



**Message from the Director General of UNESCO Ms Audrey Azoulay
for the Forum of Partners of the Slovak Commission for UNESCO**

(13 June 2023, Bratislava, Slovakia)

Dear Ministers, Excellencies,
Dear friends,

2023 marks the 30th anniversary of Slovakia's independence, its membership in UNESCO and the establishment of the Slovak Commission for UNESCO.

These have been 30 years of close and fruitful cooperation around our common objectives of promoting peace, sustainable development and human rights through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

In all our fields of action, our collaboration with Slovakia has flourished.

We are proud that today the country has eight World Heritage sites (6 cultural and 2 natural), nine elements of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, four biosphere reserves, one geopark, three inscriptions in the Memory of the World Register, five UNESCO Chairs, twenty-five UNESCO Associated Schools, one Club for UNESCO, one UNESCO Creative City and one UNESCO Learning City.

In the last year alone, Slovakia managed to join with the City of Trnava the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, to establish a new Chair of Architectural Heritage Restoration at the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava, to inscribe the country's 9th element – “The Lipizzan horse breeding traditions” on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and to become a Member of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This dynamic is quite fascinating.

As we celebrate this year the 20th anniversary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, I would like to highlight Slovakia's engagement in identifying community needs for living heritage among Ukrainian communities, groups and individuals displaced in Slovakia.

I cannot fail to mention Slovakia's exceptional commitment to promoting gender equality and human rights. One of the first UNESCO Chairs in the world, the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights Education at Comenius University in Bratislava recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. It has made a significant contribution to promoting research and disseminating knowledge on human rights in Europe and beyond.

These examples illustrate the close links between UNESCO and Slovakia. Links that the Slovak Commission has been helping to strengthen for 30 years now.

Dear friends,

Allow me to thank you for 30 years of support and cooperation. We look forward to the next 30 years of our progress and achievements for the common good of humanity.

I wish you all, the Commission and UNESCO together, a happy anniversary!

Thank you so much.