



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF ALBANIA TO UNESCO

*Statement by the Permanent Delegate
Ambassador Ferit Hoxha
to the Plenary Debate of the 207th Executive board of UNESCO
15 October 2019*

Mr. President,
Mme. Director General,
Colleagues,

Last September, during the High-Level week of the 74th Session of the General Assembly, Albania joined the **Alliance for Multilateralism**, initiated by France and Germany, in order to strengthen efforts to finding collective solutions to common challenges.

The technological development with its immense potential but also its profound ethical challenges; increasingly diverse, more interconnected but disoriented societies; a sharpened fragility of the planet with shrinking natural resources and the sword of the climate change consequences looming over all of us; persistent inequalities between and within societies; all these fundamental challenges and risks ask for more cooperation and joint efforts. Therefore, the need for a stronger, efficient, modern and result-oriented organization remains a priority.

We welcome the continued progress on the process of **Strategic Transformation**. Today, the organization has a better external communication and its visibility has improved. We expect the proces

to deliver on the clarity of purpose of the organisation's action through a better identification of means, meaningful programs and results-based management and implementation. Sound human resources management, including right-to-purpose and closely monitored staff mobility, are an essential part. The inclusive consultation and dialogue with the member States should continue through the entire process.

M. le Président,

Le Groupe de Travail à Participation Non Limitée sur la réforme du Programme de **Mémoire du Monde** a fourni un travail considérable. Pas moins de 7 réunions plénières en 7 mois, un record en la matière, nous ont permis de faire une analyse profonde du programme et de ses composantes et de faire de réelles avancées dans le processus de révision. Il n'empêche, il reste encore du travail à fournir pour arriver à une réforme compréhensive comme demandé par le Conseil. Les discussions ont permis de mesurer l'importance qu'accordent plusieurs pays à une révision qui renforcera l'esprit du programme dans son ensemble et permettra d'éviter des crises dans le futur. Les discussions ont aussi fait entendre une demande de plus en plus pressante pour redonner vie au registre international au plus vite. Aucun problème, aucun désaccord, aussi complexes soient-ils, ne sauraient résister à la vraie bonne volonté de trouver une solution, d'arriver à un compromis.

M. le Président,

Dans quelques jours, le Conseil Européen devra se prononcer sur la recommandation de la Commission européenne à ouvrir des **négociations d'adhésion** à l'Union européenne avec l'Albanie. Ces négociations, un long et laborieux parcours, ouvriront un vaste chantier et un nouveau chapitre dans nos relations solides avec l'Union, et viendront soutenir le développement et l'avancement du

pays dans tous les domaines, tout en étant un appui irremplaçable dans la mise en œuvre de l'agenda 2030 sur le plan national.

Mr. President,

Next year, Albania will assume for the first time the **Chairmanship in Office** of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is our major commitment for the year and we intend to use this opportunity to strengthen multilateralism, foster dialogue at every level and seek solutions through joint efforts in the euro-Atlantic area.

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the DG for the comprehensive report presented yesterday on the work carried during the last months. The strong focus on **Education**, in all its underlying layers, represents by far the most ambitious Unesco commitment as the lead UN agency in the implementation of SGD 4. This is a major drive that will bear proof, more than anything else, of the renewed focus of the organisation as we want it. Quality education for all is a human right, a public good and a long-term investment. In the face of the growing challenges posed by online content, intentionally distorted newsfeeds, rising discrimination and revived hate speech, education represents an indispensable tool for the development of an informed and healthy society.

We welcome the roadmap regarding the **Open Science initiative**. Every progress towards democratization of science would contribute to reducing inequalities, reducing knowledge gaps and the digital divide between countries. The consultations conducted with Member States have given visibility to the initiative and further raised awareness on its importance.

Mr. President,

In the coming days, we will discuss and we hope approve, **the budget** of the organisation for the next C/5. We welcome the fact that the overall financial situation of the Organization is positive and healthy, also thanks to increased voluntary contributions. The organisation needs a budget that will help it maintain and improve program implementation but also strengthen its role within the UN system in order to be able to deliver on leadership commitments for the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. President, let me conclude by highlighting Unesco's role in upholding, promoting and protecting **human rights**, which lie at the core of Unesco's mandate. The role of the organisation in this respect should only be strengthened. We reiterate our support for the safety of journalists. At times such as these when disinformation is easily widespread, support for professional journalism, reliable and impartial news, is a must.

As one famous saying goes « democracy dies in darkness ». But, democracy, its values and achievements, can also irreparably be affected and disrupted by digital authoritarianism and online manipulations. Our task is to constantly do whatever we can to prevent it.

Thank you

#