



## KOSOVA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND ARTS

### PRESIDENT

Pristina, 31 August 2015  
Ref. No 701

### To Presidents of Academies of Sciences and Arts

Dear colleagues,

With reference to a letter by the President of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SANU-SASA), Professor Vlastimir S. Kostic, of 18 August 2015 to the presidents of the world academies of sciences, expressing his opposition to the admission of the Republic of Kosovo to UNESCO, we deem it necessary to explain the following:

1. In his letter, the SASA President asks you to take actions to avoid the "danger" of Kosovo's membership of UNESCO. This call is promoted by an alleged plea for the protection of the Serbian cultural heritage in Kosovo. Moreover, in the letter it is alleged that Kosovo is a territory that continues to be administered according to the UNSC Resolution 1244. Further, the letter brings into question the will and capacities of the Republic of Kosovo to protect the cultural heritage on its territory. To illustrate this, the letter refers to the consequences of 1999 war and the destruction caused in 2004.

Before the SASA president would address you, Mr. Ivica Dacic, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Serbia, a spokesperson and senior official of the Serbian Socialist Party during the time it was led by Slobodan Milosevic (1990s), also addressed UNESCO with a request to reject the Republic of Kosovo's membership. On 10 August 2015, in an interview with the Russian newspaper *Sputnjik*, the Serbian ambassador to UNESCO, Mr. Darko Tanaskovic raised the alarm over the need for all-Orthodox and indeed an all-Christian action to prevent Kosovo's membership of UNESCO.

The letter of the SASA, which falls completely in line with the Serbian state propaganda, seeks to convince the academies of the world to act and prevent the Republic of Kosovo and its people from being integrated into international bodies that deal with education, science, culture, sports, and protection of these.

2. The Republic of Kosovo is 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 international relations, and mindful of the obligations that stem 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. Albanians constitute over 90% of Kosovo's population, yet Kosovo is defined by its constitution as a multiethnic and multicultural society, thus ensuring full rights and protection for all ethnic religious, linguistic, and other groups in line with the highest international standards.

As a sovereign and independent state, with a democratically elected government, with a parliament, presidency, constitutional court, and other necessary instances for functioning states and international relations, the Republic of Kosovo has signed hundreds of international agreements, including 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 a 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 conclude this year. The international bodies present in Kosovo, KFOR, EULEX, and others, exercise their activity and parts of sovereignty is delegated to them in accordance the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. In the capacity of a sovereign state, Kosovo has been involved in comprehensive dialogue with the Republic of Serbia under the mediation of the European Union.

The Republic of Kosovo has all the capacities needed to enter into international relations with states and organizations as a sovereign state; therefore it is entitled to become a UNESCO member as well.

3. The Republic of Kosovo has been an independent state since 2008. But this status is the outcome of a bitter history caused by the state of Serbia, with the SASA having played an important ideological role. The 1986 Memorandum of SASA became of one of the main instigators of the Serbian extremism led by Milosevic, which led to the dissolution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the wars of the Serbian state against Slovenia, Croatia, the attacks amounting to genocide against Bosnia-Herzegovina (let us recall Srebrenica), and the destruction of non-Serb heritage.

Following a violent annexation of Kosovo and the introduction of brutal apartheid against the Albanians in their own land of Kosovo, the Serbian military, police, and paramilitary forces - encouraged by SASA and with the blessing of the leaders of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) -- carried out genocidal attacks against the unprotected civilian population of Kosovo in the years 1998-1999, killing around 15,000 civilians (men, women, children, including 21 imams); thousands of Albanians are still unaccounted for to this day. The Serbian forces burned and ruined over 140,000 houses, destroyed 218 mosques, dozens of tekkass, and many other religious sites, archives, libraries; plundered artifacts dating back 4,000 years and the whole infrastructure of the state organization of Kosovo.

In 1991, Serbia banned education in Albanian -- forcing over 450,000 school children and students to organize themselves in a fully parallel system of education in makeshift schools, the biggest parallel system of civil resistance that Europe has ever seen.

Encouraged by SASA, in 1992 the Serbian Parliament promulgated a law (also sponsored by the Serbian Academy) declaring the Kosova Academy of Sciences and Arts (ASHAK-KASA) as having been closed down, which had been established by the Kosovo parliament decades earlier. In 1994, the Serbian occupying regime sequestered the Kosovo Academy building, together with its library, archives, and all other assets. Under such circumstances, our Academy was forced to continue its activity in a private house as part of the "parallel" system.

In 1999, the NATO forces intervened to free and rescue the people of Kosovo amid Serbia's attempt to exterminate the Albanians, when half of them (one million) had been deported, and the rest fled. Later, the Hague Tribunal was set up, whose jurisdiction was to try crimes against humanity committed by Serbia.

4. The deported civilian population returned to their homes, to find their houses burnt, everything plundered, the whole infrastructure ruined, the food reserves plundered, and even livestock destroyed. Together with the UN bodies, UNMIK, they started to reconstruct the country in freedom. The reconstruction process of society under those circumstances, with the pain still there for those murdered, the missing, raped women, orphans, was not easy. The frustration and dissatisfaction with the situation led to a revolt in 2004 which, unfortunately, left people dead and property and religious sites destroyed. Although under a protectorate, Kosovo assumed its responsibility and from its meager budget it allocated millions of euros for the reconstruction of the Orthodox churches. To date, over 10 million euros have been spent and the recovery of that destruction is complete.

On the other hand, to this day, Serbia has not assumed responsibility for burning and destroying over 140,000 houses, 218 mosques, archives, and other infrastructure. Moreover, it has not returned the remains of the victims buried in mass graves in Serbia. Senior Serbian officers have publicly admitted that massacred Albanians were dumped from trucks into the Danube River. The Serbian state or anyone else there have never assumed responsibility for burning the century-old mosques in Nis and Belgrade and arson attacks on the shops of Albanians all over Serbia in 2004.

The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts has never condemned the crimes of the Serbian state against humanity. Yet, Serbia has continued to be a fully-fledged member of UNESCO and it was never expelled from it. The logical question that arises here is: what right and other legitimacy does that academy have to raise issues like these?

5. Since 2008, the Serbian Orthodox churches in Kosovo have been subject to protection under the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. They are safeguarded by the police and other institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. They are free to exercise their activity as part of Serbian Orthodox Church.

Indeed, apart from the 2004 incidents, throughout history the Serbian Orthodox churches in Kosovo have been protected by Albanians, and in most cases they survived precisely due to this protection. The Albanians who protected monasteries in Decan, Peje, Devic, are known by name, and the Serbian Orthodox Church even gave them the ranks of "Vojvodas" as sign of appreciation for what they had done in protecting those monasteries. On the other hand, one cannot hide the truth that it was the leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church that blessed the notorious Serb criminal Arkan before he would start a sway of massacres in Bosnia and Kosovo.

6. In 2000, under the patronage of Romano Prodi from the EU, the Kosova Academy of Science and Arts (ASHAK), together with SASA, signed the act of the establishment of the Union of South Eastern Europe Academies in Venice. This marked the start of a new era for the SASA, and gave the opportunity for it to distance itself from the Milosevic regime it had served. In 2002, in discussions with the ALEA president, in the presence of the UNMIK's representative in charge of education and science and the Kosovo Assembly's speaker, the ASHAK representatives were asked if they would oppose SASA's integration in international mechanisms like that one. The position of the ASHAK was against anyone's isolation, however it expected the SASA to give up its notorious memorandum and support for

Milosevic's policies. The ALLEA president told our representatives that he was coming from Belgrade with written guarantees about that.

In 2004, when the incidents mentioned earlier in this letter took place in Kosovo, ASHAK was admitted in ALLEA in a package with SASA. Later, although we had no direct mutual relations, ASHAK was active in the international bodies at which SASA was also present.

Now it seems that with a new president at its helm SASA is returning to its old policies in full coordination with the Serbian foreign ministry. The unprecedented efforts to prevent Kosovo's UNESCO membership are the best proof of this. Attacks of this kind make the engagement of the Serbian state representatives in the EU-mediated talks with representatives of the Republic of Kosovo in Brussels completely meaningless.

Dear colleagues,

Example of an academy becoming a tool to serve the government, as is the case with the SASA (which was proven by its memorandum and its public position until 2000), the return of fascist requests for the isolation of another people that has already been liberated from a regime that the Serbian academy tries to defend, say enough about the authors of that letter.

Sincerely,



Hivzi Islami

President of ASHAK

