



**REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

*President*

ADDRESS

of the President of the Republic of Macedonia  
H.E. Branko Crvenkovski  
at the Summit "Communication for heritage: New Vision for SEE"

**Opatija, June 1, 2006**

**Distinguished President Mesic, Distinguished Director General of UNESCO, Distinguished presidents, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my honor and pleasure to address this eminent gathering on behalf of the Republic of Macedonia and extend my appreciation for the hospitality and the excellent organisation of this Summit to the Republic of Croatia and its President.

Moreover, I would like also to commend UNESCO and the Director General of UNESCO, Mr. Matsuura for the strong support and understanding that he is giving to the countries of South East Europe in their efforts and strive to promote their mutual cooperation and to integrate in the European and Euro Atlantic structures.

The organization of this Regional Forum in Opatija clearly and unambiguously demonstrates the readiness and determination of the South East European countries to cooperate mutually within UNESCO, the European Union and the Council of Europe and in general as neighbors. These are countries that have many things in common and identical needs but also the possibility of jointly satisfying these needs.

The continuity in the organization of these regional meetings at the highest level, in the framework of the Dialogue among Civilizations, the Forums in Ohrid, Tirana, Varna and now in Opatija, as well as the conferences of the Ministers of Culture in Mostar and Venice, add a new vision for this region, introducing a new quality and dimension to our cooperation.

The regional meetings so far opened new possibilities for the organization of a series of important events in the Region enriching and intensifying therefore the communication among our countries in all areas, especially in the field of culture and cultural heritage, education and science.

**Distinguished,**

Cultural heritage lives in our region and within our people, but also within each of us individually. This is exactly the reason why we must not allow political disputes, differences and prejudices to prevail over the search for the cultural thread that has been bringing us together and which today regardless of all that has been happening to us and is still happening, makes our people feel closer to each other.

It is absurd that here on this soil, which has always been a crossroad of civilizations, we must constantly remind ourselves of the need to study civilizing corridors and cultural ties. The frontiers of our countries are not the frontiers of our mutual influences.

Only when we will truly and sincerely agree with the assumption that cultural heritage is the common good of our people, we will be able to start enjoying the prosperity that all tolerant and open environments deserve.

Heritage pertains to all of us, and none of us can take ownership over it. Only exploration of mutual ties, open discussions and exchange of results of expert researches can open to us and to future generations the true dimensions of cultural heritage that we have been entrusted with. True value of heritage can be acknowledged only when we will be able to make it a foundation for a better future for all of us. In that context even the most suspicious among us will accept that civilizing differences that have always existed are a virtue not a handicap.

**Distinguished friends,**

I am strongly convinced that by Strengthening our mutual cooperation and with the support from UNESCO, the EU and the Council of Europe we will be able to implement our decisions taken at these important meetings and we will be able to leave to our future generations in the Region a HERITAGE OF AN ESTABLISHED COMMUNICATION that will be based on mutual tolerance, culture of peace, established dialogue and respect Of cultural differences. This should be the vision in South East Europe

The affirmation and respect of different cultural identities through joint coordinated projects will imply the preparation of highly qualitative development policy of continued communication.

The communication of the South East European countries in all fields of cultural, social economic and political life, is not only possible, but an indispensable prerequisite to the development, integration and inclusion of the region in modern cultural trends of the European Union.

I believe that underlining the new spirit of regional cooperation through an enhanced communication, creation of a long term strategic program - action plan in all fields of culture - all restraining definitions will be eliminated and the intercultural processes and sustainable development of the region will be promoted.

I avail of this opportunity to express my pleasure for the fact that our country and the SEE together with other member countries of UNESCO, together in a democratic manner through a mutual respect, deepen the friendly and humane relations among people, contributing thus with its activities to the construction of a better world which is one of the basic commitments that the Organization has been following and still follows in this 60th anniversary since its creation.

The satisfaction is even greater for the fact that the Republic of Macedonia gave its contribution to these endeavors of UNESCO by organizing the Regional Forum "Dialogue among Civilizations" in Ohrid, in 2003.

In this past period since 2003 in the framework of UNESCO, the Republic of Macedonia successfully organized a few important Regional meetings, such as: the Regional Meeting for Cultural Heritage Digitization, the Anti - Piracy (Regional meeting, World Dance Congress - CID UNESCO, Regional meeting on Prevention of Illicit Traffic of Cultural Properties and other illicit activities etc.

Within the decade of the Dialogue among Civilizations, our country will have the pleasure of hosting the Third Conference of the Ministers of Culture. I believe that at this conference, through a mutual exchange and contributions, we will continue to define the priorities and mutual needs presented in Mostar and Venice.

I hope that Macedonia in 2007 will also host the **Regional Youth Forum**, *Dialogue among Civilizations* at which, with the assistance of UNESCO and the Ambassador of Good Will, Mr. Abramyan, the dialogue and communication will continue among young people as well.

Finally, I would like to express my conviction that the constructive work and the final document adopted at this forum will contribute to our commitments to make South East Europe a more pleasant and more prospective place to live.

Thank you.