



# KONVOI INJUNESCO

AS WE ARE

AS WE

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# E ARE

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## **Free to love**

We are building  
our own country,  
nourishing a population  
of 70% younger than 35,  
run by a women president  
in a place where everyone  
is free to love.

AS WE ARE

Stories from a country in the making

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The material in this book has been collected, created and edited for the sole purpose of offering an overview and promoting Kosovo's history, art, culture, education and science.

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AS WE ARE

Stories old and new of a country in the making

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AS WE ARE

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

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Stories old and new!

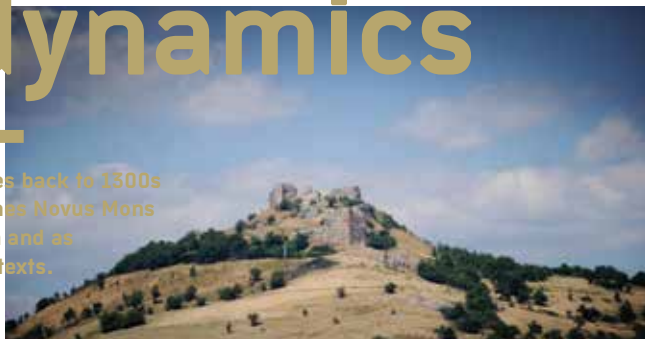
The past is history, today Kosovo is looking forward to join the world primary organization of education, science and culture to help break the long isolation and to engage in exchange with the rest of the world, starting from 2015 on the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO.

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One day President Jahjaga, Ambassador Cifaku, Mayor  
Kusari-Lila among others, will be the stories mothers will  
proudly tell to their daughters, and their portraits will be  
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them that the path has been paved for them at difficult  
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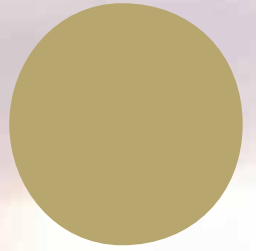
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One cannot miss the breathtaking  
and massive mountains in this country.



AS WE ARE





AS WE ARE

EVOL

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# IVING

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Prizren is home to the Old Stone Bridge of 15th century and this century's Dokufest. This young film fan is captured making sure to bring back home the memory of both.



# Stories old and new!

Hashim Thaçi,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo

**The past is history, today Kosovo is looking forward to join the world primary organization of education, science and culture to help break the long isolation and to engage in exchange with the rest of the world, starting from 2015 on the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO.**

Kosovo is the youngest nation in the European continent. It was borne out of a lengthy process of negotiations under the facilitation of UN Envoy Marti Ahtisaari. He recommended for Kosovo to obtain a status as a state, as the 7th republic gaining independence from the former Yugoslavia.

Though the past has been very painful and filled with episodes of state-sponsored oppression and inter-ethnic violence, today the country looks ahead for a future firmly within the European family of nations. Kosovo has concluded the negotiations and is on the verge of signing the EU Stabilization and Association Agreement, the first formal step to EU Accession.

The country had to deal with several parallel transitional processes: from war destruction to peace-building; from a conservative society to a more open-minded one which became the first ever Balkan country to elect a woman president, Madame Atifete Jahjaga; from a closed economic system to a more transparent market economic model. In this difficult path full of challenges to become a democracy that guarantees the rights for all strata of society, Kosovo has managed to engage with the international community and become a full sovereign member of UN agencies such as IMF, World Bank, but also other international bodies such as the International Olympic Committee.

Kosovo is also the youngest European nation in term of the average age of its population. Every year, more than 25,000 pupils enroll in primary schools, in a country that has total of 1.85 million inhabitants. After half a century of communist model and 10 years of political apartheid that

culminated with a genocidal war, the country launched an extensive campaign to rebuild schools and with the help of the donor community, over 230 schools were rebuilt in Kosovo's countryside. This being said, the country now needs to upgrade its curriculum for schools, upgrade teaching methods and increase scientific output through more research and development. As the Kosovar economy records steady growth – it has recorded the highest average economic growth in all of South East Europe in last 7 years – more focus is also needed to improve environmental record.

Kosovo also has a lot to offer to the world. Medieval UNESCO World Heritage sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church, old Ottoman mosques, beautiful ski resorts and other nature habitats await to be discovered as a part of our joint, global patrimony.

Hence Kosovo is looking forward to join the world's primary organization of education, science and culture to help break the long isolation and to engage in exchange with the rest of the world, starting from 2015 – on the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO. Our accession to UNESCO would be an appropriate birthday gift for both the fans of the organization as well as people of Kosovo!







**Camping in Prizren  
for NgomFest  
by Sara Rodiqi**

Winner of the biggest national photography competition called #InstaKosova #InstaKosova

Thousands of photographs from young people across the country were shared on social media, aiming to promote their own Kosovo.

AS WE ARE

AS WE ARE  
HOW WE

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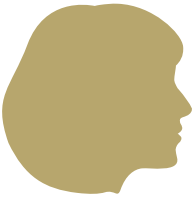
70% YOUTH

# ARE AND E DO IT

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Kosovo wants lasting peace and solidarity, moving beyond political, economic and historical issues.

70% YOUTH



70% YOUTH



86%



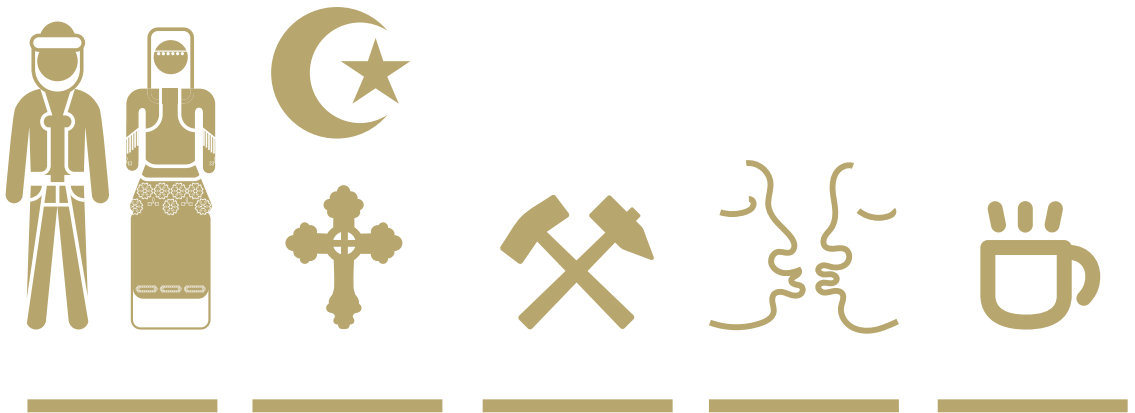
Run by a woman president. The first one to be elected in the Balkans. More than 30% women representation in the Parliament and Diplomatic Service.

It's a super dynamic country inhabited by 2 million, out of which 70% are younger than 35.

Household internet connection in urban areas is over 86% way broader than any other country in the Balkans, needless to mention.

Kosovo speaks in more than five languages with Albanian and Serbian as official ones, and turkish, bosnian and roma spread in different localities.

Landlocked but watery, rivery and mountainous.



There are over 100 different typologies of traditional clothing found in Kosovo and none of them is based on religious references.

It harmoniously accommodates a diverse fusion of religions such as muslims, serbian orthodox, roman catholics and sufi dervishes.

Rich in Nickel, Lead, Zinc, Magnesium, Lignite, Kaolin, Chrome and Bauxite

OK to be gay! Kosovo constitution offers same sex love and marriage since 2008

Rich in day&nightlife. Rich in coffee culture, accommodating over 200 coffee places solely in the capital city. Greatest Machiatto Land on Earth.

AS WE ARE

70% YOUTH





AS WE ARE

# A LIVING IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS

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A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



# HERITAGE TEMPORARY AMICS

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Some of the most outstanding monuments are the Serbian Orthodox Church sites, which are the only Medieval Monuments in Kosovo inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

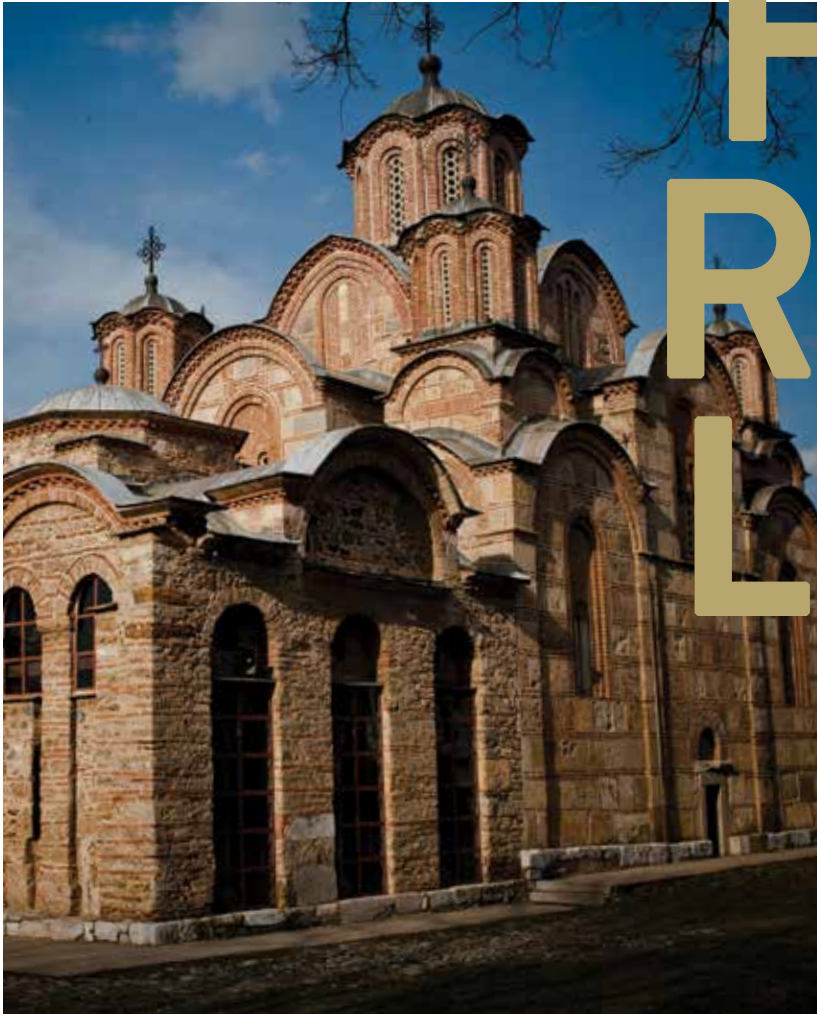
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# FIRE ROOM LEG

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Alban Bakija,  
Director of Kosovo Institute for Cultural Heritage

# MPLY TED ACY

## Cultural Heritage Protection in Republic of Kosovo

The idea of Cultural Heritage in general – and protection of cultural heritage more specifically – is relatively novel in historical terms. Both concepts from the perspective of the modern age are challenges posed by globalisation and digitization, along with ‘culture’ as we now know it. This means defining and presenting the past culturally had (and still has) a complex and important function in both personal and public life. Through presenting a shared national past, social groups with significantly different or even opposing economic and political interests could share

a common Cultural Heritage. In this sense, whilst individual cultural taste is always personal, culture itself is both political and historically contingent. It differs in different societies at different times and in different places. The Republic of Kosovo seeks to go beyond simply legitimizing the current social and political order; aware of the positive aspects of cultural differences between different social groups.

Although, there is much sensitivity to matters of cultural ownership and historical roots that has been expressed violently in the past, making this a difficult matter for policy-makers attempting to mediate artists and artifacts and the wider society, however, the shared cultural heritage has proven itself as the only value on consolidating a sense of commonality between previously warring cultural groups. The Republic of Kosovo is focused not on simply legitimizing the current political order or instilling feelings of patriotism per se as often aimed for by states historically. But – and more in line with the theory underlining the idea of a republic – choose to explore notions of citizenship and shared culture and history in a more critical and self-reflective manner. We are seeking to understand the artifacts

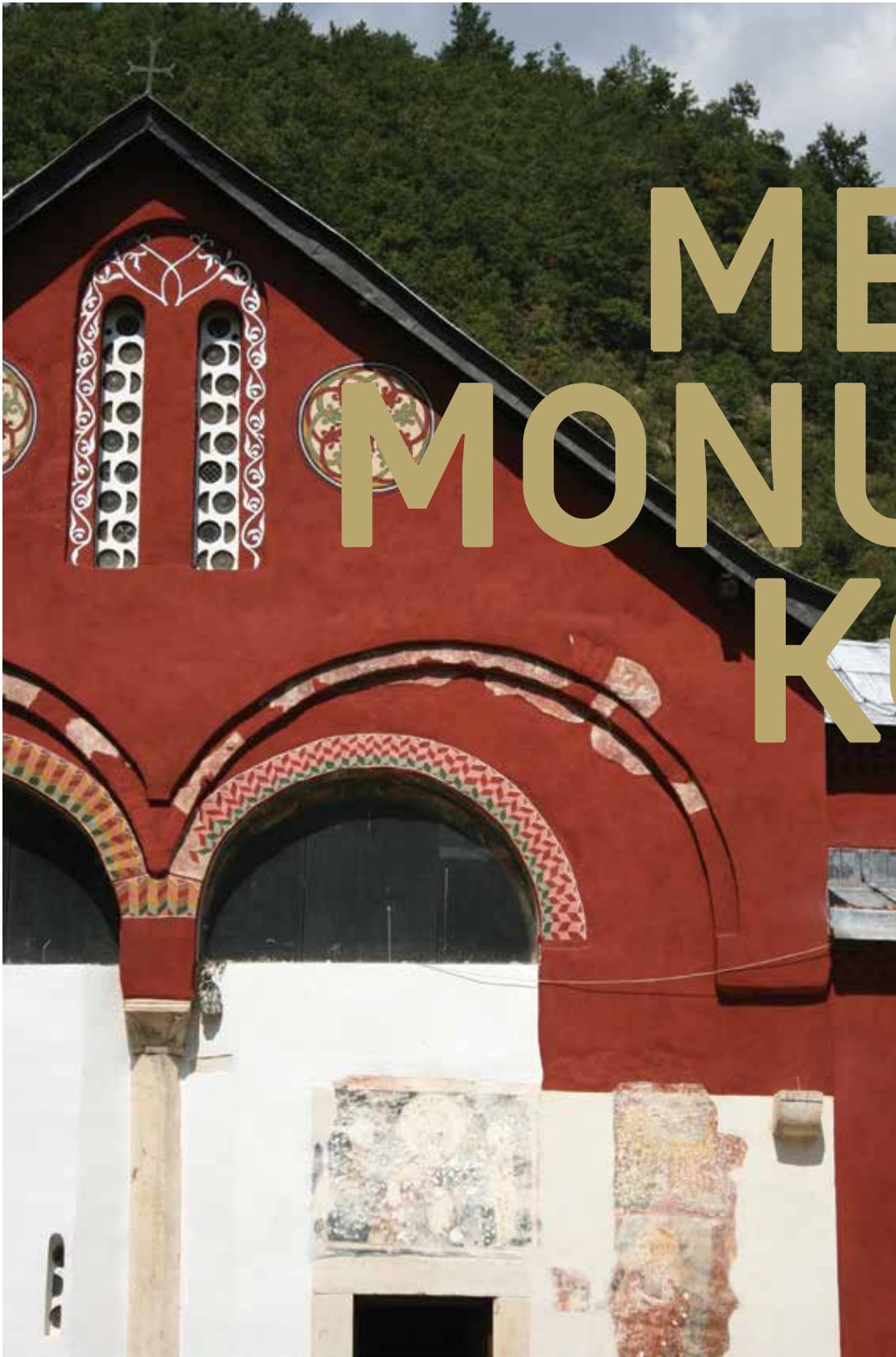
presented as part of an ongoing process of understanding and making history, rather than as static moments in an already ‘dead’ historical past, trying to reflect more truly the open-ended nature of historical thinking at the present time.

Lived environments, local artifacts and buildings in the Kosovan territory have survived through centuries of warfare, changes in political leadership, religions, shifting cultural meanings, personal associations and notions of national identities. However, even when the heritage is still present, their meaning may be still be lost forever if the knowledge embodied in them is not preserved and transmitted from generation to generation.

This is where cooperation with UNESCO is valued as a *sine qua non* for safeguarding our heritage, on the one hand to preserve important heritage in general; but on the other, to create a space for the creation of a new sense of common identity and shared history amongst individuals themselves. Heritage is made up of local stories, which together make the history of the world.

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A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



# MEDI MONUM KOS



# ME DIEVAL HERITAGE EVENTS IN KOSOVO

## Unesco World Heritage

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In Kosovo there is a wealth of heritage left as legacy from different historical periods – sites that make up valuable world heritage, from different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Some of the most outstanding such monuments are the medieval sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church, also inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List – the Decani Monastery, the Patriarchate of Peja/Peć Monastery, Gračanica Monastery and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša.

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Dečani Monastery of the Serbian Orthodox Church



The Serbian Patriarchate of Peja/Peć

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The Dečani Monastery was the first site from the four Medieval Monuments in Kosovo to be inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. It was built in the mid-14th century for the Serbian king Stefan Dečanski and is also his mausoleum. The original founding charter from 1330 has been preserved.

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The Church of the Holy Virgin of Ljeviš in Prizren



The Gračanica Monastery

The Patriarchate of Peja/Peć Monastery, the Gračanica Monastery and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša played a decisive role in the development of ecclesiastical building and mural painting in the Balkans between the 14th to the 16th centuries.

The wall paintings in the three churches are an exceptional testimony to the manifestations of the cultural tradition of the Palaiologian Renaissance of Byzantium in the Balkans, which reflects a fusion of eastern Orthodox Byzantine with western Romanesque styles.

They show the height of the development of Balkan art from the first half of the 14th century in Gračanica and Ljeviša, similar only to the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki and the Monastery of Protaton at Mount Athos, while the paintings at the churches at Peja/Peć, dating from around 1300 until 1673-74, are a powerful demonstration of the emergence of this style and its aftermath.

UNESCO World Heritage List,  
Medieval Monuments in Kosovo.  
[whc.unesco.org/en/list/724](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724)



**The Burial of Sava**  
A fresco found in the Patriarchate of Peja/Peć, a Serbian Orthodox Monastery of the 16th-17th century



**The Angry Eye**

A fresco found in the Patriarchate of Peja/Peć, a Serbian Orthodox Monastery of the 16th-17th century

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A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



# THE COLLECTOR MEMOIR OF HUNGARY

Intangible cultural heritage provides the scaffold upon which the tangible can then take its final shape and be interpreted.

# LECTIVE ORY MANITY

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While architectural and archeological cultural heritage sites stand bearing witness to the remarkable human feats, intangible heritage can truly capture the ephemeral spirit of a place – it is a living truth that completes our heritage. In the quest for permanence, cultures often resort to setting heritage in stone, through monuments, but these objects and artifacts do not carry within them the inherent meaning, the context in which they should be defined and expressed.

Intangible cultural heritage provides the scaffold upon which the tangible can then take its final shape and be interpreted. It is the identity, the soul, and the living tradition that carries the collective memory of humanity. Intangible culture is a totality, a creation of our people exhibited in nuances of performances, tales and customs, not recorded via traditional means.

The people as carriers of knowledge and skills are the agents of preserving the often fragile traditions and the continuity of culture. Especially in Kosovo, there has been an incredible blend of people – of cultures – for longer than we can imagine, creating layers and layers of historical experiences and influences. This has given birth to a synergy of heritage, a coherence of meaning and values, which transcends individual stories. Even more so than stone, it

is people that embody our living intangible heritage and ensure the continuity of our cultural values. And we surely have more than enough stories of people that shape our world as we know it.

Over the millennia that have passed, cultures come and gone in what is today known as Kosovo, one common element has surfaced over and over again – the vital role of the woman in our society, be it as a goddess, a mother, a wife, a sister, or a leader. From the goddess of Dardania worshipped over ten millennia ago, all the way to today's Kosovo with the first elected woman president in the Balkans, and even to the group of women authoring and designing the book that you hold – women have been and are still leaving a strong imprint in the heritage of this society.



Epigraphy monument from Smira dedicated to Dea Dardanica, year 211

Neolithic findings from various sites in Kosovo show that the figure of worship in that time was a woman goddess. Throughout the period, until the transition in the Copper age, the region was characterized by a matriarchal culture and the main cult was attributed to the mother goddess<sup>1</sup>.

The Vinca culture, dated from 5700–4500 BC and mostly covering the areas of modern-day Serbia and Kosovo<sup>2</sup>, has left behind many artifacts giving us a glimpse into this early civilization. Some scholars believe that the Vinca symbols represent the earliest form of writing ever found, predating ancient Egyptian and Sumerian writing by thousands of years.<sup>3</sup> One of the most remarkable finds from a Neolithic settlement near Prishtina in 1955 is a terracotta figurine known as the Goddess on the Throne, believed to date back to 3,500 BC<sup>4</sup>. Most of the figurines found from this period represent female bodies. Another exceptional monument, deemed by the Kosovo Council for Cultural Heritage as the most important ancient find in Kosovo, is the epigraphy monument from Smira, found in 1988, featuring two labyrinths and a dedication to Dea Dardanica, or the "Goddess of Dardania".<sup>5</sup> Even during Roman times, the Dardanians kept their faith and continued to worship

their Dardanian goddess along with other Illyrian gods. The same goddess is present in other epigraphy monuments, sculptures, busts and coins.

There are four very interesting components of our intangible heritage that survive, which draw roots back to the Neolithic, Roman Empire and Illyrian times – the ocarina, a musical instrument found in a Neolithic settlement in Kosovo which is only made in Kosovo today; the traditional white felt hat, called "plis", initially a symbol of freedom from the Roman Empire; the filigree, an ancient jewelry craft dating back to 3,000; and the Gorani bride face painting, based on the ancient belief in the Sun and the three cycles of life, a key element of faith in times of Dardania.

<sup>1</sup> Berisha, Milof (2012). *Archaeological Guide of Kosovo*. Prishtina

<sup>2</sup> Chapman, John (2000). *Fragmentation in Archaeology: People, Places, and Broken Objects*. London: Routledge

<sup>3</sup> Haarmann, Harald (1996). *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe: An Inquiry Into Cultural Continuity in the Mediterranean World*. New York: Walter de Gruyter

<sup>4</sup> National Museum of Kosovo

<sup>5</sup> Shukriu, Edi (2008). *Two labyrinths and Dardanian, Greek and Roman relations by Dea Dardanica's monument*. Volume II, CRHIPA – De Boccard, Paris



Goddess on the throne, year 3500 BC

#### The Goddess on the throne

Goddess on throne is one of the most precious archaeological artifacts of Kosovo. The figurine represents a female deity, reflecting the cult of the great mother idol. The anthropomorphic figurine displays a stoic female posture, with two hands on the waist, sitting and set on a throne. The figurine's head is five angular with sharp facial contours. A diadem is set above the head in shape of the semicircular ridge hunch. The figurine is typical for the Kosovar variant of the Vinca Culture. The terracotta statuette dates sometime between the forth-third millennium BC. Accordingly, the Kosovo Museum has adopted the image of the Goddess on Throne as distinctive institution's logo. Nevertheless, the image of the Goddess on Throne has been adopted as the symbol of Prishtina.

#### Neolithic Exhibition in Paris

For the first time, Kosovo is exhibiting artifacts from the Neolithic period in the National Museum of Archeology in Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris. The exhibit features anthropomorphic figurines and vases believed to be between 7,000 and 10,000 years old, as witnesses of Vinca culture – a very important Neolithic culture, still not fully understood, yet present in the Balkans for millennia. The works in question unveil this fascinating collection of statues of religious character and a magnificent and original style, found in relative abundance in Neolithic sites across Kosovo. The exhibition aims to reveal to the French public the richness and quality of the Vinca culture statuary and the richness of the recent prehistory of central Balkans, as well as to be the first act of cooperation between France and Kosovo in the field of archeology and heritage.

AS WE ARE

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS





# Ocarina

## wind, sound and vibrations

The Master of the ocarina, as Shaqir Hoti is affectionately known, decided to create his own ocarina.

**Different types of Ocarinas are found around the world, but the one found at the Runik Neolithic site represents the earliest prehistoric music instrument ever found in Kosovo.**

Another unique artifact found at the Runik Neolithic site is the ocarina – an unusual ancient wind musical instrument made of clay. It represents the earliest prehistoric instrument ever found in Kosovo.

While different types of ocarinas are still manufactured in China and Japan, a specific type of ocarina is currently only made by one man in Kosovo. Inspired by the instrument's unique sounds and vibrations, the Master of the ocarina, as Shaqir Hoti is affectionately known, decided to create his own ocarina.

He did not quite have the opportunity to thoroughly research the original one, but he started out with using clay, similar to the earliest version of ocarina. After trying various materials, he reached the peak of his artistry by creating an original ocarina made out of a walnut shell. Apart from making the instrument, this artist knows how to play it as well, and has already won awards with other groups of musicians. Recognizing the need to preserve such a unique tradition carried solely by this one person, programs and NGOs such as the Promotion of Cultural Diversity in Kosovo (PCDK) by the Council of Europe and the Kosovar Stability Initiative have organized several events in Prishti-

na dedicated to the ocarina, including teaching young students the process of making this instrument and playing it accompanied by groups of musicians.

All ocarinas are made from two separate pieces, which are brought together in the end. Two moulds are covered by plastic sheets, and a mass of clay is pressed into them. The halves of clay are then carefully hollowed out, leaving a thin layer in the shape of the mould. The halves are then taken out and stuck together. A mouth hole is then opened at the top of this eggshaped instrument, which is where the sound is created. In the end, decorative lines, similar to the ones used the past are added, and the clay is left to rest for three weeks. Once this is complete, the clay can be baked, giving birth to the ocarina. For more information on how the ocarina is made, you can check the short documentary made by the PCDK.



There is evidence suggesting the plisi had a predecessor over 2,000 years old – in Roman times a hat called pileus was the emblem of liberty, and it was believed that the Illyrians wore it as a symbol of their freedom from the Roman Empire.

# Plisi

## crisp white wool felt

**For centuries, the plisi that we know today has been made by artisans from sheep's wool, with tools and instruments which are often over a hundred years old.**

Kosovo has an incredibly rich heritage of traditional costumes, mostly thanks to the diverse communities that live here, each developing unique and ornate wardrobes depending on the region or ethnicity they belong to.

One rather recognizable traditional item is the hat worn by Albanian men in Kosovo – the plisi – a woolen felt white hat, in the shape of a half-egg.

The plisi has become a symbol and a staple of traditional Albanian clothing and identity, worn for special occasions such as weddings and other celebrations, but among older men who like to keep the old tradition, it is worn on a daily basis.

There is evidence suggesting the plisi had a predecessor over 2,000 years old – in Roman times a hat called pil-

eus was the emblem of liberty, and it was believed that the Illyrians wore it as a symbol of their freedom from the Roman Empire.

For centuries, the plisi that we know today has been made by artisans from sheep's wool, with tools and instruments which are often over a hundred years old. It is a special craft passed on from generation to generation, and many of the families that make the plisi have inherited the skills from several hundred years ago.



Reminding us that heritage is a history chapter of communities, places, stories and landscapes.

# Filigree

## curling, twisting and plaiting fine threads of silver

**In a delicate process of gently caressing ornamental wires, comes the tradition shared by three generations of Krenare Rakovica's family.**

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The art of filigree consists of curling, twisting and plaiting fine pliable threads of silver and uniting them at their points of contact with each other into unique pieces forming worn jewelry. It is an ancient craft that dates in the years 3,000 BC. It is widely spread across the Balkan countries and is best represented by old and young crafters in the contemporary Kosovo.

Each piece is made by hand. Each piece represents a recovered old jewel traded between crafters and wearers alike. In this delicate process of gently caressing ornamental wires, comes the tradition shared by three generations of Krenare Rakovica's family, whose small studio shop corners in the city centre of Prishtina. Her grandfather from Prizren, the epicenter of crafts in Kosovo, started the craft of Filigree back when the city had its own factory and employed hundreds of workers, who not only produced for other markets, but helped the tradition grow and spread among generations. The factory is gone long time ago, as her grandfather and father are; but before going, they made sure to leave traces of their mastery in Croatia where the grandfather worked occasionally, and in Prishtina where her father opened a little studio shop and continued the craft.

Krenare was raised in the studio shop 'Te Kinezi' in Prishtina. Her parents run it since the end of 1970's and it was neither planned nor discussed between her and her family, that she would continue was only natural. It's how Prishtina citizens and their international friends find the way

to her shop very naturally. Krenare is the only crafter and worker in the studio, she treats everything with her own hands. She does it carefully and remembers perfectly every single piece that came along her way. Beside the pieces she designs and makes daily, she has a dozen of others inherited from her family and originating around the world. The typical shapes found in Kosovo are lacra, the blind eye, the bird, the flower, different geometrical shapes and all decorated by gem stones of different shapes and colors.

Krenare opens tens of little boxes with stones, for which she has no idea where they come from. 'I never buy stones, I got them from my grandfather, he used to trade materials with other traders from everywhere in the world, while some are stones left from old pieces I traded with wearers, those too are mysterious' she says, only to remind us that heritage is a history chapter of communities, places, stories and landscapes alien and familiar, all in one, brought to our realities to nicely comfort us and better connect us with the world.



# Nusja

## wealth, happiness and fertility

Painting their faces and decorating them, just as their predecessors did two millennia ago.

47

**The bride's face is painted with three colors – gold, symbolizing wealth and happiness; red, symbolizing fertility; and blue, to protect the bride from the 'evil eye'.**

There is a place in Kosovo, near Prizren, where when girls prepare to get married, they paint their faces just as their predecessors did two millennia ago. The bride's face is painted with three colors – gold, symbolizing wealth and happiness; red, symbolizing fertility; and blue, to protect the bride from the 'evil eye'.

The whole process takes about two hours, during which the bride has to lie still. First her hair is braided, and then her face is painted with a white base on top of which suns are drawn in red, blue and gold on her cheeks, with sun rays extending over the rest of her face. She is then carried on a white horse covered with a scarf and an umbrella that is decorated for the occasion. She does not speak – she keeps her silence until she arrives at her husband's home. Once there, the paint can be removed. The purpose of this wedding ritual, safeguarded proudly by the Gorani community of Zhupa region, is to ward off the evil eye and all other evils that the brides are subject to, seeing as they are

surrounded by stares of guests, and someone might 'look at the bride with an evil eye'. Some also say that it is to keep the brides all looking the same, so as not to have any jealousy among them.

Currently, there are only two living people who know how to paint the brides' faces and are continuing the tradition – a woman aged 70 named Aziza Sefitagic, and her young student Elvisa Sagdati. Six other young women have been trained, but they are not practicing this art, posing a potential risk for the preservation of this remarkable tradition unique to this place.

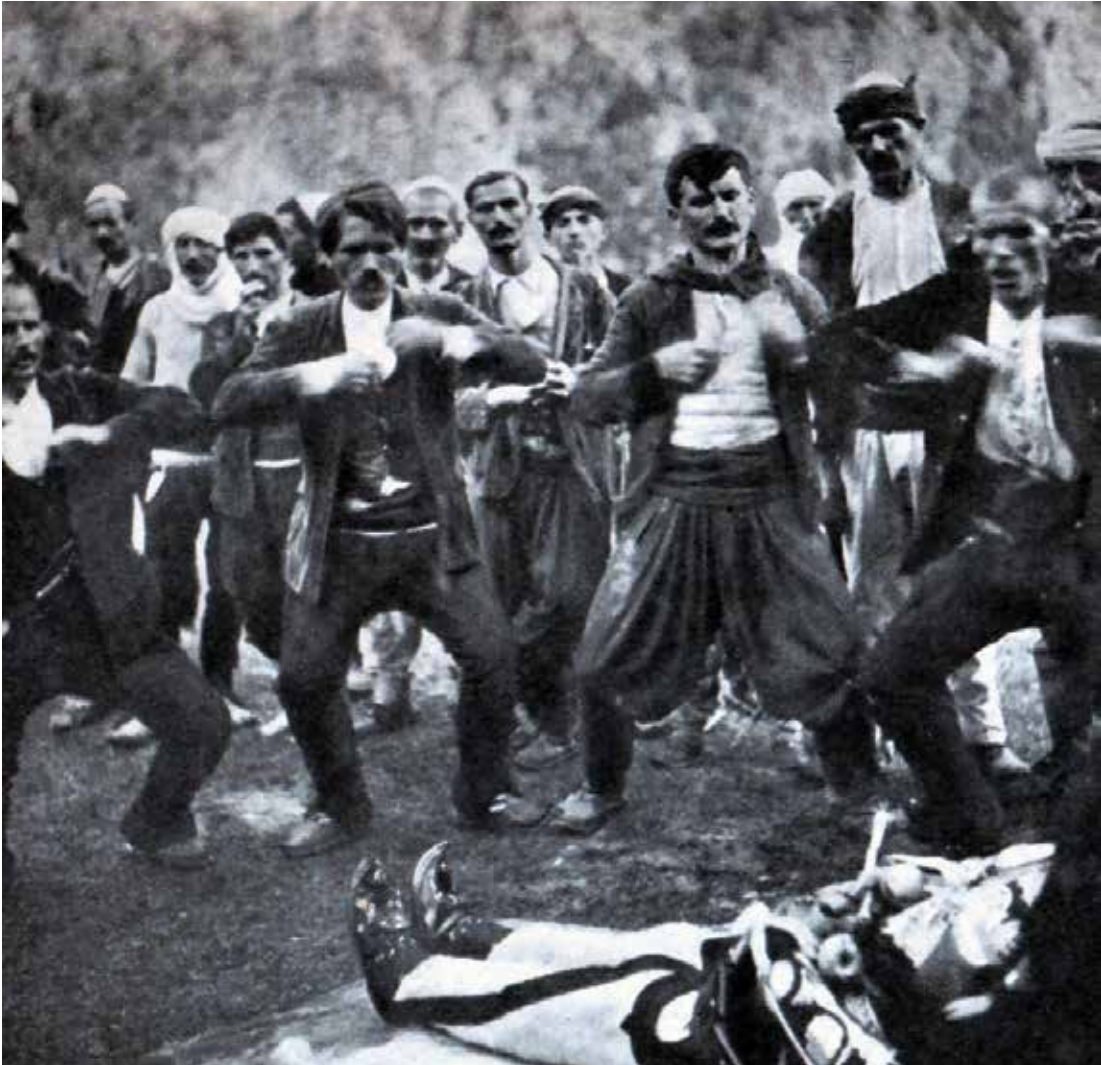
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A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS









The lamenting would stop once the wife or mother of the deceased would come and tell the men:

That is enough!

# Men's Lament

## oh poor me, oh my son!

**A death rite known as the Men's Lament continues to this day in the Dukagjini region of Kosovo. When a man dies, the male members of his social and family circle will lament his death by striking their chests, pulling their hair, scratching their faces and screaming.**

When the Albanian national hero, Gjergj Kastriot Skanderbeg (locally known as Skenderbeu) died in year 1468, his contemporary, Prince Lekë Dukagjini, touched by deep sorrow for his deceased leader, started wailing and pulling out his hair and beard.

This started a death rite known as the Men's Lament (Gjame burrave) that continues to this day in the Dukagjini region of Kosovo, where when a man dies, the male members of his social and family circle will lament his death by striking their chests, pulling their hair, scratching their faces and screaming "oh poor me oh my son/nephew/friend".

The lamenting would stop once the wife or mother of the deceased would come and tell the men "That is enough". This rite primarily serves for the men to express their grief, but it also used to be a way to inform neighbors and oth-

ers of the person's death, so that they can come and pay respects to the family.

The legacy of Lekë Dukagjini also left a set of codified laws that ruled the region for over five centuries. From the 15th century, the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini, as it is known, existed as an oral set of laws, and was only published in the 20th century. It was based on four pillars – Honor, Hospitality, Proper Conduct, and Kin Loyalty. While some parts of it were quite controversial, the Kanun has left behind several valuable traditions, still alive today.



A Peja family gathering in Peja, Kosovo, 1930

# Oda

## where social life flourished

### The school, the mosque, the court and the parliament of earlier generations.

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The oda—literally meaning chamber—is a traditional room, usually the biggest and best room in one's house, equipped with a fireplace and traditional medieval or other ornaments.

It is where our elder men gather to discuss family, community and national issues, where they solve problems, and where cultural and social life flourished. However, the scope of oda extends way beyond its physical construct – it is not simply a gathering place, it is a concept, a holistic idea, which is why it stands as one of our greatest assets of intangible culture.

The oda represents an institution essential in the transmission of our oral tradition, folklore and laws. As a society that struggled with literacy until recent decades, oral tradition was indispensable in communicating important information, events, and history to member of different communities. The oda served as a medium of transmitting collective memories to younger generations, who

were able to learn about legends, songs and other stories through regular gatherings.

It used to be the school, the mosque, the court and the parliament of earlier generations. It was precisely the oda that enabled the spread of and adherence to the Kanun. Families that did not abide by the decisions and rulings made in the oda were ostracized from the community.

Today this institution does not hold such great power, but it still acts as a forum where men gather to discuss and solve local issues. It continues to serve as a means to bridging the gap between generations and sharing old stories and words of wisdom, many of which have never been written, but manage to prevail thanks to the oda.

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AS WE ARE

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



Albanians would  
rather die than  
break Besa

# Besa

## a man of Besa could be trusted with one's life

**The word can be translated as honor, faith or trust, but what this uniquely Albanian word with no equivalent in other languages, really implies is keeping a promise. The promise given under BESA was what ruled our society since medieval times.**

Closely related to one of the main pillars of the Kanun – honor – besa was regarded as the highest authority of this set of laws. It can be translated as honor, faith or trust, but what this uniquely Albanian word with no equivalent in other languages really implies is keeping a promise.

The fact that Besa is one of the more common female names in Kosovo is a testament of how dear to our hearts this concept really is.

The promise given under besa was what ruled our society since medieval times – a man of besa could be trusted with one's life. Since the birth of national and social mythologies of Albanians, it has been the moral testament of the people. Thus, it is considered by many as the single most important and defining characteristic of Albanians.

Besa e shqiptarit nuk shitet pazarit  
(besa can not be sold or bought in a bazaar)

Shiptari kur jep fjalën therr djalit  
(an Albanian can sacrifice his own son for besa)

Shqiptaret vdesin dhe besën nuk e shkelin  
(Albanians would rather die than break besa)

Besa e shqiptarit si purteka e arit, etj.  
(the Albanians' besa is worth more than gold)<sup>1</sup>

The besa was so strong, that during the Ottoman Empire, it was Albanian vojvodas (dukes) who would be assigned to protect the monasteries.

Attesting to the fact that besa is our highest ethical code, which is about helping those in need and being a good human being, transcending faith or even mortal danger, is the salvation of over 2,000 Jews during World War II by Albanians. The film "Besa: The Promise", which has won numerous international awards, tells this story and says that 'only Albanians would lay down their lives for a stranger'.

<sup>1</sup> "Alma Kushova, Albanian journalist, collecting old sayings about besa. OpenDemocracy, 22 July 2004"

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# Burrneshat

## the sworn virgins of Kosovo

Laura Bispuri's feature movie on the topic of Burrneshat is called 'Sworn Virgin' and was screened in the biggest film festivals worldwide. Sworn Virgin features the character of a rural woman from Albania that embarks on an uncertain path to reclaim her original identity after living as a man for 14 years.

### “The only formal, socially defined female to male crossgender and crossdressing role in Europe”

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Burrneshat, or Albanian sworn virgins, also developed out of the Kanun and were mostly present in the northern parts of Albania and Kosovo.

The burrneshat are women who take a vow of chastity, dress as men and live as men, for various reasons – some women preferred staying with their family, some wanted to avoid marriage, and some simply felt more male than female. It is a tradition that is slowly disappearing, but there are still some burrneshat left in Kosovo.

Women can become a burrneshat at any age, at the moment when they take an oath to remain celibate for the rest of their lives in front of village elders. They can then live as men – something that in times when Kanun was law gave

them more rights than they would have as a woman, such as right to carry a gun, smoke, drink alcohol, become head of the household, play music and sing, or simply just interact with men in social occasions.

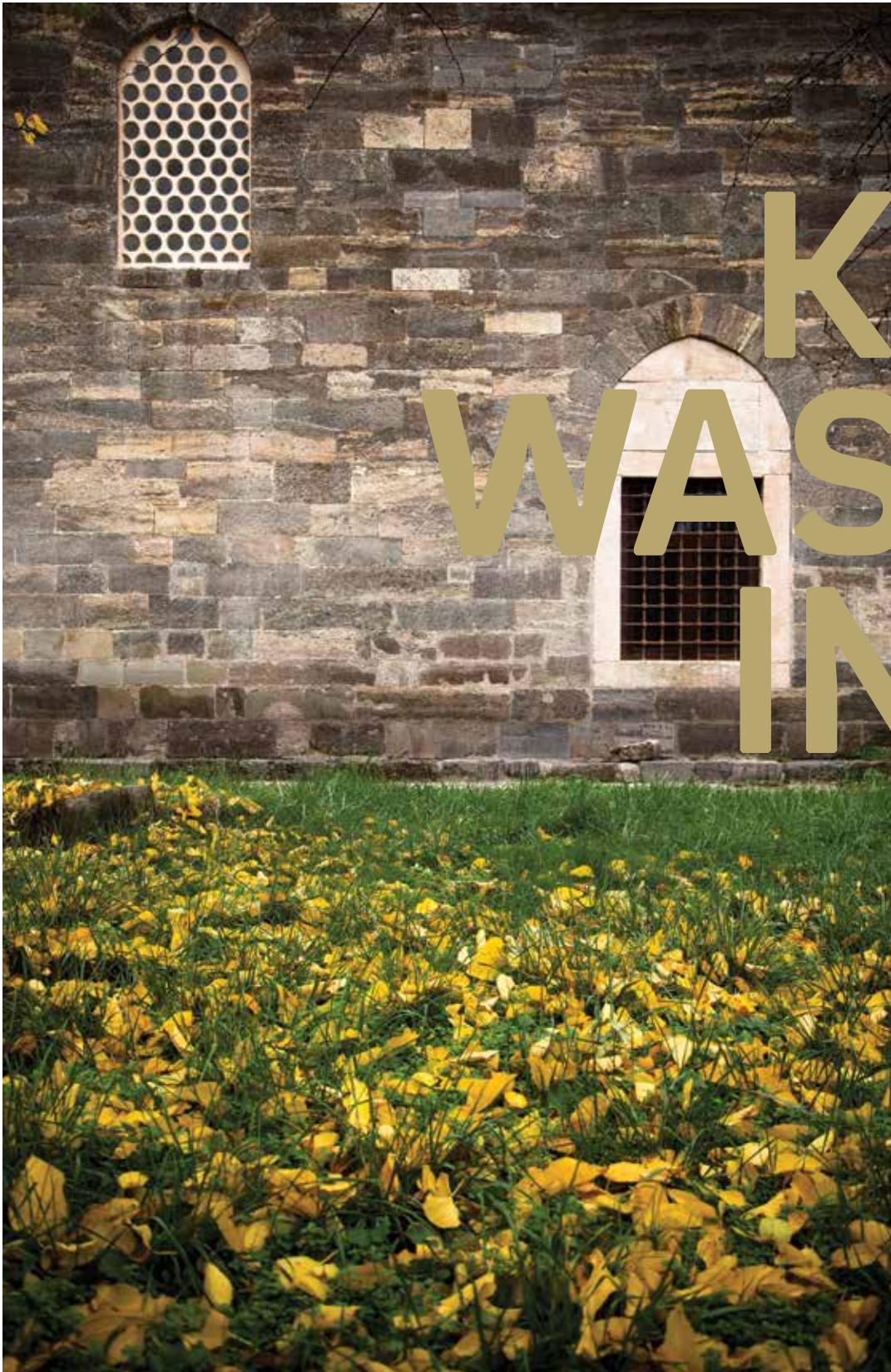
What is perhaps most interesting about this dying tradition, is that it is believed that burrneshat are the only “formal, socially defined female to male crossgender and crossdressing role in Europe”.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (Robert Elsie, “Historical dictionary of Albania”, 2010)

AS WE ARE

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# KOS WASN'T IN A

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# KOSOVO NOT BUILT DAY

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## With literal layers of history present here, Kosovo has much to offer to the world in terms of tangible heritage

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Societies sometimes take an almost Darwinian approach to preserving what heritage they think should be of value for the future generations – it will be alive, or it will perish.

This need of ensuring eternal life is often manifested through massive architectural displays of a period's values in stone, steel or concrete.

These objects then give further way to discussions and validations of old values. Preserving them recognizes the cultures that made them, while also reaching back in time to provide a glimpse of memories that used to be someone's reality.

With traces of advanced cultures living here from over ten millennia ago, and incredibly rich, literal layers of sites and history, Kosovo has much to offer to the world in terms of tangible heritage. Entire civilizations competing for their place in history left their mark here with many spectacular monuments, whose joint presence in this small space crosses religious and ethnic borders, serving as a fine example of a truly multicultural global heritage.

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It is extremely visually and spiritually fulfilling to watch all this energy way above from the Prizren Castle or even watch movies in the castle gate.

## Castles

### Prizren Fortress

Gathering different kinds of people from all around the world, International Documentary Film Festival Dokufest is known to be one of the most hip and change-driving documentary festivals.

Each year young and passionate volunteers, mainly from Prizren, gather to organize the event of the year. It is extremely visually and spiritually fulfilling to watch all this energy way above from the Prizren Castle or even watch movies in the castle gate. The Prizren Fortress contains in itself an important part of the ancient history of the city. Its topographic position, its domination over the city, a rather attractive natural landscape, and the well-thought architectural configuration render the site invaluable in terms of archaeology, history and tourism. Over a cone-shaped hill; in the East of the City, lays the Castle with fortifying walls. During research, traces dating from 16th to 19th centuries were found. Continued archaeological works in 2004 and 2009/2011 found a prehistoric settlement of the Bronze Era

and the early Iron Era, which was the first settlement of this area. During the Ottoman Empire, the castle was expanded with fortified walls and fencing, and enriched with other facilities, such as the Hamam, the mosque and other military facilities.

Apart from its historical, architectural, scientific values, this site is of major economic relevance in terms of cultural tourism. Starting from 2010, as part of Dokufest, an open cinema was built in the castle gate, showing various films, and enriching the castle's functions with an important cultural activity.



A clocktower in between a church and a mosque make up for a divine landscape in Gjakova, Kosovo.

The tower of Isa Boletini in Boletin, Mitrovica.



## Stone Tower Houses and Clock Towers

### Sahaf Kulla

At the core of Prishtina's cultural and historical area the Clock Tower stands tall. Built in the 19th century, it is known as a building of architectural, historical and cultural value. Located next to the Fatih Mosque, it is one of the landmarks of that area. Even though the Clock Tower stopped telling time until 2001 because of the stolen bells, the chiming clock mechanism has worked well until the 70's.

### The Kulla of Abdullah Pashë Dreni

A traditional Albanian house, the house or kulla of Abdullah Pashë Dreni is both an architectural and historical landmark in the center of Gjakova. This brick and stone construction built in 1790 served as a site of the first military operation of the League of Prizren in 1878.

Mehmed Ali Pasha, an Ottoman marshal who had come to oversee the cession of Albanian territories to Montenegro, was a guest of Pasha Dreni, a former League member. By Albanian custom, Pasha Dreni was obliged to protect his guest. They both died fighting following a long battle between the marshal's troops and League members.

An important cultural monument, the house is due to be turned into a city museum.

### Kulla of Osdautaj family

Another historically important tower, the Osdautaj family kulla is an exceptional specimen of vernacular architecture due to its four-storied construction.

Located in Isniq, this nineteenth century kulla was restored in 2001 and has been turned into a museum where one can see a great example of the men's oda, and traditional artifacts provided by the Ethnological Museum.



Ulpiana  
Archeological Site

## Archeological Sites

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### Ulpiana

Now only a remnant of the past is known to have once been an ancient Roman and Byzantine center.

Even though Ulpiana dates back to prehistoric times, it reached its peak during the 3rd and 4th century AD as a Roman municipium called Ulpiana Splendidissima.

### Novobërdë

Was mentioned for the first time at the first decades of the 14th century AD, with the name Nuovo Monte (New Mountain).

The Medieval town was a mining center and up to the present days, remains of the walls, watch towers and foundations of several other sacral monuments within the area of the fortress are still preserved.

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The old drinking fountain of Sheh Osman Baba was built in 1605 and is found at Halveti Tekkie in Prizren, Kosovo.

## Tekkes

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### **The Grand Tekke**

Believers of mystical Islam, dervishes, belong to orders of Sufi Islam which study philosophy, poetry, and attempt to reach enlightenment through various rituals that bring them closer to God.

The Grand Tekke or Teqja e Madhe is an autocephalous tekke of the Balkan Saadi order with a sister tekke in Prizren.

This low-roofed building, located close to the Grand Bazaar, was originally built in the seventeenth century.

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## Mosques

### Sinan Pasha Mosque

Just across the old stone bridge, dominating the city center, stands the mosque of Sinan Pasha built in 1615. The mosque is considered to be the most significant and most beautiful mosque in Prizren.

The large dome, carved mahfil and the mural decorations with floral motifs and calligraphy inscriptions make this mosque a cultural heritage gem. With the changing of rulers, the mosque changed function and was damaged, most severely in 1919 by the Serbian authorities.

### Bajrakli Mosque

Part of the League of Prizren complex, the Gazi Mehmet Pasha Mosque (also known as the Bajrakli Mosque) is one of the most elaborate places of worship in Prizren.

Erected in 1566, the mosque was founded by Gazi Mehmet Pasha together with a hammam, mausoleum, madrasa and a library - all constructed between 1563 and 1574. The mosque's large porch, water fountains for washing and garden seats make the yard pleasant while blue and white mural decorations adorn its interior.

Mosque and church - In the center of Ferizaj a rare sight may be seen - St. Uroš Orthodox Cathedral and the Mosque of Mulla Veseli share the same yard. The mosque was built in 1894 and reconstructed in 1941, while the church was constructed in 1927.



Trepca Mosque in  
Mazhiq built in 15th  
century | Trepça,  
Mitrovica

Gazi Mehmet Pasha Hamam was built between 1573-74, in the same time Mehmet Pasha built his mosque just around the corner in Prizren. It is one of the biggest in Balkans and belongs to what was considered the most successful architectural period of the Ottoman Empire.



## Hamam

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### **Gazi Mehmet Pasha Hammam**

Built in 1573 during the heyday of Ottoman rule. The Turkish bath functioned fully only until 1926, but was closed completely in 1944.

Today, its vast rooms and stonewalls serve as a gallery and a venue for cultural events.

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Urban Complex of  
Marash, Prizren



Grand Bazaar,  
Gjakova



## Marash of Prizren and Çarshia e Madhe of Gjakova

### Urban Complex of Marash

On the left side of Lumbardh River, under the Castle, in the eastern area of Prizren, we have the Urban Complex of Marash.

In Arabic, "marash" means a refreshing place. This complex is rich in underground waters and streams of the Lumbardh river. Part of this complex, along with the natural beauty and fresh air, is also an ancient oak (platanus), more than 450 years old.

### Grand Bazaar

Gjakova's bazaar is a series of small shops, some still selling handcrafts, with wooden shutters on cobbled streets.

Çarshia e Madhe or the Grand Bazaar has been the heart of this trading town since the sixteenth century.



Novobërdë Castle dates back to 1300s and is found with names Novus Mons or Novamonte in Latin and as Nyeuberghe in Saxon texts.





Emin Gjiku Complex remains one of the best examples of town houses in the early XIX century.

## Ethnographic museums

Residential Complex "Emin Gjiku" is located at the core of the old city of Prishtina, in the northeast of the end of current center of the city, near the Great Hammam and the Mosque of Sultan Mehmet Fatih.

Ensemble "Emin Gjiku" was built in the early 19th century and it was owned by the known family Gjinolli.

Emin Gjinolli's nickname was "little man", or in Turkish Eminçik, which later turned into Emin Gjik, from which the complex is named. During different periods of time (almost two centuries), the complex has undergone many changes as a result of changing the function. But as a whole, complex "Emin Gjiku" remains one of the best examples of town houses in the early XIX century.





## Bridges

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### **Terzi Bridge**

The Terzi or Tailors' - Bridge, is an emblematic Ottoman-style construction made at the end of the fifteenth century.

With its 190 meters length, the bridge, which connected the two trading towns of Gjakova and Prizren, was once the longest bridge in Kosovo.

During the eighteenth century, the tailor guild of Gjakova sponsored the bridge's reconstruction, hence the bridge's name.

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The Old Stone Bridge with nine arches is located to the west of the town of Vushtrria in Kosovo and belongs to 14th century.





The Gračanica Monastery sits in the ruins of a 6th century early Christian three-apsed basilica. It is now placed in UNESCO's World Heritage List as part of Medieval Monuments in Kosovo.



The Masjid Tekke of Sheh Emini was built in 18th century and is located at Big Market historic complex within the complex of Albanian League, branch in Gjakova.

Fatih Mosque is located in Prishtina and was built between 1460-1461 under the order of Sulltan Mehmet II al Fatih.



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# STORI CONTEM CULT

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# ES ON PORARY TURE

Photo taken during  
Gjon Mili Interna-  
tional Photo Exhi-  
bition/13th Edition  
ALONE TOGETHER:  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
AND THE OTHER

Curated by Frits  
Gierstberg at The  
Kosovo National  
Gallery of Arts

08

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“Kosovar artists are the avant-gardes of art in the region” declared Rene Block, the internationally acclaimed curator, during his first visit in Kosovo in 2003.

That was certainly surprising, given the fact that it was only in the 1990s when the modernist painters like Muslim Multiqi, Gjelosh Gjokaj, Rexhep Ferri and Tahir Emra, were joined by the young and loud contemporary artists, leading the first ever contemporary art movement in Kosovo.

Artists like Sokol Beqiri, Mehmet Behluti, Ilir Bajri and Maksut Vezgishi used video, sound, performance and installations in order to reflect and react towards the political situation of the time. Their works echoed across the

Balkans, thus being accommodated in political contexts of what was known at the time as the war times in Balkans.

Today's contemporary artists, photographers and curators are active, echo globally and are part of the biggest international art events across the globe.

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# Flaka Haliti

Barriers are man-made manifestations of political decisions made about territories, which are often drawn with little regard for natural and ethnical boundaries.'

## Flaka Haliti belongs to the very new generation of contemporary Kosovo.

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She uses mediums old and new in her very political/non-political works of art. Before moving to Frankfurt for studies, she left her fellow Kosovo artists with a pair of bull's balls.

During the opening of one of the biggest art exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, Flaka entered and carefully put a pair of balls in the corner of the exhibition space, as a reaction to hearing male artists saying female artists have no balls to be part of a dynamic contemporary art scene.

In that long-time-ago of Flaka's rather dynamic artist development, the act was big and feminist, one of the rarest feminist reactions in the scene at the time.

Before representing Kosovo in Venice Biennale, she had her personal exhibition titled 'I see a face, do you see a face' shown in Mumok, Vienna. Her success in Mumok was fol-

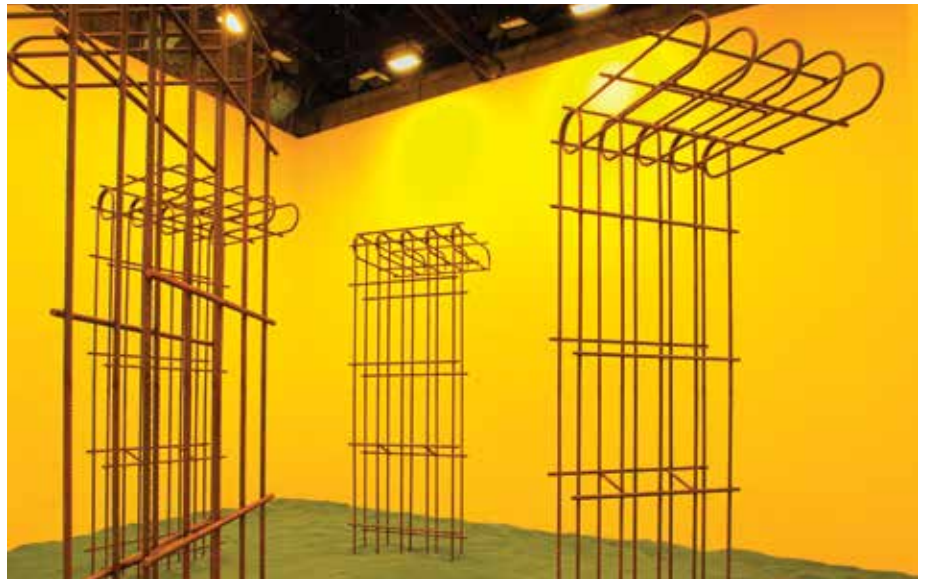
lowed by another personal exhibition at the National Gallery of Arts in Prishtina, titled 'Last time i Googled you, you looked different'. The core elements used in both exhibitions were used as a basis to expand and re-imagine the Venice Biennale context.

'Speculating on the blue', commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and curated by Nicholas Schafhausen, represents Kosovo at this year's Venice Biennale, addressing the topic of borders, being not only Flaka's personal history but one shared everyday globally.

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Light transition  
speculating on the  
blue at the Pavilion  
of Kosovo in Venice  
Biennale 2015



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# Petrit Halilaj

**“I’m hungry to keep you close. I want to find the words to resist but in end there is a locked sphere. The funny thing is that you’re not here, nothing is.”**

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Kosovo's first ever Pavilion at the Venice Biennale presented the young Petrit Halilaj with his nest-like installation called 'I'm hungry to keep you close. I want to find the words to resist but in the end there is a locked sphere. The funny thing is that you are not here, nothing is.'

Petrit's work in Venice, considered to be a sculpture installation, created space for his childhood memories, branches of trees, other objects from the motherland, his family members, himself and two living canarines, thus evoking his personal history and culture, while representing and reflecting on the country.

After Venice, he was found occupying WIELS, Contemporary Art Center in Brussels, with his personal exhibition called 'Poisoned by men in need of some love' curated by Elena Filipovic.

This was followed by his presence in the exhibition "14th July?" at Fondation d'entreprise Galeries Lafayette in Paris, which led to being selected by Maurizio Cattelan for Best of 2014, ARTFORUM in December 2014.

The Pavilion of Kosovo at the Venice Art Biennale in 2013 was initiated by the Ministry of Culture, commissioned by Erzen Shkolloti, director of the National Gallery of Arts and curated by Kathrin Rhomberg.

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AS WE ARE





Petrit Halilaj collected twigs and branches for his nest-like installation representing Kosovo at Venice Biennale 2013.



image previously published in Zürcher Hochschule der Künste

# Sislej Xhafa

Sculpture made of tubular steel, light-emitting diodes, plexiglas, steel cable, aluminum and plastic, h15 m. Hardaupark/ Zurich

## It is a young but super dynamic scene that of contemporary art in Kosovo.

It is a young but super dynamic scene that of contemporary art in Kosovo.

Right after the politically loud artists of the first generation, comes Sislej Xhafa, maybe the loudest and maybe also the most political, but working out of the country and selecting different mediums, Xhafa has been accommodated as an internal protester choosing means of absolute weirdness.

‘Starting even from his early works, Xhafa uses the prejudiced image of “the other”— the bad one and the weak one, the denizen and wanderer, the foreigner who is perceived as a danger to the safety and wellbeing of westerners. Just like the feminist theoreticians and activists, or other groups fighting for the rights of marginalized ethnic and interest groups, who had used the strategy of twisted concepts to raise awareness on the dominating prejudices in their respective societies, even in countries that are considered more democratic and advanced (the prejudices of the machoism, racism, etc), so has the image of the Albanian immigrant (and also Arab and African) in Italy and wider in Europe, been prejudiced as a creature with criminal predispositions—a bad person, a thief, a rapist, backward, perturbing, etc.

Xhafa uses these prejudiced images to challenge and aggravate racist concepts—concepts for which the majority is not so conscious about.’ - wrote the Kosovar philosopher

and art critic Shkelzen Maliqi, referring to one of Xhafa’s early works, that when he was noticed internationally wandering around Venice gardens, playing with a ball, while dressed as national Albanian teamer and carrying a small Albanian flag, a recorder that broadcast an Italy-Albania football match and opening for himself a Clandestine Pavilion during Venice Biennale 1997.

After his clandestine approach to this event, Xhafa had had his work shown twice and officially in Venice Biennale. The recent was in 2013, representing Italy amongst five other artists and in 2005 when together with Adrian Paci and Lala Mederith Vula, he represented Albania in its debut in Venice Biennale.

His works of art and provocations are to be found not only in galleries across the globe but permanently in cities like Zurich where his work Y, an oversized, swing-like catapult was installed last autumn in Hardaupark of the same city.



Lala Meredith Vula is particularly known for her photographs of women in Turkish baths.

# Lala Meredith Vula

## The beauty and imperfection of the free body underwater.

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In 2015 Lala came back to Kosovo for the opening of her personal exhibition called Blood Memory curated by Karen McQuaid and hosted by the National Gallery of Arts, Kosovo.

She has been working between Kosovo, Albania and England for a long time, but Blood Memory recalls her visit in Kosovo in the early '90s when she attended an event of Bloodshed, happening at the time in all areas of Kosovo and led by Anton Cetta, a historian and a mediator.

'Participation in the events of reconciliation of blood feud has left great impression on me. I was amazed to witness how people can reconcile conflicts, even when they suffered huge loss, but also how people can do something for their people, their society, for humanity and for freedom. It is a very big thing' - said Lala Vula in the occasion of the opening of her exhibition in Prishtina.

Before this, in 1988, Lala Vula was one of the exhibitors in the seminal YBA show Freeze show, organised by Damien Hirst. Since then she has exhibited widely internationally while focusing her work in the utter world.

She is internationally known for a series of photographs in Kosovo showing haystacks built by Albanian farmers, and the series of photographs of women in Turkish baths which then led to another series of women underwater, thus evoking the beauty and imperfection of the free body underwater.

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Installation  
Illuminated Text on scaffolding  
6m x 7m x 3m

© National Gallery of Kosovo





“A Place Beyond Belief” by Nathan Coley made possible by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, British Council in Kosovo, Kosovo Talks EU and Kosova Gallery of Arts in 2012.

AS WE ARE

# THIS CO IS ONE GR FEST

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# COUNTRY GREAT FILM FESTIVAL

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it really is!

DokuFest is an occasion when the city takes pride of its citizens and let them caress it, offering charm and relevancy worldwide. This did not only help grow DokuFest in a world acclaimed event, but also helped Kosovo set trends.

A wall is a cinema,  
a Byzantine Castle  
wall is the most  
beautiful cinema on  
Earth.

Kino Kalaja at  
DokuFest always  
makes it to the top  
list of the most  
beautiful cinema  
experiences in the  
world, in any given  
media.

Gazi Mehmet Pasha  
Hamam of 16th cen-  
tury accommodates a  
number of exhibitions,  
panels and talks  
happening as part of  
DokuFest.



Kosovo hosts DokuFest, one of the greatest documentary and short film festivals in Europe. The Kosovo war of 1999 that left the city of Prizren without any cinema, but after a group of friends founded DokuFest 2002, that did not only awake Lumbardhi, the oldest open air cinema in the city, but it caused the invention of multiple cinemas across the city. When the sun goes down, the cinema culture takes over.

It offers the unique experience of watching movies in the riverbed or enjoying them in the walls of a byzantine castle the guards the city of Prizren.

Doku accommodates seven cinemas and makes use of every little building, road and old house for their hundreds of activities that include masterclasses from world known filmmakers and producers, to alternative cinema workshops, to having PJ Harvey with Seamus Murphy in a special talk around their joint project that involved using documentary photography and film for the videos that featured Harvey's 'Let England Shake' in 2011. It is an occasion when the city takes pride of its citizens and let them caress it offering charm and relevancy worldwide. This did not only help grow DokuFest expand into in a world acclaimed event, but helped Kosovo set trends. Today, there are seven other film festivals happening in the young republic.

Skena Up that started as a student festival right after DokuFest in 2003, merges film and theater. It is an annual seven-day festival providing a suitable forum for students local and international, offering them a chance to present their work to the public, creating interaction with audience and receiving feedback.

Skena Up also brings together peers from all over the world and introducing students to internationally renowned directors, producers, writers and actors. It takes place in Prishtina, offering the city not only the experience of film and theater, but a plenty of cultural options and all-night after parties.

The biggest and the most iconic film festival of the capital city Prishtina is PriFilmFest. Founded in 2009, right after the Independence of Kosovo,

**Skena UP**  
A forum for students local and international, offering them a chance to present their work interact and receive feedback from the public.

**Anibar Animation Festival**  
Encouraging young artists to experiment and work with animation



Pri Film Fest is an annual seven-day festival that aims to bring the best of international cinema to Kosovo, while offering the local filmmakers an international audience. The winners at PriFilmFest receive a statue called "Golden Goddess", that is based in the figure of Goddess on the Throne, a neolithic terracotta figurine discovered in Kosovo in 1960, today the city's symbol.

One of the other big festivals is also Rolling Film Festival, a four-day international film festival dedicated to Roma Community and aiming to demonstrate and promote diversity, richness, and common humanity of Roma stories, while supporting the community locally and regionally. It was founded in 2009 and other than films, it offers workshops, music events and volunteer opportunities.

ONE WORLD / NJË BOTË is an annual International Documentary Film Festival on Human Rights screening documentaries, with the topic of drastic violations of human rights around the globe. It began in 2000 and is organized by Council for the Protection of the Rights and Freedom (CDHRF), as a part of the Prague-based World One Festival.

It aims to promote human rights, freedom and democracy offering meaningful debates on issues like human rights,

civil society, foreign policy, environmental policy and other topic relevant to Kosovo. The other festival taking place in the capital is Nine Eleven, a short film festival dedicated to its albanian audience and offering a series of production possibilities for young directors. It was founded in 2003 in remembrance of the lives lost in the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 2001.

Anibar Animation Festival was founded in 2010 by a group of young art activists in Peja city. It aims to encourage young artists to experiment and work with animation in order to express their ideas and worldview. Screening in three different locations and offering a rich nightlife filled with concerts and parties, it is one of the most important cultural events happening in the city during the summer, while Anibar remains the only animation profiled festival in the country.

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# Kosovo National Art Gallery

Šejla Kamerić  
30 Years After  
Curated by Erzen  
Shkololli

Photo Courtesy of  
National Art Gallery  
of Kosovo

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It is the highest institution of visual arts in the country of Kosovo. It is the display space of various exhibitions of local and international artists.

The most successful yearly exhibitions are the International Exhibition of Artistic Photography, "Gjon Milli"; the Young Artist Award, "Artists of Tomorrow"; and the International Exhibit Award, "Muslim Mulliqi".

Run by the internationally acclaimed curator Erzen Shkololli, The National Art Gallery of Kosovo has become a fertile ground for artist development, exchange, talks and displays. It is a regional epicentre for big shows, including the most recent between Hans Ulrich Orbist and Petrit Halilaj, called Thirty One and highlighting 31 works by artists from the Kontakt Art Collection.

Thirty One presents works that play an integral part in European art history but claim an exceptional status within a politically heterogeneous terrain, which in this occasion have been arranged and assembled by Erzen Shkololli.

Other names who have been involved in curating and exhibition at the Kosova National Art Gallery are Charles Esche, Galit Eilat, Kathrin Rhomberg, Marcus Meissen, Angela Vettese, Karen McQuaid, Adam Szymczyk, Pierre BalBlanc, Paul Elliman, Sebastian Cichocki, Corinne Diserens, Richard Birkett and many other international names.

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# REDO

# International

# Graphic Design

# Conference

Built in the 70s, the National Library is one of the most iconic buildings of modern Prishtina. The main talks and presentations of REDO happen in its beautiful oval hall.

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## **The REDO International Graphic Design**

Conference is an annual cultural event in Prishtina, comprising of speaker lectures, workshops and bookshops, which focuses on engaging practices, international tendencies, unconventional ideas and processes, panel discussions, theoretical analysis, with an emphasis on local and international occurrences.

It uses the concept of strolling as a means of exploring the city through various locations where the lectures take place. Moving from one building to another, the audience marches together, bringing the conference closer to the city as a playful territory.

REDO's core idea is to bring together all local and international graphic designers, engage them in intellectually stimulating talks, inspire a young generation of designers to create great projects, share ideas/knowledge; educate the public/raise awareness about graphic design and to become a regional hub on graphic design.

Respected graphic designers, typographers, and many from the design field of academie have graced the stage in front of an ever-growing, eager crowd. Worth mentioning that Experimental Jetset, Cornel Windlin, Åbäke, Julia Born, Helsinki Type Studio, Stefan Marx, Linda van Deursen, amongst others.

The events have attracted an audience of more than 1,000 people from the local and international scene, with an increased interest from the international scene in the last year. Students and enthusiasts of all kinds, designers, architects, photographers and programmers, are all participants.

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# Lambda— Lambda— Lambda



Exhibition view  
of 'Daily Business'  
showcasing Tobias  
Spichtig, Paolo  
Thorsen-Nagel.

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Is the first space run by inter-  
nationals for contemporary art  
located in Pristina.

It provides artists, professionals and audience with an inti-  
mate and informal environment conducive to experimen-  
tation, discussion and learning. LambdaLambdaLambda was  
founded by Isabella Ritter and Katharina Schendl with the  
aim to strengthen the dialogue between local and interna-  
tional artists.

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# PAW Prishtina Architecture Week



Site visit during one of the workshops at PAW 2015 in Prishtina.

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Prishtina Architecture Week is laid out in the capital city in a series of talks and events aiming to reactivate and reprogram neglected public buildings and

spaces, proposing new scenarios for their future uses. PAW creates adequate spaces for young unrepresented artists and groups and raise the capacity of local students and professionals of arts and architecture.

AS WE ARE

# NURTUR TOMORROW

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A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS

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AS WE ARE

NURTURING OUR TOMORROW







# GRA ACHIEVE

**Kosovo wants lasting peace and solidarity that move beyond political and economic issues, and this can only be achieved through strengthening education.**

One of the very first sentences of the Constitution of UNESCO perfectly captures the sentiment of the people of Kosovo in its post-conflict state-building efforts: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." Kosovo wants lasting peace and solidarity that go beyond political and economic issues, and this can only be achieved through strengthening education.

With more than half of the population under the age of 25, education is the most powerful tool – in fact, the only one – with which we can set our country on the right path.

Despite existing weaknesses in the system, there has been exponential growth in the development of education in Kosovo. With teaching in Albanian being banned here in 1919, and the subsequent shortage of teachers, the illiteracy rate of Albanians in Kosovo had quickly reached 94% before the 1950s. Following Yugoslav socialism and the reintroduction of education in Albanian, in the 1970s, the illiteracy rate had dropped to 30%. Whatever progress was starting then, however, was again shattered by the time the conflict escalated in Kosovo, during which 83% of schools were damaged or completely destroyed. However, these

harsh oscillations in development did not break the spirit of the people and their continued dedication to creating a better society.

Today, the illiteracy rate for our young people is only 2%, equal for both men and women. With the help of donors, the government of Kosovo was able to rebuild 230 new schools. Around 98% of children of primary school age and 82% of secondary school age are attending school. In terms of gender inclusiveness, there is an equal share of boys to girls attending primary school, whereas for upper secondary school that ratio is 0.96. The share of male to female teachers is also equal on average, apart from the discrepancy between preschool and university level; the former is dominated by women, the latter by men.

<sup>1</sup> Clark, Howard (2000). "Civil Resistance in Kosovo", Pluto Press



Doves by Armend Krasniqi was a TOP 10 winner at #Insta-Kosova, the biggest national competition in photography.

# AND EMENTS

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In the academic year 2013/2014, in the public education sector, there were 27,000 children in preschool; 280,000 in primary and lower secondary school; 100,000 in upper secondary school; and 52,000 students at the university level. There are 1,046 primary and lower secondary schools (age 6-15), and for these levels, there are on average 16 students per one teacher.

For the upper secondary level (age 15-18), there are 131 schools, with an average of 17 students per teacher. The primary goal in our education strategy is to enable all children, particularly marginalized groups to access free education. That's why primary and secondary education is free of charge and mandatory for all children age 6 to 15. However, equal access to education and security still remain issues for children from minorities, girls and children from poorer families.

The higher education system has been adapted to match the Bologna process qualifications framework and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is being widely used by institutions and programs in Kosovo. Yet there is much left to be done in order to improve the education system.

What we need now more than ever is access to a global platform to help with resources needed to fully modernize our education system – a platform independent from politics, as education and science should be. UNESCO membership would help Kosovo in areas currently in critical need for improvement, such as quality of curricula, teacher training, technology used, and scientific and academic research. We are trying our best to make education and science the backbone of development for Kosovo, and becoming part of the UNESCO family is the greatest support that we can receive in this regard.

# A future for all



## Ensuring social inclusiveness is at the forefront of the national education strategy.

### Inclusive education

Kosovo is a multiethnic state, and to support inclusiveness, the Kosovo Assembly adopted a law providing primary and secondary education in minority languages. It allows communities to receive pre-school, primary, and secondary public education in their mother tongue and recognizes the right of communities to set up private educational and training establishments and generate educational modules on their culture, history and traditions. Classes in Kosovo are available in five languages, depending on the locality.

Although the legal framework has been set, the number of people from the minority communities attending school is quite low.

There is especially a discrepancy in the share of students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities – the majority of the students in primary and secondary education are Albanian (95%), whereas the share of RAE communities in these levels is only 0.8% and 0.7% respectively. While there has been a continuous increase of participation from minority communities in the past years, a more cohesive approach is needed – without tackling the issue of poverty and unemployment, and bringing schools closer to these communities, many children will continue to be left out of the education system. For this reason, being able to establish Community Learning Centers with the support of UNESCO would go a long way in bridging this existing gap in Kosovo.

In our efforts to change the traditionally patriarchal outlook, where boys have priority over girls in education, ensuring gender inclusiveness is at the forefront of the national education strategy. The attendance rates have improved significantly over the years, but the share of women in teaching positions needs to be strengthened. Despite teaching being a 'traditionally female profession' in Kosovo, looking at the share of women in teaching positions in primary, secondary and tertiary education (excluding pre-school and special education schools), they make up only 40% of the teaching workforce. Women and gender issues

are also sometimes under- or misrepresented in schools as well as textbooks, and Kosovo would greatly benefit from training programs such as UNESCO's 'Gender Equality in Textbooks' or 'Female Education Planners'.

For children with special needs who are not able to have normal education, special education schools and classes have been established. There are a total of 7 schools for special education and 64 adjoining classes, held in regular schools. Until now, three special schools have been transformed into resource centers, which offer multiple services for children with special needs, and the plan is to transform the rest of the schools as well. Children with special needs in Kosovo used to be stigmatized often by their peers and the community, and education opportunities were almost non-existent.

This is changing, but even today, many years after the reforms in the system were introduced, only around 10% of children with special needs have access to any form of education. MEST has developed policies that enable inclusion and friendly environment for those children in schools, but the implementation of these policies needs time and commitment by all parties, as well as international expertise from countries that have already tackled these issues successfully.



Today, the illiteracy rate for our young people is only 2%, equal for both men and women

### Focusing on practical skills

Vocational schools in Kosovo, similar to other professional schools, aim to provide students with a more practical foundation, suited to the labor market needs. The duration of the vocational higher secondary education, as a part of the pre-university education, is divided in 3 levels. The first level includes grades 10+11, providing a basic qualification and enabling employment within the labor market as a semi qualified worker. The second level includes grade 12 and offers employment in the labor market as a qualified worker.

Vocational education is still viewed by many to be a narrow route. Students who go to vocational schools become specialized in fields such as building and construction, commerce, administration, trade, etc. Vocational education provides people with practical skills and the underpinning knowledge to use these skills, however without a proper labor market needs analysis and a redirection of educational resources, vocational education risks remaining as a dead end for students unwilling to continue university. With such an enormous base of young people and limited funding capacities for tertiary education, vocational education has to move up on the agenda of our education strategy.

For people who decide to continue their studies through a vocational pathway, a partnership with UNESCO offering access to quality technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is crucial. This would provide special and unique opportunities for employment in Kosovo. According to UNESCO, quality TVET programs are the main source of vital, special, new skills. Because quality TVET programs are often avoided by governments, countries need to establish national training boards to ensure monitoring, management and provision of heterogeneous systems of TVET. Kosovo is also working towards improving the efforts of the development of quality vocational programs.

Joining UNESCO would also help create national funds for technical and vocational trainings so it can support demand and the need for quality training in Kosovo. Involvement of diverse stakeholders in the design, planning and management of TVET often leads to incoherent policy frameworks and can even be the cause of friction between different institutional stakeholders. That is why Kosovo needs to further develop the plan, and as a country in its early stages of institutional reforms, it is not easy to always clarify roles and responsibilities.

With the help of UNESCO, Kosovo can avoid these mistakes and look up to other good examples of UNESCO countries that are succeeding in quality TVET.

**Jahja Kokaj Receives International Scientific Awards**

Jahja Kokaj, a 66 year-old prominent scientist from Kosovo, is a Professor and Researcher at the Kuwait University in the subjects of Optical Data Processing and Holography, Laser Application in Medicine, Astronomy-Muon Observations, and Nano Characterization of Thin Films Using Laser Spectroscopy. Among numerous awards and honors that he has received during his long career in the field of Spectroscopy and Laser Optics,

Mr. Kokaj concludes the 2014 with year-long achievements. Among others, he has been nominated for King Faisal International Prize – 3rd Place (2014); Recognition for Successful Collaboration of Laser Lab of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the U.S. and Center of Excellence for Laser Application (CELA) in

Kuwait; Recognition of the Government of Cuba for Collaboration and Help of CELA provided to the Laser Research in Cuba; Scientific Researcher of the Year – Recognition from PEGAS Alternative Academy; etc.

With the aim of supporting Kosovo in building its scientific and academic capacities, Kokaj established the holography laboratory in the University of Prishtina, which was one of the most advanced laboratories of its kind in the former Yugoslavia. During the 90s, Kokaj has contributed to bringing modern lasers and detectors for practicing the modern physics at the University of Tirana and the University of Prishtina. He is currently supporting many Albanian experts to reach international achievements in his scientific field.

NURTURING OUR TOMORROW



The primary goal in our education strategy is to enable all children, particularly marginalized groups to access free education.

## Fostering our cooperation with international organizations and institutions, in order to enable our youth to truly be part of the global society.

### Promoting Science

Every year in Kosovo, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) organizes the "Week of Science", an international conference for scientists from Kosovo and the region to present their annual achievements in science. Only this year, 280 papers by 600 authors were discussed, and with young scientists participating, it serves as an excellent tool to promote science among the youth.

As part of the education reform ongoing in Kosovo, the MEST is trying to bring science and technology in the spotlight as drivers of economic development, especially given our young human capital.

The Scientific Council of Kosovo will start supporting scientific publications in international journals, and the admission quotas for the university are being changed – the newly announced plan consists of lowering admission of students in social sciences by 30%, and increasing the technical sciences' admission by that share.

Scientific research is now becoming a main pillar of our universities, and the MEST insists that for university studies to be called such, both the academic and scientific components need to be part of the institution.

### Moving forward

As part of the education reform, the MEST, together with the EU, has started a labor market study, the indicators of which will be tied to the universities, as a way of turning universities into agents for economic development.

In the meantime, we continue to foster our cooperation with international organizations and institutions, in order to enable our youth to truly be part of the global society. We have already adopted and are implementing the framework of the Bologna process, and we participate in the Erasmus Program, the largest EU student exchange program, as well as in the Central European Exchange Program for University Studies and the Academy of Central European Schools.

The EU Liaison Office in Kosovo has supported around 190 students over nine rounds of the Young Cell Scheme so far – an EU Postgraduate Scholarship Program for Kosovo, contributing to the creation of an effective, efficient and transparent public administration in Kosovo at all levels, as graduates return from their studies to work for our public institutions. For the first time, Kosovo participated in the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015, a test on 15 year old students' knowledge of mathematics, science and reading.

We are trying our best not to leave our youth isolated, as education within a global context is the only way to development and peace, yet we are still facing hurdles. Because KOSOVO is not a UNESCO member yet, we are not eligible for millions of dollars in grants given every year by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), as they only work on data provided by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

At this point of our development, international cooperation is essential to advancing our education as a competitive force in the 21st century. These problems can only be solved through free and open sharing of ideas, and international sharing of resources – all that Kosovo is asking is to not block our access to these opportunities.

AS WE ARE

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# ULL ERMENT

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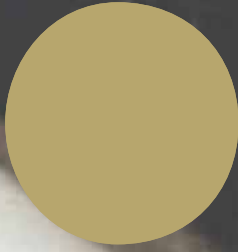
One day President Jahjaga, Ambassador Çitaku, Mayor Kusari-Lita among others, will be the stories mothers will proudly tell to their daughters, and their portraits will be decorating offices of our future women leaders, to remind them that the path has been paved for them at difficult times, and that they should never give up.

AS WE ARE

FULL EMPOWERMENT









In June 2015, thousands of women's dresses were hung on clotheslines across the field of Prishtina's football stadium, as part of an art installation by Kosovo born-artist, Alketa Xhafa Mripa, dedicated specifically to these surviving women and aimed at breaking the silence on Kosovo's wartime rapes.

# An example for the region

## Kosovo was the first Balkan country to elect a woman president — H.E. Atifete Jahjaga — in 2011, and has increased its representation of women in institutions in the last decades.

Despite the unfortunate baggage that Kosovo has accumulated in its past in areas such as social equality, it is now trying to compensate for this developmental lag by establishing a modern legal framework and encouraging initiatives that target marginalized groups.

In terms of gender equality, we are working hard to set an example for the region. Kosovo was the first Balkan country to elect a woman president – H.E. Atifete Jahjaga – in 2011, and has increased its representation of women in institutions in the last decades.

Partly thanks to a 30% quota for female representation in the parliament, 32.5% of MPs in Kosovo today are women, second highest representation in the region. It should also be noted that about half of them are elected without quota. Although not many, the several women ministers in our government hold influential portfolios. The head of the Central Election Commission and one third of our diplomats abroad are women. The 2013 local elections marked the first time that a woman mayor, Mimoza Kusari-Lila, was elected, although representation of women in appointed government positions still remains under the legally mandated 40% threshold.

There are however many challenges that remain. Kosovo is still a largely patriarchal society, and our struggle for gender equality is a daily reality. Despite the representation quotas, there are few women in decision making positions and political parties are still male-dominated. In poorer families, priority is given to male children when it comes to education. And, although a family law exists, women are still renouncing their rights to family inheritance. Female

ownership of property has increased from 8% in 2012 to 15% in 2014, but it still remains lower than in the region. A recent survey conducted by UNICEF in Kosovo (MICS 2015) shows that domestic violence against women is justified by a higher percentage of women than of men aged 15-49. This is very concerning in a society with so many survivors of sexual violence during wartime, where an estimated 20,000 women were raped. Nevertheless, steps are being taken to remove this stigma of victims. In June 2015, thousands of women's dresses were hung on clotheslines across the field of Prishtina's football stadium, as part of an art installation by Kosovo born-artist, Alketa Xhafa-Mripa, dedicated specifically to these surviving women and aimed at break the silence on Kosovo's wartime rapes. Apart from inciting a local debate, the installation also received heavy international media coverage.

Step by step, with initiatives such as this one, better access to education, and strong female role models, we will be able to achieve full empowerment of women and truly become regional leaders of inclusive social development.



Vlora Çitaku donating the skirt she wore on Kosovo's Independence Day on 17th of February 2008, in support of the wartime rape survivors during the campaign 'Thinking of you' of the artist Alketa Xhafa Mripa.

# Like a woman that she is

**Works “like a woman” — yes, that expression should exist to describe a hardworking, multitasking, ethical and sensitive leader.**

Vlora Çitaku, the newly appointed Ambassador in Washington, previously a General Consul in New York and Minister of European Integration, is a passionate hard working lobbyist in the gender equality and women empowerment cause. During her term as Minister of European Integration, Vlora’s agenda was filled with meetings ranging from those related to the process of European Integration, to meetings with women’s association’s representatives, artists, human rights agents, RAE representatives, etc.

She rarely refused a meeting, she worked “like a woman” – yes that expression should exist to describe a hardworking, multitasking, ethical and sensitive leader.

Vlora’s career in politics started at a very difficult period in Kosovo’s history, in 1998-99, when she was working as journalist for foreign media and then serving as spokesperson for KLA. She was among the first to join the PDK in the aftermath of the war in Kosovo. Vlora was a member of the parliament for the period 2007-2010 and then Acting Minister of Foreign affairs during 2010-2011, before becoming Minister of European Integration in 2011.

A woman politician in Kosovo lives and works against multiple challenges: that of delivering and proving the success as a politician and leader of an institution, that of the pressure from the citizens to deliver on matters related to European integration and visa liberalization process, that of fighting the daily prejudices on the sources and causes of her success, which were often offensive remarks from the still existing conservative patriarchal society. Holding

one of the most important positions in the government, as Minister of European Integration, Vlora stood up proudly, inspiring herself daily from portraits of strong, important Albanian women hung on her office wall.

Despite the challenges, Vlora pushed the European Agenda momentously, moved the gender equality agenda at a rate that no other politician ever did before, strongly supported the initiative to request justice for the victims of sexual violence during the war in Kosovo, advanced the RAE inclusion agenda, opened her doors to the LGBT community, and today represents Kosovo in Washington.

One day President Jahjaga, Ambassador Çitaku, Mayor Kusari-Lila among others, will be the stories mothers will proudly tell to their daughters, and their portraits will be decorating offices of our future women leaders, to remind them that the path has been paved for them at difficult times, and that they should never give up.

AS WE ARE

FULL EMPOWERMENT



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We have put efforts into building a civic democracy, in which we celebrate the diversity and individuality of all communities cohabiting in Kosovo.

# COMMON SPACE

**We have put efforts into building a civic democracy, in which we celebrate the diversity and individuality of all communities cohabiting in Kosovo.**

In the last decade, Kosovo has become a renowned example of religious peaceful coexistence and multiculturalism. Moving past the ethnic conflict that escalated in 1999, we have put efforts into building a civic democracy, in which we celebrate the diversity and individuality of all communities cohabiting in Kosovo.

The cultural mix that the European Union takes such pride in is manifested in Kosovo in an even more pronounced way, strengthened by the various layers of history created by the remarkable people sharing this common space.

Eight larger communities live in Kosovo – Albanians, Serbs, Romani, Ashkali, Egyptian, Turks, Bosnians and Gorani. They all have their own language, their old customs, their traditional clothes and food, and our Constitution tries to accommodate this richness by requiring the state flag and seal to reflect its multi-ethnic people. We are one of the few countries that have no lyrics for our anthem, precisely for this respect of symbolic neutrality. The official languages are Albanian and Serbian, whereas the Turkish, Bosnian and Roma languages are official at the municipal levels. We also have national television and radio programs broadcast in all the above mentioned languages, as well as an abundance of local private radio and TV stations.

Significant efforts have been made in political representation as well. In municipalities where a certain community represents over 10% of the population, it can have a Deputy Mayor as their representative. Out of 120 seats in the Parliament, 20 are reserved for non-majority communities, and no amendment to the constitution can be made without having two thirds of those 20 MPs agree.

And although there are limitations in enforcing minority rights across the board, reports from the Ombudsperson indicate that human rights protection is continually progressing in Kosovo. However, similarly to the challenges in gender equality, we are lacking full representation in institutions, in private businesses, civil society and education. Full social and economic integration of all communities is one of the priorities for Kosovo, and is the only way we will become a fully developed citizen state.

## AS WE ARE

### Albanians

The largest community in Kosovo, Albanians comprise a population of 1,600,000. Spread throughout Kosovo, their native language is Albanian. Albanians do not necessarily identify with one religion - although predominantly Muslim, there are Albanian Catholics, Bektashi, Jewish, etc.

### Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian

The Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are recognized as separate under the Constitution of Kosovo, however they are sometimes grouped under the label RAE. There are an estimated 37,000 of RAE community members living in Kosovo, of which about 9,000 Romani, 15,000 Ashkali, and 11,000 Egyptians. They use Romani, Albanian and Serbian language, depending on where in Kosovo they live, and the majority of them is Muslim.

### Turkish

Most of the Turkish community in Kosovo lives in the region of Prizren. There are about 25,000 of Turks in Kosovo, speaking Turkish and identifying as Muslim. The Turkish language is also widely spoken in certain Albanian communities living in Peja, Mitrovica, Prishtina and Gjilan, especially among older family members.

### Gorani

The Gorani are one of the smaller communities in Kosovo. About 7,000 Gorani live in Gora, a rural region in the farthest south of Kosovo, between Macedonia and Albania. Gorani consider themselves Muslim, whereas their language is similar to Serbian and Macedonian.

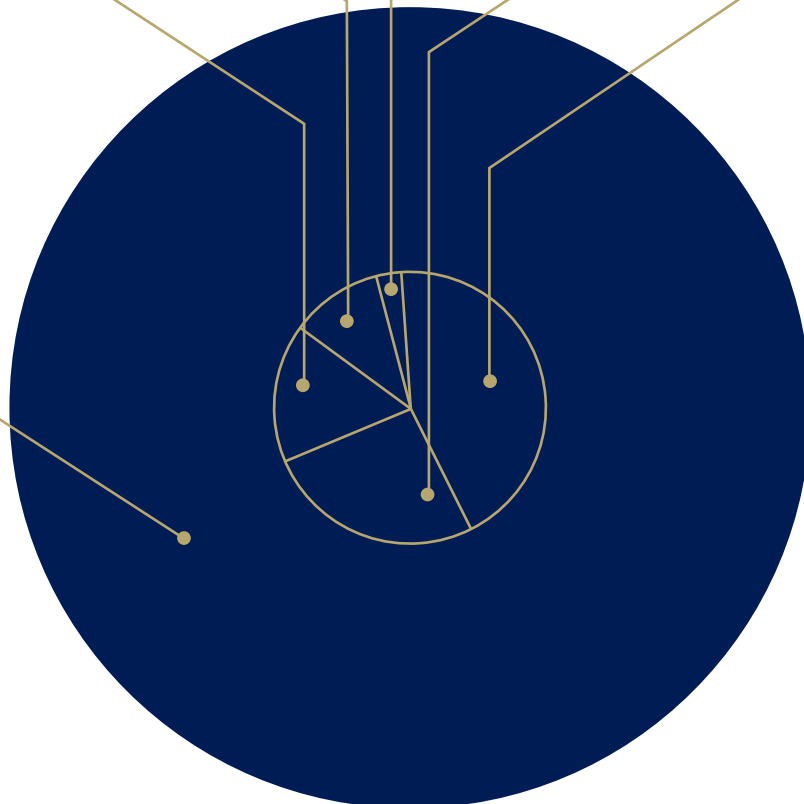
### Bosnians

Bosnians, Slavic people originally from Bosnia, whose native language is Bosnian, are predominantly Muslim. The community counts about 60,000 people in Kosovo today, spread out across different regions.

### Serbs

Considered as the largest minority in Kosovo, the Serbs number around 100,000 living in Kosovo, living mainly in the north of Kosovo around Mitrovica, as well as in the east in places such as Gracanica and Gjilan. They speak Serbian, and are followers of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has four sites registered in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

FULL EMPOWERMENT







Declaring the Independence in 2008, Kosovo has adopted the most liberal constitutions in the region and Europe, banning discrimination exclusively on 'sexual orientation' and accommodating well the idea of 'love based marriages'. In late 2013, the parliament passed a bill to create a coordinating group for the LGBT community.

For the first time, on 17 May 2014, well-known public figures and politicians, took to the streets of Pristina to march against homophobia. On that day a big LGBT flag covered the front side of the government, an act that was repeated On the same day this year.

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photo Arben Lipaashica

# FAITH MONY SOVO

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A church and a mosque share the same garden in the city of Ferizaj, Kosovo.

# International Interfaith Initiative in Kosovo

*“Kosovo has a story to tell – a story of a tortured history, war, conflict but also of progressive nation-building and forward-looking post-conflict society. Seldom in today’s world you find a country with overwhelming Muslim population, where Jewish rabbis feel like rock stars, where the main city squares carry statues of Catholic saints like the Mother Theresa of Calcutta, whose father was a Kosovar and where secular society is at peace with the religious domain.”*

— Petrit Selimi,  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Kosovo

*“In Kosovo we have a particular situation in which the majority of people are following the Islamic tradition but some of the most important religious sites belong to Christian tradition, particularly that of the Orthodox Church. Is this a contradiction? No, I would say that this is an asset and an opportunity to build relations based on mutual acceptance and understanding that all cultural and religious monuments are the wealth of us all.”*

— Father Sava Janjić,  
Abbot of Visoki Dečani  
Monastery in Kosovo

“Kosovo has a story to tell – a story of a tortured history, war, conflict but also of progressive nation-building and forward-looking post-conflict society. Seldom in today’s world you find a country with overwhelming Muslim population, where Jewish rabbis feel like rock stars, where the main city squares carry statues of Catholic saints like the Mother Theresa of Calcutta, whose father was a Kosovar and where secular society is at peace with the religious domain.” Petrit Selimi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, speaking at the International Interfaith Conference 2015, Kosovo.

In 2012, a project titled Interfaith Kosovo was launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, which meant to serve as a platform for constructive debate and development of innovative approaches in promoting religious tolerance and countering violent extremism, by bringing together faith leaders, civil society activists, government members, academia and media from around the world.

A rich heritage of interfaith cooperation and open-

ness has been present in Kosovo for centuries, be it with medieval Christian churches and monasteries always being guarded by Albanian tribesmen, or Serbian Orthodox holy places in Kosovo being used by Muslims when they were seeking cure and hope for their sick family members, or Kosovo Bektashi Muslims traditionally growing and selling wine. Thus, with Kosovo being one the most remarkable examples of peaceful religious coexistence and tolerance, it was an excellent place where a global platform for interfaith dialogue could be created and nurtured.

“In Kosovo we have a particular situation in which the majority of people are following the Islamic tradition but some of the most important religious sites belong to Christian tradition, particularly that of the Orthodox Church. Is this a contradiction? No, I would say that this is an asset and an opportunity to build relations based on mutual acceptance and understanding that all cultural and religious monuments are the wealth of us all.” Father Sava Janjić, Abbot of Visoki Dečani Monastery in Kosovo speaking at the International Interfaith Conference 2015, Kosovo.

The initiative started with a small workshop and a multi-lingual web portal [interfaithkosovo.org](http://interfaithkosovo.org), and has quickly established itself as a key interfaith platform, not just in Kosovo, but globally as well. Since its start, a flagship event – the International Interfaith Conference – has been organized every year to highlight global issues and over 600 participants from more than 60 countries have participated in events organized in Kosovo.

Among prominent guests of Interfaith Kosovo in the previous years were HRH Prince Ghazi of Jordan, former Prime Minister Tony Blair, Dean of Yale Divinity College Miroslav Volf, head of policy product at Facebook Monica Bickert, foreign ministers, ambassadors, theologians, faith leaders, activists, and journalists.

Through the Interfaith Kosovo initiative, workshops on promoting Jewish heritage in Kosovo were organized and a monument in the garden of Kosovo Parliament to commemorate the victims of Holocaust from Kosovo was raised. There were also numerous lectures and summer schools focused on issues of religion, society and foreign

*“As this conference illustrates, Kosovo has successfully engaged in interfaith dialogue for a long time and has a lot of experience accommodating different communities. In addition, Kosovo has a large, well-educated young Muslim population combined with strong ties to the West. This, together with its geographical location and history, make it exceptionally well suited to provide these types of services and find innovative ways to spread messages of moderation and tolerance. Kosovo seems to be an ideal market, both politically and strategically, for counter-extremism efforts to focus on.”*

— Dr. Tina Kempin Reuter,  
CNU Professor of  
International Politics

*“Women of faiths in Kosovo have the understanding that attaining knowledge about the faith, about what the Qur’an and the Bible say is an imperative to them to stand against patriarchy that is sometimes served in the name of religion. Women and youth in mosques and churches should unchain themselves from modesty and make visible the great things they all do as grassroots activists.”*

— Besa Ismaili,  
Vice-Dean to the Faculty  
of Islamic Studies in Prishtina

*“International conferences come and go on a variety of interesting and useful subjects, but one cannot but hold in the highest respect a small young country who having known more than its fair share of sectarian tragedy should make such a visible and substantive commitment of both time and resources to hold such a conference for the fourth year. It brought together an impressive international group across the generational cultural and religious spectrum to debate and exchange views on issues of such critical importance.”*

— Prince Don Cristoforo  
Rocco di Torrepadula,  
Council Member of the Sacred Military  
Constantinian Order of St George

affairs, as well as published books and blogs that promote the agenda of reconciliation in Kosovo.

This year’s flagship conference, titled ‘Interfaith Dialogue in Time of Social Media: Enabling Agents of Change Countering Violent Extremism and Hate Speech’, focused on debating religious topics through a multi-disciplinary approach and developing tools to improve social activism against religious extremism. More than 200 participants from over 50 countries, some traveling from as far away as Bangladesh, Nigeria and Panama, joined the conference to share knowledge and ideas. The three day event set new highs for global reach via social media, youth participation, gender equality and diversity. Trending 7th in the USA on twitter, the hash tag #faithsinkosovo boosted the conversation to 3.5m timelines.

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Kosovo has a large, well-educated young Muslim population combined with strong ties to the West. This, together with its geographical location and history, make it exceptionally well suited to provide these types of services and find innovative ways to spread messages of moderation and tolerance.

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It is also worth noting that the 2015 conference not only brought together great thinkers of various fields, but they were able to attract an equal number of successful women as men, as a reaffirmation of Kosovo’s efforts in achieving gender equality – a point acknowledged and praised by many of the conference’s participants.

“Women of faiths in Kosovo have the understanding that attaining knowledge about the faith, about what the Qur’an and the Bible say is an imperative

to them to stand against patriarchy that is sometimes served in the name of religion. Women and youth in mosques and churches should unchain themselves from modesty and make visible the great things they all do as grassroots activists.” Besa Ismaili, vice-dean to the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Prishtina, speaking at the International Interfaith Conference 2015, Kosovo.

“International conferences come and go on a variety of interesting and useful subjects, but one cannot but hold in the highest respect a small young country who having known more than its fair share of sectarian tragedy should make such a visible and substantive commitment of both time and resources to hold such a conference for the fourth year. It brought together an impressive international group across the generational cultural and religious spectrum to debate and exchange views on issues of such critical importance.” Prince Don Cristoforo Rocco di Torrepadula, Council Member of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George, thanking the organizers of the International Interfaith Conference 2015, Kosovo .

# Why Interfaith in Kosovo?

By Ambassador Dr. Dimitris Moschopoulos,  
UNDP/Advisor on Religious and Cultural Heritage

Being at a crossroads in the Balkans where different cultures and religions have succeeded one another, sometimes lived together and often clashed with each other, Kosovo has a long and rich history, the extant material legacy of which goes back thousands of years, as far back as the Neolithic period. Such legacy includes prehistoric sites and artifacts, archeological sites from antiquity and early Christian times, the ruins of the Roman town of Ulpiana, etc.

As a result of its later history, starting in the Middle Ages, the territory of Kosovo has become a rich mosaic of religious and cultural traditions that have shaped this area and have left to humanity many important religious and cultural sites. These sites, regardless of their religious affiliation or ethnic identity, have attained universality and are a valuable part of the world cultural heritage. Both Christian and Muslim sites fall in this category; prominent among them are of course the sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church inscribed on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List. But the realm of history is first and foremost the realm of pain and suffering. And the phrase "rich history" has become a euphemism for saying that a given history has been a history of strife, conflict, war and destruction. Nowhere is this more apposite than in the Balkans (cf. also the saying that "the Balkans produce more history than they can consume").

Kosovo has had more than its fair share of this kind of history, the recent conflict being the latest and hopefully the last episode of this long history of strife and war. Thousands of lives were lost during the war in the late 1990's, and the aftermath of that war has seen more loss of life and property.

Prominent among the ruins caused by the recent conflict are religious sites of the two main religions represented in the region, churches and monasteries on one hand, and mosques on the other. The loss of important items of religious and cultural heritage has been enormous. One tends to bemoan more the destruction of cultural heritage of exceptional quality and of universal value – and some of the cultural items destroyed in the Kosovo conflict belong in that category. But we should not forget that in fact every heritage is unique and holds inestimable value for the community that has created or inherited it. Destruction of such heritage amounts to destruction of a community's spirit and as such is as serious as destruction of life.

Kosovo is now in a post-conflict situation, and in the process of building and rebuilding, both at the material level, in terms of infrastructure, and at the level of institutions and of community spirit. Reconciliation among the people who fought against each other in the conflict is of paramount importance and an indispensable task. Interfaith dialog is a most valuable tool to that end, as inter-faith relations seem to have come out of the conflict practically unscathed. Indeed the conflict, like most conflicts in the region's modern and recent history, was interethnic in nature and not a war of religions. Religion played a secondary role in it, in fact its role was more often that of a victim than that of an accomplice.

That interreligious relations have developed in Kosovo in a clearly positive direction is a very remarkable and very welcome phenomenon. One could adduce a number of explanations for it. The history and the geographical position of the country, half-way between the Catholic and the Orthodox capitals of Christianity, has allowed the two major Christian Churches to develop and interact here, and the Ottoman Empire which introduced Islam into the region displayed remarkable tolerance in matters of religion. The religious *modus vivendi* that had developed through centuries was respected to a large extent also during the Yugoslav times. And today's Kosovo is resolutely and officially secular, a state of things which allows space for free expression and choice in developing inter-faith relations. Major credit for the development of inter-faith relations must go of course to the religious leaders involved, who people of

inspiring vision and enlightenment who have managed to establish a true bond of mutual respect and dialog fostered in their frequent meetings and discussions. Whereas nationalism, which caused the conflict, is by definition exclusive (it is based on the exclusion of the Other), these religious leaders have sought the inclusive elements inherent in religion, that is, the common points of their different religions, and they are putting them to good use in order to promote understanding and peace.

The Interfaith Initiative, which has been active in Kosovo for the past four years and is the organizer of yearly International Interfaith Conferences, is based on the same philosophy: use the inclusive elements contained in religion for the common good, enhancing understanding and peace.

Why in Kosovo? Because, in the process of building and rebuilding that it is going through, Kosovo needs to use the best means available to it, and inter-faith dialog is, in these hard post-conflict times, a field promising progress and a better future. Inter-ethnic dialog remains the main challenge, where important difficulties still persist. It is therefore reasonable for Kosovo to turn to the kind of dialog that is proving positive and draw the conclusions that can be used in tackling persisting difficulties in the inter-ethnic dialog.

It is common practice to organize conferences in order to tackle problems and seek solutions to them. The problem to solve becomes the subject matter of the conference. The Interfaith Conference in Kosovo is not that kind of conference. Interfaith dialog is being promoted not because dialog among faiths is a problem in Kosovo, but precisely because it is a field of recognized success. Interfaith dialog is not part of the problem, but part of the solution.

One important point to be underlined: Kosovo is not alone in trying to build up a better future for its people; the international community has as serious a stake in Kosovo's success as Kosovo itself and is a valuable partner in all its efforts, including in this Interfaith Conference.

Ambassador Dr. Dimitris A. Moschopoulos is a Greek retired diplomat, whose last posting was in Prishtina as head of the Greek Liaison Office, from 2008 to 2014. During his service in Prishtina he was mandated by the EU to also act on its behalf as Facilitator for the Protection of the Religious and Cultural Heritage of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo. He is currently contracted by the UNDP to work as Advisor to Kosovo institutions on religious and cultural heritage.

# Kosovo's Road to Multiculturalism

By Ian Linden, Senior Advisor  
Tony Blair Faith Foundation

In the centre of Prishtina, Kosovo's main city, there is a wide pedestrian boulevard parallel with the bustling lines of cars on Agim Ramadani street, where people promenade. It has the languor of a small Mediterranean town on a sunny Sunday afternoon. It is lined this time of year with strawberries piled high. Stall after stall. There are the occasional signs for honey between the long lines of punnets brimming with ripe, red soft fruit. Five minutes away is an exquisite 14th century mosque still in use.

Political scientists need labels and categories and "post-conflict society" is one of them. But you could be forgiven for thinking it does not feel quite right for Kosovo in the early Summer sunshine. Yet, as with Northern Ireland, a young government's firm intention of reconciliation confronts the realities of lingering social hostilities, stereotyping and insecurity, and, for Europe, an unusually young population who want things to change fast.

It was the high percentage of young people at Kosovo's annual interfaith gathering last month that struck me most. The theme was social media and they tweeted their way into the top ten trending in the USA for one hour during the proceedings. No mean feat. They were very clear that their parents' legacy of inter-ethnic and inter-religious hostility was a problem they wanted sorted out.

In this they had the support of the – also youthful – civil servants from the Kosovo Foreign Service and the International Institute for Interfaith Dialogue who had invited them.

It was refreshing to have alongside religious leaders speakers such as Monica Bickert, head of product policy at Facebook, and Harold Hyman, editor and geopolitics expert from BFMTV, France's largest news channel. The convenor power of the government of this small, predominantly Muslim, Balkans country is no less impressive than its insight that championing interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism is an effective deployment of soft power. The vast Roman Catholic cathedral dedicated to Mother Teresa, almost finished but looking raw, (her family moved to Kosovo from Albania) was some testimony to this commitment, as was the beautifully preserved Orthodox 14th century monastery and church in the town's suburbs, a UNESCO heritage site. No-one had touched it during the war. Other churches had suffered badly.

Commitment to multiculturalism in Europe has come under threat as European societies react to terrorist threats and a small number of their citizens that have left for Syria to join Da'esh. The Kosovo government has experienced the same phenomenon on top of facing the immediate task of nation-building. It faces a strong headwind against the course it has been charting, trying to establish religious pluralism on sound foundations. The country's religious leaders also face significant new challenges.

But throughout Europe, the middle-aged men with beards-studying texts- having shared meals-and being nice to each other-practice of interfaith dialogue is correspondingly called into question. Has it not entrenched patriarchal authority structures? "What is the point?" "They go back and nothing changes". And so on.

But this is not a fair account of what the Kosovo government is achieving, or of the action-oriented nature of much interfaith dialogue today, which balances talking with doing. Too often it can be contrasted with the hands-on tough love work of CVE, Countering Religious Extremism. Often, though, its very practice, the threat of a good example, is driving a cart and horses through extremist narratives. The two are not mutually exclusive. Inter-religious dialogue is not a one – off inoculation rather it slowly builds up the immune system, building resilience to extremist narratives and proselytism.

It is too easy to laugh at, caricature and dismiss religious leaders today. True, in the main, they have little idea about effective use of social media for their religious messages. But that is more age-related than religion-related. A tweet from the Pope is front- page news. But for the past decade they have had a slew of new demands and expectations heaped on them with negligible resources with which to respond. That South Asian imams with a poor education and poor Islamic formation look, and sound, lost and defensive, when they are supposed to become overnight CVE warriors, is hardly surprising.

The national haemorrhaging of young recruits to the Da'esh charnel house has given a degree of urgency. But the absorption of liberal democratic ideas and new responsibilities by religious leaders takes time. The intuition that young people need to be at the front-line of countering religious extremism makes interfaith in Kosovo exciting and should be made into the country's premier export. The young women in white dresses with dark flowing tresses – well some – the handsome young men at their side, strolling together past the line of strawberry stalls, are Kosovo's most sophisticated weapon against Da'esh's modern death-cult. So cut the religious leaders a little bit of slack.

Ian Linden is Senior Advisor at the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, formerly director of the Social Action Programme, Faiths Act, and an associate professor in the Study of Religion at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in the University of London. He has published a number of books on religion in Africa and, recently, two major studies on faith and globalisation, "A New Map of the World and Global Catholicism". He was for fifteen years director of the Catholic Institute for International Relations and was awarded the CMG for work for human rights in 2000. He is a member of the Christian-Muslim Forum of the UK, worked in interfaith dialogue with Shi'a leaders in Iran and has acted as a DfID (UK government Department for International Development) consultant on matters of Faith and Development.



Tens of women and men walked during the last gay parade, happening in the capital city Prishtina.





# UNESCO can support freedom of expression in Kosovo

Agon Maliqi,  
Public Policy Consultant

Agon Maliqi is a public policy consultant, op-ed writer and blogger from Prishtina, Kosovo. He is the creator and co-founding editor of “S'bunker”, a forthcoming opinions and analysis blog. This article was written exclusively for this publication.

Kosovo is a developing country undergoing several parallel transitions. It is a former centrally planned economy that has gone through deindustrialization and is now trying to start anew as a market economy. It is also a young democracy trying to build inclusive institutions while having no previous traditions of democratic rule and holding the weight of bloody conflicts on its shoulders. Most importantly, it is a country that still hasn't fully completed its state-building process, having declared independence as recently as 2008.

These vast institutional and economic transformations, at a time when incomes are still low and many live in poverty, are a source of deep social frictions. Public discourse is often heavily polarized.

Democratic media emerged only in the last two decades and, just like in most parts of formerly authoritarian Eastern Europe, people are still learning how to handle radically different opinions from their own. Especially those opinions that go against the currents of the mainstream, or that challenge the authority of powerful people or dominant ideas.

Nevertheless, Kosovo's media scene is vibrant with free expression and challenges to authority. There is a plethora of media where politicians and powerful figures are regularly criticized and where taboos are challenged head on. This includes commentary on social issues that are delicate even by the standards of many developed countries. For example, people in Kosovo can freely express their support for LGBT rights or promote atheistic ideas and not face any consequences, even though mainstream society is largely conservative on social matters. Of course, there have been cases where people were threatened because of their views and public engagements on sensitive issues. But these are mostly sporadic assaults by individuals and not state-sponsored efforts. No journalist or individual is in prison in Kosovo because of what he or she said.

Nevertheless, freedom of expression currently faces two great challenges in Kosovo. The main one is the fact that business and political interests control most of the main media platforms and commercial pressures are increasingly transforming them into spin services for special inter-

ests. This indirectly or directly forces journalists towards self-censorship. The good thing is that there is nevertheless pluralism in the media scene, in the sense that almost every special interest has access to its own media channels, and as such diverse views can be expressed and heard.

The second challenge to freedom of expression in Kosovo is caused by the rapid changes in media technology. Numerous internet sites and social media are challenging the monopoly of traditional media like TV and newspapers as the main shapers of public discourse. This trend has democratized the media scene, creating space for more grassroots engagement in public affairs. But it has done so at the cost of editorial quality assurance, as the free commentary of the blogosphere has allowed libel and defamation to become a standard norm in public discourse.

Kosovo's media scene has grown and developed into what it is today thanks to the generous and substantial support provided by development assistance programs. But much more can and should be done to address the current and future challenges outlined above. In this regard, Kosovo's media could use the support of anyone who is willing to provide it. This is one particular area where UNESCO could provide valuable support in the future through its relevant programs, especially through the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).



# Alive and Kicking

Around 1000 young Kosovars benefited from entrepreneurial training programs, in professional and vocational areas, and another 300 were provided with funds for opening new businesses.

## Youngest, freshest, fastest-learning nation around. Nice meeting you!

Being a country with the youngest population in Europe over 70% of its people are under the age of 35, youth is considered as our most important asset. The youth is our only tool to fast and concrete development – be it in culture, education, business, or other areas.

The Kosovar Youth Strategy 2013-2017 was approved aiming to empower youth in public life.

Around 1000 young Kosovars benefited from entrepreneurial training programs, in professional and vocational areas, and another 300 were provided with funds for opening new businesses.

The Central Youth Action Council was established, as the most representative youth association in the country. Since 2011, as part of its cultural diplomacy, Kosovo has ensured the presence of its young artists and musicians at the most prestigious international cultural events, including the Venice Biennale of Architecture, Venice Art Biennale, Berlin International Film Festival “Berlinale”, Cannes Film Festival, Montreux Jazz Festival, etc.

Our talented youth are also expressing their talent through a variety of domestic festivals and events such as Interna-

tional documentary and short film festival “DokuFest”, in Prizren, “DAM” Festival and “ReMusica” in Prishtina, Anibar International Animation Festival in Peja.

Kosovo’s internet usage and penetration is comparable to global statistics. Internet penetration based on users is 76.6%, and based on households is 84.8%. Kosovo hopes to obtain its top level domain soon to make it easier to businesses locate their corporate websites. Given its demography and English-speaking citizens,

it is important to increasingly promote business and the information technology.



In March 2015, Kosovo's Football Federation of Kosovo (FFK) has submitted a formal application for admission to the Union des Associations Européennes de Football (UEFA) as its long and immense effort has started to bear fruit.

# Olympic youth in different sports and styles

## The new Balkan state has achieved remarkable results after having been granted full membership by the International Olympic Committee in December 2014.

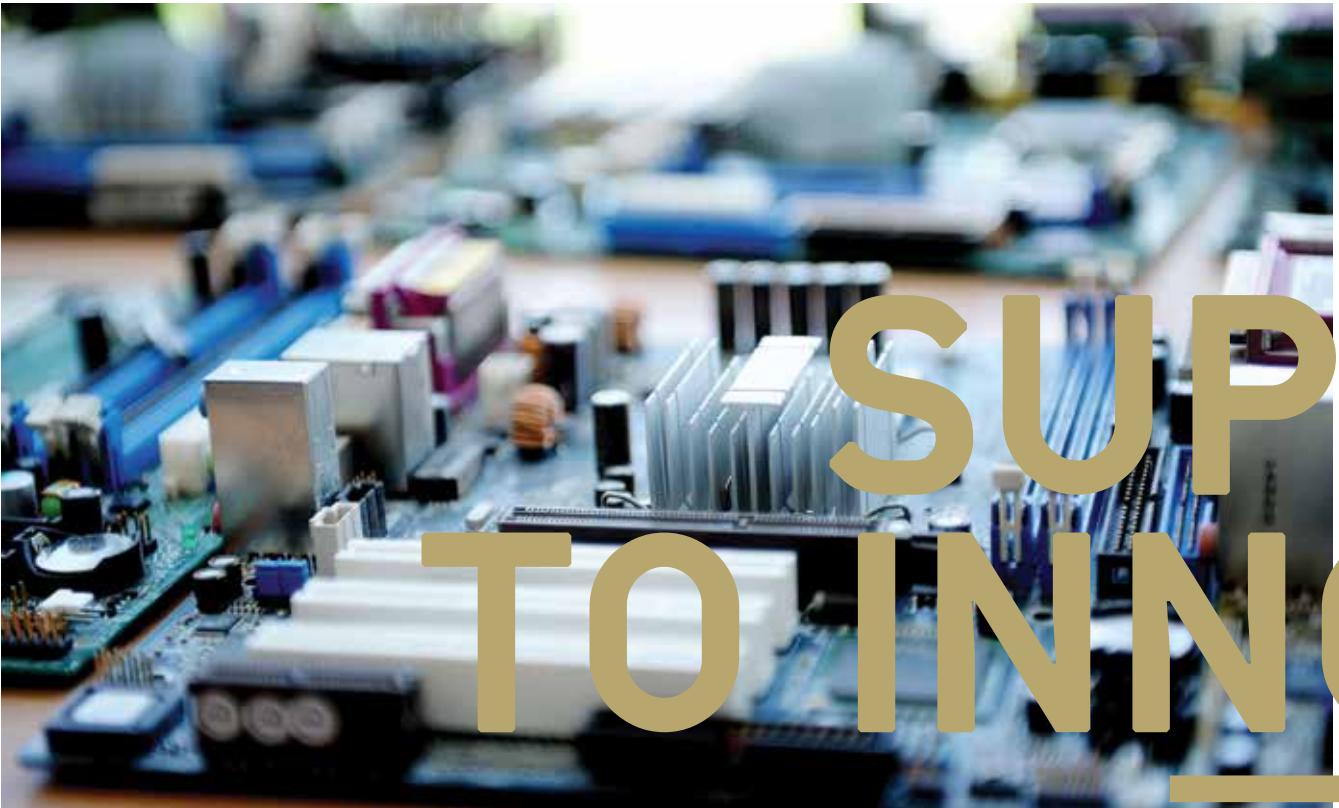
Kosovo young sportsmen received a major boost with a 100% increase in subsidies for sports federation and Kosovo's Olympic Committee, while 12 sports halls were built Kosovo-wide. The investment has started to pay off as the young judoka Nora Gjakova won the bronze medal at Baku 2015 European Games in Kosovo's debut at an Olympic event. Kosovo made history as 19 young Kosovan sportsmen made their official international, Olympic debut at Baku Games.

The new Balkan state has achieved remarkable results after having been granted full membership by the International Olympic Committee in December, 2014. This development sealed Kosovo's accession to several major international sports federations, including International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF), International Basketball Federation (FIBA), Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA), Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), and also International Boxing Association (AIBA), Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), World Taekwondo Federation (WTF), World Chess Federation (FIDE), International Kickboxing Federation (IKF) and United World Wrestling (UWW). Kosovo is a member of over 30 global sports associations.

In March 2015, the Football Federation of Kosovo (FFK) has submitted a formal application for admission to the Union des Associations Européennes de Football (UEFA) as its long and immense effort has started to bear fruit. In 2016, Kosovo will host for the first time World Adventure Golf Masters. Kosovo is also a provisional member of

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). It is allowed to play international football with members of the FIFA, as of January 13, 2014. The Kosovo national team played its first historical international football match versus Haiti, on 5 March 2014, in Mitrovica.

Kosovo youth is constantly succeeding in different sports and styles. Donjeta Sadiku has won Kosovo's first boxing World Championship medal at AIBA Women's Junior/Youth World Boxing Championships 2015 in Taipei. Kosovo-born Xherdan Shaqiri scored one of the two only hat-tricks at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. His teammate in the Swiss national team, Granit Xhaka, was in the European Team of the Week, along with Argentina's and Barcelona's Lionel Messi. Another former Kosovar football player, Besnik Hasi, has been elected Belgium's Pro League Coach of the Year for 2014, as the coach of R.S.C. Anderlecht, Belgium's most successful team in history. Kosovo's pride, judo world champion, Majlinda Kelmendi, said that her life dream is to win a medal at Rio 2016 Olympic Games. More than 70 countries have never won a medal at Olympic Games.



### The information and communication technology (ICT)

Sector in Kosovo has experienced exponential growth since 1999. From being almost non-existent 10 years ago, Kosovar companies in the information technology (IT) domain today offer a wide range of ICT services to both local and international companies. Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe<sup>1</sup>, with advanced knowledge in ICT.

With competent network engineers working for a fraction of the wages paid abroad, Kosovo is determined to make its place in the international ICT market.

Today, public and private education institutions in the IT field, through certified learning curricula by companies such as Innovation Centre Kosovo, CISCO and Microsoft, provide education to thousands of young Kosovars, while the demand for this form of training continues to rise.

The backbone of the ICT Industry is the Kosovo Association of Information and Communication Technology ([www.stikk-ks.org](http://www.stikk-ks.org)), which represents the industry. It issues regular publications on the situation of the ICT Industry of the country, and their 2013 report on internet penetration

shows a figure of over 72% internet penetration in the country, where over 130 ICT companies operate, 80% fully owned by locals, 10% by foreigners (other 10% is shared ownership), with an average size of 10 to 20 employees.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the basic research infrastructure, currently available within universities and research institutes, there needs to be an overarching approach to innovation that joins both businesses and research infrastructures. Recognizing this need, in the recent years, a large network of public and private institutions – a few of them featured here – providing support to innovation activities has been created and expanded, playing a major role in promoting Kosovo's science, technology and innovation activities.

<sup>1</sup> "Country report - Kosovo". International Business and diplomatic exchange - IBDE. 2011. Retrieved 2015-06-30

<sup>2</sup> "Outsourcing destination: Kosovo". Outsourcing Journal. 2013-10-01. <http://www.outsourcing-journal.org/>

# SUPPORT INNOVATION

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## **Innovations Lab**

UNICEF is undergoing a transition, driven by an evolving development context, and by disruptive thinking and technologies that promise to advance its service to children. With this in mind, Innovations Lab Kosovo is helping UNICEF and partners rethink development.

A unit of UNICEF Kosovo, the Lab is home to a multi-disciplinary team including project managers, software engineers, advocacy practitioners, designers, social entrepreneurs, educators, communications and marketing specialists, and graphic and web designers. ILK's By Youth For Youth pillar empowers youth to transform their social impact ideas into actionable projects, providing young leaders with first-hand experience developing and implementing a project, programme, and social venture. BYFY acts as a "pre-incubator", bridging the gap between idea and sustainable, impactful project by providing funding, equipment, office space, and—most importantly—capacity building through training and mentorship. The Design Center pillar combines promising methods with emerging information and communication technologies to

enhance UNICEF's service to vulnerable youth and children. DC explores challenges and opportunities related to service delivery and the use of information, and leverages advances in mobile, open source, and social technologies to prototype solutions.

The Youth Advocacy Platform supports the right of Kosovo's youth to be heard. YAP works on two fronts: firstly, it equips Kosovo's youth with the skills to engage with decision-makers through creative, sustained social and political action; secondly, YAP generates demand among youth—and opportunities for youth—for participatory dialogue through advocacy community outreach initiatives and high-impact public campaigns.

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Some local and international events, include the Global Entrepreneurship Week 2013 & 2014 (ICK is a National Host for Kosovo); NASA Space Apps Challenge Prishtina (winner of NASA's People's Global Choice Award 2015) the Job Fair in cooperation with STIKK; Hack for Fun Workshops; Week of Women in cooperation with National Democratic Institute and USAID, and many others.





## With competent network engineers working for a fraction of the wages paid abroad, Kosovo is determined to make its place in the international ICT market.

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### **The Innovation Center Kosovo (ICK)**

Aims to connect scientific research and development with the business sector, and create new job opportunities oriented towards the future, based on knowledge and new technologies. The Center supports both start-ups and existing companies with the potential for growth. The Incubator department is one of the main pillars of ICK, through which ICK helps entrepreneurs in creating and developing successful companies. It provides services depending on the experience of the team and level of development of business idea, through incubation, consulting, training, networking and international match-making.

Virtual Incubation Services are also offered to startups that do not have a need for hosting services at ICK, since they own their own premises or they are situated outside of Prishtina. Through their Training and Events Department, ICK provides special training services for tenants in the incubator and deliver market-oriented, high quality courses improving the skills of the general workforce, public administration and civil society. The event unit contributes to ICK becoming a visible and recognized center for ICT, innovation and business activity and networking, hence, serving as a venue for national and international events.

Some local and international events, include the Global Entrepreneurship Week 2013 & 2014 (ICK is a National Host for Kosovo); NASA Space Apps Challenge Prishtina (winner of NASA's People's Global Choice Award 2015) the Job Fair in cooperation with STIKK; Hack for Fun Workshops; Week of Women in cooperation with National Democratic Institute and USAID, and many others.

ICK has also identified and supported talents, freelancers, and teams that were engaged in projects with potential in becoming viable companies, through their Coworking space.

### **The IPKO Foundation**

Aims to support the development of the next generation of leaders with a digital vision for Kosovo, of people who embrace technology, Internet and the information society. As supporters of innovative ideas, the IPKO Foundation has established a scholarship fund.

The Next Generation Scholarships is for university students in Kosovo pursuing a field of study with a digital focus, ranging from economics students working on the IT field potential for economic development, law students focused on intellectual property rights, to graphic design students working with digital media. Since 2009, 138 scholarships were given to merit students from accredited universities, in a total amount of 317,323 Euros.

Ipko Foundation has also been very active in organizing social tech events, such as Bar Camps, App Camps and Wiki Academy. They have also supported the development of the Digital Diplomacy strategy of Kosovo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and they have funded a team of researchers to prepare a report on Kosovo's application for a Top Level Domain (TLD) name.

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A space for discussion, for emerging new projects, for networking, for growth.

# HackerShtellë

## Prishtina Hackerspace+Baushtell

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Somewhere in Prishtina, in the middle of a yard full of pine and cherry trees, now stands HackerShtellë. For five years this building was abandoned. Before that, it used to house the studio of an impactful radio station as well as the offices of various important activist movements in Kosovo. It only made sense that if one wanted to re-functionalize the space this house offers, it would be for the purposes of benefiting society at large.

And so, it's becoming a youth center – or rather, as the initiators like to call it – an open, multi-functional and collaborative house.

The project was named 'HackerShtellë' after 'Prishtina Hackerspace' and NGO 'Baushtellë,' the two organizations that identified the need for this to happen. Once fully functional, the two main floors of the house will serve separate purposes. The first floor will become a hackerspace, inspired by the worldwide movement of the same name that seeks to promote a progressive use of technology.

The second floor will be dedicated to art and self-expression. In its' entirety, the house will provide a space for discussion, for emerging new projects, for networking, for growth. It will be a home for maturing ideas and mature ideals, in line with the far-sightedness that the developments of the 21st Century have brought along to humanity. The first in-house event will be a five day workshop organized by the Biomodd Prishtina community. It will take place in mid-July, and it will engage the participants in building computer networks with living ecosystems inside of them.

These bio-installations will then be exhibited at HackerShtellë, with the hopes that it will inspire out-of-the-box thinking among the visitors of the house. The official

grand opening of HackerShtellë on the 17th of August will coincide with the arrival of the travelling art project 'BAUSHTELLË: BALKAN TEMPLE' in Prishtina. For the next three weeks, HackerShtellë will accommodate Serbian, Swiss, and local artists with events such as exhibitions, discussions, screenings, and daily meals prepared in the kitchen of the house.

The project will also be touring through Belgrade and Zurich, where similar events will take place. It will culminate with a big 6 hour performance taking place in each city, exhibiting the participating artists' responses to the question 'What do you believe in?'

Once the house officially opens, Prishtina Hackerspace will begin hosting weekly activities such as 'Install Fests' where young people can get help with the installation of free operating systems on their computers, open meetings for hackerspace members, individual working periods, lectures and DIY projects during weekends, and so on. To facilitate these activities, there will also be a purchase of equipment such as computers, 3D printers and laser cutters from funds gathered from a recent Kickstarter campaign.

AS WE ARE

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS

# HERITAGE ALIVE

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# TAGE IVE

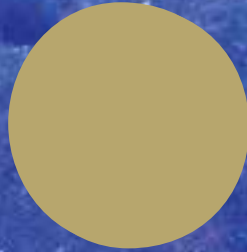
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One cannot miss the  
breathtaking and massive  
mountains in this country.

AS WE ARE

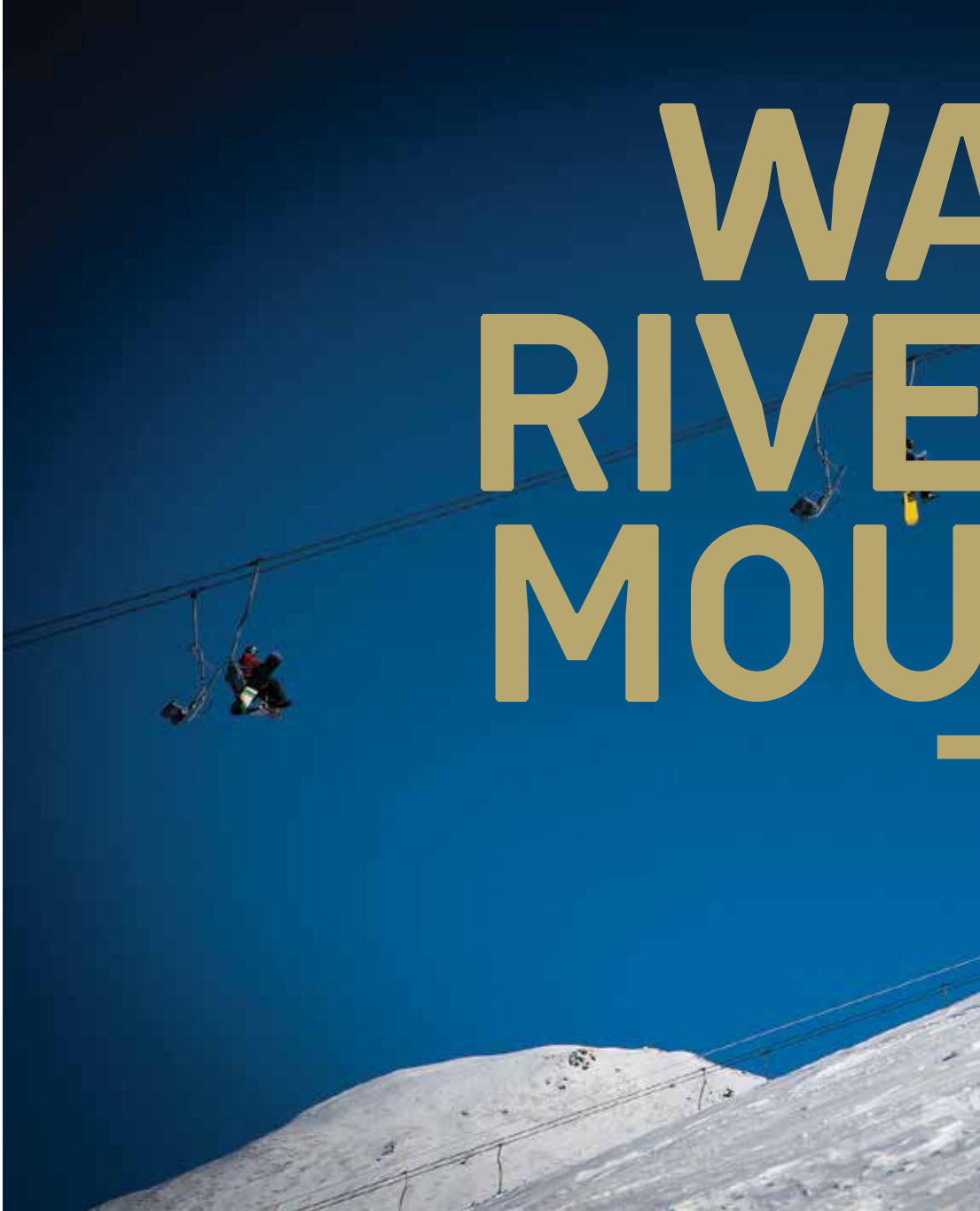
HERITAGE ALIVE





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# WAT RIVER MOUN



# ERY, Y AND TAINY

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The imposing mountains, the bountiful rivers and waterfalls, the fascinating marble cave put Kosovo natural heritage on par with other countries.



**Mirusha Waterfalls** a series of waterfalls found in the Mirusha Park, in central Kosovo. Over time, the waterfalls have created canyons and caves, which are famous throughout the country and in the region.

## Water

With their branches spread out all across the country in a spider web shape, Drini, Ibri, Lepenci and Morava e Binces are the four main rivers of Kosovo's hydro system.

The rivers of Kosovo flow towards three seas: Black Sea, Adriatic Sea and the Aegean Sea. The main rivers that flow towards the Black Sea are Ibri and Sitnica with its branches. While Drini i Bardhë river and its branches flow into Adriatic Sea and Lepenci River with the main branch Nerodime flowing into Aegean Sea basin.

According to the length of the rivers, Drin is the longest in kilometers, approximately 120 km inside the territory of Kosovo, while Prizren's Lumëbardhi is the shortest in

length, approximately 30 km long. The system of rivers, in Kosovo, is seen as a potential to gradually start producing energy by hydropower.

With appropriate water management it may as well be an option for employment of the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo.



Brezovica's highest point is 1,015 m. The mountains are known for their rich flora and fauna as well as wide and challenging ski terrains.

## Brezovica

Located in the south-east of Kosovo, with a territory of 80 km<sup>2</sup> and a highest point of 1,015 m.

It is known for its steep and challenging ski terrains. The mixed population of Serbs and Kosovars make it a multi-cultural place where people come together through sport or business. This resort welcomes people from all parts of the world and it is estimated to bring even more in upcoming years.

In April 2014, a contract with French consortium "MDP Consulting - Campagne des Alpes" has been signed - the investment plan is more than four-hundred million Euros

within a decade and it is estimated to create more than 3,000 jobs. The privatization of Brezovica is seen as a large step in lowering unemployment rate and attracting more tourists to visit the natural beauties of Kosovo.



Gadime Cave, also known as Marble Cave was first discovered in 1966. It is a rare karst limestone cave in the village of Gadime e Ulët, while most of it is still unexplored.



## Gadime's Cave

White villager Ahmet Diti was cutting stones in his garden in 1966, he discovered an astonishing marble cave – now known as Gadime Cave.

Its name comes based on its location – Gadime village in Lipjan Municipality. A site where stalactites and stalagmites often meet to form solid pillars, it is 1200 m. long and dates back to millions of years ago. The Romeo and Juliette story is famous in the Cave – if the stalactite Romeo ever kisses the stalagmite Juliette, the world will come to an end.

Rugova mountains are suitable for hiking, skiing, paragliding, rock climbing and social gatherings.



## Rugova Mountains

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Getting closer to the city of Peja in the western part of Kosovo, one cannot miss the breathtaking massive mountains, which romantically become one with the sky - the Rugova Mountains (also known as Albanian Alps).

Rugova mountains act as a natural dividing border between Montenegro and Kosovo. Lumbardh river flows in between the mountains, giving a particular glow to the rocky sides. Rugova mountains are suitable hiking, skiing, paragliding, rock climbing and social gatherings. The international ski federation ranked Albanian Alps as one of the four most important centers for the winter sports.

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In June 2015, the government of the Republic of Kosovo inaugurated the Crystals Museum, with the Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Environment and Spatial planning, and "Trepca" as contributors.

Building this modern museum was necessary for the preservation and promotion of our underground wealth, appearing in the most beautiful natural form through crystals.

The museum will be at the service of the industrial culture, universities and science, and will create new opportunities for generations eager to learn about the mineral resources of our country.

Crystals Museum In Mitrovica / Kosovo is rich in Nickel, Lead, Zinc, Magnesium, Lignite, Kaolin, Chrome and Bauxite.

# The Genesis of a Jewel

## Kosovo's geological journey from the Proterozoic to the prehistoric and beyond.

Kosovo's high circles of surrounding mountains, fertile plains and central spine of low rolling hills have been built over eons of geological time. Not only did significant geo-tectonic events define the distinct geographic dominion that is today's Kosovo but they also laid down the resources that have sustained numerous waves of competing armies and empires with expanding interests.

The oldest rocks in Kosovo are concentrated in the North East with scatterings isolated in smaller pockets elsewhere.

Their geogenic journey started 1000 – 570 million years ago when the earth was gripped, like a snowball, in the most severe glaciation on geological record. Strata formed by ice and fire would lay down the continental bedrock of Kosovo, only to be drowned out millions of years later.

240 to 66 million years ago, when dinosaurs dominated life on earth, Kosovo was, for the most part, under water. Metallic ores that went on to form such an intriguing part of Kosovo's human history originated at these times.

They are part of rich strip of related rocks that extend from the western Med, across the Alps, Caucasus, Hindu Kush and Tibet all the way to Indonesia. Lead, the metal that went on to fuel Yugoslav car batteries and the roofs of Byzantine Churches and Ottoman Hamams, formed when molten liquids spewed into what would then have been a shallow sea known as the Vardar Ocean. Limestone that today can be bought at the side of the road for making ornamental fountains, developed from the accumulated shells of billions of crustaceans bedded down in warm waters. Later those same shells would metamorphose under great pressure into the marbles that would line the floors of what are today's state buildings.

Towards the end of the dinosaur era, when mammals first started appearing, the sea that covered Kosovo would retreat as flanking tectonic plates of Africa and India collided with Euro-Asia. Veins of Gold, Zinc, Lead and Silver developed where rocks, brought together by the collision, merged together under great pressure and terrific heat.

The same forces that formed gold would keep pushing to produce mountains; and the consequent Alpine mountain building period would push up Kosovo's plethora of peaks well beyond today's 2000m.

The circle that is Kosovo had been created, but the people had not arrived; in fact they had not even evolved. They would not appear for another 65,955,000 years. In the meantime the mountains would be eroded down by weathering and water, into sediments that would settle to produce rich soils for luxuriant plant growth. Lignite, the fuel that powers 97% of Kosovo's electricity generation, was laid down by the accumulation and subsequent decay of this fertile vegetation in sedimentary basins.

The flat lands of Kosovo, created by the constantly changing course of rivers and shallow lakes levelling the landscape, would start to take form. Forests covered the fertile floor but mountaintops would be stripped of soil by a period of glaciation during an ice age we are, technically speaking, still in. As the ice receded man would arrive in

hunter-gathering tribes some 45,000 years ago. By the New Stone Age women were playing a leading role in artistic expression and numerous human shaped terracotta figurines, some represented as pregnant women were being crafted in their hands. The most famous of them all, "The Goddess on the Throne," has come to represent the place she was found, Prishtina.

Over millennia life carried on in a slow evolution of settlement, farming and increasing sophistication through the Copper, Bronze and Iron ages. By the Iron Age burial mounds indicate hierarchies had developed. Then, in the 1st century AD, Romans, who eventually formed the province of Dardania, conquered the region.

These metallic ages, from copper to Iron, evolved as man turned his hand to shaping and subduing natural ores. Base-metal mining has been a mainstay of the economy ever since, with Illyrians, Romans, Byzantines, Serbs, Saxons, Turks, French, Britons and modern miners all undertaking extensive extraction. In medieval times a traveller recorded that King Stefan Uroš II Milutin kept several silver mines including one at Gracanica. The "third great Balkan Silver long cycle," (1395 to 1566) would line the coffers not just of his lineage but also of the dynasties' conquerors – the Ottoman Sultans. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent would mine 11,000 Kg of silver from Kosovo in a single year. Rich pickings indeed, for an Empire that would rule with steady stealth and careful strategy for nigh on 500 years.

Jewellery from prehistoric bangles, to fine Ottoman earrings is the legacy of man's inventiveness in the region. The silver and gold mined over millennia can still be seen in the national museum, or in the crafted trinkets and ornaments of the Nemanjic era and Ottoman ages. But, their external beauty belies a deeper conception, when the sea that covered Kosovo had only just receded, when early mammals had just taken their first lung full of air, and veins that glimmered, just like gold, precipitated precious metals out of hot fluid rock.

Marc Perry is Digital Editor for Interfaith Kosovo. Following journalism studies in the UK he helped establish a radio show based on BBC Woman's Hour for Afghanistan's national radio station. After experiences there he took to religious affairs, humanitarian, and travel writing from the Balkans. He holds a Masters in International Journalism and a BSc. in Applied Environmental Science.



During the trip, there are 15 stops that Ambienturists make, including morning picnics by the lakes, drinks by gorgeous waterfalls, and visits to the historical hearts of old towns.





# Ambienturë

## Plant a tree while exploring heritage

**Before heading out to visit the more distant locations, Ambienturists plant a tree in Prishtina, tagged with their name and date of planting, intended to offset the carbon dioxide released during their trip.**

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Kosovo started linking environment protection with cultural heritage in a new eco-tourism initiative, as one of the most exciting ways for both locals and international visitors to explore Kosovo.

Ambienturë is a recreational, cultural, informative and eco friendly tour that takes its visitors all around Kosovo. Participants of the tour get to see amazing landscapes, meet local people, and become active participants of environmental protection.

Before heading out to visit the more distant locations, Ambienturists plant a tree in Prishtina, tagged with their name and date of planting, intended to offset the carbon dioxide released during their trip. During the trip, there are 15 stops that Ambienturists make, including morning picnics by the lakes, drinks by gorgeous waterfalls, and visits to the historical hearts of old towns.

Ambienturists have their lunches at the local women's houses, where the ladies prepare delicious traditional Kosovar food.

As an interactive way to become acquainted with our culture, apart from visiting fascinating monuments of our tangible heritage – the ethnological museum in Gjakova, the Terzi and Fsheji bridges, or the old town of Prizren – the Ambienturists spend their nights in 19 century Kullas, small stone castles, where they have a chance to learn first-hand about some of our oldest traditions.

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**Editor:**

Fiona Kelmendi, Rina Meta

**Contributors:**

Agon Maliqi, Alban Bakija, Arif Muharremi, Arben Llapashtica, Astrit Zatriqi,  
Astrit Ibrahimimi, Bujar Gashi, Deniz Xheka, Emanuel Gjokaj, Enver Bylykbashi,  
Ermal Meta, Fiona Kelmendi, Gazmend Krasniqi, Jetmir Idrizi, Katharina Schendl,  
Leonard Dubova, Majlinda Hoxha, Marc Perry, Marcin Pudelek, Marigona Kastrati,  
Meddy Huduti, Mentor Shuki, Nita Deda, Nita Salihu, Orgesa Arifi, Petrit Selimi,  
Raif Kabi, Renea Behluli, Rina Meta, Rozafa Maliqi, Sara Rodiqi, Selviqe Gashi,  
Shpat Buzoku, Tefta Kelmendi Merran, Valon Badivuku, Vigan Hoxha and Yll Citaku.



