

WE DEMAND REVIEW OF DIALOGUE POSITION AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

10 November 2015, Prishtina

The failure on UNESCO membership bid represents a major blow to Kosovo's statehood and its international integration. We, the undersigned civil society organizations and individuals of this declaration, believe that this moment should be subject to political responsibility and review of Kosovo's positioning on the dialogue. We consider that this is among the greatest diplomatic failures of the state of Kosovo since the declaration of independence, and as such should serve as a moment of reflection for necessary political and institutional changes. Hereby, we request: 1. Necessary conditioning towards Serbia on the continuation of the dialogue, 2. The European Union to ensure conditions for equal dialoguing, 3. Institutional responsibility for this failure, and 4. Fulfilling international obligations on cultural heritage despite non-membership in UNESCO.

1.

The UNESCO membership bid, once again, revealed that Serbia is not interested for good neighbourly relations. On the contrary, Serbian state has led an aggressive campaign, often with racist tones, against Kosovo's UNESCO membership bid. Serbia's attitude has been totally contrary to principles of the reached agreements in the Brussels dialogue and represents a unilateral breach of these agreements. While Kosovo is implementing the obligations deriving from the dialogue, Serbia is violating all of the agreed obligations by actively impeding processes of Kosovo's international memberships. Hence, we request the Kosovo government to set necessary conditions to be fulfilled by Serbia for the continuation of the dialogue. In the actual circumstances, any continuation of the dialogue with Serbia is unacceptable for us.

2.

We call upon EU Institutions and EU Member States, as the mediators of the political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, who have been the main lobbyists of Kosovo's membership bid to UNESCO, to reflect on Serbia's rejection vote and obstructionist endeavours. We, as the Kosovar civil society, have always been engaged for and called upon peace and dialogue between two states. However, Serbia's actions to block Kosovo's membership bid to UNESCO are contrary to these values and practices. Consequently, we request from the EU Institutions and EU Member States, as the intermediaries of the process, to ensure conditions for equal dialoguing and implementation of the agreements. In contrary, insistence on Kosovo to sit on the negotiations table under any circumstances, although Serbia is totally non-cooperative, is an unjust act and as such will be unacceptable for the Kosovar civil society.

3.

Convinced that gaining merits in cases of success goes back-to-back with the responsibility in cases of failure, we demand political responsibility from institutional holders of the membership application process for its failure. At the same time, we demand that the government analyses the flow of the membership application process, and at the earliest publishing of a detailed report on diplomatic actions and lobbying activities carried out, including engaged persons, expenses, lessons learned from this failure and recommendations for institutional responsibility by diplomatic representatives of the state and other officials involved.

4.

The cultural heritage is among the governing segments facing considerable challenges in Kosovo. The list of Kosovo's arguments for UNESCO membership bid on the cultural heritage framework need to be further enriched. The next membership opportunity being in 2017, we request from the state institutions to declare cultural heritage a policy of national interest. Albeit membership in UNESCO, nothing stops Kosovo on advancing its own system for protection and promotion of cultural heritage. No single day should be missed on undertaking vital actions that increase Kosovo's potential for membership after two years, including: unilateral adoption of UNESCO conventions, designating cultural heritage properties in permanent protection, drafting of management plans for cultural heritage properties, Kosovo internal dialogue for orthodox heritage sites, addressing illegal constructions inside protected heritage areas, and adaption of the new law and national strategy for cultural heritage.

Signatories,

Advocacy Training and Resource Center
Alma
Alter Habitus
Anibar
Arnika
Artpolis
Balkan Policy Institute
Center for Policies and Advocacy
Centre for Political Courage
CIPOF – Childproof
Civil Rights Program Kosovo
Cultural Heritage Without Borders Kosovo
Divine Women
Dokufest
EC Ma Ndryshe
ETEA
FOL Movement
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GAP Institute

Geo-environment
Green Art Center Prishtina
Group of Legal and Political Studies
Initiative for Kosova Community
Initiative for Progress
Institute for Development Policy
Konsumatori
Kosova Education Center
Kosova Population Foundation
Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims
Kosova Women's Network
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Kosovar Civil Society Foundation
Kosovar Stability Initiative
Kosovo 2.0
Kosovo Architecture Foundation
Kosovo Center for International Cooperation
Kosovo Democratic Institute
Lady
Little People of Kosova
Mitrovica Women Association for Human Rights
Multimedia Center
Mundësia
Network of Peace Movement
P.E.A.
Peer Educators Network
PHH-West
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Women's Centre "Repose"
Youth Association for Human Rights
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7 Arte

Adriatik Kelmendi, journalist
Alban Haliti, activist
Arbana Xharra, journalist
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Kreshnik Basha, activist
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