



**CULTURAL CORRIDORS OF SOUTH EAST EUROPE
COMMON PAST AND SHARED HERITAGE -
A KEY TO FUTURE PARTNERSHIP**

A REGIONAL FORUM

Varna, May 20-21 2005

**ADDRESS BY MR. PETROS TATOULIS,
DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE OF GREECE**

(Summarized, the original text is not available)

- The Deputy Minister congratulated the President of Bulgaria on his initiative to organize the Varna forum, and the UNESCO Director General and the Council of Europe Secretary General for their joint auspices of the event, noting that such initiatives are in line with the aspirations of people around the world, giving them strength to look to the future with more optimism.
- The Deputy Minister said that people should seize all opportunities offered by the globalized world, making full use of the advantages of a balanced world – a world in which citizens can find relief from stress, worry and fear and get to know each other better, which can only be achieved by facilitating mutual understanding through more knowledge about the cultures and civilizations of individual communities.
- Said that such interaction, such people-to-people communication at the level of culture would create the necessary conditions and inspire hope for the future.
- Said he was very interested in the current discussions which acknowledged that the countries in the region played a leading role in culture and civilization, especially in the remarkable project for cultural corridors, which made it possible to identify the monuments and sites which needed to be restored.
- The Deputy Minister said that the Balkans were ending an era of confrontation to enter an era of mutual closeness, harmony and building up on the historical foundations and the cultural idiosyncrasy of the region, and all that was being done for the well-being of the citizens of the Balkan region and the countries of Southeastern Europe.
- The Deputy Minister stated that the links among places and routes of historical and tourist value would certainly bring people closer together by enhancing and promoting the spirit of exchange and the transfer of knowledge and technology. He said this was an extremely useful way for different cultures to complement each other, creating new forms of partnership, new connections, new contacts for the purposes of protecting, developing and popularizing cultural identity, which is not based on blind and dull uniformity, but emphasizes diversity, and this is, indeed, an active element of European integration.
- On behalf of the Ministry of Culture and the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Kostas Karamanlis, the Deputy Minister invited the participants in the forum after the meeting in Croatia to come to Greece for a meeting on the role of waterways in spreading the values of culture and civilization.
- The Deputy Minister said that, concerning the Declaration, the working group which was to meet immediately afterwards would have the easy task to approve a text after considering all statements made at the forum. He said the Greek delegation was ready to put forward its proposals and remarks in a constructive manner, in accordance with the rules of international law, and in the spirit of international cultural conventions, democracy and tolerance.