



# Literature Festival A Venue for Cultural Exchange

The Festival of European and Iranian Children's Literature opened on September 22 concurrent with the first day of the new school year at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) in Tehran. Writers and illustrators from Iran as well as four European countries namely Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Norway have featured their works at the event which will last through October 8th. Director of the festival, in an interview with Iran Daily, said the primary objective behind the event is to promote cultural exchange and dialog among Iranian and European kids as well as artists and authors working in the field of child literature. Seyyed Mozaffar Shojaei pointed to the initiative of Dialog Among Civilizations and said the best means to promote understanding between nations is

By Sadeq Delqan

to start the dialog among their young ones. He believes that dialog among children from different cultural backgrounds would run more smoothly and would meet fewer obstacles, since young people enjoy a common language. "They share much due to their pure and simple nature, but the educations they receive split them up as they move toward adulthood," he said, adding that the commonalities between children are manifested in the works of child authors and illustrators. "One part of the festival has been dedicated to examining the commonalities and discrepancies between the Iranian and European writings for children," he explained. Director of IIDCYA for international affairs said the institute has far more potentials for expanding its extra-national relations. Highlighting the role of the festival in boosting cultural interaction

between Iran and Europe, Shojaei commented, "We regard this festival as a major step toward promoting relations on a large scale." Asked to elaborate on different sections of the festival, he said, "Animations, short and feature films and movies from Iran and the participating countries will be screened." He pointed to writing and illustrating workshops as another program, adding 250 workshops will be held during the 17-day festival. "About 2,500 children will work and practice with Iranian and European writers and illustrators," he noted. There is also an exhibition section. "Books from Iran and other countries are showcased at the exhibit. Ten domestic publishers feature their works," he added. "The theater section includes joint training workshops between Iran and the European participants. Several plays are also performed at the event."

According to Shojaei, nine foreign papers and four Iranian ones are to be presented at the festival's seminar, covering issues such as child rights, mythological literature as well as the heavenly world of kids. "On Thursday and Friday nights during the festival, legends and stories from these cultures will be read and plays will be performed by the participating countries," he noted. The festival provides a venue for artists and writers from different countries to exchange their viewpoints and get to know other cultures. The event is being sponsored by the Austrian non-governmental organization X-Change with the cooperation of several organizations from Finland, Sweden, Iran, and Norway. X-Change was established three years ago. It has been cooperating with Tehran University, Beheshti University, and the University of Fine Arts in the field of architecture. IIDCYA is located on Hejab St. near Laleh Park in Tehran.

