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Arts festivals join in support for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

2008-01-09

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The Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth Ján Figel' considers that "the arts festivals are vital for promoting intercultural dialogue, because they enable the circulation and visibility of different cultural streams of European arts and cultures and thus offer a concentrated possibility of exchange and enrichment".

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Representatives of the most important European arts and culture festivals in Europe organised at the margins of the launch of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in the Slovenian capital a signing ceremony of the declaration of support. The signature ensures the promotion of the Year in music, dance and theatre festivals, rock, pop and jazz festivals, but also in literature, film or street arts festivals. "We are proud to offer our unique platforms to bring the message of intercultural interaction to millions of Europeans visiting festivals every year", said Darko Brlek, European Festivals Association's (EFA) president and director of the Ljubljana Festival.

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Altogether 22 festivals agreed to sign the declaration and others are invited to join in the days and weeks to come. Among the signatories are directors of well-known events like the Avignon Festival, the Edinburgh International Festival or the Wiener Festwochen, but also up-and-coming ones like the International Festival Sarajevo-Winter or the Vilnius Festival.

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The Declaration reflects the commitment of the participating festivals to raise awareness of artists, managers, collaborators, volunteers and audiences about intercultural dialogue as a respectful and free exchange among communities and individuals that promotes and maintains cultural diversity. This diversity is understood as a condition for the protection of human rights and democracy, but also as an obstacle to stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and ignorance.

The declaration was initiated by the European Festivals Association, a non-governmental organisation representing festivals in 38 mainly European countries, which is also a member of the steering group of the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue (www.efah.org).

More information:

Full text of the Declaration is available at the EFA website.

More information about the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue at www.dialogue2008.eu