

UNESCO AND ITS FINANCIAL STABILITY AFTER MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

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Abstract: The paper presents an overview of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) describing the current standing of this important international organization in terms of its global competences and performance of specialized activities in the fields of culture, cultural heritage, education, science, scientific cooperation and other areas based on international documents.

The paper describes the origin and development of UNESCO and the international documents adopted to regulate its standing and operations. It deals in more detail with the historical establishment and development of this global organization and its activities based on international documents such as the United Nations Charter and the UNESCO Constitution. It compares the long-term objectives of the organization concerning respect for human rights, justice and democracy and the arguments of current and former Member States concerning their fulfilment.

The paper also considers the organization's financial mechanism with special regard for the issue of Member States' membership fees. In addition to the current state of UNESCO funding, it considers the possible impacts on its activities following membership changes and the withdrawal of some states from the organization and the subsequent decrease in the available funding for its activities.

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Introduction

International relations and international cooperation have a significant impact on the social systems of states, and thus also on the political systems and internal policies of states. International relations and international cooperation have also resulted in the adoption of many national legal acts and various measures of an economic, social and other nature. Thus, it can take the form of political or economic pressure or participation in various international groupings, with states adopting different legal acts, social and economic measures into their legal system and internal policy. Of course, on the other hand, the internal political systems of individual states also affect international relations, and this influence derives mainly from the state's size.

The research issue of the paper is the analysis of the basic documents of the United Nations (UN) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for the purpose of comparing UNESCO's goals for international relations and the situation in the organisation's membership base. The article uses citation analysis and comparison of the meanings of texts of international documents.

International relations

The current globalised world is substantially characterised by a great many changes with a major impact on states and associations of states, such as migration, environmental protection, armed conflicts, and many others. The international community is responding to these problems in an effort to solve them and cooperates at an international level, as no state is able to solve them alone. Similarly, states are not self-sufficient for ensuring their own development, but must collaborate. As Lid'ák (2000) stated, this creates many interrelationships, ties and bonds between states, which are not static, but rather dynamic, constantly and rapidly changing and adapting to new conditions, many of which have no basis in historical experience.

International relations can be understood as mutual relations between states, but also relations between nations, cultures or societies and institutions, especially in the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific or educational field, but also in other areas.

Thus, sovereign states, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, multinational corporations are considered as actors in international relations, but in recent years' terrorist organisations, organised crime groups or social movements have also come to be considered possible international actors. Nevertheless, the main actors and elements of international relations are states. It can therefore be said that international relations can be understood as international cooperation in various fields (political, economic, cultural, legal, educational, etc.) between states and their bodies.

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States may associate in international cooperation to form bilateral or multilateral clusters with various forms or content.

However, the practice of international life, especially in recent years, shows that the concept of international relations is much broader and cannot be confined to inter-state relations. Besides political and diplomatic relations, there are many other forms of action, such as economic, scientific and other. It is also essential that the European and global public be informed truthfully about the serious facts of international relations and international policy (Plavčan, Funta, 2019). States are, of course, decision-makers shaping the international environment, but among other institutions, the sphere of international relations cannot be narrowed down just to states. An analysis of international documents affecting educational policy and labour mobility policies is of great importance in the current period. Major societal changes in Europe and throughout the world are bringing new challenges. For example, the Marrakech Compact seeks solutions for how to integrate migrants from Africa and the Middle East into the European labour market (Moška, Plavčan, 2019).

Origin, objectives and functions of UNESCO

An international conference of Allied ministers of education was held in Great Britain with a view to restoring and innovating education and training. The governments of European countries met in Great Britain in 1942. Based on the recommendations from this conference on education, a further international conference was held on 1 – 16 November 1945, which was attended by the representatives of 44 states, with a view to establishing an international organisation for cooperation in the field of education and culture that would strive to maintain international peace. The result was the drafting of the UNESCO constitution on 16 November 1945, which officially established the international organisation. The UNESCO Constitution entered into force on 4 November 1946 following ratification by the 20 founding States, namely: 1. Great Britain, 2. New Zealand, 3. Saudi Arabia, 4. South Africa, 5. Australia, 6. India, 7. France, 8. Mexico, 9. Dominican Republic, 10. Turkey, 11. Egypt, 12. Norway, 13. Canada, 14. China, 15. Denmark, 16. United States of America, 17. Czechoslovakia, 18. Brazil, 19. Lebanon, 20. Greece. The UNESCO Constitution sets out the goals of the organisation, the establishment of membership, its bodies, budget and relations with other organisations in the framework of the United Nations. Czechoslovakia was one of the founding members; the Slovak Republic acquired UNESCO membership after the split of the former Czechoslovakia by succession on 9 February 1993. UNESCO currently has 193 members and 11 associate members. The US and Israel withdrew from UNESCO in 2019.

UNESCO is headquartered in Paris and is one of the world's leading international organisations. It belongs to the United Nations system as one of a number of specialised organisations. Non-member states of the United Nations may also become members of UNESCO, with the recommendation of the UNESCO Executive Council and subsequent approval by a two-thirds majority vote of the UNESCO General Conference.

UNESCO brings together countries of the world that are committed to cooperating internationally in the development of culture and its diversity, intercultural dialogue and the protection of the cultural heritage of the world community, support and development of education and science and scientific cooperation, and in seeking ways to address the current challenges facing the global community. The areas of cooperation also include social and natural sciences, the environment, information, communication, computer science, and also law. UNESCO places great emphasis on justice, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as freedom of expression as an essential condition of democracy. Among other things, UNESCO also adopted the agenda for coordinating tsunami early warning systems.

As the supreme body of UNESCO, the General Conference, in adopting proposals, distinguishes between recommendations and international conventions submitted for their approval. Each member state submits recommendations or conventions to its competent bodies within one year of the end of the General Conference meeting at which they were adopted.

The UNESCO Constitution also contains provisions relating to its budget. Article 9 (2) states that the General Conference approves the final draft budget and also the allocation of financial responsibility between member states, in accordance with the agreement concluded under Article 10 of the Constitution with the UN. According to point 3, the Director-General of UNESCO may accept voluntary

contributions, donations and grants from governments, public and private institutions, associations and private persons under the conditions laid down in the accounting rules. Article 10 of the UNESCO Constitution states that UNESCO must be part of the United Nations as a specialised organisation of it by agreement under Article 63 of the UN Charter. This agreement is subject to approval by the United Nations General Assembly. The agreement must ensure effective cooperation between UNESCO and the UN in pursuit of their common objectives, while recognising the economy of this organisation, in the framework of powers defined in this constitution. An important provision of Article 3, such an agreement may serve, inter alia, for the approval and funding of the UNESCO budget via the UN General Assembly.

Under Article 2 (6), any member state or associate member may resign membership in the organisation on the basis of notification addressed to the director-general. However, such withdrawal does not affect financial obligations toward the organisation prior to withdrawal.

International Relations and the UN

The Charter of the United Nations (UN Charter) is the basic document of this organisation. The founding document was signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco. The document is binding on all members of the organisation. The Charter entered into force on 24 October 1945 following ratification by a majority of the founding members. It sets out the main purposes of the organisation, sets out the rights and obligations of the Member States, as well as the basic bodies and the functioning of the organisation.

The United Nations Charter sets out the following purposes of the UN: “To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. To be a centre for harmonising the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.” (United Nation, 1945).

The UN Charter in Chapter 1, Article 2 (United Nation, 1945) states that “the UN is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members and that these members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered. All members of the United Nations shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. All Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action. The Organisation shall ensure that states which are not Members of the United Nations act in accordance with these Principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security. Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the members to submit such matters to settlement under this Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII actions in the case of a threat to the peace, a breach of peace and acts of aggression.” (United Nation, 1945).

UNESCO funding

Funding is needed for fulfilling the objectives and roles set. The approved budget of UNESCO for 2018-2019 is 1.2 billion USD, which is decided by the General Conference as the supreme body composed of representatives of the member states, meeting every two years. This respects the organisation’s 6-year medium-term strategy. The current strategy is set for the period 2014 – 2021. The General Conference also fixes the member states’ contributions. The budget consists of contributions from Member States, voluntary contributions, donations, fundraising and other resources.

Approximately 84% of the budget is intended for the organisation's programmes, of which 32% is for education, 23% for science and oceans and 10% for culture (Financial Accountability, 2019).

The United States was among the largest contributors. However, on the margins of the 202nd Executive Board meeting held on 4-18 in Paris, the United States officially announced its decision to leave the organisation as at 31 December 2018 and terminate its UNESCO membership with effect from 1 January 2019. Israel also joined the United States' decision. According to these states, the reason was the organisation's long-standing position regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue and Jerusalem, as expressed by dozens of resolutions. Another reason was the acceptance of Palestine as a member of the organisation in 2011. Another reason for the departure may also be that UNESCO suspended the USA's voting right due to its debt in the main bodies. In any case, the US was not satisfied with the majority voting system, as they had little chance of changing anything when viewed in comparison to the amount of their contributions. Another reason the USA cited was the need to reform the organisation, as well as the UN itself (Summary Records, 2018).

The USA's departure has had serious consequences for the financial situation of the entire organisation, including the interruption of several programmes. UNESCO is trying to compensate for the shortfall of about a quarter of funds, representing approximately 80 million USD annually, through voluntary contributions, though this is not sufficient. The USA had previously withdrawn from the organisation and was absent over the period 1985 to 2003. Both USA and Israel, though, are interested in observer status. They want to participate in the activities of the organisation as an observer state and contribute their opinions on the various topics they consider important from their perspective.

Conclusion

The achievement of the UNESCO objectives are declared in the UNESCO Constitution. "The purpose of the Organisation is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations." (UNESCO, 1945). This article of the Constitution highlights the role of collaboration and its support among nations through education, science and culture as one of the most important means of fostering understanding and cooperation between nations and states. Point 2 specifies ways of cooperation, through mass communication, education cooperation, where equality of educational opportunity is a main theme, cooperation in assuring the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science and all branches of intellectual activity, including the international exchange of persons, and in other areas of international cooperation. Point 3 states: "With a view to preserving the independence, integrity and fruitful diversity of the cultures and educational systems of the States Members of the Organisation, the Organisation is prohibited from intervening in matters which are essentially within their domestic jurisdiction." (UNESCO, 1945).

Only in this article does the UNESCO Constitution address international relations between its members, though exclusively in the fields of education, culture and other areas of international cooperation. Point 3 mentions a prohibition on interference by UNESCO in the internal affairs of its members, without further specifying them. The fulfillment of UNESCO's objectives is exclusively to promote understanding and cooperation between nations and to eliminate discrepancies through the dissemination of culture and education.

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