

Brussels, 10 December 2010

EU and India launch policy dialogue on culture

José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, and Catherine Ashton, Vice President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will join Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at a ceremony today to mark the signing of a joint declaration to strengthen people-to-people contacts between India and the EU through a policy dialogue on culture.

President Barroso said: *"It is a very positive signal for EU-India relations that we can reinforce our strategic relationship through a more intense dialogue and exchanges in the field of culture, acting jointly in favour of cultural diversity in the EU, in India and at international level."*

Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, added: *"Today's declaration will bring our communities closer and result in increased regular exchanges of best practices. I am confident that both the EU and India will see concrete benefits from the promotion of knowledge building in the field of culture."*

The joint declaration was signed by Jan Truszczyński, Director General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, and Jawhar Sircar, Secretary of the Indian Ministry of Culture.

The signing of the declaration formally marks the launch of a culture policy dialogue between the European Commission and the Indian Government. It shows the growing importance of culture in international relations, in particular since the adoption of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural expressions, to which both the EU and India are parties.

Since 2007, the Commission has invested € 2 million through the EU Culture Programme in support of five joint initiatives with India. These included the 'Spice' project which brought together the Attakalari Centre for Movement Arts in Bangalore and art professionals from Europe. The Culture Programme also backed '2050 Cultures of Living', an architecture project where the Darpana Academy of Performing Arts and the Srishti School of Art shared views on design and technology with partners from eight European countries.

To find out more:

Text of Joint Declaration on culture

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc1747_en.htm

European Commission- International cultural cooperation:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc1567_en.htm

European Commission - External Relations, EU relations with India:

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/india/index_en.htm

The European Commission Delegation to India:

http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/india/index_en.htm

The 2007-2009 Special Action for India under the EU Culture Programme:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2007/selection/selection_strand_13_2007_en.php