

From Venice a concrete proposal to further dialogue in Lebanon

The XII Euromediterranean Conference on Cinema was held on September 8th at the Casino Palace in Venice in the framework of the Venice Film Festival under the High Patronage of the President of the Republic of Italy. The event is organized by the Italian Committee of the CICT-UNESCO in partnership with OCCAM, MCM and the Office in Milan of the European Parliament.

The Conference enjoyed the participation of important personalities such as Hon. **Ugo INTINI**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. **Danielle MAZZONIS**, Under Secretary of State for Culture and the members of the European Parliament **Alfonso ANDRIA**, **Iles BRAGHETTO**, **Ruth HIERONYMI**, **Vincenzo LAVARRA** and **Luca ROMAGNOLI**, and was concluded by the approval of the Final Declaration calling for the support to the Cinémathèque Nationale du Liban and the film festivals of Beirut and Baalbeck.

The aim of those initiatives is that of favouring cultural dialogue and the strengthening of the role of cinema as instrument to create a unified Lebanon identity, supporting the peacekeeping mission recently endorsed by the United Nations and to which Italy participates.

Has mentioned by Ugo Intini: *“Cinema can be the bridge between the 2 costs of the Mediterranean, becoming the antidote against any form of extremism, which is based on opposite ignorance, that is on the ignorance one of the other. The decision approved today of re-launching the Cinémathèque Nationale du Liban and supporting the Film Festivals of Beirut and Baalbeck goes in this direction, trying to promote dialogue between cultures”*.

Staffan de Mistura, former Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General in Southern Lebanon, has expressed his support to the decision endorsed in Venice as: *“I’m fully convinced and aware of the importance of the message of unity that is given by any of the many cultural festivals taking place in Lebanon each year. A strong message of support, so that those festivals can be fully operative will be an element that will help reconstructing, not just physically, the Country, which represents a unique example of mosaic of different cultures and religions”*.

Pierpaolo Saporito, President of the Italian Committee of CICT-UNESCO and OCCAM, in summing up the results of the Conference, has recalled when in 1999, as President of the CICT-UNESCO; participated in the opening of the Cinémathèque Nationale du Liban, at the presence of the famous Lebanese director Randa Chahal, and the great emotion that was felt then, representing a moment of hope for the country: *“to re-launch this endeavour now, after the recent tragic events, is a crucial action in order to give a concrete hope for the population in Lebanon”*.