

Speech by the Rector Arben Hajrullahu on the 55th Anniversary of the Establishment of the University of Prishtina

Prishtina, February 14, 2025

It is a great honour and a special privilege for me to stand before you today in this historic event—not only to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the University of Prishtina but also to pay tribute to the legacy of those who have shaped the history of our country and nation.

Fifty-seven years ago, for the people of Kosovo, the founding of a university was merely an idea, a dream—a bold vision held by those who believed that our nation could have a brighter future and could overcome its numerous challenges through education. It is the very determination and commitment of those who, during the protests of 1968, defied violence and persecution; and it is also the determination and commitment of others who, over the decades, fought against oppression and inequalities, sacrificing everything so that this dream could one day become a reality.

Today, the University of Prishtina stands as a symbol and a living legacy of that bold journey—a centre of knowledge and innovation that continues to lead and inspire new generations to contribute to the advancement of our society.

The dark years of apartheid in the 1990s, which culminated in genocide, remain fresh in the memories of this institution. Yet, thanks to the dedication and tireless efforts of the people of Kosovo and the unwavering support of our friends, the university was rebuilt and it forged ahead toward a brighter future. Every challenge we faced was a drive toward greater individual and collective resilience.

The University of Prishtina was the driving force behind the freedom, independence, democracy, and statehood of Kosovo, as well as a beacon of academic revival—not only for the people of today's Kosovo, formerly known as Dardania, but also for all Albanians from the former Yugoslavia and beyond.

We remain firm in our mission: to educate, inspire, and empower.

We take great pride in recognizing among our alumni: presidents and prime ministers, other state leaders, and distinguished figures in academia and beyond—individuals who have carried forward the values and ideals cultivated in this institution. Our alumni are the best example of the power of the University of Prishtina in building our nation's future.

The number of University of Prishtina alumni who have succeeded globally as esteemed scholars and recognised professionals is not scarce. They stand as a testament to the extraordinary work our university has accomplished over the years and reflect its academic and social values. They are not only the finest embodiment of our values, they continually demonstrate a willingness to advance knowledge and support the ongoing mission of our university.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Friends of the University of Prishtina,

While we honour our glorious yet challenging past, the University of Prishtina continues ahead with an unwavering commitment to meet the needs of the 21st-century in higher education, especially in this post-digital and artificial intelligence era, which is rapidly and powerfully transforming everything.

Our university excels in technology integration, innovation, and cutting-edge teaching methodologies in our region and beyond. As a result, we have transformed the way we fulfil our mission. Currently, for example, using QR codes for class participation provides real-time transparency. On the other hand, continuous assessment not only makes learning more effective but it also equips students with key skills and knowledge for the labour market.

As we commemorate our 55-year journey, we are fully aware of today's challenges. While artificial intelligence is reshaping processes in higher education and the labour market, societal needs are constantly evolving at an unprecedented pace. At the University of Prishtina—and

beyond—our duty remains to uphold and strengthen the core mission of universities—the pursuit of critical thinking and the pursuit of analysis grounded in scientific postulates.

The scientific and innovative work of the University of Prishtina is best demonstrated through its success stories. An example is the project of two of our students who have designed a device called “PulseInsight,” which predicts and prevents cardiovascular and respiratory diseases by analysing breathing patterns and heartbeats. This project was recognized in the top 40 of the most innovative ideas in the world despite being in competition with no fewer than 110,000 other ideas. Additionally, a professor and a student from our university have recently developed a prototype of a mechanical ventilator designed to pump oxygen and remove carbon dioxide from the lungs of individuals with breathing difficulties or those undergoing surgical procedures.

On this special day and anniversary, we take pride in honouring our distinguished professors and students for their contributions in an effort to prevent brain drain. At the same time, we strive to encourage those who have left to return—if not permanently, at least occasionally—in what is known as “brain circulation.”

Ladies and gentlemen,

Friends of the University of Prishtina,

The University of Prishtina is built upon the commitment and collaboration of all who believe in the power of knowledge. Every student, alumnus, professor, and partner is an essential link in this chain of success. Let us work together so that the University of Prishtina is not merely an institution that endures the ‘test of time’ but the driving force of development that shapes the future. Let us demonstrate through our actions that education is not just the transmission of knowledge but a catalyst for social change toward a better future.

On behalf of the University of Prishtina, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to every one of you for your unwavering support.

With vision and determination, we can work together to preserve and strengthen the University of Prishtina as a beacon of knowledge, hope, and innovation.

Long live the University of Prishtina and my warmest congratulations on its 55th anniversary!

Thank you!