



## FINAL DOCUMENT

### OF THE REGIONAL FORUM “TRANS-BALKAN CULTURAL CORRIDOR “GREECE - BULGARIA - ROMANIA“ – SHARED HERITAGE AND COMMON EUROPEAN FUTURE“

Plovdiv, 16 November 2007

The participants in the Regional Forum on the subject *Trans-Balkan Cultural Corridor “Greece - Bulgaria - Romania – Shared Heritage and Common European Future“* – representatives or delegates of national, regional and local authorities, of civic, scientific and business societies from Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, appreciating the importance of:

- The Trans-Balkan Road being a shared historical environment for dialogue, exchange and consent, including its inherent cultural and natural heritage, as an incentive for sustainable regional development and quality of life;
- The Regional Forum *Cultural Corridors of South East Europe* (Varna, 21 May 2005), held on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Director General of UNESCO, and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, as well as the Varna Declaration, which expresses the political will of the Heads of State of South East Europe for joint action in the field of the cultural corridors of the region;
- *The Strategy for identifying, preserving, sustainably using and promoting the cultural corridors of South East Europe* adopted by the Heads of State (Opatija 2006) and the Ministers of Culture (Varna 2006) from the region, as well as the Bucharest Declaration of the Heads of States of the South East Europe Region (2007);
- The valuable experience acquired in the last 20 years by the Council of Europe and the European Institute of Cultural Routes in the field of the European cultural routes that is recognised within the framework of the now celebrated *20th anniversary of the cultural routes of the Council of Europe*, and developed in the adopted by the Council of Europe *Resolution CM/Res (2007)12 on the cultural routes of the Council of Europe*;
- The results obtained from the work of expert networks from South East Europe in the field of the cultural routes in the region (since 2000), as well as all conceived and realised projects of cross-border cultural and tourist cooperation between the three countries in the last years;
- The accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union and the increased opportunities for common actions between the three countries supported with European funds and programmes;
- The contribution of the Communication Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the European Union 2007, and of the Regional Governor of Plovdiv Region for the success of the present initiative;

Declare their confidence in the necessity of unifying the efforts of the regional and local authorities from the three countries along the Trans-Balkan Cultural Corridor, in partnership with experts, civic, scientific and business societies, for coordinated actions in the following directions:

1. Complete identification and disclosure of the Trans-Balkan Cultural Road (hereinafter referred to as "the Road") with regard to the networks of the cultural corridors of South East Europe and the European cultural routes. To this end, determine its territory, the leading themes relevant to the criteria of the Council of Europe, compile the information about the cultural and natural values, tourist and information infrastructures, cultural events schedule, etc., in an integrated information system;

2. Propose measures for an integrated regional policy for preservation of the cultural potential of the Road, as well as the identity, values and cultural diversity of the tangible and intangible heritage included thereto;
3. In the light of the Regional Forum of Varna and the Varna Declaration, use sustainably the Road and its cultural resources for fostering the cross-border cooperation, for facilitating the dialogue for cultural, social and economic development, especially by developing the cultural tourism and living culture;
4. Promote the Road with the help of contemporary information methods and technologies, including the Internet, by using the existing websites created by expert networks of South East Europe;
5. Develop Strategy and Action Plan to define, preserve, use and promote the Road and the network of cultural routes integrated thereto, as a basis for regional policy for sustainable development in connection with the cultural and natural values in the territories concerned;
6. Prepare a dossier for nominating the Road as *Cultural Route of the Council of Europe* in conformity with *Resolution CM/Res (2007)12* of the Council of Europe;
7. Facilitate the set up of regional expert networks between the three countries for combining the expert and scientific research capacity for activities in the indicated areas by using the existing experience in this field;
8. Establish mechanisms for partnership and structures of cooperation for preservation and sustainable development of the Road between the concerned regional and local authorities, civic sector, scientific societies and tourist business, which are to institutionalise and coordinate the joint action of the participants to ensure synergy and sustainability with special emphasis on the role of university networks in this process;
9. Use efficiently the capacity of the European structural funds, the opportunities for joint application for European programmes and the forms of partnership between the public and private sector and civic society, for creation of integrated regional tourist products along the Road related to the themes of the European cultural routes;
10. Launch educational and training programmes for getting familiar with the values of the Road and for establishing a local capacity in the field of cultural heritage, cultural tourism, intercommunity and cross-border cooperation.
11. Recommend to the regions, municipalities, experts and other concerned parties along the Eastern Trans-Balkan road to initiate annual meetings and activities, as first step towards the institutionalisation of the Trans-Balkan cultural road with expectation the mutual trust at these meetings to develop in different forms of communication.
12. The participants warmly appreciate the contribution of the Regional Governor of Plovdiv Region for the success of the present Regional Forum and kindly ask him to disseminate the Final Document among the relevant local, regional and national authorities along the Eastern Trans-Balkan Cultural road, with the assistance of the Regional Governors of the Prefectures of Evros (Greece) and Prefecture of Brasov (Romania), as well as with the lecturers of the Forum – representatives of universities from the three countries. The participants recommend the Final Document to be submitted to the relevant authorities of the Republic of Greece, responsible for the organization of the following South East Europe Meeting of the Heads of States in 2008 with theme *Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South-East Europe* in order to consider the idea proposed at the Forum for the development of the Eastern Trans-Balkan road along the waterways of the region.