



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

Varna, May 20-21 2005

**SPEECH BY MR. DRAGAN KOJADINOVIĆ,  
MINISTER OF THE MEDIA AND CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA  
(*representative of President Boris Tadic*)**

*(Summarized, the original text is not available)*

- The Minister stated that during the first plenary session, the participants of the forum had had the chance to listen to all present Heads of State, and now the floor had the representatives of the absent presidents;
- Pointed that after years of conflicts, countries from the region were in a period of reconciliation and that the road to this had been very long and hard. Added that reconciliation could be most easily achieved in the area of culture, exactly by building up these cultural bridges – the cultural corridors;
- Also stated that at the moment, many countries from the region paid special attention to the cultural heritage, which had been neglected by the totalitarian regimes during the last years and during the years of communism and socialism and this went especially for the places of faith – as monasteries, mosques, churches. Added that during the last military actions in the region some parts of the cultural heritage had been destroyed;
- Informed that they were trying to rebuild some of the destroyed buildings in Kosovo and Metohia together with the UN, but it would take years, probably decades in order the entire cultural heritage to be restored. Added that when these monasteries and churches were reconstructed, they would need to be revived, in order for people to be free to confess their religion and to live free;
- Warned, that the cultural corridors would remain on paper if this was not achieved. Called to the presents at the forum to carefully listen to what Mr Matzuura had said, because they often listened but did not here what he said;
- Paid attention to what Mr Davis had said about the management, because when spoken about cultural heritage, usually was spoken about budgets only – the national budget or the Council of Europe’s and almost nothing about the correct management, and especially it could give life to these budgets;
- Emphasized that when speaking about cultural corridors, which were so important about the region, first should be discussed the languages, the national cultures of the region. Marked the fact that the region was under a great pressure of the so called “Americanization” and rhetorically asked whether filming of Hollywood movies in these countries promised bright future of the cultural heritage of the region;

- Insisted that countries from the region should defend their culture, their language, their cultural identity, because they were being attacked from all sides;
- Marked the fact that South East Europe is a crossroad of cultures and Serbia is on the crossroad of South East Europe and throughout the last years, subject of a special attention from the Council of Europe, UNESCO, and the UN.
- Put a stress that cultural roads were also roads, main lines on which the economical cooperation was developed, but could also turn into roads of conflicts;
- Informed, that things, done by the other countries form the region were also done by Serbia – the country reformed its legislation, in order to protect its cultural heritage, certainly with the support of UNESCO;
- Assured that Serbia shall adopt the laws necessary for protecting the cultural monuments, because this was the best possible basis to achieve its goal. And for the countries form the region, still not members of the EU, stays the perspective of joining in the future;
- Insisted that it should be remembered that this part of Europe was not only a cradle of the civilization, which should make countries proud, but also how much was done in order this cradle to be preserved and passed on future generations;
- Expressed his hope that this meeting would be a good basis of future activities and lots of people would make serious efforts after this conference;
- Promised, that he would take care and pay attention so that culture in his country is well managed, because, as Mr Davis said, this aspect is usually underestimated unlike the market aspect;
- Warned, that culture should not only be protected, but should also be further developed, otherwise cultural corridors would degrade to just trade main lines and roads.