

PUBLIC LETTER TO MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE, Mr. ARSIM BAJRAMI

Concerning the possible closure of IBCM in case of non-issuance of emergency funds

IBCM Student Council

June 2017

Honorable Minister Bajrami,

This letter is addressed to you, as the head of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, on behalf of all current and IBCM graduate students. We are addressing this letter to you entirely in an independent, impartial and uninfluenced manner by the involved parties in this issue.

We as IBCM students consider that our future is being risked as the issuance of emergency funds keeps getting delayed. We consider that we, the students of IBCM, are the most damaged party by the current situation, and as such we are deeply shocked by the news that the institution, in which some of us are at the beginning, some in half and others at the end of their studies, may be closed due to lack of funds aimed at covering operational costs - which was regulated through an internationally signed agreement between the relevant Ministry and the IBCM founding organization - SPARK.

You are already familiar with the legal, financial and to some extent political context and background of the situation that has prevented and continues to prevent the issuance of the budget/funds as determined by the agreement. Therefore, we feel that it is necessary for you to hear our voice, to sympathize with us and to understand the situation which we, the IBCM students, are currently facing!

Quality education represents the basis to a country's development and ensures the continuity of providing a country's economic and social well-being. For us, it is incomprehensible, shocking and unreasonable how it is possible for an institution that promotes quality education, has international curricula and accreditation, implements practical approaches in its learning model, and is easily accessible to students of all communities, such as the IBCM, is likely to be closed due to ongoing events in the political scene, mainly due to the Central Elections that have not yet been completed.

Since its establishment in 2009, IBCM has brought a new spirit and positive changes to the city of Mitrovica and beyond and this is a notable fact. Practical approach and methods, modern international curricula and the educational system itself, adopted by Danish partners have made our IBCM graduate peers find employment within 6 months of graduation and not only; many IBCM graduates have successfully opened and continue to manage their private businesses which regenerate new jobs, other IBCM graduates and students are head and/or part of NGOs , various initiatives and projects aimed at improving the lives of citizens in our society - these are just some of the ways IBCM is shaping and positively changing the community of Mitrovica and beyond.

It is said that education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change our communities and IBCM as an institution with solid values and quality education provided is the epitome of this saying. We, as IBCM students are proud to be part of such an institution that through education is bringing together

a divided city and is creating future leaders and professionally prepared individuals that will drive and bring positive changes in our society.

We are fully aware that the budget foreseen for IBCM funding in the signed agreement cannot be issued without the establishment of the new government and the ratification of the agreement by members of the Assembly of Kosovo; however, the college in which we study is at risk of closing before the new government is established. Therefore, given the legal and constitutional basis regarding signing/executing decisions related to issuing emergency funds, we urge you to pressure the relevant instances and bodies so that emergency funds are issued before the establishment of the new government.

We believe that the Government of Kosovo will find a long-term solution for IBCM, but given the situation we are in, any delay will result in what has already been announced by SPARK, IBCM Management and relevant embassies - the closure of IBCM! Consequences, in this case, would be long-term and irreversible for the IBCM students, staff and community of Mitrovica.

Keep in mind that our progress as a nation cannot be faster than our progress in education. Human capital is our fundamental resource and quality education is our passport to the future, and the future belongs to those who prepare for it today! Allow us continue our education - save the future of IBCM students!

Respectfully and with the deepest sense of hope for your response!

IBCM Student Representative Council