



**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 MRS. MONA OCTAVIA MUSCA,
MINISTER OF CULTURE AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF ROMANIA**

(Summarized, the original text is not available)

- The Minister conveyed the regrets of Romanian President Traian Basescu for being unable to attend the meeting due to the difficult situation in his country caused by floods. The Minister said that the President and half of the Romanian Government were travelling to areas affected by the floods.
- Noted that this situation was compounded by the serious problem of three Romanian journalists kidnapped in Iraq. The Romanian President headed an emergency management team which was working on the case, trying to achieve the journalists' prompt release.
- On behalf of Romania and its President, the Minister thanked the Bulgarian President for what she described as a wonderful idea – to bring together the presidents of South-eastern European countries for a discussion on cultural corridors in South-eastern Europe.
- Praised the work of all who had contributed to the drafting of the Varna Declaration, a document which did not obviously elicit any remarks because it was fully worked through. She added that Romania supported and welcomed the Varna Declaration, and had no remarks to make on its content and form.
- Stressed that culture always unites people and never divides them, unlike politics, which, unfortunately, can be divisive. She said that all people of Southeastern Europe are united by their cultural past and heritage, by their cultural diversity, and what unites the people through culture also unites their countries.
- Said Romania has a specific cultural heritage: multiculturalism, or cultural diversity, and this was perhaps one of the reasons for the Romanian city of Sibiu to be selected as European Capital of Culture in 2007 at Luxembourg's proposal.
- The Minister said that in connection with the status of Sibiu as European Capital of Culture in 2007, Romania wished to host, also in 2007, a regional high-level meeting of Southeastern Europe, entitled: "Multiculturalism as a Bridge between the Cultural Heritage and the Culture of the Future".
- Expressed hope that this proposal would be approved by the participants in the Varna meeting, and that Romania would be able to welcome them in Sibiu in 2007. She noted that participants in the Varna forum had referred to a "Sibiu-Sofia-Luxembourg triangle".