

THE TIRANA SUMMIT DECLARATION ON INTER-RELIGIOUS AND INTER-ETHNIC DIALOGUE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

Tirana, Albania – 10 December 2004

We, Heads of State and Government and other distinguished participants, hailing from all countries of South-East Europe, in the Regional Summit on «The Development of Interreligious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue – a Significant Factor for the Stability and Progress in South-East Europe», held in Tirana, Albania, on 9 and 10 December 2004, at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Albania, H.E. Mr. Alfred Moisiu, and the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, hereby adopt the following «Tirana Summit Declaration»:

1. We are united by the desire for a peaceful future based on shared values. To this end, we are committed to releasing ourselves from the disputes of the past and to overcoming them by practicing a culture of dialogue within and among our countries. Peace is indivisible from dialogue. The challenge we face every single day is to replace fear with acceptance, harassment with tolerance, and hatred with respect.

2. We are committed to building and sustaining good mutual relations. We hold that dialogue must be conducted on a platform of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and dignity of the individual. Any form of totalitarianism is incompatible with dialogue.

3. Following the High-level Conference on Strengthening Cooperation in South-East Europe, convened by UNESCO in Paris in April 2002, the Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations, held at Presidential level in Ohrid on 29 and 30 August 2003, was a significant event. It set the stage for

concrete dialogue actions in education, science and culture, designed to deepen mutual understanding and trust in the region.

4. The Tirana Summit is a further step in that process highlighting the intrinsic value of the religious and ethnic dimensions of the dialogue in South- East Europe. Both dimensions are interlinked and help create a spirit favoring social cohesion beyond the sphere of verbal declarations into everyday living. Without an open dialogue there can be no true reconciliation. Celebrating, protecting and safeguarding the cultural heritage and exercising the freedom of religion, of speaking one's own language and of respecting traditions are among the basic rights of every human being.

5. South-East Europe has suffered from the ravages of the last wars of the 20th century in Europe, also as a consequence of inter-ethnic and interreligious tension, hatred and violence. Today, the region is rebounding, leaving the wounds of the past behind and responding to the desire of its peoples for reconciliation, exchange and cooperation, especially among the youth. Ensuring freedom of movement in the region will be an important practical step. In the present post-conflict period, there is an undeniable need to face up to the truth of the past as the region is not yet free from the seeds of divisions and confrontations of a religious or ethnic nature.

6. The experience of the region has demonstrated that the matrix of values and the underlying ethical, cultural and spiritual foundations are a major determining factor for the resilience of the social fabric and the vibrancy of each society.

7. We salute the accomplishments of our host country, Albania, which has succeeded in establishing a multiparty democracy. The country also offers a valuable experience in terms of successful inter-religious coexistence, which

manifests itself in harmony among people adhering to different religious groups under one societal roof.

8. Our commitment to dialogue among cultures and civilizations is also a commitment against terrorism, reinforcing our determination to cope with new vulnerabilities in an era of globalisation. We realise that no religion preaches terror, nor are there national interests or reasons that would justify terror. Terror rests always and everywhere upon prejudices, intolerance, exclusion and, above all, on the rejection of any dialogue.

9. We reaffirm that mutual respect, rooted in open dialogue and nourished by multi-ethnicity, multi-culturality and multi-religiosity is indispensable for the preservation of peace, stability and the resolution of conflicts.

10. In a world, where no country is entirely homogenous, demands for recognition and accommodation of different ethnicities, religions, languages and values are increasingly arising. There is an urgency of developing a sense of respect for the Other that will provide a basis for mutual reference, friendship and learning. Minorities can constitute bridges of connection and understanding between peoples and countries. If left unattended, struggles over cultural identity may quickly deteriorate into a source of instability both within states and between them.

11. Cultural diversity and heritage are vectors of identity and tools for reconciliation. Cultural heritage – in both its tangible and intangible forms – is indivisible and embodies the symbolic values of cultural identities. The protection of heritage, and its preservation, presentation and transmission to future generations, are not only ethical, but equally legal imperatives. States need to find ways of forging national unity amid ethnic and religious diversity, while individuals must be prepared to shed rigid identities if they are to

become part of diverse societies. We therefore welcome the *Regional Forum on Cultural Corridors* which President Georgi Parvanov will convene together with the Director-General of UNESCO at summit level in Varna in May 2005.

12. Relations among religious communities in the region have often been strained causing grievances and tensions. Religion must not be part of the problem, but part of the solution. Preserving space for diverse religious faiths is one of the preconditions for enjoying cultural diversity.

13. We recognize the need to protect the right to freedom of religion for all citizens. Religion is of profound importance to people's identities, but religious differences should never be seen as insurmountable. There exists an underlying thread of unity connecting the great religious traditions. They each propound basic spiritual truths and standards of behaviour that constitute the very basis of social cohesion and collective purpose. The religions should, therefore, be able to dialogue and contribute to societal dialogue in an effort that honours their deepest truths and holds promise for humanity. Indeed, dialogue must be at the core of continued inter-religious cooperation and collaboration in the region.

14. All faiths convey a message of peace, justice and human solidarity. All religious leaders, like other civil society and community leaders, have the potential to exercise a moral and positive influence on how people in society understand each other and interact. Reconciliation of religious views is an increasingly significant challenge of our age. This also entails the need to create more awareness among peoples and government authorities about the need to respect the traditions of the use of religious symbols, images and expressions.

15. We recognize that religious beliefs and practices as well as ethnic values and traditions have a fundamental influence and impact on education systems and their quality. Thus, we commit ourselves to the education of a new European generation in the spirit of inclusiveness, instilling a feeling of forgiveness instead of hatred, promoting tolerance, understanding and coexistence rather than conflict and violence, reinforcing civic education and observing human rights. We are committed that our schools foster respect, understanding and consideration for Others. We are committed to ensure that our schools foster a sense of community and solidarity. We are committed to teach our children to cross ethnic and religious barriers.

16. Learning to live together again requires that we undertake a renewal of curricula, improve and revise educational materials, organise youth fora as well as re-orient the training of our teachers – in short, we are committed to promoting quality education.

17. Advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have an unprecedented ability to bring together diverse communities, cultures, civilizations and different faiths. We must capitalize on ICTs and their innate potential to advance freedom of expression, which is the cornerstone of any democratic society and has its corollary in the freedom of the press.

18. The overarching goal of all countries in the region is to secure integration into Euro-Atlantic structures in a unified Europe, which for 60 million people holds the promise of stability and prosperity free of interreligious and inter-ethnic conflicts.

19. Regional co-operation is becoming the natural way to tackle shared problems and to move towards progress. International and regional organisations, including the organisations of the United Nations system, the

European Union and the Stability Pact, should consider it their responsibility to continue assisting the countries in the region.

20. We express our sincere appreciation to President Alfred Moisiu and to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, for having convened this important Summit. We thank the Government and the people of Albania for their generous hospitality and contribution. We also are grateful for the valuable support extended by the Governments of Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway and the United Kingdom, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

21. We all are committed to making use of dialogue as the only way to achieve full stability and overall progress in South-East Europe, leading to a successful completion of the European integration process in the entire region.

Regional Summit on “The Development of Inter-ethnic and Inter-religious Dialogue – Important Factor for the Stability and Progress of South-East Europe”

(Tirana, Albania, 9 - 10 December 2004)

List of Participants

Co – Convenors

Alfred Moisiu, President of Albania

Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Heads of State or Government

Borislav Paravac, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Georgi Parvanov, President of Bulgaria

Stjepan Mesić, President of Croatia

Branko Crvenkovski, President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Svetozar Marovic, President of Serbia and Montenegro

Fatos Nano (Albania), Prime Minister of Albania

Kjell Magne Bondevik, Prime Minister of Norway

Representatives of Heads of State and Ministers

Kostas Karamanlis (Greece), Minister of Culture
Blagoj Stevanovski (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Minister of Culture
Murat Başesgioğlu (Turkey), Minister of Labour and Social Security, Representative of the Republic of Turkey

Thomas Mayer-Harting (Austria), Director General, Foreign Ministry of Austria,
Representative of the Federal President of Austria

Viktor Opaschi (Romania), Special Adviser to the President of Romania, Representative of the President of Romania

Delegations

Luan Hajdaragai (Albania), Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Edmond Dragoti (Albania), Vice Minister, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport

Edlira Haxhiymeri (Albania), Vice Minister, Ministry of Education

Tatjana Gjonaj (Albania), Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Albania to UNESCO

Teodor Osoja (Albania), Representative of UNESCO in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Rexhep Majdani (Albania), Former President of Albania

Sali Berisha (Albania), Former President of Albania

Filip Rrumbullaku, General Secretary, Office of the President

Iris Halili (Albania), Chief of the Cabinet of the President of Albania

Kristaq Birbo (Albania), Chief of Protocol, Office of the President

Muhamet Kapllani (Albania), Diplomatic Advisor to the President of Albania

Llesh Kola (Albania), Advisor to the President of Albania

Idriz Konjari (Albania), Advisor to the President of Albania

Sulejman Thic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Bosnian Member of the Presidency

Dragan Covic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Croat Member of the Presidency

Zeljana Zovko (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Bosnia and Herzegovina to France, Permanent Delegate to UNESCO

Vasilj Zarkovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Advisor for Economic System and Finances, Delegation of the Serb Member of the Presidency

Mirsad Besic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Chief of the Department of Protocol, Secretariat of the Presidency

Ivana Saravanja (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Expert associate, Contact Person for Public Relations, Secretariat of the Presidency

Zorka Parvanova (Bulgaria), First Lady of Bulgaria

Andrey Karaslavov (Bulgaria), Head of the Office of the President

Atanas Pavlov (Bulgaria), Chief of Protocol, Office of the President

Boika Bashlieva (Bulgaria), Press Secretary, Office of the President

Hristo Georgiev (Bulgaria), Secretary General of the Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO

Nikola Karadimov (Bulgaria), National Coordinator of the Stability Pact

Davor Bozinovic (Croatia), Croatian Foreign Ministry, The Department of Neighbouring States

Katarina Trstenjak (Croatia), Chief of Protocol, Office of the President

Ivica Maštruko (Croatia), Foreign Policy Advisor to the President

Anica Djamić (Croatia), Assistant to the Foreign Policy Advisor

Natasha Savova (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Secretary General, Cabinet of the President

Igor Ivanovski (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Public Relations Councillor, Cabinet of the President

Kire Petkov (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Protocol Councillor, Cabinet of the President

Blerina Starova Zlatku (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Assistant to the Foreign Policy Councillor, Cabinet of the President

Darko Kostadinovski (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Assistant to the Foreign

Policy Councillor, Cabinet of the President
Zoran Jovanov (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Member of the Cabinet, Prime Minister's Office
Panetelis Carcabassis (Greece), Ambassador of Greece to Albania
Massimo Ianuci (Italy), Ambassador of Italy to Albania
Odd Saeter (Norway), State Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
Bente Angell-Hansen (Norway), Director General of the Department of International Affairs, Office of the Prime Minister
Øivind Østang (Norway), Head of Information, Press and Information Section, Office of the Prime Minister
Jan Braathu (Norway), State Undersecretary for Western Balkans, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Trine Skymoene (Norway), Deputy Permanent Delegate of Norway to the OSCE
Zeljko Perovic (Serbia and Montenegro), Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Head of the Sector for Multilateral Affairs
Dragoljub Najman (Serbia and Montenegro), Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Serbia and Montenegro to UNESCO
Iztok Simoniti (Slovenia), State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Melita Gabrič (Slovenia), International Relations Adviser, Office of the President
Ugur Yalcin (Turkey), Delegation of the Turkish Minister for Labour and Social Security
Representatives of International and Regional Organizations
Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact
Pieter Verbeek, Director of Working Table III, Stability Pact
Björn Kühne, Political Advisor, Stability Pact
Dragan Barbutovski, Spokesperson, Stability Pact
Claudia Luciani, Head of Division III, Directorate General of Political Affairs, Council of Europe, Strasbourg
Hubert Petit, Head of Contracts and Finance Section, Delegation of the European Commission, Albania
Evgeny Efimov, Deputy High Representative and Senior Advisor to the High Representative of the International Community and to the Special Representative of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina
Una Zeger, Executive Assistant of the Deputy High Representative
Pavel Vacek, Ambassador, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Albania
Anna-Kristina Stjärnerklint, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative, United Nations Development Program, Albania
Elzira Sagynbaeva, Deputy Resident Representative, United Nations Development Program, Albania
Entela Lako, Civil Society Focal Point, United Nations Development Program, Albania
Lawrence Rossin, Principal Deputy of the Special Representative of the Secretary General, United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Pristina
Biyjala V.P.Rao, Principal International Officer, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, PISG, United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Pristina
Erica Usher, Head of Strategic Policy and Planning, Migration Policy and Research Department, International Organization for Migration
Maurizio Busatti, Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration, Albania
Hans d'Orville, Director, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO, Paris
Horst Gödicke, Chairman, UNESCO Intersectoral Working Group on South-East Europe
Ann-Belinda Preis, Senior Programme Planning Specialist, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO, Paris
Marie Paul Roudil, Chief of Section, Culture Sector, UNESCO Regional Office for Sciences, Venice
FW (Russ) Russell, Programme Planning Specialist, Bureau of Strategic Planning,

UNESCO, Paris

Andreï Chevelev, Programme Specialist, Sector for External Relations and Cooperation, UNESCO, Paris

Krista Pikkat, Executive Officer, Office of the Director-General, UNESCO, Paris

Andrea Stengel, Consultant, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO, Paris

Participants

Alajdin Abazi (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Rector of South East European University, Tetovo

Franz-Lothar Altmann (Germany), German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin

Bjoern Andersen (Denmark), Cultural Sociologist

Nena Arvaj (Croatia), Project Officer, Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights, Osijek

Paul Ballanfat (France), Professor of Persian Studies, University of Lyon

Ivo Banac (Croatia), Professor of History, Yale University, Member of the Parliament, Croatia

Relja Bašić (Croatia), UNESCO Artist for Peace, Zagreb

Harry Birnholz (United States of America), Director, USAID mission in Albania

Marcus Braybrooke (United Kingdom), President, World Congress of Faiths, London

Alja Brglez (Slovenia), Director, Institute for Civilization and Culture, Ljubljana

Narciso Binayan Carmona (Argentina), Journalist, Historian

Mihail Cekov (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Reverend, United Methodist Church

Mustafa Cerić (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Justyna Chrzanowska (Poland), Legal and Treaty Department, Human Rights and National Minorities Division, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Emily Coffman-Krunic (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Regional Director, South East Europe, World Conference of Religions for Peace

Andrea Decker (Germany), Balkan Representative, German Foreign Trade Association

Agon Demjaha (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Executive Director, Balkan Children and Youth Foundation

Silvo Devetak (Slovenia), Director, European Centre for Ethnic, Regional and Sociological Studies, University of Maribor

Zlatko Dizdarevic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Croatia

Arraham Elqayam (Israel), Head of "Abraham Way", Inter-faith Dialogue between Judaism and Islam in Israel and Palestine

Schlomo Fischer (Israel), Founder and Educational Director of Yesodoth, Jerusalem

Maciej Gocman (Poland), Plenipotentiary of the Board, International Academy of Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations, Warsaw

Sabri Godo (Albania), Head of the Republican Party

Wolfgang Greffe (Germany), Balkan Representative, German Foreign Trade Association

Ingrid Halbritter (Germany), Director, Dadalos Project, Sarajevo

Martin Hauser, UNESCO Chair for the Study of Intercultural and Interreligious Relations, Director of the Department for Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Relations, University of Bucharest

Harriet Hentges (United States of America), Executive Vice-President, Institute of Peace, Washington

Ismael Kadare (Albania), Writer

Kozara Kati (Albania), Executive Director, Albanian Center for Human Rights

Saso Klekovski (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Executive Director, Macedonian Center for International Co-operation, Skopje

Emir Kovacevic (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Deputy Regional Director, South East Europe,

World Conference of Religions for Peace

Ana Lalaj (Albania), Director, Institute of History Albanian Academy of Sciences
Arthur E. Liolin (United States of America), Chancellor, Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America, Boston
David Little (United States of America), President of the International Academy for Freedom of Religion and Belief
Rusmir Mahmutcehajic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Writer
Ghassan Manasra (Israel), Head of "Abraham Way", Inter-faith Dialogue between Judaism and Islam in Israel and Palestine
Mirjana Mikic (Croatia), Program Specialist, Center of Peace Studies, Zagreb
Ino Mirković (Croatia), UNESCO Artist for Peace, Lovran
Piro Misha (Albania), Director, The Book and Communication House, Tirana
Atia Moor (United States of America), Project Director, World Learning for International Development, Albania
Ferid Muhic (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, St Cyril University, Skopje
David Nearon (United States of America), International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah
Darina Oketa (Albania), Program Officer, World Learning for International Development, Albania
Borka Pavicevic (Serbia and Montenegro), Director of the Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade
Malgorzata Pawlisz (Poland), President, International Academy of Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations, Warsaw
Vladimir Petrovsky, (Russia), Chairman, Dialogue among Civilizations Foundation, Geneva
Jordan Plevnes (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Permanent Delegate and Ambassador of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to UNESCO
Paolo Roga (Italy), Representative, Community of San Egidio, Rome
Adam B. Seligman (United States of America), Professor, Department of Religion, Boston University, Boston
Jelena Stevancevic (Serbia and Montenegro), Project Coordinator, Humanitarian Law Center, Belgrade
Veton Surroi (Serbia and Montenegro), Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of *Koha Ditore* (Albanian language newspaper), Kosovo; Member of the UN-supervised Kosovo Transitional Council
Marcus Tanner (United Kingdom), Balkans Editor, Institute for War & Peace Reporting, Belgrade
Kiril Temkov (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, St Cyril University, Skopje
Matty Thimm (United States of America), Country Director, World Learning for Development, Albania
David Thompson (United States of America), USAID Program Officer, Albania
Alfred Uçi (Albania), Philosopher, Member of the Albanian Academy of Sciences
Rumen Valchev (Bulgaria), Professor Bourgas Free University, UNESCO Chair in Culture of Peace and Human Rights, Bourgas
Ivan Vejvoda (Serbia and Montenegro), Executive Director, Fund for an Open Society Yugoslavia, Belgrade
Arber Xhaferri (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Chairman of the Democratic Party of the Albanians
Shan Zefi (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Chancellor of the Bishop Marko Sopi of the Catholic diocese of Skopje-Prizren