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Launching Colloquy of

« Heritage and Beyond »

a publication on the contribution of the Council of Europe
Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for
society (Faro Convention)

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*The Regional Programme on culture and cultural
heritage in South East Europe*

Distinguished Minister Canavilhas,
Esteemed Mr. Palmer,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a particular honor for me to greet you all on this special occasion on cultural heritage and its preservation.

Regional Programme for cultural and natural heritage was established 6 years ago, as a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. 9 beneficiaries from South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo under the UN Resolution) have accepted the methodology that the partners offered and expressed their interests in fulfilling the aims of the Programme.

Complex methodology that has been presented to us and then widely accepted in our region has obligated us to true commitment to the programme and up until now we had many benefits from this acceptance.

Regional Programme has been realized through three components:

- A) Institutional Capacity Building Plan
- B) Integrated Rehabilitation Project Plan/Survey of Archeological and Architectural Heritage
- C) Local Development Pilot Project

All these three components had their own methodology and the region of South East had a major improvement in the field of cultural heritage through its implementation.

Through Component A had been issued many publications that had helped us to advance our legislatives and procedures regarding cultural heritage.

Component B is the center of all our preoccupation in the recent months because of the recently held Ljubljana Conference which has been concluded with the Ljubljana Declaration that had been accepted. Ljubljana conference was the end of one phase of the IRPP/SAAH since the next year is planned for defining future strategies of cooperation with all interested sides in this perspective, so we all hope that until the end of 2010 we will accept another strategy that would

offer new knowledge and new framework of cooperation which will improve our practices as good as the IRPP/SAAH did. We have implemented good experiences and good practices from the IRPP/SAAH into our national activities and procedures on cultural heritage and during this process a strong regional cooperation was created. Through this cooperation step by step we had unify our regional strategy which really can be huge advantage. On this manner, Montenegro, as a chair of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe during the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on the occasion of Ljubljana Conference had presented the idea of one new procedure in the working of the Council. Every year during the Ministerial Conference of the Council ministers of culture will agree onto one main priority of regional policy on cultural heritage so all our efforts will be directed into improving this specific theme. This suggestion was widely accepted with the members of the Council and on the next ministerial conference which will take place in Montenegro on the spring of 2010 we will have the first chosen yearly priority. This action will help us a lot also with the cooperation with the international cooperation on manner of defining their programs for our region according to our needs.

Implementing of IRPP/SAAH also had helped us to widen the visions regarding cultural heritage which corresponds also to the Faro convention. The time has passed when cultural heritage was seen only as immovable objects in the hand of public sector, important for cultural and national identities. Although it is indisputable that the heritage is the core of the identities, today, with the intervening of all other aspects that are connected with it, we can easily talk about the concepts of sustainable development, local communities, new opportunities, socio-economic growth, cultural tourism etc. That means that concept of cultural heritage has transmitted from one form to another without losing any of previous values. It has just widened the possibilities for its different uses. That is why the Faro convention is crucial in this moment. It is the legal framework that enables us to direct all activities in this manner to the right path.

Component B is very specific and it consists from the number of methodologies and improvements that created special workflow for all beneficiaries. The project methodology itself has been divided correspondingly into few stages, moving from the general to the particular, from the heritage identification and management strategies to a detailed, specific consideration of the feasibility and costs of restoring and rehabilitating the sites. Preliminary Technical Assessment (PTA) as a basic document of the monument now in Montenegro and some other countries from the region is widely accepted and it is one of the regular procedures in the field of preserving heritage.

Component C is designed for the concrete help to the local communities. In Montenegro in the area of Skadar Lake, which is the biggest lake in Balkans and also border with Albania, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Media with national

partners and with Council of Europe, had established LDPP office which is very advanced. Skadar Lake is one of the national parks in Montenegro and it is very well known by the diversity and richness of cultural and natural heritage in this area. Through LDPP office we wanted to foster socio - economic development of local communities through sustainable development of cultural heritage and cultural tourism. Various activities that had been offered through the work of LDPP office on Skadar Lake have fostered interest of local communities to take an active role towards widening of cultural tourism offer in this area and in this precise moment Montenegro is in the phase of negotiations with Albania in order to find the way of developing of common strategy for this area from which both countries will benefit since this area has really huge potential in many aspects: fascinating cultural and natural heritage, old crafts, food, cheeses and vines, water sports, etc.

All activities taken in our countries through Regional Programme have fulfilled these general objectives that Council of Europe and the European Commission had established previously:

1. The celebration of diversity; the encouragement of constructive dialogue between peoples;
2. The promotion of mutual respect for the identities of those peoples;
3. The encouragement of greater well-being and an improved quality of life.

Achievements of the implementing of Regional Programme are mostly measurable. There had been picked 186 monuments from the Region defined as a priority intervention and up until now many of them have got some kind of funding from national or international authorities.

The Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage for South East Europe as you could partly hear is a very complex methodology. Although sometimes we have been faced to different problems during its implementation, on the end it has really provided major improvement. But, it was not one of the passive programs that are presented, accepted and after a while one monument is rehabilitated. Although the funding of course is more then important, this program had offered long term strategy of learning that is now applicable to all monuments. It is not measurable like a funding, but the impacts of this process of accepting new knowledge and improving previous is precious.

Thank you for your attention.