

## **Festival**

Springtime corresponds to the return of festivals, with the most famous of them being the Cannes International Film Festival, dedicated to cinema since 1939 to counter the Venice Film Festival, created and instrumentalized in 1932 by the fascist and nazi regimes (1). With the hand on culture, another symbol is revealing of the state of anxiety, and even existential fear of a society - its way of welcoming exiles and tackling the migration issue.

The signals sent by the European Union and a group of ideologically close European countries on the migration issue are worrying (2). After authorizing in March 2025 the European states to create “return platforms” for paperless people outside of Europe, the European Commission planned on 20 May 2025 to review the concept of “safe third country” to facilitate the expulsion of asylum seekers to countries through which they have transited (3). The door is open for asylum seekers' centres in remote countries, already tested in Rwanda by the UK or Denmark. The relaxation of the concept of “safe third country” responds to the request made in May 2024, within the framework of the Pact on Migration and Asylum (PAM), by some fifteen countries, at the initiative of Austria, Denmark and Italy. The Commission must “identify, develop and propose new ways and solutions to combat immigration in Europe”. The 2024 legislation requires that the national asylum authorities prove the existence of a link between the applicant and the safe third country concerned (having lived, worked...). In 2025, the Commission suggests to significantly reduce the concept of linkage. A simple passage of the asylum seeker is sufficient. If there was no transit, an agreement or arrangement with this “safe third country” will suffice. The States concerned must nevertheless fulfil certain conditions: “protection against refoulement, absence of real risk of serious harm and threat to life and liberty on grounds of race, religion, nationality (...) or political opinion” or “the possibility of requesting or receiving effective protection”. The greatest uncertainty is that European countries and third countries concerned are jointly rejecting reception and asylum for refugees in “limbo” according to the director of the European Refugee Network. The case has already happened with the agreement between the European Union and Turkey in 2016, where thousands of refugees rejected by Greece were also rejected by their Turkish neighbor.

More worrisome is the unprecedented attack by European political leaders, orchestrated by Prime Ministers Giorgia Melloni in Italy, heir to a post-fascist party, and Mette Frederiksen in Denmark, a social democrat, with seven other countries, against the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg and the 1950 Convention, which judges are responsible for interpreting and applying in their judgments (4). This text protecting the rights of exiles would, according to this group of European countries ideologically close on immigration issues, be inappropriate for the «great questions of our time» and the magistrates charged with applying it would have exceeded their rights, encroaching on national sovereignty. According to a law professor at the University of Brussels, the countries attacking the ECHR have not detailed any judgment they consider contentious. This is therefore an ideological statement that fits into the state of mind of a US president, who was sworn in on January 20, 2025 and who has multiplied xenophobic and anti-immigration statements. He was caught up by the justice system, the last bulwark to defend the rule of law, which he never stopped attacking. In a particularly explosive geopolitical context, these attacks against an international Convention considered for 75 years

as one of the pillars of the European project, unique model, recognized by all democracies, to combat discrimination and defend diversity, are not accidental. The judges of Strasbourg, like the ones in the United States, are the last bulwarks against the populist assaults coming from far-right ideologies.

Unexpected support came from the Culture, with the 78th Cannes Film Festival which ended on Saturday 24 May 2025 (5). The list of winners celebrates and defends all the diversities attacked by authoritarian regimes, yesterday and today. The Golden Palm was awarded to the Iranian, French and Luxembourg film directed by Jafar Panahi «A simple accident». The director, an influential Iranian New Wave filmmaker, was sentenced in 2010 to six years in prison for propaganda against the regime of the Mullahs. He must have been sneaking around. Her award-winning film at Cannes in 2025 addresses the Iranian regime's fierce repression of its opponents, especially young people and women, since the launch in 2022 of the movement "Woman, Life, Freedom". A Brazilian, French, Dutch and German film directed by Kleber Mendonça Filho «The secret agent», received the prize for directing and male interpretation. He evokes the period of dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985) to denounce neo-conservative and conspiratorial regimes today, with a recurrence in Brazil with Javier Bolsonaro (2019-2023). Authoritarian regimes always target minorities, the weakest and most vulnerable people. The Female Performance Award was given to French actress Nadia Melliti in the film directed by French director Hafsia Herzi, "La Petite Dernière" (winner of the Queer Palm) for her portrayal of a young lesbian Muslim woman.

Democracy is under attack on every continent, in every latitude. The best indicator of a country's democratic health is the respect for diversity in all its facets. The fight for the rights of exiles, LGBTQIA+ and religious or cultural minorities is the same... Today, as in the past, culture and justice are essential bulwarks against the repeated assaults of populist and authoritarian regimes when they are defended by courageous and honest artists and judges who have the means to fight their battle, by a demanding legal and regulatory framework and long-term financial support. The European Union, with its imperfections and blindness, remain the best bastion against autocratic regimes, and the first supporter of a «universalism of differences», dear to Edouard Glissant. Caribbean artist, author of «essays and novels dealing with the notions of otherness, living together and interculturality», he defended together with Victor Segalen an «aesthetic of the Diverse» (6).

Edouard Glissant is the red thread of an exhibition "Black Paris" at the Beaubourg Centre. Black artists from North America, the West Indies or Africa came to find in Paris a land of choice and inspiration, and a freedom of expression which they were deprived elsewhere. Long live the diverse and free Europe, yesterday and today.

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- (1) In 1939, it was a modest festival created to oppose the Venice Film Biennale and its organization by Mussolini and Hitler.
- (2) Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland
- (3) Philippe Jacqué « Bruxelles ouvre la voie à l'externalisation des demandes d'asile », Le Monde, 22 mai 2025

- (4) Philippe Jacqué « Immigration : neuf pays de l'UE veulent affaiblir la CEDH », Le Monde 25 mai 2025
- (5) Clarisse Fabre et Jacques Mandelbaum « Un Festival au palmarès très politique », Le Monde, 27 mai 2025
- (6) Mohamed Amine Rhimi, «L'imaginaire de la « poétique du Divers » et de la « Philosophie de la Relation » d'Édouard Glissant : repenser la mondialisation au prisme de la « transrhétorique »», Amerika [En línea], 22 | 2021, Publicado el 14 julio 2021, consultado el 29 mayo 2025.  
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