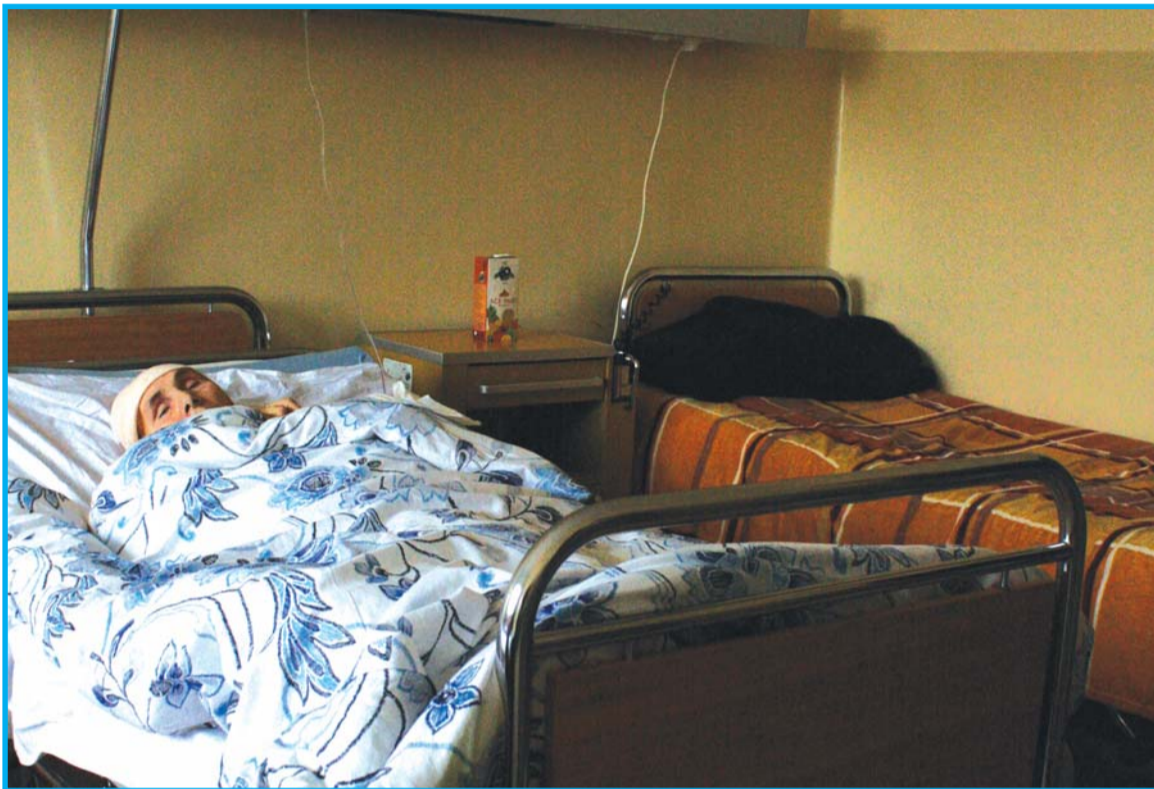


# Prishtina Insight

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## Elderly, Babies at Risk As Hospital Heating Goes Off

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# “Corrupt” Arms Dealers Own Web of Companies

An investigation by Prishtina Insight has uncovered a web of companies operated by or connected to two arms dealers suspected of corruption who secured a string of contracts from Kosovo and EU institutions.

By Petrit Collaku

On October 5, police from the EU rule-of-law mission, EULEX, swooped on six men suspected of corruption in connection with the supply of weapons to Kosovo Police.

During the course of EULEX raids on businesses and homes in Prishtina and Germany they arrested senior Kosovo Police officials and two businessmen, Astrit Pira and Armend Selimi.

The latter were owners of the

Jolix and Friends, the firms that secured the allegedly corrupt deal in October 2008.

An investigation by Prishtina Insight has uncovered that Pira's and Selimi's business interests go far beyond this deal.

Three of their companies, Jolix, Friends and another firm, Amici, have since 2007 won contracts worth at least 6.2 million euro from international and local institutions.

The firms secured numerous contracts with Kosovo Police,

Prishtina Municipality, the Kosovo Security Force, the European Commission in Kosovo and with EULEX, the body now investigating the men.

The contracts included the supply of weapons, ammunition, kitchens, bicycles, firemen's uniforms and broadcast monitoring equipment.

The two businessmen also own a fourth firm, construction business 3AT, which has close links to another company, Toning, which has also won a string of lucrative

contracts from the authorities.

Meanwhile a third businessman arrested in the raids, Ylber Saliu, owns a medical business, Triomed, which has secured a number of tenders from the Ministry of Health.

EULEX has told Prishtina Insight that it is focusing its investigation on the 2008 ammunition and arms tender, although the rule-of-law mission did confirm that all tenders are being looked at.

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## Lone Gay Bar's Closure Leaves Kosovo Gays Bereft

The media furor surrounding the rapid opening and closure of Kosovo's first gay bar has exposed the precarious position of the gay community in this deeply conservative, mainly Albanian land.

The Pure Pure Club briefly hit the lime-light in September when an online news portal revealed...

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## Compensation is Pipe Dream for Kosovo Workers

A steel pipes factory in the town of Ferizaj was bought this June by Mabetex, the construction company connected to Deputy Prime Minister Behgjet Pacolli.

Pacolli bought the factory for just under 3.7 million euro, despite the fact that it had recently received 13 million euro of investment...

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# “Corrupt” Arms Dealers Own Web of Companies

from page 1

## From kitchens to shotguns:

The Prishtina-based firm Friends, officially owned by Armend Selimi and a woman registered as Zaide Osmani, has secured 1.1 million euro of contracts for state institutions.

But Prishtina Insight has discovered that the woman is in fact registered on the electoral roll as Zaide Pira and is the wife of Astrit. He is now in detention awaiting trial.

In July 2011, the firm won a deal worth more than 500,000 euro to supply Kosovo Police with “special vehicles”. It earlier supplied the police with weaponry and uniforms in various tenders.

Jolix, also based in Prishtina, has won 3.2 million euro of contracts with a range of institutions, including EULEX and the European Commission. The owner of the firm is registered as Astrit Pira.

On September 23, just two weeks before the businessmen were arrested, it secured another contract from the Kosovo Police for “special equipment” worth more than 500,000 euro.

Jolix has also done business with international institutions in Kosovo. It won two contracts with EULEX in 2009 to supply weapons and other equipment worth 900,000 euro.

The European Commission Liaison Office in Kosovo also awarded it a contract to establish a “broadcast monitoring system” for 800,000 euro in 2010.

A joint company, “Jolix and Friends” is registered in Tirana with Astrit Pira and Armend Selimi as owners. Both men also own another Albanian-registered firm, Germax, which specializes in arms.

Facebook photos posted by Pira show the two men at a number of arms fairs in various countries.

Despite their close cooperation and friendship, in two of the tenders with Kosovo Police, both Jolix and Friends won different lots, suggesting that they were either competing or cooperating in bids.

Selimi is also the owner of Amici, which has secured just under 100,000 euro of contracts from Kosovo Police and Prishtina



Fire Service, part of Prishtina Municipality.

Both men also own 3AT, a firm that specializes in construction according to its official entry in the business registry. The company, based at 50, Edward Lear Street, is part-owned by Faton Hoxha, who operates two other construction companies, NPN Toning and Toning SHPK, from the same address.

The Toning companies have also won a string of construction contracts with the authorities, including one for the construction of a primary school in Skenderaj for 1.5 million in 2008 with the Ministry of Education.

Integral, another firm owned by Armend Selimi, is also co-owned by Franz Leopold Krieger, who owns Blue Force Defence Trading, a firm that sells military goods from its base in Austria.

Prishtina Insight did not find any evidence that Integral had won contracts with government institutions.

Blerim Krasniqi, EULEX’s spokesperson, told Prishtina Insight that Pira and Selimi remained in custody.

“Regarding the current investigation, two managers of private companies are in detention on remand,” he said. “The remaining suspects are members of Kosovo Police and the Interior Ministry.”

In the operation, EULEX arrested a Kosovo Police director, Ragip Bunjaku, the head of Kosovo police procurement, Xhevahire Vatovci, Kadrush Koliqi, official in the Directorate for Public Security in the Interior Ministry and the three businessmen Ylber Saliu, Armend Selimi and Astrit Pira.

As part of the investigation, German police also searched one business premise and a private house in Germany, the country where the ammunition was coming from related to the tender of 2008.

Ylber Saliu, according to the official business registry, is owner of a medical firm Triomed, which has won a string of contracts with the Ministry of Health.

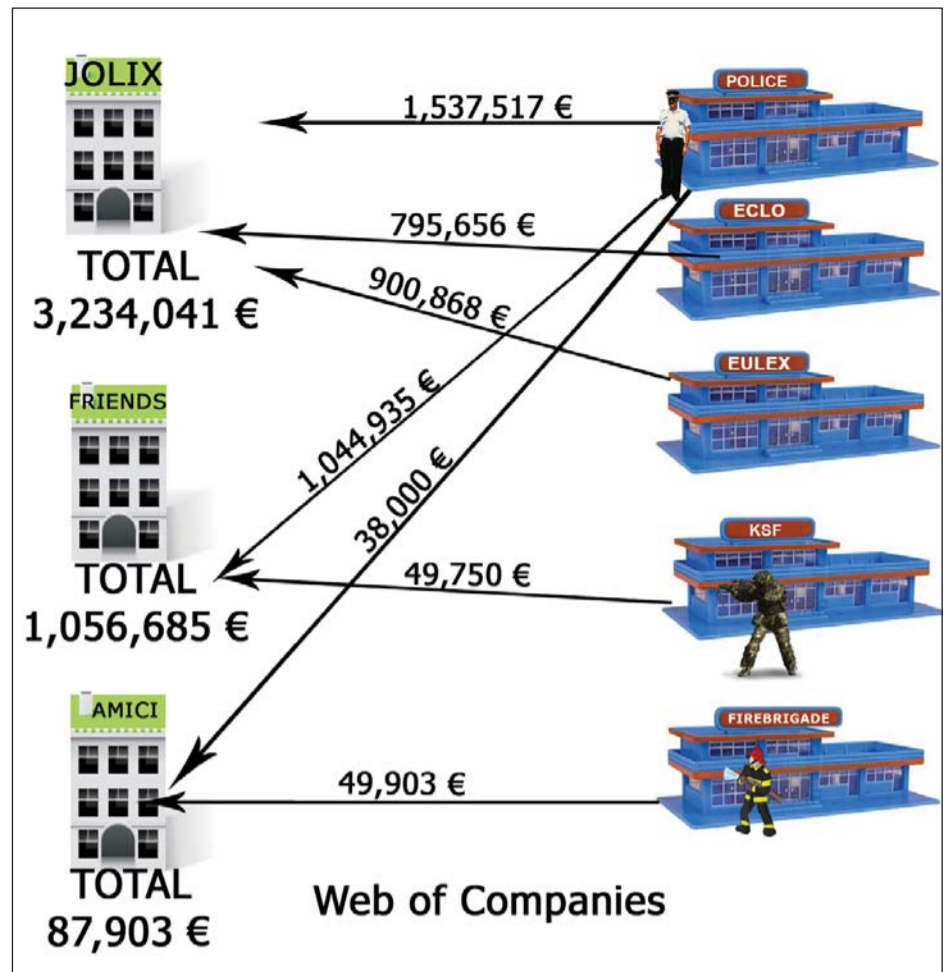
Xhevahire Vatovci, head of Kosovo police procurement, was suspended in May on suspicion of misuse of official position and authority. She allegedly favoured a company in a tender for the supply of fuel to the police.

“It is known by the prosecution that the mentioned company won a few tenders with various, national and international agencies,” added the EULEX spokesman.

“Needless to say that all tenders are checked. However, the investigation focuses on alleged crimes committed by individuals and only physical person are being investigated.”



Pira and Selimi share a bike on a trip to China.



Astrit Pira with actor Steven Seagal at an arms fair.



Astrit Pira at another arms fair.

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# Mitrovica Hunters Paid 16 Euros Per Shot Dog

Mitrovica Municipality is paying hunters 16 euro for each shot dog in an attempt to reduce the number of strays, provoking outrage among animal rights campaigners.



By Avdyll Gashi

Some 125 stray dogs were killed in the first few days of a cull of stray dogs in the northern city of Mitrovica.

Members of "Trepça" Hunters Association have been brought in to carry out the killing with the promise of 16 euro per dead dog.

Animal rights campaigners say that the approach is inhumane and have called on Mitrovica to follow Prishtina's lead and stop the use of culls to control the stray dog population.

But officials in Mitrovica claim they do not have sufficient money to implement a programme to catch the dogs, castrate and then release them.

Shefqet Aliu, an official at the town hall, said the action started on November 22 and will end on December 8.

According to him, by November 29, a total of 125 dogs had been killed, and the hunters paid.

The killed dogs will be then

dumped, their bodies covered in lime, and buried in the Koshtovë waste landfill.

Some residents of the city, however, would rather a shelter was set up to look after the dogs.

"These dogs have a large presence here, and they stay near our building entrance a lot," said Shpresa Jusufi, as she was walking into her apartment block. "However, the best solution would be to take them and send them to another place; to kill them would be such a pity," she said.

Dennis Capstick, executive director of the NGO Animal Friends of Kosovo, doesn't support the idea of a shelter. His organization promotes a programme of CNVR: catch – neuter – vaccinate – release.

Following pressure, Prishtina municipality has now adopted this approach.

"After vaccination and castration, these dogs should be brought back where they came from, so they could die naturally, and the problem with stray dogs would be resolved in a humane manner," said Capstick.

He added that humans should



Dogs are currently being culled in Mitrovica.

not be cruel to animals. "Numerous studies have shown that children and adults who are cruel to animals often end-up being cruel to humans," he added.

Capstick said the risk from stray dogs is usually a result of humans harassing them. "Kosovo claims that it wishes to be part of a modern and progressive Europe. However, in treating dogs

and animal wellbeing in general, it still operates in the old Balkan ways," he said.

This summer, French actress and animal rights activist, Brigitte Bardot, sent a letter to the KFOR Commander requesting that the slaughter against dogs be stopped.

"Nearly 200 stray dogs were shot, leading to a slow and agonising death," Bardot wrote.

## Editor's Word Termokosi



By Lawrence Marzouk

Did you know that Termokos's chief executive earned 37,000 euro last year, that's more than ten times the average for Kosovo?

Have you read somewhere that the socially owned firm wrote off 14 million euro of the 16 million euro owed to it without any proper procedure to identify which customers should or should not be let off their bill?

Did you realise that it was fined 20,000 euro this week for breaking the law on public procurement when awarding a contract for the supply of fuel, and that as a result of delays to the tender, it ran out of fuel?

Were you aware that Termokos's serious failures meant that babies and elderly people in Prishtina hospital were kept warm with hot water bottles on Tuesday when it dropped below freezing outside?

The bigger picture is sometimes difficult to see for a journalist eking out a corruption story, like coaxing a maggot from a rotten apple. I could have written about the first three issues above without most readers batting an eyelid. The fourth, however, is different.

A reporter spends so much time working out how the maggot got into the apple and how to tempt it out, that you forget that some poor soul is might have already sunk his teeth into the rancid fruit.

Even when millions of euros are being misused it's sometimes difficult to explain to you, the reader, what is so special about this particular apple and why you should be interested in what that maggot is doing.

The best stories are the ones which demonstrate the real effect of corruption in Kosovo, which show how that little maggot and that rotten apple have impacted on everyday life.

Termokos's failure to secure fuel to heat Prishtina, directly resulting in babies and the elderly being kept alive by water bottles in the city's hospital, is just that.

This institutional failure – perhaps corruption – could have led to the death of some of society's most vulnerable people.

The appalling way in which Termokos is managed would be funny if the consequences were not so serious.

Mostly the impact of graft is subtle. That's not to say that it is any less damaging, its effects are just more nebulous.

In a country which so struggles with corrupt behaviour, it is easy to shrug off the odd bribe because any consequence seems minor and far removed from your everyday worries.

A child will not freeze to death each time someone takes a bribe, but perhaps it's useful for people to imagine it that way, and maybe they would care more about the less heart-wrenching, but equally damaging instances which occur every day.

# Elderly, Babies at Risk As Hospital Heating Goes Off

Sick babies on the neo-natal ward, as well as the elderly, were being kept warm by hot water bottles in sub-zero temperatures after the heating went off at Prishtina's main hospital.

A lack of fuel at the municipal heating company, Termokos, meant the Prishtina hospital was cut off from its main source of heat and forced to use electrical heaters on Tuesday.

This, in turn, overloaded the hospital's electricity supply, leading to power cuts.

The head of neonatology clinic, Muje Shala, said that they

were, as a result, using hot water bottles to keep babies warm.

"The power is not stabile," he said. "Very often the power switches deactivate due to the overload in hospital."

Elmi Ademi was covered with a thick blanket and being warmed by an electrical heater.

"It's very hard to face the cold," he said. "There is not always electricity. We are freezing," Ademi told Prishtina Insight.

Miradije Haxhaj, another patient being treated in this clinic, said she was worried for her health.

"There was a little heating this morning. Around ten the central heating stopped," she said.

Termokos, the sole heating supplier in Kosovo's capital, was ordered by the Procurement Review Body to cancel its contract with "Compact Group" company due to illegal procurement procedures.

On Tuesday, PRB decided, in the public interest, to let Termokos receive a supply from the same company.

In meantime, PRB fined Termokos 20,000 euro due to its failure to follow procurement pro-



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# Lone Gay Bar's Closure Leaves Kosovo

This abrupt opening and closure of a pioneering gay-friendly venue in Prishtina has highlighted the embattled status of this marginalised community.



By Kaltrina Ademi

The media furor surrounding the rapid opening and closure of Kosovo's first gay bar has exposed the precarious position of the gay community in this deeply conservative, mainly Albanian land.

The Pure Pure Club briefly hit the limelight in September when an online news portal revealed that it was being advertised on a popular gay website as "Prishtina's first gay friendly bar".

But the venue closed soon after this unwanted publicity and is now being renovated under a new name, leaving Kosovo's beleaguered gay community feeling more isolated than ever.

## Doomed by publicity:

It's Saturday night and across the bars and clubs of Prishtina, young people are partying, much like their peers elsewhere in the Western world.

But while these trendy youngsters dream of visa liberalization and of easier travel to the EU, young gays in Kosovo have nowhere to go out and share dreams with potential friends and partners.

Beni and his partner pretend to be "best friends" in order to protect themselves.

"You can't tell anyone [that you are gay]," he said. "Most people here think it is a sickness and not



normal."

Beni has to be careful to avoid detection. "I know how to act around people," he explained. "The less effeminate a homosexual man in Kosovo is, the less he is likely to end up in a situation.

"You have to know how not to come across as too feminine, because then people notice and you can get into trouble."

Most homosexuals in Kosovo meet each other through social networks aimed such as Gaydar or Gayromeo, organizing secret parties, often in private residences.

But in September, a member of Gayromeo announced the opening of a gay bar and restaurant near Prishtina's football stadium called the "Pure Pure Lounge Bar".

The information was picked up by the news website Lajme Shqip, which sent a photographer along to snap those attending the event.

"We are at risk – you should know this," one of the organisers told the photographer, according to lajmeshqip. "Someone could bomb us here or set fire to the whole place," he added.

While there was no attack on the bar, the publicity did attract unwanted attention and a barrage of homophobic abuse online.

Pure Pure has not reopened since, and is currently being refurbished under a new name, "Pepper Chill Bar".

A waiter at the Ling bar, opposite the now defunct Pure Pure, told Prishtina Insight: "I heard that it was a gay bar but I never went inside."

He added that most bars in the area were struggling to stay open because they were failing to attract enough customers.

"Facebook Bar, a place for Prishtina football fans, closed down because they could not afford it anymore," he said, mentioning one recent casualty.

Another waiter at the same bar said a former colleague had

worked at Pure Pure and had waited during a birthday party that doubled up as a gay event.

"He told me that every kind of person attended this party," he said. "Gay couples were coming in and coming out holding hands."

The publicity surrounding the bar's status not only led to a flurry of homophobic online comments but also angered the local gay community.

"It was ridiculous," a bisexual man who asked to remain anonymous complained. "Gays are a marginalized group, so you know the consequences that those people may face – some of whom have families.

"It was reckless to publish information like that in the name of a sensational story," he added.

"I'm just glad they did not publish any pictures from the venue. I guess the journalists must have had a heart."

The same man added that any publicity was destined to be the kiss of death for such a venue.

"It was way too risky to go once it was made public. Then it was doomed," he said.

## Living a lie:

Beni grew up in Peja, a city in the western Kosovo. He says that lack of a proper sex education made it hard for him to understand his sexuality and recognize it at an early age.

"Living in a place like that, it was difficult to know who I really was and where the feelings I had came from," he said. "I started dating girls to

see if I could really like someone."

Beni failed in his attempts to fall in love with a member of the "right" gender. He soon gave up on repressing his feelings but knew he had to keep it a secret from everybody who did not share his sexual orientation.

"Here in Kosovo, everybody knows everybody. I know one guy who told a family member [about his sexuality], so they forced him to marry a woman and reject his feelings and desires," he said.

Civil society groups working in the field of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights say they remain marginalised and stigmatised in society.

According to LGBT activist Sarah Maliqi, "Because of the high level of homophobia in this traditional society, in which homosexuality is considered shameful and a taboo, these groups are often forced to hide their sexual identity.

"Otherwise they risk becoming outcasts and in cases where their identity is revealed they also risk becoming victims of physical and psychological abuse."

How far this physical

and emotional abuse can go was shown in a shocking incident back in 2005, when Gramoz Prestreshi and his friend, Lorik, were beaten up by a gang in Prishtina.

Both men called the police to report this crime, only to find out that it was the first time anyone in Kosovo had ever reported a "hate crime based on sexual orientation".

In an interview in 2007, Gramoz recalled that the police started "joking" with them by calling them "faggots" and that even the doctor appointed to take care of their wounds was deeply hostile. "You are sick people. I don't want HIV in my clinic," he had said.

Gramoz was granted asylum in the US but the consequences for Lorik were much more tragic. He committed suicide shortly after the incident.

## Laws aplenty on paper:

In theory, Kosovo's government has outlawed all forms of discrimination in paragraph 24 of its constitution.

But issues related to LGBT rights are ignored in practice, campaigners say.

Minister of Culture Memli Krasniqi told Prishtina Insight in 2009, when he was a government spokesman, that same-sex marriage was "not relevant in Kosovo's social context. It does not exist as a primary, secondary or tertiary issue to focus on."

As far as broader civil rights for gays were concerned, however, Krasniqi said that "the government supports the law against discrimination, which includes discrimination against them".

But A.D, a gay-rights activist in London, whose family comes from Kosovo, says gays in Kosovo remain caught in a Catch-22 dilemma.

"The problem is that for a homosexual to sue his offender, he would first have to openly admit that he was homosexual," he said.

The second problem was that he would have to provide evidence that he had been abused or beaten

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# Gays Bereft

on account of his sexuality, "which the offenders can easily deny".

Maliqi says that despite all-encompassing nature of the law on discrimination, LGBT people receive no protection in society.

"Not much has been done to promote the rights of the LGBT community," she complained.

"Officials in [civil rights] organisations often lack professional knowledge and understanding regarding the rights of homosexuals and transgender people, and sometimes their behaviour results in the mistreatment of those groups," she said.

"The result is that this category of people does not feel institutionally protected from discrimination and violence."

High levels of youth unemployment, up to 70 per cent according to some indices, also mean that young people are financially reliant on parents or older siblings. This also has a major impact on the ability of gay people to 'come out,'" she explained.

"The LGBT community lives a double life," she continued. "They don't have the freedom to stand up for their sexuality because of a fear that their families or friends will not understand and that institutions won't protect them, and also because they often are financially dependent on their families."

Beni agrees. "I know already what my parents think of homosexuality," he said. "They despise it and label it as sick and whenever something about it comes on TV they switch the channel immediately."

## Slight change in outlook:

Sociologist Linda Gusia, from the University of Prishtina, says homophobia is a reflection of Kosovo's traditional, patriarchal society but the situation is changing.

"Sexual identity and sexuality are now discussed in Kosovo and are thought of as more than just a means for reproduction," she said.

"But changes that have to do with sexuality still meet conservative resistance and fear," she cautioned.

"Traditionalism combined with the economic situation have an

impact in fuelling a fear of anything or anyone that is considered different."

Maliqi thinks the situation could change faster if the media and civil society worked together to promote LGBT rights.

"The media should start to treat this topic in an unbiased manner and engage with professionals in these fields," she said.

"Civil society and the LGBT community should work more towards encouraging a debate on the rights of the community as well as universal human rights."

For now, understanding of homosexuality remains fairly limited among the general public, including the younger generation.

Armend, a 22-year-old from Prishtina, reflects the homophobic views expressed by many others. "I don't care about them and their problems, I don't want to know about them," he told Prishtina Insight.

"As long as they don't run around spreading homosexuality they can do whatever they want in their homes," he added.

Besnik, 24, from Mitrovica, believes gay people are contaminating society with their imported values.

"It's probably because they can't get girls or couldn't while they were young," he jokes. "Then they start doing perverted things with each other because they saw it on Western television or heard it from the internationals."

Beni has encountered these views many times. "They think homosexuality did not exist here before and that the international community brought it in," he said.

"They think homosexuality just 'happens' to people who are sexually experimenting with the same sex and that for some it becomes a mental issue and they end up being gay."

Some young Kosovars are a little more tolerant, however. Petrit, 27, from Prishtina, describes himself as open-minded.

But he said he would still feel wary about the idea of being friends with someone who was clearly gay.

"It is simply the fact that people might mistake me for being gay if they saw me with someone who is," he said. "I would not want that".

# Kosovo and Serbia Both Claim Victory in Border Deal

While Kosovo says the border agreement reached in Brussels means that Belgrade has effectively recognised Kosovo's independence, Serbia says it means no such thing.



By Fatmir Aliu,  
Gordana Andric  
Prishtina, Belgrade

Serbian and Kosovo negotiators have disputed the meaning of the recent, EU-mediated agreement on control of the Kosovo-Serbia border with both sides claiming victory.

The head of Kosovo's negotiating team, Edita Tahiri, on Monday said that the recently agreed deal implied Serbian recognition of Kosovo's independence.

Tahiri said that only independent states could reach agreements on Integrated Border Management, IBM, the EU-designed model to which Prishtina and Belgrade have now assented.

"Serbia is far from showing good will to implement the agreement that we have reached on IBM... but for us Serbia's signature on the protocol represents a recognition of Kosovo's border," she said. "[This is] because IBM can only be implemented between states."

Belgrade has rushed to dismiss such claims.

Serbia's chief negotiator, Borislav Stefanovic, said Serbia did not recognise the Kosovo border as a state border and two custom regimes within a single state were nothing new as far as Serbia was concerned.

Stefanovic said the words "border crossing" did not exist in the agreement and that a footnote explained that while Kosovo sees the "line" as a border, Serbia sees it as an "administrative line".

"We found a solution that is not ideal, but which preserves our national interest and constitution", Stefanovic said.

The two sides reached an agreement on management of the controversial border crossings in Brussels on December 2.

Serbia had come under strong pressure to shift its hard-line position on Kosovo ahead of a key meeting in Brussels concerning its bid for EU candidacy.

The European Commission developed the concept of



Integrated Border Management, IBM, specifically for the Western Balkans.

The basic principle is that all the relevant authorities and agencies involved in border security and trade on both sides of the frontier work together in coordination.

Under the terms of the deal, Kosovo and Serbian customs and police officers will stand under one roof once the agreement is put into operation.

"Kosovo Police and Customs officers and Serbia's Police and Customs officers will be jointly stationed in one building in all six border crossings," Tahiri explained.

Police from the EU law mission, EULEX, "will be there to watch the implementation of the agreement on IBM," Tahiri added. The two sides will jointly control the cross-border flow of goods and passengers.

Belgrade, however, has again disputed Kosovo's interpretation of this part of the deal. Serbia insists that Kosovo customs officers will only be observers at the border.

Stefanovic said that while Serbian police and custom offi-

cers will control the Serbian side of the line, police from the EU law mission, EULEX, will control the other side, on behalf of Kosovo.

"This is what the so-called Kosovo government could not say to its citizens," Stefanovic claimed.

One undoubted concession to Serbia in the deal is that the two sides agreed that no flags or state symbols will be displayed on the border checkpoints.

But Tahiri said the deal could not prevent anyone from hoisting Kosovo's flag directly outside the "perimeter of the joint [border] post".

The crisis on Kosovo's northern border began on July 25 when the Kosovo government deployed customs and police officers to two northern border crossings with Serbia at Jarinje and Brnjak. Serbs in the area have been manning barricades and road blocks in protest ever since.

However, following an agreement reached with NATO peacekeepers in KFOR, Kosovo Serbs started removing their barricades at Jagnjenica and Jarinje on Monday.

# Kosovo MPs Back Fresh Sanctions on Serbia

Parliament had supported an opposition motion demanding a renewed ban on products from Serbia.



By Fatmir Aliu

Kosovo's parliament on Wednesday adopted a motion calling on the government to introduce a trade ban with Serbia.

In the vote, 42 MPs voted for the motion presented by the opposition Self-Determination (Vetevendosje)

group, 33 voted against and two abstained.

The sanctions vote comes after Prishtina and Belgrade reached an agreement on control of the country's volatile northern border with Kosovo.

This involves a system known as "Integrated management for crossing points", or, as Kosovo calls it, Integrated Border Management.

This deal is aimed at lowering tensions in Serb-run northern Kosovo where locals have erected

tens of roadblocks in protest against the deployment of Kosovo government officials on the border.

Serbia has not allowed products marked "Made in Kosovo" to enter Serbia since the war of 1999. Kosovo says it has belatedly introduced reciprocal measures in response to Serbia's earlier action.

Kosovo's parliament urged the government to "undertake full political, economical and trade reciprocity measures" against Serbia, and to encourage domestic

producers to fill the gap.

"The Ministry of Trade and Industry should encourage... local producers and trading companies to find replacements for products imported from Serbia," the motion says.

Self-Determination's leader in parliament, Visar Ymeri, said Kosovo "should enforce all state mechanisms to ensure the accurate implementation of the reciprocity measures against Serbia."

The motion is the first opposition motion adopted by parlia-

ment, where power is in the hands of the Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK, led by the Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci.

Some local media reported that several government MPs voted for the motion by mistake and tried later to withdraw their votes.

Parliament has 120 seats. The ruling coalition has 61 seats: the PDK, 34; the Coalition for New Kosovo, nine; the Independent Serbian Liberal Party, 12; the Parliamentary Group 6+ (non-Serb minorities) six.

# Kosovo Surprised by Wave of Asylum-Seekers

Kosovo has long exported migrants, but a growing number of people from Africa, Asia and the Middle East are now heading the other way, seeking temporary asylum in the country.



By Tinka Kurti

"I didn't know that there was a Kosovo, but I like it, for now," said Amina, as she sat in Kosovo's asylum centre on the outskirts of Prishtina, her home for the past three months since arriving on an arduous journey from war-torn Somalia.

The 25-year-old, whose name we have been asked to protect, is one of around 150 asylum seekers to have sought safety in Kosovo in the first half of 2011. "As for the future," Amina told Prishtina Insight, "I don't know."

The number of immigrants arriving in Europe's poorest country from the poorest corners of the world is on the up. For almost all of them, Kosovo is just a stopping point on the way to the gold-paved streets of Western Europe, even if they do not admit it to the immigration officials.

Some 150 people applied for asylum in the first six months of 2011, which suggested that the final figure for the year would top the 250 recorded in 2010, which in turn was way up on the humble 30 who sought asylum in 2009.

Most come from Afghanistan, Palestine and Somalia. But Kosovo has felt the shockwaves of the Arab Spring, which has brought Syrians and Tunisians to the country as well.

Amina reached Kosovo via Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Greece and Macedonia.

It might have been an eye-opening adventure had she been travelling for pleasure. As it was the journey was hellish, she said. She had fled her violent homeland with her sister and brother after their parents were killed.

En route, their paths were separated and she arrived in Kosovo with a friend she met along the way, Fadma, with whom she had travelled for two-and-a-half-months. Fadma has now left Prishtina, but no one knows how or what happened to her.

Amina says she is happy at the centre, but doesn't know how long she will stay.

Almost all asylum seekers follow this trend. They arrive in Kosovo and halt there to explore routes to the promised land, the European Union.

Fitim Zariqi, head of the Asylum Seekers centre, near Germia Park, says that asylum seekers often hide their bags outside the centre in order to make their eventual escape easier.

"They all leave Kosovo, which they use only as a transit in order to carry on towards the EU countries, but while they stay here they are satisfied with the treatment," he said. "We try to give them a comfortable stay."

Currently the centre has just four asylum seekers. But the centre received 150 cases this year so far and it has often been forced to use hotels as an overflow.

With the exception of a woman from the Ivory Coast, who has remained there for a year, the rest stayed less than six months.

Afghanistan tops the list with the arrival of 65 Afghanis. Second



The asylum seeker centre is near Germia Park in Prishtina

is Palestinians with 36 asylum seekers. Thirteen people came from Syria and 11 from Tunisia.

"At some points during the year we hosted more than 50 asylum seekers," Zariqi said: "We had a problem with space". This is not the only problem, however.

"Financial problems are the main issue because we don't get any funds from the [UN refugee body] UNHCR, like other countries, as we are not a member of the UN," Zariqi said, referring to the continuing controversies over Kosovo's statehood.

Asylum seekers in Kosovo are not provided with "pocket money" as no funds are available for that but the centre makes sure they all have separate rooms, daily meals, clothing, hygiene packs and other equipment needed for daily life.

Translation is another problem, Zariqi said. "We've had problems with the Urdu language for example. Only a small number of Afghanis speak English."

"I believe that our treatment is very dignified," said Zariqi, holding up a brochure describing the rules of conduct applicable to all asylum seekers.

"At the same time it is important that they conform to our law."

Brahim Sadrija, information officer for the Kosovo Police, said police accompany asylum seekers to the centre, where they are kept for a week until their identities

have been verified. After that, they are free to travel inside Kosovo. How and when they leave the centre, the police do not know.

"Initially we identify them, verify the information they give us and then provide them with temporary documents like travel documents," Sadrija added.

Islam Caka, director of the department of citizenship, asylum and migration in the Interior Ministry, said 134 persons had come from Asia this year and 34 from Africa.

"Their aim is not Kosovo," he agreed. None have stayed in Kosovo where there is no work for them.

Caka claimed that Kosovo is the best country in the region in terms of treatment of asylum seekers, adding that the police in Macedonia and Serbia often dump their unwanted immigrants on

the Kosovo border.

"Other countries in the region mistreat asylum seekers," he said. "They do not supervise them as they are obliged to do so."

True or not, the increase in the number of asylum seekers in Kosovo has prompted the authorities to express concerns to EU officials.

According to the European Union, Kosovo is doing better in handling asylum issues but needs to do more.

"Capacity and training [in addressing asylum seekers] is currently insufficient," the European Commission progress report on Kosovo, published in October, said.

"The lack of appropriate interpretation services hampers communication with the asylum seekers and the initial screening of the cases," it added.

## Most Requests Rejected

By the end of June, the Interior Minister's department of citizenship, asylum and migration had issued over 300 first instance decisions on asylum since Kosovo's independence.

Most rulings were negative and were made in absentia, as the asylum seekers had already left the country.

Of seven appeals against these first-instance decision, the national commission for refugees ruled negatively in six. No appeals have been made to the Supreme Court.

Rejected asylum seekers have a right to remain accommodated in temporary facilities, awaiting execution of a decision to return them or any other measure.



A bedroom in the centre

# EU Visa Talks With Kosovo May Start January

Dialogue between the European Commission and Kosovo on visa liberalisation may start by the beginning of 2012, a European diplomat told Prishtina Insight.



Fatmir Aliu Pristina

Dialogue with the European Commission on Kosovo's entry into the passport-free Schengen zone of the EU may start next year, instead of being launched this year, a

European diplomat told Prishtina Insight.

The European Commission in October pledged to instigate the process by the end of 2011, but this may now be moved to January, the diplomat said.

"The objective is to initiate the dialogue on visa-liberalization with Kosovo," he said.

"But everything will depend on the December 9 meeting [of EU leaders], and it is possible that the

process will only commence next January."

In its Progress Report for Kosovo, published in October, Brussels said Kosovo had reached enough goals for the talks process to start.

EU Foreign Ministers met on Monday in Brussels ahead of the December 9 summit of heads of state and government.

The conclusions of the Council of ministers on Monday reaf-

firmed the EU's belief that "Kosovo will also benefit from the perspective of eventual visa liberalisation once all conditions are met."

The Council of ministers said it welcomed "the intention of the Commission to launch a visa dialogue without prejudice to the Member States' positions on [Kosovo's] status towards the end of the year, if all conditions are effectively fulfilled".

Khalidoun Sinno, acting head of the European Commission Liaison Office to Kosovo, told Prishtina Insight that the conclusions of the Council of Ministers were welcome and positive.

In that light, the question of the timing of talks was not a big problem, he said.

"We have to see what next week brings but the commitment to visa dialogue stands," he said. "We shall see after December 9".

# Compensation is Pipe Dream for Kosovo Workers

While 900 ex-workers at a pipe factory in Kosovo still wait for the 25 million euro compensation promised a decade ago, the business has been sold for a song to the Deputy Prime Minister.



By Sanie Jusufi



A steel pipes factory in the town of Ferizaj was bought this June by Mabetex, the construction company connected to Deputy Prime Minister Behgjet Pacolli.

Pacolli bought the factory for just under 3.7 million euro, despite the fact that it had recently received 13 million euro of investment.

According to evidence uncovered by Prishtina Insight, Pacolli's involvement in the factory dates back to at least 2009, though neither he nor Mabetex was then officially an owner.

In late 2009, Mabetex funded the creation of a snowboard park in the mountain resort of Brezovica with 20,000 euro of equipment.

Crucially, most of the equipment was built and designed at the pipe factory in Ferizaj, which according to those involved in setting up the park, appeared to be controlled by Pacolli and Mabetex at the time.

Asked whether the origin of Hasani's money had been verified, Kaloshi replied: "We do not know where the money came from but the agency made background checks on the buyer."

Two years earlier, in 2007, Arian Hasani purchased the factory for 3.67 million euro. As part of the privatisation deal, he invested around 13 million euro.

But questions have been raised about how Hasani, who according to friends is a sales assistant at an electrical company and lives in a small flat, was able to find almost 17 million euro.

There are also questions about why the factory was sold to Mabetex this June for only 3.69 million euro.

It is unclear when Pacolli and Mabetex's apparent back-stage involvement in the firm began.

The Privatisation Agency of Kosovo, PAK, told Prishtina Insight that it checked up on Hasani's background before it gave the purchase the green light.

But the PAK also admitted it did not know where his huge sums of money had come from.

Workers and union members meanwhile believe the former public enterprise was deliberately undersold to Hasani.

The Constitutional Court has given the government until December 17 to honour a ruling awarding the former workers at the factory – sacked in the Kosovo conflict in 1999 – more than 25 million euro in compensation.

Whether the cash-strapped government will honour this claim, originally made in 2000 against the factory, is unclear.

## Suspiciously cheap sale:

The pipe factory was privatized in 2007 in a process that involved two bidders, Arian Hasani and Driton Fetahi.

While Fetahi offered only 200,000 euro, which is less than the cost of a decent house in Ferizaj, let alone a factory, Hasani offered 3.67 million.

At the time Hasani was a worker at Gama Electronics, a firm in Ferizaj and his only known asset was a two-room apartment, friends told Prishtina Insight.

Fehmi Baftiu, the lawyer representing the sacked workers, said he was bewildered by the sale of the factory along with 30 acres of land for so little money.

He believes the 3.67 million came from Hasani's uncles, Mustafa and Ibrahim Bucaloi, owners of HIB Petrol, a market leader in Kosovo based in Ferizaj.

"Mustafa Bucalio bought the factory for his nephew," Baftiu says. But he also believes there was political involvement in the deal.

Mustafa Bucalio confirmed to Prishtina Insight that when Hasani bought the factory he was a sales manager for Gama Electronics. He did not provide further information.

Ibrahim Bucalio, sole official owner of Emerald Hotel and HIB Petrol, said he knew nothing of

the purchase of the pipe factory and was not involved in it privately or through his companies.

Four years later, in June 2011, Hasani sold the factory to Mabetex, owned by Selim Pacolli, for 3.69 million, after investing over 13 million euro in it.

He is a brother of Kosovo's Deputy Prime Minister, Behgjet Pacolli.

Behgjet is also still closely involved in the Swiss-based construction firm whose past grandiose projects have included renovating the Kremlin for Boris Yeltsin.

Selim Pacolli declined to comment on his firm's purchase of the factory.

Union members at the factory describe the first sale as a scandal. Yzeir Qorrolli, local union leader, said numerous visits to the factory in the run-up to the sale ended in just two low bids.

"Apart from Behgjet Pacolli there were Germans, Bulgarians and others," Qorrolli says.

He said he had received threats when the union considered filing complaints over the first sale.

Ylli Kaloshi, spokesman for the PAK says the agency verified the background of Hasani in 2007 and concluded that he met the requirements of the bid.

Asked whether the origin of Hasani's money had been verified, Kaloshi replied: "We do not know where the money came from but the agency made background checks on the buyer."

Adem Metushi, manager of the Pipe Factory of Ferizaj until 2005, also doesn't know where Hasani got the money to buy the factory.

"One of the conditions [in the bid] was to declare the provenance of one's wealth but as far as I know this wasn't declared," he said.

"I know Hasani is a good person, but he didn't have that kind of money."

## Fight for compensation:

In the meantime, the 900 workers sacked in 1998 and 1999 during the Kosovo conflict still await the 25 million euro in compensation promised to them on numerous occasions promised in 2000.

In 2000, the workers sued the factory at the Municipal Court in Ferizaj to reclaim their lost wages and won 25 million euro.

The Constitutional Court of

Kosovo confirmed the ruling in December 2010, but the workers' compensation, has never been received from the Privatisation Agency.

Drita Osmani says many the claimants have died since the original ruling in 2000. "Two hundred [of the 900] workers have died waiting to get their money," she says. "But I still hope the Constitutional Court's decision will become a reality."

One worker is Sefedin Abazi, from Komogllava, near Ferizaj, who needs money to provide for his sick son. With his old job he was once able to provide for a normal life for the whole family.

During the Kosovo war he took them to Germany. But when the war ended he returned without hesitation, thinking that all would return to normal. "We deluded ourselves into thinking that he would work in the factory again," Sefedin's wife, Ziza, recalls.

Drita Osmani, who worked for 27 years there and now works for the trade union, maintains that the factory was grossly undersold on both occasions.

"How can you sell a factory [for 3.5m euro] with 30 acres of land when a single machine that makes pipes is probably worth 3.5 million?" she asked. "The factory was given away for free."

Drita Osmani says many the claimants have died since the original ruling in 2000. "Two hundred [of the 900] workers have died waiting to get their money," she says. "But I still hope the Constitutional Court's decision will become a reality."

The chair of the Constitutional Court, Enver Hasani, has sent a letter to the government and to PAK, asking for PAK to implement the decision of the Constitutional Court by December 17.

But PAK spokesperson Ylli Kaloshi says the PAK has met its obligations to the workers.

The government has yet to respond on whether it will respect the decision of the Constitutional Court.



Work at the pipe factory for the snowboard park which was sponsored by Mabetex - two year's before they officially bought it.



Governor Dimitar Bogov says savings are safe.

# Macedonia Bank Chief Calms Euro Fears

As savers start shifting investments from euros to dollars and swiss francs, Macedonia's bank chief assures savers that their money is safe whatever happens to the single currency.



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

Following a trend seen in much of the rest of the world, some Macedonians are selling euros and buying US dollars and Swiss francs while some are switching investments to Macedonia's own currency, the denar.

As worries over the future of the single currency grow, more and more people are seeking advice from banks and heading to exchange offices, bank employees say.

"In the last few days our clients are more nervous than usual, asking us what to do, and whether to keep their euros or sell them," a staffer in NLB Tutunska Banka, one of the biggest banks in Macedonia, told Prishtina Insight. The same source

said there was no panic but some clients have already swapped savings to US dollar and Swiss franc accounts, even though the interest rates on them were significantly lower than for savings in euros.

To calm fears, the head of the National Bank of Macedonia, NBM, Dimitar Bogov, insisted that people's savings were secure in spite of the euro uncertainty. "There is no place for fear," Bogov said.

Macedonia's denar is directly tied to the euro, which some see as worrying if the euro crumbles.

But, speaking to the newspaper Kapital, the bank chief said that, "even if the euro collapses, we will immediately tie our national currency to the [reborn] Deutschmark as the most stable [currency]".

According to current exchange rates, Bogov said one euro would be worth 1.96 Deutschmarks, identical with the exchange rate in 2002, when the euro was first introduced.

Ljube Trpeski, an economics professor and former head of the National Bank, said that recent jitters in Macedonia "and exchanges of euros for dollars and francs are happening all over the world".

Trpeski praised last week's move by the big world banks to ease liquidity problems. But observers say this was only a short term solution and expect more decisive steps.

# Serbia Acts to Curb 'Greedy' Bank Levies

As government moves to outlaw unfair bank charges, customers who have lost thousands of euros say they will seek compensation.



By Snezana Krivokapic

From the first week of December, Serbian banks have been required to seek their customers' clear consent before they raise interest rates or impose heavy fines for exceeding overdraft limits.

The new law will also make it cheaper for consumers to transfer current accounts and loans from one bank to another, in some cases reducing the charges by half.

The central bank has introduced the rules to curb what it regards as unreasonable banking practises. Banks have defended their conduct, arguing that such penalties were allowed within the contracts agreed with their customers.

Meanwhile, consumer campaigners say the new legislation entitles them to seek compensation.

Dejan Gavrilovic, a spokesman for the Efektiva pressure group, said consumers had been duped by requests from banks to sign additional clauses, or annexes, to contracts that appeared to offer "favourable terms".

In fact, he says, "the banks were trying to cheat their clients". Efektiva estimates some customers were overcharged up to 4,000 euro

on mortgage loans.

As the new law effectively recognises that the banks' charges were unfair, campaigners believe they have the grounds to sue for the money they have lost.

Bank officials deny they are liable to any such claims, insisting that the charges levied in the past were in accordance with the existing laws.

The central bank has also confirmed that the new rules will not be applied retroactively. Banks will only be penalised for violations after December 5, when the restrictions on unfair charges come into effect.

The law is a response to a domestic problem, and is not thought to be linked to the crisis in the euro-zone that is currently dominating global headlines.

Some three-quarters of Serbian banks are owned by European institutions that have been shaken by the debt crisis in Greece and Italy. However, the central bank says the Serbian subsidiaries are not heavily exposed to the upheaval in the euro-zone.

Under the new rules, banks that wish to charge heavy penalties on unauthorised overdrafts will have to give a clear breakdown to consumers, saying for instance what part of a 30 per cent lending rate is down to inflation or the need to make a profit.

Similarly, banks that intend to hike inter-

## The new law to protect consumers

Banks have to define and determine the variable interest rate in accordance with publicly disclosed information, such as the reference interest rate, consumer price index etc.

Consumers who are defrauded through their bank cards will be covered for all losses above 150 euro – provided they report the loss to the bank within 45 days.

Banks will no longer be allowed to

assign the collection of outstanding loans and interest repayments to debt-collection agencies, who have often been accused of harassment. All such claims can only be sold or passed on to other banks.

The charge for rescheduling loans at another bank will not exceed 0.5 per cent of the repayment sum. Until now, banks could charge up to 3 per cent for the transfer.



est rates on existing loans will have to explain their reasons to consumers, giving them a fair chance to move their debts elsewhere. They will have to spell out how interest rates on mortgage loans are being calculated when they issue new contracts or amend existing ones.

In the past, banks have cited institutional policy when charging higher interest rates on loans, even when the overall rate has fallen.

According to Gavrilovic from Efektiva, interest rates that have been unfairly raised by one or two percentage points have ended up costing customers thousands of euros.

Leading banks reject the claim, made by Gavrilovic, that many customers were misled by additional clauses to their contracts.

"Yes, we did send annexes but clients were not obliged to sign them," said Maja Vezmar Ristic, head of retail in KBC Bank.

"The customers are expressly informed

that their interest rates are going to be reduced according to the law in any case," she said.

Zivojin Savic, head of retail at Komercijalna bank, also said the bank did not force customers to sign annexes to their contracts. He said customers were only informed of the chance to convert certain mortgages into euro-indexed loans, or extend repayment deadlines. In order to do so, however, they would have had to seek advice from their branch.

Both officials say their institutions acted within existing financial laws, and will not be required to pay compensation.

However, leading members of Efektiva – who include the lawyer Dijana Markovic Bajalovic, a former president of a competition watchdog – believe the banks could face prosecution under broader consumer protection laws.

# Bosnian Serbs Pledge to End EU Logjam

As EU envoy urges action to end to Bosnia's stalemate, Milorad Dodik says the Serb entity is willing to separate out the country's EU progress from its internal political disputes.



By Ratka Babic

Bosnian Serbs signalled readiness to compromise over the question of Bosnia's stalled EU membership process following a meeting on Thursday with Peter Sorensen, Head of the EU delegation and Special EU Representative to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After the meeting, Milorad Dodik, President of one of Bosnia's two autonomous entities, the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska, said he was "ready to support separating the issues that hold back Bosnia's application for EU membership in order to get them resolved and provide a chance for BiH to apply for candidate status".

Dodik added that he was referring to implementation of a 2009 ruling by the European Court of Justice in the case of Sejdic-Finci vs. Bosnia, adoption of a law on a

census and adoption of a law on a system of state assistance.

In their lawsuit, Jakob Finci, a Jew, and Dervo Sejdic, a Roma, claimed Bosnia's constitution violated the European Convention on Human Rights by limiting their rights as members of ethnic minorities to sit in parliament or hold other top state offices.

Under Bosnia's 1995 constitution, these positions are limited to members of the country's three so-called constituent nations, Bosniaks [Muslims], Serbs and Croats.

In the case of the law on a census, the Republika Srpska President said all political leaders were ready to get this issue off the table but no final agreement had been reached "owing to the issue of the establishment of Council of Ministers".

Bosnia has been unable to form a new state-level government since October 2010 general elections ended in stalemate.

"The circumstances are even more complex now for an agree-

ment [on a Council of Ministers] but if we were to put European issues on a separate agenda then it would be discussed in a relaxed atmosphere," Dodik continued.

Although he had earlier called for a reduction in the size of the state budget, the Bosnian Serb leader said he was now ready to accept a budgetary framework based on last year's spending levels.

EU envoy Sorensen said European ministers had taken note of everything Bosnia had done in terms of adopting a law on state assistance "as well as efforts to implement the Sejdic-Finci ruling but they had also concluded that there was enough talk and now was the time for action.

"I came with a clear message from European Ministers stating that the EU was worried because of delays occurring in BiH," he added.

"All this leads us to appeal to political leaders in this country to form the Council of Ministers as soon as possible," he concluded.



# Serbs to Vote Under Old Electoral Roll

Fearing that time is running out to compile a single national electoral roll, as a 2009 law requires, the government is amending the law to enable early elections to take place under the old system.



By Gordana Andric

Serbia's centrist government has sent amendments to the law on the electoral roll to parliament in an emergency procedure on Tuesday, proposing that the existing electoral roll be used in case of an early election.

The government's explanation for proposing the amendment is that there may be not enough time to compile a single register of voters, as the new election law prescribes, if elections come early.

"There would not be enough time merge the data from the existing electoral rolls into a single roll in a manner that will provide for the highest degree of accuracy and efficiency," the explanation reads.

Serbia adopted a new law on electoral roll in December 2009. The law, which is supposed to come into force this December, says all voters should be registered in a single national list, instead of in various lists compiled by their local authorities.

As of now, Serbs may vote only at their registered place of resi-

dence. Thus, a person who has registered as a resident of the Belgrade municipality of Vracar cannot vote anywhere else.

Under the new law, registered voters will be entitled to cast their ballots at any polling station in the country.

Serbia's Minister for Labour, Rasim Ljajic, told the Belgrade-based broadcaster B92 that the amendments do not mean the government is preparing for early elections.

"I'm just not sure the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Government will be able to finish a single register in time for regular elections," he said.

"We are entering into the run-up for regular elections...[and] I expect elections to be held in May," Ljajic added.

Marko Blagojevic, from the Centre for Free Elections and Democracy, an NGO that monitors elections, accepts that the government has proposed the amendments because of a lack of time to implement the new election law.

"This will not affect the regularity of the elections," he said. "All our previous elections were held using the old register and it had no influence on their regularity," Blagojevic added.



Milorad Dodik has promised to cooperate with the EU.

# Croatia's Kukuriku Coalition Ousts HDZ

'Kukuriku' coalition, led by the Social Democratic Party, won Sunday's election, securing 80 seats in the 151-seats Sabor.



By Boris Pavelic

According to the official results of the state election commission, the Kukuriku coalition has won 80 seats in the 151-seats Sabor.

That means it will have strong majority of three MP's more than needed to form the government. The HDZ won 44 seats in parliament, including three from diaspora, which is historically the lowest HDZ election result.

"Our politics will be politics of justice and fair payment for fair work," Zoran Milanovic, the PM designate and president of SDP said in his victory speech. "We are leftist parties, liberal parties, with

modern values in our hearts, but we do respect tradition. We will do everything for Croatia to become a good place to live in", said Milanovic.

The Kukuriku coalition comprises the Social Democrats, the Pensioners Party, the Croatian Peoples Party and a regional party, the Istrian democratic Assembly.

"We will serve honestly in opposition," said Prime Minister and president of HDZ, Jadranka Kosor, in her concession speech.

"From this moment on we will start to work for the election victory in the next election," she said adding "We are not totally satisfied, but in these circumstances, our election result is good. "Kosor said that "nobody can deny that HDZ started the fight against corruption".

"We will continue like that," she

added, noting that "HDZ will be constructive opposition, strongly defending Croatian national interests". She didn't congratulate the election victors.

In the election campaign, Kukuriku promised an end to corruption while also warning that coming years would see considerable belt-tightening as the country learned to live within its means.

There was speculation that the new government would be obliged to seek aid from the IMF, but Kukuriku's Prime Minister designate, Zoran Milanovic, during the campaign said the new government would do all it could to avoid that.

Kukuriku's candidate for the post of vice-premier, Radimir Cacic, said the first move of the new government would be to carefully examine the state of the

country's finances.

After that, the government would repay its outstanding debts to companies, hopefully easing the problem of widespread insolvency in the private sector.

The main task in foreign policy would be to take a more active role in the Southeast European region, building up a zone of peace, cooperation and friendship based on Euro-Atlantic values, Kukuriku's candidate for foreign minister, Vesna Pusic, said.

Most analysts said the HDZ, led since 2009 by Jadranka Kosor, lost the election primarily because of the large number of corruption cases against senior officials, including the former HDZ president and Prime Minister, Ivo Sanader. The party itself is under investigation for allegedly running a slush fund.



SDP head Zoran Milanovic

# Fear of Wahhabi Impact Threatens Sarajevo's University Library

After plans to rename the new university library after the Saudi King came under attack, the future of the project hangs in the balance.



By Dijala Hasanbegovic-Puric

A growing revulsion towards the hardline Muslim Wahhabi movement in Bosnia may imperil an important project that has already been held back for years – the Sarajevo University Library building that was to be built with a 15 million euro donation from Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi ruler, King Abdullah.

The existing University library currently shares the premises of the National Library, is run by the same administration, rarely has the heating on and relies on its infrequently paid staff.

Because of heating problems, the reading rooms stay open only to 4pm, which does not suit most students' needs.

To many people in the university, the years of delay in the construction of a new campus and library are glaring examples of a failed fundraising strategy on the part of the university and the local government, the Canton of Sarajevo.

That was one reason why Faruk Caklavica, the Vice-Chancellor of Sarajevo university, was grateful when the Saudi monarch in 2009 promised to help out, during the first visit of the Saudi Minister for Higher Education, Khaled bin Mohammad Al Angary, on December 8 that year.

That year, following the offer of the donation of 15 million euro, the University website announced that the University Senate had decided to name the new Library after King Abdullah.

But two years on the atmosphere has changed and the decision is now being presented as

highly controversial in the media.

The recent terrorist attack on the US embassy in Sarajevo by Mevlid Jasarevic, a Serbian-born member of Bosnia's small Wahhabi sect, has reignited suspicions of the Wahhabi version of Islam, the official faith of Saudi Arabia.

The US embassy building is adjacent to the future University Library.

Wahhabi groups first became established in Bosnia during the 1992-5 war and since then have been blamed for fomenting splits in the Islamic community, not to mention such outrages as the US embassy attack.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has heavily invested in Bosnia since the war, seeing it as a lone outpost of the Islamic faith in Europe. Saudis have poured money into building mosques in particular.

"Their ideological impact is visible in B&H today [but] this friendship with Saudi Arabia, during the war and now, is a double-edged sword, and it is sad that the University is not aware of that," the weekly magazine BH Dani wrote this November.

The Saudi connection is certainly a divisive factor in fractured Bosnia.

While many Bosniaks [Muslims] welcome the connection, the country's Christian Serb and Croat communities look on with deep misgiving.

Meanwhile, members of all three main communities are uncomfortably aware that Saudi Arabia is no democracy but a semi-theocratic monarchy with a dismal record on human rights and women's rights in particular.

"Women in Saudi Arabia don't have a right to vote or participate

in government and can't even appear in public without a male protector," an editorial on Radio Sarajevo portal noted recently.

"In this Islamic, officially Wahhabi monarchy, women don't even have the right to drive a car."

Professor Caklovica says he is dismayed by the sudden backlash to a plan that was never kept secret.

"The University held many meetings with different levels of government on building the new campus and we had strong support from the Sarajevo Canton," he recalled.

"But they weren't able to offer much concrete aid because the buildings we planned to erect are expensive and demanding," Caklovica added.

He said that it had been a joint decision of all members of the University Senate to seek a donor for the library, and then name the building after the donor by way of thanks.

The professor maintains that the media will be to blame if the Saudi King gives up on the project.

"When donors give you the means to build something, it is appropriate to say 'Thank you' in some way, either by naming the institution after the donor or by building a memorial plaque," he said.

"But now the media has done everything to stop the building of the library, so now the question is whether Saudi Arabia will stay in the project," he added.

Meanwhile, this April the University Board for Special Academic Prizes sent a suggestion to the Senate to award the King the highest university award for "supporting progress, humanity and peace worldwide".

Significantly, perhaps, while the



A new Sarajevo University Library was to be named after Saudi Prince King Abdullah.

Senate accepted the suggestion, the award has not actually been given out.

The cantonal Education Ministry spokesman, Stefan Pejovic, said that minister, Emir Suljagic, would issue an official ruling on the subject soon.

Plans to build a new campus and library date back to the year after the war ended, in 1996, when the first attempt was made to collect money for the project.

The estimated cost of the reconstruction of the former Yugoslav Army barracks was put at 185-260 million euros.

After the issue of an international tender, a Turkish-American company SEYA won and drafted a master plan for the University Campus.

The Saudi-based Islamic Bank provided 400,000 US dollars (about 300,000 euro), but more than ten years work has not even started.

The Sarajevo Canton has been in charge of financing the rest of project but without success.

In the meantime, only minor renovation work has been done to the existing campus, which is on the same site.

One University Senate member, Muharem Avdispahic, professor of Maths and Science, who attended the Senate meeting on November 2, when the latest information about the library project was presented, says the basic problem is a lack of real willingness to implement the project.

The Cantonal government, no matter who was in power, was reluctant to get on with the project, Avdispahic believes. The planning phase should have been com-

pleted over long ago and construction should have started.

"Every country, including Saudi Arabia, that is willing to invest in the new campus is a true friend to our society," he said.

"But we should think globally... there is no reason to change the name of the library in favour of any name, donor or not," he added.

"Worldwide, university libraries are simply called 'university libraries,'" he continued.

However, the National and University Library in the city of Tuzla bears the name of the well known Bosnian writer, Dervis Susic.

One new graduate from the Librarianship Department at the Philosophy Faculty in Sarajevo, Anela Hakalovic, doubts there is an obvious win-win solution to the dilemma over the Saudi connection.

"Whatever decision the University makes now won't look good," she said.

"On one side, refusing to name the library after King Abdullah might be a sign of embracing a stereotype [about the Saudis as extremists] - and we can't say our county is a positive example, either, when it comes to human and civil rights, which is what we hold against Saudi Arabia," she said.

"On the other side, accepting the [Saudi King's] name would be like showing submission - just because of its economic power," Hakalovic added.

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



The university library currently shares with the national library.

# World Court Brings Macedonia Comfort, Not Victory

Macedonia may have won a round with Greece at the ICJ - but the battle over the country's name is far from over.



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

Observers describe the World Court judgment in favour of Macedonia against Greece as a big slap in the face for Greece and a legal, diplomatic and moral victory for Macedonia.

Insiders predict the battle between the two countries to intensify as Macedonia tries to promote, and Greece to downplay, the International Court of Justice judgment.

On Monday the Hague-based court voted by 15 to one to uphold Macedonia's argument that Greece had breached a 1995 UN deal when it blocked Macedonia's attempt to join NATO in 2008.

But the court did not agree to order Greece to stop blocking Macedonia's membership of the EU and NATO in future. The court said there was no need to suppose that Greece would repeat actions that the court already found wrongful.

The judgment is final, without appeal and is binding on the parties, though the World Court has no tools to enforce its decisions.

"I have never seen a clearer victory represented in so many votes for one side, accompanied by a rejection of all of the Greek counter-arguments," Jana Lozanovska, a Skopje-based international law expert, said.

The court rejected Greek arguments that the NATO blockade was a reaction to previous Macedonian breaches of the same UN accord.

"It would be a pity if Macedonian diplomats fails to use this big victory to its advantage," she added.

Insiders close to the Macedonian Foreign Ministry told Balkan Insight that the country will use the judgment to gradually try to shift the terms of the argument in its favour, hoping this will eventually open the way for NATO and EU accession.

"The next steps are to inform all the relevant institutions like the UN Security Council, NATO and EU of the [ICJ] decision and demand that they respect it fully," a diplomatic source said.

"Macedonia will try to garner as much support among our friends as we can," he adds, noting that "a tough diplomatic struggle lies ahead - but we have a chance to convince our NATO and EU allies to change their previous decisions."

NATO and the EU have previously made it clear that they await a solution to the "name" dispute with Greece before accepting Macedonia's accession bid.

Greece insists that the use of the name "Macedonia" implies a territorial claim to its own northern province of the same name. Macedonia on the other hand sees the Greek demand for it to change its name as an insult and an attack

on the country's identity.

Citing the unresolved dispute, Greece in 2008 invoked the NATO principle of solidarity in decision-making to prevent Macedonia from getting an invitation to join the alliance. NATO said it would only let Macedonia in once it had solved the dispute.

The following year Greece again used its club membership privileges, this time in the EU, to prevent Macedonia from obtaining a start date to accession talks.

This was despite a recommendation from the European Commission for talks to begin. The EU has also set the resolution of the name dispute as a precondition for considering Macedonia's accession bid.

While Macedonia is hailing the Hague judgment as a major triumph, NATO and EU have received the ICJ ruling without much comment, reiterating only that the ruling should be seen as a further impetus for continued UN-led talks aimed at finding a settlement.

The talks, mediated by a US diplomat, Matthew Nimetz, have been practically frozen for a year, partly owing to Greece's worsening debt crisis.

In that light, the US ambassador to Macedonia, Paul Wohlens, on Monday suggested that little had changed as a result of the ruling.

The condition for unblocking Macedonia's NATO membership remained the same as before - first solving the name dispute and then being admitted to the alliance, he said.

"Diplomats are always careful and restrained in their statements," says Toni Deskovski, a legal expert in the Macedonian delegation that defended Macedonia's case before the ICJ.

He says it is too early to expect a dramatic shift in NATO and EU policies on the issue.

Deskovski says that even Macedonia's own delegation has not yet finished its legal analysis of the complete judgment.

"We are still finding new elements in the judgment that could influence future events," he says.

A former Macedonian ambassador to NATO, Nano Ruzin, says it will be up to the Macedonian representative to NATO, Martin Trenevski, to lobby alliance officials and member states, using the favourable ICJ ruling.

"We should emphasize the moral aspect and convince Greece to make a concession during the initial phase - meaning that Macedonia would get an invitation to join [NATO] while the 'name' issue is solved in the meantime, before the membership becomes actual," Ruzin told the Dnevnik newspaper on Wednesday.

Macedonia floated a similar idea at the end of November to the European Parliament's foreign affairs committee to whom Macedonian Foreign Minister Nikola Poposki proposed a timeframe to Greece to settle the name



dispute.

Poposki proposed that at the December 9 meeting of EU leaders, Greece should allow Macedonia's EU accession talks to get underway.

In exchange, as soon as the talks began, during the so-called screening process, Macedonia would agree to a strict timeframe to settle the name dispute.

Although ideas for parallel name talks along with EU accession talks are not new, this was the first time that Macedonia had proposed a strict timeframe, and its pledged word to Greece that it would solve the dispute.

But it seems that the plan, although deemed interesting by some MEPs, came too late.

This week, several EU member states including Slovenia and Britain, tried and failed to put the issue of Macedonian EU accession talks on the agenda for December 9.

However, preoccupied EU ministers decided to postpone this discussion for six months.

But experts say it is still not too late to effect change at the next NATO summit, in Chicago in May 2012.

Former Macedonian Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki believes Macedonia may have mustered enough support by then to push for a change in NATO's stance.

"It won't be easy but it is also not impossible, if there is enough political will to re-open the 'Macedonian case,'" he says.

Milososki was foreign minister in 2008 when Macedonia decided to sue Greece before the World Court.

"The goal at Chicago would be for some NATO member to bring up the issue of a change to the [Bucharest 2008 summit] conclusions," he says.

For the future, he suggests more lobbying for US support as a crucial element.

However, some experts think Macedonia has wasted time and energy in pursuing the ICJ case, which they say may have brought moral satisfaction but not a practical solution.

Denko Maleski, another former Foreign Minister, told Balkan Insight that the judgment had only

returned the name dispute from "the legal to the political track".

Noting that the ICJ has no means to enforce its judgment, he refers also to the conclusions of the court, which also called on both sides to continue pursuing a settlement through talks.

"I am afraid we have wasted... time and effort [on the ICJ] and that we will again have to find a solution through some sort of compromise as part of the political, UN-brokered name negotiations," Maleski said.

He said the court's refusal to order Greece to stop thwarting Macedonian accession attempts in future was a reminder that "international law is not strong enough to impose [itself] on sovereign states".

But the international law expert Lozanovska is more optimistic.

"As the highest judicial organ of the United Nations, ICJ judgments are final and legally binding. The court relies on its authority to see its rulings done," she said, adding that countries "in principle" rarely disobey them.

She brought attention to paragraph 168 of the World Court's ruling, which she said offers additional support for Macedonia's cause.

In it, she says, the court "implicitly says that Greece should not repeat its blockade against Macedonia".

Part of paragraph 168 reads: "The Court does not consider it necessary to order the Respondent [Greece]... to refrain from any future conduct that violates its obligation under Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Interim Accord."

"As the Court previously explained... there is no reason to suppose that a State whose act or conduct has been declared wrongful by the Court will repeat that act or conduct in the future, since its good faith must be presumed".

Lozanovska said that if Greece fails to respect the ICJ judgment, Macedonia could take the fight to the UN Security Council, a body with the authority to implement ICJ judgments.

"The Security Council can pass decisions and recommendations," she said.

But Stevo Pendarovski, former advisor to the Macedonian Presidents Boris Trajkovski and Branko Crvenkovski, argues that the fight in the UN Security Council is a political one and that Greece can potentially stall any decision there, provided it secures the support of at least one permanent member.

"In theory the ICJ implicitly prohibits Greece from repeating the same act and I imagine our diplomats will try to use this paragraph. But in practice Greece can decide to block Macedonia [in NATO and EU] for whatever given reason," Pendarovski said.

The Security Council is one of the principal organs of the UN. Of its 15 members, five have right of veto as permanent members.

Most of these permanent members have recognized Macedonia's "constitutional name", including China, the US and Russia. France and Britain, on the other hand, recognized the country under its provisional UN reference, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, FYROM.

But Pendarovski maintains that the fact that some permanent members recognize Macedonia's chosen name is not a guarantee that they will support Macedonia against Greece.

Meanwhile, Greece shows no sign of changing its course on Macedonia.

"Greece will continue to pursue [UN-led] negotiations in good faith to reach a mutually acceptable solution," the Greek Foreign Ministry said on Monday after the ICJ judgment was announced.

The ministry noted that the judgment did not order Greece to refrain from further blockades of its neighbour.

Greece's new Prime Minister, Lucas Papademos, has sounded the same note on the issue as his predecessors.

He simply reiterated Greece's stance, that "reaching a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue is a condition for the full normalization of relations [with Macedonia]."

# Digital Age Spawns

Employers across Europe have read workers' private emails and chat conversations by illegally using secret computer surveillance software; in Romania employees claim bosses have used private information gained to blackmail and bully them.

the firm yet to decide whether to prosecute the worker.

Bogdan Manolea, a lawyer specialising in internet law, believes the Romanian government has failed to properly implement data protection laws and has not ensured the public is properly aware of their rights and responsibilities.

"The authorities did not do their job properly; they did not explain why it is important. People have a paranoid reaction – yes, we are all intercepted – but when you ask them what they are doing about it, they don't know or don't act. There are many who complain and few who act," he says.

Asked if the ANSPDCP has done enough to inform bosses and workers about the rules, Savoiu says they have published the Romanian data protection law on its website.

The ANSPDCP site does not, however, carry an accessible summary or guide to good practice on monitoring that could be of use to both employers and employees.

Balkan Communist Legacy

Yet there seems to be little appetite among Romanians and Serbians alike to take on their bosses or the authorities – a legacy, in part, of communist rule.

An unwillingness to confront employers is also evident in neighbouring Serbia, an aspirant EU member that, in 2008, adopted European data protection laws.

Implementation has been slow and Serbians seem equally unaware, and disinterested, in privacy at work issues.

Aleksandar Resanovic, Serbia's deputy information commissioner, believes people do not properly understand the concept of privacy after so many years of communism.

"We do not have complaints. People say 'who cares if they monitor me?' But it is not a question of whether you have something to hide or not. Privacy is something that belongs to you and you decide whether you disclose it [information] or not," he says.

Together with the Partners for Serbia NGO, the commissioner is trying to make sure that at least employees responsible for processing personal data at large firms are aware of the law.

## Serbia: Who Monitors the Monitors?

Blazo Nedic, president of Partners for Serbia, launched a campaign this year to raise awareness but remain concerned the law does not adequately check the people responsible for monitoring.

And there have been some eye-catching incidents that have made it to the press, including the posting on YouTube of Serbian police CCTV footage that captured a couple having sex in a car park.

Since then, the Serbian police have been required to follow new, strict procedures when collecting and processing CCTV data.



By Dollores Benezic

Most Romanian workers log on to their computers each morning oblivious of the fact their bosses can not only monitor what websites they visit, but measure exactly how much time they spend working or surfing the net.

Of greater concern, hardly anyone realises their employer can, with the right software, intercept private emails sent from personal accounts such as Gmail or Yahoo!

"Employees should be aware that the content of their emails could be read," says LF, an executive at Netsec Interactive Solutions, a Bucharest-based IT security consultancy, who asked not to be named.

"Sadly, although initially designed to be used constructively, IT monitoring tools are used by some employers for personal rather than professional goals. We are talking about blackmailing or even harassment."

Netsec estimates more than 40 per cent of multinationals and large companies operating in Romania use specialist software to routinely intercept and track all information flow – including what an employee might write in an email or download onto a memory stick.

Secret surveillance of workers, banned under EU law, has been hugely controversial in other European states too, particularly Germany where companies have been forced to pay multi-million euro fines and lawmakers are debating new workplace privacy

legislation.

In Romania, many allege that bosses not only collected information about them by illegal, covert means, but then used it against them.

## Blackmailed by the Boss

No Romanian employees would talk openly to BIRN about their experiences of illegal workplace monitoring, fearing speaking out would jeopardise their new positions and mark them out as trouble-makers.

One woman claims she was forced to resign after her boss accessed private emails she had sent to a friend, in which she criticised her line manager.

After being called into the boss's office, she was shown printouts of her private emails and told it would be best for her to leave. She accepted a small payout after her employers threatened they would make sure she couldn't get work anywhere else.

Another, a married man, claims he was blackmailed by his boss after she discovered he was having an affair with a colleague. The manager found out after accessing conversations between the two on Yahoo! Messenger that were recorded by computer surveillance software.

He claims the boss forced him to perform tasks he did not want to under threat she would tell his wife he had been unfaithful. When he finally refused and left his post, the boss rang his wife and told her about the affair.

Both say their employers never once informed them that their communications, both private and official, would be subject to surveillance.

While it is legal for employers to monitor their workforce and use computer software to do so, they are obliged by EU and national law to inform workers. In turn, employees must officially consent to the surveillance. In practice, this rarely happens.

Officially, not a single company in Romania subjects its workforce to surveillance. Employers are also obliged by the law to inform the Romanian Data Protection Agency (ANSPDCP) if they are monitoring staff, but not one has registered to date.

## Software Sales Boom

This appears to be rather at odds with estimates on surveillance software sales in Romania, where IT companies say business is booming.

The surveillance software market was worth an estimated €1 million in Romania in 2010 alone, according to Amplusnet, another software manufacturer, who stress it is a rapidly expanding business.

The Romanian Constitution stipulates that all correspondence is confidential but does not differentiate between private or official work-related communications.

Alina Savoiu, head of communications at ANSPDCP, says: "It is a violation of correspondence, which is a criminal act. All companies that are involved in such practices are infringing the law."

The software manufactured by companies like Netsec track every activity on workers' computers, not just their correspondence, private or otherwise.

The boss can see exactly which websites you visit, what content you view, and compare how much time you spend surfing the net rather than using Excel, Word or other office tools.

Lawyers who represent employers argue they need to ensure their workers are putting in their full hours and are not engaged in unproductive or unlawful activities – such as accessing porn sites or downloading illegal content.

## Gay Worker 'Asked to Leave'

But, as LF from Netsec says, bosses can use tools developed for lawful monitoring to gain information they can then abuse. Even the pages employees visit can reveal or suggest they may have personal problems, such as health issues, addictions or complex private lives.

Mihai Russu is a Bucharest-based lawyer who has represented

companies involved in disputes with employees about privacy. He recently represented a medical firm that had secretly monitored its employees and in doing so discovered one of the directors, who was married, had been browsing gay dating sites. The director was asked to leave his job.

He initially refused, claiming the request was discriminatory. In the end, he gave up because he feared his family would discover he was gay.

Russu insists his sexual orientation was irrelevant and that he was asked to leave because "he was not working his eight hours".

However, Russu acknowledges the company did break the law because it secretly monitored workers.

Savoiu says the ANSPDCP has not received any complaints about covert surveillance, but insists they would investigate if they did and seize equipment, including computers, if deemed necessary.

However, she admits they employ just one qualified IT expert who can track monitoring software.

## Bosses Own the Evidence

Proving you have been the subject of unlawful workplace surveillance is no easy task, not least because the bosses own the evidence.

If the ANSPDCP was unable to investigate, employees can go to civil courts themselves but they cannot seize the bosses' equipment.

"Can an employee bring to court all the servers and evidence on the employee's computer that shows he was supervised? No. The state would only have the authority to seize this type of evidence, backed up by appropriate experts, in criminal cases," says Cristian Driga, a lawyer specialising in IT crime.

"In civil cases, employees have to bear the cost alone... added to that, there is an acute shortage of certified computer experts available in the field," he says.

On the other hand, employers argue they must monitor their staff to protect commercially sensitive information and safeguard their brand.

Russu quotes one case where an advertising firm he represented discovered, by means of covert surveillance, that one worker was copying confidential client databases that could have been financially damaging to the company.

She resigned after being challenged by the bosses and went on to set up a competitor firm of her own. The dispute is ongoing with



Bosses are hacking into employees' email accounts.

# Big Brother Bosses

But confusion as to what remains private at work is certainly not confined to Belgrade and Bucharest; there have been numerous cases and campaigns across European countries.

The European Directive 95/46/EC does not spell out the limits of lawful employee monitoring but it does enshrine employees' right to be informed that they will be subject to surveillance, grants access to the data and allows for workers to oppose data collection by the bosses.

## Britons Trust the Authorities

Like their Romanian and Serbian counterparts, the British do not appear overly-concerned about surveillance either in or outside the workplace.

The reason why, however, might surprise Balkan readers who lived under communist rule.

"We never had a police state like Romania. In a sense, we trust our authorities more than most nations do and if something goes wrong, we have a very good legal system," says Nicholas Lakeland, a partner and employment law specialist at London law firm Silverman Sherliker LLP.

But he warns workers should be aware of the sort of personal information bosses can collect and how it could be used.

"We had a case where the employer found out one employee had HIV. In the construction industry, employees using heavy machinery may be breathalysed... in that particular case they also found he had been using drugs which helped him with the HIV... the employer did nothing... but it was a [potentially difficult] situation," says Lakeland.

However, some British employees have taken privacy cases all the way to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), as demonstrated by the Halford and Copland cases.

In 1990, Alison Halford, a police officer in Wirral, accused her superiors of intercepting her phone and Lynette Copland, a secretary at a college in Wales, found out that her phone and office email have been intercepted over a six-month period.

The ECHR ordered the British state, which employed both, to pay damages on the grounds that they were entitled to privacy at their workplace.

However, despite the ECHR rulings little changed in Britain.

"A lot of employers do that [monitoring] without thinking. An employer comes to me and says 'I find all these interesting things by looking in employees' emails'. And I say 'You did not tell them, there is no legitimate reason why you are doing it. You are just snooping, so stop it and destroy all the data you have'.

"There are a lot of small offices where employers are doing that, they don't really know the law, people are curious and want to know what other people do. It is human nature but it is not legal", says Lakeland.

This trust in the authorities will have been undoubtedly dented by the News of the World illegal phone hacking scandal that threw suspicion not only on unscrupulous journalists but also law enforcement and politicians.

## Germans Keep State in Check

Germans are acutely aware of the importance of privacy and the need to keep state control in check.

They share a deep-seated distrust of

authority figures with their eastern European counterparts – an unease informed by recent history including the Nazi era and the Stasi in what was East Germany.

Germany has had data protection laws on its statute books since 1970 and, although their legislation on monitoring does not differ from the rest of the EU, they have set down additional rules.

Unlike elsewhere, employers are forbidden from monitoring employees' online activities if the company rules allow them to access private email accounts or surf the net for personal use from the firm's computer.

Still there is unease about the scale of unlawful monitoring.

Bertran Raum, head of social services at Germany's Federal Commission for Data Protection, quotes 2001 statistics suggesting that two out of three companies monitor their workforce.

"I think the number of employers who are monitoring their employees has risen since. I think that a lot of that monitoring would be illegal," he says.

## Workers' Bank Accounts Accessed

There was public outrage when it became known that Deutsche Bahn, the state-owned national rail company, had been secretly monitoring its employees for a decade.

In a bid to root out corruption, the company routinely accessed employees' private bank accounts and checked payments against their supplier list.

In 2009, they were fined €1.2 million by the Berlin Data Protection Commissioner.

The LIDL retail chain was fined in 2008 a similar amount for employing private investigators to monitor staff, including video surveillance, by the data commissioner of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Their have been numerous other workplace privacy and surveillance scandals, involving high-profile companies, that have been covered in the German media.

Employees who suspected they were being illegally monitored talked to the press and the resulting coverage forced the authorities to take action on the issue.

Jan Jurczyk, press officer for Ver.di, the second largest German trade union, says that "we have more to thank journalists for than the authorities".

Alexander Dix, Berlin Information Commissioner, admits: "It takes a lot of courage in Germany to complain about an employer. You cannot rely on the German courts, as it takes several years... and sometimes you don't win."

## More Power for Bosses?

After so many scandals, the German parliament is debating a new federal law to regulate workplace monitoring which they are expected to vote on by the end of 2011. No one is happy with the proposed changes.

Currently, companies have to seek permission both from the unions and the labour courts before installing surveillance equipment. Under the proposed new law, they would only have to ensure they notified employees and secured their consent.

"Now the judge keeps the balance between employees and employers, but in the new project, the employer is the one who decides when to monitor. He is the judge," thinks Sarah Thomé, lawyer for the human rights NGO the Humanist Union.

She believes that the focus on consent is



misleading, as the employee could agree to all types of monitoring out of fear that not doing so would prevent them from getting the job in the first place.

For their part, employers say the rules do not address their key concern: corruption.

Thomas Prinz, a lawyer at the Confederation of German Employers' Association, believes there is no need for a new law, just because some companies illegally spied on their employees.

"The draft has no clear provisions for preventing corruption. This is the main point for any German company," he says.

Raf Jaspers, a Belgian lawyer and author of Big Brother in Europe, is convinced only public awareness and action will combat state and employer privacy intrusions.

"It will be a long struggle to convince the masses. Privacy is not like work or food, which you miss immediately if you don't have them," he warns.

Back in Romania, IT specialist LF offers workers some simple advice: "Do not forget that when you switch on your computer you are no longer alone and no password, no matter how complex, can block monitoring software."

Dolores Benezic is a Bucharest-based journalist. This article was produced as part of the Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence, an initiative of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and ERSTE Foundation, in cooperation with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network.

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# Archivists Revive Fading Sounds of Old Kosovo

An online archive of traditional music aims to encourage broadcasters to play more folklore tunes - but supporters of the genre fear it may not suffice to revive its waning popularity.



By Arber Selmani

“If the media don’t educate the public about traditional music, this music will be forgotten,” Liliana Qavolli, a traditional Albanian chanteuse, says.

Qavolli hosts her own radio show on Radio Kosova promoting the sounds of the çifteli, an Albanian string instrument, the zurla flute and the tupani drum.

She faces an uphill battle. More common sounds on the radio these days are pop and rap music, international and local.

Qavolli believes more needs to be done, particularly by the public broadcaster Radio Television of Kosovo, RTK, to keep these old sounds alive.

“Bosnia’s TV Hayat dedicates specific times to sevdalinka, which are traditional Bosnian songs, but we do no such thing with our old masterpieces,” Qavolli complains.

“Local radio and TV hardly transmit any traditional music,” she adds. “I barely hear my own songs on the radio and even more rarely on TV.”

## Digital future?

In a bid to boost flagging interest in traditional tunes and promote Albanian culture in general, Truni [“Brain”], a non-governmental organization, launched a project in late November to create an online archive of Albanian music and culture.

At a cost of around 100,000 euro, with 8,000 euro coming from the Ministry of Culture, the NGO will start collecting songs from next January.

They will include old songs in outdated formats in personal and public archives as well as those that are on CDs but are not widely available.

The music will be provided for free through a website, Gjurmët, named after a 1980s rock band, and radio and television stations will be encouraged to use the new resource.

Qavolli believes the project will help promote traditional music but is unconvinced that it will be enough on its own.



“I understand that most of the old recordings haven’t been digitalised and are not in media archives,” she says.

“But there are still plenty of them and nobody transmits them – or at least they are rarely transmitted.”

Minire Fetahu, editor of the music desk at RTK, says they air traditional music for an hour a day and that given the need to cover a range of tastes and ethnicities, that slot will not increase, even if he would like to offer more.

“RTK, as a public television, has to cover other shows from other communities in Kosovo, so we don’t have much space for our [Albanian] traditional music,” he explains.

“But we do broadcast two or three songs in the morning, afternoon and on the evening programme,” Fetahu adds.

“We also have a weekly one-hour programme called Pa Skenar [“Without script”], but it is not enough,” Fetahu admits.

Selvetë Krasniqi, music editor at Radio Kosova, says they set aside 15 to 25 minutes a day for traditional music, which she considers is enough. “Traditional music is quite well represented on our radio,” she says.

The singer Antigona Qena, who presents Pa Skenar, plays old hits from the radio archives. But Qena says old songs are being broadcast too rarely.

“It is embarrassing that still we cannot get the recordings from the archives, and that they are often in poor condition,” Qena adds.

## Festivals vanish:

Two festivals that once showcased traditional music have both disappeared.

Artists remember fondly Akordet e Kosovës [“Kosovo Accords”], but that was last held in 1995.

In the western city of Prizren, the Zambaku i Prizrenit festival also became synonymous with traditional music.

Held in 1991, 1998, 1999 and 2005, organisers fear it will never again grace the cobbled streets of this Ottoman-era city due to lack of money.

Organiser Reshat Randobrava says the music they played there is being forgotten.

“Once again, I’d mention that many of these songs aren’t recorded and digitalised, though this alone does not justify the ridiculous [low level of] media coverage,” he says.

“There are very few, old traditional songs that I hear or see on the media,” he adds.

Nexhmije Pagarusha, a folk singer and heroine in Kosovo, says the media must shoulder most of the blame for the decline in the popularity of traditional music.

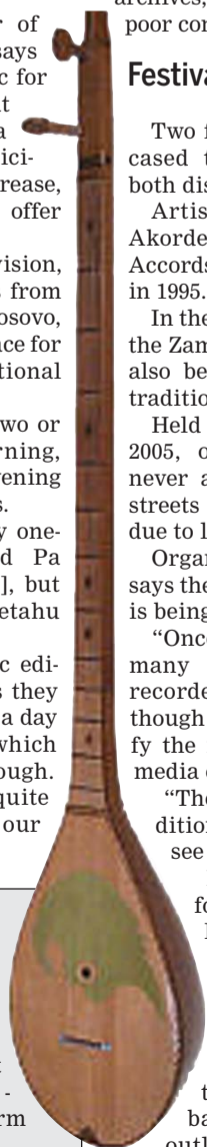
“I sometimes think that there is a kind of bartering with the media outlets and that someone is being paid to transmit the music we hear and see,” she maintains.

## What’s in a name?

Gjurmët [“The Traces”] was an Albanian rock music band from Kosovo that played between 1980 until 1986 and was composed of five members.

Singer Migjen Kelmendi, is now a journalist and publicist who is particularly well known for his campaign to have Gheg - the northern version of Albanian - recognized as an official form of Albanian.

From January, Gjurmët will become an online archive of Albanian music, photos, paintings and more.



# Kosovo Scores First Success at Sundance



By Lawrence Marzouk

Kosovo has scored its first success at the world’s top independent film festival Sundance, with the shortlisting of Khtimi.

The short film, which translates as The Return, is among 64 other entries to have made it to the final list.

It was directed by Blerta Zeqiri and the screenplay is by Shefqet Gjocaj.

The film follows a man who comes back from a Serb prison to his wife and son and the difficulties he faces in returning to normal life.

Sundance is the largest independent cinema festival in the United States and is held in Salt Lake City, Utah, in January.

The festival received a record 7,675 submissions, up 16 per cent over submissions for the 2011 Festival, for this category.

Trevor Groth, director of programming for the Sundance Film Festival, said: “As technology allows greater access to short films as well as filmmaking tools, an increasing number of people are turning to short filmmaking as a form of expression and an opportunity to explore creative freedom.”

“The fact that we received 1,200 more submissions in this category than last year speaks to that.”

“Within them we saw a wave of truly original and outrageously distinctive films united by their uncompromised spirit.”



# Albanian, Serbian Students Breathe Life Into Tumbleweed Town

Bujanovac's new economics faculty may have only 70 students but its opening is still seen as historic - the start of a new era for this run-down, ethnically divided community.



By Nikola Lazic  
Bujanovac

Finding a free table at the Plato café in downtown Bujanovac has gotten more difficult these days. Along with the old regulars, students of the new Faculty of Economics are frequent customers. Their department is just across the street in the renovated Cultural Centre.

Young Serbs and Albanians pass their time here between lectures in a pleasant and cosy atmosphere over coffees costing 60 cents each.

Owner Branislav Velickovic rubs his hands in satisfaction. Business has boomed since Serbia's northern Vojvodina province offered to help finance the opening of the department for 70 local students.



Bujanovac's famous bubbles.

"The students are my regulars. They don't spend much, but I am glad they've picked my café for their breaks," Velickovic says, as the murmur of the crowd overwhelms the music in the café.

The owner of a nearby fast-food outlet, Goran Dimitrijevic, has also profited from the opening of the Faculty, as many of the students buy breakfasts at his place.

"Since the Faculty opened, business has gone up significantly," he said. "Both Serbs and Albanians come to my restaurant in equal numbers."

Bujanovac is an ethnically divided town, home to Serbs and Albanians. Both communities have

benefited from the opening of the new Economics Faculty.

But for the ethnic Albanian minority in Southern Serbia it is especially important. They now have their first opportunity to study in their native language at home without having to move over the border to Kosovo, Macedonia or Albania.

Just over a decade ago, in November 2000, armed clashes erupted between the Serbian security forces and Albanian insurgents in the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac.

The conflict ended six months later through the mediation of NATO and the international community.

Most students don't recall those times. What's important to them is getting diplomas in a few years' time and finding jobs in one of the most underdeveloped regions in Serbia.

Afrodita, an Albanian from the Bujanovac area, just graduated from high school and this is her first year of studies. She is fashionably dressed, much like her peers in Serbia.

"Being able to study in this town means a great deal to me, particularly because of the money [that I'm saving]," she said. "The lecturers are good and my command of Serbian is good enough for me to follow lectures in this language as well."

Her Serbian colleague, Jelena, finished college in Belgrade a couple of years back, married, got a job but now wants to get a diploma in economics in her hometown.

"I've studied in Belgrade and I can say the programme and the professors are just as good here in Bujanovac," she says.

One storey of the Bujanovac Cultural Centre has been renovated and modified to meet the needs of the Faculty, which is linked to the University of Novi Sad in Vojvodina and financed by Vojvodina and the Coordination

Body for Southern Serbia.

This government institution was set up 11 years ago to mediate between the local and central authorities and help overcome the consequences of the 2000 conflict.

A space 200 square metres in size, previously used as a conference room, has been turned into an amphitheatre with modern furniture and electronic equipment.

There are auxiliary services such as a library, a bookstore, technical service and an office that is soon to be turned into a classroom in which Albanian and Serbian language courses will be organised.

Lecturers from the Economics Faculty in Subotica, which is part of the University of Novi Sad, hold classes here in Serbian. Their colleagues from the University of Tetovo, in mainly Albanian western Macedonia, teach in Albanian.

At a Principles of Marketing lecture, the atmosphere is informal and friendly. Assistant lecturer Drazen Maric, who is not much older than his audience, is trying to pass on his knowledge to his students through exercises and discussions.

He says the opening of the Faculty in Bujanovac is of great social and economic importance because the economic backwardness of a region generates other problems.

"Increasing the level of young people's knowledge and their skills in subsequently applying this knowledge is one solution to the problems in Southern Serbia," Maric says.

"Our obligation in a multinational environment such as Southern Serbia is to bring together different nations and cultures that are still apart for various reasons," he adds.

Maric believes that Subotica, on the border with Hungary, because it is also a multiethnic environment, shares specific qualities with Southern Serbia.

Classes at the Faculty are organized according to the so-called block system. This means that stu-



OSCE officials at the opening of the new multilingual university.

dents have classes in one subject for a whole week, making it easier to organize the lecturers' accommodation and travel.

Assistant lecturer Maric and his colleagues are accommodated some 20 kilometres from Bujanovac in Vranje, the administrative centre of the Pcinj district of which Bujanovac is a part. But they enjoy making the rounds of Bujanovac's restaurants and cafés.

"The thing I like best in Bujanovac is the food. You just can't find such a good barbecue in Vojvodina," Maric says.

The opening the Faculty of Economics in Bujanovac on October 28 was a red letter day for the region. The US, British and Albanian ambassadors to Serbia were all present, as were Serbian government ministers and professors from Novi Sad University.

Nenad Vunjak, Dean of the Subotica Economics Faculty, said the main reason why they decided to cooperate with Southern Serbia was out of a desire to demonstrate a commitment to multi-ethnicity.

"Professors who are Hungarians, Croats, Ruthenes, Slovaks, Slovenes, Bunjevci [Croats from Vojvodina] and Serbs will all be travelling here to lecture," he said. "They will talk only about the department's work, and won't be bogged down by the [region's] past."

Vunjak also reminded his audience that diplomas from Novi Sad are recognised throughout the world - a major issue in Southern Serbia, where Albanian students with diplomas from Kosovo have

found their degrees unrecognised in Serbia.

"Although we are separated by 500 kilometres, we will not depart the slightest bit from the quality of lectures we give in Subotica and Novi Sad," Vunjak added.

"Everyone in Vojvodina is happy to contribute to the stabilisation of the situation in Southern Serbia," he concluded.

Because they were previously unable to study in their native language in Serbia, many young Albanians from Serbia continued higher education in Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008.

Since then, Serbia has refused to recognize university diplomas from Pristina, leaving several hundred ethnic Albanians from Serbia with degrees that are of no practical use although this looks set to change following an agreement in the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue.

Galip Beqiri, president of the National Council of Albanians, a government body set up to handle culture, education, media and language issues, describes the opening of the faculty in Bujanovac as "the first step towards solving the old problem over higher education among Albanians".

His dream is for Bujanovac to get a couple of other faculties and so to become a true university town.

"I hope the authorities in Belgrade and international donors will... help us get a new building to host some new faculties," Beqiri said, talking ambitiously of a new faculty of education and another for technical sciences.

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## 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.

### 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-victory.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

### Hotel AFA

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



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

### 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.

### 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

### 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

### Restorant Brasserie Lura

At 450-square-metres Restaurant Lura is as spacious as you get in Prishtina. It's also surrounded by the towering trees of Germia and offers a pleasant garden where, in the summer, this eatery prepares food al fresco. It's large meeting room is also ideal for that private lunch or dinner.

The combined style classical and modern interior leaves you with an impression of refined taste.

The newly opened restaurant is already famous for its Mediterranean specialties, exquisite seafood and fine selections of Italian, French and Local wines. But that's not all, for music lovers, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday night dinners are accompanied by jazz, whereas on Saturdays local patriots can enjoy live traditional Albanian music.

Lura Restaurant  
Str. Nazmi Gaffuri • 10 000 Prishtina • +381 (0)38 763 763 ; +386 (0)49 763 763 • www.lurarestaurant.com  
info@lurarestaurant.com



### 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



### CHURCHILL'S PUB

Churchill's Pub is a place where you can associate with its unique, casual, cozy and friendly atmosphere where you can enjoy an affordable pub style.... That comfortable atmosphere combined with that special music, the great range of drinks and the chance to get to play a game of pool and dart board on the second floor.

A pub where you can go and enjoy everynight live music, different ones like evergreen, traditional, unplugged and rock. You can also enjoy the happy hour which starts at 20:00-21:00 everynight.

Beers (Peja and Skopje) for only 0,99 Euros, Gin Mix and Vodka Mix for only 1,50 Euros.

Churchill's Pub is located in the heart of Prishtina.

*Str: Johan V. Hahn, Peyton, Prishtine*  
+377 44 728 750





## National Theatre of Kosovo

**Friday, December 9, at 8 pm**  
"Leksioni i YU-Mitologjisë" - premiere

By Oliver Frijlic, coproduction: Kosovo, Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina, Montenegro, Macedonia.  
**Saturday, December 10, at 8 pm**

"Nata e dymbëdhjetë" - Twelfth Night, William Shakespeare play; Director: Ilir Bokshi

Like many of Shakespeare's comedies, this one centres on mistaken identity. The leading character, Viola, is shipwrecked on the shores of Illyria during the opening scenes. She loses contact with her twin brother, Sebastian, whom she believes to be dead. Masquerading as a young page under the name Cesario, she enters the service of Duke Orsino through the help of the sea captain who rescues her. Orsino has convinced himself that he is in love with the bereaved Lady Olivia, whose father and brother have recently died, and who will have nothing to do with any suitors, the Duke included. Orsino decides to use "Cesario" as an intermediary to tell Olivia about his love for her. Olivia, believing Viola to be a man, falls in love with this handsome and eloquent messenger. Viola, in turn, has fallen in love with the Duke, who also believes Viola is a man, and who regards her as his confidant.

**Tuesday, December 13, at 8 pm**

"Fizikantët" from Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Director: Isë Qosja

The story is set in the drawing room of the oldest building in the *Les Cerisiers* sanatorium, an idyllic home for the mentally ill, run by famed psychiatrist Mathilde von Zahnd. It is a satirical drama often recognized 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.

**Wednesday, December 15, at 8 pm**  
"Zjarri miqësor" - Ballet  
Choreography by Arthur Kiggeleyn, composed by Christian Meyer.

**Friday, December 16, at 8 pm**  
Trio AEA - Etno Jazz Classic.

**Saturday, December 17, at 8 pm**  
"Përgjuesi" - stand-up comedy with Adem Mikullovc. Small stage.

**Monday, December 19, at 8 pm**  
"Nata e fundit në Goli Otok" - by Xhevat Qorraj

**Tuesday and Wednesday, December 20 and 21, at 8 pm**  
"Kabare orchestra" - by Natasha Popllavska, Albanian Theatre - Skopje.

**Thursday, December 22, at 8 pm**

"Dashuria që vret" - ballet  
Choreography by Ilir Kerni.



**Tre Gjermanët e Trashë II, Fridays, 8pm**

Every Friday at 8 pm in the new play "Tre Gjermanët e Trashë II" you will understand: "What did Brigel say when he asked for a drink?"; "Why Hans didn't let him drink Mojito?"; "How did Gani experience his 21st snow?"; "Is Vukashin really Ukshin?"; "Does KFOR-ja still work for KFOR or she just loves him?"; "How did Hekuran boil eggs in the middle of the North Pole?"; These and other events you can see in the play "Tre Gjermanët e Trashë II". "Tre Gjermanët e Trashë II" the bravest Albanian play.

"Tre Gjermanët e Trashë II" Written by: Lirak Çelaj; Producer: Florent Mehmeti; Roles: Naser Rafuna, Adrian Morina, Kushtrim Sheremeti, Lirak Çelaj, Fisnik Ademi, Ard Islami, Arta Selimi, Florent Mehmeti.

For any further questions or reservations call at +381 (0)38 246 555 or write at [oda@teatrioda.com](mailto:oda@teatrioda.com)



**Çifti I Hapur, Thursdays, 7.30pm**

Every Thursday, at theatre Dodona, 7.30pm, "Çifti I Hapur" is being played with the text of Italian authors Dario Fo and Franca Rame, directed by Kushtrim Koliqi

"What would you do if your partner suddenly opened his/her mind to have intercourse with another person?" A man proposes to his wife eliminating the concept of martial loyalty and creating an "open relationship" in their lives. The woman, of course, rejects and after several attempts of suicide, she decides to accept her husband's offer because in fact it's the only way to remain "married". The man is happy. He, no longer needs to hide his girlfriends and in a way he's released from feelings of guilt. Now everything is democratic and open. Everything goes well until the day when the woman finds the love of her life, which is what her "modern" husband cannot accept. Cast includes: Edona Reshitaj and Besart Sllamniku, while the costumes and the stage design was created by Njomza Luci. Composer: Trimir Dhomi; Choreographer: Bruno Saqipi; Light designer: Skender Latifi; Stage manager: Bedri Maloku, Albert Bekteshi & Fadil Gashi, Photographer: Arton Humolli.

For more details check: [teatridodona@yahoo.com](mailto:teatridodona@yahoo.com); [besart.sll@gmail.com](mailto:besart.sll@gmail.com)



Every day at 10 pm, ABC Cinema continues screening the movie "In Time" produced by Andrew Niccol.

Welcome to a world where time has become the ultimate currency. You stop aging at 25, but there's a catch: you're genetically-engineered to live only one more year, unless you can buy your way out of it. The rich "earn" decades at a time (remaining at age 25), becoming essentially immortal, while the rest beg, borrow or steal enough hours to make it through the day. When a man from the wrong side of the tracks is falsely accused of murder, he is forced to go on the run with a beautiful hostage. Living minute to minute, the duo's love becomes a powerful tool in their war against the system.

Roles: Justin Timberlake, Amanda Seyfried, Cillian Murphy, Vincent Kartheiser, Olivia Wilde, etj.

"The Adventure of - Tin Tin" Directed by Steven Spielberg.

Tintin and Captain Haddock set off on a treasure hunt for a sunken ship commanded by Haddock's ancestor. But someone else is in search of the ship. Having bought a model ship, the Unicorn, for a pound off a market stall Tin Tin is initially puzzled that the sinister Mr. Sakharine should be so eager to buy it from him.

Stars: Jamie Bell, Andy Serkis, Daniel Craig etc.

For any further questions or reservations call at 038 243 238 or visit them at [www.kinoabc.com](http://www.kinoabc.com)



## SKENA UP (International Students Film & Theatre Festival)

**Friday, December 9, Day 5.**

Bodrumi - 23', fic. Fakulteti i Arteve, Kosovë

At Hotel Sirius. From 10 a.m.

Reality, fuck off - 19' doc. Serbia

**Culture as a bridge between nations,** Conference with International Journalists

At Hotel Sirius, From 10 a.m.

**Special screening, Swiss Day**

At Kino ABC, From 3.30 p.m.

**Press conference** At Kino ABC. From 11 a.m.

Red Poppies - 30' fic. Serbia

**International competition,** at Kino ABC. From 12 p.m. Total 146.3 min

**Exyu generation Next** At Kino ABC. From 6 p.m.

Ambitious - 21', fic. Saint-Petersburg State University of Cinema and Television

Rruga - 5', fic. Fakulteti i Arteve, Kosovë

FLEKE / SPOTS - 92' fic. Aldo Tardozzini, Croatia.

**International competition,** at Kino ABC. From 12 p.m. Total 140.17 min

Sea of Desires - 28', fic. Postgraduate School of Scriptwriters and Film Directors

Touch it, handle it, grasp it - 10', doc. FAMU, Czech Republic

**Theatre Competition,** At Dodona Theatre.

Wonder boy - 15', fic. VCA School of Film & Television, Australia

The Last Day of Bulkin - 13', fic. Postgraduate School Of Scriptwriters and Film Directors

Guanape Suur - 23', doc. ZeLIG - School for documentary, Italy

From 7 p.m. Antigona - Fakulteti i Arteve, Kosovë

Opalescence - 4'40", fic. INIS, Canada

The moon is a wonderful place - 14'25", doc. ifs Internationalen Filmschule Köln, Germany

The April Chill - 15' CineTech, Georgia  
The Service - 33', fic. NATFA "Kr.Sarafov", Bulgaria

From 10 p.m. Çmenduria Krijuese - 35' Fakulteti i Arteve, Kosovë

Just toys - 12'59", doc. Higher Institute of Cinema, Egypt  
Drifting - 25', fic. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts-School of Film & Television, China

**Exyu generation Next** At Kino ABC. From 6 p.m.

1000 grams - 15', fic. University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HFBK)

**Afterparty,** Steffen Bennemann & Onetake (GER) / DJ Genti (RKS) / Visuals by Cheveria (RKS) At Secret Lounge. From 11 p.m.

Just toys - 12'59", doc. Higher Institute of Cinema, Egypt  
Drifting - 25', fic. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts-School of Film & Television, China

**Theatre Competition,** At Dodona Theatre. From 8 p.m.

Wallflower tango - 7'14", anim. Film Academy BadenWuerttemberg, Germany

**Sunday, December 11, Day 7.**

Cutdamn - 14', fic. Akmi Metropolitan College & Queen Margaret University of Edinburgh, Greece

Venera's mirror - 25' Academy of Performing Arts, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Twist & Blood - 30' fic. Silesia University Radio & TV Department of Krzysztof Kieslowskis name in Katowice, Poland

**Presentation of CPH PIX / Copenhagen Film Festivals by:** Riina Spørring Zachariassen - Denmark At Hotel Sirius. From 10 a.m.

Karyukai.inc - 10'40", fic. Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata, India

**Afterparty,** Pink Metal (RKS) / Viga & Eka(RKS) At Secret Lounge.

My kingdom comes - 8'16" anim. Academy of Fine Arts Hamburg, Germany

**Press conference** At Kino ABC. From 11 a.m.

Ernesto - 6'53", anim. The National Film and Television School, UK

From 9 p.m. Kosovo 2.0 launching magazine party Ergen & BimmBimma (RKS)

**Special screening, Reconnect** At Kino ABC, From 3.30 p.m.

**International competition,** at Kino ABC. From 12 p.m. Total: 152. 99 min

Urban Tundra - 15', doc. Baltic Film and Media School, Estonia

From 11 p.m. Repetiror (SRB) / Bardhi (RKS)

Sergeant - 21' fic. Serbia  
Boys. Where are you - 11' fic. Serbia  
I'm good, I'm gone - 22' fic. Serbia

Thief - 24'30", fic. American Film Institute, USA

The Strange Ones - 15', fic. Columbia University, USA

# Swastikas Still Visible at Jewish Cemetery

Following the desecration last week of Prishtina's Jewish cemetery, the town hall and Institute for Monuments of Prishtina promised a speedy clean-up - but Nazi symbols are still visible on gravestones.



By Shengjyl Osmani

The attack on Prishtina's Jewish cemetery, which has been rejuvenated in recent years thanks to volunteers and charitable funding, drew widespread condemnation last week.

Some 36 graves were daubed with the swastika in an act described as "barbaric" by the Albanian-Jewish Solidarity Association.

Immediately following the incident last week, the Institute for Monuments of Prishtina assured the public that this act of vandalism would be erased as soon as possible, but racist graffiti can still be seen.

Kosovo President Atifete Jahjaga and Prime Minister Hashim Thaci also condemned the act and have called for police to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

President Jahjaga said that the damage to the cemetery is an act in complete contradiction to the traditions and values of the people of Kosovo, which is based on tolerance and respect for all people and all the monuments.

PM Thaci said that this attack is an attack against the state of Kosovo, and above all an attack on



Swastikas are still visible on graves at the Jewish cemetery despite promises of a clean-up.

traditional values of the people of Kosovo for tolerance, coexistence and respect.

The US Embassy has condemned this "act of hatred", which "was an offense not only against the families of persons buried there and of the Jewish community in Kosovo and beyond, but also an offense

against Kosovo's multi-ethnic state and society".

Moreover, the Albanian-Jewish Solidarity Association said that "such examples of racism and hatred have no place in Kosovo society ever, as these are acts of violence and chauvinism".

"For such barbaric acts there

is a need for stronger condemnations," the association told Prishtina Insight. "We need to be sensitive to the sins of xenophobia and ethnic bias."

Students of American University in Kosovo, who during the summer were engaged in a project to restore the cemetery, also expressed regret at the dam-

age.

"This is a criminal attack on our friendship and volunteering, but we will continue to prove that Kosovo's youth is a genuine society that respects the values of others," said Anesa Collaković, AUK student, who participated in the restoration project, this summer.

## Where Dreams Are Made?

### Bar Review:

# ANDËRR



By Donjeta Demolli

If you want to escape from the reality of ordinary Prishtina life, Anderr café, might be for you.

Anderr, which means dream in Albanian, is not only aimed at nighttime clientele, but also allows you to daydream.

By day, enjoy the delicious food and a coffee and during the night, drink some beer, homemade rakia or even a cocktail or two.

You never know, you may have an exciting dream after you drink a shot named "melage", angel, or lezet, relish.

The food is mainly fast food – think sandwiches, hamburgers or salads for an average of two euro.

Whiteness reigns everywhere in this venue, but are also Albanian elements in handmade carpets.

Large mirrors and pictures by Jetmir Idrizi complete the environment by making it even more

dreamlike.

Each week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, you can enjoy live music performed by jazz bands and DJs.

Anderr is also looking for artists who want a place to exhibit their work, or organise a workshop.

Albums of artists and bands are also available, including Garazhat e Bardha, Shpat Deda, Genc Salihu, Cute Babulja, OM Quartet and the Glasses.

Anderr currently has a photo exhibition by international photographers of Roma community children in Kosovo. The exhibition will be held on January 10, 2012.

Ex "Purple" café in Pejton  
Justinian str.  
Prishtinë

Tel: 045 636 667, 044 607 889

Visit Facebook for  
more information.

Working hours 7 am to 3 am



# Inside Prishtina

Prishtina through the Eyes of:

## Daniell Bey...

US Fulbright Researcher at  
USAID BEEP project



## Kosovo Designer Opens Boutique Shop Review: Venera Mustafa



By Florina Hajdani

A young Kosovar designer has opened a shop showcasing her modern, sometimes whacky clothes.

Venera Mustafa studied fashion

design, specialising in men's wear, in Paris, and holds a degree in sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Prishtina University.

She interned with Anne Valerie Hash and with the dynamic duo Luise & Franck, where she got her first glimpses of a professional fashion company.

Her path then took her to Copenhagen to another fashion label, Henrik Vibskov.



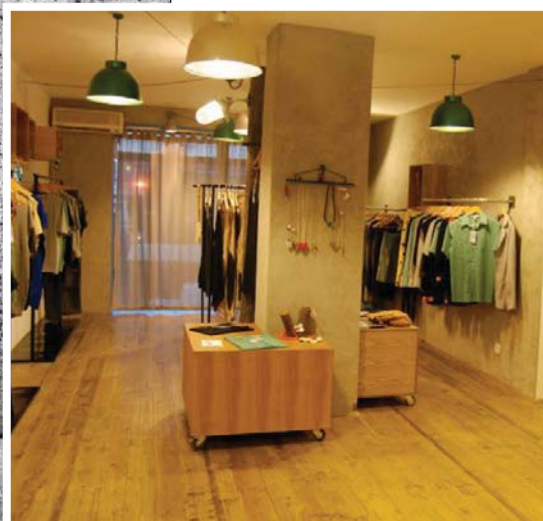
Venera Mustafa label was founded in 2010 as is the first ready-to-wear label based and produced in Prishtina. She opened her boutique to showcase, and of course sell, her work recently in Prishtina.

Inspired by western clothing designs, she also brings the spirit of Kosovo too, through great men and women clothing lines.

Despite the high quality and creative design, the clothing is also priced reasonably.

Pieces range from 20 euro up to 380 euro for a very special dress.

*Venera Mustafa  
21 'Fehmi Agani' street, in front  
of former OSCE building, first  
floor; www.veneramustafa.com  
+377 44 115 114  
+381 38 22 06 25.*



### What surprised you most about Prishtina?

I was most surprised about the friendliness and hospitality of the people in Prishtina. It made the transition to from home much easier.

### What's your favourite hangout?

I like to vary my routine and try to visit as many restaurants as possible. My favorite place to eat lunch would probably be Kroj because of the atmosphere, but I also enjoy having a coffee at The Index during work.

### What is the best thing about Prishtina?

The frequent celebrations and fairs in Mother Teresa Square are probably one of the best things about Prishtina. The opportunity to celebrate life in Kosova and to sample different goods from around the country can't be beat.

### What is the most annoying thing about Prishtina?

As we get further into winter, it is getting dark increasingly early. When it is dark outside at 4.30 pm, it makes the days seem longer and the night colder.

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

I would make efforts to help clear vehicles from the sidewalks. The lack of available parking has led to most people walking in the street amongst traffic, and it makes traveling by foot much harder.

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

I try to limit my macchiato intake to one or less a day. I prefer black coffee, so I usually make do with Nescafe, Turkish coffee, or brewed coffee when at home.

### What's your favourite Albanian word and why?

Miredita! It helps to get a conversation off on the right foot.

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

I use the Bajram Kelmendi house as a landmark.

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# The End of International Supervision

ICO signed its own death warrant by failing to stop Kosovo government breaching the Ahtisaari package, writes Andrea Capussela.



By Andrea Capussela

You have a splendid rose garden. A dashing young man picks some flowers every evening, for the eyes of his pretty girl.

So you take a guardian, and tell Romeo: "one flower per day, not more, and the guardian will give it to you".

And so they do, for a while: one flower per day. But the girl is everyday less impressed by the solitary rose, and her lover grows restless. One day he rushes into the garden, looks defiantly at the guardian, and cuts a whole bunch of roses: meekly, the guardian retreats into his shed. The next day the guardian sends him a polite note saying: "you were right to take a whole bunch, because this was the rule".

If you disagree with the guardian, you will scold him for the note and sack him. If you agree with him, the rule has implicitly been changed; but you will still sack him because under the new rule there is no need for a guardian.

Of course, I am talking of Kosovo's supervised independence: the Ahtisaari plan, the ISG and the ICO.

In August Kosovo adopted a law that openly breaches the Ahtisaari plan (it abolishes certain committees for the liquidation of SOEs which are expressly required by the Ahtisaari plan). Three weeks later the ICO wrote a polite note saying "you were right in doing this, and what Ahtisaari said about the liquidation of SOEs is now replaced by your law" (ICR Decision No. 2011/31: read it, it is published on the Official Gazette website). The ISG didn't scold or sack him.

So, this note formalises the end of the international supervision of Kosovo: breach, polite note, indifference. This was already obvious, you will say. But this note also announces the end of the Ahtisaari plan as a binding document, because it was not only Kosovo but also ICO that openly breached it.

ICO's boss was given the power to "interpret" the Ahtisaari plan, not to abolish or change it: only the ISG can do this. But the grandiloquent language of that note says that certain provisions of Ahtisaari "shall be replaced" by the new law: ICO acted beyond its powers (the replacement makes sense, but this is beside the point: ICO couldn't do it). Of course ICO had breached Ahtisaari several times before, such as in 2008, when it said that the elections that had to take place nine months after

independence had in fact (hop!) taken place a few months before it. But this time it proclaimed the breach through an official act, and nobody could or did react to it: ICO didn't act as a pouvoir constitué but as a pouvoir constituant. Better: as a pouvoir détruisant, which ended the life of Ahtisaari's plan as a legal document.

ICO didn't probably realise what it did with that decision and that word, 'replace': its thinking and language are sometimes imperfect. But the result is good: the Ahtisaari plan was never taken at face value, and finally form and substance will coincide. Except that article 143 of Kosovo's constitution – which gives legal force to the Ahtisaari plan and places it above the constitution itself – remains. If Kosovo and its friends aren't brave enough to delete it, they could use this argument: this article is the poetical expression of an aspiration, not a binding provision.

Cassandra would retort that changing a system by breaking is a boomerang that will come back to hit Kosovo: "What about the respect for the law, and the constitution? And – she will add – Kosovo needs rule of law more than clean air!". But Cassandras are not there to be listened to. I will return to ICO and Ahtisaari after having told you what happened to poor EULEX.

In August, Kosovo adopted also a law on the special chamber of the supreme court, a tribunal that deals with privatisation matters and which, under the Ahtisaari plan, must work with panels where EULEX judges are always the majority (two out of three). The new law leaves only one of them in each panel: if the special chamber was an EULEX court with some Kosovo judges, it now is a Kosovo court with some EULEX judges.

Of course also this law breaches the Ahtisaari plan, but in its polite note ICO duly wrote that it agrees also with this law: ICO has become a very generous lady.

This, of course, was an executive power of EULEX. This law, just like the other one, was written by a US lawyer who lives in Kosovo since Kosovo became a destination for US lawyers (footnote: in my presence, this man once claimed that he wrote more than one hundred laws for Kosovo; of course, he knew nothing of most of them: this Hammurabi is one of those people who write provisions like "breaching this law shall be illegal"; sadly, this is the quality of the rulers whom Washington sends to Kosovo). EULEX wasn't even consulted: this law simply written, sent to parliament and

approved: fait accompli. How sad EULEX must have felt: they had just said that they respect Kosovo's constitution, and this is the reward! Passers-by heard loud cries near their HQ «How could they do this to us, after all we did for them (including on applicable law, Limaj, CBK and the fake Marty task force)!». Officially, though, EULEX kept a stiff upper lip: it didn't utter a word and half of its privatisation judges are now moving out of that court in perfect dignity.

So, EULEX was shown the way in which it will be kicked out of Kosovo: with a law, as befits a sovereign state. And if tomorrow EULEX's prosecutors become a nuisance, and the US embassy so decides, their Justinian will concoct another law and – voila! – the SPRK is kosovarised.

Except that EULEX and the EU don't recognise Kosovo. I wonder how EULEX explained to Brussels the loss of this executive power: I hope they were honest and didn't say that everything is perfectly fine in that sector, and Kosovo's commercial courts are far superior of its criminal ones, because the opposite is true (incidentally, Kosovo would greatly benefit from EU assistance in commercial justice, to improve the business and investment climate and give some impetus to economic growth. You can imagine the conversation in Brussels: "What is that face? What have they done to you this time?" red-faced, EULEX explains: "... s-so we didn't s-say anything b-because K-Kuci didn't let us and also the ICO said it was ok." !!!

"Aaargh! I told you one hundred times that you mustn't listen to them! ... Idiot! Can't you defend yourself?... What have I done to have such a spineless mission." Unlike ICO, EULEX has a master.

But what about ICO, which motu proprio decreed the end of supervision, of Ahtisaari and of its own usefulness as its guardian: should it be dissolved?

Perhaps not, under three conditions.

The Ahtisaari plan is back to being just an interesting paper, as it was on 16 February 2008 and as it should always have remained. Many good ideas can be picked from it, choosing flower from flower, and ICO is full of good people who know Kosovo well: they can still be useful, if they abandon their fundamentalist approach to that paper. Indeed, while I worked there most of ICO's time was spent discussing whether this or that was in line with Ahtisaari and then thinking up inventive and surprising arguments to prove that it was (the summary of these arguments lies in ICO's Matrix, that pinnacle of fiction which you can read on its website).

The second condition is that it stops listening only to the ambassador who dresses up as a mediocre Belarusian oligarch: as a European taxpayer I decided that I have had enough of financing a dépendance of the US embassy. The last condition is that it waives all its powers: it is because of them that it never said anything useful, because speaking against something

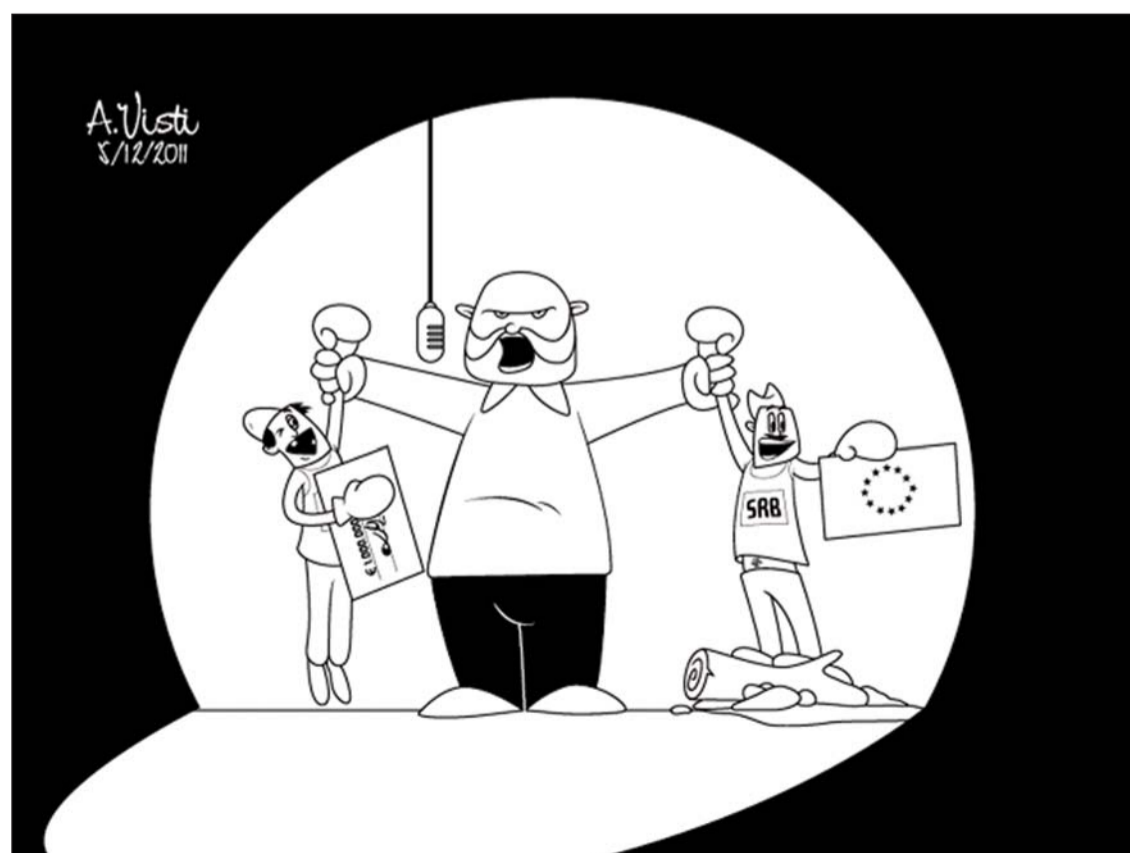
meant banning it, and it never had the courage to do it: if it becomes an advisory body, it will regain its freedom of speech and could offer the government useful critical advice.

So, it is not to the ISG that ICO must ask permission to stay, but to Thaci's poodle, the sharp Mr. Kuci, who seems to have been given the role of telling the international community what they should do. If he will agree, ICO will stay (and I will send them again my CV, having saved them).

Of course, the communitarians will have to commit their parricide: the goddess of decentralisation must die, and they must hold the following self-evident truth as their sacred belief, and repeat it every morning: "Decentralisation is a great idea, for its intrinsic value and political significance, both internal and external. But it doesn't follow that each municipality should be given control over secondary schools, primary health care, water, waste, much of the cadastre, and disproportionate transfers from the central budget to play with.". Also they are good and sensible people, and will understand; and, frankly, greater gods than theirs have succumbed to human progress.

*Andrea Capussela has a PhD on the cross-border aspects of competition law, and until 2008 worked on mergers and acquisitions. He then moved to Kosovo, where until the end of March he was the head of the economics unit of the International Civilian Office.*

And the winner is....



# Montenegro is Ecological on Paper Only

Jelena Marojevic, a coordinator for the NGO Green Home, says the Moraca dams project is another sign that Montenegro does not take its environmental claims seriously.



Nela Lazarevic

**Q: What are your biggest concerns about the building of hydroelectric power plants on the Moraca?**

A: When using hydro potential to produce energy, it is necessary to respect the ecological standards in that area and ensure negative effects are reduced to a minimum. Before making any decision about construction it is also necessary to prove that building such constructions serves the public interest and that there is no alternative that would satisfy both the need for energy and ensure the preservation of resources.

The activities we've seen so far have not proved that the construction of the Moraca dams is of the highest public interest and that the benefits of the project will be bigger and more significant for Montenegro's citizens than the damage caused by loss of land and resources and the negative impact on the environment.

The reason for that is that no real cost/benefit analysis has ever been done comparing expenses and benefits, while on the other hand the Study of Strategic Assessment Impact, SEA, of the Moraca dams does not contain adequate information about the potential impact on the environment.

This document is incomplete, significant biodiversity and hydrological data is missing and alternative solutions are not taken into account, which is why the study has been sent back for completion.

On the other hand, it is clear that the construction of dams on the Moraca would directly endanger the habitats of rare flora and fauna that are protected at international level: the so-called "emerald areas" of the Mrtvica and Mala Rijeka, which Montenegro has international commitments to protect.

**Q: Are all hydroelectric power plants undesirable, or are you worried only about this project? What about smaller hydropower plants?**

A: Having in mind the dynamics of the development of society and its evident need for new sources of energy, dams are a necessity of the times in which we live.

But every new construction, including these dams, regardless of whether they are as big as the ones on the Moraca, or whether we are talking about mini-dams, should be carefully planned with minimum impact on the environment and full respect for standards of protection.

Also, before entering the decision-making process, it is necessary at the start of the planning to provide for public participation and carry out consultations so as to take into account all the needs and alternatives and in that way reach the highest possible

level of agreement. This is missing when we are talking about these kinds of projects in Montenegro.

**Q: What alternative is there to the existing energy strategy?**

A: It was exactly this necessary degree of dialogue, agreement and public participation that was missing when the Energy Strategy of Montenegro was announced in 2007. Consequently, its realization is encountering obstacles and public opposition.

The existing strategy has not dedicated enough attention to planning and constructing mini-dams with respect to EU standards, improving energy efficiency and cutting losses on the energy network.

More importance should be dedicated to producing energy from alternative sources, such as wind and sun, which are not elaborated enough in the strategy.

**Q: Would producing more energy from wind, sun, etc, be adequate, in terms of the amount of energy produced?**

A: Energy from alternative sources, such as the wind and sun, represent the energy of the future. More and more developed and prosperous countries are turning to these forms of energy, trying to provide the highest possible percentage of energy from these sources, which are much more suitable in terms of the environment impact. The best way is actually a combination of alternative and renewable energy. Unfortunately, Montenegro is paying far too little attention to exploiting this potential, which is not being thoroughly researched.

**Q: What do you think about the underwater cable from Pescara to Tivat? How does this reflect on the energy situation in Montenegro and how will it affect the environment?**

A: Public discussion of this project, organized at the beginning of last summer, showed that the project will unquestionably have a big negative impact on the environment.

Unfortunately, we were not given the possibility to compare the losses and gains from this project so that a final decision could be brought in the interest of the citizens of Montenegro.

Owing to the lack of data about biodiversity and socio-economic and cost-benefit analysis, the discussion was about satisfying formalities, while we were deprived of many substantial answers.

It's clear that realization of this project will prompt the construction of many energy plants, not only in Montenegro but also in the region, with the aim of using its capacities for exporting energy.

**Q: What are the potentials of the development and promotion of the idea of Montenegro as an ecological state? Can this concept come alive?**

A: With the declaration of Montenegro as an ecological state, a strategic decision was taken for it to develop in line with the principles and requests of sustainability. However, 20 years after the declaration, the environment is still low on the list of political priorities while a big gap remains between the "declarative readiness" of numerous important strategies and documents and actual conditions on the ground.

The Energy Strategy is no exception... and in terms of development plans it contrasts with the principles and goals of sustainability, and with other strategies, such as the Sustainable Development Strategy, and international conventions.

It also conflicts with the idea of Montenegro as an "ecological" state. Unfortunately, the influence of the energy lobbies is making our country move in the direction of greater dependence on the will and interests of individuals and against the interests of society and the citizens themselves.

By all means, the idea of an ecological state represents a positive, good model for the promotion and development of society, but the adjective "ecological" is merited by actions – in other words it should be merited by what we do and by the measures we take to protect the living environment and the precious biological diversity that we own.

**Q: What are the next steps, now the tender to build the plants on the Moraca has closed unsuccessfully?**

A: The fact that there were no interested investors in the tender, which puts the project on hold, represents a clear signal for us in the civil sector that the Montenegrin government should turn towards sustainable energy solutions that benefit the Montenegrin economy, citizens and nature. The result of the tender is not surprising.

The civil sector and numerous domestic experts have been warning the government ever since 2007 that this kind of outcome could be expected, because the project and the way it was being projected by the government was not profitable, and contained big ecological and economic risks.

It is time for the government to clearly and realistically examine the situation and take into account the unprofitability of this project - unless the waters can be diverted from the Tara river to the Moraca, which isn't possible owing to parliament's Declaration on Protection of the Tara.

They should finally divert their focus towards sustainable production of electric energy and find solutions that will reconcile the needs of economic development with the conservation of the environment. Every future potential project on the Moraca will have to show and prove its sustainability and be ecological acceptable, whoever realizes it.

## Outside In An Albo-Serb Soap Opera



By Kreshnik Hoxha

With a Serb President sandwiched between fanatics of the Battle of Kosovo of 1389 and EU wannabes on one side, and a Kosovar Prime Minister caught between an apathetic whingeing society and a purposeless government possibly facing a motion of no confidence, we look set for another jaw-dropping tragicomedy, no matter what the optimists tell you.

Some, however, would have you believe that we are set for a happy ending. The relationship between Edita Tahiri and Borko Stefanovic has undoubtedly morphed into a cheesy Latin American soap opera with signs that all is going to end well, at least in this fictional world.

But don't be fooled: our fellow citizens in northern Kosovo have read a different script - the barricades may be coming down but it's difficult to imagine that barricaders have given up on the return of Tsar Lazar. And opposition parties on both sides of the border, or administrative crossing or whatever "integrated" terminology the EU wants to you to use, are busy trying to stop their respective governments from "sacrificing the national interest" and injecting a new plot twist in this tragicomedy.

MPs from Kosovo's Vetevendosje movement have rolled their sleeves up for a motion of no confidence to overthrow the guy who, according to them, is selling northern Kosovo to Boris Tadic and enabling Serbia to get closer to the EU. Opposition parties LDK and AAK were quick to express their unwillingness to back the motion, although that's unlikely to stop Albin Kurti's men trying.

Similarly, opposition leaders from Serbia are also very outspoken about the Serb national interest and saving Kosovo. The leader of Democratic Party of Serbia, Vojislav Kostunica, has stressed that Serbia should forget the EU membership and it must consolidate itself as an independent country. He can give up on the EU, but that will not change the fact that Serbia has a new neighbour.

The risk to Tadic, however, is that if Serbia does not get EU candidacy status his party will lose the upcoming elections to radicals, and Serbia will be floating on a fresh wave of nationalism. Then we can expect Serbia to attempt to change its capital to Gazimestan.

Thaci too has pledged what is left of his reputation on visa liberalisation and real progress towards the EU. News coming from Brussels indicates that the EU supports the "purpose" of starting the visa liberalisation negotiations. Now it remains to see how long it takes to move on from the "purpose" of starting the process to actually having tangible results. The ghetto of Europe certainly is a long way away from visa free travel.

On the other hand, the head negotiators are once again busy thinking of creative ways of presenting the agreements in Brussels as major victories for their own respective governments. Edita claims that Serbia recognised our borders. But, wasn't she the one yelling until now that it's all technical? Borko, too, says that Kosovar police and customs are there as monitors with no executive power because Kosovo is a Serb province. If that was the case, why doesn't Vojvodina have monitors? The weeks and months ahead of us have the potential to destabilise the whole region, or to stabilise it.

But, as long as Edita and Borko keep posing and shaking hands in front of the media, we can all at least pretend that we are civilised and keep watching the Latin American Soap Opera, as if it was real life.

## Ecosovo Making conferences less rubbish



By Elizabeth Gowing

Four bags of rubbish. It's not an assessment of the quality of the training, but it is one set of indicators for the impact of that capacity building session that you've just attended. Our international organizations love those workshops, seminars, joint working groups... and we can be sure of at least one metric of the long-term effects of each one held in the conference rooms and halls of Prishtina: four bags of rubbish. Plastic cups, and plates, water bottles and juice cartons, biscuit packets, delegates badges, unnecessary handouts... all bundled together in big bags ready to go to landfill.

At the end of a day of training run for local teachers, Michael König, Education Attaché at the Austrian Embassy in Prishtina, says he stood staring at the room, inspired by the content of what had been covered during the day – and depressed by the waste that they had generated.

"Together with our intern we brainstormed what we could do to generate less disposable rubbish at our next capacity building event. We always put a lot of planning into making sure that our approach to education is sustainable; we realized we needed to do the same for our approach to the little things, like the catering."

The model that Michael's team has now adopted has reduced waste to a fraction of what it was before.

First the team decided that they would use no disposable plastic. They invested in a set of 40 reusable cups and plates. Delegates were told that they needed to keep their cup during the day and if they wanted a clean one then they could wash it up. As the leader of the team, Michael himself washed up all the cups at the end of the day.

For lunch, different models were tried, including ordering 'proper food on proper plates'. A full plate was brought in, to great enthusiasm from the delegates. They ate off proper china with real knives and forks – and the woman who had been paid for the plate then took responsibility for washing up and returning the cutlery and crockery. On other occasions, each delegate was given a sum to go to buy their own lunch at local cafes.

"And we realized it wasn't just about the rubbish that was generated in front of our eyes, but the process by which all of these things had reached us," Michael says. "We didn't want to be responsible for the importing of food over long distances, with all the carbon cost of that, so our other principle was that if it was available locally-produced, we would buy it locally-produced."

The delicious biscuits were made by the local bakery rather than coming plastic-wrapped from a factory, and the juices offered to delegates at the Ministry of Education training were Frutomania or Mam's brands, made in Kosovo. Teas were from Herbakos. Water was Killokot or Dea, Rugova, Akull, Bonita – or any one of the other Kosovan brands. "And we started buying water in five litre containers rather than lots of smaller bottles," Michael says. "That reduced the rubbish considerably."

Delegates badges were collected at the end of the events to be reused, not thrown away, and handouts were reduced to those that were really necessary.

The result was plenty of discussion from the teachers attending the training, and just a tiny bag of waste to be disposed of at the end of each day. "It's made us all think more carefully about the stuff we throw away," he says. "And that's education for everyone."

*Elizabeth Gowing is a founder of The Ideas Partnership, a Kosovan NGO working on educational, cultural and environmental projects. She is also the author of the recently-published, Travels in Blood and Honey; becoming a beekeeper in Kosovo. She can be reached at theideaspartnership@gmail.com*

# BIRN Gala Raises 400,000 For Kosovo's Sick Children

A fund-raising evening organised and broadcast by BIRN as part of its 'Life in Kosovo' show has raised funds for the medical treatment of children at home and abroad.



By Faton Osmani

Lazio Footballer Lorik Cana's jersey and a dress worn by Kosovar actress Arta Dobroschi were among the top items auctioned off as part of BIRN's gala show, which raised 400,000 euro for charity.

The money will go to the Mother Theresa Association in Germany, which helps children from Kosovo receive out-of-country treatment and has funded improvements to the children's ward at Prishtina's main hospital.

Shaqir Gashi, president of the association, said this year's gala, the first staged in cooperation with BIRN, had been a great success.

The show, which included performances from pop stars and comedians, was broadcast live on Radio Television of Kosovo, RTK, the country's public broadcaster.

Jeta Xharra, BIRN Kosovo director and anchor of Life in Kosovo, said such an amount had never been collected in Kosovo in the space of only two-and-a-half hours.

"With these funds we can nurse back to health ten children, and this is what's most important," she said. [to treat each one of these gravely sick children will cost tens of thousands of euros each]

The event was staged in the recently opened Emerald Hotel on the outskirts of Prishtina.

Meanwhile banks operating in Kosovo have rounded up the final sum to 400 000 euro.

Shaqir Gashi, president of the Mother Theresa Association in Germany, said the final amount could reach as much as 450,000 euro as phone calls had continued after the closing stages of the broadcast on RTK.



The gala event was ninth yearly fundraiser for the Mother Theresa Association.

Albulena Sadiku, a project manager at BIRN, said a staff of more than 50 worked for two weeks to ensure that the night raised as much money as possible.

Comedian Besim Dina, who appeared on the show, said it gave him a special feeling to help children in need. "Tonight proved once again that our people know how to open their hearts and their wallets," he said.

The Kosovo Philharmonic Orchestra

performed under the baton of Albanian conductor Desir Sylejmani, who lives in Germany.

The invited guests in the hall, as well as the viewers at home, had the opportunity to hear the world-famous soprano singer Ermonela Jaho. Kosovar mezzo-soprano singer Flaka Goranci sang with the tenors Riad Ymeri and Rama Lahaj.

RTK's big band as well as Kosovo pop singers like Genta Ismaili and Dafina Zeqiri also performed.

Lorik Cana, who plays football for Lazio, Rome, provided his jersey for the charity auction, raising 15,000 euro from a caller in England.

The dress of actress Arta Dobroschi, worn for a premiere at the Cannes Festival, was bought for 7,000 euro.

"It was our first live show and it was a big challenge," host Xharra recalled.

During the evening, three imams from Kosovo, Shemsi Rrahimi, president of the Islamic Community in Vushtrri, Lutfi Ballek, an imam in Prizren, and Jetish Berisha, an imam in Mitrovica, decided to give a month's salary each as a donation.

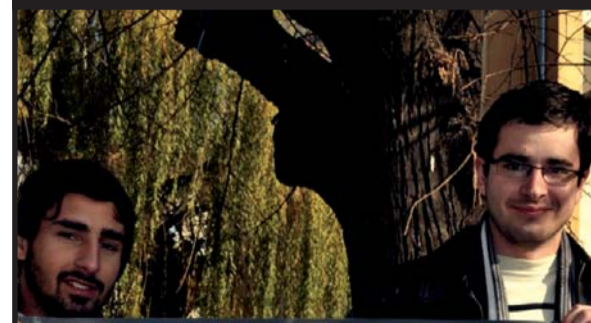
For the first time funds also came from several Kosovo municipalities. Novo Brdo, Mitrovica, Gjlane, Prizren, Kamenica, Glogovc, Obilic and Peja each gave 1,000 euro, while the capital, Pristina, donated 2,000 euro.

Four companies whose representatives were present inside the hall raised tens of thousands of euros.

"The solidarity exceeded our expectations and we are very pleased that we managed to do this for the children of the country," Xharra said.

Erelehta Popaj, who manned BIRN's call centre, noted that most of the calls came from Switzerland. "Most of the amounts they donated were for 100 Swiss Francs and above," she explained.

## Human Rights Campaigners Hit Streets



POSHTËRIM  
E VËRTETA  
DISKRIMINIM  
LIRIA E SHPREHJES  
SUNDIM I SË DREJTËS

URREJTJE  
SUNDIMI  
DREJTËS  
DHUNË  
DEMOKRACI  
DINJITET

BARAZI PËR  
RACIZËM  
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BARAZI PËR  
RACIZËM

NE T'GJITHË  
KEMI LINDË  
T'LIRË DHE  
T'BARABARTË

SIÇI S'MUND T'I MARR T'DREJTAT TUA

Youth Initiative for Human Rights activists are manning the streets across Kosovo to promote human rights. The activity is being organised to mark the international day of human rights on December 10. For more information on the campaign, visit the YIHR web or Nisma Ime Facebook profile.

STAY ONE STEP AHEAD

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## 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

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

### Medium

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

### Hard

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



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