

Prishtina Insight

September 2 - 15, 2011 Issue No. 70 www.prishtinainsight.com Price € 1



Missing Kosovo Lobbyist under Arrest in Eritrea

Kosovo's flying independence lobbyist, James Berisha, is being held in prison in Eritrea, it emerged on Thursday afternoon, two weeks after he was reported missing.

See Page 4

NEWS
EULEX and Kosovo Police Close to "Violent Clash"
> page 2

FEATURE
Sacked Kosovo Gallery Chief Blames Politics



> page 12 - 13

INSIDE PRISHTINA
Prishtina's History Retraced Through 'Lost' Photos
> page 18

FEATURE
Time Is Running Out for Macedonia's Big Cat
> page 15

Limaj Faces Grilling as Roads Get Tested

Former minister Fatmir Limaj is shortly to be interviewed by EULEX prosecutors for the first time in 15 months - while his roads face a test of their own, Prishtina Insight has learnt.

By Artan Mustafa

The EU rule-of-law mission in Kosovo, EULEX, is to employ an international expert in road quality as part of a probe into corruption at the Ministry of Transport.

The unusual move is to be used in an attempt to demonstrate that contracts issued by the former transport minister, Fatmir Limaj, did not provide "value for money", as was stated in the criteria for awarding many of the biggest construction projects.

Limaj issued these tenders based on a combination of the lowest price and the best technical offer. But questions are being asked about how the technical offers were graded.

In a number of cases highlighted by a Prishtina Insight investigation into road tenders last year, the reason why some firms received top technical marks and thus beat cheaper bids was far from clear.

The international experts expect confirmation of their appointment in the forthcoming weeks, this newspaper has learnt.

The news comes as it emerged that EULEX prosecutors will interview Limaj on 20 September.

EULEX spokesman Kai Mueller-Berner told Prishtina Insight that Limaj, 40, has been summoned to appear before a EULEX Prosecutor at the Special Prosecution of the Republic of Kosovo, SPRK, in regard to the investigations into the Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications.

This will be the first grilling in 15 months of the once powerful minister - who ran the biggest ministerial budget in Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's previous

government - since EULEX police raided his home and office.

Following the raids, Johannes van Vreeswijk, former chief prosecutor of EULEX, said the mission had uncovered evidence that could result in Limaj and Nexhat Krasniqi, head of the procurement at the Ministry of Transport, being jailed for up to 55 years.

But lack of further action in the case and comments made by a former EU investigator have cast a shadow over the probe.

continues page 2



Nightclub Shakes Ancient Mosque

A row between Muslims who attend the Hadum mosque in Gjakova, western Kosovo, and the municipality has erupted after the town's mayor failed to act against a disruptive nightclub.

Mosque-goers said they couldn't use the place of worship at night during Ramadan...

news

page 5



Ban Fails to Halt Kosovo's Trade With Serbia

Kosovo's ban on the import of Serbian goods does not cover all areas, it has emerged, as energy and medicine continue to cross the border.

While imports of most Serbian goods stopped in July, multimillion deals that the Kosovo Energy Corporation, KEK, signed with Belgrade-based...

business

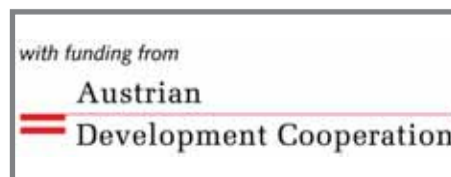
page 7

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

Prishtina Insight is supported by:



Limaj Faces Grilling as Roads Get Tested

from page 1

Troy Wilkinson, a former police officer in EULEX's Executive Department for Organised Crime, claimed in an interview last month with the newspaper Zeri that EULEX had focused on the Limaj case because they were seeking stories to make a media splash.

Limaj and Krasniqi are being investigated, among other matters, for organised crime, money laundering, bribes, misuse of official positions and fraud between 2008 and 2010, involving the issue of road tenders.

Around 1,300km of roads were asphalted and renovated when Limaj was in charge of the ministry, with Krasniqi at the helm of

procurement.

Limaj's lawyer, Tomë Gashi, said the prosecution appeared to be trying to buy time.

"They sent the invitation for the interview three months in advance. This is quite strange because normally the prosecution sends a notice ten to two weeks in advance and eight days is the minimum according to the law," Gashi said. "They seem to be more interested in his reputation than the truth."

But sources close to prosecution say they've made important progress, which is leading towards an indictment, and that they are interviewing Limaj because of this.

The summons to grill Limaj does not extend to Krasniqi, who

has been interviewed before. "Krasniqi might be interviewed later again," Mueller-Berner said.

Limaj last week appeared at the Prishtina Municipal Court in regard to a different case involving war crimes, for which he is suspected.

The Constitutional Court of Kosovo is about to issue an answer in the coming weeks to a government request, submitted in July, to clarify whether parliamentarians and other high state officials enjoy immunity from arrest while serving their mandates.

EULEX has said it has an arrest warrant prepared for Limaj for alleged war crimes, but cannot act until the dilemma over MPs' immunity is cleared up.

EULEX and Kosovo Police Close to "Violent Clash"

A US diplomatic cable issued by the embassy in Prishtina, and released by Wikileaks, reveals how Kosovo Police's special unit, ROSU, and EULEX were close to clashing violently in August 2009.



By Lawrence Marzouk

A violent clash between Kosovo Police's special unit, ROSU, and EULEX riot police was averted through the intervention of US Ambassador to Kosovo Christopher Dell, it is claimed in a leaked cable.

As tension between EULEX and the Kosovo government mounted over a protocol the mission wanted to sign with Belgrade, PM Hashim Thaci decided to send 25 members of the paramilitary police unit to northern Kosovo to protect Albanian returnees who were reconstructing homes.

"EULEX subsequently sent two Formed Police Units (FPU, anti-riot police), consisting of 100 French, Italian, Romanian, and Polish officers, to the three bridges across the River Ibar to prevent the ROSU from crossing," according to the cable.

The EULEX commander was unable to convince his ROSU counterpart to stand down and at 8 pm the KP unit was pulled back to a police station in southern Mitrovica.

"Responding to a call from the Ambassador, Prime Minister Thaci called the ROSU back to Pristina," the cable reads.

"The decision to send ROSU forces north represented a danger-

Wikileaks Highlight:

Orthodox Church Pays KEK

"On December 30, 2009, Father Simeon, secretary to Bishop Artemije, Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Ras and Prizren, signed an agreement with the Kosovo Electricity Corporation (KEK) for Gračanica Monastery, and stated that all SOC sites in Kosovo were now authorized to become KEK customers. KEK reconnected Gračanica Monastery the same day. Gračanica Monastery, along with 57 other Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) monasteries, convents, and churches had been disconnected from the electrical grid in autumn 2009 due to their failure to register to pay for electricity. SOC buildings were reconnected to the electrical grid about one month after KEK began to disconnect non-paying mosques, a process that began after Islamic Eid al Fitr celebrations."

The Zanzi Bar Fiasco

"By most accounts, Prime Minister Thaci acted rashly last night when he decided to dismiss the LDK from the coalition about an hour after he learned of the LDK-AAK agreement. He had not consulted with either AKR or

LDD, and he would have had trouble in securing votes to maintain a government. In fact, this was Thaci at his worst - emotional, impulsive, and hasty. It appears that the folly of his exercise was clear to him the following morning, when he came away from a meeting with President Sejdiu with nothing to show."

On PDK's 2009 Election

"In this fight, PDK has several clear strengths and weaknesses. Chief among its weaknesses is a reputation for corruption and crime. No fewer than three of PDK's mayoral candidates have prior criminal convictions and/or face felony charges (Sami Lushtaku, Skenderaj/Srbica: convicted for threatening a judge; Xhabir Zharku, Podujeve/Podujevo: two arrests for kidnapping, obstruction of justice; and, Shukri Buja, Lipjan/Lipljan: vehicular homicide). That said, PDK enjoys the natural advantages of incumbency - patronage and power. Another PDK asset is Prime Minister Thaci, a tireless campaigner who has promised voters an impressive, if not always plausible, array of public sector projects and new investment as he barnstorms across Kosovo in support of PDK candidates."

ous escalation in tensions between the GOK and EULEX.

"We were fortunate that Prime Minister Thaci recalled the ROSU forces, and that the incident did not end in a violent police-on-police confrontation.

"We are also fortunate that the Europeans have thus far, also refrained from escalating the issue, though there are some within

EULEX who want to do so by moving forward with the police protocol regardless.

"We will continue to urge all sides to put aside the issue of EULEX-Serbia police cooperation for several days, in the hopes that calm can increase the political space necessary for Kosovo leaders and EULEX to manoeuvre," the cable concluded.

Star Witness in Haradinaj Trial Pleads Guilty to Contempt of Court

Shefqet Kabashi, a former member of the Kosovo Liberation Army, has pleaded guilty to contempt of court for refusing to testify during the trial at a United Nations war crimes tribunal of former Kosovo prime minister Ramush Haradinaj on charges of crimes against humanity.

Shefqet Kabashi refused to testify in 2007 at the first trial of Haradinaj, KLA commander during its conflict with Serb forces in 1998-99, and two others.

He entered his plea at a session of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY, in The Hague, Netherlands, after being handed over to the court earlier this month by Dutch authorities.

The ICTY acquitted Haradinaj in 2008 of charges of murder, rape, torture, abduction, cruel treatment, imprisonment and the forced deportation of ethnic

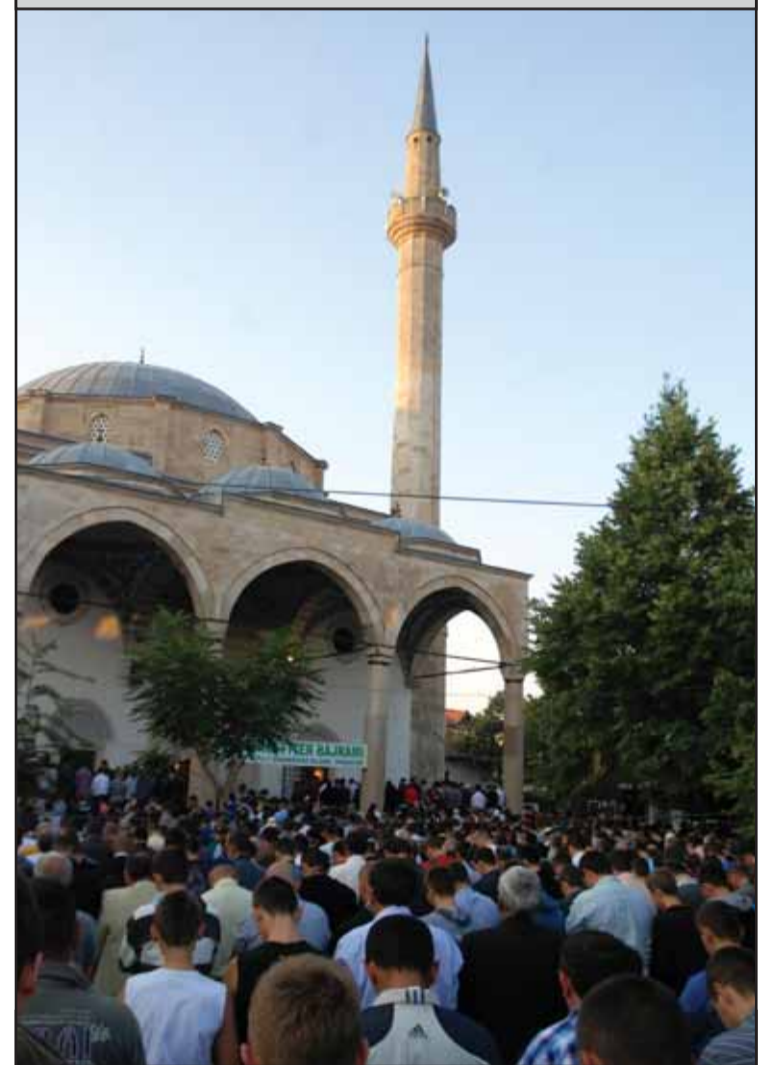
Serbian and Kosovar Roma civilians.

But appeals judges partially quashed the acquittal last year, calling for a re-trial because the trial chamber had not done enough to ensure the testimony of certain witnesses given "serious witness intimidation," thus depriving the prosecution of vital support for its case. The original trial had heard how many witnesses felt unsafe.

Earlier this month, the tribunal said Kabashi's testimony was relevant as it related to the alleged responsibility of Haradinaj and two co-accused, Idriz Balaj and Lahi Brahimaj, on six counts of torture and murder of prisoners at the KLA headquarters and the prison in Jablanica.

All three deny all wrongdoing and Kabashi has again refused to respond to prosecutors' questions.

Hundreds Gather for Bajram Prayers



Hundreds of people gathered outside of Prishtina's Grand Mosque to mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Kosovo's Muslims have been campaigning for a new, bigger mosque in the capital as they claim there is currently not enough space in the existing places of worship.



Rental of simultaneous translation equipment.

Services for conferences, presentations and trainings.

For prices and booking call: +381 38 602042, +377 44 243367, +386 49 243367

info@avc-group.cc
avcprishtina@hotmail.com

UN: Kosovo One of Many Balkan Heroin Routes to EU

Claims by the Russian Federal Drug chief Viktor Ivanov that Kosovo is the "main European drug forwarding station" for Heroin have been queried by the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime.



By Lawrence Marzouk

Heroin making its way into the European Union passes through Kosovo, but this is just one of three major routes to the lucrative market, the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime has told Prishtina Insight.

Russian Federal Drug Control Service Viktor Ivanov announced an initiative to combat drug trafficking via Kosovo in Belgrade this week, which is supposed to involve five countries, including Russia and Serbia.

Speaking during a press conference at Belgrade's Russian Embassy, Ivanov said that he had signed a bilateral agreement with Serbian Interior Minister Ivica Dacic on a combined fight against drug dealers which provided a solid foundation for operational collaboration.

According to the Russian official, his talks with Serbian officials concerned the Balkan route for trafficking drugs from Afghanistan to Europe, which has its distribution centre in Kosovo, where heroin is believed to be repackaged before being transported onwards.

"A kilogramme of heroin costs around 10,000 euro in Kosovo, while the price for the same amount of that drug in western Europe is around 150,000 euro" explained Ivanov,

adding that this fact was well known to police forces in Europe, who were duly concerned.

Ivanov said that Russia had launched an initiative to combat drug trafficking in Kosovo that proposed the creation of a so-called Balkan Anti-narcotics Five, which would include Russia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania.

Heroin sales for Kosovo were 3 billion euro a year, he is quoted as saying on the website Voice of Russia, adding that almost 50 tons of heroin pass through Kosovo annually.

But the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime told Prishtina Insight that "they had" not made any specific estimations about the level of heroin trafficked via Kosovo.

"However, our research division did indicate that in 2009, the latest figures we have available, some 70 tons of heroin were estimated to be trafficked via the Balkans in general.

"We're unsure of the figure of 50 tons of heroin trafficked via Kosovo as there are three main routes after the heroin leaves Turkey."

He said the main routes were via Turkey-Bulgaria-Macedonia-Kosovo; Turkey-Bulgaria-Serbia; and Turkey-Bulgaria-Romania.

"This said, Kosovo is obviously used by heroin traffickers and is under threat," he added.

The UN's Special Report 'The Global Afghan Opium Trade: A



The UN disputes Ivanov (above)'s claims that Kosovo is the sole of hub for heroine in Europe

Threat Assessment, 2011', reveals that "Kosovo appears to act as a storage site for heroin smuggled from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or Albania.

"Heroin is often stretched and cut with adulterants and then re-packaged and sent westward through Serbia or Montenegro," it adds.

"Kosovo is especially threatened, due to its location along the main heroin trafficking route from Bulgaria to Italy."

According to the report the scale of profits across the Balkans is a real threat to the legal economy.

"In many cases, profit from the heroin trade from the Balkans to Western and Central Europe exceeded the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of transit countries such as Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, posing a serious threat to the licit economy," it reads. "Given the low GDP per capita across most of the Balkan countries, the heroin trade can significantly exacerbate corruption."

Kosovo was used as a transit country mainly for heroin being smuggled into to Italy.

Almost 90 per cent of the heroin abused in Italy entered the country from Bulgaria, via Kosovo, to Albanian, through Albania from Greece, or via Bulgaria-Serbia-Bosnia-Croatia-Slovenia.



Heroine from Afghanistan passes through the Balkans on the way to Western Europe

Editor's Word

"Qelloja kush?"



By Lawrence Marzouk

To ease you back into the post-beach routine, let's start with game of 'guess who?' or "Qelloja kush?", if you prefer.

I am one of the world's best known international organisations, spanning the globe. I promote freedom of speech, among other things, and my most senior officials tell the world that "people have a right to information that affects their lives". Despite this I have no "access to information" policy and my officials appear completely baffled when approached by a journalist to find out whether it is possible to ask for certain documents to be released.

Have you got it yet? No? Well, it's the hypocritical UN - an organisation whose top guy complains about a "culture of secrecy and a lack of accountability" in the world and calls on states to open up their books, but whose own multi-billion-dollar, taxpayer funded gravy train has no - that's right no - policy on what documents it should or shouldn't release.

The public of the world which pays for the UN in all its extraordinary guises has no right to request the documents it produces while its leaders prattle on about how everyone else must be transparent.

It's as if Wikileaks, the organisation founded on openness, operated in complete darkness, without providing any means to the public of knowing their motives, financing or how they decide what to publish or not, and then complained when its own material leaked.

Imagine that? Well you don't need to because both cases are true.

Clearly some of those who shout the loudest about transparency are not always those most willing to open themselves up to scrutiny.

And what of Kosovo? Surely those grubby, corrupt leaders I read about in all of these international reports must be dead against allowing the public to pry around in their affairs.

Well, I have some news for you - whether they are blissfully unaware of the scope of their laws or have embraced the new world order, Kosovo leaders are not doing badly in terms of allowing its citizens to get information.

When I say citizens, I actually mean my team at BIRN and a few hardy members of civil society, because as far as I can tell no one else is bothering to use the laws. I have seen a number of reports in recent months and years complaining that institutions have not properly implemented the law on access to documents, but when we speak to the institutions they say that no one submits requests.

It is true that major problems remain with the law's implementation. There are no guidelines in place for people to ask for documents, no money has been assigned to dealing with requests, the legal requirement of allocating a member of staff to this task has been ignored and the deadlines set in the law are unrealistic.

Clearly Kosovo has much progress to make if it wants to become the Sweden of the Balkans, but, at least, with a little persistence, you can get documents when you ask for them - Unlike some the EU countries, and, of course, the UN.

Recently, we have successfully secured all the expense receipts from one Minister. Among the beers ordered, wine quaffed and foie gras sampled, there is no scoop. We were not looking for a major corruption case, just testing the system and checking to see if those elected to represent the citizens of Kosovo are spending money wisely. We'll publish those documents in the next months so you can decide for yourself.

The power in the release of these documents is not in the story that it will generate, or the buzz about who ate what where, it is in the impact on ministers' behaviour. They will know, from now on, that if they order the most expensive champagne on the menu, they may well be found out. That is the kind of credible threat which encourages politicians to think twice before squandering cash.

Societies function better when it is not just the police, prosecutors, auditors and inspectors ensuring that the laws are followed and money is spent well. That's why the UN will always struggle with corruption. It must open itself up to proper scrutiny.

But the public, and journalists in particular, need to play their part too, and can only do so if freedom of information laws are in place. In contrast to the UN, it is the public and its journalists in Kosovo who need to up their game if corruption and wrongdoing is to be tackled properly.

PRISTINA 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

Missing Kosovo Lobbyist under Arrest in Eritrea



By Petrit Collaku

Kosovo's Foreign Ministry, MFA, revealed on Thursday that James Berisha, who is touring Africa in a bid to convince countries to recognize Kosovo's independence, is being held in prison.

Foreign minister Enver Hoxhaj has asked for help from the foreign ministries of Germany, France and Saudi Arabia to assist with the release of Berisha.

"Those countries have good relations with Eritrea and we asked them to help us for the release of Berisha from prison," Artan Behrami, MFA spokesperson told Prishtina Insight.

The ministry was unable to say if Berisha why he had been arrested.

"The MFA is trying through diplomatic channels to release James Berisha and say to Eritrean officials that Berisha's presence in Eritrea has to do solely with lobbying for Kosovo's independence, nothing else," said Behrami.

MFA stated that according to the information's received, Berisha's was in good health and was being treated well by Eritrean officials.

At the end of May, Berisha crash-landed in Sudan, after a cylinder of the Cessna 172 4-seater plane broke and blocked

Kosovo's flying independence lobbyist, James Berisha, is being held in prison in Eritrea, it emerged on Thursday afternoon, two weeks after he was reported missing.

the supply of fuel to the engine. He was unharmed.

On August 15, he took a commercial flight to continue his mission, and flew from Sudan to Eritrea. Nothing has been heard from him since.

Lumnije Gashi, who is based in Prishtina and has been tracking Berisha's moves in Africa, said he received the last email from Berisha on August 15, the day he landed in Asmara, Eritrea.

"In this email, Berisha warned us that he may be arrested," Gashi told Prishtina Insight.

A resident of the US state of Texas who grew up in Kosovo,

Berisha started flying across Africa last November, asking African states to recognise Kosovo's independence, declared in 2008.

Berisha, 39, flew all over Latin and Central America in 2009, visiting 34 countries and four territories to thank states that had recognised Kosovo's independence and lobby others that have not.

He was planning to continue his lobbying mission in Asia. Berisha spent his childhood in Kosovo and then left for Western Europe to fulfill his dream of becoming a pilot.



James Berisha has not been in contact with his family for more than two weeks

US Prosecutor to Lead Organ Trafficking Investigation

John Clint Williamson has been appointed as the lead prosecutor for an investigation into allegations of organ trafficking by the Kosovo Liberation Army in northern Albania.



By Petrit Collaku and Michael Montgomery

Williamson, who played a key role in bringing indictments against Slobodan Milosevic, will serve as the lead prosecutor in a seven-member task force headquartered in Brussels but operating under the jurisdiction of the EU's rule of law mission to Kosovo, diplomats said on Monday.

His task force will probe the Council of Europe's 2010 report which alleged that a criminal network with links to Kosovo's incumbent Prime Minister Hashim Thaci executed kidnapped civilians and sold their organs after the 1999 Kosovo war.

The report, headed by human rights investigator Dick Marty, claimed that "numerous concrete and convergent indicators confirm that some Serbians and some Albanian Kosovars were held prisoner in secret places of detention under KLA control in northern Albania and were subjected to inhuman and

degrading treatment, before ultimately disappearing."

Marty's findings corroborated allegations raised in a 2009 investigation by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, Center for Investigative Reporting and the BBC.

Thaci has denied the allegations and pledged to work with the investigators.

Williamson has extensive experience investigating and prosecuting complex criminal cases including war crimes. He was a prosecutor for the U.S. Justice Department and served as a trial attorney for seven years at the U.N. war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

During the Bush administration, Williamson served as Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes Issues. He is currently a Special Expert on war crimes for the United Nations Secretary-General.

The decision to appoint Williamson signals strong U.S. backing for the probe and follows months of intensive negotiations between the EU and Dick Marty.

Fred Abrahams of Human Rights Watch said the appointment of Williamson was a "welcome sign that the



John Clint Williamson

EU and US government are taking this investigation seriously."

"The key to the investigation is now witness protection, and western governments must step up to provide the financial and logistical support to make sure those people with information about serious crimes feel safe. That includes accepting resettlements of witnesses and, if necessary, their families," he said.

EULEX is the European Union's rule of law mission in Kosovo. It was established in 2008 and is the largest civilian crisis management mission in history. More than 2,000 international police officers, judges and prosecutors are supported by approximately 1,200 local staff. Its aim is to help Kosovo's authorities to develop independent and multi-ethnic justice, police and customs services.

Croatia and Serbia in War of Words over Kosovo

The State Secretary at the Croatian Foreign Ministry, Mario Nobile, has expressed dissatisfaction to Serbian Ambassador Stanimir Vukicevic over statements made by Serbia's President Boris Tadic and foreign minister Vuk Jeremic.

Croatia's foreign ministry has told the Serbian ambassador that Croatia recognises Kosovo as an independent country with which it will develop friendly relations based on mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, just like with all the other Southeast European countries, including Serbia.

The relations between Serbia and Croatia's took a new turn for the worse last week after Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor's visit to Kosovo.

On 24 August, Kosor said in Prishtina that Croatia was Kosovo's best friend because both countries had suffered from the nationalist and war-making regime of late Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic in the 1990s.

Serbia's foreign minister, Vuk Jeremic, reacted by saying: "Whoever has Jadranka Kosor as a best friend, doesn't need enemies."

Serbian President Boris Tadic said on Friday that the partnership between Croats and Albanians should not be built to the detriment of others, in this case the Serb people, adding that Kosor was rekindling old hostilities to secure financial benefit for her country.

Kosor responded that after 20 years of independence no Croatian politician or prime minister would ever again go to Belgrade to ask for permission about what to do or think.

"Those times are, luckily, gone forever," she said.

Croatia's foreign ministry said in a statement that Croatia strongly supports the protection of all human and minority rights in Kosovo as well as the restoration of dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtina.

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,

Artan Mustafa and Kanarina Shehu.

Marketing, Sales & Distribution:

lawrence@birn.eu.com

Design & Layout: "Rrjeti"

Printing: Lindi Printing Center

Copyright © BIRN

Nightclub Shakes Ancient Mosque

A nightclub which shares a wall with one of Kosovo's most ancient and beautiful mosques is shaking the building with loud music and stopping the faithful from praying.



By Alban Selimi

A row between Muslims who attend the Hadum mosque in Gjakova, western Kosovo, and the municipality has erupted after the town's mayor failed to act against a disruptive nightclub.

Mosque-goers said they couldn't use the place of worship at night during Ramadan, the month of fasting, because of the Logic nightclub, which was pumping out music so loud it was shaking lights in the building.

The venue, which has been open since 2008 under various names including Liquid, was taken over by new owners this summer, although neighbours say that noise has been an issue for some time.

Florim Mellova, Imam at the mosque, organised a petition calling on the municipality to close the mosque, but, instead, the municipality wrote back saying that the club was not operational.

"We have signed a petition and we have informed the respective

inspectorate for preventing such activity, since it is just 10 meters away from the mosque and uses the wall of the mosque as the wall of the nightclub," he said.

"Especially when we perform the fourth and fifth of the five daily prayers, we have to leave the mosque because of the noise that interrupts us.

"It is not the first time that we are facing this problem; this has happened even in the past years. During the last Ramadan, we had to completely leave the mosque and go to another one."

But until now, the municipality of Gjakova has failed to resolve the issue.

Mayor Pal Lekaj said: "It is true that the head of the Islamic community of Gjakova has sent a complaint regarding this issue, but [we have received] also a petition signed by the citizens that attend the prayers in this mosque.

"If the noise that comes out from this nightclub prevents them from performing their rituals, we will do whatever we are allowed by law to stop this mess or even close this nightclub.

"I have ordered the directorate of inspectorate of Gjakova to analyse

the situation.

"After they are done with it, we will try to reach a positive decision for the Hadumi mosque, thus working for the good of Gjakova citizens, especially Muslim believers."

Lekaj admitted that his first response to the complaint was inaccurate as the inspectors had investigated during the day.

"You can see that during the day, the nightclub does not work. However, we will be observing the activity of this nightclub also during the night.

"If we come to a conclusion that it is interrupting these believers from performing their prayers, we will undertake the appropriate measures to stop its activity."

Mellova added: "The mayor is well informed that we leave the mosque when the music starts playing in this nightclub. Even the lights in the mosque shake, as the base of the music is so high."

Nightclub owner Lendrit Halilabazi refused to speak to Prishtina Insight.

The Hadumi mosque was built in 1594 and was restored by UNESCO and Cultural Heritage without Borders between 2005 and 2009.



The nightclub, now renamed Logic, shares a wall with the mosque

Weapons Seized by EULEX in Northern Kosovo

The European Union police operation, EULEX, has seized several weapons in the northern part of Kosovo in an investigation into the murder of Kosovo policeman Enver Zymberi.



By Petrit Collaku

Nicholas Hawton, the spokesman for EULEX, said that EULEX police, supported by the NATO peace-keeping force KFOR, had conducted searches in four houses on Wednesday. Two of the houses were in Zubin Potok, the other two were in Zupce village.

He said that no suspects had been found during the searches. "No arrests have been conducted," Hawton told Prishtina Insight.

He added that EULEX had seized several pieces of evidence, including weapons. "Evidence was found during the searches and there has been a seizure of number of weapons," he said.

EULEX police officers are continuing to remain in the north so as to seize a vehicle which is con-

sidered to be part of the evidence, he added.

This effort was hindered by local residents, who blocked the road thus making an obstacle for the police to seize the vehicle, he explained.

According to a Beta news agency reporter from the scene, KFOR and EULEX forces entered the village of Zupce at around 05:00 CET and started searching local households for suspects.

Beta reported that local Serbs in the villages had been upset by this and had gathered near the place where barricades were set up following the imposition of a trade ban last month. They were reported as saying that it would depend on international forces' actions whether the road would once again be blocked.

Zymberi was shot in the head near the Brnjak checkpoint after the authorities in Prishtina sent special police units to enforce a trade ban at the Jarinje and Brnjak crossings.

Summer Spells Rise in Kosovo Road Deaths

Kosovo is experiencing a spike in road deaths this summer as its already congested roads are flooded by emigrants returning home by car.



By Petrit Collaku

Tens of thousands of Kosovars emigrants to Western Europe return to their homeland each summer, bearing presents and much needed remittances, but also placing an extra burden on the country's already overstretched road infrastructure.

While police say they have been successful in cutting road deaths at other times of the year, they admit that the summer period remains a dangerous one on Kosovo's roads.

Between January to August 19, 75 people died in car accidents in Kosovo. Of these, more than 20 died in July and the first half of August alone.

As a result, police have increased traffic patrols, including with motorcycle and bicycle units.

"There has been a huge increase in cars and traffic as it is the summer holidays, during which many Kosovars living abroad have come to their homeland and have contributed [to congestion]," said



Baki Kelani, Kosovo police spokesperson.

He said that officers were carrying out operations on all major roads to check for speeding and other traffic offences in a bid to stop the recent trend of fatal car accidents.

The latest fatality was a motorcyclist who died after being obstructed by a vehicle he was trying to overtake. The motorcycle hit a van coming in the opposite direction.

On August 13, four people died and two were injured in a car accident on the main Prishtina to Peje road.

Kelani said that the recent increase has forced police to put all traffic units, including motorcycle and bicycle police units out.

But he said that there were fewer fatal accidents overall in the first six months of the year compared to last year.

According to police statistics, 53 people died in car accidents between January and June 2011, compared to 75 in that period last year.

"These are positive figures compared to last year," he said. "But, actually, we are worried about the current situation where, during July and August, more than 20 persons have died in car accidents," Kelani told Prishtina Insight.

"We will be checking for illegal overtaking, if safety belts are being worn and where drivers are using telephones while driving," said Kelani.

Vienna's Young Yugoslavs Still Pine for 'Home'

Searching for an identity in a country that looks askance at them, second generation ex-Yugoslavs are often bigger, more nationalist Serbs, Croats or Bosnians than their parents.



By Gordana Andric

“And it all comes back to me, a far away little town and my girl from the green fields, I don't know where she is now...”

From a café in Vienna's Ottakringer Strasse, the well-known lines of a Serbian song by of Zeljko Joksimovic waft onto the street.

The sounds are similar in a dozen other cafés in Ottakringer Strasse, which is widely nicknamed “Balkan Street” on account of the number of ex-Yugoslav immigrants who have made it their home.

Walking down the street are posters advertising club dates for various singers from the Balkans. The graffiti mostly celebrates the results of Balkan football matches.

No one coming from an ex-Yugoslav republic needs a foreign language to find his or her way round Ottakringer Strasse. The average person working in a shop here speaks Serbian better than German.

In most cafés the waiting staff don't bother use German at all, but assume their customers speak at last one Balkan language.

Although some cafés are marked “Serbian”, “Croatian” or “Bosnian”, most are fairly mixed. At one table you might see a teenager showing her friend a T-shirt with Serbia's coat of arms on the front, while on the other side of the same café a young man wearing the Croatian checkerboard emblem reads a newspaper.

Most Balkan youngsters in these cafés are, in fact, second-generation immigrants, born and raised in Austria. For all that, they are often every bit as nationalistic, or patriotic, as their parents when it comes to the “home” country.

The 432,000 people of Yugoslav origin living in Austria today are the largest foreign community in the country. About 58,000 were born in Austria.

According to Austria's Statistic Office, 29 per cent of people of foreign origin in Austria came from ex-Yugoslav countries.

Slavs have been migrating to Vienna for generations. As the imperial capital of Austria-Hungary, the city was a magnet to the Czechs, Poles, Serbs and Slovaks then living under the Habsburg dynasty.

More recent, post-Second World War migration to Austria from Yugoslavia occurred in two waves.

The first was in the 1960s and 1970s, when Yugoslavia became the first Eastern European Communist country to allow freedom of movement, and tens of thousands of Yugoslavs moved to Austria to work.

A second wave of migration followed in the 1990s when Yugoslavia collapsed and thousands of Croats and Bosniaks [Muslims] sought refuge from the conflict in Austria.

Vedran Dzihic, from Vienna



Petar Rosandic (right), aka Kid Pex, a rap musician from Vienna who was born in Zagreb

University's Institute for Political Sciences, says ex-Yugoslav immigrants can be divided into three groups when it comes to their sentiments toward their motherlands.

Some show almost no interest in their country of origin or ethnic background, some are nostalgic for the old Socialist Yugoslavia and a third group are highly nationalistic about their Serbian, Croatian, or Bosnian origins.

Sinisa Djurdjic, a 24-year-old



Nationalist Serbian graffiti in Vienna's 11th district

Serb from Pozarevac, who moved to Vienna five years ago, says the ex-Yugoslav youths he has encountered are often rigidly nationalistic.

“They are all big Serbs, big Croats, big Bosnians and big

that [Ante] Gotovina [the Croatian general jailed by the Hague Tribunal for war crimes on 15 April] was not guilty and I wanted to show I'm proud to be a Croat,” he said.

Émigré organizations in Vienna do their best to keep Serbs, Croats and Bosnians aware of their home countries' national grudges and grievances.

In 2008 street protests against Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia was organised in Vienna. Several thousand showed up.

Darko Miloradovic, vice-president of the Community of Serbian Clubs in Vienna, complains that many did not know why they had come.

“Many had no idea why they were there. They knew they were protesting against Kosovo's independence, but they didn't know anything more about the issue,” he said.

Most of the information that ex-Yugoslav youngsters in Vienna gather about their mother countries comes from the home and from their parents.

At school, youngsters from ex-Yugoslavia learn about Austrian history. Whether they will hear more about their mother countries depends on the teachers.

Slavoljub Paunovic, an engineer from eastern Serbia who has been living in Vienna for 25 years, says he has brought up his son as a real Serb.

“My 22-year-old speaks Serbian and knows a lot about Serbia, as I insisted on that,” he said.

“He could tell you when the Battle of Kosovo happened, even if you woke him up in the middle of the night,” he added.

Paunovic believes this form a national awareness is quite normal. “It's more like cheering for your own religion and tradition,” he said, “though some people are more extreme.”

“In school they don't get much information [about the Balkans], unless a teacher who has several pupils from former Yugoslavia

decides to devote more attention to the subject,” Ivana Martinovic, an editor at the Vienna newspaper Biber said.

She says that young Austrians with Balkan origins often have a distorted perspective on the situation in their parents' homelands.

“They go there for a few weeks in summer and of course they think those are great countries as they don't see the poverty, the unemployment, or any of the problems,” she said.

“On their Austrian salaries, it's a perfect place.”

Both Martinovic and Vedran Dzihic, from Vienna University, believe that the long-distance nationalism of many young ex-Yugoslavs in Austria reflects a search for identity.

“Their nationalism is based on partial information and on emotions,” Dzihic said. “In their search for identity they can find it in a group [nation] that they don't really know, so they can create anything they want from that group.”

Martinovic, herself an ex-Yugoslav, raised in Austria, believes that nationalism is often just part of growing up.

“The Fascist symbols on their necklaces or tattoos don't always have a hard-line nationalistic meaning, as those teenagers are often not aware of what they're wearing,” she said.

“They just feel the need to belong somewhere and to mark themselves as members of some group.”

Petar Rosandic, aka Kid Pex, a rap musician from Vienna who was born in Zagreb, maintains that some of these superficially hard line Balkan patriots are not as aggressive as they look.

“Waving the flag is often as far as they are ready to go,” he said. “Croats, Serbs and Bosnians hang out together [in Vienna],” he added. “It's folkloric nationalism. Serbs with the four 'S' symbol tattooed on their arms always shake my hand to greet me,” Rosandic noted.



A Shop in Balkan Strasse, Vienna

Ban Fails to Halt Kosovo's Trade With Serbia

Serbian electricity and medicine continue to be imported into Kosovo despite the embargo Prishtina imposed in July.



By Besiana Xharra

Kosovo's ban on the import of Serbian goods does not cover all areas, it has emerged, as energy and medicine continue to cross the border.

While imports of most Serbian goods stopped in July, multimillion deals that the Kosovo Energy Corporation, KEK, signed with Belgrade-based energy companies earlier this year remain in place.

On July 20 Kosovo announced it was blocking imports from Serbia in response to Belgrade's refusal to abide by the terms of the Central Europe Free Trade Agreement.

Membership of CEFTA is supposed to oblige participants to allow free movement of goods.

But in 2008 Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina started barring goods marked with Kosovo custom stamps, after Kosovo declared independence from Serbia.

Kosovo's ban in July followed the cancellation of the latest round of talks between Kosovo and Serbia, which was due to discuss Kosovo customs stamps. The negotiations were postponed because the EU believed no deal was likely to be reached.

A new round of talk is expected in September, and the EU-mediator Robert Cooper was in Prishtina this week to discuss the issue.

The ban has had a major impact on Kosovo's small export market, forcing exporters to take lengthy and expensive routes into the

European Union around Serbia.

In the meantime, Prishtina Insight has discovered that Serbian medicine, as well as energy, is still being imported.

In March, KEK awarded a contract worth 17 million euro for the import of electricity between May 2011 and March 2012 to four companies, including Rudnap Energy, based in Belgrade.

A second tender in April, also for power and worth another 32 million euro, was awarded to two Belgrade-based firms, GENI and EGL.

These companies will continue to export electricity to Kosovo as electricity is not included in the July "reciprocity measures", the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Dardana Halimi said.

"Energy is not included in the decision on reciprocity," Halimi explained. "Reciprocity has to do with trade relations, and energy issues are not in the remit of this ministry."

Haki Ejupi, chief inspector of pharmaceuticals in the Kosovo Medicines Agency, said several Kosovo companies authorised to import medicines still bought them from Serbia.

He said these drugs were often bought from companies based in the European Union, which means that the products do not arrive directly from Serbia. Manufacturers of these drugs include Hemofarm and Zvlavia.

"Kosovo's contracts with several companies to import these medicines have not yet expired," he said. "About 40 types of these drugs are still available in pharmacies in Kosovo."



Serbian products, such as Wellness biscuits, are slowly disappearing from the streets of Kosovo

Confusion surrounds the import of these goods because although they are brought from Europe Union countries, the fact that they are made in Serbia should mean that they are blocked at the border, Halimi of the trade ministry said.

Rivals replace Serbia:

Meanwhile, many Serbian goods are still on sale in many supermarkets and small stores, but this is stock bought before the imposition of the ban in July and these products are becoming increasingly rare.

Kosovo shop inspectors launched an operation at the beginning of August to ensure that new Serbian products were not being sold.

Ruzhdi Shehu, chief inspector for the Trading Inspectorate of Kosovo, said 100 people were working on the operation.

"Those who have violated the law will be punished. But for more details you will have to wait for the report we will publish in

September," he said.

Adriatik Stavileci, spokesperson for Kosovo customs, told Prishtina Insight that the amount of goods being smuggled into Kosovo across its northern, porous border had dropped dramatically as a result of the controversial police operation in the north.

"Since the beginning of the reciprocity measures until now, we have had only 35 cases of confiscation of smuggled goods," he said.

He said petrol was the main item being smuggled across the northern border points, and that criminals were now attempting to find alternative routes into Kosovo.

Ban is boon for local industry:

The embargo on Serbian goods has stimulated production in Kosovo, according to Agim Shahini, president of the Kosovo Business Alliance. "Most manufacturers say that their production has gone up about 40 per cent," he

said.

The construction sector had benefited to a similar extent, he added.

When Kosovo was able to export to Serbia, the total value of its goods was only 15 million euro a year, while imports from Serbia cost about 290 million euro a year.

Kosovo relied heavily on Serbia for imports of wheat, for bread, for example. But in August Kosovo signed a new deal to import wheat from Bulgaria.

Kosovo's agricultural minister, Blerand Stavileci, said that Kosovo and Bulgaria would start to work on removing all administrative and custom barriers to the food trade.

He added that there was no problem with the supply of wheat as Kosovo farmers had also increased production to cover 80 per cent of the country's needs.

The association of farmers, however, disputes these figures. It says that its members can only supply 40 per cent of the demand for wheat in the country.

Import Relaxation Sees Influx of Old Cars

Almost half of the cars brought into Kosovo since July's relaxation of the import age limit have been older than 8 years – despite the high taxes imposed on these vehicles.



By Lavdim Hamidi

Cars up to age of 13 are now being imported to Kosovo since the law was relaxed in July, in a bid to cut the price of vehicles and boost the government coffers.

Previously, the government had imposed an age limit of eight years on imported cars in order to phase in more environmentally friendly vehicles.

Opponents of the new scheme say that it is all about raising revenue as customs duties for all ages have been increased. Some argue that it will have no major impact on prices as consumers will be put off by high import taxes.

But according to Kosovo Customs, during July, just over

2,000 cars were imported: 1000 cars below the age of 8 and 943 older cars. Nearly 150 new cars were brought in.

The average price for a car of up to 8 years was 6,200 euro, while the import taxes were in the region of 2170 euro, including customs and VAT.

The average cost of a car over eight years old was 2,280, while the import duties reached around 1,700 euro.

Kosovo Customs' spokesman Adriatik Stavileci said customs had collected 4.2 million euro from car import taxes in July.

Opposition politicians and car dealerships have criticised the policy, saying that it is aimed purely at raising more money.

Kosovo's budget is expected to take in a further 20 million euro a year as a result of the change to the law.

Car trader Nazim Salihu said:

"The new decision of the government has just increased the value of existing cars in the market because of high custom clearance taxes, especially for cars that are manufactured since 1998.

"Therefore, this has hampered even more the living standard of Kosovars," he said. "For these older cars, citizens must pay customs, excise and Value Added Tax which often exceed the value of the car, while for new cars no excise tax should be paid, but such cars cannot be afforded by many Kosovars, because of the higher prices," explained Nazimi.

He added that due to high taxes, many people cannot even buy a 13 year old car, thus ensuring that cars from the 80s remain on the streets.

Haki Shatri, Former Minister of Economy and opposition politician, said the new policy is absurd.

"This is not logical: who will



Kosovo's car market remains divided between the haves and the haves-not

buy an old car at a cost of 2200 euro, for which they will have an extra customs taxes of 1700 euro?" said Shatri, adding that the government aims only to fill the state budget, rather than enabling peo-

ple to buy cars.

Unlike Kosovo, where there is a car custom clearance fee on imported cars, Albania lately has removed such taxes, which has significantly decreased car prices.

Romania Plays Nature Card to Attract Tourists

Forget beaches and big hotels. Romania is trying to turn its vast unspoiled countryside into the next big thing in tourism – but the figures show it has a way to go.



By Marian Chiriac

Istvan Szakacs rises at seven each morning to start his first task of the day: feeding the animals on Solyomko farm, in Bixad, a village in southeast Transylvania's lush Covasna county.

On his farm, Szakacs grows vegetables, medicinal herbs and grains, as well as raising horses, chickens, ducks and keeping bees.

With his lean looks, he may look like the archetypal son of the soil but appearances can deceive.

Szakacs, now in his mid-fifties, abandoned his job as a driver for a local construction company just over three years ago and started a new life, one of a growing number of pioneers in rural tourism in Transylvania.

"I told myself it would be a good idea to profit from what we have round here: forests, a unique lake nearby and pristine nature," he says. Together with his wife he bought a traditional farmhouse and turned it into a rural bed-and-breakfast.

"The experience has surpassed all my expectations because I'd never been a farmer before," he recalls. "I've learned to make bread, to cook and build hives for bees."

Szakacs sounds almost prosaic when he talks about his motives for all of this. "People pay to have fun," he says.

Around his farm there is plenty of fun available. Guests staying at Szakacs's inn, which has 20 beds, can go hiking, visit the area's famous St Anna lake, the only volcanic lake in Central Europe, or simply hang around the farm, relaxing with a drink in the calm settings of the gardens and orchards.

Although Covasna lies in the



Romania's beautiful countryside is beginning to attract tourists, but much work remains to be done to promote this area

heart of Romania, this part of southeast Transylvania has an overwhelmingly ethnic Hungarian population, so visitors can steep themselves in traditional Transylvanian Hungarian culture as well as enjoying Hungarian cuisine, such as goulash soup and a delicious cake called kurtos kalacs.

Rural tourism is Romania's new mantra. It emerged in recent years as an answer, at least in part, to the crisis in agriculture and as an alternative to more traditional forms of tourism based round seaside hotels and beaches.

Despite the government's efforts to promote this sector, much remains to be done in terms of infrastructure and "educating people who work in tourism", says Petre Anton, member of a

Bucharest-based tourist agency.

Anton cites poor roads, often semi-deserted country towns and unskilled tourism personnel as some of the main factors hindering the development of countryside tourism in Romania.

For all the problems, international experts are optimistic about the long-term prospects.

"The number of foreign tourists to Romania could double in the next two or three years if the country continues to focus on promoting the mountains and rural life," Taleb Rifai, secretary general of the World Tourism Organization, WTO, said last week on a visit in Romania.

"For a long time Romania focused on its seaside, which is an important asset," he added.

"But Romania's uniqueness

relies in its mountains, fields and country life, which in the last three years have started to be used to their potential."

While the authorities try to explore new ways to attract foreign visitors, Romania's revenues from this sector still pale in comparison to those of its smaller, more tourist-savvy neighbours.

According to official data from 2010, Romania's total revenues from tourism amounted to around 750 million euros, which is only a third or a quarter of the money that neighbouring Bulgaria or Hungary earned from this sector in the same year.

There is no official data available in Romania about revenues from rural tourism alone.

It is the same story with tourist numbers. Last year Romania host-

ed around 1.2 million foreign visitors. That compares very poorly with the more than 5 million visitors to Bulgaria and a stupendous 9 million or so who went to Hungary - which is far smaller than Romania and arguably has far fewer attractions.

Meanwhile, not all the new fans of rural tourism in Romania are foreigners.

Domnica Mateescu, who runs a small printing house in Bucharest, has spent most of his holidays in recent years on different farms across the country. "I like it because it's cheap and they're usually located in beautiful places," she says.

"There is no noise and fuss there and on a farm I can practice my gardening skills, which is one of my main hobbies", she says.

Trade Gap Narrows in Albania as Exports Rise



By Besar Likmeta

Albania's trade deficit fell 0.4 per cent in July compared to the previous month, according to data published by Albanian's Institute of Statistics, INSTAT.

INSTAT estimated that the trade deficit for the month of July was

29.9 million lek (215 million euro).

Meanwhile, exports were valued at 17.8 million lek (128 million euro), registering a growth of 7.7 per cent compared to the previous month of June and a 32.4 per cent increase compared to the same period of 2010.

Imports were valued 47.7 million lek (342 million euro), registering a growth of 2.4 per cent compared to the previous month of June and a 7.4 per cent increase compared to the same period of 2010.

According to INSTAT, trade with countries in the euro zone accounted for 69.1 per cent of exchanges, with Italy and Greece emerging as the country's main trading partners.

Minerals, electricity and fuels boosted exports in July with an increase of 30.3 per cent in these goods, compared to the previous month.

Albania's trade deficit was registered as nearly 3 billion lek (2.15 billion euro) in 2010.



Ancient Roman Ship Discovered off Albanian Coast

The remains of a 2,100-year-old Roman ship have been discovered off the Karaburun Peninsula in Albania's southern coast by archaeologists.



By Besar Likmeta

A research team comprised of Albanian and US archaeologists found the wreckage in August at a depth of 50 metres and believe it dates to between the second and first century BC.

According to archaeologists, the discovery of a 30 metre-long ship with more than 300 amphoras—a type of ceramic container—aboard, sheds new light on the ancient population of the southern Illyrian coast and its trade relations in the Mediterranean.

"The growing maritime evidence points toward an intense wine industry and associated heavy trade that developed in the 2nd century BC and continued into the 1st century CE," Dr Jeff Royal of the RPM Nautical Foundation said in a statement.

"The heavy traffic of this commodity ran southward down the Eastern Adriatic route to the Vlora area before cutting over to Southern Italy and continuing into the West Mediterranean," Royal added.

During ancient times, Albania's coast stood on an important trade route, receiving traffic from Greece, Italy, North Africa and the western Mediterranean.



Amphoras from an ancient ship found off the Albanian coast

"This discovery is important not only for the expedition but also for Albania's underwater archaeology," Dr Adrian Anastasi from Albania's Institute of Archeology said.

The expedition was financed by the RPM Nautical Foundation, which was founded by US financier George Robb Jr. It has dis-

covered 20 shipwrecks from ancient, medieval and modern times in its survey of the Balkan country's coast in the last five years.

Robb and his research team have called repeatedly for the creation of an underwater archaeology museum, which would

allow for the excavation and preservation of these relics, but so far they have received little support from local authorities.

"The discoveries of the last five years could create a unique museum for the Balkans, an opportunity that Albania should not miss," Robb said.

Serbian Police Oppose Pride Parade

Serbia's Police Union has expressed its unwillingness to secure the forthcoming Belgrade Pride Parade, citing poor working conditions.



By Bojana Barlovac

Ahead of the Belgrade gay march scheduled to be held on 2 October, the Serbian police union has issued a statement saying that the police cannot let its officials "shed their blood for a quarter of bread, pate and 500 grams of water and a daily allowance of 400 dinars (about 4)."

This is on top of their monthly salaries, thought to be in the region of 300 euro per individual.

The statement also refers to last year's clashes when thousands of hooligans attacked police in central Belgrade in an attempt to disrupt the parade. As many as 140 people, mostly policemen, were injured, 249 arrested and damage was estimated at more than 1 million euro.

The government's decision to allow the parade to be held is seen by some as politically motivated – an attempt to show Serbia as liberal and encourage its path towards European Union accession. However the police officers' union statement called on the government to provide



Religious and nationalist elements have stopped earlier Gay Pride events

EU-level working conditions for police officers.

It said it would only secure the parade "when the Serbian government provides the standards and working conditions that exist in the EU".

Members of the police argue that this time they "will not allow [themselves to be] beaten, hurt and humiliated" but the statement does not reveal how they intend to do that.

"We are warning those who are deciding on our fate to take into account, when doing security assessments, factors such as numbers of injured police officers and

citizens and damage caused to the citizens and the city of Belgrade," the statement read.

The police union also raised question about whether Serbia was in such an economic condition to bear the consequences of the parade such as damage and injured people.

"As a number of Serbian nationals have the right to express their views, opinions and differences, the other number of nationals also has the right not to bear any consequences arising from hasty decisions of the [first group of] nationals," the statement concluded.

Snails Invade Electrical Poles in Zagreb

Snails trying to escape from the oppressive heat wave that has swept across Croatia in recent days, have taken over electrical poles in Zagreb to the shock of many of the capital's residents.

Vesna Stamol, an expert in land snails working at the Croatian Natural History Museum said the animals were trying to find respite from the scorching temperatures, according to the Croatian Times.

"Although I was also surprised to see them on hot poles, that actually helps them against the heat. At about 30 centimeters from the ground, the air current is stronger," which helps them cool down, Stamol said.

The phenomenon is seen more often in rural areas, Stamol added.

For this to happen, it is enough if the amount of humidity in the air drops due to heat. Extreme temperatures such as these experienced in Croatia in the last days are not necessary.

Snails will remain on the poles until the first rains come, when they will come down to search for food. They could, however, remain on the poles for another six months without any problems, daily Jutarnji List writes.

Macedonia's Military Feels

As the prospect of NATO membership has receded, Macedonia's armed forces have seen spending fall, prompting concern that they are being sidelined.



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

Macedonia's army, which this month marks its 19th anniversary, takes pride in the fact that it has been a military force deemed fully compatible with NATO standards since 2008.

But although hundreds of Macedonian soldiers serve in peacekeeping missions side by

side with NATO troops, the army is still shut outside the alliance because of a longstanding dispute with neighbouring Greece over the country's name.

Citing the unresolved nature the name dispute, in 2008 Greece blocked the North Atlantic alliance from extending an invitation to Macedonia to join at NATO's Bucharest summit.

Athens claims that use of the name "Republic of Macedonia" implies a territorial claim against its own northern province, also

called Macedonia.

At Bucharest, NATO had no other option but to declare that Macedonia would only be able to join once the two countries had settled the issue.

Three years on, the continued failure of the country to enter NATO has deflated enthusiasm in and about the armed forces, while significant cuts in funding have deflated serving soldiers' morale.

General Miroslav Stojanovski, who until recently headed the General Staff, admits that over the

past few years there has been a "stagnation not only of the modernization of the army but also of the living standards of its staff".

Stojanovski retired from the post that he held since 2005 on August 18.

Blaming the cuts in defence spending mainly on the global economic crisis, which has also affected Macedonia, Stojanovski said he regretted that politicians had "ignored" his calls for more investment in the army.

Five years ago, in 2006,

Macedonia's military budget met NATO recommendations, accounting for 2.1 per cent of GDP. After gradual falls each year the army budget for 2011 now stands at 1.3 per cent of GDP.

The spokesperson for the Defence Ministry, Selvet Baruti told Prishtina Insight that some 70 million Euro are available in total for this year.

Macedonian politicians pledge to maintain a significant military presence in international missions, a practice that its NATO allies have praised.

After being present in Iraq as part of the US-led peacekeeping force, in Libya, as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the bulk of Macedonian troops currently deployed overseas are stationed in Afghanistan, taking part in the UN-led ISAF mission.

More than 200 soldiers are now serving there.

Since 2002 when the country started active participation in missions abroad, Macedonian soldiers have received more than 1,400 awards for combat achievement and participation in missions, a fact that speaks highly for the professionalism of an army of only 7,000 or so soldiers.

But military experts warn that key investments in procurement have been delayed for too long, putting the lives of Macedonian peacekeepers at risk.

However, thus far no soldiers from Macedonia have died in overseas missions.

"Our soldiers' excellent training will have been in vain if they lack equipment," says retired colonel professor Blagoja Markovski,



Failure to enter NATO has been a major setback for the Macedonian army

Macedonian MPs Deny Seeking EU Protection

Legislators from the ruling VMRO DPMNE party deny reports that they asked Brussels to shield them from their own party chief, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski.



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

Several of the MPs alleged to have signed the letter dismissed reports, published on Monday, which claimed that that six of them recently sent a letter to the EU delegation in Skopje in which they said the ruling party was blackmailing them to ensure they stayed loyal.

"This is a politically constructed lie by the opposition," Mihailo Dzolonga, one of the six MPs told Balkan Insight. Dzolonga denies ever writing or signing such a letter, adding that his party has never attempted to blackmail him in

exchange for his loyalty.

According to the original source, a Facebook post by local freelance Journalist Zoran Bozinovski, the VMRO DPMNE parliamentarians were forced to sign blank resignation forms that could be activated if they chose to leave the party.

On their official entry to parliament, after the June 5 election, they were also allegedly forced to sign bank cheques of 500,000 euros as another guarantee that they will stay loyal.

"This is speculation", Slave Goshev, another MP linked to the affair, told Prishtina Insight.

Slave Goshev of VMRO DPMNE denied his party ever blackmailed him

Macedonia's main opposition Social Democrats were quick to run with the allegations.



At a parliament session on Monday they demanded to know whether such a letter existed, to which MPs from the ruling coalition did not reply.

Bozinovski stands by his story, saying he obtained the information from a source who allegedly acted as "the middleman" between the MPs and the EU office in Skopje.

"The most disturbing thing is

that people [in the June 5 election] voted for legislators who are forced into allegiance to their party leader," Bozinovski told Prishtina Insight.

He said his source told him that the letter was signed at a secret location in Skopje one month ago and that more MPs had originally planned to sign it, but then changed their minds at the last minute.

Among those who allegedly

changed their minds, media reports said, was the former Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki who quit in June "for family reasons". Milososki was seen as one of Gruevski's most trusted associates.

The EU office in Skopje was not available for comment on Tuesday as it was closed for Ramadan, a national holiday in multi-faith Macedonia.

Like Forgotten Force

adding: "We should [only] accept duties that match our capabilities".

Ever since 2006, Macedonia has announced the procurement of modern armed personnel carriers, intended mainly for troops serving abroad. But the army has yet to reach a deal on actually buying the APCs.

For its mechanized infantry squad serving in Afghanistan, Macedonia currently uses reinforced versions of the Hermelin light APC, vehicles produced in the former East Germany and later donated to the Macedonian army in the 1990s.

Military analyst Petar Skrbina says such vehicles are outdated and don't meet NATO safety standards. The protection that these vehicles offer is not adequate to conditions in Afghanistan, he maintains.

"We risk losing soldiers if we continue to send them out in Hermelins," Skrbina insists.

Another sector of the armed forces suffering from a lack of funds is the air force.

Before the 2008 NATO summit, the military launched a modernization programme for the air force's mainly Russian-built combat, all-purpose helicopters.

Elbit Systems of Israel was chosen to equip the aircraft with sophisticated NATO compliant equipment.

But only few helicopters ever experienced an upgrade. Meanwhile, in January 2008 one of the upgraded helicopters transporting military staff back from Bosnia crashed near Skopje, killing all 11 on board.

The tragedy sparked fresh controversy over the quality of the upgrades, which were supposed to provide better navigation systems and night-flying capabilities.

Parallel plans to purchase new helicopters, ideally from a Western manufacturer have also been put on hold owing to lack of funds.

At the moment, the army has a contract with Elbit to form a combat flight school. Over the next few years the military plan to spend over 5 million euro a year on this school, which is intended to turn out highly trained pilots.

Macedonia's new defence minister, Fatmir Besimi, who took over in July, has acknowledged the pile-up of problems in the armed forces.

At a recent joint meeting with former defence ministers he

promised that by 2020 the army budget would rise gradually from 1.3 per cent of GDP back to the previous level of 2.1 per cent, once again matching NATO recommendations for defence spending.

"Now is the time when financing is being planned," Besimi told reporters, referring to the period when the country's financial plans for the following year are being agreed. "One of my challenges will surely be to increase the defence budget," he added.

Besimi did not say how he planned to tackle continual complaints about army wages and living standards.

The average soldier's monthly salary at the moment is about 320 euro, which is about the national average.

Soldiers say that with pay at that level they cannot even dream of buying a flat in a country where prices for apartments cost around 1,000 euro a square metre.

An employee at the army logistics centre in Skopje told Prishtina Insight under condition of anonymity that he felt frustrated, risking his life "for practically nothing in return in terms of my future [financial] security and that of my family.

"There's an impression that the government doesn't care about the army, especially now that joining NATO is no longer certain," he added.

"We also have no idea what we will do after we retire," the same soldier said.

By law professional soldiers must retire when they turn 39. This is a matter of deep concern for soldiers who may afterwards be left without a job and reliant on a small military pension.

The authorities have responded to some of these complaints. Last year an ambitious project was launched to help military personnel purchase flats at affordable prices. The project, currently at an early stage, envisages building special army flats on sites of former military bases.

The government has also launched a programme to help retired soldiers find new jobs. The authorities promise to pay half the wages of army veterans for the first six months if companies employ them.

But Prishtina Insight's interlocutor said he was sceptical about these plans. "Seeing is believing," he replied.



History of Close Encounters:

Macedonia's army was formed in 1992 from the territorial defence force of the former Yugoslav republic and from a few leftovers of the Yugoslav Army, the JNA, which pulled out peacefully after Macedonia declared independence.

The first serious challenge was to secure the previously unguarded border with Serbia, which then included Kosovo.

Macedonia's lightly equipped conscripts faced a serious task in trying to control a mountainous border whose precise contours have often been disputed by the local, mainly ethnic Albanian, population.

The army also had several near encounters with the much stronger JNA, controlled by Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia, which had already waged major wars in Slovenia and Croatia.

However, diplomacy prevailed and no serious incidents occurred.

The army's development in the 1990s was additionally hobbled by the international arms embargo placed on former Yugoslavia, which was intended to prevent the wars in the region from spreading. Although Macedonia was not involved in any armed conflict at the time, it still fell under the terms of the embargo.

The army's greatest challenge was in 2001, when a serious armed conflict erupted between the Macedonian authorities and a rebel force based in mainly ethnic Albanian western Macedonia.

The army and police suffered from defections of some ethnic Albanian staff who then joined the rebel force. That year the army made some of its biggest procurements to date, purchas-

ing predominantly Russian and Ukrainian equipment.

After six months of fighting, a peace deal signed in Ohrid resulted in the disarmament of the Albanian insurgents in exchange for a political settlement guaranteeing greater rights for the community.

As part of the Ohrid deal, it was also agreed that the level of participation among Albanians in its ranks would rise.

After the conflict ended, in 2002, Macedonia deployed its first overseas peacekeepers in Iraq.

By 2008, as a consequence of reforms, it has shrunk in size from a force of over 20,000 conscripts in the early 1990s to a small, well-trained core of some 7,000 professionals.

Military training and equipment donations from friendly NATO countries greatly assisted the process of transformation.

Slovenian PM Dined with Tadic Before Merkel Visit

Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor has revealed that he was invited to an unscheduled dinner meeting with Serbian President Boris Tadic just days before German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited him Ljubljana, Blic reports.

The meeting was scheduled shortly after

the Chancellor, who has been conducting a tour of the Balkans, visited Tadic in Serbia and asked that Serbia abandon its parallel institutions in northern Kosovo.

Pahor reportedly claimed that he was contacted by Tadic and asked to 'come to Belgrade within the context of regular

meetings between Serbia and Slovenia'.

Pahor then responded to Tadic's appeal by travelling to Belgrade for a meeting with the president last Saturday.

'It was an intensive four-hour meeting during a working dinner. We discussed security issues,' Pahor was reported as say-

ing during a joint press conference with Merkel.

Merkel, for her part, was quoted as saying that 'a gradual approach can be used in the settlement of the Kosovo problem', a comment some observers have taken to mean a change in her stance on Kosovo.

Sacked Kosovo Gallery Chief

Kosovo's National Art Gallery remains without a permanent director after the Ministry of Culture ousted Fahredin Spahija in a coup that he claims was politically motivated.



Galeria e Arteve e Kosovës
The Kosova Art Gallery



By Shengjyl Osmani

Kosovo's artists are becoming concerned about political meddling in the cultural scene following the sacking of the director of the Kosovo Art Gallery.

Fahredin Spahija became the latest official to blame political interference for the loss of his post when he was removed in June. His post has yet to be filled permanently.

Spahija, who was only halfway through his four-year mandate when he was forced out, says he was dismissed after a politically orchestrated petition was handed to the Minister of Culture, Memli Krasniqi, who took up his post in January.

He claims employees of the gallery were forced to sign up to the campaign to oust him or face the sack.

The Ministry of Culture and the acting head of the Gallery reject the accusations, claiming that Spahija was sacked for his poor treatment of staff.

But some members of staff who signed the petition against Spahija told Prishtina Insight that they had nothing against the former director. A number of prominent artists have also backed Spahija.

"We should learn from the mistakes that Albania has made, where even the maintenance staff often gets removed when the leadership of a cultural institution changes.



Kosovo Art Gallery is currently without a permanent head as the Ministry of Culture struggles to find a replacement

All eleven employees at the Gallery signed a petition to the Ministry, accusing Spahija of mistreating them and of mismanagement. Initially the petition had been submitted with just nine signatures.

The two staff members who signed it at the second calling told Prishtina Insight that they had had no problems with Spahija.

Mexhide Maxhuni and Skender Gjykolli said they finally decided to sign it for "the sake of colleagues" but refused to elaborate on what that meant.

"I was not forced to sign the petition," Maxhuni said, "but I respect very much the [former] director and he was never mean or rude to

us," she added.

Gjykolli also refused to say why he signed the petition, as he had "nothing against Fahredin Spahija

"In my declaration I clearly mentioned that I was complaining about the former director of the art gallery, Luan Mulliqi," he said.

Spahija told Prishtina Insight that top politicians from the cultural sector had wanted him out for some months.

"I knew that behind the scenes people close to the Minister of Culture were aiming to eliminate me professionally," Spahija said.

Meanwhile, others who signed the petition have defended their action and the removal of Spahija.



Alban Muja fears political influence in the cultural scene

Dhurata Ramosaj, the current acting head of the Gallery, and one of the initiators of the petition, said they had agreed to share their dissatisfaction with the Ministry

and end what he called the "unbearable" atmosphere under Spahija.

"The director mistreated all of us and we wanted to end this torture, solve our problems and prevent the situation from becoming worse," Ramosaj said.

Veton Firzi, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, said that after receiving complaints from Gallery employees, they set up a committee to look into them.

"We formed a disciplinary committee to deal with this issue and after talking to all employees individually, the committee proposed Fahredin Spahija's dismissal," Firzi said.

But Spahija retorts that "if the accusations were true, why haven't the workers mentioned

"In my declaration I clearly mentioned that I was complaining about the former director of the art gallery, Luan Mulliqi," he said.



Blames Politics



any concrete examples of abuse?
"All these scenarios were well planned in advance and the

"The director mistreated all of us and we wanted to end this torture, solve our problems and prevent the situation from becoming worse," Ramosaj said.

employees of the Gallery have been misused for other people's personal interests," he added.

Before appointing Dhurata Ramosaj as acting head of the gallery, Minister Krasniqi twice failed to fill the post.

Vesta Nura and Shkurtë Kadri-Citaku, both employees in the Ministry of Culture, turned down offers to be acting heads of the gallery. Neither has divulged why they did so.

Lutfi Haziri, former culture minister in the previous government, told Prishtina Insight that during his mandate he received good reports about Spahija.

"He is a very well organised person who always follows agendas and schedules, working in a professional way," he said.

Others artists have also rallied to Spahija's side, though some would only speak anonymously for fear of being blacklisted by gov-



Fahredin Spahija opening an exhibition with Budim Berisha

ernment-backed institutions.

Budim Berisha, a well known painter from Prizren, said he only held his first exhibition in Kosovo in many years because of Spahija's presence at the Gallery.

"I trusted that Fahredin would run my exhibition [properly]," Berisha said. Kosovo won't ever have a better-equipped director of the Art Gallery, he added.

Fears for independence:

The sacking of Spahija has added to concerns in the artistic community that politics is encroaching directly into their

"All these scenarios were well planned in advance and the employees of the Gallery have been misused for other people's personal interests," Spahija added.

field.

The director of the Kosovo National Theatre, Arian Krasniqi, left his job citing "political interference" in the summer of 2009.

Alban Muja, an artist from Prishtina, said that politics and culture needed to be separated more clearly.

"Whenever politics intervenes in culture there is no more culture, only anti-culture," he said.

"We should learn from the mistakes that Albania has made, where even the maintenance staff often gets removed when the leadership of a cultural institution changes.

"This doesn't happen elsewhere in the world, except in countries like Belarus where all institutions are led by party people," he added.

Muja said that perhaps an international director should be considered for the Gallery to avoid the institution being dragged into politics.



PEJA TOURISM STREET FAIR 2011

10 - 11.09.2011 Peja/Peć Main Square 12:30 - 19:00



Peja Tourism Street Fair 2011 "Experience Dukagjini Region", is a leading event for the tourism industry to meet, network, negotiate and do business.

This year, the "Experience Dukagjini Region" Street Fair will be more than just picking brochures. It will last two days, to take place during September 10 and 11 and will open from 11:00 hrs at central square of Peja. The event will feature cultural performances, community programs and lots of activities to be enjoyed over entire weekend, to include hiking routes, biking adventures, traditional food, wine degustation and tours etc - all at special discount rates.

At this "first of the fall" type of event in 2009, over 60 vendors including 7 towns, lined the streets and offered a range of products and services. More than 10,000 consumers attended last year's event and hundreds of festival attendees who were looking to plan a vacation stopped by the event booths, to learn more about special packages and offers as well as of the attractions that the destination had to offer. The street fair was initiated by USAID's Kosovo Private Enterprise Program and Municipality of Pejë. Both partners continue to support Experience Dukagjini Region, street fair.

Contact Kosovo Alternative Tourism Association at shtak.kosovo@gmail.com or visit www.kata-ks.com if you have any questions.



Kosovo's Young Playwrights Fail to Grab the Limelight

Budding dramatists complain that a lack of funds and interest mean they're not getting a chance to showcase their talent.



By Besiana Xharra

Award-winning playwright Dituri Neziraj is like many of her fellow dramatists in Kosovo: unemployed and disillusioned with the state of theatre in her country. "Today's young playwrights are waitresses or working in fields that have nothing to do with their profession," she laments.

"After I completed my Masters in drama, I had to look for another profession. For a short time I worked as a journalist and now I am unemployed, like many of my colleagues," she adds.

Neziraj's children's drama, *Me, You and Dedushi*, made it onto the stage of the National Theatre after she won a national competition for young talent. But since then, the theatre has shown no further interest in her work.

At least Neziraj had one of her works showcased. Most other young writers never get to see

work on stage.

The National Theatre, an austere, Communist-era building on Prishtina's Mother Teresa Boulevard, organises only one competition for young writers each year, a contest named after the acclaimed actress Katarina Josipi.

Most of the time the theatre shows the work of international writers such as Tom Stoppard and Eugene Ionesco, translated into Albanian. Writer Mehmet Kraja says the country's theatres suffer from unimaginative management.

"Theatre must change its culture, but this is currently impossible given the people now managing Kosovo's theatres," he says.

"Kosovo theatres are not cultural institutions with established programmes and cultural policies," he adds.

"Kosovo theatres don't do performances anymore, they do waffle."

He charges the National Theatre in particular with ignoring the country's own "great writers" to concentrate on poorly translated and staged foreign dramas.

The well-known playwright Ekrem Kryeziu, who is a professor at the Academy of Arts, agrees that theatre remains a marginalized art form in Kosovo.

But he believes this is a result of a lack of



Award-winning playwright Dituri Neziraj is now unemployed.

funds, and is not just down to poor management. "The drama section at the Faculty of Arts has produced very good authors, names that make us proud," Kryeziu says. "But young playwrights are supported very little," he adds.

"The National Theatre of Kosovo does not open doors for them, which leads me to conclude that the drama in Kosovo is badly managed," he continues.

Even the Katarina Josipi prize comes in for a lashing, as the playwright says it too often is used to promote drama "with no value".

Burbuqe Berisha, director of the National Theatre, shrugs off such criticisms, arguing that the Katarina Josipi prize has been a great success in promoting Albanian-language drama.

The jury is professional and picks the best drama, she said, which, with the theatre's support, is then produced for the stage.

She accepts that young playwrights are not getting enough attention in Kosovo but says it's up to the government to set aside more money for drama.

Jeton Neziraj, artistic director at the National Theatre, agrees; the failure of the government to invest in theatre is a major part of the problem.

"At least the National Theatre in Prishtina has managed to maintain itself but the other theatres are in deep crisis as a result of no one investing in them," Neziraj says.

Kosovo's provincial theatres, in Peja, Gjakova, Gjilan and other towns, are virtually unusable. After years of neglect they are mostly used now for political rallies at election times.

The Ministry of Culture gives the National Theatre 230,000 euro a year, accord-

ing to Shasivar Haxhija, an advisor in the ministry.

He said the ministry was hoping to raise the budget for next year but added that theatres outside Prishtina were the responsibility of their local municipalities, so they could not expect to receive central government funds, apart for some specific projects.

Neziraj said the current funding arrangement was "scandalous". "We cannot cover all costs with this money, it is impossible." He added that there had been no budget increases in recent years, just promises.

Two private theatres in Prishtina, Oda and Dodona theatre, do stage plays written in Albanian, but these are rarely the works of younger playwrights.

Agim Selimi, director of Dodona, said his theatre is the only venue to promote young writers, but that he struggles to do so in the absence of financial support from the government, relying only on ticket proceeds.

Some established actors and playwrights, meanwhile, says it's up to youngsters to impose themselves and bring about change in the world of Kosovo Albanian drama, rather than just complaining.

Actor Melihate Qena says she is concerned when she hears about new playwrights obsessing over money troubles.

"Drama should be something wanted by your soul, so that you cannot live without writing," Qena says, "but today some have taken on this work for benefits alone and aren't really interested in drama."

Arian Krasniqi, playwright and a former director of the National Theatre, said he hoped a new generation of dramatists will make their mark and so bring about "a major turning point in the writing and promotion of Albanian drama here and outside our country".



Memli Krasniqi Minister of Culture Youth and Sports

Time Is Running Out for Macedonia's Big Cat

With only about 20 Balkan Lynxes left in Macedonia's Mavrovo National Park, environmentalists are battling against the clock to save it from extinction.



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

In the Mavrovo national park, in the mountains above the western town of Gostivar, city dwellers arrive every weekend, seeking time out among the wild scenery and fresh mountain air.

Few seem to know that the thick pine forests surrounding them are one of the last remaining haunts of one of Europe's rarest, most endangered animals, the Balkan Lynx.

The largest wild cat in Europe, the lynx is a national symbol of Macedonia, its image adorning the face of five-denar coins.

But for most Macedonians, the depiction on the coin is the only sighting they are ever likely to get of this majestic beast, which has been driven to the brink of extinction across

Balkan Lynx

The Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx martinoi*) is a subspecies of the Eurasian Lynx in the Lynx genus. It is the national symbol of the Republic of Macedonia. It is considered to be the largest cat on the continent. The Balkan Lynx has been on the brink of extinction for nearly a century, with numbers estimated to be around one hundred. The Balkan lynxes decrease in number have been thought to be due to illegal poaching. While the Balkan Lynx is listed as a subspecies in much of the news coverage and taxonomic references, there has been some dispute over those claims.

the semi-peninsula.

The pace of decline has been catastrophic, even over the last 20 years.

Back in the 1980s, according to Macedonian Ecological Society, the Mavrovo Park alone was home to about 120 animals. Now they estimate only about 20 remain.

These remaining animals are so few and elusive that when Macedonian environmentalists in March captured a live specimen on the mountain, for the purposes of tracking its movements, it was big news.

"It was an historic event," says Dime Melovski, of the Macedonian Ecological Society, recalling his emotion on finding the animal in a trap: "I cannot describe how I felt when we found out that we had a live animal. I was trembling with excitement."

Over the past four years, the Macedonian Ecological Society has teamed up with the Mavrovo Park and with environmentalists in neighbouring Albania in an effort to save the wild cat.

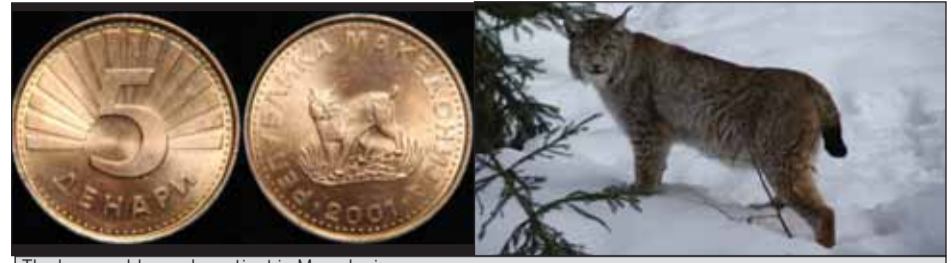
Their aim is to research the lynx's habitat, which stretches over the other side of the border to Albania, and obtain more data about its status, movements, daytime and nocturnal habits and favourite prey.

When the study wraps up by the end of 2012, the environmentalists hope to be in a position to propose more accurate measures for its protection.

The adult animal caught in March was put to sleep, then weighed and measured and a blood sample was taken.

The lynx, which they named Marko, was then released back into the wild with GPS attached, allowing the scientists to track its whereabouts and learn about its habits.

Already, the scientists say, they have col-



The lynx could soon be extinct in Macedonia.

lected some valuable information about Marko's lifestyle.

"In only the first days of research we found that Marko had crossed some 35 kilometres and had come back to the place where he was captured. Along the way he strangled a doe," Melovski notes.

Until they caught Marko, Macedonian scientists mostly had to make do with dead lynxes and with stuffed animals in museums, Melovski explains.

The Balkan Lynx is a subspecies of the Eurasian Lynx, which remains widespread in Russia and other parts of Central and Eastern Europe.

Once it was common throughout the mountains and forests of the Balkan peninsula. But man has shrunk the Balkan Lynx's natural habitat and continuous illegal poaching has pushed it to the edge.

Today only fragmented populations, numbering no more than a hundred in total, hang on in parts of Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro - most of them in western Macedonia.

Melovski says that if their last-ditch efforts fail to save the animal in the Mavrovo park, this cat may soon be extinct.

Oner Jakuposki, head of the Mavrovo

National Park, says he is determined to save the species. "We will take every possible measure to preserve the Balkan Lynx," he says.

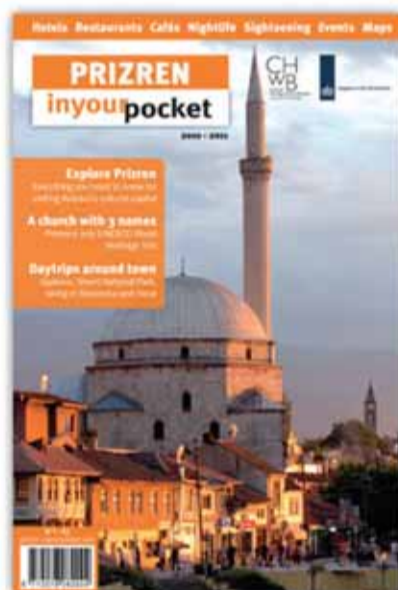
But Jakuposki says that as matters stand, the lynx is protected only by general Macedonian laws, protecting a range of endangered species.

"The studies should give us enough data to back up our case for parliament to specifically regulate protection of the lynx and finance its re-introduction," Jakuposki adds.

They need more funding to prevent its extinction if they are not to be too late, he concludes.



marketing



inyourpocket
ESSENTIAL CITY GUIDES

Get the **Pristina In Your Pocket** and
Prizren In Your Pocket city guides now,
at bookshops or via
www.kosovo.inyourpocket.com

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-vict-
ory.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 barbeques 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*



Contact Prishtina Insight if you would like your event to feature or to advertise your venue. Email marketing@prishtinainsight.com

Prishtina Diary

Friday, September 2, 2011

DJ SHONKY from 10pm will perform at Zone Club. This event is being organized by Next Level (A local event planning agency) for its fifth anniversary. Dj Shonky is a French artist coming from Paris who is known worldwide for his minimal music.

Friday, September 2, 2011

DJ Jungle V'S DJ. FLOW at Duplex Club starting at 10pm. DJ Jungle and DJ Flow are known local artists who played Hip Hop and RnB music.

Friday, September 2, 2011

RnB and Hip Hop music from Live Stine and DJ Gamble at Plat'on Club from 9 pm

Saturday, September 3

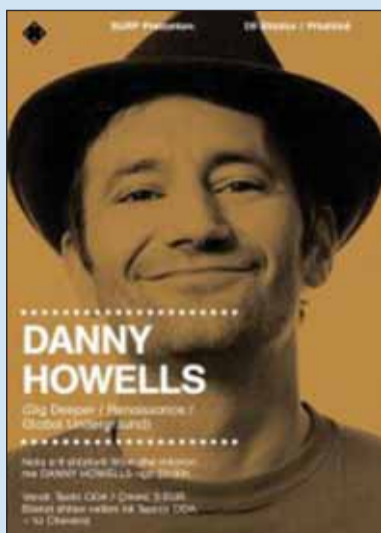
Jägermeister Party with TINGULLI TRENT & DJ JUNGLE (BABA STARS) starting at 10 pm at Duplex Club.

Friday, September 9, 2011

DJ Danny Howells in Prishtina to perform at Theatre Oda, from 11 pm. Danny Howells is one of the world's best DJ's and most respected in the Kosovo clubbing scene. Danny

Howells is remembered for his special connection with the local crowd that no other artist has ever had. He's also the only DJ to have played for more than 6 hours nonstop. He is finally returning with a super special night at the Surf Urban Summer Festival.

Danny is one of the few DJs on the scene today that truly has a style of his own. With his passion for all styles of music and infectious personality, Danny has created a unique, eclectic sound that has established him as one of the most in demand DJs in the world. Danny is one of the hardest working and most dedicated individuals in the business with over 20 years experience and a hectic touring schedule that constantly takes him around the world. He has played in the world's coolest clubs and held residencies at places such as Arc, Ministry of Sound, Twilo, Renaissance, The End, and Bedrock, as well as his own Dig Deeper nights worldwide. Danny is a DJ with a broad musical taste who likes any-



thing from jazz to rock, to pop and anything a bit bizarre. He likes to champion his own special tracks and records that nobody else has latched on to and has a way of combining cutting edge grooves with crowd pleasing dynamics that enables him to connect with his audience making him one of the hottest DJs in the world.

Kosovo National Theatre



Monday, September 5, 2011

Helver's night play from 8 pm. Wednesday, September 7, 2011, until Sunday, September 9, 2011

Nine Eleven short and documentary film festival

Monday, September 12, 2011

The Physicists, by Friedrich Durrenmatt - a satirical drama often recognised as the most impressive yet most easily understood work of the Swiss writer Friedrich

Dürrenmatt. Informed by the Second World War and the many recent advances in science and nuclear technology, the play deals with questions of scientific ethics and mankind's ability to handle its intellectual responsibilities. The play is directed by the Albanian producer Ise Qosja and it will be on stage at 8 pm.

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Silence [heshtje] a play by Refet Abazi, directed by Arta Kallaba.



Every day, at 4 and 6 pm ABC Cinema is screening the brand new movie Rise of the Planet of the Apes. During experiments to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease, a genetically-enhanced chimpanzee uses its greater intelligence to lead other apes to freedom. The movie is directed by Rupert Wyatt, written by Rick Jaffa, Amanda Silver, and is played by James Franco, Andy Serkis and Freida Pinto.

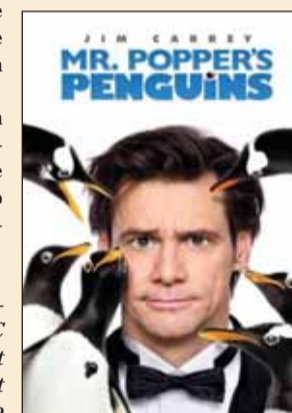


ABC continues screening the movie Bad Teachers at 8pm and 10 pm. Some teachers just don't give one. For example, there's Elizabeth (Cameron Diaz). She's foul-mouthed, ruthless, and inappropriate. She drinks, she gets high, and she can't wait to marry her meal ticket and get out of her bogus day job. When she's dumped by her fiancé, she sets her plan in motion to win over a rich, handsome substitute (Justin Timberlake) - competing for his affections with an overly energetic colleague, Amy (Lucy Punch). When Elizabeth also finds herself fighting off the advances of a sarcastic, irreverent gym teacher (Jason Segel), the consequences of her wild and outrageous schemes give her students, her co-workers, and even herself an education like no other.



The premiere of the movie Mr. Popper's Penguins will be hosted by ABC Cinema on September 9, 2011.

The life of a businessman begins to change after he inherits six penguins, and as he transforms his apartment into a winter wonderland, his professional side starts to unravel.



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



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 !

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



Prishtina's History Retraced Through 'Lost' Photos

A new book reveals how Kosovo's capital change dramatically in last 60 years through photos which had been all but lost



By Shengjyl Osmani

“A city is not just a batch of houses, streets, squares, institutions, shops...no! A city is a cascade of energies, a true heart's nest, flickers of joy and concerns and a search for new beginnings,” wrote Vlora Dumoshi, of the Municipality of Prishtina, in Valbona Shijaku's book on Prishtina's evolution in last 60 years.

Shujaku, an independent cultural manager based in Prishtina with a graduate degree in art from Columbia University, has dedicated two years of hard work on her latest cultural project - a book on the old city of Prishtina, *Prishtina Poetic Memories*.

“My interest in the old town came early in age, mostly because of my grandmother's stories,” she said. “Having lived through World

War II, she remembers life before the war, its hardship and the regimes that followed.

“She still speaks of a town of respectful people, beautiful houses and the magnificent old market,” explained Valbona.

Prishtina Poetic Memories is an illustrative black and white photo collection book, which allows the reader to sense how the city of Prishtina looked between the 1950s and 1980s, and how it developed.

It looks at how people lived in the then small town of around 18,000 inhabitants from different cultures and faiths.

The photos included in the book, published in June, have been carefully selected from those in the archive at the Museum of Kosovo.

“The collection of photographs from the Museum of Kosovo, which feature Prishtina in the late '50s and '60s, is a photographic perspective on the collective memory of Prishtina of the time,” says Arber Hadri, the Director of the Museum of Kosovo, in the preface



Prishtina's old town how it looks now and how it looked 50 years ago (top)

to the book.

He explained that these almost forgotten photos were archived, digitalised and categorized

thanks to the dedication of the author Valbona.

Valbona Shujaku told Prishtina Insight that she doesn't want the beautiful memories of her grandmother and parents to be forgotten and lost forever.

She wants to make a new generation aware that the city of Prishtina once had two rivers, beautiful houses, and a bazaar.

A city with gardens and craftsmen changed into a town of administrators and bureaucrats, she added.

“For days I walked around memorizing old buildings and comparing them to the pictures I had discovered,” she said. “I talked to the aged inhabitants who are living proof and first hand witnesses of the town as it once was,” explained Valbona.

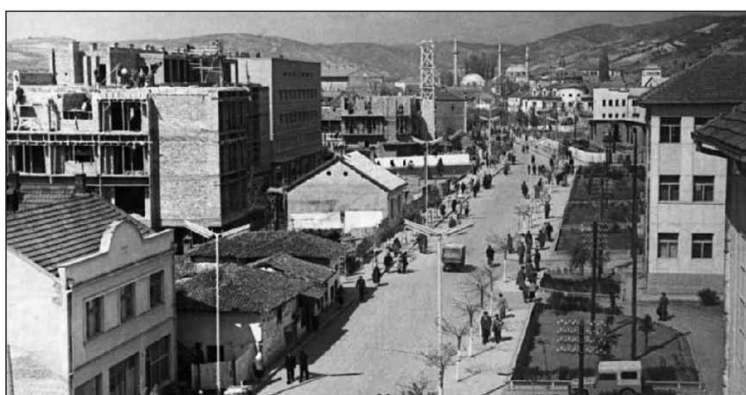
The book contains 244 photos and a map where all the photos are identified with the location. In addition, Valbona told Prishtina Insight that it was not easy to select the photos and leave many more unpublished, as all were “beautiful and meaningful for her”.

“Even though Prishtina has been shaped into a concrete

hubris, there were, and there are, remnants of the old town,” she added. “This book is meant to be a photographic supplement to my grandmother's town, in fragments, the way she spoke about it, the way she remembered it, and the way she wanted to remember it, so it would not vanish completely into oblivion.

“This book is a gift from Prishtina to me,” adds Valbona.

The book can be bought at Prishtina's book stores, and it cost just 20 euro. It can be also ordered online, from the web site: www.prishtinapoeticmemories.com or directly from Valbona at info@prishtinapoeticmemoies.com.



Inside Prishtina



Bar Review: Studio 53

Pasta La Vista, Baby

Opened during the hot summer months, Studio 53's garden terrace and classic design is already proving popular with those looking for a good spot to check out the passing crowds.

The comfortable interior and a relaxing terrace may be light and airy, but Studio 53's food speciality is anything but – pasta sandwich. Prishtina Insight has yet to try it, but will report back to its readers once it has taken

the plunge.

Apart from this item, the venue offers the usual range of sandwiches and pasta dishes ranging from 1.70 euro to 2 euro.

The bar also serves the usual range of coffees, soft drinks and alcoholic drinks that can be found across Prishtina, including several alcoholic cocktails. Studio 53 is also an official representative of Attibassi Italian coffee company.

The bar will soon start hosting weekend events,



and is open for private reservations. They are open from 8 am till 12 midnight from Monday to Sunday.

For more, visit them next to ABC Cinema, or

call for reservations at 045 611 111.

*Studio 53
Str. Rexhep Luci nr: 5
Next to ABC Cinema
and NLB Bank
045 611 111*

Prishtina through the Eyes of:

Garland Boyette

deputy team leader and legal expert for the EU SME support through the Ministry of Trade and Industry



1) What surprised you most about Prishtina?
I was surprised by the size, extent, and popularity of the "café culture" here

2) What's your favourite hangout?
Chez Bar

3) What is the best thing about Prishtina?
The weather here is on the whole quite pleasant, has a surprisingly vibrant night life, and it's a great spot from which to explore the region.

4) What is the most annoying thing about Prishtina?
The lack of water in the centre between 22:30 and 5:30.

5) If you were mayor of Prishtina for the day what would you change?
I think we should be able to do something to improve the garbage situation

6) How many macchiatos do you drink a day?
I know it's a sin here, but I don't drink coffee.

7) What's your favourite Albanian word and why?
"Ufull"/"Ufla" - just sounds great!

8) What landmark do you use to tell taxi drivers where you live?
Grand Hotel (sometimes Café Metro)

SHOP Review: Bakery PanExpert

German Franchise Looking to Make Dough

Germany may be best known for its car exports, but their baked goods are pretty good too if PanExpert is anything to go by.

The shop is the first and only German bakery franchise in Kosovo, and is serving up cold sandwiches, breads, cakes and muffins in a comfortable environment.



Besides the high quality of the products, the bakery also has reasonable prices, affordable for all. Sandwiches cost from 0.50 euro to 1.50euro; pieces of cakes range from 0.45 euro up to 1.40 euro.

You can also order entire cakes, costing from 7.50 euro for a small one up to 18 euro. Finger food or cold sandwiches can be made to order for private events.

The shop near the National Theatre is just the first in what the owners hope will be a growing empire of dough. PanExpert bakery will soon open another 15 or 20 shops around the city, in order to stay close to everyone.

The bakery is open every day from 7am until 11 pm, Monday to Sunday, and has



very polite and helpful staff.

For orders you can reach them at 044 197 520 or 038 224 381, or email panexpert_pr@hotmail.com

*PanExpert Bakery
Str. Bajram Kelmendi, nr: 1
Behind the National Theatre*



Kosovo's Successful Use of Violence

Violence has been used repeatedly and successfully in Kosovo to advance political goals, but US mediation is now required to solve the current crisis, says Balkans' expert David Phillips.



By David L. Phillips

Kosovo Albanians have a track record of using violence to advance their political goals. Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's bid to seize Kosovo's border crossings with Serbia fits the pattern: create a crisis, get the international community involved, and enlist foreign mediators in service of Kosovo's agenda.

The current crisis occurred when Thaci seized customs stations on the Kosovo-Serbia border in a bid to end the de-facto partition of Kosovo.

While the Kosovo government has an absolute right to assert its sovereign rights, European leaders criticized Thaci's recent gambit as reckless and provocative. Brinkmanship may achieve some goals in the short term, but it also risks discrediting Kosovo and undermining its goal of gaining greater global recognition.

Kosovars successfully took matters into their own hands on two previous occasions. In the 1990s, their impatience with peaceful non-violent resistance led to an armed rebellion against Serbia's tyrannical rule. Slobodan Milosevic responded with atrocities and war crimes.

Kosovo rebels calculated that the United States would never let happen in Kosovo what happened in Bosnia. They were right. In 1999, the Clinton administration launched a 67-day air campaign resulting in Serbia's surrender.

A confrontation between Serb and Albanian youths in the divided city of Mitrovica sparked riots across Kosovo during the spring of 2004. Frustrated with their lack of progress towards independence, Kosovars launched a

seemingly coordinated attack on Serbian enclaves and UN personnel.

The Bush administration condemned Albanian-led violence, while concluding that the status quo was untenable and launching a diplomatic process that culminated in Kosovo's US-led coordinated declaration of independence.

Serbia rejected the outcome. So-called bridge watchers, Serbian thugs allegedly financed and coordinated by Serbia's Interior Ministry, enforced a partition of Kosovo. Serbia's goal is to annex 20% of Kosovo north of the Ibar River.

The international community turned a blind eye. It also ignored Serbia's embargo of goods bearing a customs stamp with the state insignia of Kosovo.

On July 28, Kosovo Special Forces took control of two northern border crossings to enforce a ban on imports from Serbia in retaliation for a ban on Kosovo's exports in a dispute over customs regulations.

When NATO forces regained control, they were attacked by a mob of armed Serbs. The border crossing at Jarinje was burned to the ground. One Kosovo policeman was killed.

Thaci's provocation paid off. He consolidated his nationalist political base by issuing an emotional appeal to protect the country's "sacred sovereignty." The confrontation with Serbia comes at a time when Thaci's credentials have been tarnished by allegations of vote rigging, rampant corruption, and ties to human organ trafficking.

Thaci may have instigated the current crisis, but international public opinion holds Serbia responsible. President Boris Tadic has tried to distance Belgrade from the hooliganism of Kosovo Serbs. However, Serbia's EU membership has been seriously compromised.

Europe is suddenly paying attention. Violence in Kosovo could escalate conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, resulting in its ethnic partition.

In addition, it could destabilize Macedonia where a fragile power-sharing agreement keeps the peace between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians. Another spasm in the Balkans would fuel anti-immigration sentiments on the rise across Europe.

Seized by the dangers of Kosovo's partition, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton has called for dialogue. She castigates both sides insisting, "Violence will never be tolerated." In fact, violence has served a purpose by mobilizing international mediation.

Thaci may look like a winner in the short term, but crisis has a cost. EU member states that refuse to recognize Kosovo's independence will harden their position. The visa liberalization dialogue enabling visa-free travel for Kosovars to Europe will be delayed. EU member members opposing expansion will be validated.

The United States does not want to reward violence. However, letting the current problem fester or punting responsibility to the EU risks an even greater crisis.

Bill Clinton is beloved for leading NATO's intervention and George W. Bush for stewarding Kosovo's independence. It is Barack Obama's turn to lead an international diplomatic effort restoring Kosovo's sovereignty and stabilizing the Western Balkans.

David L. Phillips is Director of the Program on Peace-Building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights and a Fellow at Harvard University's Project on the Future of Diplomacy. His upcoming book is entitled "Liberating Kosovo: Coercive Diplomacy and U.S. Intervention."

Outside In EULEX: Selective Rule of Law?



By Kreshnik Hoxha

EULEX received a warm welcome in the aftermath of Kosovo's independence in 2008, but the growing agitation ever since demonstrates the corroding confidence in the European mission. But, did the recent Northern Kosovo drama add another nail to the coffin?

The optimism that Kosovo will be guided towards the EU through a mission deployed by the EU itself was quite a soothing feeling in Kosovo's first days of statehood. Faced with the post-independence challenges, a mission that would oversee, train and guide the Kosovar leadership was regarded as pivotal to the creation of a functional state.

One of the key priorities of EULEX was to ensure widespread investigation in addressing corruption, war crimes, terrorism and organised crime. This would be especially relevant in cases involving local leadership, which had so very lucidly demonstrated its ineptness in policy making and weakness in enforcing rule of law in a post-independent Kosovo.

At a time in 2010 when the reputation of PM Thaci's government was in absolute tatters and the irritation of citizens with its government was growing exponentially, it was the Chief Prosecutor of EULEX, Johannes Van Vreeswijk who stated that serious investigations to address corruption were due to follow shortly.

This claim, in addition to the raid undertaken by EULEX police in the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications months before, had planted the seed of hope for Kosovo citizens. This was perceived as a signal that finally, after two years of witnessing Northern Kosovo submerged in lawlessness and the rest of the country struggling with weak rule of law, EULEX was going to get its act together.

However, partly due to the lack of a clear strategy and partly due to the confusion arising from its political versus technical mandate, EULEX has proven to be nothing else but a reconfigured version of UNMIK.

Its unclear mandate was further confirmed in the aftermath of the trade reciprocity measures with Serbia, when the two EULEX-controlled borders in Jarinje and Brnjak were exempted from Prishtina's orders by EULEX, which chose not to assist the Kosovo government.

If EULEX keeps boasting about its actions elsewhere in Kosovo as a sign of rule of law enforcement, then it must act with the same consistency in the Northern part of the country too.

If, for all the years that it has been loitering in Kosovo, EULEX had tackled the organised crime and corruption in the northern part of the country, like it attempted to do so in the south, today the situation on the ground in the north would have been very different.

Instead, the prolonged negligence of the north by EULEX sparked Prishtina's orders to deploy special forces, which in turn forced EULEX to restore peace and order, 12 years after the war had ended.

Ironically, in all this state of affairs, it is precisely the EU that criticises Kosovo for unilateral actions of enforcing rule of law in the north – a task that should have been enforced by its own EU mission in Kosovo.

Selectivity in its actions harms EULEX's already weakened credibility in Kosovo. But, above all, a mission that fails to accomplish its duties can never be justified to the European taxpayer at a time when the EU is floating on a financial mess.

Ten Years On, Macedonia Still Awaits Closure

Only full implementation of the Ohrid Agreement can bring a divided Macedonia to the point to true reconciliation.



By Erwan Fouere

On 13 August 2001, exactly ten years ago, five political leaders, representing the majority Macedonian as well as ethnic Albanian communities, signed the Ohrid Framework Agreement in the Macedonian capital, Skopje.

This guaranteed linguistic and cultural rights for the Albanian and other ethnic communities in the country. The EU and US, which had brokered the Agreement, signed as witnesses.

This landmark event marked the culmination of difficult negotiations that were concluded over the previous days along the shore of Ohrid Lake, hence the Agreement's name, one of the most beautiful locations in the Balkans and one steeped in legend - but whose tranquil waters belie the underlying tensions that have marked the troubled history of the region.

The Agreement brought to an end a bloody conflict, which had threatened to tear apart this small multi-ethnic country after barely ten years of independence, following the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Just over a year had passed since the 1999 Kosovo/Serbia war, which brought to the fore the legitimate grievances of ethnic Albanians as well as sending over a quarter of a million refugees across the border into Macedonia.

It was another reminder of the difficult Balkan past that still weighs heavily on the region. The ethnic Albanian community in Macedonia at the time, according to the 2001 census, comprised 25 per cent of the population of 2 million.

With the signing of the Agreement, which marked the formal cessation of hostilities, the leader of the rebels, Ali Ahmeti, whom the Macedonian leadership at the time branded a terrorist, was per-

sueded to come down from his mountain stronghold.

Subsequently he formed a political party, became part of mainstream politics and joined coalition governments. Such is the nature of Balkan politics.

With its recognition of the linguistic and cultural rights of ethnic communities in the country as well as the need for strengthened democratic institutions, the Agreement brought a period of relative calm and stability which has continued to this day, despite dangerous bumps along the way.

Indeed, even allowing for continuing problems, it has been rightly hailed as a model for reconciliation and for fostering multiethnic coexistence for the entire Balkan region.

However, making this Agreement a reality was not plain sailing. It required radical changes to the constitution and the adoption of over 70 laws providing for a decentralised system of government, equitable representation of different ethnic communities in the army, police and other branches of public service, a law on use of flags and symbols - always a sore point throughout the Balkan region - linguistic rights as well as an increased role for civil society.

Success would not have been achieved without the courage and leadership of political leaders at the time, led by the highly respected President, Boris Trajkovski, tragically killed in a plane crash in

2004 on the very day that

government had traveled to Dublin to present its candidature to join the European Union [Ireland then held the EU Presidency].

While Trajkovski provided the vision and inspiration, it was the Prime Minister, Branko Crvenkovski, and his successor, Vlado Buchkovski, who successfully steered the ambitious legislative agenda through parliament, completed in spring 2005 with the adoption of the law on the use of flags.

This was achieved despite the best efforts of the then opposition party led by Nikola Gruevski, now the Prime Minister, to block everything relating to the Agreement, reflecting the deep prejudices that continued to exist between the political forces, four years after the signature of the Agreement.

Trajkovski understood what the Agreement implied for the country: "It is necessary to change the mentality of each individual in order to overcome the prejudices which are the greatest menace even for the best ideas brought about by a new era", was his plea to parliament in December 2003, just two months before he died.

The EU recognised the great courage displayed by the country's leaders by accepting Macedonia's candidature for EU membership in December 2005, an important stepping-stone in the EU integration process and an encouragement to continue reforms.

With this decision, the EU made it clear that "the road to Brussels went via Ohrid". To quote Javier Solana, EU High Representative at the time, "Instead of facing a destructive conflict, the country is now engaged in a constructive struggle for membership of the EU".

The next big challenge facing the country's leaders was to ensure full implementation of all the adopted laws, in particular the long-term reforms to the judiciary and public administration, both highly politicised, and guaranteeing greater respect for the rules and democratic process for the benefit of all citizens and ethnic communities.

However, as one learns from observing the history of the Balkans, nothing is irreversible.

Even when a process is in place, it takes just one incident

for things to unravel.

With the election of a new government under Gruevski in July 2006, the political environment dramatically changed. Underneath his reformist programme and promises to pursue implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and EU and NATO accession - promises that initially impressed many - lay a deep-rooted nationalist and populist agenda.

His behaviour in the first months of his mandate reopened wounds from the 2001 conflict and awakened dangerous "Balkan ghosts" that many had hoped had been exorcised forever with the demise in Serbia of Slobodan Milosevic.

It took Gruevski three months after his election before he accepted a face-to-face meeting with his 2001 "nemesis", Ahmeti, even though Ahmeti's Party had obtained over 63 per cent of the ethnic Albanian vote in those elections. This reluctance to engage with political opponents remains a weak point of Gruevski's to this day.

The country has moved on since those difficult beginnings, and both Gruevski and Ahmeti have been in a coalition government since 2008, reconfirmed in June's early general election. And although the EU Executive in November 2009 recommended that accession negotiations should commence, the record of implementation of the Ohrid Agreement ten years on remains mixed.

Mistrust between the communities runs deep, no more so than in education. The trend towards splitting schools on ethnic lines grew to such an extent in recent years that it required a repeated appeal from the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities for the government to adopt an integrated education strategy.

If children from different communities are divided in schools, what hope is there for an integrated multi-ethnic society to develop on a basis of mutual trust? That the country still suffers from unacceptably high unemployment rate of over 30 per cent, mostly young people across the ethnic divide, has not helped to bridge the gap of mistrust.

Perhaps the most sensitive issue remaining from the 2001 conflict relates to the victims and atrocities committed then. Of the six cases brought before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, ICTY, only two - against ethnic Macedonians - went to trial, resulting in one conviction still on appeal and one acquittal.

The remaining four cases, against ethnic Albanians, including leaders of the

rebel movement, were returned to Macedonia's domestic jurisdiction in 2008. The implicated ethnic Albanians claimed all along that these cases should be covered by the amnesty agreed after the conflict, which Gruevski's governing party never wanted to accept - until few weeks ago!

But, as part of the coalition deal reached after this June's elections, which returned Gruevski for a third mandate but with a reduced majority, parliament adopted a controversial decision on this issue, in effect granting them amnesty.

This decision has caused considerable anguish for the families of the mainly ethnic Macedonian civilian victims of the conflict.

Their anguish was understandable, and is shared by all those who suffered at that time. But neither amnesty nor court proceedings alone will help to heal the wounds from that time. Final closure can only come through a reconciliation process similar to that in South Africa.

And as the architect of that model, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, has repeated: for the reconciliation process to succeed, it must be initiated from within the region; it cannot be imposed from outside.

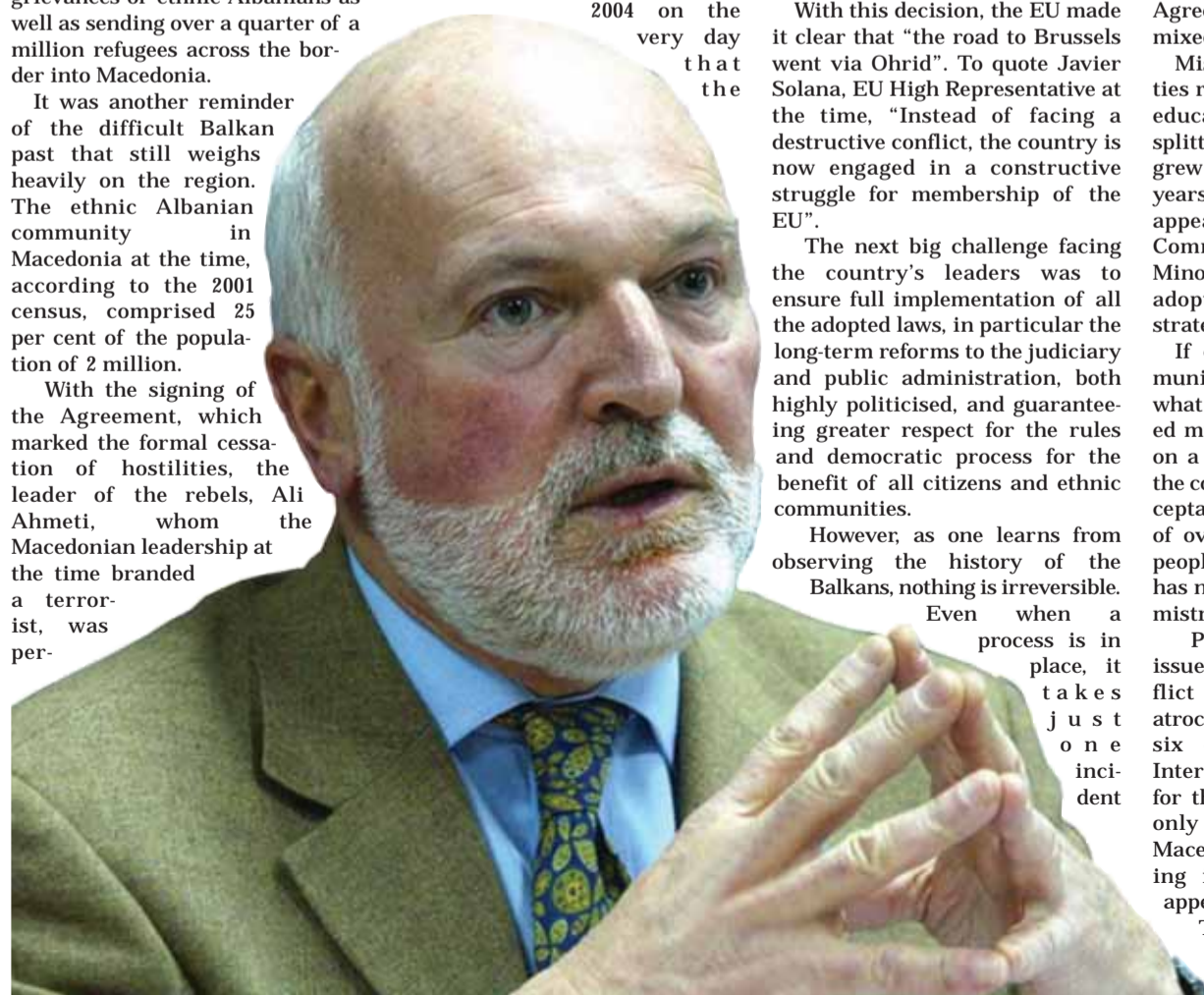
The recently established REKOM Initiative, a network of civil society organisations across the Balkans, offers an excellent example in this respect; it advocates the establishment of a Regional Commission for Truth Seeking and Truth Telling about war crimes and other serious violations of human rights in the former Yugoslavia.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement, if properly implemented, can make a real difference in promoting reconciliation and fostering a relationship of trust and mutual respect between the different ethnic communities. It can also act as a buffer against the potential spillover of unrest from north of the border in Kosovo.

But it requires greater dedication and commitment by the country's leaders acting together. It also requires a more determined effort to involve civil society and respect for media freedom. Gruevski's confrontational attitude towards media has drawn reprimands from the International Federation of Journalists and from Amnesty International.

This is the challenge facing Gruevski and Ahmeti as they mark the tenth anniversary of an agreement, which has withstood the test of time and remains a viable model for the Balkan region.

Erwan Fouere was EU Special Representative and Head of Delegation in Macedonia from 2005 to this year.



NGO Sows Seeds of Eco-Awareness

A Green NGO is cultivating interest in the environment with a specially designed eco-curriculum for young pupils.



By Shengjyl Osmani

Kosovo has an unenviable record for protecting the environment – the plastic-bag-choked rivers and polluting industries are testament to this.

But the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, REC, in Kosovo is aiming to address these concerns using techniques including educating young school children about the importance of going green and providing small grants for local projects.

Kosovo youngsters are, for the first time, being introduced to environmental protection in the classroom through a 'green pack' devised by REC.

The charity now hopes to roll out the programme across the country, for which it is seeking funds, and include green issues in the national curriculum.

REC has, for eleven years, attempted to raise awareness of environmental concerns and has

worked hard to create a "cleaner, friendlier and more beautiful environment, all over Kosovo".

"Our vision is an environmentally sound Kosovo with actively participating citizens working towards sustainable development," said Dr Zeqir Veselaj, the head of REC.

Green Packs

The Green Packs are focused on primary schools, and REC is lobbying for the material to be included in the curriculum.

Shpresa Mustafa, from Pjeter Bogdani primary school in Prishtina, said the packs provided the children's first insight into protecting the environment.

"We, as trained teachers, were very satisfied with all the material which were contained in the package, and I'll continue mentioning the environmental facts to all my future classes, with the hope that this project will continue in the future too," she said.

The green pack has been translated for dozens of countries across Europe and includes songs, games, facts and advice on envi-



Kosovo's record on the environment is poor - REC is seeking to change that

ronmental issues which is aimed at catching the attention of children.

Project manager Shqipe Neziri said most primary schools had received the pack but more funds were needed to make it a yearly programme.

"The project covered the majority of all primary school children in Kosovo, where we had 12 trainers who trained 900 science teachers, who received certificates accredited by the Education Ministry, and 1,100 primary schools, 950 in Albanian language and 150 in Bosnian language, were introduced to the green pack."

She added that REC would be attempting to secure more funds at a donor conference in New York to ensure that all primary children, in each municipality in Kosovo receive the training.

Eco Action Plans Tackle Local Issues

REC has been able to implement Local Environmental Action Plans, LEAPs, in five Municipalities last year, and ten

others this year, bringing together the Ministry on Environment and municipal assemblies.

Rita Luzha, the environmental officer for Peja municipality, told Prishtina Insight that a project for the reconstruction of a water canal was successfully implemented with a 50,000 euro grant from REC.

"Thanks to REC, in corporation with the Swiss International Development Agency, SIDA, the canal area was cleaned, and since then, the water from rains doesn't floods the streets anymore.

"The citizens of Peja now, even during rainfall, can walk on unflooded streets. Thanks to REC, we, the municipality of Peja, have ratified the local environmental plan, and are successfully improving our environment," he added.

Ardita Zekiri, who works on local initiatives and civil society support for REC, said: "The project is funded by the Swedish Government through SIDA and implemented by REC in cooperation with MESP and the partner municipalities.

"The budget depends on the local projects, there are no limitations on the sums."

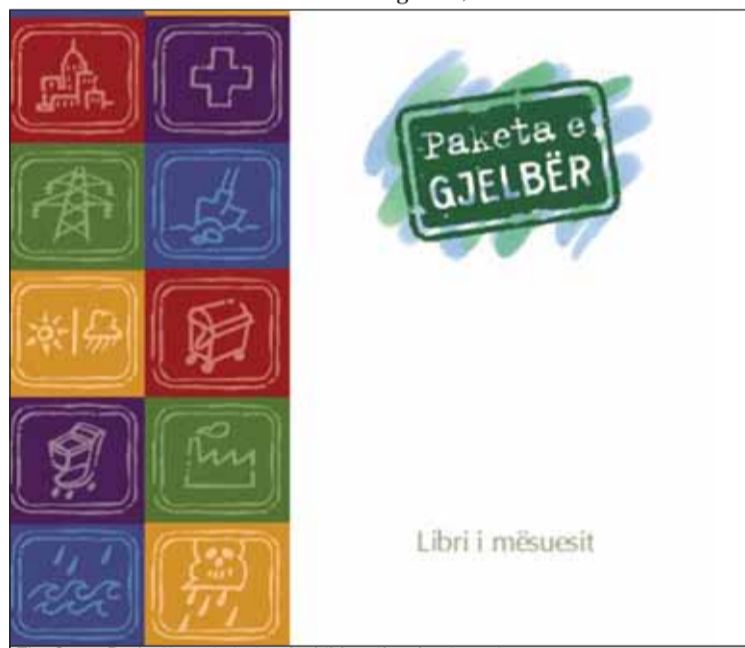
Since its establishment in Kosovo, REC has also given out 500,000 euro of environmental grants.

Fideze Bektashi, the REC Information Officer, said the group has also worked on drafting and monitoring environmental legislation in Kosovo including the Kosovo Environmental Strategy 2005-2015 and the Strategy for Air and Strategy for Management.

"Another issue we are focusing on is to increase cooperation with environmental NGOs," he added.



A page from the Green Pack



The Green Pack attempts to teach children the about eco-issues

Murdoch's Nemesis Helps Reporters Spot Scoops



By Lawrence Marzouk

Nick Davies, the Guardian journalist widely recognised as one of the world's best reporters, told journalists at BIRN's Summer School they must be vigilant for 'hang-on-a-minute' moments if they want to uncover great stories.

Davies, the journalist credited with virtually single-handedly leading the investigation into the hacking of phones by a British newspaper, also attached the basic tenets of reporting, force-fed to journalists, such as balance and the need to

read all other sources of news.

He described this approach as "baffling, breathtaking and hideous", adding that this led journalists to get "sucked up into a consensus".

"We miss stories if we focus on this tiny little group of stories," he added.

He said, instead, that reporters should take a moral judgment on issues and look for the unusual in everyday life.

His pursuit of the vast haul of documents obtained by Wikileaks was, he said, an example of how journalists failed to spot a story.

He said that when the arrest of the alleged whistleblower was covered in the press, reporters focused on this. "Very, very few thought to

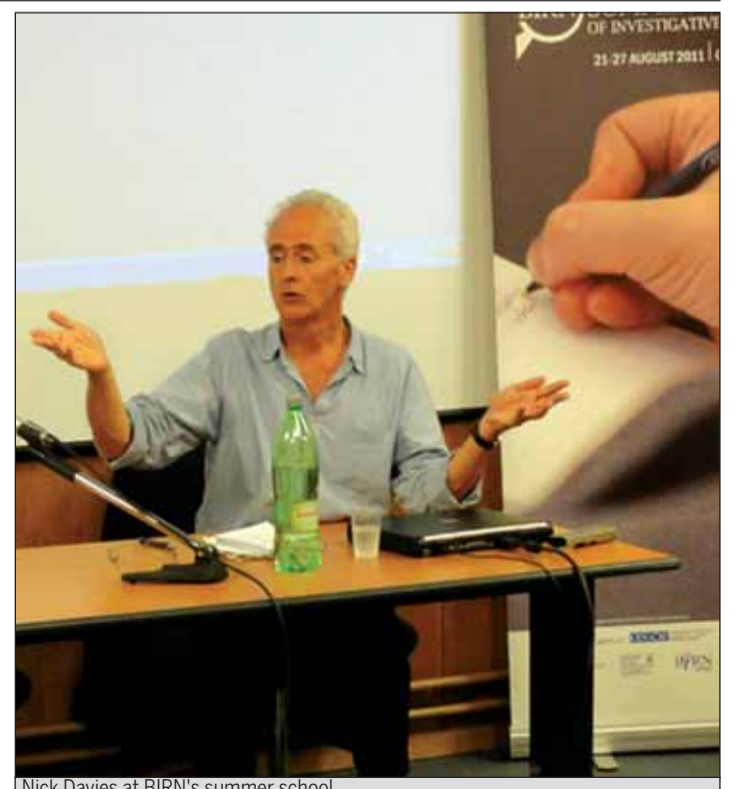
go to get the secrets," he said.

Davies added that understanding how a source is thinking, and what he or she needs, is also critical in convincing them to talk.

"The finding of stories starts with the 'hang-on-a-minute-moment'," he said, explaining that this is when reporters should spot that the usual order of things is out of place and begin investigating.

On the phone hacking scandal, he said that he had a number of lucky breaks when key documents arrived just when he was facing pressure to prove more of the story.

The use of phone hacking as a journalistic technique would, he said, only be justified in "remote cases of extraordinary importance".



Nick Davies at BIRN's summer school

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

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

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