

Dimitar Bogov: Promoting Macedonia's cultural and historical values

Opening speech by Mr Dimitar Bogov, Governor of the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, at the opening of the exhibition titled "Wall Paintings from the Episcopal Basilica in Stobi" on the occasion of the International Museum Day, Skopje, 18 May 2012.

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Honorable Minister Kancheska-Milevska,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Wohlers,

Distinguished guests,

This year we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the monetary independence of the Republic of Macedonia, recalling with respect the period of creation of the Macedonian Denar and the processes that led to the proclamation of the monetary sovereignty of our country on April 26, 1992. Undoubtedly, this is an opportunity when it is necessary to say that in the past twenty years, the main carrier of these processes – the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, with all its capacity has adequately served the new democratic society, as an institution that is responsible for maintaining the stability of the Macedonian national currency and its monetary and financial system.

Besides its primary activity, in the past 10 years, our institution has sought to continuously and systematically contribute to the preservation, care and promotion of cultural and historical values of Macedonia. As it is actually typical for most central banks in the world, through the work of its museum, the National Bank has gradually established itself as an important cultural treasury of the numismatic cultural legacy of civilizations that existed in this region, thus giving its contribution to the enrichment of the Macedonian society with permanent and irreplaceable values; those without which common knowledge is doomed to poverty, without which we would not be able to recognize and understand the universal values of civilization that have been mounting for centuries in the long civilization pace of human existence.

The National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, together with the National Institution Stobi, have decided to approach the Macedonian public exactly on May 18th – the International Museum Day, jointly organizing this important exhibition, where for the first time an extremely valuable cultural heritage is presented to the public. It includes 19 unique fresco-fragments from the inner walls of the Old Episcopal basilica in Stobi, dating from the 4th century BC, which the history of art considers an exclusivity of paramount importance, given that this kind of artistic creation is not present in the wider range of the European mainland. Within the exhibition, the curators from the National Institution Stobi enabled us to closely look at the details of the mosaic floors that decorated this building. In addition, part of the exhibition are also the unique fresco-details that adorned the baptistery, which is located next to the Basilica. The exclusively crafted marble container also belongs to the baptistery, as part of its internal decoration, which, on its part, includes the famous mosaics with depictions of peacocks. Those were the peacocks that the artist Biljana Unkovska used when designing the layout of the modern Macedonian banknotes of ten Denars.

Speaking of the ancient town of Stobi, besides the fact that it is really a constant inspiration for artistic creation, in the past it was a center with emphasized monetary production that took place more than 18 centuries ago.

This exhibition is even more significant because of the generous support of the US Embassy in the Republic of Macedonia, which throughout the past years has enabled professional protection of these invaluable paintings, thanks to which they can now be publicly exhibited.

The National Bank is honored by the given trust to host this exhibition, which I hope that over the next month will be an intriguing cultural event for the general public. I also hope that with

the support of the Ministry of Culture and of the other institutions of culture in Macedonia, also in the future we will have an opportunity to enrich the public life and the creative social pulse of the country's cultural life.

Expressing my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, the National Institution Stobi and the Embassy of the United States in the Republic of Macedonia, I invite His Excellency, the Ambassador of the United States, Paul Wohlers and the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, Elizabeta Kancheska-Milevska to take the floor.