



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

## Venice Office

Regional Bureau for Science  
and Culture in Europe

### **Speech by Sinisa Sesum, Head of Antenna Office in Sarajevo UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice (Italy)**

**on the occasion of the Official launch  
of the Revitalization of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo Fortress project**

**Novo Brdo, 29 January 2014**

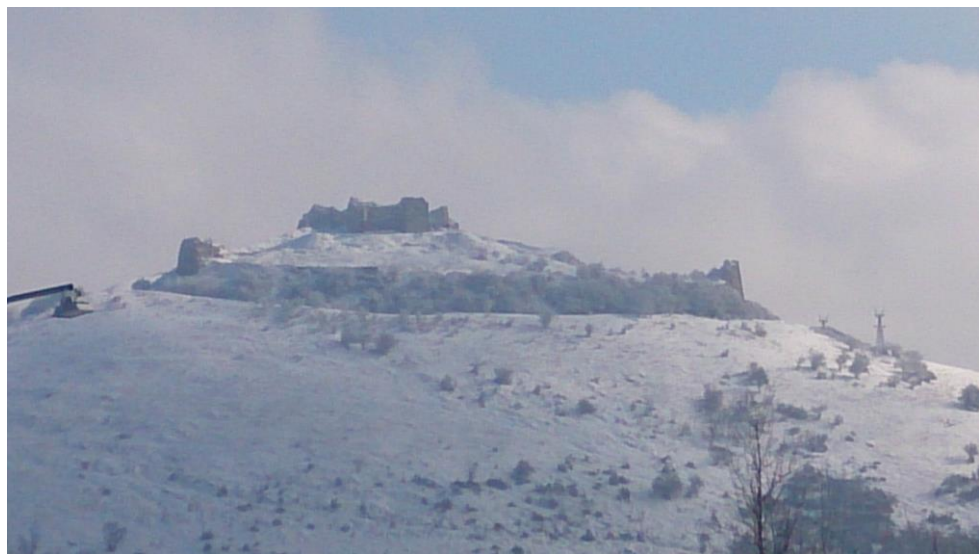


Photo credit: © UNESCO/Sinisa Sesum - Novo Brdo fortress

Ladies and Gentleman,

Dear friends,

I am honored to be here with you today on behalf of UNESCO, to attend, this important event dedicated to the inauguration of Revitalization of Novo Brdo Fortress, the project which will be implemented thanks to the generous donation of the European Union and to the support of the relevant authorities.

Since 2003, UNESCO in close cooperation with UNMIK, and thanks to the generous contributions of Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the United States working on the safeguard of the rich cultural heritage in Kosovo\*.

Dozens of important cultural heritage monuments were preserved and I will just mention some of the most important ones such as the Decani and Gracanica Monasteries, the Pec Patriarchate, the Bogorodica Ljeviska Church of Prizren, the Hadum Mosque of Djakovica, the Mosque of Decani, the Catholic Cathedral in Prizren, the Hammams in Mitrovica and Prizren, the traditional Ottoman fountains in Prizren, the Deftedar Mosque in Pec.

For UNESCO, the protection of cultural heritage is a value in itself but it also can serve other positive purposes. In particular, having once been the focus of intense bitterness, cultural heritage may play a useful role in the re-establishment and maintenance of peaceful relations between different communities. Indeed, the protection of cultural heritage is a domain where increased trust and understanding between communities may be constructed and where different parties may exchange signals of respect and responsibility that can help build a sense of mutual confidence. The protection of cultural heritage may help overcome the painful divisions caused by past events.

Understanding how to locally communicate the meaning and importance of historical monuments and their values for the further social and economic development is very important.

Subsequently, the European Union generously accepted to ensure financial support - through a joint management modality with UNESCO - to this important project aimed at revitalizing the Novobërdë /Novo Brdo Castle through conservation and restoration efforts and, managing and valorizing the municipality's cultural heritage asset through socio-economic development initiatives.

The protection and promotion of cultural heritage and the safeguard of cultural diversity in the South Eastern European region is one of the top priorities of UNESCO. Therefore we will in cooperation with UNMIK, other members of the UN family and relevant authorities spare no effort in continuing with the safeguard and promotion of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the region.

Finally, I wish to warmly thank the European Union for its decision to finance such important project, the authorities for their confidence and the Tourist Centre of Novo Brdo for its support in organizing today's event.

Thank you for your attention.

*\*note: Kosovo, as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 from 1999*