

**Draft**

**Sarajevo Declaration**

**on the**

**Alliance of Civilizations' Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and  
Cooperation in South Eastern Europe**



**United Nations Alliance of Civilizations**



We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

With the participation of special invitees: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, (as Chairman in office of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe) as a special sponsor of the Regional Strategy for South Eastern Europe, a representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden as the EU-Presidency, and a personal representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil as the host of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations to be held in Rio, on 28 and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2010,

Together with the special invitees: the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council and representatives of UNESCO, IOM, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Commission,

On the occasion of the Alliance of Civilizations' first South Eastern Europe Conference, held in Sarajevo, on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009 at the joint invitation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sven Alkalaj, and the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Mr Jorge Sampaio,

- SOLEMNLY REAFFIRMING our unreserved commitment to the principles and norms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, as well as in other international instruments, such as the Constitution of UNESCO and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001),

- REITERATING our support and commitment to the ideals and principles of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Cultural Convention, the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities as well as any other relevant Declaration, Resolution or Recommendation of the Council of Europe, in particular the “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue – Living Together as Equals in Dignity”,

- EMPHASIZING that there is a great degree of correspondence between the objectives of the Alliance and the OSCE’s values and principles, as clearly expressed in Helsinki Final Act and the subsequent OSCE relevant documents.

- EMPHASIZING the importance of the ideals and principles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the European Union,

- RECALLING the spirit of the Declarations adopted by the Heads of State of the South Eastern European countries within the framework of the Regional Forum on Dialogue Among Civilizations organized by UNESCO (Ohrid 2003, Tirana 2004, Varna 2005, Opatija 2006, Bucharest and Sibiu 2007, Athens 2008 and Cetinje 2009) as well as of any other relevant decisions and recommendations pertaining to cultural cooperation in the region, such as the Foundation Charter on Cultural Cooperation of the Ministers of Culture of South East Europe, signed in Copenhagen in 2005, and the Annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe on the topic “Cultural Heritage: a bridge towards a shared space”.

- WELCOMING the renewed commitment of the CoE and European Commission to pursue the Ljubljana Process through the joint regional programme in the field of cultural and natural heritage in order to promote reconciliation, intercultural dialogue and development processes in SEE.

- STRESSING the efforts of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in sustaining focused regional cooperation in South East Europe, building upon the achievements of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in fostering peace, democracy, respect for human rights, economic prosperity and security,

- NOTING the importance of other ongoing processes and initiatives aimed at enhancing regional cooperation, namely in the framework of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) as its operational arm, that contribute to further promote dignity of peoples, respect for their national linguistic, cultural and religious diversity, better understanding and dialogue among different cultures and religions,

- CONVINCED that the Report of the High Level Group dated 13 November 2006 on the Alliance of Civilizations' United Nations Initiative and its two Implementation Plans set the appropriate framework to further work together to foster sustainable peace, stability, good neighbourliness and harmony in the South East European region,

- CONVINCED that strengthening regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are crucial to improve pluralism and diversity management as essential elements to build intercultural and inclusive societies based on shared values, better understanding, mutual trust and respect,

- CONVINCED that the perspective of membership of all South East European States in the European Union is the best impetus and framework for lasting peace and stability in the whole region and that successful regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations will positively contribute to achieve this aim,

- STRONGLY DETERMINED to overcome divisions and conflicts in the region through a common and coherent approach of regional cooperation strongly focused on young people as a crucial pool of talent, ideas and energy and as an essential asset to surmounting the challenges of building inclusive and participative societies based on democratic citizenship and on a new paradigm of good governance of pluralism and diversity management,

- STRESSING that in this regard education is a key area to increase youth capacity building, knowledge and skills in order to invest young people with rights and responsibilities and empower them to shape the future,

- RECALLING that media is another key field of action because of both its impact in shaping collective views and attitudes, particularly the “new information technologies” as the internet that have provided means for vastly increased people-to-people communication which are powerful means to bridge cultural and religious divides,

- ACKNOWLEDGING that migration and mobility of populations have been posing challenges to the region and its neighbourhood and have to be addressed,

- STRESSING that further development of regional cooperation in these four fields (youth, education, media and migration) will contribute to strengthening human rights for all; ensuring women’s rights and gender equality; promoting inter-ethnic, inter-cultural and inter-religious respect and tolerance; encouraging free circulation of ideas; developing youth education focused on intercultural skills and competences; fostering intercultural dialogue, promoting the integration of migrants; and combating hate crimes, all of which play a significant role in building mutual trust among peoples and cohesive democratic civil societies in the region,

- RECALLING that strengthening the role of women and in particular young women is of special importance to sustainable conflict management, reconciliation and sustainable peace and development, and that promoting gender issues and equal rights between men and women in education, dialogue and the media is important to build inclusive societies, tolerant and respectful for diversity,

- EMPHASIZING the crucial importance of turning the South Eastern Europe into a region where peoples are engaged together in finding shared solutions for the common challenges they are facing with regard to globalisation, democracy, economic prosperity, pluralism and inclusiveness,

- REAFFIRMING that the Alliance's Regional Strategy for South Eastern Europe should establish and provide a viable and continuous framework for policy development and cross-border cooperation focused on three main areas of action - youth, education and media -, through building upon the already existing regional and international initiatives, facilitating their implementation, fostering synergies and creating new partnerships,

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

- to scale up efforts to adopt and/or implement AoC National Plans for Intercultural Dialogue or similar instruments in our own countries through our competent authorities and promote increasing regional exchanges between Focal Points and key players on experience gained, lessons learned and progress made, taking into account ongoing relevant initiatives launched by international and regional organizations or by any significant stakeholder,

- to endorse the principles, objectives and recommendations of the Alliance's Regional Strategy for South Eastern Europe presented today, aimed to contribute to further building bridges and strengthening trust through enhanced intercultural dialogue and cooperation in the region,

- to call upon experts and representatives of civil society under the guidance of the National Focal Points to the Alliance to finalize and agree on a Plan of Action for 2010-2012 implementing the Regional Strategy, taking into account national priorities and building up on the ongoing co-operation with international and regional organizations as well as bilaterally, to be presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Alliance Forum, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> May 2010,

- to express our political commitment to put into practice the tasks and practical activities for the implementation of the above-mentioned Strategy, namely those which will be outlined in the Action Plan for 2010-2012, upon its endorsement and subsequent presentation at the Rio Forum.

- to call upon the relevant regional and international organizations, particularly UNESCO, IOM, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the Regional Cooperation Council to scale up their efforts to support and cooperate in the implementation of the National Plans and the Regional Strategy for South Eastern Europe, in accordance with the Action Plan to be agreed.

- to increase cooperation with UNESCO using the framework of 2010, International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures as a genuine opportunity to strongly support the implementation of the intercultural dialogue activities at the regional level to be included in the Plan of Action for 2010-2012

- to promote sustained participation of local governments, cities, civil society organizations, youth and women's organisations, the corporate sector, foundations, universities, faith-based organizations and media in the achievement of the goals of the Alliance of Civilizations, particularly in the framework of the Alliance's National Plans, the Regional Strategy for South Eastern Europe and its Plan of Action.

- to further develop enhanced cooperation among countries in the region and outside it and particularly the cooperation of the region as a whole with other states, organisations and international programmes with a view to further promoting people to people exchanges, capacity building for young leadership in intercultural dialogue and cooperation and diversity management, in particular through joint actions, common projects and networks, and the creation of new opportunities to advance the Alliance's goals in the region and to fulfil the relevant commitments.