



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

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Skopje, 26 April 2012

EU Culture Programme Info day-Literacy Works

26 April 2012

Skopje Fair (Business Conference Hall)

Speaking points
Ambassador Aivo Orav
Head of the EU Delegation

Dear Minister Ms. Kancheska-Milevska,

Dear cultural operators,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to take part in this information day dedicated to the Culture programme, which is one of many programmes of the EU.

EU Culture Programme is powerful driver for development of individuals and institutions. It is recognized as a fundamental building block for human and institutional development and one of the strongest instruments for increasing opportunities offered to citizens here by the European Union.

The Culture programme provides assistance for initiatives to celebrate Europe's cultural diversity and enhance our shared cultural heritage through the development of cross-border co-operation between cultural operators and institutions. Citizens, cultural institutions, non-governmental organizations, and national administrations can all participate in the Culture programme.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Opening up the Community Programmes* to the Western Balkan countries was decided at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003. It was right decision as the Programmes of the European

** name changed into Union Programmes after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty*

Union represent useful preparation for acceding into the structures of the EU. The participation in the Union Programmes strengthens the European integration processes by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience. Encompassing most Union's policies, these programmes are a major pre-accession instrument that familiarises the candidate countries and their citizens with the European Union policies and working methods.

The country is in need of good quality of cultural products and initiatives. All European countries aspire to quality in culture in order to celebrate Europe's cultural diversity and enhance our shared cultural heritage. Besides that, we need able managers of culture that have necessary skills and resources to transfer and exchange knowledge. The Culture programme aims to achieve all of these so that we have better cultural development.

The European Union is founded on the values of respect of human and minority rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. These values are common to the societies in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and equality between women and men prevail. All of that compose what we today call a European culture.

By European culture we mean a society in which all citizens are equal. Society where different ethnical, religious, cultural and

other groups can keep their identities and have a sense of belonging, making them more open to, and accepting of, diversity. Through the European culture, a society can recognize the potential of all its citizens, encouraging them to integrate into the society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs.

In this light, the Culture programme is key element for one nation's cultural development. It serves as important source in helping the country's citizens reach their cultural potential and acquire required quality of human capital and skills.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I believe that with the today's presentations on Culture programme, we all will have a chance to be informed on the successes and results achieved with the participation of citizens, professionals and institutions in the Culture programme.

Thank you very much for your attention.