



Welcoming address
by Terry Davis
Secretary General of the Council of Europe

*"Communication of Heritage,
a new vision for South-East Europe"*

Forum on Communication of Heritage in South East Europe
Opatija, 1 June 2005

President,

Thank you for hosting the fourth edition of the Summits for Cultural Heritage in South East Europe.

Presidents,

Prime Minister,

Director-General,

[Commissioner],

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We can now speak about an established tradition - each year in spring the leaders of this region meet to renew a common commitment to heritage as a common good, a resource for development and an asset to be enjoyed across national and cultural borders.

You would probably expect an Englishman to say that tradition is a key to stability, but without an outlook to the future, tradition is only an anchor to the past. The reason why the regional Summits on Heritage are so successful year after year is that they are based on a combination of continuity and innovation.

The continuity of these Summits lies in their message of togetherness and joint endeavour, in the symbolic search of a common identity for the region. The innovation comes from the different angles through which the theme of heritage is explored - and each time this exploration results in fresh ideas and activities on the ground.

Today we will focus on communication of heritage - a subject of great importance because the way in which cultural heritage is perceived shapes the attitudes of people to their past and to the past of other people. And we will also discuss how we can enhance heritage and exchanges in the region through cultural corridors - an initiative which gave a new impulse to the Regional Summits last year in Varna.

Later today, I will outline in some detail the Council of Europe's approach to cultural corridors in South-East Europe and our contribution to information and communication about cultural heritage at the pan-European level.

I am sure that we will all enjoy a stimulating and productive meeting.