



Kosovo is a vibrant, young and dynamic place

Five Questions for Austrian Ambassador Johann Brieger



The Valley of environmental fanatics

13 villages of Rugova Valley



Kosovo is entering a new phase of development

Interview with Prime Minister of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi

Kosovo's New Diplomat



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NEWS



Image from last year's inaugural edition of Germia Hill.

Clinton, Ashton's visit to Kosovo

Clinton and Ashton said that the dialogue is fundamental to the future of Kosovo and Serbia.

The United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton along with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton paid an official visit to Kosovo on 30-31 December, 2012, where they met with President Atifete Jahjaga, Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi and leaders of political parties. In these meetings parties discussed about the continuation of technical, but also political talks with Serbia, as well as for Kosovo's integration into the European Union. Prime Minister Thaçi stated that the state of Kosovo is consolidating and is getting stronger every day and that Kosovo's independence and its territorial integrity and its internal state organization, are internationally recognized and uncontested facts. "But, there are many issues of interest to the two countries and in the interest of citizens in the two states. Dialogue is the only path toward EU integration; it is the decisive catalyst for the success of this process. Normalizing relations between Kosovo and Serbia is in Kosovo's interest, it is in the interest of Serbia, it is in the interest of the region, it is in the interest of strong investment in the European Union, the United States of America, for peace, stability, regional cooperation and the Euro-Atlantic perspective. Therefore, after the opening of this chapter, in Kosovo, in Serbia and in the region, citizens are more hopeful and have more

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Prishtina welcoming experts

On 8th of November, over 100 diplomats, editors, foreign policy experts from Europe, America and Africa will meet for the second edition of Germia Hill Conference to discuss "The Future of Transatlantic Relations: South East Europe and Beyond", organized by European Council of Foreign Relations and MFA

Although the importance of Europe in America's grand strategy has been in decline since the end of the cold war, the US and the EU continue to share basic interests and values. There are indeed many issues and regional arenas where transatlantic cooperation remains a high priority: from the hotspots in the Western Balkans to the Middle East and North Africa going through a period of turmoil, to Afghanistan. But the global crisis kicking in after the 2008 financial meltdown has accentuated the drift apart. The "pivot to Asia" policy enunciated by the Obama administration in late 2011 is driven by the realization that increasingly scarce resources have to be deployed with strategic foresight. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton argued in a piece published by Foreign Policy, "the future of politics will be de-

termined in [East] Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action". Leadership succession in Beijing or the green shoots of a genuine political turnaround in Burma/Myanmar matter more to US policy makers than events in Europe's southeast or even in oil-rich Arab world. At the same time, the now chronic financial crisis paralyzing the EU has sapped support for a more ambitious common defence and security policy helping member states leverage their collective weight in global affairs. Nowhere is that as visible as in the cutbacks in defence spending driven by austerity, as ECFR's recent brief How to Stop the Demilitarisation of Europe has demon-

strated. The second edition of Germia Hill conference organised by ECFR in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo will examine areas and issues where coordination of diplomatic efforts between US and EU makes a real difference. In the Western

Institutions present at 2012 Germia Hill: ECFR, ICG, Atlantic Council, Hoover Institution, Brookings Institute, Chatham House, TransAtlantic Institute, SAIS, etc.

Balkans, where Eurocrisis has fortunately not put an end to EU expansion, the US still has a key role to play in helping with the unfinished business from the 1990s.

Europe and America have to join forces in helping anchor epochal changes across the Arab world and assist, in a non-intrusive manner, the evolution of more

accountable and open political regimes to replace decades-long authoritarian rule. At the same time, they have to forge a credible strategy in dealing with security threats resulting from the instability associated with such a major shift. Regional crisis sparked off by the looming civil war in Syria and Iran's nuclear programme, however, make such a joint strategy a rather tall order.

After the remarkable success of the inaugural Germia Hill conference in November 2011, this year's event will gather a group of top policymakers, prominent analysts and experts and high-profile journalists from the EU, US, the Western Balkans and Turkey to debate over the course of two days all those and other related issues, as well as to formulate recommendations on how to improve and advance transatlantic cooperation.

Diplomatic Bits & Pieces

5 QUICK QUESTIONS

Kosovo is a vibrant, young and dynamic place, quite close to Austria in many respects

1 What is the best thing about working and living in Kosovo?

I would say people, people and people. When I arrived together with my wife in January 2011 we were positively surprised by the warmth and hospitality of the people in Kosovo. It is a vibrant, young and dynamic place, quite close to Austria in many respects. It happens regularly when I travel the country that I am approached by somebody, young or old, who has a story to tell and who shares fond memories of his or her Austrian experience. For some these are memories of the opportunity to have had access to a good university during the dark days of Milosevic, when Austrian universities opened their doors and became a second home to many. For others, Vienna was often considered as the gate to the rest of the world. But this can also be fond memories of shared moments with relatives living or working in Austria. This multitude of different aspects contributing to a very positive image of Austria in Kosovo makes my job and life very easy and full of opportunities.

Johann Brieger,
Ambassador
of Austria in
Kosovo



host to President Ahtisaari during the Vienna talks and fellow Austrian diplomats like Albert Rohan played and are still playing an important role in helping Kosovo on its path to statehood as a close partner and advocate of your rightful aspirations. Honoring those political and often emotional ties between our countries and citizens, it was thus a very personal desire for our Vice Chancellor Michael Spindelegger to fly to Pristina on September 10th and actively participate in the solemn ceremony in Parliament. These close ties go well beyond ordinary diplomatic or business relations – they have developed into something larger and at the very same time more personal - very special and unique.

2 How big is the Austrian presence in Kosovo?

The largest and most visible part of the Austrian presence is currently certainly our KFOR-contingent with some 600 troops on the ground. Austria is the largest non-NATO contributor to KFOR and the 3rd largest overall and held until recently the position of DCOM-KFOR. We have Austrians in leading positions in the OSCE and EULEX. But looking to the future, what is even more important, is a healthy presence of Austrian companies in the banking, insurance or construction sector but also some well known Austrian brands making inroads into the kosovan market like Red Bull, Swarovski or the Porsche dealership. With investment plans of about 200 million Euros the Austrian Hydropower provider KELAG will not only contribute to a more stable power supply but also introduce a good share of clean energy, which is very important for everybody living in this country. Austrian companies are thus not only strategic partners for the future of your beautiful country but also generate jobs and contribute to the livelihood of thousands of families.

3 How do you see Austria-Kosovo relations developing?

As you know, Austria has been present in the region for a very long time and had also played her role in the statehood of Albania, the centenary of which we are all celebrating end of November. This is very present in Kosovo. But also more recently Austria was

4 What is your favorite part of Kosovo?

Moving around a lot as a Diplomat your favorite part becomes where your friends are. Having and seeing many of them regularly throughout the country, it is again more about people than places. But we like to enjoy the fresh air in the Rugova Valley or in Dragash, a leisurely stroll through the historic centre of Prizren but also like to go to Gjakova and Peja or enjoy the tranquility of Decani monastery.

5 What is your current reading list?

I just finished *The Successor* by Ismail Kadare and started the book *Diplomat am Rande der Weltpolitik* from Albert Rohan. Interesting reading is also *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* by John Perkins and *Globalization and its discontents* by Joseph Stiglitz. If time allows I like to reread some classics from Austrian literature like Arthur Schnitzler or Franz Kafka but also enjoy reading fiction from Dan Brown. A book of a different nature I am currently reading and can recommend is *Gimme one* by Barbara Schröter, which is a story about the daily challenges in the lives of dogs, told from their very own perspective in the form of a dog's diary. As we have saved two puppies of stray dogs shortly after we arrived in Kosovo and who have become cherished family members in the meantime, this is something all dog lovers can easily relate to.

SHORTNEWS

FROM THE EMBASSIES

William Hague's visit to Kosovo

First Secretary of State, William Jefferson Hague has been on an official visit to the Republic of Kosovo, where he met with leaders of the governmental institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, President Atifete Jahjaga and Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi. After meeting with Prime Minister Thaçi, the British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, said that the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia should not be endless, but that progress must be achieved in all stages of the process aimed at normalizing relations between two countries. He stated that the future of all the countries of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union. Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo has stressed that the agreement for the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia will be in the interest of all people in the region. "Kosovo is ready to continue this process. A broad multi-party and interethnic political consensus was established in Kosovo. It is extremely important to us that the democratic world – European Union is also united and supportive for the initiatives of Baroness Ashton", said Thaçi.



After meeting with Prime Minister Thaçi, the British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, said that the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia should not be endless.

Deputy Foreign Minister Selimi participates in the meeting of the Visegrad Group + Western Balkans

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, Petrit Selimi, has participated in the ministerial meeting of the Visegrad Group, expanded with representatives of the Western Balkan states, held in Warsaw, Poland. The European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy, Štefan Füle, has attended this meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radoslaw Sikorski, as the host, while Kosovo's Deputy Foreign

Minister Selimi held a speech at the meeting behind closed doors as did other ministers from the Balkans and Central Europe. Selimi had also official bilateral meetings with his counterpart in Poland, Grayna Maria Bernatowicz, where they discussed concrete forms of cooperation between the two countries. Mr. Selimi attended this meeting after a visit to Berlin, where he has participated as a speaker at the Aspen Institute conference, dedicated to security issues in Southeast Europe.

Minister Beqaj presents Kosovo's potentials in London

The Minister of Economic Development, Besim Beqaj, participated in the Kosovo – Great Britain Trade and Investment Conference, held in London on 10-11 October, where he presented Kosovo's investment potentials to British investors and held a lecture at the Sheffield University. Minister Beqaj underlined that the Republic of Kosovo continues to improve its investment environment, noting the favorable legislation. MED Head emphasized that the potential investment sectors include energy, mines, information technology, food processing industry, metal processing industry, wood processing industry, textile industry, etc. while ensuring the investors that they will enjoy full institutional support.



The conference is sponsored by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Kosovo and Forum Alpbach.

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NEW KOSOVO READS

EVERY ISSUE OF NEW DIPLOMAT WE WILL RECOMMEND BOOKS, REPORTS OR WEBSITES WITH INTERESTING AND UPDATED CONTENT ON KOSOVO.

Title: Kosovo Tales: Two Hearts, One Love

Authors: Lee Ann Sontheimer Murphy

Publisher: Rebel Ink Press, LLC
Publication Date: October 1, 2012

5th end of World War I. Yugoslavia, a new country at the time, is now a memory. Go back to Roman times and it was the Roman province of Dardania,

even earlier is was the Dardanian Kingdom. One of the things which becomes confusing in a hurry is that Kosovo has a Serbian minority and an ethnic Albanian majority. In short, it means everyone wasn't necessarily happy to see Kosovo formed.

The wars dividing the region were harsh and often bloody and there's still some lingering echoes today. Although Kosovo was named an independent na-

tion for the first time last month, there's still dissent over the possibility of partitioning Kosovo. But I'm not here to talk politics or even pretend I understand the diverse, difficult issues of southeastern Europe one hundred percent. I'm here to share some stories. I like to think the tales are poignant, heart-breaking, and also a reaffirmation of both life and love. I'm sure some will wonder just how and why

I was inspired to write Kosovo Tales.

The answer, in short, is that I had the privilege and pleasure to know some Albanian immigrants to the United States. I found them to be warm, intelligent people who endured many things in their native land.

This isn't their story, not at all. My stories are fiction but they were inspired by some of the realities.

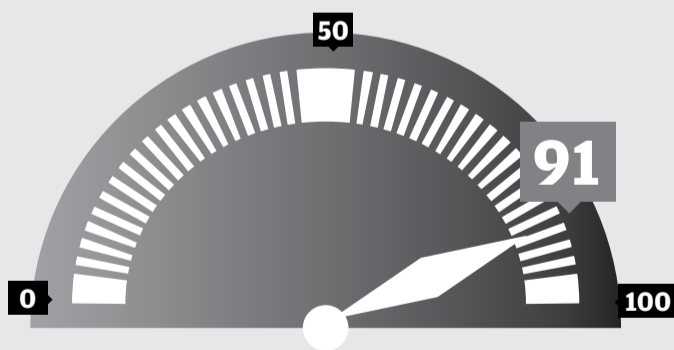


RECOGNMETER

- KOSOVO CONTINUED ITS ENGAGEMENT WITH MANY COUNTRIES SEEKING RECOGNITION. OFFICE OF DPM PACOLLI INFORMED THAT BURUNDI RECOGNIZED THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO.

- FIFA'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S NEXT MEETING IN TOKYO, ON 14 DECEMBER. FIFA MAY RECOGNIZE KOSOVO'S RIGHT TO PLAY INTERNATIONAL MATCHES.

- REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL WILL ALSO DECIDE ON KOSOVO MEMBERSHIP BY END OF 2012.



The Republic of Burundi has confirmed the recognition of the Republic of Kosovo. Verbal note of recognition was submitted to the Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Behgjet Pacolli, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burundi Laurent Kavakure, in Bujumbura, the capital of the Republic of Burundi. Also this month, FIFA, world's football governing body, is expected to confirm its decision to grant Kosovars right to play friendly matches.

Every two months, Kosovo's New Diplomat will report on the rate of recognitions of Kosovo's sovereign and

independent status b UN member states, international institutions and sports and cultural organizations.

Clinton, Ashton's visit to Kosovo

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

trust in a Euro-Atlantic future of development," said Thaçi. After the meeting with Prime Minister Thaçi, the American Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton emphasized among other issues that the normalization of relations between the state of Kosovo and Serbia is critical for Kosovo's and Serbia's future progress. "In the US, we believe that the steps undertaken by Kosovo are especially important for you. We believe that by moving toward the EU, you will be rewarded for the hard work, and sacrifice of the people of this generation, past generations and generations that are to come" – said Secretary Clinton. In the joint press conference with Prime Minister Thaçi and Baroness Ashton, Secretary Clinton stressed an important message: "Allow me to be clear not just for people in Prishtina, but for all those watching and listening in the entire region: the USA fully supports the sovereignty of Kosovo and its territorial integrity, and it wishes to see the application of rule of law in all Kosovo. We op-



pose any kind of talks about territorial change or the opening of the topic of Kosovo's independent status. These topics are not open to discussion. Kosovo's sovereign and independent borders are clear and defined" – said Secretary Clinton. "I am grateful to the Prime Minister for saying that he is the Prime Minister of the north and south. We cannot wait to help the Prime Minister and Government, and the people of Kosovo to make this pledge a reality, in the north and south. The USA is very proud of the friendship we have with Kosovo," said the American Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. In the joint press conference with Prime Minister Thaçi and American Secretary of State, Clinton, the High Representative of the European Union, and Vice President

of the European Commission, Catherine Ashton said: "I want to say to the people of Kosovo that your future is in the European Union and we look forward to seeing you achieve this objective". In addition, Baroness Ashton said, she was aware that the dialogue we started in Brussels is not easy for the Prime Minister of Kosovo, and is not easy either for the people of Kosovo, with your history and fear. But, Ms. Ashton guaranteed that this was a dialogue which would improve lives, a dialogue which would normalize lives, so that people in the north can continue their daily lives, feeling part of a community and part of social life. This will be done by sitting down and talking, talking openly and freely – said Baroness Ashton.

Kosovo marks the greatest progress in World Bank's "Doing Business" ranking

For the first time since Kosovo's involvement in the World Bank report "Doing Business", in 2013 Kosovo marks the greatest progress in this ranking. Kosovo, which is ranked 98th, has advanced 19 places compared to last year, when the country was in position 117. The protection of investors has improved by 74 positions, making the greatest increase compared to other indicators in this report. , highest such jump in WB reports. This is the most significant report related to the doing business

indicators. The characteristic of this year, according to the report, is that in Kosovo the majority of business start-up procedures are provided free of charge by the relevant institutions. 26 new business registration centers "one-stop-shop" have been opened where businesses can get all services in one place and get the registration number of the business with the fiscal number in only one document and within one day. Challenges reported by the report are related to stagnation with the

registration of the property in time required and the cost to resolve issues of bankruptcy. The report also notes that in Kosovo, there is no change in access to credit. The evaluation in this report is based on 11 indicators: starting a business, obtaining construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting loans, protecting investors, paying taxes, enforcing contracts, resolving insolvency, trading across borders and the recruitment of work.

About us

The eighth edition of Prishtina Jazz Festival

Prishtina Jazz Festival, the first festival of jazz music in Kosovo, marks its eighth edition. In the past seven editions, the festival has gathered a considerable number of great jazz musicians, local and international. For the past two years, the festival has been supported also by Kosovo's MFA.

The Director of Prishtina Jazz Festival Ilir Bajri is one of Kosovo's prominent artists. He said that there are jazz artists in Kosovo and their number is constantly growing. The youngest generation of Kosovo artists and talents are educated in the main jazz education centers. Two of them are attending school in the New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York.

"Never in Prishtina have there been as many clubs in which jazz is played and interpreted, whereas musicians never lacked desire and willingness to perform. Mainly owners and organizers of such events are the ones who should be criticized because often they do not care much about the conditions and the manner of the organizations of such evenings", said Bajri. However, he added that "it is inevitable for me to criticize also the musicians who easily give up for reasons of dissatisfaction. This ne-



cessarily leads to unpleasant and harmful compromises, for the musicians, for the owners of the clubs as well as for the society in general". Bajri announced the artists who will perform at this year's addition are Kevin Brady Trio from Ireland (November 2nd), Elif Çağlar Quintet from Turkey (November 3rd), KASU (November 4th), Max Kochetov Quartet from Serbia (November 5th), and Kekko Fornarelli Trio feat. Eric Vloeimans from Italy and the Netherlands (November 6th).

In terms of the support and understanding that the festival enjoys in the organizational and financial aspects, Bajri stressed that the support is usually inadequate and there are many challenges and problems most of which are unreasonable and unnecessary. Of course, Bajri concluded, "there are also problems and gaps from our side as hosts, we have apathy and difficulties obtaining support from sponsors"

The HighLand Lute, Kosovo guide, winners of the AppCamp Kosova 2012

Leart Zogjani and Bardh Lohaj, the authors of the mobile application "The HighLand Lute", are the winners of the AppCamp Kosova 2012. The game bases tells the story of Balkan mythological creators encountered by the main character Ali Pasha of Guçia, based on "The Highland Lute", an influential epic of the famous Albanian poet and translator, Gjergj Fishta. The game was demonstrated on Android platform with excellent graphics for a prototype. "The HighLand Lute" presents a good opportunity for the international market, where people can download the game and play for fun, but at the same time they will learn new things on our history interactively", said Leart Zogjani.

Under the umbrella of AppCamp Kosovo, more than 150 participants had the opportunity to see 16 prototypes presented before a jury, for which it was very difficult to decide on the 4 prizes of 3,000 euro (12,000 euro in total), and on the special reward for



the trip to Barcelona. Dorjan Berishaj, for the application named "Skenderman", Agon Lohaj, for the application "ZAG", and Blerta Thaçi, for the application Braçat - Prishtina Street Style, were awarded 3,000 euro each.

The teams were evaluated on the basis of the importance of the idea, content, connection with the appropriate platform (iOS or Android). The event was sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, IPKO Foundation, Innovation Centre Kosovo, the Norwegian Embassy and the British Council, with the aim of improving the image/presence of Kosovo in the mobile applications markets.



BUBULINA KRASNIQI

- **What do you do, where are you based?** I am a Senior Officer for International Organizations within the Department for Bilateral Relations and International Organizations. I am based in Prishtina.
- **What is the most you like about the job you do?** The privilege I was given to work in an environment filled with professionals on the field, gave me the opportunity to contribute and to be part of important processes in the Ministry.
- **What is the best thing about the city you live in?** Prishtina is the city where I was born and raised and its energy is what I love the most. I find it fascinating how young people here are optimistic about the future and how fast they move along with the trends, culture and changes, as most of the developed countries.



KADRI DAKAJ

- **What do you do, where are you based?** I am appointed as first Consul at the Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo in Paris, France.
- **What is the most you like about the job you do?** Working in a Consular Mission in Paris, has given me the privilege of being one of the Kosovo's diplomats, representing my country officially in France. Establishing from the beginning a Consular mission in Paris is a privilege and simultaneously a great responsibility. What I like the most in our work the influence that Paris has as one of the most important diplomatic centers in Europe and beyond.
- **What is the best thing about the city you live in?** Paris is one of the most beautiful metropolitan cities in the world, with its peculiar architectural epitomes and enthusiasm for the arts, history and different cultures. Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, Louvre Museum are pearls whose architectural, historical and artistic beauties and values remain unique throughout the world.



RUDINA BUKOSHI

- **What do you do, where are you based?** I am the First Secretary at the Embassy of Republic of Kosovo to Japan. I just moved to Tokyo, one of my favorite cities in the world. Everybody who is in love with the history of Japan would wish to be posted here. I hope to enjoy all the bounty of this country.
- **What is the most you like about the job you do?** I fit this job and this job fits me. This is and always has been one of my life objectives - being a diplomat, promoting my Kosovo everywhere in the world, even in the Far East countries.
- **What is the best thing about the city you live in?** Everybody who comes for the first time in Tokyo, is fascinated, astonished and it seems you are living in another world of your fantasies. You can see a combination of tradition and futurism. The Japanese people are the best example of self-disciplined, responsible citizens. Hence, their civic consciousness for me represents the best proof of patriotism.



VLORAT GASHI

- **What do you do, where are you based?** I am the Head of Finance Division in the Department of Budget and Finance in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- **What is the most you like about the job you do?** Being part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an institution that promotes values and represents Kosovo in the international arena is a privilege and a motivation for my work. The Department for Budget and Finance, part of which I have been since its foundation, in the financial context, has brought into function the Diplomatic and Consular Missions, as the Ministry has created a system that had to be established since its very beginnings. All this success has been achieved due to the excellent mutual cooperation.
- **What is the best thing about the city you live in?** Taking into consideration that I was born and I live in Prishtina, I would like to give a brief description presenting Prishtina as an amazing place for Kosovo young people. Prishtina has great values making it a pleasurable place for all Kosovo citizens, starting from universities, theatres, museums, libraries and other cultural institutions that it contains. Prishtina has a very emancipated and motivated youth, ready to help the country's progress, and this makes me very happy to live in such a society.



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NEW DIPLOMATS

FEATURE *of the* MONTH

Rugova Valley. It is a mixed place, there are recreational areas which you can find a lot in the valley.



PHOTOGRAPHS KOSOVGUIDE, FLYINGFORKOSOVO

The Valley of environmental fanatics

This region remains well preserved and still less explored, but offering great opportunities for lovers of eco- and rural tourism.

Rugova Valley is one of the most attractive natural areas of the region. It belongs to the Albanian Alps range of mountains situated at the western part of Kosovo. There are 13 villages populated with «Rugovans» who are famous for their fanatic love of the environment, their specific cultural activities, and practice of folklore. The highest peak of the Rugova valley reaches up to 2560m above sea level, and the area is quite rich with rivers, natural lakes at 1800m on the mountains, 30m high waterfalls and several natural caves.

This region remains well preserved and still less explored, but

potentially offering great opportunities of diversion for lovers of eco- and rural tourism. Its territory allows a total immersion in smells and tastes of the nature. Possibilities for sports are huge during the whole year thanks to trekking and hiking paths, streets perfect for biking routes, and to the rock walls welcomed by climbers.

Rugova valley is always visited by different groups of visitors. During the summer the majority of people from the city go up on the valley for the weekend. There are plenty of tours, events and other activities going on throughout the year.

Recreational Opportunities

The best way to enjoy the valley during the summer and fall is to hike or bike the region. Rock climbing is offered, as well as exploring caves or simply hug the wind and enjoy traditional food. In winter and spring, the crystal look of the Albanian Alps and fresh air offer the best place in the Balkans to ski, trek or even hike. Rugova Valley is a mixed place, there are recreational areas which you can find a lot in the valley.

This is a mixed place, there are recreational areas which you can find a lot in the valley.

Seasons Accessible

Rugova Valley is accessible all year round. However, it does snow heavily in the winter which leads to most but not all villages shutting down tourism services. However, the village of Bose does have a ski resort and stays open throughout the winter.

Boga

Boga has just recently started to become an attraction for national tourism, in the Rugova gorge; therefore it is still undergoing preparation and infrastructure design. It is an extraordinary attractive spot for conquering mountain tops or skiing

during winter season, since it is also equipped with ski lift. Though it is quite equipped with accommodation settings, skiing equipment and restaurants; it still needs to promotion, will and people's curiosity in order to be visited more. It is at 28th kilometer of the Rugova gorge road, driving from Peja to Rugova.

There are indication signs, therefore you cannot miss it. The road is quite good, even though during winter sometimes it happens to get closed. There are regular minibuses from Peja to Boga, taking you there in 45 minutes.

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World Press

Kosovo is entering a new phase of development

Interview with Prime Minister of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi on the principle challenges facing Kosovo, now that the new republic reached the End of Supervised Independence, fulfilling all the major provisions of President Ahtisaari's Plan.

Question: How do you evaluate the process of the Supervised Independence? Kosovo reached a new landmark as it announced a fully sovereign status following the decision of International Steering Group that Kosovo has complied with all the major provisions of President Ahtisaari's plan?

PM Thaçi: Kosovo declared its independence in a coordinated manner back in 2008, following and respecting the process established by the UN Envoy Marti Ahtisaari, who based his plan on UNSC Resolution 1244 and the principles of Contact Group that included Russia. I remind you that these principles were based on the premise that people of Kosovo themselves will decide their status, after decades of neglect and oppression that almost ended with a genocide of unseen proportions in Europe after World War 2. We can recall that Kosovar government and institutions were supposed to implement a certain number of provisions to ensure full minority protection, positive outreach towards all strata of the society, protection of heritage and full decentralization of the political power to the local municipalities. ICO evaluated that Kosovo has by and large implemented all the key provisions, in less than five years. I am happy to have been able to witness such a dramatic change in our landscape, in our government and wider society. We have established new and more powerful municipalities which bring power closer to the people facilitated high level integration of Serbs in new municipalities and approved special laws that enable protection of special heritage sights. Kosovo has gone long way in making our state a functional and progressive member of the international community. Challenges remain, most urgently, on the need to engage Serbian community in north in the process of decentralization according to the UN Envoy's plan.

Question: Challenges nevertheless remain, especially in economy and justice sector? What is the plan of Kosovo government in the years ahead? What are the priorities?

PM Thaçi: Kosovo is Europe's youngest state but is already



INTERVIEW

Europe's World

playing a positive role. We have the lowest debt compared to GDP in all of Europe and the highest GDP growth in the eurozone, as Kosovo and Montenegro are de facto members through a special relationship with the German Bundesbank. We have invested public funds in infrastructure and education, and we have plans to make Kosovo a dynamic economy tied to the regional and European markets. In the energy sector we will build new capacities, as we plan in the mining sector. We will continue to invest in education to allow Kosovars innovators and business to be competitive in difficult global circumstances.

We intend to keep prudent and conservative fiscal policies, but still heavily invest in projects that will enable long-term growth and prosperity. We are improving every year the tax revenues and have tested the electronic trading of bonds, supported by US Treasury and EU. Fighting corruption and organized crime are high on the agenda so investors can be ensured a fair and prompt legal system, but people can also know that freedom also brought equality. We have shifted gears in

fighting corruption and organized crime, as EU progress report has noted. Our main priority is Euro-Atlantic integration process, but in order to come out successful, many reforms need to be implemented.

Question: What does Kosovo expect from European Union? What will it bring to Europe, once the accession process

is on full track for Kosovo as well?

PM Thaçi: Kosovo has been at the centre of many historical processes in Balkans and Europe. We have seen empires come and go, and we have witnessed moments of hope but also periods of tragedy and genocide. As of the Thessaloniki Summit, Kosovo is part of a joint European perspective. At the end of Supervised Independence, Commissioner Stefan Fule has said unequivocally that, if we fulfil the standards, Kosovo will one day become a member of EU. We hope that hard work and effort on our part, as well as positive

actions in Brussels, will permit this. We are counting on the Feasibility Study, the first formal step for EU accession, to be a fair look our society and a clear roadmap for Kosovo's next steps. Kosovo is an entrepreneurial, dynamic and quintessentially European nation. A small candidate country, there are limits to

what we can bring to the EU's table, but it's clear that our role has been crucial in making the Balkans a peaceful and prosperous region that is dedicated to the future.

Question: When do you believe Kosovo will join EU?

PM Thaçi: What is important for us to focus on now is delivering on the reforms that are key to EU integration. We must continue to strengthen democratic institutions, protect minorities, ensure a just system for all citizens and create a sustainable model for economic growth. It is clear that we are years away now, but the more we deliver in our reforms, the closer we will be to membership. For now, dialogue will continue to be an essential component for progress and the main tool for resolving open issues in between the EU and Kosovo.

Foreign Policy of Kosovo after the End of Supervised Independence

Editorial by Kosovo's Foreign Minister published in Europe's World

Kosovo declared its independence on 17 February, 2008, and today is recognized by over 90 UN members, all but four NATO member states and a considerable number of nations across the globe. With the exception of Serbia, we have been recognised by all our neighbour states and enjoy admirable regional co-operation. In 2009, joined two UN agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Naturally, securing additional statehood recognition and strengthening Kosovo's international position in multilateral organisations are among our most important foreign policy objectives. We try to reach that through close bilateral cooperation with countries across the geographical and political spectrum, EU, NATO and US being principle pillars of our democracy. We recall that EU opened its doors to Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania in the first decade of 2000. Croatia will accede in 2013. Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro were granted candidate status, while Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are potential candidates. It has been encouraging to see the reforms carried out by other aspiring members supported through EU funds for reform and development. Kosovo has just received its Feasibility Study on potential for an SAA, hence the second long-term foreign policy objective continues to be Kosovo's membership aspirations to the European Union. First priority is visa-free travel to the Schengen zone. Regional cooperation is important in this context. In order to meet this principle Copenhagen Criteria, we have continued to engage in good neighbourly relations through dialogue with neighbours – including Serbia, and have accepted an EU invitation to discuss jointly the issues that affect our peoples every day which require closer cross-border cooperation. This presented us with an opportunity discuss issues such as mutual recognition of university diplomas, cadastre, civil registry, customs, integrated border management, and in regional cooperation and representation. Kosovo's government is determined to implement conclusions that came from these talks. We are also ready to engage in further dialogue that should aim to normalize relations between the two countries.

International Steering group that consists of countries that have recognized Kosovo, has recently declared the readiness of Kosovo to take up full sovereignty.

Executive mandated of ICO was declared null and void. EULEX remained present, under new constitutional arrangement. These benchmarks achieved are important highlights that help us in the diplomatic dialogue. I can always say proudly that Kosovo citizens of all ethnicities have actually created a stable and civic state with a growing economy, in midst of global economic crisis that hit the region so hard.



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