

Prishtina Insight

July 29 - September 1, 2011 Issue No. 69 www.prishtinainsight.com Price € 1



'Frustration with EU Inaction' Forced Border Raid

Prishtinaa says EU inaction over Kosovo's lawless north forced it to take unilateral action - which some now describe as "poorly planned".

By Lawrence Marzouk

An advisor to Kosovo's Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci, has told Prishtina Insight that the European Union and its rule of law mission in Kosovo, EULEX, had failed in Kosovo and that this was why the authorities had no choice but to undertake unilateral action in the north on Monday.

Bekim Collaku spoke after days of unrest in the north led to the destruction of a border crossing by a Serb mob, the death of an officer from Kosovo Police's special

unit and the redeployment of NATO troops in large numbers.

"The EU has failed to learn the lessons, and again it has problems fulfilling its mission through EULEX on rule of law," Collaku said.

The EU remains "status neutral" on Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence because five of the 27 member states do not recognise it.

This has hampered decision-making by EU institutions and its mission in Kosovo, EULEX, as it has attempted to balance conflicting views.

It has resulted this year in

Europe's failure to renew a key trade agreement with Kosovo, or appoint a permanent head of EU policy in Prishtina since the beginning of May.

Secret operation:

Kosovo Police's special unit launched an unprecedented operation on Monday night to take over two northern border points, Gates 1 and 31 near Leposavic and Zubin Potok.

The two crossings have been out of Prishtina's control since the country declared independence, when Serb mobs burnt them down.

Since then EULEX officials and Serb members of the Kosovo Police have manned them. But customs duties have not been collected and passports have not been stamped.

Kosovo's government said action became urgent after it imposed a ban on Serbian imports on July 20, which was not being enforced in the north.

The government introduced the embargo after talks between Belgrade and Prishtina failed to result in a deal lifting a Serbian ban on Kosovo products imposed in 2008.

continues page 2

BUSINESS

Fears Over Sale of Kosovo's Prize Asset, PTK

> page 6



INSIDE PRISHTINA

Giant Party Leaders' Posters Illegal, Says Municipality

> page 18

TIME OUT

Dokufest's Tenth Anniversary Already a Hit

> page 17

FEATURE

Comedy Bridges Language Gulf Between Two Albanias

> page 12 - 13

Prishtina Insight

Kosovo's only English-language newspaper is available:

Delivered to Your Door

From Newsstands across Kosovo

Sent To Your Inbox

From our partners

see page 16 for more info



Thaci Loses Grip on Kosovo's Ruling Party

An old anecdote holds that ruling parties craft their own downfall. If so, the current struggles within the leadership of the governing Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK looks like a textbook example.

A bitter conflict between key figures in the PDK, which may be...

analysis

page 4-5



New Photos Issued in Medicus Case

Photos of Israeli Moshe Harel, who is on the run from justice, have been issued by Interpol in a bid to track down the fugitive.

In June, EULEX, the EU mission in Kosovo, confirmed the indictment against a Turkish doctor, Yusuf Sonmez, and Israeli Moshe Harel...

news

page 5

Prishtina Insight is supported by:



with funding from Austrian Development Cooperation



Kosovo: 'Frustration with EU' Forced Border Raid

from page 1

The operation was kept secret from Kosovo's international partners, including EULEX and the NATO force, KFOR. Nor were details passed on to the Chief of Kosovo Police, Reshat Maliqi.

Pro-government newspapers have claimed that, on hearing the news of the operation, Maliqi contacted EULEX, prompting Prime Minister Hashim Thaci to sack him.

Maliqi denies this. He told Prishtina Insight that last Friday he was told he could not take his holiday because of a planned operation, but he received no further details of it until Monday evening.

Kosovo Police sources told Prishtina Insight that the mission was kept secret in order to make sure that Serb members of Kosovo Police in the north did not pass on the information to local Serb militia groups.

As the police special units reached the two gates a little before midnight on Monday, they removed mobile phones from their fellow Serb officers in order to avoid information filtering out.

But as news of the operation spread, armed local Serbs took to the streets and set up roadblocks near the Kosovo-Serbia border.

Kosovo Police and Customs officials then faced difficulties on Tuesday travelling by road, after being drawn into firefights with local Serbs. During these an officer was shot in the head and later died and another was seriously injured.

On Tuesday a deal was thought to have been reached between Belgrade, Prishtina and KFOR on the removal of the special unit and the future deployment at the crossing points of Kosovo police and customs officers of Serbian and Albanian ethnicity.

But Serb leaders on Wednesday said they had agreed only for Kosovo Serb police officers and EULEX customs officials to be present. As a result, they did not dismantle roadblocks and a KFOR helicopter attempting to transport Kosovo police and customs officials to the border was fired on and was forced to retreat.

As it became clear that the situation was worsening, sources in the police special unit told Prishtina Insight that they were preparing to return to the north later on Wednesday following the funeral of their colleague, Enver Zymberi.

A few hours later a group of Serbs set alight the border point near Leposavic. Belgrade branded the arsonists as hooligans. But Prime Minister Thaci maintained that the violence had been orchestrated from the Serbian capital.

US and French KFOR troops have now been deployed in large numbers at both border crossings

and across the north in a bid to stem the violence.

Kosovo's unilateral move was widely criticised by the international community, in particular by the EU.

A more nuanced view came from the International Civilian Office, ICO, comprising 25 countries that supported Kosovo's independence.

The ICO defended the government's right to carry out such operations on its sovereign territory, while urging both sides to end the violence and return to the negotiating table.

ICO spokesman Andy McGuffie told Prishtina Insight: "The Kosovo government now must focus on reaching out to its citizens in northern Kosovo in addition to establishing legitimate administrative control.

"It must determinedly explain to people living in northern Kosovo how Prishtina can improve their quality of life," he added.

"The government has to show understanding of the aspirations of people living in northern Kosovo and work with them to create economic, social and political benefits for all."

Frustration boiled over:

Relations between the Kosovo government and EULEX have become increasingly fraught this year, with key figures including the Interior Minister, Bajram Rexhepi, launching withering attacks on the mission's alleged failure to tackle lawlessness in the north.

This frustration with the international community and in particular with the EU led Kosovo to take unilateral action, the government says.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Thaci said there was "no going back" on the police operation aimed at taking control of customs posts in the Serb-held north.

This was "a moment of truth for the new Kosovo", he added. "Kosovo will not turn back, there will be no return to the status quo."

Thaci attacked EULEX for not supporting the action. "For 12 years the international community has failed to take even one act to restore law and order in that part of the territory of Kosovo," he said.

The Prime Minister's advisor, Collaku, told Prishtina Insight that the EU needed to understand that it was "losing an opportunity to fix the mistakes it made in the past when, owing to its disunity, it failed to prevent the wars in the Balkans.

"It may be the last moment for them to be clear on what they want to happen in the Balkans," he said.

"To be clearer, they should clearly say whether they accept Kosovo



KFOR has stepped up its presence in Mitrovica

as a sovereign and independent state inside its recognised borders, or whether they have another agenda."

Collaku said the government could no longer tolerate the "criminal structures of Serbia terrorizing the population living in that part of Kosovo.

"We cannot allow criminal groups sponsored by Serbia to hold the future of our country hostage because that is not acceptable, not only according to our constitution, but also by our internal law and European principles."

The advisor said the dead Kosovo policeman had been murdered by Serbian paramilitaries "paid for by the Serbian state.

"Thus, the EU should oppose the paramilitary actions of Serbia inside Kosovo and support the legitimate actions of Kosovo's authorities for the rule of law."

Naim Rashiti, head of the think tank, the International Crisis Group in Kosovo, agreed that frustration with the EU had played a key role in the decision to seize the border crossings.

He detected "extreme frustration in the leadership in Prishtina in relation to the international community and Belgrade.

"During recent years, there has been an increase in this frustra-

tion, which mainly is connected to the unclear position of the EU," he said.

"The effects of [their] neutral position on [Kosovo's] status will be felt even more in the future and they will be painful for Kosovo," he predicted.

Rashiti said that Kosovo needed to see the quick establishment of control of customs in the north, and the EU needed to push Serbia to drop its ban on Kosovo goods.

Alongside increasing anger at EU inaction, some see a shrewd political manoeuvre by Thaci aimed at bolstering his ratings.

One international official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said an internal poll carried out by the ruling PDK party recently had showed his popularity ratings were falling.

Rashiti agreed that tackling the north had become a key issue for political leaders in Kosovo, particularly since the last election, since when a stronger, more vocal opposition emerged in parliament.

But Collaku dismissed the idea that petty political considerations lay behind Thaci's decision to order the police action. Such claims "failed to understand reality", he said noting that no elections were looming in Kosovo.

The European Parliament's rap-

porteur on Kosovo, Austrian Green MEP Ulrike Lunacek, said Serbia bore most of the blame for the outbreak of violence in northern Kosovo.

"The escalation in northern Kosovo, with one dead and one injured, is a tragic symptom of the ongoing stalemate in the negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia," she said.

"By blocking dialogue, Serbia has triggered this current border dispute, which due to an inappropriate response by the Kosovar authorities, has bubbled over."

The MEP said that the EU and its members needed to ensure Serbia improved its relationship with its neighbour.

"If Serbia continues to block dialogue with Kosovo, the EU must refuse to grant it EU candidate status," she added.

Poorly planned:

Kosovo's government have been lavish in its praise of the operation and of the bravery of Kosovo Police Officers

But some voices are critical. Kosovo's recently sacked chief of police said the mission was poorly planned.

"There should have been a detailed plan with everything thought through, i.e. food, medical intervention, logistics and so on," Maliqi said.

"But owing to the [lack of] time, this plan had no possibility to be drawn up. The police faced barricades, shootings in the road and only a few of them had any idea about the terrain. Most of them were there for the first time."

Maliqi said that sources in KFOR had since assured him that "the operation was not planned well".

Rashiti of the ICG also said the operation appeared poorly planned and thought through.

"In principle, unilateral actions are seen as unacceptable by the EU and they are against the idea of dialogue, which the EU promotes," he noted.

Police Chief: I Found Out About Sacking From Daughter

The former head of Kosovo Police, sacked this week by Prime Minister Thaci, has revealed that he found out about his dismissal from his daughter who had been watching the news.

Reshat Maliqi told Prishtina Insight that he has not been told why he was sacked as a controversial operation in Kosovo's north got underway.

"The decision was a surprise even for me," he said. "I have never asked to be dismissed or resign. I have never even had any warning regarding working issues.

"My daughter called me and told me that she saw the news in RTK that PM has dismissed me."





Delays to Kosovo's EU Chief Sends "Wrong Signals"

Britain's Minister for Europe David Lidington has said that the EU's failure to appoint a new head in Kosovo is sending the wrong message to Prishtina when it needs encouragement on its EU path



By Artan Mustafa

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton has again failed to name a permanent EU Special Representative, EUSR, in Kosovo at the second time of asking.

Following the decision for the job of EUSR and head of the International Civilian Office, ICO, to be split, the EU has been without a new head of operations in Kosovo since May 1.

The delays have come as the EU has struggled to form a cohesive position on who should become the next EUSR in Kosovo, what form the EU's presence should take in the light of administrative changes and even how the office and Kosovo should be referred to as.

Ashton appointed the Italian diplomat Fernando Gentilini with a mandate ending at the end of July to buy time to resolve these issues, but her office told Prishtina Insight this week that his contract would be extended for another two months.

Prishtina Insight can reveal that warnings that these delays would be sending out the wrong message to Kosovo at a crucial time have been made to Ashton.

A letter sent to the European Scrutiny Committee of UK Parliament, dated 11 May 2011, by Minister for Europe David

Lidington reveals his concerns that 'Ashton's plans to re-design the EU presence in Kosovo will not in practice enhance EU influence and reputation as much as she and the UK would like'.

"I am particularly concerned that, given the tight timescales involved, the EU risks being without a EUSR for a sustained period of time," he wrote. Since then, appointment to the position has been further delayed.

"This would be the wrong signal to send at a time when we are looking to the new Kosovo government to drive forward the reform priorities highlighted in the Commission's progress report, and when we would like the EU to send tangible signals of its support for Kosovo's progress towards the EU, in line with the European perspective of the entire Western Balkans region", Lidington wrote.

The British minister has been particularly concerned at attempts by non-recognising countries to impose their views on references to Kosovo in EU documents..

To the "EUSR playing a lead role in a settlement defining Kosovo's future status", despite 22 out of 27 states of EU

"This would be the wrong signal to send at a time when we are looking to the new Kosovo government to drive forward the reform priorities".

having recognised Kosovo.

Lidington said, however, that negotiations on a new EUSR had been coupled to an ongoing discussion on how Kosovo should be referred to in EU documents.

Ashton's Spokesperson, Maja Kocijancic, told Prishtina Insight that the procedure for naming a permanent representative is ongoing.

"The aim is quite clear, but there are still ongoing negotiations with the [European] Council," she said.

Around ten 10 people, including Italian ambassador Michael Giffoni, Miroslav Lajcak, Managing Director for the Western Balkans in the European External Action Service, and Ulrike Lunacek, European parliament reporter for Kosovo, were interviewed during the past weeks.

The problem is not only with the name of the diplomat. EU member states that have recognised Kosovo would prefer for EUSR to be a head of an "EU Delegation", rather than a "Liaison Office" as it is now.

Vlora Çitaku, Kosovo's minister of Integration, told Prishtina Insight that the Government would welcome a higher EU profile to help the communication in the process towards EU membership.

"The decision for a permanent EUSR would be reflected in our cooperation," she said.

Kosovo officials blamed the lack of EU coordination and unclear messages for the latest developments in the North of Kosovo.

Editor's Word

Plazma



By Lawrence Marzouk

"Goodbye Plazma" joked the front page of Prishtina daily Express last Friday.

Kosovo was wishing farewell to everyone's favourite childhood snack – Plazma biscuits, as a product of Serbia, were no longer welcome in these parts.

In my imagination, the worried parents of Prishtina were clamouring outside the gates of the government building, dumbfounded at the withdrawal of the most effective bambino bribe ever to have emerged from Pozarevac, Serbia. "Our children are crying! What should they eat?"

"Let them eat pite," cried Mimoza Kursari-Lila, Kosovo's Marie Antoinette and Minister of Trade and Industry, as she sped through the gates in her blacked-out jeep.

But by Tuesday morning, it became clear that this was no longer a joking matter. Kosovo's government had launched its most audacious move yet by taking over the two northernmost border crossings. It was quite a breathtaking operation given Kosovo politicians' usual fawning to the international community.

I imagined Hashim Thaci finally stretching out his legs under the desk and hanging up that photo of him with Madeline Albright and a terrible hair cut. Kosovo's leaders were making themselves feel comfortable in the corridors of power, no longer tiptoeing around their international overlords.

Kosovars felt a surge of joy: this was their country, and their government was taking responsibility for it. If EULEX was unwilling to provide security in the north, Kosovo Police was.

But by Tuesday night, the death of a Kosovo police officer signalled it was not going to be easy controlling these crossings, and the mood began to turn. There was anger at the death of the police officer, but also concern that the mission was if not impossible, at least quite difficult.

Once a Serb mob had turned up and burnt down Gate 1 on Wednesday, NATO had had enough and decided to put everyone back in their places.

So KFOR has taken over manning the crossing, one family has lost a father, a border point has been burnt down and relations between Kosovo and Serbia are at a new low – not a resounding success, you may think.

But this operation, however poorly planned and executed, has broken a trend which has endured since 1999: the international community's failed zero-risk policy in the north.

The grand "strategy" to resolve The North, much discussed last year, was simply a list of perfectly sensible measures that would have contributed to thawing of a frozen conflict.

The ICO and Quint may be square behind it, but the EU and NATO's muddled policy on Kosovo and, therefore, its continued zero-risk policy meant we have seen no real progress.

Call it foolhardy, but this action may at last jolt the EU and the wider international community into taking some small risk in an effort to resolve the terrible situation in this black hole of lawlessness.

For too long the European Union in particular, but also other international actors, has wanted to ignore important issues such as mob-rule in the north, for fear of upsetting their own delicate institutional balance of opinions, while expecting Kosovars to stay quiet because they might, at some point, get visa liberalisation, and in the misty future, EU membership.

Thaci has shown this week that the EU cannot have their cake and eat it. Particularly, if it's a Plazma biscuit.

PRISHTINA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT "ADEM JASHARI"

Bëhu pjesë e kujtimit nga Kosova - blej **DUTY FREE**
Share the experience - buy **DUTY FREE**

Bëhu pjesë e kujtimit nga Kosova - blej **DUTY FREE**
Share the experience - buy **DUTY FREE**

Bëhu pjesë e kujtimit nga Kosova - blej **DUTY FREE**
Share the experience - buy **DUTY FREE**

WE ARE OPEN FOR ALL DEPARTING FLIGHTS • CALL US ON 038 594422

Thaci Loses Grip on Kosovo's Ruling Party

The powerful Prime Minister is losing his grip on key factions within his governing Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK.



By Artan Mustafa

An old anecdote holds that ruling parties craft their own downfall. If so, the current struggles within the leadership of the governing Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK looks like a textbook example.

A bitter conflict between key figures in the PDK, which may be beyond Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's skill to resolve, threatens his grip on the party.

Key figures in the party have become openly hostile to the Prime Minister, attempting to derail his government coalition and embarrassing him by openly snubbing forceful requests from the country's important international backers.

At the heart of the struggle are Jakup Krasniqi, the speaker of the parliament, who was acting President at the end of the last government, and Fatmir Limaj, former Minister of Transport.

Both men are powerful figures within the party, popular among voters, and more or less openly working against Thaci.

Now members of the party fear that the selection of a candidate for the soon to be beefed-up role of



He's behind you: Jakup Krasniqi (left) and Hashim Thaci (right) no longer see eye to eye on who should govern their party, the PDK

state president could create further acrimony.

Ancient rivalries:

Former minister Fatmir Limaj has faced controversy before. Accused of war crimes in 2005 at the International Tribunal for Ex-Yugoslavia, ICTY, he was found not guilty.

Following his release, he spent months mulling whether to go back to the PDK or form his own party. Limaj apparently felt aggrieved with the party leader for not giving the support he felt he deserved while facing war crimes in The Hague where Thaci had never visited him during the trial.

Sources in the PDK told Prishtina Insight that from then on Limaj had blamed many of his troubles on elements within SHIK, the intelligence agency associated with the PDK, calling them a "fount of disinformation" about him.

"The rift started during the Kosovo war over women but has developed into a broader rivalry," a source inside the PDK told Prishtina Insight.

Limaj eventually decided to rejoin the PDK and was handed the job of transport minister after the 2007 election, during which he received the second highest number of votes after Thaci himself.

The conflict between the two men took a new turn in late April

2010 when police from the EU rule-of-law mission, EULEX, raided the home and offices of the then minister, probing corruption allegations.

Prosecutors alleged that Limaj had misused millions of euros, charges that could land the hero of the 1990s Kosovo war with 55 years in prison if proven. Limaj denies them.

As transport minister, Limaj had run a large budget, much of which he used to build around 1,300km of new roads in two-and-a-half years. According to his allies, he almost doubled the length of paved roads in the country.

Aware of Limaj's popularity, Thaci at first reacted angrily to EULEX's charges.

Diplomats told Prishtina Insight that Thaci had also tried to rescue Limaj and Ahmet Shala, a former finance minister also facing corruption charges, by sending them abroad as diplomats. This deal failed, however.

Sources close to Limaj suggest that Thaci, for all his public professions of support, actually wanted Limaj off the scene, possibly because he was jealous of his popularity.

"He [Limaj] hasn't spoken to Thaci or to Kadri Veseli [head of SHIK] for months," the source in the party said. Veseli declined to answer Prishtina Insight's questions on this.

Charges fuel friction:

In the meantime, Thaci left Limaj and Shala outside the new government formed in early 2011 following December's general election.

Limaj has declined to speak about his fallout with Thaci to Prishtina Insight, saying that it was "not the right time".

But in recent months he has repeatedly attacked the government and called for a different style of politics.

Limaj was again thrust into the spotlight in February when he declined to support Behgjet Pacolli's candidacy for the post of President of Kosovo.

Pacolli was head of the New Kosovo Alliance Party, a coalition partner in Thaci's new government.

But Limaj's hostile stance, alongside that of Jakup Krasniqi, speaker of parliament, rendered Pacolli's position politically precarious.

A Constitutional Court ruling a few weeks after his election in March finally terminated Pacolli's short spell as head of state.

"The problem [with my election as president] was Jakup Krasniqi," Pacolli has since told Prishtina Insight.

Limaj supporters have told Prishtina Insight that they draw a connection between Limaj's stance on Pacolli's presidency and

the EULEX charges that have since followed, suggesting the charges were politically motivated.

"He will fight on because he's convinced he hasn't done anything wrong as transport minister or during the war," one ally said.

The latest twist in the party's squabbles was Krasniqi's refusal as speaker to proceed with the adoption of a parliamentary resolution asking the Constitutional Court to clarify the issue of parliamentarians' immunity from arrest, as EULEX had sought.

EULEX raised the request partly to enable its police to proceed with the arrest of Limaj on war crimes charges.

Although Thaci's government endorsed the EULEX request, and although the US ambassador, Christopher Dell, accused Krasniqi of protecting his friends and putting personal interests before those of the country, the speaker refused to budge.

In the end, Thaci's government sent its own request for clarification of the immunity question to the Constitutional Court, bypassing Krasniqi and parliament.

Internal criticism grows:

Krasniqi, meanwhile, shows no sign of backing down. "Kosovo needs to have a different kind of governance to the one it has had and continues to have," he told

Prishtina Insight

www.pristinainsight.com

Publisher:

BIRN

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Mensa e Studenteve, first floor

10000, Prishtina

Kosovo

Phone: +381 (0) 38 24 33 58

Fax: +381 (0) 38 22 44 98

lawrence@birn.eu.com

Editor-in-Chief:

Lawrence Marzouk

lawrence@birn.eu.com

Editorial Team:

Ana Petrusseva, Gordana Igric,

Jeta Xharra, Marcus Tanner,

Petrit Collaku, Shengjyl Osmani and

Kanarina Shehu.

Marketing, Sales & Distribution:

lawrence@birn.eu.com

Design & Layout: "Rrjeti"

Printing: Lindi Printing Center

Copyright © BIRN



Limaj considered setting up his own party before rejoining the PDK

New Photos Issued in Medicus Case

The first photos of an Israeli man wanted in connection with the Medicus organ trafficking case have been released in a bid to track him down



By Lawrence Marzouk

Photos of Israeli Moshe Harel, who is on the run from justice, have been issued by Interpol in a bid to track down the fugitive.

In June, EULEX, the EU mission in Kosovo, confirmed the indictment against a Turkish doctor, Yusuf Sonmez, and Israeli Moshe Harel, in Prishtina.

The indictment brought against Sonmez includes human trafficking, organised crime and unlawful exercise of medical activities, while Harel is charged with human trafficking and organised crime.

Harel has been on the run since 2008 after disappearing when an UNMIK court released him on bail to leave the country for a funeral.

A EULEX spokesperson noted that "the victims were from various parts of the world".

The Medicus case involves allegations that a group of people brought poor donors and rich recipients to a clinic in Kosovo and organised and carried out the harvesting of kidneys and their transplant.

Seven Kosovars have been indicted prior to the two men charged on Friday

The Kosovo men named in the indictment were allegedly aided by Dr Yusuf Sonmez, who is also wanted for organ trafficking charges in several other countries, and Moshe Harel, an Israeli of Turkish origin who the prosecution says acted as the gang's fixer, finding both donors and recipients and handling funds.

Sonmez was arrested in Istanbul in the beginning of January and later released on bail.

The case of the Medicus clinic



Wanted: Moshe Harel suspected of organ trafficking

was opened by the Kosovo police, and the UN force UNMIK in November 2008, which later forwarded it to EULEX and the Kosovo Special Prosecutor's Office.

The Medicus clinic, just outside of Prishtina, is also linked to a December 2010 Council of Europe report which alleged that elements of the Kosovo Liberation Army traded organs of prisoners during the 1999 conflict.

NATO Attack on Serbia Set Off Norwegian Bomber

Norway bomber Anders Behring Breivik revered Radovan Karadzic as 'a hero' for his war on Bosnian Muslims and says NATO's bombing of Serbia on behalf of Muslim Kosovars 'tipped the scales' for him, prompting him to action.



By Bojana Barlovac

The 32-year-old Norwegian, who has confessed to last Friday's bombing of government headquarters in Oslo and the mass shooting at an island camp - which killed 93 people - says events in the Balkans played a significant role in strengthening his resolve to carry out a massacre.

On the day of mass shootings and bombing, Breivik released online a 1,500-page manifesto of his extreme nationalist philosophy, which suggested that he intended to use his atrocity as a platform to espouse his type of extreme anti-immigrant politics.

In the manifesto he described NATO's bombing of Serbia in 1999 as the point that "tipped the scales", driving him to action; he strongly sympathised with Serbia's bloody crackdown on the mainly Muslim Albanians in Kosovo.

It took him about a year from that to realise that "the Islamisation of Europe2, as he

said, could no longer be stopped by peaceful means.

The bomber was enraged by the fact that the NATO military attack, of which Norway was part, was targeting "our Serbian brothers who wanted to drive Islam out by deporting the Albanian Muslims back to Albania," he wrote.

"For me personally it was our government-

ment's involvement (engagement) with/in the attack on Serbia several years ago. It was completely unacceptable the way the US and Western European regimes bombed our Serbian brothers," he wrote. "There have been many other cases that have strengthened my resolve [to carry out the bombing]," he added.

The bomber went on to describe his admiration for Radovan Karadzic, the wartime Bosnian Serb leader who is on trial in The Hague facing charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and violation of the laws and customs of

war in Bosnia during the 1992-1995 war.

He is among those persons that the Norwegian would most like to meet.

Breivik denies that Karadzic was "a mass murderer and a racist," as his accusers call him. "Because of the efforts to free Serbia of Islam, he will always be regarded and remembered as a revered crusade warrior and a European war hero," he wrote.



Prishtina Insight.

"Kosovo deserves government by people who are more determined, which it doesn't have now," he added. "Citizens should see a change in a governance and in the quality of their lives," he continued.

Krasniqi also criticised the PDK party congress held late in 2010, which reelected Thaci as leader without opposition, calling it superficial and quick.

"The PDK doesn't function as a party, its bodies do not function... and it does not conduct itself based on its statute or programme," he said. "All the decision-making is concentrated in the president of the party [Thaci]."

Flora Brovina, a former PDK parliamentarian and party candidate for the post of state president, agreed that "too many key decisions are taken not in the party but in cafes.

"When a meeting was supposed to be held on immunity issue recently, I got three messages saying, 'We're meeting,' and another three saying, 'No, we're not gathering,'" she recalled.

She also says the last party congress was a failure, adding that the previous one held in 2005 was also "not that proper", either.

However, the PDK's vice-president, Hajredin Kuci, says talk of rivalry and splits in the party is overblown.

"I have so much respect for Krasniqi... he is one of the key decision-makers in the PDK," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

But Kuci said that people's ambitions always grow when their parties continue to win elections. "If this [rivalry] is conducted within democratic and statutory rules, it is normal," he said.

Presidential row looms:

Meanwhile, Kosovo is to hold its first presidential election in 2012 and the direct election of the head of state will make this position more powerful.

Thaci, now starting his second mandate as premier, may well

want to aim at this new post. He has so far said that he is undecided.

The same PDK source cited earlier told Prishtina Insight that Thaci will run "only if he is convinced he cannot win the next parliamentary elections in 2013".

By law, the President of Kosovo must resign all other political duties, which means he cannot lead a political party.

Hajredin Kuci maintains that if Thaci is interested in the post, he will face no rivals in the PDK.

"On the other hand we have to think about the PDK, because he cannot then also be party president. Kosovo might gain a good President while leaving the PDK in a poor position," Kuci said.

Kuci said the PDK had to try to strike balance whereby both the country and the party win. "Thaci has maintained the party's cohesion. The PDK has been the most cohesive party in the last 12 years, be it in power or opposition," he said.

"It won't be easy for anybody to take the helm of the party because... the gap will be obvious," he added.

A party congress should be held this year to decide on the presidential candidate but a major source of contention could be an alleged deal that Pacolli struck with Thaci after his forced resignation as President in March.

It has been claimed that the agreement means that Pacolli will be the PDK's presidential candidate next year, which may again raise trouble within the party from Krasniqi and Limaj.

Krasniqi is reluctant to spell out how he will react to the potential candidacy of Pacolli for the post of State President.

But he gives little weight to any promises made to Pacolli when he helped make way for the election of a new "technical" President, Atifete Jahjaga. "These things might have happened - but they have only created confusion in PDK and in the political system," Krasniqi said.



Fears Over Sale of Kosovo's

Privatization of the Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo, PTK, has become mired in allegations of corruption and fears that a shotgun sale may leave the country shortchanged.



By Artan Mustafa

Concerns are growing that Kosovo could be forced to accept a raw deal for the sale of PTK because of allegations of corruption affecting the firm's value, a lack of interest among potential buyers and the government's pressing need to sell the company to plug a financial hole.

Hashim Thaci's government this week invited potential investors to bid for Post Telecommunication of Kosovo, PTK, the country's most lucrative public firm.

Besim Beqaj, Minister of Economic Development, who leads a committee of five ministers overseeing the process, told Prishtina Insight that the government wants to complete the sale by New Year.

"My aim is to have a process characterised by strong competition and transparency," Beqaj said.

But with just two firms in the running, some doubt that the competition will be sufficient to generate a decent profit.

Following a pre-qualification round in the summer of 2010, five companies showed interest: AlbTelekom, a consortium of Calik Group and Turk-Telekom; Telekom Austria; Croatia's Hrvatska Telekom, a branch of Deutsche Telekom, Oraskom of Egypt and Sabafone of Yemen.

Owing to political turmoil in Kosovo, which culminated in the calling of an early general election in December, the decision on a shortlist was delayed.

In May this year, a letter was sent to the five companies asking if they were still interested.

Beqaj says two did not reply and one other, Alb-Telekom, did not provide the correct documents, leaving just two firms in the running.

Beqaj maintains that the presence of Austrian Telekom and Hrvatska Telekom in the final stage is enough.

"They are both strong competitors," he said. "They have around 160 million subscribers, have a presence everywhere in the world, and know the market," he said.

But Visar Ymeri of the Vetevendosje opposition party is worried.

"When you have two companies, it normally means that you sell it cheap because the competition is weaker," he told Prishtina Insight.

"I strongly believe that the government and US ambassador already know who the winner is."

The law on procurement in Kosovo requires three bidders for tenders, but no such limit is being applied to the sale of PTK.

Beqaj pledges that if one more company withdraws, the sale will stop. "I have a mandate from parliament for this process to be competitive," he said.

An undersold asset:

In April, the government adopted a budget for 2012, which included 350 million euro expected to come from the PTK sale.

The opposition accuses the government of potentially lowering the price of PTK by naming this price in the budget.

The sale of PTK was also passed as part of the government

budget, rather than as a specific decision.

Driton Dali, who served as a deputy in the previous parliament for the then opposition New Kosovo Alliance, AKR, told Prishtina Insight that foreign consultants had valued PTK at more than 1 billion euro.

Other opposition MPs meanwhile deem the decision to sell PTK illegal. They say that by law parliament should have made the decision to privatize PTK.

"When Thaci saw the decision could not pass in parliament, as it had already failed twice, he smuggled the privatization of PTK into the law on the budget, which is illegal under the law on public enterprises," Ymeri, of the Vetevendosje party, told Prishtina Insight.

The IMF told Kosovo's government earlier the year that, following its controversial decisions to spend up to a billion euro on a new highway to Albania and raise civil service salaries by up to 50 per cent, it would need to sell PTK to balance the books.

According to some experts, this means that bidders are likely to offer less money, as they know the government wants a quick sale.

Beqaj insists that he is not concerned by fears that Kosovo needs to sell the firm at all cost.

"If we cannot make progress with the [PTK] privatisation, we have the option of [raising cash with] internal and foreign loans," he said.

"Unlike other countries in the region, which a GDP to debt ratio of 40 per cent, our ratio is only 7.1 per cent."

Lummir Abdixhiku, head of the Riinvest Institute, a think

tank, in a column in Koha Ditore in April, asked whether 350 million euro was a good price for PTK.

"This is what happens when you sell to pay off loans and when you are in a rush," he wrote. "This happens when you link the privatisation with the budgetary process".

Vetevendosje's Ymeri says the question is not "for or against" privatization in principle.

"We need to ask why, what and when we should privatize. Why privatize a company that has made a profit?" he asked.

Others support the PTK sale. Economics professor Naim Gashi says the fact that PTK was profitable is not a good argument against privatization.

He believes that PTK has suffered from a history of state mismanagement and should be handed over to the private sector.

Minister Beqaj, meanwhile, says the telecommunications sector requires continuous investment, which private firms are better able to supply than the cash-strapped Kosovo state.

"The life span of technological investments is short, so the sector needs a proper dynamic to compete in the market," he said. "On the other hand, citizens need good services.

"Economic transformation to a free market is always painful but it has shown success," he added. "We're ready to bear the pressures and the difficulties in the short term. It's a sacrifice made today for the future."

Opposition from within:

Criticism of the deal does not come only from opposition parties and experts. Some at the heart of the deal are voicing concern.

Behgjet Pacolli, leader of the government's junior partner, the New Kosovo Alliance, told Prishtina Insight that he opposed privatization.

The PTK's chief executive has suggested that his firm is being deliberately devalued.

His concerns relate to several reports on the PTK commissioned by the government and prepared by transaction advisors TelCo AG and Wolf Theiss.

The reports, which Prishtina Insight has seen, complained of poor management and recommended a sale.

They said the PTK was over-staffed and had continued to recruit despite a government decision in May 2010 to stop new hiring.

The reports said around 4,000 people work for PTK, although Shyqri Haxha, PTK chief executive, has said the real number does not exceed 3,400.

In one report dated March 2011, the transaction advisers also complained of PTK's failure to offer new mobile services and increase phone traffic.

The same report drew attention to an alleged fall in revenues, saying mobile operation revenues had fallen by 15 per cent since 2007.

But PTK chief executive Haxha

"I strongly believe that the government and US ambassador already know who the winner is."



Prize Asset, PTK

rejects the advisors' assessments. "We increased the number of consumers from 800,000 to 1.2 million, established numerous services such as GPRS roaming and prepaid roaming, and in May 2011 we have a 160 million [euro] turnover, similar to 2008," he said.

"Had it not been for the transaction advisers' interventions, stopping our projects, we would have doubled or tripled our income [by now]", Haxha added.

Haxha was referring to a government decision to accept the request of the advisors to suspend major capital investments planned by PTK last year.

The PTK also complains that its requests to the Regulative Authority of Telecommunication, ART, for permission to issue licenses for 3 and 4G operations, which allow for multimedia and internet mobile access, and for a crackdown on illegal operators, were ignored.

The transaction adviser further said that if a new mobile operator entered the market, PTK would lose up to 15 per cent of its share. As a result, the government told ART not to issue a third license.

ART declined to answer BIRN's questions about whether the government order was legal.

Following Telco AG's advice, the government then decided to privatize PTK in July 2010, although no final decision was taken.

Under present plans, the government will keep 25 per cent of its shares for the meantime.

Both the mobile Vala brand and landline will be sold, whereas the government will keep the unprofitable postal section and its assets.

Economics professor Naim Gashi supports this model. "Through the package sale, the investment potential both in the mobile operator and in telecom

will increase," he told Prishtina Insight.

"I support the privatization of PTK knowing that... unsuitable people and those close to interest groups were given positions that continually undermined its value."

But sociologist Besnik Pula says political motivations are driving the privatization.

"No rational economist would logically alienate a profitable asset," he told Prishtina Insight, noting that the government will only hold on to the unprofitable part of the assets.

Behgjet Pacolli, Kosovo's principal deputy Prime Minister, who made billions when the former Soviet Union opened its market to foreign investors, says he would advocate a third approach, leasing the PTK for a few years.

"We should stop overselling and mistreating Kosovo's assets," he said. "Rather than destroying them, we should work to increase their value and keep the money around and increase employment."

He says he told Thaci not to sell the PTK but to give the management over to a foreign company for a period.

"Companies were ready to pay up to 600 million for six years," he said. "This privatization policy could really create a clash in our co-government agreement," he added.

The Dardafone controversy:

Meanwhile, in June, the head of Kosovo's Special Prosecution, Isabel Arnal, and prosecutor Joachim Stollberg, issued an indictment against the chairmen of the PTK's board.

The document named Rexhë Gjonbalaj, Haxha and the owners

of Devolli company, Blerim and Shkelqim Devolli, as suspects.

Gjonbalaj and Haxha are charged with damaging contracts and abuse of official duty. The Devollis are accused of fraud, damaging contracts, abuse of trust, falsification of documents and organised crime. All deny wrongdoing.

The charges date back to 2008, when the PTK signed a contract with Dardafone, a consortium of Devolli Group and New York-based Unitel.

The ART licensed Dardafone to operate as a Mobile Virtual Network Operator, or MVNO, meaning that it could provide a phone service using the infrastructure of another company, in this case the PTK's.

Under the agreement Dardafone would receive 78 per cent of profits, a figure which Driton Tali and Andrea Capussela, former head of the International Civilian Office's economic department, deem far too high.

But before the deal was signed, the name on the contract was switched from Dardafone to Dardafone.net.

"This basically was not the same company," Tali said. "Devolli understood it could leave aside its original partner, Unitel, and get the control of the new company in its own."

PTK chief executive Haxha says the contract was drawn up before he took charge, although he admits signing it.

"The ART had licensed Dardafone and the PTK was

"If we cannot make progress with the [PTK] privatisation, we have the option of [raising cash with] internal and foreign loans".



obliged to work with it," he said.

"In addition, the previous chief executive had suggested, and the previous board had signed, the contract. I could do nothing against it," Haxha added.

He maintains that the current indictment "is part of the campaign to damage the value of PTK", as the company "was not damaged by that contract".

But Tali disagrees, saying he believes PTK lost between 200 and 300 million euro from the contract.

Conflict of interest?

Vetevendosje's Ymeri meanwhile complains of a conflict of interest concerning the government's PTK transaction advisors, Telco AG, as they worked previously with Austria Telekom.

"One of the key persons who worked for the transaction adviser for PTK privatization, Telco AG and Wolf Theiss, cooperated with Telekom Austria for five years," Ymeri said. "This is a conflict of interest from which Telekom Austria can benefit."

Telco AG has admitted that it acted as advisors to the Austrian firm in previous transactions in the region, including in Kosovo, but says it no longer works for the Austrian mobile giant.

Telekom Austria has refused to comment on the issue or on further questions from Prishtina Insight regarding PTK's value.

The Kosovo government had denied the potential for any conflict of interest, saying the transaction advisor was chosen in an open competition.

+

Y
M
C
K

Austerity Package Reveals Albania's Economic Woes

Deep cuts in public spending provide reality check for Albania's government, which continues to sing the praises of an economy allegedly unaffected by the global downturn.



By Gjergj Erebara in
Tirana

When IMF officials visited Albania last month and called for spending cuts and tax increases to make up for the fall in revenues, the centre-right government of Prime Minister Sali Berisha resisted, arguing that Albania's economy was doing just fine.

However, despite an attempt to put a brave face on the economic situation, parliament last Thursday voted in an austerity package, cutting government spending by 18.3 billion lek (131 million euro) for the 2011 fiscal year.

In a government order for public administration employees, ministries stopped paying for vacations and overtime, while cutting per diems for officials travelling abroad.

The government also ordered police officers to repay some of the bonuses they had received in 2010 for working over their vacations; meanwhile police were reporting that they could not complete some of their patrols for lack of petrol.

Experts blame the current situation on the government's over-optimistic forecasts for economic growth and revenues in the 2011 budget and the election-related expenses run up before the May 8 local polls, which has created a hole in public coffers.

Experts say the negative effect of indulging in spending sprees in election years has had a damaging effect on the weak economy, which could potentially prop a liquidity crisis if the situation is not realistically tackled.

Albania had enjoyed 5.5 per cent growth rate over the last decade, which was reflected in government revenues growing by 7 to 10 and in some cases 15 per cent a year.

But since the global financial crisis struck in September 2008, growth in GDP has fallen to 3 to 3.5 per cent a year, while government revenues grew only by 1 or 2 per



Albania's PM argues that the country's economy is booming

cent per year.

The drop in revenues didn't stop the government's spending increases, however, which averaged 7 to 10 per cent per year, due to ambitious public works projects and wage hikes.

Albania had hoped for a fast return on such investments and for high growth rates, but sluggish growth in the last two years has forced the government this year to cut planned expenditures in midyear.

Yet, the planned cuts may not be enough to cover the revenue shortfall.

The government had banked on revenues of 360 billion lek (2.6 billion euro) but in the first two quarters of 2011 revenues have already been 150 million euro lower than expectations, and some experts estimate that the budget shortfall could double by the end of the year.

Albania's budget is currently near what economists call primary deficit, which means that its revenues are not enough to cover current expenditures, service its debt, and the ministry of finance must borrow just to keep the state going.

The Dean of Economics at the University of Tirana, Omer Stringa, says a mix of election-year populist policies and sluggish growth has created an inflammable situation.

"Even developed democracies are prone to election-induced economic cycles, but such cycles are harsher where democracy is obsolete," said Stringa.

"Budgeted revenues this year are low partly because the government announced a general fiscal amnesty before the [local] elections," he added.

Prime Minister Berisha surprised observers by wiping off 38 billion lek [270 million euro] in unpaid electricity bills owed by 270,000 families to the state-owned power corporation, KESH, in the election campaign. The move was seen as a blatant bid to shore up support for his ruling Democratic Party.

The local elections were preceded by a broader spending spree on the part of the government. Apart from public investments in roads and other physical infrastructure, operative spending, which includes fuel and per diems, also

exploded.

The spending extravaganza could not have come at a worse time for the state budget.

After a January 21 anti-government riot, which left four opposition protestors dead, consumer confidence hit a low, with the retail sales index registering an unusual drop of 7.1 per cent on the previous year.

This was followed by a drop of 38 per cent in the wholesale sales index.

Lower sales have reduced budget revenues and increased difficulties for companies, which have in turn postponed their loan repayments to banks.

According to Albania's banking association, underperforming loans jumped to 15.6 per cent of the total loan portfolio in the first five months of 2011, 30 per cent higher than the previous year - harming banks' balance sheets.

The former governor of Albania's Central Bank, Shkelqim Cani, says the current economic situation bears some similarities with the difficulties faced by the cash-strapped Communist regime in the late 1980s.

The government's refusal to manage an obvious crisis then made it impossible to prioritize expenditures and created the so-called "matchbox" crisis.

For several months in 1986, in the country where kerosene was the main fuel for cooking, matchboxes became a rare commodity after Albania's only match factory stopped production for lack of a mere 1,000-dollar-worth of imported production ingredients, which had been made scarce by unplanned cuts.

"Over-optimism creates unrealistic forecasts in revenues and expenditures, while the cuts that then follow have a strongly disruptive effect on the economy," Cani said.

Although the former bank governor notes that Albania is no longer a centrally planned economy in which matches are likely to go scarce anytime soon, he warns that bad economic planning could wreak as much havoc now as it did in the past.

"I am afraid that the government could default [on its debts] if this situation lasts long enough," Cani said.

Romania Fails to Sale Stake in Petrom Oil Company

Romania did not receive enough competitive bids for its minority stake in Petrom.



By Marian Chiriac

Bucharest delayed selling a minority stake in the oil group OMV Petrom as the euro-debt crisis made and insufficient promotion made investors reluctant of bidding during a two-

week offer period that ended on Friday.

"The subscription rate was below the 80 percent required to close the offer, so we have to set a new timetable depending on market conditions", the Economic Ministry said in a press release.

Romania holds a 20.6 per cent stake in Petrom, of which it is trying to sell 9.8 per cent. The government hoped to raise around 2.07 billion lei, worth around €500 mil-

lion, through the sale.

Austria's OMV holds a majority stake in the company.

Analysts are describing the sale's failure as not so good sign for investors. "The market conditions were extremely volatile, with euro-debt crisis making investors wary of bidding. Furthermore, the government didn't make enough in order to promote the sale", says economic analyst Adrian Simionescu.

"The failure of Petrom bid is to negatively influence government plans to further sale its stake in other state-run companies".

The Petrom sale is part of a larger government plan to raise 2.9 billion lei (€0.7 billion) this year on the Bucharest bourse, under the terms of a €20-billion bailout loan led by the International Monetary Fund, IMF.

Bucharest is also planing to sell a minority stake in the natural gas

producer Romgaz via the stock exchange this year, though the company is not yet listed. In addition, the Economy Ministry plans to finish selling minority stakes in the utilities Transgaz SA and Transelectrica SA by 2012 as it raises money to finance the state budget.

Facing a growing need for cash, Romania is largely dependent on foreign borrowing to finance its investment plans.

Bosnia Still on Hunt for New Government

Bosnia's ten month political impasse since the last general election appears far from resolution as the country's Croatian parties push for their own candidate to chair the Council of Ministers.



By Eldin Hadzovic

Bosnia looks no closer to forming a state government after the two strongest Croat parties said they were proposing their own candidate for the post of chair of the Council of Ministers.

They said they will again insist on appointing Borjana Kristo, former President of Bosnia's largest entity, the Bosniak [Muslim] and Croat dominated Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The previous candidate for the post, Slavo Kukic, proposed by the Social Democratic Party-led coalition, failed to gain the support of delegates from Bosnia's Serb-dominated

entity, the Republika Srpska, RS. The winning candidate needs the support of both entities.

Both major Serb parties, the Serbian Democratic Party, SDS, and the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, SNSD, refused to give Kukic votes. Kukic also failed to gain support from leading Croat parties, Croatian Democratic Union, HDZ BiH, and HDZ 1990.

Bosnian media reported two meetings in the past ten days, held by the leaders of the HDZ, the Social Democrats, and the Party of Democratic Action, SDA, Dragan Covic, Zlatko Lagumdžija and Sulejman Tihic respectively.

Covic, the HDZ BiH leader, said on Monday in Livno that Kristo would certainly be the HDZ candidate. "Borjana Kristo is still our top candidate for chairman of the Council of

Ministers," Covic said.

The President of the Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, accused the Bosniak parties of attempting to dominate Serbs and Croats in the process of forming the Council of Ministers, which acts in Bosnia as a state government.

Dodik said this way why no agreement on a new government could be reached. He also said that Serbs were entitled to four seats in the state-level government, while the Croats were entitled to nominate the chairman of the Bosnian Council of Ministers.

Dodik for the first time also made it clear that the Serb parties had an extra demand of their own. "The next Foreign Affairs minister has to be a Serb. Otherwise, there will be no Council of Ministers," Dodik said on Monday.

Ambassador: Britain Ducking Guilt For Srebrenica

A former US ambassador to NATO says Britain bears huge responsibility for the 1995 slaughter of Bosniaks in eastern Bosnia.



By Eldin Hadzovic

Writing in Wednesday's Financial Times in response to a letter by General Sir Michael Rose, Robert E Hunter, ambassador to NATO from 1993 to 1998, said NATO failed to stop the Serb carnage in Bosnia because Britain did its best to sabotage collective action on behalf of the Alliance.

"The failure of NATO to reach agreement on serious military action [before Srebrenica] can be attributed to the efforts of one allied nation: Great Britain," he wrote.

"As the US ambassador to NATO who negotiated the NATO air strike (and other military) decisions, I can attest that the ally that worked hardest to prevent NATO military action was Britain, from July 1993 until after Srebrenica when, in face of the horrendous killings, it finally stopped its obstruction."

The former ambassador said France and Canada were also often reluctant to join a consensus for military action, but it was Britain alone that had worked "consistently and assiduously to limit the military effectiveness of the NATO decisions".

Hunter said that when Britain was outvoted and isolated in NATO, it made use of the so-called "two-key" system, authorizing air strikes, to ensure "in New York that the UN 'key' would not be 'turned'".

"The upshot was that Britain kept NATO from acting, from July 1993 until after Srebrenica, when it was pressed, along with the other allies, to respond to the slaughter that had taken place."

He concluded: "Britain thus has a huge burden of responsibility for what happened at Srebrenica; NATO's failure before Srebrenica to act militarily lay in London, not either in Washington, at NATO-Brussels, or with the Dutch soldiers with UNProfor at Srebrenica".

The diplomat's letter is bound to reopen the debate on British policy towards the Balkans in the 1990s, which has remained controversial to this day. Critics say it was dominated by a policy of "appeasement" of Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia and his goal of creating a greater Serbia, or even actively colluded in those plans.



Bosnia's political impasse shows no sign of being overcome

Macedonia's A1 TV Bankrupt, Facing Closure

After a court in Skopje pronounced A1 TV bankrupt on Tuesday, journalists said farewell to the doomed-looking station in a news show.



By Sase Dimovski and Sinisa Jakov Marusic in Skopje

Journalists from Macedonia's A1 TV paid a farewell tribute to the TV station on Tuesday, saying the company "departs into history as an outlet that continuously promoted European principles".

The joint statement of the reporters was read out in the main news on Tuesday.

A1's 234 employees are expected to lose their jobs after the court formalizes its decision declaring the station bankrupt, expected in three days. The state trustee will then have the right to determine whether A1 should stop broadcasting.

The TV station claims it was targeted by the government of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski for its pro-opposition views.

Tuesday's legal ruling declaring A1 bankrupt came at the request of state trustee, Aco Petrov. He told the court in Skopje on Tuesday that the station's financial situation was dire and that by continuing to oper-

ate it would only generate further debt.

"A1 has debts of some €30m, €9.5 m of which the TV station owes to the tax office for unpaid taxes," Petrov told the court, arguing that it could repay only 4.3 per cent of its debt.

The tax office and the state attorney also supported bankruptcy proceedings being launched for A1.

Danco Nakov, a lawyer for A1, questioned the way the issue was being handled. "The whole procedure is against the law and the only goal is to shut down A1," he told the court.

Nakov said the tax office had inflated the sum owed by the TV station to €9.5 million. He said an investigation into A1's jailed owner, Velija Ramkovski, had showed that the TV station owed only €1.5 million in unpaid taxes.

Macedonia's two main reporters' guilds, the Journalists' Union and the Journalists' Association, said the potential closure of the TV station posed a threat to the media in the country as a whole.

"The closure of the oldest private TV in the country would seriously deplete the local media space," the unions said in a

statement.

Ramkovski has been in custody for over six months and is currently on trial, alongside 22 other people, charged with grave financial crimes.

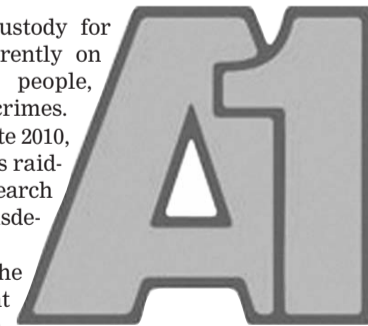
A1's trouble dates back to late 2010, when police and tax inspectors raided the station's premises in search of evidence of financial misdemeanours.

In January this year, the courts froze A1's bank account and property but the TV station was allowed to continue broadcasting. More recently, the tax office confiscated a number of A1's vehicles.

Earlier this month, three daily newspapers owned by Ramkovski, Vreme, Shpic and Koha e Re, were also closed because of unpaid taxes. The sudden reduction in the number of opposition voices in Macedonia has sparked concerns for media freedom.

Journalists' associations staged street protests this month against what they see as political and business pressures on their freedom.

The European Commission, the OSCE, Freedom House and the Vienna-based South



East Europe Media Organisation have also expressed concern.

In separate press releases issued this month, they asked the Macedonian government, for the sake of democracy and pluralism, to allow the TV to repay its debts in instalments so that it could survive. The tax office

rejected the proposal.

Earlier this month an OSCE representative, Dunja Mijatovic, suggested that the closed daily papers had been targeted by authorities.

"While media should follow rules set for all businesses, these outlets seem to have been targeted by the authorities in this case," Mijatovic said in Vienna.

Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and his VMRO-DPMNE party maintain that media freedom and tax payments have nothing in common. They say the tax officials have only been doing their job.

Stalled Pact Reflects Cooling Serbia-Russia Ties

An agreement between Russia and Serbia seems to have fallen victim to rancour over Belgrade's apparent overtures to NATO.



By Snezana Krivokapic

When the Russian leader Vladimir Putin visited Serbia in March, Moscow's and Belgrade's plans for a strategic partnership agreement were described as the "coronation" of an ancient spiritual relationship.

Though largely symbolic, the agreement was to have been followed by a loan worth some 565 million, earmarked for railways and other infrastructure projects. The pact was described as strengthening the "deep historical bond" between the two countries by "making Russian influence more visible".

But the June deadline for finalising the agreement has passed with scarcely any mention of the strategic partnership.

Serbian President Boris Tadic's trip to Moscow, also scheduled for June, has meanwhile been cancelled. The Russian embassy in Belgrade told Prishtina Insight that no explanation had been given for the cancellation.

While Russia has yet to send any of the promised loaned funds to Serbia, more money might be due to its diplomats in Belgrade. The Russian foreign ministry recently said its employees in Belgrade qualified for higher salaries on account of "the inefficiency of the central government, regressive economic structures, low living standards and rising crime". In Russia's view, diplomats serving in Serbia now face a similar level of risk to their colleagues serving in Tajikistan, Georgia, Abkhazia, North Korea, Iran and Israel.

Moscow's move to cool ties followed swiftly after what is likely to have been the year's largest gathering of world military leaders in Belgrade. The June meeting was organised by NATO and billed in locally as



Tadic and Putin: From Russia with a little less love

a NATO conference, although it was not formally described as such by the alliance.

The stalling of the strategic partnership agreement appears to be just one of several signs that Russia saw Serbia's decision to host the meeting was seen as a provocation.

Russian annoyance over the meeting may not be the only factor behind the delay.

According to Dusan Janjic, director of the Forum for Ethnic Relations, Serbia has failed to produce a formal application for the loan.

"We've been talking about a Russian loan for more than a year and there is still no project to apply for it," he says.

The Russian embassy in Belgrade also told Prishtina Insight that it had yet to receive adequate documents for any of the projects listed under the loan and the money could be not disbursed until the paperwork was complete.

Janjic says the Russians are unlikely to release the loan until they have seen all the documents from Belgrade as "proof of serious intentions". He said Moscow has grown increasingly skeptical of the Serbian government, which has recently backtracked on several assurances to Russia.

Serbia's minister for infrastructure, Milutin Mrkonjic, maintains that construction of a railway project, covered by the loan, is due to start on September 1.

Moscow has long opposed NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe, a region that was once under Soviet influence.

In March, the Russian ambassador to Belgrade, Aleksandar Konuzin, said that while Serbia had the right to join any alliance it pleased, it could expect a firm response if it were to host NATO missile bases on its territory.

"We would be forced to take military

measures to remove the military threat. These measures would

not be aimed against Serbia but against these missiles," he said.

In June, Konuzin formally complained over remarks by an opposition leader, Cedomir Jovanovic, in which he called Moscow's policy towards Belgrade "colonial and humiliating" and said foreign ministers Vuk Jeremic and Sergei Lavrov were "hugging like bears".

Also in June, Konuzin hosted a reception for Russia Day to which he invited the Serbian turbo-folk diva Svetlana Raznatovic "Ceca" alongside dignitaries from the government.

The presence of the controversial singer, recently sentenced over a multi-million-euro fraud, in the same room as prime minister Mirko Cvetkovic was interpreted by some as an attempt to embarrass the authorities.

Military analyst Aleksandar Radic says Russia is unlikely to oppose Serbian entry into NATO if it appears inevitable.

"We are surrounded by NATO states. Russia was against Montenegrin membership but accepted it even after obtaining huge economic influence in that country," he said.

Montenegro adopted an action plan for NATO membership more than two years ago and recently agreed to send a small contingent of troops to assist NATO-led operations in Afghanistan.

Janjic also said that Russia would probably ease its objections to Serbian entry into NATO as long as the alliance did not build missile bases on Serbian territory.

Both Radic and Janjic said Russia cared above all for economic influence over Serbia, which wanted to increase from its present level



LIK

THE LEARNING INSTITUTE IN KOSOVO

We're new in town offering English tuition to those who want to learn for work, or for a visa application, or just because you want to.

Learn for work ...

Learn for fun ...

Learn for life !

- **Beginner and intermediate classes with a native English speaker**
- **Intensive courses over four weeks**
- **Register now for classes in September**
- **Courses tailored to ensure that you pass the UK exams provided by the British Council**
- **EUR 300 all inclusive PLUS original learning materials, no photocopies!**
- **Contact Ardita on 045 39 39 33, or email us at info@learning-institute-kosovo.com. We have a special FREE gift for the next 20 people who register with us**

LIK will donate 10 per cent of all received course fees in September to Prishtina Insight's fundraising efforts for Prishtina Hospital.

Croatia Debates Hadzic's Role in the War

War victims and experts agree that the forthcoming trial of the former Croatian Serb leader has the potential to fill in important gaps in people's understanding of the conflict in Croatia.



By Goran Jungvirt in Zagreb

While the arrest of the last suspect wanted by the Hague war crimes tribunal makes headlines around the world, the burning question in Croatia is whether Goran Hadzic will stand trial in Zagreb.

Last Thursday, Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor announced that Zagreb would ask the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia, ICTY, for permission to take charge of Hadzic's case.

"Hadzic was one of the most ardent implementers of [former Serbian leader Slobodan] Milosevic's aggressive policy of Serbian territorial expansion," Kosor said. "People from eastern Croatia and many others can best testify about it."

She was referring to the years when, acting on Milosevic's authority, Serbian paramilitaries as well as the Yugoslav Army, JNA, seized hold of about 30 per cent of Croatia, overwhelming the besieged town of Vukovar in eastern Slavonia late in 1991.

Hadzic, a former leader of the self-proclaimed Serbian statelet, the Republika Srpska Krajina, already has two convictions for war crimes in Croatia.

In 1995, a local court in Sibenik sentenced him in absentia to 20 years for responsibility for the indiscriminate shelling of the Adriatic port of Sibenik and or Vodice in 1992 and 1993.

In 1999, a local court in Osijek, in Eastern Slavonia, sentenced him to eight years for crimes against civilians and property in 1991.

An outstanding indictment issued by a court in Vukovar in 2002 accuses of Hadzic of playing a key role in the killing of 1,292 persons in the area of Osijek, Vukovar, Vinkovci, Zupanja and Bjelovar in 1991.

Hadzic remains a figure of intense interest in Croatia, where he was a leader of the Croatian Serb revolt against Croatian independence in Eastern Slavonia and Baranja.



Vukovar's bullet-scarred streets, where Hadzic is alleged to have committed war crimes

After the fall of Vukovar in 1991, many Croatians remember him standing in front of a TV Belgrade camera, demanding that captured prisoners-of-war and other civilians be turned over to his authorities for punishment.

According to the indictment issued by the Hague in 2004 Hadzic participated in the forcible transfer of tens of thousands of Croat and other non-Serb civilians from the Vukovar area.

He is also charged with having participated in the murder of hundreds of Croats and other non-Serb civilians, including women and elderly persons, in Vukovar, Dalj, Dalj Planina, Erdut, Erdut Planina, Klisa, Lovas and Grabovac.

According to the indictment, these actions formed part of a larger criminal enterprise aimed at permanently removing the Croat and other non-Serb population from roughly one-third of the Republic of Croatia to create "Greater Serbia".

Hadzic was named president of the self-proclaimed "Serbian Autonomous District of

Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem" and later of the Republika Srpska Krajina.

Still, much of what Hadzic did, and his culpability in many of alleged atrocities, remains unclear. Some believe he only followed orders rather than initiating grave crimes himself.

"Hadzic wasn't the highest up in the hierarchy of command for the things he's been indicted for," said Vesna Terselic, director of Documenta, an NGO established to form an accurate record of recent conflicts in the Balkans.

Zarko Puhovski, a human rights activist and former president of the Croatian Helsinki Committee, HHO, agrees.

"Hadzic was a second-rate figure, important only in that his arrest ends the epoch of international prosecution of war criminals from former Yugoslavia," he said.

Puhovski added that wherever the trial is held, he does not expect it to greatly change perceptions of Hadzic or of the events of the 1990s.

A few months ago, reports in the Croatian media quoted a for-

mer interior minister, Josip Boljkovac, as saying that Hadzic was initially a peacemaker.

In his book "The Truth Must Come Out," Boljkovac, who was interior minister until July 1991, portrays Hadzic as someone who sought a peaceful solution to the breakup of Yugoslavia.

In his book, published in 2009 Boljkovac described secret meetings that Hadzic supposedly had with Croatian police to prevent an outbreak of armed conflict in Croatia.

But even if such meetings took place, many observers remain sceptical of his motives, seeing him as an opportunist rather than a genuine peacemaker.

"I would give little relevance to Hadzic's cooperation with the Croatian police," Davor Genero, a political analyst in Zagreb, said. "He maintained those contacts to make his situation easier."

Hadzic's supposed negotiations with the Croatian police have no bearing on what happened afterwards, Genero added.

Whatever Hadzic's real role in subsequent atrocities, sorting out questions of responsibility in a trial will be a valuable histori-

cal service, Terselic said.

"The detention camps [where Croats were held] in Vukovar, in Nis, and in Begejci [Serbia] – everything has to do with Hadzic," she said.

"These are crimes that haven't been investigated and processed. Hadzic's trial can help initiate prosecutions on a local level, and... bring those responsible to justice."

Before war broke out in 1990, Hadzic was an obscure worker in a warehouse in Pacetin, a village near Vukovar.

Then active in the Communist league, he became a member of the Vukovar municipal assembly. But he was not a political heavyweight, says Stjepan Milas, a Croat who was also in the municipal assembly in 1991.

"No one attributed to him much importance," Milas told the weekly Glas Slavonije after Hadzic's arrest. "He was just a storage worker. But apparently he had strong political backers."

Following the fall of Vukovar in November 1991, after a three-month siege by Serb paramilitaries and the JNA, Serbian forces entered the city and detained thousands of Croatian civilians.

Many were executed, including 200 men taken from the hospital and killed at nearby Ovcara farm. Thousands more were sent to detention camps, where some say they were mistreated and even tortured.

Some camps were close by. Others were sent to camps in Serbia. According to the ICTY indictment, 5,000 inhabitants of Vukovar were deported to camps in places such as Nis and Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia.

For Terselic, the ultimate value and significance of Hadzic's trial will be in sorting out exactly what happened.

"The attack on Vukovar and its aftermath, as well as the peace negotiations, are elements needed for a true understanding of the war," she said.

"It will be an important step in trying to form a clear idea of what happened, Terselic added, "especially through the foggy picture that has been created on all sides for 20 years."

Hadzic Arrest Village Tastes Moment of Fame



By Dragan Gmizic

Krusedol, home to 500 people, is not often on the front page. But as the site where police nabbed a top war-crimes suspect on Monday, it is making the most of the limelight.

The local tavern in centre of the village of Krusedol, 70 kilometres north of Belgrade, is suddenly full of journalists and villagers after news breaks that police have

arrested Goran Hadzic, top war-crime suspect and ex-president of the Croatian Serbs.

"I have never seen Hadzic and I've lived in this village all my life," a local 50-year-old says. "I know what he looks like as I saw his photograph on the news, but I tell you I have never seen him here," he adds.

"But even if I did meet him, I wouldn't report him. Why would I do that?" another asks.

Krusedol has a population of less than 500. But around the village there are several weekend settlements to which people from

larger cities of Serbia, especially Belgrade and Novi Sad, travel for vacations.

These settlements, like Krusedol itself, are located on the slopes of Mount Fruska Gora, at the edge of a National Park.

War crimes Prosecutor Vladimir Vukcevic said police arrested the suspect near the village, where he was apparently planning to meet a helper and collect some money.

According to Vukcevic, members of the Security Information Agency nabbed him at 8.24am. He was armed but did not resist

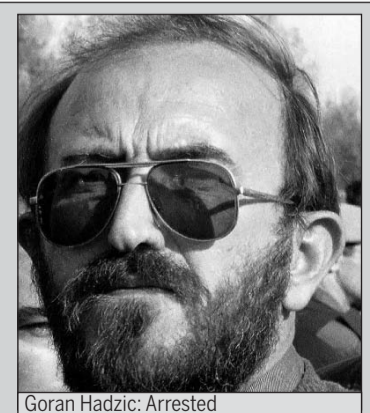
arrest.

According to the first reports, Hadzic was arrested close to the Serbian Orthodox monastery of Krusedol, which lies across the road from an army barracks.

It was often suggested that war-crime suspects were hiding out in monasteries at Fruska Gora and the Srem region.

Hadzic's family lives in a house in Aranjan street in Novi Sad's Adamovic's settlement, a part of town well known for its expensive and elegant villas and their nouveau riche owners.

Today, we could find only jour-



Goran Hadzic: Arrested

nalists in front of the house. Neighbours from nearby buildings said they'd seen nothing unusual going on

Comedy Bridges Language

A new hit sketch in Albania is using humour to tackle the divide between Albanians from Albania and those from Kosovo.



By Marjola Rukaj

A comedy show on one of the most watched television stations among Albanians has put the cultural and linguistic chasm between Albanians in Albania and those in Kosovo under the spotlight.

"Xheneriku dhe Kosovari" ("The mechanic and the Kosovar") takes place in the variety show Portokalli every Sunday on Tirana's Top Channel.

The sketches centre on encounters between an uneducated mechanic from Tirana played by Erand Sojli while different characters from Kosovo are played by Kosovo's Kreshnik Ibrahim.

The show focuses on differences in culture and language that lead to odd and embarrassing situations between Albanians in Albania and those across the border.

The actors deal humorously with reciprocal stereotypes, such as the strong nationalism and traditional attitudes of many Kosovars and the cosmopolitan aspirations of many Albanians from Albania.

"I wanted to play with these stereotypes," Erand Sojli, protagonist and writer of the sketch show, told Balkan Insight.

"There are great differences between Albanians in Albania and those in Kosovo. We're Albanians but we don't under-

stand each other. That's dramatic."

Kosovars and Albanians from Albania lived under the same state only during the dim and distant past of the Ottoman Empire and more recently during Italian and German occupation in the Second World War, when the Axis powers created a puppet greater Albania.

Besides that, communications between Kosovo and Albania have been limited. While Albania became an independent state in 1912, Kosovo passed under Serbian and then Yugoslav rule.

Contacts have only flourished since Albania threw off its Stalinist regime in the early 1990s and since Kosovo was freed from Serbian rule in 1999.

"We haven't been in contact with each other, so we don't know each other," Erand Sojli said. "The first time I went to Kosovo, I had many curious misunderstandings; even the way we say, 'Thank you' in Tirana, has a negative significance in Kosovo."

During the long years of enforced mutual isolation, Albania and Kosovo developed on different cultural lines, he added: "We find it strange in Albania that people in Kosovo are so patriotic, while we are not. It's because patriotism in Kosovo, due to political reasons, has a lot to do with their identity."

Differences also involve linguistic phenomena and the strong influence of the Serbian language and culture in Kosovo.

"Serbian influence is very present in language in Kosovo, in the syntax, in the lexicon and in everyday life," Pandeli Pani, an Albanian scholar at Bonn University, explained.

"For example, Albanians have taken most technological words from Italian or French while the Kosovars were more influenced by Serbian and sometimes by German."

"There are many differences between Kosovars and Albanians in Albania," Kreshnik Ibrahim, the Kosovar actor who plays in the Erand Sojli's sketch show, says.

"When I moved to Tirana, I had many difficulties working with Albanians from Albania," he recalls. "They have a very different mentality compared to ours in Kosovo."

Ibrahim is the only Kosovo actor to have starred in the popular Albanian show Portokalli for years.

"All the other actors from Kosovo stayed only short periods because our sense of



humour and theirs are different - and the public in Albania didn't quite get it".

Linguist Pandeli Pani says Albanians became more aware of their differences with Kosovars in 1999, when large numbers of people fled to

"We have our prejudices as well," Fisnik Ismaili, designer of the comic series The Pimpsons, added. "While they [Albanians] think our language is uncultivated, we think that Albanians from Albania speak in a coquettish, over-

from Kosovo is that they are discriminated against both in Belgrade and in Tirana," he says. "They face the same negative stereotypes from both."

Kelmendi who advocates official recognition of Gheg speech throughout the Albanian-speaking area, says negative stereotypes about Kosovars reflect the lack of prestige of the Kosovar version of the Albanian language.

"It's a consequence of the Language Congress held in Tirana in 1972 that chose the Tosk version as the standard, and of the discrimination against Gheg language and culture," he maintains.

Many Kosovars say the attitude of Albanians in Albania towards their co-nationals in Kosovo remains characterized by a certain arrogance and discrimination.

Some Kosovo intellectuals have criticized the Tirana cultural elite for failing to take Kosovo artists and intellectuals seriously.

Gazi Berljajolli, a linguist at the University of Prishtina who writes in Gheg, says the sketch show unconsciously reflects feelings of superiority felt by the people of Tirana.

"It may be humorous, but the sketches show how people in Tirana feel superior to Albanians in Prishtina," he says, "because the character



Erand Sojli

Albania during the Kosovo conflict. "Before that, we didn't have systematic contacts and didn't know each others' realities," he reflects.

Most people in Kosovo speak the northern Gheg dialect of Albanian, while Albania's standard language since 1972 has been based on the southern Tosk dialect.

Enver Robelli, a Kosovo journalist on the daily Koha Ditore, said this difference has had an impact on mutual perceptions.

"Many negative stereotypes regarding Kosovars in Albania are caused by language and by the way that people in Albania perceive the way Kosovars speak," he said.

"Even the fact that Kosovars speak slowly makes people in Tirana think that Kosovars are less intelligent than Albanians from Albania," he added.

Robelli says sketches such as those played by Sojli and Ibrahim mock these stereotypes and so expose the folly of prejudice.

Arbnora Dushi, a linguist and folklore scholar in Prishtina, agrees. "Stereotypes have resulted from the lack of contacts between Kosovo and Albania. Although this sketch is a caricature of reality, it helps to confront this kind of stereotype," she told Balkan Insight.

feminine way."

Erand Sojli and Kreshnik Ibrahim say that "The Mechanic and the Kosovar" has enjoyed generally good feedback from the public in both Albania and Kosovo. Nevertheless, not all Albanians are fans.

Migjen Kelmendi, an ex-rockstar from Prishtina who owns a television and weekly magazine that use the Gheg speech



Migjen Kelmendi

instead of the Tosk standard, says the sketch show perpetuates "denigrating stereotypes that are even worse than those contained in sketches produced in Serbia, which represent Kosovars as un-emancipated peasants".

"The tragedy of Albanians

from Albania is the one who jokes and laughs with the stereotypical Kosovo character.

"One can pick up the sense of superiority in the fact that the character from Albania is a mechanic from Tirana while the Kosovar is just a Kosovar; we don't know anything of his



Kreshnik Ibrahim

Gulf Between Two Albanias

geographical, social, cultural, or economic background," Berljolli adds.

For all the criticisms, the sketch show does seem to inaugurate a new phase of breaking down taboos in the sometimes complicated relationship between Kosovo and Albania.

Its success has already inspired the authors of another popular show on Top Channel in Tirana to invite public personalities from Prishtina and Tirana to talk about differences among the two countries in a funny and informative way, demystifying stereotypes.

"Television from Tirana is widely followed in Kosovo. New expressions and new trends from Tirana are becoming more present in Kosovo due to that," linguist Berljolli says.

Meanwhile, the linguistic tide does not all flow one-way. A certain influence of Kosovar syntax and lexicon, which often comes from Serbian, is becoming increasingly trendy and acceptable in Tirana.

"Many intellectuals from Kosovo are active now in talk shows in Tirana, bringing their way of speaking and thinking to Albanian TV audiences," Pandeli Pani told Balkan Insight.

"Many journalists from Tirana are in contact with Kosovo as well, so they absorb Kosovar elements and introduce them instinctively or by joke into the way that they speak in Tirana."

"It is all about contacts," explains theatre author Jeton Neziraj. "By creating more contacts between Kosovo and Albania, the differences become more comprehensible."

Neziraj explains his point with an anecdote about Tirana actor Ema Andrea, who was recently preparing a play in Belgrade in collaboration with a Kosovar actor and an Albanian from Macedonia.

"I'd noticed with surprise that she had no problems in getting along with them, so I asked whether she had difficulties understanding them," he recalls.

"I'm already used to the way they speak because we are in contact continuously," she told me. "Now it seems normal to me, though it's still different."

This article is funded under the BICCED project, supported by the Swiss Cultural Programme.



Erand Sojli and Kreshnik Ibrahim during their sketch 'Xheneriku dhe Kosovari'

Web Hot Topics: Do you Gheg It?

Alchaemia: HAHAAH... strong "nationalism" of Kosovars, and "cosmopolitanism" of Albanians from Albania... that's some sweet, sweet irony right there.

FjaleBes: Interesting article. There's just one "tiny" information missing here - most Albanians from Albania used to be Gheg too, but they were con-

verted both linguistically and culturally to the Tosk culture, the one that dictator Enver Hoxha belonged to, during Hoxha's communist dictatorship.

As an Albanian by origin who was born and brought up in a non-Albanian country, but cultivated both Gheg and Tosk cultures at home, unlike many

other Kosovars and Albanians, I could easily pick up the subtle and indirect discrimination of Kosovars by Albanians from Albania.

Unfortunately, many Kosovars seemingly have to put up with the discrimination coming from Albanians from Albania because as one of the most discriminated peoples of Europe they have to choose between being discriminated

by xenophobes and discriminators of Serb ethnicity and the xenophobes and discriminators from Albania.

Sonnykraja: I am an Albanian from south Montenegro and our dialect is different from both of these but I still understand them both. We are still one nation no matter what!

Sunny: I have lived in Kosovo and in Albania for a period of

time, and I fully disagree with the concept of the journalist. It is not true that there is such a big difference between communication of Albanians from Kosova and Albanians from Albania. They lived separately for half a century, but it is not true that they cannot understand each other. They are the same nation and speak the same language.

Independence Fears over Kosovo's New Serbian Channel

A new, public television station for Kosovo's Serbs is to be launched imminently, but support from the country's Serb journalists remains elusive.



Anamari Repic, currently vice-director at RTK, says that many Serbs think that the channel shouldn't be part of RTK. "They're not for RTK 2 and some international stakeholders have the same view"



By Artan Mustafa

Kosovo's Government may have sent its draft law on public broadcasting in Kosovo to parliament, which will establish a new television channel in Serbian - but local Serb journalists continue to oppose key elements of the plan.

Worries include the channel's name and its ability to remain independent from government influence.

According to the draft law, Radio Television of Kosovo, RTK, should consist of two television channels, one in Albanian, established after the end of the conflict, and a new station in Serbian.

A parliamentary committee on media gathered to discuss the law on July 23, and it is expected to appear in a plenary session when the Assembly returns from summer holidays.

The earliest timeframe for the channel's first broadcast is early 2012.

It will aim to provide 'information and entertainment to the minority communities', as foreseen in Martti Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Status Proposal, which Kosovo Parliament has adopted and was the blueprint for Kosovo's declaration of independence.

A large team, involving around 30 representatives from different sectors, is leading the preparations for the launch.

Dukagjin Gorani, an adviser to Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, says the channel must be established because it is part of the Ahtisaari plan.

"It will be an independent channel inside the public broadcaster. According to the recommendation it will be called RTK2 but that is still open," Gorani told Prishtina Insight. "The

"Parliament is a political institution and it can create only public organisations. If they [Serbs] want to create private TV, they do not need to ask

us."

Gorani added that a national television frequency has been kept for Serbian language since 1999.

Serbian journalists oppose the channel being called RTK2, prefer its headquarters to be in Gracanica not Prishtina, and they request editorial independence.

Anamari Repic, currently vice-director at RTK, says that many Serbs think that the channel shouldn't be part of RTK. "They're not for RTK 2 and some international stakeholders have the same view," she added.

Repic agrees that a huge operation like this channel can survive only if it has public funds.

However, an issue remains how to secure editorial independence.

"Serbian colleague are afraid

that the TV will promote Kosovo as a state and that it would not promote enough Serbian culture and issues," she said. "I think it should have all what a broadcaster needs to inform and be as objective as possible."

An EU Commission arrives in August to advise the government in relation to the editorial independence of the new channel, cooperation between the exiting private television-stations and it, as well as the institutional set up for public broadcasting.

Imer Mushkolaj, executive director at Kosovo Association of Professional Journalists, says that as member of the steering group he has insisted that the channel be public, but not a second channel to RTK.

"The important thing is for the channel to be public, not pri-

vate as the majority of Serbian representatives are asking, also due to the financial security," Mushkolaj said.

As things stand, the new channel in Serbian and the two public radio will answer to only one board of directors, but will have their own managerial structure.

The board will add two Serbs to the current 11-strong setup.

Serb journalists have called for the channel to have a ring-

fenced budget from the beginning and be financed similarly to RTK, through funds and its commercial income.

It will be obliged to open 20 per cent of its space for outside productions and 15 per cent of its programming to other minority communities.

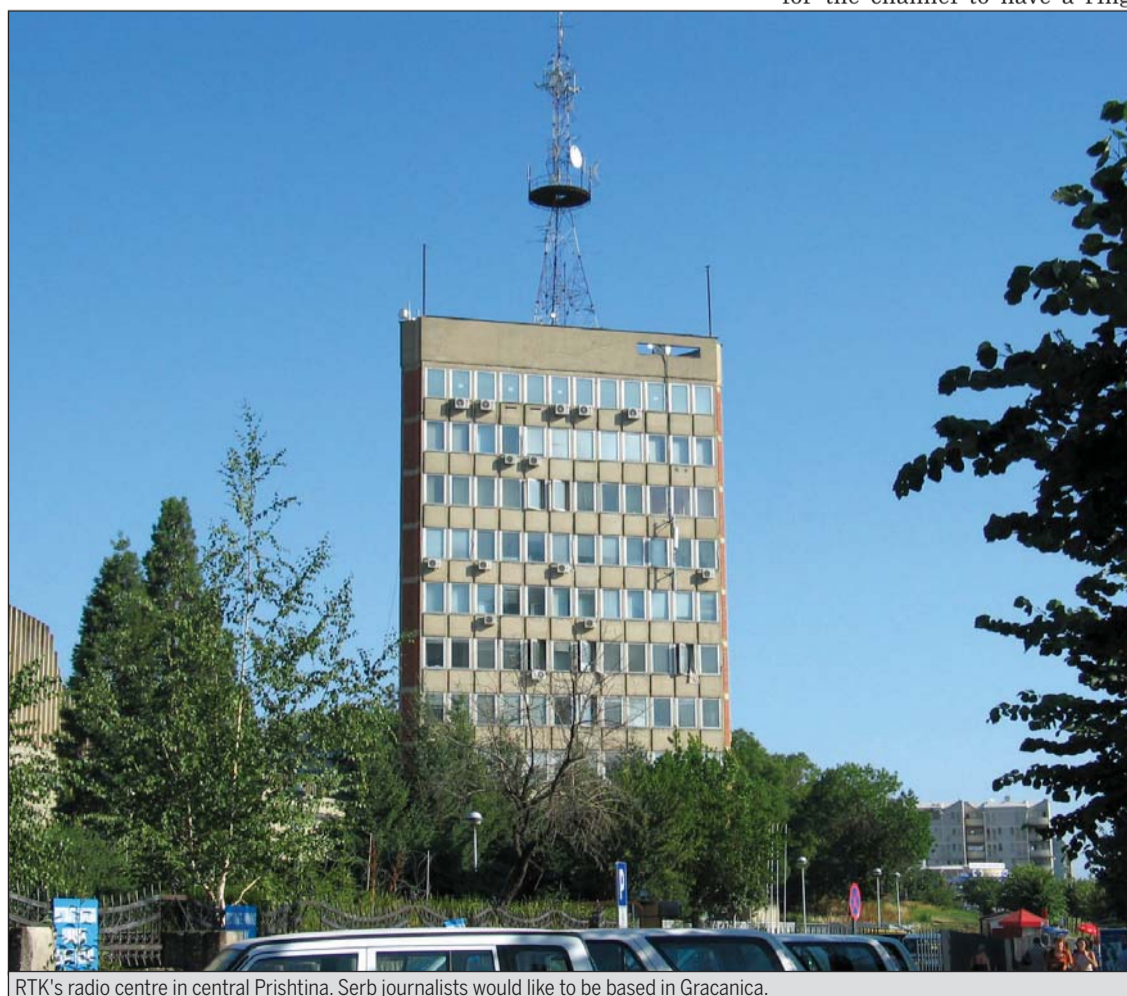
Andy McGufie, the ICO spokesperson, said: "The idea is to create a television channel from Kosovo for Kosovo. We need to work on the characteristic features that will make the TV interesting to Serbian community."

Mr. Mushkolaj says that this tv channel is needed and necessary for an objective information for Serbs in Kosovo. "Until now, Kosovo Serbs were mainly informed from Belgrade media or Serbian local media in Serbian language. Often the reporting did not reflect adequately the life of Kosovo Serbs, they did not report the challenges they face or the good side of their ordinary life".

Mushkolaj adds that the most important thing is "what sort of channel it will be, what editorial policy it will follow and who will work for it". "The Serbs should feel that this channel, before anything else, is theirs and serves their interests".

According to him, the channel should be dedicated to all Kosovo audience and be open to offer jobs for Albanian journalists who speak Serbian and others, as well as for cameraman, montage staff etc.

Dukagjin Gorani says also that Kosovo can soon switch to digital TV system which according to him is a precondition for Balkans come 2015.



RTK's radio centre in central Prishtina. Serb journalists would like to be based in Gracanica.

This Is Our Neighbourhood

Roma children, many of whom until recently had never held a camera, have discovered a way to tell their story to the world in pictures



By Prishtina Insight

Until the spring of this year many of the children who have contributed photos to this online exhibition didn't know how to write their name.

Although they have now all learned that and are now registered to be in school in September, it will be a long time before their literacy skills are good enough for them to use writing to lobby.

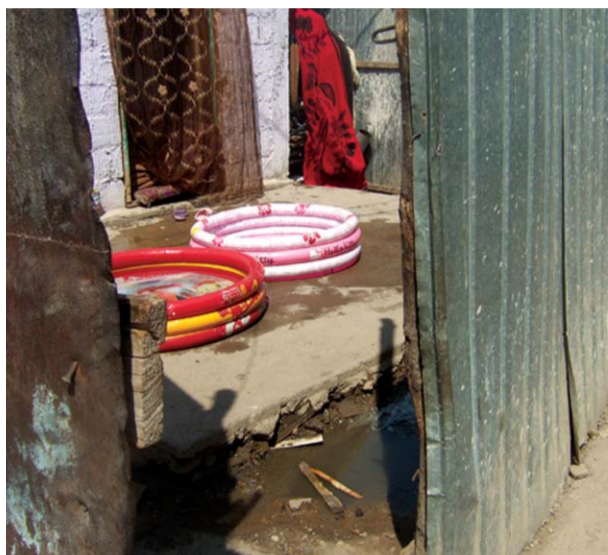
Kosovo NGO The Ideas Partnership hopes the children will be able to communicate with the world immediately through images they've taken – striking and memorable

photos of their daily life.

The Ideas Partnership is working with these children and their families to change some of the living conditions shown in the photographs – income generation opportunities through a women's soap-making project, adult literacy classes, clothing transfer, and supporting the children to get to and stay in school.

"We want to run the project again next summer, of course," says Elizabeth Gowing, co-founder of the charity. "And we hope the photographs in a year's time will show that things are improving for this community."

See the children's photos of Neighbourhood 29 at www.neighbourhood29.com, where 29 new photos are uploaded every da



Neighbourhood is a photographic project created by young people aged 7 to 17 living in the Fushe Kosove area of Prishtina.

It is supported by the volunteers of Kosovo NGO The Ideas Partnership as a part of their Summer Programme 2011.

The aim of the photography project is simple: each participant gets a camera, some basic training on how to use it and then the freedom to explore, exper-

iment and express their creativity by taking photos that represent their neighbourhood.

We hope that the project will provide a unique and memorable experience for the young people and give them a chance to showcase their community, as they see it, to the rest of the world. We plan to keep this site as up to date as we can during the summer, showcasing a selection of photos from all participants.

The cameras they have used have been donated and are fairly low-spec, but we think the results are great, especially as most participants have never used a camera before. It shows that the best

photos are those that capture something interesting and inspiring, whatever camera is used. You can see more photos of the project in action on The Ideas Partnership facebook page.



All the photos were taken by young Roma children

marketing

Conference Interpretation and Translation Services



CITS

Conference Interpretation and Translation Services

Want quality, professionalism and dedication – give us a chance and you won't regret it

- Simultaneous and consecutive interpreting;
- Written translations;
- Revision, editing and proofreading;
- Certified translations for court;
- Simultaneous interpreting equipment and sound systems;
- Media monitoring;
- Language consultancy.

E-mail: cits.translation@gmail.com

Tel: 038/ 22 98 99

+ 377 (0) 44 137 976

Where to pick up Prishtina Insight?

Prishtina Insight has teamed up with these 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.

Jinglebells

If your soul is affected by the grey season then pay a visit to Jinglebells, where you will find all the colours that you've been missing.

Jinglebells is a perfect one-stop-shop for internationals offering a selection of books in various languages and the quickest supply of international newspapers in town. It also offers souvenirs and gifts, such as local handicrafts.



*Jinglebells.
Bookstore and
more.
Ernest Koliqi
12, opposite
EULEX HQ
+386(0)49 741 170*

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. Skopje-based 'Los Ritmos' entertain diners every Friday and Saturday with their latin beats. For more information, visit their facebook page, or contact them.



*Cavallero,
Located next to the ex-
UNMIK building
Prishtina
+386 49 619 375
Facebook page*

A taste of Napoli in Prishtina.

After ten years of making pizza in Napoli, and only with love to blame, Fatmir the chef returned to Prishtina. His pizzas, made in a woodburn stove, are definitely genuine napolitanas. For those who consider pizza to be boring, Fatmir has several pastas on offer, also a true joy for the taste buds. Napoli has an excellent selection of red and white wines or, for the more ambitious, one of the region's best Quint's raki. Napoli makes for delicious lunch, dinner or even after-theatre time out in the centre of Prishtina.



*Pizzeria Napoli
off Luan Haradinaj,
opposite Newborn
044/409-402402*

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.hote-
lafa.com*

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-fried 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 Prishtina

Hotel Prishtina's 43 charming guest rooms and suites are reminiscent of a small hotel in the European tradition. You'll immediately feel at home in our living room, sipping a glass of wine in our fine restaurant surrounded by a gallery of paintings by local artists.



The hotel offers free, fast wifi internet, complimentary breakfast, conference room, swimming pool, sauna and laundry service.

Hotel Victory

But Victory is more than a place to meet and do business. Its doors are always open for guests to enjoy the tranquility of our guest rooms and lobbies, and the finest cuisine in the region. The only hotel in the region where real plants, original art and fine solid furniture decorate the space and turn it into a homelike environment. Hotel Victory is established to offer travelers the most complete, comfortable accommodation available in Kosovo and the region. Our professional staff will offer guests the highest standard of service and support, and we will use our resources to greater lengths to make your stay as complete as possible.



*Hotel Victory
Mother Teresa
Prishtina, Kosovo
Tel: +381 38 543 277
+381 38 543 267
Email:
info@hotel-victor-
ry.com
http://www.hotel-
victory.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*

Friends Bar

Friends Bar is owned by a Swiss-Albanian couple. The modern interior and the calm terrace behind the bar will make your stay comfortable. They offer a wide range of beers, including Dark Lasko and Murphy's Irish Red, which can rarely be found in Kosovo. You can also try eight different tastes and colours of vodka. Starting from May 14 there will be barbecues every Saturday from 5pm to 9pm, and brunch every Sunday from 9am to 1pm. BBQ and brunch will be offered with a wide choice of local and international food.



*17, Rr.Fehmi
Agani
045244 498
Facebook
Page: Friends
Bar - Prishtine*

Odyssea Bistro

Odyssea Bistro Bar is a beautiful bistro located in the heart of Prishtina, offering a combination of a quality menu with inspiring dishes and a modern bar with a large variety of drinks and exotic cocktails.

Odyssea Bistro Bar's unique design is a mixture of classic French influence and a modern touch.

Busy during lunch breaks, romantic for dinners and classy for evening drinks, Bistro is a great place to visit at any time of the day.

Sample Bistro's brunch on Sundays, or enjoy live music on Wednesday, Fridays and Saturdays

*Bistro,
Sejdi Kryeziu, Pejton, Prishtina
045402095 and 049333959*



Paddy O'Brien's

The staff at Paddy O'Brien's have a saying: "It's easy to walk in, but very hard to leave."

And with its warm atmosphere, fantastic range of drinks and excellent food, it is easy to see why.

There have been many attempts to establish a proper Irish pub in Prishtina, but this is the only one to hit the spot.

From classic coffees to cocktails, via, of course, Guinness, you really won't find it difficult to select the perfect drink.

A mouth-watering menu of Irish specialties is also on offer, spanning from all-day breakfasts to Irish stews at night.

Options include shepherd's pie, bangers and mash, fish 'n chips, and whopping great burgers.

Thursday is pub quiz night, but there is always something going on at the pub, whether it is sport screenings or just a good shindig.

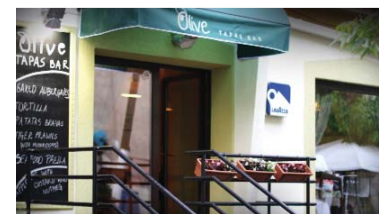
*Paddy O'Brien's
Tringe Smajli Street,
by the Illyria Hotel
Prishtina: 045-420900*



Olive Tapas Bar

After many tears running tapas bars in England and Germany, as well as opening the first of its kind in Prishtina, these guys no their trade. Try to delicious tapas and while away on afternoon on the moorish sangria. Tapas and main courses include rocket salad, mixed cheese, Spanish tortilla, omelet with vegetables and potatoes and deep fried calamari.

*Open Monday to Saturday
7 am until 12 pm
Olive Tapas Bar
St.Fehmi Agani 48/1
Tel. +381 38 321 132
Cell +377 44 620 414
olivetapasbar@gmail.com*



Dokufest Programme:

Friday, July 29, 2011

Kino LUMBARDHI

12:00 'You don't like the truth: 4 days inside Guantanamo' 99 min

14:00 'Inner vision: Artists on film: The Devil and Daniel Johnston' 110 min

16:00 'Day is done' 111 min

18:00 'Koha, Kohe pas Kohe' 27, Ngushte, 19, Ninulla 5, Gure Uje 18, The last unicorn 5'

Kino SHTEPIA E KULTURES [Culture Centre]

12:00 'Unorthodox: I Am Still Here' 107

14:00 '10 years strong: The White Diamond' 87'

16:00 'Made in Switzerland: Gambling, Gods and LSD' 180'

Kino SHKOLLA E MUZIKES [Music School]

10:00 Animator Workshop: Intensive workshop dedicated for youngsters who will work closely with workshop tutors to produce short animations.

14:00 'Youth Program: Jeanine 17, The Uzine or The Revenge of Mr. Staach 17,

Le Concile Lunatique 12'

18:00 'Kids Program: L'invention 4, Nimbus Machina 6, Evasion 4, My Dear Deer! 4, Galeria 5'

Kino BAHÇE [Garden Cinema]

20:30 'Fini 29, People I Could Have Been and Maybe I Am 54'

22:00 'The Black Power Mixtape 1967-75' 96'

Kino LUM [River]

20:30 'Pera Berpange 15,

Out of Ereasers 15, Stick Climbing 14, Si Qeni N'Rrush 27'

22:00 'Cinema Komunisto 101'

Kino KALA [Cinema in the Castle]

20:30 'V Letu Hip Hopa 72,'

22:00 'Revansh 15, The 4th Revolution: Energy Autonomy 86'

LIDHJA E PRIZRENIT [Prizren League]

20:30 'Inner Vision: Artists on Film: Black Sun 70'

22:00 'Festivals We Like: Sheffield Doc Fest: Life in Movement 79'

Saturday, July 30, 2011

Kino LUMBARDHI

12:00 'Trials, Trimbulation and the Sustainable Growth of a Cock 21, Our School 94'

14:00 'Out of Reach 30, Without a Country 20 Slow Action 45'

16:00 'City on Film: The Soul of Things 15, People on Sunday 74'

18:00 'Mila Seeking Senida 83'

Kino SHTEPIA E KULTURES [Culture Centre]

12:00 'Made in Switzerland: Play 4, Stick Climbing 14, An African Election 89'

14:00 'Inner Vision: Artists on Film: Marwencol 83'

16:00 'Festivals We Like: Play-Doc: Paris #1 31, You Are All Captains 79'

18:00 'Made in Switzerland: Yuri Lennon's Landing on Alpha 46/15, Aysheen-Still Alive in Gaza 79'

Kino BAHÇE [Garden Cinema]

20:30 'Raju 24, Big Bang Big Room 10, Lena and Me 15, Gardfren 25'

22:00 'Special Presentation: Let England Shake: 12 Short Films 90'

Kino LUM [River]

20:30 'Poplava 42, A Letter To Dad 48'

22:00 'At Night, They Dance 80'

Kino KALA [Cinema in the Castle]

20:30 'The D-Train 5, City on Film: Of Tie and the City 74'

22:00 'Supriseville 9, The Forgotten Space 113'

Sunday, July 31, 2011

Kino LUMBARDHI

14:00 '10 Years Strong: Voice of Bam 90'

16:00 'Spotlight: James Longley Iraq in Fragments 94'

18:00 Best Short Best Green Dox

Kino SHTEPIA E KULTURES [Culture Centre]

14:00 Announcement of Awards

16:00 'Unorthodox: N-VI, Vanishing Roadside 75'

18:00 Best Int'l Dox: Short Best Human Rights Dox

Kino BAHÇE [Garden Cinema]

20:30 Best Int'l Dox: Feature

22:00 Audience Award

Kino LUM [River]

20:30 Best Balkan Dox

22:00 Best Balkan Newcomer



Every day at 6 pm, ABC Cinema continues screening the animated movie Rio. Blu, a rare macaw who believes that he is the last of his kind, discovers there's another macaw out there, a girl named Jewel.

Then, to set up a life with her, he leaves his cage in small town Minnesota and heads to Rio de Janeiro. Blu is domesticated and Jewel is the fiercely independent, high-flying female. They embark on an adventure of a lifetime, where they find out about friendship, love, courage, and being open to life's many wonders. Rio also brings collectively a menagerie of bright characters, a heart-warming story, colourful backdrops, stimulating Latin and modern music, and family-friendly song and dance.



Every day, at 8pm and 10 pm, ABC cinema also continues screening the brand new movie Hanna.

Award-winning director Joe Wright creates a boldly original suspense thriller with Hanna, starring Academy Award nominee Saoirse Ronan ("The Lovely Bones," "Atonement") in the title role. Raised by her father (Eric Bana of "Star Trek"), an ex-CIA man, in the wilds of Finland, Hanna's upbringing and training have been one and the same, all geared to making her the perfect assassin. The turning point in her adolescence is a sharp one; sent into the world by her father on a mission, Hanna journeys stealthily across Europe while eluding agents dispatched after her by a ruthless intelligence operative with secrets of her own (Academy Award winner Cate Blanchett). As she nears her ultimate target, Hanna faces startling revelations about her existence and unexpected questions about her humanity. The movie is directed by Joe Wright, starring Saoirse Ronan, Eric Bana, Olivia Williams, Cate Blanchett, Jason Flemyng, Jessica Barden, and is written by Seth Lochhead, David Farr, Joe Penhall, Joe Wright.



For ticket reservation or further information call ABC Cinema at 038 243 117 or visit them at <http://www.kinoabc.info>

Dokufest's Tenth Anniversary Already a Hit



By Shengjyl Osmani

With a few days left still to run before the end of Dokufest, many are already calling it a great success.

Multi-award winning Norwegian photo-

DOKU FEST

International Documentary and Short Film Festival

23 - 31 July 2011, Prizren

grapher Espen Rasmussen's exhibition - Transit opened DokuPhoto on Friday, July 22, at the Haman Museum in Prizren, which also marked the start of Dokufest.

The international documentary and short film festival, Dokufest, officially opened its tenth anniversary last Saturday, July 23, in Prizren. During the week, seven screens in the city have been screening international documentaries and short films in front of international and local crowds.

"4,000 tickets have been sold up until Wednesday, and this number is growing fast," said Veton Nurkollari, the artistic director of Dokufest, as the event got under way.

Despite the incredible number of films that will be screened during this tenth edition of the festival, many workshops and discussions with Oscar nominated directors and well know designers were also squeezed into the first four days of the festival.

In a lecture with leading US designer and illustrator Mirko Ilic, born in Croatia, he told the audience about socially and politically charged graphic design.

"It's my first time in South-eastern Europe since I left Croatia a long time ago, and I am amazed by the festival and by



Kosovo youngsters who are full of courage and want for a better future," Ilic told Prishtina Insight.

Furthermore, Sara Garcia, member of the jury for Balkan Dox said that it's not easy to organize a festival, but it is her pleasure to be part of the best film festival in the region.

"I was told by my friends about the festival and they also told me about the incredible energy dedicated to this festival," said Garcia.

German Euronews journalist, who is a

member of human right movies jury, Sebastian Saam, said that having human rights movies in this festival shows the need for this issue to be addressed more.

"I, as an expert in human rights, would have liked to have more than six movies in the festival, but believe that the selected ones for this festival are good enough to point out the political and social angle of this matter," explained Saam in the Dokudaily newspaper, published during the festival.

Ecosovo

Don't Let Ink Blot
the Environment

By Elizabeth Gowing

I love it when I find something I can do that's good for ecology, my own economics and local employment all at the same time. So you can imagine how happy I was when I walked into Ink Station. I was given a friendly welcome (in beautiful English), and then the printer cartridge I was carrying was whisked away from me. But it wasn't whisked away into landfill - not like all the other printer cartridges my life has left behind it (I shudder, thinking of the little plastic cairn that will stay as a legacy of my last three decades of wasteful printing). Instead, the cartridge was taken to be refilled while I stayed for a few minutes easy conversation with the manager of Ink Station.

I congratulated him on his business - it offers a good service because prices (which vary for different models) for refilling a cartridge are extremely competitive when compared with buying a new one. And of course I love the environmental benefit, saving all those cartridges from being burned or buried.

You want to know how many cartridges we're talking about? You're looking for a how-many-times-round-the-earth fact now, aren't you? Well I'm told that, for example, over 375 million empty toner cartridges and ink cartridges are thrown into the trash every year in the US alone. Apparently if you put all these cartridges end to end they would go three times round the earth.

Choking landfill isn't the only problem caused by all those cartridges. The production of them is also energy-intensive: four litres of petroleum are burned to manufacture one toner cartridge.

And all of this is unnecessary. Printer cartridges can in extreme cases be refilled up to 15 times before reaching the end of their life (though it's more usual to manage 5 to 7 refills). That's good business for Ink Station (and good savings for me), and goes some way to managing that landfill problem.

However, if you're intent on seeing the trashcan as half full rather than half empty, it is of course true that such a reduction in that chain of old ink cartridges looped three times around the globe is still going to leave us with a chain stretching about halfway round the globe; and decorating our planet with such a garbage necklace is still nothing to be proud of. Reducing this kind of waste isn't just about refilling ink cartridges; we need to think about the use of the ink in the first place. Despite the policy of ECLO and others requiring brochures to have solid colour front covers, it is generally considered good environmental practice (as well as being cheaper) to design publications/ business cards/ flyers etc with a white background rather than white text on colour. The environmental implications of design aren't restricted to the first printing of a brochure - the original decision about the balance of white space and colour block has implications for every subsequent photocopy of the product, or printing of a pdf on machines that may be remote in space and time from the first production.

Of course we can all also be more careful about the sheer quantity of what we print - for example, considering whether it's necessary to print out an email just for the sake of one piece of information contained within it, when we could write that down somewhere else instead. These decisions will affect not only how much paper and electricity our offices consume, but also the number of new printer cartridges we have to buy and the four litres of petroleum burned up every time.

So, however useful you think this article is, don't photocopy it just for the details of Ink Station. Jot them down on a piece of scrap paper: Ink Station, info@inkstation-kos.com and Bulevard Bill Clinton - on the right as you head out of town, close enough to the statue of Bill for you to believe that it is this business that his hand is gesturing at.

Elizabeth Gowing is a founder of The Ideas Partnership, a Kosovan NGO working on educational, cultural and environmental projects. She can be reached at theideaspartmentship@gmail.com.

Prishtina Drops Street Dog Cull

Prishtina municipality have stopped their campaign of shooting street dogs to control the population in favour of a more humane technique.



By Lawrence Marzouk

Hunters will no longer be employed by Prishtina municipality to hunt down and shoot street dogs, the town hall has announced.

The news came after a campaign by the pressure group Animal Friends of Kosovo, which has called for the practice to be dropped.

The municipality said it will now use the Trap Neuter and Release, TNR,

technique instead.

Animal Friends of Kosovo said they were "delighted and congratulated the municipality of Prishtina on their decision to end the culling of street dogs and adopt a TNR programme".

"This clearly shows that the municipality is prepared to deal with a difficult problem and deal with it in a modern, viable and humane way," the group said in a statement.

"We are available to assist and support the municipality in any way that we can with our expertise and experience and would welcome the opportunity to meet with them to discuss this further. We look forward to the tender issue, which we will be bidding for."

The municipality said it would now issue a tender for a company to carry out the neutering campaign.

In a statement it said: "After examining carefully the European standards for protection and treatment of animals, and in accordance with law for the treatment of animals, Prishtina Municipality has decided to announce a tender for castration and sterilisation of stray dogs and also has suspended the contract with the utility company Horticulture the physical elimination of stray dogs."

Prishtina also called on other municipalities to follow in its footsteps.



SHOP Review:

AMFORA Wine Shop



By Shengjyl Osmani

Amfora joins a select few in becoming the latest wine shop to open in Prishtina.

The shop is run by a wine expert, who hails from Kosovo's grape-growing region of Rahovec, and can offer great advice on which local tipples to try.

Homemade wines and raki are sold in creative bottles from different fruits, like grapes, pear, and quince.

Well known wines like Bodrumi i Vjeter, Stone Castle, or Iliret, are sold here, and the homemade bottles are in one litre plastic bottle, or brandy in glass



bottles.

Despite the high quality of the wines, Amfora offers reasonable prices.

A bottle of wine will cost you between 2.30 euro and 7 euro. Homemade vino costs from 1.30 to 2.30 euro per

litre.

Soon, Amfora will offer you beautiful wine glasses and wine bottle openers.

For homemade wine orders, or for wine advice call them at 044 655 767; 049

852 833, or visit them behind the AAK building.

Amfora,
Wine and Spirits Shop
Str. Ulpiana, A-7, Hyrja 3
Lok. 1, Prishtine
[behind AAK building]

Inside Prishtina



Prishtina through the Eyes of:

Chris Hill

USAID BEEP Project



What surprised you most about Prishtina?

The vehicles. When reading official GDP and unemployment figures, you don't expect to see more Mercedes, BMW, and Audi vehicles than you have in your life. But that's the case.

What's your favourite hangout?

Filikaqa during karaoke night.

What is the best thing about Prishtina?

The women. They are beautiful.

What is the most annoying thing about Prishtina?

Cars parking on the sidewalk. You park on the sidewalk and walk on the road.

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

I would get more roads paved.

How many macchiatos do you drink a day?

Two

What's your favourite Albanian word and why?

Liri. It's what works best.

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

Albi.

Giant Party Leaders' Posters Illegal, Says Municipality

With Colgate-smile faces, photos of political leaders adorn party headquarters across Kosovo's capital, but, according to the municipality, none has planning permission



By Shengjyl Osmani

It's difficult to miss the beneficent face of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci staring down at you from the giant photo attached to the Democratic Party of Kosovo's headquarters on Mother Teresa Boulevard.

But according to Prishtina municipality this billboard, and those of other parties, are illegal.

"Billboards of political leaders, like the one of PDK leader, Hashim Thaci in the city centre, the AKR leader, Behgjet Pacolli, or the AAK, Ramush Haradinaj billboards, hanging in their party headquarters must not escape from municipal regulations and obligations," said Agim Gashi, head of the Department for Public Service.

Gashi told Prishtina Insight that despite the policy, the municipality has given permission to no party billboards in the municipality.

"By not expressing their interest in receiving a permit to continue using

current billboards they are drastically violating our policy," added Gashi.

He would not be drawn however on what action will be taken against the parties.

The news came as municipal inspectors launched a programme of tackling encroachment by private enterprises into the public space, including bar terraces and stairs.

"The Municipality has started legalising the use, but not all of them are yet legal," Muhamet Gashi, the spokesperson of the municipality, told Prishtina Insight.

Bar Review:

Grill House Bar

Flaming Good Barbecues

Barbecues may be a great way to enjoy grilled food, but they do involve a fair bit of messing around, especially if you don't have a garden.

Grill House Bar might just be your answer. It provides all the necessary equipment for you to cook alfresco, apart from the food, and provides chilled drinks thanks to its onsite bar.

At 7km along the Prishtina-Skopje highway, it is also a short distance for those escaping the smoke.

Grill House Bar offers 1700 metres of open green space, a

grill area, small children playground corner and all kinds of drinks.

Grill lovers do not need to wonder where to buy coal for burning, or grill accessories as Grill House Bar has all you need. Thus, you just need to gather all your friends or family and spend time cooking, and relaxing.

The grill bar is 500 metres after you pass the HIB petrol station.

You can book the whole area, or just a corner for around 25 people, which will cost you less, including all grill services.

For the whole area, you will be

charged 100 euro per day.

No food is served in Grill House as you are supposed to bring your preferred dishes with you, but no outside drinks are allowed to be brought in.

For reservations, excluding weekends, call 044655977. It is open Monday to Friday from 3pm to 11 pm, and weekends from 9 am to 11 pm.

*Grill House Bar
7th kilometre on Prishtina-Skopje Highway
500 m after HIB Petrol
044 655 977*



Norway's Bomber Should Leave the Balkans Alone

Breivik is only the latest extreme rightist to project his pet theories about the world onto a region about which he knows precious little.



Marcus Tanner

It's not surprising that Anders Behrin Breivik claimed NATO's bombing of Serbia in 1999 was one of the factors behind his decision to carry out last Friday's atrocities in and near Oslo.

For years, Serbia's heroic resistance to Islam in Bosnia and Kosovo – their words – has been a cause célèbre with the extreme right in Europe, an oft-quoted example of Europe's ignominious surrender to world Muslim domination.

Far-right websites in Britain – some of whom the bomber was in contact with – regularly hum with professions of admiration for the actions of their "Serbian brothers" in the 1990s – those feelings of admiration coupled with fury about NATO's action in allegedly advancing the cause of Al-Qaeda in the Balkans.

The other great poster boy of the far right these days is Israel, which is deeply ironic given the right's traditional anti-Semitism. The Norwegian bomber's manifesto is full of the usual contradictions in that regard. He admires Israel vis-a-vis the Palestinians at the same time as maintaining that the pre-Second World War Jews were a treacherous element in Germany. Square that, if you can.

One thing that stands out in analysis of the Balkans by right-wing extremists like Breivik is the blurred focus and shaky grasp of facts. Accurate knowledge of the past and present conditions in the Balkan region is in short supply, when compared to the amount of words they expend on the subject.

Looking back at the Bosnian war in his self-styled manifesto, the Oslo bomber says the Muslims started the whole thing off by rejecting a generous Serbian offer of a couple of "enclaves". Well there you have it. The ungrateful Muslims.

Of course, were anyone to look at a demographic map of Bosnia circa 1991 and examine the relative demographic strengths and distribution of the three main communities, one would not conclude that this offer was generous.

Breivik's words recall those of the former Bosnian Serb leader, Biljana Plavsic. In the middle of the Bosnian war, she told me and Tim Judah of the Times in an interview that the Serbs were doing the Muslims a favour by herding them into enclaves. "Why's that?", we asked. "Oh, they like living on top of each other," she said in an airy fashion, as if that ought to have been obvious.

As for Kosovo, whoever talked there of the war with Serbia as a great religious struggle or as a milestone in an international Islamic crusade? Certainly not the Islamic countries, most of whom did not side with Kosovo in 1999 and most of whom do not recognize its independence now. Certainly not the people who run things in Prishtina now either. Deeply corrupt they may be – but Islamic zealots?

It is true that many Serbs attributed a religious quality to the Kosovo war, claiming that the Albanians' "real" motive was their hatred of Christianity. But what is important to note is that this motive was attributed to Albanians; it wasn't claimed or accepted.

This is one of the old curses of the Balkans; people insistently projecting grand overarching international ideologies, causes and theories onto conflicts that have little to do with them.

The war in Croatia was not about Catholicism versus Orthodoxy, it was about Croatian independence. Nor was the war in Bosnia, as many British liberals claimed in the early 1990s, about democracy versus fascism – a rerun of the Spanish Civil War. It was a struggle, a very militarily lopsided one, between Muslims and Serbs over who ruled Bosnia. Too bad if that sounds boring.

It may titillate the palates of armchair world theories to see the Balkan countries as pawns on a chessboard, all being moved around in purely passive fashion by vast unseen international forces. Reality is more humdrum. The sooner these grand strategists leave the Balkans out of their complex calculations, the better.



Farewells and More Promises at EULEX



By Selviye Bajrami

In the past couple of weeks the head of the special prosecutor's office and the chief prosecutor at EULEX have left, amid concerns over slow progress at the EU's rule of law mission in Kosovo.

After completing several interviews in Brussels with representatives of the European institutions who deal with EULEX, the European Union's rule of law mission in Kosovo, I am now concentrating on my work in Prishtina, the capital of Kosovo.

In an effort to finalise interviews in another Balkan state, Bosnia and Herzegovina, that has an international rule of law mission, I am completing the final stages of my research.

In addition, I have started interviewing people, nationals and foreigners, who are working in one way or another with EULEX, the EU's rule of law mission in Kosovo.

Beside the interviews for research, I am continuing my work at my daily newspaper. While my fellowship research topic is EULEX, this mission is a constant subject of media reports here and regularly features in my daily reporting.

Despite the departure during the past couple of weeks of key personnel – the chief prosecutor and the head of EULEX's Kosovo Special Prosecutions Office, SPRK – there is still no word on their permanent replacements.

Both Johannes van Vreeswijk, the Dutch former chief prosecu-

tor, and Isabelle Arnal, the French head of the SPRK, have taken other jobs elsewhere.

Van Vreeswijk had already served more than three years at EULEX, rumours persist that Arnal grew frustrated that she had not been promoted with the mission.

Van Vreeswijk and Arnal held key positions in EULEX's fight against organised crime and corruption and the prosecution of war crimes. They leave many unfinished cases behind them.

These are documented in official records and include cases in which senior Kosovan officials are suspected of some involvement.

The people of Kosovo will remember van Vreeswijk as a man who made great promises. I interviewed him recently, and he admitted that things had not gone as well as he'd have liked.

"I expected things would go faster. However, it was not as simple as I thought it would be," van Vreeswijk told me.

Arnal presented a statistical report on her work at the special prosecutor's office during the period July 2010 - June 2011, with details on 28 pre-trial operational activities and the investigations of complex arrests.

Of the backlog of cases EULEX inherited from its predecessor UNMIK, 111 out of 179 open investigations have been concluded.

The report lists the institutions that were raided and searched and the suspected offences. However, it does not what was the result of each investigation.

The report confirms that 11 EULEX prosecutors and a further 10 ethnic-Albanian Kosovan prosecutors are operating within the SPRK investigating 253 cases that

fall under the unit's jurisdiction: war crimes, terrorism, financial and organised crime.

Of those 253 cases, 161 cases are under investigation by EULEX prosecutors at SPRK and 92 other files have now been passed to Kosovan prosecutors at the same office.

The report also states that 119 of the 253 cases are connected to allegations about financial crime, 67 with war crimes, 12 terrorism offences and 55 other alleged criminal activities.

In the second table of the document, you will see the breakdown of investigations relating to 69 cases of alleged corruption and 50 other financial crimes.

According to the report, during 2009 a total of 14 trials were concluded by the SPRK, while during 2010 only ten were completed.

Arnal left on the promise that the financial crime charges currently lying on file will soon be prosecuted in court by the SPRK.

The expectations of Kosovo citizens are much greater than EULEX's achievements so far.

Not only that, EULEX as a whole has spent €365m to date, all paid for by EU taxpayers. Its annual budget for October 2010 to October 2011 has been set at €165m.

These sums of money are large by anybody's standards and as van Vreeswijk and Arnal say goodbye to EULEX, many are left wondering if prosecution rates will now drop further.

Selviye Bajrami is a Prishtina-based journalist who is participating in the 2011 Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence. She will be writing regular updates on her investigation into EULEX and international rule of law missions in the region.

Sarajevo's First McDonald's: How Many Served?



By Valerie Hopkins

On Wednesday, Bosnian presidency member Zeljko Komsic walked with US Ambassador Patrick Moon beneath those great triumphal Golden Arches for the VIP opening of McDonald's.

The well-heeled guests looked better suited for a symphony performance than to dining at a greasy spoon, but they had indeed gotten all gussied up for Bosnia's first McDining experience. The crowd was already lining up at 8.30 for the official 10am grand opening.

My home country boasts over 13,000 McDonald's, so I can't really complain about having two in my adopted city of Sarajevo, but I have to say I am not personally "Lovin' it."

I'm not looking forward to the scent of fries wafting down Titova as I make my nightly promenade towards Bascarsija, and I do not plan to lounge in the McCafe gossiping for hours with my friends. I don't like what McDonald's represents in the world: globalization, consumerism, and a total lack of culinary creativity.

However, I recognize what a Bosnian McDonald's signifies—both good and bad.

Sarajevans have forever pointed to

the invisible hand of the omnipotent "Cevapi Lobby" in preventing McDonald's advance into Bosnia; proudly saying that Ronald McDonald knew he could never compete with Mrkva, Zeljo, Ferhatovic, and other family-owned purveyors of Bosnia's wonderful and affordable "minced meat fingers".

Rumors abounded that McDonald's had conducted market research and run with its tail between its legs from a market that it could never penetrate.

These stories are much more colourful than the reality: it was red tape and political obstacles to licensing and registering that kept the corporation's attempts to open up a burger joint at bay for 15 years. The owners of McDonald's have finally waded through the legal muck and made it happen.

So, whether people are thrilled or aghast that the Big Mac has arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fact that BiH can now be added to the Big Mac Index, The Economist's global measure of a currency's value, is arguably more important.

That McDonald's has opened at long last indicates to other potential investors that this country has a business climate worth investing in, and will hopefully bring much-needed foreign direct investment into the economy.

I do think Bosnian detractors of McDonald's should do something

about it by demanding healthy options and use of local products. Selling water from an Ilidza-based company is a good start, but McDonald's should do more to ensure that as many ingredients as possible have their origins in Bosnia.

I also hope Bosnian health officials, practitioners, and families will be more successful at combating the obesity brought on by fast food than they have done in my country.

Official statistics from the World Health Organization suggest that obesity is climbing in Bosnia: according to 2008 statistics, over 60 per cent of the population is overweight, putting BiH within the top ten most overweight countries in the world.

In a country where healthy foods are much more affordable, local, and organic than they are in America and much of Western Europe, this trend should be easy to reverse, given the right policies.

After the grand McOpening, I encountered two men decked out in red-and-yellow McD's apparel scarfing down two large portions of cevapi in Bascarsija. They gladly posed for a picture.

"Nothing could ever compete with cevapi!" they grinned, licking their fingers. We'll see in the next few months if they are right.

Valerie Hopkins is an American freelance journalist based in Sarajevo.

Outside In Kosovo's Northern Saga



By Kreshnik Hoxha

With a week of fresh drama in the North, clashes in Jarinje & Brnjak, and a divided international stance on the latest developments, Kosovo has once hit the world media once again.

But, was the operation, ordered by PM Hashim Thaci, a major step in statehood consolidation or a provocation and oppression of Kosovar Serbs?

Kosovo's Minister of Trade and Industry, Mimoza Kusari-Lila, did what she had promised a while ago and banned Serbian goods from entering Kosovo. What goes round comes around! But, she is insistent that this decision is not an embargo on Serbia. Instead, she labels it as trade reciprocity with Serbia, who has been banning Kosovo products since 2008.

The administrative order of Mrs Kusari-Lila entered into force with immediate effect and the next day the trucks with Serb products were shown the way back, with the exception of border crossings in Jarinje and Brnjak, the northern crossing with Serbia.

To ensure that the decision was implemented Kosovo-wide, Kosovo's PM Hashim Thaci made a decision which took everyone by surprise: he ordered Special Units of Kosovo Police, ROSU, to take control of the two border points.

This, in its pure form, represented a major step in statehood consolidation, albeit a late one, and expansion of Prishtina's power to the lawless north.

However, a completely different picture emerged in the north, where the patience of Kosovo Serbs was running thin. Oliver Ivanovic, involved in the parallel structures and the Belgrade government, summoned the local Serbs to take to the streets and block roads in order to impede ROSU's mission.

The situation escalated rapidly. Twitter was flooded with reports from locals of both ethnic groups. Local Serbs portrayed this as yet another episode of Albanian terrorism and repression against Serbs, while the Albanians summarised the operation as delayed but essential. In the end, seeds of ethnic hatred were planted once again, which led to the death of one ROSU member, who was ambushed by local Serbs.

According to many international reports northern Kosovo has long been a haven for Serb and Albanian criminal gangs involved in organised crime and smuggling. The functioning of these gangs as well as the parallel structures of Belgrade has had a detrimental effect on the life of locals from both sides.

The operation received contradicting reaction from various international organisations. The International Civilian Office half supported the operation but called for dialogue and urged the government to align its attempts of gaining administrative control of borders with efforts to support citizens in the north.

On the other hand, the EU high representative Catherine Ashton seemed to be seething that her project of EU-mediated talks between Prishtina and Belgrade was crumbling fast.

But, this operation was undertaken to ensure the enforcement of reciprocity throughout Kosovo and it was not directed at local Serbs.

Kosovo as a sovereign country, though with disputed recognition, must insist on its right to protect its sovereignty, whether Serbia spins the story in its favour or not! Prishtina should stand by its decision, even after the burning of border in Jarinje by Serb hooligans.

And the Kosovo Serbs in the north should ultimately realise that it is the Kosovo government they should be complaining to, not Belgrade.

They must understand that the parallel structures of Belgrade are oppressing and holding them back from a peaceful life – something that they rather naively blame the Albanians for.



Sarajevo's first McDonald's just before it opened

STAY ONE STEP AHEAD

KEEP OUR OPINIONS
TO YOURSELF

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

and be the first to know what's really happening

BalkanInsight.com

Online news, views and analysis
from our correspondents across the region

www.balkaninsight.com

Classified

Contact Prishtina Insight if you would like to advertise
Email marketing@pristinainsight.com

Balkan Research and Profiling

ALL YOU NEED TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

Call: +381 11 33 36 209
or email: analysis@birn.eu.com

COUNTRIES
PEOPLE
COMPANIES
POLITICS
COMPETITORS
NGOs
GOVERNMENTS
INDUSTRIES
REGULATIONS



BIRN's network of correspondents and contacts across the Balkans provide an unparalleled insight into politics, business and society.

Whether you are looking for a regional overview or a detailed analysis of a specific business sector in one of the territories that we cover, you can be sure that we are able to provide relevant, insightful and up to the minute information.

Our skills and background in investigative journalism mean that BIRN's research and profiling service is thorough and detail-rich, but at the same time, presented in an approachable and highly readable format.

Embassies and Liaison Offices in Prishtina

American

Address: "Nazim Hikmet" no. 30
Arbëria/Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 549 516

Austrian

Address: "Ahmet Krasniqi" no. 22
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 249 284

Belgian

Address: "Taslixhe" I, 23 A
10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 734 734

British

Address: "Ismail Qemajli" no. 6
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 254 700

Bulgarian

Address: "Ismail Qemajli" no. 12
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 038 245 540

Dutch

Address: "Xhemal Berisha" no. 12
Velania, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 224 61

Finnish

Str: Perandori Justinian No. 19
Pejton
10 000 Prishtina
Phone: +386 43 737 000

French

Address: "Ismail Qemajli" no. 67
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 22 45 88 00

Greek

Address: "Ismail Qemajli" no. 68
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 243 013

German

Address: "Azem Jashanica" no. 17
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 254 500

Italian

Address: "Azem Jashanica" no.5
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 244 925

Japanese

Address: "Rexhep Malaj" no. 43
10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 249 995

Luxemburg

Address: "Metush Krasniqi" no. 14
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 226 787

Malaysian

Address: "Bedri Shala" no. 48
10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 243 467

Norwegian

Address: "Sejdi Kryeziu" no. 6
10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 232 111 00

Saudia Arabian

Address: Dardania SU 7, building 2, #1
10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 549 203

Slovenian

Address: "Anton Ceta" no. 6
10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 244 886

Swedish

Str: Perandori Justinian No. 19
Pejton
10 000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 38 24 57 95

Swiss

Address: "Adrian Krasniqi" no. 11
10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 248 088

Turkish

Address: "Ismail Qemajli" no. 59
Arbëria /Dragodan, 10000 Prishtina
Phone: +381 (0) 38 226 044

Classified Ads

Do you have a flat to rent? Position to fill? Students to find for a language course? Why not speak directly to Kosovo's international community through Prishtina Insight' classified ads.

Almost every international organisation, embassy, NGO and many others subscribe to Kosovo's only English language newspaper, which is also on sale at newsstands in seven cities and received in electronic format by scores of paying clients across the world.



Easy

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

Book early and
recive lower fares

Prishtinë › München
daily

Prishtinë › Frankfurt
3X a week

Daily flights to many
European cities

› Zürich › Genève › München ›
› Hamburg › Frankfurt › Köln ›
› Hannover › Berlin › Düsseldorf ›
››››› Stuttgart ›

038 220 220
www.flyksa.com

EK EUROKOHA
REISEN

KOSOVA AIRLINES

Austrian

Special round trip fares
from Prishtina to:

New York **249€**
Dubai **219€**
Amsterdam **109€**
Copenhagen **109€**
Brussels **89€**
Paris **89€**
Milan **99€**
London **89€**
Prague **99€**

**Airport taxes are
not included in the price.**

EK EUROKOHA
REISEN

038 220 220 | info@eurokoha.net