

CULTURAL HERITAGE:

A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SHARED FUTURE

International Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture in South-East Europe

Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), 19 July 2004

ACTION PLAN

for the Implementation of the Mostar Declaration

The shared commitments and guiding principles of the “Mostar Declaration” are translated in this Action Plan into concrete action lines, aimed at advancing the process of development and stabilization in South-Eastern Europe by promoting the preservation and enhancement of regional cultural heritage, and by fostering regional cooperation in the same field.

By approving the present Action Plan, the participants of the Conference will thus take the necessary steps towards the implementation of the Mostar Declaration principles and engage themselves in translating into practice the objectives and activities stated below.

I. Stakeholders

While undertaking the lines of action indicated in this Action Plan, the undersigning Governments shall take into due consideration the important role of all other stakeholders involved in the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage. In particular, alongside the role of **Governments** in developing and implementing sustainable strategies for the preservation and good management of cultural heritage, the involvement of the following actors is to be ensured:

- The **private sector**, considered not only as a market player, but also as a crucial actor in a wider sustainable development context;
- The **civil society**, including the associations of artists and intellectuals, whose commitment and active involvement are of crucial importance in allowing for the potential of cultural heritage as a factor of mutual understanding to be put to best use;
- **International and regional institutions/organisations**, which have a key role in integrating cultural heritage in the regional stabilisation and development process, and in making available the necessary resources for the definition and implementation of related initiatives.

II. Objectives

The **general objective** of the present Action Plan is to contribute to the political stability and the social and economic development in South-East Europe by enhancing regional co-operation in the field of culture and cultural heritage.

Specific objectives are:

- A.** Facilitating the integration of South-East European countries into wider European structures by raising their international co-operation standards in cultural affairs.
- B.** Reaffirming the role of cultural heritage and cultural diversity as agents of mutual understanding, and promoting concrete initiatives in order to put such potential to best use.
- C.** Supporting the definition and implementation of strategies aimed at fully tapping the potential of cultural heritage as a factor of economic development.
- D.** Contributing to duly highlight cultural affairs within the political agenda of South-East European countries.
- E.** Enhancing bilateral and international co-operation on cultural heritage within regional organisations and co-operation initiatives.
- F.** Contributing to the development of cultural tourism, also with a view to its integration with other forms of tourism and tourist programmes.

III. Action Lines

In order to achieve the objectives of this Action Plan, taking into account different circumstances and in accordance with internal priorities of each Country, the participating Countries commit themselves to the following set of actions:

Objective A: Facilitating the integration of South-East European countries into wider European structures through raising their international co-operation standards on cultural affairs.

Action lines:

1. Increasing the exchange of knowledge and "good practices" related to preservation, restoration and management of cultural heritage, supporting the activation of new bilateral and regional partnerships.
2. Strengthening the coordination between state and local institutions in charge of the management of cultural heritage, e.g. through the establishment of a permanent network of experts and centres of excellence in the various domains of conservation, management and promotion of cultural heritage.
3. Increasing the efforts towards combating illicit traffic of cultural goods and services, and, more generally, towards a systematic application of international and domestic legislation dealing with the protection of cultural heritage (i.e. with training courses to upgrade the qualifications of civil servants, increased financial resources for the implementation of activities, enhanced co-operation with specialized non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations).

4. Promoting the development and up-dating of educational, academic and professional training programmes in the field of management, preservation, conservation and restoration of cultural heritage, in conformity with the European and the international standards.
5. Supporting legislative reforms and updates in the field of cultural policy and cultural and natural heritage protection and management. Proper legal frameworks shall be endorsed in accordance with the European and international standards, as well as with the imperatives of economic development.

Objective B: Reaffirming the role of cultural heritage and cultural diversity as agents of mutual understanding, and promoting concrete initiatives in order to put such potential to best use.

Action lines:

6. Informing public opinion on, and disseminating knowledge of the treasures of cultural heritage within the respective countries and in neighbouring countries - through the media, educational institutions and strategic information campaigns.
7. Facilitating networking between local, national and international non-governmental organizations aimed at developing projects for the enhancement of cultural and natural heritage.
8. Promoting the exchange of knowledge and best practices on the inclusion and participation of citizens from different cultural backgrounds in activities aiming at the preservation of cultural heritage.
9. Supporting the efforts to develop and use information and communication technologies for the preservation and management of shared cultural heritage, keeping it accessible to the public as a living part of today's culture.
10. Stimulating cultural exchange programmes and international relations at secondary and post-secondary level, with the participation of municipalities and local governments, the private sector, and specialized non-governmental organizations.

Objective C: Supporting the definition and implementation of strategies aimed at fully tapping the potential of cultural heritage as a factor of economic development.

Action lines:

11. Developing policies for supporting sustainable cultural tourism at local and country level, in close partnership with the private sector, and ensuring the allocation of adequate resources to this end.
12. Promoting regional co-operation for the definition of transnational "cultural tourist routes". This may include the realization of projects for the development of tourism infrastructures, the publication of joint editorial projects for the promotion of shared cultural heritage, the definition of trans-national museum networks, and any other cross-border co-operation initiative for the enhancement and promotion of regional cultural heritage.
13. Supporting the recovery of traditional and artisan professional skills through the establishment of vocational schools, the implementation of campaigns for the promotion of artisan production, and the development of tourism.

14. Creation of a virtual museum of regional cultural heritage, with branches in each country participating in the Mostar Declaration.

Objective D: Contributing to duly highlight cultural affairs within the political agenda of South-East European countries.

Action lines:

15. Developing country-specific strategies for the preservation and management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and ensuring the recognition and respect of cultural diversity.
16. Integrating cultural heritage preservation and management with in the framework of development policies.
17. Initiating and supporting a structured dialogue at the country and local level among all relevant stakeholders with a view to devise common strategies to enhance the preservation and management of cultural heritage, including the identification and promotion of partnerships (e.g. public-private partnerships) and the provision of adequate human and financial resources.
18. Encouraging initiatives by the local authorities and the private sector for the preservation, protection and promotion of cultural heritage, e.g. the definition of cultural heritage days, restoration/preservation awards, school competitions, summer schools at cultural sites, open-doors days at museums and cultural institutions.

Objective E: Enhancing co-operation on cultural heritage preservation and management within regional organisations and development cooperation initiatives.

Action lines:

19. Raising the priority of cultural heritage and cultural affairs in requests for international co-operation and assistance on development projects from bilateral and multilateral donors.
20. Supporting the strengthening of co-operation on cultural affairs within all regional organisations and co-operation initiatives, duly highlighting the role of cultural heritage in supporting mutual understanding and sustainable development.
21. Supporting and giving wide publicity to a new “International Art Bridge Prize” organised within the framework of the Biennale of Venice in co-operation with the UNESCO Venice Office, in recognition of outstanding creative achievements by young artists or groups of artists in South East Europe in the field of the visual arts, and to encourage their further development as artists.
22. Enhancing the role of regional and international organisation in supporting and promoting festivals, competitions and other events aimed at the promotion of arts and regional cultural heritage, with a special view to the involvement of children and the youths.

IV. Implementation

As a first tool for the implementation of the present Action Plan, a “**South-East European Cultural Heritage Trust Fund**” will be established and managed by the **UNESCO-ROSTE** (Section for Culture). The resources made available within the Trust

Fund shall be used to support the implementation of regional activities aimed at fostering cultural co-operation among South East European countries, and at enhancing cultural heritage as a factor of development and mutual understanding. Such activities shall be defined within the conceptual framework of the Mostar Declaration, and aimed at translating into practice the lines of action indicated in this Action Plan.

The Trust Fund is intended to be an international, subsidiary tool aimed at flanking and supporting the engagement that the countries participating in this Action Plan have taken upon themselves, to ensure within their state budget - taking into account different circumstances, and in accordance with internal priorities of each Country - adequate resources for cultural co-operation and cultural heritage preservation and management.

In order to ensure the immediate operability of the Trust Fund, the **Italian Government – Italian Development Co-operation** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) commits itself to donate a **voluntary contribution of Euro 800 000**, allocated to the definition and implementation of a **pilot project for the development of cultural tourism within the region**.

In particular, the pilot project will support activities aimed at improving and integrating the management of regional cultural heritage within national and trans-national tourist programmes, which will then be made available to European tourist authorities and operators, thus laying the foundations for sound international and cross-border economic co-operation.

Besides the Italian financing, the **South-East European Cultural Heritage Trust Fund** needs further contributions by other bilateral and multilateral donors in order to achieve the overall goals of the present Action Plan. In particular, the signatory Countries of the present Action Plan, together with UNESCO and the Italian Government, express the hope that other partner countries and partner organisations of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe will contribute to this initiative, and commit themselves to support a broader participation in the Trust Fund within all regional cooperation forums.

V. Follow-up and evaluation

An international performance evaluation and benchmarking - both qualitative and quantitative - should be developed to follow up the implementation of the objectives of this Action Plan. This evaluation mechanism shall be considered as one of the activities to be defined and implemented within the above-mentioned South-East European Cultural Heritage Trust Fund, under the lead and responsibility of UNESCO-ROSTE (Section for Culture).