

UNESCO
7 Place Fontenoy,
75352 Paris

Attn: All Country Delegations

Prishtina, 26 August 2015

Dear Sir/Madame,

On behalf of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo (ASHAK) I am addressing you with an appeal to support the Republic of Kosovo's membership at UNESCO.

The population the Republic of Kosovo is the youngest in Europe, and their potential and needs for education, cultural, scientific, and sport activities are enormous. Even in the given circumstances of the functioning of the state of Kosovo (outside the UNESCO bodies), many young Kosovars have managed to achieve results in promoting Kosovo internationally in the fields of arts, culture, sport, science, and knowledge. In many cases, despite the apparent potentials and will for integration and cooperation, they have faced obstacles in absence of international institutional integration, which directly depend on UNESCO. In this way, Kosovo's young people are being deprived of the opportunity to fulfill their normal ambitions and use their capacities, and faced with hopelessness they are forced to seek other ways. We consider it is high time to enable Kosovo's integration in the institutional bodies of activity that are provided under the UNESCO umbrella, its basic goal being emancipation of humankind and enhancement people's lives in every corner of the globe. This would enable Kosovo and its people to address at a higher level its needs, to integrate the potentials it possesses, and contribute to the world's integrating bid. This would make it possible for the institutions and the people of Kosovo to benefit from such cooperation and in this context to employ the capacities and advance the advance the existing standards to the highest levels.

Based to the positive experiences (though not satisfactory) that the ASHAK as a result of integration into academic institutions and cooperation on an equal footing with international institutions, we are confident that opening of the UNESCO doors Kosovo's education, cultural, and scientific institutions would significantly help advancing their quality, enable reaching the highest standards of independent functioning of respective institutions, and multilateral cooperation not only in the region of the Balkans and Europe but wider. At the same time, this would definitely help in overcoming the feeling of differentiation of Kosovo's population, by leaving it outside the international bodies to which they rightfully belong.

The Kosovo Academy of Sciences and Arts, which this year marks the 40th anniversary of establishment, has built cooperation relationship through bilateral agreements with academies of the region and beyond, including Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Austria, Turkey, Britain, Belgium, Italy, and others, cooperates with many other academies of Europe, and is also a full member of the all European Academies (ALLEA) and the International Academy Panel (IAP). This experience makes us optimistic that Kosovo's membership of UNESCO would open many other doors necessary for integration and international cooperation, which for the time remain unjustly closed to Kosovo.

After Kosovo's annexation by Serbia of Slobodan Milosevic in 1989 and introduction of a regime of true apartheid, the darkest in the modern history of Europe, against the majority population of Kosovo, by depriving them of the basic right to education, scientific activity, culture, and sports, through a law on the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (which was sponsored by that academy), ASHAK was closed down in 1992. The Kosovo Academy and its members opposed to such law promulgated by Serbia, which led to the seizure of the ASHAK's building 1994. Yet, the ASHAK members continued performing their activity of meeting their obligation toward the people of Kosovo. Under the circumstances of a brutal apartheid and police-military prosecution by Milosevic's regime, deprived of the benefits of being part of the international organizations, such as UNESCO and others, but through a broad moral support from the human right organizations and other international bodies, Kosovo's education, scientific, and cultural institutions, including the ASHAK, did all they could to maintain a system of over 450,000 schoolchildren and students in a network of education and building of the hope for a better future in normal integration circumstances of the modern world.

Amid a genocidal exercises by Milosevic's regime, resulting in the killing of around 15,000 civilians, deportation from their homes of over one million Albanians, destruction of the entire

system of society, plundering of material and non-material wealth of Kosovo (including state infrastructure of the society including over 1.000 unique items and artifacts of culture and art of the Kosovo soil from the Neolithic period to the present day), the destruction of over 140,000 houses and over 400 cult institutions, the UN and NATO intervened in order to rescue an entire people from extermination, driving out the Serbian military and police and paramilitary forces, and creating a minimum of conditions for the return of the people to their homes and rebuilding of their lives from the scratch. Under those circumstances, after the year 2000, under the UN protectorate and with the help of different international mechanisms (UNMIK, NATO, EULEX) Kosovo's institutions of education, science, culture, and sports, embarked on a new phase, initially that the country's reconstruction, and then the development and integration into the international institutions and mechanisms in full agreement with their respective standards. An education system of pre-school, elementary, secondary, and university level, interlinked with the cultural and scientific activities, by responding to the needs of the population, have played a big role in this respect. In this way, the Republic of Kosovo has today a extensive education, science, and culture system at all levels of organization, seven public and a number of private universities, many public and private academic institutions, including the Academy of Sciences and Arts, being it a system that strives to meet the needs of a two-million population in the field of education, culture, and science, and integration in the modern world.

During 1990s and in the years that followed Kosovo and its people did not have a privilege of enjoying the support of the institutions like UNESCO, which in our country is considered as fundamental for the integration of the country and the people in the normal courses of the world.

The Republic of Kosovo is today an independent and sovereign state recognized by 111 countries of the world (of them 109 UN members), integrated in many aspects in the system of the international relations, and conscious of the demands and obligations stemming from those relations. It has a permanent population, a defined territory, and a government elected through democratic processes, which guarantees integration into the international activities alongside many other countries. Albanian make over 90 per cent of Republic of Kosovo's population, but it is defined by its Constitution as multiethnic and multicultural society, thus ensuring full rights and protection for all ethnic religious, linguistic, and other groups in line according to the highest international standards. Kosovo has managed to significantly increase participation of women in the social, scientific, and cultural life, by setting standards that cannot be reached by the region, by setting 30% quota of women's participation in the parliament and other institutions; it has set

similar criteria and has attached special attention to the cultural heritage of all communities; it has ensured linguistic equality at all levels of the state for the communities that make over 5 per cent of the country's population.

As a sovereign and independent state, with a democratically elected government, with a parliament, presidency, the constitutional court, and other necessary instances of internal functioning of the states and international relations, the Republic of Kosovo has signed over 100 international agreements; it has signed cooperation agreements with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Development Bank of the Council of Europe, it is member of the International Organization of La Francophonie, the International Olympic Committee, and many other international bodies, and has started a process of signing of the Stabilization-Association Agreement with the European Union, which is expected to be concluded this year. International bodies present in Kosovo, including KFOR, EULEX, and others, exercise their activity in agreement with the Republic of Kosovo, with a part of the sovereignty, in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, without affecting its sovereignty, being delegated to the international mechanism.

The Republic of Kosovo has all necessary capacities to enter into relationship with different countries and international organizations as a sovereign state; therefore also to become a member of UNESCO.

Hoping that this request of Kosovo will be supported by you and the respective decisionmaking bodies,

We remain,

Yours sincerely,



Academician Hivzi Islami

President of ASHAK

Member of European Academy of Science and Arts