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COMMUNICATION OF HERITAGE:
A NEW VISION OF SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

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Paper prepared by:

The CULTURELINK Network Research Team

Introduction

UNESCO has a long standing commitment in fostering regional cooperation in Southeastern Europe (SEE). It continually engages in contributing to stability, peace and development of intercultural dialogue in this geopolitical area.

The region of SEE has gone under a tremendous change which inevitably caused the re-assessment of national identities and cultural re-identification.

SEE was burdened by the raging conflict issuing from the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the endurable consequences it left. In the last decade of the past century, Southeastern Europe was the region where the war was a reality and the conflict was wrongly ascribed to differences in cultural legacy and cultural values that were imprinted in the fabric of national identification. Although they are proclaimed to be the main traits of proposing better communication amongst the nations, cultural differences were „sparking“ elements to conflicts that have occurred in this region.

Still, the conflict itself was largely defined by the opposing political, social and economic interests and inclinations towards the general systemic change. Cultural features, just as religious legacy, were purposefully mistreated and misused as a communicational tool of obliteration. Inevitably, heritage both tangible and intangible became a source of ineffable torment. Destruction of cultural heritage was just one of the conflict consequences where the tangible cultural assets were destroyed as national symbols regardless of the outstanding value they had for the global cultural inheritance.

Since 1990, UNESCO has undertaken a principal role in leading international operations and actions for restoring and safeguarding heritage damaged or threatened by conflicts. These activities are mostly realized through cooperation with other above-national bodies and agencies, like Council of Europe and European Commission who have collaborated intensively with UNESCO on projects in Croatia, Bosnia, and the Kosovo region. The initiative for rehabilitation, protection and presentation of cultural heritage in Kosovo is an initiative that followed the High-level Conference on Strengthening Cooperation in Southeastern Europe that was held in UNESCO headquarters in 2002 which was further elaborated at the UNESCO Conference on Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo. The main aim of these initiatives are accentuating the need for establishment of intercultural communication and concrete dialogue among civilizations in order to enable better understanding and appreciation of the mutual cultural legacies and features.

Furthermore, the objectives of the initiative encompass the fostering of international awareness of cultural issues in the region and generation of both political and financial resources that can enable the achievement of general goal which is to push the current and rather marginalized regional position towards a more active and weighty one in the context of European developing perspectives.

Consequently, many heritage sites were restored and inscribed on the World Heritage List¹. The latest entries were Monastery of Dečani in Kosovo in 2004 and Old Bridge Area and the Old City of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2005.

The latter is a result of the Cooperation Memorandum that was signed by UNESCO and the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Old City of Mostar and the Old Bridge Area are two out of five heritage preservation projects that are to be realized in this country. The Old Bridge was recently rebuilt and many of the edifices in the Old Town have been restored or rebuilt with the contribution of an international scientific committee established by UNESCO. Just like the Monastery of Dečani, the reconstructed Old Bridge and the Old City of Mostar is a symbol of reconciliation, international cooperation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities. In many ways, this bridge represents the aims of the efforts UNESCO invests in this region – by restoring the heritage as a core symbol of a respective identity and promoting its value in a wider, international context, UNESCO strives to establish new ways of interregional and international communication where heritage is posed as a main agent and factor of dialogue. Heritage is perceived as grounds for understanding and communication rather than for national glorification. According to the UNESCO's Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage from 1972, the World Heritage Sites belong to all peoples of the world, regardless of the territory where they are actually located. In conjunction to the universal spirit that the Convention promoted along with the raising of the awareness about the collective good, Convention proposed for the national State Parties to integrate the inherited cultural legacy into the national policies and development plan. This was further asserted by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage, adopted in Paris in 2003. In the context of the current globalisation trends and the erasing of the nationally established borders, both tangible and intangible heritage are a matter of not only national interest but of a global one. It is imperative for the heritage to be preserved in the environment of its cultural inception while

¹ There are 31 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the region of Southeastern Europe: 2 in Albania, 1 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9 in Bulgaria, 6 in Croatia, 1 in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 7 in Romania and 5 in Serbia and Montenegro.

positioning it on a wider international and intercultural level. This enforces the sustainability of a distinctive cultural identity and encourages the respect and dialogue among diverse cultures. It is precisely cultural diversity that supports a clear definition of particular cultural identities and thus makes possible communication among various cultures. The occurrence of the interlinking notions of heritage as being national yet global, distinctive yet diverse, proves the UNESCO's promotion of the World Heritage to be inclusive rather than selective. The policy of inclusiveness promotes and proposes the language of cultural diversity to be the main pillar of the communication in the region that needs to upgrade the levels of intercultural tolerance. Cultural diversity must be deeply integrated into the foundations of emerging SEE societies.

In conjunction to the mentioned activities and operational aims in the SEE region, UNESCO has engaged in organizing annual regional forums of Heads of States and other leaders from the SEE countries as a result of the recognition of the need for enhanced international cooperation in this region as being essential for the reconstruction of educational, scientific, cultural and communicational structures. The main objective of forums is to assess and present new possibilities for better cultural communication and cooperation amongst SEE countries.

The first meeting took place in Ohrid, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2003. Entitled „**Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations**“, it underpinned the importance of confidence and capacity building in the region through the interregional dialogue and cooperation in conjunction with complementary actions at the respective national levels.

Following was the Tirana Summit (Albania) “**The Development of Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue**” in 2004 which further reinforced the concept of dialogue among the civilizations.

“**Cultural Corridors of Southeast Europe: Common Past and Shared Heritage – a Key to Future Partnership**” was the title of the last meeting that was held in Varna, Bulgaria in 2005. The meeting highlighted recognition of the role of cultural heritage and cultural corridors of the countries of Southeast Europe as a key element for strengthening regional and global cooperation.

This year's meeting devoted to “**Communication of Heritage: A New Vision of Southeastern Europe**” will define and analyze the aspects and benefits of the communication of heritage through the fundamental role of science and culture given that the science and IT

have always been key components of developing for all cultures and have a great potential to advance dialogue.

Certain initiatives undertaken by the non-governmental bodies in establishing the scientific and cultural cooperation between the countries of the region must be mentioned since their significance is considerable. The series of annual postgraduate courses, organized by the Department of Culture and Communication of the Institute for International Relations in Zagreb in cooperation with Interuniversity Centre in Dubrovnik since 2000, has gathered scholars and students from the SEE region who have jointly researched, examined and debated various aspects of the contemporary and on-going cultural changes in the region. The topics that were covered in the course curriculum include the issues of Multicultural contexts of Central European and Mediterranean Regions, Redefinition of Cultural Identities in Southeastern Europe, Cultural Industries and Technological Convergence, Managing Cultural Transitions in Southeastern Europe and assessing the Creative City by Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region. These initiatives are of paramount importance for the viable construction of long-term communication and knowledge sharing.

New Technologies and Knowledge Societies

Today the new ways of communication and knowledge organisation in the networked environment are the result of digitisation and technological convergence - merging of the computer industry, communications, broadcasting and publishing that enabled fast and easy way of information storage, reproduction and distribution of information. All existing media are being converted to 'new media' by being pulled in the digital domain through digitisation. The fact that digital technologies make this conversion and change possible does not also make this process easy. Digitisation of existing cultural goods, e-born cultural goods and documents and their accessibility through the Internet network present a new context that cultural institutions must take into account in the information society, and Southeastern Europe is not an exception. The presence of the Internet is rapidly increasing, despite the discouraging facts of Serbia and Montenegro having only 14% population digitally literate, Bosnia less than 5% and Albania not even 3%. UNESCO has supported the increase of digitisation by funding digitisation centres in countries of the region (Zagreb, Sofia, etc.). The primary feedback of the centres operation has shown that digitisation is a much-needed project in SEE with long-term prospects. Moreover, the digitisation has made an influx in the sphere of heritage preserving and providing wider accessibility. Namely, UNESCO has been actively involved in the project of cultural heritage digitisation in Macedonia. In the

communicational arena and the influence that new technologies have made on regional networking in the culture and the arts sector, NGOs have played a crucial role. In effect, this has been mostly funded and supported by the international foundations, organizations and agencies. Today, the NGO sector that has been strengthened in the period from the 2000 till 2005, is the bearer of the cultural communication in the region. Concurrently, UNESCO and the Council of Europe have made a statement by placing one of the most significant networks for scientific and cultural cooperation, the Culturelink Network in Zagreb, in capital of a SEE country.

This new context affects the way the cultural sector operates, and opens new possibilities for cooperation as well as for the distribution and consumption of cultural goods, giving the users the unprecedented access to knowledge. As Kolar-Panov argues, there is a vital need for national visions and strategies for ICT implementation, and use in both scientific and cultural sector.

In practice, creating digital resources proves to be a bottom-up process where anyone can relatively easily upload digital content online and this is visible in a situation where NGOs have assumed leading position in using digitalisation in order to promote and establish open access to content and free communication of knowledge in the cultural and arts sector in SEE². Though the region lags behind Western Europe, digital infrastructure development is uprising.

However, the establishment of an open and flexible system of knowledge and heritage in the SEE, that must be based on using common organisational and technical standards, incites problems related to converting of the existing analogue heritage to the digital form at all fronts. There are organisational challenges arising due to logic that ICT imposes, as well as challenges related to new knowledge that cultural practitioners must master. When these skills are in place, there is still a question of setting priorities and adequate national strategies that will have to take into account limited resources available. Apart from the insufficient financial resources, one of the major obstacles in content development is also language barriers.

The organisational patterns of network challenges the established ways of working in the public cultural institutions that are hierarchically structured. Also the convergence creates new problems for cultural policy that is in the SEE still traditionally perceived as a sector

² See Open Content in the Southeastern and Eastern Europe <http://oc.openflows.org/see>

under the Ministry of Culture's ingerence and that in the new context of e-culture must embrace interactions with various other policies.

The digitalisation of heritage resources aims to preserve knowledge that has been recorded through particular heritage elements. It does not happen automatically because ICT infrastructure is available to us. This process has to be carefully planned. Existing heritage artefacts should be digitised and processed in such a way that allows information to be retrieved by different users' criteria. For the most part heritage institutions are small institutions, with limited resources, that have in their safekeeping a small share of our heritage. The real knowledge that heritage provides us with, lies in the relations among objects and not only in the objects themselves. For this reason, institutional boundaries should be overcome when digitalisation strategies are being developed. If we agree that the role of the cultural heritage sector in knowledge society is not just to ensure users access to 'raw' information, but rather to offer the possibility for interaction with knowledge, than it is clear that this can be achieved only through cooperation.

The cooperation in the heritage field does not happen randomly. To be able to effectively safeguard heritage, it is important to build partnerships through cooperation networks that contribute to different aspects of heritage protection, which also includes digitalisation. It requires setting policies in place, securing necessary resources, developing inventories, mapping resources, building new knowledge structures, connecting people, exchanging experiences, etc. For this reason joint cooperation projects are an important infrastructure that enables heritage to be protected, as well as communicated.

In Southeastern Europe such cooperation is taking place, but still only to a limited extent. In most cases, institutions work on small-scale isolated projects. Some steps have been taken to remedy this through various joint projects initiated by UNESCO, the Council of Europe or the EU. On a political level, UNESCO is engaged in organizing annual regional forums of the Heads of States and other leaders from the SEE countries, resulting from the recognition that the need for enhanced international cooperation in this region is essential for the reconstruction of educational, scientific, cultural and communicational structures. The main objective of these forums is to assess and present new possibilities for better cultural communication and cooperation among SEE countries. There are also cooperation initiatives on more practical levels that aim to develop joint digital resources and facilitate knowledge sharing. Initiatives such as UNESCO's Regional Meeting on Digitization of Cultural Heritage

that took place in Ohrid in 2005³, Council of Europe's Integrated Rehabilitation Project Plan / Survey on the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage (IRPP/SAAH) 2003 – 2006⁴, the HEREIN⁵ project, or the Kulturkarte Donau⁶ project all contribute significantly to the process of restoring broken regional links and they help build synergies in the development of digital heritage projects.

The process of establishing a framework, as well as infrastructural services for digitalisation and constructing virtual heritage resources in the region is important because it does not only try to digitalise existing resources in a systematic way, but it also contributes to building 'knowledge tools', such as thesauruses and digital maps, which serve as users' interfaces through which the digital heritage resources are accessed. This organisational layer, although sometimes invisible to the users, is important as it contributes to the success of the projects because they in fact shape the virtual heritage resources logic, which if not suitable to users' needs will fail in reaching the set aims.

The only way to keep culture and heritage alive is through communication. New technologies can assist in preserving our memory (knowledge), but we must strike a balance between its use as a recorded memory tool and its use as a communication tool. In addition to recording elements of our heritage through using ICT, we must strive to keep it alive through its communication and use. Digitalisation is very significant for culture in the information society, as it does not only provide means of preservation of our collective memory through recording cultural heritage resources, but also as the means of preservation of today's culture and creativity.

ICT will be effective for preserving heritage only if it results in keeping alive particular elements of our heritage for its use by citizens. This highlights the importance of cooperation and joint projects but it also implies that real actions must link the virtual with the real world. Thus virtual heritage resources, cultural industries, cultural tourism, art, etc., are all important segments in which our heritage is reflected and through which people find connections to it.

³ <http://www.ncd.matf.bg.ac.yu/news/sr/ohrid.pdf>

⁴ http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/Heritage/Technical_Co-operation_and_Consultancy/3_Projects_and_Programmes/IRPP_SAAH.asp#TopOfPage

⁵ www.european-heritage.net

⁶ <http://www01.noel.gv.at/donau/>

Cultural Tourism as a Dynamic Aspect of Heritage

The natural and cultural heritage, diversities and living cultures are major tourism attractions (*International Cultural Tourism Charter* 1999) and cultural tourism is among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange and for carrying information about the 'Other' since it embodies the inevitable 'contact' between cultures. Interaction between tourism and cultural heritage often results in the interpretation of heritage, which involves an educational process.

Since postmodern tourism has shown trends of active holidays which enrich the *persona* of a visitor by educating him/her and giving them a sense of experience, a great potential has been seen in developing such approaches. Accordingly, with the growth of creative use of free time, the growth of the industry which supplies creative activities also occurred⁷. Such industries are those which supply «ordinary» citizens with means for developing their creative skills. The situation in the Southeastern Europe in the sector of cultural industries as defined by UNESCO shows that the only three countries from the region represented on Florida's⁸ emerging 'global creativity index' are EU candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia.

Cooperation between various countries and their different cultures is best perceived through the concept of cultural routes/corridors. This concept is not new to the UNESCO activities; it launched programmes related to roads that connected peoples of the world. The concept of cultural routes also has strong roots in the Council of Europe and ICOMOS activities but also new initiatives following the same pattern were born (such as within the Central European Initiative or within the Varna Regional Forum on Cultural Corridors of Southeastern Europe for example). The Council of Europe initiatives tried to involve the SEE region in its itineraries but except for a few (The Olive Routes, The Silk and Textile Routes), no greater developments have been done. A new theme of 'Nikola Tesla Route' is currently being proposed that would involve some of the SEE countries where Tesla spent his life. Because of numerous actions in this field a need for concerted actions is expressed.

⁷ In Croatia, such changes have occurred around 1995. No research has been done in the field but the search through the Court Register results in a number of small firms that started their activities as hobby art centres around 1995 or later. A number of firms also changed their field of activity into hobby/art field (<https://sudreg.pravosudje.hr/SUDREG3/index.jsp>). A personal communication with the director of the leading firm in the field in Croatia (Hobby Art Center Chemaco) revealed that people in Croatia do have more free time as is also the world trend. Still, people in Croatia do not have more money but a number of them started to do hobbies as a means to gaining profit (K. Presečan, personal communication, 25 February, 2005).

⁸ Florida, Richard (2005). *The Flight of the Creative Class*, New York, HarperBusiness

The cultural routes initiatives undertaken so far have particular importance as pioneering activities in the field of intercultural communication through tourism. There is no doubt that cultural routes have a great power in connecting people. Still, the question arises why SEE countries have not been more involved in the initiatives? A research study⁹ done in Istria has confirmed that all cultural tourism planning is done in an eclectic way, without a systematic approach. Another research study¹⁰ done for the whole territory of Croatia confirmed the same results. The mentioned research also confirmed the following problematic issues: non-existent or poorly organized system of cultural statistics; insufficient cooperation between cultural and tourism sector; lack of funding and consulting agencies. All of these are certainly slowing down the process of closer cooperation between possible partners in the SEE region, since the situation is not quite clear on national levels. Further obstacles in planning and implementing cultural tourism programmes are seen in fragmentary responsibilities for the cultural tourism sector.

Fora and seminars¹¹ that have been held in the last few years expressed the need for a more organized system in the field. The success of an organized system on national levels is a prerequisite for future quality cooperation. Therefore, a need for clear responsibilities on national levels is expressed so that future partners in regional initiatives can be detected. Undoubtedly, SEE region has a lot to offer in this field having in common a variety of themes that could be presented.

Many other documents and initiatives which partly focus on the subject of cultural tourism are existing whether within the framework of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, EU, ICOMOS or other. In this way, for example, the Charter of the Council of Ministers of Southeastern Europe from 2005, in the Article 2 mentions that the objectives will be pursued, among other, through 'creating regional management strategies for cultural needs to be defined and put into action, thus assuring the integration of cultural activities into contemporary economic and social goals, including cultural tourism' (*Charter of the Council of Ministers of Southeastern Europe*). Accordingly, by protecting and putting efforts into preserving the heritage sites in SEE, UNESCO has provided grounds for the development of

⁹ The research *Identification of the situation in cultural tourism in Istria* has been done by Daniela Angelina Jelinčić in Istria, Croatia in 2002.

¹⁰ The research has been done by the Institute for Tourism, Zagreb within the framework of 'From Culture and Tourism to Cultural Tourism: Development Strategy' in 2003.

¹¹ For example 'Reedukacija za kulturni turizam' (Re-education for Cultural Tourism), Belgrade, 8 – 10 May 2003; 'Od turizma i kulture do kulturnog turizma: strategija razvoja' (From Culture and Tourism to Cultural Tourism: Development Strategy), Zagreb, 18 February 2003.

cultural tourism in the region. World Heritage Sites in SEE are today's most visited locations for new generations of cultural tourists.

Cultural Industries and Communication of Heritage

Cultural tourism, as well as creative tourism, are important factors in the communication of heritage across borders. In this way, the exchange of knowledge of respective identities takes a more direct and dynamic form. One of the ways in which identities and heritage can and are also communicated, are cultural and creative industries. They have become of great concern due to the active transformation of cultural models perceivable in the cultural policies as a part of public policies.

Cultural industries are considered by UNESCO as mainly those industries that combine the creation, production and commercialization of contents. These contents are typically protected by copyright and they can take the form of goods or services. Cultural industries may also be referred to as 'creative industries', 'content industries', 'experience industries' or 'copyright industries'. Cultural (and creative) industries are based on the exchange and consumption of cultural products and services that have a tangible as well as intangible element. Sometimes, it can be understood that 'cultural industries make a subset of the creative industries' (UNCTAD, 2004: 4). The notion of cultural industries generally includes printing, publishing and multimedia, audio-visual, phonographic and cinematographic productions, as well as crafts and design. In some contexts this concept also includes architecture, visual and performing arts, sports, manufacturing of musical instruments, advertising and cultural tourism. In this context one has to stress that new technologies are influencing directly as well as indirectly both aspects of cultural products. The cultural as well as creative products are not like other products as Venturelli (2000: 7) stresses; unlike other products, their value increases with time and their usage. It is not a one-way process, and new technologies are not the only influencing factor, but they are important considering the role they have and how they are used, taking into account radical changes including mp3, p2p, various intranets, broadband, etc. The digitalization in this respect influences cultural heritage that in this way can be more easily used in the cultural industries, and consequently more easily communicated, promoted and exploited. The new technologies also enable the preservation by the way of digitalization of cultural industries heritage such as cinematographic and documentary heritage, literature, traditional arts and crafts etc., which

can thus be distributed and communicated more easily. This is also perceived as a tool for the enhancement of the regional cooperation.

The knowledge on and research of creative industries is rather scarce in the SEE region. There are several problems encountered while entering the analysis of the cultural industries sector (Primorac, 2004): there is a lack of data, the data that exist is not structured, and the existing structured data differ from country to country in their structure, which makes comparison difficult. When assessing the overall situation (on the sectors of book publishing, film industry, recording industry and publishing) one notes that there are mainly problems of distribution within and out of the country, piracy/copyright issues, problems of small-scale production, translation and the need for regulation of the market.

In connection to cultural industries, UNESCO tries to provide legal aid to Member states as part of the development of cultural industries. This should be achieved through strengthening the local capacities and access to global markets of the emerging countries through new partnerships, training, and control of piracy and intensification of the types of international solidarity. The question of copyright and neighbouring rights is directly connected to cultural industries in the context of the production and exchange of cultural products. This is in line with the *Florence agreement* on the free circulation of educational, scientific and cultural goods (1950), and its' *Nairobi protocol* (1976). UNESCO works to protect cultural diversity and it is committed to have an active role in raising awareness on the importance of copyright. Therefore, it promotes the international conventions on copyright and neighbouring rights, and in the same time it opens the floor for the internationally accepted regulations of the digital age. It has to be stressed that one of the major UNESCO actions in this field is the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions that was adopted in 2005 by the General Conference of UNESCO. The principal objectives of the 2005 Convention are: to recognize the right of States to formulate cultural policies; to adopt measures in favour of the diversity of cultural expressions; to recognize the distinctive nature of cultural goods and services insofar as they convey identity; and to recognize the link between culture and development and the importance of international cooperation. The promotion of these objectives is carried out through various international meetings and conferences (organized with partners such as UNCTAD and others), on the issues connected to cultural diversity and globalization, cultural industries, copyright infringement, and so on.

The latter topic is rather important in the region of SEE as the infringement of copyright is rather immense in SEE countries and piracy is on the highest levels in Europe.

That is why in May 2004, UNESCO co-coordinated a project entitled ‘Anti-Piracy Training for Trainers’, an advanced seminar on the copyright enforcement officials from SEE. The project was carried out by the UNESCO’s Copyright Programme and was funded by the Government of Norway, while positioned within the framework of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity. It was designed to alert national authorities and enforcement officials to the importance of enforcing copyright laws and economic and cultural consequences of piracy. The second phase of the project were national seminars for officials involved in anti-piracy struggle on a national level; these seminars begun in December 2004 in Romania and were followed by seminars in FYROM (April, 2005), Bosnia and Herzegovina (May, 2005) and Bulgaria (May, 2005).

The majority of the profit of cultural as well as creative industries is based on the profit made from the copyright they create, or from the copyright that they own. The interests of multimedia companies have dominated the regulatory processes: “[a] sign of this imbalance is the fact that copyright is not only addressed by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), but by the World Trade Organization (WTO), bringing intellectual property (as a tangible good) to the trade negotiating table. This move was initiated by the USA and Europe to give them more power and control over the flow of intellectual capital - turning intangible rights to be negotiated within the framework of world trade. In fact, intellectual property is considered to be the fast-growing component of the national economy and represents a significant amount of the GDP in the United States” (ERICarts, 2005: 8). This dynamism of cultural industries is mostly result of the transnational corporations that also creates an imbalance of the cultural production and a certain homogenization of the cultural market. There are many structural changes ahead in the cultural industries sector in the SEE countries. The whole field has to be restructured in order to establish strong domestic production that will have a healthy distribution system and accessibility and that will be in touch with global processes. UNESCO should continue to work in raising awareness on these issues in the light of regional cooperation in the field of cultural industries in the context of communication of heritage.

The Regional Cultural Cooperation

The SEE cultural cooperation in the last fifteen years has been marked by transitional changes that have included liberalization of markets, increasing openness to globalization processes and impacts of new technologies. The dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation has essentially re-oriented cultural exchange and cooperation by directing all efforts to communication and cooperation with the EU countries and reducing radically both intra-regional and international contacts and communication.

Cultural cooperation in the region is still sporadic and rather unsystematised. However, the new forms of cultural cooperation have been developing. They are visible in networking, transfer of knowledge, artists' mobility and creativity and the development of cultural market exchange based on cultural industries production.

Specific networks have been created: ECUMEST, Apollonia, the Southeast European Contemporary Art Network - SEECAN, Balkan Art Network, BalkanCult and other. They support functional interlinking within the region by promoting information exchange, residential programs for artists, seminars, educational and other activities.

Transfer of knowledge encompasses joint projects and exchange of experts, particularly in the area of cultural policies, cultural management and cultural heritage. It reflects the need to share expertise which is often lacking, and rationalize cultural processes through competent analyses.

Exchange of artists has been increasing, which testifies to the growing interest in joint manifestations (e.g. The Urban Zagreb Festival hosting artists from Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, etc.) and creation of artists' residence programmes (e.g., in Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia etc.).

The present day cultural cooperation within the region has been marked by the strong influence of international donors, particularly international organizations, who have been supporting the efforts to enable functional interconnection among the ever more diversified societies within the region, and centripetal forces influencing processes of redefinition of the particular national identities. However, it is ever more visible that the identification processes are structurally comparable. They tend to affirm cultural particularities, diversities and specific cultural values, but the processes of such affirmation are similar. This provides for a possibility to base cultural cooperation on the new regional visions. One of such visions should be linked to the communication of heritage. The whole process of cooperation

therefore moves from internationally supported programmes and projects to the nationally supported ones. An institutionalization of support to joint programmes is lacking and they mostly depend on individual efforts of cultural activists, researchers or artists. The civil society organizations active in the cultural field support substantially ever more diversified forms of cultural cooperation within the region. Their efforts are not always matched by the governmental organizations or state ministries that mostly care about how to sustain and develop national cultural activities.

Southeastern Europe: Creation of a Modern Dynamic Region

The contemporary European development dynamics largely resides in modern regions that encompass production, trade and many other functions related to the integration processes and mutual cooperation of the European peoples. The region of Southeastern Europe is, in geographical, historical and cultural sense, both a part of Central Europe and the Mediterranean. It connects them and inherits from both of them, gradually evolving from a regional construct heavily imbued in historical Balkan heritage into a supranational region bringing new diversity qualities into the overall European integration processes.

Southeast European region is being created through influences of the newly established states and still instable national identities, strong presence of ethnic identities and pressures for wider European identification supported by wishes to integrate into the EU and the much needed functional economic and social integration. Thus the creation and further development of the Southeast European region demand the establishment of functional links among the neighbouring countries and peoples and an awareness of belonging to the same geographic, historical and cultural entity. The general process of democratization and systemic transition in the area has to be blended with different aspects of integration processes, be they global or regional. Although Southeastern Europe has not yet been fully constituted as a region in a modern sense, there are tendencies of flexible mutuality: promotion of mutual trade, common development projects, sharing of infrastructure, re-establishment of cultural links and exchange, sharing of ever more standardized media communication developed under the influence of global media networks, etc. Within such concepts the values of the Balkan cultural heritage, artistic specificity, regional diversity, blending of different cultures that has been going on for centuries, need to be re-evaluated through mutual and ever more intensive sharing of knowledge and through the creation of regional cultural identity.

Sharing of knowledge on cultural heritage and awareness of its value stands for rationalization of the own past and represents the communication of heritage. Communication of heritage is an inalienable part of redefinition of cultural identities and the presentation of key-values of peoples from the region. The communication of heritage encompasses historical, cultural, natural and overall intellectual heritage of Southeastern Europe and thus defines the position of the region in the European context.

Southeastern Europe is defined today in the context of the knowledge society and full awareness of individualized and particular cultural identities. Although the knowledge society may primarily be an economic concept, it has important social and cultural implications. It brings forward a new way of working with historical memories and cultural heritage in the form of information components.

The institutions dealing with the past and the collective memory have been changing in the contemporary world. In this context, the communication of heritage is linked to institutional change induced by processes of transition in all countries and cultures of the SEE. Institutional convergence is forming new creative clusters. Following the societies' needs, they are evolving from a prevalent scientific concern to communicational one. Retaining science as their obligation, heritage occupations, be they museums, archives, libraries or different hybrid institutions, are turning themselves into a communicational business of particular sort and importance. From ambition to care about totality of inheritance and provide knowledge about it, those institutions now want to share, to impart and provide the benefit and joy of **understanding**. They want to contribute to the better quality of life in all communities and provide basis for their development. Communication helps to create means and objectives for the accumulated knowledge to be turned into the very substance of regional development. By communicating heritage, language of users is employed to present both difficulties and advantages of making science and culture effectively and efficiently present in the daily lives of most of the SEE peoples. That is what communication of heritage is about.

The attempts at self-definition of countries and societies in this part of Europe still remain disconnected and much diversified, but they also seem to be turning from the past to the future perspectives. Realization of these perspectives demands an overall transformation of the Southeast European societies, their economic modernization and overall progress, as well as the functional inclusion in international exchange and development.

The new societies are being built in the region. Their ability to develop self-consciousness based on education, knowledge, respect of inherited cultural values, present

creativity and flexible communication will define the future of these societies. Their natural and human resources need to be interconnected within the region in order to produce synergetic effects in each and all of its parts.