Zagreb, 27 October 2014

**INFORMATION FOR MEDIA**

In organisation of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Task Force on Culture and Society and Croatian Ministry of Culture, the conference titled: Cultural Heritage Rehabilitation as a Key to Sustainable Development to be held 27-28 October 2014 was officially opened.

The conference gathered high-level representatives responsible for culture, participants of Ljubljana Process II: Rehabilitating our Common Heritage, representative of other RCC participants from SEE, European Commission, UNESCO, other regional and international organisations and civil society organisations active in the area of cultural heritage.

Deputy Minister of Culture Berislav Šipuš opened the first conference day on 27 October 2014. Addressing the audience, he emphasized that culture should be the fundamental driver of sustainable growth, as it is a source of creativity and innovation and an important element of economic development and social cohesion. The recently published EC communique: Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe recognised heritage as an important element of public policies and promoter of local and regional development.

Welcome speeches were delivered by: Mr. Sanjin Arifagić, RCC SEE 2020 Coordinator; Mr. Luigi Ficacci, Ministry of Cultural Resources and Activities and Tourism of the Republic of Italy on behalf of Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU; and Mr. Wenceslas de Lobkowicz, AdvisoronCultural Heritage, Directorate GeneralforEnlargement, European Commission, followed by addresses by high-level representatives of countries participating in Ljubljana Process, Mr. Zef Çunij, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Culture of Republic of Albania; Mrs. Lidija Ljesar, Deputy Minister of Montenegro; Mr. Mircea Angelescua, Head of Romanian Delegation, Advisor for International relations.

In their addresses, the speakers emphasized the contributions to building institutional capacities in SEE, positive results of Ljubljana Process in the region, mentioning the most important monuments in some countries involved in the project. It was concluded that cooperation in the area of culture and cultural heritage has an important political and social dimension in promoting cultural diversity and reconciliation.

Representatives of international organizations have also communicated their views on the importance of culture and cultural heritage as an important growth driver. Their deliberations were shared by: Mr. Vojko Volk, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia in Republic of Croatia; Mr. Erik Csernovitz, Deputy Secretary General, Central European Initiative (CEI); Mrs. Adisa Džino Šuta,  Head of BiH Office, Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB); Mrs. Višnja Kisić, Secretary General, EUROPA NOSTRA Serbia (EU Community of National Associations); Mrs. Sofia Kolonias, Head of Greek Delegation, Vice President of ICOMOS Greece (International Council on Monuments and Sites); Mr. Siniša Šešum, Head of UNESCO Office in BiH; Mr. Blandine Smilansky, representative of EUROCLIO (European Association of History Educators), Brussels Office.

At the end of morning session Dubrovnik Declaration was adopted with strong support by Mr. Luigi Ficaccia, Ministry of Cultural Resources and Activities and Tourism of the Republic of Italy on behalf of Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU, and Mr. Wenceslas de Lobkowicz, AdvisoronCultural Heritage, EC Directorate GeneralforEnlargement, thus supporting further work of the RCC Task Force on Culture and Society. Its adoption also marks a new phase of cooperation with RCC, successfully coordinated by Ljuljana Process. The Declaration complies all thus far documents and initiatives and integrates EU guidelines on the use and management of cultural heritage.

The Declaration emphasise that cultural and creative sectors have significant capacity to generate new jobs. Dubrovnik Process will promote culture and cultural heritage as key elements of sustainable development. The Process will continue building from the set foundation which includes culture and rehabilitation of heritage of monuments as a component of sustainable development, creating jobs, raising environmental awareness, inspiring local development and creativity.

Dubrovnik Process will promote culture and arts as an integral part of quality and sustainable education and participation of youth in assessing the rich diversity of cultural heritage.