...), which is 58% increase in four years." The unemployment rate reached 15.4% in the second quarter of 2015 (NIS), of which 28.6% are degree holders. Greater Tunis (Tunis, Manouba, Ariana and Ben Arous) ranks first, accounting for 195,000 unemployed, followed by East central (84 600), the Midwest (74 400), the South East (73 400), the North East (63 400), North West (62 700) and South West (51 100). Tunis also suffers from recurrent social conflicts and an unfavourable international environment (including the situation in Libya and the slowness of the European economy). Its economic growth has been slowing down since its national net worth did not exceed 2.8% in 2014 against the 3.5% realised previously, which was expected following the slowdown of industrial activity. This is the 4th consecutive year of low growth (2% per year) and the first in Tunisia's economic history ever for such a long period of low growth. Note however, that the Human Development Index remains reassuring. For it is 0.721 in 2015, enlisting Tunisia in the 96th place out of 187 countries and the 10th amongst Arab countries. Tunisia should reach most of the Millennium Development



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Goals (MDGs)² despite social and regional inequalities that are a challenge for the country.

Only three years after the "revolution", a new constitution was adopted (January 26, 2014) which signifies a big step for the democratic process. This constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression, opinion, the right to creativity and allows participation and enjoyment of the cultural and artistic life. However, many attacks and condemnations were still noted against artists. Aside from politics, the causes of barriers have become religious or moral.

Soon after the drafting of the constitution, a new government headed by Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa was elected by the National Constituent Assembly on January 29, 2014 succeeding the cabinet led by Ennahda. The selection criterion only granted the post of minister as independent technocrats.

It is in this context that Mourad Sakli took over as the Minister of Culture and Heritage Preservation. In his press conference on March 11, 2014³, he announced the three axes of the cultural policy for the year:

- The contribution to the establishment of a climate that is conducive to freedom and which stimulates creativity in the various cultural and artistic fields.
- The democratisation of culture, namely the right of all to enjoy and participate in cultural life.
- Instigation to gradual decentralisation of the various cultural sectors.

Subsequently, there have been two ministerial changes, and the new minister of culture Sonia Mbarek (appointed on 12 January 2016) artist of music, university professor and a doctoral student in law made no statement at the time of her appointment to announce her policy.

In addition, the independent cultural scene is characterised by profound changes since January 2011, following the changes of laws related to community life. For example, a platform that carries the name of jamaity (my association) was founded in January 2014. This platform put together 1936 associations (www.Jamaity.org) in January 2016, as well as calls for projects and available funding. This initiative, created by emerging cultural players to support their colleagues, facilitates the work of cultural actors. Moreover, to encourage the private sector, the Minister of Culture issued in January 2016 a guide to cultural patronage. One of the huge challenges of the independent cultural scene today is the occupation of public space in which it was not possible to invest for decades. According to IFEDA centre (Centre for Information, Training, Studies and Documentation of Associations IFEDA, created in 2000), the number of Tunisian associations in September 2015 exceeded 18,143 and they have done a tremendous job to reclaim the space coveted by Islamists.

²- In the report on the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations, "Eight Goals for 2015".

³- « Mourad Sakli presents the strategy of the Ministry of Culture for the year 2014 », in tuniscope.com, March 11, 2014.



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Finally, the wave of freedom has given rise to activities inside the country like pocket theatre in Kef (north western Tunisia), a private cultural space newly founded by young artists in Bizerte (north), and others.

2 General objective and governance

In the aftermath of independence, culture in Tunisia has been linked to a reform of the education system. It was surely attributed to the State Secretariat for Culture and Information, which was established in 1961. Three years later in 1964, the creation of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage Preservation marked the state's willingness to support the national cultural action. (Decree No. 96-1875 of 7 October 1964 and in Decree No. 2005-1707 of 6 June 2005).

It was during the 1970s that the cultural policy of Tunisia began to be influenced by the currents of thought that constructed the guidelines of international and regional organisations such as UNESCO. Thus, a new perception of culture emerged, understood as an instrument of development and an extension of the strategic vision of society. The capital (Tunis) was designated "Regional Cultural Capital" in 1997 by UNESCO. Tunisia has ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in July 24, 2006, then, with a coalition for cultural diversity, the country has ratified the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions on February 15, 2007.

The administration of the Ministry of Culture fulfils an effort to modernise and organise in defining the areas of the state intervention in culture in Tunisia. Note also that, the priority is generally given to heritage, cultural activities, performing arts (drama), audio-visual arts, and books. Today, the administration is expected to open up to other specificities, such as plurality and cultural diversity, media relations, relations with the civil society, cultural industries, the private funding of culture, the new networks of culture and its dissemination.

Cultural policy in Tunisia is going under a decentralisation process. A first wave was initiated in 1970 and was continued in 1992 with the creation of 264 regional delegations of culture, working in coordination with the local cultural committees. In 2013 in Tunisia, one could count more than 225 cultural centres spread over the entire territory (including 26 in the Governorate of Tunis). In addition to: 12 cultural centres, 381 public libraries, 6 centres of dramatic and performing arts, 19 institutes of music and dance.

However, that centralisation remains very strong. Undeniably, the decision-making power in the capital remains critical, and the heritage potential of the regions is neither valued nor sufficiently used. This results in a discrepancy between North / South and East / West. The great cultural inequality is clearly perceived between the urban fabric (North, Northeast) that is culturally dynamic and the rural areas



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(South and West). This contrast is even more obvious since the "revolution" in 2011. Also note that there is the lack of cultural facilities, limited human resources, limited financial resources and the deficit in training. We can add to that, the fact that the structures and institutions that constitute a strong network across the country, had to divert their activities under the Ben Ali era. Finally none of the named structures can perform its function of decentralisation and democratisation of culture. Their empowerment is at the heart of the objectives of the constitution of 2014 (Art.131)

A public policy dedicated to festivals and heritage

Public policy of the Tunisian MOC favours events, particularly festivals: over 700 festivals are identified throughout the country, including 400 with total or partial sponsorship. These festivals are either a conversion of ancient secular festivities or related to agricultural or religious occasions (local festivals), in addition to new festivals that are open to contemporary expressions (national festivals). The state has made a vitrine that presents cultural diversity and pumps it more and more with cultural tourism services (such as festivals of Tozeur, Dougga, Sahara Douz). Festivals can contribute to the attractiveness of the regions and promote their heritage and eventually promote them as potential tourist destinations. At the heart of this strategy, heritage occupies in effect a prominent place since the 1970s. Our evidence is the National Heritage Institute: with a budget of 1.49 million TND in 2013⁴, is the best- equipped Tunisian public institution. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism collaborate in this case to support these events. The down side of this cultural policy would be standardisation. In other words, it is to focus on the commercial dimension at the cost of the artistic dimension of the event in order to attract more people. Although encouraging, the democratisation of the access to culture should not underestimate thinking about programming as far as the artistic quality is concerned. For example, the artistic director is often absent from the Organising Committees of Tunisian festivals. Moreover, in the opinion of all consulted cultural actors, festivals in Tunisia generally suffer from a lack of medium and long-term structuring. Devoid of clear objectives and programmatic lines, poorly adapted to their size and their environment, they suffer from a lack of anticipation, organisation and continuity from one edition to another; training needs of project management and cultural communication were discussed to overcome it.

3 Legislation and funding

A - Legislation

A former legislative framework

⁴ - According to a document submitted by the MOC on the 2013 budget of administrative public establishments (EPA).



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At the legislative level, the law decrees that govern the sector date for much of the 1960s, at the earliest and most of the 1980s. It is the same case for the status of public institutions and festivals run by the Ministry of Culture. Old laws caused a lack of administrative flexibility, difficulty to establish partnerships and debilitation of economic and artistic influence that many actors (institutional and non-institutional) criticise.

Disregarding the laws of Intellectual Property

The new Minister of Culture has made the encouragement of private investment in culture a priority in the policy, in particular through respect and promotion of intellectual property, which is not applied in Tunisia.

The OTPDA (Tunisian Agency for the Protection of Copyrights: Law No. 94-36 of 24 February 1994 on literary and artistic property, amended and supplemented by Law No. 2009-33 of 23 June 2009) is the formation of the non-administrative support to safeguard the economic and moral rights of authors (members) in the various literary, artistic and scientific fields. For this purpose, it delivers the authorisations necessary for the use of the different works and ensures the obtaining of royalties due to authors. It also contributes to instilling the culture of copyrights. A recent decree (n ° 2013-2860 of 1 July 2013) added the administration of similar rights to the mission of the OTPDA.

However, the failed enforcement of intellectual property law in Tunisia is caused by many recurring and structural causes. First, the absence of the culture of copyrights and ethics may be due to the local context of rampant piracy although a legal armoury has been deployed since 2009 formed of the economic Brigade, Customs and the Ministry of Interior, which is a link to the OTPDA has been fighting against it. Second, the lack of human, technical and financial resources and with 470,000 TND budget allocated in 2013 by the Ministry of Culture and 280 000 TND capital, it has a little leeway.

The steps initiated by the Ministry of Culture since early 2014 in this perspective were to:

- Organise an awareness campaign on the importance of literary property to the dissemination of the culture of safeguarding intellectual property (spring 2014).
- Increase the interventions of qualified field officers who are committed to punish offenders (September-December 2014).
- Develop cooperation with specialised international organisations and bodies (2016).

B - Finances and the budget allocated to culture

The budget dedicated to culture in Tunisia has doubled in 10 years (2003 to 2013), but decreased from 2012 to 2013.



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This budget does not exceed 0.64% of the general budget of the state in 2013⁵, but it experienced a relatively constant rate for 10 years, between 0.7 and 0.8%.

Compared to other Greater Maghreb countries, Algeria with a rate of 0.53% and 0.23% with Morocco, Tunisia dedicates a significant portion of the state budget to culture. This budget cannot meet- however only partially- the needs of a young population (18.9% aged 15-24 and 28.4% with the 25-29 age group in 2012 according to NIS). Distribution of the budget also covers areas depending on the different domains resulting in an unequal coverage.

Distribution of the national budget by the Public Institution in Tunisia in 2013⁶

Public institutions	Amount allocated by the state in TND	% of national budget
The National Heritage Institute (INP)	1490000	0.055%
The National Library	1420000	0.050%
The National Centre of the Cultural Communication	550 000	0.020%
The National Institute of Music	240000	0.010%
The National Popular Arts Troupe	200000	0.010%
Regional Offices of Culture	12640000	0.47%
The Centre for Arab and Mediterranean Music (CMAM)	1124000	0.042%
The Tunisian National Theatre (TNT)	1077000	0.040%
The Tunisian Agency for the Protection of Copyrights (OTPDA)	470000	0.017%
The National Centre of Translation	998000	0.037%
The National Centre of Cinema and the Image	170000	0.006%

Following the regional offices, and in order, the INP, the National Library, the

⁵ - Amar Kessab and Dounia Benslimane , « A comparative study on certain aspects of the politics of culture in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt », Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, 2011, p.15

⁶ - Subsidy figures are from the document MdC "Budgets 2012-2013 EPNAS public establishments of non administrative character and EPAS public establishments of administrative nature".



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CAMM, TNT and the National Centre of Translation are the most supported public institutions by the state.

Cinema: Public aid and the small private support

Despite a favourable public support, Tunisia is experiencing economic problems in this sector. The film sector is managed by the General Directorate of Performing Arts and Audio-visual Arts, and Audio-visual Arts Department in the Ministry of Culture. It is the sector that gets the most support by the state after cultural events. Clearly seen through the amount of public funding (of about 5.5 million TND in 2013) and the establishment of the National Centre of Cinema and the Image in 2012. The state pays on average in the form of a grant 500 000 TND for each feature film produced (35% of total costs and 70% for a short film). The average film budget is 2 million TND, which highlights the weakness of the annual state budget allocated to the sector.

There are two production support commissions:

- Aid with writing, production or finishing a feature film or a short film (Decree No. 2001-717 of 19 March 2001) for distribution in the commercial world. The selection committee is composed of people in the business and a member of the Ministry of Culture, which convenes once a year. Among the award criteria: the artistic quality, financing strategies, with the guarantee of economic benefits and reputation of the director of the work who is a holder of the professional card.
- Support for non-subsidised producers (by the previous committee) purchase of film rights to broadcast with a non-commercial networks, such as cultural centres, associations (cine clubs), schools, universities, Tunisian embassies abroad; this aid is dedicated to the encouragement of Tunisian cinema. Among the award criteria: artistic quality and the significance of content.

Despite such public support, production remains weak and faces the refusal of support from banks and the private sector. Only 5-6 feature films and 25 to 30 short films are produced on average per year in Tunisia. Despite the large number of production houses (500 according to the Ministry of Culture), many directors are struggling to secure their budgets. According to cultural actors, one of the reasons is the lack of co-productions and the lack of involvement of foreign and local investors. In fact, two or three known producers have the hold of the Tunisian market, however limited it may be, but only because of their mastery of the postproduction of picture and sound, and the distribution of foreign lucrative movies. National television, in large financial deficit, also stopped supporting the Tunisian cinema for ten years. Banks show little flexibility with regards to the sector, especially that they know very little about its business model.

The CNCI was established in 2012 (Decree No. 212-753 of 2 July 2012) and raised many expectations. This organisation has signed a partnership agreement with the



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CNC France in 2013, aimed at developing film cooperation between France and Tunisia. Fethi Kharrat was appointed director of the CNCI in June 2015, he worked on the revision of legislation on the grants for and dissemination of Tunisian films, dating back to the 60s and 80s, which gave a breath of fresh air to the sector. The production aid for 2015 exceeded 3.982 million dinars (1.794 million euros).

Dramatic Arts: A legislative framework to review

The old legislation governing drama in Tunisia (1989) is to adapt to changes in the sector to promote the creation of rehearsal space and production and distribution for the new generations; especially graduates of the Institute of dramatic Art (ISAD) of Tunis and Kef which are the two main foundations for public drama and they are under the Ministry of higher Education. Obtaining production aid as a financing methodology and the selection criteria of which, are regularly mentioned as barriers to creative freedom of Tunisian artists. Additionally, this "aid to create" is very limited and does not allow the emergence of new forms and new medium and long-term projects.

The Performing Arts Department is in charge of coordinating public funding of Dramatic Arts in Tunisia. With an annual budget of 3.2 million TND in 2014, Dramatic Arts is an artistic field that is well supported by the state compared to others. Since the 1980s, the art arena has been open to private initiatives (Decree No. 89-399 of 24 March 1989)⁷. The new Law on associations has also encouraged this transformation (see 3.3.A.). Theatre companies rose from 10 in 1987 to over 150 today. The Tunisian National Theatre (TNT) and 6 drama centres are in the public guardianship, managed by officials appointed by the MOC, with a mission of production, dissemination and training.

Support mechanisms, governed by an annual commission (consisting of representatives of the MOC, public institutions, private sector and trade unions) are:

- Production aid: estimation of a project before its completion. 1/3 or 2/3 of the overall production cost can be supported. However, grants are awarded to the company once the play has been performed and approved by the commission.
- Distribution aid: purchase of the finalised project for a public broadcast system, established by the MOC but organised by the companies; about 15 to 20 performances are intended to present for the "best" performances, based on past subsidies. The state support is reflected up to an amount ranging from 20 000 to 40 000 TND on average, knowing that the cost of a show varies between 2 000 and 9 000 TND depending on the scope of the project.
- Assistance for the operation and equipping the theatrical spaces and

⁷ - Decree n°89-399 of March 24 1989, setting the conditions for granting or withdrawal of the approval of the Minister of Cultural Affairs to create professional structures of production and distribution of Dramatic Arts.



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associations.

A first-time work must have a minimum of 15 performances to be supported in its dissemination.

Books: The lack of an operational structure of book publishing

The Book Directorate of the Ministry of Culture supervises two other divisions: Humanities Department, and the Public Reading. The professionals have expressed the wish to see an operational structure type "National Centre of the Book" which would better support the industry and constantly address the situation of books with the production of detailed and reliable data. From a political standpoint, the Tunisian government has encouraged book publishing. For this reason, it has liberalised its importation, subsidised local production (with the compensation of paper costs) while controlling editorial activity until the private publishing houses began to emerge in the 1990s, and helped diversify the production. Thus, since 2000, a myriad of French publishing houses were established in Tunisia (Apollonia, Alif-editions of the Mediterranean, Simpact, Alyssa, Tree ...), publishing 1000- 4000 books a year.

Plastic Arts: Public support for very limited creation

The state support for plastic arts essentially translates into the purchase of works of art of which the negotiation is entrusted to a commission of the Ministry of Culture. The Commission shall purchase works twice a year, from galleries approved by the Ministry of Culture (56 in total), and stores them in a repository that is currently far from meeting the requirements for the conservation of art works. Nearly 7,000 non-catalogued works have been stored for the past 40 years in a very narrow building, in very poor conditions, some of which are already damaged. The personnel in charge of the reserve do not have adequate training to deal with concepts of conservation. 400 art works unknown to the public have been exhibited by the Fine Arts Department, for the first time in 2012, in several places of Tunis. A second exhibition was held in 2014 for works acquired in 2013. Also associations that implement art projects may be subsidised (the grant per association to reach a maximum of 5000 TND; 10000 TND exceptionally and also requires the agreement of a commission with the final approval of the Minister). These grants are charged to the budget of the Ministry and not artistic directorates/departments.

Music and dance: Truncated state-supported disciplines

Music and dance in Tunisia are the least supported type of arts, the state granted them an annual budget of 550 000 TND in 2013. 100 000 TND were awarded to dance against 50 000 TND in 2010. This finding contradicts with the dynamism of these two lively areas of the new era since 2011.

The Department of Music and Dance raises the need for:



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- Legislative reform of laws and decrees regarding the professional card (Law No. 69-32 of 9 May 1969) which is not at all representative of the current artistic forms of music, dance and the diploma music teachers where the ISM is disregarded in the whole equation (Institute of higher education which is now under the Ministry of Education and Research) which graduates many students with a master's degree and teachers' remuneration (Decree No. 89-605 7 June 1989)⁸ and their paid overtime using a rate still set at 1.199 TND for example.

* Constitutional reform of the conservatories (a total of 19 throughout the country, with a total of approximately 5000 students according to the MOC), which have no status, the same applies to orchestras, symphonic, national troupe of music, the national troupe of folk dance and festivals.

However choreography is getting an institutional recognition beginning with the legitimisation of folklore rather than contemporary dance, which is mostly misunderstood and often reduced to a problematic cultural and economic situation for artists who above all, have no status in the first place.

The precariousness of cultural enterprises as a barrier to the engagement of banks

The access and the diversification of funding sources for cultural projects and dependency on the pulse of the private investment in culture; be it merchant cash providers or non-market and because of the economic crisis and the lack of understanding of business models, banks are a poor alternative. They consider cultural projects as too risky to be funded within the context of commercial activity.

Scarcity of cultural patronage

Despite existing tax incentives, cultural patronage is rare in Tunisia. There are many advantages of an "intangible investment premium and a premium for priority technological investments" in launching a business. The law also allows producers to defer payments of employees' social security contributions when hiring to get reductions on the income tax and tax exemptions related to training. However, it seems that this is not enough to convince more companies to engage in supporting culture and artists.

Another positive achievement is that the Tunisian Ministry of Finance signed an agreement with the OIF in 2004 to manage a guarantee fund that supports some of the risk of the crediting institution that finances a cultural project, reducing the risk of loss to the company eligible to the fund. This has been delegated to the National Fund management body of the Tunisian Guarantee: Tunis Re, state reinsurance company based in Tunis.

Moreover, the MOC published in January 2016, a new guide to cultural patronage.

⁸ - fixing the rate of the allowance for overtime granted to music teachers and staff of the education inspectorate of the Ministry of Culture.



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4 Institutions, civil society actors, and infrastructures

A - International Institutions

Cooperation between the EU and Tunisia is funded under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) for grants / aid since 2007, as well as under the new mandate of the European Investment Bank (EIB) for lending. More than 160 million euros were incurred in 2011. Following the political changes in Tunisia the amount was doubled in order to strengthen cooperation in the sectors of civil society and media in the consolidation of the rule of law and the electoral process, in regional and local development and social reforms. Since the 2011 events in the region, the priority of Mediterranean cooperation has become to support the democratic transition in many countries. International and professional organisations play an important role in the culture in Tunisia and therefore have some responsibility in the operation of the cultural environment.

Two programs that are specifically dedicated to culture include Tunisia:

- The regional program Med Culture approved by the EC in late 2012, which started its implementation in 2014.
- The new EU-Tunisia bilateral program, the only one program that is specifically dedicated to the culture in the region, operational in 2016 and providing great opportunities for the cultural sector in Tunisia.

In addition, a dozen cultural centres of the member states that develop bilateral cultural cooperation are active in Tunisia.

These include primarily:

- **The French Institute of Tunis (IFT)** is the main actor of the bilateral cultural cooperation, in which the Charles de Gaulle multimedia library in Tunis opened in 2015. The Institute has two branches in Sousse and Sfax and the research centre for the Greater Maghreb, IRMC, which conducts and supports numerous cultural activities in Tunisia.
- **The Goethe Institute**, a dynamic body in Tunisia that also transformed its directions since 2011. It is now anchored in complex partnerships with local players, selected according to specific criteria. Currently in the process of establishing essential training programs in the cultural sector's long-term plan.
- **The British Council** is working with partners from all regions of Tunisia to offer opportunities to learn the English language in order to share creative ideas from the UK. Youth, emerging cultures and project financing are amongst its core areas of work.
- **The Italian Institute of Culture** distributes and supports several events but mostly offers fellowships, courses, and language courses.
- **The Cervantes Institute** develops essentially musical activities that integrate with existing festivals (Young Virtuosos, Medina Festival, October musical ...).



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- **The EUNIC Network (European Union National Institutes for Culture)** brings together different European cultural centres and is coordinated now by the British Council. EUNIC is in charge of the implementation of the EU-Tunisia bilateral program.

Other international organisations are culturally active in the Mediterranean and particularly in Tunisia, including:

- **UNESCO:** Action is being taken in Tunisia bearing in mind culture as an access point to development. This is particularly encouraged by both the UNESCO and the Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture based in Tunis, which under the aegis of the Tunisian Ministry of Education, coordinates ALECSO and ISESCO. Seven Tunisian sites are listed in the UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage (and one natural heritage site) , ten are still under study.

- **The International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF):** In Tunisia, its main activity shows through a mobility fund for artists, training actors (Arab-African Centre for training and theatrical research of El Hamra Theatre) audio-visual production and in cultural industries. It has set up a guarantee fund to secure up to 70-80% of loans from banking institutions granted to entrepreneurs, which is run in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and the Tunisian insurance company Tunis Re.

Networks and professional funds

The arts and culture sector has established networks and tools to support cultural cooperation to facilitate work for international projects and improve skills and mobility. Tunisian cultural operators in particular can benefit from funding and training programs:

- **Young Arab Theatre Fund (YATF):** created in 2000, YATF is at the service of emerging and independent artists who live and work in the Arab world, with long-term objective to foster and support the viability of the independent art scene of the Arab world.

- **Al Mawred Al Taqafhi:** Based in Lebanon, seeks to support artistic creation in the Arab world and to encourage cooperation and cultural exchange between intellectuals and artists in the Arab world and abroad. It helped develop reflecting on the cultural policy of Tunisia and training of cultural operators through workshops and training.

- **The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC):** with the objectives to interbreed and diversify funding sources, preserve cultural and financial independence and also to increase the number of donors and to encourage cultural patronage, which is still rare in the region.

Note also that the Roberto Cimetta Fund (France, supported by the European Foundation for Culture), the Prince Claus Fund and the DOEN Foundation



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(Netherlands), the Safar Fund (Jordan), the Marcel Hicter association (Belgium) and the Arterial network (based in South Africa), among others, also support the development of the sector in Tunisia, whether through the mobility of cultural goods, artists or training.

B - The Tunisian civil society

The term "civil society" is virtually new in Tunisia. Besides, one of the major problems in the Euro-Tunisian cooperation under the Ben Ali regime was the lack of NGOs and cultural associations, as the majority of Tunisian cultural actors were production companies because of the difficulties in jobs of the like.

Since January 2011 and following the rectification of the laws regarding the work of associations, the number exceeded 18,000 associations in September 2015 (Ifada). However, despite the growth of civil society, Tunisia still lives with an imbalance, in terms of number of associations from one region to another:

North	Centre	South
10131	4791	3221

Figures according to IFADA (December 2015)

The interior areas	Coastal areas
6481	11662

Figures according to IFADA (December 2015)

Cultural associations are ranked second, following educational associations and schools which represent 18.04% (IFEDA 2015). Moreover, the number of international NGOs operating in Tunisia does not exceed 129.

The post-revolutionary period has witnessed the development of new structures and organisations that formerly hardly existed if at all. Among these structures we can mention the case of NGOs and private cultural spaces. Their number is steadily rising since 2011. It was rare that a foreign association obtains permits or visas to legally practice a cultural or artistic activity in Tunisia before the revolution, which is the usual legal status of Tunisian cultural actors (businesses and for profit). The consequence of this greater flexibility brought avant-garde artists to renew the forms of Tunisian artistic aesthetics in organising different expression outlets of street art and break dance as is the case of the festival "Graffiti Meeting" that was organised by the 'Kif Kif-Association' in March 2012. The development of Graffiti tags is revealing new artistic paths that brought this proliferation of associations and this new mode of expression that was formerly severely punished by the



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conservative law, is now emphasised by showing in new exhibitions.

The music festival of the world "Mousiqa Wassalem" (music and peace), which was established in 2012 is the best example of cultural " activism ", since it brought together the alternative music scene in the Arab world, which is rare in Tunisia.

The steadily rising number of artistic associations, reinforces the disparity between North / South and the already existing centralisation. These new practices are for sure in trendy urban cores and are non-existent in rural areas. A new objective is to offer these new aesthetic forms, through effective cultural mediation to people who do not usually participate in local artistic life. Some blame the traditional forms for these forms to be considered for elitists only, whereas these forms could in reality develop a new interest in people who would form a new perspective about the pioneering activities that these new associations offer.

Examples of the North / South disparity:

- Foreign cultural centres based in Tunis
- Saudi Cultural Centre.
- German Cultural Centre (Goethe Institute).
- Belgian Cultural Centre (Walloon).
- British Cultural Centre (British Council).
- Spanish Cultural Centre (Institute Cervantes).
- French Cultural Centre (IFT).
- Greek Cultural Centre.
- Italian Cultural Centre (Dante Alighieri).
- Russian Cultural Centre.
- League of Arab States Cultural Centre (ALECSO).

Independent Cultural Spaces

Name	City	Region
MAD'ART	Carthage	North
AGORA	Marsa	North
CINE VOG	Kram	North
El Hambra	Marsa	North
ESPACE 77	Gamarth	North
ETOILE DU NORD	Tunis	North
L' ARTISTOU	Tunis	North



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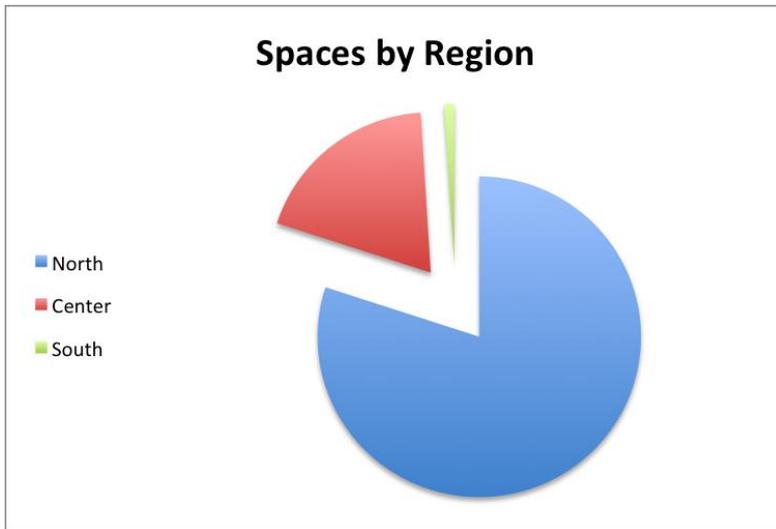


EL HAMRA	Tunis	North
ELMAKHZEN	Tunis	North
ELTEATRO	Tunis	North
MASS'ART	Tunis	North
LANG'ART	Tunis	North
LE RIO	Tunis	North
LE MONDIAL	Tunis	North
LE MAJESTIC	Bizerte	North
MINERVA	Sbitla	Centr e
LE PHOENIX	Chemama	Centr e
INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE	Kasserine	Centr e
LA GROTTTE DES ARTS- ALTHIBUROS	KEF	North
POCKET THEATRE of KEF / ACT	KEF	North
ETOILE DU NORD	Tajerouine	North
ZANDALA	Sousse	Centr e
KENE	Bouficha	Centr e
HANG'ART	Gafsa	South

Source: Rideau Rouge association for performing arts



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C - National public and institutional framework

Three national public bodies are involved in the heritage sector in Tunisia under the Ministry of Culture:

- **The Directorate General of Heritage** which was recently created, including the Directorate of safeguarding and promoting heritage, tangible and intangible, and the Museums Department.
- **INP of Tunis (National Heritage Institute)** is a scientific and technical institution (Decree No. 26-1609 of 26 July 1993) that is responsible for preparing the cultural, archaeological, historical, civilisational and artistic inventory, its studies, safeguarding and its development. INP maintains cooperative relationships with several international organisations concerned with heritage such as UNESCO, ALECSO, ICOMOS, ICCROM⁹, among others, and is also engaged in several Euro-Mediterranean networks and bilateral relations with academic and cultural institutions from various countries.
- **The Agency for the development of heritage and cultural promotion** is in itself an economic operator with an official mission for the development of the archaeological and historical heritage and its management. It stopped some programs but still executes heritage development programs (about sixty sites, monuments and museums), organises cultural events with various partners, delivers the authorisations necessary for the organisation of cultural activities, recreational or commercial events taking place in chamber spaces that are "under their

⁹ - International Council of Monuments and Sites, International Council of Museums, Centre of international studies for the conservation and the restoration of cultural properties



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tutelage"¹⁰. Its heritage development mission has a structural deficit of implementation, partly due to internal problems of strategy and organisational structure. The blow of the 2011 events in the tourism sector has also led to a significant decrease of the budget of the agency, from 15 million TND in 2009 to 4 million in 2014.¹¹

At the local level and under the responsibility of the INP, heritage regional inspectorates are responsible for finding and continuously monitoring the status of assets in each territorial division comprising several governorates.¹²

In the capital, the **Association for Safeguarding the Medina** (ASM) in Tunis is also very active. Focused on its objectives and among others, it rehabilitates the image of the old city and redefines its role in the urban area of Tunis. (Architecture, urbanism and missions in the Medina workshop).

Today the heritage sector seems to suffer from a major crisis, linked to a lack of: specialists, university courses, appropriate jurisdiction and sufficient financial resources for safeguarding and promoting the value of heritage successfully. A clear national strategy in terms of legislation, institutional accountability and a detailed budget are all expected.

Cultural tourism: Aspirations of the future

The question is not new in the ministries and has been studied since the 1990s, its findings had no effect and quickly became obsolete. It seems that the lack of continuity and cooperation between the services of the various ministries, and within the same ministry itself arrogated the different political inclinations. Yet it is recognised that the country's cultural diversity is a key stimulus for the tourism economy. On one side we have the seaside tourism, (now mass tourism, "lower-end"), which is no longer profitable, following the security problems of the South. Moreover, health tourism (spas, cosmetic surgeries) remains niche tourism. Therefore, tourism based on the utilisation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the country is the future and the leverage to regional development and job creation.

The Public Framework

At the level of public administration, cultural action is led by the Directorate General of Cultural Action (the management of studies and promotion of cultural activities and management of institutions of the cultural activities). Amongst its objectives: monitoring of the network of cultural centres, following up on the inventory needs across the country (national and regional), project evaluation (in terms of content and pilot projects), access to culture for all social classes and age groups, the broadening of participation in cultural life, and enriching cultural

¹⁰ - Site of AMVPPC.

¹¹ - According to gathered comments.

¹² - Site of INP



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activities for Tunisians living abroad.¹³

The cultural houses main objectives¹⁴:

- Participate in the development of the national cultural production by the constant discovery of new talent in all areas of cultural activity,
- Develop cultural awareness and an increased need for knowledge among the public,
- To increase the sense of belonging for people in their natural environments and to introduce them to the many facets of their history and identity.

However, the results of the cultural centres are far from being equal to the expected objectives¹⁵.

A heterogeneous network at the territorial level, statutory and financial

Today, the national network consists of 211 houses of culture and 14 cultural complexes over 185 delegations, representing 70.7% of territorial coverage (79 of 264 delegations did not contribute to geographic coverage). Since 1963 (when the first house of culture was established), their construction reflects the differences in their operations. Some were created by having invested in existing buildings; others had their design done for from scratch. Several statutes, more or less clear, contain several budgets: the cultural centres of class 1 with a budget of 15 000 TND / year, those of the class 2 had the budget of 13 000 TND / year, typical houses and larger cultural complexes, have an annual budget of 42 000 TND and are situated in the large cities. In 2013, two new house projects were launched and 10 are under study.

Administrative and financial management of the houses is not unified, because some depend on regional delegations while others are attached to cultural committees. However, new legislation plans are to replace that of 1983¹⁶. In May 2012, a draft decree was presented by the MOC, discussing the status of the public establishment administration and more autonomy in the management of these institutions¹⁷.

Evolution of budgets in institutions of cultural action

Thousands of TND	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL BUDGET ALLOCATED	5182	5426	6497	8069	8803	8762

¹³ - Site of MOC

¹⁴ - Document submitted by the team of the Directorate General of Cultural Action

¹⁵ - The study is still being validated by the cabinet. A UNESCO Expert has also conducted a study on the houses of culture, as part of a larger study on the theme of "culture as a means of economic development", in 2011.

¹⁶ - Cf. Decree No. 83-1084 of 17 November 1983 on the reorganisation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, with an article about the houses of the people and culture and entertainment

¹⁷ - On the occasion of a national conference of directors of cultural centres organised on the theme "Perspectives of cultural action in the context of democratic transition" in Monastir, May 2012.



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1-HOUSES OF CULTURE						
Cultural facilities	900	990	1090	1200	1600	1700
Fixed equipment	400	400	800	900	1000	1000
Computing equipment	450	350	350	770	700	511
Maintenance	1200	1320	1652	1800	2000	2000
Management fees	2190	2324	2560	3349	3453	3491
2-ADMINISTRATION	42	42	45	50	50	60

In six years, the budget allocation for cultural centres in Tunisia increased continuously by over a third.

	# of Culture Houses in 2013	%
Governorate with > 20: Tunis	26	11.5
Governorates with > or = 10: Monastir, Mahdia, Kairouan Sfax, Beja, Kef	75	33.4
Governorates with 10-5: Ben Arous, Bizerte, Nabeul, Sousse, Jandouba, Gabes, Medenine, Siliana, Gafsa, Sidi, Bouzid, Tataouine, Tozeur, Manouba	114	50.7
Governorates with <5: Ariana, Zagouan, Kebili	10	4.4
Total	225	100

In the review of the above table:

- Greater Tunis is home to most of the cultural centres for 26 and 11.5% of the total, confirming the strong cultural centralisation of Tunisia.
- 6 governorates are home to 75 houses, and this represents 33.4% of cultural centres that lie except for Kef and on the coastal basin.
- 14 governorates are home to 114 houses which is 50.7% of cultural centres; the highest average of the regional territory resulting in 5 to 10 houses / governorate.
- 3 governorates are home to 10 houses of 4.4% of cultural centres, the governorate of Kebili with only 4 cultural centres, proves the North / South disparity.



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Culture houses decide to close down

Highlighting the fact that houses of culture are severely suffering from attendance deficit, especially young people who are nevertheless the first target. They are criticized for not initiating cultural activities that would therefore bridge the gap between the social and cultural environment of young people.

In this sense, a need for studies on current cultural practices of Tunisian youth and other age groups of the audience was clearly identified by the interviewed cultural actors. The 2011 events have shown what role these houses could play in the understanding of freedom at the level of the whole territory that we know is very heterogeneous. Openness to different partners and actors in the local and national socio-cultural sector (civil society, international organisations, institutions...), as well as a better use of communication technologies will eventually equip them with the means to act more effectively in the social fabric.

Technical and human resource problems of these houses

- The cultural leaders are not sufficiently trained in the spheres in which they perform: such as project design and monitoring, communication, working with the public etc., to meet the objectives.
- Lack of equipment of sound and light, among others, but also musical instruments.
- Lack of skilled workers, state employees for public reception and maintenance of cultural centres (indoor / outdoor).
- Poor distribution of human resources.

In 2015, a training project developed by Al Mawred Al Thaqafy and in partnership with the Tunisian Ministry of Culture, has helped facilitate meetings between the directors of these cultural centres and cultural operators and artists in the corresponding territories with the aim of stimulating exchanges and collaboration around the use of these places.

4.1 SWOT analysis of the cultural sector

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic sector • A good number of major cultural actors in civil society • Existing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of the structure for research and exploration. • Lack of collaboration inter-sectoral and Inter- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of a prospecting unit for public and private cultural sector. • Conducting scientific and technical studies on the cultural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of qualitative and quantitative studies of the cultural sector. • Risks of the society's radical



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<p>cultural practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing base for cultural infrastructure Geographic location (open to Europe, the Arab world and Africa) Rich history for the development of traditional cultural tourism 	<p>ministerial.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural policy lacks an overall strategy. Lack of long-term projects. 	<p>changes in Tunisia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation or support of a project to make a database of the cultural sector in Tunisia Training the staff of the Ministry on cultural policies and management of cultural projects (strategy development, management, Communication) 	<p>changes that would be influenced by direct and indirect funding.</p>
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5 Education and training

The regulatory framework governing the status of artists in Tunisia is essentially based on the granting of the professional card, based on Law No. 69-32 dated May 9, 1969 and Decree No. 70-141 of 27 April 1970 "establishing the composition and functioning of the committee for the Artist's profession". But not all artistic genres have a professional card. It is issued for dramatic artists (Decree No. 89- 397 of 15/03/1989) and music and dance artists (Law No. 69-32 of 09/05/1969). Artists, creators and intellectuals get with this professional card a special social security scheme (Decree No. 2003-894 of 21 April 2003 laying down the procedures and modalities of application of Law No. 2002-104 of December 30, 2002 relating to the social security scheme for artists, creators and intellectuals). The contribution rate is set at 11% of the income, which is equal to twice the minimum wage¹⁸ (guaranteed minimum wage) with a system of reported 48 hours per week of an occupancy period of 2400 h / year.

Apart from state employees, most artists work outside this system; without a contract, nor tax and social protection, which establishes a parallel market that

¹⁸ In July 2012, the minimum wage was increased from 300 to 320 TND per month. The average annual salary in Tunisia, according to figures from the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2012 was 6 535.4 TND or 544 TND per month



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leads to ethical complications. Most often, artists do not know the few rights they have. Moreover, support for creation is low in public policy. The old laws do not recognise the new artistic forms (hip hop to contemporary dance, multidisciplinary arts, etc.) and do not allow aid in the first-time creation. Artists are thus forced to seek short term support of international or private organisations.

A - A platform for film lovers.

The FTCC (Tunisian federation of film societies) is a Tunisian institution recognised since the 50s. It screens films in rural areas, schools and cultural centres through "cine-bus". Today many filmmakers study in film schools that are local or abroad, in the two local public schools: ISAC and ISAMM (Higher Institute of Multimedia in Manouba) and the 3 private schools, ESAC (Graduate School of Audiovisual and Cinema in Gammarth), EAD (School of Art and Decoration founded in 1993) EDAC (School of Arts and Cinema). Only 39 clubs continue to work in 2014.

Regarding creation, in 2011, the department received 108 movie projects to be filtered, nominated and selected by the production aid commission, against forty projects the year before. Despite the obstacles, the creativity of young filmmakers has not wavered.

B - The lack of training for careers in the scene.

ISAD provides training in art in theoretical and practical acting after finishing high school with a competitive selection process. A license degree of applied arts with the concentration of puppetry is being prepared for September 2014 (in partnership with the National Arts Centre of Puppetry). A proposed school application for the Performing Arts or a professional master's is scheduled for September 2014, carried by the TNT and ISAD Tunis, in partnership with the IFT. To address the lack of local training in the arts and crafts of stage and theatrical research, and the difficulty to go abroad for training, the El Hamra Theatre launched the "Arab-African Centre for training and for Theatre research" and offers three levels of training focused on acting, dramaturgy and staging, open to candidates from North Africa, West Africa and the Arab world. For 13 years, the centre has trained 317 artists, cultural operators and technicians.

In the present times, there is no public training in directing, set design and playwriting in Tunisia.

For drama, access to the profession is subject to certain criteria: the applicant for the card must be an artist or a professional technician; and must hold an advanced degree in dramatic arts or have an experience of at least five professional theatrical productions; and for theatre to be the sole source of income to him/her.



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C – Books

Training in areas and professions related to books is provided by the Higher Institute of Documentation of Tunis (documentation training, library and archiving) and a license is issued in Sfax, the master's degree is still a draft project. The African Training Centre for Publishing and Distribution (CAFED) ¹⁹ is based in Tunis since 1991 and has since its inception gotten the support of the francophone community.

D - Training in music and dance

The ISM (Higher Institutes of Music in Tunis, Sousse, Sfax, Kef, Gabes, Gafsa) are now under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and therefore subject to the LMD reform to adapt to European standards. In the opinion of the stakeholders interviewed, the overall level has dropped significantly during the Ben Ali era. Most graduates find positions in art education.

In the CMAM (Centre of Arab and Mediterranean Music) and the ISM Tunis, specific trainings are given in the form of master classes and discussions are also delivered through partnerships with institutions or cooperative services of member states. Moreover, because of the lack of professional music training, students often have to go abroad.

E - Art and design

According to the professionals interviewed in art and design education in Tunisia, although there are solid twenty public and private structures, their programmes suffer from being too theoretical or academic.

F - Training in cultural mediation / project management / cultural policies

Three academic experiences have been implemented in terms of training in mediation and cultural management in Tunisia:

The first professional training of cultural management in Tunisia was launched in September 2005 in the higher drama institute of Tunis, it was intended to yield eventually and graduate production managers for the theatre as well as in the field of events. Unfortunately, this experiment ended in June 2010 following various problems of integration in the labour market.

Another experiment was carried out at the Higher Institute of Music; a professional master's degree in cultural management, this program still exists.

The third is an academic training of the Bourguiba Institute in cultural mediation, which aims to train mediators for art galleries and cultural tourism.

Moreover, the number of students in cultural mediation against the total number of art students does not exceed 5% (ISAD sample, Tunis in 2010).

Close to the Tunisian academic training, IFT and the Goethe Institute organise training for young cultural managers every year.

¹⁹ - CAFED is a continuing education program in the book field, the main goal is to help equip Francophone Africa with qualified native frameworks to promote endogenous production of books, especially academic books.



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Regarding the labour market, most of the cultural spaces are run by artists and not by administrators. Moreover, activities entrusted to cultural managers are generally redundant, standardised and reduced to the bare minimum (Virtual network, social networking, posters, newspaper articles, a TV or radio spot), hence the decision to reduce the workforce and be limited to technical staff that is essential for lively art organisations. Indeed, opportunities in terms of employability seem in principle quite low.

Furthermore, little cultural activities are implemented to promote the artistic product (work with schools, workshops, intervention of the artist in an extra-theatrical setting, lectures in non-theatrical venues...), which limits the job market for public institutions (Ministry of culture) and private spaces that have no budget for recruiting.

G - Alternative or emerging artistic forms

Some art forms have emerged in the recent years, encouraged by the liberation context of "post-revolutionary" and the new issues that were raised accordingly. The Intervention Group of the Oppressed Theatre (GITO) chose to play in villages or abandoned regions in the country to meet some art audiences that exist in remote areas. Similarly, the Tunisian Association of Diplomas and Dramatic Arts Institutes of Tunis and Kef, created in March 2011, continue to have a theatrical laboratory mission in marginalised areas of the North and South of Tunisia.

This involvement also depends on the occupation of public space previously confiscated by the state. There has been, especially from 2011 to 2013, an explosion of forms, photographs, graffiti, dance, performances and texts appearing in the streets, which brought with it both a new space of representation and a location of democratic expression.

The Dream City project organised by the Art Rue Association is exemplary in this respect. Its artistic and cultural ambitions are nonetheless political and social, seeking to probe the on-going transformations of the Tunisian history. This multidisciplinary festival of contemporary art installed a few days in the Medina of Tunis "is making the bet on the proximity of the land, Art for All: the magical connection between social categories", which was the title of its editorial. The public is invited to wander and discover or participate in the works of Tunisian and international artists in the exterior and interior spaces of the old town.

6 Non-professional practices and general audience

The 2011 events have changed the national scene in favour of the civil society, which was a liberation movement unprecedented. Freedom of speech and expression and interest in some cultural activities of national and international concern have been noted, particularly through festivals. New venues or



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'alternative' projects carried by a young civil society increased public demand. The diagnosis of the Tunisian civil society developed in the context of the formulation of the mission of the program to support civil society in Tunisia²⁰, commissioned by the EU in March 2012, reflects the profound transformation that the 2011 revolution brought to the "civil society".

Administrative procedures for creation of an association have been considerably simplified since 2011. Among the some 9000 organisations of the civil society that exist in Tunisia, 70% are considered "cultural associations" or active in the cultural sector.

However, the network of associations suffers from its disintegration and the wide disparity in Tunisia with a high concentration of cultural associations in the governorate of Tunis.

Also we can add the lack of accessibility of artistic forms in the regions, the low presence of Tunisian products at the international level. According to the artist and researcher Mohamed Ben Soltane, "Tunisia records a notable absence in the regional and international scene compared to its Moroccan, Algerian and Egyptian neighbours"²¹ Feryel Lakhdar, meanwhile, said that the Tunisian artists are struggling to "confront a world of international contemporary art that is difficult to penetrate and of which they ignore the codes and customs"²².

A- Cinema: Operational and distribution problems

Currently, only 25 cinemas are active in Tunisia, against 200 in the 70's. Some have extremely limited capacity and are therefore of little use. This sharp decrease of the number of cinemas is caused by multiple factors relating to public disaffection. First; a shift in programming by international outlets, Internet competition and piracy. Second; the public deplores the poor quality of projection, lack of comfortable rooms and artistic disparity between Tunis and other cities. Faced with the desertion of the rooms, and the falling revenues, the film worth market was hardly able to finance production, while Tunisian producers are forced to meet 65% of their budgets. To address this situation, a boost of production was initiated in 2009 by the MOC, but had to face the interruption of the political instability that followed.

The numerous film festivals are well attended, which may seem paradoxical in view of what has been said previously. Among the biggest festivals, one can note: the Carthage Film Festival, the International Festival of Hammamet, the Documentary Film Festival "Doc à Tunis", the Festival of Ulysses Films International, in Djerba, the Spring Festival Sousse, the amateur Film Festival of Kelibia attracting over 2,000 spectators per evening.

B – A strong demand from the public

To meet the strong demand of the public, stakeholders interviewed have all cited the need for new and well-equipped theatre spaces. Despite the number of theatre festivals, international, national, and regional (not less than 300 throughout the country), with the best known, the Carthage Theatre Days, which has been

²⁰- http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/documents/projets/rapportdiagnostic_stecivile_mars2012_fr.pdf

²¹- Mohamed Ben Soltane, «Art en Tunisie: vers une visibilité en devenir», *tunisieartsgalleries.com*, septembre 2010.

²²- *ibid.*



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going on for more than 30 years, theatre spaces and equipment are inadequate in the regions.

C - The decline in museum attendance

Recent statistics have shown a decline in museum attendance by local and foreign visitors. This sector suffers from a deficit in staff and does not create a real stimulating policy, which results in reduced attractiveness. Habib Ben Younes director of museum development division at INP supports "a reform of museum management and the endorsement of a decree specifying the particular nature of the collections, will yield autonomy of the sector's financial resources that will contribute to the creation of new jobs²³". The Bardo Museum, famous for the breadth of its collection, was the subject of a renovation program from 2009 to 2012 with the archaeological museum of Sousse and Djerba, in collaboration with the World Bank. Despite its reorganisation, the number of visitors has dropped since 2011²⁴.

D - Low levels of readership

Despite a sharp increase in school enrolment rates (99% for 6-11 years in 2013 according to NIS) and a general improvement of the purchasing power in Tunisia, reading habits are not rooted in the population. According to the national survey "The Tunisian, books and reading," performed by the MOC in 2010, 22.74% of Tunisians have never read books, 77.26% read a book and 31.88% read a book in 2009. Readers are mostly young and female readers outnumbered male readers. The main reason was lack of time. In addition, the orientation of the educated population is increasingly leaning towards science and technology at the expense of humanities and social sciences. Moreover, only 13.15% of Tunisians interviewed in the investigation of the Ministry of Culture reported reading at the library, as libraries are often seen by students as places of study and revision. A network of 384 public libraries in 2012 covers almost the entire country, with over 34 000 seats and 7.4 million books.

E – Boiling Music Industry

The craze for young contemporary music (hip hop, rock, reggae, electronic...) is such that new bar concerts are appearing²⁵ and new events are created at regional, national²⁶ or international²⁷ levels. Parallel circuits and social networks have served as a springboard for the development of these players in the "alternative music" realm, who are very popular among the younger generations. The lack of rehearsal rooms and recording is increasingly evident today.

²³- H la Hazghi, « Tunisian Museums, Lecture by Habib Ben Youn s in Art'Libris. Encore du pain sur la planche. », in *tunisiartgalleries.com*, 7 March 2011.

²⁴- The peak attendance was 600 000 in 2005. In 2011, the year of the revolution, only 130,000 people came. See article: "the new Bardo Museum opens" La Presse, May 18, 2012

²⁵- In the northern suburbs of Tunis, the Plug electronics club, Pub rock Plug, the Bungalow, Carpe Diem

²⁶- Among recent initiatives : International Festival of World Percussion in Sousse, Anouar Brahem concert in Kef, Festival of the Herb, Mousiqqa Wassalem International Alternative Music Meeting of Carthage, the Angar Festival

²⁷- Electronic Dunes organised by a Franco-Tunisian team on the site of Star Wars in Nafta, attracted 10,000 people in 3 days in February 2014



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7 Conclusions and recommendations

The main difficulties encountered by Tunisian artists in their work are related to their precarious economic and social situation. The political crisis and the current economic difficulties have led to a significant reduction in public spending. There has been lack of opportunities because of a narrow or even a deficiency of market in certain fields: plastic art, cinema, etc. Another challenge for artists is to maintain their liberty and preserving that whilst having sponsors (governmental or private). This lack of opportunity could be filled through cultural actions or by intersecting the artistic sector with other fields (work with schools...). Also, calls for projects can generate an offer and an income for artists while broadening the scope of their work and influence.

Culture and the private sector:

The April 2013 study days on cultural entrepreneurs and cultural industries in Greater Maghreb²⁸ highlighted that cultural industries have long been and remain non-existent until now and are often limited to the traditional crafts. Some of the advanced general reasons are "the economic underdevelopment of the region; lack of market structure for culture and the high prices of cultural products compared to the local purchasing power; after the independences, the state's grip on media and publishing and in academia became stronger; strong censorship and intrusions in the field of production and distribution of cultural products; deficient legislation in regards to the right to intellectual property; shortcomings of public policies of culture ... ". All of this can be summarised in three types of risks: business risk, the precariousness of the sector, and rights management and piracy²⁹.

In addition to the measures of the economic impact of culture, it is helpful to analyse the correlations between the "consumption" of culture and participation in the community and social capital. The culture that primarily affects the intellectual and social elite could contribute to social cohesion among consumers. Networking strengthens the community, national identity or "connectivity" and "interaction": this is called the indirect economic benefits (not measured by the market).

These functional effects, which reflect the impact of culture on the life and development of a society, are still less known in their nature and their scope. Research attempts to create analytical tools to determine the social dynamics that contribute to the exclusion or promote the inclusion of people in a society and to assess the correlations between the individual and collective benefits of cultural participation. In the European and international context, it is understood

²⁸ - 24-25 May 2013, Carthage, organised by the University of Paris 13 (LabSic / Labex ICCA), the IRMC, IFT and the IHEC (Institute of Higher Business Studies of Carthage), in partnership with the IFA of Algeria and Morocco's IFM

²⁹ - Utilisation of Guarantee Funds in Promoting Financing Cultural Enterprises, Patricio Jeretic, Intergovernmental Agency of the Francophonie, p.14.



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that culture is a key element and a locally responsive approach to development³⁰. However, the Tunisian civil society plays an important role and contributes to the cultural "post revolution" life.

The number of actions and projects led by private and independent players has exceeded expectations despite the lack of public funding, which only increases the ambitions and drives of young people to believe more and more in the role of culture as a prime factor for change and improved living conditions.

These initiatives have promoted artistic creation and gave birth to new cultural spaces of many shapes, such as espace 77 in the suburbs of Tunis with 1,200 m² dedicated to circus arts and was inaugurated on January 16, 2016. New forms of expressions based on the social and professional networks have emerged and Tunisian production is a dynamic one accordingly. The post revolutionary period has seen perpetuate artistic disciplines that are already fashionable (theatre, film and dance steadily rising), and has at the same time witnessed the development of aesthetic forms and expressions of new modes (street art protests, the wave of break dance, graffiti tags...).

However, the cultural sector remains fragile in Tunisia. This can be explained in part by the desire of extending and making art accessible for the biggest number. This led, in the 1960s, to the creation of 225 houses of culture. However, these institutions today suffer from a glaring lack of image. Their budget coverage is insufficient to even ensure their maintenance alone. Their equipment (projectors, sound and light equipment...) is insufficient to ensure the artistic production and dissemination. Their image is too smudged to educate the masses to discover new aesthetics. In summary, places created to curb the North / South disparities, and use the arts as a means of education, awareness and cultural awareness are in the end really helpless and away from their original purpose. Currently, centralisation remains too present and attempts to extend cultivation to the broadest audience proved either inconclusive or unfulfilled. The current objective is to catalyse offering them a renewed interest, a larger workforce and a larger budget.

Other reasons also explain the excessive fragility of the Tunisian cultural sector. We can mention in this regard the deficiency in the application of laws concerning intellectual property although; they do not guarantee the respect of copyrights. In addition to the limited human and financial resources of the OTPDA (Tunisian protection copyright organisation), this situation led to the withdrawal of private enterprises and cultural industries, with the notable absence of a real music market since there are no laws guaranteeing fair use of works. Also the recurring offense of music and art works piracy is a direct consequence of this failure.

³⁰ - « Study on projects using cultural expressions as a lever for employment, human rights, democracy and other human development areas », Contract N°2011/281035/1-FWC COM 2011 – Lot 1 – Studies and Technical Assistance in all Sectors, 18 March 2014.



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A real lack of effectiveness of artistic training which, in the opinion of respondents, gives primacy to theoretical reflections neglecting learning through practical exercise. So says Mohamed Ali Kammoun stating, about professional training of music that "the teaching of music in Tunisia rather encourages written Western forms and tends to neglect the current practice." Moreover, these courses are as few as diverse. In the case of dramatic trainings; they are only limited to ISAD (in Tunis and Kef). Therefore, a large number of students study abroad justifying their choice by the high standards of the Tunisian training institutions or criticising their programs' limited diversity. Some trainings are non-existent and are subject to strong recommendations of professionals to have aboard. This is the case of the professions related to books, which lack adequate training, are not solid, defined or regulated and focus too much on the perspective of profitability.

Finally exchanges and training between Tunisian and international institutions constitute a development subject; to diversify and renew the Tunisian art education.

It is as difficult to access good art training as to access a professional integration. This is consistent with the situation and the global context facing Tunisia since the revolution. In 2014, 31.9% of the unemployed are young graduates. Moreover, once the artist gets the professional card, the artist does not have an unemployment insurance coverage. As the state does not provide aid at the first artistic piece creation, which forces new artists to find means on their own for their productions. This gives them no guarantee as to their sustainability and their future.

Furthermore, the state does not recognise the emergence of new artistic forms (Hip-hop, street art....) and was reluctant to subsidise or encourage them. This recognition is yet necessary, even essential to ensure emerging artists, renewal of the artistic forms and especially the guarantee for each artist not to have to experience the generic aesthetic selection. The independent initiative must be supported by the state, which would allow artists to the forefront of not having to seek their means of production from private developers with no guarantee as to their future livelihoods.

Finally cultural mediation must provide effective support for the general audience to make them aware of the post-revolutionary artistic diversity. This support has to meet two objectives: In addition to retaining the usual cultural and artistic crowd, it must encourage the non-crowd and reduce the number of those who say they are not concerned by these modes of expression. Advertising is still rarely used. For example, we can mention the book field in Tunisia, which uses no campaigns or advertising posters. As the virtual networks are to promote since they've already proven effective in their undeniable ability to raise and call for the largest number.



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Digital platforms can be an effective way to make artistic works more accessible, which would reduce the problem of distance and the North / South disparity. Indeed, the digital realm represents an axis, still untapped and is able to facilitate access to art through technical reproducibility and could become a pillar of decentralisation.

In conclusion, the future of culture in Tunisia is promising, with independent actors that continue to multiply despite the difficult economic and political conditions, particularly in under-privileged areas. One of the post-revolutionary goals is to extend the culture's reach to cover these under-privileged areas. This is to develop the audience and to work towards the genuine democratisation of culture to get out of its elitist framework.

8 Annexes

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