



**İstanbul Declaration
On
“Music as a Metaphor of Cultural Dialogue in South-East Europe”**

**Eighth Summit of the Heads of State of
South-East Europe**

İstanbul, 23 June 2010

We, Heads of State and other high-level representatives of South-East Europe, UNESCO and the Council of Europe gathered in İstanbul, “2010 European Capital of Culture”, on 23 June 2010, to hold the Eighth Meeting of the Summit of the Heads of State of South-East Europe devoted to the theme “Music as a Metaphor of Cultural Dialogue in South-East Europe”, organized under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Abdullah Gül, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mrs. Irina Bokova, and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland :

Reaffirming the ideals and principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitution of UNESCO, the Statute of the Council of Europe, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the European Convention on Human Rights;

Emphasizing that İstanbul Summit coincides with the “International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures-2010” proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly for which UNESCO was designated as lead agency;

Recalling that the International Year seeks to underscore the significance of the intercultural dialogue as a hallmark of mutual understanding and culture of peace, which should inform all policy-making at local, national, regional and international levels and should involve all relevant stakeholders;

Recognizing the importance of safeguarding and enhancing the promotion of cultural heritages, both tangible and intangible, as a fundamental source for building sustainable peace, a vector for reconciliation and harmony throughout the region and catalyst for regional cooperation;

Welcoming the focus of İstanbul Summit on “Music as a Metaphor of Cultural Dialogue”, which highlights the role of music as an integral part of the intangible cultural heritage in South-East Europe as stipulated in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), and which aims at celebrating the wealth of cultural diversity of the region and its mutual influences through music;

Emphasizing that the present Declaration is in continuity with the Message from Ohrid on “Dialogue Among Civilizations” (2003), the Tirana Summit Declaration on “Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue in South-East Europe” (2004), the Varna Declaration on “Cultural Corridors of South-East Europe, Common Past and Shared Heritage - A Key to Future Partnership” (2005), the Opatija Declaration on "Communication of Heritage" (2006), Bucharest and Sibiu Declaration on "Cultural Diversity - a Bridge between Cultural Heritage and the Culture of the Future" (2007), the Athens Declaration on “Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South-East Europe” (2008), and the Cetinje Declaration on “Management of Heritage Diversity and its Promotion for Tourism” (2009);

Expressing our satisfaction that significant progress has been achieved in the pursuit of the above-mentioned Declarations, including through the annual conferences of Ministers of Culture, ongoing relevant regional programs as well as the commitment of the National Commissions for UNESCO;

Also acknowledging the important role played by arts education, including music, in the strengthening of intangible cultural heritage and reinforcement of intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding and harmony;

Admitting that the access, protection and promotion of the cultural heritage of South-East Europe constitute the very basis for a strengthened regional cooperation,

We, therefore, underscore the crucial role of culture in all its dimensions for development and *concur* that this aspect should be explicitly acknowledged in the outcome Document of the High-level Event of the UN General Assembly on the Millenium Development Goals in September 2010 in New York;

We acknowledge that:

- a. Cultural heritage is an indispensable part of national identity, however no cultural heritage is formed by a uniform civilization or culture; every cultural heritage is an outcome of centuries of communication and exchange between various cultures and civilizations;
- b. South-East Europe has been at the crossroads of various cultures which have given birth to rich and diverse cultural heritages and constitute the indispensable basis for lasting peace and harmony in the region;
- c. Cultural routes, corridors and itineraries provide effective means of safeguarding and promoting cultural diversity with full respect to each other’s heritage as a platform for establishing a genuine cultural dialogue in South-East Europe;
- d. The intangible cultural heritage is a core element of cultural diversity, a mirror of human creativity, and its safeguarding and enhancement contribute to the fostering of good relations, improved communication and effective cooperation, tolerance and mutual understanding in the region;

- e. Music, as a part of intangible cultural heritage, plays an indispensable role in the life of nations, communities, groups and individuals, and serves as a bridge among the peoples of the region;
- f. Throughout history, South-East Europe has developed a “regional culture of music” which has served as means of both communication and reconciliation; diverse cultures of South-East Europe rally around the same melodies, which represent the shared heritage of all the cultures of the region;

We reaffirm our common commitment to:

- a. Underscore the significance of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, as means for encouraging regional cooperation and intercultural dialogue;
- b. Explore and encourage all opportunities in order to preserve, sustain, use and promote intercultural dialogue and cooperation in South-East Europe through cultural routes, itineraries and corridors of the region;
- c. Improve cultural cooperation in the region by intensifying joint scientific, academic and artistic endeavors and exchanges;
- d. Integrate the principles of safeguarding cultural heritage in joint projects particularly in the areas of culture, education, sciences, communication and information.

We declare our determination to:

- a. Safeguard and ensure mutual respect for the cultural heritage of the region by underscoring its significant role in bringing cultures closer together and providing an enabling platform for exchange and dialogue for deepening mutual understanding;
- b. Encourage the establishment, consolidation and networking among the relevant institutions dealing with cultural heritage throughout South-East Europe and facilitate the access thereto;
- c. Focus on preserving, sustaining, using and promoting joint projects on routes, corridors and itineraries in cultural heritage to create an environment of cooperation, dialogue and better understanding in the region;
- d. Highlight music as a catalyst for joint initiatives in order to nurture cultural diversity, thus instilling peace and harmony among the peoples of the region;
- e. Provide support for initiatives, academic interdisciplinary studies and common projects for mapping, documenting, inventorying and promoting intangible cultural heritage of music in the region;

- f. Make use of local and regional festivals, fairs, media and youth exchange programs for a better interaction of cultures through the music and melodies of the region;
- g. Encourage organization of trainings and preparation of audio-visual materials for creating awareness in the region for the safeguard and transfer of common musical cultural heritage to the next generations.

In conclusion,

We welcome the proposal of the President of Serbia, to host the Ninth Meeting of the Summit of the Heads of State of South-East Europe in 2011 in Belgrade.