



NewsEurideas

July 2011 Issue

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© Karim Abraheem

Immigration, refugees and culture

The launch of the European Union's new Asylum Support Office this June marked the dawn of a new era for E.U. asylum seekers and immigrants, as well as for those who manage their cases or provide related language services. With this in mind, Eurideas Linguistic Services selected immigration and asylum as the focal points of its latest monthly newsletter, first outlining the intended role and goal of the new E.U. office in Malta. Secondly, we want to present you the Brussels-resident photographer Karim Abraheem. Among other topics, immigration is one of the main subjects of his artwork. Thirdly, we draw your attention to the activities of an Italian 'social promotion' association, ARCI, which provides support to refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable groups in Italy.

We hope the newsletter provides some insights into the latest immigration issues in the E.U. Enjoy reading.

'Eurideas News' is a newsletter issued by Eurideas Linguistic Services. Being a translation agency specialised in EU related topics, our aim is to talk about EU projects and organisations, countries, regions, politics and culture. If you would like to contribute to one of our next newsletters with an article, please do not hesitate to contact us. For inquiries, please contact us at:

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Addressing Immigration Issues: A New European Asylum Support Office in Malta



Over the years, citizens of EU Member States have gained unprecedented rights to stay in other EU countries, for professional and personal reasons. If we are unemployed, we can go to other EU countries to look for work. We can take our immediate family with us. It is as if the EU has rewritten the dictionary definition of “homeland” for its citizens and, as a result, we now have ties that bind with all our European neighbours, especially the countries in which we take root.

There are, however, responsibilities as well as opportunities associated with EU membership and, in efforts to help Member States fulfil their obligations to protect people in need, in the early 2010, the Council and the European Parliament formally approved the creation of a European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Though Cyprus and Bulgaria expressed a keen interest in hosting the office, it was ultimately determined that the EASO headquarters would be located in Valletta, Malta.

The office was officially opened by European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström, on 19 June. In her opening remarks, Malmström stated that she was “very happy to open the European Asylum Support Office. By dealing with practical and operational issues regarding asylum and migration, the Support Office offers valuable support to Member States by facilitating practical cooperation in all aspects of the assessment of asylum claims and in the reception of asylum seekers.

It will provide support to Member States confronted with unexpected inflows of asylum seekers and to those which simply need to make their asylum system more fair and efficient. It is an indispensable instrument to help achieve a more comprehensive and protective Common European Asylum System. Practices for receiving asylum seekers still vary considerably from one EU country to the other and much more needs to be done to achieve a greater convergence of approaches. The Support office will have an important role in that.”The opening ceremony took place at the Upper Barrakka Gardens in Valletta and was attended by Commissioner Malmström, the Prime Minister of Malta, Lawrence Gonzi, and the Maltese Minister of Justice and Home Affairs, Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, among others. The EASO Management Board also met earlier this month to establish a work plan for 2012 and to assess the effectiveness of the 2011 plan that is currently in place.

One of EASO’s core functions is to relieve pressures on the asylum systems of EU Member States by using its expertise to help them ensure that their immigration systems are fair and efficient, especially in emergency situations. The support offered comes in the form of interpretation services, information on countries of origin and advice on how best to manage asylum cases.

Photographer Karim Abraheem



Karim Abraheem was born in Amarah in southern Iraq. In 1980 he left his country to study in Brussels. At the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Karim obtained a degree in special sciences (development cooperation). He then attended a training in photography at the Academy of Fine Arts in Anderlecht. In early 2004, Karim returned to his homeland for the first time in 24 years.

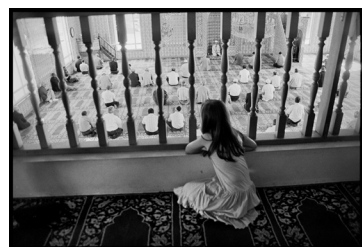
There he conducted a photo shoot, commissioned by the global magazine MO*. In 2005, Karim obtained his degree in photography. A year later, in December 2006, the publishing house Epo published his extraordinary book 'Irak Vandaag' ("Iraq Today"). In it, the artist shows us a very diverse Iraq where not the war, but ordinary people take centre stage. Man in his everyday surroundings is the common thread in Karim Abraheem's works. He is interested in social themes, such as the situation of undocumented migrants and the multicultural environment. His interest in those concerns is the drive behind his work with KMS (Kerkwerk Multicultureel Samenleven).



Cairo, young girl and bike



Iraq, Amarah, 2004



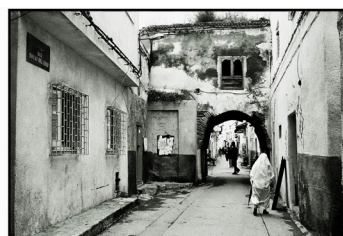
Beringen, Etonnement



Night shop, Saint-Gilles, Brussels



Afghan refugees, Brussels



Tunis, April 2011



Demonstration, Tunis, April 2011



Dancing with birds in Place Flagey, Brussels

Why have you decided to become a photographer?

When I was a little boy in Iraq, I loved to see cameras in the shops or with adults, it always fascinated me. In Belgium, in 2000, I studied photography at the Academy of Fine Arts in Anderlecht for five years and I really learned a lot of interesting things. In fact becoming a photographer is a personal decision, personal desire. It's just like being a philosopher or doctor, you need a passion for this job. I realized from the beginning that photography would be more than a hobby for me, it enables me to understand reality better by picturing it in an artistic way.

What are your preferred themes and topics?

My work depicted the daily life with special emphasis on issues like: immigration, minorities, factory labourer, religious rituals and people within a particular social environment.

Are there any new projects you are working on now or you are planning in the near future?

Yes, certainly, one project about Tunisia in two months. In fact, I visited Tunisia in April in order to see the change ... to share with the Tunisians the joy of the fall of the dictator. I took pictures but I'm planning to return and take more photos. I am thinking about Egypt also, a new project in Cairo for example, but I am not sure yet, I just say: inch`Allah.

If someone is interested, is there a possibility to see or buy your photos?

Simply contact me through e-mail (karimabraheem@hotmail.com) or by phone: +32 495 400 700.

Learn About ARCI and its Work with Asylum Seekers in Italy



Immigration being the focus of this month's newsletter, Eurideas Linguistic Services interviewed Alessandra Bari, the Immigration Coordinator at ARCI Torino, an Italian social promotion organization.

We would love to hear about ARCI and the work you are doing on immigration, in particular.

Thank you. Well, ARCI is a big Italian civil society association. It has existed for over 50 years and we have volunteers from all over Italy on our books. Overall, we must have about 1.1 million members, 140 local committees, 20 regional committees, and 5,600 social clubs.

What is the focal point of ARCI's work?

ARCI supports vulnerable groups, such as children, immigrants, drug addicts, people with mental illnesses, physical disabilities and romas.

Could you tell us about ARCI's recent work on immigration?

First, let me outline our work on immigration nationwide, then we can talk about ARCI Torino's work in the Piedmont region, in particular. Basically, ARCI helps immigrants and asylum seekers at the national and European levels by lobbying on issues such as asylum and discrimination. To make sure that we are as effective as possible, we also develop partnerships with other immigration organizations. At the moment, our community mobilization unit is really busy guiding, monitoring and striving to protect asylum seekers and refugees who land in Italy from North Africa and beyond. We also organize anti-racism and anti-xenophobia conferences and petitions as well as events to promote the rights of migrants.

So what is ARCI Torino?

ARCI Torino is the Turin-based branch of ARCI. We promote cultural development and international solidarity and to do that, we organize all sorts of events from theater to cinema, music, visual arts, information, recreation and sports. It is great fun. We currently have over 50,000 people signed up in Turin alone and our member associations include 150 social clubs and associations all over the province.

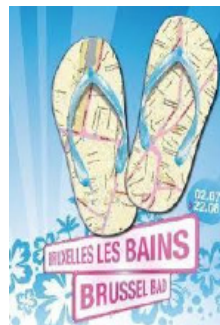
Is ARCI Torino involved in immigration issues as well as ARCI HQ?

Absolutely. Since December 2006, we have provided emergency housing and humanitarian support for political refugees in and around Turin. In 2008, we organized the placement of refugees in Italian families to help them integrate into Italian society. We provided advice and support both for them and the host families. At the moment, we are supporting over 140 people in our refugee welcome centres in Turin, but our waiting lists are far longer.

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us, Alessandra. We really appreciate it.

<http://www.arci.it/>
<http://www.arcitorino.it/>

AGENDA



► **August 12 - 21, 2011** The Brussels Summer Festival is a music festival which features a host of different styles. It's located in the royal quarter of Brussels. Four main stages, concerts indoors, a collaboration with five museums, screenings of short films, street activities, etc. The BSF also features classical music: Classissimo
<http://www.brusselsummerfestival.com>

► **June 6 - October 16, 2011** Ninety concerts in the Walloon Region and in Brussels. This year, a brand new branch is added to the Festival: The Festival-Musiq'3, combining students and professionals in an innovative, intergenerational concept that will take place in Brussels in Flagey between the first and the third of July.
<http://www.festivaldewallonie.be>

► **July 9 - 10, 2011** The International BROSELLA Folk & Jazz Festival takes place at the "Groentheater" at the Ossegem parc (close to the ATOMIUM) in Brussels (Laken). The festival is free accessible. An Experience, because every year you have the opportunity to witness surprises: new bands to be discovered next to well-known artists often with exclusive programs.
<http://www.brosella.be>

► **July 1 - August 7, 2011** Brussels Beach (Bruxelles les Bains) opens its urban beach, from Tuesday till Sunday, at the Quai des Péniches. This year: exceptional presence of the sailing boat on which the treaty of Rome was signed.
<http://www.bruxelleslesbains.be>

► **July 5 - 7, 2011** Ommegang is a historic parade, part of the Brussels folklore with more than 1.400 actors, folk and historic groups, puppet theater, giants, flags,... It honours the coming of Charles the Fifth to Brussels in 1549. A whole medieval village will be created at Place du Grand Sablon, with free entry for everyone. Knights combating on foot and horses, falconry, are some of the activities of the three days event.
<http://www.ommegang.be>

► **July 16 - August 21, 2011** The traditional and gigantic Midi Fair along the Boulevard du Midi. Hundreds of attractions, some traditional, others the most modern. The Midi Fair has a long history. In 1880 the city council decided that 3 fairs which took place simultaneously had to be combined. One big fair was born, every year on the first weekend before the national holiday of 21 July.
<http://www.foiredumidi.be/>