



FORUM BEOGRAD

Душа Европе A Soul for Europe Europa eine Seele geben Une âme pour l'Europe

Forum Secretariat
Milentija Popovica 9
11 000 Belgrade
Serbia
Tel: +381 11 316 42 96
Fax: +381 11 316 42 96
mail@forumbelgrade.net
www.forumbelgrade.net

Press release

**The first international conference on culture following the Balkan wars calls for new paths of cooperation between civil society and the world of politics.
Culture has a key role for democratic development in South-eastern Europe.**

Organisers:



**Kulturni
Front
Beograd**



4 April 2007. At the conclusion of the conference “Forum Belgrade”, which was held on 30 and 31 March in the Serbian capital with approximately 250 attendees, the **Belgrade Declaration** was published. In it, the signatories emphasise the important contribution non-institutional cultural initiatives and organisations in South-eastern Europe are making towards a European culture of diversity. At the same time, they underscore culture's productive influence on democratic development in the Balkan region. Numerous politicians who participated in the conference support the declaration in view of further activities.

The signatories to the Belgrade Declaration express their determination to support civil-society initiatives in the cultural sector even more decisively in future, and in doing so to engage representatives of the younger generation as the decision-makers of tomorrow more actively in the process. Activities in the cultural sector contribute significantly towards the development of new social structures, an economic upswing and reconciliation in the societies shattered by political and ethnic conflicts.

Active participants in Forum Belgrade included EU Commissioner **Meglana Kuneva**; MEPs **Doris Pack** and **Hannes Swoboda**; **Marijana Grandits**, Director of the Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe; high-ranking political representatives from the participating countries, including the mayor of Belgrade **Nenad Bogdanović** and the Serbian Deputy Minister of Culture **Dragan Kojadinović**; as well as numerous decision-makers in non-institutional cultural organisations. Participants came from Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine.

Forum Belgrade was organised by the civil-society initiatives Cultural Front (Belgrade), the Felix Meritis Stiftung (Amsterdam) and “A Soul for Europe” (Berlin).

The work of the Berlin initiative “A Soul for Europe” is based on the independence of all participating civil-society protagonists and directly integrates high-ranking representatives of the European Parliament and the European Commission. The central concern involves developing innovative forms of cooperation between civil society and the world of politics in order to empower the forces of culture for the development and integration of Europe.

The initiative “A Soul for Europe” sees Forum Belgrade as a stage along the way towards a “Culture for structural development” roadmap for European regional politics.

Information:

Ruggero Lala
The Felix Meritis Foundation, T: +31 (0)20 626 23 21 F: +31 (0)20 624 93 68,
E: ruggero.lala@felix.meritis.nl

The complete text of the **Belgrade Declaration** is available on
<http://www.felix.meritis.nl>