

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

Republic of North Macedonia

Distinguished Minister Luo Shugang,

Esteemed Heads of Delegations from the Central and Eastern European Countries,

Esteemed Ministers

Your excellencies,

Dear guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me at the beginning to greet you and to wish you a warm welcome in our country, Republic of North Macedonia. It is a great honour and pleasure for us to host the Fourth Ministerial Forum on Cultural Cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Central and Eastern European Countries, by which we shall demonstrate, clearly and undoubtedly, our efforts to deepen and intensify the cultural ties between the countries which are a part of this platform.

As you know, the China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Coordination Centre began its mission in 2018 in accordance with the Hangzhou Declaration on Cultural Cooperation and, within this context, I would like once again to express our gratitude for the confidence shown to us to run this Centre.

In the past two years, we have been devotedly engaged into the realization of a number of initiatives towards enhancing and bringing together the cultural relations among artists, associations and institutions from the countries that are a part of this Process, as well as recording, exchanging and distributing information in the field of culture. The Coordination Centre has organized and participated in many activities with its own representatives and experts, distinguished artists and professionals in the area of culture.

Thanks to the programmes of the *Silk Road* and *The Belt*, commenced within the framework of the 17+1 Process, our institutions and artists of various profiles have had the opportunity to visit the People's Republic of China and to acquire

valuable experiences which have upgraded their professional knowledge and skills. In this respect, we must give special gratitude to Mr Luo Shugang and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China.

As a Coordination Centre on Cultural Cooperation, we have attentively implemented the adopted documents within the framework of the 17+1 Process. Above all, we have focused on finding new modalities of dynamic cultural communication which will enable creation of new initiatives, cultural projects and programmes.

In this direction, it is my pleasure to inform you that the China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Coordination Centre has created a new web platform which will facilitate the networking of all subjects in the field of culture from the countries included in this platform and stimulate cooperation. This platform will serve as a powerful instigator of our mutual communication.

Dear guests,

Today, it is with pleasure that we can note that the cultural cooperation between the countries from the 17+1 Process is in progress and in flourish. We put culture in function of the positive development of our societies, by all means, respecting differences- the things that make us unique, but also unite us in global terms.

In the spirit of the well known Silk Road, which once used to facilitate the exchange of cultures, languages, science and art between the western and eastern civilizations, our collaboration must continue as a strong basis for numerous mutual projects in the future.

In this regard, I would emphasize that the Cultural Cooperation Plan for the next two years 2020-2021, which clearly defines our future activities, will be beneficial to all the countries from the Process. It is our imperative to have intensive collaboration in the library and audio-visual domain, in the field of protection and cultural heritage and music. We firmly believe that the 17+1 Process will significantly lead to effective synergies for the benefit of the creative industries, which, according to many, are the new European economic force.

Dear guests,

With this whole engagement and contribution, we have all shown our strong will for future fruitful cooperation in all areas of culture. The Declaration which will be adopted today confirms this, and I believe that it will produce positive effects in the cultural exchange. We are thinking of a long-term perspective, of investments in the cultural development, of building stable trust for strategic partnerships from which we expect visible results.

Once again, I thank you for your participation in this Forum. I expect us to have a fruitful and successful working day and I wish you a pleasant stay in our country.