

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE STATUS OF THE ARTIST AND THE  
FLORENCE AGREEMENT IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE”**

28-29 November 2003, Vilnius, Lithuania

**FINAL DECLARATION**

We, the artists and representatives of art organizations and cultural institutions from Armenia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia and Slovakia, attending the **International Conference on the Implementation of the Recommendation Concerning the Status of the Artist and the Florence Agreement in Eastern and Central Europe** held in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2003, consider that the *Recommendation Concerning the Status of the Artist* adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 1980, and *The Final Declaration* of the 1997 World Congress on the Status of the Artist held in Paris remain the principal documents defining the status of the artist in contemporary society and are of special significance to Eastern and Central European states.

The participants of the conference are convinced that:

1. Artistic creation is a fundamental element of cultural identity and of present and future European sustainable development.
2. Free and individual expressions of artistic creativity should continue to be a focal point of the cultural policies of both national states and the European Union at large.
3. Art has always been and continues to be an essential part of human and societal creativity, intercultural dialogue, development of democracy and social cohesion; the future of Europe depends on the attention its states and the society pay to art, on their ability to hear the voice of artists and to improve their status.
4. A new instrument on cultural diversity without prejudice to the international legal framework applicable for trade exchanges of cultural goods and services. With regard to the drafting process of the *UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity* the member states should acknowledge the decisive role of international trade regulations for diverse cultures.

5. Support and funding of arts should be facilitated through public funding as well as establishment of various partnerships and combined models of funding in order to provide reasonable working conditions for individual artists and/or artists organisations.
6. Public authorities should provide artists with premises for their creative activity and foresee possibilities for such premises in the process of planning or reconstruction of cities, towns and settlements.
7. The various interdependences between the knowledge based society and art should be acknowledged, because, *inter alia*, the content being used is provided by artists. All forms of artistic education and training as well as the education for the art (audience building) are of paramount importance.
8. Copyright and related rights are still insufficiently enforced in a number of states resulting in huge losses incurred by states and rights holders themselves. With the advancement of new technologies an adequate protection of rights should be developed, including the strengthening of collective management of the rights.
9. National regulatory frameworks should provide for measures improving social and economic conditions of artists' existence. In addition the regulatory environment should enable artists to associate themselves in various organizational forms to protect their rights through collective bargaining, assisted by professional legal specialists.
10. Dialogue among cultures and civilizations enhances creativity, universal perception of culture, tolerance and harmony. The states that still have not joined *the Florence Agreement* should ratify this legal instrument. The enlargement of the European Union might call for reflection on the contents of *the Florence Agreement*. The public functions of professional creative organizations should be recognized in legal acts and supplied funding.
11. Artists from accession and EU associated countries are now facing not only new opportunities, but also serious challenges and threats resulting from uneven social and economic conditions and protection of creative work. Possible negative effects of direct and indirect taxation systems harmonization raise our particular concern.