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Corrupt Kosovo Officials Gamble With Patients' Lives

Callous Health Ministry officials denied life-saving drugs to some of the sickest people in Kosovo in pursuit of financial gain, an indictment seen by Prishtina Insight reveals.

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Kosovo PM Gets Cold Feet About Election Deal

Constitutional deal aimed at averting a major political crisis last year is in danger of unraveling as the Prime Minister appears to back away from promise of fresh elections.

By Genc Nimoni

Hashim Thaci, Prime Minister and head of the governing Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK, wants his government to serve a full term, sources say - jeopardizing a US-brokered political deal that averted a major constitutional crisis last year.

The deal involved political newcomer Atifete Jahjaga being announced as consensus candidate for the post of president on April 6, 2011.

This followed negotiations between Thaci's PDK and its coalition partner, the New Kosovo Alliance, AKR, as well as with the main opposition party, Democratic League of Kosovo, LDK.

The deal, brokered by the then US ambassador, was to put Jahjaga temporarily at the helm of the state while a new constitution was being developed.

This was to be followed by direct elections for a new president and, later, fresh general elections.

But almost 18 months on, the LDK has withdrawn from the con-

sultation process, accusing the PDK of attempting to block the fresh presidential elections.

A source close to Thaci confirmed to Prishtina Insight that the premier no longer supports quick presidential elections, as he believes it would force him to call an early general election ending his government's mandate early.

The advisor, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Thaci was more interested in seeing the government serve out its full term to 2014 than compromising with

the LDK.

"He doesn't support the resignation of Jahjaga as this would mean the end of the mandate for his government," the official said.

He said that Thaci believes the pressure on him is not currently strong enough to force him to go for presidential elections, which are now likely to be held at the same time as general elections. "He will only agree to them if he feels confident that PDK will win the elections easily," he added.

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West Nile Virus Claims Several Balkan Victims

A woman aged 53 in Skopje, Macedonia, died of the West Nile virus last Friday, the Institute for Public Health in Skopje announced.

She was the sixth fatal victim of the mosquito-borne virus in the Balkans, where several dozen others have been hospitalized in the past month...

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Djilas Scents Victory in Serbian Democratic Race

Senior Democratic Party officials are busy visiting party headquarters across the country, battling for the hearts and minds of delegates in the run-up to a crucial leadership election.

A new leadership for the party will be selected on November 10 when some 4,000 delegates will vote...

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Kosovo PM Gets Cold Feet About Election Deal

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According to same source, Thaci meanwhile wants to convince the opposition Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, AAK, led by Hague indictee Ramush Haradinaj, to join his crumbling coalition.

Deal gone awry:

The 2011 deal between PDK leader Thaci, AKR head Behgjet Pacolli and LDK chief Isa Mustafa followed a Constitutional Court ruling that deemed Pacolli's election as president in February 2011 illegal due to errors in the voting process.

Facing the possibility that Kosovo could have to go back to the ballot box just a few months after the PDK had been voted in, US ambassador Christopher Dell brokered a pact that saved the weak PDK-AKR government coalition.

This allowed Jahjaga, a police colonel much favoured by the US embassy, to become president unopposed.

The agreement stated that a commission to reform the system of presidential elections would then be formed immediately to draft constitutional changes so that the president would then be elected directly in future.

The commission was tasked with finishing this work within six to nine months "from the date of its founding".

Kosovo's first direct presidential elections were then to "be held no later than six months from the date on which the necessary constitutional and legislative amendments enter into force".

The parties agreed also to immediately form a commission on reform of general elections, which was to wrap up its work no more than 12 months from the date of its foundation.

The new General Election Law was supposed to include provisions that these polls would be held no later than 18 months from the date that the new law came into force.

But neither the reform of the presidential election system nor of the general election has been resolved.

Suspensions have also grown that the PDK is blocking the reforms in order to avoid an early general election.

Court ruling:

The presidential commission's proposals for changes to the constitution - including plans for a directly elected president and new powers for the head of state - went for evaluation before the Constitutional Court on March 23.

On May 4, it was followed by a supporting letter, signed by 37 parliamentarians from the ranks of the PDK, the LDK, the KKR, and the AAK.

But on July 20, the Constitutional Court rejected the 10th amendment, which stipulated that the "first presidential elections shall be held six months from the entry into force of the constitutional amendments and adoption of relevant laws", a key tenet of the agreement.

The ruling asserted that, with reference to the current President, "the entire people of Kosovo held an expectation that she would be their President for the next five years.

"To shorten that mandate, as Amendment 10 proposes, would deprive the



Will she or won't she? It's not clear whether President Atifete Jahjaga will resign or not.

people of Kosovo of their legitimate representative... at an earlier date than they were led to expect," it added.

While the agreed package of changes envisaged the president being allowed to step down, following the Court ruling there is now no provision obliging Jahjaga to do so, if and when parliament passes the other amendments.

Jahjaga is keeping her options open, telling Radio Free Europe on August 27 that she had no intention of stepping down before a full consensus was reached between the parties.

"I have expressed my will to respect the political agreement but it is for the parties to reach unity and find the modalities for the implementation and honouring of that agreement," she said.

"I am a factor of unity and it does not benefit me to take sides or to support the positions or standings of one or two political parties," she added.

"The resignation of the President has not been foreseen and I am not allowed to resign, because this would mean a different election procedure and an acting President," she concluded.

Numbers game:

The LDK is still pushing for an agreement to ensure that Jahjaga does stand down when the constitutional changes are introduced, even without the legal obligation, which was blocked by the Constitutional Court.

But the party withdrew from the commission in August, claiming that it could not support the other amendments without a binding agreement that Jahjaga would stand down, and that Thaci would hold general elections.

Senior members of the PDK, while happy to support the constitutional changes, are reluctant to agree to a new deal which will force elections. For the constitutional changes to be adopted, two-thirds of the parliamentarians must vote in favour, which means 81 votes.

The PDK has 34 seats in parliament and the LDK 27. The opposition Vetevendosje party has also said that its 12 MPs will not support direct elections for a president.

In a vote, it is thus unclear whether the changes will have enough support without

the LDK's backing.

Ismet Beqiri, head of the LDK's parliamentary caucus, recalls that his party seeks immediate introduction of the amendments, and elections according to the time frame stipulated.

"Thaci is trying to delay elections," he claimed.

His party colleague, Vjosa Osmani, a member of the commission on the constitution until last month, meanwhile said that "all the constitutional amendments are ready.

"The legislation on the president was finalised a long time ago," she added.

"However, voting on it is useless if the President does not open the path to early presidential elections and if the Prime Minister does not do the same regarding early parliamentary elections.

"To overcome the crisis, the Prime Minister should show his will to respect the agreement, and President Jahjaga should open the path for the election of a president by the people," Osmani said.

Hajredin Kuci, the deputy prime minister, from the PDK, told Prishtina Insight that the party had no secret agenda.

The commission's work on the constitutional amendments was complete and it was up to political negotiations now to decide what happens, he said.

"The politicians have to sit down and find a consensus as to how to act," he added. "For the PDK, any constitutional and legitimate solution is acceptable."

Kuci said that the main problem was the lack of talks between the PDK and LDK on resolving the issue.

Daut Haradinaj, a deputy from the opposition AAK, and brother of the party leader, says that the Constitutional Court has given the president a full mandate.

"We respect the court and we do not think that this [elections] is the most important issue today, while we are considering talks on problems in the [Serb-run] north," he said.

The PDK leadership met last week and established a commission to evaluate its struggling coalition with Pacolli's AKR.

The same PDK source added that the Prime Minister is concerned of differing opinions within the party leadership about the coalition, which might lead to a fiery congress in the coming months.

News in brief

Thaci Urges EU to Seal Agreement With Kosovo

Kosovo's leader says he wants the European Union to formalise its relationship with the country by opening negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement - the first step towards eventual membership.

Prime Minister Hashim Thaci made the call at a meeting with the EU's High Representative, Catherine Ashton, in New York on Monday, when he asked Brussels not to delay the process with Kosovo.

"Kosovo-EU relations should go beyond courtesy and good manners in the direction of concrete contractual relations sealed with a process of stabilisation and association," Thaci said.

Serbia Deputy PM Rules Out Kosovo Partition

Suzana Grubjesic, Serbian Deputy Prime Minister in charge of EU integration, said that the partition of Kosovo might well be the most rational solution to the issue of the territory, but it was not possible today as the US and other Western countries opposed the idea.

"It could have been done five or six years ago when the atmosphere in the international circles favoured something like that," Grubjesic told Serbian broadcaster B92 on Monday.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in February 2008, but Belgrade does not recognise the loss of what it still considers a province.

Grubjesic said that the new government will not recognise Kosovo's independence, but will try to normalise day-to-day relations.

UN Tells Kosovo to Maintain Stability

The UN secretary general has told Kosovo leaders to preserve the country's stability and solve all problems through dialogue.

At a meeting held in New York, Ban Ki-moon has told Kosovo's President Atifete Jahjaga and Prime Minister Hashim Thaci that the European Union's role in the Balkans region is essential, and its guidance should be followed.

"It is important for Kosovo to maintain stability... all issues should be solved by peaceful means. The entire region should look ahead to Euro-Atlantic integrations," Ki-moon is quoted as saying in the press release issued after the meeting by the Kosovo side.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. Since then 89 states, including 22 EU member states and the US, have recognized it.

Serbia and Kosovo started EU-mediated talks in Brussels in March 2011, three years after Kosovo declared independence, which Serbia refuses to recognise.

President Atifete Jahjaga accused Serbia of jeopardising Kosovo's security and territorial integrity by continuing to finance illegal Serb structures in the northern part of Kosovo.

She said that such security structures keep frightening the ordinary Kosovo Serbs, with whom the Albanian-led government in Prishtina wants to have a dialogue.



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Kosovo Kids Taught False History, Study Shows

Kosovo's high school pupils are taught incorrect facts about what really happened during the 1999 war, says the Humanitarian Law Centre study.



By Fatmir Aliu

The study by the Humanitarian Law Centre - Kosovo, was conducted at a number of secondary schools across Kosovo and is based on one-to-one and group interviews with children aged between 15-17 years-old about the war and its victims.

Kreshnik Sylejmani, the project coordinator, said that the findings show that pupils do not know what happened during the Kosovo war in 1998 and 1999.

"We have asked the kids about the number of killed and disappeared in Kosovo during the Kosovo war. Some children answered 250,000 victims. Their text books do not give them that information," Sylejmani said.

The conflict in Kosovo between Serb security forces and the insurgent Kosovo Liberation Army, claimed around 10,000 victims, the majority Kosovo Albanians. The war ended after a 78-day NATO air-bombing campaign in 1999 that ousted Serb armed forces from the province, which was then put under UN administration.

Kosovo declared independence in 2008 - a move recognised by 89 UN member states, including the United States and 22 EU members, but challenged by Belgrade.

The HLC's round-table about transitional justice and facing the past, organised on Friday in Prishtina, found that the lack of historical facts in the school curriculum about these painful events, is detrimental to children's education and for reconciliation in the region.



During its study, the centre played tapes of war victims, describing their sufferings during the war, without revealing their ethnic background.

"Children in some regions did not even know that there were victims on the Serb side too, when they found out that the voice they were listening was of a Kosovo Serb victim. The children denied that there were Serb victims during the war, it was difficult for them to cope with the information we passed onto them," Sylejmani added.

Shkelzen Gashi, a political scientist from Kosovo, presented his comparative study of 7th grade primary school history text books in Kosovo, Albania and Serbia.

He said that he had found a massive falsification and distortion of data, and a misrepresentation of events, in both the Albanian and Serb text books.

"Look at the famous events of 1389. In Serbia, the Battle of Kosovo is represented as a war, sanctioned by God himself. The fact that other Balkan nations also fought against the Ottoman Empire is not mentioned," he said.

"In Kosovan books, the participation of other nations in the battle is over emphasised. Even Milos Obilic is transformed into an Albanian, and called Milos Kopiliq. He is even said to have come originally from Drenica, where our current Prime Minister is from," Gashi added.

During his investigation, Gashi discovered that the Albanians and Serbs highlight the crimes of the other side, while remaining mute about their own. Kosovan history books fail to mention that Kosovo Serbs were killed during the 1999 war, while Serb books remain silent about the Albanians that were killed.

What he finds even more problematic is the hate speech that is used throughout the text books.

"I was horrified to find that instead of facts, figures and arguments, you find hate speech. The Kosovan books talk about state genocide against the Albanians. The Serb books, on the other hand, present the Kosovo Albanians as terrorists and fascists. These extreme views should not be found in history books for children aged of 15 and 17," he said.

"Believe me, the history books that Hashim Thaci, Ivica Dacic and Sali Berisha read when they were in school were so much better than the current ones. At least they did not contain hate speech," he added.

Albanians Want Independence Google Doodle

Some 30,000 activists have signed an online petition asking the internet giant to mark Albania's 100 years of independence with a Doodle.



By Besar Likmeta

"Albania is a small country, but with a big history," the petition for a special Doodle reads. "It would mean a lot for every single Albanian around the world if one of the world's biggest companies on the Internet recognised our independence, especially because it is the 100th anniversary," it adds.

So far the online petition, posted on Change.org, has collected nearly 30,000 signatures.

A Google Doodle "is the fun, surprising, and sometimes spontaneous changes that are made to the Google logo to celebrate holidays, anniversaries, and the lives of famous artists, pioneers, and scientists," the internet giant says in its website.

Google notes that demand for Doodles has increased



in recent years, with more than 1,000 of them already published. The company has set up a team who meet regularly to brainstorm and decide which events will be celebrated with a Doodle.

"The doodle selection process aims to celebrate interesting events and anniversaries that reflect Google's personality and love for innovation," the search giant concludes.

Editor's Word Path Less Trodden



By Lawrence Marzouk

As you awoke this morning, September 28, you were no doubt blissfully unaware of the enormity of the day ahead. This 24-hour stretch has been "International Right to Know Day" since 2003.

In recent years, the calendar has become a dizzying mess of official "Days", with every minor pressure group and nutty fad pinning their name to the Gregorian periodical.

With so few days to go around, organisations have been forced into cohabitation, their shared birthdays vying for column inches and airtime.

March 20 is both "International Day of the Francophonie" and "International Day of Happiness", which will appear a bizarre blend to anyone who has tried to order a coffee in Paris.

The next day is both World Puppetry Day and World Forest Day, during which you can either celebrate the protection of trees or their use for entertainment, or perhaps both.

The "Day" situation has clearly got out of hand but, I am, nonetheless, going to take this opportunity to tell you why you should cherish today, Right to Know Day.

When I first moved to Kosovo more than three years ago, I arrived with a freshman's naiveté to the legal hurdles facing journalist in the Balkans.

I had grown up as a reporter at the time of the roll-out of Freedom of Information laws across the world, using them to good effect in England.

I wanted to carry on this type of work in Kosovo, but was warned off with the usual "it will never work here". I ignored the advice.

At first progress was slow, but eventually we started to hack through the layers of bureaucracy, making allies with some helpful institutions, and clearing a path for others to follow.

Using publicly available documents and Kosovo's Law on Access to Public Documents, we gathered enough information to show serious conflicts of interests involving Fatmir Limaj, then the Ministry of Transport. The investigation we carried out, and published in Prishtina Insight in April 2010, forms the backbone of EULEX's case against Limaj.

In 2011, we again followed the paper trail, revealing how four companies - run by the same people and from the same office - had been the only bidders for a fire engine, which was sold to Prishtina municipality for 30 times its actual value, and has since been dogged by technical problems.

We have revealed how mayors were spending tens of thousands of euros in business partners' restaurants, how donors to political campaigns were winning big tenders just after elections, how corners were being cut on building monuments to war heroes, how major firms had won privatisation deals illegally and who the real owners of Kosovo's biggest private mobile telecommunication firm were.

The documents often showed how the rich and powerful were abusing their positions to rob the citizens of Kosovo.

Disappointingly, none of these untouchables has yet faced justice, but at least our work has given the public a clearer view of the moral landscape of their overlords, based on trustworthy public documents.

This is my last editor's word for Prishtina Insight as I return to England tomorrow, but in the coming days BIRN will launch a new section of its Albanian-language website, Gazeta Jeta ne Kosove, dedicated to our quest for documents, and mission to hold the powerful to account.

Under the name of the Centre for Public Openness, we will continue to use public documents for investigative work, monitor the implementation of the Law on Public Documents, and press the state for much more transparency, thanks to funding from the Open Society Institute.

This week we received confirmation from the Cadastral Agency, which had initially rejected our requests for land ownership information, that our subsequent appeal to the Ombudsperson had created a precedent for all citizens - and importantly journalists - to access their documents.

The work we have done in recent years has aimed to create paths for others to follow and use the Right to Know law, as well as understand the value of public documents.

This is important - as we cannot do it alone. I urge you all to investigate who owns that suspicious property on your street corner, or the plot of land through which a new road is being built. You don't need to be journalists to do this, just someone who cares about justice and their country.

International Right to Know Day reminds people of the importance of transparency.

But before we get too obsessed with marking the occasion, it's worth remembering that September 28 is also World Rabies Day.

So go and use your right not just today, but every day, as the untrodden path covers over quickly.

Corrupt Kosovo Officials Gamble With Patients' Lives

Callous Health Ministry officials denied life-saving drugs to some of the sickest people in Kosovo in pursuit of financial gain, an indictment seen by Prishtina Insight reveals.



By Petrit Collaku

Senior Health Ministry officials were willing to sacrifice the lives of people suffering from life-threatening conditions in the pursuit of bribes, according to the indictment against former ministry secretary Ilir Tolaj and ten others, involving former minister of health, Bujar Bukoshi.

The EU's law mission, EULEX, accuses Tolaj of abusing his official position by interrupting or cancelling tenders for drugs as well as soliciting bribes in a number of cases.

The most shocking allegations concern repeated cancellations of tenders for drugs to treat leukemia and multiple sclerosis.

An investigation by Prishtina Insight into the problems in public hospitals meanwhile shows that chronic problems continue with the supply of drugs and the associated tenders.

These systemic snags continue to endanger patients' lives, forcing many to solicit cash from friends and relatives to buy private medicine at home or abroad.

Shocking indictment:

The indictment, filed by EULEX prosecutor Maria Bamieh on July 12, accuses Tolaj, the ministry's former Permanent Secretary, Zenel Kuqi, former head of procurement,

and Bekim Fusha, former head of pharmaceuticals, of risking patient's health for corrupt purposes.

Bujar Bukoshi resigned from the post of deputy prime minister on July 9, 2012.

He is accused of abusing his official position during his tenure as Minister for Health between April and October 2010. Allegedly, Bukoshi backed Tolaj and did not sign the contracts with various pharmaceutical companies.

The indictment says they repeatedly cancelled tenders between January 1 2009 and December 31, 2010, which should have been awarded to Sante Pharm, a firm owned by Milliam Abdullahu.

This resulted in shortages of the drug Beta Inferferon, needed to treat multiple sclerosis, as well as Fluradabine and Eterncept, drugs used for leukemia.

"Abdullahu was not liked by the Ministry for previously going to the press," the indictment reads. "He was not willing to pay the 'cut' that Hajrullah Fejza requested from him." Fejza was "Director of Quality" at the ministry.

"The Ministry continued to cancel and annul tenders for these drugs supplied by Sante Pharm rather than use the exemption to Procurement Laws," it added.

The exemption allows tenders to go ahead with only one bidder if there is only one supplier, but officials continued to cancel the tenders under the pretext that they required more offers.

"Thereby, Ilir Tolaj, Bekim Fusha and Zenel Kuqi let patients in Kosovo, suffering from leukemia and multiple sclerosis, go without medication at the same time as spending the budget on drugs for less life threatening conditions," the indictment concludes.

The indictment also notes that while the trio boasted of having saved 4 million euro from the budget in various cuts, at the same time they also claimed they did not have money in the budget for multiple sclerosis and leukemia drugs.

Kuqi, head of procurement, claimed there was not enough money to purchase the drugs when questioned as part of the investigation.

However, he accepted that the Ministry had been fined 30,000 euro for not supplying the leukaemia drug Glivec.

He claimed that the tender for the leukaemia drug Imnatib had been cancelled twice as he wanted to get a cheaper company in Kosovo to supply these drugs.

All three deny wrongdoing. The case is currently before a judge, who is expected to rule soon about whether a full trial will be held.

No solution in sight:

An investigation by Prishtina Insight has meanwhile confirmed that the Ministry of Health contin-



Diellza Nimonaj, 19, suffers from leukemia. She has been forced to seek treatment outside of Kosovo.

ues to struggle with tenders, although there is no suggestion this is due to corruption.

Patients told this newspaper that they were being forced to look for other ways to find the drugs that they need.

Agim Ilazi, 62, from Gjilan, is one of many facing this dilemma. After doctors told him a few months ago that his tumour had returned, he had to undergo surgery for a second time at his own expense.

The first operation, which took place in October 2008 in Zagreb, Croatia, cost him 15,000 euro.

He was told to continue treatment for three years by using Gleevec, which helps block the return of tumours.

He blames the recurrence of the tumour this year on the fact that he had been unable to finish the full treatment course.

Ilazi received the drugs he needed free of charge at the public hospital in Gjilan until July 2010.

"After July [2010], for a few months in a row, I managed, after a lot of effort, to get treatment, but it was costing me 3,000 euro a

month, he said.

The mechanical engineer, who works for the publicly owned post and telecom firm PTK in Gjilan, said he eventually ran out of money and so had to stop the treatment.

"I don't think the tumour would have come back if I had continued the treatment to the end," Ilazi said.

Ilazi was hospitalized in Tirana, Albania in May 2012 for a second operation.

He said he then started chemotherapy with the financial help of others but does not know

how long he will be able to continue paying for it.

Jeton Lika, from the Association for Supporting Patients with Leukemia, said patients with this life-threatening disease have suffered greatly in Kosovo, particularly owing to the shortage of appropriate and affordable drugs.

Lika said that his association is small and wields little influence, but is working to help those struggling with the illness. "The situation is very difficult for these people," Lika said. "Something more should be done for them."

Dr Curr Gjocaj, head of the Department of Health Services at the Ministry of Health, said his department had raised the supply problems with the relevant institutions, resulting in the Ministry of Health being fined 30,000 euro.

But problems with tenders for medicines continue to disrupt the supply chain.

According to the agency responsible for public procurement, KRPP, of the ministry's 19 tenders in 2011, 14 were for the supply of medicine and all 14 were delayed by complaints from defeated bid-

ders.

On three occasions the tenders had to be withdrawn because of ministry errors.

In 2010, complaints from companies participating in the tender delayed four of the five tenders that the Ministry of Health issued for medicines.

In 2009, 12 tenders for medications resulted in 12 complaints from companies.

This year, according to KRPP, the Ministry of Health has initiated six tenders, one of which was for cancer-drugs, one for antiviral medications and one for

HIV/Aids treatment.

Three of the six tenders have been annulled already, while two have been re-tendered.

"At the moment, the Ministry of Health has around 80 active valid contracts and each in due time will expire after which the procedure needs to be restarted," Gjocaj noted.

"A 100-per-cent fulfillment of the Essential List [of drugs] has never been achieved since the [Kosovo] war," he added.

"And it won't happen if the budget for healthcare remains at this level, where all kinds of diseases for 2 million people are allocated 18.5 million euro a year."

Forced to go private:

As problems with the drugs supply continue, patients are thrown back on their own resources.

When doctors diagnosed Diellza Nimonaj, from Decan, with leukemia on August 21, her father, Mirsat, who works for the local authority in Decan, raised the cash to send her to Turkey.

Doctors in Prishtina said that they "could not do anything for her" there. "We don't have any treatments here, so find a solution," Mirsat says the doctors in Prishtina told him.

The doctors also told Mirsat that the disease is curable, but that treatment would be costly.

"The PTK helped me to leave soon after to Istanbul with 6,900 euro," he said adding that an understanding was found with the president of the board of PTK, Rexhe Gjonbalaj, a fellow student of Mirsat.

"Diellza is at the American hospital in Istanbul and is undergoing chemotherapy at the moment," he added.

He hopes that his daughter will make it through with chemotherapy and that no further, more expensive treatment will be needed.

Family and friends have been busy using social networks to raise funds for her case. This type of aid is usual and frequent in Kosovo for people who suffer from serious conditions.

"This financial assistance is absolutely necessary to save the life of my 19-year-old girl," Mirsat said.



Cancer patients have been forced to do without the drug Gleevec in Kosovo

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Publisher:

BIRN

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Mensa e Studenteve, first floor

10000, Prishtina

Kosovo

Phone: +381 (0) 38 24 33 58

Fax: +381 (0) 38 22 44 98

lawrence@birn.eu.com

Editor-in-Chief:

Lawrence Marzouk

lawrence@birn.eu.com

Editorial Team:

Jeta Xharra, Marcus Tanner,

Petrit Collaku, Artan Mustafa, Gresa

Musliu, Parim Olluri, Jeton Musliu and

Donjeta Demolli.

Marketing, Sales & Distribution:

info@pristinainsight.com

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Kosovo Disability Campaigner Wants Lunch Date with Obama

She has yet to secure lunch with the world's most powerful man, but with Hiljmnijeta Apuk's track record of overcoming adversity few would bet against her realising her dream of meeting Barack Obama.



By Mihane Mustafa

Hiljmnijeta Apuk is a Bosnian, little person, living in Kosovo's most troubled, ethnically-divided city, Mitrovica.

But the 56-year-old has not let disability or discrimination get in the way of her work. In 2007, Apuk was listed as one of the most influential women in Kosovo by the then US Ambassador Tina Kaidanow in a diplomatic cable, published by the organisation Wikileaks.

She is the director and founder of the NGO "Little People of Kosova", and represented Kosovo at the UN General Assembly's International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignities in 2006 in New York and again this month.

Between September 12 and 14, Apuk presented her work to the other delegates, including leading a discussion on how to empower students with disabilities and an exhibition of peoples with disabilities from different cultures. Apuk told Prishtina Insight: "We wanted to show that we are here as well."

She speaks with great admiration of the work that the USA has done to improve the rights of people with disabilities, especially compared to progress in her homeland.

She points to the White House's



Hiljmnijeta Apuk is director and founder of the NGO Little People of Kosova

website, which lists strengthening healthcare and work opportunities for disabled people as a priority.

A lawyer and economist by profession, Apuk's organisation, The Little People of Kosova, has 125 members and was founded in 1990, the first of its kind in the Balkans.

During the war, the office was set ablaze but she rebuilt it from ashes and the organisation reopened in 2002.

Apuk is convinced that everyone has a lot to give to society. "I carried on my education and was a top student," she said, adding she was the only one of her family of seven with a disability.

Her mother is Bosnian, and her

father, "Qerkez", or Circassian in English, a mostly Muslim people from the Caucasus, and one of Kosovo's smallest minorities. She credits her mixed background as having given her a more open perspective to people and diversity. Her organisation has members from all ethnic communities in Kosovo.

According to her, strengthening the rights of people with disabilities remains a major challenge in Kosovo. "This is the most discriminated group in society," she said.

In October, Anuk will start a lobbying campaign to get people with disabilities to work. "We have organised [a campaign] in all the cities of Kosovo," she said.

"Let's see who will offer jobs."

Some 99 per cent of disabled people in Kosovo, she added, are unemployed.

And while employment is a major problem in Kosovo, Apuk adds that there are many other issues – such as a lack of access to sports.

She mentions the case of Daut Bytyqi, a member of the organisation, who participated in world championship for people with disabilities and broke the World Record in javelin. "In 2005, in Rambouillet, France, he broke a record but none of the institutions have helped him to continue with this sport."

For more information visit www.lpkosova.com/

West Nile Virus Claims Several Balkan Victims

An outbreak of the virus is reported to have killed half a dozen people in the region so far.



By BIRN

A woman aged 53 in Skopje, Macedonia, died of the West Nile virus last Friday, the Institute for Public Health in Skopje announced.

She was the sixth fatal victim of the mosquito-borne virus in the Balkans, where several dozen others have been hospitalized in the past month, according to officials in Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia.

Last Thursday, a woman aged 50 died from the virus in central Kosovo, the head of Kosovo's Institute for Public Health said.

The victim was hospitalized on September 6 in a critical condition and died on September 14.

Three elderly persons have died of the West Nile virus in Serbia, health officials there said.

Apart from viral encephalitis, the patients had other health complications, Serbia's Tanjug news agency reported last week, adding that all three died last month, but that it "took time to determine through analyses that the cause of death was really viral encephalitis".

Five infections have been reported in Croatia, but no deaths.

The virus, which was discovered in Uganda in 1937, is carried by birds and spread to humans by mosquitoes.

While most infected people show only mild symptoms, or none at all, severe cases involve headaches, high fevers, or even comas and paralysis.

Photo News:

Fushe Kosove Cleaned Up

Inhabitants of the neighbourhoods 028 and 029 in Fushe Kosove are celebrating after the illegal rubbish dump near their homes was cleared up by contractors from the Municipality. Residents claimed the dump was a health risk to their families.



Spy Chief's Firm Wins Govt Contracts

Kobit PC, led by former spy chief Kadri Veseli, has won a series of contracts with state institutions, as well as with firms closely connected with the ruling PDK, Prishtina Insight has learnt.



By Parim Olluri

An investigation into a firm managed by Kadri Veseli, former chief of the now disbanded unofficial secret service, SHIK, has revealed a string of contracts between the firm and the Office of the Prime Minister, municipalities, and even Kosovo's Security Council.

The company, Kobit PC, a regular advertiser in the pro-government press, boasts on its website of business links to other firms run by former SHIK operatives and to members of the ruling Democratic Party of Kosovo, including a major bank and the Kosovo Football Federation.

A leading security expert has questioned whether necessary measures to protect secrecy are being taken, given the sensitive position that Veseli previously held.

Kobit PC, which has offices in Prishtina and Mitrovica, was founded in 2008 by Hylmi Veseli, Kadri's cousin, listed as the sole owner, according to the official business register.

Hylmi told Prishtina Insight that his uncle is chief executive of the firm.

SHIK, which was seen as the

intelligence-wing of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's PDK, was officially disbanded in 2008.

But many question whether the organisation has in fact ceased operations.

According to official tender documents that Prishtina Insight has seen, the Office of the Prime Minister awarded a deal to Kobit PC for IT equipment for 8,500 euro in July 2009.

In March 2010, the Kosovo Security Council then announced that Kobit PC had won a tender for 10,000 euro to supply IT equipment.

The Kosovo Security Council offers advice regarding security, drafts strategies and provides security information to the government.

Other public institutions to have given business to Kobit PC include the municipalities of Malishevo and Fushe Kosove, the Clinical University Centre of Kosovo, QKUK, Kosovo's main hospital, and the State Archive.

The company won a contract from QKUK worth just under 10,000 euro in December 2009.

A contract worth 3,000 euro from Malishevo followed on March 29, 2011. In May 2011, Kobit PC won a tender to supply toners to the municipality of Fushe Kosove for 5,000 euro.

The international auditing firm, Deloitte, also found that computer

appliances were bought by Obilic from Kobit PC without a public tender.

Prishtina Insight has also discovered that computers used by the Kosovo Judicial Council appear also to have come from Kobit PC, although no tender documents could be found.

Other documents issued by the Council, including those from the procurement department, include "meta-data" showing that Kobit PC had installed Microsoft Word. The Council said it had not bought computers directly from Kobit PC.

The Office of the Prime Minister declined to answer questions relating to the contracts, while other institutions which had done business with Kobit PC said they selected the firm because it was the cheapest.

Florian Qehaja, a security expert and head of the Kosovar Center for Security, said that institutions needed to be particularly vigilant about security when dealing with firms linked to political parties.

Work with PDK-Linked firms:

Among the firm's private customers, according to its webpage, are Victory College and Kosova Petrol, both owned by Bedri Selmani, a former PDK assembly member and advisor to Thaci.

Victory Hotel, where Thaci's party has held many conventions, was built illegally on state-owned land, according to the Kosovo Privatisation Agency.

In April, Prishtina Insight also reported that Kosova Petrol profited from the use of more than 20 petrol stations, which actually belong to the Croatian firm, INA.

According to the earlier investigation, Kosova Petrol used the stations without paying rent for ten years, depriving the state of at least 4 million euro.

The UN authority in Kosovo, UNMIK, granted Selmani a short-term rental of the petrol stations immediately after the war in order to prevent a petrol shortage.

Selmani refused to comment on these contracts when contacted by Prishtina Insight.

Another client of Kobit PC is the Kosovo Football Federation, FFK, whose deputy president is the PDK assembly member and former SHIK operator, Bekim Haxhiu.

"I'm only learning today that there are computers from the company owned by Kadri Veseli," Haxhi told Prishtina Insight earlier this month.

"I did not even know that this company supplies the [football] federation, or that Kadri managed it."

Kobit PC is a regular advertiser in the pro-PDK newspapers, Express and Lajm.

The Fortnight in Headlines

Zeri, September 19

For three years in a row, the Ministry of Education couldn't find the necessary funds to cover the publication of 150 academic books. The books are works of ten of the world's most prestigious universities, which gave the green light for the translations. The ministry argues that it has sent a request to the government for the publication of the books, but that it received no financial support.

Koha Ditore, September 21

Early elections are considered a real option to form a credible government. The scenario for such an enterprise, according to sources within the PDK, is foreseen by "pushing" Behgjet Pacolli to resign from his post as the Deputy Prime Minister. If he refuses, then it might happen that he get's sacked, because of the recent corruption affair.



Zeri, September 24

At the time when the pressure is mounting for new negotiations between Prishtina and Belgrade, Serb Prime Minister Ivica Dacic is bringing back to the table the issue of Kosovo's partition. Such statements from senior Serb politicians, is seen by analysts in Kosovo, as bringing into question the overall stability situation in the Balkans.

Express, September 25

Kosovo's President Atifete Jahjaga is not legally married with Astrit Kuci. As such he is not entitled to the privileges and competencies as described by the law for "the first man". Despite this, he has a diplomatic passport and takes part in important meetings with the Head of State abroad. Kuci has even accompanied President Jahjaga at New York.

Zeri, September 26

Pictures and bills! That's all that the Kosovo delegation is sending from New York, after spending a couple of days in the US to lobby for more recognitions. But in fact, no UN member has recognised Kosovo and as such the mission is deemed a failure.



Hashim Thaci's office has bought a number of computers from the firm run by the head of SHIK, Kadri Veseli



Millions Vanish in North Kosovo's Black Hole

Criminals from both Kosovo and Serbia have made fortunes from cross-border smuggling into Serb-run northern Kosovo, depriving both countries of millions of euro a year in lost duties.



By Dinko Gruhonjiq,
Besiana Xharra

“Brotherhood and unity” between ethnic Albanian and Serbian criminals is being blamed for the loss to Serbia of more than 210 million euro between January 2008 to June 2011 - and 40 million euro a year to Kosovo.

The losses are attributed to Serbia's decision, which it revoked in the summer of 2011, not to collect Value Added Tax on products sold in the northern Serb-controlled part of Kosovo.

Another factor behind the losses is the general lack of rule-of-law in the troubled region, which has allowed smugglers to act with virtual impunity.

Goods brought into Kosovo across northern Kosovo border crossings - both official and unofficial - have found their way into shops in the rest of Kosovo having evaded all import duties.

Some have also found their way back into Serbia where they are sold, without duties having been collected on them.

The situation has improved in the past year, officials on both side of the border say, but criminality persists.

Kosovo Customs told Prishtina Insight that even this year, they estimate that they have lost about 9 million euro through smuggling, mostly through the north.

Research carried out by the Center for Regionalism, an NGO in Novi Sad, in Serbia, and by Mother Theresa, an NGO in Prishtina, between 2008 and June 2011, said Serbia lost 90 million euro in that period in unpaid VAT for oil products, 120 million euro in vehicles brought into Kosovo

and 3 million euro in telecommunications.

The aggregate loss is likely to be significantly higher, however, as the Serbian government has not applied its normal VAT rate of 18 per cent to northern Kosovo since 2006.

The study also reveals that in the last decade Kosovo was the ninth most important market for Serbian exporters, making up about 4 per cent of exports, or around 300 million euro in 2012.

But, according to field research, which included interviews with transporters, intermediaries, and producers, it is believed that unregistered exports from Serbia are worth another 200 million euro a year, which would bump Kosovo up to Serbia's fifth most important market.

Exports from Kosovo to Serbia, on the other hand, are insignificant. They were worth only about 4 million euro in 2010, though unregistered exports are believed to have been worth another 10 million euro.

“Kosovo is of vital interest to Serbia from the viewpoint of exporters and the general economy,” the study, recently presented at the Media Centre in Belgrade, noted

The researchers noted that many goods transported to the north of Kosovo and not subject to customs taxes returned to Serbia at prices excluding VAT.

The research claims that most transporters involved in the “grey trade” are from Serbia's southwestern Sandzak area, centred on the town of Novi Pazar.

Most of the intermediaries come from Sandzak and northern Kosovo but some were from Macedonia and Montenegro.

“The greatest profits in Serbia-Kosovo-Serbia commerce are made in this region [Sandzak],

damaging the customs and tax services of Serbia and Kosovo, and damaging producers and consumers as well,” the study said.

“Many people profit on the basis of lack of transparency of goods circulation between Serbia and Kosovo,” it added.

Borislav Stefanovic, Serbia's main negotiator in EU-led Belgrade-Prishtina talks, said that deals reached last year between Serbia and Kosovo should decrease smuggling between Serbia and Kosovo.

“Some individuals have become rich by means of this illegal commerce,” Stefanovic said.

According to him, implementation of the rule of law and Serbia's re-imposition of VAT on goods headed for Kosovo last September were important steps in curbing smuggling.

Aleksandar Popov, head of the Centre for Regionalism, the organisation that researched the report, said that the findings revealed a “brotherhood and unity of crime”, referring to the Yugoslav-era slogan about cooperation between different ethnic communities.

“In the grey commerce in Kosovo, Albanian-Serb brotherhood and unity functions without obstacles,” Popov said.

According to him, the size of this “grey area” needs to be revealed in order to understand why some sections of the political establishment in Kosovo and Serbia seem willing to tolerate the status quo.

“It isn't convenient to them to put some order in the field of commerce and customs,” Popov suggested.

He said that once goods pass into Kosovo through Gate 1 or 31, the two northern crossing points, they are registered by the EU mission, EULEX, and then disappear.

“After this, nobody knows what happens with these goods,

because, without being registered [by Kosovo customs], they arrive in the south through grey channels,” Popov explained.

Serbia's government has been unwilling to say how much its revenues from the north have increased since the changes in VAT regulation in 2011.

But Popov said that, according to data from a similar project carried by the Center for Regionalism in 2005, they are worth millions of euro a year.

“Specific individuals used the unregulated situation to become rich, at the same time causing great damage to the Serbian budget,” Popov said.

The deal reached between the two sides on what is called “integrated border management” should cut the level of smuggling between Serbia and Kosovo, he continued, but the agreement has yet to be implemented.

Bisera Sheqeragiq, an economic expert from Novi Pazar who was involved in the project, for which purpose she spoke to various local businessmen, said that legal procedures for exports are too complicated, providing another incentive for traders to explore unofficial routes.

“For example, there is a dual system for the transportation of people and goods,” she said.

“There is one system for Kosovo Serbs, specifically those north of river Ibar [in the Serb-controlled zone of the north], and there is another for south of the Ibar [the rest of Kosovo],” she said.

Still losing millions to smuggling

Adriatik Stavileci, spokesman for Kosovo Customs, said the country had been losing around 40 million euro a year from smuggling in the north, though he declined to

reveal how this calculation was made.

He said that the situation was now improving.

“This year, smuggling in the north decreased,” he said, adding that this was because Kosovo Customs staff were now present at Gates 1 and 31 on the border.

“The exact size of this decrease [of smuggling] for the north will only be known at the end of the year,” he continued.

Last July, Kosovo sent special police to take control of both gates in the north, causing a spike in tension. Negotiations following this incident led to an increased presence at the crossings and, in September 2011, Kosovo and Serbia reached a deal on accepting each other's customs stamps.

Stavileci said that smuggling continued across other borders, albeit at a lower level, in food, oil, alcohol and cigarettes.

He said that so far this year Kosovo had lost around 9 million euro in smuggling, much less than it lost at the same time period last year.

KFOR, the NATO-led body responsible for controlling roads in the north, has so far failed to close all the illegal routes between northern Kosovo and Serbia.

But KFOR Spokesperson Mars Stummler told Prishtina Insight that troops were in the process of closing illegal crossings.

“KFOR does not talk prior to operations it will undertake,” he explained.

Dinko Gruhonjiq is editor of News Agency Beta, department of Vojvodina, and head of the Association of Independent Journalists of Vojvodina. His research was assisted by Heartefact Fund. HF Besiana Xharra works for the Zeri newspaper and regularly contributes to BIRN.

Bosnia's Serb Entity Signs up for South Stream Pipeline

The President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, has signed an agreement with the Russian company Gazprom to build a section of the South Stream pipeline network and two gas power plants in the entity.



By Elvira M. Jukic

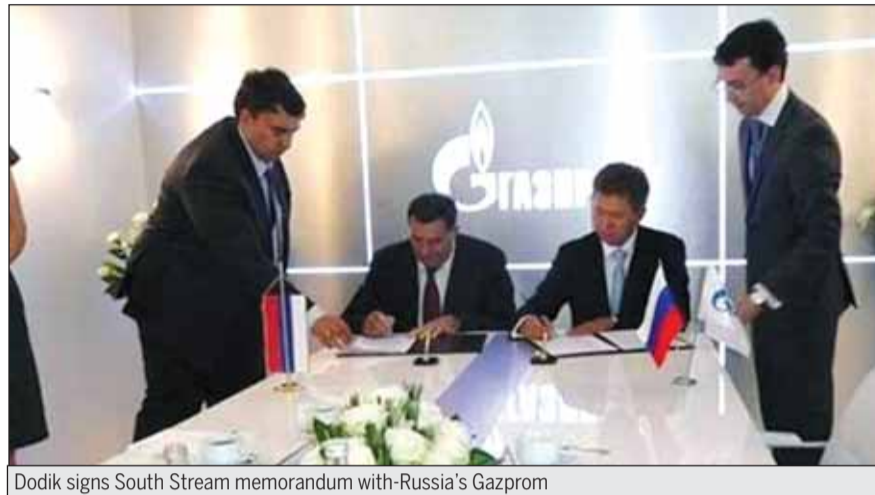
Dodik and other representatives of Republika Srpska, the Serb lead entity in Bosnia, signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Russian gas company Gazprom last Friday in Sochi, Russia.

Dodik said on September 21 that the contract also entails the building of gas power plants, with potentially enough generating capacity to make Republika Srpska one of the most important power producers in the region.

He added that the South Stream is a significant project which would solve the issue of energy sustainability for the whole region. The South Stream is a network of pipelines that will transport natural gas from Russia through the Black Sea and Bulgaria to Italy, Austria, and some Balkan countries.

The head of the Energy Department in the Bosnian Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Mubera Bicakcic, told Prishtina Insight that while it was positive that Republika Srpska had signed up for the South Stream pipeline network, it should have consulted the state-level institutions or the Federation entity first.

She explained that although it was good for the country that pipelines would be laid through part of Bosnia, the other institutions in the country should still have been consulted, especially as another project is being considered – the EU and US supported Nabucco project, whose aim is to reduce European energy



Dodik signs South Stream memorandum with Russia's Gazprom

dependence on Russia.

"The problem is that we do not have a state-level strategy for energy, even though it is a priority area for Bosnia and Herzegovina in the process of the EU integration," Bicakcic said, "This is because the RS wants to be independent in energy planning."

Bicakcic explained that according to the law, an entity like RS can sign international agreements, but in this specific case it had to ask the responsible state-level ministry for approval.

"We did not get any notification in the Ministry," Bicakcic said.

The Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, Aleksandar Dzombic, told the local media that the contract Dodik signed is a key investment for the future development of the entity.

Gazprom and the government of Republika Srpska will form a joint company in the next year, after which the

exact path of pipelines will be determined and construction work will begin.

Dodik explained that the joint company would ensure a stream of credit and foreign cash for the project, adding that the Gazprom Bank might provide extra security for the project through a loan.

Hamza Karic who lectures on international relations at Sarajevo's Faculty of Political Science, welcomed the fact Republika Srpska had signed the contract but said that the other Bosnian entity has to follow their lead, when it came to energy policy.

"If this project is implemented it would represent a success for the political leadership of the Republika Srpska entity," Karic said, "It is important that representatives of the Federation [the other entity] become more proactive in achieving cooperation with Gazprom and other companies in this sector."

Tender Failure Sets Back Macedonia Power Project

The future looks uncertain for a massive power project that would have involved building two power plants, named Cebren and Galiste, in the south of the country.



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

Macedonia's government's decision to cancel a power plant tender represents the sixth unsuccessful attempt to find a partner company to build the scheme – a mammoth project estimated to be worth at least 540 million euro.

"The procedure for the project has been stopped as the offers were unacceptable," the Economy Ministry said.

After two decades of failed tenders, the government saw a last chance for the power project in bids offered last year by Greece's Public Power Corporation, PPC, and a Chinese corporation, China International Water&Electric, CWE.

They were the only two companies that submitted bids last year.

The ministry said that the two bids contained additional requests by the companies that Macedonia could not meet.

One obliged Macedonia to buy all the



Tikves Lake, where the new hydro power plants were to be built

electricity produced at the plants at a previously agreed price.

The two plants to be built on the Crna river were set to be the biggest in the country. With an average output of 1,100 gigawatt hours of electricity, they would have boosted power production significantly. Macedonia at the moment has to import up to 30 per cent of its power needs.

The government had said it would

decide on the project by the end of last year. This was postponed when the government said it needed more time.

A source in the Economy Ministry told Prishtina Insight that after the failure of the tender procedure the ministry plans to hand the project over to another department, the Ecology Ministry.

But some industry insiders said if this occurs, it will greatly reduce the chances of the plants ever being built.

News in brief

Macedonia Albanians Filibuster over Army Law

Logjam over Albania's army law continues in parliament, where the government's ethnic Albanian junior partner is blocking adoption through marathon speeches.

Ethnic Albanian legislators in Macedonia are trying to "talk out" a proposed law on the rights of the military, blocking its passage in parliament through the means of marathon speeches.

The law, put forward earlier this month by the main ruling VMRO DPMNE party, concerns the rights of members of the armed forces who fought in the 2001 armed conflict, and their families.

The draft law has angered ethnic Albanian parties, which either want the same rights extended to former Albanian guerrilla fighters and their families in the 2001 conflict – or the bill dropped altogether.

Albania Govt Accused of Funding Allies With Ads

Socialists accuse government of Sali Berisha of funneling millions of euro in advertising money to friendly media, close to the ruling centre-right Democratic Party.

Albanian Socialist MP Eduard Shalsi has revealed data showing that in the past five years several government ministries have paid for expensive TV advertising campaigns, with the lion's share of the contracts going to an agency close to the pro-government TV Klan.

Apart from the TV adverts, the MP said that hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of money was also spent over the same period in newspaper adverts in the Democratic Party's own tabloid paper, Rilindja Demokratike, and in two pro-government papers, Gazeta 55 and Koha Jone.

Montenegro Albanians Doubt Plan to Restore Municipality

Ruling party leader's announcement that a mainly Albanian area of the capital may become a municipality has been met with a sceptical response, coming in the run-up to the October general election.

Ethnic Albanian leaders in Montenegro responded cautiously to a pledge by the ruling party's leader to re-establish a mainly Albanian municipality in the country.

Milo Djukanovic, chairman of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists, DPS, on Sunday told the party's pre-election convention that the mainly ethnic Albanian Tuzi area might have its independent municipal status restored in the near future.

He said the authorities would hold a consultative referendum in order to decide the issue on October 4, ten days before Montenegro's general election.

German Deal Boosts Serbia's Energy Prospects

A partnership deal with RWE should bring in much-needed investment – but Serbia may still have to import power this winter.

Aleksandar Obradovic, acting director of EPS, and Peter Terium, chair of RWE, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on energy sector projects. The recent announcement of a strategic partnership between Elektroprivreda Srbije, EPS, Serbia's state-owned energy utility, and Germany's RWE has boosted Belgrade's hopes of securing long-awaited investment in the power sector.

Aleksandar Obradovic, acting director of EPS, and Peter Terium, chair of RWE, on September 10 signed a Memorandum of Understanding on energy sector projects in Serbia in the presence of Aleksandar Vucic, Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister and Philipp Rosler, Germany's Economics Minister.

Before heading to Germany, Vucic claimed that cooperation with RWE would secure investments worth 2.2 billion.

Macedonian, Greek Ministers Meet in New York

The Greek and Macedonian Foreign Ministers, Dimitris Avramopoulos and Nikola Poposki, met in New York last Monday - but no substantive talks on the "name" dispute took place at the introductory meeting.



By Sinisa Jakov Marusic

The two ministers met for an unofficial conversation at Macedonia's request at the sidelines of the UN General Assembly to reiterate their country's stands.

After asserting that Greece had done its part towards resolving the dispute between the two states over Macedonia's name, Avramopoulos said it was time for the government in Skopje to do

more.

"Things might have been different and even better in relations between us if the neighbouring country showed more respect on historically and culturally sensitive issues that are of particular importance to Greece," Avramopoulos said in reference to Macedonia after the meeting.

Aside from the long-running dispute over Macedonia's name, Greece objects to Macedonia's more recent drive to lay claim to what Greece considers its own exclusive heritage.

For his part, Poposki repeated that Macedonia had no territorial claims against Greece, describing

claims to the contrary as an "artificially imposed perception".

The fresh initiative comes at a time when the European Commission is about to release its annual report on Macedonia's progress towards EU membership.

The report, to be published on October 10, is expected to contain yet another recommendation for a start to EU accession talks - the fourth in a row.

However, without a solution to the "name" dispute at hand, the EU is unlikely to offer an actual start date for the talks, owing to the continuing Greek blockade.

Greece insists that use of the term "Macedonia" implies a terri-



torial claim to its own northern province of the same name. Citing the unresolved issue, Greece has repeatedly blocked Macedonia's progress towards both EU and NATO membership.

UN-brokered talks to overcome the long standing dispute have failed to result in a solution and

there have been no substantial talks for over a year, partly owing to the complicated political situation in Greece.

Macedonia obtained EU candidate country status back in 2005, and the European Commission has recommended a start to accession talks since 2009.



Journalist Slavko Curuvija was murdered in 1999

Serbia to Probe Mystery Killings of Journalists

Media watchdogs welcome government's decision to set up international commission to investigate unsolved murders of reporters in Serbia.

Serbia's new government has decided to set up an "international commission" to investigate the unsolved murders of journalists in the country.

The commission will primarily investigate the killings of three prominent journalists, Dada Vujasinovic, Slavko Curuvija and Milan Pantic.

A publisher and journalist, Curuvija, was shot in the head on April 11, 1999, while coming back home from an Easter walk.

The killers and those who directed them have never been identified, despite promises made by every government since Slobodan Milosevic was ejected from office in 2000.

Milosevic and his wife, Mirjana

Markovic, were widely believed to have been involved in Curuvija's death.

During the March-June 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia, Curuvija blamed the Milosevic regime for the North Atlantic Alliance's military intervention.

Vujasinovic, a reporter for Duga Magazine, was killed 14 years ago. Her death was initially called a suicide, but earlier this week a new ruling said the case would be reopened as a suspected homicide.

Pantic, a local journalist from the central town of Jagodina, was shot on the doorstep of his home in 2001.

The task of the commission will be analysing all former investigations, ascertaining the facts behind their failures, and creating grounds

for future investigations.

Apart from representatives of the security services, the prosecution and the media, international investigators will take part in the Commission's work.

Dunja Mijatovic, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, welcomed the establishment of the new body and expressed the hope that it will yield results.

"Families and friends of killed journalists and society as whole need to see justice being served," she said.

"As long as journalists are afraid for their lives and the lives of their families while doing their job, we do not live in a free society," she added.

Mummy Draws Crowds in Belgrade

Serbs are flocking to see the 2,300-year old mummy that has gone on show at Belgrade University.



By Danilo Lucic

History lovers from across Serbia are coming to Belgrade University's Faculty of Philosophy to see the embalmed 2,300-year-old body of an Egyptian priest called Nesmin, now known as the Belgrade mummy.

For the first time since 2008, the mummy has been presented in a specially built show costing 35,000 euro, put on as part of Serbia's European heritage days.

The mummy came to Belgrade from Luxor in Egypt in the late 19th century as a gift for the Serbian people from Hadzi Pavle Ridjicki.

Gordana Grabez, from the National Museum, which owns the mummy, said that interest in the exhibition was enormous, and all tickets for visiting the exhibition have to be booked in advance.

"This will be an excellent opportunity for archaeology students to examine authentic remains from old Egypt," she said.

"The wider audience can also become familiar with this important relict, which was a great example, being a gift, of true philanthropy on Ridjicki's part," Grabez told Prishtina Insight.

The exhibition has necessitated the construction of a special showcase with double glass panels filled with argon, special cold lights and a built-in temperature regulator.

Hadzi Pavle Ridjicki, a wealthy Serb, bought the mummy while on a trip to Egypt and donated it to the nation in 1888.

The name of the high priest, Nusmin, means "one who is dedicated to the God Min".

He was 50 when he died.

According to Grabez, as many as 320 people saw the mummy over the weekend. Only 20 visitors are allowed to see it per hour due to special temperature and humidity conditions that have to be met.



Djilas Scents Victory in Serbian Democratic Race

As the Democratic Party gears up for a leadership contest following its defeat in recent elections, the wind is blowing in the direction of Belgrade Mayor Dragan Djilas.



By Bojana Barlovac

Senior Democratic Party officials are busy visiting party headquarters across the country, battling for the hearts and minds of delegates in the run-up to a crucial leadership election.

A new leadership for the party will be selected on November 10 when some 4,000 delegates will vote secretly in electronic form.

The two main candidates for the top post are the current leader, Serbia's former president, Boris Tadic, and the party's deputy president, the Mayor of Belgrade, Dragan Djilas.

Tadic is accused of having concentrated too much power in his hands and is widely blamed inside the party for losing the May general and presidential elections to Serbian Progressive Party.

Djilas, on the other hand, won the local election in Belgrade in May and thus became Mayor for the second time.

The clash within the party that began following its defeat in the presidential, general and local elections in May has little to do with ideology.

The issue is power – or rather, the loss of it. Until recently, the Democrats controlled almost all the levers in Serbia. Now they have lost power at all levels, and party officials and activists want to regain their lost influence.

Many analysts predict that Djilas will take over from Tadic after the November leadership election.

They also believe that under Djilas the party will become a stronger opposition force than is likely if Tadic wins.

Dragan Bujosevic, editor of the daily newspaper Politika, is one of those who are convinced that Djilas will beat his rival.

"This is more than clear now that two biggest branches of the Democratic Party, in Belgrade and Vojvodina, have both positioned themselves on Djilas's side," he told Prishtina Insight.

In recent months, party officials have chosen their sides and have

publicly bickered and traded blame over the party's election losses.

Meanwhile Djilas has won over the support of most senior party officials.

His vocal supporters include Bojan Pajtic, head of the provincial government in Vojvodina, and Goran Jesic, mayor of the Vojvodina town of Indjija and, as of recently, Vojvodina's deputy Prime Minister.

Djilas's ex-wife, Milica Delevic, who ran Serbia's office for EU integration in the previous government, also supports Djilas. So does Bozidar Djelic, former Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration.

On the other side, Tadic still has the support of Dragoljub Micunovic, one of the founders of the party, and Dusan Petrovic, former Agriculture Minister.

According to Bujosevic, the delegate system of election will also help Djilas as it will be easier for him to lobby in the campaign.

The party congress on September 8, the first opportunity for Democrats to analyze the causes and consequences of their defeat, rejected Tadic's proposal for the vote to be direct and opted for a delegate system.

Zoran Panovic, editor of the daily newspaper Danas, believes that Djilas has been building his campaign on blaming the loss of local power across Serbia on Tadic and his associates.

Panovic says that Djilas demonstrated his political talents back in the early Nineties, when he led student protests against the authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milosevic.

"Under Djilas, the party would be more cooperative with the business sector," he noted to Prishtina Insight.

Otherwise, Panovic believes that with Tadic at the helm, the Democratic Party could suffer the same fate as the Democratic Party of Serbia, DSS, led by the former Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica.

Ever since the democratic changes of 2000, the influence of the DSS has decreased year on year. Now it has the support of only about 7 per cent of the voters.



Serbian Democratic frontmen Tadic and Djilas are fighting it out to lead the party

Bujosevic and Panovic agree that while Tadic is unlikely to remain the party leader, if he does so, Djilas will leave and form a new party.

Prishtina Insight has learnt from party insiders that Djilas has been considering this option for a while.

Panovic also believes that the leadership election will reveal the real position of the Democrats in Serbia's political scene, as the party has been enjoying "unrealistically high ratings since 2000, thanks to late Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, and then thanks to Tadic's own charisma".

In either scenario, the Democrats will only see personnel changes, as the party's ideological position, broadly centrist and pro-European, will remain the same.

Bujosevic said that the party did not need major internal reforms as it was already run like a typical Western democratic party.

"It has direct elections for the posts of president and deputy presidents and is decentralised so much already that it could be seen as harmful for the party," he said.

Regarding its ideology, he believes that the party will remain a centrist party, regardless of who wins the elections.

According to him, this would be logical given the overall economic situation in the country as well as the Serbian mentality. Most parties on Serbia's political scene position themselves on the right or centre-right.

One is the now ruling Serbian

Progressive Party, which is prudently staying out of the Democrats' internal election race.

Zeljko Cvijanovic, editor of the online media outlet Novi Standard, says the Progressives have no favourite candidate among the leadership contenders.

"They are not trying to open any corruption cases related to either Tadic or Djilas," Cvijanovic noted.

But Cvijanovic says it will suit the Progressives if Tadic wins, because the Democratic party will then be weaker.

"If Djilas wins, they [the Progressives] will have a strong opposition," he predicted.

Ironically, some sources claim that the Progressives are ready to cooperate with the Democrats if Djilas wins the race.

Prishtina Insight has learnt from party insiders that Djilas and Aleksandar Vucic, the acting head of the Progressives, have enjoyed good relations lately.

Cvijanovic said that such a turn of events would be supported by influential Western countries, which would like to see Vucic and Djilas in coalition in Serbia.

Under this scenario, it would then be possible to recompose the government without a new election and form a so-called grand coalition.

This would be extremely stable politically and thus capable of taking the tough and unpopular decisions that Serbia needs to take to exit from its current economic crisis.

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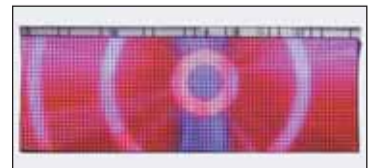


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Capable mayor and businessman

As mayor of the capital, Djilas has improved the city infrastructure significantly despite the economic crisis. He also owns several influential marketing companies that are closely connected to the media.

He is the majority owner of the Multicom group, active throughout Southeast Europe, and several smaller agencies and printing companies.

Djilas is also co-owner of Emotion, a company that launches reality shows, and several PR agencies.

Milo Djukanovic - Still Pulling Strings in Montenegro

He may have resigned from frontline politics in 2010, but the veteran leader still wields significant political and economic influence.



By Nela Lazarevic and Milena Milosevic

Milo Djukanovic has not held any posts in the government of Montenegro since he quit as Prime Minister in December 2010.

But he is still a powerful influence in the country, widely believed to be pulling strings from the backstage.

In January 2012, the opposition daily Vijesti described him as the most powerful person in the former Yugoslav republic, though it claimed to detect a gradual fall-off in his influence.

Djukanovic has, meanwhile, not abandoned politics entirely. He remains head of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists, a position he has held since 1998.

And his public appearances still draw disproportionate media coverage, compared to most other politicians.

Nor has he necessarily quit frontline politics. Ahead of the general election due on October 14, he has stated that he cannot rule out running for top state posts again.

If he does return, it will be his second comeback.

He already served three consecutive terms as prime minister from 1991 to 1998.

He was then President of Montenegro from 1998 to 2002 and Prime Minister again from 2003 to 2006, when he decided to step down the first time.

But he returned as Prime Minister in February 2008, remaining in office until December 21, 2010.

Young leader:

Born to a well-off middle class family in 1962, Djukanovic's father was a judge.

After taking a degree in economics in Podgorica, he was first appointed Prime Minister of the then Yugoslav republic in 1991, when he was only 29.

Previously, Djukanovic had led the junior wing of the League of Communists, as the Communist Party in Yugoslavia was called.

Initially, many doubted his ability to govern because of his lack of political experience.

However, Djukanovic endured, becoming one of the longest-serv-

ing politicians in recent European history.

He started out politically as a follower of the hardline Serbian nationalist leader, Slobodan Milosevic.

As Yugoslavia dissolved, and as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia broke away in the early 1990s, he continued to champion close ties with Serbia.

But by the mid-1990s he had become disillusioned with the results of the ex-Yugoslav wars, which had brought the rump Yugoslav state into diplomatic isolation.

In 1997, he started publicly distancing himself from the Milosevic regime and espousing the idea of Montenegro regaining its independence, which it had lost after the end of the First World War.

This took several years to bring about, the European Union having made it clear that it preferred the continuation of some form of union with Serbia.

But in May 2006, Djukanovic led the pro-independence bloc into a successful referendum after which the loose State Union with Serbia was dissolved.

Rich businessman:

Djukanovic has in the meantime become a wealthy man. Between 2006 and 2008, when he first withdrew from politics, he concentrated on business activities.

During that period he started five companies, three of which remained active after he returned to his old post as Prime Minister in 2008.

These are Capital Invest, an investment, consulting and management firm, which owns a stake in a major bank, Prva Banka; Universitas, a company that operates the private University of Donja Gorica; and Global Montenegro, a tourism and consulting company.

All three remain active. Djukanovic is still listed as founder of all of them and as the authorized representative of Universitas and Capital Investment.

Over the past years, there has been much speculation about the extent and source of Djukanovic's wealth.

In 2010, the British newspaper The Independent placed him at the bottom of a list of the world's top 20 richest politicians.

A year earlier, International



Milo Djukanovic may have stepped down as Prime Minister, but he is never far from politics

Consortium of Investigative Journalists, ICIJ, estimated his wealth at 14.7 million dollars.

This sharply contrasted with his official salary, which over the previous 17 years had never exceeded 1,227 euro a month.

He denies many of the claims about his wealth.

"It would be wonderful if it was like that, but unfortunately it isn't," he told the Bosnian Serb public broadcaster in 2011.

He added that labeling him as a very rich man was just part of a negative campaign, which tried to present Montenegro as a country that was under the thumb of organised crime gangs and smugglers.

Smoking gun:

Djukanovic was frequently accused of involvement in a cigarette smuggling racket between Italy and Montenegro in the 1990s.

He has admitted that cigarettes passed through Montenegro at the time, but maintains that the business was legitimate and that it did not involve smuggling.

"There is no question of smuggling, it was just a transit business conducted in line with the law," he said in July 2003.

"The cigarettes that came into the Montenegrin port of Bar had

in fact come from the EU and were re-exported with all the right paperwork," he added.

He claimed he had no personal stake in the trade, either, but that it was a valuable source of income while Montenegro was under an international embargo on account of the state union with Serbia.

An Italian Investigation into Djukanovic's alleged role in cigarette smuggling was launched in 2002, but was dropped in 2009.

However, his opponents have continued to accuse him of being connected to the organized crime.

Family business:

There have been various controversies over the ownership of Prva Banka, centering on claims that the government gave the bank unfair privileges.

In December 2008, opposition parties complained that the government had approved a loan of 44 million euro for the bank to ensure its liquidity while no other bank received similar help.

The bank came back into the spotlight in May 2012, following the release of an investigative project, "First Bank, First Family", conducted by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, OCCRP, and the BBC's

Newsnight.

The project claimed that, following its privatization in 2006, Prva Banka was effectively controlled by the Djukanovic family and used to further its personal interests.

It argued that, while most deposits to the bank came from public funds, two-thirds of the generous loans it made went either to the Djukanovic family or to their close associates.

When these loans endangered the bank's liquidity, the report said that government officials "adjusted laws, bailed out the bank with taxpayers' money, did not prosecute criminal actions at the bank and ultimately sold the state energy company and put large amounts of money into First Bank - all of which kept the bank alive at key points".

Soon after the project was published, the Ministry of Finance criticised it, saying the report selectively interpreted state support for the banking sector.

However, the controversies surrounding Djukanovic and his family have continued.

Even his successor as Prime Minister, Igor Luksic, told BBC's Newsnight that Djukanovic remains controversial. "How could you not be after 20 years in Balkan politics?", he asked.

The Fortnight in Numbers

1.739.825 is the total number of inhabitants of Kosovo, excluding three municipalities in the northern part, according to the official census which took place in April 2011

111 years old - the oldest woman living in Kosovo, according to the census

5.85 persons: the average size of a household while the average in the EU is 2.4. The record was a household of 50 persons.

Secret Contracts Hide Cost of Skopje Makeover



By Valentina Stojanchevska and Olivera Nikodinovska

The Skopje 2014 project, aimed at remaking the run-down capital of Macedonia in grand style, is in danger of becoming a bottomless financial pit as costs overrun and contracts for new buildings and monument multiply.

Far from the 80-million-euro price tag initially estimated by the government, some believe that close to 200 million euro have been spent already on bronze, marble and concrete structures intended to beautify the city.

This estimate is based on data from the website of the Public Procurement Bureau – but as the data do not cover all the latest constructions, the true figure could well be far higher.

Significantly, some contracts for the largest buildings that are part of the revamp remain unpublished or appear to have vanished.

As annexes to published contracts have also multiplied, no precise figure as to how much this project is costing the cash-strapped country can be made.

The main opposition Social Democratic Party, SDSM, meanwhile claims that the project may have devoured as much as 350 million euro – or more.

Estimate shows that over 63 million euro have been spent on only four buildings and sculptures in

central Skopje, in which the Ministry of Culture was the formal investor.

But this is not the final bill even for these four, because two of these buildings, the National Theatre and the Philharmonic, are incomplete, so additional resources will be required.

Furthermore, although the contracts for the Theatre and nearby Museum of the Macedonian National Struggle were signed in 2007 and 2008, they are still not published, making it difficult to determine precise expenditures.

When construction of these buildings started, the Culture Minister, Elizabeta Kancevska-Milevska, said the Theatre would cost 6 million euro and the Museum 4.5 million euro.

But additional annexes and new contracts for the Theatre, still under construction, have pushed the price of this building alone to over 34 million euro, while the Museum bill has now hit 14.5 million.

Skopje 2014 was first presented to the public through a video clip released in 2010.

The revamp, among many other things, envisages a new building for the Foreign Ministry, a 16-million-euro initial contract.

It also encompasses reconstruction of the parliament, estimated at 12.8 million euro, and a new bridge across Vardar called “The Eye”, at cost of 2 million euro, though this does not include the cost of dozens of sculptures to be placed on it.

But the list has grown. Within

the last two years, Skopje 2014 has been extended by the addition of several new buildings, monuments and reconstructions. As part of the project the city has also decided to build classical facades for some 20 existing buildings in the city center.

For example, only for the reconstruction of the facades of three buildings that gravitate around the main square, the authorities so far spent over one million euro.

The museum and theatre:

One puzzle concerns how much money has gone on the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle.

Although the most subsequent contracts and annexes for the Museum have been published, the initial contract awarded in 2008 has never been disclosed.

The Culture Ministry has repeatedly stated that the initial contract, signed with the construction company Beton Stip is worth 4, 5 million euro. However, this contract cannot be found on the Ministry's web page.

Some doubt that this document will ever be revealed, following the opposition allegations made last year that employees of the Culture Ministry forged and destroyed official documents.

Last year, the police filed criminal charges against three employees at the ministry for destroying and forging business books. According to the law such documents need to be kept for at least five years.

Despite calls for resignation, Culture Minister Elizabeta Kancevska Milevska insisted that the missing documents were not linked to large sum contracts for the “Skopje 2014” revamp. Only the three employees were penalized, while the suspicions remained for a wider cover up in the affair that was dubbed “Patriotic Broom”.

The opposition parties that made this claim listed the procurement documents for the Museum contract among the allegedly destroyed documents.

The ministry has never produced the actual contract in order to rebut the opposition accusations.

In the absence of the original

contract, the remaining official documents for the Museum include six annexes with a total value of 2.8 million euro, while another 7.2 million has gone on the interior decoration.

Thus, instead of the initially announced 4.5 million euro, the Museum, which opened last September, has cost at least 14.5 million euro.

The National Theatre, still under construction, has been marred by similar controversies.

The Ministry has again not published the original contract, awarded in 2007. The cost of this project, meanwhile, now stands at 34.2 million euro, five times the originally projected amount – largely as a result of annexes added to the first contract.

For example, over half a million euro were allocated in an annex for “additional and unpredicted matters”, without explaining what this meant.

Other annexes, related to interior decoration, installations, lights and others, added an enormous 27.7 million euro to the price tag.

Many believe that vague annexes to contracts are a deliberate tool used to conceal the real cost of these monuments.

This is because it is not legally necessary to launch a regular procurement procedure if the cost of an individual annex does not exceed that of one-third of the cost stated in the original contract.

Thirty monuments:

The complete cost of monuments erected in the central area of the city, now more than 30 in number, is also a mystery.

This is mostly because the authorities rarely publish the authors' fees, or the transportation costs for what in some cases have been giant marble and bronze pieces casted and moulded in Italy, Serbia and elsewhere.

The authorities have already conceded spending 9.4 million euro on the 24-metre-high equestrian statue of Alexander the Great in Macedonia Square, having initially budgeted for 4.5 million – less than half that amount.

Some 5.3 million went on the bronze sculpture while the rest

went on the decorated pedestal and fountain.

The monument by sculptor Valentina Stevanovska was cast by Italy's Fernando Marineli foundry. Stevanovska is also the author of the equally vast monument to Alexander's father, Philip, which the authorities say cost 5 million euro.

The sums spent on other monuments in the city centre, such as the Ottoman-era revolutionaries Goce Delcev and Dame Gruev, Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, Czar Samuel, Sts Cyril, Methodius, Clement and Naum, the wartime hero Metodija Andonov Cento and others, vary.

The range from 80,000 euro to 1.7 million each, depending on the size or material used.

According to the Public Procurement Bureau data, the cost of over 30 monuments and pedestals in the city centre, as well as the new bridge, has come to 33 million euro.

Delays push up Philharmonic bill:

Construction of the Philharmonic has lagged behind the tempo of construction in respect to other buildings in the project. The concert hall is far from complete, even although construction began back in 2009, before many other projects.

It was ambitiously announced that the project would be finish by the end of 2011.

But following last year's budget re-balancing, 246,000 euro intended for this building were redirected to the Museum of Macedonian Struggle.

Finalization of this project has been put back to 2013 and current costs have now reached 7.5 million euro.

This contract was initially estimated at 5.9 million euro, but this amount has since increased as a result of annexes for “additional and unpredicted work”.

The State Audit Office report from January 2012, related to the work of the Ministry of Culture, noted that the Ministry first engaged an acoustic expert from Germany for 250,000 euro for his services.



Marble sculpture of Tzar Samoil



Construction of the new philharmonics is among the slowest of Skopje 2014 buildings

With many construction contracts for the revamp of the Macedonian capital still secret - and annexes added to them all the time - the total sum being spent on Skopje 2014 remains a mystery.

But only a month after he began work they announced that his position had become vacant.

"We conclude that the vacancy announcement procedure was conducted only to formally satisfy the requirements of the Law for Public Procurement while the institution had already previously started ongoing work related to the acoustics of the building," the auditors' report said.

The union of construction workers complained on several occasions to the Ministry about the slow pace of construction. The official explanation was that such a complex project required a longer time frame.

Triumphal Arch:

One of the highpoints of the 2014 revamp is the 21-metre-high Triumphal Arch, called "Macedonia", which opened earlier this year, costed at 5.4 million euro.

Also designed by Valentina Stevanovska, it is ornamented with over 30 reliefs in marble representing different phases of Macedonian history.

The basic contract that the Ministry of Culture made with the Granit construction company was signed at 4.3 million euro.

But two annexes for additional and unexpected work have since added another 248,000 euro while another 817,000 euro went on for interior decoration and 30,000 euro on designing and professional



Skopje old lion - one of the many new sculptures in Skopje

supervision of the construction.

For the government of Nikola Gruevski the "triumph" in question is the creation of an independent, sovereign Macedonia.

But some have asked critical questions. The Association of Macedonian Architects, for one, asked for construction to stop, expressing concerns about the transparency of the procedure and about the chosen location.

Constitutional Court:

The government has already spent 35.2 million euro on construction of the building holding the Constitutional Court, State Archives and the Archaeological Museum, although the basic agreement signed in 2009 was set to 24.8 million.

During construction, the con-

tract was supplemented by five annexes. Officials, in this case from the government bureau for General and Administrative Matters, justified this again by referring to "additional and unforeseen costs" that jointly increased construction costs by 5 million euro.

An additional 5.4 million euro was spent on interior decoration such as relief compositions as well as on the supervision of the project.

The building has also decorated with five more marble sculptures featuring the god of wine, Dionysus, and four muses - costing almost half a million euro.

An additional 2.5 million went on floors, ceilings and windows. The completion of the building was set for the end of 2011, but it remains unfinished.

Millions spent in a week?:

During a recent debate in parliament on the budget, the opposition claimed that the government recently spent an amazing 18 million euro on Skopje 2014 in just one week.

Radmila Shekerinska from the Social Democrats, in a written initiative to parliament supported by 40 opposition legislators, claimed that the government spent 250,000 euro on three willows planted on platforms in the Vardar River, 1.7 million on a fence on the new bridge, 5 million on three fountains, 2.4 million on a sculpture of Prometheus opposite parliament, 5.5 million euro on the monument to Philip of Macedonia, 2.4 million for four golden horses, 146,000 euro for the interior decoration of the Museum of Macedonian

Struggle and 850,000 for the interior decoration of the Triumphal Arch.

The opposition argues that the government made major cuts in capital investment, education and health budget owing to the European crisis - but did not cut anything on a project that is basically a luxury for a poor country.

"The Skopje 2014 project bears all of the characteristics of the economic policy of the government of Nikola Gruevski: investment in unproductive expenditure, careless spending of taxpayers' money, criminal and corrupt procurement procedures and annexes and unpaid obligations to the construction companies," members of the opposition said.

Meanwhile, the State Anti-Corruption Commission says it sees nothing problematic in the addition of numerous annexes to construction contracts, so no inquiry can be launched.

They maintain that the annexes meet the terms of the Law on Public Procurement.

Sabina Fakic, from the Skopje based anti-corruption watchdog, Center for Civil Communications, CCC, says that murky annexes are not a problem for Skopje 2014 alone, but are a problematic issue generally in public procurement in Macedonia.

The CCC says that while annexes to government contracts worth some 23 million euro were signed in 2010, the number almost doubled in 2011 to 41.5 million euro.

"Another problem is the lack of control by the official institutions to assure the objectivity of these additional contracts and to eliminate suspicions of their possible misuse," Fakic said.



The Triumph Arch, also called "Macedonia"

Plans changed many times:

During the summer the authorities put down markers for ten new monuments in the central area of Skopje.

In the last four years the Skopje 2014 plan has changed nine times to accommodate new buildings and monuments.

At first the public was not informed of the details and could not have known that the project would include ten or more grandiose buildings, many more monuments and bridges, a panoramic wheel, plus several new facades on existing buildings inspired by styles of Classical Antiquity.

With the last modification, the project has gained a new 30-metre-high monument to Mother Teresa, an administrative building, more revamped facades and more willow trees for the Vardar River.

The latest modification drew a vigorous reaction from opposition politicians in the city and other critics.

"Where is the interest of the citizens in this? The city centre cannot breathe anymore," one opposition city councillor, Jani Tagasovski, from the municipality of Centar, complained.

The mayor of the municipality, Vladimir Todorovic, who has backed the modifications, admitted that he does not know how many times the plan has now been corrected.

"It is a fact that the plan has been modified many times," he said.

"But, that is not something we cannot do. That is, in fact, our duty," Todorovic added, insisting that the modifications were all made in the interest of the public.

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

Slovenia's Divine Mountains are Hikers' Dream

The stunning mountains of the northwest combine the very best of Mother Nature with some startling reminders of the horrors of war.



By Nemanja Cabric

Northwest Slovenia, a land of natural splendour that has long inspired poets and travellers, is also the final resting place of countless soldiers killed in the First World War.

That's why, in the midst of such remote places as Mrzli Vrh and Bohinj, traces of historical battles can still be seen.

They include caves drilled by Austro-Hungarian soldiers on Mrzli Vrh, trenches, concrete and stone forts, military roads and tracks, shelters dug from rock, bunkers, remnants of barbed wire and bits of guns and equipment.

Most of these places have since become open-air museums, drawing hikers who want to see both historical sites as well as the natural wonders surrounding the country's highest peak, Mt Triglav.

A hiking festival that takes place in the western Soca region, from September 22 to October 7, including guided tours, exhibitions and lectures, offers tourists first-hand experience of the beauty of this part of Slovenia as well as its turbulent past.

The Soca river valley in western Slovenia is a crossroads for many hiking trails, most of which offer stunning views of the landscape almost every step of the way.

Those who wish to get to know this region can organise their trip themselves.

But they will certainly lack

professional guidance, and many of the most attractive locations are almost unreachable without guides, hidden in the wild mountainous terrain.

Long-ago battles

The emerald green waters of the Soca flow for 138 kilometres through western Slovenia and northeast Italy.

Its source is in the Trenta valley, in the Julian Alps in northwest Slovenia at an elevation of 876 metres.

The river runs past the towns of Bovec, Kobarid, Tolmin, Kanal ob Soci, Nova Gorica and Gorizia, entering the Adriatic close to the Italian town of Monfalcone.

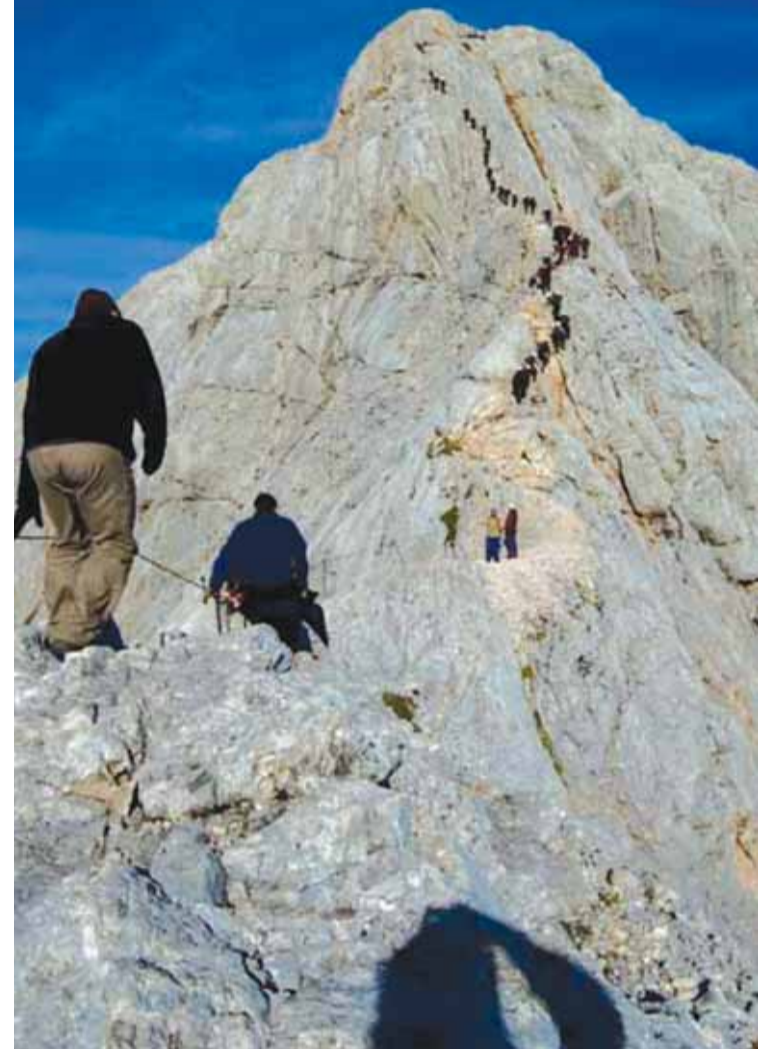
Its Italian name, Isonzo, still evokes memories of the horrific battles between the Italians and Austro-Hungarian armies in the First World War.

Twelve battles, which raged here in the high mountains on both sides of the river between June 1915 and November 1917, took away an almost unimaginable number of lives.

Half of the entire Italian First World War casualties - some 300,000 of 600,000 - occurred along the Soca, or the Isonzo Front. Austro-Hungarian losses, while not as numerous, were also very high, at around 200,000 of an overall total of around 1.2 million.

The remains of both the Austro-Hungarian and the Italian first lines of defence can be seen on Mrzli Vrh whose peak is arranged as an outdoor museum, offering majestic views of the former battlefield of the Front.

The ridge is crisscrossed with numerous trenches and caves.



Hikers tackle the climbs of northwest Slovenia

The outdoor museum can be reached by two paths that start from Zatomlin and Krn villages. The second matches the European trekking path E7 and gradually rises to the Pretovc Alp.

The track passes pastures, dairies and places where Austro-Hungarian soldiers hollowed out spacious caves in rocks. In one of cave along the way from Pretovc to Mrzli Vrh an altar is set up, and on top of it stands a cross.

It takes about 40 minutes to reach the top from the Alp of Pretovc. Because the tour to Mrzli Vrh takes several hours of walking, it needs to be planned carefully.

God's gift Triglav National Park and its surroundings are an authentic fairytale landscape, with almost cartoonish meadows and pastures.

Bohinj valley, home of the mythical creature known as the Zlatorog, has become a starting point for tourists on day-trip walks on trails that run throughout the valley and on mountaineering and climbing tours.

The Bohinj Basin is 20 km long and 5 km wide and lies within the Julian Alps in the Upper Carniola region of northwest Slovenia. It is traversed by the Sava Bohinjka river and its main feature is Lake Bohinj.

According to legend, when God was giving out land to various peoples, as he finished he realised that he had forgotten about a

small group of people who were silent and didn't hustle like the others.

Because of their modesty and patience he felt pity for them and decided to give them the most beautiful land of them all, which he had spared for himself. It's called Bohinj, after "Boh", the Slovenian word for "God".

The Triglav National park offers some of the most stunning landscapes in mountainous Slovenia. The park lies in the Julian Alps, on the three corners of Slovenia, Austria and Italy. The highest point is the summit of Triglav, at 2,864m, whilst the lowest point lies in the basin of the Tolminka river, at 180m.

Triglav's beauties include glacier-shaped valleys, mountain plateaus, mountains extending far above the tree line, pure waters, deep-cut gorges, remains of virgin forests, rich biodiversity and alpine flowers.

There are three important ascent routes to Triglav. The Bohinj Alpine Path, dedicated to the Bohinj mountaineers who were the first to ascend Triglav in 1778, the approach from the Upper Sava Valley, the Mojstrana, dedicated to the famous priest, Fr Jakob Aljaz, and the Trenta Route, inspired by Dr Julius Kugy.

Although the paths vary in difficulty, they all demand a degree of stamina and in some places climbing is impossible without ropes.



The sublime Triglav mountains in Slovenia

Government-owned corn destroyed in one of Africa's poorest countries

In a government warehouse in the centre of one of Zambia's farming districts, 300 miles from the capital, thousands of bags of corn are stacked up high. All are rotten. All are set to be destroyed.



By Anthony Mukwita

This destruction of food is a calamity for a country where the UN estimates 64% of its people are still incapable of placing two meals on the table. In Zambia, the average rural farmer is estimated to survive on less than \$2 per day.

The Mkushi warehouse, where 50,000 bags have gone to waste and another 200,000 are in danger of going bad, is not an isolated case. Across the poor African country hundreds of thousands of tonnes of maize are being rotting away or being destroyed.

Officially 54,235 metric tonnes of maize is earmarked for destruction countrywide, but other experts have suggested that figure could top 100,000 tonnes by the end of the harvest.

The Zambian government simply does not have enough storage facilities nor is there an adequate road network to transport maize, most of which is grown by small hold farmers living in remote, rural areas.

Vice President Guy Scott admitted during a June media briefing that: 'We have two million tonnes of maize against storage facilities that are meant for 300,000 tonnes of maize, so with poor storage it gets rotten.'

Controversial payment

At the heart of the problem are controversial government subsidies including a programme which provides cheap fertiliser to farmers growing maize and a government policy to then buy the crop at above-market rates.

Earlier this year the World Bank urged the Zambian government to stop subsidising the maize crop, saying it was unsustainable longterm and not addressing the core problem.

Maize, from which the porridge-like paste nshima is made, is consumed in vast quantities in Zambia. Government subsidies, introduced by the late President Levy Mwanawasa in 2004 to ensure the country grew enough of its own food, have encouraged farmers to boost their maize production.

The policy has been so successful that the country has turned itself from an importer of food to an exporter. And as the world worries about the the impact on food prices of the devastating US drought, the



Zambia is overflowing with corn. Calls are being made for the government to cut their subsidy of the crop.

Photo by Alex Berger

Zambian government as a result of its policies has a different concern - how to deal with the maize that is spilling out of government silos and other storage facilities. Even schools have reportedly been converted into makeshift warehouses to deal with the overflow.

The Food Reserve Agency (FRA) is aware of the storage constraints according to a statement on its website and is making efforts to 'engage relevant authorities on the matter so that funds could be mobilised to support construction of additional storage facilities, as well as rehabilitating the existing ones.'

It has drawn up an investment plan to construct new facilities with a total storage capacity of '700,000 metric tonnes in various parts of the country, which have been recording increasing production but with inadequate storage,' it added. It has not said how much this will cost.

In addition, the FRA has leased storage facilities from the private sector and over 200,000 metric tonnes of capacity has been utilised so far says Mwamba Siame, an FRA spokeswoman in a statement posted on the agency website.

Reducing poverty

Zambia moved to increase its food production back in 2004 following a hugely problematic food crisis in 2002. Further hit by the spike in world food prices in 2008 when the cost of maize increased by more than 100% compared to 2006, the government again sought to increase production.

The new government has continued to subsidise maize produc-

tion to the tune of \$471,698 per year according to a study, The Fiscal Cost of Existing Maize Policies (FCEMP) by NGO, the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute commissioned by DFID. The subsidies have pushed up maize production from below 700,000 tonnes to nearly 3m this year.

It seems the policy has worked - at least in terms of assuring Zambia's food security. But the subsidies are also aimed at reducing poverty, and by this measurement, many argue they have failed. The situation in Zambia provides a stark case study for just how difficult and complex a problem poverty reduction is.

Harsh critics

Earlier this year the World Bank urged the Zambian government to stop subsidising the maize crop, saying it was unsustainable longterm and not addressing the core problem - feeding the poor.

'Current maize prices encourage mono cropping at the expense of crop diversification. Job creation through economic diversification, which is the goal of this government, is unlikely to be achieved if government pursues the same policy in the agriculture sector as that of the previous government. This old policy has not resulted in significant reduction in rural poverty and job creation.'

Instead the World Bank has suggested that the country's poor would benefit more if the government allowed the market to set the price of maize: 'It is our hope that Government will reconsider its policy in setting prices for maize to allow prices to be determined by

prevailing market conditions. This will ensure affordable mealie meal prices for the low income households. Lower prices will not only reduce the cost of living for the poorer Zambians but will also benefit the livestock industry. Low prices will also contribute to the development of a sustainable maize export business, which will allow Zambia to become the bread basket in the region.'

A report by the IMF, another critic of the subsidies, points out that the combined costs of the marketing and fertilizer support programmes have grown from 1.2% of GDP in 2009 to 2.7% in 2011.

We have two million tonnes of maize against storage facilities that are meant for 300,000 tonnes of maize, so with poor storage it gets rotten. Vice President Guy Scott

Others have suggested that the programmes have not helped the most vulnerable members of the population - those that the policies were first aimed at. The report by IAPRI shows that Zambia has nearly 1.5m small-holder farmers. It is this rural population that makes up the majority of the country's poor. But the study shows that the smallest farmers, those farming less than one hectare, increased their maize the least, by an average of just three 50kg bags. The farmers that benefited the most from subsidised fertilizer were those that farmed over five hectares.

It is the same with the government's policy of buying maize at a premium - as two thirds of small-holder farmers do not sell their maize crop there are few that benefit from this government hand-out.

And even dealing with the surplus has proved a problem. A study by the Food Security Research Project (FSRP) entitled: Who gained and who lost from Zambia's Maize Marketing Policy says that Zambian maize bought above market value at about \$12 for a 50kg bag or about \$300 per tonne meant it off loads onto the local and export market at a loss.

The rural poor

For critics, the money spent subsidising farming would be much better spent on other things targeted at the rural poor. The IAPRI, for instance, suggests that with the same amount of money more than 50 new high schools could be constructed and 10,000 more teachers employed. The number of health workers could be doubled for instance.

All these suggestions look good on paper but what would their full ramifications be if the government were to bite the bullet, cut subsidies and leave the maize marketing to market forces?

The almost 600,000 small scale farmers belonging to the influential Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU) that currently depend on in-pur subsidies in the form of fertiliser and seed would be practically jobless and exert further pressure on the government to take care of them says Coillard Hamusimbi, an Outreach and Administration Manager at the almost million strong farmers lobby group ZNFU.

'If the subsidies were removed,' said Hamusimbi, 'Zambia would start importing maize on a large scale at a bigger cost. We will experience runaway inflation as 60% of our inflation is directly attributed to food... there could also be a risk of small scale farmers losing a source of income so I don't think the union would recommend the removal of subsidies... It's unfathomable.'

The jury is still out on what the new Sata government will do. But as the harvest rolls in, the government must first grapple with the overflow and the difficult headlines as the reports of wasted stocks keep flooding in.

Anthony Mukwita is deputy managing director of the Zambia Daily Mail based in Lusaka. Earlier this year he spent three months on secondment with the Bureau.

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Here is Prishtina Insight's guide to the best places in town to eat, drink, shop and be merry. We'll keep this section updated with the newest and coolest places opening in Kosovo.

Restaurants:

Liburnia 1 and 2

Rr Meto Bajraktar, tel. +381 (0)38 222 719. There are actually two Liburnias opposite each other, both very similar in style and food. Housed in a fine Ottoman abode and surrounded by pleasant walled gardens, Liburnia oozes atmosphere, whether in winter or summer. The food is a roll call of decent traditional Albanian food, including the usual stews (tave) and grilled meat. It's not the best place in town to sample local delicacies, but a good choice given the setting. Open 8 am - 11 pm

Country House

Off road to Podujevo from Pristina, right after the Muciqi Mercedes-Benz garage, tel. +377 (0)44 656 054. This rustic restaurant is a 15-minute drive outside Pristina (on a good day) and provides glorious views across rolling, verdant hills and is especially pleasant place in the summer to watch the sunset. The overall food quality is decent, with special marks for the fresh bread, straight from the wood stove, and specia me maze (peppers in cream). 10 am - 11 pm.

Princesha Gresa

23 Rr. Fehmi Agani, tel. +381 (0) 38 24 58 41. If you have a horse-size hole in your stomach to fill, this is the place to come. The meal starts with some free bread and dips and is followed by gargantuan portions of salad, meat, fish, or anything else on this varied menu. The food is sometimes great, sometimes average but always served in massive portions. Open 10 am - 11 pm.

Hemingway

Rr Ilaz Kodra, tel. +386 (0)49 145 637. Yes, you can get fresh sea fish in landlocked Kosovo. Hemingway is tucked away in an unappealing end of the city but worth a trip if you are craving food of the piscine variety. It's a pretty basic sort of set-up and relatively expensive for the setting, but undoubtedly one of the best places in town for fish. Open 9 am - 11 pm

Le Siam Thai

Rr Fehmi Agani, tel. +377 (0)45 243 588.

Stylishly designed and smoke-free, Le Siam has become a real hit for the international community of Kosovo. If you are acquainted with Thai food, you're not in for any surprises here, with the typical assortment of curries, salads and deep fried treats, delivered to decent standards. At 7 or 8 euro for a main course, it's relatively pricey compared to its neighbours. Open Monday-Thursday 11:00-14:00 and 17:45-22:30; Friday-Sunday 11:00-23:00.

Renaissance II

Rr George Bush (behind the Pro Credit Bank HQ), tel. +377 (0)44 118 796. Renaissance offers arguably the best overall dining experience in Prishtina. It's quite an experience just to find the place. Tucked away along a tiny alleyway, you enter the homely, stone building through heavy wooden doors. It's 15 euro per head, and for that you will be kept fed, watered and supplied with booze for at least a three course meal, including a wonderful meze starter and a delicious main course cooked on embers. Open 11 am - 11 pm.

Bars:

Crème de la Crème

Rr Robert Doll, tel. +377(0)44259912. Crème is probably the best all-round bar in the city. It's run for the amusement of the young, arty owners and not for profit, which explains the more-than-generous pricing arrangements, especially for the perfectly executed cocktails. Its five tiny floors heave on Fridays and Sundays with Pristina's cool to the variety of beats. Every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 8pm to 3am.

Filikaqa

Rr Mujo Ulqinaku BL 4/1, Pejton, website www.filikaqa.com; 038 244 288. Whistle, as it translates from Albanian, offers a dizzying array of televisions on which to watch your sport of choice and eat the best burgers in town. Select a booth, ask the amiable staff to tune into your match and grab a 'double decker' or 'triple burger', which look like American fast-food classics but taste better. Friday night Karaoke is a must-see, must-see event.

Hard Rockers Club

Road Ilaz Kodra, contact: vraja_fatos@hot-mail.com. It's one of the few places in Prishtina where you can catch regular live acts and the only place which caters for those who like their rock served up heavy, or hard. On a quiet night, it's quite a comfortable venue to grab a beer, even if you are not being entertained by hirsute musicians.

The Cuban

Road Luan Haradinaj Tel: +377(0) 45 620 620. This is a decent addition to the city's drinking scene, even if the place can be full of spivs and tarts who aren't going to a fancy-dress party. The Cuban-themed décor is decadent Havana, the food is average, and not very Caribbean, but the cocktails are good. 8 am - 1 am.

Khoni's Bar

Rexhep Mala, Pristina, tel. +377 (0)44 750 720. Khoni's is, without doubt, a Prishtina institution. It's small, friendly and smoky, plays excellent soul, disco and classic rock music from vinyl and is open until the last man or woman staggers out. Arrive by 11pm at the weekend to secure a corner, or even better a seat, if you intend to make a night of it. Next to A&A restaurant and has round windows. Opens: 8pm-to late. Shut on Sundays.

Fastfood:

Bel Ami

Rr Luan Haradinaj, Tel: +377 (0)44 133 848, +386 49 133 848. The ideal town-centre stop for a quick lunch or takeaway snack, Bel Ami unceremoniously serves some of the best chicken doner in Prishtina in a surprisingly un-greasy, smoke-free environment. Ask for a "komplet" to get the classic doner packed with salad and sauces and wrapped in tin foil. Monday-Friday 9 am - 7.30 pm; Saturday 9 am - 8 pm.

Clubs:

P1

Fehmi Agani, +377 (0)44 608 669. If you're looking for cool, then P1 is probably not the spot for you. The decor is pretty uninspiring, the music is bog standard and the atmosphere reminiscent of a cattle market. But if your thing is scantily clad young women or packs of amorous boys, than it's an excellent choice. And, in the venue's defence, it does have a pleasant outdoor area for summer dancing. Working hours Wednesday, Friday, Saturday from 9 pm to 3 am.



Hot Food:

NOMNOM, Rr Rexhep Luci, Prishtina. A superb edition to Prishtina's dining scene. Its London chef serves up food fit for a high-end eatery in the Big Smoke. The excellent variety of ingredients on offer is particularly pleasing, as is the extensive wine list. The outdoor area is also great for people watching while you sup a cocktail or two.

PAPIRUN(LEFT). Tel. 045 26 23 23. Papirun has seating at two perpendicular counters in what's basically a hole-in-the-wall just off Mother Teresa Boulevard, near the Grand Hotel. The menu has 13 options: 6 pizzas and seven sandwiches. The sandwiches are the stars, though. Every component is handled with care. The bread alone is good enough to make just about any sandwich into a glorious feast. It's freshly baked and seasoned with rosemary.

Hot Shop:

SACRO(ABOVE), Rruga Garibaldi, Behind Metro Caffe, Prishtina, tel. +377 44 234 499, www.sacrobio.com Where in Pristina can you buy dried Kamenica mushrooms? Lentils to help with a vegetarian/vegan diet? Marshmallow root? Sacro, the newly-opened shop in central Prishtina, is an education and a delight.



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.

A taste of Napoli in Prishtina.

After ten years of making pizza in Napoli, and with only love to blame, Fatmir, the head chef, returned to Prishtina. His pizzas, made in a woodburn stove, are definitely genuine napolitanas. Fatmir also has several delicious pastas on offer, 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 quince raki. Napoli makes for delicious lunch, dinner or even after-theatre time out in the centre of Prishtina.



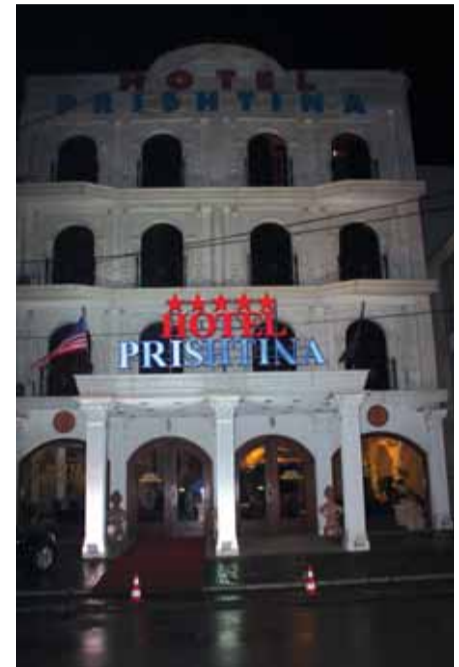
*Pizzeria Napoli
off Luan Haradinaj, opposite Newborn
044/409-402402*

Hotel Prishtina

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

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

*Hotel Prishtina,
St. Vaso Pasha nr. 20
+381 38 / 22 32 84*



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 gardens. Rooms start at 45 euro for a single, and luxury rooms and apartments are available. The hotel's rooms are well appointed and comfortable.

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



Te Komiteti

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

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



Restorant Brasserie Lura

At 450-metres squared 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 of 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*

Papillon Bistro Bar

This newly reopened bar in Prishtina, Papillon, offers more than 60 types of wines from France, Italy, Spain, and Kosovo with great prices and delicious dishes.

They serve pasta, sandwiches, salads and different appetizers.

You can also try different types of local or international beers.

The bar, with its stunning new design, is located in the centre of Prishtina, near ProCredit Bank headquarter, RTK radio centre, and the Mother Teresa cathedral.

*Papillon
Mother Teresa Str. Nr. 51 A
info@caffepapillon.com
044 103 310*



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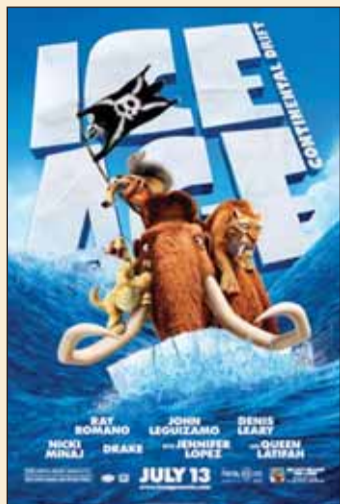


Ice Age Continental Drift

The film will be screened everyday at 11am and 2pm.

Kino ABC is continuing to screen this movie. The beloved trio - Meni, Diego and Sid - experience the greatest adventure of their life. On their way they meet exotic sea creatures and face a new world.

Starring: Ray Romano, John Leguizamo, Denis Leary, Alan Tudyk, Wanda Sykes, Jeremy Renner, Jennifer Lopez, Queen Latifah etc.



"Resident Evil: Retribution"

Kino ABC present the world film premier. The film will be screened at 8pm and 10.30pm

The Umbrella Corporation's deadly T-virus continues to ravage the Earth, transforming the global population into legions of flesh eating Undead. The human race's last and only hope, Alice, awakens in the heart of Umbrella's most clandestine operations facility and unveils more of her mysterious past as she delves further into the complex. Without a safe haven, Alice continues to hunt those responsible for the outbreak; a chase that takes her from Tokyo to New York, Washington, D.C. and Moscow.



"Total Recall"

Everyday at 10.30pm

Douglas Quaid has a wonderful wife, but he wants to have an imaginary journey that will result with a deserved vacation. He dreams like he's a master spy. A mistake happens and Douglas finds himself in an unbelievable situation. The police follow him. He finds his true identity, true love and true destiny as well.



For any further questions or reservations call at 038 243 238 or visit them at www.kinoabc.com



PRI FILM FEST

Many countries in the region and world have proven that the best promotion of a country is through its culture. PriFest's mission is to open the doors to the second newest country in the world, Kosovo, to welcome different cultures of the world through cinema, using it as a medium to promote open dialogue between cultures and nations. PriFest seeks to bring the best of world cinema to Prishtina and Kosovo, and to promote the best of Kosovar film to an international audience. PriFest aims to develop local and international talent, by enhancing growth of the industry in the country. There are still a few days before the end of the festival to catch some great films:

Friday, 28 September 2012

13:00 MIDDLE LENGTH PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
LEAN SHE'AT NOSAAT / WHERE EVER YOU GO

directed by: Rony Sasson, Israel, 2011, 40 min
TATÁL MEU E CEL MAI TARE / DADDY RULZ
directed by: Radu Potcoavă, Romania, 2012, 30 min
VAST
directed by: Rolf van Eijk, Netherlands, 2011, 50 min

16:00 HONEY AND BLOOD PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
THE WOMAN WHO BRUSHED OFF HER TEARS

directed by: Teona Strugar Mitevska, France, Macedonia, Germany, Slovenia, Belgium, 2012, 113 min
17:00 DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, BALLET HALL
VOL SPECIAL / SPECIAL FLIGHT

directed by: Fernand Melgar, Switzerland, 2011, 103 min
18:00 HONEY AND BLOOD PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
ARCHEO

directed by: Jan Cvitkovič, Slovenia, Italy, Hungary, 2011, 80 min
19:00 DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, BALLET HALL
S'ĚSHTE LAVAZH / NOT A CAR WASH

directed by: Gentian Rexhep Koci, Denmark, 2012, 49 min
20:00 COMPETITION PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
AVÉ

directed by: Konstantin Bojanov, Bulgaria, 2011, 86 min
22:00 COMPETITION PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
AGNUS DEI
directed by: Agim Sopi, Kosovo, 2012, 111 min
22:00 SPECIAL SCREENING

NATIONAL THEATER, BALLET HALL

IRON SKY
directed by: Timo Vuorensola, Finland, Germany, Australia, 2012, 93 min

Saturday, 29 September 2012
13:00 MIDDLE LENGTH PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
VTORI DUBAL / TAKE TWO
directed by: Nadejda Koseva, Bulgaria, Germany, 2011, 27 min

UNSER LIED / ONE SONG
directed by: Catalina Molina, Austria, 2012, 30 min
LEGAL / ILLEGAL

directed by: Eileen Byrne, Germany, 2011, 25 min
MUŠICE, KRPELJI I PÈELE / GNATS, TICK AND BEES / MUSHKONJAT, RRIQËRAT DHE BLETAT
directed by: Hana Jušić, Croatia, 2012, 30 min
PRTLJAG / BAGGAGE

directed by: Danis Tanović, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, 2011, 26 min
16:00 HONEY AND BLOOD PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
PARADA / THE PARADE / PARADA

directed by: Srđan Dragojević, Serbia, 2011, 115 min
17:00 DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM/ PROGRAMI DOKUMENTAR
NATIONAL THEATER, BALLET HALL
PROTI YLI / RAW MATERIAL

directed by: Christos Karakepelis, Greece, 2001, 78 min
18:00 HONEY AND BLOOD PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
TEPENIN ARDI / BEYOND THE HILL

directed by: Emin Alper, Turkey, 2012, 94 min
19:00 DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM/ PROGRAMI DOKUMENTAR
NATIONAL THEATER, BALLET HALL
DICTATOR

directed by: Blendi Fevziu, Albania, 2012, 89 min
20:00 COMPETITION PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE

KUMA

directed by Umut Da, Austria, 2012, 93 min
22:00 COMPETITION PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
BARBARA

directed by: Christian Petzold, Germany, 2012, 105 min
Sunday, 30 September 2012

13:00 MIDDLE LENGTH PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
AINULT MEIE KOLM / JUST THE THREE OF US

directed by: Giampietro Balia, Estonia, 2011, 29 min
DE AZI INAINTE / FROM NOW ON

directed by: Dorian Boguta, Romania, 2012, 36 min
APELE TAC / SILENT RIVER

directed by: Anca Miruna Lăzărescu, Germany, Romania, 2011, 30 min
KOLONA / KOLONA

directed by: Ujkan Hysaj, Kosovo, 2012, 28 min
16:00 HONEY AND BLOOD PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
YAGIN VAR / YOU HAVE FEVER

directed by: Murat Saraçoğlu, Turkey, Germany, 2011, 99 min
18:00 HONEY AND BLOOD PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
DJECA / CHILDREN OF SARAJEVO

directed by: Aida Begić, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Germany, Turkey, 2012, 90 min
20:00 COMPETITION PROGRAM
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
SHARQIJA / SHARKIJA

directed by: Ami Livne, Israel, 2012, 85 min
22:00 SPECIAL SCREENING
NATIONAL THEATER, MAIN HALLE
TREE OF LIFE

directed by: Terrence Malick, France, 2011, 139 min
For more information call 038 22 11 44 or write
info@prifilmfest.org / news@prifilmfest.org

National Theatre

Friday, September 21, at 10pm
"Mosquito killing" by Xhevdet Bajra, directed by Donard Hasani

Saturday, September 22, at 10pm
"Wedding"

Solemn academy to honour the 40th anniversary of the National Ballet of Kosovo - choreographer Mehmet Ballkan



Oda theatre opens its new season with premier of play "The Last Station". The play will be shown on Tuesday, September 27, and will rerun the next day on Friday, September 28, at 8pm.

Author: Lirak Celaj and Florent Merhmeti
Music: Labinot Sponca
Costume: Rudina Xhaferi

Actors; Besnik Krapı, Liridona Shehu, Ilire Çelaj, Ardian Morina, Eshref Durmishi and Kushtrim Sheremeti.

The show is dedicated to all war victims who given their lives for freedom.

If It Was a Play - Every Thursday at 8pm

The play is based on the drama by Almir Imshireviq. Director: Agon Myftari. During the war time, on bus number 4 in Prishtina, near Hotel Union there was a 26 year-old guy wearing jeans and a black T-shirt. Sniper bullet breaks the window and shot the youngster in the neck. a lady who was next to him, starts to scream. When she sees the blood in her shirt she faints.

Starring: Rebeka Qena, Adrian Morina, Armend Ismajli, Besnik Krapı.

For more information call +381 (0)38 246 555 or write
oda@teatrioda.com.

Prishtina Diary

HARD ROCK BAR

- Friday, September 28, Electro Zombies LIVE and Dangerous

FILIKAQA SPORTS BAR

- Ethnical Plugged & Friends Live

PADDY O'BRIEN'S IRISH PUB

- Live Sport - GAA, Rugby, American Football and more. All Football - Champions League, Premiership, La Liga, Serie A.

CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

- Friday, September 28 - Electro Zombies. Synthesizers, sound effects, electro vocals.

HAMAM JAZZ BAR

- 29 September 2012
Baltic Balkan and La Bolschevita
30 September 2012
Toni Kitanovski&quartet
01 October 2012
Eldita Taran&quartet

Street Art Freshens City



Tringë Smajli street in Prishtina has been given a splash of colour. Through the project "Street art – Culture for All", the artist, Pleurat Sejdiu has painted the bollards on the pavement with portraits and various figures. (Photo: Njomza Salihi)



Prishtina through the Eyes of:

1. What surprised you most about Prishtina?

When I arrived here first in December 2006 I was impressed by the liveliness, by the kindness of the people, by the respect for each other and that it was so easy to make contacts and friends. This was re-confirmed when I came back to live here one year ago. I really enjoy every day I spend here: The dynamics and the passion, the atmosphere of this city is amazing.

2. What's your favorite hangout?

There are so many clubs, bars and discos which are just great. But there is one club which is part of every evening in which I hang out. Due to my passion for Latin-American dance and music I enjoy Cuban the most.

3. Do you do anything cultural?

I have a lot of friends who are active in the cultural scene, particularly in cinematography. I love festivals such as Skena-up or the Dokufest, but also go to small, much less known festivals. Music is another passion, and the jazz festival in Prishtina or Mitrovica or the rock concerts in Gračanica during the summer festival there were great occasions. Again, I particularly appreciate as well small live bands which often present great music in small bars which are often

Christof Stock

EC Liaison Office Head of Operations

unfortunately not widely known. Finally, in the area of fashion there were great presentations from different fashion makers and schools in Prishtina. All in all, I think that Prishtina offers a lot for any taste and in particular if one would like to go away a bit from the mainstream.

4. What is the most annoying thing about Prishtina?

Due to a previous bad experience during the time I lived in Moscow, I am afraid of street dogs. And there is a growing number in the streets of Prishtina, particularly in the area I am living, Taslixhe.

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

This is very difficult to say, as it is difficult to change anything in just one day. Of course, there are known issues such as water supply, electricity or waste management. But I have to say that – even though not perfect – things have improved since I was here first in December 2006. What I would initiate perhaps is the establish-

ment of an urban transportation system and in parallel limit the traffic downtown considerably. An urban transportation system, which runs day and night, provides really an alternative of using cars. This could really influence the daily rhythm of so many people, from school kids to students and from people who now drive to work to those who sometimes drive when shouldn't be driving (any more).

6. How many macchiatos do/did you drink a day?

I do not drink macchiato. I only drink espresso and Turkish coffee. Of those, I drink each day at least 3 to 4, but easily more. In Kosovo you really can find one of the best coffees in the world.

7. What's the tastiest Kosovan food?

Of the traditional food, I like very much fli and ajvar. I am also into the different varieties of salads and peppers. All in all, Kosovan food is very tasty and offers a lot of alternatives. As a vegetari-



an I appreciate that there are always a lot of salads, vegetables and fruits. Finally, I adore baklava and I have in many cities in Kosovo my preferred 'Baklava place'.

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

Since I am living in between the Belgian embassy and the Italian residence it is rather easy for me to indicate a landmark to a taxi driver. One could also say that I live between Brussels and ella Italia.

Good books; good deeds



By Elizabeth Gowing

Recycled prose doesn't just mean 'copy-paste' journalism. If words are worth anything then they should be shared, so set your books free from sitting like dusty badges on your shelves!

One friend suggested that since she kept books on the shelf in her sitting room only as a way of showing off what she'd read (and how interesting she was), and as she badly needed space, she could cut off the books' spines and stick them along the outside of a storage unit which would fit on the shelf, making no difference in the appearance of her erudite living room to the casual observer but enabling her to donate the books to others who would benefit from them.

Whether or not you go this far, you might be wondering where you can give your books to when you've finished with them. Or you might have decided that you don't need to purchase a book new; every new book produced generates about 3.85kg of carbon emissions, taking into account production, transport and retail. That's the same as operating your computer for 15 working days (but by the way, and before all your Kindlers or iPadders start feeling smug about your paperless reading, you might be interested to know that a recent New York Times article calculated that you need to read 100 books on your e-reader to offset the global warming contribution of the manufacture and powering of the device. Further incentive to get reading!).

There are some opportunities in Kosovo for secondhand books. In Mitrovica there is 7Arte, the bohemian library, secondhand bookshop and cultural centre incongruously located on the sixth floor of the old OSCE building. Books are both Albanian and English, available to borrow, to swap and to buy, and you can have a makiatu while you do so. See www.7-arte.org for more information or contact 049 211771.

In Prishtina, the inter-municipal Hivzi Sylejmani library, just off UCK street, near the main ProCredit Bank (look for the sign visible as you walk down UCK street) is housed in a lovely 1920s building which is designated as a historical site protected by the Ministry of Culture. Here you can register as a reader to borrow books, mainly Albanian, but with a section of English classics, as well as books in the languages taught in the Yugoslav system - French, Russian and Serbo-Croatian.

Another initiative in Prishtina has less of the 1920s charm but a more active sense of a living community of readers. Areopag is a centre near the student dormitories and behind Gizzi restaurant in SunnyHill (high up above Prishtina, like its namesake above the city of Classical Athens) run by an NGO since 2007. It's a library, bookshop and internet café. Again, the books are a mixture of English and Albanian, with a focus on textbooks to support the university students who make up its main clientele, but also including some general fiction and DVDs for loan. There are more than 2800 books, mainly donated from Arizona State University, as well as the personal library of the Albanian actress Melihate Ajeti. Annual membership is 15 euro for students and 20 euro for non-students - approximately the cost of one new book! The concept is clearly an attractive one - manager Artan Geca says that on one day this year they had 66 students using the reading room. Contact areopag_ks@yahoo.com or 044 831 262 for more information.

With initiatives like this, there is no excuse for not buying and donating used books so that no more trees have to be felled, printing presses powered and transportation fuelled. The only thing better than reading a good book is reading a good book secondhand.

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 on theideaspartnership@gmail.com



Outside In

The Autonomous Province of Kosovo



By Kreshnik Hoxha

Prishtina, February 17, 2008

Even the Siberian temperatures that have occupied the Balkans these days did not manage to stop the influx of the world media to Prishtina and Belgrade on this historic day, which is believed to be stabilising the region. Celebrations in the Mother Theresa Square and the Republic Square have started since the early morning.

Everyone is counting down to 3pm with eyes turned to RTS and RTK to watch the live broadcasting of the extraordinary session in the Parliament of Kosovo. The world is waiting for the historic moment when Tomislav Nikolic and Hashim Thaci address the world and deliver the great news from Prishtina.

The festivities in the parliament seem endless. Guests, friends and diplomats from across the world are waiting seated to witness this rare historic moment for humanity. The hospitality of Atifete Jahjaga and Ivica Dacic is quite evident while they escort Bill and Hillary Clinton, Milorad Dodik, Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel, Marti Ahtisaari and Boris Tadic to their seats. Few yards further, one can see Edita Tahiri and Borko Stefanovic feeling proud that their negotiations were fruitful.

It is 3pm now and the Assembly Speaker Jakup Krasniqi kindly asks all the guests to stand, while Tomislav Nikolic and Hashim Thaci prepare their speech. The noise in the Mother Theresa Square in Prishtina and the Republic Square in Belgrade turns into silence as everyone listens to Catherine Ashton, who has just given the opening speech.

Tomislav Nikolic addresses the world by promising that equality and mutual understanding will be the main pillars between the two nations.

He publicly apologises for all the crimes, persecutions and damages caused by Serbia to Kosovo while adding that Serbia has already started paying war reparations and is returning the stolen pension funds.

Hashim Thaci reaffirms that Kosovo will continue to progress in its Euro-Atlantic path, even though it has now been transformed into a Serbian province. He stresses that the European perspective of Kosovo will be the engine of development and adds that the new Ahtisaari-based Constitution is more glorious than the 1974 one.

Belgrade, March 2, 2008

Two weeks of celebrations, joy and music seem to have been enough for the Serbs in expressing their happiness for returning Kosovo to Serbia's sovereignty. Everyone, from retired grandmothers all the way to the Serb youngsters with 1389 tattoos on their chest, cannot hide their happiness that the cradle of their civilisation is back in the hands of Tsar Lazar's successors.

A Monday full of sunshine has dawned on Belgrade, where a new chapter for the institutions of Serbia commences.

Dozens of official cars arrive from Prishtina to Belgrade as the MPs convene for the first time after the enforcement of the new Constitution.

Hashim Thaci, who flew with JAT airways from Prishtina to Belgrade is taking the steps to parliament entrance.

The Deputy President of Serbia Atifete Jahjaga arrives in Belgrade by high-speed train, a generous donation of Japan to congratulate the reconciliation between the two nations. The Japanese were going to call it the Kosovo-Serbia Bullet Train, but decided there had been quite enough shooting between the two countries.

Jahjaga is accompanying Jakup Krasniqi, who is currently busy checking whether Albanian signs and denominations have been put in the parliament building.

According to the Ahtisaari Plan, Albanians as the biggest minority group in Serbia have 28 percent of the seats reserved for them in Serbia's parliament. The ministry of foreign affairs, education and health are governed by Albanian ministers, while the Albanian language has been installed as the joint official language in



Serbia.

Serbia's flag has been changed to a blue background where the map of Serbia, Kosovo and Vojvodina is accompanied by six doves symbolising peace.

The new Constitution strictly prohibits the use of the old Serbian flag in order not to provoke the Albanian minority and spread the message of a multiethnic Serbia.

Belgrade and Prishtina, June 21, 2008

Guided by the special rights guaranteed by the Ahtisaari Plan, Albanians managed to imprison Serbian Academic Dobrica Cosic, for being one of the drafters of the SANU Memorandum in 1986, which brought violence and terror to Albanians in Kosovo two decades ago.

Last week, the Regional Court of Belgrade sentenced a Serb youngster from Kurshumlia to 5 years of imprisonment for singing the constitutionally banned "Boze Pravde" anthem in Kalemegdan. The sentence of the youngster in conjunction with the Vidovdan celebrations led to nationwide Serbian protests in Belgrade claiming that Albanians are occupying Serbia.

As a response to the Serbian demands, the Academy of Sciences of Belgrade drafted yet another memorandum expressing concern over the dangerous and miserable state of Serbians in Serbia, Kosovo and Vojvodina. The memorandum demands imminent imprisonment of all those that who pose a threat to this nation. Nearly 2 million Albanians are yet again faced with nationalism in Serbia and experience the 90s déjà-vu.

These events transform Prishtina into a nest of terror and police forces from Belgrade are raiding the University of Prishtina and expelling Albanian professors.

Dozens of engineers and journalists in Kosovo's public broadcaster RTK are physically assaulted and persecuted, while Albanian broadcasting is banned. Tomislav Nikolic initiates the amendment of the Constitution in order to revoke the autonomy of the provinces.

The West is finally convinced that Kosovo's return to Serbia would be successful only if it did not include those nearly 2 million people. The region heads towards a new wave of destabilisation as it becomes evident that Serbia is predisposed to repeat the crimes of 90s in the name of country's protection.

Reality, September 2012

Nowadays, the public opinion in Serbia has been taken by surprise with the potential referendum that could be called to decide between Kosovo and the EU.

The initiative surfaces at the time when pressures for a political dialogue on northern Kosovo are on the rise.

However, it would be more logical if, instead of nationalistic weeping, the Serbian nation was presented with a more pragmatic question: Do they want Kosovo as a province, when in this day and age it is evident that you cannot rule it with the oppression you imposed on Albanians for nearly two decades?

Are they prepared to have Albanian ministers and Deputy Prime Ministers due to proportional representation?

Or simply put, would Serbs accept an Ahtisaari Plan and a flag that substitutes the eagle and tricolour with six doves symbolising peace?

The time has come for the Serbians to finally come to terms with an independent Kosovo and close this chapter permanently. They must understand that they cannot own Kosovo like they did in the 90s, even though this is precisely how they imagine Belgrade's return to Kosovo.

Bosnia's SDP Sold Out to Forces of Darkness

Once the great hope of a multi-ethnic Bosnia, under Zlatko Lagumdžija, the Social Democrats have become just another instrument of Bosnia's destruction.



By William A Stuebner

The Dayton Agreement always contained within it a toxin that would ultimately guarantee the destruction of the dream of a democratic, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Whenever I said this to late US diplomat Richard Holbrooke, he became angry and defensive. He was an intelligent man who recognised that almost any agreement has inherent flaws, but he rejected the notion that he had negotiated a peace with a fatal flaw. The lethal error was the legitimisation of ethnic politics.

Still, many generally pessimistic observers of Bosnia long clung to one beacon of hope; the ethnically non-aligned nature of the Social Democratic Party, SDP.

Despite the widespread rejection of the one-party system in the 1990 election, many Yugoslavs who had grown up during the age of Tito's slogan about "Brotherhood and Unity" still believed that people of disparate religions and customs could exist peacefully side-by-side.

And there was always the assumption that these mothers and fathers would influence their children to prefer tolerance and friendship to fear and hatred. The SDP was, until recently, the one political party that seemed to be above the stupidity of ethnic division.

While most other parties used fear of "the other" to retain power, the appeal of the Social Democrats was their rejection of the ethnic games that everyone else was playing.

Now, however, the leader of the SDP, Zlatko Lagumdžija, appears to have sold out to the dark forces that want to bring about Bosnia's final dissolution and plunge the country back into fratricide.

His machinations regarding proportional ethnic representation as a way to respond to the European Court of Human Rights' 2009 ruling in the Sejdic-Finci case, and his dismantling of the governing coalition in favour of highly questionable political alliances have resulted in the resignation in disgust of the SDP's highest elected official, Zeljko Komsic, Croat member of Bosnia's State Presidency.

Lagumdžija also withdrew the SDP from its coalition



Zlatko Lagumdžija, head of the Social Democrats

with the Party for Democratic Action, SDA, not only because they opposed him over proportional representation but also because they rejected his draft legislation designed to bring police and state television in Bosnia's Federation entity under political (i.e. Lagumdžija's) control, by eliminating independent, non-partisan supervisory boards.

EU and US officials also opposed the plans, but the initiatives had already exposed the almost dictatorial inclinations of the SDP leader to some of his most important international supporters.

He then took his party into a long-threatened alliance with the Alliance for a Better Future, a party founded in 2009 by Fahrudin Radoncic.

Radoncic is the owner of "Dnevi Avaz", a Bosnian newspaper, which has long been a tool for the character assassination of anyone that Radoncic dislikes or sees as a rival.

The current target is Bakir Izetbegovic, a relatively moderate and pragmatic politician who is the highest elected member of the SDA and member of the State Presidency.

Some of the nationalistic, ethnically-based parties have always used the Dayton Agreement to put Bosnia in a state of limbo. Progress has been stymied in almost every area imaginable.

On the big issues like EU and NATO accession, every country in the Balkans is leaping ahead. Unemployment among military-age men is well above 50 per cent, and given Europe's economic problems, this situation can only worsen, since the old relief valve of going abroad to work has all but disappeared.

Hope for the future is almost non-existent among young people in Bosnia.

Even stagnation can be sustainable as long as there is no heat to bring the pot to a boil. But in the Balkans, there are always plenty of pyromaniacs.

Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic kindled the flame in Kosovo in 1987 only to have Croatia's Franjo Tudjman and his colleagues add fuel to the fire.

For the past decade, Milorad Dodik, President of Republika Srpska and head of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, SNSD, has been the principal bogeyman. He has been the man that anyone interested in a peaceful, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina loves to hate.

In his defense, at least he has been straightforward and consistent. Many other politicians of all stripes have followed paths just as likely to destroy the country, but they have been disingenuous; saying what the international community wanted to hear while lining their pockets and sowing just as much discontent as Dodik.

The most serious recent "game change" that endangers peace and progress has been the transformation of the SDP by its leader into just one more instrument of conflict.

So what will trigger renewed violence and who is likely to be the instigator? Despite efforts at disarmament, there are still plenty of weapons floating around Bosnia.

Furthermore, "clubs" and paramilitary formations exist. People are still angry, and reconciliation is no more than a dream involving relatively few dreamers. For good reason, Bosniaks are the most aggrieved party from the last war and have the most to lose from the dissolution of the country.

Croats constitute a small minority, and with Croatia's accession to NATO and the EU,

Zagreb will not want to instigate anything. Belgrade is also unlikely to intervene in any meaningful way, especially given the hard lessons of the last war.

Consequently, it is probable that a small minority of angry Bosniaks may take things into their own hands.

Initial incidents could take the form of the forcible occupation of property or the destruction of national flags and symbols. Perhaps someone with poor judgment will wear the wrong insignia in the wrong area, and their mutilated body will be discovered at a border crossing or in front of some other public place like a church or a war memorial or a sporting event.

Cemeteries or places of worship may be desecrated. Attempts at enforcing public order could cause multi-ethnic police and military units to disintegrate. Ultimately, we could witness the attempted assassination of nationalistic public officials or car bombs designed both to kill and to elicit a reaction.

The Europeans are focused on their own economic problems, and the Americans simply have other priorities. Europe certainly has the most to lose and is in danger from two threats. The first could be a repeat of the refugee flows of the 1990s, which would strain already struggling economies.

But this pales by comparison with a far worse possibility. If Bosnia is divided into three rump states, as some wish, the Bosniak portion would face the same discrimination from Europe that Turks have experienced for decades.

This could also destabilise the mainly Bosniak Sandjak area straddling Serbia and Montenegro, thereby sparking wider conflict.

Europe would ultimately, perhaps in 10 or 20 years, be confronted with a nightmare of its own making; a radicalised, educated, European Muslim population with no hope and a lust for revenge.

There may be little time left for the international community to halt the slide toward this outcome. It is time to get serious about supporting the forces of moderation represented by people like Komsic and Izetbegovic.

William A Stuebner is former US diplomat and former Special Adviser to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

No Sale



By Chris Farmer

It is hard work NOT to sell something people want.

Did you ever notice how hard people in shops will try to discourage you from buying? Since I am currently harbouring my girlfriend's cat while she is off travelling and working, I had the experience of this in a pet shop only a few days ago when I had to buy cat stuff.

Cats do not require, it turns out, a lot of stuff. They need food and water. They need kitty litter and maybe something to play with (although they will ignore it until you leave the room). I have never had cats nor been much of a cat person, but now I had to procure cat food and went to my local pet shop to do so.

My first disadvantage was that I did not know what I wanted. This is always a sign to the shopkeeper that I am about to waste her precious time (I was the ONLY one in the shop) by asking questions - Oh! Diabolical Consumer! Although I was armed with recommendations, I still wanted to ask about the comparative value of the cat food. The one I wanted was, of course, the most expensive.

We don't have it.

But you do, I protested. I was looking straight at it. She did not stir from her chair, look up, or give any signs that she was about to. She told me that I should go to New Belgrade to find it. I was speechless.

Now, I am not an economist, but it seems to me that when Vendor A is selling Product X, the goal should be to take Consumer's money and stuff his bag full of Xs. If we don't do that, what are we doing in the shop in the first place? So I persisted.

I pointed again at the cat food I wanted. She shrugged and said, ok. Her "ok" seemed to contain a complex meaning. It said: "I was not going to get up from my newspaper and see what you wanted or give it to you because it would just make me tired and I was out late last night and I hate this job anyway and what do you want with cat food when you do not look like a cat person?"

Yes. Ok.

Now that she was up, she took advantage of the moment to show me some other cat food. This food, she said, is inferior. It is cheap. And they had a lot of it. Didn't I want to buy a lot of her cheap inferior cat food instead of that bag of gourmet fare about which I had disturbed her? Again, my non-economist alarm was ringing in my head. Shouldn't she be happier to sell me the more costly one?

I left the pet shop immediately and headed for a pharmacy, hoping they could be convinced to sell me an aspirin.

Christen Bradley Farmer is founder and president of MACH IV Consulting. Farmer also regularly shares his observations on life Serbia in Politika daily, LivingIn Belgrade.com, and in his B92.net VIP blog.

US Embassy Burning Suspect Cleared



A Serbian court on September 19 acquitted the prime suspect in setting the United States embassy in Belgrade on fire in February 2008, when Kosovo declared independence.

A Belgrade high court judge said there was no evidence that 24-year-old, Milan Zivanovic took part in the burning of the embassy but he was sentenced to a year in prison for stealing property from the building.

Serb rioters stormed the building on February 21, 2008, in anger over Washington's support for the statehood of Kosovo. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnyakovic)



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