



## MEDIA INFORMATION

Berlin Conference "A Soul for Europe"

### **For a Citizens' Europe**

20 November 2010

House of World Cultures, John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10, Berlin, from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Initiative "A Soul for Europe"

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The Treaty of Lisbon came into force about a year ago. It offers citizens and civil-society organisations for the first time a legal opportunity to influence and control EU measures and policies. However, a large section of the European population still takes a negative view of the decisions made in Brussels. In an age of growing Euro-scepticism, policy-makers must realize that Europe is a concern of its citizens, not just of its institutions.

Europe needs the independent impulses by its civil society. Citizens have to consider themselves called upon to influence the development of the European unification process out of their own accord and with their own ideas. A new understanding of civiness is needed to build a Europe with stronger civic roots. European integration entails promoting national images, value systems and intercultural dialogue. Cultural activities must make their influence felt beyond the cultural sector and European affairs that have so far been of a mainly economic and political nature need a cultural dimension.

The "A Soul for Europe" initiative's 4<sup>th</sup> Berlin Conference will include three panel discussions featuring prominent intellectuals, policy-makers, entrepreneurs and representatives of civil society who will be debating

- **The Role of the Citizen in Building Europe**
- **The Image of Europe**
- **New Forms of Cooperation between Culture, Business and Politics**

Discussants will include director Wim **Wenders**, sociologist Paul **Scheffer**, entrepreneur Arend **Oetker**, EU-Commissioner Androulla **Vassiliou** and Director General of the DG Communication of the EU Claus Haugaard **Sørensen**. Among the speakers will be European Parliament members Elmar **Brok**, Jo **Leinen** and Doris **Pack** as well as representatives of the "A Soul for Europe" Strategy Group.

The conference takes the form of an open workshop. Its aim is to develop concrete proposals for action that can be implemented at the European decision-making level with the help of a parliamentary working group. The official conference languages are German and English and simultaneous interpretation services will be available.

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The **Strategy Group** consists of more than 50 young individuals from 21 countries. They are responsible for the conceptual development and dissemination of the idea of "A Soul for Europe". The Strategy Group was built up and its work is made possible with the financial support of the **Robert Bosch Stiftung**.

"A Soul for Europe" is carried out by the **Felix Meritis Foundation** in Amsterdam, **Stiftung Zukunft Berlin**, the **European House for Culture** in Brussels and **Setepés** in Porto.

The **Cultural Front Belgrade** and the **Stichting Caucasus Foundation** in Tbilisi are associated partner offices.

The activities of "A Soul for Europe" are supported by numerous partner organizations from the field of business, culture and politics.

The legal seat of the EEIG ASfE is in Brussels.

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"A Soul for Europe" is a civil-society initiative that is seeking to make more effective use of Europe's cultural resources than in the past to promote the European development and integration process. In this endeavour, it relies on cooperation between citizens and political decision-makers.

From its partner offices in Amsterdam, Belgrade, Berlin, Brussels, Porto and Tbilisi the "A Soul for Europe" Initiative is building an international network of European cities and regions, the cultural sector and business as well as European policy-makers. At the very heart of the initiative is the Strategy Group: About 50 civil society actors from more than 20 are responsible for the conceptual development of "A Soul for Europe" through projects and initiatives.

Project Executing Organisation:

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“A Soul for Europe” would like to thank the following partners for their support:



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