



Recommendation 1511 (2001)¹

Final version

Cultural situation in Kosovo

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Culture and education are amongst the first victims in any conflict: the war in Kosovo is no exception to this rule. At the same time, culture and education are a most efficient long-term means for the prevention of such conflicts as they help to eradicate the stereotypes, prejudices and intolerance which lead to them.
2. The educational system in Kosovo needs urgent, massive support, not only because of the destruction of facilities and the lack of teachers but, above all, because of the ongoing segregation of children and students of different ethnic origins and because of the potential risk of developing educational policies based on nationalist rhetoric and hate speech.
3. Other major problems in the field of education are the high drop-out rate between primary and secondary education, in particular among girls and in the countryside, the lack of teacher training and the inadequacy of teaching methods, the very low level of pre-school attendance, the lack of parental involvement since the end of the conflict, the non-schooling of disabled children and the prevalence of corruption in the university.
4. Another area of great concern, where urgent action is needed, is the protection of the rich cultural heritage. The built heritage of Kosovo, Ottoman, Serbian and Albanian, has suffered the effects of years of neglect and war and is now suffering the effects of large-scale, uncontrolled and unregulated reconstruction.
5. The situation is chaotic due to financial, administrative and logistical problems, a lack of co-ordination between international and non-governmental organisations and because of the extent of unauthorised and sometimes illegal activities. There are a large number of dedicated professionals with great expertise, working in local institutions, which have been isolated, undermined and under-funded for many years.
6. The Council of Europe should also contribute to reactivating the cultural landscape, the enactment of efficient media legislation and provision for media self-regulation. Youth and sports programmes are also needed and could do a lot to ease the climate of tension.
7. The recent conflicts in the Balkans have clearly shown that the existing problems there cannot be tackled on the local level only. Thus the Assembly believes that the Council of Europe commitment to the revival and the democratisation of processes in the field of culture and education in Kosovo should go alongside efforts in the same direction in Serbia and in Montenegro even if it is not yet possible or advisable to try to link them.
8. The scope of the challenges that the international community has to face is unprecedented. The long experience of the Council of Europe in co-ordination and in providing expertise both in terms of technical assistance and in mediating complex questions of educational and cultural rights places it in a very strong position to make a substantial contribution.
9. In this respect, the Assembly welcomes the two agreements signed with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (Unmik) and the World Bank on assistance to reform the education system from primary to higher education.

1. *Assembly debate* on 25 April 2001 (12th Sitting) (see [Doc. 9053](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mrs Poptodorova). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 25 April 2001 (12th Sitting).



10. The Assembly also welcomes the publication, in co-operation with the European Commission, of the "Study on the State of the Cultural Heritage in Kosovo", in the context of the Technical Co-operation and Consultancy Programme and the Action Plan for Cultural Heritage in Kosovo.

11. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers ensure the means for the Council of Europe to maintain its decisive role in providing assistance and promoting co-operation in the field of educational and cultural matters in Kosovo.

12. The Assembly also recommends that the Committee of Ministers continue to assess thoroughly, in collaboration with the Unmik, other international organisations and NGOs, the needs for assistance in culture, education, media, cultural heritage, youth and sport issues, in particular to:

12.1. assist in the process of drafting the legal framework for provisional self-government in Kosovo in its fields of competence;

12.2. ensure efficient decentralisation of responsibilities in the fields of education and culture, as far as possible independent of local political pressures;

12.3. support the ongoing project for training the 26 000 teachers in Kosovo as a most urgent step to increase the quality of teaching;

12.4. complete the revision of curricula and textbooks;

12.5. support exchange programmes and the mobility of teachers and students in general, inter alia, by addressing visa restrictions in a constructive way;

12.6. continue to encourage the reform of higher education with a view to raising academic standards, to ensuring the autonomy of the university, to eradicating corruption and to aligning the University of Pristina with the Bologna Process;

12.7. promote a policy of equity in the schooling of Kosovar children with a view to bridging the gap between ethnic groups while taking into account the special educational needs of disabled children;

12.8. ensure that local educational initiatives – in particular those designed to counteract segregationist thinking – are encouraged and developed with the aid of moral and material support, so that what have been isolated projects become the rule rather than the exception;

12.9. support youth organisations and promote wherever possible the use of non-formal education as a way of overcoming division and discrimination.