

Prishtina Insight

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Pacoli Builds Mansion Outside Prishtina

Pacoli's large villa is surrounded by a two metre high wall. It is being built by his construction company Mabetex, which has been involved in a number of high profile contracts in the former Soviet Union and Kosovo.

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Ban on British Cars to be Challenged in Court

The people of a village where a third of locals own right-hand-drive UK cars have mounted a legal challenge to a July 2009 ruling which banned such vehicles from the roads.

By Petrit Collaku

A ban on right-hand-drive cars in Kosovo is being challenged in the constitutional court, Prishtina Insight can reveal. The ban relates to a Ministry of Transport order, issued in July 2009, barring vehicles imported from Britain, Cyprus and Malta from Kosovo's roads.

To register a right-hand-drive car in Kosovo, the owner must first carry out expensive, and potentially dangerous, changes to the vehicle before they can receive a certificate at a government-licensed test centre.

The order applies retroactively, meaning that even those who

already have a Kosovo-registered right-hand-drive car have been required to make the modification, which can cost up to 7,000 euro, when they carry out their yearly registration of the car. British registered cars driven by non-Kosovars are still allowed on the roads.

The Ministry of Transport argues that the ban was introduced for safety reasons, although Kosovo Police told Prishtina Insight that they have no statistics showing that right-hand-drive cars are involved in more crashes than any others.

It is not known how many such vehicles are in Kosovo, but according to customs 439 cars were imported from the UK to Kosovo in

2008, and in 2009 another 1,006 were brought in, despite the ban being introduced halfway through the year. British second-hand cars are popular in Kosovo as they are sold at a fraction of the price of vehicles in the region.

Lawyer Naser Gashi has taken up the case of 40 people from the village of Llugaxhi, who are now unable to use their cars. Gashi argues that the order violates article 46 of the constitution, which says that "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of property. This category of people is being arbitrarily deprived," Gashi said.

He added that the act was retroactive, drawing all the right-hand-drive vehicles into the ban, also violating the constitution.

According to article three of the Constitution, the principle of equality before the law was being violated, "because the people I represent have paid all the necessary payments, as everyone else has, but with this instruction they are not equal before the law", Gashi said.

The ministry's reply to the Constitutional Court, seen by Prishtina Insight, says the decision has no retroactive legal basis. But Gashi claims that the ministry is arguing over semantics, as forcing cars to switch before their "next registration", which happens yearly, is equivalent to a retroactive order.

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Roma Boxing Club Aims to End the Fighting

The president of the Kosovo Boxing Federation said that sports would lead to way to reconciliation between communities.

The remarks came as seven boxing clubs from Kosovo participated in an event marking International...

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Minister Limaj Calls for Better Road Quality

Kosovo's Minister of Transport Fatmir Limaj has called on road builders to improve the quality of, and commitment to, their work.

The comments were made to the Association of Road Builders last week, following the signing...

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Right-Hand-Drive Ban Goes to Constitutional Court

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“What about the previous cars that were registered in Kosovo? Now they have to pay extra to make the switch from their family budget,” Gashi said.

He said it is now up to the Constitutional Court to decide, but called on the government to compensate those being forced to make the changes. “It’s the government that allowed them to register those cars,” Gashi added.

The Ministry of Transport claimed in their submission to the court that changing the steering wheel from right to left is a personal financial matter, which the vehicle owner must arrange if he or she wants to carry on using a car in Kosovo. Point ten of the ministry’s reply also states that legalising right-hand vehicles would endanger other drivers.

Of the 1,200 people officially registered in Llugaxhi, near Lipjan, 400 currently live in the UK and many have brought cars back to their families in the village. Of the 270 vehicles in the hamlet, 70 are right-hand-drive and none can be legally driven on Kosovo’s roads.

Selatin Retkoceri said he has several such cars at home with Kosovo plates, which he could no longer use because of the ban. “Why have they allowed British cars into Kosovo and then decided to make these changes?” he asked.

He bought a Mercedes in March 2009 for 12,000 euro and paid all necessary import duties and customs of around 3,000 euro before the ban was introduced four months later.

He paid a garage 4,000 euro to switch the steering wheel but the work has been halted because the mechanics cannot find the right parts. “For the time being, the work is going really badly as it is hard to find spare parts and if you find some they don’t fit,” he said.

He now believes the process is unsafe as the work involves cutting the chassis, but he is still pressing ahead as the garage has already begun transferring the wheel. “If police see that my car still has the wheel



Selatin Retkoceri's Mercedes remains in bits after workers started to switch the right-hand-drive car to the left, but couldn't find the parts

Photo by Petrit Collaku

on the right side, they may confiscate it,” he added.

More than 40 people from the village have brought a complaint against the Ministry of Transport’s administrative order.

One is Hakif Selimi. He has two right-hand vehicles. He bought a van for 3,000 euro to use for his dairy company. The van is still registered legally until August but he fears that he may go out of business if he is forced to give up his vehicle, as he cannot afford the switch.

“I bought this car because it was cheaper than everywhere,” Selimi said. “There is no one in Kosovo to make these changes safely,” he added. “I don’t know how the ministry can take such a harmful decision. We have paid all necessary payments, customs, and now we have to pay additional expenses.”

Selimi showed us another vehicle, a VW Passat. “I cannot drive it but at least my drive looks beautiful,” he joked. “I have to make changes to this car too but it’s impossible because it is too expensive.”

Kosovo police said the majority

of traffic accidents happen when cars overtake unsafely. “We have all the statistics but we have not looked to see if UK cars are involved in more accidents,” Baki Kelani, Kosovo police spokesperson, told Prishtina Insight.

A Volkswagen authorised dealer and service centre in Prishtina said it had received few requests to switch the steering wheel because it was expensive. “People cannot afford the price we ask for such changes,” Haki Abdullahu, a technician, told Prishtina Insight. To do a proper job would cost 6,000 to 7,000 euro, depending on the type of the vehicle, he explained.

Abdullahu said one of the vehicles brought in for a service following a switch was in such a poor state that they refused to work on it. “When I saw the wheel welded so badly, we could not continue the service for him. These people are signing a suicide contract,” Abdullahu said.

The Renault office in Kosovo said it had carried out no right-hand switches. “People visited us but when we asked for 5,000 euro, and for some cars up to 6,000 euro, they left,” Jeton Kurteshi, a

Renault mechanic said.

A Peugeot garage said the changes are not affordable. “It is expensive because we offer original parts,” Halil Elshani said. Elshani added that new cars are almost fully computerised and detailed work is needed to make the switch.

The Constitutional Court has told Gashi that he needs to present proof that the cars have been refused a certificate at test centres. “My clients have told me that no one from the centres issued such certificates of refusal, although they requested them,” he added.

But one man, Shukri Abdullahu from Prizren, who has joined the group fighting the ministry, said that after numerous

requests he secured a “refusal paper” from the test centre. “I was told by this centre in Prizren orally that they cannot undertake a technical test of British cars because of the orders of the Ministry of Transport,” Abdullahu said.

Abdullahu, who owns a Ford Mondeo imported from UK, said that he checked with the Ford office in Kosovo and was told that such changes were impossible.

He added that someone had offered him a car, which was in parts, but he later found out that it was stolen. “This way, the government is encouraging more organised crime. I don’t want to buy a stolen vehicle for spare parts,” he said.

Balkan Road Laws:

Last December, Serbia adopted a new traffic law which allows drivers to be fined if music in the car is so loud that driver cannot hear the horn of other road users. The fine is 5,000 dinars, or about 50 euro.

The law also stipulates that if a pedestrian gets caught with headphones from an mp3 player or an iPod in his or her ears while crossing a street, that person will be fined 3,000 dinars.

In Macedonia, among the many strange regulations, drivers must at all time wear a safety vest while refueling at a petrol station.

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Report Condemns Growing Attacks on Kosovo Judiciary

Improved security for judicial staff urged by OSCE to prevent intimidation of courts and loss of public confidence in their impartiality.



By Lawrence Marzouk and Belinda Vrapic

Monitors working for the OSCE have disclosed a series of violent attacks on, and death threats made to, judicial employees in Kosovo.

The organisation is calling for tighter security of the type already accorded to international judges working for the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo, EULEX.

According to the OSCE report 'Intimidation of the Judiciary: Security of Judges and Prosecutors', published on April 15, there is "a continuing or even growing trend of insecurity and intimidation of the judiciary".

The report reads: "This affects not only the independence and impartiality of the courts, or at least the perception of it, but it also undermines the credibility and authority of prosecutorial and judicial institutions in the eyes of the public."

The OSCE has called on the Kosovo Judicial Council, the body responsible for the independence and impartiality of the judicial system, to beef up its security measures and carry out risk assessments.

Illir Tasholli, head of the Security Office for the Kosovo Judicial Council, told Prishtina Insight that the situation was already improving, and blamed the police for failing to provide adequate protection in the cases mentioned by OSCE.

This issue was brought again into focus this week when Avni Gjakova, lawyer for the leader of the Vetevendosje [self-determination] movement, Albin Kurti, was pelted with eggs as he entered court

on Monday. Kurti had again failed to appear on charges related to a protest in 2007 and members of his movement decided to express their dissatisfaction with the process by attacking Gjakova.

The event led to a joint call by Kosovo's three highest-ranking European Union representatives.

In a joint statement, Pieter Feith, EU Special Representative in Kosovo, Yves de Kermabon, head of the EULEX mission, and Renzo Daviddi, head of the European Commission Liaison Office to Kosovo, said the rule of law could not function if justice officials were unable to operate "without political interference, disruption or violence".

They called on the authorities "to protect the independence of the judiciary".

On October 7, 2009, at the same court, while the prosecutor was reading out amendments to the indictment, the defendant, charged with aggravated murder and attempted aggravated murder, grabbed a chair and threw it at him.

On January 15, 2009, in the district public prosecutor's office in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, a party in a court case entered the office of the public prosecutor and, in the presence of other employees, said: "I am giving you my word that your children will become orphans."

On May 7, 2009, in the Prizren municipal courthouse, two individuals insulted, threatened and used physical violence against the court clerk, inflicting "grave bodily injuries". They also assaulted a female security worker of the court, causing her light bodily injuries.

In each of these cases the threats and violence resulted in jail sentences but the OSCE believes not enough is being done to prevent these acts from occurring in the



Photo by Koha Ditore

Lawyer Avni Gjakova was pelted with eggs while entering court last week

first place.

The report notes that while there is a police presence at public trials, no security is provided during the many cases held in judges' offices.

As a result of intimidation, some cases are being transferred from local judges and prosecutors to EULEX, which provides close protection units when needed.

"Such practice is not the most appropriate way to address the matter, but apparently it is the only one used so far," the report said.

Illir Tasholli, of the Security Office of the Kosovo Judicial Council, said security in courts was being improved through the provision of new equipment, such as metal detectors, as well as trained security staff.

"We have put in well informed and trained security officials who are responsible for detecting and checking the legitimacy of people who want to enter the courts," he said.

Asked if he was aware of the reported violent attacks, Tasholli said he was not aware of serious

cases of physical violence. "There have been verbal assaults but not serious physical ones," he maintained.

"Any cases which involved physical assaults on judges in court [have occurred] because the Kosovo Police has been negligent in performing its duty," he continued.

Asked what measures were being taken to prevent such situations, Tasholli said the Judicial Council had started to hold negotiations and regular meetings with Kosovo Police. "There is also in place a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Interior and the KJC for these cases [attacks] to be treated as a priority," he said.

"I am well aware... that people in such professions... are at risk of assault. We are doing our best to provide a safe working environment within the courts and during working hours," he added. However, he cautioned that resources were lacking to provide security outside of court.

EULEX Officers Caught 'Smuggling' Out of Kosovo



By Lawrence Marzouk

Romanian EULEX officers have been sent home after being caught smuggling large quantities of cigarettes and alcohol out of Kosovo.

Macedonian customs officers at the Blace border crossing with Kosovo stopped a bus with Romanian number plates, driven by a Romanian driver and carrying 16 Romanian staff from the EU rule of law mission, on Tuesday night.

They found 314 cartons of cigarettes stashed in the boot and in the passenger's travel bags.

Some 133 litres of alcoholic drinks, including whisky, cognac,

tequila and vodka, were also found.

EULEX's mission includes mentoring, monitoring and advising Kosovo's customs staff. The mission has launched an internal investigation into the affair.

On Thursday night, EULEX confirmed that Romanian authorities have terminated the mission of the Gendarmes while the investigation continues.

The Macedonian authorities determined that 178 cartons of cigarettes were the property of the bus driver while the rest of the cigarettes and the alcohol belonged to the passengers. The goods have been temporarily seized and the driver and passengers fined.

The Romanian Gendarmes were returning home to Romania from Kosovo when they were stopped.

EULEX spokesman Karin Limdal



The haul of cigarettes and alcohol uncovered by Macedonian customs

said the Head of Mission, Yves de Kermabon, had been informed.

"The full facts relating to this incident are still being established. I do not want to pre-judge any inquiry," said the Deputy Head of the EULEX Police Component, Lambert Lucas.

"But EULEX takes very seriously any allegations that members of its staff may have acted either illegally or contrary to the strict internal disciplinary code of the mission. If individuals are found to have acted wrongly, action will be taken, without hesitation," he added.

Editor's word

Gezuar



By Lawrence Marzouk

If you've spent any amount of time in Prishtina's bars or restaurants, you will know what 'Gezuar' means. Although I hesitated this week over whether to use the Romanian word for cheers, Noroc, instead of the Albanian.

The reasons will be all too obvious to most of you, but for those who have had a news bypass, 16 Romanian gendarmes working for EULEX were caught on Tuesday night smuggling thousands of cigarettes and a stockpile of booze out of Kosovo.

It is one of those stories which falls firmly into the 'you couldn't make it up' category.

And while I couldn't help but chuckle at photos of the mountains of cheap cigarettes and alcohol strewn across the floor of Macedonia's border point, the news certainly does nothing to enhance EULEX's or Romania's embattled reputations in Kosovo.

After Romanian police, working for UNMIK, shot dead two Vetevendosje protesters in 2007, and escaped without punishment, and the country failed to recognise Kosovo's independence in 2008, it is hardly a surprise we don't see red, yellow and blue flags being waved in the streets of Prishtina. But, with this bizarre and highly embarrassing episode, Dracula's realm has sunk to a new low.

For EULEX, this represents another public relations disaster, following hot on the heels of the counterproductive decision to take Vetevendosje's leader, Albin Kurti, to court before achieving any concrete progress in the fight against corruption.

I do have some sympathy for the EU mission. With 3,000 staff, it is inevitable that some employees will, at some point, cause you embarrassment.

It is, however, very unfortunate that this has manifested itself in form of breaking customs regulations, when EULEX are here to help Kosovars improve their border security and crackdown on smuggling.

The full facts of this debacle are yet to emerge – although the chain of events seems pretty clear. Once they do come out, tough action and a public apology should follow from EULEX.

And from the Romanians? Well, they could start by handing over those responsible for the 2007 deaths and recognising Kosovo's independence.

I, for one, would be happy to pardon this latest indiscretion, crack open one of their smuggled bottles and toast them with a 'Noroc' for that.

Poor Infrastructure Keeps Kosovo Off Tourist Map

Prishtina was listed a 'highlight' of the Western Balkans in the Lonely Planet guide – and officials claim tourist numbers are rising – but the lack of basic amenities continues to deter many visitors.



By Besiana Xharra

Tourism is seen as a key pillar in Kosovo's economic plan but despite a smattering of visitors, poor infrastructure continues to prevent the country from realising its potential, experts say.

The Investment Promotion Agency of Kosovo, a government agency, trumpets the two-year-old state's ability to "compete in the international tourism market".

It says: "With its different sport, recreational and wellness facilities located throughout the country, Kosovo offers a wide range of tourism attractions."

But tourism operators believe Kosovo is still a long way from providing the necessary infrastructure to become a mainstream destination. Attempts to promote the country internationally have yet to make much impact.

To promote Kosovo's natural and cultural wealth to domestic tourists, the Kosovo Tourism Association, KOTAS, and USAID, launched a campaign last year encouraging people to "Stay the Weekend, Experience Kosovo".

A follow-up fair, held on Thursday, April 22, attracted 70 businesses, and Zeke Ceku, head of KOTAS, believes progress has been made.

The association has since established the first company in Kosovo

that caters for an international market, Tourism Planning and Development Consulting. This firm has begun a partnership with a Regent Holidays, based in Bristol, England, which has been bringing visitors from Britain and elsewhere since last May.

Regent Holidays brought its first group of 22 British tourists to Kosovo for a long weekend last May. Their tour took in Gjakove, Peje, Istog, Prekaz and Prishtina.

The firm, which specializes in trips to unusual destinations, markets Kosovo as "ideal for pioneering travellers keen to discover Europe's newest country". Prices range from £550 for a three-day break to £880 for a weeklong escorted tour.

Andrea Godfrey, general manager for Regent Holidays, told Prishtina Insight that Kosovo had potential but lacked good tour guides and information for tourists.

She added that hotel prices were expensive compared to similar countries. "Kosovo needs to have trained guides, and develop itself even more culturally, architectural and in rural tourism," she said.

"I've been very surprised by the warm welcome we had in all the places we visited but Kosovo needs more professional tourism developments, such as publishing more brochures and maps of smaller, rural places."

Ceku said the partnership had been "extremely successful and is showing significant growth compared to last year." But he complains that the Ministry of Trade and Industry is not doing enough to promote tourism in Kosovo. For its part, the ministry insists it has promoted Kosovo at several international fairs but has failed to reap great rewards yet.

"For 2010 we planned to present Kosovo at three international tourism fairs, one in Turkey, one in Berlin, while the last one was in Prishtina at the beginning of April," said Bujar Kuqi, director of



tourism at the ministry.

"At these fairs we have enabled businesses, especially tourist agencies and hotels, to present their offers," he explained. When Prishtina Insight visited the ministry's tourism fair in the capital, however, it was noticeable that most offers were for travel abroad. Only a handful of Kosovo-based operators were present.

Kuqi said figures released by the Statistical Office of Kosovo showed the number of tourists was "increasing from year to year" but the data was not precise enough to draw firm conclusions.

According to the Statistical Office around 20,000 visitors came to Kosovo in the first six months of 2009. By contrast, more than 90,000 tourists visited neighbouring Macedonia in the first quarter of 2009 alone.

With better infrastructure, Kosovo would become much more attractive, Kuqi said. The ministry in the meantime plans to sign agreements with neighbouring countries promoting visits to Kosovo as part of a regional package.

Visar Kastrati, owner of the tourism agency Ilea Travel, says his attempts to promote Kosovo interna-

tionally have not succeeded so far. The high cost of plane tickets was a major factor in deterring potential visitors.

"No one will come to Kosovo with the ticket prices as high as we have," he said. "Then there are other basic problems like the water and electricity supplies, which are not yet reliable."

Air fares from London to Prishtina appeared more expensive than those to neighbouring capitals, apart from Skopje, when Prishtina Insight checked on a price comparator website.

No budget airlines cover Kosovo, though they serve a number of other countries in the region, including Croatia, Greece and Bulgaria.

That situation is set to change this summer, however, when Easyjet plans to start flights between Prishtina and Geneva and Mulhouse, in France, for as little as 30 euro a flight.

The Brothers Thaci, another agency handling domestic tourism, says the facilities are not yet good enough for mainstream international tourists. "We're interested... but we don't believe tourists will be interested in coming here in these conditions," the agency owner, Elmi

Thaci, said.

Last October, the government launched a 6 million euro campaign to rebrand Kosovo's image through its adverts, styled "The Young Europeans". The adverts, shown on international news channels and devised by the well-known PR firm Saatchi and Saatchi, highlighted Kosovo's youthfulness, showing various attractive young people in picturesque parts of the country.

While the campaign aimed to shift Kosovo's overall image in a positive direction, Saatchi and Saatchi said it hoped the adverts would also attract tourists and direct foreign investment.

But not everyone believes the ads have enticed any new visitors. Ceku, from KOTAS, suggested that the impact had been limited and the money could have been better spent elsewhere. "There are many alternatives [to a PR campaign] which would have been more focused and used much less money," he said.

But government officials stick by the campaign, saying the adverts had "shown the world who we are". According to Hajredin Kuci, the Deputy Prime Minister, "We must give it time because we are still in early stages of promoting our state."

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BA Rejects Calls to 'Remove' Prishtina from Serbia on Website



By Lawrence Marzouk

British Airways has rejected calls from a 1,500-strong campaign to remove Prishtina from Serbia on its booking website.

Currently, fliers to Kosovo's capital are faced with the option of 'Pristina, Serbia' when booking a flight, despite the UK's recognition of Kosovo's independence.

A Facebook campaign calling for BA to change its website has attracted more than 1,500 members and a petition with 100 signa-

tories.

Grese Rexhepi, one of the campaigners, wrote to BA saying that she was 'slightly irritated' by the 'mistake' and called on the airline to 'rectify this error'.

But BA wrote that it would not make any amendments until Kosovo was recognised by the UN.

A BA employee, who gave her name only as Claire, wrote: "The challenge we have on ba.com is that Kosovo, in spite of being recognised by many countries as a sovereign entity, has not been allocated a two-letter country code by the UN because it does not yet have official UN recognition."

"Ba.com needs these country codes in order to be able to create



and price quote bookings accordingly.

"Therefore, until we have a two-letter country code, we can't set up the tables in our systems that would enable us to remove Kosovo from Serbia."

"I know that this news will disappoint you. At this stage I can only assure you that once the UN,

and IATA, recognise Kosovo as a sovereign entity we will quickly make the appropriate changes to our website."

To secure a seat in the UN, Kosovo needs the support of just under 100 current members. Kosovo is currently recognised by 66 countries, the latest coming from Swaziland last week.

Kosovo Failing to Meet Green Energy Targets

As production of lignite-powered electricity expands over the next few years, the proportion of clean power generated in Kosovo is likely to shrink.



By Lavdim Hamidi

Just 6 per cent of energy produced in Kosovo comes from green sources, Prishtina Insight can reveal, and the proportion of clean electricity is likely to shrink as Kosovo presses ahead with the planned expansion of lignite power production.

The Kosovo-German company Wind Power is the first in the country to use wind to harvest electricity. It has three wind turbines atop Mount Golesh near Prishtina airport but they generate only 1.35 megawatt of electricity. The megawatt is a measure of how much electrical energy is produced per second.

The firm is awaiting approval from other municipalities after which it will set up new sites.

Manager Esad Sadrija admits wind energy is very much a nascent industry in Kosovo but says it will become increasingly important in years to come, just as it is elsewhere.

According to the Kosovo Energy Corporation, KEK, just 45 megawatts of renewable energy is produced in the country, mainly from hydroelectricity.

This is a fraction of the 700 megawatts produced by the aging, lignite-powered power stations, Kosovo A and B, located on the outskirts of Prishtina.

The biggest hydroelectric plant, Gazivoda, is in the Serb-controlled north, over which Prishtina has little control, and its 35MW capacity is rarely used.

Luan Shllaku, an environmental expert and executive director of the Kosovo Open Society Foundation, says greater development of alternative energy is not just desirable but necessary if Kosovo is to join the European Union.

Under the terms of the Kyoto Protocol, Kosovo needs to meet the so-called 20-20-20



Kosovo has just three wind turbines which produce 1.35 megawatts

objectives, which means reducing greenhouse gases by 20 per cent, increasing green energy production by 20 per cent and improving energy efficiency by 20 per cent. All this must be achieved by 2020.

"According to European Union norms, at least 20 per cent of our energy production should be clean energy," says Shllaku, "while currently the level is almost zero."

Haki Abazi, director for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Western Balkans Programme, who attended last year's Climate Change conference in Copenhagen, said that Kosovo should use international sources of funds to develop green energy and prepare itself to participate in carbon trade schemes.

He told Prishtina Insight: "Developed countries have been committed to support annually developing countries with \$100 billion."

"Even though vague and ill defined, this presents a great opportunity for Kosovo in order to have modern facilities for carbon capture and storage, to develop its capacity to explore renewable sources, it also represents an opportunity to support costs for retrofits and change of technology mainly to regulate transportation and introduce cars that do not use fossil fuels."

Kosovo does plan to develop a hydroelec-

tric plant in Zhuri, near Prizren, which is expected to produce around 300 megawatts of energy by 2015. The energy ministry is also encouraging development of privately funded "micro" hydroelectric plants. The government recently issued a tender for 16 concessions for these small plants.

But even if they all go ahead, they can contribute only a fraction of Kosovo's green energy targets. As for the plant in Zhuri, Shllaku notes that this project is also too small to make much of a difference, especially given plans to expand lignite power production over the same period.

After 2015, the Kosova e Re, or New Kosovo, power station should be producing 1,000 megawatts on top of at least 500 megawatts from Kosovo B, which by then will have been upgraded.

Shllaku added that Kosovo's wind energy potential was something of an unknown, as wind maps plotting appropriate sites in the country have yet to be drafted.

Solar energy is another relatively unexplored area in Kosovo. As yet, only a handful of sites, including Prishtina Health Centre and the university campus, make use of the sun's rays to provide electricity and heating.

Business news in brief

Kosovo Could Lose 50million euro Aid

The European Commission Liaison Office Representative Kjartan Bjornsson has warned that Kosovo could lose 50million euro of aid because the country had so far failed to sign an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, IMF.

Bjornsson told a meeting of the High Forum, which reviews commitments for donations to Kosovo, that the money cannot be allocated until the technical agreement is signed with the IMF.

But the Government of Kosovo said the cash was not at risk as Kosovo is meeting the IMF's requirement, adding that it expects the agreement to be signed soon.

The IMF did not respond to Prishtina Insight's request for a comment.

Serbia to Invest up to €300,000 in New Airline

Miodrag Miljkovic, State Secretary for Air Traffic in the Serbian Ministry of Infrastructure, said that the Serbian government planned to invest \$400,000 (about 296,000 euro) in a new airline company which will be set up to replace the country's national carrier, Jat Airways.

In an interview with the Tanjug news agency, Miljkovic said that according to the law on air traffic, any airline that wants to engage in regular traffic must have \$400,000 (about 296,000 euro) in its account for purposes of regular traffic. He added that \$200,000 (about 146,000 euro) is necessary for charter traffic.

The Serbian government decided in a telephone meeting on Friday to set up a new national airline to replace Jat Airways. The new company would be founded with a minimal monetary deposit and would take over from Jat any resources that would be of interest to potential private investors. According to the company's statement, the new company will be free of debts.

The national carrier ended 2009 with debt amounting to 25 million euro while accumulated losses from the 1990s amounting to about 146 million. The company employs 1,200 people; it owns 12 aircraft, which are more than 20 years old, and uses three leased aircraft.

Albania Assigned Poor Credit Rating by S&P

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services assigned Albania on Thursday a 'B+' long-term sovereign foreign and local currency credit ratings, in the wake of recent decision to issue Eurobonds.

At the same time, S&P assigned a 'B' short-term foreign and local currency rating with a stable outlook. A transfer and convertibility assessment of 'BB-' was also assigned.

"The ratings on Albania are constrained by our view of the country's relatively low prosperity, high government debt as a percentage of government revenues, growing external vulnerabilities due to persistently high current account deficits, and an uncertain political environment," said Standard & Poor's credit analyst Marko Mrsnik in a statement.

"On the other hand, the ratings are supported by the economy's solid growth performance and our view of its strong long-term potential, a legal framework that explicitly prioritises debt-service payments, and long-term prospects for further EU integration," he added.

Transport Minister Limaj Calls for Better Road Quality



By Lawrence Marzouk

Kosovo's Minister of Transport Fatmir Limaj has called on road builders to improve the quality of, and commitment to, their work.

The comments were made to the Association of Road Builders last week, following the signing of the 700 million deal to build Kosovo's first highway, which will link the Albanian and Serbian borders.

The statement also follows a Prishtina Insight investigation into road building in Kosovo.

Limaj said: "I assure you that you will continue to have my support and I will continue to protect your interests, but in the meantime you must continue to improve the quality and commitment to your work."



Fatmir Limaj

"You know that we are criticised by everyone over why we have invested so much in roads. We do not intend to stop."

Since taking over the position of transport minister in late 2007, Limaj has embarked on a huge road building pro-

gramme which has won him praise for improving the country's poor infrastructure but also led to criticism about corruption and the poor quality of some of the work.

Prishtina Insight's investigation, published in the last edition, revealed that three multimillion euro road tenders were awarded to friends or relatives of the minister.

Limaj has not commented on potential conflicts of interest, but his advisor Endrit Shala said that the tender processes had been carried out properly and that the minister had played no part in the decisions. But the research also found that in two out of the three tenders, key documents appeared not to have been submitted by the winning firms. Not supplying the necessary documentation usually leads to disqualification of a bid.

The ministry has failed to provide an explanation of how the firms secured the tenders despite the missing documentation.

Pacolli Builds Mansion Outside Prishtina



By Lawrence Marzouk and Belinda Vrapı

Politician Behgjet Pacolli, one of Kosovo's richest men, is constructing a walled mansion in the outskirts of Prishtina.

Pacolli, who leads the opposition New Kosovo Alliance, is the latest in a series of top officials and politicians to be building a home in the Hajvali and Veternik area of Prishtina.

This district, to the south of the city and near Gracanica, is relatively rural and is not part of Prishtina's urban plan, limiting development.

Prime Minister Hashim Tachi was criticised earlier this year when it emerged he was building a mansion in Veternik.

Critics questioned how he had obtained the necessary building permits and the funds for the new home, although the prime minister rejected the attacks.



He explained that he had used family funds and a loan from a commercial bank, adding that planning permission had been received from Prishtina Municipality.

The head of customs, Naim Huruglica, and deputy prime minister Rame Manja, of the Democratic League of Kosovo, have also been criticised in recent weeks for building in the area.

Huruglica told Koha Ditore that he had applied for a build-

Behgjet Isa Pacolli was born in 1951 in present day Kosovo. He is the president and CEO of Mabetex Group, a Swiss-based construction and civil-engineering company. Pacolli is also president of the third biggest political party in Kosovo, the New Kosovo Alliance.

He is believed, by some, to be the world's richest ethnic Albanian. Mabetex was given several important contracts in Russia in the 90s to reconstruct, renovate and refurbish the former Russian Federation Parliament, the Russian Opera House, State Duma and the Moscow Kremlin.

Mabetex is currently working in Kazakhstan, where it has played an important role in the construction of the new capital Astana. One of the completed projects was the new Presidential Palace.

ing permit as soon as he started constructing the house, but after six months he had received a rejection from the municipality.

Pacolli's large villa is surrounded by a two metre high wall. It is being built by his construction company Mabetex, which has been involved in a number of high profile contracts in the former Soviet Union and Kosovo.

Prishtina Insight contacted Mr Pacolli's spokesman to ask

whether he had obtained the necessary permits.

Spokesman Arber Geci said that Mr Pacolli was out of the country, adding: "I do not have permission to answer in Mr Pacolli's name for his personal issues, such as his house, but from what I am aware of personally, I think he does have permission."

Officials from Prishtina Municipality did not return this newspaper's calls and emails.

Roma Boxing Club Aims to End the Fighting

In a torn tent in Gracanica, a boxing match was held last Saturday by the Kosovo Boxing Federation to mark Roma International Day and kick start reconciliation between communities



By Petrit Collaku

The president of the Kosovo Boxing Federation said that sports would lead to way to reconciliation between communities.

The remarks came as seven boxing clubs from Kosovo participated in an event marking International Roma Day and the creation of a new Roma boxing club in Gracanica.

"What politics fails to do can maybe be achieved faster with sports, and it will relax our inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo," said KBF president Ramadan Selimi.

The new, Gracanica-based boxing club Real Rom has now registered with the KBF, and its president Jevta Aksic said that the Roma community will give its best to integrate.

"This way, we can draw attention away from politics and deal with simpler issues," he told Prishtina Insight. "The motto of this event is 'with sport, reconciliation for all communities living in Kosovo'."

A former boxer and candidate at the last local elections, Aksic said he hoped young people would embrace the club.

"I am grateful to Kosovo clubs for being here today because



One of the bouts at the boxing event in Gracanica on Saturday

this way we can inspire young people in Gracanica to take part in sports," he said.

Seven matches were held in the ring, erected inside a football hall with a few strips of the cover still hanging over the metal skeleton. The fights were adjudicated by three professional umpires and two judges.

The one hundred spectators of different ages stood throughout the matches, although not

because of the high adrenaline spectacle, but because there were no seats.

"The people of Kosovo have always been sport admirers," Ferid Zekolli, a 'sport integration official' at the Ministry of Culture told Prishtina Insight. He added that the Roma community is also preparing teams in football, basketball and kick-boxing.

"They should have opportuni-

ties and chances to take part in sports because there are a lot of young people here in Gracanica," Zekolli said.

Aksic said that the new Gracanica municipality, recently created as part of Kosovo's decentralisation process, helped to organise the event.

He added that with some understanding between all parties and communities, sports can thrive in Gracanica.

Prishtina through the Eyes of:

Nassim Benali

AUK student from Algeria



What surprised you most about Prishtina?

The mixture of tradition and modernity in the people, as well as the city itself in terms of architecture and other surroundings.

What's your favourite hang-out?

Germia is my favorite place for fun and relaxation. Amelie cafe is my favorite place to sit and socialise with friends while having good food and drinks.

Do you do anything cultural?

I enjoy teaching French to students and my local friends, I go to the movies and theatre, and I find great pleasure travelling around and discovering the country and its people.

What is the most annoying thing about Prishtina?

The smoke, including that of cigarettes, vehicles and industries.

If you were mayor of Prishtina for the day what would you change?

I would enforce the law that prohibits smoking in public areas.

How many macchiatos do you drink a day?

None. I am not a coffee drinker. Instead, I like chocolate and fruit drinks.

What's the tastiest Kosovar food?

Pite and Pitalka bread. I also like Ajvar when I want to have a snack.

What landmark do you use to tell taxi drivers where you live?

Hotel Ambassador.

Kosovo Women Sacrifice Inheritance Rights for Tradition

Although the law guarantees women a share of their family inheritance, most forgo that right, in deference to the centuries-old Code of Leke Dukagjini.



By Mevlyde Salihu

Hazir Sopa may not have attended a single day of school but at 80 he enjoys the respect accorded to a village elder. He helps solve family disputes in his village of Bukosh, near Suhareke, in southeast Kosovo, when people can't agree on how to divide family property or settle separations and divorces.

Tradition still plays a significant role in Kosovo, and one tradition that's alive and well is that women give up their right to inherit, even though it is guaranteed by law, deferring to the custom that family property should go to men.

These patriarchal customs date back to the medieval Code of Lekë Dukagjini, observed by Albanian Ghegs in northern Albania and Kosovo, which has regulated life for centuries and set rules and norms as well as punishments for those not abiding by it.

The division of inheritance is among the rules that have survived till today. According to article 36, women are not entitled to inherit. Line 88 of the chapter on inheritance reads: "The code recognises the boy as the heir and not the girl."

Line 91 specifies: "The woman does not take part in the inheritance of her parents or husband."

However, Sopa says the interpretation of the code has changed over centuries. "Women can ask for their share if they want, and it will be given to them," he said. "According to traditional law, two women get the share that one man is entitled to. So if the son gets ten acres, two daughters together can get ten, and then divide it into equal halves."

But Sopa warns that if they do demand their share, they must give up the right to pay long visits to their parents' or brothers' houses and can only visit as guests.

Sopa doesn't base his rulings on written documents; he learned his craft from his father and brother, both elders whose reputes spread far beyond the village of their birth. Sopa says he was not interested in keeping the family tradition going, but people insisted.

"They come to me because courts take too much time," he explains.

Despite its age, the code is still used throughout Kosovo, although in big cities, such as Prishtina, its influence on social norms is weakening.

"Most women in Kosovo today do not enjoy their right to inheritance, and this goes back to the Dukagjini Code," Linda Gusia, a Prishtina-based sociologist, says. "The law of tradition is stronger than the actual law."



Women often forgo inheritance despite their legal right to it

Kosovo in the meantime has adopted laws confirming the equal inheritance rights of women and men. Article 3.1 of the 2004 Law on Inheritance reads: "All persons under the same conditions are equal in inheritance."

"Kosovo has very good laws, but they are totally inapplicable," Gusia adds. "Equality is a distant concept for our society; in essence, we live in a patriarchal society."

Nina L, who is in her early thirties, is divorced and lives with her family. "An uncertain future awaited me when I contemplated divorce," Nina recalls. She quit her job to move abroad with her ex-husband but soon realised he was not right for her.

"It took me a month to realise I wanted a divorce, but eight to do it. If I'd had something of my own, I would have taken that decision a lot sooner," she says.

On her return, Nina moved back into the family home and began rebuilding her life, but her only possession of value is her Renault Clio. "I have a little wealth of my own, my job and my car, and I plan to solve the housing issue later on," she says.

If she can start earning enough to lead a decent life, she won't accept her share of her inheritance, even if her family offers it: "I don't know how the division of family property will go because we haven't come to that, but what irritates me is that I've contributed morally and financially, yet, when my brother marries, I might have to live by a stranger's rules."

She is referring to the fact that if

her brother inherits the family home, his wife will become the "woman of the house".

Leonora Selmani, from the Agency for Gender Equality, says cultural and traditional norms, poverty and insufficient level of education, are all obstacles to the achievement of gender equality. "Women are in a particularly disadvantageous position when it comes to property rights and actual owning of property," Selmani notes.

She believes education would greatly increase women's awareness of their rights. "Further emancipation of women would influence changes, increasing their capacities to ask for what is theirs," she says.

Many women don't know the law guarantees their inheritance rights and doubt they can draw any benefit from it, Selmani says. "As a result, many women don't have the assets to get bank loans, and so are deprived of the possibility of acting independently from men," she adds.

FL, a teacher in her late forties who asked not to be named, saved money for years to buy her own flat, knowing that the family property would all go to her brothers.

"I think if they [the men] had more they might have given me a share, but as it is, my sister and I didn't inherit anything," she says. Even then, she adds, she would probably have hesitated before accepting because of tradition.

Women have to choose between emotional or material capital, Gusia notes. "The law enables you

to ask for your share but in social terms, it's a disgrace to do so, you'd be considered shameless," she says. "How could you do this to your brother?" they would say," she adds.

Nina and FL say they would only demand a share if they were in dire circumstances. "I would only ask for it if I didn't have anywhere to sleep," Nina says.

Judge Remzije Brovina's inheritance office is packed with people. She explains the proceedings and the steps people need to take to complete the procedure.

As they leave, another group pushes its way through. Judge Brovina doesn't take breaks between sessions. "You see," she says, "one judge for inheritance issues - among a million inhabitants."

Bademe Kelmendi, a professional clerk and an expert on inheritance issues at Prishtina Municipal Court, helps Brovina. She says that every person who attends a court session is properly informed of his or her rights.

"If there are seven children, I make sure they understand that they each have the right to one-seventh of the property," she explains. "Then it's up to each one to declare if they'll have it, or give it up."

"I don't know what happens at home," Kelmendi adds, "but in the courtroom, the law is fully respected. Based on my experience, women are aware of their rights deriving from law."

Yet, most women still declare that they don't want their share

when asked by the judge or her aide. Kelmendi says that in more than half of cases processed in court, women give up their share.

"In some cases they give up their share in favour of a mother or sister, but in most cases it's in favour of the brothers," she says.

Research carried out in 20 municipal courts by NORMA, a lawyers' association, shows that of 725 completed cases in Prishtina in 2007, women used their right to inheritance in 232. In 92 cases, women and men were equal inheritors.

"This is a pretty low number," Valbona Salihu, NORMA director, says. Many educated women abandon their right to inherit because they fear relations with their brothers or other relatives will suffer, she adds.

"We are very connected to our families and women's ties with their brothers are special," says Gusia. "But, this is a matter of asking for what is theirs, not their brothers," she says.

"If 20 women from Prishtina simultaneously raised their voices and said: 'We'll take it, because it belongs to us,' people would slowly start thinking of it as a normal thing," Gusia adds.

The main problem, Nina believes, is that men and women are treated differently from childhood. "This is where the problem starts," she says. "Girls are pressured to get married, while boys get used to the idea that they own everything," she says. "No wonder I felt a guest in my own home, and a guest at my ex-husbands."

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Prishtina's 'Forgotten' Cemetery



By Werner Bartels

The city's little known Muslim cemetery is like an open book, revealing much about the city's rich but often tragic and bloodstained history.



Most foreigners who have spent time in Kosovo have made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Kosovo's former president, Ibrahim Rugova, and visited Prishtina's old Jewish cemetery.

Few have taken a stroll through the Muslim cemetery, even though this large, fascinating graveyard is situated above the Dardania district where most embassies and many international organisations are based and where many foreigners live.

Each time I've taken the few steps uphill from Rruga Ismail Qemali, my temporary home, to the Muslim cemetery, I've made new and interesting discoveries, leading me to reflect on the past and the present of this country and prompting me to open a few pages of Kosovo's rich culture and tragic history.

The first sight near the entrance of the cemetery, to the right of Vushtrria street, is a white marble semi-circle on which are written the names of three prominent victims of the Serbs in early 1999. Serb police abducted Bajram Kelmendi, a leading lawyer, and his sons Kushtrim and Kastriot, from their home on March 25, 1999. Their corpses were found somewhere between Prishtina and Fushe Kosova the next day. Bajran's widow, Nekibe, was until recently the Justice Minister of Kosovo.

Just behind the Kelmendis' grave one can see two black marble tombstones with the engraved portraits of Mehmet and Myrvete Gjevori, well-known personalities in the field of education. Mehmet, who came from Albania in the early Forties, when illiteracy among adults was still widespread, authored Kosovo's first primer. His gravestone depicts him with the "abetare", his children's language book, in his hand.

Gjevori's efforts to eliminate illiteracy among the Albanians did not meet with enthusiasm

from the Serbian leadership. "I had it tough during Rankovic's time," he said referring to Yugoslavia's Interior Minister in the 1950s, notorious for his tough stance towards Albanians. "They didn't treat us teachers from Albania correctly. The Serb secret service was always suspicious of us."

The grave of the Kosovar patriot, Nazim Gafurri, who exposed Serbia's barbarous treatment of Albanians in the early 1920s and was assassinated by the Serbian police commander of Prishtina on May 6, 1928, is covered with a black marble slab with an inscription reading: "This monument was erected by the people, 1997."

The same text - without the last line from the year 1997 - can be found on Gafurri's original gravestone opposite the tomb. The inscription on this round, pillar-shaped stone is a set of old-fashioned Turkish verses in Arabic script. The original rhyming verses abound with Arabic and Persian words, most of which might become obsolete after Kemal Ataturk's Turkish language reforms, as did the Arabic script, which was replaced by the Latin alphabet in the 1920s. One of Prishtina's main streets, leading from the centre past the oldest mosques, the Clock Tower and Sami Frasheri School to Taukbahe district, is named after Gafurri.

Another famous Albanian patriot from the first half of the century is buried a bit further away. Iljaz Haxhi Agushi was born in Prishtina on 14 April 1903 and killed in Tirana on 27 October 1943. The tombstone of this "apostle of ethnic Albania", as he is called on his epitaph, shows the contours of Greater Albania, including Albania, Kosovo, northwest Macedonia, parts of southern Serbia, the region around the port of Ulqin/Ulcinj in Montenegro and the region of northern Greece

known to Albanians as Camera.

Iljaz, who was educated and started his political career in Istanbul, was elected as representative of the Ferizaj region to the Yugoslav parliament in 1938. As prefect of Prishtina a little later during the Second World War, he arranged the unification of Kosovo with Albania, then ruled by Mussolini's Italy.

Thanks to his experience in administration, he was made Minister of Public Affairs and later Deputy Prime Minister in the government of Mustafa Kruja. Thus, from January until September 1943, he was the second most important man in the Albanian government after Prime Minister Kruja. The Albanian communists killed him.

Agushi's original tombstone from the year of his death, which like Nazim Gafurri's original gravestone is pillar-shaped, carries a Turkish text in Arabic script - even though use of the Arab script for the Turkish language had been banned in Turkey years before Agushi's death. A street in central Prishtina, between Ilir Konushevcu and Nazim Gafurri streets, bears his name.

Next to the entrance to the cemetery's northern section, you'll find the graves of Sofë Rugova (1923 to 1996) and Ukë Rustë Rugova (1918 to 1945), parents of the former president. However, Ibrahim's father was not laid to rest here. Along with the president's grandfather, Rustë, the Communist partisans accused them of being Nazi collaborators and executed them at the end of the Second World War. That is why the slab of Ukë's tomb carries the remark 'I zhdukur', "missed" (missing?) in English.

One of Kosovo's most famous graves can be seen three steps further. On February 10, 2007, two young men, Arben Xheladini, and Mon Balaj, were killed by Rumanian UNMIK policemen

EC Project Addresses Justice Sector in Kosovo



By Petrit Collaku

The European Commission Liaison Office in Kosovo, ECLLO, presented on Monday the plan for the construction of a new building for the Kosovo justice system. The complex will be called the Palace of Justice.

As Kosovo's justice system is suffering from a lack of physical space, this project is expected to secure adequate space and thus help improve judicial services.

The project will also have other effects, including supporting pub-

lic access, gaining confidence in the justice sector, reducing the backlog of cases and increasing independence.

"We have pledged 25 million for the realisation of this project. This confirms the commitment of the EU to ensure better standards and performances in the area of justice so that Kosovo citizens get better services," Kjartan Björnsson, head of operations of the ECLLO, told journalists.

Kosovo Minister of Justice Haki Demolli said that improving working conditions for the justice system in Kosovo will help to increase the level of accountability, professionalism, and transparency of the work of judges and prosecutors.

Besides the residential, commercial and sport elements of the complex, the Palace of Justice will in the future accommodate the relocation of the parliament, key ministries and other government

departments. The area is to be located some four kilometres from the centre of Prishtina.

The Palace of Justice compound will cover an area of 27,000 square metres and it has all the require-

ments in terms of the functionality required for a modern justice compound. It is to be composed of five peripheral buildings and approximately 625 employees are expected to work there.



Culture

during a demonstration on Mother Teresa Boulevard, in the heart of Prishtina. The two have since become heroes to those Kosovars who take a critical stance towards the international institutions that play such a decisive role in the political life of the country. Many of those who think that Kosovars alone, not foreigners, should decide Kosovo's fate sympathise with the Vetëvendosje (Self-determination) movement, which led the 2007 demonstrations. Only Xheladini's grave is here in Prishtina, however. Mon Balaj is buried in his hometown of Podujeva.

In the cemetery's western section, on the left side of Vushtrria Street, lie the graves of more prominent Kosovars. One is Mahmut Bakalli (1936 to 2006), whose large white marble tomb is situated right behind the fence at the roadside. In Tito's time, Bakalli was a leading cadre in the League of Communists. After Tito's death in 1980, and especially after the Kosovo police brutally suppressed demonstrators calling for a Republic of Kosovo within Yugoslavia, Bakalli fell out with the League of Communists. In his last years, he was a member of the Kosovo parliament and adviser to the then prime minister, Agim Çeku.

Not far from the end of the western section, visible from the roadside, is the grave of Azem Shkreli (1938 to 1997), a famous Kosovar poet and writer.

Esat Mekuli (1916 to 1993), another well-known poet, is buried at the western end of the section. His grave, like Shkreli's, carries only the name of the deceased and the years of his birth and death. Mekuli's best-known poem is arguably *A është fajtor shqiptari* (Is the Albanian guilty? See box). It was written in 1938, after the author heard about the notorious memorandum *Iseljavanje Arnauta* (Evacuation of the Albanians), by Vasa Cubrilovic, which called for the expulsion of the entire Albanian population from Kosovo. The poem must have come to the mind of many Kosovars at the end of the 1990s, when Serbia's then ruler, Slobodan Milosevic, revived and tried to execute Cubrilovic's

barbaric project.

Professor Fehmi Agani, a philosopher and sociologist, was one a close associate to Ibrahim Rugova in the 1990s. On May 6, 1999, during the Kosovo war, Serbian soldiers abducted him from his house in Prishtina's Dragodan district, and executed him. As with Nazim Gafurri and Bajram Kelmendi, there was no motive for the killing beyond the fact that he belonged to the Albanian race. Agani had taken part in the Rambouillet conference from February to March 1999, just before the war broke out in Kosovo war. That, as well as the fact that in comparison to Rugova he was less well known internationally, also made him a suitable target. A bronze statue of the professor dressed in his coat, walking forward pensively, has been erected in the centre of Prishtina near the Philosophy Faculty of Prishtina University. His tomb is covered with a black marble stone carrying only his name, the dates "1932 - 1999" and a simple wavy line.

Behind Professor Agani's tomb lies that of his brother, Hilmi, 1927 to 1994, professor of Albanian language and literature at Prishtina University.

Two other well-known inhabitants of the western section are Gazmend Zajmi (1936 to 1995), possibly Kosovo's most famous composer, and the painter Muslim Mulliqi (1934 to 1998). Their photographs, like those of Azem Shkreli, Esat Mekuli and Ibrahim Rugova, can be found among the portraits of prominent Kosovar writers, actors, painters and musicians on Mother Teresa Boulevard.

The vast majority of those who



The monuments commemorates three prominent victims of the Serbs in early 1999.

have found their final resting place in Prishtina's Muslim Cemetery are unknown to the general public.

Interestingly, there is no segregation according to ethnic groups. Albanians, Bosniaks (Muslim Slavs), Roma and Turks lie next to each other in close proximity. Consequently, the tombstones carry inscriptions in various languages, plus here and there a Koranic quote in Arabic.

As for the Roma graves, it is not unusual for one tombstone to be in Albanian or Serbo-Croat, and for a neighbouring grave belonging to a member of the same family, to contain a Romani inscription. In one case, on the grave of Sedat Demiri (1967 to 1985), not far from

Professor Agani's tomb, the Romani words are written in Cyrillic letters, which is quite uncommon, because the Romani language generally uses the Latin alphabet.

Many tombs show portraits of the deceased engraved into the black marble. We often find the Islamic symbol - the crescent and star - although the Albanian double-headed eagle is equally frequent.

A few graves are decorated with the bust of the deceased, while some the illustrations on some tombstones indicate the profession of the person resting underneath. The stone of Sali Ibrahim, obviously a Rom, sports his portrait plus a pack of cards.

Prishtina's Muslim Cemetery is an open book, which tells the visitor a lot about the city's and the country's history, culture and society.

Looking at the various inscriptions in five languages (Albanian, Serbo-Croat, Romani, Turkish, Arabic) and three alphabets (Latin, Cyrillic, Arab), one cannot help wondering whether people of different origins and mother tongues can only co-exist peacefully after they have died. Wouldn't it be better to get along well during one's lifetime? As the German poet, singer, songwriter and essayist Wolf Biermann, puts it: "How close some of the dead ones are to us And how dead some of those who live."

A ËSHTË FAJTOR SHQIPTARI

A është fajtor shqiptari pse në këtë qiell jeton,
nën këtë qiell në trojet e të parëve të vet?
A është fajtor pse është
e përkundër të gjithëve qëndron shqiptari,
rob e njeri, që do i vetvetës të jetë?

A është fajtor shqiptari, pse si të tjerët don
të jetojë si njeri në të vetat sot e përditë?
A është fajtor pse - përkundër dhunës - rron e qëndron
nën qiellin e Kosovës loka, në truallin e të parëve të vet?

IS THE ALBANIAN GUILTY

Is the Albanian guilty of living under this sky,
under this sky on the grounds of his ancestors?
Is he guilty of being
and in spite of everything remaining Albanian,
a man, a human being, who wants to belong to himself?

Is the Albanian guilty, because - like all the others - he wants
to live like a human being on his own ground, today and forever?
Is he guilty, because - in spite of violence - he stays and remains
under the sky of Mother Kosovo, on the ground of his forefathers?

KFOR to Transfer Border Security to Police



By Lawrence Marzouk

KFOR has confirmed that it intends to hand over control of the Kosovo's border with Albania to Kosovo Police.

General Markus Bentler, KFOR commander, told a press conference that the transfer will take place on April 28, according to Prishtina daily Koha Ditore.

"I think the transfer of competencies on the border with Albania will happen on April 28," General Bentler is reported to have said.

The move follows the transfer of

responsibility for the Macedonian border in late March.

He added that there were no plans yet to hand over control to Kosovo Police for policing the border with Montenegro and Serbia.

"Things are going forward and the transfer of competencies is a good indicator of the improvement of the security situation in Kosovo and I think that they were ready to accept new duties and this is very positive," Commander Admiral Mark Fitzgerald, Joint Forces Command Naples, said at the press conference.

On March 31, KFOR handed over the lead for Macedonian border patrols to Kosovo police, although the responsibility is still shared with the NATO force.

It has also emerged that three new border crossings between Albania and Kosovo will be

opened in the near future.

The news emerged during a meeting in Tirana between

Albanian Foreign Minister Ilir Meta and his Kosovo counterpart Skender Hyseni.



A joint patrol of the Macedonia-Kosovo border by KFOR and Kosovo Police

Cantina AM-PM: Stylish Mexican in a Refined Setting



By Maneater

Menus seldom change in Prishtina, and a recent halt in the opening of new restaurants has made my job a tinge more difficult.

Nevertheless, a third variant always exists to spice up the city's culinary scene: a change of ownership.

Cantina AM-PM, formerly known as Mexican Cantina, recently went through a transfer to new management, and although hardly noticeable from a distance, the new owners have transformed the venue into a more grown-up affair.

The interior is slightly smaller than that of neighbouring Qamil Hoxha eateries, such as People's or Lips.

After bypassing its extra-large front terrace, with chairs interestingly adorned with plush blankets, you can expect to meet a handful of smartly dressed waiters at the bar, and less than a dozen tables available for dining.

Nothing screams Mexican from the décor, unlike other Mexican eateries in town which attempt to mimic a fiesta experience with tacky souvenirs and cheesy music.

Instead, Cantina AM-PM presents a more urban feel, with brick-exposed walls, vent-exposed ceilings, low lighting and poster art. Warm tones of red and dark wood furniture balance off the industrial-like details.

Lunchtimes are buzzing, but evenings are distinctively hushed, and quite appealing. I opted for the latter, and headed to the venue around 8 pm with a group of friends.

As anticipated, only another two tables were occupied, and a melodic jazz tune seductively played in the background.

The menu is one of the components that have completely changed, now consisting of a mere dozen options, simply printed on a single page.

Although the majority of options are Mexican-influenced, Cesar salad and pizza have been included, even though they take away from the theme.

Our group ordered a combination of the following dishes - beef quesadillas, Mexican chicken nuggets, chicken Cesar salad, chicken burrito and chicken chimichangas.

Each option is priced at less than 5 euro, and arrived within 15 minutes of placing our order.

Fortunately, each dish was plated differently and garnished with a distinctive side, providing an attractive spread for our table.

The beef quesadillas consisted of seasoned ground beef and melted cheese pressed between two warm tortillas, which were decently flavoured.

The nuggets were also good due to their interesting cornmeal-based coating, spiced up with an accompanying salsa dip.



Cantina's buzzing outdoor eating area

The chicken Cesar salad consisted of the usual lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers, with strips of savoury chicken.

Meanwhile, the chicken burrito and chicken chimichangas both incorporated what seemed to be an identical filling of chicken, white rice, onion, and red and green pepper.

Don't get me wrong, the filling was quite tasty, with marinated Mexican flavours and a touch of spicy delight, but not distinctive enough to warrant two separate orders.

If you fancy a softer tortilla, as opposed to a thicker pan-fried tortilla, and nacho chips as oppose to a serving of salad, go for the burrito.

The latter, along with a double portion and a serving of a sour cream-like sauce,

can also be expected with the chimichangas.

The only dessert option available that night was chocolate mousse, served with maraschino cherries and chocolate syrup. The mousse was outstanding, and after three servings we agreed that it was a perfectly refreshing closing to our Mexican meal.

Although not staggeringly authentic, we enjoyed the well-plated, good value dishes and fresh ingredients, which kept every dish from being too overpowering.

Cantina AM-PM
Rr. Qamil Hoxha
049 710 710



★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★☆☆☆	★☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Yes We Cantina	Immanuel Cantina	Can't Complain	Student Cantina	Can't in a Million Years	Incantinance

Get the Paintball Rolling

The outskirts of Prishtina offer two excellent spots to use your friends as target practice



By Lawrence Marzouk

Paintballing in Kosovo is a great weekend escapade, if you can handle the post-game bruises and aches from Rambo style rampages.

The game can be played in Kroj I Mbretit, just off the main Prishtina-Peja highway after the airport turnoff, or in Novo Brdo.

Both venues won't take more than 30mins to reach and offer a pleasant environment in which to splatter your friends with paint.

Mr Bali's Paintball Game, in Kroj I Mbretit, is the largest and best known paintball centre in Kosovo, and provides a range of battlefields and ten scenarios to keep you busy. These include a Western-themed field, complete with wooden, cut-out 'sheriff's house' and 'mortuary', and a speed trial with disused buses dotted around. The equipment is well maintained, protective gear is provided and you can

relax at the venue's outdoor bar afterwards.

The costs are 7euro per player, including 100 balls, or 10euro for 200 balls. Refills are available at a slightly cheaper rate.

The Novo Brdo offering is much smaller in scale but has the advantage of being set in beautiful surroundings.

It is part of the NGO Care's programme for attracting tourists to this picturesque spot of Kosovo. The arena is set in a small farm and, reassuringly, directed by the head of the local hunting association, Nasmu. Up to ten people can play and the cost is five euros for the gun and 100 paintballs. While you are there, you can pop into the famous castle or grab some food and drink with the owners of the farm, the Bunjaku family.

Essential information:

Novo Brdo

Address: Bunjac, near Novo Brdo
Contact: Touristic Information Center, Village Bostane, Novo Brdo, +377 44 465 471, www.tourism-novobrdo.com



Paintball Game, Mr Bali

Address: Off the main Prishtina-Peja road, after the airport on the left-hand side, if you are coming from Prishtina.
Contact: +377 44 505 409, 044 263 020 and +386 49 505 409, info@paintball-kosovo.com www.paintball-kosovo.com



By Shega A'Mula
in Prishtina

Inside Prishtina

Building Review:

The Independence House of Dr Ibrahim Rugova

Although the sacrifices of many eventually led to the independence of this country, Kosovo's first president, Ibrahim Rugova, will forever be considered by many as the forerunner of this cause. To commemorate the end of conflict in Kosovo, Rugova transformed his former office into a site of remembrance in 2002, naming it The Independence House.

"This house was a house for all the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, of civil society, and all political party groups," announced Rugova at the inauguration of the museum.

"It was a home for the people of Kosovo, in order for thousands of Albanians to overcome and fulfil their everyday needs and to participate in important national acts and events for freedom and the independence of the Republic of Kosovo."

The incredibly small home, comprising a handful of rooms and a tight corridor, was first used as

office space for the Kosovo Writers' Union.

In 1988, Rugova, then already an esteemed writer and intellectual, became the director of the union, which acted as a stepping stone for his political career.

When Yugoslav President Milosevic revoked Kosovo's autonomous powers in 1989, Rugova and fellow colleagues established the Democratic League of Kosovo political party, LDK, a movement which would fight the new oppressive policies being applied in the former province.

The writers' union house was now transformed into the LDK headquarters, becoming the nucleus of Kosovar-Albanian political activity.

After the LDK announced Kosovo's first declaration of independence on July 2, 1992, the building also became the home of Kosovo's self-established parliament, government, information centre and presidency, with Rugova

as its head of state.

During the nineties, a complete parallel system of governance was born in this building. As LDK membership rose to include almost every ethnic Albanian resident of Kosovo, international collaborators and the media began to seek meetings with the political figures at the home, only further broadening its importance.

Today, a stroll through the memorial site can baffle any visitor, due to its limited space.

It is hard to believe that Rugova's passive movement for Kosovo's independence could have been achieved in a home so small.

The home avoided damaged during the conflict of 1999, but was lit up in flames the day NATO troops entered Kosovo to end the violence.

Only one object remained undamaged by the fire - a picture of Rugova with acclaimed writer Anton Cetta, which still hangs in there today.

After funded reconstruction from



One of the rooms in The Independence House

a string of institutions, the house was converted into a museum.

But after Rugova's death in 2007, the building was renamed to include his name, and remodeled to emphasize his role in the road to Kosovo's independence.

The museum is a series of two rooms, one of which is an embellished version of Rugova's former office, with a copy of a hand-written speech he wrote.

The second room, located in the centre of the house, displays Kosovo's 2007 declaration of independence in the centre, Rugova's first podium, a table used to illustrate the original used for press conferences and meetings, archaeological tributes to the ancient Illyrians

known to have occupied this land millennia ago, and a large chronological display of photos telling the story of independence, from Albania's 1912 declaration of independence, leading to the end of the conflict in 1999.

The museum staff are thoroughly well informed on every piece displayed within the museum, and can offer an extensive amount of historical background, not only for the country, but also the region.

Visitors are welcome to drop by during regular working hours of the week.

Off Rr: Fehmi Agani, next to Tiffany Restaurant

Bar Review:

Clip Caffe

For some people, hip-hop music touches the soul, and the one place in town serving up the best of this genre is Clip Caffe, a bar opened by a pair of local rappers known near and far for their undeniable talent.

Although their fame reaches idol-status among the young diaspora communities across Europe and America, at home they're just a couple of regular guys to everyone, looking to show their visitors a good time.

During the day, the windows and doors of the bar are flown open, letting out rhythmic tunes, usually hand-picked by visitors enjoying a drink inside.

Meanwhile, their front terrace joins the row of countless café patios located along the block, creating quite a lively atmosphere during lunchtime and weekends.

At night, the curtains are usually drawn, as the party is moved inside for a more private setting.

The interior is swathed in shades of purple, with no reference to anything remotely 'ghetto' or 'gangsta'.

On the contrary, the space is delectably fresh, with snug seating and an attractive

bar, perfect for lounging alone or with companions.

Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings are typically more vivacious, with modishly clad females, and equally well-dressed males, sparking up endless conversation as cocktails are assembled and a DJ spins in the background.

By midnight, everyone's usually out of their seats, requesting songs and showing off their moves.

The staff is diligent in keeping up with drink orders, from Clip specialties, to beers, spirits and wine - all modestly priced. And to top it all off, fruitful shots are regularly a house treat.

Day or night, there's always a loyal crowd at Clip, usually a younger age bracket of twenty-somethings, leading up to the early thirties.

Bear in mind, 99.9% of the time, music varies from international hip-hop, reggae, dancehall and R&B.

The cafe is located just off Perandori Justinian, on the corner of Garibaldi and Luan Haradinaj.



Customers enjoying a drink and some urban tunes at Clip Caffe

Shop Review:

Maden Group

Ever thought of building your own home or getting in an interior designer to spruce your place up? Well, Maden is certainly one of the best places to go in Kosovo.

Although I have yet to build a house of my own, a recent visit to Maden Group's offices certainly lived up to my expectations of an attentive and tailored service.

Maden Group comprises a team of young, avant-garde architects, engineers and designers, providing efficient and detail-oriented design and construction services for both private and commercial projects.

Although dedicated to versatility, Maden head architect Ideal Vejsa told Prishtina Insight that they were looking to fill in a specific niche - people wanting professional assistance with small building projects.

Therefore, Maden's projects vary from interior design, apartment renovations, home designs and construction. Their team can offer you a complete design, full construction, or both.

Maden has taken their services a step further by testing out the market for all relevant home-building goods - plumbing, heating, drywall, electricity, windows, doors, stairs, roofing, lighting, and furniture, just to name a few. Their website lists dozens of trusted companies that they recommend.

In addition to offering custom-made designs for your home, furnishings and interior design, Maden has also recently published a catalogue with home models ready for purchase.

The catalogue meticulously states every detail of the home, from a description of the architecture and design, to loan options.

The homes in the catalogue vary from modest one-storey models, to more extravagant luxury pads with high ceilings, multiple storeys and outdoor swimming pools. In total, there are thirty existing models to choose from.

Maden has also wandered into new territory for Kosovo - ecological homes. After



Design your new home with Maden

thorough research, the team is now able to add green options to homes, which encourage conservation and environmental protection.

Options include orienting a home to use the sun's warmth, geothermal energy, atmospheric water, water recycling, and devices that guarantee efficient use of energy.

Maden's website is full of valuable information for those interested in contracting design and construction projects.

Their office is also a very pleasant environment to meet with architects and devise ideas for your home.

Recent Maden projects include Z-Mobile's new flagship store in Pejton. Their catalogue is also available for purchase at newsstands and convenience stores located across the city.

Rr: Ilaz kodra nr:9
038 721 721

www.madengroup.com



Border Crackdown Fails to Deter Albanian Migrants

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network investigates the world of Albanian illegal migrants seeking a better life in Greece, who aren't put off by tougher controls of the frontier.



By Gjergj Erebara

“In the past two weeks I tried three times to pass the border but each time the Greek police caught me,” says Admir Cela, stranded penniless outside the Kakavija border pass, trying to hitch a trip back to his hometown of Fier in central Albania

Arrested three days earlier after illegally crossing the border close to Gjiroksatra, Greek police held him and then repatriated him to Albania where he spent a day in detention before being released near the border crossing.

The 17-year-old had hoped to go on foot all the way to Ioaninna, some 55 kilometres from the Albanian border inside Greece. “It's become very difficult,” said Admir, who first hiked across the border aged only 13, while still in sixth grade.

In the last two years, Albanian authorities have stepped up border patrols in order to curb illegal migration. Tighter border controls are one of the criteria Albania needs to meet in order to achieve visa liberalization with the European Union.

However, despite the increased policing of the border between the two countries, the flow of economic migrants from Albania into Greece has not stopped.

Those who take the dangerous and arduous trip on foot through the mountains say that while the crackdown has made their lives more difficult, it has done little to deter their desire to seek a better life across the border.

Gateway to Greece:

Roughly 650,000 Albanian migrants have moved to Greece since the collapse in 1991 of Enver Hoxha's Stalinist regime in Albania.

During the communist regime, when everyone leaving did so illegally and was considered a traitor, an electrical fence was installed on the border to stop them. Border guards had orders to shoot escapees and the dead bodies of those killed were often paraded through towns to instill terror.

Nearly two decades later, with the electric fence long gone, thousands pass each year through the southern border village of Konispol en route to Greece.

Of all the places along the 297-kilometre land border between the two countries, many illegal migrants consider Konispol the easiest from which to cross into Greece.

Besides being right on the border, the village is only 29 kilometres from the nearest Greek town of Igumenitsa, from where the illegal migrants can catch a bus



The border between Albania and Greece

further inland.

Fazliu, a 56-year-old villager from Llakatund, close to the city of Vlora, who has crossed the border on foot many times, said Greek police repatriated him last time on April 7.

After the Albanian police registered his name in the Qafe Bota border post, he was released and returned to Konispol just in time to catch up with the Champions League game between Barcelona and Arsenal on TV at the Baresha hostel.

At 4am the next day he awoke and together with two other guests was getting ready to make his way to the border again to cross into Greece.

“It takes up to six hours on foot to arrive near Igumenitsa,” he said, sipping a last espresso before setting off.

The Baresha hostel takes its name from its landlady, though there are no signs to identify it. At the entrance is a picture of the shrine of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. It contains two simple rooms lined with five beds.

Though landlady Baresha charges only 500 lek (four euro) for a bed for the night, rumours in the village have it that she has become quite well-off on account of the large numbers of immigrants passing through Konispol.

All seven guests staying at the hostel that night left to cross the following morning illegally into Greece.

Koli, a 48-year-old man from the village of Vllahina, also close to Vlora, together with his wife was another guest at Baresha's on April 7. He too planned to cross the border illegally into Greece the following morning. Koli had a Greek work permit and residency documents but his wife did not.

“My wife does not have the proper documents to travel to Greece so she has to travel through the mountain and I will accompany her,” he explained.

Borders within borders:

Three roads lead to the village of Konispol. The main one crosses the Vivar canal, which has to be passed by a raft in order to proceed further.

Both Albanian and Greek

police on both sides of the border commonly use roadblocks to stop immigrants. The Albanian police stop all cars headed to the border area and ask to see people's documents.

Some migrants die, trying to avoid these checks. In October 2008, five migrants drowned in the nearby lake of Butrint when two small boats attempting to sidestep a police roadblock at the ramp across the Vivar canal capsized.

Because police control the whole length of the road that leads to Konispol, few taxi drivers will risk driving migrants there, so they often are forced to walk as much as ten kilometres on foot to reach the village. Unannounced spot checks of hotels in the area are common not only in Konispol but in other border towns like Gjirokastra and Korca.

“We won't drive illegal emigrants to Konispol because if the police find them without documents we will end up spending the night in jail,” Fatmir Izeti, a taxi-driver from the resort town of Saranda, explained.

According to Izeti, their services are often replaced by those of corrupt police officers who after finishing their shifts will ferry migrants to the border for around 100 euro, three times the normal fare, although the majority of migrants cannot afford it and prefer to walk.

Laura Totraku, a spokesperson of the General Directorate of Police, declined to comment on claims that some police are involved in transporting migrants to the border crossing.

But Izeti, the Saranda taxi-driver who claimed corrupt cops were ruining his business, said he sympathised with the dilemma facing would-be emigrants.

They “not only have to walk for days in the Greek mountains but are also forced to walk for hours in the mountains of their own country”, he said.

They keep on coming:

According to Frontex, the EU border control agency, the Greek frontier with Albania is one of worst affected land borders in Europe in terms of illegal migration.

In 2009 Greek police extradited over 50,000 Albanians who had crossed the border illegally, according to the Albanian Ministry of Interior. Albanian border guards stopped another 20,000 from attempting to cross.

In an effort to meet EU visa liberalization requirements, Tirana continues to invest training and equipment into the border police to curb the migratory flow.

“Today we have modern binoculars with heat detectors that can spot a person in the middle of the night,” said Edurat Caka, head of border police and migration in Gjirokastra, showing examples of the tools at his disposal.

Although illegal migration is a crime and under article 97 of Albania's penal code offenders can be jailed for up to two years, Albanian police admit that they only refer cases to prosecutors if they involve organised human smuggling.

“Most migrants are interviewed in order to identify the trafficking networks and later released,” Ferdinand Gjeta, head of border police in Korca, in southwest Albania, said. “We only file criminal complaints to prosecutors in the cases of organized trafficking.”

According to Gjeta, Albanian migrants passing the land border into Greece through the mountains seldom rely on trafficking networks.

Despite the new equipment and the increased efforts to stop migration, Gjeta admits that effective control of the border is still beyond their reach.

“In the region of Korca alone we have 60 kilometres of border, passable throughout the year, so stopping illegal migration from economic migrants is next to impossible,” Gjeta said.

“The communist regime could do it,” he admitted, “but that was not through effective control of the border but rather through sheer violence and repression”.

Gjergj Erebara is a reporter with the daily newspaper Shqip. The investigation was supported by the Danish association of investigative journalism, FUJ, under its SCOOP programme.

News in Brief

Montenegro Awaiting Recognition From 72 States

While Montenegro became an independent country almost four years ago, the country is still awaiting recognitions from 72 out of 192 UN member states.

This fact emerged in one of the additional questions in the European Commission pre-accession questionnaire given to the Montenegrin government, according to Serbian daily Blic.

The people of Montenegro voted for independence from Serbia in a referendum on May 21, 2006, after which the country became a member of the UN.

A list of countries which had not recognised Montenegro's independence by March 18 included Venezuela, Bolivia, Somalia, Yemen, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana and Saudi Arabia.

According to Podgorica daily Vijesti, the country has cited in the questionnaire that country's diplomatic missions have initiated the recognition procedure in Jordan, Kuwait, Liberia and some other states in Africa for a second time as the first time it made such requests was immediately after the independence referendum.

Montenegro submitted its EU candidacy application in December 2008. In July 2009, the EC gave the Montenegrin authorities a questionnaire that serves to assess a country's readiness to meet the commitments required by EU membership.

Macedonia Justice Min. Survives No-Confidence Vote

The Macedonian Parliament late on Monday voted down the no-confidence motion against Justice Minister Mihajlo Manevski tabled by the country's opposition.

Only 16 legislators in the 120 seat parliament supported the motion while 65, mainly from the main ruling centre-right VMRO DPMNE party, voted against.

“We did not expect you to support the motion, but we achieved our goal - the Macedonian public heard our credible criticism,” Vlado Buckovski from the biggest opposition party, the Social Democrats, SDSM, said during the 12 hour debate.

The Social Democrats hold Manevski responsible for failing to keep politics away from influencing the work of the judicial system, among other complaints.

The motion for a vote of no confidence was submitted on February 26, due to “nepotism in the judiciary, irregularities in the ministry's financial operations, the scandal of usurped state-owned land, extremely poor conditions in Macedonian prisons and political pressure on judges”.

New Police Chief Promises 'Proactive Policing'

Behar Selimi took over Kosovo's top policing job, as acting director, earlier this month. In an interview with Balkan Investigative Reporting Network's Life in Kosovo show he talks about past mistakes and his plans for the future.



By Jeta Xharra

Question: Let's talk about the great challenges that await you. Apart from all the qualities you have, you have however inherited a police force which is paid less than other public services. Police officers who risk their life are paid less than those who work in the post office or in the airport. Is this fair? And do you think it can be expected from you to fight organised crime with the salaries that you have now?

Behar Selimi: First of all I absolutely do not think it's correct to accuse anyone explicitly for the condition of the police today. It is a police in development, just as other institutions are. It's clear to me what condition the police is in, both in social and material matters. I am also clear about my ability to manage the police's budget. The salaries are managed directly from the ministry of finance. However, with the other part, which are goods, services etcetera, I will try to bring in a savings plan without damaging the safety that the police offers to the citizens.

And regarding the dedication of the police, of course the current state of salaries has an extraordinary negative impact in the dedication and readiness of the police to enter life-threatening situations. However, our police continue to be dignified and [the police] is still acting in life-threatening situations, because of the professional character of being part of the police. In this regard, it's known that one of Minister Rexhepi's [the new interior minister's] priorities will be improving conditions for the police. I hope our government will continually have it as its priority. There are public promises for this as well.

If you had found yourself with a similar scenario to the police strike [which happened earlier this year], how would you have managed it? How do you think it has been man-

aged and what will you do in the future if you face the same situation?

First of all, our police are very dignified. And with the police you must speak very sincerely and directly. The situation that was created, according to my personal opinion, was as a result of unclear and confusing communication between the management and our police. We were not very articulate, and didn't say things concretely regarding the new system of wages.

However, from the type of communication used, great expectations were built and great hope was given to the police for a very big raise compared to what really happened in January. This resulted in protests. Protests are legally and constitutionally allowed.

Your work is not done alone. Do you have the right to choose your friends? Do you have the right to choose the people who will fight corruption with you?

My immediate team of vice director and assistants are chosen under the authority of the Minister of Internal Affairs and that team is functioning well. Luckily, I have been working with that team for a long time now. And I think this team will be of the right level and will support me in all my ideas and initiatives.

Tell me your vision for the police of Kosovo. If you become a director, how long will it take to undertake specific reforms, what are these reforms and what is the budget? How much time, how many people, what budget and what reforms do you want to achieve in the time you will be director?

First of all, the reason behind the need for reform is the fact that Kosovo Police is only ten years old. It's one of the youngest police forces, maybe the youngest one in the world.

It has been created on the basis of advanced international standards. Concretely the police of Kosovo has been developed on the basis of good

practices, but under a system which has served well once upon a time.

The police of UNMIK, at the start of its mandate, were working on our development. But our word has not always been heard and considered. We haven't had the chance to take any decision on the establishment of the organisation structure.

We are not a very professional police in comparison to the regional ones, on the basis of efficiency and effectiveness.

There is also another issue. Up until two years ago, Kosovo Police has been working in a place which was on its way to becoming a state. Now we work in the Republic of Kosovo.

The laws, constitution, oblige us not to count on the vital support of the international presence. The laws now oblige us to be first, and only ask for assistance from the internationals. Regarding the reform, it has already started under the mandate of General Ahmeti. I will only continue it.

Reforms are a necessity of our time. It will consist of adapting our police organisation to the needs of our new Kosovo. Needs that have been specified in the strategies for security, organised crime and terrorism.

For the public who hasn't read these strategies, could you please tell us what are these reforms?

A necessity is changes to the organisational structure. The organisational structure is the foundation of an organisation. One reform will be changes to work structure, which means more police, nearer to the citizens, near our neighborhoods. Until now, our police has been a reactive police. It answered calls, sometimes on time, sometimes late.

It didn't have a preventative function. The preventative function is carried out by police presence. We are not only obliged to fight crime, but also to fight fear of crime.

This is done through police presence. We will try to be as near as possible to the citizens.

Outside In Volcanic Visa: Feasibility Study



By Kreshnik Hoxha

ECO-warriors must be well chuffed as they witness Eyjafjallajökull's eruptive gift. As the volcano continues to generously blow its ashes across Europe, the continent's airspace has enjoyed some peace and quiet from the aircrafts, and a massive cut in carbon emissions.

To understand the severity of this tragicomedy, it would be enough to mention the case of a British family that had to take a taxi from the French Alps all the way to Birmingham and forked out £2,000. Now, you wouldn't go to Birmingham by choice, even if you were given a Greek island in return, but despite the unappealing destination, I bet that French taxi driver is now in love with the Brits.

This European collective mess demonstrates how crucial air travel has become to our everyday life. Everyone is unhappy and asking for something. Passengers are desperate to get home, having been stranded in airports for, what seems, donkey's years. Airline companies are eager to scrounge money from the EU to make up for their losses.

And the EU's aviation authorities are far from reaching a consensus on how to tackle the menace of volcanic dust and indignant at criticism that their reaction was over the top. Everyone is complaining about something.

Who would have thought that a volcano would demonstrate what sort of whingeing characters the Europeans are?

In addition, who would have thought that this eruption would demonstrate how inventive the Europeans can be when push comes to shove? But, inventive travel ideas run thin if stranded in Kosovo when you need to be in England.

By holding the honour of being a Kosovar, you are required to make all sorts of advanced Excel spreadsheets to examine which country accepts your Kosovo passport, where you need a visa, which countries your passport is likely to cause a diplomatic crisis in and where you are likely to be shot if you wave your passport.

Travelling from Prishtina to Paris by coach would take roughly two days on top of the whole week you would have waited to secure your Schengen Visa.

Jumping on Eurostar through the Channel Tunnel would take you to the Queen's land right at the heart of London St Pancras in just over two hours.

So, what would you do once you get to the UK? Make another spreadsheet detailing who you need to speak to to get Britain to join the Schengen Agreement? Or would you rather make a long list of actions the Kosovo government needs to focus on in order to satisfy visa liberalisation requirements?

Personally, I would just sit back and enjoy the fact that we are the only nation in Europe that has to produce such sophisticated feasibility study reports on alternative travel arrangements whenever Mother Nature shakes up!

Dear Teta Mia...



Teta Mia solves your problems

Why are disputed buildings so combustible? Would reducing the heat of argument make them safer?

Lucy Fer, Prishtina

Many thanks for posing such an observant question, Lucy. Indeed, if we review the last few years in Kosovo, it is true that several controversial buildings have been razed to the ground.

Do you remember when key files held by Prizren municipality went up in smoke in October 2007? "We report that all records relating to Internal Audit activities in 2007 were destroyed in a fire during the year under review," bemoans independent auditors KPMG in their report on the municipality's finances.

Perhaps you recall the fire which gutted Prishtina's Hotel

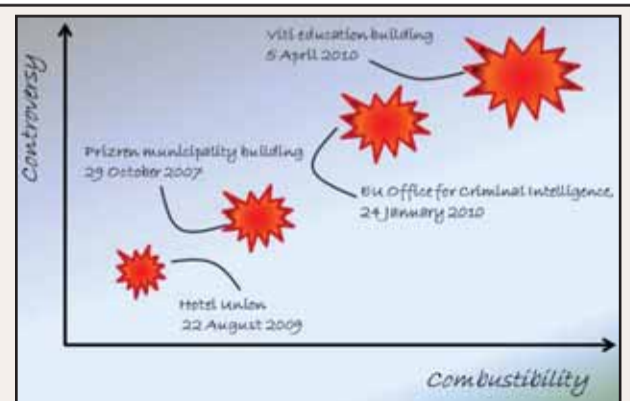
Union in August last year? The iconic building, declared a protected cultural monument in 1996, had been the subject of a passionate campaign by locals to restore it to its Austro-Hungarian glory. It was sold to QMI for 3.2 million euro in 2007 by the then Kosovo Trust Agency on condition that it keep its distinctive facade.

However, you may not remember the blaze at the EU Office for Criminal Intelligence, coverage of which seeped out five days after it happened on the night of 24 January 2010. Tucked away from prying camera crews in Film City, KFOR fire-fighters failed to rescue the building, and one assumes the recovery operation continues.

But fresh in your mind will be Express' genius headline, "The problem in Viti solved with explosion" on April 6, the morning after a blast at a building owned by Viti Municipality's Directorate of Education. The building had been the subject of a hot dispute between the municipality and the Drenusha Hunters' Association; EULEX had recently found in favour of the latter.

Viti Deputy Mayor Xhevat Bislmi condemned the attack, saying it was directed against the Albanian school and against the Municipality of Viti.

In an effort to provide some scientific analysis in answer to your question, Ms Fer, I have plotted the aforementioned



incidents on a handy graph, which clearly demonstrates the truth of your hypothesis.

So, would reducing the heat of the argument lessen the propensity of contested buildings to combust? I'm not so sure. I suggest instead that we need the fire-retardant effects of a decent insurance system, thorough police investigations, a functioning prosecution and penal sector, and computerised databases to back up potentially incriminating files. And then, we will be able to argue as hotly as we like.

Giving the Blind Hope

Blind and partially sighted people in Kosovo face discrimination and challenges on a daily basis, but The Kosova Association for the Blind and Partially Sighted is working to overcome these problems

“If we can't see it, we can feel, we can touch, and we are not stupid,” said Mexhit Foniqi.

The coordinator of The Kosova Association for the Blind and Partially Sighted said that despite improving opportunities, blind people still faced serious discrimination.

When the 53-year-old, who lost his vision at the age of 20, applied for a position in Kosovo's president's office in 2002, he was not taken serious.

“They were shocked when they saw me. They could not believe that I had applied for that job,” Foniqi said. “They didn't interview me at all. I could have shown that I am capable for that position.”

As coordinator for the association, Foniqi does a great deal of paperwork, such as compiling annual reports, contracts and other important documents, but blind people are often seen as incapable of doing these jobs.

He added that previously, under the Yugoslav regime, certain jobs were set aside for the blind.

“Telephone operators, physiotherapist and packagers were positions guaranteed for blind persons,” Foniqi said.

The government, he believes,

should think more about long-term solutions to secure jobs for his community.

Despite these problems, awareness of blind people is on the increase, he revealed. “Today there are 23 blind persons studying in Pristina University,” he said.

The Kosova Association for the Blind and Partially Sighted was set up in 1947. It re-established its centre in Prishtina in 1999 and in 2003 began offering services to this community.

President Besnik Kadaj told Prishtina Insight that the association covers almost all of Kosovo's territory, with some 3,000 members registered in its database. Kadaj believes that the number of blind people in the country is around 5,000.

He said that blind people in Kosovo are facing many challenges in almost all aspects of their daily lives.

“The blind community is not involved in society because our rights are not protected in the legislative framework,” Kadaj said.

He said that under the Law on Health and the Law on Allowances for the Disabled, blind people are discriminated against.



Under health legislation, the blind are given no priority for operations, even if treatment could be sight-saving, and the law for disability allowances does not include the blind.

“The blind person, already a disabled person, has to have another disability in order to be eligible for pensions,” he added.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has been sponsoring the association with 400 euro per month, but this donation has been decreasing each year. In 2008, the ministry was giving 1,000 euro per month.

But Kadaj said that a group of experts, including members of the association, is working on the Law for Compensation for Blind Persons, which aims to aid integration and provide equipment.

“We are not looking for ideal conditions,” he said. “White stick,

watches for blind people, typing machines, glasses for people with sight impairment, this is what we need.”

He claimed that the association hopes to benefit from a new gambling law, which will lead to the introduction of a state lottery. Neighbouring countries are already provided funds through this mechanism. Montenegro's blind association receives 700,000 euro annually and Croatia's 1.2million euro.

The association currently operates with donations for specific projects and is working with the Czech embassy on a programme to train Braille teachers.

And it's not all bad news. Kadaj said Kosovo's postal service is offering free delivery for blind people in and out of Kosovo. “We can send packages of up to seven kilos and that's for free.”

Easy

4				8	1		
	9	6		2			
			4	7		3	
		9	8				4
2							3
	7				2	8	
		8		6	3		
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		1	9				2

Medium

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		9	5				
	7	1			9	4	5
7				2		9	5
4			3		1		8
	6	3		5			4
3		6	9			5	2
					8	6	
2							

Hard

	7				2		
		5		3	4		6
		8		5		4	7
	6						5
		3				1	
1	8						6
	3	6		7		8	
7			4	8		6	
			3				1



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Prishtina Diary

Friday, April 23, Hip Hop at Pacha Club, Doors Open at 11pm

Pacha Club opens on Friday, April 23, with its 500 square metres of space, including a dance floor with special lighting effects, two separate bars, VIP section, and lounge space which create a wonderful drinking, dancing and entertainment venue. The unique environment is aimed at upscale club goers.



The club promises to organise events with the best DJs from Kosovo, the region, and International DJs. It will open on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays
VIP Service: Tel. +377 44 174 631
Location: "Rilindja" Building, Prishtina / Kosova

Friday, April 23, 2010, Tripp Cafe at 8pm

Baboo Darabuka
DJ Benity

Friday, April 23, Faithless from 8pm

Faithless, the internationally renowned British electronica band, will play in Skopje today.
Ticket Price: 18 (1000 MKD)
Book tickets online at <http://etickets.exploringmacedonia.com>

Saturday, April 24, 2010, Spray, 11pm

Phantom, French hip hop

Bob Dylan in Skopje

June 4, 2010, from 8 pm

Place: Metropolis Arena, Skopje

Bob Dylan, one of the most famous and successful popular singers of the last 40 years, will play in Skopje in June. For more information visit www.avalon.com.mk/dynamic/vleznici_fr_en.html



Programme for Music Festival Active Live 01

Mitrovica May 7 and 8, 2010
www.ngoaktiv.org

May 7, 2010, at 9pm, Club Viva



Resident DJs from Kosovo
DJ Wood - Mitrovica, Kosovo
DJ Batrich - Mitrovica, Kosovo
DJ Pavicevic Dejan - Mitrovica, Kosovo
DJ Chella - Mitrovica, Kosovo
DJ Marko - Mitrovica, Kosovo
DJ Flekica - Mitrovica, Kosovo *special guest

May 8, 2010, at 9pm, Club Viva
Live performance of local Mitrovica bands
Cold Shots - Mitrovica, Kosovo
Dark Sky - Mitrovica, Kosovo
Krvna Grupa - Mitrovica, Kosovo
Breakdown - Mitrovica, Kosovo
Lazy Band - Mitrovica, Kosovo
Hosenfefer - Mitrovica, Kosovo
And special guest Kanda, Kodza i Nebojsa from Belgrade

National Theatre of Kosovo

Wednesday, April 28, 8pm; the Ballet 'Ping-Pong Skepter' by Artan Ibershimi

Friday, April 30, 8pm, the play 'L'Envers du Décor', a guest play from France and Luxemburg



Ticket Price: 3 Euro



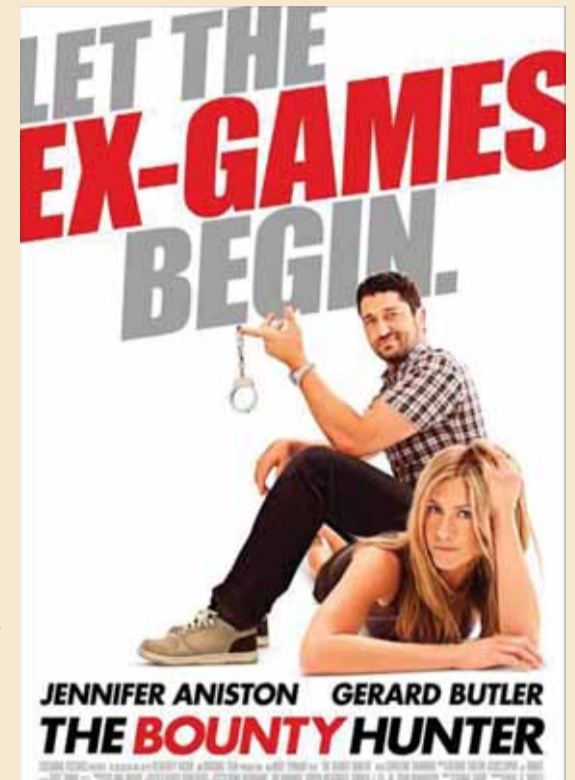
ABC Cinema, from April 16, has started screening the movie The Bounty Hunter-Let the Ex-Games Begin. The movie, starring Jennifer Aniston and Gerard Butler and directed by Andrew Tennant, tells the story of Milo Boyd, a down-on-his-luck bounty hunter, who gets his dream job when he is assigned to track down his bail-jumping ex-wife, reporter Nicole Hurly.

He thinks all that's ahead is an easy pay-day, but when Nicole gives him the slip, so she can chase a lead on a murder cover-up, Milo realises that nothing ever goes simply with Nicole.

The exes continually one-up each other until they find themselves on the run for their lives. They thought their promise to love, honor and obey was tough, staying alive is going to be a whole lot tougher.

The movie is shown twice a day, at 8pm and 10pm.

For ticket booking or reservations contact ABC on 038 243 117 or www.kinoabc.info



Prishtina International Half-Marathon will be held on May 9, 2010

The Athletic Federation of Kosovo, Sports Department and Directory of Sport and Youth are holding the tenth Prishtina International Half-Marathon.

Like last year's event, this run will again promote the values of peace, co-existence and excellence in sports. In 2009, 658 runners of many nations enjoyed the event.

This year, the organisers hope that the positive experiences of last years will motivate even more athletes will take part this event.

For more information visit www.primaraton.com.

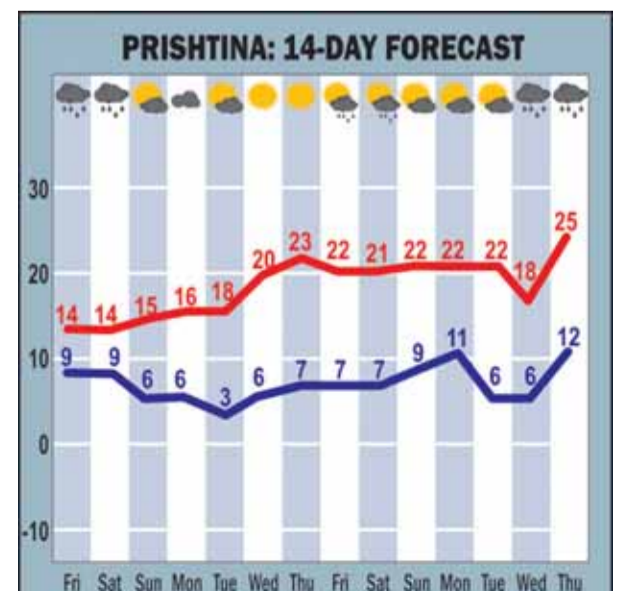


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