

Editorial comment on the editorial policy of SEEJPH with reference to the comments by Bjegovic-Mikanovic & Marinkovic, and by Jankovic

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As one of the editors of SEEJPH, I welcome the discussion on the paper by Jerliu et al. It demonstrates the vitality of the new journal. Nevertheless, I believe that a scientific journal does not need to be politically correct, but rather scientifically accurate! Both criteria have been questioned with regard to the paper by Jerliu et al. in the comments of Bjegovic-Mikanovic & Marinkovic and of Jankovic. Whereas I admit that we as editors were not sufficiently aware of the political context when the paper was published on October 31st, 2013¹, we rather left it to the authors to take responsibility for political correctness regarding the status of Kosovo according to the UNSCR². One of us, Prof. Slavenka Jankovic together with her colleagues from Serbia clearly marked this deficit in their recent comments and even more the reference to Independence of Kosovo in the title, which was declared unilaterally on February 17th, 2008, however judged not to violate international law by the International Court of Justice (1). The Journal of course obeys to the political framework set by UNSCR, ICJ and the Brussels Agreement (2) and in the future we will take care of the proper designation of Kosovo.

Much more relevant I consider the scientific critique on the paper. This is in my view most welcome and, as far as I understand the issues raised, widely justified. The Kosovo was one of the least developed regions in the former Yugoslavia and it underwent a positive development in most health indicators between the fifties and the eighties of the last century. Although our criteria for reviews laid out in the section on instructions for authors are not fulfilled completely in all categories, nevertheless the reviewers accepted the paper in the early development phase of the journal. We always strive to improve the rigidity of our reviewers' work and, therefore, I welcome the critique by Prof. Slavenka Jankovic from a scientific point of view. It is essential to raise our standards and to enhance the quality of SEEJPH.

References

1. International Court of Justice. Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo, Advisory Opinion. I.C.J. Reports 2010, p.403. Available at: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/141/15987.pdf> (accessed: May 01, 2014).
2. The Brussels Agreement of 2013. Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2013/190413__eu-facilitated_dialogue_en.htm (accessed: May 01, 2014).

¹ The decision to publish the paper by Jerliu et al. was reconfirmed by all editors in writing including Prof. Slavenka Jankovic (by email of 26 February 2014)

² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence". <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/kosovo/>.