

# Press Release

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## The STAGE Project: cultural policies to foster increased democratic stability in the southern Caucasus

Strasbourg, 12.09.2005 – "Culture and cultural policies for development" will be the main theme of a meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the south Caucasian countries held by the Council of Europe in Kyiv on 15 and 16 September at the invitation of the Ukrainian authorities.

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> ministerial colloquy to be held as part of the STAGE Project (\*), which is intended to promote cultural exchanges between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and help strengthen democracy there. In this year in which we have been celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Cultural Convention, the colloquy will be open to all 48 signatories.

It will be opened by Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Joaquim Duarte, the Portuguese Ambassador to the Council of Europe (representing the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers), at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 15 September.

Cultural diversity and social cohesion, cultural funding and cultural tourism are some of the items on the agenda of the colloquy, during which the Ministers of Culture present will also be reviewing the STAGE Project's progress since 2004 (on the basis of an evaluation report drawn up by Terry Sandell, the project's main advisor) and will decide on the main lines of the follow-up activities to foster the development of national cultural policies.

The colloquy will be **open to the press** and will take place in the Ukrainian House arts centre (Khreshchatyk 2, Kyiv) on Thursday, 15 and Friday, 16 September from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

A final declaration will be adopted at the end of the colloquy and presented at a press conference to be held on **Friday 16 September at 6.30 p.m.**

More information is available on <http://www.coe.int/culture/stage> and <http://www.stage5.org.ua> (see site for accreditations).

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(\* )The STAGE Project (Support for Transition in the Arts and Culture in Greater Europe) involves the three participating south Caucasian countries and observer and donor countries (Germany, Austria, Greece, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine).

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