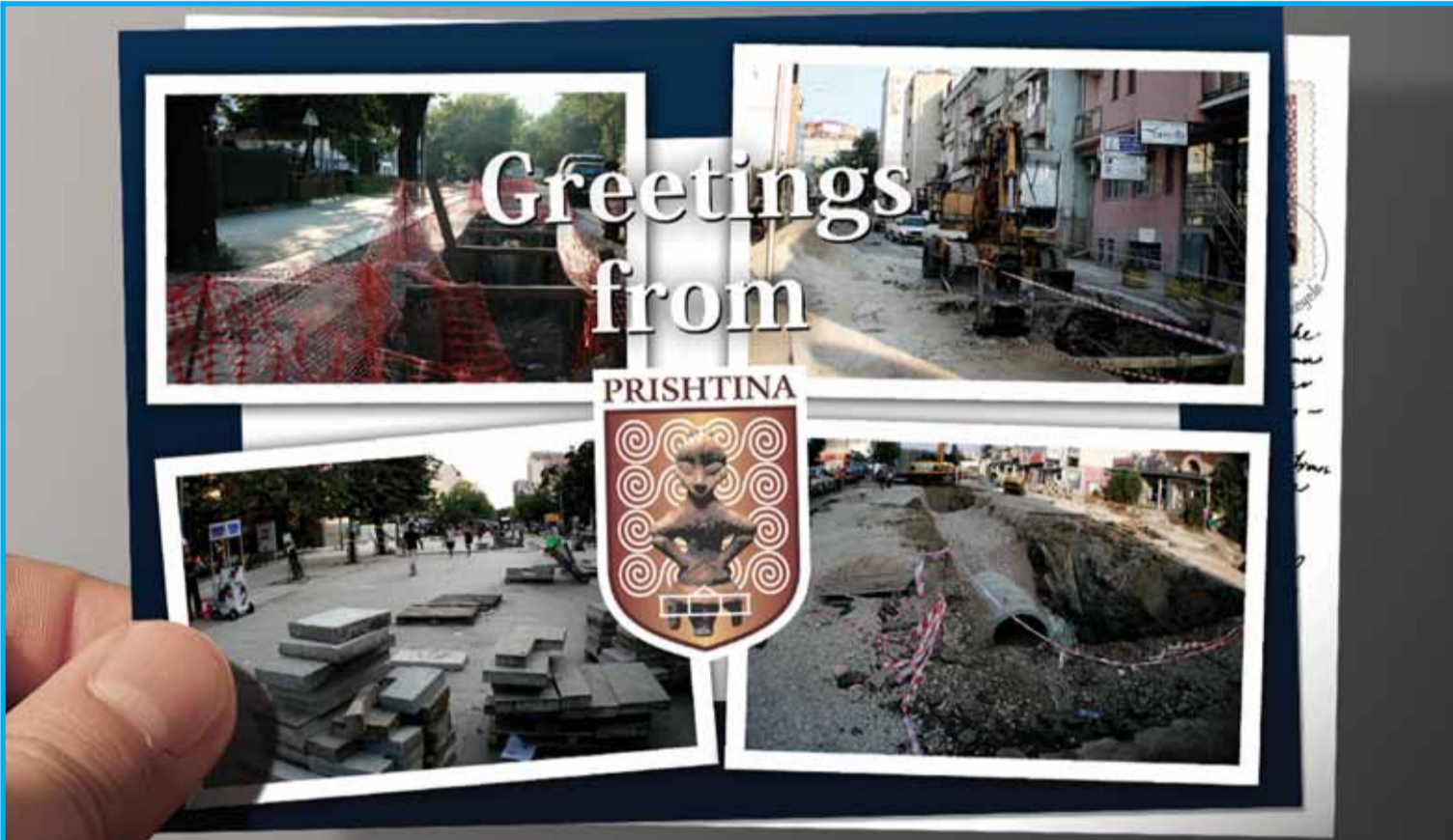


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# Prishtina Insight

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Prishtina's Picture Postcard Image: Prishtina Insight commissioned this mock postcard following the municipality's decision to dig up the city during the height of the summer season. Read more on page 8

By Edon Muxaxheri

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## Serbia, Kosovo Plot Strategy After Court Ruling

While Prishtina insists the World Court opinion closes the issue of Kosovo's status, Serbia is gearing for up a new UN resolution, which it hopes will keep the subject very much alive.

By Petrit Collaku and Bojana Barlovac

Serbia and Kosovo have been busy shoring up their respective positions in the run-up to expected negotiations, following the ruling of the International Court of Justice, ICJ, on July 22.

While Kosovo has declared July 22 an historic day, after the Court ruled that that its unilateral declaration of independence did not

violate international law, Serbia reiterated it would not abandon the struggle over what it calls its "Jerusalem".

Since the World Court delivered its advisory opinion, Kosovo said it was expecting new recognitions from countries that had held back, waiting for the ICJ to pronounce.

It has sent letters to 120 foreign ministries calling on their countries to recognise its statehood, while the Foreign Minister,

Skender Hyseni, has begun a series of meetings in New York to push the process forward, promising 35 recognitions in the meantime.

Hyseni's office said that he has "tens of meetings scheduled" with representatives of countries at UN headquarters.

So far, 69 countries, including the United States and 22 of the 27 EU countries, have recognised Kosovo. But around 120 have not,

and Kosovo needs another 25 to gain a majority in the UN in time to counter a Serbian resolution in September in the General Assembly, dealing with the ICJ decision.

For UN membership, Kosovo will need a recommendation from the Security Council before it can be put to the General Assembly. New members require approval of a two-thirds majority.

continues page 4



### IMF Predicts Sustained GDP Growth for Kosovo

The IMF is predicting that Kosovo's GDP per capita, currently the lowest in Europe, will grow by 3 per cent from 1,766 to 2,360 euro over the next six years.

The analysis came as the IMF approved a grant of 109 million euro over the next 18 months to support...

business

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### New Powers for EU Bosnia Envoy Questioned

A Bosnia-based source confirmed on Wednesday to Prishtina Insight the existence of the confidential document by Europe's foreign minister, Baroness Ashton, urging the creation of a powerful new envoy to Bosnia with powers to impose travel bans and free...

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## Dear Teta Mia...



Teta Mia solves your problems

Who is George Washington?

Patriot, Prishtina

What is this ignorance, Patriot? How can you not know who George Washington is? Don't they teach you basic history at school? Well, I suppose I must enlighten you.

In short, George Washington was the first constitutional president of the United States of America, the flag of which glorious country graces the petrol stations and armoured personnel carriers of our own dear land.

His role in the American revolution and the ensuing independence from Britain was crucial to the development of this new nation. Not only was he an outstanding soldier and strategist, he was also acutely aware of the factional pressures within his fledgling republic and strove to remain aloof from party politics and representative of all Americans.

Remembered as accepting public office only reluctantly (first as Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary forces in 1775, and then as President of the United States in 1789 and again in 1793), George Washington is one of Plato's rare "philosopher-kings". It seems he even tried to refuse his presidential salary on account of being wealthy already – but was persuaded to take it in order to open up future presidencies to those with no independent means.

On leaving office, resisting colleagues' pressure to stay on for a third term, Washington left us some bons mots in his farewell address. I think, Confused, that this address may still have some relevance for us today.

For example, Washington is adamant about respecting the separation of powers of the different organs of state. We need "caution in those intrusted with [a country's] administration," and should avoid "in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism..." For this, we must have "reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power."

He also warns against developing favouritism for a particular foreign country, because it can lead to "concessions to the favorite Nation of privileges denied to others" for various reasons, including that the "Nation making the concessions" will unnecessarily [part] with what ought to have been retained"; and because "ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens" can be allowed to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country...sometimes even with popularity" in the interests of the favoured nation.

His aphorisms, observations and maxims retain their searing relevance in our new, unpredictable century. A few in particular come to mind, which perhaps we can use to build our own new state in this diamond-shaped corner of the Balkans:

*"Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder."*

## Malcolm: Kosovo Should Lobby

Historian Dr Noel Malcolm, the author of the seminal 'Kosovo A Short History', talks of how Kosovo could secure more recognitions following the International Court of Justice decision and discusses Kosovo's place in the world of international diplomacy



By Jeta Xharra

**Question: Dr Malcolm, Kosovo has been independent for two years now but it has only attracted recognitions from western countries and it is having problems communicating and getting recognitions from countries of Arab, African and Latin American world. What should Kosovars be doing?**

Noel Malcolm: Well, it is difficult for me to give advice because I am not a professional diplomat, I am not even a diplomat and I know that the Foreign Ministry in Prishtina is doing a lot on this and I don't know the details of negotiations. But I think there are problems for Kosovo now.

At the beginning it was clear that the big Western powers would help with and do the main job of approaching other countries and recommending recognition of independence. I think that the easy countries have been done now, the ones that responded easily to advice Britain or America.

You cannot go to many countries in Africa as an old colonial power like Britain and just tell them what to do in their foreign policy. And America, as we know, has suffered some damage to its reputation in foreign policy, particularly, obviously in the Arab world but also in Latin America.

I don't think it is good

for America to have the job of telling them what to do in their foreign policy. So, I think it is up to Kosovo itself to do this. And I think it has to deal with several different problems. One is the pressure of Russian policy. Russia has been very active even in the Islamic world putting pressure on countries not to recognise Kosovo.

**Question: Kosovars are worried to stress their Islamic identity from fear of being identified as an Islamic country. Should that worry still persist?**

Answer: As a general statement to the world about what Kosovo is and how it identifies itself, that is a very reasonable worry. There is no reason for Kosovo to present itself generally as an Islamic country, it is very different from the Arab, Islamic states. But in its negotiations

with the Islamic states over this issue, I think

it has the

right to

remind

them

that the

majority

of its

popula-

tion is

either

Islamic or

at least of

the Islamic

background

and cultural

heritage. Perhaps,

I know there was a

big photo-

graphic study of all the mosques and all Islamic building that were destroyed or damaged by Serbia in 1999. This sort of materials has some psychological effect. When Saudi Arabia recognised Kosovo, it said 'we do so not only we recognise the will of Kosovo people but also we recognise their cultural and religious ties to our own people'.

**Question: And to the Africans? What could we stress when Kosovars talk to Africans? That is, if they ever get a chance to go since Kosovo passports are not accepted there, you can even get the delegation practically there.**

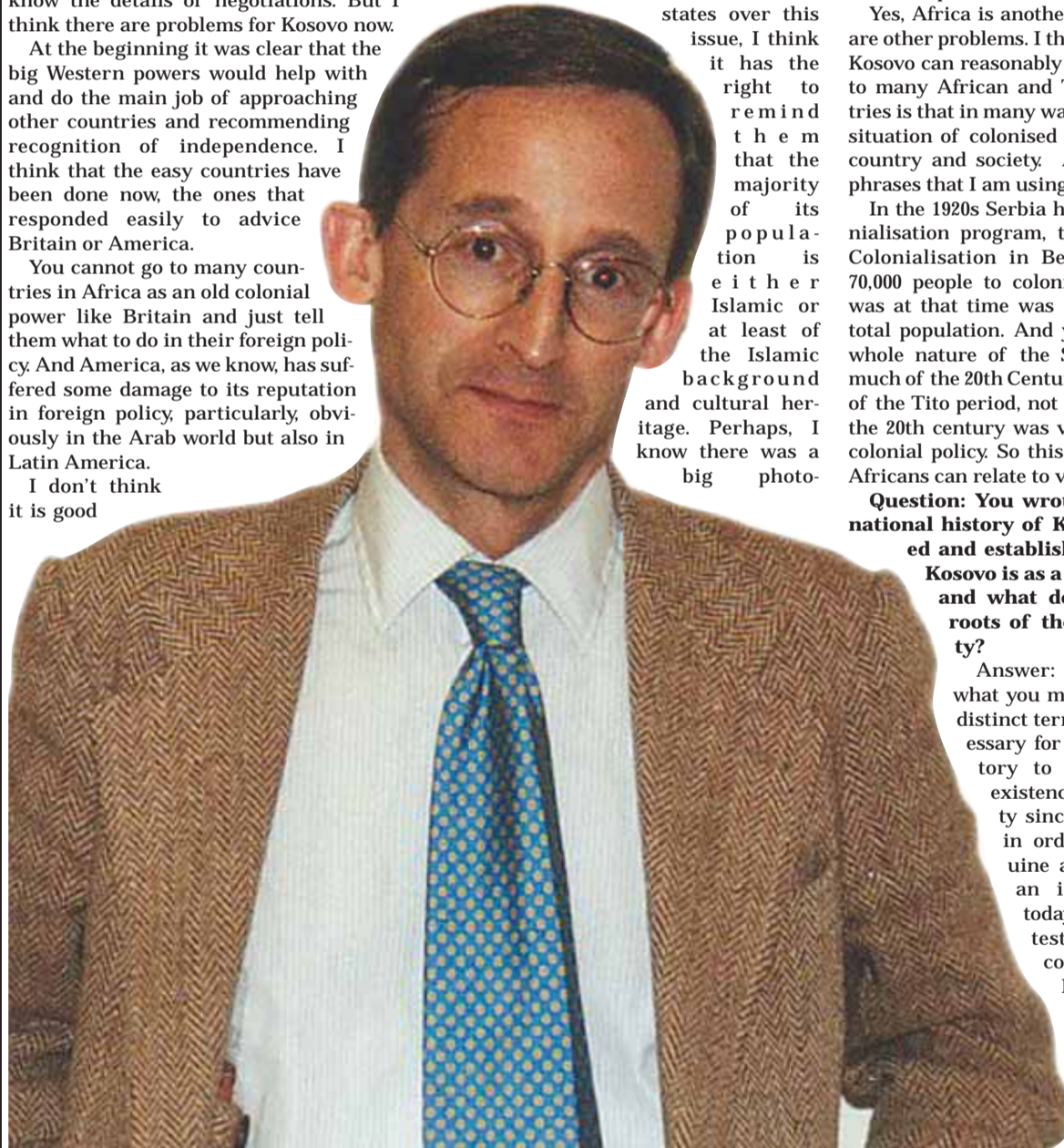
Answer: Well, I think the passport issue is just a practical detail. This is somewhere where Western countries can surely help and if necessary can arrange special diplomatic passes. I think that is not the main problem.

Yes, Africa is another case where there are other problems. I think one theme that Kosovo can reasonably emphasize talking to many African and Third World countries is that in many ways Kosovo was in a situation of colonised and a colonialised country and society. And these are not phrases that I am using widely.

In the 1920s Serbia had an official colonisation program, they had Office of Colonisation in Belgrade, they sent 70,000 people to colonise Kosovo, which was at that time was 10 per cent of the total population. And you know that the whole nature of the Serbian policy for much of the 20th Century, not the best part of the 20th century was very much like the colonial policy. So this is something that Africans can relate to very directly.

**Question: You wrote the first international history of Kosovo. How rooted and established do you think Kosovo is as a distinct territory and what do you see as the roots of the Kosovar identity?**

Answer: Well, it depends what you mean by rooted as a distinct territory. It is not necessary for a particular territory to show continuous existence as political entity since the Middle Ages in order to have a genuine and valid claim to an independent state today. If we apply that test many European countries would fail. Belgium became Belgium in 1830. There are many European countries that only came together later. Look at



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# Africa on 'Shared' Colonial Past

Germany and Italy as we know them today. So, I don't think it is necessary to ask for long historical justifications for a particular state borders on the map.

What matters is the population that lives there, the history of perhaps the last 100 years, that's a human lifetime to the maximum and the political arrangements that people have lived under.

It is absolutely clear that Kosovo lived in a system at least for the last 50 years approximately, Tito's constitutions, where Kosovo, with its present borders, was a political unit, acting independently, making its own decisions within the federal structure, representing itself directly at the federal level and therefore in fact having all the same rights and powers, the same justification to become a state after a dissolution of Yugoslavia. Just, exactly on the same level as Slovenia or Croatia or the others. That is enough, that is enough historically.

**Question: If you look at the map of Europe today and where the Balkans is, would you still say that the Balkans is the playground where the great powers still settle their accounts?**

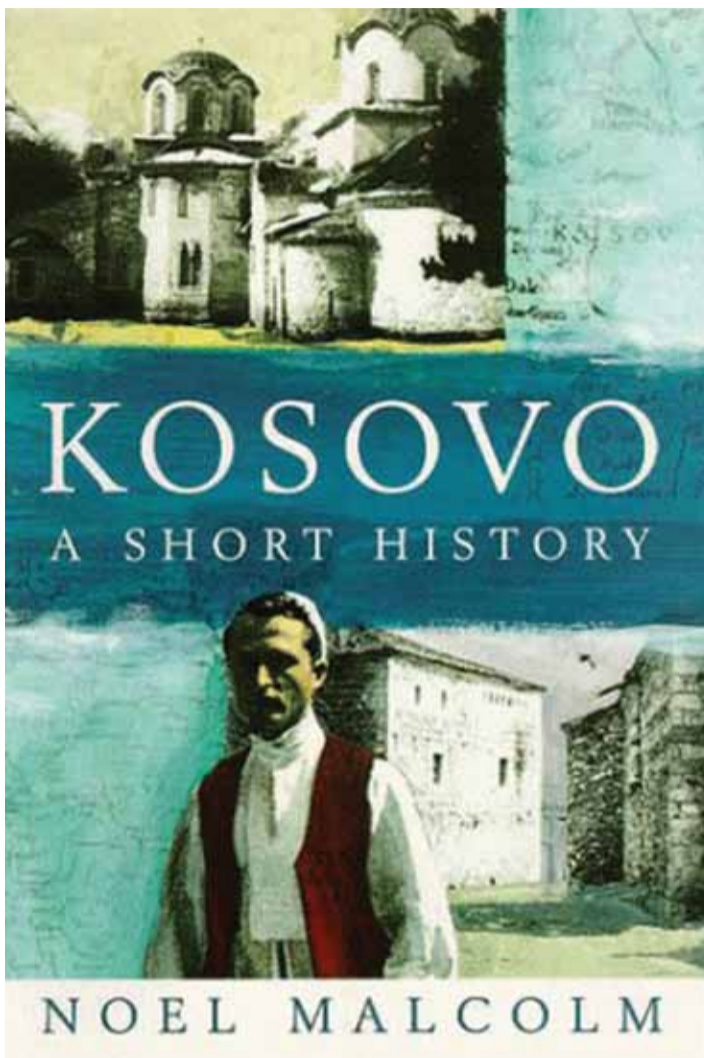
Answer: Well, not in the way it was in 19th Century, the Congress of Berlin, for example. Not in the way it was in 1914 when one assassination in Sarajevo brought the whole power system into a World War.

**Question: But in which way?**

Answer: In a much more limited sense. If you look particularly at Russian policy towards Kosovo, it is difficult to see any intrinsic reason inside of Kosovo or inside the narrow Balkan situation for Russia having such strong views and such a strong desire to block Western policy.

This is a game being played on the chessboard for other purposes. And it is part of Putin's larger desire to make trouble for Western policy, to show that Russia still has the power to block things, to demand compensation on some other points where perhaps they really do care but about something completely outside the Balkans.

Russia is still treating Balkans in this instrumental way. I believe that they are also treating Serbia in this very instrumental way. People in Belgrade that imagine that they have some great sort of blood brotherhood and sort of deep Slavic sympathy



coming to them from Moscow are very mistaken. They are also just being used and manipulated. We have seen it with Russia's maneuvers on oil pipelines and buying up the Serbian oil industry at a ridiculously low price. That Russia is just playing games with them too. And when it has used them, they will abandon them. So, I think Russia is the one case where it is just great power politics.

In the case of European powers they have the direct interest. They are doing this not in the old fashioned way but because they want some sort of coherent and progressive situation to develop on their own borders. And in the case of US, I think it is closer to the European position, much closer than it is to the mentality of Moscow.

**Question: Then, were would you say the Balkans is going today?**

Answer: I wouldn't generalise about the Balkans. There are risks particularly in the case of Bosnia. I don't think in the case of Kosovo there is any great risk. The only risk is stagnation and

not making progress as quickly as Kosovo should and as quickly as it could.

In the case of Bosnia there is a much more genuine risk, real political risk. I think regarding your last comment that the attention of Western powers has moved elsewhere, that's absolutely true. And that's true of America for many years now, the intensive involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan has taken up the energies of the State Department, there is much more a sort of holding operations mentality now when they look at Balkans. Much more responsibilities lie with the European powers. And I am afraid that Europe is at the awkward moment now, it is a moment when it is just trying to develop for the first time officially European foreign policy, with its own Foreign policy representatives, its own quasi Foreign Ministry, its own diplomats who would be set up. This is a very difficult project because ultimately foreign policy in each European country is absolutely a national matter. We know that these nations do not agree on

many key issues. We have seen that over Kosovo.

**Question: The Balkans has lots of myths, leading some to believe that the region is uniquely prone to ethnic ancient hatred. Now, what do you think can be done for these myths not to hold the entire region hostage for the future?**

Answer: The myth of the ancient ethnic hatred was something produced partly by ignorant outsiders, from travelers in the early 20 Century onwards, who thought it was easier and somehow more exciting for their readers if they said that this is a sort of maelstrom of inexplicable ancient hatred that made it sound exotic and mysterious. It comes partly from that, and partly in much more recent history it comes from the deliberate manipulation and confusion of Western opinion by people who wanted them to think that the wars that were caused directly by politicians, essentially by Milosevic in Belgrade, that these were not caused by any modern politician but they were caused by some ancient people with swords in peoples' memories. There was stupidity on one hand and deliberate manipulation and confusion on the other. If you look at the reality, these ancient hatreds go back no further normally than the middle of 19 Century. And they are products; absolutely normal products of the state formation process that developed nationalism of different kinds with their national myths; and developed political conflicts on the ground because these nationalisms were competing for territory. So that is the so called ancient ethnic hatred. You question how do we stop them or reduce them. It really is a question of education in the broader sense. Not just what goes into school textbooks, but what people say in the public, what politicians say, what is said in the media.

I am not talking about the brainwashing, or some sort of new ideology that the Balkans was always been a wonderland of mutual tolerance. No, just normal history, normal understanding.

Perhaps some normal understanding that every country in Europe has some elements, some ethnic minority that is looked down on by its neighbours or vice versa. There is nothing unique about this. Nothing at all.

## Editor's Word

# Kartolinë



By Lawrence Marzouk

Browsing through the Kartolinë, or postcard, section at the Rilindja bookstore, I couldn't help laugh at the appalling attempts to promote Kosovo's image.

The photographs for each city were each more risible than the next. From clapped-out cars on the streets of Ferizaj to ugly tower blocks in Mitrovica, the only redeeming feature of these montages was their comic value.

Rather than embellishing these towns and cities, these wish-you-were-here offerings made a mockery of Kosovo.

But it got me thinking about how the country, and Prishtina in particular, was selling itself.

I've seen quite a number of tourists wondering wide-eyed around town, Lonely Planet Western Balkans open on the map section as they try to fathom the city's geography and esoteric road nomenclature.

Prishtina gets a great write-up in the guidebook - it is, in fact, listed as one of the highlights of the region, and rightly so.

The vibrancy of the place, its superb bars, cafes and restaurants, its people's wholesome welcome and its smattering of history mean it should be on any backpackers' itinerary of the region.

But, just as those dreadful postcards fail to portray their subjects in a flattering light, Prishtina Municipality appears to have decided to sabotage their own tourist season by digging up some of the most pleasant parts of the city centre.

Mother Teresa, for starters, is Kosovo's capital's only pedestrianised street. In a city dominated by cars, it is a wonderful place to take an evening stroll and absorb the atmosphere.

Except that, for the past three weeks, the place has looked like an unfinished jigsaw, with piles of slabs dotted along the stretch, great mounds of cement and a gymkhana of cordoned-off areas.

Now, I know that the shoddy workmanship of three years ago, when the street was first laid, needed remedying, but did it really have to happen at the busiest and most important time of the year for visitors, be they emigrants or tourists?

And what of the bustling Fehmi Agani Street, home to Kosovo terrace culture in the shape of the Little Café district? Well, that too is being ripped to pieces for pipe replacement, turning it into an obstacle course of rickety bridges and giant chasms.

Bill Clinton Boulevard looks like the dusty site of a modern excavation.

I am not saying that these projects aren't needed, or aren't welcome, but that most cities would have decided to do the work outside of peak season.

I simply do not buy the municipality's argument that these projects could not have been started in spring and completed by now.

Prishtina isn't awash with world renowned monuments or blessed with perfect beaches - it needs to work hard with the hand it has been given.

But this time, the municipality has drilled right through its own foot.

## ICTY Orders Partial Retrial of Former Kosovo PM

The appellate chamber at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has ordered a partial retrial of the case of Ramush Haradinaj and two other former commanders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), and the immediate detention of the three men.

The court ordered the retrial largely because of claims from the prosecution that a number of witnesses had been intimidated over the course of the trial.

Haradinaj, who served as prime minister of Kosovo for a short period in 2004, Idriz Balaj and Lahi Brahimaj were initially charged with crimes committed between March 1 and September 30, 1998 in the Dukagjin area of western Kosovo against the non-ethnic Albanian population and ethnic Albanians which the KLA believed were cooperating with Serbs.

In April 2008, Haradinaj and Balaj were acquitted by a first instance verdict on all

charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Brahimaj was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for cruel treatment and torture of two persons at the Jablanica/Jabllanice headquarters of the KLA.

The trial chamber's verdict found Brahimaj guilty of cruel treatment and torture of two victims who had perceived ties, or were believed to be collaborating with Serbs.

# Serbia, Kosovo Plot Strategy After Court Ruling

from page 1

Serbia's draft resolution was submitted to New York on Wednesday calling for 'acceptable solutions for all open issues in the interest of peace, safety and cooperation in the region'.

In the wake of the ruling, Serbia has dispatched delegations to 55 countries in an attempt to stop new recognitions. In Belgrade, the Serbian parliament on Monday held an emergency debate on the advisory opinion, reaffirming Belgrade's commitment to defend 'Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity'.

Kosovo's Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci, described the ICJ opinion as the seal of approval for Kosovo's independence. In an address to Kosovo MPs on Wednesday, Thaci said the ICJ opinion brought to a close the era of so-called "supervised" independence, referring to the continued presence of international supervisory authorities, namely the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo, EULEX, and the International Civilian Office. Neither organisation is in fact about to leave Pristina anytime soon.

But Kosovo's government says the ICJ opinion puts Prishtina in a favourable position ahead of future negotiations, effectively ruling out any need for further discussion of Kosovo's status.

The speaker of the Kosovo assembly, Jakup Krasniqi, told BIRN's weekly television show, Life in Kosovo, that the Court ruling gave Serbia "a great moment" to come to terms with reality and cooperate with an independent and sovereign Kosovo. "It is in the interest of both Serbia and Kosovo to be together in the EU integration process," he said.

Blerim Shala, vice-president of the opposition Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, AAK, agreed the ruling strengthened Kosovo's bargaining position.

"There are going to be talks, and they are going to be difficult, but Kosovo is now in a better situation," he said. "Just imagine if the opinion had been ambiguous or in favour for Serbia - then certainly there would be talks on Kosovo's status," Shala added.

However, the word "status" still lingers in the air, despite Kosovo's best efforts to expel it from discussion.

A top diplomat, the US ambassador to Kosovo, Chris Dell, and an advisor to Thaci, Dukagjin Gorani, were both quoted in separate articles referring to possible "special status" for the Serb-ruled north of Kosovo - though both men have since criticised the articles as inaccurate.

After media in both countries picked up the Voice of America story, which said Thaci was considering offering autonomy to the north, Dell said: "I did not call for granting northern Kosovo autonomy, nor has the Prime Minister ever done so - publicly or privately," he added.

Gorani said that after the ICJ ruling, Belgrade was no longer in a position to place conditions on talks and so was trying "through the media to send messages to its people, particularly to the Kosovo Serbs, that autonomy is guaranteed for Serbs in northern Kosovo".

He described the ruling as "a huge disappointment to the Serbian people, particularly to the Kosovo Serbs, [who now had to realise] that the policy Belgrade started 11 years in Kosovo was a mistake".

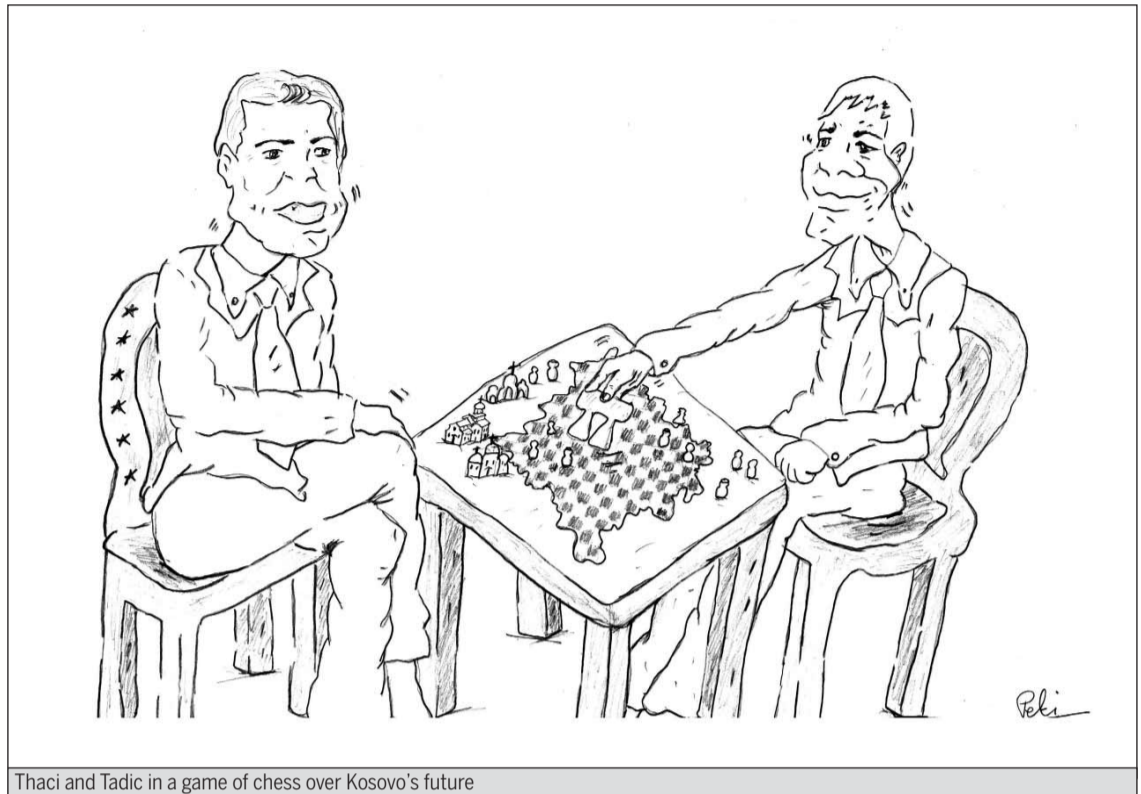
A Kosovo government spokesman, Memli Krasniqi, said future talks with Serbia would be only about technical issues. He told Prishtina Insight the government had a clear strategy for the north, where Kosovo's law would one day be applied.

## Serbia Plans UN Vote:

Meanwhile, after more than 11 hours of debate, Serbia's parliament on Monday night adopted a resolution calling on the government to continue its efforts to defend Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the vote, 192 out of 220 deputies voted in favour of the resolution, 26 were against, and two deputies did not vote.

The resolution called for "peaceful negotiations to allow for a permanent, sustainable and mutually acceptable solution for Kosovo and Metohija in accordance with the Constitution of ... Serbia, which will allow for the historic reconciliation of the Serbian and Albanian people, as well as peace and stability in the region".

The document, entitled "Decision on the Continuation of Activities in Defence of Serbia's Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity", calls for national unity and recommends the use of all



Thaci and Tadic in a game of chess over Kosovo's future

available diplomatic and political means to preserve Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The opposition Liberal Democratic Party, LDP, and the right-wing Democratic Party of Serbia, DSS, voted against the resolution, though not for the same reasons.

While the Liberals oppose nationalist posturing over Kosovo, the more nationalist DSS blames the government of mishandling the issue.

Petar Petkovic, DSS spokesman, told Prishtina Insight that the party had been requesting a parliamentary session on Kosovo issue for two years "at which a unified stance on the issue would be created in the interest of all Serbia's people."

"The fact that the government decided to address parliament on the issue only today, after the ICJ's opinion, represents pure hypocrisy," Petkovic added, maintaining that a series of government blunders had led to the advisory ruling.

"The only solution to such situation is for [President Boris] Tadic and all the top officials in the country to resign," he continued. A new government would then responsibly commit itself to resolving the issue and file a new lawsuit before the ICJ.

The other major opposition parties, the nationalist Serbian Radical Party, SRS, and Serbian Progressive Party, SNS, both backed the document.

Dragan Todorovic, from the SRS, told Prishtina Insight that the government's handling of the affair had ended in fiasco, "but Radicals will not side with the enemy", referring to the break-away Kosovo Albanians.

Riza Halimi, the only ethnic Albanian MP in Serbia's parliament, voted against the document, calling the debate a missed opportunity.

"This was a great chance for the country to try to resolve some burning issues affecting ethnic

Albanians in South Serbia as well as Serbs in Kosovo," he said, "but with such a decision officials have confirmed that they still cling to their unreal stance on the issue, continuing to demand new negotiations on status of Kosovo."

Halimi added that not one word in the document mentioned any of the everyday problems that his minority in Serbia faces in connection with the Kosovo dispute.

"While they are talking about talks on [Kosovo's] status, some people in Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac [in South Serbia] are not receiving pensions because they worked in Kosovo and diplomas from Kosovo's university are not recognised," Halimi said, referring to two key issues affecting Serbia's ethnic Albanian minority.

Addressing MPs at the close of the session, President Tadic said Serbia's pursuit of its claim to Kosovo had to be balanced by the need to keep out of the ethnic conflicts that it had been involved in for decades. "It is time for great patriotism, it's time for great work," the President said.

Two days after Serbia's government took a clear parliamentary mandate to continue its Kosovo policy, Serbia submitted its draft resolution on Kosovo to the UN General Assembly, which "clearly states" that unilateral secession is not an acceptable means to solve territorial disputes.

According to a statement issued by Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic on Wednesday, the Serbian resolution comes after serious consultations between the country's diplomats and members of the international community following the International Court of Justice's ruling on Kosovo's independence.

The resolution also calls for dialogue as a way to reach mutually acceptable solutions "for all open issues" in the interest of peace, safety and cooperation in the region.

The Serbian draft document

asks the UN General Assembly to include in its provisional agenda a topic on further action following the announcement of the ICJ's advisory opinion.

The text, however, does not mention talks on status of Kosovo on which has to date been a central tenet of Belgrade's position.

Jeremic has explained that he wanted to see 'further negotiations on Kosovo's status as a result' of the UN resolution.

Djordje Vukadinovic, a Serbian political analyst, predicted that the draft resolution would have been "prepared carefully, to be as acceptable as possible to those countries that have already recognised Kosovo," Vukadinovic told Prishtina Insight.

He said that Belgrade needed to be flexible in talks with Washington and Brussels in order to prevent further recognitions happening before the General Assembly meeting.

"The text itself will directly determine the chances of the resolution succeeding," he added.

Serbian deputies expressed optimism at the session that the UN would yet conclude that the Kosovo "secessionists were not right", as the Foreign Minister, Vuk Jeremic, put it.

Meanwhile, Todorovic, from the opposition SRS, said he was pessimistic about the outcome of the meeting of the UN General Assembly in September. "We don't expect anything good," he said.

He told Prishtina Insight that Serbia needed to concentrate more on "improving relations with countries like China and Russia, which can resist the US on the [Kosovo] issue."

Meanwhile, Serbia's Jeremic left for New York on Wednesday in order to discuss the Kosovo issue with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, as well as a number of ambassadors accredited to represent their countries at the UN. He is also expected to address the Forum of the Non-Aligned Movement.

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# Kosovo Hospitals Hand Out Weak Medicine to Children

An investigation by BIRN has revealed that 10,000 bottles of paracetamol, which contained 20 per cent below the necessary level of active ingredient, have been prescribed to children in state hospitals



By Alban Selimi

Paracetamol bought by the Ministry of Health to be used in public hospitals for children has 20 per cent less active ingredient than it is legally supposed to, an investigation by BIRN has revealed.

Skender Musa, head of the legal department from Kosovo Agency for Pharmaceutical Products, AKPM, told BIRN that it had tested the product, produced by Italian firm Ecobi, revealing the low levels of active ingredient.

He said: "As based on the standard operational procedures the results are not usually disclosed, but I can tell you that in this case, the test revealed less paracetamol [than there should be]."

"The criteria for its import to Kosovo are set by the

Ministry of Health, and the AKPM was not in a position to intervene within the MoH because we operate as an agency within MoH and all the decisions are taken by the former Minister's Cabinet."

Officials from the AKPM added that the medicine was brought into the country without it being registered with the agency, which is the legal procedure.

Illir Tolaj, advisor to the Minister of Health, said that this brand of paracetamol was 'here before minister Bukoshi took the office and before we as his advisors came to the positions as well'.

Minister Bujar Bukoshi took over the job from Alush Gashi in March this year. Gashi declined to comment on the revelations.

Tolaj added: "We have been facing difficulties when addressing this matter and it is astonishing to learn how much effort has been made to sweep this problem under the carpet - it is a highly serious

matter.

"We have a concrete case when a medicine is given to the population with a different content from what is prescribed."

Haki Ejupi, chief inspector at the MoH, confirmed that the medicine has been withdrawn from the market after AKPM's results.

Ejupi added that if the medicine had been on sale privately it would have been easier to get it withdrawn quickly, but as he was dealing with officials in a public institution he was asked 'to keep his mouth shut'.

"If we were dealing with the commercial market we would be looking at punishment and other legal sanctions," he said. "But here we are dealing with a contracted product which in the terms of the contract between the contractor and the supplier foresees withdrawal from the market if the product proves not meet the requirements or poses health risks."

Yllka Leci-Shulemaja, a pharmacist from JONA MED, the firm that imported the product and secured the tender with the MoH, said that the medicine was not harmful to the public and that the firm fully complied with the terms of contract by withdrawing the item from the market.

"All the medicine has been withdrawn and replaced with another item. The MoH noticed that instead of 95 per cent of active concentration it was 85 per cent only. Luckily no damage has been done whatsoever," she claimed. AKPM, however, believes the difference was 20 per cent, not 10 per cent.

Sources in Kosovo Police told BIRN that investigations were ongoing into the matter and that 'arrests will take place soon'.

Despite numerous attempts to contact the producer of the medicine, Ecobi, the firm failed to respond to requests for clarification.

News in brief

## Montenegro: No Evidence of Mass Grave in Andrijevica

After six days of searching, Montenegrin investigators and forensic experts from the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo (EULEX) say they have not found evidence of mass graves in the area around Andrijevica, near the border with Kosovo.

Biljana Covic, a spokesperson for the high court in the town of Bijelo Polje, told Balkan Insight that the investigation ended yesterday.

"After six days of investigating the site, no evidence which could confirm the existence of a mass grave has been found," she said.

She went on to say that the Montenegrin investigating judge would now draft a court's record of the investigation and pass it on to the Prosecutor's office.

The search was prompted by allegations of a mass grave in the area believed to contain bodies of Kosovo Albanians.

## EU Appoints New Chief of Mission in Kosovo

The EU rule-of-law mission in Kosovo, EULEX, has announced that Xavier Bout de Marnhac, a retired French army general, has been appointed as the new head of mission.

Bout de Marnhac, who will succeed Yves de Kermabon, will take up his duties on October 15. His appointment is renewable for one year. De Kermabon has served as the EULEX chief since February 2008.

"The decision was taken by the European Union Political and Security Committee on a recommendation by the EU High Representative of the Union for the Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton," EULEX said in a press release.

Bout De Marnhac served previously as the commander of the NATO Kosovo force from 2007 to 2008.

## Kosovo: Central Bank Governor to Remain in Detention

The Governor of Kosovo's Central Bank, Hashim Rexhepi, has been remanded in custody for 30 days by a local Pristina judge following his arrest.

"Today in the detention hearing of defendant Hashim Rexhepi, a Kosovo Judge in the District Court of Pristina confirmed the motion of the Special Prosecutor's Office of Kosovo for one month of detention on remand," EULEX, the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo, said in a press release on Saturday.

Rexhepi was arrested on July 23 on suspicion of abusing official position or authority, accepting bribes, tax evasion, trading in influence and money laundering.

Kosovo police said that more arrests were possible based on ongoing investigations.

On Thursday, Rexhepi was also charged with abusing his official position and receiving bribes.

## Prishtina Insight Takes a Break

Like most of our readers, Prishtina Insight will be taking a break in August. We will return on September 4.

# Kosovo Transport Official Arrested For Wiping Ministry Server



By Petrit Collaku

An IT administrator has been arrested on suspicion of having wiped the Kosovo Ministry of Transport's server as the EU rule of law mission carried out corruption raids connected to the minister of transport, Fatmir Limaj.

On Thursday in Prishtina, EULEX police's executive department carried out searches at the home and office of the IT administrator.

The defendant was arrested and charged with 'obstruction of evidence'.

According to a well placed source, the man is suspected of having wiped the server of the Ministry of Transport from his office at the Kosovo Assembly Building in a bid to hamper EULEX's corruption investigation.

On April 28, Kosovo's Ministry of Transport and homes connected to its minister Fatmir Limaj and head of procurement, Nexhat Krasniqi, were raided by



Photo by Petrit Rahmani

EULEX. The action is in connection with a corruption probe linked to road tenders issued between 2007 and 2009. No arrests have been made yet and both men deny all wrongdoing.

But Kosovo Minister of Transport Fatmir Limaj and the ministry's head of procurement, Nexhat Krasniqi, could face up to 55 years in

jail, if found guilty on corruption charges, according to EULEX's chief prosecutor Johan van Vreeswijk said in an interview in May.

In a frank interview with Pristina daily Koha Ditore, Mr van Vreeswijk revealed that the officials face charges of money laundering, organised crime, fraud in office and soliciting bribes.

A Prishtina Insight investigation, published earlier this year, revealed that a number of lucrative building contracts appear to have gone to friends and relatives of Fatmir Limaj.

EULEX suspects that around two million euro has been misused in this specific case, adding 'there are also other charges'.

# Delay to Business Park Sparks Concerns



By Lavdim Hamidi

As Kosovo's First International Business Park nears completion, two years behind schedule, questions are being raised about why it has taken so long to finish the project.

Officials backing the scheme in Drenas, in central Kosovo, are claiming it is a success, as almost all space has been reserved at the site.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry, MTI, started the 9-million-euro project in 2005, with the aim of opening it in 2008.

The ministry now predicts the park will be finished by the end of this year but admits this depends on the work of the contracted companies.

"The European standard for the completion of a business park is ten years, whereas we will accomplish it in five," said Naser Grajçevci, head of the Agency for Support of Small and Medium Enterprises, which works under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. "We could have built it faster but we preferred to do a good job in building it."

But Bujar Dugolli, the former Trade and Industry minister, during whose mandate work started on the park, said there were no excuses for the delay.

"Work started in 2005 and should have finished in 2008; there is no reason whatsoever for delays in finishing the building," said Dugolli, of the opposition Alliance for a New Kosovo, AAK.

The ministry, meanwhile, said it had concluded deals with 45 businesses and was negotiating with another eight. "If an agreement is reached with those eight,



The ceremony to mark the start of work at the park in 2005

there will be no empty spaces left," said Grajçevci, adding that the interested businesses came from Germany, Greece, Hungary, the US and elsewhere.

According to him, the 45 companies have promised to invest around 50 million euro and create 1,200 new jobs. "The criteria for location in the Business Park in Drenas were employment, the value of the investments, the technology that they will bring and production or service capacity," he said.

Businesses that have won the right to places in the park will rent sites for 99 years at a price of 0.03 euro per square metre.

The head of the parliamentary Commission for Trade and Industry, Myzejene Selmani, from the opposition New Kosovo Alliance, AKR, said the building of the park had been a questionable project.

"The building of this park started improperly and so it will end," she said. "It was started to suit the personal interests of those in the authorities who are reaching secret deals with businesses."

Selmani said she had opposed the park from the beginning, and the delays in completing the project had only added to her suspicions.

## The Park in Figures:

The park, covering 24 hectares, and is being built 17km from Prishtina on the Prishtina-Peja highway in the village of Koretice in Drenas municipality. It was planned that some 72 local and foreign production enterprises would take up sites, which are 1,000, 3,000 or 6,000 square metres in size. The project was initiated by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and is a joint investment between the ministry and Drenas municipality.

# IMF Predicts Sustained GDP Growth for Kosovo



By Lawrence Marzouk

The IMF is predicting that Kosovo's GDP per capita, currently the lowest in Europe, will grow by 3 per cent from 1,766 to 2,360 euro over the next six years.

The analysis came as the IMF approved a grant of 109 million euro over the next 18 months to support Kosovo's economic imbalances and help achieve sustainable growth.

According to the IMF, despite serious problems in the economy, Kosovo's growth rate is healthy, though it has mostly been achieved by increasing the role of the government in the economy, particularly through capital expenditure.

However, exports are expected to begin double-digit growth from this year to 2015, after 2009 saw a fall in their value of 1.8 per cent. It has also emerged that from 2011 to 2015 more than 5 per cent of the total budget will go on the new Merdare-Morina highway.

The IMF calls on Kosovo to sell off the state-owned post and

telecommunications company, PTK, in order to balance the books.

The IMF approved the money last Tuesday, two days after Kosovo's Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci, and the economy minister, Ahmet Shala, visited the institution during the course of their visit to the US.

"Kosovo's economic performance has strengthened in recent years, although large fiscal and external imbalances persist, which could be exacerbated by considerable capital spending, including for the country's first major highway," Murilo Portugal, the deputy managing director of the IMF, warned.

"The program seeks to raise revenues and restrain current expenditures in order to limit the impact of large capital spending on the fiscal deficit and on the government's bank balances," he added.

"To this end, the Assembly recently revised the 2010 budget and raised excise rates.

"The authorities are committed to improving tax administration, refraining from unfunded spending initiatives, and ensuring the credibility of the budget process by revising future budgets exclusively in a deficit-neutral fashion," he concluded.

Kosovo joined the IMF on June 29, 2009.



## IMF's Assessment of Kosovo's Economy

A decade after the end of the conflict that led to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008, growth prospects continue to be hampered by profound structural impediments. These include poor public and private infrastructure, unreliable electricity supply, and inadequate regional connectivity of transportation routes.

The economy remains undiversified and dominated by the trade and services sectors that are boosted by the large foreign presence and remittances. The export base is narrow and dominated by low value-added products,

and a sector that could drive sustainable growth has yet to emerge. Public expenditure has increased due in part to rising subsidies and net lending to the publicly-owned loss-making electricity company KEK, which remains under severe financial strain as a result of widespread difficulties with billings and collections, and a tariff structure that does not ensure cost recovery.

Nevertheless, economic activity appears to be strengthening and the recession in Europe in 2009 had only a modest impact on Kosovo's economy. Following a contraction last year,

exports have been rebounding so far in 2010 and remittances—an essential source of funding for private sector activity—have also been recovering.

However, private sector credit growth continues to decelerate. Public spending, especially for capital investments, has supported economic activity. Real growth therefore declined only moderately to 4 per cent in 2009, from 5.4 in 2008. Public investment spending is expected to increase in 2010, mainly due to the beginning of the construction of the Route 7 corridor, Kosovo's first highway.

# Power Row Shakes Austrian Investors' Faith in Macedonia

The dispute between Macedonia and its biggest foreign investor, Austria's EVN, has cooled down. But the legacy of mistrust may deter much-needed foreign investors in future.



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

Macedonia has spent millions of euros promoting itself as a favorable business destination. Commercials on the cable channel CNN under the slogan "Invest in Macedonia" have extolled the benefits of the Balkan country's low taxes and labour costs and friendly business climate.

While the response to the campaign has been mixed, some major Austrian concerns have taken a keen interest, as a result of which Austria has topped the list of foreign investors in recent years.

However, last year's bitter dispute between the Macedonian government and the country's biggest Austrian investor, the power company EVN AG, which operates Macedonia's power supply grid, has damaged the investment climate, experts say.

The row concerned 200 million euros that the courts ordered EVN to pay ELEM, the state-owned operator of the power production facilities.

While EVN says it is optimistic that this now notorious dispute will be settled, it has already diminished Austrian confidence in the independence of Macedonia's courts, according to Austrian business and economic experts.

Georg Krauchenberg, regional director for South Eastern Europe in the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, said the affair might deter investors in future.

"It will be hard to persuade [new] investors after some have had very negative experiences [in Macedonia] and the case of EVN is very famous in this regard," Krauchenberg said.

The EVN AG spokesperson for Eastern Europe, Stefan Zach, told Prishtina Insight that "operationally, EVN Macedonia is progressing successfully" and the company was engaged in important talks with the government over the dispute.

"EVN AG is in intensive negotiations with the parties involved in the dispute, especially the government... with Deputy Prime Minister [Vladimir] Pesevski and with the Minister of Economy, Fatmir Besimi," Zach said.

"We are trying to resolve all the open issues and the discussions are going in a constructive direction," he added. Zach declined to disclose further details on the grounds that "this could endanger a possible positive result".

Austrian investments in Macedonia began in earnest in 2006 with EVN AG's entry into the electricity market. The company paid 225 million euro for the power supply grid while power production stayed in the hands of state-owned ELEM.

Having attracted only a relatively small amount of foreign direct investment, FDI, Macedonia is struggling for each euro. After a surge in 2008, when the country garnered a record 500 million euro in FDI, the global economic crisis that followed last year cut this figure in half.

Austrian businesses have contributed very significantly to Macedonia's FDI. According to the Macedonian Statistical Office for 2008, Austria was by far the biggest investor that year, responsible for some 100 million euro. Data for 2009 is not yet available.

Besides EVN AG, Telecom Austria and



Macedonia has been heavily advertised as a good place to do business

Vienna Insurance are also present on the Macedonian market, as are a number of smaller businesses.

But right after the company entered the market, EVN ran into trouble. That year, the centre-right VMRO DPMNE party, which had criticized the previous government's deal with EVN, won general elections and formed a government.

Macedonia's new Prime Minister, the VMRO DPMNE leader, Nikola Gruevski, made series of hostile statements against the work of EVN in Macedonia in 2009, suggesting the company was not honouring the deal.

Gruevski raised suspicions about whether EVN had invested the 90 million euro it pledged to put into the grid under the terms of the purchase agreement. EVN denied the accusation.

Verbal tensions escalated into legal warfare when ELEM then launched and in April 2009 won a lawsuit against EVN, as a result of which a court in Skopje ordered EVN to pay the state company 200 million euros.

ELEM's complaint was that EVN had collected a large sum of old debts from consumers but had refused to share the proceeds with ELEM, as an annex to the 2006 purchase treaty stated.

During Macedonia's difficult transition to a free-market economy in the 1990s, the authorities tolerated a high rate of non-payment of utility bills to keep the social peace. After EVN entered the market, the company agreed to split any money it succeeded in collecting from debtors with ELEM.

The Austrian firm attacked the court ruling as "scandalous", claiming the trial had not been fair. It also opened a lawsuit against the Macedonian state before an international Arbitration Court in Washington.

The row soured political relations with Vienna, especially after Austria's Deputy Prime Minister, Josef Proll, in charge of the economy, wrote in May 2009 to his Macedonian counterpart, Zoran Stavreski, complaining about the affair.

Proll referred directly to the Skopje court ruling, criticizing what he claimed were the "more than obvious shortcomings of the court procedure against EVN".

Later that May, in a separate letter addressed to Gruevski, the ambassadors of Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, France and the United States jointly warned the Prime Minister that the row had the potential to harm the country's EU prospects and deter future investors.

After initially claiming the government

had nothing to do with the row or the court decision, maintaining it was a spat between two companies, The Prime Minister agreed to talks with EVN.

Meanwhile, in September 2009, the Macedonian appeals court overruled the first-grade court, ruling that the order for EVN to pay ELEM 200 million euro had contained procedural flaws.

Both EVN and the government have since moderated their tone, though EVN said it would not automatically withdraw its lawsuit in Washington until it was confident that similar problems would not reoccur. Direct negotiations between the Government and EVN have since resumed.

Vladimir Gligorov, of the Vienna Institute for International Economic Research, told Prishtina Insight that Macedonia had continued to suffer from the reluctance of domestic players to let foreign investors in.

"In Macedonia, as in other countries, there has been a problem of closed doors against foreign investors, especially in those sectors in which domestic companies have an interest and where political interests are also at work," he said.

For a small landlocked country to attract serious foreign investors, he added, "you need to offer big advantages such as a quick, transparent and unbiased legal system. In Macedonia this is unfortunately not the case".

Gligorov said disputes like the one with EVN were harming the government's media campaign to sell Macedonia as a good business destination.

"When there are suspicions of political pressures on the courts, or of corruption, or of bias by the courts and government, this has very negative consequences," he said.

Investors were only comfortable putting money into countries that were stable and on course to join the EU, he continued: "This signals that these countries will have to adopt and nurture certain standards, establish certain institutions and be under the supervision of Brussels. Macedonia did not join this group of countries, which has been a very big drawback."

Meanwhile, Stefan Zach of EVN said he hoped that Macedonia's new Law on Electricity currently in preparation would match EU standards and legislation. This is "of the utmost importance" for the work of EVN in the country he said.

*This article was produced as part of a journalistic exchange programme between BIRN and Austrian Der Standard.*

## Serbia: CB Governor Candidate Faces Opposition

Serbian Opposition MPs said that they do not support the nomination of Dejan Soskic for central bank governor during a debate today in the country's parliament. Soskic was named by Serbian President Boris Tadic in July, but he must be approved by the parliament.

While the deputies of the ruling majority in the Serbian parliament have praised Soskic as the best choice for the post, many opposition MPs refused to support him, claiming they are not familiar with his programme and that they cannot judge based on his biography.

Despite the opposition to Soskic's nomination, the ruling Democratic Party and its coalition partners hold enough seats in parliament to push through the nomination, and it is very likely that he will be approved.

Central Bank governor Radovan Jelacic resigned from his post on March 23, citing "personal reasons", but he has said that he will remain in place until a new governor is appointed. Soskic, who was a Fulbright scholar, is a professor in the economics faculty at Belgrade University and a widely-published author of works on financial markets. He has advised and worked with the Central Bank and other government institutions for many years.

## WB Revises Croatia GDP Estimate

Croatia's economic recovery is still a long way off, the World Bank has said in its latest report.

Croatia's real GDP is expected to fall by one per cent this year according to the institution's revised predictions.

Initial estimates had predicted zero growth, the Croatian Times writes. In a report evaluating the situation in the new member states of the European Union (EU 10) and Croatia on Thursday, senior World Bank economist Sanja Madzarevic-Sujster said economic recovery for EU10 states is fragile and uneven, while for Croatia it is not even on the horizon.

Only in 2011 will the EU10 region reach the levels of economic activity present before the crisis. Some of the states, including Croatia, will need more time. In order to ensure growth, the Croatian government must implement its economic recovery programme and reign in the country's public debt, the institution advised.

Madzarevic-Sujster said she welcomed the government's plan to cut public sector staff by five per cent, but warned the government to include the unions in the process, the Croatian news portal Index reports.

## No Plans for New IMF Loan, Bucharest Says

Romanian Finance Minister Sebastian Vladescu on Tuesday dismissed rumors that Romania is in talks with the International Monetary Fund over a new loan agreement.

"The topic is not on the agenda at this point," Vladescu told reporters following a meeting with IMF representatives in Bucharest.

Vladescu also rejected media reports that Romania will face problems paying out pensions this year.

An International Monetary Fund team early this week started talks with Romanian authorities over drastic action to cut back public spending in the country following a 20 billion bailout package signed last spring.

IMF mission chief Jeffrey Franks has said the IMF and the Romanian Government would likely discuss the continuation of their relationship sometime in the future, adding that the authorities in Bucharest have voiced interest in new cooperation projects.

The IMF visit comes four weeks after the Romanian government's austerity plan, which includes cuts to the workforce and a 25 per cent slash in public sector wages, came into effect.

The government had also planned to cut pensions by 15 per cent, but the Constitutional Court ruled the measure anti-constitutional, and the authorities pushed up the VAT tax on goods and services instead.

Following the IMF review, Romania should receive the sixth disbursement of its loan, worth 900 million euro.



Photo by Petrit Rahmani

## Mystery of Prishtina's 'Timeless' Clock



By Hana Limani

For centuries, citizens of Prishtina turned to their grand Ottoman clock tower to tell the time. But following the replacement of the mechanism by electric components in 2006, the tower has been misleading those unaware of its lack of punctuality, despite two sets of restoration works.

Currently the time is around 15 minutes fast, and the custodians of this fine structure have yet to discover why the clock tower is not telling the correct time.

The bell tower was erected in the late 19th Century, with the original bell dating back to 1764, when it was brought from Moldova as war loot, first to Vushtrri and then to Prishtina.

The hexagon-shaped tower is 26 meters tall and is made of red bricks.

The original mechanism of the clock was replaced in the 60s and the bell was set to ring every half an hour.

In 2002, the original bell was stolen. But despite its replacement, interior renovation work, the switch from cogs and wheels to electrics in 2006 and last year's exterior renovation work, the clock tower continues to tell the wrong time.

Haxhi Mehmetaj, the head of Prishtina Institute for the Protection of Monuments, said: "The time has been wrong most likely from the switch of the mechanism to an electric one in 2006. It may be rust, it may be the disruptions cause by the earlier power outages, but we are to look into that soon."

"Back in the days, this bell tower served as the main time reference for the citizens of Prishtina; today is different."

He added that French KFOR took over the safeguarding of it after the conflict, changed the mechanism in 2006 and retain the key to set it.

The 26,000 euro, six month renovation of the bell tower last year dealt only with the façade and not the mechanism, he explained.

"The renovation was done for each stone of the tower separately. None was replaced, as that would harm the authenticity of the old tower."

"The damaged ones were refurbished and the rest were covered with a protective material to preserve them from the marks of time."

The bell tower of Prishtina, known as Sahat Kulla, or Clock Tower, is located in the core of the old centre of the city.

It is surrounded by many other buildings that show the history of the city, including the Turkish Bath, known as Hamam, and the mosque of Sultan Mehmet Fatih.

Prishtina through the Eyes of:

## Jasper Tjaden, Intern at GTZ



**What surprised you most about Prishtina?**

The kindness and hospitality of the people, Tonibler kids, nightlife, schatzis, the EU and Germany affinity, the personal testimonies of colleagues.

**What's your favourite hangout?**

Rugova's grave at sundown. Obilic gently blasts smoke over Prishtina in the distance and the town is a calm and peaceful place from up there.

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

Great one. I would set up more trash cans, introduce draconian laws on waste disposal, plan a beach bar on the grass at the University Library, paint all unpainted houses white and ban car alarm systems and continuous shouting of the neighbour's kids. I would introduce a tax for internationals and pay teachers a higher wage.

**How many macchiatos do you drink a day?**

Always one more than my colleagues at work.

**What's the tastiest Kosovar food?**

Greek salad.

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

Swiss embassy. What? Ministry of Education. What? University Library? What. Biblioteka Universitet? Ahh po po.

## Summer Visitors Greeted by Diggers

In the height of Prishtina's tourist season, three of the most popular thoroughfares for strollers and visitors are currently being dug up



By Shengjyl Osmani

Prishtina's most popular streets are being dug up in the height of summer, leaving tourists and locals feeling hot under the collar.

Kosovo's capital's only pedestraised street, Mother Teresa Boulevard, has paving slabs scattered across the street and piles of cement dotted around. This comes just two years after the area was first trans-

formed into a car-free zone.

Fehmi Agani, famed for its outdoor terraces and small cafes, is also under assault from the men in yellow tabards, as Prishtina Municipality replaces the pipes.

And Bill Clinton Boulevard, recently adorned with a new statue of the US President, is also a 'no go' area for walkers as the major thoroughfare is being widened.

The decision to begin work on these tourist hotspots at the busiest time of year has drawn criticism from some residents, but Prishtina Municipality argues that the summer is the best time of year to carry out this kind of

work.

Muhamet Gashi, spokesman for the municipality, said that the three road projects were key to improving the infrastructure for the city.

Gashi explained: "The best period for road construction is the summer period." He added that carrying out all three at the same time meant that the municipality could complete the projects this summer and coordinate the works.

"The new roundabout [at the end of Bill Clinton Boulevard] is being blocked because of the many vehicles coming from Fushe Kosove," he added. "The municipi-

pality is working hard to finish the work on the road, the road expansion, in order to overcome the traffic jams in this part of the city."

Gashi said that he expected work to be finished in September.

Regarding the replacement of paving slabs on Mother Teresa, Gashi said that the one-million euro project carried out in 2008 to pedestrianised the area had come with a ten year guarantee, which was now being called in as many of the slabs had become loose and chipped.

But not everyone is pleased with the work being carried out now. Prishtina resident Hamit Gashi said: "It shouldn't be necessary to

do this work at this time, and certainly not every year, because of the pollution from dust that it causes.

"It is taking too long for the square to be finished and in the meantime many people are suffering from the dust."

Shpend Balaj told Prishtina Insight: "People need a break from road works that seem to happen every year."

And Flutura Kermija, manager of Amelie, which has a branch with a large outdoor seating area next to one of the work sites, said: "During the road works we have had a slight decline in visitor at our café."



# New Powers for EU Bosnia Envoy Questioned

Experts and diplomats fear plan to beef up powers of future Brussels envoy is unrealistic - though some welcome any sign of fresh engagement on Europe's part in the troubled country.



By Marcus Tanner

A Bosnia-based source confirmed on Wednesday to Prishtina Insight the existence of the confidential document by Europe's foreign minister, Baroness Ashton, urging the creation of a powerful new envoy to Bosnia with powers to impose travel bans and freeze assets of opponents.

Britain's Daily Telegraph on Wednesday reported that the new envoy to Bosnia would obtain extra powers to push through constitutional changes in the country.

"In the case of non-compliance... for example challenges to fundamentals of the Bosnia and Herzegovina state, the [envoy] will be able to recommend to the EU High Representative [Lady Ashton] that Council impose travel bans and/or the freezing of assets in the EU," the Telegraph quotes the EU paper as saying.

The Prishtina Insight source who has seen the paper confirmed the substance of the Telegraph report, noting that it was a short four-to-five page policy paper, not a detailed strategy, the substance of which was to underline EU willingness to assume a leading role in Bosnia, should agreement be reached on closure of the existing Office of the High Representative, OHR.

Prishtina Insight contacted the office of Lady Ashton in Brussels. A spokesperson said the paper remained "classified" and the office could not therefore comment on it.

Brussels' plan to enhance the powers of a future EU office in Bosnia, so it can punish recalcitrant local politicians, has meanwhile drawn a skeptical response from experts and diplomats in the country.

They say it remains unclear who would give this body a mandate to exercise such powers and question whether they would be effective.

Balkan expert Florian Bieber said it was not clear where the new powers for a future EU envoy would come from. "It's an old idea to create some kind of office to take over from the OHR but it's all very unclear," he said.

"The OHR had a mandate for its powers from [the 1995] Dayton [peace accord], but the new EU post would have to get a mandate from the Peace Implementation Council, PIC, which is the body that beefed up the OHR's powers in Bonn back in 1997."

The expert noted that the PIC, the body supervising peace in Bosnia, comprised countries such as Russia that were not likely to approve changes seen as deeply detrimental to Bosnian Serb interests.

Bieber, soon to take up the chair of South East Europe studies at Graz University, said reports of the classified document appeared confusing, because the EU did not need a new body, or new powers, to impose travel bans on Bosnian officials.

Furthermore, while noting that the ideas contained in the reported document would meet strong approval from



Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs

the US and Turkey, he said neither country is a member of the EU, so they would not exercise any direct input into the work of the future EU envoy's office.

Bieber said a core question that needed to be addressed was whether externally imposed solutions for Bosnia had any future. "The fundamental issue is whether this kind of approach can yield results," he said.

"Bosnia has to work through the will of its people, and I'm critical of forcing through institutional changes," he added. "You can agree or disagree with the Bosnian Serbs but you have to get people to sign up if you want to see anything substantial."

A senior international official based in Bosnia was equally doubtful about the plan, recalling that the idea for an EU envoy to Bosnia arose at a time when international officials were talking optimistically of a smooth transition of power from the OHR to the EU, which would then usher Bosnia into, or towards, the European club.

Matters had changed as internal conflicts in the country worsened, since when talk of EU membership had faded. "There never was a smooth transition and the situation [in Bosnia] is now dire, which is why the EU is coming up with new proposals," the official said, speaking anonymously.

"For years the EU has been speaking about its 'toolbox' in Bosnia but the toolbox is empty," he added. He also queried the value of such penalties as travel bans and asset freezes, saying: "They don't add up to much."

This source said media reports of the EU paper "don't strike me as news. Just because there is a new paper [on Bosnia] doesn't mean this organization is ready to take over. It hasn't been worked out what executive powers it would have. It will need much wider discussion."

Matthew Parish, an international lawyer who formerly worked in Bosnia, said imposing asset freezes would prove difficult to enforce in practice.

In principle, the EU Council of Ministers had the power to do so under the Lisbon Treaty but this power can only be used "for combatting terrorism and related activities" and must be approved by the European Parliament," he said.

"This power has very rarely been

used. Bank accounts have never been frozen outside the terrorism context," he added.

"When this took place on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions, the European Court of Justice overturned the bans, declaring they breached the 'fundamental rights' of the individuals affected.

"The idea that this power could be used against recalcitrant Bosnian politicians, who may not have any bank accounts in the EU and are not terrorists, seems quite far-fetched," he concluded.

Striking a more optimistic note, Srečko Latal, Bosnia-based analyst of the International Crisis Group, ICG, said if media reports of the document were accurate, at least they suggested Europe was experimenting with new approaches towards Bosnia, having realized the old "carrot and stick" approach of EU membership was not working.

"Travel bans and other penalties are nothing new, as they were on the table 10 or 15 years ago," he recalled, "but they effectively fell off the table after the OHR lost international support, since when it's lost its capacity to use the so-called 'Bonn' powers.

"It would be good to see these negative measures reinstated in order to reward local leaders for their willingness to reform," the analyst added.

"The EU does need additional measures to use the various mechanisms it has at its disposal," he continued. "I hope the EU is coming up with a new strategy towards Bosnia as what they had was not enough.

"EU membership has been a 'carrot and stick' for too long and the carrot has become too far away. The problem is not only on the part of the Western Balkan countries but on the part of the EU, which failed to understand the core problem in Bosnia and use appropriate measures.

The Bosnian Serb leader, unsurprisingly, has given the idea of a travel ban the thumbs down. Speaking on TV in the Bosnian Serb entity, the Republika Srpska, RS, the RS Prime Minister, Milorad Dodik, said the first official in Bosnia who needed to be placed under an EU travel ban for breaking the terms of the 1995 Dayton agreement was the OHR.

News in brief



## Ejup Ganic Returns Home to Hero's Welcome

Hundreds of people gathered at Sarajevo's airport on Wednesday to greet former Bosnian presidency member Ejup Ganic, a day after a London court rejected Serbia's request for his extradition on war crimes charges and accused Belgrade of political manipulation.

"It was established that the trial against me was politically motivated and that Serbia had abused British courts and prosecutors," Ganic told journalists upon his arrival in Sarajevo.

Ganic added that Bosnia benefited from the situation because Belgrade for the first time acknowledged before the British court that the war in Bosnia was an international armed conflict in which it took part.

"I am bringing with me the documents in which Serbia confirmed that it committed aggression against Bosnia," Ganic added. "Serbia will have to bear the consequences."

Ganic was arrested in London on March 1 at the request of Serbia, which claimed he was responsible for war crimes related to an attack by Bosnian troops against a column of Yugoslav Army, JA, troops in Sarajevo at the start of Bosnia's 1992-95 war.

The judge at the City of Westminster Magistrates Court said in his ruling on Tuesday that there was no justification to try Ganic as independent investigations had already concluded that there was no case against him.

## Macedonian Tour Boats Stay In Harbor

In the midst of the summer tourist season all tour boats in Macedonia's Ohrid Lake have been banned from sailing as they lack the newly requested technical safety certificates.

The harbour master in Ohrid has banned the boats from sailing as their owners refuse to pay some 7700 thousand euros to a French company that has been recently contracted to conduct the inspection that is carried out each year.

The boat owners are upset with the Macedonian Ministry of Transport for signing the deal with the French firm, arguing that similar companies from neighboring Serbia or Bulgaria would have charged them not more than 2,500 euros for the same work.

"We have been requesting since this winter that a new [inspection] company be found but the harbour master did not do that," Goran Ustijanovski, the head of the Association of Ohrid Boat Operators, told media.

But the harbour master said that all boats that sail without properly undergoing the inspection by the French company will be fined.

"With good will we can solve this problem," Ljupco Nasteski, the head of the harbour master's office said.

The measure comes after the September 2009 tragedy involving the Ohrid tour boat "Ilinden" when 15 mostly elderly Bulgarian tourists died after the ship capsized in the lake.



# Corruption Rows Stall Albania's War on 'Grey' Economy



By Besar Likmeta and  
Gjergj Erebara

Third official campaign to suppress cash-only economy by forcing companies to use registers looks like running into sand again - drawing complaints that the machines don't work and claims of conflicts of interest.

An investigation by Prishtina Insight has found that a campaign to force businesses in Albania to use cash registers - so that tax officials can see their transactions - risks being derailed by rows over sales of faulty machines and complaints of conflicts of interest.

The universal use of cash machines forms a major element of a government drive to reduce the cash-only "grey" economy, which is robbing the authorities of vitally needed tax revenues.

But documents seen by Prishtina Insight show that the companies licensed to install the machines have often installed substandard registers that then need replacing.

Some tax officials meanwhile link these glitches to an alleged conflict of interest. This is because one of the firms that installed the substandard machines is owned by the husband of the former head of the General Directorate of Metrology, the government agency that certified the quality of the registers.

Lack of confidence in the machines means that many businesses have now ignored the June 31 deadline to have them installed. As a result, they could be liable to significant fines.

## Third time unlucky:

The first attempt to introduce cash registers in Albania was made back in 1994. The idea was to reduce the scope of the informal or grey economy, which is a major problem for the government, reducing tax intake by several hundred million euro a year, distorting the labour market and creating unfair competition.

Albania's Finance Ministry and the IMF have both estimated that the informal economy could be worth as much as 40 per cent more than its official, visible counterpart.

Distribution and sale of the new machines was entrusted to a state-owned company, the Center for Financial Informatics, also tasked with their maintenance.

Most retail businesses in urban areas duly obtained cash registers. But they rarely used them properly and the process of installing them halted in 1997, when the collapse of pyramid-

investment schemes plunged Albania into deep crisis.

"The process of distributing and using the cash registers was never carried out as envisioned because of generally poor respect for the rule of law, the tax administration's inability to inspect the process and the political tensions of the period," recalled Xhavit Curri, former deputy head of the General Directorate of Taxation.

In 2001, the government tried again to boost installation of cash registers, taking a less centralised approach. Business could acquire cash registers from any source as long as the machines met certain criteria.

But the Socialist-led government's decentralised approach meant companies felt little incentive to import cash registers or train employees in their maintenance.

In 2008, the government launched yet another drive. To secure the sale and distribution of the new cash registers, now envisioned as transferring data electronically to the tax authorities, the government licensed five companies: CVC-NOKI, IVA Elektronik, PKP-Rilindja, AED and BNT Electronics. These companies would have a virtual monopoly on the machines' import, distribution and maintenance.

## Faulty machines:

The process of installing the new cash registers started early last year. For large businesses, paying VAT, the deadline was set at March 31, 2009. Smaller enterprises had a later deadline.

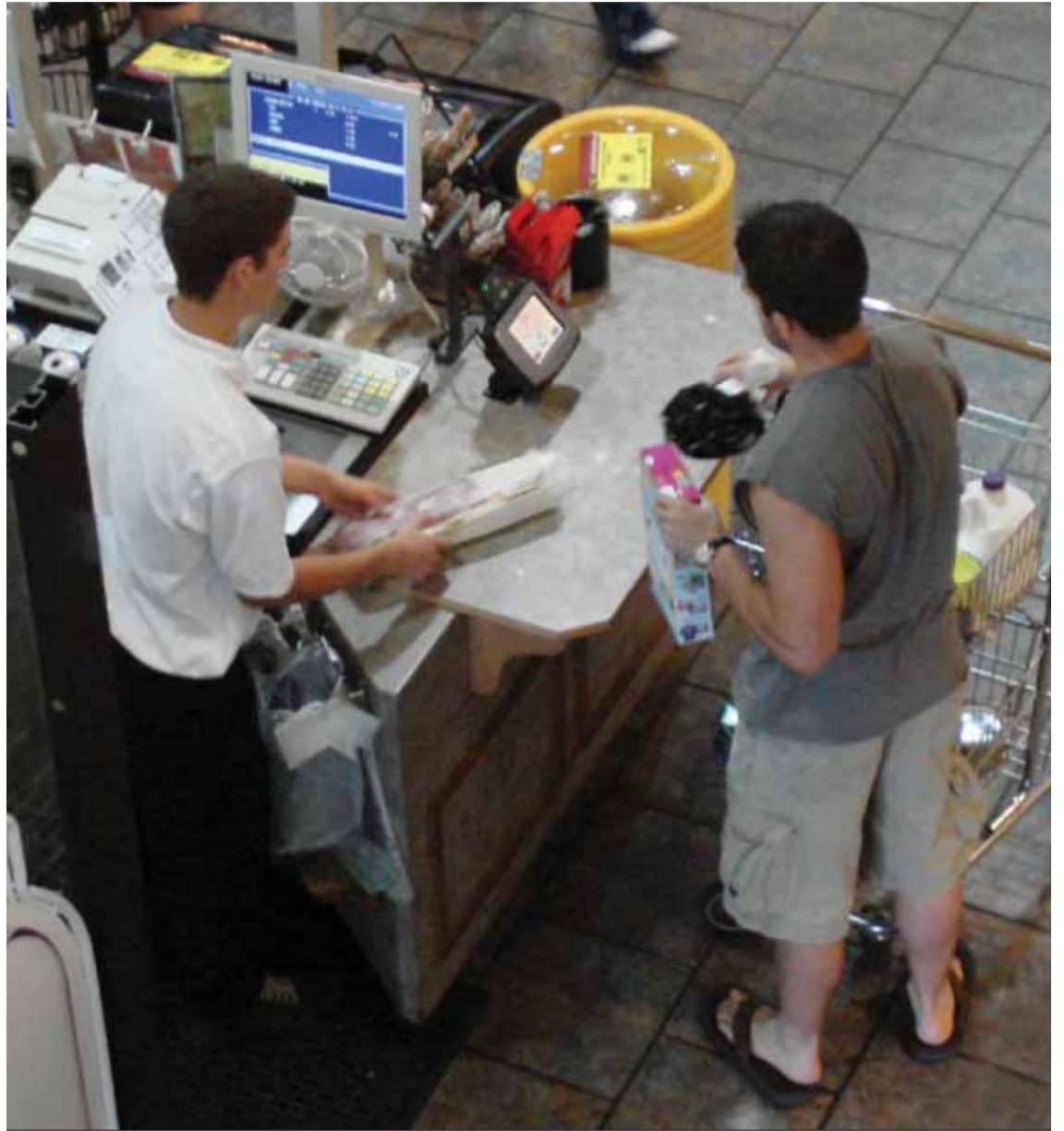
Because both the companies distributing the registers and the businesses installing them were slow in getting up to speed, the government extended the deadline to December 31, 2009.

Although the extension gave businesses plenty of time to secure a machine from one of the five licensed companies, most waited until last December to order one, creating a sales rush.

It was during this sales rush that the tax authorities started noticing that the companies licensed to sell the registers were selling registers without modems or SIM cards.

Renald Rista, head of IT in the General Directorate of Taxation, in charge of supervising the distribution of the cash registers, said Albania's Council of Ministers had failed to specify that each register needed to have a modem or a SIM card, though the Council had implied it, by requiring that each machine transfer data at least once a month automatically to the tax authorities.

Rista recalls several meetings



The third attempt to get Albania's businesses to adopt fiscal cash registers has been fraught with difficulties

at the General Taxation Directorate and the Ministry of Finance at which the licensed companies were urged not to sell any more cash registers without modems, but the problem persisted.

Before the cash registers, imported from different countries, were to be sold, the General Directorate of Metrology and Calibration, DPM, was tasked with certifying their quality, based on the Council of Minister's specifications.

Rista says the companies rejected the tax authorities' efforts to have some of them upgrade their substandard registers, arguing that the DPM had certified the machines.

## Conflict of interest?

Myrvete Pazaj, head of the metrology directorate at the time, whose husband partly owns one of the companies, PKP-Rilindja, denied that her agency knowingly certified substandard machines.

"All cash registers certified by the DPM were in accordance with the decisions of the Council of Ministers, but the government later decided to upgrade the registers' security features," she

said.

Concerning her alleged conflict of interest, because of her husband's part ownership of PKP-Rilindja, Pazaj said that she reported this to the authorities herself "and then withdrew from the decision-making process in accordance with the law on conflict of interests".

But Rista still says that it was wrong that Pazaj, "who was charged with supervising the cash register companies, owned one [via her husband].

"From what we have seen on the ground a good part of the registers sold by PKP-Rilindja were totally lacking standards," he added.

Prishtina Insight has obtained documents showing that the tax authority later found that some of the machines that PKP-Rilindja imported - which the DPM certified and Pazaj signed - were indeed substandard.

Prishtina Insight was also shown a memo that the General Directorate of Taxation sent to the Minister of Finance, requesting the revocation of PKP-Rilindja's license due to the sale of sub-standard registers.

As problems piled up, the government froze the sale of registers for two months, from March

till April 2010.

Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers issued a new decision, which specified many of the requirements not fulfilled earlier by the five licensed companies.

A new commission was set up in the Ministry of Finance, where registers will need to pass one more certification test before being released onto the market.

But Rista noted that although the government does not plan to again extend the installation deadline, which expired on June 31, confidence in the entire process is now low and few businesses that have installed the new registers.

However, businesses found without cash registers from now on will be liable to fines of 100,000 lek (800 euro). If they are then found again making transactions without a cash machine, they risk larger fines, or being shut down.

*Besar Likmeta is BIRN Albania Editor. Gjergj Erebara is a freelance journalist based in Tirana. Ard Kola, a business journalist with the daily Shqip also contributed to this report. This article was made possible through the support of the National Endowment for Democracy.*

# Neighbourhood

## Opinion

# A Pyramid Scheme



The 'pyramids' in Visoko, Bosnia, have generated plenty of tourism for the region



By Rob Miller

In 2005 Semir Osmanagi, an expatriate Bosnian metalworker living in Texas, made a most startling announcement. The hills that surround the central Bosnian town of Visoko were not—as had always been thought—mere hills, but were in fact pyramids, man-made and ancient, built by a prehistoric civilisation that rivalled the ancient Egyptians in technological and cultural sophistication.

That Osmanagi's own consulted experts found his theories to be riddled with inaccuracies did not dissuade him. Nor did the fact that Bosnia was in an ice age 12,000 years ago, the time when the pyramids were supposedly built. Nor, either, did the fact that Bosnia's inhabitants at the time were itinerant hunter gatherers, who built no permanent structures—let alone huge monoliths. Five years on, the archaeological digs continue unabated, and the tourists arrive in droves.

The pyramids have taken over every aspect of the town; they have become its identity. Stepping out of the bus station when I arrived in Visoko, looked up at a cluster of road signs; all of the local Visoko ones bore on their left side a stylised pyramid, yellow on white. Crossing the bridge into town, I saw what used to be the Motel Hollywood; now, inevitably, it has become the Motel Piramida Sunca. Local restaurants serve "pyramid pizza". The town is gripped with pyramid fever.

I headed towards the "Pyramid of the Sun", the most overtly pyramidal of the four claimed pyramids and the

closest to the town. A large white sign welcomed me to the "world's largest complex of pyramids", and a perspex box filled with coins invited donations to help fund further research. Eventually, I came to the dig site. Inside trenches, Malaysian archaeologists carefully probed the ground, scraping the soil from what looked simply to be ordinary rocks. To the side, a large section of hillside was fenced off, its exposed stone on display to the world: made up mostly of breccia, it looked perfectly natural, and did not have even the illusion of design about it.

As I prepared to ascend again past the dig site and to the top of the pyramid, a guide approached me and asked what I was interested in. I mumbled something awkward about the pyramids, but also mentioned Visoki, the ruined medieval fortress town that sits atop the so-called pyramid. "Visoki? You don't want to go there," the guide snorted. "All it has is some old walls and views of the valley. You must go to the tunnels; to go to Visoko and not see the tunnels would be madness!" He insisted that he drive me the two kilometres in his car—for 10, of course—but I declined; I had wanted to see Visoki for far longer than I had the pyramids. Visibly frustrated, he left me and headed back to his tourist group, and I resumed my ascent.

The route was treacherous, and barely a path at all; the forest grew more dense the higher I went, and the loose, sandy loam beneath my feet offered little traction. In places, the hill became near vertical, and its ascent more a process of rock-climbing than of hiking; I thought with bitter amusement of the idea that this colossus had been crafted by human hands.

Eventually, bursting through a thicket, I found myself on a loose

stone wall, its cement crumbling. Was this Visoki, I thought? Surely it would have some notice, some fence surrounding it? But it was; I was standing on one of the outer walls. Climbing further up, I eventually summited the hill and saw the rest of the structure. The sandy rock blazed yellow-white under the early afternoon sun, and as I walked further I saw the remains of one of the fortress's towers, covered in a plastic wrapping but otherwise neglected. There was no fence, not even a notice warning of the site's importance; it was thoroughly exposed, to the elements and to human interference.

Looking around, I saw why its location had been chosen: the fortress offered its defenders an unimpeded view of the whole Bosna valley, and approach to it was restricted to the shallower side of the hill. I thought of the bustling groups of tourists I had seen at the mock archaeological sites, barely metres away from where I stood; none had thought to ascend the hill any further, to see Visoki.

This seems to me the great tragedy of the pyramid hoax. I can understand its motivation, of course. Bosnia is not a rich country, nor Visoko a rich town; in the wake of the "discovery" the increase in tourist visits to the otherwise-overlooked Visoko must have been welcome. But Visoko has real history, real wonder, that is being neglected and ignored in the hurry to capitalise on the fame of the Bosnian pyramids. Osmanagi has shown himself to be a canny operator, able to mobilise and orchestrate the press with ease; that he felt the need to do so in promoting a false history of his own making—rather than the rich history to which Visoko was already legitimately home—says much of his ego, and is far less than Visoko deserves.

## Macedonia 'Should Play Better than French Footballers'



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

Macedonia should play smart if it wants to join the EU and NATO soon, visiting French Minister of European Affairs Pierre Lellouche told media in Skopje.

Speaking on Thursday at the joint press conference with his host, Macedonia's Vice Prime Minister in charge of European affairs, Vasko Naumovski, Lellouche said that his country would like to see Macedonia join the European family.

"The ball is in your court. Try to play better than the French football team," Lellouche said, referring to the scandals that marred his country's team at the recent World Cup in South Africa.

The French official reiterated that in order for the Macedonian EU and NATO bids to be unlocked, a solution to the Athens-Skopje name dispute needs to be found as soon as possible.

"We are looking forward to a settlement between [Macedonian PM Nikola] Gruevski and [Greek PM George] Papandreou. We are here to assist and move the process forward. The sooner a solution is reached, the better it will be for all," Lellouche said.

Athens and Skopje are locked in a long lasting dispute over the use of the name Macedonia. Athens has blocked Skopje's entry into NATO and its progress towards EU accession pending a resolution to the row. Greece claims that the country's formal name, the Republic of Macedonia, implies territorial claims against Greece's northern province of Macedonia.

After several missed opportunities in the past two years observers now see the November NATO summit as an informal deadline for solving the spat.

Lellouche said that the country has still homework to do on its path to full accession and that in that regard it should speed up the pace of reforms that would ensure rule of law, an independent judiciary, effective police, and a more intense fight against corruption.

"The Macedonian government remains committed to the fulfillment of the priorities from the European agenda regardless of whether the country formally starts EU accession talks this year or next," Macedonia's Naumovski said.

At the following afternoon meeting the French diplomat met Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. The two also talked about the poor economic cooperation between the two countries, local media reported.

Lellouche also met the head of Macedonia's main opposition party, Branko Crvenkovski of the Social Democrats.

After his stay in Macedonia Lellouche heads to neighbouring Kosovo.



French Minister of European Affairs Pierre Lellouche

# Dokufest is

Prizren's inimitable documentary film festival gets underway this weekend offering 156 films from 34 countries, as well as a week-long schedule of parties, art events and even a new screen in the city's fort



By Shengjyl Osmani

Dokufest was voted among the best documentary film festivals in the world this year, by American filmmaker and critic AJ Schnack. That will come as no surprise to it's many

fans who have been enjoying the alfresco screenings in Kosovo's most beautiful city since the festival launched in 2002.

But it has served to raise the international profile of the event, which takes place between July 31 and August 7 this year.

In this ninth incarnation, Dokufest will be screening films up to five times a day in two open air cinemas as well as in two regular cinemas.

Added to the films, the festival is also well-known for lively nights after the

screening.

Various, non-film related events will also be held within the scope of the festival: workshops, DokuPhoto exhibitions, festival camping and concerts.

Festival executive director Aliriza Arenliu told Prishtina Insight that Dokufest can competes well with its international peers.

He said: "The enthusiasm for the festival has changed a lot, and more and more young people are interested to volunteer and help

organise the festival in the best way that it can.

"Dokufest has been selected as among the best 25 international film festival and we have also increased the number of awards, so more sections have been added to the festival, which gives floor to more films.

"For the last eight to nine years, the awareness about cinema has drastically increased and people from Prizren see the festival as part of their city cultural heritage."



## Dokufest: The Facts

The 2010 festival, as each year, will take place, in Prizren. The event will present 156 films representing 34 countries, selected from more than 1300 submissions. In addition to this, DokuKids, the children and youth section of DokuFest, will present another 45 films in two competitions and two special programmes. A retrospective of acclaimed Yugoslav filmmaker Zelimir Zilnik and Philippine wunderkind Khavn de la Cruz are themes this year.

Other themes include Spotlight Afghanistan, Cities on Speed, Europe Next Door and Made In Finland, dedicated to the recent production of documentaries and short films from Finland.

The event kicks off on the night of Saturday, July 31.

Summer

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Festival

# Back in Force

Arenliu added that more films have been added to the programme each year as well as new, creative places for screening. This year Dokufest is launching screenings in Prizren's magnificent fort.

He said: "The festival overall has contributed a lot to increasing cultural values in Prizren, and economic incomes, since the hotels do not have capacity for all the guests so many private houses are being rent during the festival."

For more details of the programme, see our Timeout page or visit [www.dokufest.com/2010](http://www.dokufest.com/2010)



## Dokufest Essentials Accommodation

There are about 15 small hotels in Prizren spread in various parts of the town. Although they might have 3-4 stars, all, except Hotel Residence and Hotel OK, would be equivalent to 2 stars hotels accommodation, and cost from 10 to 70 euro depending on hotel. They are likely to be full at this time, although it's worth giving them a try. Camping is also available, as well as rooms in private homes.

- Hotel Tirana (downtown) +37744216155
- Hotel Alvida (10 minutes of walk) +37744217167
- Hotel Residence (8 minutes of walk) +37744256774
- Hotel City (10 minutes of walk) +37744952392
- Bujtina (downtown) +37744113252
- Hotel OK (5 minutes of drive) +37744131761

## Dokufest: What the Critics Said

One said: "Honest to God, I would say it was my best festival experience ever. Part of the festival experience is going to interesting places and for me it's this town in the south of Kosovo. It's really young there."

Another said: "Everyone seems to be a volunteer at the festival. They do a lot of outdoor screenings and I remember going to an outdoor screening that was dealing with the very recent past with mass graves and everything. And there are all these young people there. And you could look up from the screening and see all these bombed out buildings. It's one of these festivals that are really relevant. That festival experience is great."

Comments posted on the website run by AJ Schnack, the author and editor in chief of "All these wonderful things", a webpage dedicated to art and craft of non-fiction filmmaking.

Summer

SURF

Urban

Festival

Logos: Visa, Norwegian Embassy, Pristina Insight, Express, etc.

HIP

HOP

# Becomes the Sound of Kosovo

Rap music now rules. But as Kosovars get used to independence, local rappers are trading in old themes about struggle for a more US-style culture of 'sex, fame and money'.



By Shega A'Mula

It's Wednesday night in Prishtina and people are queuing for Fullhouse, the city's most up-to-the-minute nightspot. DJ Epps, official hip hop DJ of rapper 50 Cent's G-Unit label, is the act drawing in the crowds.

If rap music isn't your cup of tea, you might as well skip having an evening out, as two of the city's other major night clubs are also hosting hip hop DJs.

"Kosovars want hip hop," Drin Zatriqi, owner of Fullhouse, says. "When I book a hip hop DJ, the club is not only full but more people are waiting to get inside than ever before."

Wednesday's queue is full of Beyonce-impersonating young women and a string of baggy-trouser-clad young men, all intimate with Epps' work but also with the man that made him big, 50 Cent.



Kastriot Rexha, 20, an emerging local rapper

The sixth-best artist of the past decade, according to Billboard Magazine, performed in front of a sold-out crowd of more than 25,000 fans at Prishtina's open-air football stadium in December 2007, becoming the first high-status star to perform in the country.

Petrit Selimi, one of the organizers of the event, which launched

the operations of the country's second mobile phone operator, IPKO, said the choice of rap over other musical genres was simple.

"We consulted local and regional promoters and music managers and our evaluation showed the majority of Kosovars prefer hip hop," he says. "If big companies want to market successfully, they need to identify with stars that the public want."

Other companies have followed suit. Z-mobile, the country's third mobile operator, flew the notorious US rapper Snoop Dogg to the same venue in July to meet an equally passionate crowd of young hip hoppers.

"After researching the market through interviews, radio preferences and more, we came to the conclusion that this [rap] music is the most listened to in the country by our target market, which is people between 18 and 30," Valdrin Lluka, head of marketing and sales for Z-mobile, says.

According to Z-mobile, more than 15,000 people sang along to

The passion for hip hop also embraces local artists. Kosovo rappers have built up a massive fan base among young people at home and among the big diaspora. Even the government's spokesman, Memli Krasniqi, used to be a rapper.

Guxim Gerxhaliu, 23, is a local rapper, graffiti artist and DJ. Known as DJ Pamon to his followers, Gerxhaliu has been living and breathing hip hop practically since childhood.

He explains how Kosovo's hip hop culture emerged under the harsh Serbian regime in the Nineties, when access to the world's hip-hop scene was limited and anger about what was happening to the country was overflowing.

"I was only ten when I felt hip hop emerging all around me," he recalls. "At that time, it was all about the struggle of Albanian youth, and it was very underground."

"We couldn't have open concerts and performances back then. Now, you see hip hop everywhere in the city, from the way people dress to the way they dance," he adds.

While Gerxhaliu spends many nights of the week DJing in cities around the country, most of his fellow hip hop artists are putting out albums and recording MTV-style videos. He laments that the music is no longer a means of protest but a commercial venture.

"Now it's all about fame, girls and money," he explains, comparing the scene to that of the Nineties.

Gerxhaliu is not the only one to note the commercialization of Kosovo's hip hop industry. Kastriot Rexha, 20, an emerging local rapper who has recently become hugely popular under the name of Dr Mic, says everyone wants in on the hip hop game.

"Every other guy my age or younger wears baggy clothes and wants to be a rapper," he explains, decked out in loose clothing. "You have all these rappers mimicking the lives of American rappers, rapping about being famous, sleeping with many girls and buying expensive cars."



Snoop Dogg played in front of a packed crowd in Prishtina earlier this month

"For me, it was never about the money. I used to struggle to find 25 euro to record a song three to four years ago, but I did it because I believe hip hop is the easiest way for young people to express themselves."

Rexha writes and records music with his group, TDS, which stands for The Dark Side. This refers to the deep social and economic problems that Kosovo's youth encounter.

"We want our songs to shed light on the dark problems Kosovo's young people face, like unemployment, lack of freedom of movement, and more," he says.

"Although I work with rappers that live for fame, I won't lose my values," he adds. "Most young people don't have the money to record music, so I want to give them a reason to believe."

Tere Humphreys, professor of music at Arizona State University, now at the University of Prishtina International Summer School, says the evolution of hip hop culture in Kosovo, from a vehicle of angry protest to a means to parade wealth, reflects positive changes taking place in society.

"As Kosovo becomes more democratic and wealthier, pop culture will become more prevalent. Hip-hop represents modern pop-culture everywhere in the world," he says.

Commenting on growing references in lyrics to sex, drugs and money as opposed to struggle, Humphreys Kosovo's rappers and their audiences have become accustomed to their country's independence and to freedom.

"Freedom and democracy are being taken for granted through these references, which means that society is developing and young people are engaging in aspiration; they want the lifestyle that we [Americans] have," he says.

"Hip hop represents the mixture of cultures and races, and because it's part of current popular culture, its emergence in Kosovo indicates the development of modern democracy within society," he concludes.

Rap Lyrics - From Corruption to Champagne

A TDS song, called "Criticism", complains about the corruption affecting daily life:

"People are getting corrupt, playing the main role. Patriotic?"

Damn there ain't a problem you can't solve with deep pockets, 'cause what they see, they own."

In contrast, a rapper called F-Kay says in his song "One More": "When you see me in the club, I'm so fly. Everyone knows who the fly guy is. I'm dressed in a million bucks, VIP style, champagne on the rocks."

## Guide

# Three Decades of Visions Alter Medjugorje beyond Recognition

While the Pope's new commission is set to finally clarify the shrine's final status, whether anything that Rome says can stop the flow of pilgrims at this stage looks debatable.



By Marcus Tanner

It is late afternoon on the "Apparition Hill" in the shrine town of Medjugorje and the Italians are going up and the Croats are coming down. But the Croat pilgrims have a loudspeaker, so their harsh-sounding chants of "Zdravo Marijo" drown out the softer sounding murmur of "Santa Maria, prega per noi peccatori" as the two groups pass one another mid-way.

It's hot and dangerous on these slippery, sharp rocks where, almost 30 years ago, six Bosnian children had the first vision of the Virgin Mary, the first of thousands because the visions never stopped, prompting long-lasting controversy over their authenticity.

People have stumbled and been injured on this hillside. One priest tripped and died. But still they come, in all weathers, older folk panting and gasping in the heat; up they go, battalions of Croats, Italians and Irish alongside smaller contingents of Spanish, French, English, Germans, Czechs and even Lebanese.

Down below, Medjugorje, unrecognizable to anyone who hasn't been here for years, shimmers in the haze. Down there, huge, shiny air-conditioned coaches rumble through the streets day and night, disgorging hordes of passengers into what now must be the most international town in Bosnia - a place where everyone seems to speak some English, German and Italian as well as Croatian and where you can pay your bills in an amazing variety of currencies.

Twenty-two years ago, on my first journalistic assignment for the new Independent newspaper, I came to Medjugorje to see the visionaries and meet their bitterest critic, their own bishop, in nearby Mostar.

It was a village of one-storey cottages back in those days, off the beaten track, where pious peasants rented out rooms for nominal fee. Chickens clucked and scratched around in the dirt lanes. A ceaseless flow of visitors - and of money - has swept that village away.

The cottages have gone, converted into grim-looking five-storey pensions and hotels. The livestock has disappeared, too. There is not a rooster in sight on the neat lawns, kept green by hissing sprinklers.

If the village has changed drastically, so have the visionaries. They grew up, married and had families. In my minds' eye, I still see Vicka standing on the threshold of her parents' home, fielding



questions from a semi-circle of pilgrims gathered outside. "What colour is purgatory?" I remember one of them asking. "Yellow," she answered, not missing a beat. "Can we get souls out of hell with our prayers?" Answer: No. "Help me, I have cancer; ask the Virgin to cure me," shouted a woman from Mexico. "Our Lady hears everyone's prayers," Vicka replied, calmly.

She was a fresh-faced teenager then, with apple cheeks, sweet smile and perfect skin. The smile is still there, but I feel shaken on seeing the rest of her prematurely aged, lined and pain-ravaged face in a recent photograph. Her visions may have helped to bring unimaginable wealth and prosperity to the dusty and obscure village in which she was born but her own health has not been spared.

The power behind the Medjugorje phenomenon is the repeat nature of the original miracle - the constant series of visions, the latest of which I see flagged up in several languages, including Arabic, on a screen outside the church. It's not the content of the messages, banal and almost unvarying that they are, that draws most pilgrims; more the fact

that the messages just keep on coming.

Medjugorje church  
Medjugorje church  
"Most other shrines are totally dead compared to this place," explains an Irish priest, Fr Terry, reeling off the names of several he had visited or worked in, including Fatima in Portugal and the Virgin of Guadeloupe in Mexico. Fatima had been just a "big empty square", he recalled. "There was no buzz".

Medjugorje, on the other hand, has buzz. Wandering up to the church for a late-night service of Benediction, I'm astonished to find a huge crowd there, even at this hour. All on their knees, in the darkness, eyes fixed on the Host held aloft in a golden monstrance.

There is a 24/7 character to the place, as Fr Terry suggested: Mass in English, followed by Mass in Spanish; followed by Mass in Croatian; followed by Confession; followed by the Rosary; followed by Benediction. One crowd leaves the church, another pours in. No wonder Fr Terry wanted to move here permanently.

Not everyone appreciates the "Medjugorje experience", of course. Waiting for a bus to Mostar

to take me back to Dubrovnik, I meet an angry old Italian who has had enough. His Italian tour guide told him he was going to go to hell for asking stupid provocative questions and for saying he wanted to "go see how the Muslims live in Mostar", he told me. "It's almost impossible to get out of this place. They don't want us to see anything of Bosnia," he grumbled.

He had a point. Life in Medjugorje can resemble that dark US comedy, *The Truman Show* - a film set from which escape is not exactly encouraged. Visitors are invited to stay within bounds, to walk from the Apparition Hill to the Cross Mountain, go to St Jacob's church several times a day, to buy souvenirs (grappa, cigs and rosaries) from the thousands of stalls, to eat dinner in their pensions and when not doing the above, to unwind in the countless bars and cafés.

The vast majority of visitors arrive in curtained, air-con coaches and leave in the same a few days later, having seen nothing of the country beyond the limits of Medjugorje. My old Italian was having none of this; when his tour guide told him he'd be "beaten up and robbed by the Muslims" if he

insisted on going to Mostar, it made him more determined to go.

Meanwhile, the long-awaited seal of papal approval for the visions appears to be on its way. It's no secret that the old Polish pope looked on the phenomenon with deep sympathy and that his German successor, Benedict XVI, does likewise. A new Vatican commission, tasked with determining the shrine's final status, has been working under Cardinal Ruini, a close friend of the Pope's, since March. The visit paid to Medjugorje last December by Cardinal Schonborn of Vienna, another close papal ally, was a straw in the wind.

It's exciting stuff for Vatican observers. But whether anything that Rome said would actually stop the flow of pilgrims at this stage is more debatable. "People come from all over the world, from Ireland, from as far as the Philippines," Franjo Topic, member of the Vatican commission and head of Napredak in Sarajevo, told me.

"This cannot be ignored, nor the fact that so many have been converted," he added. "Even if the commission's verdict was negative, people would still come."

# Gio Grill and Bar: Late Night Delicacies



By Maneater

Forget greasy 3am downtown burgers and long queues at Grand Store's Gizzi Grill. Gio Grill and Bar is Prishtina's newest late night eatery, just in time for summer's remaining nights of festivities and sleeplessness.

Gio is located next to Albi Shopping centre, just a few kilometres outside of the city centre, and is visible from the main road leading to Skopje. The large terrace, indoor dining area and kitchen are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Considering its mundane surroundings, Gio does well to create a restful outdoor seating area, suited for either lounging or dining. White curtains and copious amounts of tropical plants are in stark contrast to the surrounding industrial area and noisy neighbouring highway.

Inside, dining tables are well spaced out and well dressed for large parties. The waiting staff are oddly gracious compared to the usual Prishtina standards, and readily available. In our case, even the head chef came out to recommend items on the menu.

Gio's menu doesn't try to be something

it's not, and serves up exactly what it says it will. It focuses mainly on Kosovar staples – which usually focus on meat – and favourites such as pizza and pasta.

Appetizers include the usual Kosovar meze, or meat and cheese platter, and bakery favourites such as flia and mantia. Fried mushrooms and fried cheese are non-traditional options.

Every meal begins with a complimentary starter of freshly baked bread rolls, known as pitalka in Albanian, and a side dish of zesty garlic flavoured cream.

We went with hot peppers in sour cream, and fried crepes to kick the meal off. The peppers were definitely fiery, but combined well with a thick and zesty country-style sour cream.

It was the first time my dining partner and I had sampled breaded and deep fried crepes in Prishtina, and we were positively surprised. With a crispy exterior and soft filling of chopped prosciutto, pickles, hard-boiled egg and cheese, this delicate crepe with a hearty stuffing can serve as a meal in itself.

For our mains, we decided to test the meat options, so we ordered a classic veal steak, and a shank meat tava, which can be best described as a mini casserole.

The steak arrived plated next to adequate portions of white rice and grilled vegeta-



Forget these greasy kebabs and bad burgers, Gio is serving up great food at all hours

bles. The simplicity of the side dishes allowed the piece of steak to excel, and for good reason – it was very fresh, and grilled exactly to our yearning.

The shank meat casserole proved our favourite of the evening. Succulent pieces of lean beef, which fell apart at the touch of a fork, were teamed up with roasted potatoes and supple carrots to create a wholesome meal ready to energize any late clubber, or

socialiser.

And prices are lower than those of Gizzi Grill's, giving this place even more of an edge on its competitor.

Gio Grill and Bar

044 240 130

Albi, on the Skopje Highway



## Where to pick up Prishtina Insight?

Prishtina Insight has teamed up with these five excellent venues to offer a limited number of complimentary copies of Kosovo's only English-language newspaper. Grab a copy of the publication and settle down with a drink or a meal to read it.

### Filikaqa Sports Bar

Prishtina's best sports bar offers the perfect setting to watch a game on over a dozen HDTV screens, guzzle down a metre of beer and tuck in to some delicious food. There is enough space to accommodate large crowds and still maintain enough legroom and breathing space between rival supporters, or those wanting to watch different games, whether it is a Liverpool match, NFL game, or cycling race. Filikaqa's menu includes spicy chicken wings, beef nachos, cheese-stuffed pizza, fried chicken, burgers and fries. Every Friday, join Filikaqa for karaoke nights.



Filikaqa  
Rr. Mujo Ulqinaku BL 4/1  
Pejton, Prishtina  
www.filikaqa.com  
+381 38 244 288

### Cavallero Mexican Restaurant

You can almost transport yourself to the Mexican coast, with soaring palm trees and an immaculate five star resort, while dining at Cavallero Mexican Cantina. Mouth-watering appetizers and savoury main dishes are nicely washed down with countless cocktail options and even imported Mexican beer. Gather you're friends and bring on the fiesta. Cavallero has a great terrace where you can enjoy the summer breeze. For more information, visit their facebook page, or contact them.



Cavallero,  
Located next to the ex-UNMIK  
building  
Prishtina  
+377 44 508 980  
Facebook page

### Prishtina Insight

#### It could be you?

Prishtina Insight is looking for a small number of additional partners to offer complimentary copies of the newspaper. And for a small fee, you will also be included in our listings 'where to pick up Prishtina Insight'. Contact Prishtina Insight on +381 38 24 33 58 for more information.

#### Prishtina Insight

Prishtina Insight is Kosovo's only English-language newspaper. It is available:

On its publication date, every other Friday, delivered to your door or your inbox for as little as 10euro for six months. Visit [www.prishtinain-sight.com](http://www.prishtinain-sight.com) for more details.

From news-stands in Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Mitrovica, Gjakova, Gjilan and Ferizaj on Saturdays for just one euro.

From one of our partner organisations (see above). Grab a drink, meal or a bed for the night and enjoy a complimentary copy from Mondays after publication.

### Cantina am-pm Restaurant

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 with good, cheap food. Cantina offers Mexican dishes at reasonable prices, starting from less than 5 euro. Although the majority of the food is Mexican-influenced, Cesar salad and pizza have been included too.



Mexican favourites served up at Cantina include tortilla, thicker pan-friend tortilla, nacho chips and burrito. Cantina's also offers a very pleasant area for al fresco dining.

Cantina AM-PM  
Rr Qamil Hoxha  
Prishtina  
+377 49 710 710

### Hotel AFA

Located in a quiet neighbourhood just outside the city centre, Hotel Afa can guarantee guests a peaceful night while being within walking distance of all the action. The venue has won a host of awards for its excellent service to customers and offers a good range of facilities, from an exclusive restaurant and VIP bar to pretty, tranquil garden. Rooms start at 45 euro for a single, and luxury rooms and apartments are available. The hotel's rooms are well appointed and comfortable.



15, Rr Ali Kelmendi,  
Sunny Hill,  
Prishtina  
+381 38/225 226  
www.hotelafa.com

### Te Komiteti

Te Komiteti's large trees and a beautifully garden, which surround the small outdoor terrace, give you an impression of an exclusive place for ordinary people. And this is exactly what it is. From brunch to lunch-time snacks and special evening meals, this restaurant offers dishes comprising quality, varied ingredients, combined to perfection. Alongside one of Prishtina's best 'modern European' style menus, you'll also find a good selection of wine, and great sangria and cocktails.



Te Komiteti  
Qamil Hoxha  
Street  
Prishtina  
+381 38 24 96 63



## Morcheeba Youth Centre,

Wednesday, 11 August 2010, Morcheeba in Prishtina

Morcheeba, one of the most famous bands of trip-hop genre in the world, will perform in Prishtina. The English band will perform as part of the urban summer festival SURF.

Morcheeba has released five best-selling albums and has been highly successful in the last two decades.

After a break, this year the band returned in its complete form, including the famous singer Skye. In April 2010, they began their world tour with stops in over 30 cities.

And on August 11 they will arrive in Prishtina. Morcheeba's performance in Prishtina is assisted by IPKO company, which had previously brought 50 Cent and Buena Vista to Kosovo. Prishtina Insight are also media sponsors.

This time around, IPKO and other sponsors have supported Gani Bobi Centre in organizing the concert that is expected to turn Kosovo into the epicentre of music events this summer.

The concert will be held as part of a month-long summer festival in the two Kosovo cities of Prizren and Prishtina.

So far, the festival has included a modern art exhibition in the comic strip bar, Strip Depot, and a concert by Petrit Ceku, the famous Kosovo guitar player.

Morcheeba's concert will be the highlight of the festival and it will be held at the Youth Centre in Prishtina.

Doors will open for the concert at 7 pm. Tickets are being sold throughout IPKO sales points and in other sites for 6 euro only, while on the day of the concert the tickets will cost 8 euro. Warm up acts include Genc Salihu, Shpat Deda and Pischmen.

Following Morcheeba, revellers will be entertained by DJ Alban Hi-Dini

More details can be found at:  
[www.morcheeba.co.uk](http://www.morcheeba.co.uk)  
[www.summerurbanfestival.com](http://www.summerurbanfestival.com)  
[www.ganibobicenter.org](http://www.ganibobicenter.org)

### Other events at SURF:

Urban Graffiti workshop from 21 to 22 August in Prizren  
MM regional literary workshop from the 28 to 30 August in Prizren



## Prishtina Diary

### Full House

Friday, July 30 2010, Sexy House night with DANI BRAVO & DEAR-D  
Saturday, July 31, 2010 Tom Boxer feat. Antonia



### Amelie, Fehmi Agani

Saturday, July 31 2010, Amelie's first year Anniversary party and Beach Party.

Amelie is celebrating its first anniversary, and is inviting you to come and join them for the first ever Amelie birthday party with free tapas food, live music and a great surprise for the winner of the lottery. Throughout the day a 10% discount for the entire menu.

From 2pm to 5pm listen to D.J. Uran B



Square 21  
Saturday, July 31, 2010  
ALBAN HI-DINI



### DUPLEX Club

Friday, July 30 2010, DJ Master Hip Hop & RnB  
Saturday, July 31 2010, DJ PROFESSIONAL (House and Hip Hop)  
Sunday, August 1, live concert from Alban Skenderaj

ABC1
Cinema

**E**very day at 6 and 8 pm, ABC will screen the final chapter of Shrek, It Ain't Ogre...Till It's Ogre. ABC cinema also continues to screen the movie Robin Hood at 10 pm. The cinema will also screen the movie It's Complicated, Divorced... with Benefits with Merly Streep, Steve Marin, and Alec Baldwin in the main roles. And starting from August 6, ABC will start screening the movie Being Azem.

For ticket reservations and further information visit [www.kinoabc.info](http://www.kinoabc.info) or call 038 243 117

## DOKUFEST July - 7 August 2010 in Prizren



### Highlights:

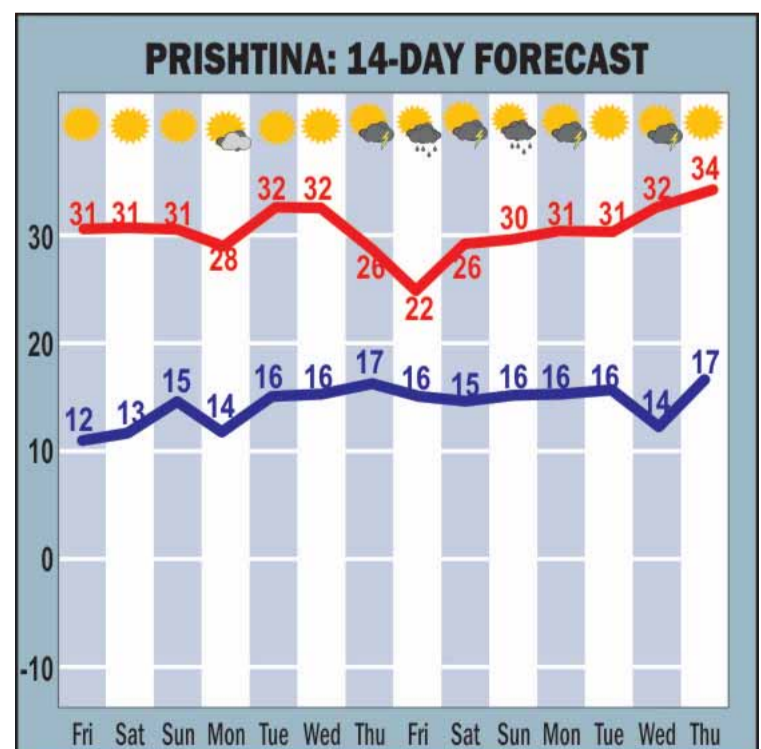
- Saturday, 31 July** - Kino Kala, Welcome Europe, Bruno Ulmer, France
- Sunday, 1 August** - Kino Lumbardhi, War and Love in Kabul, Helga Reidegel Germany
- Monday, 2 August** - House of Culture, Europe Next Door, Zelimir Zelnik, Serbia
- Tuesday, 3 August** - Kino Lumbardhi Nirgendwo.Kosovo, Silvana Santamaria, Germany
- Wednesday, 4 August** - Kino Bahce, Unearthing the Pen, Carol Salter, UK, Uganda
- Thursday, 5 August** - Kino Lumbardhi, Dreamland, Torfinnur Gudnason, Andri Snar Magnason, Iceland
- Friday, 6 August** - Kino ne Lum, Married to the Camera, Doga Kilcioglu, Turkey
- Saturday, 7 August** - Kino Lumbardhi, Recipes for Disaster, John Webster, Finland

The full version of all movies screening at DokuFest can be downloaded at [www.dokufest.com/2010](http://www.dokufest.com/2010)



**Dhermi, Havana Beach**  
Saturday, 31 July, 2010 Paul Van Dyk World Tour

The Grammy Award-nominated Electronic Dance Music DJ plays the beautiful Albanian beach this weekend. Don't miss it.



## Ecosovo

A to B without  
the CO2

By Elizabeth Gowing

Stuck for something to say? There are two subjects it is always safe to open a conversation with in Prishtina; the weather, and the traffic. And the safest way to deal with either is to complain that there is just too much of it.

I love the excesses of Prishtina's microclimate - from the blazing sun that makes the cafes open up like flowers, to the sudden snowfall that gives every building in the city a little white plis hat. But it would be hard for anyone to enjoy the excesses of Kosovo's traffic. So the exchange of complaints and depressing anecdotes trails on and on, like the cars backed up along Bill Clinton Boulevard. You take a deep breath - and wish you hadn't, because congestion isn't the only problem caused by all those cars; there's the city's terrible air quality too, as well as the unseen impact of all the irreplaceable fossil fuel that's going up in smoke.

## So what are the alternatives?

## Alternative no. 1: Buses

They're cheap; they're surprisingly frequent. And with the city's buses donated from countries across Europe, there is something magical about the choices available to you. You can stand on a broken pavement in Kosovo and hail a bus that advertises itself as heading for an affluent Swiss suburb, or perhaps the Hauptbahnhof.

Of course, at the city's bus station you really can take the first step on the way to a Hauptbahnhof, with the regular international and national departures from Prishtina. I've spent some of my happiest hours in Kosovo on intercity buses, watching the countryside and towns whizz by, unbothered by driving stress, and listening on my iPod to anything loud enough to drown out the 'comedy' shows running on a loop on the bus video player. Sense of humour failure aside, the buses are good value (3 euros between Prishtina and Gjakova, for example) and as punctual as any you would find in an affluent Swiss suburb. The times to all major towns in Kosovo are displayed above the windows within the bus station and are usually (OK, it's best to ask someone, to check) reliable.

## Alternative no. 2: Walking

No unpredictable jams (the only unpredictable thing about walking a small city like Prishtina is how

to accurately budget the time to say hello to the people you know you will bump into en route), good exercise and carbon neutral. Not everyone likes it though - a friend told me 'I hate walking in Prishtina because of the terrible air quality. That's why I drive everywhere.'

OK, if you are addicted to wheels, how about:

Alternative no. 3:  
Carpooling

For regular journeys to work, for weekend trips out of town, for field visits by your organisation - are there ways that you can share your (and the Earth's) resources with people travelling the same way? Opportunities for learning about your neighbour's or colleague's CD collection? The Facebook group 'Pristina carpool' offers a space to match up people wanting to go to the same place at the same time.

## Alternative no. 4: Trains

These are Kosovo's best-kept secret. In 2006, shortly after Kosovo's rail network had been relaunched, I took a train from Prishtina to Skopje. I noticed that my ticket was numbered 00010. A few weeks ago I caught a train from Prishtina to Peja and my ticket was numbered 09055, which suggests that the three intervening years have not been packed with customers. This train was busy, though - carrying all kinds of people - kids listening to MP3 players, men carrying sacks of peppers, old women deep in conversation and shopping. The seats are like armchairs and you can make yourself comfortable and look out of the window as if you are starting a particularly good movie, or perhaps a trailer for the feature film that awaits you when you reach your stop. You travel past haystacks, men minding cows, apple trees, mosques and churches. You remember that this is a beautiful country. My journey took just under two hours and cost 3 euros. Find the timetable for all rail travel starting in Kosovo, at [www.kosovorailway.com](http://www.kosovorailway.com), click for the English version and then on 'passenger transport' and 'train schedule'

So there are at least four alternatives to grumbling about Prishtina's traffic. The next time conversation turns to the city's traffic, are you still feeling stuck for something to say?

Elizabeth Gowing is a founder member of The Ideas Partnership, a Kosovan NGO working on educational, cultural and environmental projects. Contact her at [theideaspartnership@gmail.com](mailto:theideaspartnership@gmail.com)

## Bar Review:

## Churchill

Winston Churchill was a man in possession of undeniable leadership, a trait captured by Albert Sylejmani, the owner of a new Prishtina pub named after the legendary British leader. Albert, a professional actor, recently transformed a residential home, in a mainly residential area, into the city's newest English-style pub.

The two-story venue is located just behind the downtown block apartments home to Metro Café and a string of retail outlets. While the area is full of shabby homes and minimal business activity, Churchill definitely stands out, and for good reason.

The pub's front yard is greener than the rest of the neighbourhood, encircled by large green hedges and shelters by tall leafy trees. Simple terrace chairs and tables occupy the downtown space, which oddly feels like a retreat away from the busy city.

The bar area is located on the first level, which is fully open to the front terrace. Masculine furniture and dark wood panelling emphasize the varying colours of liquor present behind the bar, and a couple of paintings depicting the London skyline.

Thankfully, tacky pub ornaments are avoided at Churchill. The decor is extensively



grownup, with specific details which add distinctive character to the space.

A collection of eminent Winston Churchill quotes swathe the walls of the staircase leading to the second level of the pub. It's hard not to stop and read every single one, intricately written in bold differentiating fonts. "Never, never, never give up", one of them reads.

Actors, artists, journalists and other expressive individuals are part of the usual crowd at Churchill. You can usually find them on the second level, playing a game of pool in the pubs open

billiard's room, or lounging on the massive leather-bound sofas positioned in a way very familiar to one's own living room.

A series of flat screen TVs are located around the pub for, ready for football games and other popular matches.

Food will also soon be readily available at Churchill, and will include pub favourites such as hamburgers, steaks, and salads. Regular barbeques are also held on the terrace. Details will be available at [www.churchillpubs.com](http://www.churchillpubs.com) very soon.

044 207 067

Rr: Johan V. Hahn

## Shop Review:

## Souvenir Shop Delvina

While the streets of Prishtina are littered with substandard souvenirs mostly made in China, Souvenir Shop Delvina provides alternative keepsakes all produced at home. While mostly focused on traditional costumes, other items are also plentiful.

At first glimpse, Delvina comes across as a hectic bazaar stall, with heaps of fabric, rugs, costumes and ornaments hanging from walls and sitting on every available surface. The store may be small, but its collection is quite eminent.

Due to its long-standing family tradition, Delvina has earned a reputation for meticulously stitching traditional costumes for both men and women. The methods and materials used to sew the folkloric wear are equivalent to those used hundreds of years earlier.

Although traditional Kosovar dress varies from region, many aspects are staples seen in many parts of the Balkans. Delvina uses varying styles, from Kosovo and neighbouring Albania.

Although costumes are readily available at the store, the family also creates custom designs for clients. These creations take between four to five days to be completed.



Prices for males begin at 150 euro, and can reach 300 euro depending on the materials used. Heavier wool traditionally used for trousers contributes to the elevated price.

For female costumes, prices begin at 80 euro and reach about 200 euro. However, rare finds such as accessories created a century earlier can cost more.

Delvina's fabrics can also be used for alternative purposes.

Colourful and heavily embroidered materials can be used for home decorating and interior design.

Other souvenirs available at the shop include traditional instruments, footwear, headwear, jewelry, mini clay monuments, bowls and plates, bags, and postcards

Souvenir Shop Delvina

Rr: Bill Clinton,

above TEB bank

044 336 159



By Shega A'Mula  
in Prishtina

# Inside Prishtina

Prishtina Insight  
July 30 - Sep 3, 2010

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## Building Review

# Prishtina Golf

Prishtina's recreational activities have recently surpassed that of café hopping with the opening of Prishtina Golf, the country's first mini golf course and driving range.

The impressive piece of green is located just 7 km away from the downtown area, next to a village known as Llapnaselle. For those of you familiar with Ciao Restaurant, Prishtina Golf can be found just down the road from the Cagllavica eatery.

Initiatives to begin the project began two years ago, beginning with the development of the driving range. According to Lavdim Zylfiu from Prishtina Golf, the venture reached an estimated cost of 600,000 euro, with the addition of a world-class mini golf course and high-quality restaurant and bar.

"We wanted to create something that is a step ahead for Prishtina and its young Europeans, and the absence of a gold course was it," said Zylfiu.

Nevertheless, Zylfiu admits that the country's international residents will also benefited greatly from the project, as they

were inclined to visit courses outside of the country before its development.

"Internationals would head to Greece and Bulgaria for the weekends in order to play golf. Now, a lot of them our staying in Prishtina and enjoying our facility here," he added.

The facilities were built by City Golf Group, 'the market leader in golf courses since the 1950s', according to its official website.

The company's expertise can certainly be seen on the mini golf course. 18 different putting greens, furnished with interesting obstacles and deflectors varying by level, add spice to the game.

Each putting area is also a direct adaptation of a prominent international green located outside of the region, which is indicated on a sign depicting the number of the area and the technique recommended for the best putting results.

"The course represents some of the world's best putting greens, from Scotland, Ireland and the US," said Zylfiu.

Zylfiu admits that the driving range is more popular among international visi-

tors, with a total distance of 250 metres.

A maximum of seven people can practise their swing at the same time and around 50 people can play simultaneously on the mini course.

A game of mini golf proves quite relaxing for those used to the Prishtina's usual chaotic nature.

Prices are also quite reasonable - 5 euro per person for the first game, 3 euro for the second. Club prices for the driving range are 5 euro, while 50 golf balls cost 5 euro and 100 cost 8 euro.

You're also free to bring your own clubs, evading the need to pay the 5 euro rental charge.

When in need of a break, Prishtina Golf's outdoor terrace and restaurant is ready to accommodate your requests, with quality food options, drinks and alcoholic beverages.

Prishtina Golf is open from 12 pm to 12 am every day. Visit [www.prishtinagolf.com](http://www.prishtinagolf.com) for more info.

Prishtina Golf  
Llapnaselle  
045/049 34 34 33

## Outside In

# Scientific Conclusion on Kosovo



By Kreshnik Hoxha

This edition's column is the last one of the season before Prishtina Insight takes its summer break, and also Outside IN's one-year birthday. Twelve months of writing for a small country like Kosovo with the potential to produce stories every minute was quite a marathon.

With a greying Prime Minister, vertically challenged Foreign Minister, a uniquely polarised coalition and with two million Kosovars being used as guinea pigs, the now-ICJ-Approved Republic of Kosovo has seemed like a gigantic research laboratory, where great world powers perform a wide range of experiments to test their foreign policy.

And this, undoubtedly of course, brings to mind the topics discussed in this column about the progression of these experiments and the results produced.

Outside In started off with the visit of my British friends to Kosovo which added context to the biggest issue of the time. This was the road construction between Prishtina and the airport, which took a lifetime to complete.

Well, thank God, Fatmir Limaj has managed to tick that one off his list.

But the experiment demonstrated the great reserves of patience Kosovars have in almost absolutely anything, which probably plays to their disadvantage when it comes to holding politicians accountable.

Accountability testing brings us to egging politicians as a sign of anger towards them. This experiment successfully proved that if Kosovars were to egg politicians whenever they messed up, then Kosovo would be a world leader in egg production with the potential to export some to the region too. What a brilliant method for economic resurrection?

With the onset of local elections in Kosovo, the Central Election Commission extended to me their warmest regards by asking me to vote. It was an interesting experiment conducted by Nesrin Lushta aimed at testing the efficiency of the postal service in Kosovo and, in conclusion, successfully putting Kosovo on the list of countries with the slowest postal system in Europe.

The most expensive experiment to date has to be the one conducted by Hashim Thaci, in December last year, when he dished out 5.7 million euro to pay Saatchi & Saatchi to help us paint a new image in the eyes of the world, in the vain hope that it would bring us more recognitions.

The experiment showed that Thaci was short of results, especially when you look at Vuk Jeremic's success in encouraging recognitions through his appeal to the ICJ. And Jeremic did it all for free too!

These are the key findings of the research. Moving forwards, it is recommended that future experiments are performed on Kosovo's EU integration prospects and speeding up recognitions.

All these should be done in conjunction with changing the current political scene of Kosovo and serving something new and fresh to the voter in 2011 general elections.

And those with greying hair could do with reviewing their experiments or just taking early retirement of some sort.

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M  
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# Forum for Civic Initiative's Innovative Grant Scheme

The Forum for Civic Initiatives, FIQ, has been an innovative NGO since its establishment in Ferizaj in 2000.

But the organisation turned a new page this year with the launch of its new grant-making programme, which provides funds for eco ideas, active citizenship and unique ideas

"Our short term vision is to expand our grant-making programmes, provide more grants for organisations and informal groups and be able to reach out to more communities and assist them to address daily problems," FIQ head Ferdinand Nikolla told Prishtina Insight.

"In addition, FIQ will further strengthen the networking and partnership with our valuable partners from other big municipalities in Kosovo, and continue our advocacy work at the national level by overseeing rule of law institutions in order to make them more effective and accountable to the people," he added.

"FIQ believes that by possessing all these work elements, we will be able to encourage and support civic initiatives in addressing daily problems, and in the other side, make our institutions perform according to people's demands."

During its 10 years of operation, FIQ has evolved into an organisation with a focus on transparency and accountability of the government and the strengthening of the capacity of civil society through debates, training and grant making support.

For its work on the national level, FIQ's objectives are to advocate for advancing and defending public interest so that institutions develop people-focused, locally appropriate and effective policies.

Nikolla explained: "We do this through research and policy recommendations. The other objective at the local level is to engage directly with people in measuring the impact of these policies and government



FIQ's tent at Freedom Festival which was used to promote green living

actions, by facilitating a constructive dialogue and cooperation between people and private and the public sector."

During their operations, the initiative has faced different challenges for different periods of time.

Nikolla said that during its first three year FIQ had to work hard in establishing itself as a 'respected and credible actor'.

"For us, not being a huge organisation at that time [made it] not easy to convince donors that it is worth investing in us, but step by step, working together with people, with institutions, and with them, we man-

aged to increase the trust among donors, and other stakeholders, and considerably expanded our work programmes and staff," he said.

In the following two year, from 2003 to 2005, the challenge became to overcome the disillusionment at the perceived lack of results that donor money had brought to Kosovo and problems with the perception of corruption.

This year, FIQ became a grant-making organisation and is encouraging other groups to apply for funds.

All informal groups, community organi-

sations, nongovernmental organisations and networks who aim to contribute to the overall development of society are eligible to apply for a grant, which must be in the sphere of ecology, active citizenship or unique ideas.

Nikolla added: "FIQ aims to raise the level of civic involvement in improving the quality of life by creating sustainable communities, clean environment and effective partnership between community, civil society, business sector and institutions of Kosovo."

For more information visit [www.fiq-fci.org](http://www.fiq-fci.org)

## NGO NEWS

# 700million Euro Road Contract to Remain Secret

The Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications has blocked a request by civil society organisation FOL Movement to release the contract for the construction of the Morine-Merdare highway

The NGO sent an official request to the Ministry of Transport and

Telecommunication to obtain the agreement between the ministry and construction consortium Bechtel Enka for the 700million highway, which will span Kosovo, from the Albanian to Serbian border.

According to the law on access to public documents, institutional documents

must be made available to the public.

But according to the ministry's official reply, issued by its legal department and signed by the secretary general Mr Skender Gashi and the director of the legal department Avdi Kamerolli, the contract and the tender documents are too sensitive to release.

"Referring to the law number 2003/12 for Access to Public Documents, amendment 4, because of the fact that those documents are of major public interest and sensitive documents, your request has been denied," the letter reads.

Petrit Zogaj, programme manager of movement FOL, told Prishtina Insight that the decision to withhold the information suggested the ministry had something to hide.

"We won't give up until we have access to those public documents, and we will pursue all legal procedures and actions in order to find out how the 700million euro will be spent," added Zogaj.

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# Kosovo Ruling Reveals World Court's Darker Side

Judges' opinion will fuel suspicions that power, not law, is the fundamental factor behind the success or failure of secessionist movements.



By Matthew Parish

International law concerning state secession may be complex: James Crawford's flagship textbook, *The Creation of States under International Law*, though 870 pages long, contains few certain conclusions.

But one of the strangest features of the ruling of the International Court of Justice, ICJ, on 22 July in its Advisory Opinion on Kosovo's Declaration of Independence is the pretence that the subject is not a part of international law at all.

The judges' majority opinion breezily declares that international law has nothing to say on declarations of independence. To many lawyers, this will appear threadbare.

While at face value the Court's opinion is voluminous, at 252 pages, the greater part of it consists of French translation, dissenting opinions and the recital of background facts. There is little or no significant, credible, legal analysis.

The issue for the Court, as framed by the UN General Assembly, was whether the declaration of independence by Kosovo's interim self-governing institutions of 17 February 2008 was consistent with UN Resolution 1244.

This was the Resolution that authorized the creation of UNMIK, the UN agency that administered Kosovo from 1999 to its independence in 2008, and which in theory, if not in practice, still does so.

The Court faced the argument that the declaration contradicts the Resolution as this explicitly refers to preserving the territorial integrity of the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The self-governing institutions of Kosovo, including its Assembly, were created by orders of the head of UNMIK, acting pursuant to executive and legislative authority given to him by 1244. By law, everything UNMIK did had to be consistent with Resolution 1244.

Thus, UNMIK was not entitled to do anything to prejudice Yugoslavia's territorial integrity. From this it is a small step to conclude that no institution created by UNMIK could do anything to prejudice Serbia's territorial integrity either. Thus, Kosovo's assembly, which UNMIK created, could not legally declare independence from Serbia.

This logic looked so persuasive that Serbia clearly felt confident of the outcome of the case. The issue would never have reached the ICJ but for Serbia's lobbying of the UN General Assembly, which then referred the issue to the Court. How then did the ICJ escape the straightjacket of this apparently unanswerable legal argument?

The answer is that the Court exhibited a judicial ingenuity of

which Balkan politicians would be proud, opining that the General Assembly had asked the wrong question.

It was not the interim self-governing institutions of Kosovo that had declared independence on 17 February 2008 but "persons who acted together in their capacity as representatives of the people of Kosovo outside the framework of the interim administration".

This logic is very stretched. The President and the Prime Minister of Kosovo, both positions created by Kosovo's interim constitution, enacted by UNMIK, invited the Kosovo Assembly - another institution created by UNMIK - to adopt a declaration of independence.

But none of these institutions, the Court declares, acted in their official capacities; instead they were representing the people of Kosovo in an abstract role, outside the formal governing institutions of Kosovo, even though the Declaration of Independence was tabled as a resolution of the Assembly.

The political implications of this reasoning are striking. Acting on this logic, the Prime Minister of the Bosnian Serb entity, the Republika Srpska, RS, could call a meeting of the RS National Assembly, which then declares independence from Bosnia acting as representative of the people of Republika Srpska rather than as an institution established under the 1995 Dayton peace accords.

It appears that representatives of the people who act "outside the framework of the administration" are not bound by the legal obligations imposed upon those administrations - even when those representatives are one and the same people as the administration.

## Not within the scope of international law?

The other limb of the ICJ's argument amounts to an assertion that issues of state secession are not within the scope of international law at all. By this reasoning, the declarations of independence of South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transdniestr and every other autonomous territory emerging from "frozen conflicts" are also consistent with the law of nations.

Furthermore, it does not seem to matter who makes a declaration of independence. Even if not made by the proper institutions of the territory but, on the Court's reasoning, by a group representing the people of the region, a declaration of independence can still be legitimate as a matter of international law.

The more one reflects on this, the more absurd it seems. International law has as its subject the relationships between states. A fundamental question within this discipline must be when states are created, and thus when it is proper to extend to them diplomatic recognition and membership of international organizations. To pretend international law has

nothing to say on this topic is to denude the discipline of much of its normative force.

The Court tries to evade this implication by drawing another technical distinction. It avers that it is not ruling on whether Kosovo has actually seceded from Serbia, but only on whether the Declaration of Independence was consistent with international law. However, such a distinction will be lost upon the people of the Balkans, who perceive the ICJ's opinion as a hands-down win for Kosovar Albanians and a debacle for Serbia.

Imagine a court ruling that a declaration of marriage was lawful, but adding that it made no pronouncement on whether the individuals in question were actually married as a result. Such a result would be incomprehensible to anyone but lawyers. The world sees the ICJ as vindicating Kosovo's statehood, and this attempt to dodge the issue cannot succeed.

## A political ruling:

The ruling will confirm suspicions that the Court arrives at judgments on political grounds, while the threadbare legal reasoning will enable anyone who wishes to reject the decision as political theatre comfortably to do so.

Significantly, of the ten judges who voted in Kosovo's favour, eight came from nations that had recognized Kosovo while one was from Mexico, which has not taken a position. Only one was from a country opposed to Kosovo's independence, Brazil. All four dissenting judges who supported Serbia were from countries that have not recognized Kosovo. The way the Court divided along lines of national interest thereby undermined claims to impartiality.

It may be that international law has so little to say about this subject because, ultimately, the success or otherwise of declarations of independence turns not upon the ruling of a judicial institution but on the military and economic strength of the seceding territory, and on the support, or lack of it, of the Great Powers.

Transdniestr, South Ossetia and Abkhazia all survive thanks to Russian support, while Kosovo survives with EU and US support. Kurdistan - and Republika Srpska - have not achieved independence from the countries of which they reluctantly form a part because the Great Powers in their regions oppose their attempts to do so. Power, not law, appears to remain the fundamental causal dynamic in the success or failure of secessionist movements.

Viewed through this lens, the independence of Kosovo might be accepted as a settled political fact. While it sets a regrettable precedent, it was certainly a fait accompli long before the Declaration of Independence. Anyone travelling to Kosovo in recent years could see it had for all intents and purposes

separated itself from Serbia. Under UNMIK's guise, it had created a different legal system, currency, immigration rules and car licence plates and its own passport regime, taxes and administration.

For good or ill, meanwhile, acting in flat contravention of its own mandate, which was to preserve the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, UNMIK instead pursued a covertly partitionist agenda, the logical consequence of which came to fruition in 2008. In 1999, Slobodan Milosevic had predicted the independence of Kosovo were NATO permitted to occupy the territory; in this, at least, his instincts were right.

It must not be forgotten that the ICJ case was brought at the request of Serbia, which thought it had a watertight legal case. Instead, the Court hijacked Serbia's goal of vindicating its legal position, and used the ruling to validate the positions of the prime movers in the international community who had pushed for the independence of Kosovo, including the US, Britain, France and Germany, all of whom have judges on the court.

These countries, occupying Kosovo through the medium of UNMIK and faced with the mutual hostility between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, could not devise an exit strategy. They had no desire to spend years repressing the Albanian insurgency that would have erupted had UNMIK determined to hand Kosovo back to Serbia. Nor did Serbia have the military resources to suppress the territory. The independence of Kosovo was probably the least bad option available as of 2008.

But this decision will make no difference to the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo. Serbia knows Kosovo's independence is a political fact that cannot be challenged for the foreseeable future lest it jeopardize the country's EU accession negotiations. Moreover, Serbia has neither the resources nor the inclination to use force to take back control of the rebellious territory.

However, Serbia will continue to refuse to recognize Kosovo, and its rejection of the ICJ ruling will be sustained by attacks upon the poor quality of the Court's reasoning. The ICJ ruling may cause a few more countries to recognize Kosovo. But the Court will not sway the likes of Russia, Romania and Slovakia, which still strongly oppose its independence.

## A boost to separatism everywhere:

Where the ruling may make a more important difference, however, is in other countries with secessionist movements. It may turn out to be a matter of regret that the ICJ did not accord that consideration greater weight in its deliberations.

In support of the Kosovar Albanians, it is tempting to adopt a reluctant advocacy of ethnic par-

titution in the Western Balkans. Where secession and division of territory between warring ethnic groups has taken place, it has ushered in peace and political stability. Formerly hostile groups, each in possession of a new sense of nationhood, have found reconciliation through common economic and political interests, as can be seen in the recent renaissance in diplomatic relations between Serbia and Croatia.

By contrast, where different peoples who harbour animosity to one another are forced into the confines of a unified state, political stability is undermined. Power sharing becomes impossible in the face of mutual suspicion. Thus we witness the perennial paralysis inherent in Bosnian and indeed Belgian politics.

But the challenge facing international diplomacy is that legitimizing this message creates hazards: affirmation of one secessionist act may trigger nationalist movements across the world that might otherwise have lain dormant.

For this reason, it would have been better had those in charge of international institutions that confer legitimacy, such as the ICJ, not lent their moral authority to what has taken place in Kosovo. Alas, the judges of the ICJ, being lawyers rather than diplomats or politicians, may not have had in mind the practical consequences of their abstract declarations. Lawyers do not make good policy-makers. It was open to the ICJ not to rule on the issue at all. Five of the fourteen Judges thought the Court should have declined to provide an opinion. That would have been the more prudent course.

The enormity of the legal precedent being set by Kosovo's independence cannot be overlooked. In Kosovo a consortium of foreign powers, acting initially without a United Nations mandate, intervened using force in a sovereign state to resolve that country's ethnic conflict. They then occupied part of the country and oversaw its secession over a nine-year period. It is not clear that the ICJ should have lent its imprimatur to such an exceptional event. Whatever one's view of Kosovo's independence, it must be conceded that the events that led to UNMIK's occupation and separation of the province from the rest of Serbia were unique.

To have lent these events a cloak of legal support may be to suggest that other disputed territories have a similar "right" to secede, potentially fuelling ethnic civil wars elsewhere in the world.

*The author, an international lawyer based in Geneva, formerly worked as Chief Legal Adviser to the International Supervisor of Brcko. His book on post-war Bosnia, A Free City in the Balkans: Reconstructing a Divided Society in Bosnia, is published by I.B.Tauris. [www.matthewparish.com](http://www.matthewparish.com)*



# Ivan Vejvoda: 'Serbia Should Accept Kosovo Passports'

There are grounds for cautious optimism over Kosovo in that all sides have chosen the EU option and wish to resolve the dispute peacefully, says the head of the Balkan Trust for Democracy.



By Artan Haraqija

**Q: How much better or worse is Serbian diplomacy right now, not only when dealing with Kosovo but in general?**

A: I am not a diplomat; I work in civil society, with the Balkan Trust for Democracy, an independent institution. Serbian diplomacy, like any other diplomacy in the world, takes care of its national interests and tries in the difficult world of the global financial crisis to find its way. Any diplomacy, including Serbia's, is trying to vie for whatever position that can create jobs. I would say it's doing no better or no worse than any other diplomacy, even vis-a-vis the question of Kosovo.

**Q: Sometimes you are also seen as a stronger figure in the world of diplomacy than the Foreign minister of Serbia. Is that correct? How does that make you feel? ?**

A: I don't see the world in black and white colours but in shades of grey. We had a tragedy in our former country, Yugoslavia, which broke down in violence and blood and we all paid a huge price. We have to tread very carefully, whether we are diplomats, governmental, nongovernmental people or ordinary citizens. As citizens, we want normality and a return to a life in which there is a minimum of decency and dignity. So, I'm careful in what I say, because it is only by moderation, by approaching each other, by addressing each other and trying to find that middle ground, that we can resolve our situation.

**Q: What is the reason for being so careful?**

A: For example, I was at a hearing at the US Senate Foreign Affairs Committee on April 15. There were the ambassadors of all countries there, including Kosovo's. After answering this

question, they all approached me afterwards and said how glad they were about the way I'd spoken about the region and about individual issues. We need to simmer down and find that middle ground, those voices of moderation. And eliminate the extremes that brought us to the conflict in the 1990s.

**Q: Why did all this tragedy happen and why did so many people lose their lives in our former country?**

A: In a nutshell, because we were a communist country and didn't have democracy. We didn't have the institutions or the tools to resist to what I would call a power retention strategy on the part of the communist elites. They realised that the world had changed overnight on November 11, 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell. Suddenly, Yugoslavia, which had had a very specific, privileged position in the Cold War, lost all its privileges. Those in power realised that there would need to be rationalization of all sorts of governance and institutions and they knew they would lose out in this rationalization, so there was a grab for power.

**Q: Why do you see it like that?**

A: Because the world functions on the base of world order. Whether is 1815 after the fall of Napoleon, or 1918 with Versailles Europe, or 1945 at the time of Yalta and Potsdam, when the roof of the Cold War closed over us. This roof disappeared that night and suddenly everything changed. Yugoslavia had been an in-between country and suddenly it was not in-between; it had to choose. There was a run for Europe in all other post communist countries but instead of running to Europe our country decided to "sort out" a number of issues created by the grievances of the nationalities. The elites used nationalism to mobilise their populations in that process of power retention. And instead of perhaps necessarily breaking up in a moderate fashion like the Soviet Union

and Czechoslovakia, we went down the road to hell...

We also had the wrong people in the wrong place at the wrong time, which is the result of communism. You had assent though hierarchies, loyalty and obedience, not through meritocracy, so you get a person like [Slobodan] Milosevic in Serbia, [Franjo] Tudjman in Croatia and [Alija] Izetbegovic in Bosnia.

**Q: There was no such personality in Kosovo, so why were so many innocent lives lost there too?**

A: Clearly, in sorting out the legacy of communism in its institutional and constitutional structure, economic and other reasons, we have to delve deeply. Yes, Milosevic took away the autonomy of Kosovo in 1990... but I don't want to go down that road because as I said it would take us very long [to discuss].

But ... the end result is not what we wanted in terms of the social, economic situation. We would all like to be at least at the same level [economically] as the Czech Republic, but we are not, and remain far from that. In fact, we are not at the level we had in 1989. I think that 20 years on, Croatia has just now attained the level they had [in 1989]. Serbia's GDP is around 60 per cent of its 1989 level. We have all lost out.

**Q: Why is the relationship between Serbs and Albanian in Kosovo so appalling?**

A: I don't think it is. I would disagree on that.

**Q: There is almost no communication.**

A: Yes, there is.

**Q: Like this interview?**

A: Like this, and like trade as well. I came by car from Belgrade yesterday. I saw hundreds of trucks waiting to come over. Trade, as the French philosopher Montesquieu said, has a soothing effect on relationships between nations. If there is trade, there are deep relations.

What you are alluding to is that Serbia does not recognise

Kosovo's independence while Kosovo maintains that it is fully independent and has a right to a UN seat. Yes, there are things to sort out. But I would say that two-and-a-half years after Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, things have simmered down. I don't think we will go to war. On the contrary, I think we have two presuppositions to be cautiously optimistic. One is that all governments in the region, including Pristina and Belgrade, have opted for EU integration. Secondly, both sides have declared they want to resolve outstanding issues peacefully.

**Q: As a Kosovo citizen, with my documents, should I have the right to travel freely to Serbia?**

A: You should, absolutely. I lived in a communist country, had that famous passport and travelled freely. I am also someone, like all of us in this region, who lived under sanctions and had to travel to Budapest to fly to other countries. I have been in that undignified position, as all of us have. Recently, three countries, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, obtained a visa-free regime [to the EU] because they did the homework that was required of them. Hopefully, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania will get the same status.

That leaves Kosovo, and it's not good for there to be a territory in the region or Europe whose inhabitants cannot travel freely, because it only creates additional problems.

**Q: Do you believe that the current situation [with Kosovo] has satisfied one side entirely and left the other disappointed?**

A: The unilateral declaration gave Kosovo independence, which 69 nations have recognised and I suspect that there will be more recognitions. This is just over a third of the members of the United Nations. But Kosovo does not have full recognition in the sense of being a full member of the UN. Serbia lost through these

recognitions; it is struggling to retain what it can. But it needs to be recalled that we are still under the UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which keeps the sovereignty over Kosovo in Serbia's hands at a formal level. No in practical terms - but yes in the [Serb-ruled] north of Kosovo. The reality on the ground is that and both Pristina and Belgrade understand this; that this is not resolved.

Because we have these presuppositions of wanting to resolve outstanding issues peacefully, we need to find the modalities in which we can slowly come together through dialogue; words are complicated here, whether we talk about negotiations, or status and so on. Let's leave those words to the side. What we have is an unresolved problem; we all want to go to Europe, to return to normalcy and we don't want to do it in the bad way that it was done in the 1990s. I think that with the help of the United Nations, the main European countries and Brussels of course, we can find ways to move slowly forward. I would add that I see on both sides a political will not to let this linger but to act sooner than later.

**Q: Do our representatives in Pristina or Belgrade have the will to really move forward with the EU?**

A: I would say yes. I know more about the situation in Belgrade than I do here than about the politics in Pristina. But what I detect and hear when I go to Washington and Brussels is that there is an understanding that Brussels does not want a new Cyprus in its midst. It does not want another frozen conflict. I remind you that Cyprus has been lingering for 40 years, and they have been endlessly negotiating, trying to find that common ground, yet Cyprus still got into the European Union.

*This is an abridged version of an interview first broadcast on BIRN's Life in Kosovo show.*

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