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Council of Ministers of Culture
of South East Europe

DECLARATION

We, the Ministers of Culture of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, and other officials,

Gathered today, on 20 April 2012, in Belgrade, in the framework of the Serbian Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe,

Relying on the principles determined in the Charter of the Council of Ministers of South East Europe signed on 31 March 2005 in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the Appendix to the Charter signed on 15 March 2011 in Bucharest, Romania;

Recalling continuity of the Ministerial Meetings held in Tirana and Varna (2006), Sofia (2007), Zagreb (2008) and Athens (2009), Cetinje (2010), Bucharest (2011),

Considering the importance of the Declarations adopted by the Heads of State of South East Europe in regional forums on dialogue between civilizations: Dialogue Between Civilizations (Ohrid, 2003), Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue (Tirana, 2004), Cultural Corridors in South East Europe (Varna 2005), Communication of Heritage (Opatija 2006), Cultural Diversity as a Bridge Between Cultural Heritage and Culture of the Future (Bucharest and Sibiu, 2007), Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South East Europe (Athens, 2008), Management of Heritage Diversity and its Promotion for Tourism (Cetinje, 2009), Music as a metaphor of Cultural Dialogue” (Istanbul 2010), “Contemporary Art and Reconciliation in South East Europe”, (Viminacium 2011),

Reaffirming the content aim and principle of the Belgrade Declaration respectively approved by the Seventh Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture in South–Eastern Europe (Belgrade 2011);





Having in mind the importance of intercultural dialogue, regional cultural cooperation and exchange of affirmative experiences in all the aspects of culture and the arts,

Responsible for creation of cultural policy in the region with a view to the protection and promotion of cultural diversity as a necessary basis for prosperity, strengthening the universality of human rights, democracy and ensuring regional development,

The priorities of the Serbian Presidency of the CoMoCoSEE focused on audiovisual policy measures as a response to the global economic crisis and the audiovisual field considering its richness and diversity in South East Europe as an integral part of the European values.

In accordance with the Charter and Appendix to the Charter, signed last year in Romania, the First Expert meeting in the field of culture was held on 2 March 2012 in Belgrade on the topic “Time of Crisis in the Film Industry in South East Europe – Challenges of Financing Micro-budget Films.” The experts submit to the Council the following Conclusions that we commit ourselves to:

- a) The economic crisis which we are all facing needs certain response from the sector of cultural industries. This expert meeting was an opportunity to discuss possible models and solutions/measures,
- b) The institutions responsible for the audiovisual sector and film financing could consider different funding mechanisms, including schemes *of micro budget film financing*.
- c) The wider visibility of films should be achieved through cooperation and enhanced partnerships with television stations and distributors in the region.
- d) The promotion of financed films should be raised to a higher level through regional cooperation in joint activities at international film festivals and through networks and platforms





that already exist or might be developed in the future.

- e) An evaluation of current production situation in the region, with a particular focus on the segments of production, distribution, and promotion, should be made.

The Second Expert meeting in the field of cultural heritage was held on the 16 March on the topic “Protection and Safeguarding of Audiovisual Heritage in SEE”. The experts submit to the Council the following Conclusions that we declare:

To raise common awareness about importance of our audiovisual heritage in South East Europe, and how simply it could be lost, as it often happened in the past;

- a. To speed up the work on legislations about copyrights and orphan works issues, to avoid legal obstacles to digitization, preservation, dissemination and repurposing of audiovisual heritage;
- b. To work towards a sustainable financing and governance model for Audiovisual Heritage Institutions, as a common access point to SEE's AV cultural heritage, and ensure optimal use of the financial instruments available for funding digitization, metadata creation and online availability.
- c. To endorse Audiovisual Heritage Institutions to work on mass digitization of AV heritage and making content available online
- d. To encourage those member states of the Council of Ministers of Culture of SEE that haven't ratified the European Convention for the Protection of the Audiovisual Heritage of the Council of Europe to sign and ratify the European Convention for the Protection of the Audiovisual.

United by the mission of giving full support of the regional activities, we create conditions for the framework for artistic creativity and cultural expressions, therefore we shall:





Support the efforts of Serbia to promote micro-budget financing schemes at the regional level, as a means to respond to the challenges of the economic crisis, which would aim to foster film production, coproduction and cooperation in the region, by using the existing (e.g. SEE Cinema Network) or creating new regional film cooperation mechanisms.

We are also giving strong support to the strengthening of cooperation based on exchange of valuable audiovisual materials between member states of the Council and encourage implementation of relevant international standards, policies and know how on in this field.

Having in mind the success of programmes and projects of international organizations, which proved to be sustainable partners and a strong support in the field of cultural heritage and promotion of cultural diversity in South East Europe, we welcome and encourage the contribution of:

- **UNESCO**, which launched in October 2011 a new global initiative “Culture: a Bridge to Development” to highlight the role of culture for sustainable development, in particular through the promotion of cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue, creativity, artistic expression and cultural industries, and enhances regional projects on “Heritage and Dialogue” in the South-East European region, in particular through the regional centers of excellence on cultural heritage, Regional Youth Forums on World Heritage as well as the regional exhibits and initiatives on shared history and memory;
- **Council of Europe**, that continues to support the countries of the region in implementing European Conventions for preserving and enhancing their cultural heritage resources, and reconfirms the continuation of the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe (launched in 2004), as an operational framework of cooperation especially the component Local Development Pilot Project (LDPP) which has entered into its crucial phase;
- **European Union** has a decisive role in the field of culture in South East Europe in fostering cultural creativity as a tool for reconciliation; supporting with financial means and know how





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the programmes and initiatives designed to enhance cultural cooperation especially in the area of cultural rehabilitation as an incentive for economic development and promoting intercultural dialogue as a method to enable a closer understanding throughout the region;

- **Regional Cooperation Council Task Force on Culture and Society**, as the newly established mechanism for strengthening cooperation in SEE in the field of culture, supported by the RCC Secretariat, European Commission and Council of Europe, in realization of its initial development project – Ljubljana Process II – Rehabilitating our Common Heritage, contributing to both social and economical development and reconciliation in the region.

We Confirm our cordial support to the interest expressed by the **Republic of Moldova** in joining the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe, aware of the importance and role that Republic of Moldova has on the regional and European cultural landscape and heartedly accept Moldova into our family.

Finally, we welcome the Presidency of **Republic of Slovenia**, as the next chair country of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe.

