



Third Ministerial Conference of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe *Enhancing Culture for Sustainable Development (CoMoCoSEE)*

Tirana, Albania, 22 February 2017

Final statement

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the present meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe - Enhancing Culture for Sustainable Development (CoMoCoSEE),

Gathered today, on 22 February 2017, in Tirana, Albania, within the framework of the Albanian Presidency of the CoMoCoSEE,

Referring to the principles determined in the Charter of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe signed on 31 March 2005 in Copenhagen, Denmark, the Appendix and Second Appendix to the Charter approved on 15 April 2011 in Bucharest, and on 28 June 2014 in Ohrid respectively,

Fully confirming the contents, aims and principles of the Ohrid Regional Strategy for Cultural cooperation adopted on 28 June 2014, and the following Istanbul Declaration of 25 February 2016, as well as the necessity of their further implementation,

Fully confirming the principles of the Declarations approved in Mostar (2004), Venice (2005), Ohrid (2006), Varna (2006), Sofia (2007) Zadar (2007), Bucharest (2008), Zagreb (2008), Cetinje (2010), Belgrade (2011), Ljubljana (2013), Ohrid (2014) and Istanbul (2016);

Welcoming the positive developments of cultural exchange, relations and cooperation between our countries,

Acknowledging the important contribution of culture, cultural diversity and cultural heritage to sustainable social and economic development of contemporary societies and to the quality of people's lives, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the spirit of the Faro Convention,

Reaffirming our commitment to further enhance regional and bilateral cooperation on culture and cultural heritage as a driving force for dialogue, creativity, good neighbourhood and cohesion of the region, in the spirit of mutual respect, peace and stability, as well as to coordinate and monitor operational activities to further implement the Ohrid Strategy and Istanbul Declaration;

Promoting rich and diverse cultural heritage of the region whenever relevant and appropriate, within the framework of the CoMoCoSEE, including the Ljubljana Process and other regional initiatives contributing to the achievement of CoMoCoSEE objectives;

Commending the support of European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO to the enhancement of culture and cultural cooperation in South-East Europe, and reaffirming the importance to enact the Conventions and other relevant standards and policy documents contributing to the protection and promotion of culture as a driver for development;

Thanking the European Union, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO for their continuous support and valuable contribution to the endeavours of the CoMoCoSEE,

Agree on the following:

1. Continue the efforts to reinforce coordination at all levels between cultural and other sectorial policies, including but not limited to regional development, environment, economy, sustainable tourism, education etc., with the aim to achieving the Goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as well as to develop cross-sectorial programmes dedicated to heritage protection, conservation and management and disaster risk reduction;
2. Reaffirm the importance of culture, cultural heritage and art in the field of education, in order to foster diversity of cultural expression, and encourage development of arts education;
3. Encourage the exchange of knowhow and best practices applied in the sector of cultural and creative industries, also in connection to the implementation and reporting on relevant cultural conventions and directives;
4. Inventorying of cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, and the development of specific data-bases is a priority that calls for more coherent approach in their elaboration, in line with the relevant international standards;
5. Improve and implement statistical tools to assess and monitor the impact of culture on sustainable development, including the dissemination of relevant data, drawing on the relevant international standards and possibly building on the initiatives already launched in the countries of the region, such as the Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS), with a view to its possible extension;
6. Encourage cooperation among the CoMoCoSEE Member States on the development/adoption of a strategic and coordinated approach to the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property in, from and through the region, mobilising all relevant stakeholders, as well as further ratification

and implementation of the relevant international instruments and reinforced capacity building;

7. Further explore all possible fundraising opportunities as a way to advance the implementation of the Ohrid Strategy and of the Istanbul Declaration, including through joint financing and cooperation with the European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO;
8. Recognizing the role of the museums not just as heritage depositaries, but as important segments of societies enhancing mutual respect, peace and tolerance; the CoMoCoSEE welcomes the approval and encourages the implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Promotion of Museums, and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society, and favours the sharing of experiences and cooperation on this topic at regional level;
9. Welcome the initiative of the European Union to designate 2018 as European Year of Cultural Heritage, and consider the possibility to define a common theme and activities among the CoMoCoSEE Member States, promoting the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the region;
10. The CoMoCoSEE underlines the importance of regional and cross-border and transnational cooperation originated by this Council aimed at safeguarding shared cultural heritage, supports the continuation of ongoing initiatives and encourages the development of new ones;
11. The re-activation of CoMoCoSEE Troika is strongly encouraged, in accordance with Article 15 of the CoMoCoSEE Charter, with the aim at ensuring continuity and institutional memory, and at facilitating the hand-over of responsibilities among rotating Presidencies. To this end, the CoMoCoSEE Member States welcome the support provided by UNESCO, through the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, in providing in terms of technical assistance to the CoMoCoSEE Troika and, activation and regular update of the CoMoCoSEE official website, based on modalities defined in agreement with the CoMoCoSEE Committee of Officials.