



**CULTURAL HERITAGE:
A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SHARED FUTURE
Third Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage
in South-Eastern Europe**

Ohrid - 3 November 2006

OHRID DECLARATION

Third Joint Declaration of the Ministers Responsible for Culture
in South-Eastern Europe and Italy,
concerning the Enhancement of Cultural Heritage
for the Integration and the Sustainable Development of the Region

We, the Ministers participating in the Third Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe,

Considering this third Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe as a new opportunity to reaffirm our strong will to preserve the richness and diversity of our shared cultural legacy, and to promote it as a treasure of the entire world;

Regarding our participation in these annual Ministerial Conferences as an expression of our commitment to strengthening a spirit of peace, dialogue and mutual understanding between our countries and peoples;

Reaffirming in full the contents, objectives and activities included in the Mostar Declaration and Action Plan, and in the Venice Declaration, respectively approved by the First (Mostar – BiH, June 2004), and Second (Venice – Italy, November 2005) Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe;

Recalling the purposes and principles embodied in the Ohrid Declaration (August 2003), in the Tirana Declaration (December 2004), in the Varna Declaration (May 2005), and in the Opatija Declaration (June 2006) adopted by the Heads of State of the South-Eastern European countries within the framework of the Regional Forum on the Dialogue Among Civilisations;

Expressing great appreciation for the generous contribution by the Italian government to the Trust Fund for cultural heritage in South-eastern Europe, and encouraging the prosecution of the Italian support to the Trust Fund, as well as to the overall process of integration, dialogue and sustainable development in this region;

Commending the efforts by the Section for Culture of the UNESCO Venice Office – BRESCIA, for the positive implementation of the above-mentioned Trust Fund, as well

as BRESCCE's general commitment to the preservation and promotion of South-East European cultural heritage;

Adopt the following Declaration:

1. Ministerial conferences on cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe are greatly contributing to create a spirit of enhanced collaboration for the safeguarding and promotion of regional cultural heritage. In this regard, we praise the activities so far initiated within the different signatory countries as an important operative follow-up to Mostar and Venice conferences. At the same time, we are convinced that future efforts shall be aimed at reinforcing collaboration between the signatory countries on a broader, regional scale, in line with the spirit of dialogue and mutuality at the basis of the present initiative.
2. The same spirit of close cooperation must be recalled and respected among all countries of the region, regarding the current process of integration into common European structures. This process shall be conducive to a reinforced regional collaboration in the field of culture and cultural heritage, involving all the countries of the region on a partnership level. Indeed, we are convinced that cultural cooperation, through creating the very base for dialogue and mutual understanding, is a *sine-qua-non* in both sustaining and accelerating the processes leading to the European integration.
3. Within this framework, most positive cultural experiences and best practices originating from all countries participating in the present declaration shall be put at best use, with an aim to reinforce common efforts for the safeguarding and promotion of the cultural heritage in the region. The sharing of knowledge, skills and cultural resources, via the construction of stronger regional cooperation networks, shall be the objective underlying future activities within the present cooperation forum.

4. In this regard, we recall that training, education and communication, in particular among young people, play a fundamental role in reinforcing heritage preservation. Common efforts shall be strengthened in order to support the realisation of information services, educational programmes, and communication campaigns especially designed to increase the public knowledge about our shared cultural heritage, as well as the public demand for cultural goods and services. In fact, the enhancement of public awareness about the importance of cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, and of cultural diversity in all its forms of expression is an indispensable condition to allow for a more effective preservation of the heritage itself.
5. Accordingly, we solicit the adoption of new regional cooperation initiatives aimed at strengthening the institutional capacities, skills, and services of public communication in all the signatory countries. We also commit ourselves to explore the possibility of ensuring further resources within respective national programmes, in order to enhance the promotion of our shared cultural heritage at both national and international level, commencing with the sites inscribed in the World Heritage List, and the masterpieces inscribed in the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, in our countries.
6. While welcoming the recent entry into force of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (26 April 2006), we firmly encourage the adoption of all relevant UNESCO legal instruments by all countries participating in the present declaration, with special reference to the to the above-mentioned Convention as well as to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and to the Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. At the same time, efforts must be stepped up to ensure effective application and implementation of these instruments, as well as to define proper tools for their periodical updating and flexible application.

7. With a view to further reinforcing the symbiotic relation between the preservation of the heritage and its promotion as a tool for a sustainable development, we commit ourselves to support reciprocal efforts aimed at the implementation of the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, To this end, we encourage the strengthening of relevant capacity building activities, with special attention to the definition of effective sites' management plans.

8. Given the positive results so far achieved by the cooperation process initiated with the previous Ministerial Conferences on cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe, re-launched with this Ohrid conference, we support its continuation in form of yearly ministerial conferences, to be held on a rotation basis in all the countries participating in this declaration. Hence, we express appreciation for the proposal by the Government of Croatia to hold the next ministerial conference on cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe, and accept its invitation to participate.

Signatures



H.E. Mr. Ilirjan Bekiri
Minister of Culture



H.E. Mr. Bujar Leskaj
Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth
and Sports



H.E. Mr. Safet Halilović
Minister of Civil Affairs



H.E. Mr. Stefan Danailov
Minister of Culture



H.E. Mr. Božo Biskupić
Minister of Culture



H.E. Mr. Francesco Rutelli
Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities



H.E. Mr. Artur Cozma
Minister of Culture and Tourism



H.E. Mrs. Vesna Kilibarda
Minister of Culture



H.E. Mr. Adrian Iorgulescu
Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs



^{3a}
H.E. Mr. Dragan Kojadinović
Minister of Culture