



“Maydan”: A Trans-Mediterranean Association

Learning from our shared cultural roots & building our common destiny together

Shaping a transnational identity from the grassroots

Maydan is a network of members of civil society, activists, researchers, artists, development workers and, more generally, engaged citizens, who support a vision for the Mediterranean as a common destiny and integration of its peoples through cultural and political action, and education and public service initiatives that are accessible to citizens. It is a non-profit association that pursues civic, solidarity and social utility ends, relying primarily on volunteer contributions to reach the following objectives:

1. Promoting and safeguarding human, civil, social and political rights;
2. Promoting a culture of lawfulness, peace among peoples, non-violence and unarmed self-defense;
3. Organising and managing cultural, artistic or recreational activities of social relevance. In addition, Maydan facilitates publications that promote and disseminate culture and volunteerism, as well as general interest activities;
4. Carrying out scientific research of social relevance.

These activities are clearly oriented toward promoting rights, freedoms and mutual respect between the peoples of the Mediterranean, particularly by:

- * Sharing the knowledge and cultures of the Mediterranean people among members;
- * Promoting active citizenship and transnational mobility;
- * Encouraging citizen-led initiatives for democracy, rights, freedoms, human dignity and mutual respect throughout the Mediterranean region;
- * Sharing experiences, expertise and ideas for cultural expression, as well as citizenship rights in the Mediterranean;
- * Carrying out social, political and cultural initiatives across Europe and the Mediterranean.

We have named the organisation after the Arabic word for “square”: Maydan. The choice of the name was inspired by the calls for freedom and dignity and justice for all, against socio-economic injustice, and ecological non-sustainability, and the struggle for rights and freedoms crushed by oppressive regimes, which arose during the Arab Springs and the *Indignados* movements. Maydan is also a meeting place, a space of dialogue and conviviality, where the peoples of the region can rediscover their common roots, practice citizenship, cultivate community outreach and give hope for the prospect of a collective future.

Maydan intends to operate through various activities and tools that we can identify as follows:

- * Culture, dialogue and arts
- * Research, information and communication
- * Political awareness-raising and advocacy
- * Capacity-building and empowerment
- * Service exchange, employability and professionalisation.

The organisation has adopted a founding declaration to outline the Mediterranean vision we aim for: the “Manifesto for Mediterranean Citizenship”. This is a draft document collectively written by a pool of activists who convened at SabirMaydan between 2014 and 2017. This Manifesto shall be finalised through a wide consultative citizens-driven process in the region.

Although recently established as an association, Maydan’s origins are the result of a collective process started a few years ago in Sicily. A group of people, coming from different countries and backgrounds, have been working since September 2014 on a forum of Mediterranean cultural, social and political dialogue - SabirMaydan. This grassroots space made headway through a series of interactive events at the last five editions of “SABIRFEST Mediterranean Culture and Citizenship Festival”, and at the 2015 World Social Forum, focusing on transnational citizenship in the Mediterranean area and its challenges.

Maydan has been registered initially as a nationally-based legal entity due to the existing difficulties of creating a transnational legal entity. Despite this, the organisation is working intently toward shaping the Mediterranean as an integrated and safe region where its peoples may share a common future.

The founders of the organisation and its supporters are, however, working on setting up a trans-Mediterranean association from a legal and administrative perspective. Though such a form of legal entity doesn’t exist yet in the region, its development could further enhance the cultural and political action of those who believe in a free and united Mediterranean.

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