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ALBANIA

Submission

**The right of education and its economical support by
Albania**

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OIEC is a NGO in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Founded in 1952, OIEC is present in 103 countries and its aim is to promote educational catholic projects in relation with the principles of United Nations. OIEC represents about 50 millions pupils and students in more 210.000 schools around the world.

This report is established on the observation led by the persons in charge of the Catholic education in Albania. The Catholic education of Albania is a member of the international Association for Catholic education.

The report brings to light the main concerns connected to the problem of the freedom of the education and teaching such as being a matter of the international **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Albania in 1991**, in its article 13:

“(…)

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4. No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph I of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.”

The number of pupils attending Catholic schools in Albania is the following:

Primary Education: 2248

Secondary Education: 3458

Higher Education: 2070

Actually the relationships between Catholic Education and Albania are quite good, but the government progressively tries to put in the second plan the private schools in general. Our organization can notice that the government appreciates our work in schools and our contribution in the education, but not more than appreciation.

The right of education and its economical support by Albania

In the discussion about the new law for the Pre-university education 2012, it was proposed several times that the state should finance even the private education, because being a qualitative education and having no interest in (the case of non-profit institutions), it provides not only a complete formation, but it also becomes an urge to improve the quality of education and creates the possibility of an opened dialogue. In fact, our organisation think that a democratic state should offer its citizens concrete possibilities to choose the proper education suitable for his child, so the State's help makes possible not to be discriminated by this economical factor.

In the article 5 of the Law 69, 2012, about education's right we read:

1. The right to education in the Republic of Albania shall be guaranteed to the Albanian citizens, foreign citizens and those without citizenship, without discrimination in terms of gender, race, colour, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, political or religious

convictions, economic or social status, age, residing location, disability or other grounds being referred to in the Albanian legislation.

2. *"In public schools, compulsory education and upper secondary education are free."¹*

A State that thinks about its future, takes it in consideration as predicts the first issue of article 5, that all citizens are equal. It creates politics to enlarge the possibilities for a qualitative education for its citizens. Actually, private education, especially non-profitable ones, is available to the citizens, that of knowledge and future, it is not a parallel way of the public education system, but should work out together contributing for the same purpose.

Therefore, we think that Albania should guarantee all citizens equal opportunity for education: It could be done in different ways. We propose, for example, for the State to determine how much they are spending for public school students and give this family contribution to the family, which chooses to enrol their children in a private school, or directly to the private schools. This would be a consistent execution of the law, which means equal possibilities and mainly concrete. Albania cannot aggravate the families who choose the private school to collect taxes when in reality these students do not cost anything to the State.

As we said, regarding the law of 2009, Albania has made some progress on the financial support of educational institutions dependent on the religious community of course, this is a laudable step but it should be realistic. The government appreciate this kind of schools for their contribution in the field of education; it is not a difficult thing. There should be another fact regarding interest. Seen by the government these schools are in its interest and benefits are valuable economically.

There are quite enough considering facts: How many students attend private schools? How many teachers have been employed? How much would this sector cost to the government if it did not exist, just think about the infrastructure, formation, basic materials and teachers' payment.

So we think that Albanian civil society should reflect and understand the essence of this request and the government politics should express concretely and significantly the respect for the right of education. Families have their right to choose the education for their children, not only those families in good economic conditions, but also those in difficulties have the right, to choose the one that is suitable to their own and children's desires.

This good and concrete volition, of the government should be given unconditionally. According to the Law 69, 2012 for the pre-university education, to the financial support for the pre-university private education, article 39 about financial support for the private pre-university education:

1. *The Ministry shall, depending on its resources, support financially the local private educational institutions, being non-profit making, and having at least five years functioning as private institutions. The financial support for the private schools shall, in accordance with the criteria contained in the decision of the Council of Ministers, be differentiated depending on their ranking in national examinations of initial education or school leaving exams, as well as in international testing or competitions.*

2. *The private schools shall use the financial support only for the excellent students in national and international activities.*

In this way, the answer to the problem is expressed in the law simply as a desire or opportunity of the state to help non-profit private education. On the other hand, considering the conditions under which the contribution is supposed to be done, it could lead to a fruitless competition between schools.

¹ In the official translation on website of the Ministry of Education this coma has been omitted.

Regarding the right of education, we as catholic schools, think is recognized from our government only like principle not in practice. The parents, because of economical discrimination, cannot choose the education they want for their children. Instead regarding the freedom to teach religion in schools that is possible and the government give the permission if the schools ask for it. But, many our schools do not prefer to teach religion in their schools because of very high percentage of Muslims among the students and the not adequate preparation of the teachers.

We consider very important to find the way how to change the law in order to give possibility for all families to chose the education which better correspond to their values.

Geneva, 12 September 2013