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Senior UN official pays tribute to South-East European music at culture summit



Roma musicians performing outside the national gallery, Cifte Amam, in Skopje

23 June 2010 – The head of the United Nations agency responsible for cultural issues is paying tribute today to music as a cornerstone of understanding in South-East Europe at a gathering of the leaders from nearly a dozen regional countries in Istanbul, the 2010 European Capital of Culture.

The meeting on the theme of “Music as metaphor of cultural dialogue” focuses “on the role of music as a vehicle for peace and as a key element of region’s intangible heritage, testifying to the wealth of cultural diversity and mutual influences in the region,” according to a statement from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)).

The heads of State or their representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia, as well as the Secretary-General of the European Council, are taking part.

Ahead of the meeting, experts from the various countries met to sketch out a draft of a declaration which the heads of State will finalize as the Istanbul Declaration.

The draft “will focus on the role of music as a vehicle for peace and as a key element of region’s intangible heritage, testifying to the wealth of cultural diversity and mutual influences in the region.”

Today's meeting, the eight such summit held by heads of State in the region, is being staged under the auspices of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which was approved by the UN General Assembly and is being led by UNESCO.

In a related development, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova will also participate in the South-East European Cooperation Process organized in parallel by the Turkish Government.

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