Sixth Ministerial Conference of the Council of Ministers of Culture of
South East Europe
Enhancing Culture for Sustainable Development (CoMoCoSEE)
Rijeka, Republic of Croatia, 1 February 2020

Declaration

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the sixth
meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe –
Enhancing Culture for Sustainable Development (CoMoCoSEE),

Gathered today, on 1 February 2020 in Rijeka, Republic of Croatia within the
framework of the Croatian Presidency of the CoMoCoSEE,

Reaffirming respectively the contents, objectives, activities and principles
included and determined in the Charter of the Council of Ministers of Culture of
South East Europe signed on 31 March 2005 in Copenhagen and in the
Appendix and Second Appendix to the Charter approved on 15 April 2011 in
Bucharest and on 28 June 2014 in Ohrid;

Confirming our commitment to the implementation of the Regional Strategy
for Cultural Cooperation in South East Europe, approved in Ohrid on 28 June
2014; and to the joint declarations approved by the Ministers and Heads of
Delegations participating in the previous meetings of CoMoCoSEE in Istanbul
on 25 February 2016, in Tirana on 22 February 2017, in Sarajevo on 4 April
2018, and in Sofia on 17 May 2019;

Acknowledging the importance of cross-cultural cooperation and the
contribution of that cooperation to enhance stability and cohesion within South
East Europe;
Recognising the exceptionally important role of culture in building inclusive and cohesive societies, and the important contribution of culture to sustainable social and economic development of contemporary societies, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New European Agenda for Culture of the European Commission, the EU Work plan for Culture 2019-2022, the cultural Conventions and regulations approved within the frameworks of UNESCO, European Union and of the Council of Europe;

Reaffirming our commitment to further enhancing and strengthening regional cooperation in the field of culture on multilateral and bilateral level, considering the culture and its diversity as an essential factor in achieving dialogue, improved neighbourly relations, and better cohesion in the region, in the spirit of mutual understanding, respect, peace and stability;

Emphasizing our commitment to further enhancing regional and bilateral cultural cooperation via already established mechanisms of cooperation, as well as the implementation of conventions, directives, and other relevant international standards that contribute to the protection and promotion of culture as a strategic resource for development;

Thanking the European Union, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO for their support for projects and activities in the field of culture in South East Europe;

We, the Ministers of Culture and Heads of Delegations agree on the following:

1. Continue to further strengthen the cooperation among the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe Member countries, with the aim of sharing knowledge and information in the cultural and creative sector, especially best practices and experiences in interweaving culture with other sectors, such as regional and territorial development, tourism, education, environmental policies and health sectors, as well as sectoral policies in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. Recognize the exceptional importance of all cultural institutions and organisations in our societies, especially those that play an important role in improving the management of cultural heritage, safeguarding and protecting intangible and tangible cultural heritage, cultural diversity and contemporary creation in our societies and foster their inclusive economic and environmental sustainability.
3. Emphasize the importance of application of new technologies in the digitization and inventoring of cultural heritage in accordance with relevant international standards, to advance protection, safeguard and promotion of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. In this sense, we also strongly support projects that strengthen the regional cooperation in raising public awareness of the value of cultural and natural heritage.

4. Commit to further consolidate our cooperation in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural goods in the SEE region, and other offences linked to them by exchanging information and strengthening existing capacities.

5. Acknowledge the importance of protection and promotion of cultural diversity and creativity in the SEE region as a bridge between cultural policies and cultural development in our respective countries and as an essential key of development for local communities in facing current economic and technological challenges.

6. Ensure conducive environment to improve collaboration between artists and professionals in the field of culture in the SEE region in order to produce a positive impact on developing solutions in addressing their common needs and problems.

7. Encourage collaboration and mutual work on the organization of capacity building programs, seminars and expert meetings, with emphasis on sharing knowledge and best practices, which will promote cultural diversity, contemporary creation, increase mobility and exchange of artists and professionals, thereby increasing mutual understanding, knowledge and diversity of cultural expression between the Member Countries of the Council of Ministers of Culture and the European Union.

8. Further strengthen partnerships in joint projects supported by the European Union, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO, in the spirit of the Ohrid Strategy, which are aimed towards the needs of younger generations.

9. Support strengthening partnership with the public and private sectors, as well as the civil society, in line with the current technological development which opens numerous possibilities for the cultural and creative sector. Special attention is to be paid to the protection of copyright and related rights.

10. Encourage the exchange of projects and works in the field of performing arts, visual arts, traditional arts, music, theatre, cinema and literature. The
mobility of works of art, cultural productions and professionals in the field of culture helps the dissemination of new ideas in the SEE region and creates direct links among people and countries.

11. Reaffirm our commitment expressed in the Declaration adopted in Sofia on 17 May 2019 to initiate creation of the Cultural Cooperation Fund, in cooperation with UNESCO, we thank the Republic of Bulgaria for elaborating the initial documents. The Committee of Officials should ensure submission of necessary comments and inputs by end of March 2020 to enable advancement of the process.

We thank the Republic of Croatia for its Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe and we welcome the new Presidency by the Hellenic Republic.

In Rijeka, 1 February 2020