

**UNESCO Summit: “Contemporary Art and Reconciliation in South East Europe”
Viminacium, Serbia, September 2, 2011**

DECLARATION

We, Heads of State in the presence of Ministers of Culture of South East European countries, meeting at Roman archeological site Viminacium, Serbia on 2 September 2011, on the theme “*Contemporary Art and Reconciliation in South East Europe*”, organized under the auspices of the Republic of Serbia, UNESCO and the Council of Europe;

Reaffirming the ideals and principles embodied 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 the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

Also reaffirming the ideals and principles laid down in the relevant international standard-setting instruments of the United Nations, UNESCO and the Council of Europe: Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954), and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999), Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property (1970), Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), European Cultural Convention (1954), Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), Convention on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), Convention on the Protection of Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985), European Convention on the Protection of Architectural Heritage (revised) (1992), European Landscape Convention (2000) and Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005);

Emphasizing that the present declaration is in continuity with the Message on the Dialogue among Civilizations (Ohrid, 2003), The Summit Declaration on Inter-religious and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue in South East Europe (Tirana, 2004), The Declaration on Cultural Corridors of South East Europe, Common Past and Shared Heritage – A Key to Future Partnership (Varna, 2005), The Declaration on Communication of Heritage (Opatija, 2006), The Declaration on Cultural Diversity – a Bridge between Cultural Heritage and the Culture of the Future (Bucharest, Sibiu, 2007), and The Declaration on Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South East Europe (Athens, 2008); The Declaration on Management of Heritage Diversity and its Promotion for Tourism (Cetinje 2009) and The Declaration on Music as a metaphor of Cultural Dialogue (Istanbul, 2010);

Reaffirming the content, aims and principles of the Belgrade Declaration adopted at the Seventh Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture in South East Europe on 10 June 2011 in Belgrade;

Recognizing the valuable role of the international organizations participating in the Summit, namely UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union in supporting programs and initiatives devoted to enhancing cultural cooperation in South East Europe;

Recalling the significance of cultural heritage for national identities and *underlining* thus the importance of its promotion and protection from various threats and pressures;

Underlining also the importance of the protection of cultural heritage in post conflict and post disaster situations for the promotion of the intercultural and interreligious dialogue, culture of peace and non-violence;

Confirming the common determination to sustaining and promoting cultural diversity through policies, measures and programs at the national, regional and international levels;

Contributing to the promotion of the intercultural and interreligious dialogue, while keeping in mind the importance of the effects of the national, regional and local cultural policies on the culture of understanding and tolerance;

Supporting the process of cooperation between our countries in the domains of culture and art, which further on contributes to raising respect and understanding among peoples and communities, especially contributing to the realization of the mutual projects, mobility of artists and experts, institutional cooperation as well as cooperation with the civil sector on local, regional and national level;

Emphasizing the role of culture and art in the process of dialogue between peaceful and democratic societies, as well as the fact that the dialogue itself is the proper instrument for sustainable development that encourages creativity and social cohesion and builds confidence in the reconciliation processes;

Convinced that contemporary artistic production, due to its emancipatory, inclusive, educational and critical potential, constitutes a universal form of expression and communication and, as a common denominator in ethnic, cultural and religious differences in the region of South East Europe, constitutes an important vehicle for promotion and dissemination of human rights and values of tolerance, cultural diversity and mutual understanding and *assured* that contemporary art enables the reconnection among cultures and cherishes the birth of a new humanism as the basis of a genuine dialogue. We, Heads of State reiterate our determination to strengthen these principles in our societies and recognize art of today as our common heritage of the future. Hereby we declare that we shall:

1. Remain fully committed to the ongoing processes of reconciliation in the South East Europe to jointly build a peaceful and prosperous European future of the whole region;
2. Recognize and promote the essential role of art in the life and development of the individual and society and accordingly respect and assist artists and their freedom of creation, their dignity

and integrity in describing, interpreting and understanding changing conditions of contemporary world;

3. Endeavour by all appropriate means to secure increased participation of artists in the formulation of cultural policies, thus allowing the capacity of arts in its inventive and changing forms and means of expression and interaction to be recognized in policy making processes and in overall social, technological and spiritual spheres;

4. Strive to initiate, implement and sustain cultural cooperation in the South East Europe through the work of cultural and educational institutions, cultural organizations, artistic initiatives and non-governmental organizations to create joint programs supporting artistic creativity, artistic production, artistic mobility and networking, and encourage the development of necessary facilities, such as museums, galleries, performing art venues, studios and other forums, conducive to fostering the dissemination of the arts and the encounters of artists and the public;

5. Enable and assist creation of regional collections, such as museums and other public collections of contemporary art, or support already existing ones, as sites of cultural dialogue and our joint heritage of the future and promote these collection at the international level;

6. Encourage the process of reform of educational system to place due emphasis on the increasing role and meaning of contemporary art, so as to enable large audience to appreciate the work of artists, and to provide easier access, through new technologies and distant learning programs, to cultural institutions, collections and museums in order to allow them to fully develop and realize their educational role;

7. Emphasize role of the media as a mediating tool in stimulating interest and knowledge of contemporary art by appropriate cultural programs and other contents;

8. Provide support for heritage and art education for youth in the South East Europe and recognize its crucial role in creating the foundation to forge social bonds and community cohesion.

We welcome the proposal of theto be
the host of the 2012 Regional Forum