



Paris, 7 March, 2013

Press Release

ICOM supports the exhibition “Imagining the Balkans. Identities and Memory in the long 19th century” (Ljubljana, 8 April-25 August 2013, National Museum of Slovenia)

The travelling exhibition “Imagining the Balkans. Identities and Memory in the long 19th century”, focusing on the constitution and evolution of modern nations in South-East Europe during this period, will open in the National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana on 8 April, 2013, at 6PM. This project is coordinated by UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice (Italy), within the framework of its global initiative “Culture: a Bridge to Development”, with the cooperation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the ICOM International Committee for Exhibitions and Exchange (ICEE), to enhance cooperation and dialogue among national history museums in the region.

The exhibit was created in the belief that Nations and their History should not be a matter of division, and developed as a historic opportunity to place national histories in a global context, compare disputed narratives, and revive shared memories. This is the very first time that all national history museums from South-East Europe are coming together to put in perspective and compare their collections and their national histories. The exhibit, which is structured around eight thematic areas, rather than on exclusive and contrasting parallel national histories and narratives, presents shared key processes and experiences, common features and historical interactions, including with the rest of Europe.

The exhibit will be inaugurated on the occasion of the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe, in the presence of the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova; the acting Minister of Culture, Education, Science, and Sport of Slovenia, Žiga Turk; the President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), Dr. Hans-Martin Hinz; and the Director of the National Museum of Slovenia, Barbara Ravnik. All Ministers of Culture from South-East Europe will attend the opening.

Julien Anfruns, Director General of ICOM, explains: “We are delighted that ICOM has participated in this project, which is fundamental since it sets museums at the heart of society as active players in the healing efforts in a complex political situation and in the construction of a harmonious coexistence.”

It will then travel to Belgrade (Serbia) and Bucharest (Romania) in September/December 2013.

International Council of Museums - ICOM

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Participating museums:

National History Museum (Albania), Museum of Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), National History Museum (Bulgaria), Croatian History Museum (Croatia), Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia (Cyprus), German Historical Museum (Germany), National Historical Museum (Greece), National Museum of Montenegro (Montenegro), National History Museum of Romania (Romania), Historical Museum of Serbia (Serbia), National Museum of Slovenia (Slovenia), and Museum of Macedonia (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

Other stakeholders:

The exhibit is financially supported by UNESCO, ICOM and ICEE (ICOM International Committee for Exhibitions and Exchange). Other organisations and institutions (Council of Europe, International Association of Museums of History, Eunamus/European National Museums network, ICOM/ICEE, Euroclio) have participated in preparatory works. The historical advisor of the exhibit is Professor Maria Todorova (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, United States of America).

Venue of exhibit:

National Museum of Slovenia/Narodni muzej Slovenije
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National Museum of Slovenia: <http://www.nms.si/>
UNESCO Venice Office : <http://www.unesco.org/venice>

ICOM in brief

Created in 1946, ICOM (International Council of Museums) is a non-governmental international organisation in formal association relation with UNESCO. It has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. ICOM is the only international organisation representing museums and museum professionals worldwide.

ICOM is:

- A diplomatic forum made up of representatives from 137 countries and territories
- Standards of excellence for museums, specifically regarding ethics, with its *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*
- A unique network made up of almost 30,000 museum professionals at an international level
- An international think-tank composed of 31 International Committees representing museum specialties
- International public service missions, specifically through its programmes aimed at fighting illicit traffic in cultural goods and the museum emergency programme in case of natural disasters or armed conflicts.

For any matter related to the global museum community and to interview the Director General of ICOM: Aurélie AUBOURG - Tel. + 33 1 47 34 91 63 – icom.presse@icom.museum