



**10th UNESCO Summit of Heads of State
of South East European Countries
Mostar, 3 June, 2012**

DECLARATION

**”Religious, Cultural and Historical Heritage as a Foundation for More
Intensive Cooperation amongst States”**

We, the Heads of State of South-East Europe have met in Mostar, in Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 3rd, 2012 at the 10th Summit of the Heads of State of South-East European Countries on the topic of "Religious, Cultural and Historical Heritage as a Foundation for More Intensive Cooperation among States" organized under the auspices of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Director-General of UNESCO, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and attended by the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth;

Reaffirming our commitment to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitution of UNESCO, the Statute of the Council of Europe, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

Reaffirming further the importance of internationally agreed standards setting instruments of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, in particular the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999), the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the European Cultural Convention (1954), Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001); the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985), the European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage (revised) (1992), the European Landscape Convention (2000); and the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005);

Welcoming and jointly celebrating the 40th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention for Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972),

Welcoming the restoration of Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka, the Orthodox Cathedral in Mostar and the Franciscan monastery in Plehan, as well as of other monuments and symbols of multiculturalism.

Emphasizing that this Declaration builds on the Messages and Declarations adopted during the previous Heads of States Summits: the Dialogue among Civilizations (Ohrid, 2003), the Declaration on the Development of Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue in South East

Europe (Tirana, 2004), The Declaration on Cultural Corridors in South East Europe "Common Past and Heritage – a Key to Future Partnership (Varna, 2005), the Declaration "Communication of Heritage" (Opatija, 2006), the Declaration "Cultural Diversity – a Bridge Between Cultural Heritage and the Culture of the Future" (Bucharest, Sibiu, 2007), the Declaration on Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South East Europe (Athens, 2008), the Declaration on Management of Heritage Diversity and Its Promotion for Tourism (Cetinje, 2009), the Declaration on Music as a Metaphor of Cultural Dialogue (Istanbul, 2010); the Declaration on Contemporary Art and Reconciliation in South East Europe (Viminacium, 2011),

Expressing our satisfaction on the implementation of these Declarations, particularly through the Annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe,

Acknowledging the importance of the role of the international organizations participating in this Summit, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the Commission of the European Union, and their continuous contribution to the improvement of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation in South East-Europe,

Recalling that respect and appreciation of cultural diversity implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as to intercultural dialogue which encompasses inter-religious dialogue, inseparable from a democratic framework, conducive to stability, peace and development,

Reaffirming that cultural heritage, a record of human experiences and aspirations, reflects the common wealth of humanity's creative diversity at global, regional and national levels, as it draws on the roots of local cultural traditions and flourishes in contact with other cultures, therefore becoming the cornerstone for mediation, cooperation and mutual understanding, namely among and within our countries,

Underlying the major role of inter-religious dialogue, which forms part of the broader intercultural dialogue, to enhance understanding between individuals, believers and non-believers as well as between leaders of different religions, faiths and convictions with a view to increasing mutual knowledge about spiritual traditions, sacred sites and their underlying values, thus enlarging the space for harmonious coexistence in our contemporary multicultural societies,

Being aware of the deeply rooted interdependence between non-tangible cultural heritage and tangible cultural and natural assets and committed to equal care for the preservation of non-tangible cultural heritage of humanity, which plays an important role in dialogue and sustainable development,

Recalling in this regard that damage to or disappearance of each and every piece of cultural or natural heritage represents an impoverishment of heritage of all peoples in the world,

and emphasizing the need for an increased joint cooperation to prohibit and prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural property,

We, the Heads of State of South East Europe, hereby confirm our determination to appreciate and promote inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and tolerance as valuable means to ensure the sustainability of our cultural heritage, and

Hereby solemnly declare to be committed to:

1. **Nurture** peace, mutual understanding, trust and cooperation in South-East Europe, as well as to spare no effort in building a prosperous common European future,
2. **Protect** cultural heritage as an important foundation for fostering understanding and more intensive cooperation among our countries, bearing in mind that every country has a duty to protect heritage and sites located on its territory, which also form part of world heritage and are valuable to all humanity,
3. **Undertake** measures aiming at restoring and safeguarding cultural heritage to be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations so as to foster a peaceful and sustainable development of our societies,
4. **Improve** our national legislations for the safeguarding of cultural heritage, in compliance with internationally recognized instruments and guidelines, and enhance the implementation of relevant cultural policies in this regard, including allocation of substantial funds, despite the ongoing financial crisis,
5. **Strengthen** regional cooperation by improving and sharing knowledge on cultural heritage and by providing collaborative frameworks among cultural, educational and other relevant institutions and stakeholders of our countries, as well as by providing support to joint regional programs and projects,
6. **Intensify** awareness-raising measures as well as appropriate strategies to prevent or improve the fight against the illicit traffic of cultural property, in close cooperation with all relevant institutions and stakeholders,
7. **Stress** the common values, deep interactions and cross-cultural borrowings that took place among different cultural and spiritual traditions during the past times until nowadays and the need to foster reciprocal knowledge, particularly among new generations, to achieve respect for pluralism, for beliefs and convictions, the very basis to create harmony in our multicultural societies,

8. **Support** in this regard UNESCO's new global initiative "Culture: a Bridge to Development" on the role of culture for sustainable development, in particular through the promotion of cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue, creativity, artistic expressions and cultural industries, and in enhancing regional projects on "Heritage and Dialogue" in the South-East European region, namely through regional Centers of excellence on cultural heritage, Regional Youth Forums on World Heritage as well as regional exhibits and initiatives on shared history and memory,
9. **Foster** our successful cooperation enjoyed with UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the Commission of the European Union, acknowledging their positive role for the implementation of policies on the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage, and the dissemination of standards, knowledge and best practices in this area,
10. **Promote** an integrated vision of cultural heritage, which mirrors our rich cultural diversity and knowledge economies, bearing in mind that culture underpins an ongoing debate on identities, social cohesion, tolerance and dialogue which has to take place in a spirit of cooperation and mutual trust and understanding.
11. **We welcome** the invitation of President Gjorge Ivanov to host the 11th Summit of the Heads of State of South East Europe in 2013.