

# Prishtina Insight

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## Kosovo 'Backing Away' From Closing Polluting Plant

A conference to lure donors to fund renewable energy projects in Kosovo has been postponed because two organisers, the European Commission and the World Bank, believe that the government is trying to extend the life of the country's oldest and dirtiest coal power plant, a top European ...

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# Kosovo Govt Paid For President's US Meetings

Atifete Jahjaga's office denies paying a lobbying firm to help set up meetings in the US - but the company's disclosure to the US Justice Department reveals that Kosovo's government paid it to do just that.

By Parim Olluri

Mystery remains over whether the government of Kosovo paid a Washington lobby firm to help President Atifete Jahjaga meet top US officials, including Barack Obama, in 2011.

While the Kosovo President's office says it didn't spend money to secure the US meetings, a company disclosure filed with the US government suggests that the Kosovo government did.

Patton Boggs reported to the US Justice Department that it earned 191,753 US dollars (150,017 euro) from the government of Kosovo for its efforts over six months, ending December 31, 2011.

The firm reported contacting U.S officials and Congressional staffers about bilateral relations between Kosovo and the United States.

The two-sentence report, which is routine and required by American law, noted that the firm "supported the visit of the President of Kosovo in Washington

and assisted in arranging meetings with governmental officials."

Jahjaga visited the US twice in 2011, in September and December. She met President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, among other senior officials.

Patton Boggs did not reply to Prishtina Insight's request for more information about the lobbying activities disclosed in the report, so it is unclear which meetings it helped arrange.

It is also unclear whether the report is connected with a 600,000 US dollar a year contract that

Patton Poggs signed with the Kosovo's Foreign Affairs Ministry in 2011.

This was for "advisory services on legal and advocacy issues to be used for expansion of bilateral and multilateral relations".

The Foreign Ministry did not respond to an inquiry from Prishtina Insight.

Menderes Ibra, a spokesman for the minister, Bedri Hamza, said only the office of the President could release such information.

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## Developers Ravage Albania's Historic Landmarks

On August 16, the people of the southern Albanian town of Korca woke up to an unpleasant surprise.

Overnight, one of the city's most important landmarks, a villa known as the "Flag House," had been flattened.

In the same house in 1916...

neighbourhood

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## Kosovo Mulls Fate of Milosevic-era Cathedral

In 1995, University of Prishtina students woke up to find building work going on next to the main library. But it wasn't a new faculty, dormitory or even a new library.

Orders had arrived from Belgrade that Prishtina was to get...

culture

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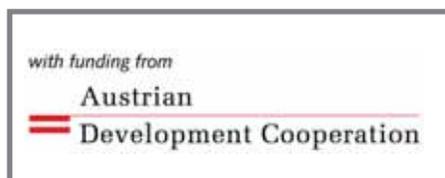
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## Kosovo Govt Paid For President's US Meetings

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The President's office denied spending any money on US lobbying.

"We haven't paid any company to arrange any meetings for President Jahjaga during her visits to the US," Arber Vllahiu, a spokesman for President Jahjaga, said.

Vllahiu added that presidential visits are held according to the official protocol in which the respective embassies are engaged. The Kosovo embassy in Washington did not respond when asked about Patton Boggs report.

### Troubled contract:

The Kosovo government initially hired Patton Boggs in September 2010.

The government canceled the deal in November that year after Prishtina Insight revealed that it appeared to violate Kosovo's law on public procurement, as no bidding process had occurred.

But the deal was quietly revived in July 2011, when the

Foreign Ministry asked the Agency of Public Procurement to allow a one-source tender. The ministry justified this by saying that the contract required confidentiality.

During Jahjaga's December 2011 visit, in addition to meeting Clinton, she also met the then Undersecretary of Defense, Michele Flournoy, Attorney General Eric Holder and FBI Director Robert Mueller.

She also met Senators Mark Kirk and Ross Johnson, and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, whose company is also seeking to buy a stake in Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo, PTK.

Earlier, in September, Jahjaga met President Obama at a reception for world leaders held at the UN General Assembly. She also met former US President Bill Clinton at his Clinton Global Initiative conference.

During the same visit in September, Jahjaga also met Frank Wisner, Patton Boggs' foreign affairs adviser.

Wisner has long been involved



Kosovo President Atifete Jahjaga met US President Barack Obama in September 2011.

in Kosovo. He was the US special representative on talks about the status of Kosovo before it declared independence in 2008.

According to the President's office, Jahjaga invited Wisner to join an initiative called "Friends of Kosovo" whose stated goal is to

expand diplomatic relations with countries with which Kosovo has no official relations. Wisner reportedly signed on.

## Brussels Lauds 'Honest' Kosovo-Serbia Talks

Ashton praises Hashim Thaci and Ivica Dacic for agreeing to continue Kosovo-Serbia talks and implement deals agreed earlier.



By Bojana Barlovac

Kosovo and Serbian leaders held "open and honest" talks, focusing on different ways of normalizing relations between the two sides, the EU Foreign Policy Chief, Catherine Ashton, said on Wednesday.

"We agreed to continue our work on full implementation of all agreements and welcomed results of a joint working group on the integrated crossings management [IBM] that took place on November 5-6," Ashton said after the two leaders met in Brussels on Wednesday.

EU-mediated talks in Belgium started in March 2011, three years after Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008.

Serbia has vowed never to recognize Kosovo as a state, but says it is open to deals that improve daily lives on both sides of the [from Serbia's point of view unrecognised] border.

So far, the two sides have reached deals on freedom of movement, university diplomas, regional representation and on trade. But not all the deals have been implemented.

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

According to the press release from Brussels, both sides also agreed to form a joint technical working group that will prepare a feasibility study for the construction of a highway from Nis in Serbia to the Kosovo capital, Prishtina.

Talks also focused on the Serbian-run northern sector of Kosovo.

Thaci said after the meeting that Kosovo had insisted that Serbia make its financing of Serbian-run "parallel institutions" in the north transparent.

Dacic said this was not a problem as Serbia itself wanted to make its financial aid to Kosovo Serbs transparent.

"Serbia has nothing to hide. The international community and



Another meeting between Hashim Thaci and Ivica Dacic.

Kosovo Serbs want to know what Serbia is financing," Dacic told the Serbian broadcaster B92.

According to him, this did not mean abolition of the so-called parallel institutions in the north of Kosovo.

The parallel institutions in question include town councils,

health authorities, post offices and schools.

This was only the second time that Dacic and Thaci had sat at the same table following a historic encounter on October 19 in Brussels.

The first meeting prompted nationalist protests in Prishtina,

where 18 police officers and 10 activists from the opposition Vetevendosje movement were injured in clashes.

According to Dacic, the next meeting with Thaci will be in December, possibly before December 10, when the European Council meets for a session.



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# Law Disputes Raise Questions Over Kosovo Telecom Buyers

Three of five pre-approved bidders competing to buy PTK are linked to cases that include accusations of bribery, fraud or conspiracy.



By Parim Olluri

Three of the five companies vying to purchase Kosovo's state telecom company are involved in legal disputes that raise questions about whether they have the right to buy a stake in the country's most profitable public enterprise.

In December, the government is expected to announce the winning buyer of Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo, PTK, following the largest sale of a state-owned enterprise in Kosovo's history.

The sale of 75 per cent of the shares in PTK is expected to fetch hundreds of millions of euro.

The Ministry of Economic Development did not respond to an inquiry from Prishtina Insight about whether it had checked the histories of all five bidders when it pre-approved them for the tender.

The bidders are: Albright Capital Management with Telecom of Portugal; Turkcell; M1 International Limited; Twelve Hornbeams and Avicenna Capital in cooperation with Sofrecom; and Columbia Capital and ACP Axos Capital in cooperation with British Telecom.

Article 65 of Kosovo's Law on Public Procurement from 2011 obliges The Ministry of Economic Development to check the backgrounds of bidding companies.

Companies convicted of corrupt practices, money laundering, bribery, taking kickbacks or fraud within the past 10 years - or which have officers or board members convicted of the same offences - are not allowed to compete a public tenders, the law says.

But accusations raised in multiple civil and criminal court cases, if proven, could yet make Turkcell, M1 and Avicenna ineligible to buy PTK.

Former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright's ownership of shares in Kosovo's sole private telecom, IPKO, has also raised questions about whether Albright Capital Management has a right to own PTK without infringing anti-monopoly legislation.

## M1 accused of bribery:

M1 International is part of the M1 Group, owned by the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Najib Mikati and by his brother, Taha Mikati.

M1 Group is largest single shareholder in the South African telecom company,



The sale of PTK is expected to fetch hundreds of million of euro.

MTN.

Turkey's largest mobile phone provider, Turkcell, has accused MTN of giving bribes to obtain a telecom license in Iran in a \$4.2 billion lawsuit in a US federal court.

Turkcell won a license to operate in Iran in 2004 but the Iranian government pulled the agreement in 2005 and granted a license to MTN.

The company claims that MTN bribed Iranian officials to get the license, and, as part of the deal, lobbied the South African government to support Iran's nuclear programme.

MTN denies the accusations. The lawsuit is on hold pending an unrelated US Supreme Court case concerning whether foreign corporations can be sued in American courts.

## Turkcell's troubles:

Turkcell itself is involved in an ownership dispute.

A decade ago its founder, Mehmet Emin Karamehmet, was worth around 8 billion US dollars, according to the London-based Financial Times.

But his wealth has since declined to 2.9 billion US dollars, and he faces a fraud trial in Turkey.

Karamehmet is fighting to hold onto his controlling stake in Turkcell in an ongoing dispute with shareholders TeliaSonera, a Nordic phone operator, and Altimeo, part of the Russian Alfa Group.

Karamehmet sold shares to the two companies in 2002 to raise cash after the Turkish authorities closed his bank, Pamukbank.

He was sentenced to 12 years

in prison for illegal use of the bank to fund a holding company, Cukurova. An appeals court in Turkey threw out the verdict and ordered a new trial.

For years, Karamehmet, through Cukurova, has been in financial disputes with TeliaSonera and Altimeo.

Two separate court rulings in 2011 ordered Cukurova to pay a total of more than 2.3 billion US dollars to the two other shareholders.

## Avicenna also in dispute:

Avicenna Capital, owned by Huseyin Gun, a Turkish businessman with British citizenship, headquartered in London and Istanbul, is also involved in a legal dispute.

Two years ago a US oil company, RA Global Services, sued an entity of the company based in the British Virgin Islands, Avicenna Overseas, naming Gun among others.

According to the lawsuit, Avicenna loaned RA Global 750,000 US dollars in 2006 for oil-drilling operations.

Afterward, RA Global signed a memorandum of understanding with all its creditors. Based on this agreement, Avicenna also had the right to appoint a board member in RA Global Services.

But RA Global alleged that people in Avicenna were acting in collusion with other creditors and were seeking to appropriate the company, and it accused the directors of conspiracy.

A 2011 judgment in the US dropped the case concerning one of the directors and it is unclear where the case stands now.

Prishtina Insight asked the

London headquarters of Avicenna about the status of the case but did not receive a response.

## Pardew vs Albright:

Meanwhile, James Pardew, a former US diplomat who served in the Balkans in President Bill Clinton's administration, met Kosovo leaders on behalf of Avicenna in October.

The Prishtina daily Zeri reported on October 18 that Pardew also met Prime Minister Hashim Thaci.

Zeri released a leaked document summarizing the reported meeting, in which it said that Thaci had told Pardew that it would be difficult to choose between Pardew and former US Secretary of State Albright in the PTK sale.

Albright chairs Albright Capital Management, which is also vying to buy PTK, as well as owning shares in IPKO, the only private telecom in Kosovo.

In October, Prishtina Insight reported that if Albright's group won the PTK tender, the Kosovo Competition Commission might decide it was violating monopoly laws.

Zeri also reported that Thaci had expressed doubts that M1 would win the tender, because of its "unclear connections" to the Middle East.

The report said Thaci had also expressed doubts that Axos would win, either, because of its "dubious Albanian shareholders."

The Kosovo government declined to explain Thaci's reported claim about Axos to this newspaper. Axos also declined to comment when contacted by Prishtina Insight.

## Editor's Word

# The Gentler Giant



By Nate Tabak

People out and about in Prishtina on the eve of the US presidential elections could have gotten their pictures taken with Barack Obama and Mitt Romney.

It was all thanks to the American Embassy, which took around cardboard cutouts of the now-former candidates to Prishtina's familiar sites, including Mother Teresa Boulevard and the National Library.

Naturally, the embassy posted a photographic chronicle of the affair on Facebook. The 43 pictures portray a largely enthusiastic collection of Prishtina denizens posing with Obama and Romney. Older women took a particular liking to the cutouts.

At first glance, it seemed a fun and likely inexpensive way for the Americans to remind Kosovars that the United States of America exists and holds democratic presidential elections every four years. Perhaps those having their pictures taken might have been dumbfounded — if not appalled — if they understood how America elects its presidents: through an antiquated, indirect process that makes it possible for the candidate with the most votes to lose. It happened to Al Gore in 2000.

This silly episode, though, was about America sending a different kind of message to Kosovo. For years, America has represented power. America has loomed large from 1999 onwards. In recent years, it's been said that any major government positions has to go through The Americans. But now America is walking a little bit softer here in Kosovo.

When Tracey Ann Jacobson took over as US ambassador earlier this year, she did something that no American envoy to Kosovo has done. She recorded an introductory video that was almost entirely in Albanian — with little bit of Serbian for good measure — and posted it on Youtube.

The video suggested a different kind of America. One that sought to earn trust instead of simply asserting itself. It seemed a calculated decision at a time of increasing skepticism of Kosovo's foreign ministers.

These days, the US as a whole could care less about what happens in the Balkans, let alone Kosovo. The region was quite literally a non-issue during the presidential campaign — even if TV stations in Kosovo devoted hours of coverage to the American election. Among the talking heads, the consensus was that Obama would be better for Kosovo because he is linked with the Clintons.

Kosovo still gets its doses of American assertiveness. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton just paid a visit to Kosovo on October 31. She, the embodiment of the benevolent bulldog version of America, voiced the US's steadfast support for Kosovo and its borders, and probably kicked a few people in the pants behind the scenes.

But as America's ground operation does things like staging amusing photo ops, it remains to be seen whether Kosovars will embrace the changing face of the United States here.

Nate Tabak is English editor of Prishtina Insight.

# Returnees to Kosovo Still Face Obstacles, Says OSCE

A lack of funds, and the failure to resolve both war crimes and missing persons cases, remain obstacles to the return to Kosovo of some 235,000 people displaced by the 1998-1999 war, says OSCE.



By Marija Ristic

Despite the fact that the safe return of internally displaced persons, IDPs, to their homes is recognized as a fundamental right by Kosovo law, returnees are still confronted by serious obstacles to their sustainable reintegration, claims the latest report from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE.

According to the OSCE report presented last week, IDPs still face a limited access to public services, property rights and socio-economic opportunities.

In some areas there are tensions between the local communities and returnees which further obstruct the return process.

"Burglaries, looting and damage to symbolic sites seriously harm the returns process and perceptions of security among returnees and displaced persons," said the Head of the OSCE Mission's Human Rights and Communities Department, Eduard Pesendorfer.

"While some municipalities have reacted decisively to such incidents, expressing their support for affected communities through statements of condemnation and regular outreach activities, others have failed to take any action," Pesendorfer added.

In most cases these frictions are

rooted in allegations of unresolved war crimes or missing person's cases, although exacerbating factors such as ongoing property disputes or the overarching political situation also play a role.

"Only 10 municipalities drafted a municipal returns strategy or action plan for 2011/2012, leaving the remaining 24 assessed municipalities without any coherent policy to guide their work on returns and reintegration," reads the report.

The report notes that the most successful examples of reintegration of returnees where in the areas with the adequate financial resources and firm political commitment from senior political officials, as well as international organizations.

"In municipalities with fewer financial resources and less political will, progress was markedly less significant and efforts to achieve durable solutions for IDPs were undermined," states the report, noting that the most problematic areas are the towns of Gjilan, Prizren, Peje and Prishtina and the surrounding areas.

"The most serious incident occurred on July 6, 2012, when a Kosovo Serb returnee couple were shot to death in their home in the ethnically mixed village of Muhadzer Talinovac, in the area of the town of Gjilan," states the report.

For ten regional NGOs from Bosnia, Kosovo, Croatia and Serbia, gathered around the project called "Fostering NGO Human



Life isn't easy for Serbs who return to Kosovo, according to the OSCE.

Rights Efforts", the main obstacle for reintegration of returnees to Kosovo is the lack of cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia.

Their report, issued in October, notes that IDPs in Kosovo still lack

an equal access to justice as the Kosovo authorities do not recognise documents issued by Serbia and vice versa which leaves IDPs in a legal gap.

The NGOs also point out the dif-

iculties in obtaining the documents, such as diplomas, birth certificates and pension rights because there is no postal service between the two countries and their institutions.

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## Montenegro and Kosovo Start Demarcation Process

Kosovo and Montenegro have started consultations aimed at signing the international agreement on border demarcation, a legacy of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.



By Milena Milosevic

The commissions in charge of demarcating the borders between Montenegro and Kosovo met last Wednesday in the Montenegrin capital, Podgorica.

They agreed on further activities necessary for signing the international agreement on border demarcation.

The first step will be preparation of the Rules of the Procedure for the work of two respective commissions. The guide for the joint working body, tasked with identification of the border lines and preparation of the boundary documents, also needs to be prepared.

"Both sides agreed that (...) the

signing of the international agreement on state border will contribute to the development of good neighbourly relations, regional stability, respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty of both states", Montenegro's Ministry of Interior stated after the meeting.

Montenegro recognized Kosovo independence in 2008 which provoked fierce reactions from Belgrade. Montenegrin ambassador to Serbia was asked to leave and it took a year before the diplomatic relations between the two countries normalised.

The most recent European Commission's progress report on Montenegro, issued on October 10, praised the country's good relations with its neighbours.

It highlighted the pending border demarcation with Serbia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Croatia, as one



Kosovo and Montenegro's leaders are discussing borders.

of the most important unresolved issues between Montenegro and its neighbours.

So far, Montenegro's border demarcation process with Bosnia

is the most advanced. In June, Filip Vujanovic, Montenegro's head of state stated that that the border agreement between the two countries was being finalized.

# Croatia Offers to Help Kosovo-Serbia Talks

Ahead of a second meeting of Kosovo and Serbian prime ministers in Brussels, Croatian leader Zoran Milanovic has offered to help ease the dialogue.



By Prishtina Insight

Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanovic has expressed support for the continuation of the Belgrade-Prishtina dialogue and has offered his help, saying that Croatia has good relations with both countries.

"I believe that the Belgrade government will be reasonable and pragmatic in its talks with Prishtina," Milanovic said after meeting his Kosovo counterpart, Hashim Thaci, last Tuesday.

Croatia recognized Kosovo in March 2008, a month after Kosovo proclaimed independence. So far, the Serbian former province has been recognised by 92 out of 193 UN member states including the US and 22 out of 27 EU member

states.

The meeting in Zagreb came a day ahead of Thaci's second meeting with Serbian leader Ivica Dacic in Brussels.

The EU-mediated talks, aimed at normalising relations between Kosovo and Serbia, started last March.

So far, the two sides have reached deals on freedom of movement, university diplomas and regional representation. However, not all the deals have been implemented.

At the meeting in Zagreb, Thaci thanked Croatia for having recognised Kosovo and expressed hope that Croatia and Kosovo will improve economic cooperation.

"We are a young country and are open to Croatian investments," Thaci said after the meeting on Tuesday.

Thaci also attended the Kosovo-Croatia Business Forum last Wednesday.

Mimoza Kusari, Kosovo's deputy premier and Minister for Industry and

Trade, and Besim Beqaj, Economic



Milanovic says he wants to help.

Development Minister, are to sign a contract on economic cooperation between Kosovo and Croatia.

# Kosovo to Recognize Montenegrin Minority

Kosovo President pledges Montenegrins ethnic minority status, so opening the door for the opening of embassies, on hold since 2008.



By Prishtina Insight

The President of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga, has announced that Kosovo has agreed to recognize a Montenegrin ethnic minority as a constitutional category.

"We will do it with new amendments

to the Kosovo constitution," Jahjaga told the Montenegrin public service broadcaster, RTCG.

According to her, this should pave the way to the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Kosovo and Montenegro.

"This will create conditions for opening embassies and improving intergovernmental cooperation," the President said.

Kosovo declared independence from

Serbia in February 2008. In October 2008, Montenegro recognized the country.

However, Montenegro has resisted opening embassies until Montenegrins obtain minority status and thus obtain right to minority representation in the Kosovo parliament.

So far, Kosovo has been recognized by 92 out of 193 UN member states including the US, and 22 of the 27 EU countries.

## Photo News: Firewood to warm Osojane's pupils



Workers unload firewood at a school in the village of Osojane in Istog. The Serbian government provided the wood to the primary and secondary school, which has around 100 students. Since 2011, about 2,300 Kosovo Serbs have returned to Osojane and surrounding villages.

(ARMENIJA ZAJMI BESEVIC/BETA)

News in brief

## Thaci: No Autonomy for Northern Kosovo

Kosovo's PM Hashim Thaci has ruled out any possibility of autonomy for the Serb-run northern Kosovo.

The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, said that the autonomy for Northern Kosovo was "just an old dream of Serbia's that will never come true".

"The idea that has been presented in the Serbian media will not come true in independent and sovereign Kosovo that has an extremely big support of the US and the EU," Thaci told reporters on Saturday.

He is convinced that the political talks between Belgrade and Prishtina will end with a mutual recognition.

The EU-mediated talks between Kosovo and Serbia started in March 2011, three years after Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008.

However, the Deputy Director of the Serbian government's Office for Kosovo, Mirko Ilic, has stated that twinning of towns and municipalities in Kosovo with towns from central Serbia proves that his country has not given up on its former southern province.

The ceremony of twinning was held in the village of Leposavic in northern Kosovo last Sunday.

Northern Kosovo has long been prone to violence. Its population, almost entirely comprised of Serbs, does not recognise Kosovo's independence or the ethnic Albanian-led government in Prishtina.

## Serbia Prepares Platform for Kosovo Talks

Serbia believes talks with Kosovo on energy will be fruitful, the country's energy minister has said ahead of expected negotiations between the two countries.

The outline of the Serbian platform for dialogue with Kosovo will be announced in the coming weeks, Energy Minister Zorana Mihajlovic told news agency Tanjug.

Mihajlovic said the government in Belgrade expected to have scenarios for solving energy and telecommunications issues ready by the end of the year.

Kosovo and Serbia began EU-sponsored talks aimed at normalising relations in March 2011. So far, the two sides have reached deals on freedom of movement, university diplomas and regional representation. However, not all the deals have been implemented.

When it comes to negotiations on energy, Mihajlovic told Tanjug that she expected Belgrade and Prishtina to come to an agreement about "the use of coal in Kosovo in the next 10, 20 or 50 years."

"A negotiating team still has not been assembled, but the ministries of energy and telecommunications - in charge of the issues which will be among the first on the agenda - are working to prepare data, conduct analyses and develop scenarios for possible approaches to solving these issues," Mihajlovic said.

## Role of JNA in the 1990s Wars Still Remains Unclear

One of the main reasons why the role of the Yugoslav People's Army, JNA, in the breakup of Yugoslavia remains unclear after nearly 20 years since the wars is that archives of the army are still kept secret, experts say.

Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the federal army, the JNA, was often used and abused for political gain by the ex-Yugoslav states, agreed experts at the round table discussion, "The role of the JNA in the dissolution of Yugoslavia," held Tuesday at Belgrade's Center for Cultural Decontamination.

The university professor and former army officer, Miroslav Hadzic, says that the role of the JNA cannot be interpreted as long as the archives of the army remain a state secret.

"All the countries of the former Yugoslavia are silent about the JNA - Serbia because of its role in the wars, and other countries because the JNA enabled them to create their own states," says Hadzic.

Lazar Stojanovic, a Belgrade based film director and commentator, agrees that the secret JNA files are one of the main reasons why its members were not prosecuted for war crimes in front of national courts.

"That army has never been charged with war crimes, right up to the present just because we cannot get at their documents. It's not just us who can't get at the files, even the Hague Tribunal cannot get hold of the files of the meetings between senior army officers and state government," notes Stojanovic.



# PM's Relative to Head Diaspora Commission

As husband of Hashim Thaci's niece is put in charge of new commission, he says merit, not family ties, was behind his appointment.



By Parim Olluri

Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci has appointed the husband of his niece to head a government commission tasked with registering Kosovars living abroad.

The government nominated Lulzim Dragusha on October 24 to head the new body. Thaci subsequently approved the nomination.

Dragusha, who is married to Evgjëni Thaci, daughter of the Prime Minister's eldest brother, Gani, told Prishtina Insight that the appointment had nothing to do with family ties. The post is also unpaid.

Unofficial estimates suggest as many as 800,000 Kosovars live

abroad, mostly in Switzerland, Germany and the United States.

They send home millions of euro in remittances each year, 585 million euro in 2011, according to Kosovo's Central Bank.

The International Monetary Fund has credited those remittances with sustaining Kosovo economic growth amid a global economic downturn.

However, the government has yet to make a concerted effort to count and identify Kosovars living abroad.

## Family affair:

Kosovo government spokeswoman Albulena Sylaj confirmed Dragusha's appointment but referred questions about it to Thaci's chef de cabinet, Abelard Tahiri.

Neither Tahiri nor Thaci's spokesman, Arianit Bytyqi,

responded to Prishtina Insight's questions, including on whether the Prime Minister had consulted the Anti-Corruption Agency to see if the appointment breached the 2011 Law on Prevention of Conflicts of Interest.

Dragusha is currently an adviser to the Minister for the Diaspora, Ibrahim Makolli, and will not receive any extra pay for heading the commission.

Hasan Preteni, head of the Anti-Corruption Agency, said he wasn't aware of the appointment until Prishtina Insight asked him about it. He said the agency will look at the case, but it will take time to rule on it.

According to the Law on Conflicts of Interest, Thaci's relationship to Dragusha could be problematic, as officials are obliged to notify the Anti-Corruption Agency about any potential issues.

## Appointment on merit:

Dragusha himself has responded to Prishtina Insight's inquiries and has defended his appointment.

"I am the most professionally qualified in the cabinet to lead this commission," he said in a written response.

He insisted that family ties to Hashim Thaci had played no role. "I have done excellently in my studies, and I must work somewhere. This has nothing to do with the fact that I married into someone's family," he wrote.

Dragusha said he would provide further explanations of his qualifications through Diaspora Ministry spokesman Xhevdet Sfarqa, though this newspaper did not receive any of this extra information by time of publication.

Dragusha's father-in-law, Gani Thaci, is deputy director of the Kosovo Insurance Bureau.

On October 1, Prishtina Insight reported that he had received a bonus of 10,000 euro for preventing fraud on the borders, where car insurance is sold. The Insurance Bureau refused to release any details or documentation about the bonus.

The new commission will comprise nine members, including Dragusha, Mentor Borovci, head of the Diaspora Ministry's legal department, Isa Krasniqi, head of the Statistics Agency; Blerim Canaj, head of the Civil Registration Agency; Besim Kajtazi, head of the Prime Minister's legal office; and Ruzhdi Halili, director of the Prime Minister's office of strategic planning and representatives from the Foreign and Finance ministries.

## Neighbourhood News in Brief

### US Election Won't Affect Balkans, Ambassador Says

US Ambassador to Serbia Michael Kirby said that Washington's policy towards the Balkans will remain unchanged regardless of the outcome of the November 6 presidential race between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney.

The US is interested in the stability of the region and wants to see a solution to the dispute over Kosovo that both Belgrade and Pristina can accept, he says.

Kirby reiterated that the US considers Kosovo a fully independent country which as such should be a member of the UN.

But he also said that the US does not believe that Serbia has to recognize Kosovo's 2008 independence declaration.

Serbian analyst Obrad Kesic believes that best indicator of the absence of potential policy changes is fact that neither presidential candidate has even mentioned the Balkans in his campaign.



### Bosnia Revisits Macedonian President's Death

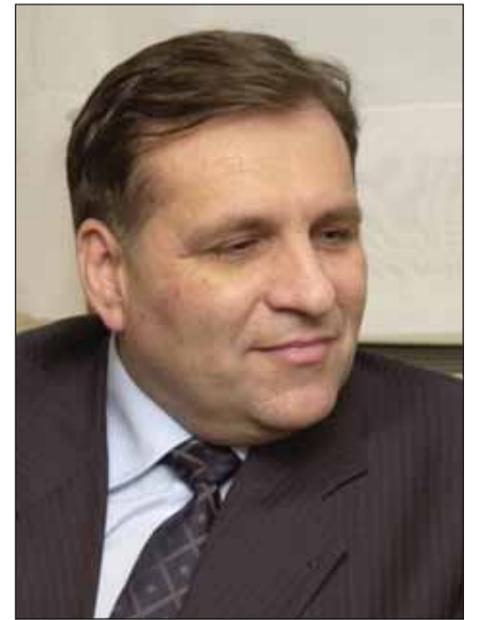
Bosnia's aviation authorities have promised to look at new evidence from Macedonia concerning the 2004 plane crash that killed President Trajkovski.

Sotir Kostov, head of the Macedonian state commission for the investigation of aviation accidents, confirmed the fresh information, which is likely to revive speculation that Boris Trajkovski may have been assassinated.

"We have been saying all the time that we have evidence, which the Bosnian commission that investigated the accident in 2004 did not take in to account," he said.

"With this move, our Bosnian colleagues have shown that they trust us," Kostov added.

He explained that if the Bosnian commission that works within Bosnia's Ministry of Transport determines inconsistencies in the previous investigation, it will pass the case to the Bosnian Prosecution, which may then decide to reopen the investigation.



# Kosovo 'Backing Away' From Closing Polluting Plant

European official says recent upgrades to the aging smokestack Kosovo A raise doubts about Kosovo's commitment to closing it.



By Liridona Hyseni,  
Njomza Salihi and  
Jeta Xharra

A conference to lure donors to fund renewable energy projects in Kosovo has been postponed because two organisers, the European Commission and the World Bank, believe that the government is trying to extend the life of the country's oldest and dirtiest coal power plant, a top European Commission official told Prishtina Insight.

The conference, originally set for November 13, instead will be held sometime next year.

Liridon Mavriqi, energy adviser to the Minister of Economic Development, said the ministry — also an organiser — needs more time to prepare.

The World Bank and European Commission would not comment publicly. But a senior European Commission official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, told Prishtina Insight that the European Commission and World Bank soured on the conference because the Kosovo government is pouring millions of euro into Kosovo's most-polluting power station, Kosovo A.

"Seeing this weak dedication on the part of the Government of Kosovo into closing Kosovo A by the time that has been decided by

the EU, we and the World Bank saw this as an inappropriate time to organise a donors' conference for investments in new energy capacities," the official said.

## Millions spent on filters:

The European Union wants Kosovo A closed by 2017. The Kosovo government plans to replace it with another coal power plant, Kosova e Re, or New Kosovo.

But in the past year alone, the Kosovo Energy Corporation, KEK, has invested nearly 47.5 million euro in the 40-year-old power station, according to company data. The money included more than 25 million euro to install new electrostatic filters at the plant.

A 2012 World Bank report partly blamed Kosovo A's lack of filters for Prishtina's notoriously poor air quality.

The European Commission official said while the upgrades are good news for the environment, the money could have been better spent on the newer Kosovo B plant, the planned Kosova e Re or renewable energy.

The official said the investments suggest Kosovo has long-term plans for the aging power plant.

"We are concerned that the terrain is being prepared to say after a few years that the life of Kosova A can be extended, since investments on filters have been made," the official said.

"For us this is an unacceptable argument since we have agreed that Kosovo A must be closed."

Other improvements to Kosovo A include an 8.7 million euro project for a system to mix ash with water at Kosovo A and pipe it to the mine at Mirash to reduce air pollution; 7 million euro to integrate the plant's ash landfill with surrounding fields; and 5.2 million euro to remove and treat over 18,000 tons of dangerous chemical materials, including tar, benzene, phenol, methanol, and petrol components.

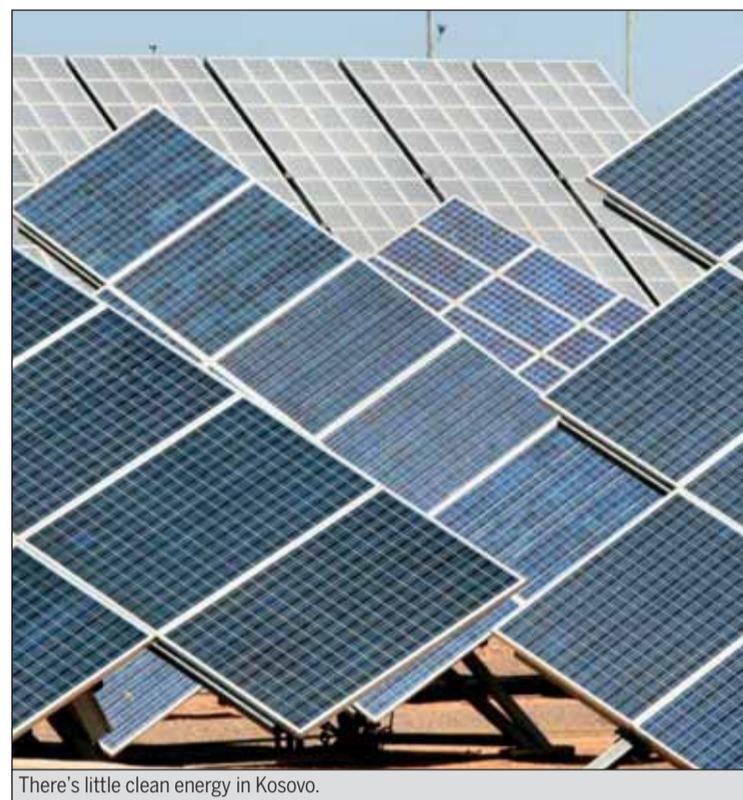
## Focus on lignite:

The government of Kosovo bases its current energy strategy on lignite, or brown coal. Kosovo has the world's fifth largest reserve of lignite. The lignite fuels Kosovo A and the newer Kosovo B, which provide the bulk of Kosovo's electricity.

The government is still in the process of pre-qualifying companies to build the planned New Kosovo plant, which would supply 600 megawatts of electricity. The World Bank and the US government are backing New Kosovo.

Supporters of New Kosovo say it will be cleaner and more efficient than its predecessors.

But environmentalists inside and outside Kosovo are critical of the plan, arguing that it commits the country to decades more of



There's little clean energy in Kosovo.

dirty energy production when the country should be pursuing clean, renewable energy, such as wind and hydroelectric power.

"The government should direct the country toward the development of this sector and towards closing the lignite plant, to have a sustainable development of this sector, create new jobs, and preserve the environment and health of people in Kosovo," Nezir Sinani, acting director of Prishtina's INDEP think tank, said.

Sinani said the government's Energy Regulator Office, which regulates energy projects, has

stalled some for years, depriving Kosovo of more than 200 megawatts of alternative energy.

Adelina Murtezaj Bajrami, spokeswoman of the Energy Regulator Office, said the agency gave final approval for two wind projects and one hydroelectric project. Four other projects are pending, two of which will receive final approval soon, Bajrami said.

Bajrami said the Energy Office is committed to "supporting the creation of a competitive energy market by encouraging investments and guaranteeing the security and stability of the energy sector in Kosovo."



Kosovo A, a 40-year-old power station, is sometimes called Europe's single worst source of air pollution.

# Serbia Anxious to Clinch Russian Steel Deal

If the sale of the Smederevo mill to Uralvagonzavod, UVZ, goes ahead, it will probably reflect Russia's political interests in Serbia rather than any economic logic.



By Snezana Krivokapic

**S**erbia is in hurry to seal the deal with a Russian public company and sell its troubled steel mill in Smederevo.

But negotiations might last longer than was planned and yet are not conclusive.

If the deal comes through, it will also be more a sign of renewed political ties with Russia rather than a reflection of sound business interests, experts say.

Since US Steel pulled out of the Smederevo mill at the beginning of the year after incurring annual losses of 200 million US dollars, Serbia took back the mill to keep the 5,100 workers employed and avoid economic meltdown in Smederevo, a town of 115,000.

Currently, two furnaces are closed, while the 5,100 employees are on paid leave, receiving 60 per cent of their salaries.

About 1,000 people are occasionally on duty, engaged on maintenance and security of the facilities while others sit at home.

The state now pays the staff more than a million dollars a month in total while they remain on paid leave.

The first tender failed in April on the eve of Serbia's May elections, when it concluded without any bids from companies that had initially expressed interest.

The government in Serbia in the meantime changed, with a new political coalition taking power led by the Serbian Progressive Party.

The new team is more interested in cultivating Russian friendship than the last Democrat-led administration was.

In the second tender, launched on October 8th, Russia's state-owned Uralvagonzavod, UVZ, was the only company to indicate interest.

This prompted Moscow analysts to say that the reasons might be more political than economic, aimed at cementing Russian influence in the region.

UVZ is one of Russia's largest builders of railway carriages, tanks, road vehicles, metallurgical products, tools and consumer goods.

The company is based in Russia's Nizhny Tagil, while its only foreign asset is the Sambre foundry at Meuse in France.

After UVZ bought tender documentation, Serbia was forced to extend the deadline for bids from October 26th to December 26th.

Economy Minister Mladjan Dinkic and Prime Minister Ivica Dacic said the tender was extended to give UVZ more time to prepare its offer.



Russia's interests in Serbia are primarily political.

Production in the mill might restart before an official agreement is signed, they added.

A source familiar with the talks told BIRN that the tender was extended because UVZ "needed permission from the political top [in Russia]" to take over the mill, adding that the Serbian authorities do not expect new bids.

"We also changed rules so that a subsidiary of the company can also apply for a tender since previous experience showed that companies usually apply in that way," Dusan Belanovic, spokesman for Serbia's Privatisation Agency, told BIRN.

UVZ bought tender documentation just a month and a half after Serbian mines minister Milan Bacevic met officials in Moscow and announced that "a Russian company is interested in the steel mill", declining to reveal its name.

In mid-September PM Dacic then said the matter "will be resolved within the framework of good Serbia-Russia relations".

On October 11th Oleg Sienko, general manager of UVZ, told Russian newspaper Komersant that the company was in talks with Serbia, but that no final decision had been made.

"Smederevo Steel has the potential to cooperate with the foreign assets of UVZ," Sienko said.

But the business logic of the move is disputed by many Russian analysts, mostly because the company produces an expensive product whose price is falling on world markets.

It is increasingly accepted among most steelmakers that making hot steel in Europe, as Smederevo did, may never again turn a

profit.

Oleg Petropavlovskiy, a senior analyst for metal and mining in Moscow, told BIRN that in a decreasing environment it doesn't make commercial sense to buy the steel mill, so it might be more of a political decision.

"Politically, UVZ, as a state-owned company, may be supporting political decisions aimed at cementing relations between Serbia and Russia," he suggested.

Dinnur Galikhanov, senior metal and mining Analyst at Aton, a consulting company in Moscow, notes that UVZ "is a government-owned company, so generating a positive return from its investments may not be its top priority."

Genadij Sisojev, editor of Moscow-based newspaper Komersant, says Russia wants to re-establish warm ties with Belgrade and its new government.

"Russia looks at Serbia as its strategic economic partner in this part of Europe," Sisojev said.

Not everybody shares his views. On October 31st Belgrade-based daily Blic quoted Nikita Bondarev, an analyst at the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, as stating that the practical result of the recent high profile meetings between Serbian and Russian politicians, including the meeting of the two presidents, was zero.

Bondarev believes that Serbia has nothing to offer Russia in order to prove its friendship and political and economic loyalty.

Other analysts also argue that it will be difficult for the Russian company to profit from this deal.

"I don't see how buying an asset in Serbia

will help them in optimizing operations in France, the logistics don't make obvious sense", said Galikhanov, adding that transporting raw steel from Smederevo to France can't be profitable, as it is not a final product but an expensive raw material.

"At the same time, it's even less profitable to transport steel products from Serbia to Russia for wagon production," Oleg Petropavlovskiy said.

The Smederevo plant produced iron at two blast furnaces then converted blast furnace iron to raw steel.

The second part of its business is to use the raw steel to produce tin-coated steel products used in cans for food, paints, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

Some experts believe that if the company wants to stop losing money it should focus on the production of tin-coated steel products.

"If you're losing money at this stage, it will be difficult to recoup that loss at the steel rolling stage. That's probably why US Steel sold the plant in the first place," Galikhanov recalled.

Both Galikhanov and Petropavlovskiy said that, since steel prices are falling, it is much easier and cheaper to purchase steel from third parties than have one's own steelmaking facilities, while to reduce costs UVZ may have to invest heavily in the mill's facilities.

PM Dacic said that if the Russian partner does decide to enter the steel mill it may invest up to \$129 million to renew production in the two blast furnaces that have been put into hibernation.

Dacic added that activating one blast furnace takes almost half a year, which means that production, might not start before the second half of 2013.

Galikhanov says that even if the so-called hot end, making iron and steel, is closed, keeping only the rolling part of the business. "That will still mean the government having to find new jobs for a lot of people from the plant".

One fifth of the total workforce in the steel mill worked on iron and raw steel production.

The Smederevo mill is not the only deal Russia might support in Serbia. Belgrade expects a favourable loan from Russia, worth a billion US dollars, to support its budget for 2013.

It is unclear whether this is a done deal. While Serbian Finance Minister Mladjan Dinkic claims that Moscow will grant the loan, Balkan Magazin has quoted Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov as saying that "at the moment, there is no plan to grant a loan to Serbia."

The South Stream pipeline is also due to start, with construction expect to begin by the end of the year.

# World Bank Pans Power Privatization in Albania

The World Bank's Albania director, Jane Armitage, last Thursday described the outcome of the sale of Albania's utility company to the Czech firm CEZ in 2009 as 'deeply disappointing'.



By Besar Likmeta

"Three and a half years later we share the deep disappointment of Albanian citizens and the government with the outcomes of this privatization," Armitage said in Tirana.

The Czech purchasers of the company, CEZ, "have not been able to reduce technical commercial losses, which were the expectation and, on the contrary, they

have increased; they have not been able to increase billing and collection, the situation has got worse," Armitage added.

Although the government and CEZ are still negotiating, the company announced on Wednesday that it might withdraw from the Albanian electricity market.

In 2009, Albania sold 76 per cent of its shares in Operatori i Sistemit te Spherndarjes, OSSH, a company that manages the electricity distribution of up to 1 million consumers, with revenues of over 300 million euro per year.

CEZ bought the stake for 102

million euro and the World Bank helped smooth the sale with a \$100 million partial risk guarantee in case the Czech company opted out.

But CEZ failed to cut losses and stem theft in the grid, forcing the government to subsidize costly imports for its state-owned power corporation, KESH.

Last month the government issued €50 million in loan guarantees for KESH to cover the cost of imports.

Armitage said that the World Bank was preparing an emergency loan for Albania, to cover

the cost of these imports and put its electricity market on a sustainable basis.

"We will be providing support as best we can to the government both in the immediate few months during these negotiations, but we are also preparing an emergency energy credit to help the government finance electricity imports and also continue reforms to put the sector on a sustainable basis," Armitage said.

"We are working on a 100 million loan to the country for the energy sector on emergency basis," she concluded.



# Serbia's Clowning PM Keeps Close Eye on Power

Ivica Dacic may like to give an impression of boozy spontaneity - but he is more politically calculating than he appears.



By Bojana Barlovac

“Kosovo is yours as much as it is mine.” So said Serbia's Prime Minister, Ivica Dacic - who was born in Kosovo - addressing his Kosovo counterpart, Hashim Thaci, at an unexpected meeting in Brussels on October 19.

The visit was seen as a historic moment in the Balkans, as Dacic was the first Serbian leader to officially meet a Kosovo Albanian leader since the former province declared independence from Serbia in 2008 - a move that Serbia strongly contested and which it has said it will never recognise.

Paradoxically, months before, on the eve of May general elections, Dacic was playing the populist card on Kosovo.

At that time he was ordering highly controversial arrests of Kosovo Albanians as Interior Minister in the former, Democrat-led government.

“I'm not so religious as to turn the other cheek; the one who hits will get a reponse,” he said then, referring to Kosovo Albanians.

Dacic's crowd-pleasing words on the widely disliked Albanians were one factor behind the Socialists' unexpectedly strong showing in the election, when they won 16 per cent of the votes, up from 7.58 per cent in 2008 elections. Dacic went on to become Serbia's new Prime Minister.

But, while in public, Dacic likes to give an impression of spontaneity, getting drunk, grabbing microphones and saying controversial things in public, his apparent gaffes divide political observers.

While some dismiss his outburst as the result of too much alcohol, others see his gaffes as part of all part of a well thought-out political strategy.

“You know the saying about ‘In vino veritas’,” Vladimir Goati told Balkan Insight, referring to

Dacic's improvised policy announcements and to his well publicised antics and sing-alongs on stage.

But Zoran Stojiljkovic, political science professor at Belgrade University, who was assistant professor when Dacic was a student, says Dacic is a clever politician who knows how to stay on the winning side.

“Dacic is one of the most talented and inventive politicians in Serbia,” he told Balkan Insight.

The best political science student of his generation at university, Dacic joined the new Socialist Party of Serbia led by Slobodan Milosevic as a youngster and at 24, in 1990, became first president of the Young Socialists.

In the Nineties, while Milosevic was firmly in power and whipping up Serbian nationalism in a drive to carve a Greater Serbia from the ruins of Yugoslavia, Dacic was an arch-loyalist, serving as party spokesperson as well as being an MP in parliament.

But when Milosevic fell dramatically in 2000, Dacic rapidly changed his tune.

After assuming the Socialist Party leadership, following the death of Milosevic in 2006, he changed policy, dumping the old war-mongering ideology and fervently embracing the new pro-EU course.

Jovan Zivkovic, head of the Centre for Regional Politics, believes Dacic has always been pragmatic, and that this pragmatism holds the key to his inconsistent-looking moves and statements.

“We do not have a proper prime minister acting for the public good but a man who always thinks only of keeping power,” Zivkovic told Balkan Insight.

In 2008, the reformed Socialists entered the government with Dacic becoming Interior Minister and a key partner of the then President, Boris Tadic, especially in the fight against organised crime and corruption.

In government, Dacic adjusted his views on other subjects, apart from Serbian nationalism.

As Belgrade sought to improve its human rights record with a view

obtaining EU candidate status - and as the EU began insisting on greater respect for gay rights as part of human rights in general - Dacic helped a gay rights activist, Boris Milicevic, get elected to the Socialist Party main board.

Dacic then proved surprisingly flexible on the emotive subject of Kosovo, a key issue that needs resolving as part of the country's EU accession agenda.

As soon as Serbia and Kosovo began EU-mediated talks in Brussels in spring 2011, Dacic shook up the political scene by scorning his party's former hardline policy on Kosovo.

“I was in a government that tried to save Kosovo with weapons and we failed,” he said, referring to Milosevic's attempt to crush the Kosovo Albanians with arms - which spectacularly backfired, triggering NATO intervention. “The time has come for a final agreement on this issue,” he added.

Soon after, in March 2012, Serbia obtained the EU candidate status it had long sought.

But, later that month, with EU candidacy in the bag and a general election campaign underway, Dacic changed his rhetoric on Kosovo once again, maintaining that Serbia would fight for Kosovo, if necessary.

His favourable attitude to gay rights also vanished for the duration of the general election campaign.

Earlier this month, ahead of a planned gay pride march, which in the end was cancelled, Dacic said in Belgrade: “Screw the kind of [European] Union for which gay pride marches are the entry ticket!”

European officials seem ready to put up with the twists and turns of their quixotic interlocutor in Belgrade.

On October 30, Jelko Kacin, the European Parliament Rapporteur for Serbia, said that a government led by Dacic had the capacity to address the most important issues on the European agenda.

He also said he was impressed by Dacic's commitment to Serbia's work on the EU and by the historic meeting with Thaci in Brussels.

Normalisation of relations with Kosovo remains a key precondition for Serbia's further EU progress.

“It was the right message at the right time,” Kacin told Serbian news agency Tanjug, referring to the historic meeting in Brussels.

## Dacic's most famous quotes:

“I think that for Serbia its better that I sing that lament. I'm not making music career, I now avoid singing, but that is something that I do since I was a child and that [singing] would probably my profession, if I wasn't politician. After all, Haris Dzinovic [famous Bosnian singer] always calls me a colleague.”

RTS, October 23rd 2012

“Milosevic called me and said that he thinks that I'm the only one who could replace him.”

RTS, October 23rd 2012

“I have fought against Thaci, and if it weren't for the international community, of course I would have won.”

RTS, October 23rd 2012

“We should continue dialogue with Pristina on all important topics. After all, it's better to talk than to wage war.”

Tanjug, April 18th 2011

“Excluding the war as an option would send a wrong message to Thaci, as there has to be a balance of fear because of a security in the region. Thaci has to know that if he attacks Serbs in Kosovo, he attacks Belgrade. Serbia cannot and will not stand still and watch.”

Press, October 24th 2011

“It is obvious that the solution for Kosovo that Albanians are wishing for is not implementable, nor are the things written in Serbian Constitution. Politicians should not compete who is the better fairy tale writer, but to practice politics in the best interest of the people.”

Tanjug, September 12th 2011

“The idea of partition of Kosovo us the only realistic solution. I don't know if the Belgrade and Pristina would agree with me on that, but I think that the most realistic is that territory where Serbs live remains in Serbia and that Serbia agrees that the territory where Albanians live stay in Kosovo.”

Blic, March 15th 2011

“Police is oblige, in accordance to the Constitution and the laws, to ensure safety to the participants of public gathering [Pride parade], not to assess whether someone likes or dislikes the even.”

Tanjug, September 30th 2010

“There will be no cooperation with the Hague tribunal. We will never agree to extradite our citizens to The Hague.”

Kurir, May 12th 2008

“No matter what we think about that cooperation [with the Hague tribunal], that is Serbian obligation.”

Beta, January 12th 2009

“If we get enough votes, they [IMF] will not be here for very long, because they cannot control life in Serbia. Thank them very much, but they should find some other country for their experiments.”

Politika, March 26th 2012

“The financial sector is the biggest enemy of our nation whose aim is to loot this nation, but it will not be like that any longer. Have we come to the point that our poor people fund the banks.”

Blic, July 11th 2012

“Serbian government will continue talks with the IMF, World Bank and other international financial institutions and organisations in order to achieve macroeconomic stability and sustainable economic development.”

Prime Minister's exposé prime, July 26th 2012.



# The Minority Report: Jobless Ethnic

Frustration unites members of the minority across the region – but hopes of EU entry may have eased tensions in Montenegro.



Samir Kajosevic  
Podgorica, Skopje  
and Presevo

Tuzi feels like a suburb without a city. Just north of the Albanian border, this small town is struggling to escape the shadow of the Montenegrin capital, another ten minutes' drive to the north.

Tuzi's 3,000 inhabitants want to run their own affairs. Instead, their town is administered as an outlying district of the capital, Podgorica. They speak the Albanian language, but they must follow the laws of Montenegro.

"Nobody cares about us," says Agron Dushaj, an unemployed man in his twenties. Variations of his complaint are replayed in countless cafes across the town, where jobless men trade hard-luck stories and take too long over their coffee.

Greater autonomy for Tuzi was meant to have been the solution to its many woes – securing employment for the young, and investment in the crumbling infrastructure. Instead, the denial of municipality status has been added to its list of grievances.

Ethnic Albanians make up the majority in Tuzi and much of south-western Montenegro. However, they are a minority in the country as a whole, as well as in two other ex-Yugoslav republics, Macedonia and Serbia.

## marketing

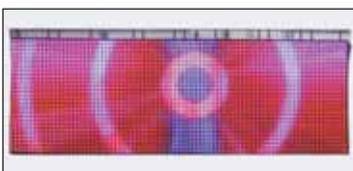


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The relative size of these minorities differs. They make up a quarter of Macedonia's total population, and a much smaller percent of Serbia's, concentrated mostly in the south. They have in common a strained relationship with states that are traditionally dominated by majority ethnic groups.

That relationship could affect the future of each and every citizen of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. The three countries have applied to join the EU. The progress of their bids will depend heavily on their treatment of minorities, including the ethnic Albanians.

Of the three, Montenegro is regarded as the strongest candidate. It could be admitted into the bloc within the next few years. While Serbia and Macedonia have both applied to join, their entry is neither imminent, nor certain.

This story compares discontent among ethnic Albanians in Montenegro with the mood among members of the minority in Macedonia and Serbia.

It reveals that exclusion from the public sector job market is a common complaint across the region. But the likelihood of discontent spilling over into civic unrest seems lowest in Montenegro – the country closest to joining the EU.

According to Genci Nimanbegu, an ethnic Albanian politician, the tough criteria for entering the bloc are pushing Montenegro to improve the way its minorities are treated. Nimanbegu's Forca party is set to join the country's governing coalition following October's elections.

"Our experience shows that all good things that happened to Albanians arose from external influences," he told the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN). "This will probably continue during the negotiations with Brussels."

### 'Jobs for their own'

An ethnic Albanian insurgency brought Macedonia to the brink of civil war in 2001. Calm was restored by an internationally brokered peace deal. Recent violence, accompanied by nationalist rhetoric from both sides, has made that peace look increasingly fraught.

Serbia's tiny ethnic Albanian population also briefly rose up against the state in 2000, before a settlement brought the gunmen into local government. The conflict in Presevo was intertwined with that in neighbouring Kosovo, where an ethnic Albanian rebellion – backed by NATO air-strikes – had culminated with Pristina declaring independence from Serbia.

Montenegro has always been different. Its ethnic Albanians never waged war against the state. Quite the opposite, in fact – the minority is credited with the creation of the independent republic. In 2006, their votes helped deliver a razor-thin victory in the referendum that prised Montenegro out of its union with Serbia.



Bujanovac, a largely Albanian city in southern Serbia.

The ethnic Albanians believe independence ought to have given them a bigger stake in a smaller state. But six years on, many still complain of being confined to the sidelines of political and economic life. They accuse the government – in power for more than a decade, and recently re-elected – of breaking its promises.

"When they depended on Albanian votes, they offered us everything," says Linda Dushaj, a young woman from Tuzi who graduated in politics but can only find work as a fitness instructor. "In the end, we got nothing."

While overall unemployment in Montenegro is around 13 per cent, the figure is closer to 20 per cent in areas such as Tuzi and Ulcinj, that are home to most of the country's ethnic Albanians.

The minority accounts for five per cent of Montenegro's overall population. However, it only has 2.8 per cent of the jobs on the state's payroll, according to a government report on the state's employment of minorities, published in June 2011.

As in most ex-Yugoslav coun-

tries, so in Montenegro, the public sector is bloated and inefficient. Nevertheless, its promise of a steady salary and benefits are a powerful lure for educated youth – especially in the absence of a strong private sector. Competition is fierce for jobs in the many ministries and offshoots of the administration.

But as elsewhere in the region, there is a widespread belief in Montenegro that the best opportunities go to those with the best connections. Employment in the public sector is seen as a means by which politicians reward – or ensure – loyalty.

Ethnic Albanian leaders who are close to the Montenegrin gov-

## MONTENEGRO'S OCTOBER 2012 ELECTIONS

The European Montenegro alliance, comprising the Democratic Party of Socialists and the Social Democratic Party, won 39 of 81 seats in the parliament.

The opposition coalition, the Democratic Front won 20 seats, while the Socialist People's Party and Positive Montenegro in nine and seven seats respectively.

In order to stay in power, the European Montenegro alliance has had to form coalitions with minority parties that have six seats between them. Of these, two seats belong to the two main ethnic Albanian coalitions.

Although ethnic Albanian politicians had been included in the previous government, they were not elected as MPs. The new alliance gives them greater clout. They have already presented a list of demands, including more investment in their districts, and more jobs in the administration for their community.

# Albanians “Let Down by the State”



Xhabir Deralla is worried.

ernment have also been accused of allocating jobs to their supporters. Many members of their community accept that this form of corruption affects everyone – not just the minorities. Nevertheless, they believe discrimination has made matters worse for them.

Dijana Ivanaj, a jobless 26-year-old graduate in the capital, Podgorica, says it is “only natural that state officials wish to keep the jobs for their own”.

“But if they give me a passport, regard me as a Montenegrin citizen and claim that I have equal rights, then I should be allowed to do the work I have been trained for.”

Having spent two years hunting for a job, Ivanaj says she has lost track of the rejections. She has even failed to get work as a secretary, for which she would have been over-qualified. As a graduate in forensic science, she had originally hoped to join the police.

However, the police service has one of the lowest records for hiring ethnic Albanians – even though it is one of the largest single employers in the administration, with more than 4,000 staff on its payroll. Ethnic Albanians account for only 1.21 per cent of that figure. And they account for only 0.72 per cent of the staff of the customs service, another major employer.

The 2011 survey that provided these figures concluded that minorities in general were inadequately represented in Montenegro’s public sector.

Sabahudin Delic, a counsellor at the Ministry for Human Rights and Minorities, acknowledges that the figures pointed to a problem – but insists that the shortfall was not the result of discrimination.

“This is not because anyone is refusing to employ members of minorities,” he said. “Simply speaking, in certain areas, we cannot find enough quality candidates.”

Delic’s workplace seems to be one of the few exceptions to the rule. Ethnic Albanians make up 43 per cent of the staff at the Ministry for Human Rights and Minorities.

## Rising tensions

Ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia say their region lacks investment.

Unemployment also tops the list of grievances in Presevo and Bujanovac, an impoverished region of southern Serbia that is home to some 70,000 ethnic Albanians.

More than a decade ago, a local guerrilla force tried to secede from Serbia and unite the territory with neighbouring Kosovo. The brief rebellion was halted by a peace deal that guaranteed the minority more clout in local politics.

But having more leaders in posi-

tions of power has not helped the community’s economic fortunes. The legacy of the previous conflict – and the lingering fear of further unrest – have stymied private sector growth.

“The investors are not coming because money is easily scared away,” says Nexhat Behluli, a former guerrilla who now runs several businesses in the area. “There is no security. The situation could deteriorate at any moment.”

The public sector also offers little hope to local ethnic Albanian graduates. Many of them have chosen to complete their education in Kosovo, Macedonia or Albania, where university courses are taught in the Albanian language. However, Serbia has refused to recognise their qualifications, until this summer. Coming home to a sluggish economy, the graduates have been locked out of the only viable source of employment.

“We are completely isolated. It feels as if we are second-rate citizens,” says Valon Arifi, who received a diploma in design in Kosovo and is struggling to find well-paid work.

Despite the disillusionment, there is little appetite for another conflict. The unemployed youth of Presevo say they would rather migrate to another country than take up arms against the state. Thousands have already done so – remittances support many households in the region.

An armed uprising in Macedonia, to Serbia’s south, was also halted by an agreement over ten years ago. The Ohrid accord – named after the lakeside resort where the rival leaders met – was heralded at the time as a blueprint for a more equitable society.

Over the last few years however, ethnic Albanians have been complaining that the reforms are being reversed. Tension remains high, and gangs of young men

from both communities periodically confront each other in the capital, Skopje.

The country is effectively partitioned between the ethnic Albanians and Macedonian majority. Estimates suggest nearly a third of the young are unemployed – one of the highest records in the Balkans.

And while ethnic Albanian parties are part of the governing coalition, members of the minority hold only 17 per cent of the jobs on the state’s payroll. The Ohrid accord had promised them a quarter of all public sector posts – proportionate to their share of the population.

Xhabir Deralla, a political analyst, says radicals on both sides are playing up the possibility of fresh violence.

“The conflict of 2001 is regarded as a match that was interrupted by the international community,” he says. “On social networking sites, people are saying it is time for the second half.”

Xhabir Deralla says he is concerned about rising ethnic tensions.

However, an official from the governing VMRO-DPMNE party, Vlatko Gjorcev, insists the tensions have been exaggerated.

“Sometimes the media presents the situation as being more dramatic than it really is,” he said. “Macedonia is not Scandinavia – but even Scandinavia has problems.”

## ‘No magic wand’

Montenegro has no recent history of bloodshed involving ethnic Albanians. The country’s government even gained some approval from the minority group during the late 1990s, when it provided sanctuary to refugees from neighbouring Kosovo.

Today, the prospect of entering the EU may be restraining ethnic Albanian resentment. Mitja Drobnic, the head of the European Commission’s delegation in Podgorica, said the Montenegrin government’s treatment of the minority was being monitored closely.

“No country can join the EU before achieving all European standards,” he told BIRN.

However, precedents within the EU suggest few minorities are ever completely satisfied.

The Croat population of Austria enjoys far better status than many ethnic Albanian minorities in the

Balkans. As citizens of an EU-member country that has pledged to honour their rights, they rarely complain of discrimination and face no barriers to employment.

Instead, Croatian rights activists speak of the perils of assimilation. They say that their language – perhaps the last relic of their culture – is dying a quiet death.

The Croats are a tiny minority, concentrated in Austria’s Burgenland province. The descendants of refugees from Ottoman conquests, they have been in the region for more than 500 years. In the past, they have faced pressure to adopt the culture and customs of the people around them.

Today, however, their local associations receive funding from the state. Since 1955, the Burgenland Croats have also had the right to teach their language in schools, and to erect bilingual road signs.

But interest in that language is waning among the young. They simply feel they have nothing to gain from learning it.

“The people want to blend in with the majority because they think they would be better off if they spoke German only,” says Gabriela Novak Karall, from the Croatian Centre in Vienna.

“They all declare themselves as Austrians. Many of them have ceased speaking Croatian, even at home.”

Back in Montenegro, ethnic Albanian politician Nimanbegu says his community is realistic about the EU. “Europe has no magic wand,” he says. “A lot will depend on us.”

Ivanaj, the jobless forensic-science graduate, says she is running out of patience. If her fortunes do not improve, she plans to join the many members of her community who have sought employment abroad.

“I have one life and I cannot spend it waiting for something to happen,” she says.

*Samir Kajosevic is a Podgorica-based journalist. This article was edited by Neil Arun. It was produced as part of the Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence, an initiative of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and ERSTE Foundation, in cooperation with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network.*



An Albanian newsstand in Presevo, Serbia.

## MONTENEGRIN MINORITIES IN PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS

Montenegrins comprise 45 per cent of the country’s citizens – and have 79 per cent of the jobs in the administration, according to a government study from 2011.

The Serbian minority makes up 28 per cent of the population, and has 8.6 per cent of the jobs on the state’s payroll.

Ethnic Albanians account for 5 per cent of the population, and hold 2.8 per cent of the public sector jobs.

Bosnians, Roma, Croats and Muslims make up smaller minorities – and have smaller shares of the administration’s jobs.

(Source: 2011 survey for the government of Montenegro)

# Bosnia Two-Party Deal Meets Storm of Criticism

While the strongest parties in the two entities say their new agreement will improve the functioning of the economy and government, critics say it will undermine Bosnia's state-level institutions.



By Elvira M. Jukic

Last week's meeting between Zlatko Lagumdžija's Social Democratic Party, SDP, and Milorad Dodik's Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, SNSD, had not even finished before they were accused of working on the final division of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Opposition parties and a number of analysts accused Lagumdžija of caving in to all the all terms that Dodik put on the table to keep his top chair in the Foreign Ministry - allegedly agreeing to steps that could lead to the country's dissolution.

Among the changes they agreed on at state level are changes to the electoral law, the functioning of the administration and the election of prosecutors.

The two parties behind the agreement signed on October 31 insisted that it would improve the functioning of government and the economy.

But critics claimed the changes would substantively weaken Bosnia's weak central state, and concentrate more power in the hands of the dominant parties.

Nermin Pecanac, of the Social Democratic Union, a small opposition party, said: "The more the two of them talk, it seems like there is less and less of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

Freshly kicked out from the state government, the SDP's for-

mer coalition partner, the Party of Democratic Action, SDA, said that for the first time since the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, jurisdiction over key issues in the country was being given to the country's two autonomous entities.

"Lagumdžija's new deal is decisive and detailed when it comes to decomposing the state, and declarative and superficial on concrete economic measures," the SDA claimed.

"Obviously, Lagumdžija gave away everything... that Dodik demanded in order to remain as Foreign Minister, and for SDP to remain in government," the opposition Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina added.

## Coalition changes:

The Lagumdžija-Dodik deal followed key changes in the state government last month, when the SDA, was expelled from the six-party coalition to make way for the SDP's new partner, the Alliance for a Better Future, SBB.

At the same time, Lagumdžija's own dismissal and that of another SDP official were also on parliament's agenda.

The main question was which change would win the support the main Serbian and Croatian parties.

Although the SDA thought it had obtained support until the last moment, backed by the fact that it polled strongly in Bosnia's recent local elections, the Serbs and Croats decided to let the SDA go.

Bosnia's state government was formed on February 10, more than



Bosnia's strongest parties are working together.

16 months after the general elections in October 2010.

The original coalition comprised the two main Bosniak parties, the SDA and SDP, two Serbian parties, the SNSD and SDS and the two main Croatian parties, HDZ BiH and its sister party, HDZ 1990.

But the SDA and SDP fell out over the adoption of a budget in May, after which the SDP insisted that the SDA had joined the opposition.

In the meanwhile, two events related to SDP officials angered the two Serbian parties, prompting demands for their dismissal.

The power struggle was resolved in the second half of October with the SDP winning the support of the Serbian and Croatian parties.

The new coalition in the state-level government came down to a deal of the two dominant parties in the two entities, the SDP in the Federation of Bosnia and the SNSD from Republika Srpska.

The four other parties were simply informed about the terms of

the agreement.

## Selecting prosecutors:

After reaching the deal with Dodik, the SDP leader announced on Monday changes to the Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, HJPC

As a result, the two parties have agreed that the main prosecutors will be chosen in future by the country's parliaments, not only by the HJPC.

Lagumdžija defended the plan as standard practice in European countries and in neighbouring Croatia, but an avalanche of criticism still followed.

The HJPC told Prishtina Insight that even if some other countries did follow this system, most were planning to change it and leave the election of prosecutors to independent institutions.

"The agreement about the HJPC did not give any reasons for changing the way that prosecutors are chosen - nor can we see the advan-

tages of such changes," the HJPC said.

The same institution said it could not merely accept the explanation that parliaments in other countries choose their main prosecutors since, the HJPC said, it is not in accordance with the opinion of the Venice Commission, the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters. This has said that the process needs to be de-politicised.

But Lagumdžija said in a TV interview on Thursday that the HJPC would not be less important in future in the process of electing the main prosecutors as only the final confirmation would be left to legislative bodies.

Another SDP official, Mirza Kusljagic, earlier said that he did not agree with the opinion of the Venice Commission, and his party would meet representatives of the international community in Bosnia to discuss the issue.

The SDA meanwhile condemned the change as an attempt to put

# Developers Ravage Albania's

Albania's shrinking stock of historic buildings is in danger as owners, real estate developers and mayors conspire to get rid of them, and rebuild on the sites.



By Fatmira Nikolli

On August 16, the people of the southern Albanian town of Korca woke up to an unpleasant surprise.

Overnight, one of the city's most important landmarks, a villa known as the "Flag House," had been flattened.

In the same house in 1916, while Albania was being fought over by competing foreign armies, a group of local patriots declared the autonomous region of Korca, also known as the "Republic of Korca".

The goal of the declaration of independence was to counter the threat of annexation by Greece, which laid claim to the region as part of what it called "Northern Epirus".

Under the auspices of the French military who at the time occupied the area, the small self-styled republic would endure until 1920.

In mid-September two other historic buildings in Korca were illegally torn down. Police are still investigating the actions. But some suspect that the owners of the buildings demolished them in order to deprive them of their heritage status, so opening up a path to redevelop the site and build new apartments.

Jorida Namcka, head of the Institute of Monuments in Korca, says that despite their dilapidated condition the three houses did not crumble away on their own, but were torn down illegally.

Experts warn growing pressure to develop historic town centres has already dispatched many local landmarks to oblivion.

They say too little is being done to conserve what remains of Albania's architectural heritage.

According to the Institute of Monuments, Albania has lost hundreds of historic sites and monuments in the last decade to a real estate boom.

From 1997 to 2006, the Institute estimates that 17 per cent of the country's 2,564 listed monuments were totally destroyed and another 37 per cent were damaged or ruined.

In the latter case, owners either entirely abandoned the properties, or carried out renovation without reference to the integrity of the original architecture.

In many other cases, unsympathetic development has destroyed the sites' overall architectural milieu.

Although Albania's property boom has slowed in recent years, due to the knock-on effect of the European debt crisis, demand for construction in city centres remains high.

Pressure from developers, coupled with

weak state institutions, a lack of funds for conservation and corruption, threaten to overwhelm halting efforts to protect cultural heritage.

Pirro Thomo, an expert on Albania's vernacular architecture, says that historic town centres, like Korca's, are being besieged by new builds, which have a negative impact on the older buildings' historic and architectural value.

"Albania's landscape is being polluted by new construction close to cultural monuments or architectural ensembles, which do not respect the value and character of the protected buildings," Thomo said.

"The new builds threaten the stylistic and architectural unity not only of the traditional ensembles but also of the landscape," he added.

The destruction of cultural monuments is not a phenomenon confined to Korca.

Two years ago, a historic building in the

prosecutors under closer political control.

"This was agreed exclusively in order to achieve absolute political control over prosecutors and to protect criminality," the SDA said.

"With this new deal we are stepping far backwards," it added, dismissing "any kind of comparison to EU countries as inappropriate".

### Closed voting lists:

Another much-criticized issue from the agreement is the proposal to change the electoral law in the country by imposing closed voting list in elections and transferring the ballot-counting process from the centre to local level.

Bosnia's constitution places the electoral process under the overall jurisdiction of state-level authorities and the Central Electoral Commission is currently in charge of the job.

Vedran Hadzovic, member of the Bosnian Central Electoral Commission, told the Sarajevo daily *Oslobodjenje* that the changes would place the process of election counts under the closer control of political parties.

"The local election committees are the weakest link in the electoral process," he said.

"Now we have a reverse proposal to abolish the central counting centre, which is exactly where cases of election frauds have been discovered," Hadzovic added.

The SDP-SNSD proposal for closed voting lists has also drawn criticism as intending to concentrate more power in the hands of parties.

Closed voting lists mean that voters will only be able to cast



Sulejman Tihić, the leader of Bosnia's SDA party.

ballots for parties; the parties will then choose who it's in parliament according to the level of support each party obtained.

The current system allows citizens to vote for a party, or to support individual candidates only, if they want so.

Hadzovic said that all the mandates in parliament would now

effectively be owned by parties, undermining the democratic culture of the country.

"That will be a serious step backwards because voters will lose the possibility of choosing their representatives in the parliaments, transferring that to the direct responsibility of the parties," he said.

### Foreign Trade Chamber and Agriculture:

Part of the deal concerns improvements to agriculture where the two parties said they would take measures to protect domestic production.

The two announced a ban on the import of seasonal fruits and vegetables grown in the country

as well as on the export of products for which Bosnia provides subsidies.

But Duljko Hasic, an expert in Bosnia's Foreign Trade Chamber, told Prishtina Insight that such a move could not be made easily, owing to Bosnia's obligations as part of international agreements it has signed.

"This means that they don't know the terms of the agreements such as CEFTA or the SAA," Duljic said, referring to Central European Free Trade Agreement and the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU, which assures free trade among member countries.

"We have no right to take such measures," Hasic said, "We do have to protect our domestic producers but not in such a way as

to incur unforeseeable consequences."

He added that the Foreign Trade Chamber had proposed measures to protect domestic producers but politicians had ignored them.

Another issue from the agreement that worried him is their proposal to change the method of financing the Foreign Trade Chamber.

"In practice that would mean that we would get about 15 to 20 times less money from membership fees," Hasic said, adding it would bring the institution to its knees.

"This is because they want to abolish another state-level institution," he claimed. "It's an attack on another state-level institution," he concluded.

### Ill in Studio:

As Lagumdžija was explaining the agreement in an interview on Federation TV, FTV, referring to a question about closed voting lists he just said that the change would contribute to "better representation".

He was unable to speak further as he fell ill in the studio and, after asking for a glass of water, stood up and walked away from the camera. Media later reported he was taken to hospital suffering from exhaustion.

# Historic Landmarks

northern city of Shkodra, known as the "Pioneers' House" was demolished and the culprits were never arrested. After it was flattened, the house was de-listed as a protected cultural monument.

In 2008, two historic buildings in the capital, Tirana, were destroyed after being engulfed by fire. Few heritage experts believe that a malfunctioning electrical circuit caused the fire, as was claimed at the time.

Emin Riza, one of Albania's top heritage experts, who helped draw proposals for the inclusion of the cities of Berat and Gjirokastra in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, says Albania is losing some of its best cultural landmarks to greedy developers.

"The damage done to many buildings of extraordinary heritage value is difficult to fathom," he said.

"Developers are the reason why so many old buildings are being burned or demolished, because they want to build new apartment blocks," he added.

According to Artan Shkreli, former direc-

tor of Albania's Institute of Monuments, a lack of investment by the government in the preservation of historic homes and monuments has led many people to believe that they are of no value and might as well be flattened.

"We are losing some of the most important architectural heritage sites in our towns because nobody bothers to protect them," Shkreli said.

Instead of just blaming the property owners, Shkreli points the finger at municipalities that have allowed conditions to deteriorate.

"In the last three years there is not one small or large town in Albania that hasn't seen such buildings ending up destroyed," he asserted.

"But no one is ever convicted because the main people responsible for their demolition are the local mayors," Shkreli concluded.

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



# Kosovo Mulls Fate of Milosevic-era Cathedral



The outlook is unclear for the unfinished Serbian Orthodox Cathedral of the Christ the Saviour in Prishtina, a relic of the turbulent 1990s.



By Donjeta Demolli

In 1995, University of Prishtina students woke up to find building work going on next to the main library. But it wasn't a new faculty, dormitory or even a new library.

Orders had arrived from

Belgrade that Prishtina was to get a new Serbian Orthodox cathedral.

Albanians saw this illegal invasion of university property and as yet another move by Slobodan Milosevic's nationalist government in Serbia to marginalize them.

"The church was not based ... on any need for spiritual devotion as much as on a need for physical and institutional aggression," Shemsi Krasniqi, a sociology lecturer at

the University, recalls.

The Cathedral of the Christ the Saviour was never finished, let alone used, by the time that Serbia lost control of Kosovo in the 1999 war.

In the aftermath of the war the church was bombed by unknown attackers and put under the protection of NATO peacekeepers for some years.

Now it remains one of the most prominent buildings in the capital of Kosovo, a country whose population is overwhelmingly Albanian and Muslim and where the Serbs comprise only a few per cent.

But as construction begins on a new big mosque for the city, and as work on a nearby Catholic Cathedral nears completion, interest in the fate of the unfinished Orthodox cathedral has renewed.

Whether it should be demolished, completed, or even converted into something else, like a museum, remains a moot point.

## Question of ownership:

The Municipality of Prishtina views the space as "property and responsibility of the University of Prishtina" that has the power to issue a license to build there, Asdren Osaj, an adviser to Mayor Isa Mustafa, says.

However, the Serbian Orthodox Church maintains that the unfinished building is its own property, citing permits and documentation secured in the early 1990s.

"Our wish is that this church becomes an adornment for all citizens, no matter what their national or religious origin is," Archimandrite Sava Janjic, of

the Visoki Decani monastery, says.

The Cathedral would be fitting, standing near the mosque and Catholic cathedral, he adds.

Once finished, the church "will be one of the most magnificent buildings in Prishtina," Archimandrite Sava continues.

"Architecturally it is a very interesting mixture of traditional and modern architecture that shows that one must respect tradition, but also look into the future."

The Serbian Church plans to finish the cathedral as soon as it has the funding to do so, the Archimandrite notes. But it's unclear when that may happen.

## Symbol of Serbian rule:

But most Albanians don't want any more reminders of the era when they were ruled by Serbia.

Architect Sali Shoshi, of Cultural Heritage without Borders, says the church serves as a reminder for Albanians of a dark period when "the [Serbian] state used urban planning for political purposes, to express its domination of the population through religious objects.

"The church is evidence of the history of the 1990s. That evidence is valuable, but as an object it doesn't have any value," he says.

"It doesn't have any architectural values and is not among [listed] cultural heritage objects since it is not an old building," he continues. Shoshi says the church should be demolished or given another function.

The cathedral is not indeed on

the Kosovo government's list of protected sites, which is maintained by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

But Shkelzen Dragaj, an advisor to the minister, said the ministry is not competent to decide the church's fate. "We are of the view that it is better for the building to be functional than to collapse," he says.

The University of Prishtina, meanwhile, has no immediate plans to do anything with it the site. But that could change as part of a larger effort to improve the university's infrastructure, says Ardian Kastrati, an advisor to the rector.

Archimandrite Sava bristles at the possibility of the cathedral's destruction.

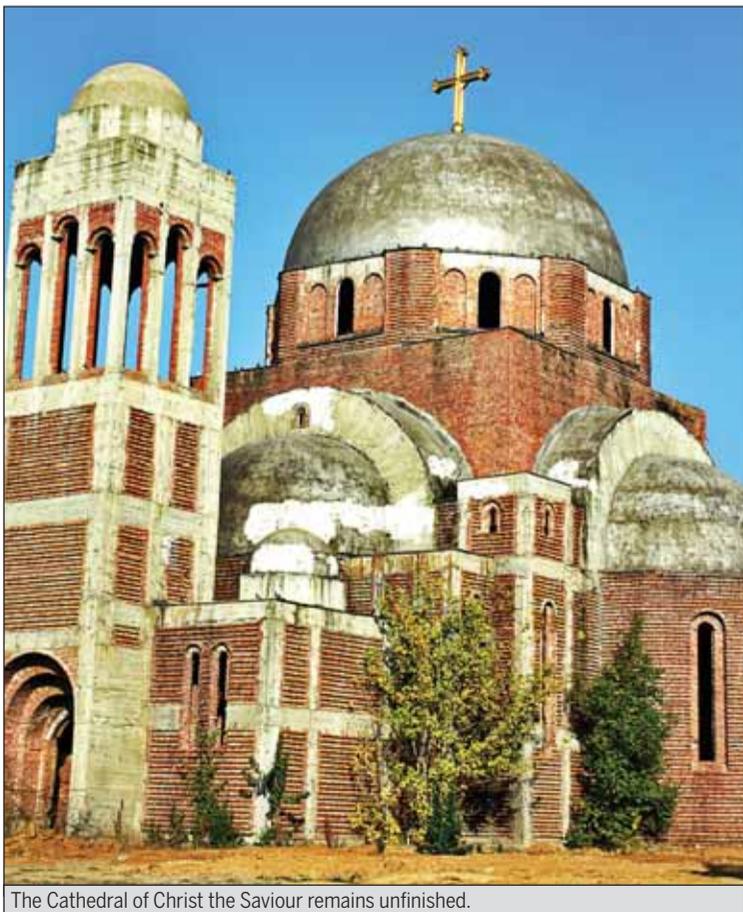
"The idea that in the 21st century someone should destroy a Christian temple in the centre of the city is absurd," he says.

"In our Church, we deeply believe that it is not the will of the majority of Albanians in Kosovo, because nobody from the Government of Kosovo has supported this, nor has the new rector of the university," he adds.

Krasniqi, the sociologist, says the best option would be to reach an agreement with the Serbian Orthodox Church and find a more suitable location for the cathedral.

He believes that tearing it down now would be a mistake. "Revenge ... is something that would damage the credibility of the [Kosovo] state more than the building," he warns.

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



The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour remains unfinished.

# Investigators track Mubarak's wealth

Tales of corrupt dictators enjoying opulent lifestyles whilst citizens struggled to make ends meet fuelled the anger of protesters throughout the Arab Spring. While Muammar Gaddafi's residences were decked out with baby grand pianos and show jumping circuits, his Tunisian counterpart Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was wealthy enough to entertain banquet guests with a pet tiger that dined on four live chickens a day.



By Louisa Loveluck

In Egypt's Tahrir Square, the vast fortune of Hosni Mubarak and his inner circle was also a focal point of resentment. Previous estimates of the Mubarak family wealth placed the figure at between \$40bn and \$70bn.

A report by The National last week, looked at official investigations into the former dictator's wealth. It reveals that Mubarak held very little in his own name, but much of the wealth was spread between his family and inner circle.

Official documents obtained by The National suggest that investigators have found \$300m in cash. Further assets of undetermined value have been identified in the form of properties, company stakes and 'additional' funds.

The confidential five-page report, dating back to October 2011, was prepared for prosecutors by investigators working for the Egyptian Ministry of Justice.

The majority of assets identified in the report were held by Mubarak's two sons, Alaa and Gamal. The pair and their wives were found to have at least 34 properties scattered across Cairo, as well as Swiss bank accounts holding approximately \$300m and multi-million dollar stakes in Egyptian and international real estate and securities firms.

Gamal in particular had been the focus of corruption allegations throughout much of the past decade. Mubarak's youngest son and his business associates wielded significant political influence during the final



Hosni Mubarak's family had a vast fortune.

decade of the Mubarak era, growing increasingly wealthy as their aggressive neoliberal reforms pushed millions deeper into poverty.

The Mubarak brothers are now standing trial on charges of violating stock market and central bank rules to make unlawful profits. The legal process has been dogged by delays and after repeated re-adjournments, the next stage is scheduled for November 12.

Further questions remain about Mubarak family assets which were channelled overseas throughout their three decades at the top. Egyptian investigators

have now asked the UK, US, France, Switzerland and Liechtenstein to freeze the bank accounts of former government officials and businessmen with close links to the former regime.

According to Ahmed Saad, a senior counselor at Egypt's Illicit Gains Authority, the total held in these accounts could amount to about \$1.2bn.

A six-month investigation conducted by BBC Arabic also identified many valuable assets linked to the Mubarak inner circle that remained unfrozen. These included luxury houses in Chelsea and Knightsbridge, as well as London-regis-

tered companies.

Foreign asset recovery has proved to be a painfully slow process, leading to accusations that the jurisdictions involved are dragging their feet.

In September, The Guardian revealed that one member of Mubarak's inner circle 'has even been permitted to set up a UK-based business in recent months, despite being named on a British Treasury sanctions list of Egyptians who are linked to misappropriated assets and subject to an asset-freeze.'

Foreign Secretary William Hague has since sent a lawyer to work with Egyptian prosecutors seeking to track down the funds.

Yesterday, it was reported that the British government has since formed a team from several government departments in an effort to speed up the fund-freezing process.

However, the recovery process is still expected to be long and painful. Identifying the location of assets, whether acquired legally or plundered from the state, is only the first step in a long-winded legal process spanning multiple jurisdictions.

Talking to The National, asset recovery expert Eric Lewis said that the action needed to be spearheaded by a 'powerful and focused executive branch.'

Meanwhile, the Egyptian economy continues to struggle, with the Egyptian pound weakening to an almost 8-year low on Wednesday.

As Lewis concludes of the asset repatriation process, 'focus, speed and coordination are essential.' Now more so than ever, it would seem.

*This story is published courtesy of Pro Publica, under Creative Commons license.*

## Photo News:

Kosovo President Atifete Jahjaga poses with cutouts of President Barack Obama and former challenger Mitt Romney during a party held by the U.S. Embassy in honor of the American presidential election on November 6. The event at Sheshi 21 in Prishtina included an unofficial ballot. Attendees reportedly favored Obama by a large margin.

## Kosovo Catches Election Fever



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?

## A taste of Napoli in Prishtina.

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.

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.



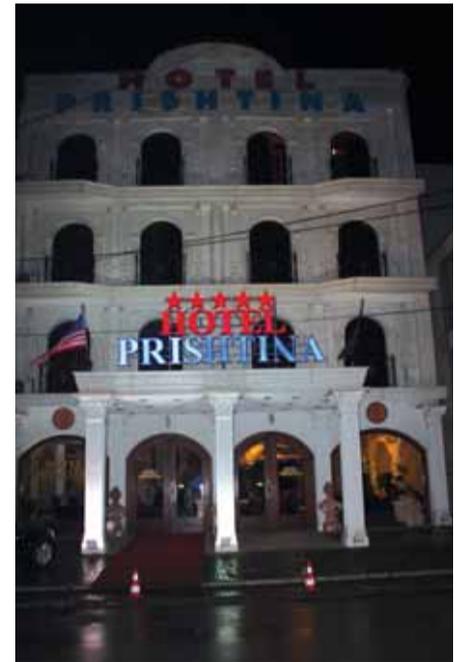
*Pizzeria Napoli  
off Luan Haradinaj, opposite Newborn  
044/409-402402*

## 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](http://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*



## 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.

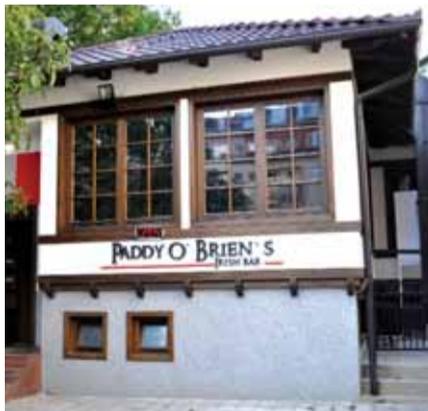
There have been many attempts to establish a proper Irish pub in Prishtina, but this is the only one to hit the spot.

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](mailto:info@caffepapillon.com)  
044 103 310*



If you live in Kosovo and would like to receive the hardcopy of the newspaper delivered to your door, you can also subscribe for 13 editions, the equivalent of six months, for 13 euro, including delivery, or for 26 euro for the whole year. Please note, deliveries outside of Prishtina may be refused due to transport costs.

You can pay through an international bank transfer or in cash at a Kosovo branch of Raiffeisen bank.

If you are interested in subscribing please email us at [info@prishtinainsight.com](mailto:info@prishtinainsight.com) with the subject "subscription", listing what type of subscription you require. We will then provide you with an invoice and bank details.

+



## "SKYFALL"

every day at 8pm and 10:30pm

Daniel Craig is back as Ian Fleming's James Bond 007 in Skyfall, the 23rd adventure in the longest-running film franchise of all time. In Skyfall, Bond's loyalty to M is tested as her past comes back to haunt her. As MI6 comes under attack, 007 must track down and destroy the threat, no matter how personal the cost.

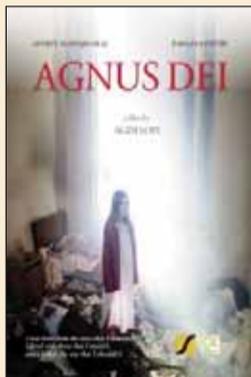
**Starring:** Daniel Craig, Judi Dench, Javier Bardem, Ralph Fiennes, Ben Whishaw, Helen McCrory. **Directed by:** Sam Mendes



## "AGNUS DEI"

Movie will be shown at 17:00, 19:00 and 21:30

Agnus Dei is a kind of Oedipus of our days. A young man Peter, who is around thirties, lives a desperate life with his mother Maria and her husband Stojan in one village of Serbia. Peter is born in Kosova from a forbidden love between his mother Maria and the young Albanian man, but for this he is not aware. It is the period of time when the relations between Serbs and Albanians are inimical, exactly is the time of the beginning of war. Peter is forced by his mother and the others to go to the war. He is mobilized forcefully in one paramilitary unit in Kosova's war. In one action prepared as revenge, he kills his father Dini whom he never had the chance to meet. Being not able to bear the arbitrary crimes, Peter, deserts from the army. He takes Dini's daughter Maria and together they escape to the mountains. During their dangerous trip they are followed from both sides of enemies, Serbs and Albanians. Peter and Maria fell in love. They reach to come back in Peter's home in Serbia. As soon as they returned home, Peter realizes that he had killed his biologic father and he had fall in love with his sister. Not being able to stand this spiritual condition he commits a suicide.



I was born from the ones that I shouldn't, I lived with those that I mustn't, and I killed the one that I shouldn't.

**Editing:** Agron Vula  
**Costumes designer:** Samka Ferri  
**Art designer:** Afrim Gora  
**Dramaturges:** Petrit Imami  
**Composer:** Mendi Mengjiqi  
**Second units director:** Arsim Haliti  
**Producer:** Milazim Salihu, Agim Sopi  
**Director of photography:** Menduh Nushi  
**Screenplay and director:** Agim Sopi

## "TAKEN 2"

every day at 6pm

Bryan Mills is the retired CIA agent with a "particular set of skills" who stopped at nothing to save his daughter Kim from kidnappers. When the father of one of the villains Bryan killed swears revenge, and takes Bryan and his wife hostage in Istanbul, Bryan enlists Kim to help them escape. Bryan then employs his unique tactics to get his family to safety and systematically take out the kidnappers, one by one.



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

## National Theatre

**Saturday, November 17, 8 pm**

"A tomb for mayor of the King"  
by Haqif Mulliqi

**Sunday, November 18, 8 pm**

"The Skanderbeg"  
by Xhevat Limani

**Thursday, November 22, 8 pm**

ballet "The wedding"  
cerography by Mehmet Ballkan

**Friday, November 23, 8 pm**

solo concert  
Inva Mula0

**Saturday, November 24, 8 pm**

"Lisistrata"  
by Aristofani, directed by Elmaze Nura

**Monday, November 26, 8 pm**

ethno-musical show  
from Ulqinji

**Tuesday, November 27, 8 pm**

"Lisistrata"  
by Aristofani, directed by Elmaze Nura

**Wednesday, November 28, 8 pm**

"Twelfth night"  
by William Shakespeare,  
directed by Ilir Bokshi

**Thursday, November 29, 8 pm**

Ballet "The flight toward the light"  
cerography by Silvia Tomova

**Friday, November 30, 8 pm**

"The house in auction"  
by Fadil Hysaj.

## Prishtina Diary

**Hamam Jazz Bar**  
**Blues Night**  
**Thursday,**  
**November 8**

**OSCAR SALAS&JAZZ**  
**TRIO**  
**Blues Bands**  
**Saturday,**  
**November 10**  
**CROSSROAD**

**Paddy O'Brien's**  
**Irish Pub -**

**Live Sport - GAA,**  
**Rugby, American**  
**Football and more. All**  
**Football - Champions**  
**League, Premiership,**  
**La Liga, Serie A.**  
**Every Thursday at**  
**7.30pm there is organ-**  
**ized Quiz Night.**

**For more informa-**  
**tion: 038 221 070 & 038**  
**221 077 or write at**  
**paddy@PaddyOBriens.c**  
**om**

Laibach: We Come in Peace  
**8pm Friday, November 16**  
Venue: Big Hall at the Palace of Culture,  
Youth and Sports "Boro and Ramizi"

**THERE IS NO NEWS LIKE BAD**  
**NEWS - EXCEPT WHEN IT'S LAIBACH**  
**NEWS!**

**Stacion** - Center for Contemporary art Prishtina presents the first concert of Laibach in Kosova. Laibach was invited to perform and be part of the project 'Identity Restoration Reloaded' a project by Stacion - Center for Contemporary art Prishtina.

The band, whose recent European tour included the Monumental Retro-Avant Garde performance at the Tate Modern in London, and the Berghain in Berlin, will soon return to the studio to start work on a box set to be released on Mute.

During 2012 Laibach released Iron Sky OST, the original sound track to Iron Sky (directed by Timo Vuorensola), the dark science fiction comedy about Nazis invading earth in 2018, after escaping to the Dark Side of the Moon in 1945.

Laibach was formed on June 1, 1980 in Trbovlje, a mining-industry town, taking the name used during the World War II occupation of Yugoslavia for the city of Ljubljana. At the time, the group collaborated with art groups Irwin (painting) and Crveni Pilot (theatre). Since its formation, the group had been preparing their first multimedia project "Rde i revirji" ("Red District"), aiming to provoke the current political structures in Trbovlje. The performance was banned before its opening due to its "improper and irresponsible" usage of Malevich's black crosses as symbols on the posters, causing a lot of negative reactions in the media and public. The group's visual style at this earliest stage focused mainly on miners iconography, but in time, they included other symbols as well: Triglav, deer horns and the Malevich's black cross rounded with a gear.

The visual imagery of Laibach's art (or 'Laibach Kunst', as it calls itself) has been described as 'radically ambiguous'. An

early example of this ambiguity would be the woodcut entitled 'The Thrower,' also known as Metalec ("The Metal Worker"). This work features a monochrome silhouette of a figure with a clenched fist holding a hammer. The work could be seen by its original Slovene viewers as a poster promoting industrial protest, but the poster could have also been interpreted as a symbol of industrial pride. Another aspect of this woodcut is the large typefaced word 'LAIBACH', evoking memories of the Nazi occupation of Slovenia (when the capital city was briefly known as Laibach). This piece was featured prominently during a TV interview of Laibach in 1983, during which the interviewer Jure Pengov called Laibach "enemies of the people."

Laibach has frequently been accused of both far left and far right political stances due to their use of uniforms and totalitarian-style aesthetics. They were also accused of being members of the neo-nationalism movement, which reincarnates modern ideas of nationalism. When confronted with such accusations, Laibach are quoted as replying with the ambiguous response "We are fascists as much as Hitler was a painter".

The members of Laibach are notorious for rarely stepping out of character. Some releases feature artwork by the Communist and early Dada artist/satirist, John Heartfield. Laibach concerts have sometimes aesthetically appeared as political rallies. When interviewed, they answer in wry manifestos, showing a paradoxical lust for, and condemnation of, authority.

Richard Wolfson wrote of the group: Laibach's method is extremely simple, effective and horribly opens to misinterpretation. First of all, they absorb the mannerisms of the enemy, adopting all the seductive trappings and symbols of state power, and then they exaggerate everything to the edge of parody.. Next they turn their focus to highly charged issues — the West's fear of immigrants from Eastern Europe, the power games of the EU, the analogies between Western democracy and totalitarianism.

## Oda Theatre

### "The last station"

Drama  
Written by: Lirak Çelaj  
Directed by: Lirak Çelaj & Florent Mehmeti  
Music by: Labinot Sponca  
Costumes: Rudina Xhaferi

The cast: Besnik Krapci, Liridona Shehu, Ilire Çelaj, Adrian Morina, Eshref Durmishi, Kushtrim Sheremeti  
The story is situated in the year 2015. Nowadays and past problems are carried in the year of 2015. Burim is the main character who is looking for the truth, for his family and his fiancé, which are still missing since the war of KLA ended. After many attempts he finds out that his neighbour is still alive and that he knows more about his family. Burim can't live in the present; he is always going back to the past, in the memories of his family and Behare, his fiancé. Halfway he meets a young girl called Shpresa who reminds him of Behare and finally gets part of Burim's life. The author of this play is inspired from the novel "Birds fly on their own" by Ibrahim Kadriu.



Personal Exhibition  
Behxhet Avdullahu



On  
November  
9, 2012  
Time 18:00

#### Biografia

Behxhet Avdullahu  
I lindur në fshatit Verrindoll komunës Prishtinë. Ka përfunduar studimet pas shtypmëke Masterit i Shkencave në klasën e Prof. Agim Rudit në vitin 2010. Ka qënë pjesëmarrës i shumë ekspozitave kolektive. Sot veshëdon krijimet e tij Artistike në çfëta të ndryshme



#### Ekspozitat

2004 Takimet e Kulturës-Kadri Kadriu-Podujevë  
2004 Muzeu i Kosovës-Prishtinë  
2005 Takimet e Kulturës-Kadri Kadriu-Podujevë  
2006 Takimet e Kulturës-Kadri Kadriu-Podujevë  
2006 Muzeu i Kosovës-Prishtinë  
2007 Sot e ku nesër-Podujevë  
2008 Galeria e shtetit-Ferizaj  
2009 Galeria Expo 40-Prishtinë  
2009 Muzeu i Kosovës-Prishtinë  
2009 Hamami i Tetovës-Tetovë  
2011 Biblioteka Kombëtare-Prishtinë,  
Ekspozite Personale  
2012 Fleta Janarit-Pajë

# Qeshu: American-Quality Dentistry in the Heart of Prishtina



by Douglas E. Morris

If you have been searching for top quality dental clinic in Prishtina, your quest is over. The state-of-the-art, ultra-professional Qeshu-Smile Dental Clinic opened only five months ago. It's staffed by the US-trained, Kosovar-American, Dr. Vesa Mita, and Prishtina's only US-certified Dental Hygienist Ariana Bytyci.

Both of these women did their undergraduate and graduate work in the US, and Mita, while receiving her Doctorate in Dental Surgery from the University of Southern California, served as the dentist for the USC Trojan football team. This honor is commemorated with an American football, signed by the team, displayed in the lobby of the clinic.

"It was very rewarding to have these huge athletes sit quietly in my dental chair, and treat me as part of their team," Mita said with a smile.

Asked why she returned to open a dental practice in Prishtina, instead of joining a practice in the US, Mita replied, "After spending over nine years in the US, I wanted to return home to my roots. At the same time," she continued, "Kosovo has many talented people who are accomplishing much all around the world. If we were to all return and share our knowledge, I believe it would help move our country forward."

Mita is prepared to meet all your dental needs here in Prishtina, including cosmetic and restorative work, and



Top-notch care for your teeth at Qeshu-Smile.

everything else offered at a clinic in Western Europe or the United States.

Then there is the delightful dental hygienist, Bytyci, who specializes in preventive dentistry, keeping your teeth and mouth as clean and healthy as possible. If that was not enough, she and Mita have also applied for a grant with USAID to develop a dental education program in Prishtina's elementary schools to increase awareness and emphasize the importance of preventive dentistry.

"Oral hygiene is incredibly important," Bytyci explains, "however, right now, there is not much understanding about its necessity here in Kosovo. We hope to be able to help remedy that."

As a long-term expat American who has had dental work done all around

the world, I would recommend this clinic without reservation. Recently I had my teeth cleaned there, and my smile has never been brighter.

The Qeshu-Smile Dental Clinic is located at Agim Ramadani 22/94 A1-A3, right next to and behind the popular Lumi bakery. Their website is [www.qeshu-smile.com](http://www.qeshu-smile.com). Contact either Dr. Vesa Mita ([smile.qeshu@gmail.com](mailto:smile.qeshu@gmail.com), +381-38-224-811, +377-45-299-000) or Ariana Bytyci ([arianabytyci@gmail.com](mailto:arianabytyci@gmail.com), +377-44-215-205, +381-38-224-811) for an appointment.

*Douglas E Morris is a travel writer who has lived over 20 years in 10 countries on three continents, and now he happily finds himself savoring the café culture of Prishtina.*

Prishtina through the Eyes of:



## Joan de Boer

Partner at SPRIGS, an international Kosovar IT company.

### 1. What surprised you most about Prishtina?

The inventiveness of people to deal problems and come up with solutions, as a northerner, I like the South European way of dealing with things.

### 2. What's your favorite hangout?

One of Prishtina's many terraces. There are many places to sit outside and enjoy the day

### 3. Do you do anything cultural?

In Tetris, I saw recently a great exhibition about Article One.

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

I am looking forward to the highway connection to Tirana. It would be great to drive somewhere easily, but a lot of work has been done for that.

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

It should be able to cycle here more easily. It's pretty easy to go across Prishtina on a bicycle and there should be free lanes for that.

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

Two in the morning. I had Kosovar friends over in the Netherlands and they complained about the coffee there. They were right: Coffee here is great.

### 7. What's the tastiest Kosovar food?

It's a home dish actually of yogurt, aubergine, walnuts and parsley. It was at a friend's house and absolutely the best dish ever. Home cooking here is great.

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

Fitness Flori in Dragodan. They all know it.

## Photo News: Roundabout in the Making



The municipality of Prishtina and the Ministry of Infrastructure have started building a roundabout at city's southern entrance. The 5.5 million euro project is aimed easing traffic. But until its planned completion in the summer, authorities say drivers should expect additional congestion.

## Buy Local: Kosovan Filigree



By Elizabeth Gowing

It starts with a rod of silver as thick as your thumb. It ends in a lacy scribble: a bracelet or a ring, a wedding waistcoat decoration. This week I've been lucky enough to spend my days watching the process of transformation from one to another.

Filigree is an ancient art, for which Kosovo – and in particular Prizren – was well-known across the former Ottoman Empire. Bashkim Tejeci, one of the craftsmen who works with Filigran ShPK in Prizren, started his career in the Socially Owned Enterprise for filigree, with 141 other craftsmen. Now he works in a former tobacco factory on the outskirts of Prizren, creating magic on a cracked formica table along with seven other men and women.

The craft is in decline in Kosovo, although there are a number of shops in Prizren and Prishtina which sell filigree imported from Turkey. But Bashkim and his colleagues are producing gems still appreciated by connoisseurs in Kosovo and abroad. This week as I've watched Bashkim work it has not been in the underheated old tobacco factory in Prizren but in Cambridge, England. The demonstration of the exquisite twisting of fine wire, the forming of tiny flower petals and infilling with spirals and curlicues took place at the Cambridge and County Folk Museum, recently twinned with the Ethnological Museum in Prishtina.

The stick of silver is turned into fine silver wire by extrusion through a machine, resulting in wire of different thickness. It's then shaped into a zigzag which is then formed into flower shapes or the rounded zigzag called "mouse tooth." This becomes an outline, which can be infilled with smaller spirals or decoration.

At that point the magic takes over. The wizard – sorry, filigranist – takes a sprinkle of silver dust, like a spell. Some of the dust inevitably falls on the table but, as you'd expect from a wizard, he has a rabbit foot (yes, really – a rabbit foot) to brush this away. The silver powder solders the decoration in place in a process of firing using mouth-blown flame which momentarily turns the filigranist into a dragon.

This results in a crusty blackened piece which needs cleaning. Cleaning is done in hydrochloric acid, producing a bright white decoration which can then be darkened according to taste.

The orders made by Filigran ShPK include huge pieces such as an eagle with a wingspan of nearly 50cm, presented to Madeleine Albright, or a 1 kilogram cup presented to Tony Blair. There are also orders from Serbian churches (although the workers at Filigran ShPK are all Muslim), including the church in Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Nativity in Bethlehem. Other orders come from local weddings, where brides are bought complete jewellery sets and pieces of filigree-encrusted costume; you can see examples at [www.filigranpz.com](http://www.filigranpz.com). Other, smaller pieces make beautiful, locally-produced gifts, such as reasonably-priced earrings, rings, or small platters. The Filigran ShPK workshop has a shop in Prizren at the end of the Stone Bridge, but there are other producers in Prishtina, and you can make orders at [atfiligranpz@gmail.com](mailto:atfiligranpz@gmail.com).

For a truly personalized gift, how about watching being made, or even helping to create your own piece of filigree? Filigran ShPK welcomes visitors to their workshop, where you can watch the work unfolding, place a commission or even have a go to prove to yourself just how impossibly intricate this work is. And it's 100 percent Kosovo.

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](mailto:theideaspartnership@gmail.com)

## Normalising a Rotten Relationship



By Kreshnik Hoxha

The excitement from the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton to Kosovo and the Serbian indifference to their Belgrade tour represents old news with little relevance today. However, the same cannot be said for the political gravity of this visit and its strategic agenda. This is especially true considering that both Kosovo and Serbia are rolling up their sleeves for an adventure.

The game is due to start. All of the hugs and kisses that came from the Clinton-Ashton duo have planted the seeds of face-saving for the decision-makers in Prishtina and Belgrade ahead of the potential concessions, which seem ever so inevitable.

What started as a "technical" dialogue between Edita Tahiri and Borko Stefanovic, today has metamorphosed into a political arena of muscle flexing, which diplomatically has been given the name: "normalisation of relations" between Kosovo and Serbia. This is yet another one of those tricky formulations coming from the West, enabling manipulation of terminology so that both Belgrade and Prishtina can tailor their propaganda in order to dilute down the critics of this dialogue.

What are Kosovo and Serbia according to this normalisation? What are the political positions under which the two fronts are normalising their relations? Are they two parties of a dialog? Are they two countries, a province and a country, or a country and a territory? Should there be a peace treaty in the aftermath of this normalisation, who will be the signatories of this treaty? Two equal parties? Or two asymmetrical parties as Dacic likes to repeat fre-

quently?

The answers to these questions have been purposefully left unclear and vague in order to embark on a complicated process, which would enable both Thaci and Dacic to declare their historic victory.

A very well-thought calculation came last week from Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, whose opening words in the press conference with Clinton and Ashton referred to the bitterness of 1999, when Clinton visited the expelled Kosovars in refugee camps. It is a well-thought calculation because this statement of Thaci paved the way for Clinton to shower Thaci with compliments. This comes at a time when the popularity of Thaci at home is rather fragile and he needs every popularity boost he can get in order to prove to his country that he is the saviour of Kosovo. Thus, nothing gets better than Clinton's accreditation.

To help Thaci in this mission, Clinton was quick to state that the U.S. strongly supports the dialogue with Serbia as the only mechanism for achieving sustainable stability. Clinton even stated that apart from being a serious matter of the American foreign policy, Kosovo is also a personal matter to her. Such a statement will definitely be used by the government officials and Thaci as a guarantee that there is no risk approaching Kosovo with these negotiations.

Similar compliments came from Ashton, too. Surrounded by flags and the coat of arms of the Republic of Kosovo and definitely overshadowed by the media interest toward Clinton, the representative of the European club, which officially appears to be status-neutral, did her part in attempting to boost Thaci's reputation in Kosovo.

This entire verbal support was also associated with a modest and symbolic gesture by Clinton and Ashton, who

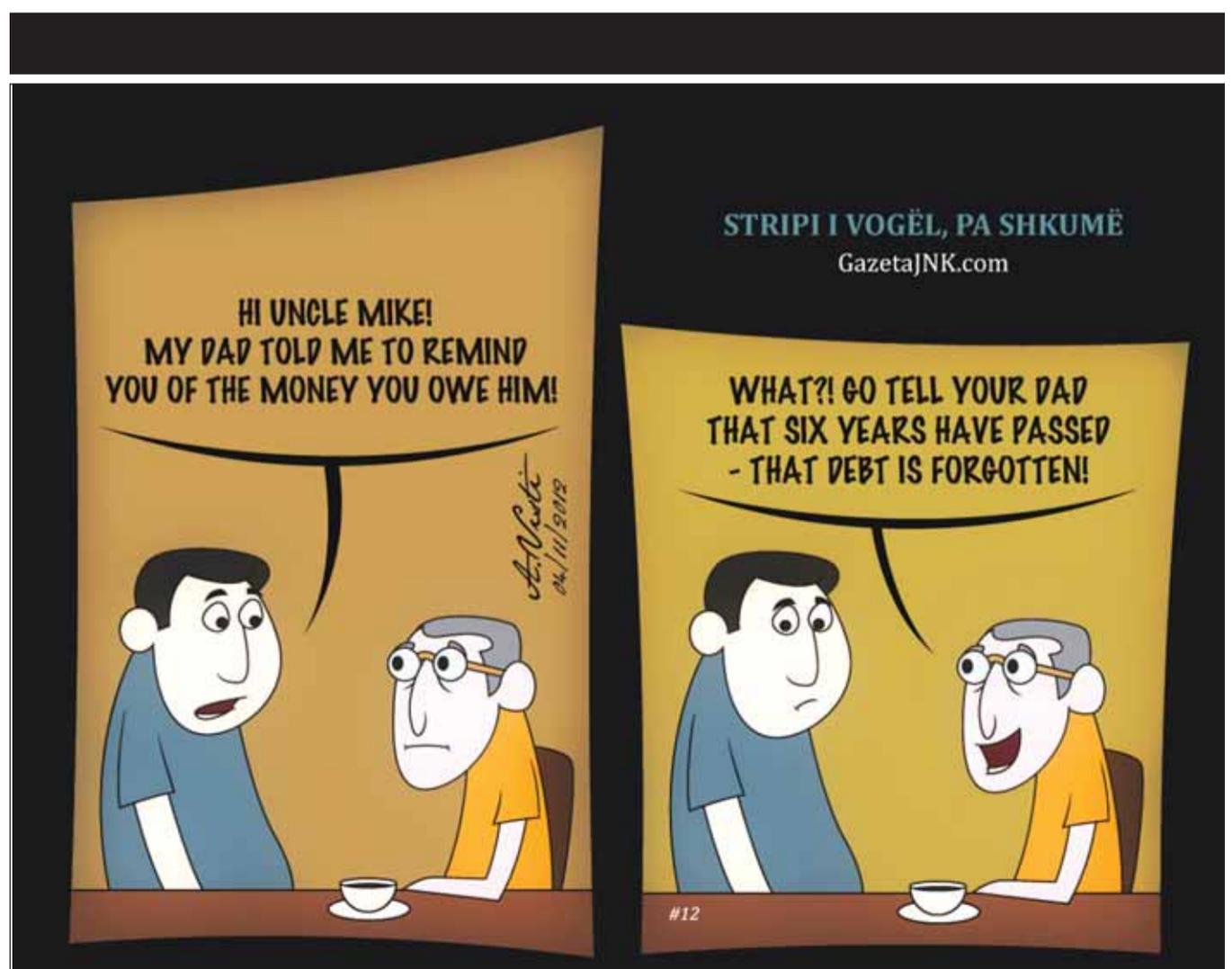
spent the night in Prishtina rather than in Belgrade. This gesture might seem trivial, but it has the tendency to spread the message that Kosovars should not be concerned and scared of negotiations with Serbia. It also aims to build trust by insinuating that the US and the EU will ensure that the damaged party will not be damaged once again.

It should be stressed that there should be neither fear nor concern when it comes to entering the dialog with Serbia. The dialogue must take place, but not in the format of the "technical" dialogue and certainly not without the conditions that Kosovo should impose on Serbia. These could include shedding light on the fate of the missing people, the return of the stolen pension funds and insisting on the dissolution of parallel structures in northern Kosovo.

The odds are that the comfort sent to Kosovars by staying overnight in Prishtina can actually fool us all. Things could easily fall to parts mainly because we are preparing to negotiate about something which constitutionally belongs to us: the north. We are going to be negotiating with a party that aims to paralyse our independence and statehood. This aim of Serbia would have not been much of a problem if we possessed an assertive and well-prepared delegation capable of defending the national interests of Kosovo.

As it stands, it transpires that Kosovo is embarking on this process by lowering its stand purely because it has a leadership that climbed to power by rigging elections, enjoys this power by being cooperative with internationals and will continue to rule as long as it obeys to the directives coming from Brussels.

Finally, at the end of this political affair, the hope is that Kosovo will not be awarded a new constitutional order inspired by the model of a dysfunctional Bosnia and Herzegovina.



# Kerestinec Verdict Shows Double Standards in Croatian Judiciary

The Croatian courts apply double standards when trying Croats and Serbs for war crimes.



By Drago Hedl

“We congratulate the judiciary!” was the ironic comment of Zoran Sprajc, the popular anchor of the main news programme on Croatian Television, on hearing of the lenient sentences handed out to five former military policemen for war crimes by the District Court in Zagreb.

It was one of the rare public condemnations of the shamefully low sentences given by Judge Marijan Garac on October 31.

He sentenced the five men who had systematically tortured 34 Serb civilians and members of the Yugoslav People’s Army, JNA, between late 1991 and mid-1992 in Kerestinec, JNA’s former rocket base, to a total of just eight and a half years.

The court had established beyond a shadow of a doubt that Kerestinec was a place in which prisoners of war and some civilians, were tortured, beaten, abused, subjected to electric shocks and forced to have oral sex.

Even though Croatian law states that a war crime is punishable by a sentence of between five and 20 years of prison, the court sentenced all five to a punishment considerably below the minimum punishment.

Stjepan Klaric, the former commander of Kerestinec prison, was given three and a half years in prison. One of his subordinates

was given two years, and the remaining three policemen just one year each.

“There is no doubt whatsoever that prisoners of war in Kerestinec were sexually abused on a number of occasions,” said the judge when he read out his verdict, having referred to just some of the horrors the prisoners had been exposed to.

Among the abuses, he mentioned how two of the prisoners had been forced into a fist fight, and how afterwards the guards had beaten up one of them with planks – the one they had bet on to win.

But if the court had trusted the witnesses and the victims of all this abuse, and if it had determined beyond any doubt at all that the defendants were guilty, the logical question to ask is why the sentences were not only low, but below even the legal minimum?

This is yet another verdict by the Croatian judiciary confirms that the European Union was right when it identified the state of judiciary as the weakest link in the chain that the Zagreb government is using to pull itself towards full-fledged EU membership.

In addition to the recent stern criticism by Berlin, Croatia’s most important ally on Zagreb’s road to Brussels, of its readiness for EU membership, Croatia has also been criticized by Great Britain.

London, like Berlin, has identified deep flaws in Croatia’s judicial system. After a recent meeting of the parliamentary

European Scrutiny Committee, British MPs decided to postpone the ratification of Croatia’s accession contract.

Westminster will now wait for the final report by the European Commission, due in the spring of next year, to assess if there has been sufficient progress on areas of concern, amongst them the state of the judiciary.

The verdict passed by the Zagreb District Court concerning the abuse of civilians and prisoners of war in Kerestinec confirms that the scepticism towards Croatia’s readiness to become the 28th member of the Union on July 1 next year is justified.

That verdict, as with many other war crimes verdicts in the past, displays a highly partial approach to sentencing. When Croats are tried for war crimes, the punishments are vastly more lenient than those meted out to Serbs tried for equally serious crimes.

Look at the case of the Serb paramilitaries, who were found guilty of crimes very similar to those at Kerestinec. When they were found guilty of holding Croatian soldiers prisoner in Borovo, in Vukovar in December 2005, the six Serbs were sentenced to a total of 49 years in prison by the Croatian court.

The prison commander, Jovan Curcic, was sentenced to 14 years; the lowest sentence to be given was six years, to one of the prison guards. The difference in the sentences given to the Croatian policemen for similar war crimes



A war crimes trial in Croatia.

in Kerestinec is more than obvious.

For another example that shows why Croatian judicial system has received such criticism from the international community, look at the trial of Mihajlo Hrastov, a former member of the special police, who killed 13 captured JNA soldiers at the at the Koranski bridge in Karlovac in 1991.

Hrastov and his defence claimed that the murder of 13 imprisoned soldiers was committed in self-defence. The trial lasted for over 20 years (!), during which time Hrastov was acquitted three times and convicted twice.

The Supreme Court sentenced him this September to just four years of prison, but this verdict is

not final either, because there is a chance that Hrastov may appeal against this verdict too.

The Croatian public has often had good reason to be dissatisfied with the sentences given out to members of the Serb paramilitary or the JNA for war crimes by courts at The Hague or Belgrade.

They were especially bitter about the sentence of just five years imprisonment that was given to Veselin Sljivancanin, a former JNA commander, at The Hague in 2007.

However, the same public fails to react when it comes to the shamefully low sentences received by members of the Croatian armed forces, for such terrible crimes as those committed in Kerestinec.

# Dy Korriku Empowers Women Through Literacy

Mitrovica organisation’s classes reach out to Ashkali and other minority communities.



By Mihane Mustafa

Hana Uka explains the moment when she managed to find the municipal building in Mitrovica on her own thanks to reading and writing skills she attained with the help of the women’s organisation Dy Korriku.

“I read the word ‘municipality’ on the sign of the building and said to myself, ‘How good is when you know to read,’ ” Uka said.

Uka learned to read in courses organised in 2011 and 2012 by Dy Korriku, a organisation named after the neighborhood.

Now her children have better chances in school because now she can help them with their homework.

Some 80 women have attended the classes, including around 40 from the Ashkali community.

Hasnije Maloku established Dy Korriku in 2005. She said all women, regardless of ethnicity and religion, need education for a better life.

Maloku, 58, had been working as seamstress and was selling dresses to Mitrovica boutiques until the end of the war in Kosovo.

Beside her fight against illiteracy, Maloku also provided courses on haircutting, sewing, knitting and embroidery.





Minister of Culture Memli Krasniqi ordered an immediate halt to the Gjakova municipality's work on the city's Grand Bazaar. The move came as city residents protested the tearing-up of a road Wednesday, which they said amounted to the destruction of the Gjakova's cultural heritage. Gjakova's bazaar is currently on a list of protected sites in Kosovo. But so far, the municipal officials say they plan on continuing the project, which they say will improve and modernize the area.

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