

Mrs.Irina Cajal – Marin
Undersecretary of State
Ministry of Culture of Romania

Your Excellency, Mr. Hysni Ismaili, Minister of Culture of the Republic of North Macedonia,

Your Excellency, Mr. Luo Shugang, Minister of Culture of People's Republic of China,

Your Excellencies,

Please receive Romania's warmest greetings on the occasion of this very important Forum!

We salute the Macedonian initiative for this forum, more precisely, the creation of the web platform that will facilitate the cooperation and communication between the national cultural institutions within the countries of the *17+1 Initiative*, an approach that will provide more coherence and continuity to our mutual efforts to spread our cultural messages within all our countries.

Nowadays, in the era of new and emerging communication technologies, we have new ways to share our values and beliefs. And this web platform for the exchange of information and promotion activities, featuring, for example, a help desk, a joint calendar of activities, a catalogue of good practices, etc. is one of this new ways.

Distinguished colleagues,

The China and Central and Eastern European Countries Cultural Cooperation Forum illustrates the joint effort made by all our countries to tighten further the cultural connections, to promote cooperation between our countries on all cultural levels and to strengthen intercultural dialogue. Cultural diversity is one of the treasures of our planet and sharing the rich cultural heritage of our countries, as an essential bearer of our identity, constitutes the basis of a deep and long lasting friendship between our peoples, the guarantee of long lasting peace.

Arts and culture connect distant geographical parts of the world and have the unique power to build bridges between people, to create communities. Also, arts and culture in general, are an universal magic language that tell wonderful stories about people and places we, sometimes, can only dream about.

Romania, as all the countries represented here, is blessed with a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Cultural diversity manifests itself not only through the ways in which it is expressed or transmitted, but also through the diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used.

In recent years, many countries have gained expertise in using the creative industries for promoting sustainable development, social inclusion, regeneration and empowerment. Societal progress depends on innovation, on new ideas and on solutions for the major problems of our time. Creative industries have the ability to make use of culture to provide new insights and new solutions to benefit both societal and economic goals.

As part of the world economic and development agenda, the creative economy, and especially the creative industries sector may help national economies to recover from the downturn. Creativity represents a key ingredient in job creation, innovation and trade, while, at the same time contributes to social inclusion, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability.

What we must keep doing at our level of competence is to identify and implement the solutions that would afford us a flexible use of this potential, bringing in both the civil society and the private sector, but keeping a necessary control of scientific principles that rule the preservation and exploitation of cultural resources, principles which are defined by international conventions and national legislations.

We are certain that everything we undertake together, in order to promote culture and to share our professional experience and achievements, will contribute to build up common projects, thus validating the principles and objectives that fundament the 17+1 Initiative.

Please receive our best wishes for success to China and Central and Eastern European Countries Cultural Cooperation Forum!

Thank you for your attention!