

DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS

SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF STATE
OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES:
“INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS ON MARITIME,
RIVER AND LAKE ROUTES OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE”

ATHENS, GREECE,
12-14 JUNE 2008



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



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of South-East Europe”

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FOREWORD

The links between water and culture lie in a variety of tangible and intangible activities that often embody the collective memory and wisdom of a society. These links find expression in songs, poems, paintings, myths and proverbs, as well as in the linguistic and artistic expressions that shape value systems, development and technical know-how. Understanding and nurturing them is a fundamental requirement for harmony and peace between peoples.

It is for this reason that the Heads of State of South-East European countries, in their longstanding collective resolve to overcome strife and reach mutual understanding through cooperation on cultural issues, chose the theme Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes in South-East Europe for their sixth summit, following a High-Level Conference on Strengthening Cooperation in South-East Europe organized at UNESCO Headquarters in April 2002.

Held in Athens, Greece on 12 and 13 June 2008, the sixth summit focussed on the significance of water routes – both freshwater and the oceans – as cultural resources that could contribute to further unifying the region.

This theme was also a natural progression from those examined at previous summits. At the 2003 summit in Ohrid, under the theme Dialogue Among Civilizations, Heads of State affirmed their collective will to preserve and promote the region's cultural assets as a shared benefit. Decisions on mutual respect rooted in open dialogue between cultures and faiths (Tirana, 2004), the use of cultural corridors as routes for intercultural dialogue (Varna, 2005), the use of heritage as an engine for regional development and cohesiveness (Opatija, 2006) and to uphold the principles of cultural diversity (Bucharest and Sibiu, 2007) strengthened the bonds between the countries of the region putting in place, through the various declarations and action plans adopted at each summit, the framework for peaceful cooperation and coexistence.

UNESCO is committed to increasing cooperation between its Member States through genuine dialogue, and to that end, we endeavour to nurture and reinforce positive linkages and exchanges, including with European institutions. Thus, it has been a privilege for UNESCO to cooperate closely with the leaders of South-East European countries in the organization of these summits on topics of high importance to the region. This is especially so since dialogue among civilizations and cultures is a deeply rooted, constitutionally prescribed task for the Organization.

The theme of the Athens Summit was particularly meaningful for UNESCO. Water is high on the Organization's agenda, having been adopted as a principal priority for our action by our governing bodies since 2002. Over the last twenty years, our activities have evolved from being narrowly scientific in nature into an interdisciplinary sustainable development approach to water, encompassing the sciences, education and culture. This evolution has

mirrored the change in global thinking on the environment and development in general, and on water in particular, following the 1992 Rio Conference and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to the President, the Government and the people of Greece for their hospitality and initiative in maintaining the momentum of these important encounters. I would also like to thank the European Union for its continued partnership in the organization of the summits.

The Athens Summit was another building block for the future prosperity and fulfilment of the peoples of South-East Europe. Taken together, the Declarations adopted at the six meetings, which are reproduced in this publication, represent an impressive expression of the political will of the leaders to build a better and more peaceful tomorrow.

Koïchiro Matsuura
*Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)*

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**INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS ON MARITIME,
RIVER AND LAKE ROUTES OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE
SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF STATE OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE**

ATHENS DECLARATION

13 JUNE, 2008

- I. We, the Heads of State and high-Level representatives of South-East Europe, meeting in Athens (12-13 June 2008) within the framework of the Summit on the theme “Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South-East Europe”, organized under the auspices of the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Karolos Papoulias, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Terry Davis:

Reaffirming the ideals and principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitution of UNESCO, the Statutes of the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights;

Reasserting our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 60th Anniversary of which we celebrate this year and which offers an opportunity for the international community to make efforts to eliminate the obstacles to their implementation, such as discrimination and intolerance;

Underlining that the Athens Summit takes place in the Year 2008, proclaimed “International Year of Languages by the United Nations” to highlight the importance of linguistic diversity and multi-linguism and thus to foster respect for the protection and promotion of all languages, particularly endangered languages, in accordance with national legislation and international obligations;

Highlighting that the agenda of the Athens Summit addresses the issue of intercultural dialogue in South-East Europe, an issue which is at the heart of the 2008 “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue”, proclaimed by the European Union and welcoming the “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue” launched by the Council of Europe;

Emphasizing that this Declaration builds on the Message from Ohrid on the Dialogue among Civilizations (2003), the Tirana Summit Declaration on the Development of Inter-religious and Interethnic Dialogue (2004), the Varna Declaration on Cultural Corridors in South-East Europe, Common Past and Heritage - A Key to Future Partnership (2005), the

Opatija Declaration on “Communication of Heritage” (2006) and the Bucharest and Sibiu Declaration on “Cultural Diversity – a Bridge between Cultural Heritage and the Culture of the Future” (2007);

Expressing our satisfaction that implementation of these Declarations has progressed, particularly through the Annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe on the topic “Cultural Heritage – a Bridge towards a Shared Future”;

Reiterating our determination and commitment contained in the above-mentioned Declarations to acknowledge and inscribe culture with its rich diversity on the political agenda in order to create a climate of mutual trust and understanding as guarantee of peace, stability thus broadening horizon for dialogue, both within the region and with the world.

II. *Underscore that:*

- a. The region of South-East Europe has been a crossroads of paramount importance to its peoples and cultures, a bridge between East and West, the cradle of the foundations of European civilization.
- b. No civilization and no culture is monolithic as both are the results of millennia of contacts and exchanges. They are constantly taking different forms and expressions depending on the memory and aspirations of each society revealing its boundless cultural diversity.
- c. This rich diversity is expressed through the “cultural routes, itineraries and corridors” which are considered as routes of dialogue and contribute to a better understanding of the underlying dynamics of cultural interaction. Thus, they inspire both historic and future-oriented thinking on the mechanisms enabling such intercultural dialogue, whether via land, sea, lakes or rivers.
- d. Since the dawn of civilization, humanity’s dependency on water has directly interacted with the development of societies, often decisively influencing their conditions of existence, water being a vital resource with economic, ecological, social and cultural functions.
- e. South-East European cultures have developed multifaceted contacts and interactions, which have constantly regenerated their rich cultural diversity, ultimately creating a very intimate relationship when travelling through seas, rivers and lakes. These fundamental routes of dialogue have influenced people’s ways of living, values and knowledge systems, throughout history and have moulded human relations and reshaped spaces for new intercultural encounters.

III.1 *Highlight* the complementary roles and objectives of the international organizations and institutions participating in the Summit and in particular:

- a. UNESCO's Constitution according to which "ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war", as well as the Organization's mission as defined in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information by means of its five established functions: (i) laboratory of ideas; (ii) standard-setter; (iii) clearing house; (iv) capacity-builder in Member States in the Organization's fields of competence; (v) catalyst for international cooperation;
- b. The Council of Europe's role in the development of standards, principles and policies concerning intercultural dialogue, culture and cultural heritage, particularly through the "Opatija Declaration on intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention" (2003), the "Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue" (2005) as well as the promotion of transnational co-operation for local development and sustainable communities through initiatives such as the "Cultural Routes", the Regional Programme on Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe (2003-2010) and the Reconstruction Implementation Commission;
- c. The expressed willingness of the European Union member States to collaborate with all the neighbouring countries of the region and the fact that the cultural diversity is a vehicle for cultural identity and sustainable development.

III.2 *Recall*, in this context, the relevant conventions and declarations adopted in the framework of UNESCO and the Council of Europe, namely:

The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Council of Europe, Rome, 1950); the European Cultural Convention (Council of Europe, Paris, 1954); the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (UNESCO, 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 (UNESCO, 1970); the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972); the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Council of Europe, Granada, 1985); the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Council of Europe, Valletta, 1992); the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995); the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, Florence, 2000); the Declaration on Cultural Diversity (Council of Europe, 7 December 2000); the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001); the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2001); the Convention for the

Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003); the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005).

- III.3 *Emphasize* the importance of other international organizations, regional initiatives, institutions and bilateral agreements which aim at building mutual trust and understanding as well as promoting cooperation among the peoples of South-East Europe, such as:
- a. Black Sea Economic Cooperation;
 - b. Adriatic Ionian Initiative;
 - c. Central European Initiative;
 - d. Regional Cooperation Council (and its predecessor Stability Pact for SE Europe);
 - e. South-East European Cooperation Process;
 - f. Council of Ministers of Culture – South-East Europe;
 - g. Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures;
 - h. L'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie as well as the UN "Alliance of Civilizations" Initiative which aims at promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation, supporting the values that are conducive to harmonious coexistence.
- IV.1 *Hereby solemnly declare* our common determination and commitment to: Reemphasize the role that Cultural Routes, Itineraries and Corridors can play as platforms for regional cooperation according to the Varna Strategy (2005) and further developed in the Opatija Strategy and Action Plan for cultural corridors in South-East Europe (2006) for preserving, sustaining, using and promoting cultural corridors in South-East Europe;
- a. Explore, within this context, every opportunity to further develop and consolidate intercultural dialogue, particularly through maritime, river and lake routes of South-East Europe, calling upon joint efforts for the search for more sustainable approaches, highlighting the potential of water routes in bringing people and civilizations together;
 - b. Strengthen cultural cooperation in the region that encompasses an especially rich heritage as a fertile ground for nurturing ideas and contemporary creativity in the areas of scientific and artistic exchanges, co-productions of documentaries and movies as well as renewed approaches to the museums of the region as spaces for intercultural encounters;

- c. Mainstream the principles of intercultural dialogue in well-defined national policies for development and social cohesion, especially in the areas of culture, education, sciences and communication, paying particular attention to the effective coordination of various regional policies and programmes as a key factor in meeting the needs and aspirations of the development of South-East Europe;
- d. Enhance the safeguarding and conservation of the cultural and natural sites as well as of the cultural landscapes of the region as an integral part of sustainable development, particularly through sound cultural eco-tourism. Above all, awareness about heritage must be raised and knowledge fostered among citizens namely through revisited formal and non formal education and voluntary participation;
- e. Foster coordination and reinforce training and capacity building for preventing the illegal trafficking in cultural goods and for the return of illegally exported and imported cultural goods to the countries of origin in the framework of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation;
- f. Mobilize resources from national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions for the cultural routes project, particularly on maritime, river and lake routes of South-East Europe.

IV.2 *We are, in particular, resolved to:*

- a. Further developing joint cultural policies through the kaleidoscope of intercultural dialogue, using effectively the potential of existing programmes in the framework of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, ICCROM, the European Institute of Cultural Routes of Luxembourg, ICOM, ICOMOS and other relevant international and regional organizations and institutions, such as the South-East Cooperation Process (SEECF) upgraded within the newly established institutional framework of the Regional Cooperation Council;
- b. In this context, elaborating an operational plan by establishing a Pool of Joint Pilot Projects on Cultural Water Routes with concrete strategies and actions to highlight intercultural communication and dialogue as pioneering and dynamic means for better understanding the past, acknowledging the present and building up the future, contributing to stability and peace in the region.

IV.3 *To this end, we consider the setting of a Pool of Joint Pilot Projects on Cultural Water Routes as a framework for an integrated approach to:*

- a. Mapping the tangible and intangible heritage of the region and promoting joint research in the field of cultural and natural heritage related to water;
- b. Safeguarding cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, historic cities, monuments, as well as cultural and natural sites, namely through cooperation concerning cross-border World Heritage Sites, as well as the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe;

- c. Preserving maritime archaeological sites and promoting underwater archaeological programmes;
- d. Protecting maritime, river and lake biospheres, particularly in relation to UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme;
- e. Developing joint interdisciplinary research, training and capacity-building opportunities as well as transfer of technical expertise in the areas of conservation and safeguarding of natural as well as cultural heritage in its tangible and intangible form;
- f. Awakening the younger generations to the challenges of sustaining the viability of Cultural Water Routes, particularly through artistic, literary and mythological narratives facilitated by the use of ICT and youth exchange programmes;
- g. Promoting artistic and cultural activities through dedicated venues such as festivals, fairs and a forum on "Water Heritage Days" with an emphasis on paintings and mythologies as well as on the linguistic diversity of the region, as expressed in its songs, poems, proverbs, metaphors and keywords which can hand over fundamental water-related knowledge, particularly through sites and museums focusing on the linkages between culture and environment;
- h. Implementing the Opatija Strategy and Action Plan for cultural corridors in South-East Europe, namely by:
 - i. Defining criteria and mechanisms through the Pool of Pilot Projects of Cultural Water Routes;
 - ii. Highlighting the Cultural Water Routes through specific designation by UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Institute of Cultural Routes of Luxembourg;
 - iii. Coordinating related regional policies for cultural tourism and developing a strategy to provide sound cultural and eco-tourism facilities;
 - iv. Undertaking joint actions to safeguard endangered cultural and natural sites through integrated approaches of conservation;
 - v. Creating a permanently functioning website called "Virtual Cultural Corridors in South- East Europe" in collaboration with the International Organizations and the regional network of experts with an emphasis on cultural water routes.

In conclusion,

We welcome the proposal of the President of Montenegro, Mr Filip Vujanovic, to host the next regional Summit (2009), on the theme "Management of Heritage Diversity and its Promotion for Tourism", as well as the intention of the Republic of Turkey to host the 2010 Summit in Istanbul.

STATEMENTS of WELCOME

Michalis Liapis

MINISTER OF CULTURE OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

It is a great honour for us today to welcome to Athens, the birthplace of Western Civilisation, the honourable Presidents and other high-level officials of South-East European countries and also the Director-General of UNESCO and the Director-General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, to the Athens Summit of Heads of State of South-East Europe, which is entitled ‘Intercultural encounters on maritime, river and lake routes of South-East Europe’.

The Athens Meeting, following the principles of the Ohrid, Tirana, Varna, Opatija and Bucharest-Sibiu Meetings, emphasises still further the need for creative collaboration between our countries in cultural affairs.

The recognition of the importance of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage and its active preservation, are primary factors in strengthening collaboration at both local and international level. Sensitisation to the need to protect this heritage is indissolubly linked with sustainable development and the promotion of cultural tourism; and with the viable development and protection of the environment, which is now under greater threat than ever.

I feel, therefore, that all that remains for us is to ponder on the development model for our region. This is a moral, political and cultural obligation. We should not forget that the natural environment is a precondition for the creation of the cultural environment. We cannot protect the one while ignoring the other. In this context, today’s subject emphasises the importance and distinctive role played by water as a decisive factor for communication, unity and intellectual and intercultural exchanges; and also a vital factor in human life.

Water routes have always played a unifying role for culture. From prehistoric times, culture developed around water; on the banks of rivers and lakes; on the seashore. Water routes were ideal for communications, for the exchange of merchandise and ideas, friendship and reconciliation. It is this historical role that we are today called upon to strengthen and revive.

The proposal for a Cultural Water Routes Pilot Programme advanced by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture is designed to strengthen efforts to publicise the diverse cultural tradition of South-East Europe.

Our proposal is to examine cultural activity not as an end in itself, but as emblematic joint action on the relationship between the citizens of our countries and the environment. We are optimistic that the Athens Summit will form the springboard for fruitful collaboration

in a sector that has been emerging increasingly in recent years as a dynamic, independent factor for development and prosperity; as a demand from our citizens themselves.

Through the Pilot Programme, we hope to strengthen cooperation in South-East Europe, with the objective of promoting scientific research; of enhancing, projecting and protecting cultural heritage; of preserving memory; of supporting education; of informing and sensitising the public and promoting intercultural dialogue; and of linking culture with the environment.

At the same time we undertake the commitment, at the next meeting of Ministers of Culture of our region at the initiative of Greece, to examine the way in which the proposed activities and actions can be implemented, so that we shall soon see tangible benefits from this collaboration through specific actions.

In conclusion, I would like to express my conviction that the Athens Summit will serve as a platform for intercultural collaboration and communication and also of sensitisation to the environment through water routes.

KAROLOS PΑPOULIAS

PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

It is a great honour and a pleasure for me to welcome you to Athens today to debate a very important issue: the dialogue among the cultures of our region.

I must admit that this topic is very close to my heart since during my years in politics I have come to know the Balkan soul and to appreciate the art, the cultural traditions and intellectual creativity of the peoples of this region who have suffered like few others in history.

This Summit is a message to our peoples but also to the world at large: the message of peaceful coexistence, of respect for what is different and of fruitful dialogue. The message that our goals and aspirations, the dreams and wishes of our peoples for growth, stability, peace, progress and prosperity, can only become true through a democratic dialogue among equals in a spirit of constructive cooperation.

The Athens Forum focuses on the joint belief that culture is an important asset to be protected and preserved for the future generations.

The “Intercultural Encounters on maritime, river and lake routes in South-East Europe” promote the special role of water as a timeless channel of communication in the region and as an element shaping the contacts between our cultures.

The previous meetings have highlighted the importance of cultural heritage in the region and the need to protect and promote it mainly through the Cultural Corridors which are the path to a deeper knowledge and understanding of our historical and cultural identity.

May this meeting add a link to the chain of the joint efforts by the states of South-East Europe to forge closer relations and contacts in culture as well as in all other fields.

It is with this hope that I welcome you and declare the Athens Forum open.

STATEMENTS

STJEPAN MESIĆ

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

It gives me great pleasure to greet you today here in Athens, where we have assembled for the sixth time at the regional Cultural Corridors Conference guided by the idea of mutual cooperation and regional dialogue in culture.

Throughout the history of mankind people have exchanged cultural achievements, knowledge, values and goods. The world we know today is built on foundations of great movements and changes. Not only in our region but also throughout the planet. And in history seas and rivers were the main corridors along which values woven into the foundations of our cultures travelled along with conquerors and merchants.

The area occupied by Croatia has always been related to the sea. The sea was its thoroughfare and the source of its sustenance. Croatian culture was born and thrived by the sea and the very same sea brought influences and knowledge about other cultures.

Croatia's most valuable monuments are the best case in point. Thus, Poreč has one of the most important monuments of Byzantine art. The heart of Split is Diocletian's Palace, the abode of Roman emperors. The islanders of Hvar still produce their famous wines from grapes grown on plots planted four centuries before the common era by Greek colonists from the island of Paros, who settled on Hvar after sailing across three seas - the Aegean, the Ionian and the Adriatic.

The symbol of Trogir is still Lysippus's Kairos, the god of the opportune moment, who swam to the east Adriatic shore two thousand years ago. Dubrovnik's seamen and merchants were present throughout the lands in the Balkan hinterland and their banner - the banner of St. Blasius - flew on ships, which connected the most distant corners of the world.

From prehistory to the age of the great discoveries in the 1st century the eastern shore of the Adriatic was one of the main European transport arteries. It was a bridge connecting Europe and the East. It was the route, which ran from China and India across Asia Minor and the Alps to the Baltic and the valleys of the great lowland rivers, Vistula and Volga, to Europe's far north.

The Danube also played a similar role in Europe. This symbol of the Roman *limes* became in time the symbol of a latter-day central European Babylon, transforming a world in which an individual was either somebody's else master or the victim of diversity into an area acting as a bridge of understanding, learning about others and promoting cooperation between cultures and peoples.

At all our past meetings I have advocated the broadening and the establishment of cultural corridors in our region. I also highlighted a negative aspect, the abuse of heritage in building walls instead of bridges between cultures and supported the continuous development of intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation.

Croatia knows quite well the significance of intercultural dialogue. Our recent history is only an additional incentive for broadening the paths of dialogue, always with a single goal in mind - the reconstruction of destroyed bridges serving to create lasting peace and stability in this part of the world.

Today our common rivers, lakes and seas are in the focus of our attention. Let me turn from the past towards the future. Just as culture used to travel along our ancient maritime and fluvial routes in the past, today danger knows of no boundaries. In spite of many scientific analyses, discussions, conventions and action plans, our seas, rivers and lakes face great danger as they are threatened and encumbered by development which more often than not behaves like a devourer of space and water.

We are witnessing the violation of space. The appearance of our shores has changed thoroughly. Some settlements are disappearing others are sold off. A year ago satellite images detected 250 oil slicks in the Adriatic alone. The bodies of good dolphins lie stranded on beaches, killer algae spread on the seabed, fires destroy landscapes and large-scale construction of tourist facilities contaminates the most valuable space. Biological and urban balance has been affected because of the profit cult.

But, let me be quite clear I am not against progress or against development. Not at all. I am also quite aware of the need for the supply of energy sources, of the need for tourist trade development. What I do advocate, however, is the establishment of a direct interconnection between development and the protection of the environment. If we destroy our environment, development becomes meaningless.

And when we speak of dialogue, the dialogue of profit is established quite well and, unfortunately, not infrequently it is much stronger and more candid than the dialogue of culture. The appetites and the aggressiveness of profit are proportional to the beauty and value of our heritage.

Our region is still very vulnerable and particularly exposed to the attack of profiteers of all kinds.

Our shores and waters are jeopardized and destroyed lightly and swiftly and the treatment is slow and difficult.

No convention can protect the seas if humans do not protect them. People who do not know the value of their waters cannot protect them.

Our space and our waters are not limitless. And the time at our disposal to protect them by proper decisions and determined action is more than limited.

GEORGI PARVANOV

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

It makes me sincerely happy that, for a subsequent time, we are holding this forum, which Bulgaria hosted in 2005. It was then that we set ourselves the goal of preserving and developing the unique nature of our cultural heritage and make it universally known to Europe and the world, as well as of turning it into a tool of economic and social cohesion of the countries of this region. I can now underline with satisfaction that the forums held subsequently, as well as the regular meetings of the Ministers of Culture, are beginning to yield fruit. The substantive support of our friends from UNESCO and the Council of Europe has since enabled us to proceed in earnest towards pursuing more concrete objectives and making genuine accomplishments.

Here I would like to thank our Greek hosts and especially President Karolos Papoulias, for their hospitality and for the excellent organization of today's meeting, while expressing my confidence in its contribution towards our future actions. I suppose we all share the belief that the participation of the Director-General of UNESCO and of the representatives of the Council of Europe is yet another proof to that effect.

The subject matter of this year's forum, namely *"Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South-East Europe"*, is of particular interest and relevance. It is of interest because of the fact that the development of human civilization would be unthinkable without water and of relevance because of the fact that we remain dependent on water to exactly the same extent as people used to be many millennia ago.

The history of humankind shows that the great civilizations and cultures have emerged alongside major rivers and around seas. And the entire history of our region can be interpreted as a history of communication by way of water. Our civilization could not have taken shape without navigation on the Mediterranean, the Marmara and the Black Seas, as well as way upstream the navigable rivers Maritza and Tundzha, Struma and Vardar, Timok and Danube, etc.

In the course of the past few years, not just in our region but in a wider international context, we have not stopped discussing everything and anything that unites people around the world, nor emphasize the merits of intercultural dialogue.

We all recognize that, along with economic development, priority should also be given to culture, to the environment, to human capital and, above all, to education and the upbringing of the young people, of the future generations, so that our children and grandchildren would be worthy successors of our common cultural and humanitarian legacy. It is our duty, especially in South-East Europe, to pass on to them our valuable shared

knowledge, in order for them to realize that what sets them apart is far less significant than what brings them together for joint action, in the name of our common heritage.

It was guided by such ideas, albeit on a national scale, that a youth movement for the study and conservation of the cultural heritage was created in Bulgaria at the initiative of civil society and with the support of the government institutions. Students and lecturers of secondary schools and establishments of higher learning, participate together on an annual basis (for the 4th consecutive year) in archaeological excavations, in restoration and conservation work. In this way we manage to combine in one education and upbringing. On the one hand, we have training in protection of monuments of culture and conservation of the cultural diversity and on the other, we have upbringing of the youth in a spirit of respect for the cultural heritage and tolerance for the cultural identity of other peoples and cultures, which have co-existed in this region in the course of millennia.

The success of this undertaking and particularly the interest that it has stirred among young people, gives me reason to believe that we can expand the boundaries of the initiative into a Regional Summer Academy, in which young people from our countries will internalize the lessons of our common paths traversed in the past and will rediscover both their community and their diversity in the timeless wealth of local customs and folklore traditions in the monuments of Antiquity and the Middle Ages and in the ancient myths and legends. I believe that this Academy fits nicely into and is fully in line with, the Pool of Joint Pilot Projects that we are about to endorse by our Joint Declaration and, along with the water routes project, it can provide an excellent basis for the operational plan that we are planning to develop. I am confident that, with the support of UNESCO and the Council of Europe, such a Summer Academy can flesh out with genuine content the idea of pursuing the cultural, social and economic development of the region by means of culture, science and education.

Today we are faced with new opportunities for pursuit of future undertakings, supported by financial mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral cooperation. With the support of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, we can pool together the efforts of civil, the governmental and the intergovernmental sectors, in order to build a fully operational network of concrete projects for cultural corridors.

I would like particularly to emphasize that we highly appreciate the work of UNESCO Director-General Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, to whom we owe a deep respect and we will support him till the end of his fruitful and - particularly successful for the organization - term.

I avail myself the opportunity to inform you about the decision of the Bulgarian government to nominate Ms Irina Bokova – the Bulgarian ambassador in France and Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to UNESCO, as Director-General of UNESCO.

As a career diplomat in United Nations, UNESCO and a number of other international organizations, Ambassador Bokova has intense experience in the area of multilateral international relations. As Deputy Foreign Minister, as State Secretary and Minister of Foreign Affairs, she has a long-standing managerial experience. She is skilled

to engage in a dialogue and to reach consensus in decision making at the highest levels. I would like to express our hope that the countries from South-Eastern Europe will support the nomination of Ms Bokova and I believe that she will contribute creatively to the promotion and strengthening of the role of UNESCO in the area of education, science, culture and communication.

Filip Vujanović

PRESIDENT of MONTENEGRO

It is with great pleasure that I participate at the Summit of the Heads of State of the South Eastern Europe, which has traditionally been affirming the values of partnership, sending the messages of peace, tolerance and regional and global prosperity.

We owe special thanks to the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr Papoulias, for excellent organization of the Summit as well as for the choice of a very inspiring topic that offers a wide room for confirmation of the values to which the Summit has been dedicated. Previous Summits have valorized the wealth of the cultural heritage- an exceptional heritage of the South-East Europe, which points out, strongly and constantly, that this region has been one of the cradles of the world civilization and that it should be valued and promoted as such.

It is for the sake of such heritage and, equally important, our common European future, that the recent history of the Western Balkans, particularly ex-Yugoslav countries, should be marked as a disaster, which permanently warns and at the same time obliges to reconciliation and genuine friendship that serves as a foundation for common progress.

Just as the cultural heritage wealth does not recognize state boundaries, the same applies to the natural wealth, areas and watercourses. Cultural wealth bestowed on us creative work of previous generations, while nature itself essentially presented its wealth through a unique message - that state borders make no harm to the integrity of such wealth. This means the obligation of each state to affirm integrity of the cultural and natural wealth in co-operation with its neighbours and countries of the region, as only in this manner will the wealth in its territory achieve its full value.

The topic of this Summit, bringing together cultural and natural heritage, points to their interdependence and the need to have both careful approach and responsible co-operation in this regard.

Commitment to preserving its own cultural and natural heritage in cooperation with other countries has been high on agenda of the state policy of Montenegro in this very important field.

Montenegro, as an old European country and the youngest member of the United Nations has inherited a rich cultural heritage. It testifies on multiethnic and multi-religious co-existence within the three great civilizations and three religions; Orthodox, chistianity, Islam and Catholicism, which left many diverse spiritual and material values on the territory of the present Montenegro.

At the same time, a very attractive geographic position has presented Montenegro with extraordinary natural wealth i.e. waters. Montenegro has sea, many attractive lakes and clean and fast running rivers, which makes water routes through Montenegro valuable for establishing connections with neighbours and countries of the region.

Since the earliest times, the Montenegrin sea, lake and river waters have been very favourable for settlement, being also very important cultural corridors. Along Montenegrin river valleys, there are many archaeological sites, which date back to the Palaeolithic through Mesolithic and Neolithic to Metal Period. At the junction of the two biggest Montenegrin rivers, Zeta and Moraca, there is one of the oldest urban centres in the South-East Europe – the town of Doclea. After Diocletian's reforms and establishment of the province of Prevalis, this settlement also became its centre, after which the first state in the territory of the present day Montenegro was named. Area around the Tara river has regional and global value and its canyon is the second deepest canyon in the world after Colorado. The Tara river canyon has been under double UNESCO protection- as a World Natural Heritage and World Biosphere Reserve, which has been a shared natural value of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The area of the Skadar Lake, which is one of the largest lakes in Europe, has, apart from its unique natural beauties, always represented a place of creation, development and evanescence of numerous civilizations. Its middle-age cultural monuments are particularly noteworthy, with their very attractive and unique by its characteristics. Among many edifices that have been located along the shore and islands of the Skadar Lake, particular value is attached to the monasteries and rulers' endowments, which testify that this region used to be a seat of Old Zeta - a state that preceded Montenegro. The Skadar Lake region is an area under protection as "Ramsar site". Academies of Science and Art of Montenegro and Albania and the Governments of the two states have joint projects aimed at preservation and valorisation of the Skadar Lake.

Advantages and privileges of a life at seaside led to settlement of these areas even during the prehistoric times. Traces of the Greek and Roman civilizations can be seen at each part of the Adriatic coast. Intensive contacts overseas brought about creation of the Boka Navy in the town of Kotor in 9th century, so the traces of pre-Roman, Roman, Gothic, Renaissance and Venice period can now be seen in the town.

After restoration of its independence, Montenegro has undertaken significant steps towards valorisation, research and protection of underwater archaeology. Sea bottom research has been underway and 29 submarine sites have been recorded so far, which require further research and protection in cooperation with Croatia and Albania and other countries of the Adriatic Sea. The Parliament of Montenegro has adopted the European Convention on Cultural Heritage Protection, which also applies to its water routes.

Let me express, once more, my appreciation for the organization of this highly important Summit. It is also my pleasure to announce that the next Summit will be held in Montenegro where we will affirm the tourist valorisation of cultural heritage given its special importance.

BORIS TADIĆ

PRESIDENT of Republic of Serbia

It is my distinct pleasure to have an opportunity to address you today.

The Republic of Serbia wishes to express its appreciation to our host for the commendable organization of this event and acknowledge the hard work of our Chairman in promoting the enhancement of UNESCO's regional activities.

Since ancient times, our region has been seen as an important cultural crossroads, a plentiful blending of West and East, North and South. This unique and lasting meeting place of civilizations, with major centres of knowledge, art and economy, such as classical Athens, has left a mark on every nation, every religion and every culture in the region. This heritage is our huge responsibility to nurture and constitutes an advantage that has always given us a unique place on a global scale.

Through the Balkan littoral and the Vardar-Morava valley, Serbian culture long ago embraced this great European spiritual inheritance. The mission of the brothers Cyrill and Methodius began in Thessaloniki and via the Vardar and Morava rivers went all the way to Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, passing through my country and our neighbourhood to the great benefit and advancement of us all.

Regional cooperation is rooted in the European dedication to resolve differences harmoniously through dialogue, not discordantly through confrontation. The Republic of Serbia therefore fully supports the participation of all Balkan countries in the work of regional cultural projects and initiatives, particularly within the South-East Europe Cooperation Process and the Regional Cooperation Council, emphasizing the regional program of the Council of Europe and the European Commission for Cultural and Natural Heritage of Southeast Europe.

It is my great pleasure once again to express Serbia's full support for the UNESCO programme that has brought us here: "Cultural Heritage in Southeast Europe: A Bridge to a Common Future".

I wish to signal how much we welcome and wholeheartedly support the proclamation of the year 2008 by the European Commission as the Year of Inter-cultural Dialogue. Cultural heritage has long been an impetus for modern economic and social development. In this context, I would like to propose the creation of a Danube cultural corridor. The reason for this is simple: the Danube-this River of Europe - is a symbol of interdependence and a symbol of shared destiny.

Cultural corridors should help build - and in some cases, rebuild – solidly - constructed bridges of cooperation in the near future, both within and beyond our region. These can act as handmaidens to the continuation of the necessary process of regional reconciliation brought about as a result of the civil wars of the 20th century.

The Republic of Serbia continues to support the enduring role of UNESCO: to construct an impregnable defence of peace in the minds of men and women through the bridging of differences and the promotion of our common heritage.

Only when we come to look at diversity as a source of strength - only when we embrace the view that individual cultures genuinely prosper and progress when they come into contact with other cultures - can we say that the tide has inexorably turned in favour of peace, human rights and a common sense of destiny.

The greatest challenge to human rights and cultural preservation in Serbia lies in our Southern Province of Kosovo and Metohija, under United Nations administration since June 1999. Given UNESCO's mandate, I shall limit myself to a brief discussion of the plight of our cultural and religious sites in the province over the past nine years.

At the last count more than 150 churches or monasteries, including dozens that were built as long ago as the 14th century, have been set ablaze by Kosovo Albanian extremists in the past eight years, including 35 during the March 2004 violence against Serbs in Kosovo.

Hundreds of other holy sites remain at risk, as recognized by UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre. All four of our World Heritage designated sites that are located in our province of Kosovo have been placed on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger. The most recent example of the constant threat they are under is the decision of municipal authorities of the majority Kosovo Albanian town of Decane to unilaterally remove property from the monastery of Visoki Decani.

This cannot be allowed to stand. The rule of law cannot apply everywhere else in our region and not in Kosovo. Those responsible must be held to account. Otherwise there can be no justice, no fairness, no way forward.

Serbia greatly appreciates UNESCO's sensitivity in this area of our cooperation.

And I am pleased to be able to affirm without reservation that the Republic of Serbia will participate in all the projects mentioned in the draft Declaration of the Summit, because they are based on the principles of non-violence, tolerance and respect of cultural diversity on which I spoke at the previous Summit held last year in Bucharest.

I can assure you that Serbia's Ministry of Culture, together with our National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, will expand their cooperation with the international community in order to more effectively implement the protection, preservation and restoration of Serbian heritage sites in our province of Kosovo.

Today, the countries of the Western Balkans are distinguished by whether they are members of the European Union or not. Happily, this feature is a temporary one, for we all agree that our common future lies in the EU.

In that sense, regional cooperation is a prelude to Europe, a preparatory stage to the comprehensive integration of the Western Balkans into the EU. By consolidating our commitment to act in concert on a whole host of issues of common interest, regional programmes help us all gain greater familiarity with the *idea* of Europe in the 21st century - an idea that aims to fuse national interests within the common values of the unprecedented historical enterprise that has come to be the European Union.

But, Europe is more than the embodiment of an idea. It is a Union of sovereign states in which decisions are made without rancor and where consensus is the order of the day; where compromise and concession are built into the system and where solidarity for less developed areas of the Union is presupposed.

In Europe, justice is blind and the rule of law is supreme. Corruption and organized crime are shown no quarter. Individual liberties stand tall and care for the more vulnerable is a praiseworthy virtue, not a sign of weakness. The reconciliation of nations can be safely completed to the benefit of the generations to come in the name of those who are no longer with us.

That is why the April 29th signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the EU and my country is so historically significant. It has enabled us to pronounce that the contours of Serbia's future in Europe have at last been solidly traced. The decisive victory of pro-European forces in the May 11th parliamentary election signals our national confirmation to pursue a political course that rapidly leads to full membership in the European Union.

The formation of a pro-European, responsible, social-democratic government will solidify the gains we have made in the past eight years.

It will enable us not only to move toward EU membership. I believe that a new window of opportunity will open up, one which will pave the way for the commencement of true negotiations on Kosovo's future status serious negotiations that continue until a compromise is reached a compromise by which all legitimate stakeholders can abide and one that is confirmed by the United Nations Security Council.

Regional cooperation is rooted in the European dedication to resolve differences harmoniously through dialogue, not discordantly through confrontation.

That is why we remain steadfast in our determination to fashion a historic compromise agreement with the Kosovo Albanians, to solidify the democratic gains made and to propel our entire neighbourhood forward to rapid European membership.

For I believe that never before in the history of South-East Europe has such a concrete opportunity to overcome regional strife and conflict, as the one before us now, presented itself to those willing to grasp its promise of prosperity and cultural enrichment.

Let us commence the work of the future now. Let us build those bridges.

BAMIR Topi

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

I am extremely pleased to participate to this Summit of the Heads of States of Southeast Europe, which is being held in the neighbouring and friendly Greece. Seizing this opportunity, please allow me to express my gratitude to President Papoulias for the quality of his hospitality.

Albania has joined these meetings with the noble hope to concentrate the common efforts in strengthening the inter-cultural cooperation and further consolidating the friendship bridges among the South-East Europe countries and peoples.

This is an excellent opportunity to re-iterate the fruitful and long-term relation with UNESCO, Council of Europe and European Union which in a well-coordinated process are increasingly demonstrating that they stand at the vanguard of the international community's efforts to encourage the cultural pluralism, to spread the recognition in the spirit of respect for peoples and cultures and also to build human dignity through the appreciation of the environment and diversity in the widest sense of this term.

The topic of this Summit about the inter-cultural encounters on maritime routes in the entire region puts under new light the extraordinary assets of South-east Europe by transforming our rich ecological and natural resources into an unchangeable potential of communication, dialogue and cultural diversity that characterizes our countries and peoples.

Convinced that a fundamental connection exists between the material and spiritual heritage, cultural diversity, creativity and sustainable development, Albania has actively supported all the UNESCO's initiatives and expertise in the framework of culture. It already possesses a suitable national legislation in full compliance with all the internationally recognized standards for an overall and efficient preservation of its cultural and natural monuments and sites.

We esteem that our national perspective in relation to the heritage is compatible and inseparable from the regional approach, since the preservation of our identities, encouraging cultural tourism, democratic participation, with human rights education and inter-cultural dialogue clearly represent common objectives for the stability, development and prosperity of the region.

Today, fortunately we are all witnessing our region becoming familiar with a very positive climate of political cooperation based on good neighbour principals and common aspiration for integration in to the European Union. Such a climate provides in a natural

way a healthy platform for the preservation and encouragement of the cultural and natural heritage of the region as an integral part of its sustainable development.

The Athens Summit agenda clearly places at the core of the debate the significance of cultural dialogue as an element, which at the present day, takes on a capital and undeniable importance for building long-term solutions of sustainable peace and development and social cohesion all over South-east-Europe. It echoes the multiple actions of the European Union, the content of the White Paper, the Council of Europe and the normative recognition of cultural diversity in UNESCO.

The Athens Summit coincides with the declaration by the European Union of the year 2008 as the Year of Inter-cultural Dialogue.

Albania, like the majority of regional countries, aspires to be integrated in the near future into the European Union and has already compiled a National Strategy of Inter-cultural Dialogue following the holding of the first Forum on the Alliance of Civilizations. This Strategy, which reflects the centuries' long tradition of full harmony and understanding among its three major and predominating religions, is in full compliance with all the previous Summits documents and with the commitments undertaken in the framework of the Council of Europe, the European Union and UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression.

I have the privilege to communicate to this Summit our full institutional commitment to organize by the year 2008, as integral part of this Strategy, the Forum of Inter-confessional Dialogue in South-East Europe following up on the Tirana Regional Conference, held in cooperation with UNESCO in 2004.

Availing myself of this opportunity, please allow me to extend to all the Athens Summit participants the invitation to actively take part in this Forum, which is of fundamental value for the actual rhetoric of cultural diversity. In conclusion, I would like to re-iterate once again the conviction that the Athens Summit will serve as a useful platform for the strengthening of the intercultural cooperation framework in the region and especially for overcoming the challenges presently faced by us in South-East Europe.

HARIS Silajdžić

CHAIRMAN of the PRESIDENCY of BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

It is my great honour to express my thanks to our host, President of the Hellenic Republic, Karlos Papoulias, for his warm hospitality and excellent organization of this gathering and especially to greet the UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Terry Davis.

I would like to express my satisfaction with the organization of today's meeting which we see as a continuation of a dialogue process at the highest level, of the countries of the Southeast European region in the domain of culture and cultural heritage, initiated under the patronage of UNESCO in Ohrid in 2003.

A specific geographic position at the crossroads between the East and the West, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, valleys of big rivers such as the Danube and Sava, as well as a very rich and tumultuous history of our region, have made South-Eastern Europe a mosaic of religions, cultures, traditions and languages. Being a historically multiethnic country, Bosnia and Herzegovina considers these diversities to be one of the greatest riches of our region. I fully share the opinion with UNESCO that it is precisely the domain of culture that offers enormous opportunities for the establishment of close cooperation in the Southeast Europe region. In this context, I would like to welcome UNESCO's activities and those of its Director-General.

I believe that the joint affirmation and joint promotion of our cultural heritage could be one of the best and most effective ways of creating a better portrait of our region.

In addition to its cultural and historic values, our cultural wealth could also be an important basis for economic and sustainable development. I wish to express my pleasure with the fact that a decision was made at the last session of the Committee for Cultural Heritage in Christ Church in New Zealand, enlisting the Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge in Višegrad on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This act, combined with the addition of the Mostar Historic Town Centre along with the Old Bridge in 2005, represents a stimulus for our country to step up the restoration and protection of our cultural and natural wealth. Bosnia and Herzegovina has recently nominated another cultural and historic monument to be added to the World Heritage List; namely the Old City of Jajce. We do hope that a positive decision will be made at the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee. In addition to this we are preparing the nominations of Vjetrenica Caves.

Once more I would like to point out that Bosnia and Herzegovina is interested in nominating the National Park of Sutjeska for enlistment on the World Heritage List, which is a joint project with the National Park Durmitor in the neighbouring Montenegro.

I believe that this is the best way to permanently preserve the natural wealth of our countries – especially the canyons of rivers Drina and Tara. Allow me to use this opportunity to repeat that Bosnia and Herzegovina is fully committed to respecting the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Furthermore, I would like to point out that Bosnia and Herzegovina has recently ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression and that we are in the process of ratifying the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Allow me to mention some other projects for promotion of the historic and cultural heritage, which are of a great importance for my country.

I would like to thank UNESCO and its Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura for participating in the reconstruction of three symbolic religious objects in our country - the Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka, the Orthodox Monastery in Mostar and the Catholic Monastery Plehan in Derвента. The reconstruction of these objects will further improve our efforts to rebuild a multiethnic and multicultural society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the cultural diversity is considered to be a part of our wealth and a comparative advantage.

The active participation of UNESCO in the realization of these projects additionally underlines the important role that UNESCO has in the protection of the treasures of our region and the promotion of a multiethnic and multicultural society in the very geographic centre of Europe. I would like to thank UNESCO for the support in completing the project ARS AEVI, which is one of the most important European museums of modern art in Sarajevo. Due to this project, Sarajevo and our region have become one of the world's leading destinations of modern art.

As you know, Bosnia and Herzegovina has undergone a period of post-war recovery and reconstruction. It has been a tough period for our country and our citizens. The country was almost completely destroyed and not only did we have to rebuild the cultural and historic monuments and values but also the trust among people of our region. A special segment of our post war reconstruction was the reconstruction of cultural life, for which we received strong support from UNESCO and its Member States. The experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the view of establishing a cultural dialogue is of a great importance because we can offer constructive models for culture in the globalized world.

Generally, we all found our societies and cultures near water. It is a source of life and all big civilizations have been established on the banks of big rivers. Bosnia and Herzegovina contains in its name the name of one of our six big rivers and its natural borders are the rivers Una, Sava and Drina and in the south the Adriatic Sea. Various cultures were founded on these waterways; cultures that have been developing since the Neolithic. Every great civilization and religion is somehow closely connected with the culture of water. Every cultural part in our region could signify the fact that there are no borders in the nature and that the water connects people by ensuring the existence of all people. Therefore, Bosnia and Herzegovina supports development and intensification of cultural corridors with the aim of establishing

a closer connection and ensuring the survival of the unity of diversities. Exactly this unity of diversities is the cultural wealth that we have to preserve in South-East Europe. I believe that the cultural corridors related to maritime and river routes could be a useful tool for the realization of intercultural dialogue.

By establishing affirmation and joint promotion of our cultural heritage, we could turn the South-East Europe region into a destination which, thanks to its cultural wealth and all its diversity, would once again attract visitors from the entire world and in that way open new development perspectives for our countries. Thus, we send a clear political message of our willingness to constructively include our countries in all international processes and our determination to make the region of South-East Europe an example which proves that good relations and cooperation can be established if they are based on constant dialogue and a plenitude of cultural diversities.

KAROLOS PΑPOULIAS

PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Today's meeting, which is the sixth in a series, is a proof that we are committed at the highest political level to continue our dialogue and cooperation. It is also a proof that culture was and remains more than ever before, a strong binding force and a field of exchanges among our states. More importantly, it is a proof that we have decided to turn this part of the world into an area of real communication where our peoples will rediscover everything that brings them together.

We all know that some of the darkest pages in European history were written in the Balkans. Conflicts, extremism and intolerance, outbursts of nationalism and civil wars have caused our peoples to suffer like few others in history.

In this mountainous region where even geography seems to be a limiting factor for contacts among the peoples, water has always provided some of the most important routes. So, the water corridors, the sea, the rivers and the lakes have brought people together not only through trade but also through cultural exchanges, contacts and dialogue.

The journey of Ulysses and his comrades, of Jason and the Argonauts, are Greek myths which belong to all of us now. They teach us that the routes of the sea offer adventure and discovery, knowledge and knowledge of oneself, communication and wisdom.

The journey, the eternal voyage of the human spirit, has left its indelible mark on a vast treasure of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in this part of the world as a real proof of the contact points among our societies and of the places where they met. I speak of the meeting places of music, of legends and of fairy-tales.

The Greek initiative which was already agreed upon at the Varna Summit in 2005, seeks to highlight this endless intercultural contact through water. I ask you to take part in the joint effort to uncover this wealth. Through a systematic mapping of the historic water corridors will not only emerge the heritage from cultural and historic monuments, also from people's everyday lives.

By recording these water corridors, we will show the vital role which water played and still is playing in spreading civilization. Additional benefits will result for the local societies, such as the promotion of cultural tourism. Education is central to this process since it is the basis for mutual understanding and communication. The protection and preservation of monuments, the exchange of expertise and the cooperation against the trafficking of cultural objects remain our common objectives which can be promoted through the "Cultural-water-corridors".

This programme also offers a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the protection of valuable joint cultural and natural heritage. The deterioration of the global and especially of the Mediterranean environment as well as the extent of the problems related to the aquifers requires real solutions. Culture can become a shield for the environment in which it was born and where it flourished. The tales and stories of relations between water and culture are powerful “antibodies” which can protect the environment.

The creation and implementation of pilot “Water Corridors Programmes” on the principles we have stated will provide us with experience and will instigate more such “Cultural Corridors” into Europe’s cultural diversity, as described in the strategies of our previous meetings, especially those of Varna and Opatija.

All these years, UNESCO has been the soul of our meetings. Its role is important since it is the competent UN body for intercultural dialogue, the protection of cultural heritage and education for sustainable development. UNESCO’s expertise in all these fields has made our efforts more effective. The contribution of the Council of Europe is also important since it is they who created the “Cultural Corridors” programme in 1987.

We are happy that this meeting is taking place this year which the EU has declared “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.” Let me take this opportunity to point out that for Greece, the European perspective of South-East Europe remains a vision and an objective.

Our region owes it to its history to become an area of stability and peaceful coexistence where state cooperation will rely on the principles of good neighbourly relations and intercultural dialogue.

Let us all proceed along this road.

KOÏICHIRO MATSUURA

DIRECTOR-GENERAL of UNESCO

It is both a great pleasure and an honour to join you today in Athens for this sixth Summit of Heads of State of South-East Europe.

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to President Papoulias for his generosity in hosting this year's Summit in Athens, the birthplace of democracy and a city long associated with culture and philosophy.

I should like to pay tribute to each of the assembled Heads of State with whom UNESCO enjoys close and fruitful cooperation.

As at previous Summits, it is a pleasure to see so many of our institutional partners represented in the room, in particular the Council of Europe.

Finally, but not least, I wish to acknowledge the presence of Ambassador Anastassopoulos of the Hellenic Republic to UNESCO, who is President of the 34th session of the UNESCO General Conference.

These annual summits, originating from a ministerial meeting held at UNESCO in 2002, have created a platform for dialogue and cooperation among the people and cultures of South-East Europe.

The message of the first regional summit, held in Ohrid in 2003 on the theme of dialogue among civilizations, affirmed your collective will to preserve and promote the region's cultural assets as a shared benefit.

In Tirana in 2004, you asserted that mutual respect, rooted in open dialogue between cultures and faiths is essential to development and said that: "religion must not be part of the problem, but part of the solution".

The 2005 Varna Declaration developed the concept of cultural corridors within the region as genuine routes for intercultural dialogue.

Building on this, the 2006 Opatija Declaration underscored the importance of heritage as an engine for regional development and cohesiveness. And in 2007, the Bucharest and Sibiu Declaration reaffirmed your commitment to cultural diversity.

Through these high level encounters, you have firmly and repeatedly demonstrated your will to cooperate on cultural issues, reflecting culture's critical role in replacing strife with mutual understanding. Thus, the Summit of South-East Europe has become a regional forum of dialogue and cooperation for political leaders at the highest level. I highly appreciate the tribute you paid to the role of UNESCO in this context.

Today, in Athens, we have assembled to consolidate and expand the scope of progress already achieved, through the theme of Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes, as you have underscored in your interventions. The Athens Summit will allow us to focus on the significance of water routes – both freshwater and the oceans - as cultural resources. Too long collectively referred to “the Balkans”, in reference to its mountain landscapes, the potential of the region’s water routes as connecting, unifying cultural routes, has not yet been sufficiently taken into account.

Through the “lens” of cultural routes – one of which is water routes - we can see the historical confluences of people, natural resources and commodities and their legacy in the form of tangible and intangible cultural footprints.

The linkages between water and culture are embodied in a variety of both tangible and intangible traces of water-related activities across the world, treasuring the collective memory and wisdom of a society. Historically, developed cultural norms and practices are embedded in a range of social structures, institutions, practices, daily performances and rituals. Songs, poems, paintings, myths, proverbs, linguistic and artistic expressions on the whole have perpetuated and complemented primary water-related knowledge, thus fostering the deeper and deeper impact on people’s ways of living, value systems, development and technical know how, be they social, economic, environmental or technological.

Water routes are inseparably linked to the notion of cultural landscapes, bearing witness to humanity’s creative genius, technical, economic and social development, imagination and spiritual vitality. The Danube River, with its bridges and delta, the Prespa Lakes with their vernacular architecture, the Black Sea, the Adriatic, the Mediterranean, the Aegean Seas with their myriads of islands and related myths and journeys, are just a few examples.

Water routes as sources of endless life and wonder call upon humanity to cherish, protect and safeguard them. This calls for the creation of new cooperation mechanisms.

Today’s Summit attests to your commitment to develop joint policies and engage in intercultural dialogue through water itineraries, in partnership with international organizations.

For its part, UNESCO has already undertaken a series of initiatives on which such policies and initiatives could build. For example, the World Heritage Centre and Natural Sciences Sector are working together to promote the sustainable management and conservation of sites which are both World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves and strengthening cooperation around marine World Heritage sites. This includes jointly planning and implementing capacity building and demonstration activities at selected sites, promoting the use of space technologies for monitoring the state of conservation of sites and participating in key events like the meetings of the World Heritage Committee, the Man and the Biosphere Council, the Biosphere Reserves Congress and the Executive Council of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

The renaissance of the Mostar Bridge on the Neretva River under the technical and scientific coordination of UNESCO and through partnerships between international agencies, local authorities and civil society, serves as an eloquent symbol of international solidarity and reconciliation. It shows that the safeguarding and promotion of water-related heritage can make a valuable contribution to peace, stability and regeneration.

It is my wish that the Athens Summit will allow us to launch a pool of joint pilot projects to transform the principles of intercultural dialogue related to water itineraries into more practical and concrete actions and that will also allow us to showcase best practises.

It is my fervent hope that the Athens Summit will contribute, literally, to building bridges across the water routes of the past. UNESCO stands ready to offer its continued support to this process.

What better and more appropriate a conclusion than recalling the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who once said “one can never step twice into the same river, for other waters are ever flowing on to you”.

MEHMET Aydin

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

REPRESENTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

At the outset, I wish to thank the Government of Greece for organising this session of the Summit of the Heads of State of South-East Europe. I especially would like to thank President Papoulias for the warm invitation extended to us to attend this meeting. It is an honour to be with you, Mr. President and it is a pleasure to be in here in Athens.

It's has been a little more than a year since we last met in Bucharest and charming Sibiu, the 2007 European Capital of Culture. Starting from Ohrid, our high-level meetings has firmly established themselves as the foremost forum for regional cooperation in the fields of intercultural dialogue, cultural heritage and policies.

Until today, our various meetings have covered many aspects of cultural cooperation in our region, from dialogue among civilizations to cultural diversity and our cooperation have laid a firm foundation for holding high our unique characteristics and diversity, appreciating our rich cultural heritage as a whole, as well as recognizing and realizing our common and shared values.

Today in Athens we will build on that foundation and address, as we agreed last year, one other but equally important aspect of cultural exchange and interaction that forms our heritage: Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and lake Routes.

The theme of this session of the Forum reflects a determining feature of the way the countries of South-East Europe have in the history interacted to create much of the values and assets that are shared at present. The tangible as well intangible heritage our countries own are not only the products of our own unique history and experience but also our exchanges with and journeys through various, diverse land and waters.

Speaking of intangible cultural heritage, ifs my pleasure to inform you that Istanbul, the 2010 European Capital of Culture, will host the third. Session of the Inter-governmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage on 4-8 November 2008. We will be honoured to welcome Director-General Matsuura in that meeting where important decisions will be taken to allow the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage to become fully operational. We are looking forward to a large and active participation by Committee members, non-members as well as relevant NGO's.

Turkey will closely follow the work that our experts will undertake to chart the water routes, itineraries and corridors so as to lay out our rich and unique heritage and treasures: monuments, sites, traditions, expressions and practices that we, the countries of the South-

East Europe possess. The pilot projects to that end will enable us to clearly identify our common heritage as well as our peculiarities, which we have inherited by way of living together or side by side at various periods of history.

I believe a coordinated regional policy for cultural tourism, with the support of EU, UNESCO, Council of Europe and other organizations, making use of the concept of water corridors will constitute an added value to the ongoing projects, such as the Council of Europe's Kiev Initiative Regional Programme in which Turkey takes an active part. This should help the countries of the region to further develop cultural tourism facilities. The creation of a regional educational network for heritage teaching through a website under the title "Virtual Cultural Corridors in South-East Europe" will certainly be an invaluable medium for reaching out to the public.

I would like to express my firm conviction that the discussions to be held today and the Athens Declaration to be adopted, will enable us to move forward to a new stage in our cooperation and will bear concrete and fruitful results.

Before I conclude I would like to draw your attention to another project, which is closely related to the theme of this Forum. This is the Alliance of Civilizations project launched by the UN and fully supported by the Turkish and Spanish governments. The Report prepared by the High-Level Group - which I had the privilege to co-chair - has received warm attention from international organizations, governments and civil society, even Hollywood. Greece and other countries in our region have now become "Friends of the Alliance".

ANDRAS ISTVAN DEMETER
SECRETARY OF STATE, MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF ROMANIA
REPRESENTING THE PRESIDENT OF ROMANIA

It is a privilege for me to take part in the Regional Summit Forum of the South-East Europe an Heads of State; a forum of utmost importance concerning the cultural heritage of our countries.

I have the honour and pleasure to deliver the message of the President of Romania, Mr Traian Băsescu:

The President of Romania, Mr. Traian Băsescu, sends his cordial greetings to His Excellency Karolos Papoulias, the President of the Hellenic Republic, distinguished host of this year's Summit of States of South-East Europe, to Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO and to Mr Terry Davis, Secretary- General of the Council of Europe, under whose auspices this event takes place, as well as to the heads of delegations from the other participating States.

This year's forum, dedicated to intercultural encounters on South Eastern European maritime, river and lake routes could not have a more appropriate host than Greece. Here, on the cusp of the Aegean, the Ionian and the Mediterranean seas, in the cradle of the European civilization, we are able to understand, to evaluate and to cherish the significant importance that water routes have had on today's European cultural achievements.

The theme of intercultural encounters on South Eastern European maritime, river and lake routes, represents, as far as cross-cultural communication and dialogue are concerned, the synthetic expression of a historical reality: water routes have always acted as a means of communication among our peoples. Whether we are on the Black Sea coasts or we have sailed along the Danube - as we have sailed since ancient times - we share knowledge, cultural experiences and civilization patterns on a mutual basis. Rivers, lakes and seas are not only geographical delimitations, but also - to recall the topic of last year's reunion that we had the honour and pleasure to host - bridges among our cultures, means of acquaintance and understanding among people belonging to a multilingual and multi-confessional space and opportunities for dialogue meant to defuse tensions and lead to mutual knowledge and protection of the ethnical cultural traditions within this region.

Throughout history, water routes have been a key-element for social development and economic prosperity, making a significant contribution to the improvement of living standards. The Romanians have learnt this lesson ever since ancient times, when the

Greek city of Histria, ancient trade centre on the Black Sea Coast and the oldest town on Romanian territory, offered us the model of the flourishing Greek civilization settled North of the Danube. Today, the ruins of the ancient city are on the list of European inheritance landmarks.

Romania has always given special attention to protecting the Danube sailing routes and, most importantly, to protecting the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation, a natural environment which is unique in Europe and which appears on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This is home to a wide array of bird species, most of them rare or already extinct in other parts of Europe. The Danube Delta is a paradise of the biosphere that should also be enjoyed by tomorrow's European and worldwide citizens. When the survival of some rare species and the health of the Planet are at stake, the price of any economic advantage is too high to pay. We should act together so that the Danube Delta may stay, as it is, a place that must remain unscathed by the effects, sometimes harmful, of technical progress.

We consider that the main priority of the countries of the Black Sea region should be the identification of possible routes, in order to develop cultural cross-border cooperation activities.

As an initiator and active stakeholder in the regional cooperation process, Romania has become an active player in the South-East European cooperation. The main targets of our action in the Balkan area are the consolidation of the political security and stability through the promotion of dialogue and the fostering of collaboration in a wide array of fields.

Two important regional cooperation fora should be mentioned here: The Danube Cooperation Process (DCP) as a unique way of cooperation in the Danube region, targeting several expertise areas, such as: economy and sustainable development, environment and culture, navigation and tourism and sub-regional cooperation. Despite our very different economic and cultural national profiles, the DCP has proved to be an ideal paradigm of cooperation between our countries.

The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which manages, through its Culture Working Group, many cultural projects and programs aiming to promote a new, cultural and scientific dimension of regional cooperation in the area.

During the past few years, Romania has proposed several cross-border cultural projects, in line with the UNESCO 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, mainly in the fields of underwater archaeology and the preservation of the maritime archaeological heritage on the coast of the Black Sea.

I express my hope that the concrete results of the regional cooperation summits in the fields of culture, education, science and tourism will substantially contribute to the dynamics of South Eastern European development. I wish to reaffirm Romania's commitment to support international and regional cooperation in the field of cultural heritage as a vector for sustainable development and also to take part in a solidarity action plan for the protection and promotion of cultural itineraries on rivers, lakes and seas, thus stressing the fundamental link between natural resources and human creativity.

GABRIELLA BATTAINI-DRAGONI

DIRECTOR-GENERAL of EDUCATION, CULTURE AND HERITAGE, YOUTH AND SPORT AND COORDINATOR FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE, COUNCIL of EUROPE, REPRESENTING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL of THE COUNCIL of EUROPE

Looking at intercultural encounters on maritime, river and lake routes of South-East Europe is an inspiring, innovative perspective. More than that, it is potentially a very productive approach to reinforcing mutual understanding and co-operation in the Balkan region and beyond, in the wider Europe, making the historic lifelines of our continent a source of new links between peoples.

Since the Forum organised by the President of Bulgaria under the patronage of UNESCO and the Council of Europe in Varna, in May 2005 and the following meetings held in Opatija and in Bucharest, the Heads of State of this region have shown their commitment to local development and the creation of sustainable communities. You have pledged your support for the political priorities needed to achieve this development - economic growth, preservation of the environment, protection of the cultural heritage and the promotion of diversity.

These priorities are sometimes not easy to reconcile with each other. The appropriate balance between them has to be found through democratic debate, involving ideally the members of all communities and cultural traditions that have a stake in the issue. It is a democratic debate, which will lead to a common project, a shared reinterpretation of the historical legacy in light of the contemporary objectives of the communities in question.

Applying this principle, today can contribute greatly to an energetic regional policy in favour of heritage.

The preservation and the enhancement of the cultural heritage is not an end in itself. It is a mechanism which is geared towards wider objectives: the celebration of diversity; the encouragement of constructive dialogue between peoples; the promotion of mutual respect for the identities of those peoples; leading eventually to the encouragement of greater well-being and an improved quality of life.

The Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe is a good illustration of this mechanism. Taking the examples of the “Routes of the Olive Tree”, which are itineraries of sustainable development and intercultural dialogue linking the civilisations of the Mediterranean basin, or the “Viking Routes” highlighting the history and travels of the Scandinavians and their connections in Europe and beyond during the dramatic centuries before and after the year 1000, or the “Parks and Gardens” route presenting them as the

product of artistic, scientific and technical exchange between cultures – these itineraries all work towards a universal acknowledgment of major elements of our common history, for the benefit of everyone living within and outside these regions. All «Cultural Routes» are emblematic of prosperity, intercultural understanding, co-operation, exchange and peace.

These dimensions are also present in the «Ljubljana Process», the new phase of the so-called «Integrated Rehabilitation Project Plan/Survey of the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage», jointly implemented by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Another example would be the Local Development Pilot Projects, currently implemented in eight different countries.

The action of the Council of Europe in this area is guided by the standards in the field of cultural heritage, in particular the principles laid down in the «Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society». The Convention, I am happy to add, has already been signed by a majority of the countries present here today and ratified by Montenegro and Croatia.

In a wider context our action is also part of the policy for the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. The adoption and launching of the «White Paper on Inter-cultural Dialogue» by the Foreign Ministers of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, one month ago, has been a milestone in this process. The White Paper gives due credit to cultural heritage policies on one hand and to regional co-operation on the other; both are important vehicles for encouraging trust and understanding in an increasingly multicultural and diverse Europe. Permit me to quote just a few words from this landmark text: «European history has been peaceful and productive whenever a real determination prevailed to speak to our neighbour and to co-operate across dividing lines. It has all too often led to human catastrophes whenever there was a lack of openness towards the other. Only dialogue allows to live in unity in diversity.»

The organisational framework for our action, proposed by the Council of Europe, continuously developed since 2003 and acknowledged by this Forum since 2005, remains the «Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe». Most of your countries participate in this programme as active partners. The programme has been extended with the support of the European Commission, to develop even more - and more ambitious – trans-national and intercultural projects.

Nowadays, all countries in Southeast Europe - individually or jointly - should be able to initiate major European projects responding to these political priorities.

The Council of Europe is convinced that this Summit will encourage the democratic governance of culture and heritage. It will contribute to the sustainable development of communities. Your debate will promote tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. Your reflections on intercultural encounters on maritime, river and lake routes of Southeast Europe are a contribution to stronger cultural cooperation within and across borders, to the promotion of dialogue and the prevention of conflicts at all levels of our societies.



Summit logo



Zappeion Exhibition Hall, Summit Venue



Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic



Plenary Session



Press conference with the Heads of State and other High-Level representatives



Group photo of Heads of State and High-Level representatives



Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO



Filip Vujanović (right), President of Montenegro



Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia



Bamir Topi (right), President of the Republic of Albania



Georgi Parvanow (right), President of the Republic of Bulgaria



Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina



**Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia (left)
and Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic**



**Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO (left)
and Michalis Liapis, Minister of Culture of the Hellenic Republic**



Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic (right); Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO and Ambassador George Anastassopoulos, Permanent Delegate of the Hellenic Republic to UNESCO and President of the UNESCO General Conference

ANNEXES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE

**INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS ON MARITIME, RIVER
AND LAKE ROUTES OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE**

PAPER PREPARED by:

ELENA KORKA

DIRECTOR OF PREHISTORIC AND CLASSICAL ANTIQUITIES

The Pilot Corridor Project entitled “Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South-East Europe” is a dynamic and multi-dimensional system for studying, tracing and giving prominence to the relations and contacts that developed between different peoples at different periods of history within a specific geographical context, South-East Europe, leading to the creation of shared cultural values in the region.

The Pilot Project consists of a number of individual routes of communication, dialogue, exchange and mutual influences. These were used over the centuries and led to the creation of parts of the rich, varied, cultural reserves of the region, which form the foundation for European civilisation.

It has the aim to detect contacts and mutual influences that resulted in the long-lasting exchanges of experiences, ideas and values. And an attempt is made to adopt a multi-faceted, inter-disciplinary approach to historical phenomena, leading to a more profound interpretation and understanding of the past and its harmonious association with the present.

This leads to the emergence of a new, more substantial way of viewing highly important historical events that left their mark indelibly on the history of mankind. All the parameters that led to their creation and preservation are considered and, above all, prominence is given to the connecting links that united and continue to unite peoples and areas, the mutual influences and exchanges that have shaped the cultural personality of the region, and the shared and the varied features of which it this culture is composed.

Cultural water routes are a new, distinctive kind of cultural property that consist of a large number and variety of tangible and intangible features. Their basic, core principle and primary criterion is water, which, over the centuries, has been the conduit of ideas, values, inventions, innovations and achievements that frequently give expression to global ideals. They are organised around the primary element of life and either find expression in water routes used for travel and exploration, which developed into bridges for communication, mutual influence, cooperation and progress, or involve water itself and its catalytic influence on the creation, development and shaping of the cultural identity of the region over the centuries.

In the former case, maps can be made of water routes used for contact and exploration, which initially had only a small range, though as time passed this expanded and they became navigable avenues for the exchange of experiences, experiments, innovations, culture and cultural dialogue in general, at every period. In the second case, water, the life-giving power that is a source of life and creativity, was a pole of attraction, leading to the creation of water-centred settlements, cradles of civilisation, mutually linked in a dense networks of contacts. Moreover, its dynamism, eternal movement and purifying power was a source of inspiration for myths, legends, traditions, religious beliefs, practices and rituals that accompanied and still accompany the daily life of the inhabitants of South-East Europe.

A water route is based on archaeological and historical documentation – the remains that bear witnesses to constant contact by way of all kinds of water routes or networks. Contact

and mutual influence is not traceable only in the tangible remains: they are particularly vital and perceptible in the various manifestations of intangible culture which, in its lively complexity and variety, accompanies all contacts made by water.

The Pilot Project is an undertaking with a great complexity of subjects and functions at a multi-dimensional level – an interdisciplinary undertaking comprising dynamic features of cultural communication. A thoroughgoing multi-faceted investigation of the results of this communication leads to the emergence of historical truth, to the detection of the strong connecting links between the peoples of the region, to the promotion of aspects of tangible and intangible heritage, to the evaluation of experience of the past, and to the creation of positive preconditions for the future. Cultural water routes may prove to be a dynamic vehicle for the development of the region, a substantial tool and an eternal source of communication and economic development.

By:

- Mapping cultural water routes or networks of water-borne communications,
- Placing signs at the most important stations-centres of intercultural dialogue in the region,
- Promoting the conservation and protection of monuments associated with water, protection of marine antiquities and the creation of marine archaeological parks,
- Organising special educational activities,
- Creating a constantly updated website devoted to water and culture,
- Designing cultural tourism programmes,
- Creating an annual series of celebrations to be called water heritage days, involving a wealthy of cultural activities inspired by water

and, above all, with the collaboration of the appropriate authorities in the participating countries,

We believe and hope that a major stride forward will be achieved, with many benefits for the cultural heritage and dynamic development of the region. Most of all, we place our trust in fruitful collaboration aimed at the search for knowledge, in the conviction that knowledge is a strong unifying factor for creation and progress.

UNESCO

**COMMUNICATION OF HERITAGE:
A NEW VISION OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE**

**PAPER PREPARED by:
THE CULTURELINK NETWORK RESEARCH TEAM**

INTRODUCTION

UNESCO has a long-standing commitment in fostering regional cooperation in South-East Europe (SEE). It continually engages in contributing to stability, peace and development of intercultural dialogue in this geopolitical area. The region of SEE has gone under a tremendous change, which inevitably caused the re-assessment of national identities and cultural re-identification.

SEE was burdened by the raging conflict issuing from the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the endurable consequences it left behind. In the last decade of the past century, South-East Europe was the region where the war was a reality and the conflict was wrongly ascribed to differences in cultural legacy and cultural values that were imprinted in the fabric of national identification. Although they are proclaimed to be the main traits of proposing better communication amongst the nations, cultural differences were „sparking“ elements to conflicts that have occurred in this region.

Still, the conflict itself was largely defined by the opposing political, social and economic interests and inclinations towards general systemic change. Cultural features, just as religious legacy, were purposefully mistreated and misused as a communicational tool of obliteration. Inevitably tangible and intangible, heritage became a source of ineffable torment. Destruction of cultural heritage was just one of the conflict consequences where the tangible cultural assets were destroyed as national symbols regardless of the outstanding value they had for the global cultural heritage.

Since 1990, UNESCO has undertaken a principal role in leading international operations and actions for restoring and safeguarding heritage damaged or threatened by conflicts. These activities have mostly been realized through cooperation with other above-national bodies and agencies, like Council of Europe and European Commission who have collaborated intensively with UNESCO on projects in Croatia, Bosnia, and the Kosovo region. The initiative for rehabilitation, protection and presentation of cultural heritage in Kosovo followed the High-level Conference on Strengthening Cooperation in South-East Europe that was held in UNESCO Headquarters in 2002 and which was further elaborated at the UNESCO Conference on Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo.

The main aim of these initiatives is accentuating the need for establishment of intercultural communication and concrete dialogue among civilizations in order to enable better understanding and appreciation of the mutual cultural legacies and features. Furthermore, the objectives of the initiative encompass the fostering of international awareness of cultural issues in the region and the generation of both political and financial resources that can enable the achievement of the general goal which is to push the current

and rather marginalized regional position towards a more active and solid one in the context of European development perspectives.

Consequently, many heritage sites were restored and inscribed on the World Heritage List¹. The latest entries were the Monastery of Dečani in Kosovo in 2004, the Old Bridge Area and the Old City of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2005.

The latter is a result of the Memorandum of Cooperation that was signed by UNESCO and the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Old City of Mostar and the Old Bridge Area are two out of five heritage preservation projects that are to be realized in the country. The Old Bridge was recently rebuilt and many of the edifices in the Old Town have been restored or rebuilt with the contribution of an international scientific committee established by UNESCO. Just like the Monastery of Dečani, the reconstructed Old Bridge and the Old City of Mostar is a symbol of reconciliation, international cooperation and coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities. In many ways, this bridge represents the efforts of UNESCO in this region – by restoring the heritage as a core symbol of a respective identity and promoting its value in a wider, international context, UNESCO strives to establish new ways of interregional and international communication where heritage is posed as a main agent and factor of dialogue. Heritage is perceived as a ground for understanding and communication rather than for national glorification.

According to UNESCO's Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage from 1972, the World Heritage Sites belong to the people of the world, regardless of the territory where they are actually situated. In conjunction with universal spirit that the Convention promoted along with the raising of the awareness about the collective good, Convention proposed for the national State Parties to integrate the inherited cultural legacy into the national policies and development plan. This was further asserted by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage, adopted in Paris in 2003. In the context of the current globalisation trends and the erasing of nationally established borders, both tangible and intangible heritage are a matter of not only national but also global interest. It is imperative for the heritage to be preserved in its proper and cultural environment while at the same time positioning it at a wider international and intercultural level.

This enforces the sustainability of a distinctive cultural identity and encourages respect and dialogue among diverse cultures. It is precisely cultural diversity that supports a clear definition of particular cultural identities and thus makes possible communication among various cultures. The occurrence of interlinking notions of heritage as being national yet global, distinctive yet diverse, proves the UNESCO's promotion of the World Heritage to be inclusive rather than selective. The policy of inclusiveness proposes that the language of cultural diversity should be the main pillar of communication in the region that needs

¹ *There are 31 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the region of Southeastern Europe: 2 in Albania, 1 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9 in Bulgaria, 6 in Croatia, 1 in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 7 in Romania and 5 in Serbia and Montenegro.*

to upgrade intercultural tolerance. Cultural diversity must be deeply integrated into the foundations of emerging SEE societies.

In conjunction with the above mentioned activities and operational aims in the SEE region, UNESCO has engaged in organizing annual regional Forums of Heads of States and other leaders from the SEE countries in recognition of the need for enhanced international cooperation set as being essential for the reconstruction of educational, scientific, cultural and communicational structures. The main objective of the Forums is to assess and present new possibilities for better cultural communication and cooperation amongst SEE countries.

The first meeting took place in Ohrid, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2003. Entitled „*Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations*“, it underpinned the importance of confidence and capacity-building in the region through interregional dialogue and cooperation in conjunction with complementary actions at the respective national levels.

Tirana Summit (Albania) “*The Development of Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue*” in 2004 which further reinforced the concept of dialogue among the civilizations. “*Cultural Corridors of Southeast Europe: Common Past and Shared Heritage – a Key to Future Partnership*” was the title of the last meeting that was held in Varna, Bulgaria in 2005. The meeting highlighted the recognition of the role of cultural heritage and cultural corridors of the countries of South-East Europe as a key element for strengthening regional and global cooperation.

This year’s meeting “*Communication of Heritage: A New Vision of South Eastn Europe*” will define and analyze the aspects and benefits of the communication of heritage through the fundamental role of science and culture given that science and ICT’s have always been key components of developing for all cultures and have a great potential to advance dialogue.

Certain initiatives undertaken by the non-governmental bodies in establishing the scientific and cultural cooperation between the countries of the region must be mentioned since their significance is considerable. The series of annual postgraduate courses, organized by the Department of Culture and Communication of the Institute for International Relations in Zagreb in cooperation with the Inter-university Centre in Dubrovnik since 2000, have gathered scholars and students from the SEE region who have jointly researched, examined and debated various aspects of contemporary and on-going cultural changes in the region. The topics that were covered in the course curriculum include “The Multicultural contexts of Central European and Mediterranean Regions”, “The Redefinition of Cultural Identities in South-East Europe, Cultural Industries and Technological Convergence, Managing Cultural Transitions in South-East Europe” and “Assessing the Creative City by Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region.” These initiatives are of paramount importance for the viable construction of long-term communication and knowledge sharing.

New Technologies and Knowledge Societies

Today the new ways of communication and knowledge organisation in the networked environment are the result of digitisation and technological convergence - merging of the computer industry, communications, broadcasting and publishing that has enabled fast and easy information storage as well as reproduction and distribution of information. All existing media are being converted into 'new media' by being pulled in the digital domain through digitisation. The fact that digital technologies make this conversion and change possible does not mean that the process is easy. Digitisation of existing cultural goods, e-born cultural goods and documents and their accessibility through the Internet network present a new context that cultural institutions must take into account. In South-East Europe the presence of the Internet is rapidly increasing, despite the discouraging facts of Serbia and Montenegro having a digitally literate population of only 14%, Bosnia has less than 5% and Albania has not even 3%. UNESCO has supported the increase of digitalization by funding digitisation centres in countries of the region (Zagreb, Sofia, etc.). The primary feedback of the centres operation has shown that digitisation is a much-needed project in SEE with long-term prospects. Moreover, the digitisation has made an influx in the sphere of heritage preservation by providing wider accessibility.

In the communication arena and the influence that new technologies have made on regional networking in the culture and the arts sector, NGOs have played a crucial role. This has been mostly funded and supported by the international foundations, organizations and agencies. Today, the NGO sector that has been strengthened during the period from 2000 to 2005 is the bearer of cultural communication in the region. Concurrently, UNESCO and the Council of Europe have placed one of the most significant networks for scientific and cultural cooperation, the Culturelink Network, in Zagreb, a capital of a SEE country.

This new context affects the way the cultural sector operates, and opens new possibilities for cooperation as well as for the distribution and consumption of cultural goods, giving the users unprecedented access to knowledge. There is a vital need for national visions and strategies for ICT's implementation with in both the scientific and the cultural sector.

In practice, creating digital resources proves to be a bottom-up process where anyone can relatively easily upload digital content on-line and this is visible in a situation where NGOs have assumed a leading position in using digitalisation in order to promote and establish open access to content and free communication of knowledge in the culture and arts sector². Though the region lags behind Western Europe, digital infrastructure development is growing.

However, the establishment of an open and flexible system of knowledge and heritage in the SEE, based on using common organisational and technical standards raises problems related to convention. There are organisational challenges that arise due to the logic that ICT's imposes as well as challenges related to the new knowledge that cultural practitioners

2 See *Open Content in the Southeastern and Eastern Europe* <http://oc.openflows.org/see>

must master. When these skills are in place, there is still a question of setting priorities and defining adequate national strategies that will have to take into account the limited resources available. Another major obstacles in content development are language barriers.

The organisational patterns of networking challenges established ways of working in the public cultural institutions that are hierarchically structured. Also the convergence creates new problems for cultural policy, which in the SEE is still traditionally perceived, as a sector under the Ministry of Culture and which in the new context of e-culture must embrace interactions with various other entities.

The digitalisation of heritage resources aims to preserve knowledge that has been recorded through particular heritage elements. It does not happen automatically because the ICT's infrastructure is available to us. The process has to be carefully planned. Existing heritage artefacts should be digitised and processed in such a way that allows information to be retrieved by different users' criteria. For the most part heritage institutions are small institutions, with limited resources, that have in their safekeeping a small share of our heritage. The real knowledge that heritage provides us with, lies in the relations among objects and not only in the objects themselves. For this reason, institutional boundaries should be overcome when digitalisation strategies are being developed. If we agree that the role of the cultural heritage sector in the Knowledge Society is not just to ensure users access to "raw" information, but rather to offer the possibility of interaction with knowledge, then it is clear that this can only be achieved through cooperation.

The cooperation in the heritage field does not happen randomly. To be able to effectively safeguard heritage, it is important to build partnerships through cooperation networks that contribute to different aspects of heritage protection, which also includes digitalisation. It requires setting policies in place, securing necessary resources, developing inventories, mapping resources, building new knowledge structures, connecting people, exchanging experiences, etc. For this reason, joint cooperation projects are an important infrastructure that enables heritage to be protected as well as communicated.

The process of establishing a framework, as well as infrastructural services for digitalisation and constructing virtual heritage resources in the region, is important because it does not only try to digitalise existing resources in a systematic way, but also contributes to building 'knowledge tools' such as thesauruses and digital maps, which serve as users' interfaces through which the digital heritage resources are accessed. This organisational layer, although sometimes invisible to the users, is important as it contributes to the success of the projects because they in fact shape the virtual heritage resources logic, which, if not suited to users' needs will fail in reaching the define goals.

The only way to keep culture and heritage alive is through communication. New technologies can assist in preserving our memory (knowledge), but we must strike a balance between its use as a recorded memory tool and its use as a communication tool. In addition to recording elements of our heritage through ICT's, we must strive to keep it alive through communication and its application. Digitalisation is very significant for culture in the

Information Society, as it does not only provide the means to preserve of our collective memory through the recording of the cultural heritage resources, but also those of today's culture and creativity.

ICT's will be effective for preserving heritage only if it results in keeping alive particular elements of our heritage for its use by citizens. This highlights the importance of cooperation and joint projects but also implies that real actions must link the virtual with the real world. Thus virtual heritage resources, cultural industries, cultural tourism, art, etc., are all important segments within which our heritage is reflected.

Cultural Tourism as a Dynamic Aspect of Heritage

The natural and cultural heritage, diversities and living cultures are major tourism attractions (International Cultural Tourism Charter 1999) and cultural tourism is among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange and information about the 'Other' since it embodies the inevitable 'contact' between cultures. Interaction between tourism and cultural heritage often results in the interpretation of heritage, which involves an educational process.

Since post-modern tourism enrich the visitor by educating him/her and providing a sense of experience, a great potential has been identified in developing such approaches. Accordingly, with the growth of creative use of free time, a growth of the industry, which supplies creative activities has also occurred³. Such industries supply «ordinary» citizens with the means to develop their creative skills. The situation in South-East Europe in the sector of cultural industries as defined by UNESCO shows that the only three countries from the region represented on Florida's⁴ emerging 'global creativity index' are the EU' candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia.

Cooperation between various countries and their different cultures is best perceived through the concept of cultural routes/corridors. This concept is not new to the UNESCO activities; it also has strong roots in the Council of Europe and ICOMOS activities but also new initiatives following the same pattern were born (such as within the Central European Initiative or within the Varna Regional Forum on Cultural Corridors of South-East Europe for example). Initiatives by the Council of Europe tried to involve the SEE region in its itineraries but except for a few (The Olive Routes, The Silk and Textile Routes), no developments have

3 *In Croatia, such changes have occurred around 1995. No research has been done in the field but the search through the Court Register results in a number of small firms that started their activities as hobby art centres around 1995 or later. A number of firms also changed their field of activity into hobby/art field (<https://sudreg.pravosudje.hr/SUDREG3/index.jsp>). A personal communication with the director of the leading firm in the field in Croatia (Hobby Art Center Chemaco) revealed that people in Croatia do have more free time as is also the world trend. Still, people in Croatia do not have more money but a number of them started to do hobbies as a means to gaining profit (K. Presečan, personal communication, 25 February, 2005).*

4 *Florida, Richard (2005). *The Flight of the Creative Class*, New York, HarperBusiness*

been achieved. A new theme the 'Nikola Tesla Route' is currently being proposed that would involve some of the SEE countries where Tesla spent his life.

The cultural routes initiatives undertaken so far are of particular importance as pioneering activities in the field of intercultural communication through tourism. There is no doubt that cultural routes have a great power in connecting people. Still, the question arises why SEE countries have not been more involved in these initiatives? A research study⁵ undertaken in Istria has confirmed that all cultural tourism planning is carried out in an eclectic way, lacking a systematic approach. Another research study⁶ undertaken for the whole territory of Croatia confirmed the same results. The research also confirmed the following problematic issues: non-existent or poorly organized systems of cultural statistics; insufficient cooperation between the cultural and the tourism sector; lack of funding and consulting agencies. All of this are certainly slowing down the process of closer cooperation between possible partners in the SEE region, since the situation is not quite clear on national levels.

Fora and seminars⁷ that have been held in the last few years have shown the need for a more organized system in the field. The success of organized systems at the national level is a prerequisite for future quality cooperation so that future partners in regional initiatives can be detected. Undoubtedly, the SEE region has a lot to offer in this field having in common a variety of relevant themes.

Many other initiatives, which focus on the subject of cultural tourism, exist within the framework of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, EU, ICOMOS or other institutions. In this way, for example, the Charter of the Council of Ministers of South-East Europe (2005) mentions that the objectives will be pursued, among others through 'creating regional management strategies for cultural needs to be defined and put into action, thus assuring the integration of cultural activities into contemporary economic and social goals; including cultural tourism'. Accordingly, by protecting and putting efforts into preserving the heritage sites in SEE, UNESCO has provided grounds for the development of cultural tourism in the region. World Heritage Sites in SEE are today's most visited locations for the new generations of cultural tourists.

5 *The research Identification of the situation in cultural tourism in Istria has been done by Daniela Angelina Jelinčić in Istria, Croatia in 2002.*

6 *The research has been done by the Institute for Tourism, Zagreb within the framework of 'From Culture and Tourism to Cultural Tourism: Development Strategy' in 2003.*

7 *For example 'Reedukacija za kulturni turizam' (Re-education for Cultural Tourism), Belgrade, 8 – 10 May 2003; 'Od turizma i kulture do kulturnog turizma: strategija razvoja' (From Culture and Tourism to Cultural Tourism: Development Strategy), Zagreb, 18 February 2003.*

Cultural Industries and Communication of Heritage

Cultural tourism, as well as creative tourism, is important factors in the communication of heritage across borders. In this way, the exchange of knowledge of respective identities takes a more direct and dynamic form. One of the ways in which identities and heritage can be communicated is through cultural and creative industry, which has become of great importance due to the active transformation of cultural models in cultural policies as a part of public policies.

Cultural industries are considered by UNESCO as being mainly those industries that combine the creation, production and commercialization of contents. The contents are typically protected by copyright and they can take the form of goods or services. Cultural industries may also be referred to as 'creative industries', 'content industries', 'experience industries' or 'copyright industries'. Cultural (and creative) industries are based on the exchange and consumption of cultural products and services that have a tangible as well as intangible element. Sometimes, 'cultural industries make a subset of the creative industries' (UNCTAD, 2004). The notion of cultural industries generally includes printing, publishing and multimedia, audio-visual, phonographic and cinematographic productions, as well as crafts and design. In some contexts this concept also includes architecture, visual and performing arts, sports, manufacturing of musical instruments, advertising and cultural tourism. In this context one has to stress that new technologies influence directly as well as indirectly both aspects of cultural products.

Cultural and creative products are not like other products as Venturelli (2007) stresses; unlike other products, their value increases with time and their usage. It is not a one-way process, and new technologies are not the only influencing factor, but they are important considering the role they have and how they are used, also in view of changes including mp3, p2p, various intranets, broadband, etc. The digitalization in this respect influences cultural heritage, which in this way can be more easily used in the cultural industries, and consequently more easily communicated, promoted and exploited. The new technologies also enable the preservation, by the way of digitalization, of cultural industries heritage such as cinematographic and documentary heritage, literature, traditional arts and crafts etc., which can thus be distributed and communicated more easily. This is also perceived as a tool for the enhancement of regional cooperation.

Knowledge of and research on creative industries is rather scarce in the SEE region and are several problems encountered while entering the analysis of the cultural industries sector (Primorac, 2004) there is a lack of data, the data that exists is not structured, and the existing structured data differ from country to country in their structure, which makes comparison difficult. When assessing the overall situation (book publishing, film industry, recording industry and publishing) one notes that there are mainly problems of distribution within and outside the country, of piracy/copyright issues, small-scale productions, translation and the need for regulation of the market.

In connection with cultural industries, UNESCO attempts to provide legal aid to Member States as part of the development of cultural industries. This should be achieved through the strengthening of the local capacities and access to global markets of the emerging countries through new partnerships, training, control of piracy and intensification of international solidarity. The question of copyright and neighbouring rights is directly connected to cultural industries in the context of the production and exchange of cultural products. This is in line with the *Florence Agreement* on the free circulation of educational, scientific and cultural goods (1950), and its' *Nairobi Protocol* (1976). UNESCO works to protect cultural diversity and it is committed to have an active role in raising awareness of the importance of copyright.

Therefore, the Organization promotes the International Conventions on copyright and neighbouring rights, and at the same time opens floor for internationally agreed regulations of the digital age. It has to be stressed that one of the major UNESCO actions in this field is the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted in 2005 by the General Conference of UNESCO. The principal objectives of the 2005 Convention are: to recognize the right of States to formulate cultural policies; to adopt measures in favour of the diversity of cultural expressions; to recognize the distinctive nature of cultural goods and services insofar as they convey identity; and to recognize the link between culture and development and the importance of international cooperation. The promotion of these objectives is done out through various international meetings and conferences (organized with partners such as UNCTAD and others), on issues related to cultural diversity and globalization, cultural industries, copyright infringement, and so on.

The infringement of copyright is an important issue in SEE countries where the level of piracy is among the highest in Europe. In May 2004, UNESCO co-coordinated a project entitled 'Anti-Piracy Training for Trainers', an advanced seminar for officials from SEE. The project was undertaken by the UNESCO's Copyright Programme and was funded by the Government of Norway, while positioned within the framework of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity. It was designed to alert national authorities and enforcement officials to the importance of enforcing copyright laws and economic and cultural consequences of piracy. The second phase of the project consisted of national seminars for officials involved in the anti-piracy struggle at a national level; these seminars begun in December 2004 in Romania and were followed by others in FYROM (April, 2005), Bosnia and Herzegovina (May, 2005) and Bulgaria (May, 2005).

The major part of the profit of cultural as well as creative industries stems from the copyright they create or own. The interests of multimedia companies have dominated the regulatory processes: "sign of this imbalance is the fact that copyright is not only addressed by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), but by the World Trade Organization (WTO), bringing intellectual property (as a tangible good) to the trade negotiating table. This move was initiated by the USA and Europe to give them more power and control over the flow of intellectual capital - turning intangible rights to be negotiated within the framework of world trade. In fact, intellectual property is considered to be the fast-growing

component of the national economy and represents a significant amount of the GDP in the United States” (ERICarts, 2005). This dynamism of cultural industries is mostly result of the trans-national corporations that also create an imbalance of the cultural production and a certain homogenization of the cultural market. There are many structural changes ahead in the cultural industries sector in the SEE countries. The whole field has to be restructured in order to establish a strong domestic production, which a healthy distribution system which will be in touch with global processes. UNESCO should continue to work on raising awareness on these issues through regional cooperation in the field of cultural industries and in the context of communication of heritage.

The Regional Cultural Cooperation

The SEE cultural cooperation in the last fifteen years has been marked by transitional changes, which have included liberalization of markets, increasing openness to globalization processes and impacts of new technologies. The dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation has essentially re-oriented cultural exchange and cooperation by directing all efforts to communication and cooperation with the EU countries and reducing radically both intra-regional and international contacts and communication.

Cultural cooperation in the region is still sporadic and rather un-systematised. However, the new forms of cultural cooperation have been developing. They are visible in networking, transfer of knowledge, artists’ mobility and creativity and the development of cultural market exchange based on cultural industries production.

Specific networks have been created: ECUMEST, Apollonia, the Southeast European Contemporary Art Network - SEECAN, Balkan Art Network, Balkan Cult and other. They support functional interlinking within the region by promoting information exchange, residential programs for artists, seminars, educational and other activities.

Transfer of knowledge encompasses joint projects and exchange of experts, particularly in the area of cultural policies, cultural management and cultural heritage. It reflects the need to share expertise, which is often lacking, and rationalize cultural processes through competent analyses.

Exchange of artists has been increasing, which testifies to the growing interest in joint manifestations (e.g. The Urban Zagreb Festival hosting artists from Bosnia, FYROM, Serbia, Slovenia, etc.) and creation of artists’ residence programmes (e.g., in Romania, Bulgaria, FYROM, Croatia etc.).

The present day cultural cooperation within the region has been marked by the strong influence of international donors, particularly international organizations, who have been supporting the efforts to enable functional interconnection among the ever more diversified societies within the region, and centripetal forces influencing processes of redefinition of the particular national identities. However, it is ever more visible that the identification processes are structurally comparable. They tend to affirm cultural particularities, diversities

and specific cultural values, but the processes of such affirmation are similar. This provides for a possibility to base cultural cooperation on the new regional visions. One of such visions should be linked to the communication of heritage. The whole process of cooperation therefore moves from internationally supported programmes and projects to the nationally supported ones. An institutionalization of support to joint programmes is lacking and they mostly depend on individual efforts of cultural activists, researchers or artists. The civil society organizations active in the cultural field support substantially ever more diversified forms of cultural cooperation within the region. Their efforts are not always matched by the governmental organizations or state ministries, which mostly care about how to sustain and develop national cultural activities.

South-East Europe: Creation of a Modern Dynamic Region

The contemporary European development dynamics largely resides in modern regions that encompass production, trade and many other functions related to the integration processes and mutual cooperation of the European peoples. The region of South-East Europe is, in a geographical, historical and cultural sense, both a part of Central Europe and the Mediterranean. It connects them and inherits from both of them, gradually evolving from a regional construct heavily embedded in historical Balkan heritage into a supranational region bringing new diversity qualities into the overall European integration processes.

The Southeast European region is being created through influences of the newly established states and still instable national identities, strong presence of ethnic identities and pressures for wider European identification supported by the wish to integrate the EU and the much needed economic and social integration. Thus, the creation and further development of the Southeast European region demand the establishment of functional links among the neighbouring countries and peoples and an awareness of belonging to the same geographic, historical and cultural entity. The general process of democratization and systemic transition in the area has to be blended with different aspects of integration processes, be they global or regional. Although South-East Europe has not yet been fully constituted as a region in a modern sense, there are tendencies of flexible mutuality: promotion of mutual trade, common development projects, sharing of infrastructure, re-establishment of cultural links and exchange, sharing of ever more standardized media communication developed under the influence of global media networks, etc. In this context, the values of the Balkan cultural heritage, the artistic specificity, regional diversity, and the blending of different cultures that has been going on for centuries, need to be re-evaluated through mutual and ever more intensive sharing of knowledge and through the creation of regional cultural identity.

Sharing of knowledge on cultural heritage and awareness of its value represent the communication of heritage. Communication of heritage is an in-alienable part of the redefinition of cultural identities and the presentation of key the values of peoples from the region. The communication of heritage encompasses historical, cultural, natural and overall intellectual heritage of South-East Europe and thus defines the position of the region in the European context.

South-East Europe is defined today in the context of the knowledge society and full awareness of individualized and particular cultural identities. Although the knowledge society may primarily be an economic concept, it has important social and cultural implications. It brings forward a new way of working with historical memories and cultural heritage in the form of information components.

The institutions dealing with the past and the collective memory have been changing in the contemporary world. In this context, the communication of heritage is linked to institutional change induced by processes of transition in all countries and cultures of the SEE. Institutional convergence is forming new creative clusters. Following the societies' needs, they are evolving from a prevalent scientific concern to a communicational one. Heritage occupations, be they museums, archives, libraries or different hybrid institutions, are turning themselves into an important communicational business of a particular kind. From the ambition to care about the totality of inheritance and providing knowledge about it, those institutions now want to share, to impart and provide the benefit and joy of understanding. They seek to contribute to the better quality of life in all communities and to provide basis for their development. Communication helps to create means and objectives for the accumulated knowledge to be turned into the very substance of regional development. By communicating heritage, the language of users is employed to present both difficulties and advantages of making science and culture effectively and efficiently present in the daily lives of most of the SEE peoples. That is what communication of heritage is about.

The attempts at self-definition of countries and societies in this part of Europe still remain disconnected and diversified, but they also seem to be turning attention from past to future perspectives. The realization of these perspectives demands an overall transformation of the Southeast European societies, their economic modernization and overall progress, as well as the functional inclusion in international exchange and development.

New societies are being built in the region. Their ability to develop self-consciousness based on education, knowledge, respect of inherited cultural values, creativity and flexible communication, will define the future of these societies. Their natural and human resources need to be interconnected within the region in order to produce synergetic effects at all levels.

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SUMMIT DECLARATIONS

**MESSAGE FROM OHRID
ADOPTED BY THE REGIONAL FORUM ON THE DIALOGUE
AMONG CIVILISATIONS**

Ohrid, FYROM, 29 - 30 August 2003

We, the participants in the Ohrid Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilisations – led by eight Heads of State of South-East Europe, commit ourselves to a culture of dialogue, tolerance and peace in order to advance the prosperity, well being and mutual cooperation among the peoples and countries of the South-East Europe region.

The region, which is the cradle of European culture and civilization, has witnessed wars, destruction and ethnic cleansing, not least over the past decade. Fear of the Other was always a step towards hatred and conflict. Now, a new era is dawning where dialogue, understanding and reconciliation are poised to replace the tribulations of history and where unity can be found in and nourished through the rich diversity and humanity of the peoples. Forgiveness will help rid the region from the biases and ignorance of the past. A new generation of democratically elected leaders in the region promises a more peaceful future given their dedication to dialogue and genuine cooperation.

We are determined to demonstrate that the region can turn itself, through its own strategies and effective means of dialogue and engagement, into a vibrant space where people can jointly rediscover the stimulating wealth of differences, cultural exchanges and interaction as well as their multiple identities. The recognition of *multiple identities* of each individual is indeed a precondition for a constructive, practical and forward-looking dialogue apt to deepen and intensify the process of regional cooperation and stability.

The peoples of South-East Europe know how to live together, cooperate and exchange their precious knowledge with a view to solidifying freedom and democracy and upholding human rights. Free societies can be created only upon the existence of free individuals, who are sovereign in choosing their political status and in following their own economic, social and cultural development. Only under such circumstances can spirituality, religion, cultural and civilisational affiliation fully develop, whereby people can live together in harmony and in the pursuit of prosperity.

The Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilisations, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2001, sets forth a useful framework for action by States, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. It also calls for interaction and dialogue among individuals and institutions in the spirit of inclusion and a

collective desire to learn and to question assumptions. Such dialogue occurs at local, national, regional and international levels. There are no superior or inferior civilizations. Neither are there superior or inferior races, languages and religions. We stress the equality of each cultural tradition and recognize the value of each civilizing experience as an invaluable and integral part of the commonly shared human experience. Cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indeed, diversity is not a threat.

We are convinced that dialogue represents a new paradigm of security, especially in a globalizing world with its manifold new challenges to individuals, communities and countries. A commitment to dialogue among civilizations is also a commitment against terrorism. Pursuing reconciliation and seeking security through dialogue requires a dynamic and pro-active civil society. It necessitates a mobilization of political leaders, parliamentarians, scholars, spiritual and religious leaders, media and non-governmental organizations as well as women and youth who all must play their roles and assume their responsibilities.

We believe in an active role of the private sector in promoting economic development of the region, which in turn contributes to its stability. The international business community is called upon to engage itself in activities reflecting its corporate social responsibility. In this respect, we are encouraged by ongoing initiatives launched by the private sector.

We therefore consider it of paramount importance to work with vigor towards dialogue and cooperation in all spheres of life through joint projects in education, scientific cooperation, cultural heritage as well as media and communications. The dialogue of the future necessitates transformation from verbal commitment into moral action through a range of practical projects, building on the action taken since the High-level Conference on Strengthening Cooperation in South-East Europe (Paris, April 2002) convened by UNESCO.

Peace and security in the region are of utmost importance for its stability and prosperity based on a continuing dialogue, regional cooperation and integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures.

Education remains the most fundamental basis for promoting tolerance, understanding, dialogue, respect for diversity, human rights and democratic principles. These values and dimensions together make up what is called “quality education”, which often entails a revision of school curricula and textbooks – and should build upon initiatives already undertaken by some countries in the region to eliminate stereotypes and misrepresentations of other cultures and identities.

Mutual respect of traditions and people will be possible when the matrix of values and the underlying spiritual and ethical foundations can influence education systems in different societies. We are conscious of the positive role that religion should play in this regard.

Fostering cooperation in higher education needs therefore to comprise support to a new generation of teachers and policy-makers of modern education. Education for pluralism can thus become a solid partner of political action for pluralism.

Development is a key question for the region. In that regard, *scientific and technological cooperation* is an important domain where progress can and must be made, in particular through the rebuilding of scientific networks and infrastructures and the building of competent institutional capacities and human resources in different disciplines.

The Ohrid Forum welcomes the proposal and offer by President Boris Trajkovski to convene and host in mid-2004 a conference of Ministers of Education and Science with the purpose of developing criteria for a universal network that could provide through education a continued development and promotion of dialogue among civilizations throughout the region and with the participation of experts from other regions.

The challenge for South-East European countries lies in associating *cultural heritage* with development policies and demonstrating how much this powerful symbol of a people's identity can become a unifying force for national and regional reconciliation. This may well serve as a foundation for a shared future.

Once respect for cultural heritage allows people to understand themselves, it will also be a key to understand others. 54 cultural and natural sites from the region are currently inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List, which attests to an enormous cultural richness and diversity. It is therefore imperative to develop a culture of conservation and preservation. This will help avoid that cultural heritage becomes a symbolic target of aggression and intentional destruction. The Ohrid Forum therefore endorses the adoption of a Declaration against the intentional destruction of cultural heritage, as proposed by the UNESCO Director-General, which is before the 32nd session of UNESCO's General Conference. The Ohrid Forum welcomes the project *Cultural Routes in Southeast Europe* and endorses the proposal and offer by President Georgi Parvanov to convene and host in 2004 a meeting of Heads of States of all countries of South-East Europe to be devoted to the rich cultural and historical heritage of the region.

The Ohrid Forum equally endorses the suggestion by Chairman Dragan Covic that the Mostar Bridge be reopened in 2004 in the presence of the Heads of State of the region.

Channels of *communication* must remain open and flexible in order to allow fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among people. The new era of information society requires new generations with solid skills in information technology, which today plays an important role in bringing cultures and people together. The use of new techniques such as e-learning and distance education is contributing to wider access to knowledge and information. Educational systems need to be adapted to create a new computer-literate generation.

The *media* are called to play a particularly crucial role in helping tear down barriers in the minds of people. Strengthening independent media and its professionalism, upholding freedom of the press and of expression and promoting the right of access to information and knowledge are major challenges for South-East Europe. Apart from serving as channels of information, the media constitute also forceful instruments through which new identities can be constructed and mediated.

Our common task transcends the need to rebuild the region and bolster its confidence, competence and trust after a period of conflict, as we move to a common and newly enlarged and united Europe. Civilizations and cultures will mutually enrich themselves and help shape a new world where justice, equal development and eliminating poverty will curb possibilities for future conflicts.

During the Ohrid Forum three panels developed recommendations on the themes of “Peace and Stability”, “Democracy and Civil Society” and “Culture and Diversity”. The results of their deliberations will be a valuable input for concrete action in the future.

We express our sincere appreciation to President Boris Trajkovski, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura and Rabbi Arthur Schneier and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation for having convened this important Forum. Our gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Hon. Kofi Annan, for his support and encouragement and for the participation of his Personal Representative for the Dialogue among Civilisations. We equally appreciate the participation of DaimlerChrysler and Siemens and their valuable contributions to the Forum, along with those of the Governments of Austria, Liechtenstein, Norway, Qatar and San Marino, of UNESCO, UNDP, the United Nations, the European Union and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation.

Drawing lessons from history, we agree that reconciliation is the path for our common future. Dialogue must become a new refrain that will echo throughout the region and the world at large.

THE TIRANA SUMMIT DECLARATION ON INTER-RELIGIOUS AND INTER-ETHNIC DIALOGUE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

Tirana, Albania, 10 December 2004

We, Heads of State and Government and other distinguished participants, hailing from all countries of South-East Europe, in the Regional Summit on «The Development of Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue – a Significant Factor for the Stability and Progress in South-East Europe», held in Tirana, Albania, on 9 and 10 December 2004, at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Albania, H.E. Mr. Alfred Moisiu and the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, hereby adopt the following

“Tirana Summit Declaration”:

1. We are united by the desire for a peaceful future based on shared values. To this end, we are committed to releasing ourselves from the disputes of the past and to overcoming them by practicing a culture of dialogue within and among our countries. Peace is indivisible from dialogue. The challenge we face every single day is to replace fear with acceptance, harassment with tolerance and hatred with respect.

2. We are committed to building and sustaining good mutual relations. We hold that dialogue must be conducted on a platform of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and dignity of the individual. Any form of totalitarianism is incompatible with dialogue.

3. Following the High-level Conference on Strengthening Cooperation in South-East Europe, convened by UNESCO in Paris in April 2002, the Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations, held at Presidential level in Ohrid on 29 and 30 August 2003, was a significant event. It set the stage for concrete dialogue actions in education, science and culture, designed to deepen mutual understanding and trust in the region.

4. The Tirana Summit is a further step in that process highlighting the intrinsic value of the religious and ethnic dimensions of the dialogue in South-East Europe. Both dimensions are interlinked and help create a spirit favouring social cohesion beyond the sphere of verbal declarations into everyday living. Without an open dialogue there can be no true reconciliation. Celebrating, protecting and safeguarding the cultural heritage and exercising the freedom of religion, of speaking one's own language and of respecting traditions are among the basic rights of every human being.

5. South-East Europe has suffered from the ravages of the last wars of the 20th century in Europe, also as a consequence of inter-ethnic and inter-religious tension, hatred and violence. Today, the region is rebounding, leaving the wounds of the past behind and responding to the desire of its peoples for reconciliation, exchange and cooperation, especially among the youth. Ensuring freedom of movement in the region will be an important practical step. In the present post-conflict period, there is an undeniable need to face up to the truth of the past as the region is not yet free from the seeds of divisions and confrontations of a religious or ethnic nature.

6. The experience of the region has demonstrated that the matrix of values and the underlying ethical, cultural and spiritual foundations are a major determining factor for the resilience of the social fabric and the vibrancy of each society.

7. We salute the accomplishments of our host country, Albania, which has succeeded in establishing a multiparty democracy. The country also offers a valuable experience in terms of successful inter-religious coexistence, which manifests itself in harmony among people adhering to different religious groups under one societal roof.

8. Our commitment to dialogue among cultures and civilizations is also a commitment against terrorism, reinforcing our determination to cope with new vulnerabilities in an era of globalisation. We realise that no religion preaches terror, nor are there national interests or reasons that would justify terror. Terror rests always and everywhere upon prejudices, intolerance, exclusion and, above all, on the rejection of any dialogue.

9. We reaffirm that mutual respect, rooted in open dialogue and nourished by multi-ethnicity, multi-culturality and multi-religiosity is indispensable for the preservation of peace, stability and the resolution of conflicts.

10. In a world, where no country is entirely homogenous, demands for recognition and accommodation of different ethnicities, religions, languages and values are increasingly arising. There is an urgency of developing a sense of respect for the Other that will provide a basis for mutual reference, friendship and learning. Minorities can constitute bridges of connection and understanding between peoples and countries. If left unattended, struggles over cultural identity may quickly deteriorate into a source of instability both within states and between them.

11. Cultural diversity and heritage are vectors of identity and tools for reconciliation. Cultural heritage – in both its tangible and intangible forms – is indivisible and embodies the symbolic values of cultural identities. The protection of heritage and its preservation, presentation and transmission to future generations, are not only ethical, but equally legal imperatives. States need to find ways of forging national unity amid ethnic and religious diversity, while individuals must be prepared to shed rigid identities if they are to become part of diverse societies. We therefore welcome the *Regional Forum on Cultural Corridors*, which President Georgi Parvanov will convene together with the Director-General of UNESCO at summit level in Varna in May 2005.

12. Relations among religious communities in the region have often been strained causing grievances and tensions. Religion must not be part of the problem, but part of the solution. Preserving space for diverse religious faiths is one of the preconditions for enjoying cultural diversity.

13. We recognize the need to protect the right to freedom of religion for all citizens. Religion is of profound importance to people's identities, but religious differences should never be seen as insurmountable. There exists an underlying thread of unity connecting the great religious traditions. They each propound basic spiritual truths and standards of behaviour that constitute the very basis of social cohesion and collective purpose. The religions should, therefore, be able to dialogue and contribute to societal dialogue in an effort that honours their deepest truths and holds promise for humanity. Indeed, dialogue must be at the core of continued inter-religious cooperation and collaboration in the region.

14. All faiths convey a message of peace, justice and human solidarity. All religious leaders, like other civil society and community leaders, have the potential to exercise a moral and positive influence on how people in society understand each other and interact. Reconciliation of religious views is an increasingly significant challenge of our age. This also entails the need to create more awareness among peoples and government authorities about the need to respect the traditions of the use of religious symbols, images and expressions.

15. We recognize that religious beliefs and practices as well as ethnic values and traditions have a fundamental influence and impact on education systems and their quality. Thus, we commit ourselves to the education of a new European generation in the spirit of inclusiveness, instilling a feeling of forgiveness instead of hatred, promoting tolerance, understanding and coexistence rather than conflict and violence, reinforcing civic education and observing human rights. We are committed that our schools foster respect, understanding and consideration for Others. We are committed to ensure that our schools foster a sense of community and solidarity. We are committed to teach our children to cross ethnic and religious barriers.

16. Learning to live together again requires that we undertake a renewal of curricula, improve and revise educational materials, organise youth fora as well as re-orient the training of our teachers – in short, we are committed to promoting quality education.

17. Advances in information and communication technologies (ICT's) have an unprecedented ability to bring together diverse communities, cultures, civilizations and different faiths. We must capitalize on ICT's and their innate potential to advance freedom of expression, which is the cornerstone of any democratic society and has its corollary in the freedom of the press.

18. The overarching goal of all countries in the region is to secure integration into Euro-Atlantic structures in a unified Europe, which for 60 million people holds the promise of stability and prosperity free of inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts.

19. Regional co-operation is becoming the natural way to tackle shared problems and to move towards progress. International and regional organisations, including the organisations of the United Nations system, the European Union and the Stability Pact, should consider it their responsibility to continue assisting the countries in the region.

20. We express our sincere appreciation to President Alfred Moisiu and to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, for having convened this important Summit. We thank the Government and the people of Albania for their generous hospitality and contribution. We also are grateful for the valuable support extended by the Governments of Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway and the United Kingdom, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

21. We all are committed to making use of dialogue as the only way to achieve full stability and overall progress in South-East Europe, leading to a successful completion of the European integration process in the entire region.

**VARNA DECLARATION
CULTURAL CORRIDORS OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE
COMMON PAST AND SHARED HERITAGE -
A KEY TO FUTURE PARTNERSHIP**

VARNA, BULGARIA, 21 MAY 2005

1. We, Heads of State and other leaders and representatives of South-East Europe, meeting in Varna (20-21 May, 2005) within the framework of the Regional Forum 'Cultural Corridors of South-East Europe' organised under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria Mr. Georgi Parvanov, the Director-General of UNESCO Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe Mr Terry Davis:

- a. Reaffirming* the ideals and principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- b. Recognising* the role of the cultural heritage of the countries of South-East Europe as a key element for strengthening regional and global cooperation; their heritage in all its manifestations must be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialogue among cultures (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001);
- c. Recalling* the relevant conventions adopted under the auspices of UNESCO, in particular 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 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001); the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and under the auspices of the Council of Europe, in particular the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985), the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1992) and the European Landscape Convention (2000);
- d. Acknowledging* the complementary roles and objectives of the international institutions and organisations participating in the Forum and in particular:
 - ◇ UNESCO's core mandate, which includes fostering international and regional cooperation and standard-setting in the field of culture, particularly through the preservation and enhancement of intangible and tangible cultural heritage as a source of dialogue and development;

- ◇ the Council of Europe's role in setting standards and supporting networks (cf. Resolution (98) 4 on Cultural Routes), particularly the ongoing joint action with the European Commission for the integrated rehabilitation of the architectural and archaeological heritage (the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe);
 - ◇ the European Union's role in formulating programmes and initiatives for balanced sustainable regional development, aiming at social cohesion with strong emphasis on the potential of cultural and cultural heritage resources for growth and employment opportunities;
- e. *Welcoming* the reconstruction of the Mostar Bridge (2004), which is an eloquent symbol of reconciliation in the region;
- f. *Emphasising* that this Declaration is in continuity with the Message from Ohrid adopted by the Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations (2003) and the Tirana Summit Declaration on Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue (2004);
- g. Noting the fortunate coincidence of our meeting in Varna with the *World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development* (21 May), proclaimed by the United Nations in 2002.

2. Hereby declare that:

- a. The region is developing a new confidence and capability, creating common space for dialogue, exchange and agreement, in which culture plays an increasingly important role;
- b. The rich cultural heritage of South-East Europe is an essential element of global cultural diversity; it makes a vital contribution to European and regional identity, especially in the context of European integration;
- c. The cultural heritage of our countries constitutes an invaluable resource for sustainable cultural, economic and social development, particularly through an innovative approach to cultural tourism in the spirit of the International Cultural Tourism Charter (ICOMOS 1999);
- d. The protection, presentation and interpretation of intangible and tangible cultural heritage should foster mutual understanding and respect for the heritage of others;
- e. The knowledge society and information and communication technologies, have created opportunities for strengthening the role of cultural heritage in fostering dialogue both within the region and beyond it;
- f. Revealing and making accessible the cultural heritage of South-East Europe in its proper context will highlight the importance of the region and its contribution to the cultural heritage of the world;

- g. The historical links and axes of inter-cultural dialogue and exchange of ideas, beliefs, knowledge and skills, as well as cultural goods and expressions, have given rise to a unique network of cultural corridors and cultural routes in South-East Europe, which deserve to be identified, preserved, sustainably used and promoted.

3. And commit to:

- a. facilitate the setting up of a Regional Network, with the participation of national and international experts, building on the experience gained in preparing the Forum in Varna and having a mandate to develop a conceptual and operational Strategy for identifying, preserving, sustainably using and promoting cultural corridors and an Action Plan for its practical implementation through integrated regional policies and actions;
- b. facilitate the creation of a regional framework of institutional cooperation in the field of cultural corridors and cultural heritage;
- c. contribute to the promotion of cultural heritage and cultural corridors within the region using modern dissemination technologies, in cooperation with the European Institute of Cultural Routes, Luxembourg and other specialist institutions;
- d. encourage cooperation concerning ways and means of promoting and protecting intangible cultural heritage;
- e. promote urgent measures for the protection of cultural heritage at risk within the region, including continuing action to counter the illicit traffic in cultural property;
- f. foster the improvement of management skills and structures to support the cultural heritage and creative activity and so enhance the status of artists in the region;
- g. encourage concerted action for the balanced sustainable development of cultural heritage, including cultural tourism, through partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society;
- h. promote intercultural education as a means of fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and awareness of the rich cultural diversity of the region, creating new opportunities for communication, exchange, networking and interaction;
- i. use the potential of relevant programmes and frameworks of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, ICOMOS and other international organisations, financial institutions and countries outside the region to intensify cooperation in the field of culture in South-East Europe;

4. In conclusion, we

- a. Welcome the proposal of President Stipe Mesić to host the next regional High-Level forum in Croatia (2006), on the subject of science;
- b. Support the presentation to the participants in the Forum in Croatia for adopting a Strategy and Action Plan for the Cultural Corridors, drafted by the members of the regional expert network, with the assistance of Bulgaria as organiser of this summit, the new host country of Croatia and the international organisations;
- c. Note the proposals for subsequent regional high-level forums (2007) made by Romania (Sibiu) on *'Multiculturalism as a bridge between cultural heritage and culture of the future'* and by Greece on *'Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South-East Europe'* and their role for the Dialogue of Civilizations.

OPATIJA DECLARATION COMMUNICATION OF HERITAGE

Opatija, CROATIA, 1 JUNE 2006

Heads of State and High officials from South-East European countries, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe gathered in Opatija, Croatia, from 31 May to 2 June 2006 at the Regional Forum of South-East European States devoted to the theme “Communication of Heritages”.

Convened by Croatia and UNESCO, the Summit was chaired by the President of the host country, Mr. Stjepan Mesić, together with the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Terry Davis. The Prime Minister of Croatia, Mr. Ivo Sanader welcomed the participants. The following Presidents participated in Opatija: Mr. Georgi Parvanov, Mr. Alfred Moisiu, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Mr. Sulejman Tihić, Mr. Filip Vujanović. Turkey was represented by the Minister of State, Mr. Mehmet Aydin; Serbia by the Minister of Culture, Mr. Dragan Kojadinović; Romania by the State Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Mr. Virgil Stefan Nitulescu. Greece and Slovenia were represented by Ambassadors Mr. Panayotis Baizos and Mr. Milan Orožen Adamič.

Besides the high officials, experts from South-East Europe and international organizations also attended the Opatija Summit.

At the conclusion of the summit, the participants adopted the following Opatija Declaration:

We welcome the intensification of the regional dialogue in South-East Europe at the highest levels, which has developed since the first Regional Forum in Ohrid (2003), and express our satisfaction that constructive cooperation and solid partnership has developed and is intensifying across a broad range of fields: from political and security issues, economic policy and trade coordination and joint infrastructure development to policies, strategies and programmes in culture, education and the sciences. It has created a new atmosphere of good-neighbourliness, mutual understanding and joint endeavours in different fields in the region.

We appreciate the role played by international organizations in shaping the current levels of stability and security in the region. We seek to strengthen cooperation with our international partners with a view to improving the economic and social situation. The South-East European Cooperation Process has earned recognition as a voice of the region and should continue its important activities.

We share the vision of a united Europe as a goal and a destiny for all South-East European States. We will spare no efforts in order to make this a reality.

Cultural diversity is a defining factor for Europe. Our readiness to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, as we have committed at the Regional Summit Forum in Tirana (2004), is a firm expression of our willingness to uphold the European standards in that respect.

The earnest commitment to cooperation through dialogue has grown steadily. Heritage has to interact with its time. Based on the principles and objectives of the preceding regional summit meetings in Ohrid (2003), Tirana (2004) and Varna (2005), we agree on the relevance of a set of international and European standard-setting instruments:

- the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Rome, 1950), known as the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe),
- the European Cultural Convention (Council of Europe, Paris, 1954),
- the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its two protocols (1954 and 1999), the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Council of Europe, Granada, 1985),
- the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO 1970),
- the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO 1972),
- the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Council of Europe, Valletta, 1992),
- the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1992),
- the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995),
- the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, Florence, 2000),
- the Declaration on Cultural Diversity (Council of Europe, 7 December 2000),
- the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001),
- the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2001),
- the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003),

the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Council of Europe, Faro, 2005),

the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005).

Imbued by the vision and values of an integrated Europe and the prospect of enhanced cultural cooperation, as charted in Varna (2005) with respect to cultural corridors and cultural routes, we focused in Opatija on the theme of “Communication of Heritage”. Communication is essential for building a Europe without dividing lines. It promotes the exchange of knowledge about heritage in our region and in particular our shared responsibility towards its preservation and safeguarding for future generations, providing a sense of stability, continuity and cultural identity. Our future endeavours in this area shall facilitate integration and shall be guided by the following principles:

- a. Cooperation in South-East Europe must build on its rich and diverse tangible and intangible cultural heritage and its history of intense cultural exchange and dialogue. Beyond contacts at the political level, such cooperation should increasingly be citizen-driven.
- b. Well-designed national policies for and effective cooperation in the areas of culture, education, science and tourism are key foundations for further developing South-East Europe as a dynamic European region.
- c. Cultural heritage lives in our region and within our people and makes people feel closer to each other. A strategy for “Communication of Heritage” needs to be anchored in national identities and recognize the role of cultural heritage in all its forms as a constituent element of cultural diversity and human creativity. The role of communities and groups who transmit, keep alive and recreate their heritage deserves particular attention.
- d. Heritage conservation and safeguarding are an integral part of sustainable development. This includes the promotion of sustainable cultural and ecological tourism and the development of appropriate cultural industries. Restoration and preservation of heritage should make use of innovative techniques drawing on scientific research and expert institutions. Above all, knowledge and awareness about heritage must be brought to citizens through education, new communications and media tools as well as publications.
- e. Given the importance of cultural heritage for identity and reconciliation in the region, all efforts should be made to return cultural goods to the country of their origin. Likewise, the adherence to and implementation of measures to interdict illicit trafficking in cultural goods should be broadened and reinforced.
- f. Cooperation within the region aimed at promoting a shared vision of the South-East European heritage should seek to broaden dialogue and mutual knowledge of other peoples and their cultures, traditions, languages. Furthermore, it should help bring about synergies among existing activities -whether under the auspices of UNESCO, the Council of Europe or the European Union or involving dedicated projects such as those established in the context of the South-East Europe Cooperation Process.

- g. Cooperation shall be intensified and extended also to cultural policies within the framework of European integration, as the region's cultural heritage is part of European culture and adds value to the European integration process at large. Resources should be mobilized from governments, the private sector, foundations, NGOs and international organizations for cultural corridors, intercultural dialogue, including inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue, and for sustaining existing networks. The intention of the Council of Europe to launch pilot projects is most welcome in that regard.
- h. Efforts shall be aimed at increasing the region's share in international exchanges of cultural goods, services and activities.
- i. The capacity of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to foster cultural heritage, exchange, networking and mutual knowledge should be used as a channel for communication, dialogue and mutual engagement across societies. Digitisation opens up new avenues for preservation of cultural heritage and the dissemination of knowledge. Digitised materials, virtual multimedia fora and innovative websites allow broad public access, appealing in particular to the youth. It ensures communication of heritage linking the past with the present and the future.
- j. Cooperation fostering cultural diversity shall also involve the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. To that end, all countries of the region are invited to ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005).
- k. Countries of South Eastern Europe are equally invited to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, which provides a basis for the sustainable use of the cultural and natural resources of the territory.

Taking into account these principles, we welcome the finalized Varna Strategy for identifying, preserving, sustainably using and promoting cultural corridors in South-East Europe and invite the Governments of the region, and in particular the Ministers of Culture or other competent authorities, to adopt the Strategy and to agree upon a related Action Plan. The preparation of the Action Plan should also benefit from input by experts from the countries of the region and by regional and international organizations.

We thank President Traian Basescu for his invitation to hold the next Regional Forum in Romania and accordingly we agree to meet in Sibiu, the European Capital of Culture 2007, in the first half of 2007.

In 2008, we will convene the Regional Forum in Greece and in 2009 in Montenegro.

All participants expressed their profound appreciation to President Mesić and to the Government and people of the Republic of Croatia for their excellent arrangements made and for their generous hospitality.

BUCAREST DECLARATION CULTURAL DIVERSITY – A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE CULTURE OF THE FUTURE

Bukarest/Sibiu, ROMANIA, 7-8 JUNE, 2007

We, Heads of States and other leaders from the South-East Europe region, met in Bucharest and Sibiu (7-8 June, 2007), within the framework of the Summit of the Heads of States in the Region, organised under the aegis of the President of Romania, Mr. Traian Băsescu, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Terry Davis.

- a. Reaffirming the ideals and principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Cultural Convention, the Constitution of UNESCO and the Statutes of the Council of Europe;
- b. Further reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001;
- c. Emphasising the fact that support and respect for cultural diversity - as salient feature of our region - are mandatory in the age of globalisation and that they represent fundamental principles underpinning dialogue and human progress;
- d. Recalling that, in the spirit of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, culture, in all its forms, draws its capacity to interact and to be renewed from both its internal and worldwide sources in order to be transmitted to future generations as a testimony of our experiences and aspirations and that otherness is acknowledged as part of plurality in societies and that diversity can take multiple forms;
- e. Recognising that cultural heritage of the South-Eastern European countries plays an important part in a strengthened regional and global cooperation and hence its characteristic as bridge towards the future; and further recognising the need to develop the use of digital technology to enhance access to cultural heritage and the benefits which derive from it;
- f. Being convinced of the importance of cultural heritage in stimulating creativity in its entire diversity, by a continuing flexible and changing process remodelling the existent forms of creation and of its relevant role in inspiring a real dialogue between cultures, through concerted action between the competent international

- and regional organisations, with the active involvement of the members states concerned and civil society;
- g. Recalling the relevant conventions adopted under the aegis of UNESCO, in particular:
- the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property to 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 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001);
 - the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003);
 - the Convention on the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005);
 - and the relevant conventions of the Council of Europe, in particular:
 - the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985);
 - the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (1992);
 - the European Landscape Convention (2000);
 - the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005);
- h. Taking into account the emergence of new information and communication technologies, which offer numerous possibilities for cooperation and which allow the creation of operative networks by supporting international cultural action and by strengthening the role of cultural heritage in the culture of the future;
- i. Acknowledging:
- I that this Declaration represents a natural follow-up to the Message from Ohrid (2003), The Declaration of Tirana on the Development of Interreligious and Inter-ethnic dialogue (2004), The Varna Declaration on Cultural Corridors of South-East Europe. Common Past and Shared Heritage - A Key to Future Partnership (2005), The Opatija Declaration on "Communication of Heritage" (2006);

- II. the complementary roles and objectives of the international institutions and organisations participating in this Summit and in particular:
- UNESCO's core mandate, which includes fostering international and regional cooperation and normative action in the field of culture, particularly through the preservation of intangible and tangible cultural heritage, as a source of dialogue and openness and, at the same time, as a means of protecting and promoting cultural diversity thus engendering sustainable development;
 - the Council of Europe's role in policy development sustaining cultural richness and its importance in creating supporting trans-national networks of experts, particularly the ongoing joint action with the European Commission for the integrated rehabilitation of the architectural and archaeological heritage (the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe 2003- 2008);
- III the expressed willingness of the European Union to cooperate with neighbouring countries and the fact that cultural heritage is considered a vehicle of cultural identity, whose preservation and promotion are among the founding principles of the European Union, as they are enshrined in the Treaty, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and will figure in the future European Union Constitution;
- IV the importance of other international initiatives, such as:
- the Alliance of Civilizations initiative carried out under the aegis of the UN Secretary-General and aimed at facilitating harmony and dialogue by emphasising the common values of different cultures and religions;
 - the Central European Initiative, which traditionally gives a particular attention to the promotion and support of cultural cooperation within our region;
 - the action of L'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, mobilising already in 2003 the member states to support the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
- V the importance of Cultural Routes, Itineraries and Corridors and the role they play as bridge for regional cooperation;
- VI the fact that creativity is stimulated within the already existent institutional framework (formal or non-formal), thus accomplishing the essence of our region's rich cultural heritage, a culture of the future finding its roots therein in this rich heritage and its ability to survive inside the framework provided by this heritage.

We hereby declare that:

- a. Our region represents a common space for dialogue, exchange and mutual agreement in which culture plays an increasingly important role and cross cultural perspectives are more and more relevant;
- b. Cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world, increasing the range of choices; it nurtures human capacities and values and therefore is a mainspring for dialogue and sustainable development:
 - each form of creation serves as a meeting point, opens up new horizons, thus helping to shape a more human world,
 - each form of creation ties links between individuals, generations and regions and by doing so they weave the fabric of tomorrow's heritage,

thus, the conception of new policies to highlight both similarities and particularities of the region have to be encouraged.

- a. Cultural diversity, in particular for South Eastern Europe, underpins meaningful cultural exchanges, which foster the circulation of ideas and contribute to a better multilateral understanding, to the enrichment of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage and to its thorough handing on to future generations.
- b. Cultural diversity in our region can be maintained by heightening awareness of the importance of the rich cultural heritage of South Eastern Europe as an essential bearer of our identity and of history to be conserved, medium for intercultural communication and a key element for sustainable development.
- c. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage represents an essential component of European and worldwide cultural diversity and embodies trans-national values as a result of multiple influences and confluences within our region, standing as a shared source of remembrance, understanding and cohesion, offering a privileged means needed to build a common cultural future;
- d. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage of our countries is an invaluable asset for development, not only at a cultural level, but also at an economic and social one;
- e. The creation of new ways of access to the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of South Eastern Europe will allow to highlight the significance of the contribution brought by our region to the enrichment of European and worldwide cultural heritage and will also allow to advocate the importance of the conservation, restoration and revitalization methods as binding moral imperatives so that its destruction be prevented, in the spirit of the Nara Declaration on Authenticity (1994);
- f. Multiculturalism defines not only a multitude of cultures with equal status, but also a system based on common values and the development of peace and that

interculturality refers to constant interaction between cultures in the spirit of building bridges among peoples

And we are committed to:

- a. Foster in-depth cooperation in the field of culture among the countries in the region, by backing up the measures needed for protecting and promoting cultural diversity, in order to properly develop integrated and integrational projects and duly handle the conceptual and operational strategies within the domain of inventory, preservation and enhancement of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- b. Support the free circulation of ideas and perpetual regeneration of cultural resources, by developing the access of the public to a rich and diversified range of cultural expressions from all over the world and in particular from those coming from South-East Europe, facilitated by new information and communication technologies.
- c. Further develop joint cultural policies, reflecting as closely as possible the major outlines and using effectively the potential of existing programmes and frameworks of UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Union, L'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, Central European Initiative, ICCROM and of other relevant international organizations and institutions;
- d. Strengthen cooperation with other countries outside our region and particularly the cooperation of our region as a whole with other states, organisms and international institutional programmes;
- e. Encourage concerted actions, joint projects and experts' networks aimed at balanced sustainable development of cultural heritage protection, preservation and enhancement in the region, including cultural tourism;
- f. Create new opportunities for cultural exchanges united by common goals, in particular in the field of cultural and creative industries;
- g. Support joint projects on mapping for managing the protection of natural and cultural heritage, with specific attention to heritage at risk;
- h. Reinforce inter-state cooperation, especially on a regional level and thus take the necessary measures in combating the illicit trafficking of cultural property, according to the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995);
- i. Facilitate the inclusion of the cultural heritage and of creativity, as important expressions of cultural diversity, in lifelong learning education and all forms of training, so that young people be involved as stakeholders in the making of culture and as relay generations of our cultural values;

- j. Use modern dissemination technologies and promote pluralism of media, multilingualism and important local landmarks, in order to strengthen public awareness of the importance attached to culture, as a key-factor driving development and in order to enhance the equal access to culture and by broadening the implication of more and more socio-professional categories in the cultural process;
- k. Foster regional cooperation in order to improve research, training and managerial skills for leading staff within the whole cultural field, in particular for the promotion of the cultural heritage and creative industries sectors, so as to acknowledge and give a new impetus to the creators and specialists within the region.
- l. Promote better strategies to learn about each other's cultures and countries (information campaigns, educational programmes, specific promotional approaches), exposing students to the principles of interculturality within national educational systems which include the "other- the neighbour" as value in itself;

In order to conclude,

We welcome the proposal of the Greek President, Mr. Karolos Papoulias, to host the next regional Summit Forum of Heads of States, which will be held in Athens in 2008, on the subject of Intercultural encounters on maritime, river and lake routes of South-East Europe.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF STATE OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS ON MARITIME, RIVER AND LAKE ROUTES OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

ATHENS, JUNE 12-14, 2008

HEADS OF STATE AND HIGH-LEVEL PARTICIPANTS

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Michalis Liapis

Minister of Culture of the Hellenic Republic

Stjepan Mesić

President of the Republic of Croatia

Georgi Parvanov

President of the Republic of Bulgaria

Haris Silajdžić

Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Boris Tadić

President of the Republic of Serbia

Bamir Topi

President of the Republic of Albania

Filip Vujanović

President of Montenegro

Koïchiro Matsuura

Director-General of UNESCO

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Minister of State of the Republic of Turkey

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Roumiana Mitreva

Secretary of the National Committee for UNESCO, MFA,
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Secretary General, Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs Romania

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Mounir Bouchenaki

Director-General,
ICCROM

Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonias

International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes,
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Catherine Kremezi

International Scientific Committee of Cultural Tourism,
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Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning,
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“...Since the dawn of civilization, humanity’s dependency on water has directly interacted with the development of societies, often decisively influencing their conditions of existence, water being a vital resource with economic, ecological, social and cultural functions...South-East European cultures have developed multifaceted contacts and interactions, which have constantly regenerated their rich cultural diversity, ultimately creating a very intimate relationship when travelling through seas, rivers and lakes. These fundamental routes of dialogue have influenced people’s ways of living, values and knowledge systems, throughout history and have moulded human relations and reshaped spaces for new intercultural encounters...”

Excerpt from Athens Declaration

“...In South-East Europe, the moment has come to draw up a more comprehensive shared history. Too long collectively referred to “the Balkans”, in reference to its mountain landscapes, the potential of the region’s water routes as connecting, unifying cultural routes, has not yet been sufficiently taken into account... It is my wish that the Athens Summit will allow us to launch a pool of joint pilot projects to transform the principles of intercultural dialogue related to water itineraries into more practical and concrete actions and that will also allow us to showcase best practises...”

Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General
of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

“... This Summit is a message to our peoples but also to the world at large: the message of peaceful coexistence, of respect for what is different and of fruitful dialogue. The message that our goals and aspirations, the dreams and wishes of our peoples for growth, stability, peace, progress and prosperity, can only become true through a democratic dialogue among equals in a spirit of constructive cooperation...”

Karolos Papoulias,
President of
the Hellenic Republic