



The UN in Serbia celebrates its 66th Anniversary in 2011 under the banner of the Alliance of Civilizations



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(Photo © [Andrej Blagojević](#))

In late October, the United Nations in Serbia will mark the 66th anniversary of the United Nations with a weeklong series of events that celebrate the Alliance of Civilizations, a UN initiative launched in 2005 in order to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and religions.

Serbia is a society comprised of rich and diverse cultural heritage because it is at a geographic crossroads, a natural meeting point for peoples over the centuries. The languages, music and cultural traditions enjoyed in the country have assimilated diverse influences that have been left by peoples who have crossed the western Balkans over the eras. Serbia is home to much common heritage that binds the country and its people together.

The diversity of cultures in every country around the world must have outlets for unique and distinct expression – and we must work to unify and bring them together: Bringing people together

and embracing civilizations is the purpose of this year's UN Celebration that is organized under the Alliance of Civilizations.

We exist in one world that is shaped by intense interaction. "Recognizing and valuing diversity and distinctiveness is the challenge of our age, and the challenge that Serbia is facing. Serbia's challenges are not unique – the world and virtually all countries face similar challenges," according to UN Resident Coordinator William Infante.

In April 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Mr. Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. Mr. Sampaio says that "Acknowledging diversity and living at ease within a landscape of diversity is very different from focusing on differences. The world must identify a narrative for diversity that is based upon respect and recognition to help resolve challenges and conflict, rather than adding to them."

The United Nations in Serbia counts more than two dozen agencies. Together with the Government of Serbia, and the UN Alliance of Civilizations, it will mount a wide array of Main Events and Core Activities that are dedicated to the overarching theme of "The Alliance of Civilizations and Serbia: Embracing civilizations".

This unique combination of events that will be staged with stakeholders across the country culminates in a Gala Concert celebrating the Alliance of Civilizations. The Gala is the climax event that commemorates the 66th Anniversary of the United Nations. The event, taking place at the Ilija M. Kolarac Concert Hall, features a program entitled "Under One Roof" comprising four works by acclaimed Serbian composer, Aleksander Simid, which are performed by Bojan Sudid, who conducts the RTS Choir and Symphony Orchestra. These works are dedicated to freedom, dialogue, unity and peace

The October programme includes different events that build understanding, recognition and appreciation for the diversity of cultures that are resident in Serbia. It includes a photo contest, the opening of the new Museum of Roma Culture on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the International Roma Organization, a presentation of the UNESCO publication: "World Heritage in the Hands of Young People," a pre-launch of the Dialogue café project, 2nd Regional Forum on Dialogue and Cooperation, an address by Jorge Sampaio at the Serbian Academy of Science, and others.

Events staged in Serbia contribute to the longer-term regional initiative for South-East Europe that was launched in Sarajevo in December 2010. This Regional Strategy is a framework for action that aims to build bridges, promote dialogue and understanding among peoples, cultures, religions and beliefs, and foster a culture of peace and tolerance in the region.

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About the UN in Serbia

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the Republic of Serbia comprises more than 26 agencies that support the needs, strategic objectives and development plans of the Republic of Serbia. The UN promotes peace and prosperity, and ensures that human rights are protected and that all enjoy lives that are free of fear and want.

The UN supports social, political and economic reform, peace and democracy, and sustainable development with the Government, civil society, and the people of Serbia. The UN is assisting the country on its path towards the European Union. For more information consult <http://rs.one.un.org/>.

All UN agencies uphold the UNAOC mission to bridge cultures and build peace through their individual programs.

About the UNAOC

The UN Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005 as an initiative of the UN Secretary General, under the co-sponsorship of the President of the Government of Spain and the Prime Minister of Turkey. It emerged out of a conviction that, in order to achieve sustainable peace, long-standing divisions and misperceptions between cultures need to be addressed.

In April 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance of Civilization. Under his leadership, the Alliance promotes dialogue that delivers change. It is supported by a growing Group of Friends of 130 governments and international organizations. Serbia and all of the countries of South-Eastern Europe are members of the UNAOC. (www.unaoc.org).

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