

**Declaration
of the ninth St. Petersburg International Cultural Forum –
"United Cultures Forum"
(St Petersburg, 17th November 2023)**

We, the participants of the ninth International Cultural Forum – "United Cultures Forum", including heads and members of foreign delegations, members of international organisations and culture professionals, meeting in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 16th to 18th November 2023,

Understanding culture to be a concept that encompasses ways of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs in addition to literature and art,

Emphasizing the need to recognise culture as a global public good,

Confirming that culture is the most important factor of national development that forms the will of peoples for freedom, independence and sovereign choice of their development model,

Maintaining that the present multipolar world order, the formation of which involves our countries and peoples, is based on cultural and civilizational diversity, respect for traditions and preservation of cultural identity,

Striving to preserve and strengthen the global cultural heritage, which is unthinkable without respect and care for the cultural contribution of every people inhabiting our planet,

Confirming the everlasting universal nature and creative potential of the fundamental UN documents in the field of culture, including the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Intending to increase national and multilateral efforts for the development of multifaceted cooperation in the area of culture and arts,

Emphasizing that the peoples of the countries participating in the Forum to a large degree experience:

- consequences of unequal access to cultural goods and services under the existing global system of trade in goods and services for cultural purposes, the impoverishment of linguistic diversity, in particular on the Internet, and other consequences of the digital divide,
- increased politicisation of the sphere of culture and arts both within countries and internationally,
- the negative impact of sanctions that affect the sphere of culture and result in the limitation of access to the works of the world cultural heritage, in banning cultural and creative activities in one's mother tongue, in boycotting artists on ethnic or linguistic grounds,

Supporting the rights of citizens and peoples to enjoy art and participate in cultural life, and to have access to the world cultural heritage, we **urge to:**

- Develop cooperation in the field of culture and art in the spirit of openness, building upon national cultural traditions;
- Respect the variety of value systems of states and peoples;
- Oppose the imposition of mass-culture pseudo-values that pose a risk of causing destructive effects on the preservation of the cultural sovereignty of nations and the continued development of national cultures;
- Take a stand against the use of lawless unilateral approaches in the field of culture and art in the form of sanctions, boycotts, bans and cancellations on racial, ethnic or linguistic grounds;
- Make use of national and multilateral opportunities to condemn and thwart approaches in the field of culture and art that are based on racism, xenophobia, cultural dominance or any other theories and practices that proclaim the superiority or exclusivity of individual peoples.

We express our readiness to:

- Take part in the development of a common international infrastructure that is necessary to support national culture and arts in the

countries that participate in this Forum, as well as to ensure the promotion of their multifaceted cultural cooperation, while –

- carrying out to this end specific initiatives, events and projects to promote sustainable cultural and creative industries (festivals, exhibitions, tours, awards, training in creative specialties, exchange of experience in relevant fields, etc.),

- creating for this purpose common institutions and structures (academies, creative unions, rating agencies, auction houses, etc.) involving the capabilities of national government agencies, civil society and private investors.