

Mr. President,

Dear colleagues,

Today a decision has been taken that creates a dangerous precedent with unforeseen consequences. A territory of a sovereign state has been recommended for admission to UNESCO. This is a violation of the international law, the Constitution of UNESCO, the UN Security Council resolution 1244 and the Charter of the UN.

It is regrettable that this honorable body is putting itself in the position of a political instrument for the affirmation of an illegal secessionist act. UNESCO should not be politicized! Isn't it the admonition so often solemnly pronounced by some of the most eager promoters of this claim? The compliance with regular procedures, rules and practices should be a norm in all cases without any exception. No procedural games should be allowed... And all that sadly happened this time...

I am at the same time encouraged by the fact that today a significant number of countries, effectively the absolute majority of the Executive Board, clearly demonstrated disagreement with this decision. I thank the honorable representatives that voted against or showed serious reservation.

I strongly believe that many other countries in the General Conference will support this approach and not allow that high forum to be misused for making political decisions, degradation of the Organization's reputation and the indirect legitimization of the premeditated destruction of age-long Serbian cultural and historical heritage. Serbia at UNESCO has been and is still open to the constructive dialogue with all, but our readiness was completely disregarded.

Let us work together in order to save the international law, political rationality, cultural responsibility and moral integrity from the threat of the final execution initiated by this Executive Board's wrong decision.