



**Conference of the Ministers of Culture
of the Member States of the Central European Initiative**

"State and Prospects of CEI Cultural Co-operation"

Skopje, 27 June 2002

Final Declaration

The Ministers of Culture or their representatives of Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia convened in Skopje on 27 June 2002 for the first Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Member States of the Central European Initiative. A representative of the EU/EC attended the meeting in his capacity as special guest. The meeting was also attended by the Director General of the CEI - Executive Secretariat.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Ganka Samoilovska-Cvetanova, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, which holds the CEI Presidency for the current year.

The Ministers,

- RECOGNISING that culture and arts use mechanisms and tools such as intercultural dialogue or promotion of cultural diversity that can provide major contributions for mutual understanding, confidence building and good-neighbourly relations and thus contribute to the process of building peace and stability in the region;
- CONVINCED that the respect for cultural identity and diversity can play an important role in conflict prevention;
- UNDERLINING that cultural co-operation represents a key tool for promoting a better comprehension of the values and traditions as well as of the constraints and problems that characterise the CEI region;
- TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the importance of raising awareness and of preserving the unique cultural heritage of the CEI region in its diversity;
- CONSIDERING that the transition process in Central and Eastern European countries and the strengthening of international and European cultural co-operation have a significant impact on their cultural environment;
- DRAWING on the rich creative potential and know-how available in existing structures and initiatives of member states;

- RECALLING the provisions of the "CEI Instrument for the Protection of Minority Rights" concerning the preservation and development of the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity of minority groups;
- ENDORSING the conclusions of the meeting of the Heads of Cultural Departments of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of CEI Member States, held in Trieste in July 2000, which launched the idea that cultural co-operation within the framework of the CEI should be further developed;
- STRESSING the particular importance of promoting mutual understanding among the people of the region through cultural exchanges, encounters and common projects;

DECLARE

Their intention of enhancing cultural co-operation among CEI member countries, and to this end will take the following actions:

1. Develop the specific role of the CEI and its potential with respect to other international organisations and institutions in the field of culture within the priority areas contained in the CEI Plan of Action 2002-2003¹.
2. Identify by way of the competent CEI structures, in particular the Working Group on Culture and Education, appropriate projects of common interest for CEI member countries, in particular those with respect to the effects of the transition process on the cultural policies in CEI countries.
3. Intensify co-operation with other actors in the field with the view to enlarging CEI's outreach and ensuring co-sponsorship of CEI projects.
4. Commit themselves, within existing resources, to facilitate the implementation of the CEI cultural projects approved within the competent CEI structures.
5. Encourage the quest for the necessary funding for CEI projects from governmental and non-governmental institutions.
6. Entrust the competent CEI bodies to review the progress made in the achievement of the above mentioned tasks as well as to agree on further measures with regard to CEI cultural programmes and activities.

¹ CEI Plan of Action 2002-2003: I.7. Co-operation in the field of culture and education ? I.7.1. Implementation of the projects and programmes proposed by Member States; I.7.2. Co-operation among CEI national museums; I.7.3. Extension of the "Transfrontier Television" established by Italy and Slovenia to other CEI countries; I.7.4. Extension of the Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS) to other CEI countries; I.7.5 Seminars on management of cultural institutions; I.7.6. Co-operation activities in the field of education also with respect to employability; I.7.7. Cultural events held under the CEI patronage (Mittelfest, Vilenica, CEI International Music Camp, etc.); I.9.2. Participation in regional programmes funded by international organisations; I.2.4. Co-operation with the Council of Europe ? II.2.4.1. Follow-up of the Budapest Conference (2-6 December 2001) on Impact of International Trade Contracts to the Cultural Policies of the CEI Member States?