

## **COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE 8TH MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF CULTURE IN THE VISEGRAD FOUR COUNTRIES (BUDAPEST 5-6 SEPTEMBER 2002)**

The meeting of the ministers of culture in the Visegrad Four countries was held in Budapest, 5 to 6 September, 2002, and was preceded by an expert meeting on the development of reading culture in the four countries and on the miscellaneous other issues of cooperation.

The ministers of culture expressed their deep concern regarding the situation of the reading culture in their countries. In general, promotion of reading and improvement of accessibility is of great importance. They are convinced that solution for the present situation is possible only by joint efforts of numerous ministries in their countries, and, in addition, information on the best practice should be studied, in order to adopt them, wherever it is possible. The ministers of culture agree that a large study/research is to be launched in their countries, in order to reveal precisely the gaps in this field, and further exchange of ideas on the findings of their national revealing study/research would contribute to the improvement of reading culture in the V4 region.

The ministers of culture encourage the organization of an expert conference under the Central European Initiative on the issues of diminishing the VAT on book publishing and book distribution.

The ministers of culture, in accordance with Art.9 of the Joint Statement of the Summit Meeting of the Heads of Governments (Esztergom, 29 June 2002), confirmed their readiness to further develop their cooperation, with special regard to the accession of the V4 countries to the European Union. To this end, they agreed as follows:

1. The four countries are ready to organize joint cultural presentations in the Cultural Capitals of Europe. The aim of the programme is to inform the European audience about the common cultural values of the V4 countries. (The programme does not exclude the possibility to organize additional national presentations in the Cultural Capitals of Europe.) The ministers agreed to appoint one expert/professional organization from each country, to meet in October in Budapest and draft concrete plans, proposals for such presentations in the years 2003-2006.
2. The cultural ministers noted with satisfaction the cooperation within the group Culture – Central European Platform and welcome the initiative to organize joint cultural events in the capitals of the countries acting as Presidency in Office of the European Union. The ministers reviewed the various initiatives of the previous meetings at ministerial or expert level, and agreed upon the various issues as follows:
3. They came to the joint opinion that the task of the expert meetings is to prepare the initiatives, proposals for decisions by the ministers. To this end, the ministers call for continuous exchange of views also in written forms or by phone among the experts, as coordinated by the international units of the cultural ministries. In the forthcoming years, the expert meetings devote special attention to the implementation of the programme under 1, and contribute to the solution of the eventual problems arising in cultural diplomacy or in financing.

4. It is agreed upon that the annual V4 folklore festival will be organized in Kosice (Slovakia) in June, 2002 Straznice (The Czech Republic) in 2004 and in Poland, 2005.

5. The ministers find it sedirable to organize Visegrad Four film presentations within their own countries as well as in the member states of the European Union and further, they initiate the establishment of a Visegrad Four film prize, to be granted on the occasion of the existing film festivals in their countries. To this end, discussion of their experts are to be started.

6. The ministers of culture noted with satisfaction that upon the initiative by the Hungarian Prime Minister, establishing a joint V4 Internet portal is on the agenda of the V4 Working Group on Knowledge-based Economy.

The ministers of culture are ready to offer, as their first contribution to the project, the planning of the logo to the joint V4 portal. To this end, the ministries will each forward, through electronic channnels, three proposals for the sketch of the logo to the Polish Ministry of Culture, latest by the end of the year 2002. The Polish Ministry of Culture will present the result at the first ministerial meeting in 2003, for final decision on the sketch to offer for the V4 Internet portal.

7. The ministers expressed their commitment to make bilateral and multilateral efforts in order to contribute to the enhancement of the cultural heritage damaged by the flood disaster in and the Czech Republic. To this end, they decided:

8. a) to investigate their own possibilities of assistance, based on the information of the Ministry of Culture in the Czech Republic

b) to turn jointly to the Council of Europe for special contribution by the Technical Assistance Group of the Committee on Cultural Heritage

c) to turn jointly to the European Union with the initiative concerning a new EU programme after 2004, for the enhancement of cultural heritage damaged by natural disasters.

A copy of the documents mentioned under b) and c) is attached to the present communiqué.

9. In accordance with Article 10 of the Joint Statement on the Summit Meeting of the Heads of Government of the Visegrad Group, the V4 cultural ministers discussed the establishment of a Visegrad Prize. They will appoint one expert each, by 30 November, 2002 at the latest, to work with the details and make a draft proposal for the ministers by their next meeting, for approval. The appointed experts inform the international units of the cultural ministries about the proceedings of their work.

10. The next meeting of the V4 cultural ministers will be held in February, 2003 in Levoca, the Slovak Republic.

Done and signed in Budapest, on 6 September, 2002

Gábor Görgey, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Republic of Hungary

Pavel Dostal, Minister of Culture, The Czech Republic

Milan Knazko, Minister of Culture, The Slovak Republic

Waldemar Dabrowski, Minister of Culture, Republic of Poland

### **Attachement**

Mr. Walter Schwimmer  
Secretary General  
Council of Europe  
Strasbourg

6 September, 2002  
Budapest

Dear Sir,

The Visegrad Four Group ministers of culture met on 6 September, 2002 in Budapest, and discussed, among others, the possibilities of their cooperation within the programmes of the Council of Europe, too.

Having obtained detailed information about the cultural heritage damaged by the flood disaster in the Czech Republic, the ministers of culture seized up the possibilities of their joint assistance and efforts for the restoration of the damaged cultural heritage in the Czech Republic.

Further, the four ministers of culture agreed upon to turn jointly to the Council of Europe and suggest that the Technical Assistance Programme of the CDPAT pay an urgent and special attention to the extraordinary situation in the Czech Republic. The four ministers of culture express their hope that the eventually reshaped annual programme of the Technical Assistance Programme of the CDPAT will effectively promote the improvement of the situation of the cultural heritage in the Czech Republic, suffered considerable damage in the summer of 2002.

Yours sincerely,

Gábor Görgey, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Republic of Hungary

Milan Knazko, Minister of Culture, The Slovak Republic

Pavel Dostal, Minister of Culture, The Czech Republic

Waldemar Dabrowski, Minister of Culture, Republic of Poland

cc: Mr. José-Maria Ballester  
Council of Europe, DG IV  
Strasbourg

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