

## Speech Delivered at the Fourth Ministerial Forum on Cultural Cooperation between PR China and Central and Eastern European Countries

### Republic of Lithuania

Building contacts between people and communities lies at the heart of our cooperation in the field of culture. In recent few years, while implementing Hangzhou Declaration and twoyear Cooperation Plan, we all succeeded to widen the scope of our cooperation further into the fields of libraries, literature, tangible and intangible cultural heritage and cultural tourism. In total 28 professionals from Lithuania—leaders of cultural organizations, arts managers and civil servants, went to China for multilateral as well as bilateral research visits.

With the purpose to encourage contacts, exchange and learning opportunities Lithuania in 2018 and 2019 hosted 15 cultural professionals from China in the fields of music, theatre, dance, visual arts and museums, visiting various Lithuanian cities, cultural organizations and artists. Some of new contacts made in Lithuania during these research visits already led to concrete cooperation projects.

Recent biennium has also seen high level exchange of the delegations in the field of cinema between the Lithuanian film producers, coordinated by the Lithuanian Film Centre and representatives of the China Film Co-Production Corporation. Another high level exchange was related to the Lithuanian focus at the Shanghai International Arts Festival in 2020.

In 2018 and first half of 2019 our cultural institutions and organizations implemented between Lithuania and China 68 projects, with 320 participating artists and cultural specialists, attracting 38.000 visitors.

Lithuanian experience shows that music, theatre and dance are traditionally strong fields in our cooperation with China. Cultural organizations succeed finding appropriate partners in line with their own interests, develop projects based not only on presentation, but also on exchange of knowledge and experiences, many of Lithuanian companies pay returning visits for tours and festivals. Chinese performing arts companies are welcome guests on Lithuanian stages and are appreciated by our audiences.

In 2019 Lithuanian National Gallery of Art in Vilnius presented exhibition “Chinese Xieyi [Šeji]: Selected Works from the National Art Museum of China”, a second part

of the exchange project between the Lithuanian National Museum of Art and the National Art Museum of China. Both museum projects presented in Beijing and Vilnius have clearly shown the need to move from presentational form of cooperation towards closer co-production, involving both parties in selection and curation of the exhibitions. It allows to adjust the projects to the needs of the local audiences, to get their greater involvement and appreciation.

Literary translations encounter certain issues related to the lack of translators as well as opportunities, and cooperation in this field would need more focus and investment. Nonetheless we are glad to announce that thanks to the interest from the Chinese publishers, two Lithuanian books were published in China in 2019, and we will make every effort to cooperate with the publishers promoting these publications.

We strongly believe that our vision for future cooperation shall preserve people-centered approach by creating opportunities for development and growth, by facilitating personal networks. It is important to think about long term perspective, investing in cultural exploration and trust development rather than seeking for immediate and visible results. Only then incidental partnerships may grow into regular ones and possibly also become strategic partnerships.

Thank you for your attention.