



Germany and Kosovo have always been close

Five Questions for Ambassador Ernst Reichel



Restelica—The Secret dreamy Corner of Kosovo

Kosovo's best kept secret



Time to recognize Kosovo

Yonatan Touval

Kosovo's New Diplomat

NEWS

KOSOVO*

DEAL REACHED

Serbia still boycotting meetings

In the very first weeks after the agreement was reached on regional and equal representation of Kosovo in regional fora, Serbia has continued to boycott regional meetings, claiming a hard-line interpretation of the deal. During the meetings of Regional Cooperation Council in Sarajevo, as well as the "International Conference on LGBT rights" organized by the Government of Montenegro in Budva, Kosovo representatives were active participants, without UNMIK by their side, and with the Kosovo's name in the nameplate marked with an asterisk.



Kosovo enters the multilateral stage

*Kosovo has agreed with Serbia an agreement that will enable Republic of Kosovo to participate fully and equally in the inter-governmental organizations of regional character in Europe. EU Foreign policy chief Baroness Ashton called the deal "historic"

Government of Kosovo and Serbia, in a dialogue launched by the EU after International Court of Justice declared that independence of Kosovo is not contrary to International Law, have agreed how Kosovo can present itself in diplomatic meetings of the western Balkan states. The deal was important as it paves the way for both countries to get closer to EU, enabling European Union to grant Serbia the status of a candidate for membership next week and to launch with Kosovo the preliminary process of Feasibility Study.

The agreement was reached on 24 February, after two-and-a-half days of talks in Brussels mediated by Robert Cooper, chief diplomatic adviser to Catherine Ashton, the EU's foreign policy chief, with the presence of US State Department.

The compromise foresees that Kosovo's name in diplomatic gatherings will contain a footnote making reference to Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council of 1999 and to a ruling by the International Court of Justice from 2010 on Declaration of Independence, as demanded by Kosovar government. Kosovo will however have an equal voice and rights at the regional gatherings, in line with the status of other participants and represented by the Kosovar diplomats.

The footnote to the name 'Kosovo' will read: "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence."

The Kosovar side had objections to the compromise before

international guarantees were provided by officials. Štefan Füle, the European commissioner for enlargement and neighbourhood policy, pledged to launch preparations for a pre-accession agreement between the EU and Kosovo, something that has eluded Kosovo because five member states do not recognize its independence. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared in the aftermath of the agreement that: "This is an important step for Kosovo. These agreements are consistent with Kosovo's independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty, and move Kosovo closer toward full European integration, which the United States continues to support. Kosovo will now sit at the table in regional fora as an equal partner, representing and speaking for itself."

In a statement, Ashton and

Füle described today's deal as "a major step forward". They said that the agreement on regional representation will make Kosovo "a full participant in its own right in regional meetings and events and will allow for further progress to contractual relations with the EU".

"Kosovo will thus follow the same European course as all others in the western Balkans, in line with its European perspective. In this light, the Commission proposes to launch a feasibility study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement [SAA] between Kosovo and the EU."

An SAA would be the first contractual link between the EU and Kosovo, ensuring Kosovo's completely independent path in its drive to achieve European perspective. / FROM AGENCIES

Serbia insisted that the name of Kosovo in the nameplate should include the entire footnote, a request considered impractical by the organizers of the events and all other regional representatives. Serbia decided to boycott these meetings and instructed the diplomats not to participate in any meetings in which Kosovo's name in the nameplate is not completely altered and integrated with the footnote. This interpretation of the agreement was not supported by the EU facilitator Cooper and the agreement is currently being implemented only by the Kosovo side, in line with Kosovo's desired wish to engage in regional cooperation in all forums and initiatives.

Diplomatic Bits & Pieces

5 QUICK QUESTIONS

Germany and Kosovo have always been particularly close

Germany's top diplomat in Kosovo, **Ambassador Ernst Reichel** answers Five Quick Questions on how does he and his country view the progress in Kosovo, what is his favorite part of Kosovo and what is he currently reading

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

What I clearly appreciate most is the warmth and hospitality of people in Kosovo. From the first day here, I felt welcome, appreciated and respected. I have the feeling that Kosovars are extremely welcoming to foreigners and generously open all doors for them, without themselves being intrusive. In addition, I often encounter people who speak excellent German, who spent years of their lives in Germany, Switzerland or Austria. Despite the difficult times they may have gone through, they seem to keep warm memories and a positive attitude.

2 How big is the German presence in Kosovo?

Big, but how big exactly is difficult to say. Evidently, Germany has the by far highest number of KFOR troops, and German shares in EULEX, OSCE, ICO and other governmental and non-governmental organisations add to this. The German Embassy in Prishtina is the largest in the Western Balkans. Germany is the second largest bilateral donor country, and the second largest trading partner of Kosovo. Proximity and the close human ties I already mentioned are also important factors. The more important and concrete Kosovo's EU perspective is becoming, the more also Germany gains relevance for Kosovo and its people.

3 How do you see German-Kosovan relations developing?

Germany and Kosovo have always been particularly close, but I sense that today relations are at an

Ernst Reichel,
Ambassador,
Germany



all-time high. The visit of Chancellor Merkel last December, in my view, was a clear indication. She not only came to visit the German KFOR troops that are putting their lives and health at risk for Kosovo, but she also came well-informed even about the financing of highway construction in this country.

4 What is your favourite part of Kosovo?

The answer depends on what you're looking for. I much enjoy the youthful dynamism and joy of life in Prishtina. If you want beautiful scenery, there always is the Prizren area or the West, for instance the Rugova valley.

5 What is your current reading list?

Right now, I'm reading "Der kleine Bruder" (The little brother) by Sven Regener, a tongue-in-cheek story by a rock singer turned successful writer about West Berlin's student subculture in the 1980's. Before, I read Ismail Kadare's "Broken April", of course a must for anyone who is interested in Albanian culture and history. Next in line will likely be "Chronic City" by Jonathan Lethem.

SHORTNEWS
FROM THE EMBASSIES**International Conference held in Prishtina with scholars from Oxford, LSE, Cambridge**

University of Oxford's Centre for International Studies and Kosovo based Research Institute of Developmental and European Affairs organized an international academic conference that was well attended by some of the top scholarly names in the field of international relations. Participants which included Professors Richard Caplan from Oxford, Sumantra Bose from LSE, Bruno Sergi from Mesina University, Jean D'Aspremont from University of Amsterdam and many others – gathered in Kosovo to discuss issues pertaining to the "Consolidation of Kosovo's Statehood" [see column of Prof. D'Aspremont in this issue on page 3] The conference was sponsored by the KS TALKS EU program of the Kosovo MFA and British Embassy in Kosovo which supports public diplomacy efforts.

Participants gathered in Kosovo to discuss issues pertaining to the "Consolidation of Kosovo's Statehood"

Ecumenical event bringing together experts in Prizren

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Kosovo is supporting the organization of a regional seminar dedicate dto dialogue between the faiths as well as academic discussion about Emperor Constantine and the forthcoming anniversary of legalization of Christianity in Roman Empire (1700

years ago). The conference is organized by the American University in Kosovo in mid May and will gather top historians and figures of faith to discuss the heritage and the issues related to this important anniversary in the history of monotheism. The event will take place in the multi-confessional city of Prizren

**European Forum Alpach organizes its annual regional gathering in Kosovo**

One of the well known and oldest networks of European leaders, Forum Alpach based in Austria since 1945, decided to organize its' annual meeting in the beautiful city of Prizren. The conference titled "Shaping the future of the SEE Countries" will gather EU representatives, members of EU parliament as well as participants from the entire Western Balkans to discuss the positives as well as challenges ahead for the European path of the countries in Balkans. Keynote speech will be held by the Foreign Minister Enver Hoxhaj and the Special Reporter of EU Parliament on Kosovo, Mrs. Ulrike Lunacek (EUMP), as well as Erhard Busek, one of the foremost Austrian diplomats engaged in South East Europe. The conference is sponsored by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Kosovo and Forum Alpach.

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

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NEWKOSOVOREADS

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

Title: Grand Hotel Kosovo
Authors: Andreas Wittkowsky
Publisher: LIT Verlag Münster
Publication Date: 2011

In Germany there are have been quite some books published on Kosovo, the authors being those who have lived and worked in various international organizations after the war. This new book on Kosovo, published in Germany and titled «Grand Hotel Kosovo», by Wittkowsky Andreas, is also written by someone who has worked eight years in Kosovo. Since early 2001 until late 2008 Wittkowsky worked in so called Pillar Four of the international presence. He is known as an expert on economic issues. «I

never regret that I have lived many years in Kosovo,» says the author of this book on Kosovo in conversation with those who had come to promote the book that was organized at the premises of the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin, where high-ranking diplomats took part. According to him, he would do it all over again, if he was granted the chance to repeat his last decade of activities. He does not hide the pleasure that comes with closely following the case of experiencing the growth and development of Kosovo after the war. The author spoke with much love for Kosovo, for the suffering of his people during the apartheid. Book was written in the form of confessions of the

principle character, the author. The book can be considered a collection of political essays. The author uses language with much sarcasm, not saving at all local or foreign politicians, under which the author has served for many years. In particular, there are moments when describing the events of 2004. The scenes and moments with seemingly absurd situations, when those who had seats to govern the country were shy to voice disagreement with violence used, and were not in the know of what was about to happen. More positive chapters were on the Declaration of Independence. For a politician, a western diplomat, it was something extraordinary to witness

how so many people gathered to experience the great feeling of independence, this feeling that for Westerners, can be known only through confessions in the historic books, because this process of nation-building was finished centuries ago. The book tries to presents Kosovo as a country where many paradoxes faced by the actions of external and domestic factors, but over all as a state that has not failed, and causes as a country that has European perspective, for sure. Author from the beginning to the end trying to save the love for country and people there, expressing the sense of familiarity with them. Thus a chapter book has titled «Pristina my homeland.»



The book has 189 pages and is published by LIT Verlag Münster, 2011

RECOGNMETER

SINCE LAST ISSUE WAS PUBLISHED, 4 MORE COUNTRIES HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED KOSOVO. COUNT IS AT 89, SOON APPROACHING HALF OF THE UN MEMBERS! ALSO - KOSOVO NOW BECOMING MEMBER OF MANY REGIONAL AND EUROPEAN UNION FORUMS.



Every two months. Kosovo's New Diplomat will report on the rate of recognitions of Kosovo's sovereign and independent status by UN member states, international institutions and sports and cultural organizations.

Last two months have been filled with joyous news on the recognition front. Kosovo has now received formal letters of recognition of its independence by countries as diverse

as Ghana, Haiti and Sao Tome and Principe, while Uganda also notified the Office of Deputy Prime Minister Pacolli of its' recognition of the new reality in Balkans.

A VIEW FROM OUTSIDE

Agreement in Brussels—a useful concession for reinforcing the independence

“Footnote agreement does not hinder the effectivité of Kosovo. On the contrary it may well enhance it” – says Jean d'Aspremont, Professor of International Law and Adjunct Director of Research - Faculty of Law at University of Amsterdam. After participating in ICJ proceedings in 2010, he visited Prishtina recently to participate in the international academic conference organized by Oxford University and a local research institute Ridea. New Diplomat used the opportunity to meet him for a short interview.

1) Kosovo is now recognized by 89 states, there were 65 recognitions at the time of ICJ. Do you think the legal strength of ICJ opinion has not been adequately translated into the recognition of the state as independent? The ICJ advisory opinion is rather agnostic on the question of Statehood, for it espoused a very minimalistic reading of the question submitted to the Court. However, because it is agnostic, it is in very much in favor of Kosovo. In that sense, it has reinforced the support that Kosovo could find in international law. This means that,



Jean d'Aspremont.

although the Court was very careful and has adopted a very minimalistic approach, the AO can be seen as reinforcing the international legal narrative in favor of the emergence of Kosovo as a new State. This being said, the impact of such a ruling on the recognitions has remained modest. It is not certain that all those States that came to recognize Kosovo since July 2010 were really emboldened by the AO. In that sense, I deem the impact of the AO to have been modest, though Kosovo has progressed rather

well in terms of international acceptance.

2) How do you think Agreement reached in Brussels on regional representation affects Kosovo's legal position? Is the reference to 1244 weakening the position?

I believe that the footnote agreement does not hinder the effectivité of Kosovo. On the contrary it may well enhance it, for it may well buoy the participation and representation of Kosovo in diverse fora. It cannot be excluded that it could even lead some other States to recognize Kosovo. It may thus have been a useful political concession. This being said, resolution 1244 remains an issue to address and it would be wise to start envisaging a strategy & a narrative whereby 1244 is said to be terminated by exhaustion of its object.

3) What should next legal steps for Kosovo be? Focus on bilateral recognitions, UN seat or something else?

The best and wisest step to be pursued by Kosovo now would be an attempt to secure observer status as a State at the UN (so not UN seat directly because this will not work).

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Captions from top to bottom: Ambassador Rexhep Boja with the members of Saudi royal family in Riyadh; Ambassador Vilson Ahmeti and Christian Schwartz-Schilling with spouses; Human rights activist Bianca Jagger with Kosovo diplomat Bejtullah Destani; Ambassador Sami Ukelli with guests from Fukushima prefecture; Deputy Prime Ministers Bukoshi and Pacolli, Ministers Hoxhaj and Citaku in the reception launching new Embassy building in Tirana

NEW DIPLOMATS

SHKENDIJE SHERIFI



■ **What do you do, where are you based?** I am the Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to Hungary. I am based in Budapest. ■ **What is the most you like about the job you do?** I like the interaction with the receiving country's interlocutors who are highly supportive of Kosovo as well as the interaction with representatives of diplomatic missions from all over the world. Above all, I like the opportunity not only to show the flag but also represent and promote my country in different international conferences and fora that Hungary organizes or hosts. ■ **What is the best thing about the city you live in?** Budapest is cited as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, it has a very rich history with extensive World Heritage Sites. With the striking Danube separating Buda from Pest, Budapest provides one of the most charming European metropolitan panorama. What fascinates me the most is the wide variety of music that Budapest offers starting from the classics of Bartók and Kodály, Liszt to the contemporary fusion of folk, klezmer, rock and jazz culminating with the beautiful sounds of 100 violins of the Budapest Gypsy Orchestra. !

GJYLYMSERE KUNDJA



■ **What do you do, where are you based?** I am a student of the VI semester of Political Science and currently working as Assistant to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. I am based in Prishtina, Government building. ■ **What is the most you like about the job you do?** What I like most about my job is governmental responsibilities diplomatic issues diplomatic contacts, challenges and cooperation. ■ **What is the best thing about the city you live in?** Best thing about city i live in is the youth of Kosovo.

MIRJETA BEHLULI



■ **What do you do, where are you based?** My post within MFA is a Director of the Department for Budget and Finance, and my whole work is based on the legal basis on the Management of the Public Finance including LPFMA instructions and other governmental regulations on management and internal control on the expenditure of the public money. ■ **What is the most you like about the job you do?** The management of finance on diplomatic/consular missions brings me special joy and at the same time it is a challenge for my professional capacity building, a new field in our country. ■ **What is the best thing about the city you live in?** The opportunity of being part of my country processes towards the European integrations.

ANTON MARKU



■ **What do you do, where are you based?** I am Counsellor at the Embassy of Republic of Kosovo to Austria, based since end 2009 in Vienna. ■ **What is the most you like about the job you do?** Interaction with diplomats, promotion of our national interests as well as the possibility to offer personal and professional commitment toward strengthening ties between our two countries. ■ **What is the best thing about the city you live in?** I appreciate in particular cultural heritage and architectural patrimony of city of Vienna, specially the Stephansdom Cathedral, Schonburn Palace, Giant Ferris Wheel, Donau Tower and similar. I also like artistic live offered at numerous museums, theatre and opera houses.

FEATURE *of the* MONTH

Restelica in short

Mountain shepherds, enormous Sharr Dogs, free roaming horses, pristine babbling streams and dramatic mountains are just a small taste of what awaits you in Dragash.



The peak of Brezovica resort in southern Kosovo reaches 2,500 metres.
FOTO: ERMAL META

DAILY MAIL

Restelica—The Secret Dreamy Village of Kosovo

One of Kosovo's best kept natural secrets is the **village of Restelica**, hidden in the mountains of Dragash in southern Kosovo. Over 120 aromatic and healing plants grow in a small area that is being frequented by tourists only in the recent years

The village of Restelica is located in Kosovo's southern municipality of Dragash (Dragaš) and is the largest village in that area. The canyon of Restelica lies behind and above the village, and ranges in elevation between 1,492 meters (4,895 feet) and 1,972 meters (6,470 feet). It is not difficult to reach this village and its nearby canyon—Restelica is located about a 3 hours drive southwest of Prishtina (Priština) on roads that are in relatively good shape. However, the canyon itself is very steep and slippery, so it's important to carefully plan your route there. There are several possibilities for tour guides though the best infor-

mation one may receive from the touring specialist Hiking Njeri or kosovoguide.com

Hiker's curiosity made this village a «must see» spot for many a travelers. The canyon is known for its flora—some 120 aromatic and healing plants grow there. The spring and summer seasons bring out a profusion of mountain cranberries, blackberries and mushrooms. For those obsessed with birds and birding, there is a unique species of eagles that can be observed roaming the sky. And for the patient, as well as brave at heart, bears, wolves, foxes, wild cats and goats can sometimes be seen roaming the canyon. As goats are more

accustomed to people, during the summer months they spend their time near human habitats and can often be seen at sunset pasturing in the highlands. Goelm Kamen (The Grand Rock) is the source of Restelica's river—a river in which trout, chub and barbel can be found in abundance. Its waters are clean and can be used for drinking.

Years of isolation have kept this area known only to its villagers. Just in the last decade have travelers begun to visit and explore its wonders.

History. Restelica is populated by the Gorani community who speak a combination of Slavic languages and whose

religion is Islam. Its inhabitants lead a very traditional way of life and have managed to preserve many aspects of their rich culture: from their renowned cheeses and lamb dishes to their breeding of the enormous Sharr sheep dogs, native to Kosovo since the ancient Illyrian times. The area's economy has forced many of its people to move abroad, but the community is well known across former Yugoslavia for famous pastry shops managed by the Gorani bakers. During the summer, however, they often return for visits and traditional wedding ceremonies.

Others on Restelica. Todd's Travels Website: Mountain

shepherds, enormous Sharr Dogs, free roaming horses, pristine babbling streams and dramatic mountains are just a small taste of what awaits you in Dragash. Located in the southern end of Kosovo, Dragash is an oasis of untouched natural beauty and traditional villages sandwiched between the borders of Macedonia and Albania. Ignored by the Yugoslav government, the area never received development money for tourism despite its wealth of flora, fauna and cultural traditions. Luckily, this also spared the region the communist era concrete hotels and restaurants that mar similar regions in Kosovo.

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À propos Column

Becoming a Part of Community of Nations

Kosovo's FMA has established a working group that will seek to upgrade Kosovo's interaction with multilateral organizations and other regional initiatives, giving Kosovo an own voice.

One of the biggest developments in 2012 on diplomatic front has been the agreement reached between Belgrade and Prishtina on the regional representation.

The problem in the last years of post-independence regional landscape has been that Republic of Kosovo had limited options of meaningful participation in regional forums. It could either participate with UNMIK, due to the veto powers of non-recognizers such as Russia or others who would not accept Kosovo's denomination and equal status in the regional context. This refusal to accept Kosovo in multilateral organizations led to blockade in the advancement of regional cooperation between the Western Balkan countries. In few initiatives where Kosovo was invited, government of Serbia boycotted the organizers by not showing up in the meetings where Kosovars were present.

This situation had to be resolved somehow. EU could not insist for Kosovo to be fully recognized in multilateral forums named as a Republic, as five EU

countries are yet to recognize the sovereignty and independence of Kosovo. On the other hand, it was becoming clear that isolating Kosovo and disabling it from participation with its own voice and other rights such as having signatory powers on regional level, is hindering the progress in Balkans and cross-border cooperation.



PETRIT SELIMI
Deputy Minister

participate equally in the regional fora, but also help Kosovo enter a formal relationship with EU on a completely separate and independent track from Serbia. This was made possible with an agreement that was both elegant and breaks the status-quo on Kosovo. Now Kosovo will start participating in

Hence the focus of EU mediator Robert Cooper was to instigate a dialogue between Prishtina and Belgrade that would not only enable Kosovo to have its own voice and

over 100 agreements, institutions, agencies, forums of regional importance without UNMIK but with a nametag that bears a small asterisk and a footnote explaining that «This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.» The footnote enables non-recognizers to continue formally with a policy that is not supported by majority of regional powers (Kosovo is recognized by over two-thirds of EU and Council of Europe members) but that allows Kosovo to function as a sovereign state in the multilateral context.

Kosovo is now focused in three groups of organizations to obtain the membership: Firstly, strictly Western Balkans initiatives in which various cooperative projects and agreements are discussed on trade, politics, healthcare, transport, environment, etc.; Secondly, EU agencies and other bodies with whom Kosovo is now allowed and encouraged by EU Commission to enter into contractual relationship and thirdly a wider group of regional

Hence the focus of EU mediator Robert Cooper was to instigate a dialogue between Prishtina and Belgrade that would not only enable Kosovo to have its own voice and participate equally in the regional fora, but also help Kosovo enter a formal relationship with EU on a completely separate and independent track from Serbia.

organizations with whom Kosovo wishes to upgrade communication, even if outright membership is not possible in 2012 such as Council of Europe or various sports and UN organizations. A working group has been established between departments in Government dealing with foreign policy and EU integrations and a working plan is being implemented to send applications and finish the procedures on membership.

Kosovo's compromise on accepting the footnote was refused by the opposition parties and a section of civil society in Kosovo, fearing it might lead to a weakening of the argumentation for Kosovo to be accepted as a young republic. These fears will only be alleviated when Kosovo does start slowly but surely to take its own rightful place in the community of nations, initially in the context of regional cooperation, and secondly in the wider international landscape where Kosovo's legal ID is being cemented through increased interaction on bilateral and multilateral basis.



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MFA establishes a Diplomatic Academy

Government of Kosovo has decided to support creation of Kosovo's own institution for continuous education and trainings within the diplomatic service. The Diplomatic Academy will become focal point for research and development of foreign policy in Kosovo.

Since the entry into force of the Law on Foreign Service of the Republic of Kosovo, Nr.03/L-122, MFA has been obliged to establish the Diplomatic Academy (DA). The rationale behind establishing this institution is based on the idea that a contemporary foreign policy-making cannot exist without research component and permanent capacity building of diplomats in the Foreign Service – thus, this valuable institution will strengthen the progress of foreign policy formulation in order to gradually merge what is called - conjuncture of theory and practice - in order to respond to numerous critical challenges that foreign policy of the Republic of Kosovo faces today. By establishing the DA, Kosovo MFA is highly interested to commence an

institutional value which aims to convert into a tradition of involving holistically all the actors dealing with foreign policy, including state institutions, academia, think-tanks and media. Overall, the idea is to have an epistemic



IBRAHIM GASHI
Deputy Minister

community of knowledge-based experts who will help decision-makers to define the strategic response of Kosovo towards strengthening its international subjectivity. Additionally, it will provide the MFA with new skills when it comes to public diplomacy projects and bringing various important Foreign Affairs

Ministers within the DA scope;

The Minister appoints the Academic Board and leads with, while in the absence of the Minister, the Academic Board will be headed by default by the deputy Foreign Minister. The Academic Board, as a decision making body will provide strategic guidance to the DA and will contribute to raising the overall professional quality of the Academy; MFA aims to create an institution that would bring a new spirit in foreign policy formulation through a credible Academic Board by having prominent figures from the fields of political science and international relations, ambassadors, representatives of civil society that have proved and manifested their state-building credentials. The Academic Board will

work together in building the training program dedicated to the Foreign Service officials. The latter will be involved in organizing numerous international events in order to influence the public diplomacy activities where mostly needed.

It is envisaged that the DA will be enriched with International Honorary Members; The Academy will operate under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and will be entitled to have its budget line within the budget of the Ministry, permanent address, other logistic services and its logo; The DA will remain autonomous in its programmatic framework, despite the fact that institutionally it is under the MFA structure; It will support the demands by the thematic and geographical departments of the Ministry

and the Foreign Service as defined under the Law on Foreign Service of the Republic of Kosovo, Nr.03/L-122; MFA expects a real support by the international community in Kosovo, as well as by homologous institutions in establishing cooperation and partnerships based on sustainable programmes. DA will be a new home for young diplomats, researchers and students committed to the field of International Affairs and Diplomacy;

In order to implement more effective training activities, research and consulting as well as other activities, the Academy operates based on these organizational units (divisions): Division for Training and Development of the Foreign Service and the Division for Research and publications;

Time to recognize Kosovo

For the case of Kosovo is ultimately a moral and historical one, and Israel's failure on this score, therefore, is all the more regrettable.

Four years ago this Friday, on Friday, February 17, 2008, the Republic of Kosovo declared its independence. This move, which followed years of failed international efforts to broker a compromise settlement between Kosovo and Serbia, won wide international recognition by all the major Western powers, including the United States, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and France. Not, however, by Israel. Indeed, four years later, Israel has yet to recognize the Balkan republic. And while there are undoubtedly more pressing issues on Jerusalem's foreign policy agenda, its failure to recognize Kosovo constitutes not only a needless diplomatic error, but a moral and historical failing as well.

It is a needless diplomatic error because, contrary to what Jerusalem thinks, such recognition will not undermine its own strategic interests. In fact, it might even advance them. The source of the error lies in a misplaced anxiety that, since Kosovo is often compared to Palestine, the diplomatic standing of the former might have dangerous implications for Jerusalem on the latter. The most anxiety-inducing implications concern the following:

- A Palestinian unilateral declaration of independence: The Palestinians have threatened to declare their independence, and in the past year have sought to obtain international recognition for their statehood. Jerusalem fears that the case of Kosovo makes for a dangerous precedent, and that its own recognition of the Balkan republic would undercut its case against Palestinian independence.

- Internal Palestinian secession: Jerusalem worries that recognition of Kosovo might help establish a universally applicable precedent for unilateral secession, one that could encourage Israel's internal Palestinian minority in, say, the Galilee, to secede. (On this, Jerusalem is not alone: Other countries that have withheld recognition from Kosovo - notably within



Image from a book by Ricardo Cabral.

the European Union: Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia and Romania - all share the same anxiety.)

- The validity of an internationally imposed solution: Since Kosovo's independence was imposed on Serbia from the outside, Jerusalem is apprehensive lest a perception of success on Kosovo bolster the resolve of the international community to try and impose a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this context, Israel's recognition of Kosovo might undermine its long-held resistance to such a diplomatic initiative.

There are other types of anxieties as well, including the deeply phobic one that recognition of a predominantly Muslim republic would boost the spread of global Islam. As one right-wing member of Knesset argued in the Hebrew press following Kosovo's declaration in 2008, "The flag of Kosovo is that of Islamic proliferation and a source of serious anxiety to Europe."

Jerusalem's non-recognition of Kosovo, in other words, has not been a function of a simple diplomatic lapse. It reflects instead a deliberate decision, one fueled by deep anxieties of various kinds. As it happens, these anxieties are entirely misplaced.

For one thing, as Jerusalem should know all too well, international diplomacy is primarily a function of high politics, not legal precedence. As the past few months alone have demonstrated, the case of Kosovo has had no bearing on the Palestinian bid for international recognition, not even in the wake of the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law. Israel's leading friends in the international community - which, incidentally, were also the first to recognize Kosovo - opposed the Palestinian bid at the United Nations Security Council.

Even Albania, whose commitment to Kosovo is rooted in a shared ethnic identity (Kosovo's population is overwhelmingly ethnically Albanian) and which lobbies on its behalf on the world stage, has had no qualms about coming out against the Palestinian bid. The Albanian prime minister publicly announced as much on a visit to Israel this past November. The irrelevance of the Kosovo case for the Palestinian UN bid has gone in the opposite direction as well. Some of the very powers that supported Palestine's statehood bid re-

Yonatan Touval is a foreign policy analyst and member of the board at Mitvim: The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies. He participated in last year's Gernia Hill conference coorganized by ECFR and Kosovo MFA.



main adamantly opposed to Kosovo's independence, not least Russia and China, the main opponents of Kosovo's admission to the United Nations in the Security Council.

Incidentally, this alone should ring alarm bells in Jerusalem: Although no Western power is likely to bother to convey its "disgust" at the failure of these nations to recognize Kosovo, Jerusalem should be cognizant of the camp it has joined.

For the case of Kosovo is ultimately a moral and historical one, and Jerusalem's failure on this score, therefore, is all the more regrettable. Arising out of one of the worst genocidal atrocities on the European continent since World War II, Kosovo's demand for self-determination is one that Israel cannot afford to ignore. If anything, a country that never fails to invoke the Holocaust to justify its existence should have been at the forefront of the international campaign to recognize Kosovo's independence. To mark Kosovo's fourth anniversary, Israel has an opportunity to right a wrong and to recognize Kosovo. It is an act that Israel owes not only to Kosovo; it owes it also to the Jewish people.



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