

The following declaration was published after the conclusion of Forum Belgrade, which was organised by Cultural Front (Belgrade), Felix Meritis Foundation (Amsterdam) and "A Soul for Europe" (Berlin). It is supported by many of the participating politicians, including **Meglana Kuneva**, a member of the European Commission and the Board of Trustees of "A Soul for Europe"; MEPs **Doris Pack** and **Hannes Swoboda**; Serbian Minister of Culture **Dragan Kojadinović**; the Czech Republic's Deputy Minister of Culture **Adolf Toman**; and the mayor of Belgrade **Nenad Bogdanović**.

The declaration was forwarded to the President of the Republic of Serbia **Boris Tadić**.

The Forum Belgrade Declaration

The undersigned participants in Forum Belgrade applaud the young initiative Cultural Front along with the Felix Meritis Foundation, Amsterdam and the Berlin Initiative "A Soul for Europe" for having assembled so many representatives from the world of culture, business and politics in South-eastern Europe together with leading political figures.

The signatories agree on the following:

- The conference provided examples of how cultural activities developed by non-institutional initiatives and organisations can have a strong and productive impact as part of European culture. The conference further demonstrated that such activities also can assume a key role in the process of democratic transition in the Balkan countries. Moreover, it became clear that these examples are significant in terms of sustainable regional development beyond their own local and regional context, indeed throughout Europe.
- Cultural activities foster the development of new social structures, provide impetus for economic consolidation and serve the cause of social reconciliation. Flowing from these activities is the contribution these countries can make towards diversity within the common European culture – regardless of whether they are members of the European Union or not.
- The signatories therefore declare their willingness to promote and empower the various cultural initiatives in the non-institutional sector so that the rich cultural potential of the various countries and societies of South-eastern Europe can be effective.
- Involvement of the young generation, the decision-makers of tomorrow, is crucial.
- The signatories are aware that, to that end, society and the world of politics need to develop new ways of addressing each other at the community, regional and European level.



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- A form of cooperation that has been developed with the Steering Committee of “A Soul for Europe” in the European Parliament serves as an innovative model for that. The model is based on two principles: on the one hand, the independence of the civil initiative and, on the other hand, the willingness of leading decision-makers to offer their services in terms of conveying this initiative to the spheres of power. Members of municipal and national parliaments are of particular importance for the transfer of this model to their countries.
- The signatories place their hope in the willingness of political decision-makers in the cities, regions and governments of Europe to avail themselves of the cultural dimension in their areas of responsibility and to open up new forms of cooperation with forces in civil society.
- Likewise they set their hopes on the willingness of protagonists in the cultural sector to develop new forms of interaction with decision-makers, in particular members of parliaments.

The participants share the hope that from this Forum Belgrade there will be evolving further activities and lasting effects. Forum Belgrade should be emulated. The participants, particularly the organising groups, are available as partners for that.

Belgrade, 31 March 2007