

41st session of the UNESCO General Conference, Paris

Address of the Minister of the Civil Affairs of BiH, November 10, 2021

Distinguished Chairman,

Dear Director General,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and honour to greet you on behalf of the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to express my pleasure to attend the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference.

Allow me to express my support for the proposed UNESCO Program for the upcoming period, and to emphasize the commitment of Bosnia and Herzegovina to actively cooperate with UNESCO in order to achieve the set goals.

Through its mission, UNESCO contributes to peace by promoting cooperation between nations, and in this period when the whole world was facing the COVID 19 pandemic, the importance of the role of UNESCO came to the fore.

UNESCO has once again demonstrated its ability responding to key global challenges. Cooperation in the field of education and support to the institutions in a period of online teaching is especially important for us.

I would like to emphasize the excellent cooperation we have with UNESCO in the framework of many activities in the field of education, science, culture, media and information literacy, which are implemented both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and regionally.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is especially committed to the realization of the goals of sustainable development. The document "Framework for the realization of the goals of sustainable development in BiH" also includes the goals of sustainable development for education and culture.

In cooperation with the UNESCO office in Sarajevo, we are successfully cooperating on the identification of key indicators in the educational and cultural sector, which will contribute to better strategic planning.

Together we are implementing a project called "Let's design education again! - "Creating better education for children during and after the COVID-19 crisis." The main goals of the project are the digitalization of education and the improvement of teachers' skills for performing online and combined teaching models.

Drivers of sustainable development, when we talk about education, are related to quality education and lifelong learning, better matching of labour market supply with demand and investment in research and development. All in order to build a modern education system.

When it comes to science, I would like to point out that the challenges we face today require greater investment and even stronger cooperation. I appreciate that by working together we can answer to global questions and challenges, which only science can give us.

In 2012, BiH hosted a meeting of Ministers of Science of Southeast Europe in cooperation with UNESCO. This year we initiated the relaunch of this platform. We hope for a positive response, having in mind the importance of cooperation in this area and the readiness of UNESCO to support us.

Also, the cooperation we have in the field of media and information literacy is very important for us. Media and information literacy are the umbrella competence in the digital age, with the need for further development in the context of the digital transformation of society. Wider consultations on strategies and policies for the development of media and information literacy are underway with the support of UNESCO and the involvement of a large number of different institutions in BiH.

Previously, Bosnia and Herzegovina successfully cooperated with UNESCO within the projects supported by the "Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sports". Further, strengthening of cooperation is our commitment because by investing in sports we contribute to the development of a healthy society and the promotion of sports values.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified all UNESCO conventions in the field of culture and we are committed to their implementation.

Last year, we inscribed another element on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity - the traditional grass mowing competition custom in Kupres, and prepared two more nominations (Nevesinje Olympic Games and Sevdalinka). Bosnia and Herzegovina also participates in the serial nomination of the Lipizzan Horse Breeding Traditions on the Representative List.

We especially emphasize the importance of digitalization and preservation of elements of intangible cultural heritage, and one such project is underway with the support of UNESCO.

BiH participated in the work of the World Heritage Committee for the period 2018-2021. We have tried to contribute to key issues through our work within the Committee.

The first natural site from BiH, Janj Rainforest, has been inscribed on the World Heritage List this year. Two more nomination files for natural sites have been prepared - Vjetrenica Cave and Una National Park.

Working together to preserve and protect cultural diversity is a precondition for the existence of basic human values of society and fundamental human rights.

Bosnia and Herzegovina highly appreciates the role and mandate of UNESCO and we are strongly committed to further strengthening cooperation.

I express my desire and readiness to give our contribution in achieving goals and priorities of UNESCO in the direction of preserving peace, eradicating poverty, ensuring sustainable development and promoting intercultural dialogue while respecting cultural diversity.

Thank you for your attention.