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**DIALOGUE BETWEEN PEOPLES AND CULTURES
THE ARTISTS AND THE CULTURAL ACTORS,
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: BRUSSELS,
FEBRUARY 2005**

During the last weekend of February 2005, more than 100 cultural institutions in Brussels gathered to organize an arts weekend called “BXLBRAVO”. Directorate-General for Education and Culture participated in this cross-cultural event by running a conference within the framework of the EU’s “Jean Monnet” Action. The theme of the conference was “Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures: the Artists and the Cultural Actors”.

The conference followed the report of the High-Level Advisory Group, the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Culture and the conference previously organised by the European Commission (Directorate General for Education and Culture – Jean Monnet Project) on the theme “Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures: Actors in the Dialogue”, which took place in Brussels on 24–25 May 2004. It was an initiative aimed at civil society and, as such, was focused on specific questions.

The organisers of the conference share a view that intercultural dialogue is significant way of overcoming some of the negative consequences of globalisation, condition of acknowledgement of human dignity, respect for difference and diversity, solidarity. Moreover, intercultural dialogue is a foundation in governance building, creating mutual understanding, trust to respond to the value of solidarity.

The European Union as a global player has an important responsibility in intercultural dialogue. Its role is to be a facilitator and path builder in a truly open dialogue in which it can mobilise people within and outside Europe. It should not only rely on existing programmes, but initiate and support new activities and new areas of cooperation.

The conference was jointly opened by the President of the European Commission, Mr Jose Manuel Barroso, and Mr Ján Figel’, Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture, and Multilingualism. Prominent personalities in arts and culture took an active part in the plenary sessions as well as the

conference's various workshops. The latter were dedicated to three main themes: the role of cities and the urban environment in intercultural dialogue, the experience of festivals as vehicles for enhancing intercultural dialogue, and the European institutions' paths of action in the area.

The conference was highly successful, bringing together many prominent artistic, cultural, academic and political personalities. The 600 participants attending the sessions were treated to interventions by such outstanding contributors as the pianist Mr Abdel Rahman El Bacha, the writer Malek Chebel, the Director of the Monnaie Theatre, Mr Bernard Foccroule, the UNICEF Goodwill ambassador, Mrs Nana Mouskouri, and many others. The debates and exchanges of ideas will help enormously to formulate policy proposals and concrete actions for the future, notably during the European year for inter-cultural dialogue in 2008.