

„Cultural diversity - a bridge between cultural heritage and the culture of the future”

1. 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.

2. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. 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;
- f. 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;
- g. 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);

- h. 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

3. 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;

4. 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*.