

The Republic of Serbia attaches great importance to UNESCO and is strongly dedicated to its noble mission of promoting universal values of humanity. But today our hands are unfortunately tied and our intentions hampered by an unacceptable political diversion - the introduction of a request of the so called „Republic of Kosovo“ for membership in the Organization.

This issue is of great concern for us and, as yesterday’s adoption of the agenda demonstrated, for many other Member States. Why is this so?

- Because this request is a serious breach of the international law, breach of the Constitution of UNESCO, breach of the legally binding UN Security Council resolution 1244 and of the Charter of the UN whose Article 25 says that „The Members of the UN agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter“.
- Because this unilateral attempt seriously harm and disrupt the atmosphere of the constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, held under the auspices of the European Union in which mutually acceptable solutions to the most complex of issues have been devised so far and where the crucial issue of the Serbian cultural heritage hasn’t yet been discussed.
- Because this is an unacceptable politicization of UNESCO which should not overtake the competences of the UN Security Council or serve as an instrument for the affirmation of an illegal and unilaterally declared independence of a part of the territory of one UN member state.
- Because this would be a very dangerous precedent, harmful for many countries.
- Because this issue is polarizing the membership of UNESCO.
- Because, besides not being a state, Pristina does not have moral credibility for membership. Anyone aspiring to UNESCO membership must prove not only in words but in deeds the commitment to the goals and principles of this organization, which certainly is incompatible with deliberate and systematic demolition of Serbian cultural and spiritual heritage with the aim to remove the traces of its centuries-long existence as well as the impunity of the perpetrators of such barbaric acts comparable to what the world is witnessing and UNESCO strongly condemning in the Middle East and elsewhere
- Because four Serbian orthodox monasteries are inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger and protected by the police and the military. Protected from whom, I ask you. For many years the war in Kosovo is over, isn’t it?
- Because the way of inclusion of this item in the provisional agenda raises serious concerns about the compliance with procedure and the UNESCO’s rules and practices. I have to mention that a document on the unacceptability of Kosovo’s application for UNESCO membership, prepared by our Delegation, was not even published as an official document as we requested. The Executive Board is thus supposed to deliberate and decide about such a sensitive issue only on the basis of the paper which is practically a copy paste of what was proposed by Albania and its cosponsors. Our delegation had no other option but to circulate the document on its own to other Delegations. I hope that these procedural games will not continue.

Having all this in mind we are of the opinion that this eminently political issue should be discussed in Brussels not in Paris. Who decides to support this legally untenable, untimely and premature claim should be ready to bear huge responsibility for all the negative consequences

that his choice will inevitably produce, from the international legality up to the fate of Serbian cultural heritage in the province of Kosovo and Metohija.

Are you really ready for that?