



# CREACT MED

CREATIVE MEDITERRANEAN

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022

28TH – 29TH NOVEMBER 2022



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بتمويل مشترك من الاتحاد الأوروبي



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN  
ECONOMISTS ASSOCIATION

## UNLEASHING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Cultural and creative industries (CCI) are increasingly being recognised as an important source of economic independence, job creation, social cohesion, and wellbeing. The Mediterranean's rich cultural background and dynamic young population means there is great potential for the CCI to be real drivers of growth and prosperity, but industries and infrastructures are fragmented and poorly supported.

CREACT4MED seeks to strengthen CCI ecosystems in the region and unleash the full potential of the CCI to create empowered and flourishing societies. The CREAT4MED Annual Conference 2022 built on the progress achieved so far, strengthened links between identified stakeholders, and fortified the foundations of a solid CCI Med Hub to create a productive and sustainable enabling environment for budding cultural and creative industries.

The conference showcased the project's achievements to date, set forth goals for the coming year, and provided a space to discuss innovative ideas for programmes, policies, and financial models to support CCI entrepreneurs and businesses in the Southern Mediterranean.

The conference was organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA) and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) in collaboration with CreativeForum.si, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, and MedWaves. The event took place in hybrid format, live streamed from Barcelona, Spain.

You can view all the recordings of the conference on the CREAT4MED Youtube.

### ABOUT CREAT4MED

CREACT4MED is a project funded by the European Union (EU) through the EuropeAid Programme, which aims to strengthen businesses and entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in the Southern Neighbourhood of the EU, with a particular focus on young people and women. CREAT4MED is led by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), and project partners and associates include: the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMED), the Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises (BUSINESSMED), the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (IED), RedStart Tunisia, the Med Confederation, Beyond Group, LUMSA University, the Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen (AFAEMME), Positive Agenda Advisory, Womenpreneur Initiative, Napolis University Pafos, FEPS Business Incubator, and MedWaves.



Group photo in Sant Pau



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REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Coordinated by the  
Euro-Mediterranean  
Economists Association  
(EMEA)

Funded by the European  
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## Day 1: Introduction

The 2022 Annual Conference was opened by Professor Rym Ayadi, President and Founder of the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), lead partner of the CREAT4MED Consortium), and Ambassador Veronika Stabej, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.

Prof. Rym Ayadi highlighted the transformative nature of the CREAT4MED project as it is generating new thinking for women and young people in the Mediterranean region, as well as creating jobs and growth. One of the main pillars of this project is to focus on the needs of CCI which requires recognizing it as an industry key to development beyond economic value.

Ambassador Veronika Stabej continued and pointed out the recent struggles of CCI due to the Covid pandemic and highlighted the need to encourage better working conditions for people in these industries meaning identifying ways to support and collaborate across the Mediterranean region.



Prof. Rym Ayadi (above left), President and Founder of EMEA, and Ambassador Veronika Stabej of Slovenia (above right) introducing the conference

## Session 1: CREAT4MED, Supporting the CCI in the Southern Mediterranean

In this session, Maria Ruiz de Cossío, Project Officer at EMEA, presented the roadmap of the CREAT4MED project, highlighting key milestones and measures of success. She explained that the project has: undergone an extensive mapping activity consulting a group of technical experts on the state of CCI in their regions; launched a call for nominations on best practice examples in the CCI; completed the evaluation of business proposals and held pitch sessions for Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia; and launched a community building platform with over 500 members.

She continued by explaining the expected impact of the project, which is to enhance awareness about the potential of CCI to create sustainable growth. The project aims to identify at least 300 actors, 90 initiatives and 80 best practice examples, hold at least 30 consultations and dialogue events involving around 150 CCI actors,



Maria Ruiz de Cossío, Project Officer of CREAT4MED presenting the road map.

and 15 networking initiatives with at least 300 players, engage more than 500 members in the community, train at least 240 entrepreneurs, fund 30 creative business ideas and business support organisations, create at a minimum 16 employment opportunities, and propose a practical roadmap to creating an enabling ecosystem for cultural and creative entrepreneurship in the region building on the experiences and knowledge generated through the action.

Also in this session, Dr. Yeganeh Forouheshfar, Researcher at EMEA, launched the CCI Data Observatory. As part of the mapping pillar, the CREAT4MED project has created a data observatory to collect and show reliable available data on the significance of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) in the CREAT4MED target countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, plus Algeria and Israel, as well as providing a regional perspective. It covers a broad definition of CCI stretching from gastronomy to performing arts, to gaming and music, to advertising and fashion. She explained that the Data Observatory is freely available on the CREAT4MED website and a work in progress with 2 more country reports to come, and seminars. The output of these seminars and the Observatory is to influence policy and generate an action plan to strengthen the CCI ecosystem.

You can view the CCI Data Observatory at <https://creativemediterranean.org/resources/final-cross-country/> .

Following that, Maria Dalakoura, Senior Project & Fundraising Manager at IED, one of the partners of CREAT4MED, presented the achievements of the first cycle of the CREAT4MED training academy. She explained that the training academy consists of 66 learning hours that are designed to support entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into feasible business plans. The training is free and is available through the CREAT4MED website. There are 8 modules plus a bonus module which cover marketing and internationalisation. Step by step she demonstrated how to use the training academy resources. In the first training cycle, 377 applications were received and 84 completed the training. The second training cycle will be completed in 2023. She explained that the training material will also be launched in Arabic and French.



Yeganeh Fourouheshfar, Researcher at EMEA, (above left presenting the CCI Observatory and Maria Delakoura, Senior Project Manager at IED, presenting the progress on training (above right)

Following that, Giulia Dimonopoli, Events and Project Officer at IEMED, a CREAT4MED partner, explained how the purpose of CREAT4MED is to create a community and a network of people who can share goals, ideas, and work together to create regional cooperation that will in turn create jobs and strong skills for the CCI sector. In doing so, under the project, networking and creative dialogue events will be held which will provide a space for creative hubs, entrepreneurs and other CCI players to connect, share best practices and difficulties they have faced and explore potential partnerships and collaborations to create a strong cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean.



Giulia Dimonopoli, Project Officer at IEMED, explaining the CREAT4MED community

## Session 2: CREAT4MED, funded projects

Continuing the update on the project progress, representatives from four selected incubators discussed their activities so far. As part of the subgrant pillar of CREAT4MED, the project awarded subgrants to Business Support Organisations (BSO) in each of the target countries whose role is to provide support, mentoring, matchmaking and other incubation services for the selected entrepreneurs.

The session was moderated by Douja Gharbi, CEO of project partner RedStart Tunisie, with Israa Asaad, Nucleus Ventures, Lebanon, Leila Hizaoui, Minassa INCO Tunisie, Tunisia, Marwa Cheikh Youssef, LaStartupStation, Morocco, and Belal Raslan, TTI, Jordan. Each representative presented the four business proposals selected for funding within the CREAT4MED project in their countries:

### Nucleus Ventures – Lebanon



**CEZAR'S PROJECTS**  
Rural Development

#### Cezar's Projects

Cezar Projects is a youthful rural development initiative that works as a social enterprise since 2017. The enterprise is developing standard rural –tourism operations and coordinating rural initiatives, to meet sustainability through retaining local talents, creating innovation in sustainable tourism and generating new sources of income.

More info: <https://www.cezarprojects.com/>



#### ClimberSpace

ClimberSpace is a small business specialized in resoling outdoor shoes and locally designing and producing outdoor products and apparel. It was founded by three passionate climbers and brothers who share the vision of creating an outdoor brand that shares the beauties of our nature and people through locally crafted products.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063195253235>



#### Mlouk Productions

Mlouk Productions is a film production company equipped with professional resources and a creative team that is ready to bring inspiring stories to life. At Mlouk, they joined the Creative with the Production process to offer optimized workflows tailor-made to every project. They cover the whole journey of a project, from the Idea Creation and Elaboration, to the Script Writing, to Production and Post-Production.

More info: <https://www.mloukproductions.com/>



#### Yayy

Yayy is a leading innovative gaming studio, offering different gaming solutions and experiences. They use different frameworks and standards to ensure top engaging, secure, and scalable games that attract and retain a large number of users. With Yayy – TapToSee, they offer a gamified, personalized and educational experience to tourists using Augmented Reality, ensuring that tourist places are more attractive while creating an incremental tourist engagement with interesting story-telling and on-the-go information.

More info: [www.yayygames.com](http://www.yayygames.com)



Israa Asaad, Nucleus Ventures,  
presenting the Lebanese  
entrepreneurs

## TTI – Jordan



### GIOIA

Founded in 2018, Gioia aims at designing and producing culturally inspired casual footwear, while creating economic opportunities for local artisans. Their designs include traditional embroidery techniques, calligraphy and art incorporated into contemporary shoes. They are more than just a business, they work for a sustainable future to share economies, reduce poverty, discover talent and encourage creativity.

More info: <https://www.gioiafootwear.com/>



### Puppets World for Development of Children

Puppets World is the first and only company in Jordan that aims to educate children and raise their awareness of social, behavioural, emotional, and cultural issues through an interactive mobile puppet theatre. Established in 2020, Puppets World works to achieve SDGs through multiple awareness projects and live performances in collaboration with local and international institutions including the Australian Embassy, UNICEF, World Vision International, GIZ, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Culture, among others.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/PuppetsWorldJo/>



### Talaween

Talaween is an interactive application that uses both digital and physical art activities to teach children the necessary soft skills needed to succeed in the 21st century. It provides interactive and comprehensive educational tools for teaching soft skills to children and adolescents through art, using engaging educational curricula written by specialists and converted into artistic exercises.



### ViaVii

ViaVii is a central hub for genuine local experiences and unique activities. ViaVii envisions to create an immersive form of tourism by enabling the era of "people to people travels." The marketplace is built to help travellers easily find a variety of immersive experiences and ready-to-buy itineraries, designed by trained local communities, and instantly book them online.

More info: <https://viavii.com/>

## Minassa INCO Tunisie– Tunisia



### Digital Cultural eXperience

DCX is a creator of immersive and interactive cultural experiences empowered by technology (RV, AR, gaming & application). At DCX they believe that promoting Heritage among young people is a key factor to build a prosperous and peaceful society. Their goal is to create attractive platforms and XR experiences that (re)connect young people with their Heritage.

More info: <https://www.dcx.studio/>



### Klink

Klink is a platform that allows a connection between the events' organizers and the artists. Klink closes the gap between event organizers and artists and serves as a springboard allowing them to access the event market and to optimize their work schedule's program.

More info: <https://klink.tn/>



### Maft Studios

Maft Studios is an online fashion magazine and platform, based in Tunisia, which promotes and supports different actors in the fashion industry such as emerging designers, artists, and entrepreneurs with promising projects, in Tunisia and the MENA region, by introducing them to the concerned public through original content.

More info: <https://maftmag.com/>



### The Virtual Art Gallery

The Virtual Art Gallery is a digital platform for the creation and reproduction, hosting, and sale of 360° 3D virtual tours and VR (Virtual Reality) specializing in visual art exhibition spaces. They develop tools for creating online art exhibitions, enabling artists and art galleries to share their art without limits, directly to collectors, while remaining faithful to the architecture, the accuracy of the places, the spirit, and the atmosphere of the exhibitions.

More info: <https://virtualartgallery.com/>



Leila Hizaoui, Minassa - INCO Tunisie, presenting projects from Tunisia.

## LaStartUpStation – Morocco



### Cré Artisanat

CRÉ ARTISANAT creates leather accessories with the aim to preserve and renew the Moroccan artisanal heritage, by combining several disciplines: design, painting, calligraphy, and leatherwork. They currently offer a range of handmade leather goods and accessories under the brand name Billyadi - بيليادي that meet both professional and everyday uses. The company also handles custom orders from individuals or companies, and ensures the transfer of good practices and know-how, in particular to young craftsmen and creators.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/BillyadiParWafae/>



### Felicity Chocolat

Felicity Chocolat is a boutique, an educational platform and a marketplace allowing chocolate producers of the network to thrive by developing skills and selling their creations. Their mission is to position Morocco as a local reference producer at the international level and a hub for the export of chocolate made in Africa.

More info: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/felicitychocolat>



### HELP Mariage

HELP Mariage Maroc is the first App for planning weddings serenely. It creates a large-scale impact on more than 40 professions in the creative and cultural wedding industry by enabling them to develop their business by digitizing their activity."

More info: [https://www.instagram.com/help\\_mariage\\_maroc/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/help_mariage_maroc/?hl=en)



### H Kids

H Kids designs and produces a whole range of smart baby furniture and children's bedrooms, with the mission to make the existing smart furniture accessible and available to facilitate the daily lives of parents and children.

<https://www.instagram.com/bebemarrakech/>



Marwa Cheikh,  
LaStartUpStation  
presenting projects  
from Morocco

## Session 3: CCI programmes, identifying and bridging the gaps

This session had the aim of bringing experts from across the Mediterranean region to highlight programmes in their regions to access support and tools to grow young businesses. This support comes in many forms beyond the financial and extends to the psychological, demonstrating the need to consider many aspects when developing a flourishing CCI business.

The session was moderated by Roger Alberinya, Managing Director at the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). He began the session by highlighting that CCI is becoming one of the most important sectors of the economy. However, it often lacks tools and support to grow and become mature.



Roger Alberinya, Managing Director at IEMED

The first panellist was Enrique de Villamore, Director of MedWaves, the Sustainable Consumption and Production Centre under the UN Mediterranean Action Plan. He explained that MedWaves, under the SwitchMed programme supports entrepreneurs in the Southern Mediterranean region who are focused on creating social and environmental value. He highlighted that most Mediterranean countries do not have the framework to actively support entrepreneurs and all require creativity for innovation.

Following that, Dr. Alia Arasoughly, Director of Shashat Woman Cinema joined the conference online and explained CCI in Palestine from the perspective of Women's Cinema. Firstly, she reiterated the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Palestine, however, emphasised that Palestine is experiencing a protracted crisis. This means there must be a visionary perception on how to develop and sustain organizations that are working from the ground and encourage indigenous innovation that can be competitive internationally. She went on to highlight two issues with the CCI. The first is that there is a gap between theory and practice. The level of teaching in theory is high but in practice it is relatively low, meaning overall quality is diminished. Secondly, the public sector does not actively encourage CCI and focuses more on infrastructure. However, CCI is key as it pushes boundaries and involves conceptual and emotional innovation.



Enrique de Villamore, Director at MedWaves, (above left) and Dr. Alia Arasoughly, (above right) Director of Shashat Woman Cinema

The third panellist was Amina Benjelloun, Vice President of the Federation of Cultural Creative Industries in Morocco, an institution focused on improving mobilization within cinema, music, events, arts and editing sectors. She explained the results of a qualitative study of the gaps and obstacles to CCI development in Morocco, in which institutional actors were provided with a series of propositions. First, they proposed a horizontal and vertical dialogue at the global level. Second, they recommended courses on Intellectual Property Rights, access to data and statistics, and training on employability tailored to the dynamics of the center, including courses on digital literacy and financial autonomy. She remarked that there is a need to improve governance of CCI in Morocco.



Amina Benjelloun, Vice President of the Federation of CCI, in Morocco presenting



Jessica Carson, Head of Psychology & Curriculum at ZenBusiness

The final panellist was Jessica Carson, Head of Psychology & Curriculum at ZenBusiness, and an Expert in Residence at Georgetown University. Her intervention was focused on the fact that many creative people and entrepreneurs struggle with obstacles that are psychological in nature such as confusion, apathy, uncertainty, fear, doubt, etc. Research has shown that entrepreneurs and innovative minds are more likely to struggle with these issues. She also argued that entrepreneurs tend to have a more spiritual orientation meaning there is a drive to self-actualisation. It was reaffirmed by other members of the panel and audience that mental health is crucial for entrepreneurship and for creativity more widely.

## Session 4: Supporting innovative development of creative and cultural hubs

The final session of the day aimed to discuss various challenges and opportunities to achieve goals and support growth in starting and running a cultural and creative business. Moderated by Luka Piskoric, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Poligon Creative Centre in Slovenia, the session shed light on how creativity is central to many parts of society, yet it must be done in an inclusive way. This not only includes those outside of international funding circles but also those not normally associated with CCI such as scientists and workplaces.

Luka Piskoric opened the panel by stating that creative hubs are a place for people to work together and gain opportunities for support and community building which started being recognised as essential following the financial crash in 2010.

Prof. Salvador Simó, Adjunct Director of the Mental Health Chair at the University of Vic, began his intervention by highlighting that, as indicated in Art. 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, when we discuss arts and culture, we must remember we are talking about human rights, and that enjoying arts and culture is a right, not a privilege. However, he explained that many problems in society can be linked with the fact that we are being repetitive rather than innovative and creative. He proceeded to describe an initiative led by University of Vic aimed at offering people with mental health problems the opportunity to enjoy arts and culture in emblematic cultural institutions in Spain and Europe, including Barcelona Contemporary Culture Centre (CCCB), Fine Arts Museum of A Coruña, National Auditorium of Catalonia and Thyssen Bornemisza Museum, among others. The initiative is very successful in combining creativity, culture, and mental health, and has proved to have a positive impact on patients' wellbeing (at emotional and cognitive level), social participation and employment creation, as well as on the wellbeing of caregivers and relatives. Mr. Simó reckoned these actions are the way forward and expressed his ambition to spread these kinds of actions across the Mediterranean.



Luka Piskoric opening Session 4 with panellists Prof. Salvador Simó, Theo Edmonds, Ouafa Belgacem (above) and Prof. Simó presenting (below)

Ouafa Belgacem, Founder and CEO of Culture Funding Watch, first pointed out that creative hubs have changed and are no longer understood as physical places. Thanks to digitalization, a lot of the communication and networking is happening online, making them more accessible. She reiterated that inclusivity is key in CCI, as there are many people missing from the table, such as those that do not receive international funding, and the same circles tend to be evaluated when CCI ecosystems are mapped. She finished her intervention by asking a question on whether the entities are organic, and how much is inflated by international funding. She highlighted once again the importance of including everyone in the conversation.



Ouafa Belgacem, Founder and CEO of Culture Funding Watch

Following that, Theo Edmonds, Culture Futurist, Directing Co-founder of Imaginator Academy and Research Associate Professor at University of Colorado Denver, added to the discussion from a different perspective. He made the point that scientists can engage with artists and business leaders to create better workplace experiences where companies become a natural creative hub, since that is where most citizens in the US spend their time. He reiterated that creativity becomes the science of connection from business to the arts to science and beyond.

Finally, Dr. Lina Maddah, Economic Researcher at the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) joined online and pointed out that within cultural clusters there are specific anchors that play an important role which should be included in the discussion. Clusters are forming hubs around universities and research centres, for example in high tech industries. The anchor will depend on the context and the industry, and it is important to understand these clusters and separate areas within the CCI to see what specific policies can make an impact in each sub-sector and draw them in to form clusters.



Theo Edmonds, Founder of the Imaginator Academy



Dr. Lina Maddah, Economic Researcher at the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies

## Closing

After a day of fruitful and insightful discussions, Prof. Rym Ayadi closed Day 1 of the conference. She touched on the definition of creativity from an economist's perspective, explaining that culture and creativity are important but broad concepts. Identity, power, gender, uncertainty, and time are the 5 defining factors of culture but we need to go beyond this thinking and understand what culture means for us and our future. Creativity has the capacity to be a transformative factor in our economies and include all sectors of society with their possibilities. She closed with the thought that "CCI must become a priority vector of economic development to create economic, social, and community value, essential for healthy, flourished and resilient societies".

## Day 2

Day 2 of the conference was opened by Prof. Rym Ayadi and Kristina Prunerová, Programme Manager of Civil Society and Culture at DG NEAR Neighbourhood South of the European Commission. Firstly, Prof. Ayadi explained the start of CREAT4MED as it was influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, and how the process had to be digitalised. She thanked Kristina Prunerová, Officer for the project within the EU, for the great support provided for this implementation. In her opening address, Kristina expressed her delight at the project's progress given the challenges it has gone through and its contribution to increased cooperation and collaboration in the Southern Mediterranean. She encouraged the representatives of each country to visit their corresponding EU delegations to allow them to see the impact of CREAT4MED first hand from beneficiaries. She explained the Commission's plans to target the cultural and creative industries and encouraging greater involvement of young people and women.



Kristina Prunerová, Programme Manager of Civil Society and Culture, DG Near Neighbourhood South, European Commission

## Keynote - Seda Röder, Founder and CEO of the Sonophilia Foundation, on Entrepreneurship, Creativity, and Well-being: Beyond the Economic Value

The keynote speaker of the event, Seda Röder, Founder and CEO of the Sonophilia Foundation, discussed the greater role of creativity beyond art and design. She emphasized that creativity is everywhere and necessary across industries. However, there is a growing pressure to innovate. Leaders have forgotten that creativity is a human process and not a mechanical one. Furthermore, creativity has powerful gatekeepers and our societal systems do not allow creativity to flourish or permeate. A critical flaw to be noted is that creativity is not included within the SDG goals, begging the question: how can we change the future if we do not encourage creativity? She highlighted that just 0.2% of the world's population are working in an actively innovative field.



Seda Röder, CEO of the Sonophilia Foundation

When asked by Prof. Ayadi how she views collective creativity and culture as a response to challenges such as food security, environmental hazards, etc., and how entrepreneurs could also respond to those challenges, she gave the example of citizen science and how it can be used to unleash creativity in the community without superimposing questions and answers from above. It is vital that people hold agency. She also suggested that funding is an avenue to solving these issues, changing the goals and mindset of venture capitalists and of entrepreneurs. We have to start living aligned with the value that creativity is vital to progress and wellbeing.

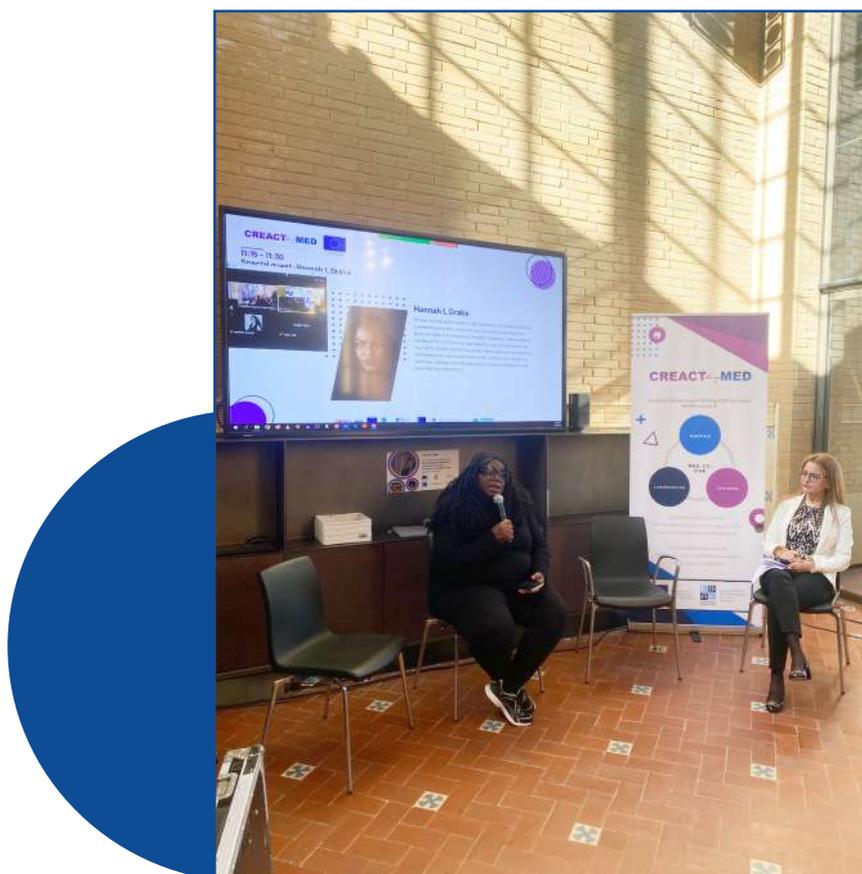
The key message of her intervention was that wellbeing is an outcome of creative activity. It is therefore vital for societal progress and human wellbeing. Through the Covid-19 pandemic, she pointed out, thousands of people maintained their mental health through social bonds with creativity. Furthermore, there are certain benefits associated with creativity and brain health – it was found that those involved in creative activity have a greater ability to look into the future in what is called 'distant imaging' than those not utilising their creative capabilities. She concluded with a quote from Einstein: "Imagination is more important than knowledge because knowledge is limited."

## Special guest: Hannah Drake, Chief Creative Officer, IDEAS xLab

In addition to the keynote, we were joined by guest speaker Hannah Drake, an American poet, blogger, activist, public speaker and author of 11 books, who shared an excerpt of her poem, Dawn, and discussed the importance of creativity from her perspective as an artist and activist. She explained that artists are at the forefront of movements and move us to action, making them the catalyst to providing the answers within the community at times of uncertainty.

Here is the excerpt of her poem:

Every day is a day for us to start over, to begin again, and to birth something new  
 Hope begins in the dark, it is the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing then the dawn will come  
 So you wait and you watch, and you work and you don't give up  
 What could we be if we weren't afraid, and what could we be if we dared,  
 What could we accomplish and how high could we soar  
 Didn't you ever dream of flying  
 If you take my hand, together we can  
 Nothing would be impossible if we stood together  
 A new day awaits us and all we have to do is rise and greet the dawn



Hannah Drake, Chief Creative Officer, IdeasXLab (left) and Prof. Rym Ayadi (right)

## Session 5: Financing schemes, perspectives for the cultural and creative industries

The session was moderated by Prof. Rym Ayadi who opened the session by highlighting that people in CCI have a general lack of access to finance. Discussions such as this are therefore extremely helpful for budding entrepreneurs and CCI industry actors. The panellists were Albert Lorente, Catalonia Trade & Investment, Jonàs Sala, Verkami, Maral Mikirditsian, Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Michelle Mouracade, Alfanar, and Nagla Bahr, Credit Guarantee Company.

Albert Lorente, Business Strategist for Experience and Design Industries, began the discussion from the perspective of ACCIÓ, a public agency in Catalonia helping Catalan businesses be more competitive from a four-pillar approach: business strategy where they help entrepreneurs find funding; technological transformation and disruption, with a separate funding program and start-up hub; international business, helping companies to network and grow their reach; and foreign investment, attracting international projects and investment to Catalonia.



Albert Lorente (left) and Prof. Rym Ayadi (right) opening and speaking in the 5th panel session

Jonàs Sala, Co-founder and Partner at Verkami, the biggest cultural crowdfunding platform in Europe with the world's highest success rate, demonstrated that crowdfunding can be an effective way to raise funds for cultural and creative projects. He stated that there is a 75% success rate of projects and under the Verkami portfolio, they have raised 54 million euros from 1.5 million backers. The platform works as all or nothing, meaning if the required funds to implement the creative project are not reached, the capital is returned to the backers ensuring security and transparency. Ouafa Belgacem from Culture Funding Watch raised the point that the success of crowdfunding is dependent on the target community. In Southern regions, for example, communities are more focused on charity rather than entrepreneurial spirit making it more difficult to achieve the goal. This is something to be considered within the CREAT4MED project. When asked about the technicalities of crowdfunding, Jonàs responded that very few legal obstacles have been encountered when allocating funds and this process is made easier if the applicants have a registered company or are freelancers, but it is not a requirement.

Then the discussion moved to Maral Mikirditsian, Deputy Director at the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) offering a different approach and regional perspective. She explained that the AFAC was set up by activists to support artists, writers, researchers, and others working in creative projects. They offer up to 200 grants each year to people either in the Arab region or part of the diaspora. Alongside grants, they offer training and capacity building to support CCI actors, however, she highlighted that they are selective with funding sources to preserve their autonomy.



Jonàs Sala, Co-founder and Partner at Verkami, (above left) and Maral Mikirditsian, Deputy Director at the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (above right on screen)

A voice from the private sector, Jasmine Busson, Managing Director at Globinvest, discussed how investment firms can focus on innovative and scalable early-stage start-ups with impact. She emphasised that ‘impact’ has varying definitions, and for her, this means investing in those that are underrepresented and underfunded. When discussing the potential trade-off between returns and this kind of impact, she said that venture capitalists are fully capable of avoiding this trade off with the right orientation. She pointed the CREAT4MED participants to various projects under the Globinvest portfolio who are making disruptions in the industry such as the AI Halia women led magazine and Podeo, a leading Arabic podcast platform. She highlighted them as important tools for conveying these messages.



Jasmine Busson, Managing Director at Globinvest (on screen)

Next in the distinguished panel was Michelle Mouracade, Impact Fund Advisor at Alfanar, offering the view that enterprises should not be reliant on grants nor public funds as it does not lead to financial sustainability. Instead, she suggested that CCI organisations could transform to social enterprises allowing them to become a bridging entity between the private and public. She explained that the impact investment market is only in its infancy in the MENA region, but its potential is vast. The process not only includes the allocation of funds but also guidance on management and vision to ensure financial sustainability.

Finally, Nagla Bahr, Managing Director of the Credit Guarantee Company in Egypt, focused on guarantee schemes as a way to provide financing for CCI. However, she emphasised the difficulty of CCI to obtain such financing given that financial institutions need a certain understanding and assessment systems for the industries that they are going to invest in. Lack of familiarity and intangible value of assets makes the CCI industry risky for most prominent financial institutions. As a risk mitigating institution, guarantee companies can support with to enable financial institutions to step in applying a scoring system which applies behavioural scoring more heavily than credit scoring. Despite this, she admitted that CCI makes up a small portion of their portfolio due to the difficulties in supporting the industry. To help build their role in supporting CCI, governmental support is necessary.



Michelle Mouracade, Impact Fund Advisor at Alfanar, (above left) and Nagla Bahr, Managing Director of the Credit Guarantee Company in Egypt (above right)

## Session 6: Creative hubs meetup

In this session, held in the framework of CREAT4MED EU-Southern Neighbourhood Creative Dialogues and organized in collaboration with Creativeforum.si and the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participating creative hubs from all around the Mediterranean, including CREAT4MED-funded BSOs, had the opportunity to present their organisations and initiatives, discuss challenges experienced and current opportunities, and uncover possible synergies and collaborations between them reaching from the Southern to the Northern Mediterranean.

The session was moderated by Luka Piskoric and Eva Matjaz, Poligon Creative Centre in Slovenia.

### Alejandro Papadopoulos, PAU, Spain

PAU is a coworking space, creative community, events, agency and academy in Barcelona. The space itself is a working space for creatives with space for 110 members. Community is key as it kept the space alive during covid by maintaining membership during the pandemic. They have a learning platform for and by professionals that is short and accessible meaning people can learn without having to undertake lengthy university courses.

### Ayah Awwad, ASALA, Palestine

ASALA is a business incubator for CCI projects under the CREAT4MED project in Palestine. The Palestinian Businesswomen's Association- Asala is a Palestinian non-profit organization that was established in 1997 under the name Center for Women's Economic Projects (CWEP) and registered as a non-governmental organization under the current name in 2001. Asala's mission is and has always been to provide services that help marginalized women in poverty to change their lives, social position, and future by enabling and encouraging their successful participation in sustainable economic activities. Asala's focuses on contributing to women's empowerment by supporting its members in the areas of capacity building, access to national and international markets, and advocacy and lobbying for women's economic and social rights including research.

Asala launched a membership program in 2019, with currently over 300 members, in order to keep in contact with women MSME owners, as well as ensure sustainability of the services it provides the members within the program. They have branches in Ramallah, Jerusalem, and Gaza.



Eva Matjaz and Luka Piskoric of Poligon Creative Centre in Slovenia moderating the session (above left, left to right) and Ayah Awwad of ASALA intervening

### Douja Gharbi, RedStart, Tunisia

RedStart is a CREAT4MED consortium partner in charge of supporting the incubators and entrepreneurs. They work in a dynamic ecosystem, not just with startups. They provide encouragement and help entities access the market and finance.

### Esra Gonen, Originn, Turkey

Originn is a meeting point and working space for entrepreneurs located in Izmir, Turkey. In the city there is a lack of collaboration meaning repetition of creative work. As a creative hub, they provide a space and tools for collaboration focusing on innovation, impact, and sustainability. They work closely also with the innovation ecosystem, namely with stakeholders from public and private sectors. As they want to build on the strengths of local context, they have started to run a Foodlab which is a maker space for food entrepreneurs and a creative space for projects related agriculture, tourism, and gastronomy, as they are strong sectors in the city. To internationalize their work and community, Originn is an active member of European Creative Hub Network and Impact Hub Network.

**Israa Asaad, Nucleus Ventures, Lebanon**

Nucleus Ventures is a business incubator for CCI projects under the CREAT4MED project in Lebanon. It is a leading startup hub in Lebanon running programs that build cutting edge scalable businesses attractive to investors. They support startups at different stages and focus on mentorship, offering subject matter experts and also matchmaking opportunities with startups who were there before them.

**Ivan Manojlovic, Nova Iskra, Serbia**

Nova Iskra is a pioneering creative hub in the Balkans, established in 2012 with the mission to create spaces and experiences for people, organizations and businesses to work, learn, innovate and create together. They have coworking spaces with three buildings in Belgrade with 300 members. The members are diverse and are not confined to the cultural sector.

They work on locating problems that the community has and then apply the funds aiming to solve them. Most of the services are free. They are cofounders of the European Creative Hubs Network which is making connections between businesses at the local level and putting CCI on the agenda within the political system.

**Leila Hizaoui, Minassa – INCO Tunisie, Tunisia**

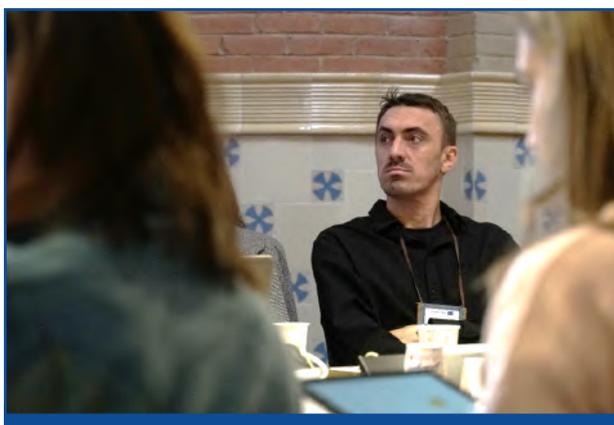
Minassa is a business incubator for CCI projects under the CREAT4MED project in Tunisia. Launched in 2019, Minassa offers personalized, individualized and free support to cultural and creative industries at all stages of development, as well as training and support for nonprofits. It aims to foster innovation, creativity, and impact of projects in the fields of architecture, design, visual arts, fashion, arts, digital, cultural, and natural heritage, etc. Over the past few years, Minassa has continuously sought to improve its support programs and diversify in order to increase its impact on the cultural and creative ecosystem, including programs geared towards women, students and established entrepreneurs. They also involve university students to cultivate ideas and offer personal coaching in business models, accounting, and themes such as female empowerment.

**Marwa Cheikh Youssef, LaStartupStation, Morocco**

LaStartUpStation is a business incubator for CCI under the CREAT4MED project in Morocco. Their product Startup Square allows them to manage their activities in a more digital way. They focus on open innovation and ensure that the start-up school is accessible. They are part of social entrepreneurship and work closely with the public sector. They have also been working in countries surrounding Morocco helping to enhance soft skills in the form of short bootcamps.

**Mohamed Abbas, Nilepreneurs Initiative, Egypt**

Nilepreneurs Initiative is a business incubator for CCI under the CREAT4MED project in Egypt. It is a nationwide initiative funded by the central bank of Egypt and operated by Nile university to support entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs in different sectors through different products and services. One of the main programs is NP INCUBATE which focusses on various sectors including CCI. They have a creative design incubator and provide support in several different sectors reached 237 start-ups. They offer financial and technical support and encourage networking and matchmaking. They also run an ecommerce platform. Outside of the CCI, they work in the software, engineering sector on prototyping, manufacturing, product design, and social media.



Ivan Manojlovic of Nova Iskra (above left) and Mohamed Abbas of NilePreneurs Initiative presenting (above right)

**Ouafa Belgacem, Culture Funding Watch, Tunisia**

CFW supports access to finance area of CCI in the local sphere. Their work extends across the MENA region, but the reality is that most financing is not local, and this is not sustainable. They work with many approaches: access to information, capacity building, investment education, and research and development. Their work focuses on identifying the needs of entrepreneurs and investors and making appropriate matches keeping in mind that beneficiaries and entrepreneurs can be from anywhere and CFW has a role in facilitating their mobility.

**Tania Santos, CRU Creative hub, European Creative Hubs Network, Portugal**

CRU is a creative hub that, in one place, combines a coworking space for creative activities, a design store, a coffee bar, and an area for art exhibitions and studios for digital production which is part of the European Creative Hubs Network (ECHN). The ECHN is a consortium of creative hubs. The programs were designed for managers of creative hubs providing training to allow for professionalization and formal processes. Mapping the goals and capacity of each hub was carried out to pave the way for enriched hub communities. They share final projects, tenders, calls, mobility programs for creative industries to form a 'one stop shop' for progress, cooperation, and collaboration.

**Viorica Cerbusca, Artcor, Moldova**

Artcor is a Creative Industries Centre in Chisinau, product of a collaborative project of the Association of Creative Industry Companies in Moldova and the Academy of Theatre, Music and Fine Arts (AMTAP). The building is attractive and provides the perfect communal space for collaboration. Under their activities, they also educate and have run analyses of creative skills and found them to be low in the city. Entrepreneurship is developed but there is not much innovation. They started to work with students and teenagers - trying to grow through schools and universities. Now, they run an Artcor school which has courses on branding, communication, and interior design building on the existing appetite for citizens to create.

**Conclusions**

As a result of these exchanges, the participants concluded that there are potential synergies and collaborations to be made. They signalled that exchanges can be made on LinkedIn and via the CREAT4MED engagement platform. The CREAT4MED team established that the engagement platform is a great tool through which to communicate and promote synergies.



Group photo

# AGENDA

## Monday, 28 November 2022

### 10:00–10:30 - Coffee and registration

### 10:30-10:45 - Welcome address

Prof. Rym Ayadi, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), Spain  
Veronika Stabej, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia

### 10:45-11:30 – CREAT4MED: supporting the CCI in the Southern Mediterranean

Giulia Dimonopoli, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), Spain  
Maria Dalakoura, Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED), Greece  
Maria Ruiz, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), Spain  
Yeganeh Forouheshfar, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), Spain

### 11:30-12:15 – CREAT4MED: funded projects

Moderated by: Douja Gharbi, RedStart, Tunisia  
Israa Asaad, Nucleus Ventures, Lebanon  
Leila Hizaoui, Minassa, Tunisia  
Marwa Cheikh Youssef, LaStartupStation, Morocco  
Salam Nawaiseh, TTI Innovation, Jordan

### 12:15-14:00 – Lunch break

### 14:00 -15:15 – CCI programmes: identifying and bridging the gaps

Moderated by: Roger Albinyana, IEMed, Spain  
Enrique de Villamore, MedWaves, Spain  
Alia Arasoughly, Shashat, Palestine  
Amina Benjelloun, Federation of Cultural and Creative Industries, Morocco  
Jessica Carson, ZenBusiness, Georgetown University and American Psychological Association, USA

### 15:15-15:30 - Break

### 15:30-16:45 - Supporting innovative development of creative and cultural hubs

Moderated by: Luka Piskoric, Poligon Creative Centre, Slovenia  
Lina Maddah, Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, Lebanon  
Ouafa Belgacem, Culture Funding Watch, Tunisia  
Salvador Simó, University of Vic, Spain  
Samer Yamani, Creativedialogue.net, UAE  
Theo Edmonds, University of Colorado Denver and Imaginator Academy, US

### 16:45-17:00 – Closing day 1



## Tuesday, 29 November 2022

**10:00 – 10:30 Welcome coffee and registration**

**10:30-10:45 - Welcome address**

Kristina Prunerová, European Commission, Belgium

Prof. Rym Ayadi, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), Spain

**10:45-11:15 – Keynote - Entrepreneurship, creativity, and wellbeing: Beyond the economic value**

Seda Röder, Sonophilia Foundation, Germany

**11:30-11:45 – Special Guest, Hannah Drake**

**11:30-13:15 – Financing schemes: perspectives for the cultural and creative industries**

Moderated by: Prof. Rym Ayadi, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), Spain

Albert Lorente, Catalonia Trade & Investment, Spain

Jonàs Sala, Verkami, Spain

Maral Mikirditsian, Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Lebanon

Jasmine Busson, Globinvest, Lebanon

Michelle Mouracade, Alfamar, Lebanon

Nagla Bahr, Credit Guarantee Company, Egypt

**13:15-13:30 – Closing**

**13:30 – 15:00 – Networking lunch**

**15:00-18:00 – Creative hubs meetup (Face-to-Face)**

Moderated peer-to-peer dialogue between European and Southern Mediterranean creative hubs

Participants:

Moderated by: Luka Piskoric and Eva Matjaž, Poligon Creative Centre, Slovenia

Alejandro Papadopoulos, PAU, Spain

Ayah Awwad, ASALA, Palestine

Esra Gonen, Originn, Turkey

Israa Asaad, Nucleus Ventures, Lebanon

Ivan Manojlovic, Nova Iskra, Serbia

Leila Hizaoui, Minassa – INCO Tunisie, Tunisia

Marwa Cheikh Youssef, LaStartupStation, Morocco

Mohamed Abbas, Nilepreneurs Initiative, Egypt

Ouafa Belgacem, Culture Funding Watch, Tunisia

Salam Nawaiseh, TTI Innovation, Jordan

Tania Santos, CRU Creative hub, European Creative Hubs Network, Portugal

Viorica Cerbusca, Artcor, Moldova

**18:00-20:00h – Networking cocktail**

End of the Annual Conference

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**ABBAS Mohamed**, Nilepreneurs Initiative  
**ALBINYANA Roger**, European Institute of the Mediterranean  
**ARASOUGHLY Alia**, Shashat  
**ASAAD Israa**, Nucleus Ventures  
**AWWAD Ayah**, ASALA  
**AYADI Rym**, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association  
**BAHR Nagla**, Credit Guarantee Company  
**BELGACEM Ouafa**, Culture Funding Watch  
**BENJELLOUNE Amina**, Federation of Cultural and Creative Industries  
**CARSON Jessica**, ZenBusiness  
**CERBUSCA Viorica**, Artcor  
**CHEIKH Marwa**, LaStartupStation  
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**DIMONOPOLI Giulia**, European Institute of the Mediterranean  
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**MATJAZ Eva**, Poligon Kreativni Center  
**MIKIRDITSIAN Maral**, Arab Fund for Arts and Culture  
**MIRAGLIA Alessandro**, Medwaves  
**MOURACADE Michelle**, Alfamar  
**NAWAISEH Salam**, TTi Innovation  
**PAPADOPOULOS Alejandro**, European Hub  
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**STABEJ Veronika**, Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
**VALERO Cristina**, European Institute of the Mediterranean  
**YAMANI Samer**, Creativedialogue.net