



**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. IVO VAJGL,
ADVISOR OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

(Summarized, the original text is not available)

- On behalf of the President of Slovenia, the Advisor thanked for the invitation to the Varna forum and conveyed the President's regrets for being unable to attend it and to take part in its proceedings. He also thanked for the excellent preparation and organization of the meeting.
- The Advisor said it was essential that the presidents attending the forum, as well as international institutions, such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO, lend support for the regional initiative for cultural corridors in Southeastern Europe.
- Said the language of presidents is somewhat different from the language of government ministers, and advisors enjoy even greater freedom of expression and are free to stay uncommitted, while presidents carry the burden of their official position, which makes this meeting especially important.
- Said Slovenia has a specific characteristic: its land is most densely covered by fortresses compared to the other countries in the region – this obviously indicates a history of confrontation, a history of cultural, religious and other wars.
- Nonetheless, the Advisor said, the countries in the region can be viewed as creative crossroads of all those waves of influence which account for the region's diversity and make it richer.
- Noted that all countries participating in the forum, except for Greece, which is an "old" and experienced member of the EU, are "newcomers" in terms of involvement in this new European trend, and expressed hope that the rest of the countries in the region will become EU members as soon as possible. He added that this is something to which they are entitled, something which follows logically from the region's history, as reflected in the discussion topics at the forum, because all countries in the region share things in common, they have interesting histories of their past, but they also have an interesting and enriching future in store, culturally and economically.
- Concurred with Minister Kojadinovic's remark, saying that culture management is important and it is the only thing missing in the Declaration, because culture and the spread of cultural messages require adequate infrastructure. The Advisor added that all countries

represented at the forum have a rather limited capacity for supporting the creative part of their societies, their artists.

- The Advisor said that in his long career as ambassador he was fortunate to meet talented artists in the region who were working abroad and, regrettably, were often underrated and earned very little. He said one of the messages of the forum should be to suggest ways to support the creative community in the region.
- Expressed his satisfaction that Croatia had decided to organize the next meeting, which was a creative and very important initiative, making a valuable regional contribution to the invigoration of the Lisbon Process. He urged all countries in the region together to seek ways to add new meaning to this process, and stressed that this may be also an opportunity to add impetus to European ideas.