



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

With the support of
Venice Office



Italian Development
Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

CULTURAL HERITAGE

A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SHARED FUTURE

.....
Activities 2005-2010



Contents:

Foreword by Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO	4
Foreword by Elisabetta Belloni, Director General for Development Cooperation Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	5
Introduction	7
Activities	
Archaeological Map of Albania	9
Traditional Arts and Craft in Bosnia and Herzegovina	11
Promotion of Thracian Archaeological Heritage	13
Support to the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology	15
Treasures of the Macedonian Cultural Heritage.	17
Capacity Building for the National Agency for Inspection and Restoration of Monuments (Moldova)	19
Guide-book on the Museums of Montenegro.	21
Promotion of sustainable cultural tourism in Transylvania	23
Safeguarding and promotion of medieval fortresses along the Danube in Serbia.	25
Rehabilitation of Museums on World War II	27
Support to the Krusevo Ethno Town festival	29
Cetinje Management Plan.	31
Communication of Heritage	33
Support to the preparation of multinational candidature file for inscription of “Stecci” on the World Heritage List	35
Annexes	
Mostar Declaration (2004)	37
Mostar Action Plan (2004)	41
Venice Declaration (2005)	47
Ohrid Declaration (2006)	53
Zadar Declaration (2007)	57
Bucharest Declaration (2008)	61
Sofia Recommendations (2009)	67
Cetinje Declaration (2010)	73
Cetinje Action Plan (2010)	77

Foreword by Irina Bokova

Director-General of UNESCO

Six years on, the rebuilding of the 16th century Old Bridge in Mostar remains a symbol of what co-operation through culture can achieve. The annual Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe, first held in Mostar in 2004, and subsequently in Venice, Ohrid, Zadar and Bucharest has grown into one of the region's most successful political initiatives to foster such co-operation throughout the region.

As a result of the Action Plan adopted in 2004, and thanks to the generous support of the Italian Trust-Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe, many projects to safeguard important cultural heritage and activities aimed at building the capacity of cultural institutions have been implemented in co-operation with UNESCO's Office in Venice. This brochure offers an overview of what has been achieved so far.

As well as preserving jewels of the region's cultural heritage, these projects have helped to foster all-important dialogue, peace and social cohesion. Ministers have pledged to ensure that integrating culture in national and regional development policies will continue to be placed high on the political agenda.

Greater political stability and economic progress, along with the reconstruction of cultural networks and infrastructures, and improved capacity in cultural management, have given rise to a new set of conditions that must be taken into account in developing new strategic approaches.

Drawing on the recommendations of the International Working Group adopted in Sofia on 20 March 2009, this Sixth Ministerial Conference in Cetinje, hosted by the Government of Montenegro, offers an opportunity to revisit the Mostar Action Plan. I am confident that the Conference will lay the foundations for renewed political commitments and long-term initiatives for South-East Europe.

Together with all Governments and partners concerned, UNESCO stands ready to begin a new chapter of this cooperation, as well as to help raise greater international awareness of the region's cultural legacy.

Irina Bokova



Foreword by Elisabetta Belloni

Director General for Development Cooperation
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Italy's commitment in the field of preservation of cultural heritage is significant and ambitious. We are pleased to offer our consolidated expertise to countries where bilateral or multilateral initiatives can lead to the defence of identity, history and culture of peoples, to the promotion of intercultural dialogue and democracy and to the increase of economic and social development.

This is the reason why since the first Ministerial Conference, held in Mostar in 2004, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has played a leading role in the promotion of the regional initiative "Cultural Heritage. A bridge towards a shared Future".

The Mostar Conference was convened by the Government of Italy and the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of UNESCO and of the World Bank in the highly symbolic framework of the celebrations for the official opening of the reconstructed Old Bridge of Mostar and it resulted in the enhancement of the promotion of South-East Europe cultural heritage as shared resource for dialogue and sustainable development.

Italy hosted a second Conference in Venice, in 2005, and in order to further enhance the follow-up to the Ministerial Conferences and to ensure the continuity of the process, the Italian Development Cooperation disbursed a first contribution in 2005, which made it possible to establish the "Italian Trust-Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe". In consideration of the excellent results achieved thanks to this contribution, we re-financed the project in 2007. Thanks to this second contribution, the project could be extended through June 2010.

The importance of the results achieved can be better understood insofar as the actions implemented under the project are considered not as an activity in itself but as part of more wide-ranging and articulate set of initiatives with the common goal not only of strengthening the protection, management and promotion of cultural heritage in South-East Europe but also of promoting this rich heritage as a tool for dialogue and sustainable economic and social development.

Elisabetta Belloni





Cultural Heritage: a Bridge towards a Shared Future

In July 2004, within the framework of the inauguration of the reconstructed Old Bridge of Mostar, the Italian government and UNESCO promoted the organisation of a first Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe on the topic **“Cultural Heritage – a Bridge towards a Shared Future”**.

The conference – concluded by the approval of a joint Declaration and Action Plan on the strengthening of regional cooperation for the enhancement of the shared cultural heritage as a tool for dialogue and sustainable development – led to the establishment of a special **“Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe”**, intended to support concrete activities for the achievement of the objectives defined by the Conference.

The Fund was established in 2005, managed by the Culture Section of the UNESCO Venice Office and financed by the Italian Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Cooperazione Italiana) with two voluntary contributions of € 800,000 each, respectively made available in 2005 and 2007.

Since 2005, the Trust Fund enabled the successful implementation of pilot activities in all the partner countries participating in the Mostar ministerial conference (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia). As part of the sub-regional project “Cultural Heritage – a Bridge towards a Shared Future”, the activities were developed to protect and promote remarkable aspects of the region’s shared cultural heritage, and to strengthen the capacities of relevant cultural and scientific institutions. All activities were defined and implemented in close collaboration with the Ministries of Culture of the related partner countries, who also contributed to their co-financing as a further evidence of the virtuous cooperation generated by the project.

Activities developed under the Trust Fund also served to increase public and political awareness on the importance of effectively safeguarding and better managing all forms of cultural heritage. .

With the support of the Trust Fund, the Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe were institutionalized into yearly conferences (Venice in 2005, Ohrid in 2006, Zadar in 2007, Bucharest in 2008, and Cetinje in 2010), thus making them one of the main cooperation frameworks for the promotion of cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe as a shared resource for dialogue and sustainable development.

CARTE ARCHÉOLOGIQUE DE L'ALBANIE

sous la direction de
Pierre Cabanes

présentée par
Muzafer Korkuti
Apollon Baçe
Neritan Ceka



LIBRARY Office in Western



Archaeological map of Albania



Archaeological Map of Albania

Albania is home to a very rich and diverse archaeological heritage, ranging from prehistoric sites to archaeological treasures, such as Apollonia. Facilitating wider knowledge of this heritage, and raising awareness on the importance of its safeguarding were the objectives underlying the activity realized in Albania. This led to the preparation and publishing of the first archaeological map of the country.



| Map of antique sites in Albania

Interventions started with the realization of an extensive field research to locate, assess and describe Albanian archaeological sites from the periods of prehistory and antiquity, covering the entire country's territory. The work was carried out by a team of senior Albanian archaeologists, coordinated by an international expert.

The research's final output was the publication of the "Archaeological Map of Albania", composed of over 300 pages offering a unique overall presentation of Albanian archaeological sites with detailed descriptions, illustrations, information on geographical locations, and bibliographic notes.



The Map is the first complete reference book on Albanian archaeology, intended for the use of experts, students and researchers, as well as of the broader public interested in discovering this remarkable cultural heritage.

Project activities in Albania also included support to the Centre for Restoration of Monuments in Tirana, in particular in the area of training courses for restorers and curators. The Institute was established in December 2007 thanks to another project supported by the Italian government – Italian Development Cooperation, and managed by the UNESCO Venice Office.

| Archaeological site of Apollonia



| "Traditional arts and crafts in Bosnia and Herzegovina" Treated copper plate illustrating a procession of young women through a vineyard.



Traditional Arts and Crafts in Bosnia and Herzegovina

“Traditional Arts and Craft in Bosnia and Herzegovina” is the first photographic book ever dedicated to the richness and diversity of traditional Bosnian craftsmanship.

Published in 2005, the work offers an overview of most significant, historical and valuable arts and crafts still present in the country, including over 170 colour photographs accompanied by rich explanatory texts on the characteristics and historical background of each single production, and interviews of craftsmen. The work is structured in 7 chapters dedicated to specific productions

(fabrics, leather, metal, wood, pottery, stone carving, religious art), including preface and an introduction.

The intent of the book is to present a particularly rich and distinctive branch of the country's cultural heritage, raising awareness on its value and specificity as well as on its endangered transmission to future generations.

While paying tribute to the invaluable richness of Bosnian traditional craftsmanship, the book demonstrates how local arts and crafts are based on a unique mix of cultural influences and sources of inspiration, and emphasizes the necessity to promote cultural diversity as a key resource for mutual understanding, dialogue, and sustainable development.



Silver filigree bracelets by Mahir Hadžibegić, Sarajevo



A Zene za Zene association weaver working on a carpet on vertical loom



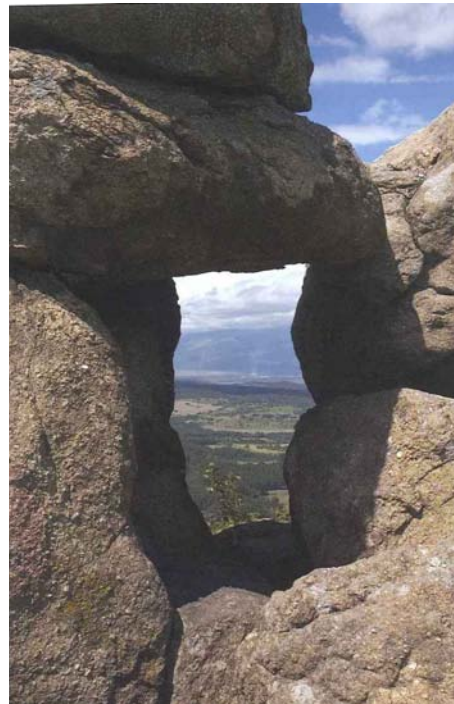
Mustafa Šoše with a piece of embroidery showing the old bridge of Mostar



Mrs. Božica, dressed in her traditional costume, is using two metal brushes to card.



| The Thracian Cosmos: the Sacred Realm of Kings
Exhibition Poster



| Kokino observatory, visual aperture of the trilith



| Gold kylix with floral decoration

| Landscape near the Village of Sheynovo



Promotion of the Thracian Archaeological Heritage (Bulgaria)

Project activities in Bulgaria focused on the promotion of this country's archeological heritage related to the Thracian civilization, and on supporting cross-border research activities. Activities were realized in collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO and the Institute of Thracology.



Gold wreath – one of the insignia of royal power in Thrace

The first set of interventions, carried out in 2006, concentrated on the preparation and arrangement of the exhibition “Thracian Cosmos: the sacred Realm of Kings”, aimed at presenting the most important findings from archaeological excavations in the so-called Valley of the Thracian Kings. The activity included the realisation of related promotional materials (multimedia CD-ROM and illustrated catalogue of the exhibition).

Opened in November 2006 at the National Museum of Kazanlak, Bulgaria, as a temporary show, the exhibition attracted a great number of visitors and was then transformed into a permanent one.

The second intervention aimed at supporting the promotion and popularisation of the sacred Thracian sites along the river Tundja, in Bulgaria, and in cross-border areas with Turkey. Activities included the realisation of a photographic exhibition inaugurated on 17 July 2010 at the Museum of Kabilè, ancient capital of the Thracian kings, and the realisation of a web-portal. Final aim of the initiative is to contribute to the creation of a cultural tourism corridor about the Thracian sites along the river Tundja, which may serve as a model for the development of similar cultural routes in Bulgaria and in the neighboring countries.



Gold death mask



| Regional Seminar on Underwater Cultural Heritage



Regional Seminar on Underwater Cultural Heritage |



| ICUA: the laboratories



ICUA: the laboratories |



Support to the International Centre on Underwater Archaeology (Zadar, Croatia)

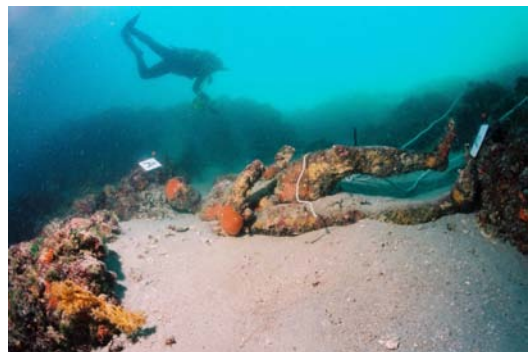
The International Centre for Underwater Archaeology (ICUA) in Zadar, established in 2007 and placed as a Category 2 Center under the auspices of UNESCO since 2009, is an independent institution funded by the Republic of Croatia. Its purpose is to carry out educational activities in the field of exploration, conservation and restoration of underwater cultural heritage. As a regional centre of excellence, the ICUA also bears a significant international dimension with respect to training activities and the dissemination of knowledge and research, particularly in South-Eastern Europe and the wider Mediterranean region.

With the aim of further developing the capacities of the ICUA, the project contributed to:

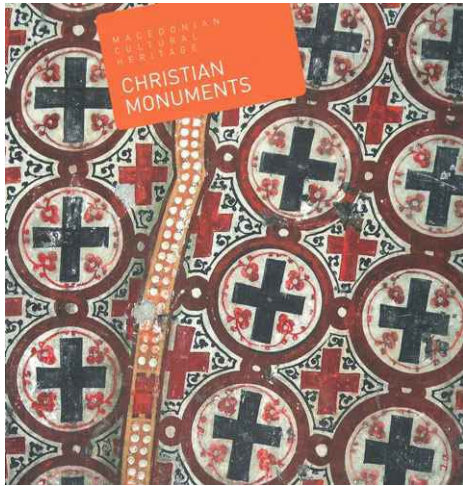
- Supporting ICUA's operational capacities, (Office of the Director and supporting staff, library, laboratories, etc);
- Supporting the organization of an international seminar on underwater cultural heritage (Zadar, 1-4 October 2009). The seminar served to promote the sharing of good practices on the protection, management, and promotion of underwater cultural heritage, with special emphasis on the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001). The event enabled the participation of experts representing 16 countries from the SEE region and beyond, and contributed to promoting ICUA as an excellence centre for regional cooperation on underwater cultural heritage



© Croatian Conservation Institute



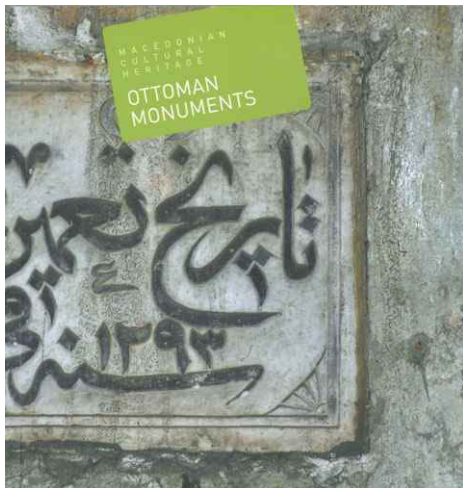
© Croatian Conservation Institute- The island of Vele Orjule



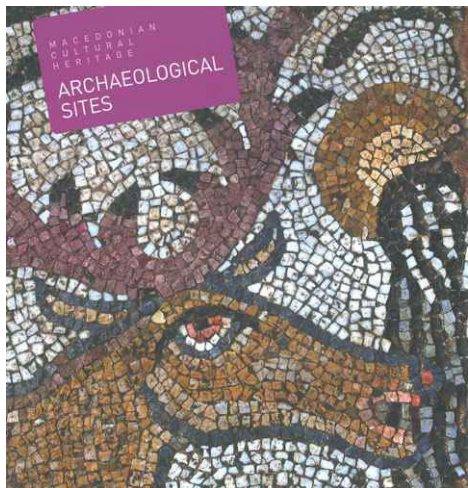
| Macedonian Cultural Heritage "Christian Monuments"



| Macedonian Cultural Heritage "Ohrid World Heritage Site"



| Macedonian Cultural Heritage – Ottoman Monuments



| Macedonian Cultural Heritage – Archaeological Sites



Treasures of the Macedonian Cultural Heritage

Promoting the richness and diversity of the Macedonian cultural heritage was the objective underlying the activity carried out in partnership with the Macedonian Ministry of Culture, leading to the preparation and publishing of 4 monographic volumes respectively dedicated to:

- Archaeological Sites
- Christian Monuments
- Ottoman Monuments
- Ohrid World Heritage Site



| Monastery at Zrze: Holy Transfiguration

Authors of the volumes are distinguished archaeologists, art historians, and photographers. The books were prepared under the coordination of the Ministry of Culture and published in two language versions, Macedonian and English.

As mentioned by the Macedonian Minister of Culture during the official presentation of the books, on 12 November 2009, “these publications, issued for the first time in such type and volume, represent an invaluable testimony of the continuity and diversity of the country’s material and spiritual culture. This project is a true challenge for all those who want to get information about the country-cradle of European civilization, with 5,160 archaeological sites, 1,156 churches and monasteries, 879 buildings of old town architecture, 112 mosques and many others”.



| Archaeological site of Stobi



| Soroca Fortress



| Donici village. The 19th century manor house



| Ciutesti Village. St Archangel church



| Micauti village. 19th century local cemetery gate



Support to the National Agency for Inspection and Restoration of Monuments (Moldova)

The development of institutional and professional capacities to ensure the effective safeguarding of cultural heritage, in compliance with relevant European and international standards, represents one of the main challenges identified by the Ministry of Culture of Moldova for the achievement of its mission, and one of its priorities for international cooperation.

In accordance with this underlying objective, a project was launched in 2010 with the Ministry of Culture of Moldova to enhance the capacities of the recently established Agency for the Inspection and Restoration of Monuments, and to support its operational activities. Interventions will include in particular:

- Support to the works for the restoration of the historical building identified as new seat of the Agency, and for the rehabilitation of the premises as office spaces (related activities started in March 2010 and their conclusion is foreseen by the end of the year);
- Support to the capacity-building of the Agency's staff, by means of specific training activities defined and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry; actions will also draw on the experiences and good practices from other Member States in SEE, in order to reinforce regional cooperation.



Capriana Monastery |



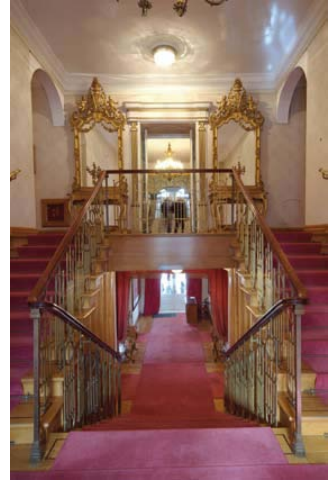
Guide-book of the Museums of Montenegro

The „Guide-book of the Museums of Montenegro“ was published in 2007 with the aim of promoting to a wide audience, professionals as well as general public, Montenegrin museum collections, and to include the museums within a renewed cultural–touristic offer in Montenegro..

The museums and sites presented in this Guide showcase the centuries-old co-existence and interaction of different cultural influences, from the East and the West, crossing paths within the territory of Montenegro and thus constituting an invaluable feature not only of the Montenegrin historical legacy, but also of the South-East European cultural heritage.

The book was published in three languages: Montenegrin, English and Italian, initially printed in 5000 copies each. It is composed of 224 pages, comprising pictures and useful information for the visitors. A second edition was published in 2010.

The Guide was distributed to all Montenegrin museums and cultural institutions, as well as to tourist centres and the media. The selling of the books through Museums’ bookshops and ticket counters also contributed to offer financial support to Museums in Montenegro.



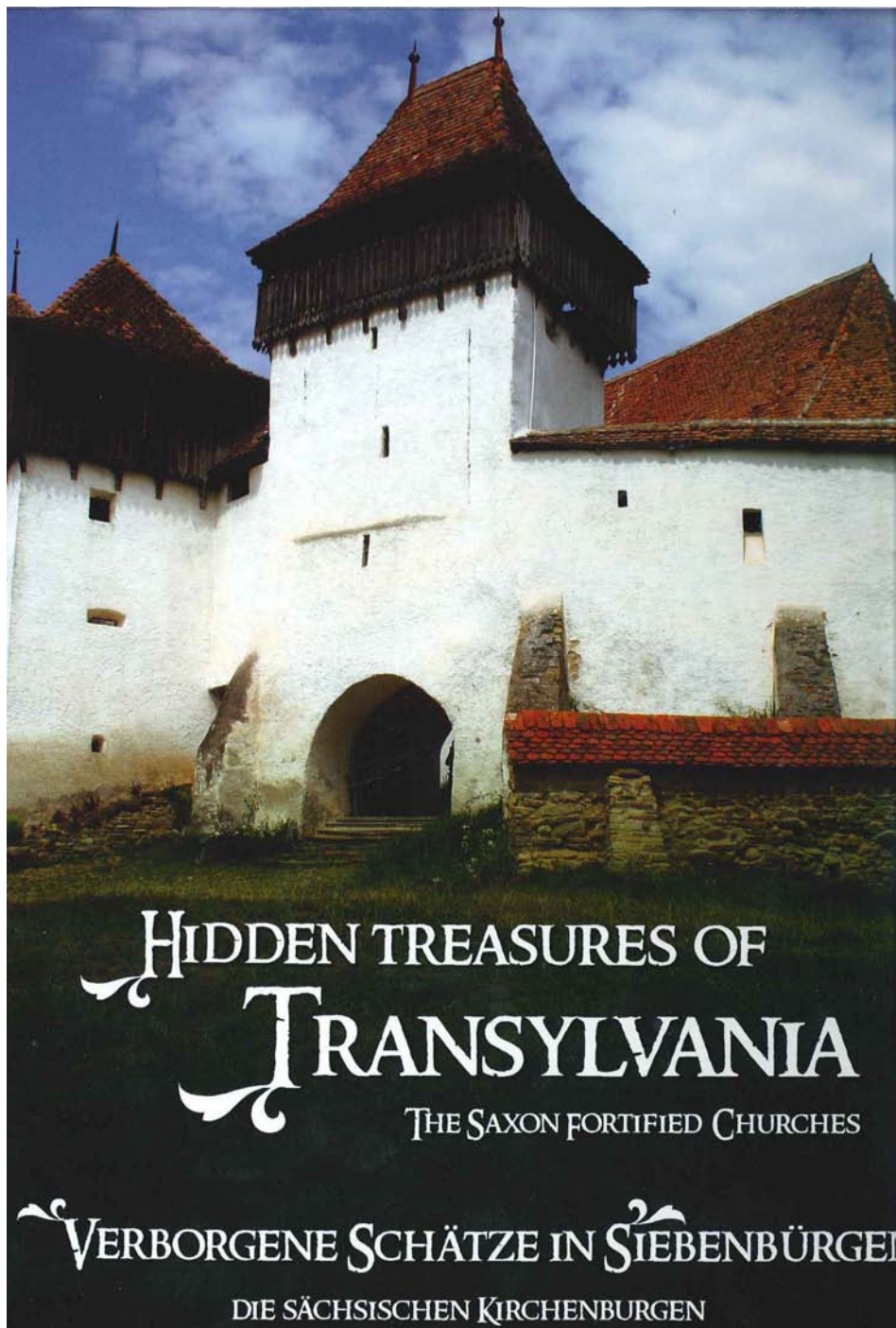
Museum of King Nicola



Historic Museum of Montenegro
Oktoih (Octoechoes) from the printing house of Vuković Podgoričanin
(early 16th c.) and manuscript Gospel (mid-17th c.)



Cetinje Monastery



HIDDEN TREASURES OF
T R A N S Y L V A N I A
THE SAXON FORTIFIED CHURCHES

VERBORGENE SCHÄTZE IN SIEBENBÜRGEN
DIE SÄCHSISCHEN KIRCHENBURGEN



Promotion of sustainable cultural tourism in Transylvania (Romania)

The project's activity in Romania, defined in agreement with the Ministry of Culture and implemented by "Mioritics Association", focused on the region of Transylvania, characterized by a particularly rich and diverse cultural heritage and counting 2 inscriptions on the World Heritage List. The activity intended to establish a pilot model for the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage and diversity targeting the counties of Brasov, Mures and Sibiu, focusing on:

- Education and awareness raising
 - Organisation of educational activities on the knowledge and protection of local cultural heritage, involving 9 schools from the target area with lectures, field excursions, dance and music classes, drawing contests, etc.
 - Organisation of 4 workshops on cultural heritage as a tool for local development, gathering different stakeholders from the concerned town and villages in order to discuss about best strategies for preserving and promoting local cultural heritage.
- Promotion of sustainable and responsible cultural tourism
 - Creation of a dedicated website on the villages with fortified churches (www.fortified-churches.com) in 4 language versions;
 - Establishment of four **Cultural Heritage Info Centres** (Sibiu 2007, Sighisoara 2007, Rasnov 2009, Altana 2010). The centres provide tourists with useful information on main features of local cultural heritage, while putting at their disposal a variety of tools (services, printed materials, guided tours, etc) for an easier and responsible enjoyment of local cultural heritage. The centres registered over 90.000 visitors in the period 2007-2009.
 - Creation of printed information and promotional materials on local cultural heritage (brochures, maps, leaflets, photographic books, etc). Nine different tools were created, for a total of over 85.000 copies printed so far. The materials were distributed through the Info Centres and on the occasion of events and tourism fairs.
- Organisation of about 30 cultural events (concerts, theatre plays, performances, traditional cuisine, photographic raids etc), during the period 2007-2009 in the concerned villages and towns.

Biertan |





| View of Kalemegdan, the Belgrade Fortress



| Kalemegdan, southern front with the Clock Tower



| Smederevo Fortress, entrance gate



Safeguarding and promotion of medieval fortresses along the Danube in Serbia

The medieval fortresses along the Danube in Serbia represent a distinctive feature of the Serbian cultural and historical heritage, whose safeguarding and promotion can offer a key-resource in fostering sustainable development in the concerned territories.

Under this assumption, the present activity – implemented and co-financed by the Serbian Ministry of Culture – aims at developing capacities of relevant stakeholders in the management, networking and promotion of the sites, as well in the development of a cultural itinerary to be possibly extended at cross-border and international levels.



Fortress in Bac, 14th century, in its time one of the biggest Medieval fortifications in Pannonia

In particular, the activity includes the following components:

- Preparation and realization of an open-air travelling exhibition on the Fortresses on the Danube, to be displayed in the involved towns and municipalities;
- Creation of a web portal dedicated to the fortresses, intended as an interactive instrument offering high-quality information on the fortresses and related cultural activities;
- Preparation and organisation of 7 workshops, hosted by each local community included in the itinerary. The workshops are intended to gather all relevant stakeholders in order to discuss and share good practices about possibilities for revitalisation and contemporary use of the fortresses, cooperation, financing opportunities, and management of cultural resources.
- Preparation and organisation of a final conference, aimed at launching a network of partners for the promotion and safeguarding of the Danube fortresses, and supporting local sustainable development. The meeting shall also aim at producing a

document presenting a common approach for the management of the fortresses, including guidelines for the definition of joint programming in the sustainable use of cultural resources



Medieval fortified town of Golubac, 14th century, marks the entrance to the Iron Gate gorge and Djerdap National Park



| Museum "Sjeverna Hercegovina" in Jablanica



Rehabilitation of museums on World War II in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Second World War represents a crucial period in the recent history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the memory of which is shared by all cultural groups and nationalities composing the country.

With the objective of preserving monuments related to this memory, a project was launched in 2009 in collaboration with the State Ministry of Civil Affairs, for the rehabilitation of and exhibitions in 3 different museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Museum "Sjeverna Hercegovina" in Jablanica; National Park Kozara-Museum Kozara; Memorial Complex "25 May" in Drvar), dedicated to episodes of the resistance movement and the liberation war during WWII.

Until the last decade of the previous century, the 3 museums were amongst the most visited cultural and historical sites of the country. The damages caused during the period 1992 - 1995, followed by a period of neglect and coupled by the interruption of internal and external tourism flows, put the conservation of these sites at risk and marked a sharp decrease in the number of visitors to the 3 museums, which however still have a great economic and touristic potential. The project therefore allowed for a shared reflection on Bosnia and Herzegovina's collective identity, while at the same time reinforcing the capacity of museums to foster sustainable local development.



| Kozara Museum



| Kozara Museum



| Traditional costumes from Krusevo



| Traditional costumes from Krusevo



| Traditional costumes from Krusevo



| Traditional costumes from Krusevo



Support to the Krusevo Ethno-Town festival

The old city of Krusevo plays a central role in the Macedonian history, and the 1903 “Ilinden uprising” against the Ottoman occupation also marked a significant milestone in the history of the entire region.

With the aim of fostering the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in Krusevo, both tangible and intangible, the project supported different activities within the framework of the Krusevo Ethno-Town festival, in collaboration with the Macedonian Ministry of Culture. The festival, firstly organised in 2009, represents one of the main cultural and social events in the city, as well as a strategic initiative for the development of sustainable cultural tourism.



In particular, the project’s activities included:

- Training and capacity-building actions for local stakeholders on the design, production and commercialisation of traditional arts and crafts (traditional costumes, embroideries, wool garments, fretwork, wood carving, etc);
- Training courses for local people on traditional music and dances;
- Production of a website and printed promotional materials on the festival;
- Support to the restoration of registered monuments and buildings (in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Krusevo).



The interventions were designed to involve all local cultural groups with a gender-based approach, aimed at encouraging the active involvement of women and enhancing their role in local cultural and economic processes.

The interventions were designed to involve all local cultural groups with a gender-based approach, aimed at encouraging the active involvement of women and enhancing their role in local cultural and economic processes.



Venice Office
Regional Bureau for Science
and Culture in Europe (BRESCIE)



GOVERNMENT OF MONTENEGRO
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND MEDIA



CETINJE HISTORICAL CORE MANAGEMENT PLAN



PODGORICA
APRIL, 2009



Cetinje Management Plan

Cetinje, the old royal capital of Montenegro, together with its surrounding area, is considered as the cradle of Montenegrin culture, crossroad of the country's history, and home to some of the most valuable examples of Montenegrin cultural heritage. With the objective of ensuring a better and more effective safeguarding, protection, and promotion of this heritage, the activity intended to support the Ministry of Culture, Sports



| Cetinje Monastery

and Media of Montenegro for the preparation of the "Cetinje Management Plan". The document, officially presented in June 2009 during the Forum of South-East European Heads of State held in Cetinje, was defined through a participatory approach ensuring the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, institutional as well as from the civil society, at both national and local levels. Preparatory activities included the gathering and evaluation of data from strategic national documents, as well as ad-hoc analysis, consultations, studies and surveys. The Plan was also prepared in compliance with relevant international standards, with special reference to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972 and to the related UNESCO guidelines for the management of cultural heritage sites.

After its approval by the Government, the Plan has become a legally binding document, implying that all future planning instruments for the area of Cetinje, as well as other relevant legal acts impacting on the local natural and cultural heritage are to be in full compliance with the recommendations, guidelines, and contents of the Plan. On

the basis of this Management Plan, important developmental programs have started to be implemented, as well as the preparation of the candidature of Cetinje for inscription on the World Heritage List.



| Cetinje – View of old town

Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe - A Bridge towards a shared future




CULTURAL HERITAGE A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SHARED FUTURE

Print Sitemap

News

Communication of Heritage: conclusion of training activities

The final workshop in Milan offered the chance to assess the activity's results, to discuss about the lessons learned, and to start the definition of possible operational follow-ups.

On 29 February 2009 participants in the course "Communication of Heritage" met in Milan, within the premises of IULM University, for the final workshop of the training programme.



The workshop was intended to allow a common discussion between organisers, trainers and trainees about the course's proceedings and results. As such, the meeting offered the chance to draw a first balance of the activity, highlighting good practices as well as critical aspects to be possibly tackled in the development of future trainings.

In particular, participants confirmed their interest and appreciation for the initiative, which was considered a very useful breakthrough to the subject. A common wish was also voiced for a continuation of the training, accompanied by several suggestions for possible follow-up actions.



In conclusion of the workshop, the trainees were awarded a certificate of attendance by Marie-Paule Roudil, Head of Culture Section at UNESCO Venice Office; Prof. Stefano Rolando, Secretary General of IULM Foundation; and Prof. Michele Trimarchi, scientific coordinator of the course.

HOME PAGE
Introduction
Partners
Ministerial Conferences
Activities
SEE cultural heritage
Documents and publications
Contacts
Links
Top

| "www.see-heritage.org"



| Communication of Heritage:
Closing Seminar in Milan



Communication of Heritage

Authorities responsible for the safeguarding of cultural heritage must work nowadays with a complex and ever-growing network of partners and stakeholders – including different sectors of the civil society, institutions, universities, traditional and new media, sponsors, etc. –, thus having the need to establish specific processes, tools and languages for communicating with their counterparts.

With this assumption, a pilot training course was delivered in 2007-2008 for the Ministries of Culture of SEE countries, with the objective of enhancing skills and knowledge of participants on purposes, theories and techniques of public communication, with special focus on the communication of cultural heritage.

The course was carried out under the scientific supervision of the School of Communication of IULM University in Milan. Training activities had an overall duration of 3 months (October – December 2007), provided through e-learning teaching modules and interactive sessions.

Contents, structure and modalities of the course were presented during a 2-day start-up workshop organised in Ludbreg (Croatia), at the Croatian Conservation Centre, on 24-25 September 2007. A final workshop for the presentation of results was held in Milan, at IULM University, in February 2008.

Participants in the course were designated experts from the Ministries of Culture of Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia.



| Communication of Heritage, Ludbreg (Croatia)





Support to the preparation of a multinational candidature file for the inscription of “Stecci” on the World Heritage List

Beyond the realisation of country-based activities, the project greatly contributed to the reinforcement of regional cooperation for the enhancement of South-Eastern European cultural heritage as a shared legacy. One of the most significant initiatives in this sense is the presentation of a joint candidature for the inscription of the medieval tombstones known as “Stecci” on the World Heritage List.

Known for their beautiful reliefs, complete with decorative symbols and writing, the Stecci are medieval gravestones dating from the 12th century. About 80,000 such tombstones have been discovered so far in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, forming a unique and shared cultural heritage.

In particular, the project supported the relevant institutions in the 4 concerned countries in order to prepare the candidature files, and to realise interventions for the safeguarding, conservation and restoration of the stones.

The activity is a direct follow-up to discussions engaged between the concerned Member States during the annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe. It represents the first initiative for the preparation of a multinational candidature for the World Heritage List between these countries, thus offering further evidence of the concrete impact of the Ministerial Conferences on the improvement of regional and cross-border cultural cooperation in the region.



| Radimlja Necropolis, in Stolac Bosnia and Herzegovina





Mostar Declaration

**Joint declaration of the Ministers responsible for culture in
South-East Europe and Italy
concerning the enhancement of cultural heritage
for the stabilisation and the sustainable development of the region**

Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), 19 July 2004

We, the Ministers in charge of cultural affairs of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia (the Former Yugoslav Republic of), Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and the Minister of cultural heritage of Italy,

Recalling the international conventions, declarations and recommendations dealing with the protection of cultural and natural heritage, including the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict adopted at The Hague and the two Protocols thereto, the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, the 1985 Convention for the Protection of Architectural Heritage of Europe, the 1992 (revised) European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, the 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2003 Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Mindful of the relevant Resolutions adopted by the United Nations, UNESCO and the Council of Europe concerning the protection of cultural heritage and cultural diversity,

Recalling the Message from Ohrid adopted by the participants of the Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations (August 2003), in which the Heads of State of South-East European countries stated "The challenge [...] lies in associating cultural heritage with development policies and demonstrating how much this powerful

symbol of a people's identity can become a unifying factor for national and regional reconciliation. This may well serve as a foundation for a shared future.”;

Expressing our commitment to enhancing co-operation on cultural affairs within the major regional organisations and cooperation initiatives, with specific attention to the Ionian Adriatic Initiative (IAI), the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEEC),

Acknowledging that regional co-operation based on mutual trust promotes political stability and economic development, and that cultural co-operation provides both added dynamism and sustainability to that process,

Emphasizing that the respect for cultural heritage and cultural diversity is a non-negotiable principle that is essential for dialogue and human advancement,

Recognizing that tolerance and respect for cultural pluralism are indispensable in the era of globalisation,

Expressing our conviction about the role of culture in optimising the integration processes and our determination to enhance bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the field of culture among countries of the region and with others, and to support international co-operation initiatives in this field from the private sector and the civil society,

Considering that the opening of the Old Bridge of Mostar is a powerful and exemplary signal that symbolizes the ending of ethnic prejudice and highlights the normalisation of inter-community relations,

Adopt the following Declaration:

1. Cultural heritage in South-East Europe represents an invaluable legacy accumulated over several millennia in an area that is often referred to as the cradle of European culture and civilization. The extraordinary diversity and richness of South-East European cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, reflecting successive periods and styles of artistic creation, requires protection from destruction and neglect as a matter of urgency.
2. Governments, local authorities and all members of society have a duty to refrain from deliberate destruction of cultural heritage and to take appropriate measures for its protection and conservation, thus ensuring that it is handed on intact to future generations.
3. Protection of cultural heritage and the defence of the diversity of cultures are ethical imperatives inseparable from respect for human dignity. They deserve



unconditional support especially from public authorities as well as from civil society.

4. Concerted efforts are to be made for the perception of South-East Europe as a region of tolerance, reconciliation and cultural inter-community dialogue. The positive developments in the region must be underscored by concrete and visible activities targeting the general public and aimed at increasing the knowledge and mutual respect of the regional cultural heritage and its promotion in Europe and all over the world.
5. The process of updating legislation in the field of cultural policy and cultural and natural heritage protection and management will be enhanced. Thus legal frameworks will be provided that are compatible with common European standards and international standards, but also with the goal of economic development.
6. As the most important international conventions dealing with cultural heritage protection have been largely ratified in all countries of South-East Europe, efforts must be stepped up to ensure effective application and implementation of these instruments, as well as to define effective tools for their periodical actualisation and flexible application.
7. Creating conditions conducive to harmonious development of spiritual and material well-being requires increased attention to the manifold elements that make up the complex cultural heritage in South-East Europe, such as cultural monuments and sites, historic cities, natural sacred sites, cultural landscapes, the underwater heritage, movable cultural heritage, museums, traditional arts and crafts, archives and documentary heritage, cinematographic heritage, oral traditions, languages, festive events, rites, music, the performing arts, literature and culinary traditions. Safeguarding that heritage requires the provision of adequate human and financial resources.
8. Whereas the cultural component of development has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years, the role of cultural heritage as a factor of economic growth needs to come into sharper focus. Accordingly, sustainable and up-to-date cultural heritage management strategies, both at national and regional level, have to be defined and activated, thus ensuring the integration of conservation attitudes into contemporary economic and social goals including tourism.
9. By the same token, culture and cultural pluralism must be recognised as potentially powerful agents of active cooperation, mutual understanding, collaboration and social cohesion. In the democratic societies of South-East Europe, respect for cultural pluralism must therefore constitute the basis for

an enhanced cultural exchange both within a country and in international co-operation programmes. Exchange programmes need to be increased and expanded systematically, with external assistance whenever possible.

10. Given the importance of cultural heritage in promoting mutual understanding and socio-economic development, the cultural heritage component should be duly highlighted within bilateral, multilateral and community programmes launched for the stabilisation and development of South-East Europe. To that end, cooperation with international organizations such as UNESCO will be strengthened.
11. In order to monitor the implementation of the present Declaration and the Action Plan appended to it, an appropriate mechanism of assessment shall be defined. This mechanism will include the functions of promoting and co-ordinating regional co-operation programmes for the enhancement of cultural heritage, in line with the principles and actions mentioned herein.



CULTURAL HERITAGE: A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SHARED FUTURE

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

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 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).



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

Venice, Italy – 26 November 2005

VENICE DECLARATION

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

We, the Ministers in charge of cultural affairs of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and the Minister of cultural heritage and activities of Italy,

Recalling and reaffirming in full the contents of the Mostar Declaration, officially approved by the first Conference of Ministers responsible for culture in South-Eastern Europe and Italy (Mostar – BiH, 19 July 2004),

Confirming our support to the objectives and activities indicated by the Action Plan attached to the Mostar Declaration, as well as our engagement in its implementation,

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

Acknowledging the complementary roles and objectives of the International Institutions and Organisations, and in particular the European Union's programmes in the field of culture, as well as the European Commission and the Council of Europe on-going joint action for the integrated rehabilitation of the architectural and archaeological heritage of South-Eastern Europe;

Expressing appreciation for the Italian support to the preservation and enhancement of South-Eastern European cultural heritage, in both bilateral and multilateral programmes, and encouraging its prosecution as well as its possible extension to all the signatory countries of this declaration,

Taking note of the "Strategy for the Preservation and Enhancement of South-Eastern European Cultural Heritage", presented by UNESCO within the framework of this conference, as well as of the cultural heritage assessment reports and recommendations produced in the context of the European Commission and Council of Europe joint action on the cultural heritage situation in South East Europe and approved by the competent national authorities of the countries concerned,

Adopt the following Declaration:

1. In a period of immense historical, political, social and cultural changes, cultural heritage represents more than ever an invaluable legacy to be duly investigated, preserved and transmitted to future generations. For this reason, public authorities and all members of society have a duty to take all possible measures in order to ensure an improved identification, conservation, protection, management and promotion of cultural heritage.
2. In order to achieve this goal, and in addition to single national policy measures, we commit ourselves to foster international cultural cooperation and cultural diplomacy in South-Eastern Europe, within both bilateral and multilateral



cooperation programmes, convinced of the value of cultural heritage as a means of mutual understanding, integration, and human and economic development.

3. By the same token, respect for cultural pluralism must constitute the basis for an enhanced cultural exchange between countries of the region, and within broader international co-operation frameworks. Exchange programmes for students, professionals and public officers must be increased and expanded systematically, with external assistance whenever possible, also in order to promote the adoption of common standards. In particular, we emphasize the need for joint training and capacity building programmes, as well as for sharing of good practices in the various field of cultural heritage management, from preservation activities to the development of cultural tourism.
4. This spirit of reinforced regional collaboration is well represented by the cooperation process initiated with the first conference of ministers responsible for culture in South-Eastern Europe (Mostar, July 2004), as well as by the progress of other existing regional joint projects, which has proven to be a very effective instrument for preserving and enhancing South-Eastern European cultural heritage. We therefore renew our adhesion to the spirit of Mostar, and express appreciation for the results so far achieved in the implementation of the Mostar Declaration and of the Action Plan appended to it.
5. In particular, considering the role of cultural heritage as a common resource in promoting dialogue and mutual understanding across national borders, we agree that priority must be attached to the development of regional and cross-border projects for cultural cooperation. Accordingly, we recommend to particularly dedicate the UNESCO Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe to the definition and realisation of cross-border initiatives, and whenever possible to provide the existence of favourable conditions.
6. To this end, we approve the creation of an international working group, to be composed of national experts designated by each of the signatory countries of this Declaration and by UNESCO, with the specific task of assisting the UNESCO Venice Office in the definition and implementation of cross-border projects for the preservation and the enhancement of regional cultural heritage. The working

group shall be convened and coordinated by the UNESCO Venice Office. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, we recommend the collaboration of this group with the existing group of national co-ordinators created in the context of the joint action between the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

7. Within this framework of regional cooperation, the role of museums as one of the main links between cultural heritage and the citizens of today and tomorrow must be underlined. Bringing the riches of cultural heritage to the fore, museums are able, protecting and nourishing cultural diversities, to improve mutual understanding inside the region and to extend the very perception of culture. Furthermore, museums play a fundamental role in connecting preservation with promotion and enhancement of cultural heritage, thus contributing to both human and economic development. Adequate resources, hence, shall be allocated within national programmes to the improvement of museums and galleries, as well as to conservation and restoration activities.
8. Similarly, full support must be ensured to the realisation of international cooperation initiatives aimed at enhancing South-Eastern European museums, according to the conclusions of the “Working Table on International Decentralised Cooperation for the Enhancement of South-Eastern European Museums” annexed to this Declaration.
9. Furthermore, we stress the need for enhancing the process of updating legislation in the field of cultural policy and cultural heritage protection and management. In particular, joint efforts must be stepped up so as to pave the way for a hoped-for harmonization of national legislations on cultural heritage, with the objective of rendering them compatible with European and international standards.
10. Efforts must also be increased 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 and mobility of cultural heritage.
11. A comprehensive and broader access to the many culture-related opportunities generated by the European satellite navigation project “Galileo” is also encouraged,



having in mind, in particular, the great potential benefits this project may determine for the development of the so-called “preventive archaeology”. In this regard, we also underline the importance of taking advantage of the co-operation instruments in the cultural field provided by the European Union.

12. Decentralised cooperation is an increasingly important means to achieve development in the world, allowing international solidarity to express itself directly between local communities. The contribution of local government agencies and local civil societies is especially important in the sector of cultural cooperation, given the crucial role these actors may play in promoting pluralism, mutual understanding and cultural exchange. Accordingly, all possible efforts shall be ensured to the promotion of decentralised cooperation within both national and regional institutions, as well as to the coordination of central and local cooperation initiatives.
13. Whereas the importance of cultural heritage has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years, the value of creativity and contemporary art as a necessary complement to the preservation of the heritage still needs to come into sharper focus. Promoting creativity in a spirit of freedom and intercultural dialogue is one of the best ways of maintaining cultural vitality. In this regard, we express great appreciation for the decision of the Venice Biennale, in collaboration with UNESCO Venice Office and with the support of the Italian Government, to create an “Art Bridge Prize” dedicated to meritorious young artists from South-Eastern European countries. By the same token, we ensure full support to the successful implementation of the Art Bridge Prize in our respective countries.
14. To the same end, we express appreciation to the Government of Italy for its generous contribution to the Trust Fund for cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe. Full support shall be ensured to the positive implementation of activities realised under this Trust Fund. We also encourage the enlargement of the Trust Fund to new donors willing to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of South-Eastern European cultural heritage.
15. Given the positive results so far achieved by the cooperation process initiated with the first conference of ministers responsible for culture in South-Eastern

Europe, and re-launched with this Venice conference, we encourage and support its continuation in form of yearly ministerial conferences, to be held on a rotation basis in all the countries participating in this declaration.

16. Hence, we express appreciation for the proposal by the President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to hold in Ohrid, on 2006, the next ministerial conference on cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe, and accept its invitation to participate.



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 Stabilisation 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 — BHI, 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 BRESCIA'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 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.





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

Zadar, Croatia – 10 September 2007

ZADAR DECLARATION

**Fourth 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 Fourth Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe,

Considering 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; as well as an opportunity to reaffirm our strong will to preserve the richness and diversity of our shared cultural legacy, with a view to promote it as a treasure of the entire world;

Reaffirming in full the contents, objectives and activities included in the Mostar

Declaration and Action Plan, in the Venice Declaration, and in the Ohrid Declaration, respectively approved by the First (Mostar, 2004), Second (Venice, 2005), and Third (Ohrid, 2006) 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), in the Opatija Declaration (June 2006), and in the Bucharest Declaration (June 2007) adopted by the Heads of State of the South-Eastern European countries within the framework of the Regional Forum on Dialogue Among Civilisations;

Renewing our appreciation for the generous contribution by the Italian government to the Trust Fund for cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe, and encouraging the continuation 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 of the Section for Culture of the UNESCO Venice Office – BRESCE for the positive implementation of the above-mentioned Trust Fund, as well as its general commitment to the preservation and promotion of South-East European cultural heritage;

Adopt the following Declaration:

1. Annual ministerial conferences on cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe greatly contribute to the creation of a spirit of collaboration for the safeguarding and promotion of the shared cultural heritage. We are convinced that the continuation of this regional gatherings are extremely important in order to further strengthen the common political and institutional commitment for the enhancement of South-East European cultural heritage, as well as to provide guidance and resources for the achievement of concrete activities in this sense.
2. Consequently, we praise the activities so far accomplished or initiated within the different signatory countries as a follow-up to previous ministerial conferences, with special reference to the projects carried out under the Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, and we encourage their continuation. We are convinced that future efforts shall insist in pursuing the objectives set forth in the Mostar Action Plan, in order to ensure an overall strategic coherence. At the same time, future actions of the Trust Fund shall continue to be defined according to specific priorities of the different beneficiary countries, so as to achieve a better tuning of activities with the actual needs and resources of each country and with distinctive aspects of their tangible and intangible heritage.
3. In this regard, we express great appreciation for the renewal of the



generous financial contribution by the Italian government to the Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, with a second donation of 800,000€. The Italian support remains a corner-stone in the continuation of this regional cooperation framework, as well as an encouragement for strengthening our respective commitment to the enhancement of cultural heritage.

4. Accordingly, we commit ourselves to explore the possibility of ensuring further resources within respective national programmes, in order to enhance the safeguarding and 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.
5. Bearing in mind the symbiotic relation between the preservation of cultural legacy and its promotion as a tool for dialogue and sustainable development, we welcome the initiative promoted by the UNESCO Office in Venice about a regional training programme for a better communication of the heritage, specifically aimed at Ministries of culture of South-East European countries. The programme responds to the objectives laid down in the Ohrid Declaration (2006), and we shall ensure the active participation of our respective Ministries in the training activities.
6. Similar initiatives at the regional level shall continue to be encouraged, with an aim to coupling the positive effects of capacity building activities with those of an enhanced collaboration between institutions of South-East European countries. In this regard, and aware of the increasingly important role of culture in supporting sustainable development processes, we recommend the economics of culture as a priority subject for future training programmes, with a special focus on cultural heritage management.
7. Intra-regional cooperation, including transfer of knowledge and the sharing of good practices, shall remain a cross-cutting priority. To this end, we solicit the creation of a regional data-base for experts and professional in the various fields of cultural heritage administration, ranging from restoration, to preservation, to valorisation and promotion. Such instrument shall be intended to favour the collection, management, and sharing of relevant information, in order to strengthen regional cooperation networks and to facilitate the reciprocal exchange of experts among the countries in the region.
8. While welcoming the recent entry into force of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (18 March 2007), we firmly encourage the adoption of all relevant UNESCO

legal instruments by all countries participating in the present declaration. 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.

9. Acknowledging the importance of underwater cultural heritage as an integral part of the cultural heritage of humanity and a particularly important element in the history of peoples and nations, we welcome the initiative of the Republic of Croatia in establishing the “International Centre for Underwater Archaeology” and recommend its nomination as UNESCO category II Centre. We are convinced that such an institution will greatly contribute to the regional and wider international capacities in protection of underwater and waterlogged heritage, thus fulfilling the basic intention of these annual ministerial conferences in reinforcing regional cultural cooperation.
10. 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 Zadar 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 Romania to hold the next ministerial conference in 2008, and accept its invitation to participate.
11. Mindful of the pivotal role played by communication and public relations in our increasingly interconnected societies, we also commend the initiative to create a specific website dedicated to the ministerial conferences on cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe. This instrument, managed by UNESCO Office in Venice, shall be firstly aimed at ensuring due visibility to this cooperation framework, and at providing relevant information to the general public. Subsequently, we encourage its development into a shared tool for promotion of regional cultural heritage, and we commit ourselves to provide operational as well as institutional support to its enhancement.



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

Bucharest, Romania, the 20th of September, 2008

BUCHAREST DECLARATION

The Fifth Joint Declaration of the Ministers Responsible for Culture
in South-Eastern Europe and Italy,
concerning the Enhancement of Cultural Heritage
for supporting Dialogue, Integration, and Sustainable Development

I. We, the Ministers participating in the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, on the topic “Cultural Heritage – a Bridge Towards a Shared Future”, organised under the auspices of the Government of Romania and with the support of UNESCO:

Considering our participation in these annual Ministerial Conferences as an expression of our commitment to strengthening a spirit of cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding between our countries and peoples; as well as an opportunity to reaffirm our strong will to preserve the richness and diversity of our shared cultural legacy, with a view to promote it as a treasure of the entire world;

Reaffirming in full the contents, objectives and activities included in the Mostar Declaration and Action Plan, in the Venice Declaration, in the Ohrid Declaration, and

in the Zadar Declaration, respectively approved by the First (Mostar, 2004), Second (Venice, 2005), Third (Ohrid, 2006), and Fourth (Zadar, 2007) Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe;

Recalling the principles embodied in the Ohrid Declaration (August 2003), in the Tirana Declaration (December 2004), in the Varna Declaration (May 2005), in the Opatija Declaration (June 2006), in the Bucharest Declaration (June 2007), and in the Athens Declaration (June 2008) adopted by the Heads of State of the South-East European countries within the framework of the Regional Forum on Dialogue Among Civilisations;

Renewing our appreciation for the generous contribution made by the Italian government to the Trust Fund for cultural heritage in South-Eastern Europe and encouraging the continuation of the Italian support to the Trust Fund, as well as the extension of the Trust Fund to other possible contributors;

Commending the efforts of UNESCO, especially through the Section for Culture of the UNESCO Venice Office – Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE) in support to all activities related to these annual Ministerial Conferences, as well as its general commitment to the preservation and promotion of South-East European cultural heritage;

II. *Underscore* that:

- a. Since the first Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe was held, the regional scenario concerning the protection, management and promotion of cultural heritage underwent substantial improvements. To mention but a few:
 - Almost all the signatory countries to this Declaration ratified most recent international Conventions in the field of culture (with special reference to the UNESCO Conventions on: the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage; the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; as well as to the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention) and are now taking measures for their implementation. In this regard, efforts must be stepped up to ensure effective application of these instruments by the Parties.
 - Countries in the region saw a significant increase in the international



recognition of the value and specificity of their cultural heritage. Factors such as the progressive stabilisation of the region after the events of the past decade, the advancement of the European integration, the inception of substantial development processes, created enabling conditions for the promotion of culture as a powerful tool for building mutual understanding.

- Similarly, the last few years saw a rapid growth in the international production, consumption and exchange of cultural goods and services, especially due to the boost of digitisation processes. At the same time, the role of culture in tourism and allied industries also started to express its full potential in terms of fostering development gains.
- b. However, such and other improvements often failed to keep pace with the velocity of change, and to fully tap the potential of culture as a central feature in ensuring sustainable human and economic development. In particular, the increase of culture as a central dimension of development has not been fully accompanied by an analogous raise in its financing and political attention. Constraints in available resources, coupled with the failure by many to recognise the potential of culture as a development factor, too often contributed to confine culture at the periphery of political agendas. In fact, culture frequently remains a residual issue, at both national and regional level, proving that the gap between its importance and its requirements remains far from being bridged.

III. *Hereby adopt* the following Declaration:

1. The rapid pace of evolution in all aspects of human coexistence, at both global and local level, imposes culture as an indispensable resource for the understanding and management of change. This holds especially true in a region as South-Eastern Europe still characterised by profound transition processes, involving the political, economical, and social spheres. For this reason, we renew our commitment to the enhancement of culture as a priority field for reinforcing cooperation between our countries, in both bilateral and multilateral dimensions.
2. In this regard, culture shall be intended as the continuous exchange, forming, and consolidation of spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features, thus promoting values of inclusiveness, openness, and acceptance of the

other on a ground of mutual respect. Such concept of culture shall lead to extend our cooperation from the field of heritage to a broader action involving the protection and promotion of cultural diversity and creativity as indispensable resources for supporting reciprocal knowledge, dialogue, and mutual understanding between our countries and peoples, as well as sustainable development processes.

3. In this sense, these annual Ministerial Conferences confirm to be a privileged forum for strengthening regional cultural cooperation, and we strongly recommend their continuation in the years to come. Moreover, we express appreciation for the results so far achieved through the activities intended as operational follow-up to the Conferences, encouraging their further enhancement according to the objectives and principles embodied in the joint Declarations approved by the present and the previous Ministerial meetings.
4. Nonetheless, in approaching the conclusion of the first five years of activity since the first Ministerial Conference was held, a more thorough assessment of accomplished results seems to be necessary, coupled with a more precise identification of remaining bottlenecks as well as of new challenges ahead. To this end, we propose the revision of the Action Plan approved by the Mostar Conference, so as to update its objectives and action lines in the light of the resources and constraints, assets and shortcomings so far emerged. Such revised document shall be subject to the approval of the Sixth Ministerial Conference in 2009, and serve as basic reference for future activities.
5. Mindful of the importance of ensuring an operational outcome to the indications of our annual meetings, we renew our appreciation for the generous contribution by the Government of Italy to the Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe. The Italian support remains a corner-stone in sustaining this regional cooperation framework, and we encourage its continuation within the overall process of integration, dialogue and sustainable development in this region. At the same time, we favour the extension of the Trust Fund to other possible contributors.
6. The Italian support shall be interpreted as an encouragement for strengthening the respective commitment by each country in the region to enhance cultural heritage, hereby including the increase of available resources within national



budgets. In fact, the goals and principles embodied by these annual Ministerial Declarations can only be achieved if the protection and promotion of cultural heritage is integrated within the priorities of national political agendas, and provided that congruous resources are allocated to this end.

7. Consequently, and as a concrete sign of our intention to proceed in this direction, we propose that future activities at country level accomplished under the Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe shall be co-financed by the beneficiary countries, also in order to create a synergy aimed at maximising their impact.
8. At the same time, it is our auspice and intention to enhance the trans-national and cross-border dimension of operational activities related to these annual Ministerial conferences, so as to make of them an even more effective instrument at the service of dialogue and development. Similarly, intra-regional cooperation, including transfer of knowledge and the sharing of good practices, shall remain a cross-cutting priority.
9. Within this framework, we express appreciation for the development in the signatory countries of centres of excellence in the various fields of cultural heritage safeguarding and management. We remind in this sense of the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar, as well as of the Regional Centre for Digitization of Cultural Heritage in Skopje, which was inaugurated in March 2008 in the presence of UNESCO Director-General. As a further step in this direction, we welcome the creation of the Centre for Restoration and Conservation of Monuments in Tirana, convinced that this institution will greatly contribute to support training and capacity building in this specific sector at the regional level.
10. Mindful of the pivotal role played by culture as a catalyst for creativity, we encourage the launch of capacity-building, training, and research activities focusing on the impact of culture and creativity over the human and economic development of our societies. Such objective shall be pursued through the identification and exchange of good practices between the signatory countries, bearing in mind the relevant policies, programmes and instruments set forth at European level. We also encourage the launch of training and capacity building programmes on the economics of culture, to be supported whereas possible by the Trust-Fund for cultural heritage in

South-Eastern Europe.

11. Similarly, all states here present greatly appreciate the support given by the Section for Culture of UNESCO Office in Venice (BRESCE), to the organisation of Regional Seminars of Experts of South-Eastern Europe on intangible cultural heritage, which took place in Arbanassi (Bulgaria, June 2007) and Safranbolu (Turkey, May 2008). While emphasizing that the implementation of UNESCO programmes in the field of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) represents a common goal to all participants in this conference, we attach great importance to the creation of a regional network of experts aimed at enhancing coordination for the identification, documentation, research, preservation, promotion, and transmission of the ICH to future generations. To the same end, we commend the establishment in Bulgaria of a UNESCO Category II Regional Center in the field of ICH, as well as the establishment of UNESCO Chairs on the same subject, as announced during the Safranbolu Seminar.
12. In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, a closer coordination between follow-up activities shall be sought, in a way to ensure their overall coherence and response to the underlying strategy promoted by the Ministerial declarations. Such coordination shall be pursued both with the support by UNESCO through the Culture Section of UNESCO Office in Venice (BRESCE), which will continue to operate as focal point of this overall cooperation framework, and by means of a more active and regular involvement of the specific International Working Group (IWG) created further to the Second Ministerial Conference (Venice, 2005).
13. As a first step in this direction, we recommend to convene annual mid-term meetings of the International Working Group, to be organised between the Ministerial conferences, with the purpose of offering an effective consultation forum for the coordination of activities and the preparation of following Ministerial meetings.
14. Finally, we express appreciation for the proposal by the Government of Montenegro to host the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, in 2009, and accept its invitation to participate.



CULTURAL HERITAGE A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SHARED FUTURE

Extraordinary Session of the International Working Group (Sofia, Bulgaria – 20 March 2009)

The International Working Group, coordination and consultation body within the framework of the annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, held an extraordinary session in Sofia on 20 March 2009, organized by the Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria in collaboration with the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO, and with the support of UNESCO.

Representatives of the ministries responsible for culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia participated in the session, together with representatives of UNESCO (UNESCO Office in Venice – Culture Section).

Main objective of the meeting was to initiate the preparation of the sixth Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, to be held in Montenegro in November 2009, with a view at advancing proposals for the definition of a new Action Plan aimed at enhancing cultural cooperation in the region, to be presented and approved by the Ministerial Conference.

In conclusion of the meeting, the International Working Group unanimously approved the following recommendations:

Sofia Recommendations

Cultural cooperation in South-Eastern Europe: a strategic framework for future challenges

The countries, people, and communities from South-Eastern Europe share not only strong historical, social, and economical relations. First and foremost, they are linked by an exceptional richness and diversity of cultural expressions that have produced distinctive specificities but also deep and very fertile connections. For this reason culture remains a strategic field for international relations in South-Eastern Europe, especially comprising the following dimensions:

- 1. Culture as a platform for the enhancement of international cooperation**
- 2. Culture as a key-factor in fostering sustainable development and facing international economic crisis**
- 3. Culture as a tool for dialogue, inclusion, and mutual understanding.**

1. Culture for the enhancement of international cooperation

- i.** Culture, as the expression of knowledge, beliefs and creativity of peoples and individuals in continuous interaction, is a privileged platform for the development of peaceful and fruitful international relations. Accordingly, the priority of culture as a subject for bilateral, multilateral, and intra-regional cooperation in South-Eastern Europe shall be confirmed and possibly further strengthened.
- ii.** To this end, a closer coordination shall be sought in order to better integrate all cultural cooperation frameworks active in South-Eastern Europe, with a view at leveraging on the respective comparative advantages, creating synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts. In this sense, while acknowledging the leading political and institutional role played by the annual Forums of South-East European Heads of State, a more effective harmonisation shall be sought between the initiatives participated by the countries in the region, also with the support of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission.
- iii.** Similarly, the coordination between cultural cooperation initiatives in South-Eastern Europe and the cultural policies and programmes of the European Union shall be strengthened, possibly increasing the participation of UNESCO as leading international organisation for cultural cooperation in the implementation of relevant EU-funded programmes, as well as in other programmes supported by different governmental and non-governmental organisations active in the field of culture.
- iv.** The richness of South-East European cultural diversity shall be interpreted as a shared resource in terms of fostering a positive and peaceful image of the region at the international level. Therefore, besides supporting the mainstreaming of



culture into development policies at the national level, efforts shall be stepped up in order to fully express the potential of culture in promoting the overall international perception of South-Eastern Europe.

- V.** In this sense, the **Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe** shall continue to represent a privileged forum for the definition and implementation of cooperation activities, and their continuity shall be ensured. At the same time the Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, managed by UNESCO as main operational tool of the Ministerial Conferences shall be further developed into a shared instrument. To this end, and with the aim at focusing cooperation efforts on an updated set of shared targets, the following action lines are proposed:
- a.** Commending the efforts of Italy as main donor to the Trust Fund and encouraging the continuation of the Italian support, all countries participating in the Ministerial Conferences shall be encouraged to directly contribute to the Trust Fund as well as to explore other possible fund-raising opportunities, in order to make of it an ever more powerful leverage of cultural cooperation in the region.
 - b.** While highlighting the good results so far achieved in the implementation of the Trust Fund through country-specific activities at the national level, we encourage strengthening the trans-border and inter-regional dimensions of future activities.
 - c.** With a view at promoting cultural heritage as a shared resource, we support the presentation by two or more countries from the region of common files for inscription into the UNESCO World Heritage List, as well as into the UNESCO Representative List for intangible cultural heritage.
 - d.** Accordingly, the implementation of UNESCO cultural Conventions shall remain a cross-cutting priority, with special attention to their increasing relevance within cultural policies and programmes of the common European structures.
 - e.** Efforts shall also be aimed at the realisation of shared communication initiatives and instruments for promoting the richness and diversity of South-East European culture. Similarly, a coordinated participation by South-East European countries in international cultural events, fairs and festivals is to be supported.
 - f.** Training and the exchange of knowledge and good practices on all aspects of cultural assets management shall continue to represent an overarching priority, in order to support capacity building and the harmonisation of policies. In this sense, the creation of regional data-bases shall be encouraged aimed at sharing relevant information on specific fields of competence, according to the common priorities. As a pilot-activity, the establishment of an electronic "South-East European Culture Laws Data-Base" is encouraged, intended to facilitate the collection and sharing of main national legal instruments on the safeguarding and promotion of cultural resources.
 - g.** Future activities for the enhancement of South-East European cultural

heritage shall also aim at better integrating cultural and natural aspects, as complementary components necessary to the definition of effective conservation, management, and promotional tools.

- h.** Finally, and with an aim at reinforcing coordination between the Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in SEE and UNESCO activities at the national level, we recommend to ensure the representation of national Commissions for UNESCO within the delegations of all countries participating in the Conferences.

2. Culture as a key-factor in fostering sustainable development and facing international economic crisis

- vi.** In a period characterised by a far-reaching and heavily-impacting international economic crisis, culture shall be seen as an ever more crucial factor in supporting sustainable development and leveraging economic growth. This is all the more true in a region characterised by an outstanding cultural richness and diversity as South-Eastern Europe.
- vii.** Considering the growing relevance of culture in development terms, the scope of future efforts within cultural cooperation in South-Eastern Europe shall be extended from the field of cultural heritage to culture in a more comprehensive understanding, thereby including those aspects with a higher impact on development such as creativity and the cultural industries.
- viii.** In this sense, an integrated approach to the management of cultural resources shall be encouraged, in order to fully tap the potential of synergic interplay between cultural heritage, the living culture, and the development processes. This approach also requires a higher degree of inter-institutional cooperation, in order to better coordinate cultural programmes with the action on related areas such as tourism, education, as well as overall economic policies.
- ix.** Common efforts shall also be stepped-up in the fields of training, capacity building, and exchange of good practices on the integrated management of cultural resources, with special attention to the synergic interaction between conservation and promotion of cultural heritage with the enhancement of creativity, cultural tourism, and cultural industries. Possible actions in this field may include the establishment of an annual South-East European award for the best practice in cultural heritage management.
- x.** Consequently, future action within the Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe shall focus on a more effective mainstreaming of culture into national and international development strategies. This objective shall be also pursued via a more effective involvement of economical stakeholders, with special emphasis on the active participation of entrepreneurs and industries active in cultural productions.
- xi.** The role of culture in supporting sustainable development shall also be reflected in the cooperation with and between the local communities and local government agencies. Bearing in mind the symbiotic relation



between development processes and the territories, future efforts of cultural cooperation in South-Eastern Europe shall increasingly involve actors from the local dimension, ensuring their active participation in the definition and implementation of activities as well as via specific actions aimed at supporting networking and the exchange of knowledge and good practices.

3. Culture as a tool for dialogue, inclusion, and mutual understanding

- xii.** This stronger emphasis on culture as a leverage for economic development shall however not result in an underestimation of the power of culture in bridging distances between countries, peoples and communities. In this sense, international cooperation efforts shall be ever more focussed on promoting universal values of inclusion, dialogue and mutual respect.
- xiii.** To this end, cultural exchanges shall be encouraged between countries of South-Eastern Europe, possibly through a more active involvement of the schooling and university systems and through all level of educations. Action in this direction may include awareness raising activities about the importance of culture and cultural heritage especially targeting the younger generations.
- xiv.** The role of artists and intellectuals as promoters of positive cultural values shall also be brought to the fore within international cooperation forums, with the double objective of enriching the cooperation platforms with distinguished ideas and proposals, and of increasing the public outreach of the institutional initiatives.
- xv.** Accordingly, a closer and more active involvement of all relevant stakeholders shall be sought within regional cooperation activities. This shall include in the first place the civil society, as the main forum for the expression and enjoyment of cultural contents as well as for the practice of dialogue and mutual understanding. Secondly, common efforts shall increasingly focus on developing collaboration with the private sector, thus acknowledging its vital role in stimulating cultural production and in translating cultural components into proper development factors.
- xvi.** The enhancement of dialogue shall also be pursued by means of supporting the networking of experts from South-East European countries and their participation in joint programmes and trans-border activities. Such action will have the double objective of strengthening mutual understanding and trust, while at the same time contributing to the process of capacity building.
- xvii.** To the same end, we strongly encourage the continuation of joint efforts for the development of centres of excellence in the countries of South-Eastern Europe, specialised in the various fields of cultural heritage research, conservation and management. The activity of such centres shall also serve as a platform for training and capacity building activities at the regional level, thus offering a concrete contribution to the enhancement of dialogue and cooperation.





CULTURAL HERITAGE
A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SHARED FUTURE
**The Sixth Ministerial Conference on the
Cultural Heritage of South - Eastern Europe**

Cetinje – April 23, 2010

CETINJE DECLARATION

The sixth joint declaration of the Ministries of Culture of South-Eastern Europe and Italy on the promotion of cultural heritage for dialogue, integration and sustainable development

We, the Ministries participating in the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe on the topic “Cultural Heritage – a Bridge towards a Shared Future”, organized by the Government of Montenegro with the support of UNESCO:

Emphasising that this Declaration is a follow-up to the Message from Ohrid on the Dialogue Between Civilizations (2003), the Tirana Summit Declaration on Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue (2004), the Varna Declaration on Cultural Corridors in South-East Europe (2005), the Opatija Declaration on Communication of Heritage (2006), the Bucharest and Sibiu Declaration on the Cultural Diversity as a Bridge Between Cultural Heritage and Culture of the Future (2007), the Athens Declaration of Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South-East Europe (2008) and the Cetinje Declaration “Management of Heritage Diversity and its Promotion for Tourism”;

Fully reaffirming the contents, aims and principles of the Mostar Declaration, Venice Declaration, Ohrid Declaration, Zadar Declaration, and Bucharest Declaration, respectively approved by the First (Mostar 2004), Second (Venice 2005), Third (Ohrid 2006), Fourth (Zadar 2007) and Fifth (Bucharest 2008) Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe;

Expressing appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Italy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Cooperazione Italiana) for its generous support to the activities for the safeguarding and promotion of South-East European cultural heritage realised since 2004 within the framework of these annual Ministerial Conferences;

Recalling

- The UNESCO Conventions and declarations in the field of culture, and especially: the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999); the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970); the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972); the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001); the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003); the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005);
- The mandate and action of UNESCO in strengthening international cooperation within its fields of competence, with special reference to its role in fostering intercultural dialogue, as well as in safeguarding and promoting cultural diversity as a driving force for human and economic development;

Inspired by the proclamation of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures;

We adopt the following Declaration and the attached Action Plan:

DECLARATION

1. Culture, as the expression of knowledge, convictions and creativity of peoples and individuals in their continuous interaction, constitutes the platform for the development of peaceful and successful international relations. Therefore, the priority of culture as a topic of and platform for enhanced bilateral, multilateral and intra-regional cooperation in South-Eastern Europe (hereinafter, SEE) should be reaffirmed and further strengthened.
2. In this regard, the annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in SEE, since their beginning in 2004, greatly contributed to the creation of a spirit of cooperation for the safeguarding and promotion of the shared cultural heritage. We thus consider our participation in these Ministerial Conferences the expression of our firm commitment to the strengthening of dialogue and mutual understanding between our countries and peoples, as well as an opportunity to affirm our strong will to preserve the richness and diversity of our shared cultural legacy.
3. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure a closer coordination between all international initiatives and platforms of cultural cooperation in SEE, with a view



at leveraging on the respective assets and experiences, creating synergies, and avoiding duplication of efforts. In this sense, while reaffirming the leading political and institutional role played by the annual Forums of South-East European Heads of State, a more effective harmonisation shall be sought between the initiatives participated by the countries in the region, also with the support of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission.

4. Similarly, the coordination between cultural cooperation initiatives in SEE and the cultural policies and programmes of the European Union shall be strengthened, possibly increasing the participation of UNESCO as leading international organisation for cultural cooperation in the implementation of relevant programmes financed by the European Union, as well as in other programmes supported by different governmental and non-governmental organisations active in the field of culture;
5. Taking into consideration the excellent results achieved so far in the cooperation in the field of culture between all the countries participating in this Conference and the UNESCO Venice Office – Regional Office for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE), we support the continuation and possibly the further strengthening of these common efforts, and express our strong encouragement to the establishment of adequate financial means for the implementation of related activities.
6. We commend the government of Montenegro, and especially the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Media, for having organised the present Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in SEE in close time proximity and in the same venue as the annual meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of SEE, which represents the first step for a closer coordination between these two platforms.
7. For the purpose of achieving a stronger relation between the preservation of cultural heritage and its promotion as a means of sustainable development, we support the realisation of relevant capacity-building activities, with special regard to the definition of efficient Management Plans for the protected areas. Accordingly, we support the creation of a regional network of experts on the management of cultural heritage, and encourage the establishment of a Regional Centre in Montenegro specialised in the management of cultural heritage.
8. Convinced that the continuity of these annual Ministerial Conferences is of great importance for further strengthening our mutual political and institutional commitment to the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in SEE, we express our appreciation at the offer of the Government of Serbia to host the Seventh Ministerial Conference in 2011, and we accept the invitation to participate therein.
9. Finally, further efforts shall be taken in order to ensure the application of this reaffirmed spirit of regional cultural cooperation at the operational level. In accordance with this, we approve the attached Cetinje Action Plan and propose it as the reference for the definition of all future international cooperation activities aiming at the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in SEE.





CULTURAL HERITAGE
A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SHARED FUTURE
Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Cultural Heritage
in South - Eastern Europe

Cetinje Montenegro
23 April 2010

Action plan

For the Implementation of Cetinje Declaration

On July 19, 2004 the Ministers of Culture of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro Romania, and Serbia, gathered on occasion of the First Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe (hereinafter, SEE) adopted an Action Plan for the enhancement of cultural heritage as a shared resource for dialogue, peace, tolerance, and sustainable development. Further to that event, the Mostar Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as: MAP) constituted the basic reference for the definition of numerous activities of cultural cooperation in SEE, within the regional initiative "Cultural Heritage - a Bridge towards a Shared Future".

Four years after the Mostar event, on occasion of the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in SEE (Bucharest, 20 September 2008), the Ministers of Culture of the afore-mentioned countries agreed on the necessity to assess the results so far achieved in the implementation of the MAP and, in relation to these, to possibly revise that document by means of a new Action Plan to be presented during the Sixth Ministerial Conference, to be held in Montenegro.

Following up to that decision, the present “Cetinje Action Plan” is intended to revise the objectives and action lines stipulated by the MAP, with a view at updating the priorities fixed by that document and at defining measures for overcoming the challenges arisen during its implementation.

I. Implementation of the Mostar Action Plan: assessment and lessons learned

During the implementation of the activities indicated by the MAP, the following **results** have been achieved:

- Regional cooperation on cultural heritage in SEE has been considerably improved through conceiving new initiatives of cooperation between the South-East European countries, with the active support of international organizations (especially UNESCO);
- The “Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in SEE” (hereinafter, Trust Fund) has been established as a special instrument of financial support to the implementation of the MAP, initially financed by the contribution of the Italian Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Cooperazione Italiana);
- An efficient mechanism of coordination and implementation of the activities financed through the Trust Fund has been established, especially through the Section for Culture of the UNESCO Office in Venice;
- Concrete results have been achieved in the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in SEE, by means of the activities realized within the Trust Fund at both national and regional level;
- The safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage has gained priority within the political agendas of the South-East European member states participating in the initiative.

At the same time, some **challenges** have been identified that hindered the complete attainment of the proposed objectives in the implementation of the MAP, such as:

- Lack of coordination between the MAP and other relevant international cooperation initiatives;
- Limited mobilization of resources. In particular, the Trust Fund did not function as a multi-donor instrument as it was originally conceived, and depended on the generosity of one single donor;
- Scarce cooperation and synergies established with the civil society and the private sector;
- Necessity to extend the MAP’s field of action towards a broader approach to cultural cooperation, with special reference to the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage, underwater cultural heritage, contemporary creativity and the diversity of cultural expressions.

Furthermore, since the approval of the MAP the regional scenario concerning



the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage underwent substantial **improvements**, including:

- The overall progress in the stabilization of the region and in its integration within the common European structures;
- The increased contribution of culture to the regional development processes, with special regard to the production, consumption and exchange of cultural goods and services, as well as the development of the cultural tourism;
- The progresses achieved in the development of institutional capacities and in the introduction of relevant international standards, with special regard to the UNESCO Conventions in the field of culture;
- The enhanced visibility of the cultural assets from SEE, confirmed by the number of newly inscribed cultural elements from this region in the UNESCO lists (including both the World Heritage List, and the Representative List for Intangible Cultural Heritage);
- The re-establishment of fruitful conditions for the enhancement of dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation between the peoples and countries from the region.

Based on the lessons learned during the implementation of the MAP, the present Cetinje Action Plan intends to update and supplement the objectives and action lines laid down in Mostar, thus posing itself as a milestone in advancing the cultural cooperation in SEE as an instrument of dialogue and sustainable development.

The Cetinje Action Plan stipulates the following:

II. OBJECTIVES

The **general objective** of this Action Plan shall remain the enhancement of culture and cultural heritage as a priority for international cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, by means of which dialogue, mutual understanding and sustainable development are to be supported.

The **specific objectives** are:

- A. Increasing cooperation in the field of culture with and between all the relevant regional cooperation frameworks in SEE;
- B. Improving the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in SEE, by means of developing capacities of relevant institutions and professionals;
- C. Strengthening cooperation in the field of intangible cultural heritage and underwater cultural heritage;

- D. Reinforcing communication, public awareness, and cooperation with the civil society in the field of culture;
- E. Promoting synergies with tourism, cultural industries and the private sector.

III. MEASURES

For the purpose of achieving the above-mentioned objectives, while considering the different implementation conditions, and compatibly with the internal policies and priorities of each member state, the countries participating in this Action Plan commit themselves to undertake the following measures:

Objective A: Increasing cooperation in the field of culture with and between all the relevant regional cooperation frameworks in SEE

Measures:

1. Culture shall be intended as the continuous forming, consolidation and interaction of material, intellectual and emotional features, thus promoting values of inclusiveness, openness, and acceptance of the other on a ground of mutual respect. Such concept of culture shall lead to extend regional cooperation from the field of cultural heritage to a broader action involving the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity in all its forms of expression, as an indispensable resource for supporting reciprocal knowledge, dialogue, and mutual understanding between the countries and peoples of South-Eastern Europe.
2. The safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage, cultural diversity and contemporary creativity shall be stimulated and mainstreamed within all international mechanisms of cooperation focusing on SEE, whereupon priority shall be given to the development of regional and cross-border projects of cultural cooperation.
3. The enhancement of cultural cooperation in SEE shall include common efforts aimed at the full inclusion of culture within the internationally recognised development goals, as well as of related cooperation programmes, hereby including the new processes of joint programming within the UN framework.
4. The richness of cultural heritage and cultural diversity in SEE shall be interpreted as shared resource for fostering a positive and peaceful image of the region. To this end, efforts shall be stepped up for the presentation of multinational candidature files for inscription in the UNESCO's World Heritage List and Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, including the prioritisation of multinational cultural elements in the allocation of international support.



Objective B: Improving the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in SEE, by means of developing capacities of relevant institutions and professionals;

Measures:

5. Reaffirming the enhancement of international cooperation as the guiding principle of the present Action Plan, future activities for improving the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in SEE shall be guided by a cross-cutting approach based on the sharing of knowledge and good practices.
6. As a crucial tool for enhancing regional cooperation between relevant institutions and professionals, as well as for supporting capacity development, networks of experts shall be established in the various domains of safeguarding, management and promotion of cultural heritage. Such networks shall operate by means of regular meetings, joint training programmes whereas possible, and the creation of virtual platforms for facilitating continuous contacts and exchange of information.
7. As a complementary tool to the establishment of networks of experts, the creation of regional data-bases is proposed in the various fields of cultural heritage administration. Such instruments shall be intended to favour the collection and sharing of relevant information, in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and to support normative harmonisation with European and international standards.
8. Efforts shall be continued and possibly stepped up for the realisation of joint training programmes, targeting in the first place the experts and officials from the line ministries of SEE countries, and possibly including professionals from specialised centres and universities. Within this framework, the implementation of the UNESCO Conventions in the field of culture – intended as a coherent set of complementary legal instruments – is proposed as a priority topic for the definition of future training programmes.
9. In this sense, the centres of excellence on the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage already existing in SEE, as well as those to be possibly established, especially if recognised as UNESCO Centres, shall be considered as priority platforms for the definition and realisation of joint training programmes and other regional capacity-building initiatives.

Target C: Strengthening cooperation in the field of intangible cultural heritage and underwater cultural heritage;

Measures:

10. A comprehensive approach to cultural heritage shall be promoted within regional cooperation initiatives, in order to adequately cover all aspects of the South-East European cultural legacy in its diverse forms of expression, both tangible and intangible.

11. In this sense, the annual seminars of expert from SEE on Intangible Cultural Heritage, participated by all the countries in the region and in neighbouring areas, and supported by UNESCO, shall be considered as a consolidated good practice and its continuation and further reinforcement is encouraged.
12. Based on the experience developed in the field of intangible cultural heritage, the establishment of a regional network of experts on underwater cultural heritage is proposed. The safeguarding of underwater cultural heritage shall also be given adequate relevance within national and regional cultural policies, hereby including the cultural heritage associated to both marine and inland waters.

Target D: Reinforcing communication, public awareness, and cooperation with the civil society in the field of culture

Measures:

13. Culture heritage is first and foremost a resource of public interest and as such it shall remain available to all citizens, regardless of social, educational and geographic distinctions. To this end, common efforts for facilitating the public access to cultural heritage, its understanding and proper usage are to be reinforced.
14. Facilitating the access to cultural heritage shall be accompanied by increased efforts aimed at popularising cultural heritage and disseminating knowledge to the public, especially by means of media and dedicated communication campaigns.
15. In this sense the role of modern information and communication technologies shall be further developed, so as to fully tap their potential in terms of accessing and promoting cultural heritage. This shall include the development of specialized research programmes for the application of digital technologies to the management of cultural heritage.
16. Activities in cooperation with the civil society shall include events and initiatives aimed at popularising culture, such as the organization of cultural heritage days and the establishment of cultural awards, school competitions and art camps. In the spirit of this Action Plan, the development of similar activities over a crossborder and international dimension is encouraged.
17. Cultural exchanges shall be promoted between the South-East European countries, including a more active participation of the schools and university systems and through all levels of education.
18. The introduction of optional subjects in elementary and high schools curricula shall be supported, which will raise the awareness on the significance of culture and cultural heritage.
19. The role of artists and intellectuals as promoters of positive cultural values shall also be brought to the fore within regional cooperation forums, with the double objective of enriching the cooperation platforms and increasing their public outreach.



Objective E: Promoting synergies with tourism, cultural industries and the private sector

Measures:

20. Considering the growing relevance of culture in development terms, the scope of cultural heritage to culture in a more comprehensive understanding, thereby including those aspects with a higher impact on development such as creativity and the cultural industries.
21. In this sense, an integrated approach to the management of cultural resources shall be encouraged, in order to fully tap the potential of synergic interplay between cultural heritage, contemporary creativity, and the development processes. Possible actions in this field may include the establishment of an annual South-East European award for the best practice in cultural management.
22. The safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in all its different forms of expression, including cultural landscapes shall be considered as a key-measure for the development of sustainable and responsible forms of tourism.
23. Accordingly, regional and cross-border cooperation shall be encouraged for the purpose of defining transnational “cultural routes” and related tourism offers, possibly including the development of infrastructures, the publication of common editorial and communication projects for the promotion of the shared cultural heritage, the creation of transnational museum networks, as well as all other initiatives of cross-border cooperation.
24. Similarly, common efforts shall increasingly focus on developing collaboration with the private sector, thus acknowledging its vital role in stimulating cultural production and in translating cultural components into proper development factors. Cooperation in this sense shall include the sharing of good practices on the establishment of public/private partnerships on cultural issues, ranging from the management of cultural heritage to the promotion of contemporary cultural expressions.
25. The increased involvement of the private sector into regional cultural cooperation shall be extended to the support of traditional arts and crafts, including the realization of specific training and capacity building activities, as well as the definition of possible common promotional initiatives.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Coordination Mechanisms

- 4.1.1.** In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, a close coordination shall be sought so as to ensure the coherence of all follow-up actions to the principles embodied by the present document, as well as by the Declarations approved by the previous Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in SEE. Such coordination shall be pursued by means of ensuring a permanent secretariat, also responsible for the international coordination of related operational activities.
- 4.1.2.** In this regard, the contribution of UNESCO to the present cooperation framework since the first Ministerial Conference in 2004 should be highlighted, especially through the action of the Culture Unit of UNESCO Venice Office. Also in consideration of the mission and mandate of the UNESCO Venice Office as Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, the continuation of its action as permanent secretariat for the development of regional cooperation within the framework of the Ministerial Conferences of Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe is strongly encouraged.
- 4.1.3.** At the same time, the further strengthening of the International Working Group (IWG) created further to the Second Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in SEE (Venice, 2005) is encouraged, composed of representatives of all participating countries and invested with consultative and advisory functions towards the permanent secretariat.
- 4.1.4.** In order to ensure the regular and continuous operations of the IWG, it is recommended to convene annual mid-term IWG sessions to be held within six months after the most recent Ministerial Conference, with the purpose of offering an effective forum for the coordination of activities and the preparation of following Ministerial meetings.

4.2. Operational instruments

- 4.2.1.** The “Trust Fund for Cultural Heritage in SEE” (hereinafter, Trust Fund) established in 2005 as the follow-up to the First Ministerial Conference (Mostar, 2004), shall continue to be considered as the main financial instrument for the implementation of this Action Plan, within the conceptual and strategic framework defined by the Declarations approved at the annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in SEE.
- 4.2.2.** The Trust Fund shall continue to serve as an international, supplementary instrument whose aim is to strengthen the commitment of the countries



participating in this Action Plan to provide within their state budget (considering the different circumstances and in accordance with national priorities) adequate means for the safeguarding and promotion of culture.

- 4.2.3.** The Trust Fund shall be considered henceforth as a shared, open, multi-donor financial tool. Consequently, the participation in the Trust Fund shall be encouraged by the largest number of contributors, hereby including the countries from the SEE region. Within this framework, the countries participating in this Action Plan express their gratefulness and appreciation for the generous support provided by the Italian Government to the Trust Fund since 2005, especially through the voluntary contributions made available by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Cooperazione Italiana.
- 4.2.4.** In this sense, we commend for the efforts by all the countries participating in this conference in order to co-finance past activities related to their respective territories realised under the Trust Fund. This model of co-financing should be replicated with respect to all future activities related to the Trust Fund, as a sign of our shared commitment and with the aim to create synergies responding to the spirit of enhanced regional cooperation.
- 4.2.5.** All partners in the Trust Fund shall ensure their efforts in order for this instrument and its operational activities to be coordinated with other financial opportunities and programmes for the enhancement of cultural heritage in SEE. Such coordination, intended as complementary to the coordination to be sought at institutional and political level, shall be aimed at ensuring overall coherence and synergy of international action in this field, avoiding duplication of efforts and optimising the use of available resources.
- 4.2.6.** Given the good results achieved so far in the implementation of the Trust Fund, and coherently with the provisions of this Action Plan concerning the coordination of regional cooperation initiatives, it is proposed that the Trust Fund will continue to be managed by UNESCO through the Culture Unit of the UNESCO Venice Office.

4.3. Monitoring and evaluation

- 4.3.1.** An international performance evaluation and benchmarking - both qualitative and quantitative - should be developed to follow up the implementation of the present Action Plan. This evaluation mechanism shall be considered as one of the activities to be defined and implemented within the Trust Fund.
- 4.3.2.** The responsibility of monitoring and evaluation under the Action Plan is entrusted to the above-mentioned International Working Group as common expert committee participated by all partner countries in the present document, with the support of UNESCO through the UNESCO Venice Office.
- 4.3.3.** Yearly reports on monitoring and evaluation of the present Action Plan shall be

submitted by the International Working Group to the Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in SEE, the latter having authority of approval over the reports.

- 4.3.4.** Based on the above-mentioned monitoring and evaluation report, the annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in SEE shall approve yearly recommendations for the implementation of activities under the present Action Plan.



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