



DECLARATION

We, the Ministers and Heads of delegations participating in the Annual Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe,

Gathered today, on 9 April 2013, in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia, in the framework of the Slovene Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe;

Referring to 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 the continuity of the Council of Ministers of South East Europe Meetings held in Tirana and Varna (2006), Sofia (2007), Zagreb (2008) and Athens (2009), Cetinje (2010), Bucharest (2011) and Belgrade (2012);

Considering the importance of the Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South East Europe held under the initiative “Cultural Heritage: a Bridge towards a Shared Future” in Mostar (2004), Venice (2005), Ohrid (2006), Zadar (2007), Bucharest (2008), Cetinje (2010), Belgrade (2011) and Sofia (2012);

Reaffirming the aim of the Eighth joint Declaration of the Ministers of Culture in South-East Europe on “Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development” adopted in Sofia, Bulgaria, 24-25 October 2012, regarding the necessity to streamline and reinforce the coordination at ministerial level;

Acknowledging the important contribution of culture and cultural heritage to sustainable social and economic development of modern societies, and to the quality of people’s lives;

Taking into account the cultural diversity based on respect of human rights and democracy, in particular rights to benefit from culture and to contribute towards its enrichment, thus fostering respect and dialogue among cultures;



Recalling our responsibilities for the coordination of cultural policies in the region, in accordance with a shared vision and priorities of the regional cooperation in the fields of culture and cultural heritage, and in response to current societal challenges;

Working towards establishing connections with other sectors (education, economy, tourism, etc.), in order to provide for necessary synergies, integrated approach towards culture and cultural heritage, and joint programmes and projects on all levels;

— **Reaffirming** the important role of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe as a key regional political platform in the field of culture and cultural heritage, strengthening regional cooperation and contributing to relevant European policies in these fields;

Thanking UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union for their continuous support and valuable contribution to preparation and implementation of programmes and projects aimed at long-term rehabilitation, management of cultural heritage and its contribution to social and economic development, strengthening institutional capacities, encouraging exchange of expertise and best practices, as well as to the establishment of relevant professional and artistic networks.

With the emphasis on creating coordinated regional policies in the fields of culture and cultural heritage, and taking into account the needs, interests and capacities of the South East European countries as well as the region as a whole,

1. We decide to streamline and reinforce the coordination between the existing cooperation platforms at ministerial level, hereby including the Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South East Europe and the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe, leading to a new unified platform under the common title “Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe. Enhancing culture for sustainable development” to be effective upon appropriate amendments of the Charter of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe.



2. Following these Charter amendments we welcome the participation of the countries as well as the international partner organisations active in the above-mentioned platforms. Furthermore, we support the inclusion of their already established expert networks and seek to promote an inclusive approach in the direction of a structured dialogue with civil society, professional associations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders.
3. Complementing the existing activities in the fields of culture and cultural heritage, we acknowledge the important role of culture and art in the field of education. Cultural and arts education fosters cultural awareness and expression, creativity and diversity, as well as contributes to human development, socio-cultural well-being and social cohesion. We will continue our efforts to develop cultural and arts education as one of the priorities of regional cooperation within this Ministerial platform.
4. Therefore, we encourage the adoption of national strategic documents in the field of cultural and arts education in line with relevant international standards and best practices, as well as their implementation in a systematic, inter-sectorial approach ensuring the involvement of partners from cultural and educational sectors.
5. We promote the exchange of knowledge and good practices, training and mobility of cultural and educational professionals, and research activities that also result in the preparation of joint projects and networks.
6. Accordingly, we reiterate our strong commitment to regional cooperation, with emphasis to creating coordinated regional policies and corresponding priority actions, aimed to face current and future challenges, in partnership with international organisations and in accordance to relevant international standards and EU policies.