

OLYMPIA-BARCELONA LETTER

The participants in the opening of the Cultural Olympiad of Athens and the participants in the dialogue Scientific knowledge and cultural diversity of the Universal Forum of Cultures of Barcelona solemnly reject any idea of the fatality of conflicts between civilisations. We consider culture and cultural creation bearers of values that overcome all differences. We firmly believe that cultural plurality and polyphony, guarantors of the acknowledgement and respect of the right of people, participate in the development of each person and allow open dialogue, excluding all sectarian and totalitarian ideologies. We are convinced that the parity of cultures constitutes the condition sine qua non of peaceful coexistence and world development and we desire that Culture, representing one of the creative forces of human action, would be considered more broadly both as an essential process for the future construction of humanity and the advent of a culture of peace.

To this effect, we declare that it is essential:

- To provide the culture of the 21st century with the necessary means in all areas of intellectual and artistic activity, and also to provide the supplementary means for scientific research with no commercial or economic goals and to favour the development of a scientific and technical culture which integrates critical and ethical interrogation;
- To take into consideration the history and traditions of each people and to take care of the conservation or restoration of monuments and the safeguarding of non-material heritage, a component of different cultures which, all together, constitute the common heritage of the all humankind;
- To embrace the fight for peace and against plagues, such as violence, fanaticism, exclusion (in the form of sexism and apartheid) and terrorism, but also to ensure the conditions essential for the development of cultural life, fighting against underdevelopment, malnutrition, the lack of medical care, economic precariousness, pollution and attacks on the environment and, finally, to sustain the scientific effort and the fine-tuning of principles of precaution in order to ensure the conditions of life, respecting biological integrity and the specificity

of each human being, considered as a bearer of all that is humanity;

- To further promote, especially among the school-going public, the equality of opportunities for the equality of access to all knowledge, for the fight against illiteracy and ignorance, for the preparation of integrated actions, particularly aimed at the most disadvantaged peoples linking cultural or pedagogic programmes to economic development and for the widest possible diffusion of the new communications technologies;

- To encourage the media, private or public, to assume, with full awareness, their moral responsibility, their role as vectors for peace and dialogue and to guarantee the plurality of information and its independence from all pressures exerted by political, ideological or economic powers;

- To foresee for the future, at national and international level, the ways and means for dialogue and intercultural exchange, founded on respect for oneself and for others, both in terms of acknowledgement of individual and collective identities and legacies of the past and in terms of mutual aid and solidarity between generations and peoples.

All the people that support this declaration wish to start a debate and to widely spread all the proposals included in the Olympia & Barcelona Letter in all our local fields. We ask both national and international competent organizations to support and update their contribution in order to promote an universal coverage of a true cultural humanism.

Athens-Olympia, 21-23 September 2001
Barcelona-Universal Forum of Cultures, 4-6 June 2004