



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Fourth Ministerial Forum

On Cultural Cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Central and Eastern European Countries

Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

24 - 26 November 2019

Speech

Dear Excellency Minister Hysni Ismaili,

Dear Excellences Ministers and Deputy Ministers,

Dear Heads of Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both an honor and pleasure in my capacity of the Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Albania to attend this high level meeting, organized by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of North Macedonia in the framework of the 17+1 initiative.

Allow me to extend my appreciation and gratitude to our host for an excellent organization and the choice of topic that not only reflects current tendencies towards strengthening of cultural relations between People's Republic of China and the Central and Eastern European Countries, but also demonstrates global policy in the field of culture.

Cultural cooperation has a particular significance for us. Culture and international relation are at the heart of the Ministry of Cultures' vision, approach and political action as we believe that culture is the best passport this region has to offer to the world.

Our Ministry of Culture has been implementing a comprehensive reform in the field of culture and cultural heritage, which includes legislative initiatives, institutional capacity building programs, public private partnership, and projects focused on rehabilitation, conservation and valorization of cultural heritage, as well as strengthening and intensification of the regional and international cooperation in this sector.

Recently, after 3 years of intense work and cooperation, we have drafted the National Strategy for Culture 2019 – 2025, which is in line with with the Objectives of the New European Agenda for Culture 2018, addressing the development and strengthening of the socio-economic dimension, and the international relations in the field of art, culture and cultural heritage.

Through specific measures, there are planned legal reforms, capacities building activities, and different incentives supporting the development of the cultural and creative industries, in private and public sector aiming to raise the awareness for the legal framework in culture sector, its function toward creating a supporting eco-system for the art and culture market, and in support of the independence of the artists and cultural institutions. With a *Vision* on arts and cultural heritage as a driving force for sustainable socio-economic development of the country, and its *Mission* to create a favourable environment for the growth and development of cultural and creative products and services, of public and private sector, this Document sets out its *Political Goals for Improvement and expansion of the cultural market; Protection and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; Presentation and promotion of artistic and cultural values; Supporting of artists and creative activities; Design and implementation of the education platform all with a Goal* to increase the attention for the arts and culture.

Considering culture an important knot that connect different nations, international and regional cooperation is the tool needed to amplify these relation with specific attention to promotion of cultural heritage, film production and distribution, culture and creative industries, contemporary arts among others.

As culture is an essential tool in reinforcing the cohesion not only among the South Eastern European countries, Albania continues to play a constructive and proactive role in several regional initiatives which offer opportunities to develop cultural cooperation projects across frontiers with a view to develop international networking and access funding for the cultural sector.

In this context, cultural diplomacy plays an important role in the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations fostering mutual understanding respect which enables embracing social development of the society in general. We believe there is a range of activities which could be carried out in this perspective such as:

Presentation of the cultural products and activities of the Cultural Cooperation Plan through the web platform to exchange and promote the information of culture to facilitate the communication and the network between the national cultural institutions and organization within the countries of *17+1 Initiative*.

Participation of our cultural professionals and experts in relevant international events organized by the China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Coordination Centre such as Forums, workshops, field trips, workshops to deepen or cultural exchanges.

Support the idea of bringing together the most eminent artist and musicians from all the 17 +1 member countries to perform on international festivals in each of the 17+1 countries, by establishing a coordination body and exchanging musical programmes from diverse cultural milieus.

Reinforcement of our cultural cooperation through bilateral and multilateral partnerships and implementation of the new cooperation plan will strengthen international visibility of *17+1 Initiative*.

As governments, state and regional institutions we participate in different projects and initiatives and to expand our cooperation we should foster the establishment of the China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Coordination Centre in Skopje as a tool of monitoring and enhancing cultural cooperation between us.

Through the Cultural Cooperation Coordination Centre we will work towards strengthen the cultural cooperation under the *17+1 Initiative* in bilateral and multilateral levels, but also implement adopted documents, thereby ensure an efficient collaboration process.

The Cultural Cooperation Plan between PR China and Central and Eastern European Countries for the Years 2020-2021 is once more a document of our commitment and

readiness to embrace 17+1 Initiative.

We believe that the creation of a web platform by the China-CEEC Cultural Cooperation Coordination Centre in Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia, will be the main tool for real-time distribution of information, improving the visibility of activities planned for years '20-'21, and raise our awareness for the current challenges and new ideas and opportunities in the culture and creative sector.

With ratifications of previous declarations, Albania has been committed to participate in cultural exchange, helping to reach its aspiration and provide foundation for a shared vision of the future. And today, we are making concrete actions for this vision. Our presence at this high level meeting, along with leading representatives of People's Republic of China and the Central and Eastern European countries, bears witness to the importance of culture and to the fact that developments and projects in this sector contributes and impacts other important sectors.

We should continue to work closely in the cultural sector to:

- support joint cultural projects that aims at exploiting common values rooted in the traditions of our region, common history and culture;
- develop a strong narrative within the countries of the 17+1 Initiative on cultural resources and specificities;
- connect with artists communities as powerful opinion maker;
- develop international residency programs;
- promote synergies amongst cultural industries, art, tourism and the private sector.

Effective development of culture and creative sectors requires the implementation of a number of activities on different levels. Nurturing culture and creativity will help foster economic growth and entrepreneurship playing a key role in the creation and promotion of a regional brand. Through the 17+1 Initiative we can:

- Deepening the cultural ties between People's Republic of China and the Central and European Countries;
- Connect artistic communities and young professionals working in the culture and creative sector;
- Support events and activities celebrating cultural and creative entrepreneurship;
- Reinforce communication, public awareness, and cooperation with the civil society in the field of culture.

On behalf of the Ministry of Culture of Albania I would also like to express my support for the Declaration that we are adopting today.

Honorable Minister Ismaili,

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'll conclude my intervention by thanking once again the Republic of North Macedonia, for exceptional organization and hospitality of your country.

A special thank you goes to the representatives of People's Republic of China and support in implementing programs, projects and initiatives in this field of culture in the region, I gratefully acknowledge their significant contribution.

The cooperation established through this platform enables us to make better joined respond to common issues and challenges but also opportunities that lie create before us all towards the achievement of our common goal.

Thank you for your attention

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