

KOSOV INUNESCO

AS WE ARE

AS WE

E ARE

Free to love

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

AS WE ARE

Stories old and new of a country thriving

-

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.

'AS WE ARE / Stories old and new of a country thriving' includes material previously published in July 2015 under the name 'AS WE ARE / Stories old and new of a country in the making'. Both books feature the diplomatic efforts of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in lobbying for Kosovo's acceptance in UNESCO. The republished work in this edition reinforces these efforts and insists on the unique values that Kosovo has to offer.

Photos published in this book are submitted by participants in #instakosova #instakosovo competition, selected from the archives of Kosovo photographers, and others are withdrawn from UNESCO website, Database of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo, Wikimedia Commons and other promotional websites of the same will.

This book is not intended for sale.

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**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO**

AS WE ARE

OUR PATH

1998—1999



Uprising in Kosovo after years of neglect causes fierce response by Serbian dictator Milosevic, who starts a campaign of ethnic cleansing. 12,000 people are killed in Kosovo, mostly in massacres committed by Serbian forces. The WHO estimates that 20,000 women are raped by Serbian forces. Serbia signs withdrawal. Kosovo becomes a UN protectorate. NATO is responsible for security.

2001—2002



First democratic elections in local and central level are organized. Some competencies are transferred from UN to local government.

2004



An incident in the north of Kosovo, where 3 Albanian children are found dead, causes riots. Hundreds of extremists attack several Serbian churches. 21 people die, 19 Albanians and 2 Serbs, over a dozen Serbian churches and other buildings are destroyed.

UN

2005—2006

UN Appoints Special Envoy for dialogue, President Marti Ahtisaari, who initiates first talks in Vienna between two former foes.



2007

UN Envoy unveils the plan of Conditional Independence for Kosovo. The idea was first mentioned in a special report of Kosovo Commission, set up by Nelson Mandela in 1999, in the aftermath of Kosovo war. This time, most of the international community supports the UN plan.

2008



Prime Minister of Kosovo Hashim Thaci, on behalf of people of Kosovo, declares Kosovo an independent country in February 17, 2008. Over 50 countries recognize it as independent in the very first year. International supervision mechanisms are set up by the international community, based on Ahtisaari Plan. UNMIK transfers policing and rule of law powers to EULEX mission.

2009



International Monetary Fund and World Bank admit Kosovo as a sovereign nation.

2010



International Court of Justice rules with overwhelming majority that Kosovo's Declaration of Independence did not violate international law or UNSC1244. UN General Assembly notes the ICJ opinion in September, refuses Serbian request to start new status negotiations, and calls for Kosovo and Serbia to engage in normalization as a part of EU-facilitated process of EU integrations.

2011



Kosovo Parliament elects Mrs. Atifete Jahjaga as a President. She becomes the first female president in the entire Western Balkans.

2012



International Steering Group, led by EU and International Civilian Representatives, concludes that Kosovo has concluded all obligations under Ahtisaari Plan and that it now merits full independence. EULEX mission remains for further support in building a strong rule of law system.

2013-2014



Kosovo and Serbia come to agreement on normalization of relations, including not blocking each other in the process of EU integrations. Historic Brussels agreement is hailed by the entire world as model of compromise and dialogue. Kosovo becomes full member of International Olympic Committee and observer member of the Organization of Francophonie. Kosovo also joins Venice Commission of Council of Europe.

2015



Kosovo applies for membership to UNESCO. 111 member states of UNESCO already recognize Kosovo bilaterally, but many other also agree to support Kosovo in education, science and culture.

STORIES OLD AND NEW OF A COUNTRY THRIVING

TO BE CONTINUED

AS WE ARE

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

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AS WE ARE



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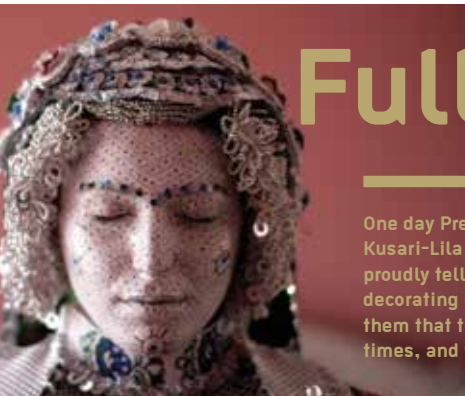
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From being almost non-existent 10 years ago, Kosovar companies in the information technology (IT) domain today offer a wide range of ICT services to both local and international companies.



200–235 Full empowerment

One day President Jahjaga, Ambassador Citaku, 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

KNOW YOU AND YOU

OUR WHYS OUR HOWS

Facts and explanations regarding Kosovo's desire to join the global family of education, science and culture.

1

Is Kosovo eligible to become a UNESCO member before becoming a UN member?

Yes, Kosovo is eligible to become a UNESCO member before becoming a UN member state, provided that it secures a two-thirds majority of votes in the General Conference; the voting takes place upon recommendation of the Executive Board.

Article II Paragraph 2 of the UNESCO Constitution reads: "Subject to the conditions of the Agreement between this Organization and the United Nations Organization, approved pursuant to Article X of this Constitution, states not members of the United Nations Organization may be admitted to membership of the Organization, upon recommendation of the Executive Board, by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Conference."

2

How can Kosovo benefit from UNESCO membership?

UNESCO's purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the UN Charter.

Very simply put, UNESCO membership would enhance Kosovo's international position in the areas of education, science and culture, enabling it to benefit from the shared knowledge and best international practices. There are countless programs of UNESCO in these areas from which Kosovo is currently excluded due to not being a member, and the only way for the country to be able to catch up with its regional partners is to at least have the same opportunities as the rest.

3

Would Kosovo's membership of UNESCO endanger the ongoing dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia on normalization of their relations?

Kosovo is already a member of two UN specialized agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. UNESCO would therefore not be the first international agency or organization which Kosovo has joined since the initiation of the technical dialogue with Serbia in March 2011.

In fact, since November 2012, Kosovo has also become a member of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and has signed a framework agreement with the European Investment Bank (EIB). Furthermore, since the "First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations" between Serbia and Kosovo signed on 19 April 2013, Kosovo has been recognized bilaterally by another two dozen UN members. It has also become a full member of the International Olympic Committee, as well as over 50 European and regional organizations and global sport federations (e.g., basketball and gymnastic global bodies), the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, the Regional Cooperation Council, and an observer member of the Organization of Francophone Countries.

None of these accessions to international agencies or organizations have in any way impeded progress in the ongoing dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. Kosovo's membership at UNESCO would not pose a threat – it could in fact greatly strengthen the dialogue: Serbia would gain from Kosovo's UNESCO membership because it would impose strict and formal international obligations upon Kosovo to preserve and protect monuments of distinct historic and cultural importance to the Serb community.

4

Is the status of Kosovo settled according to UN?

Although the official position of the UN Secretariat has been that of “neutrality” with respect to the status question, the principal judicial organ of the UN, the International Court of Justice, has confirmed that Kosovo’s declaration of independence has not violated any applicable rule of international law. In other words, it has ratified the factual situation of an independent Kosovo, thus created within the boundaries of the existing international law. The process that led ultimately to independence had in fact been led by the UN, including through a UN Special Envoy, the former Finnish President and Nobel Laureate, Martti Ahtisaari.

In addition, the UN General Assembly has welcomed this ruling of the ICJ. Although the UN GA has called for a process of technical dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, to be facilitated by the EU, it has never called for dialogue on the question of Kosovo’s status; in fact, it rejected Serbia’s initial proposal for entertaining such a process of dialogue.

5

Can Kosovo membership in UNESCO threaten the status of World Heritage Sites that exist in Kosovo, namely the Christian Medieval Monasteries of the Serbian Orthodox Church?

It is very difficult to see how Kosovo’s membership in UNESCO would threaten the status of World Heritage Sites that exist in Kosovo; in fact it would rather strengthen the status of such sites. It is one of the fundamental duties of UNESCO to preserve and protect World Heritage Sites. Kosovo’s statehood and Serbian heritage in Kosovo are not incompatible, and indeed are mutually reinforcing; and Kosovo’s UNESCO membership, far from threatening the Serbian heritage, will only create additional guarantees for its protection. The Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) is recognized in Kosovo, and its identity and rights are protected by the Constitution and other legislation, in particular legislation de-

ring from the Comprehensive Settlement Proposal (CSP). The bulk of the CSP provisions related to the protection of the religious and cultural heritage (RCH) of the SOC in Kosovo were integrated into the legislative framework of Kosovo at the end of the international supervision of its independence, in September 2012, and they were assigned the status of laws of vital interest. As a result, the RCH of the SOC has until now been continuously dealt with as a special kind of cultural heritage of Kosovo, one that requires special treatment.

Even currently, there is no question on the safety of UNESCO Heritage sites in Kosovo. They are protected by a very consolidated and modern legal framework, adopted by Kosovo and by large sponsored by the international community. The government of Kosovo dedicated almost 10 million Euros in repair of the damages done to the Serbian Orthodox Church sites by extremists in the 2004 riots, and the sites today are protected by a special unit of the Kosovo Police.

6

Is Kosovo a viable candidate for UNESCO membership?

Kosovo is strongly committed to the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The strength of this commitment is evident in the provisions of its Constitution, which reflect the highest international standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as in the policies and practices of successive governments since Kosovo achieved its independence in 2008.

Both through its Declaration of Independence and Constitution and as shown in practice, Kosovo has demonstrated its ability and willingness to respect international law and abide by its international obligations. In this context, in 2010, Kosovo Assembly went further, adopting the Law on the implementation of international sanctions imposed by the United Nations or other international organizations, so as to ensure the effective implementation of Kosovo’s international obligations.

Therefore, Kosovo has shown that it is clearly willing to abide by the UNESCO Constitution, to accept the obligations contained therein and to contribute to the expenses of the Organization, just as it regularly contributes to the expenses of other UN agencies or international organizations of which it is a member.



Prizren is home to the Old Stone Bridge of 15th century and this century's Dokufest. The young lady captured here is a film fan who's 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 joining 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.

Kosovo is the youngest nation of 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 Balkan country to elect a female 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 international community and become a full sovereign member of UN agencies such as IMF and World Bank, but also other international bodies such as the International Olympic Committee.

Kosovo is also the youngest European nation in terms of the age of its population – the average age in Kosovo is 28 years. 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 ten

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, improve 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 the last seven years – more focus is also needed to improve its 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 natural habitats await to be discovered as a part of our joint, global patrimony.

Hence Kosovo is looking forward to joining 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 for the 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

KNOW YOUR WHYS AND YOUR HOWS



Rita Ora: Embrace our efforts!

Rita Ora
is a global pop star and Honorary Ambassador of Kosovo.

I embrace the efforts done by my native country's authorities in engaging Kosovo in all multilateral forums UNESCO including, in order to ensure that Kosovo people, Kosovo youth, get access to more opportunities.

I am a typical London girl. I'm a pop star. I am a refugee. Actually, I am a baby refugee. As a kid I grew up in one room flat that I shared with my parents and older sister. Out of the window I could see Brompton Cemetery. It was scary.

I don't know what was more scary – the graveyard or being a refugee...

My parents fled Kosovo in search for a safer life. The very fact of being an uprooted person, carrying the 'refugee' tag, has marked me profoundly. Refugees rarely have a voice. Fortunately, I do have one – literally and metaphorically speaking. The voice raised me to fame. I am equally privileged and motivated to use my voice on behalf of refugees. Although peace and security are what we aim for, – pre-conditions for a normal life, – not everyone enjoys these legitimate rights; they are not granted, they must be safeguarded. International organisations have a great role to play in that regard.

There is also another facet of the story. Successful people and those who look at them tend to believe that they are special, that they are self-made. This is true, to a large extent. Nevertheless, we must not forget the power of opportunities landed to us. Even the best of us, in a war-torn country, would be standing barefoot next to a border line, too busy trying to survive.

Therefore, I embrace the efforts done by my native country's authorities in engaging Kosovo in all multilateral forums – UNESCO including, in order to ensure that Kosovo people, Kosovo youth, get access to more opportunities. Their rights will be better protected as well.

I have experienced at first hand that being a refugee carries a lot of prejudice and can cause isolation. Nations are like humans, the more isolated a country is, the more its citizens risk to suffer from low self esteem. The isolation makes you angry; it can turn nations into violence. I am delighted that Kosovo, my country of origin, has chosen the path of cooperation. This will enable its citizens to be more determined to move forward, to be eager to progress and succeed. I always loved the music, I was determined to succeed, but I'm grateful to all of those who gave me a hand, who supported me. They helped me to write my story.

It is instrumental for Kosovo to be supported in its way toward integration. It implies the international community's ability to acknowledge the effort, support it and meet half the way. By doing so, international community itself shows a vision of the world. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation should be part of those efforts. Together we can define the 21st century.

AS WE ARE

KNOW YOUR WHYS AND YOUR HOWS



What is right and what is fair.

Ferid Murad,
Physician and pharmacologist, and a co-winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize
in cardiovascular physiology and pharmacology

There is a delicate balance between competition and collaboration. But first of all, we have to set the right frame – the one of freedom, access, and opportunities.

My father migrated to United States, a Muslim Albanian who fell in love with a Presbyterian American and set up a family together with her. My parents expected me to become a practitioner physician and had high hopes for me because even, back that time, few people went to college after high school graduation.

I may have disappointed them by choosing the path of scientific research. It was not the easier road, nor the most profitable. But somehow I felt that that was the right path for me. I wanted to make a change. I was hoping that with some luck, my research could influence the lives of people. That's how it all started, with a hunch – the feeling you have when you know you're right, but you need to prove it. It takes strong motivation and absolute determination. Then, serendipity happens. You're on the verge of a tremendous discovery. But in the time between these two moments, a lifetime has gone. I have spent decades conducting basic research on nitric oxide, even when colleagues and friends said I was crazy to invest much time and effort in it. More usage of nitric oxide has to come, in the fight against cancer, Alzheimer's disease, heart disease and many other conditions. It is rewarding to know that your work is having positive impact on millions of people.

I love research – that's obvious. I love equally to work with bright young people and students. I always tell them the truth about the scientific discovery – it is a colossal endeavor! The research projects are big, long-term, and they involve people as well as lots of funding. They require close cooperation within the country and often, strong collaboration outside the country, with Universities and Research Centres. Because of that complexity, research has morphed from a personal quest to a massive international activity.

Scientific research has two sides: one is competition, an extremely fertile ground that motivates us to stretch to the outmost. We compete among each other in a collegial environment as I and my best friend from kindergarten years,

Ronald Delismon have done; however, nowadays we compete more internationally than ever. Discovery doesn't care about nationality. The legacy of Einstein or Jobs knows no boundaries; it is embraced and applied worldwide.

The other side is collaboration: when nature finds itself in need of new ideas, it strives to connect, not compete or protect. The same happens between us people. There is a delicate balance between competition and collaboration. But first of all, we have to set the right frame – the one of freedom, access, and opportunities. I am a researcher of Albanian background. I've been to Kosovo and seen the amazing progress and the potential of youth and students there. I see the same eagerness to succeed as I had in my young years. I was lucky enough to be born in the land of opportunities. It hurts me when I see frustration in their eyes; they live in the most isolated country in the Balkans and Europe due to a visa restriction regime. They can't travel freely for studies, leisure or work. Their access to different programs and grants is limited.

I am enthusiastic to learn that Kosovo authorities are applying this autumn for membership to UNESCO in order to provide citizens with more opportunities. I send them my full support. They have chosen the right direction, that of integration and cooperation. Accessing diverse scientific programs helps. Scientific research is a safe bet: even simple ideas could have far-reaching consequences.

It is noble to change the life of someone, to recognize his or her effort. But first of all, we have the obligation to be fair. By offering full membership to Kosovo, member countries will do what is right and what is fair.



70% YOUTH

Led by a female president, the first one to be elected in the Balkans. Kosovo boasts more than 30% female representation in the Parliament and Diplomatic Service.



86%

It's a super dynamic country, inhabited by 1.8 million people, 70% of which are younger than 35.

Household internet connections rate is over 86%, broader than any other country in the Balkans.



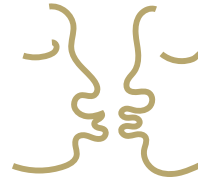
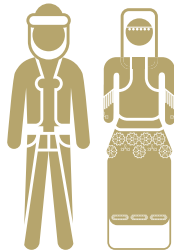
Kosovo speaks over five languages – Albanian and Serbian at the national level, and Turkish, Bosnian and Romani at municipal levels.



Landlocked, but very watery, rivery and mountainy.



It's safer in Kosovo than elsewhere in Europe. Statistics show that Western Europe has twice the burglary, over four times as much assault and 15 times as much robbery as South East Europe. With 18 firearms per 100,000 people, Kosovo actually ranks better than many EU member states.



Kosovo is a member of two UN specialized agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as a member of the International Organization of La Francophonie, International Olympic Committee, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, The Venice Commission, and many other sports and regional organizations.

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

Kosovo harmoniously accommodates a diverse fusion of faiths such as Islamic, Serbian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Sufi and Dervishes.

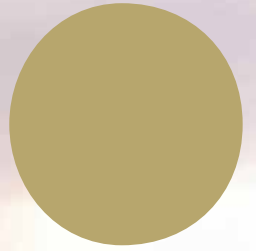
Rich in Nickel, Lead, Zinc, Magnesium, Lignite, Kaolin, Chrome and Bauxite.

#lovewins – our constitution is the only one in the Balkans that bans discrimination based on race, gender, religion and sexual orientation since 2008.

Rich in day & night life. Rich in coffee culture, with more than 200 coffee bars only in the capital. Greatest Macchiato Land on Earth.

AS WE ARE





AS WE ARE

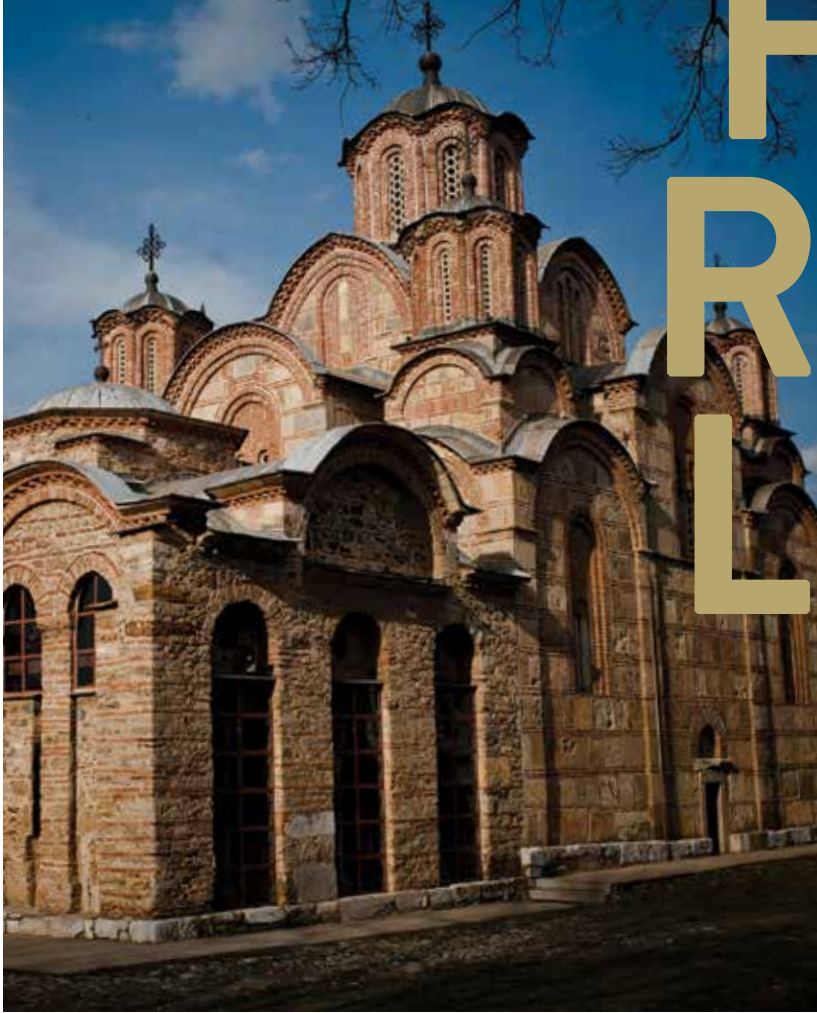
A LIVING IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS

HERITAGE TEMPORARY AMICS

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.

AS WE ARE

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



FIRE ROOM LEG

Alban Bakija,
Director of Kosovo Institute for Cultural Heritage

MPLY TED ACY

Cultural Heritage Protection in the 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 modern age, are challenged by globalization 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. 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.

There is much sensitivity surrounding matters of cultural ownership and historical roots that have been expressed violently in the past, making this a difficult matter for policy-makers attempting to mediate artists, artifacts and the wider society; however, this shared cultural heritage has proven itself as the only sense of commonality between previously warring cultural groups. 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 – chooses to explore notions of citizenship, 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 static moments in an already 'dead' historical past. We are trying to reflect more truly the open-ended nature of historical thinking at the present time. Lived environments, local artifacts and buildings in Kosovo 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 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.

Excerpts:

Foreword from the Book on
the Destruction of Islamic Heritage
in the 1998-1999 Kosovo War

András Riedlmayer

KOS HERITAGE HERI

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



KOSOVO A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

The Mosque of Ghazi Ali Beg is one of the oldest mosques in Kosovo, founded in 1410 by the town's first Ottoman governor. The mosque had been designated by law as a protected monument of culture. The minaret was toppled on 27 March 1999 by a shell fired at close range. It was hit again on 6 April 1999

by a rocket-propelled grenade and explosives were thrown inside the mosque. The falling minaret smashed through the mosque's roof, the interior was badly damaged and all the doors and windows were broken. The exterior walls of the historic building also suffered structural damage as a result of the explosions.

Since ancient times, Kosovo has been a crossroads of the Balkans, where the great religious and cultural currents of the Mediterranean world have met and interacted with each other and with rich indigenous traditions. These cultural interactions have given Kosovo a remarkable legacy, including a still thriving, 600-year-old European Islamic tradition, a part of its heritage that deserves to be better known. The oldest Islamic sites in Kosovo are linked to the memory of Sari Saltuk Baba (d. 1298), a legendary Sufi master from Anatolia, who, accompanied by a group of these dervishes, traveled and preached Islam in the region a century before the arrival of the Ottomans. However, the first major monuments of Islamic religious architecture in Kosovo are connected with the establishment of Ottoman rule in Kosovo in the 1400s.

The Ottoman sultans and their local officials—many among the latter being natives of the region—established pious endowments (*vakuf* or *waqf*) for the building of mosques, *medresas* (theological schools), *mektebs* (schools for Qur'an-readers), Islamic libraries, charity soup kitchens, *hamams* (bath-houses), *tekkes* (dervish lodges of the Sufi *lay* brotherhoods), and bazaar shops, whose rents supported these charitable and religious institutions.

Notable Islamic monuments from the early Ottoman period in Kosovo include the Mosque of Sultan Murad (built 1389–1440), in Prishtina, the Mosque and hamam of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1461), in Prishtina, and the Bazaar Mosque (1471), in Peja—all of them endowed by Ottoman emperors. The Ghazi Ali Beg Mosque (1410) in Vushtrria, and the mosque and hamam of Hajji Hasan Beg (1462–85), in Peja, were founded by early Ottoman governors. The Llap Mosque (1470), in Prishtina, was endowed by a pious local Muslim resident.

Mosques and other Islamic monuments continued to be built in Kosovo throughout the period of Ottoman rule. Much of this construction took place during the late six-

teenth and seventeenth centuries, by which time the majority of Kosovo's population, including most Kosovo Albanians but also many Slavs, had become Muslims. Many of them rose to join the Ottoman elite as soldiers, statesmen, Islamic jurists and scholars. Some attained the highest posts. Between 1453 and 1912, close to 40 of the individuals who held the office of grand vizier, the chief minister who ruled the Ottoman Empire in the name of the sultan, were ethnic Albanians.

From the sixteenth century on, the great majority of the patrons who endowed mosques and other Islamic institutions in Kosovo were local people, as were the builders and craftsmen who built them. The styles and methods of construction of Islamic monuments in Kosovo reflected local tastes and building techniques, as well as broader trends in Balkan and Ottoman architecture.

In Kosovo's mountainous west and on the Dukagjin plateau, mosques were often built in the same manner and of the same materials as the *kullas*, the traditional Albanian tower-houses of the region—the house of God taking on the form of the houses of the faithful. Notable examples of this regional style are the Çok Mosque (1580), near Junik, and the Mosque of Deçan (1813). In many mosques and *tekkes* (dervish lodges) in Kosovo, local craft techniques were employed to good effect in elaborately carved wooden ceilings and other interior decorations, as seen in the Deferdar Mosque (1570) and the Kurshumli Mosque (1577) in Peja and in the *tekke* of Sheh Islam Efendi (1881) in Gjilan.

Islamic religious architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Kosovo was distinguished by the exuberant use of colour and by the murals depicting landscapes, architecture and floral motifs that covered the interior walls of mosques. This painted decoration was a characteristic feature of mosques built during this period, among them the Red Mosque in Peja (1744) and the splendid Jashar Pasha Mosque in Prishtina (1834). Lavish mural paintings were

also used to decorate older mosques that were renovated at this time, such as the Hadum Mosque in Gjakova (built 1592-95, renovated in 1842), the Sinan Pasha Mosque in Prizren (built 1615, renovated in the early 19th century), and the Bazaar Mosque in Peja (built 1471, renovated by Haxhi Zeka in the late 19th century). The first Balkan War (1912) brought an end to the long centuries of Ottoman rule in Kosovo, which was partitioned between Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Montenegro. Following the end of the First World War, the two kingdoms merged to form a new state, which in 1929 was renamed Yugoslavia. During the 70 years that followed, not very many mosques were built in Kosovo and some were destroyed or seized by the authorities.

At the end of Ottoman rule in 1912, Prishtina had 18 mosques. At the end of World War II in 1945, there were still 16 mosques left. The new communist Yugoslav regime that took power after the war closed all but five of the city's mosques, turning them into warehouses and other secular uses. As part of a socialist urban redesign of the centre of Prishtina in the 1950s, three historic mosques were ordered razed by the authorities, among them the Llokaç Mosque (built 1551). Some of the city's closed mosques were allowed to reopen for worship during the era of political liberalization in the 1970s and early 1980s, but no new mosques were built in Prishtina between 1912 and the end of the twentieth century.

Mosques and other Islamic heritage sites elsewhere in Kosovo did not fare significantly better during the communist period. In the centre of Prizren, the historic Arasta Mosque (built 1594) was torn down in 1963 to make way for a new post office and market stalls; only its minaret was left standing, as a 'civic monument'. In Peja, the sixteenth-century Kurshumli Mosque was closed after the end of the Second World War and turned into an arms depot for the Yugoslav army. It was returned to worship after a lapse of twenty years in 1965. In the post-war years, the regime

also suppressed Islamic religious education and seized the property of the pious endowments that had sustained the mosques and their activities. However, some mosques continued to be built in villages, remote from the centres of power. About two dozen of the mosques documented in this volume were built between 1945 and 1989. Although the 1990s in Kosovo were years of severe repression in most respects, communist-era restrictions on the building and repair of mosques were eased somewhat during this final decade of Belgrade's rule, at least outside of the major cities. Close to 20 of the mosques listed in this volume were built or reconstructed in the 1990s. In some cases, unfortunately, this new building activity also involved damage or destruction of Islamic heritage.

More than two-thirds of the 560 active mosques in Kosovo on the eve of the 1998-1999 war were buildings dating from the Ottoman era. Many of these were monuments of historical and architectural significance. However, this part of Kosovo's cultural and religious heritage received relatively little attention from the state authorities charged with the protection of monuments.

Between 1947 and 1990, a total of 425 monuments and sites in Kosovo were officially designated for state protection. These included 96 archaeological sites, 16 cemeteries, 116 secular buildings and monuments, and 174 religious sites. Of the last category, 139 were Orthodox churches or monasteries, while only 32 Islamic religious monuments had been listed for protection. Since listed sites received priority in attention and in conservation funding from state agencies, this meant that by the 1990s much of Kosovo's Islamic built heritage was in a dilapidated state, after decades of neglect. In practice, the authorities not only failed to provide the funds and expertise needed for the preservation of these historic houses of worship, they allowed even listed Islamic monuments to be altered or demolished without intervening. The years of peacetime neglect were followed by the massive wartime destruction of Kosovo's

Islamic religious heritage in 1998–1999. As has been documented in this book, roughly 40 percent of Kosovo’s 560 mosques were damaged or destroyed during the war.

The damage in most cases was clearly the result of deliberate attacks directed against the mosques. There is evidence of explosives planted in the mosque or inside the minaret, of artillery projectiles aimed at the minaret, and of mosques set ablaze. In some places, the mosque was the only building in the vicinity that had been singled out for attack. More often, the destruction of a mosque was accompanied by the burning of the surrounding homes of the local Albanian residents. The devastation of Islamic sacral sites was widespread and systematic, with few areas of Kosovo left untouched.

Among the worst hit was the northwestern region of Peja, where every one of 49 Islamic sites was attacked in 1998 and 1999. Among the sites targeted were the region’s 36 mosques (half of them dating from the 15th–18th centuries), the offices, archives and library of Peja’s Islamic Community Council, a historic medresa, a 15th-century hamam (Turkish baths), 9 schools for Qur’an readers (mekteb), one dervish lodge (tekke), and several mosque libraries.

In some places, those responsible for these attacks had left behind their “signatures”—in the form of anti-Albanian and anti-Islamic graffiti in Serbian scrawled on mosque walls, or in the deliberate desecration of Islamic sacred scriptures, torn apart by hand, defiled and burned. Examples of this sort could be seen in the Gjyfatyn Mosque in Peja, the Mosque of Carraleva, the Mosque of Livoç i Poshtëm, and the Mosque of Stanofc i Poshtëm, and in a number of other mosques. Of the 218 mosques and 11 tekkes in Kosovo that were destroyed or damaged during the war, 22 mosques and 8 tekkes were in the most severe damage categories. Among these, 13 mosques and 5 tekkes were completely razed, the ruins levelled by bulldozer; 9 mosques and 3

tekkes were reduced to rubble, but the ruins were not bulldozed. Among examples of completely levelled Islamic houses of worship are the Bazaar Mosque (built 1761–62; renewed 1878), in Vushtrria, the Ibër Mosque (built 1878) in Mitrovica, the Mosque of Halil Efendi in Dobërçan (1526), the Mosque of Loxha (1900), and the Bektashi tekke in Gjakova (1790). More than 100 other mosques in Kosovo suffered serious structural damage from explosives or fires. Many of these mosques were completely burned out, their roofs collapsed, the interiors open to the sky with a carpet of burnt roof tiles underfoot, and only the four outer walls left standing.

An additional 95 mosques suffered lesser degrees of damage, ranging from shell holes in the walls, through the roof or in the shaft of the minaret, to vandalism, including fires set inside the mosque, smashed-up interior furnishings, and the desecration of sacred scriptures.

A total of 31 mosques and 2 tekkes (dervish lodges) were attacked by Serb forces during the first year of the war, in the spring and summer of 1998. Two-thirds of these religious buildings were burned down, blown up or otherwise destroyed or seriously damaged. Ten of the mosques that were damaged during 1998 were subjected to repeat attacks and further damage during the spring of 1999.

During the second year of the war in 1999, a total of 197 mosques and 9 tekkes in Kosovo were damaged or destroyed by Serb forces. One mosque, in the village of Jabllanica (Prizren region), had its roof partly destroyed by a NATO air strike in the spring of 1999. Otherwise, the destruction of mosques and of other Islamic heritage in Kosovo during the war was entirely attributable to attacks from the ground, carried out by Serbian troops, police and paramilitaries, and in some cases by Serb civilians.

The destruction also encompassed the written record of Islamic religious and cultural life in Kosovo. The Central His-

torical Archives of the Islamic Community of Kosovo were burned by Serbian police in June 1999, hours before the arrival of the first NATO troops in Prishtina. Six of the regional archives of the Islamic Community were also attacked and wholly or partially destroyed, among them the archives of the Islamic Community Councils in Peja, Gjakova, Glogoc, Lipjan, Peja, Skenderaj, and Suhareka.

Kosovo's Islamic religious libraries were also singled out for destruction. Notable losses include the manuscripts and old books of the library of Hadum Syleiman Efendi in Gjakova, founded in 1595 and burned in 1999, as well as the libraries of dervish lodges in Gjakova, Mitrovica and Peja, also destroyed in 1999. However, the losses go far beyond this. Many old mosques in Kosovo had been endowed with collections of Qur'an manuscripts and Islamic religious books that were destroyed or damaged in 1998-1999.

Among the historic centers of Islamic culture in Kosovo, only the city of Prizren escaped largely unscathed. The only Islamic monument destroyed in Prizren was a small building, part of the Medresa of Ghazi Mehmed Pasha, in which the League of Prizren, a group of Albanian civic leaders campaigning for autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, met in 1878. The building, which housed a memorial museum of the nineteenth-century Albanian national revival, was destroyed by Serbian police in March 1999.

Remarkably, not a single Serb Orthodox church or monastery in Kosovo was damaged or destroyed by Albanians during the 1998-1999 conflict. Unfortunately that changed after the end of the war, as thousands of Albanian refugees who had been forced out of Kosovo during the war returned to their burned-out home towns and villages. Following the end of hostilities in June 1999, dozens of Serb Orthodox churches and monasteries were damaged in revenge attacks. Some 40 Serb Orthodox sites were vandalized, while another 40 suffered serious structural damage or were de-

stroyed completely. Many of these buildings were village churches, some of them built during the previous decade. But about 15 to 20 of the destroyed churches dated from the medieval period. By the end of the summer of 1999, as a result of the efforts of KFOR and the UN administration to restore order, and in response to public appeals by Kosovo Albanian political and religious leaders, attacks on Serb Orthodox religious sites largely ceased.

This book is an attempt to document, to the extent possible, the Islamic sacral heritage of Kosovo that was lost during the 1998-1999 war. As Kosovo and its people come to terms with the painful memories of the recent past and work towards a common future it is well to recall that, for most of Kosovo's long history, houses of worship were protected by all communities and had traditionally been held immune from personal and communal vendettas. The rich cultural heritage that remains in Kosovo, despite the ravages of time and the destruction of war, is the common patrimony of all of Kosovo's people. It is up to them, as it was up to their forefathers, to jointly value and preserve it for future generations.

Andr s Riedlmayer directs the Documentation Centre for Islamic Architecture of the Aga Khan Program at Harvard University. In 1999-2001, Riedlmayer and his colleague Andrew Herscher, an architect and architectural historian, conducted a post-war field survey of cultural heritage in Kosovo. The results of the field survey were submitted to the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and to the UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). He has since testified about these findings as an expert witness at the war crimes trial of former Serbian president Slobodan Milošević and in several other cases before the ICTY.



A MEDI LEG

A MEDIEVAL HERITAGE

Some of the most outstanding sites found in Kosovo belong to the Serbian Orthodox Church, which are the only monuments in Kosovo currently inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List under the name of “Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (Serbia)” – a list that includes the Dečani Monastery, the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, Gračanica Monastery and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša.



Dečani Monastery of
the Serbian Orthodox
Church



The Serbian
Patriarchate of
Peja/Peć

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.



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.



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



The complex
of the Church of
St.Mary

The complex of the Church of St.Mary

The complex of the Church of St. Mary is located in the village of Mushtishtë, in the southwest of Kosovo. It is estimated to have been built in the first part of the 14th century by Dragoslav Jovan, in tribute to Saint Mary. The church was part of a complex which also included homes to three priests and the bell house.

The interior of the church was decorated with wall paintings of at least two time periods (14th and 17th century). During the war of 1999, the entire complex was destroyed; leaving only relics behind, but even as such it still has historical and religious value.



The church of Saint Demetrius



Church of Presentation of St. Mary

The church of Saint Demetrius

The church of Saint Demetrius, known as the church of Saint Varvara of Kmetoc, is located in the village of Kmetoc in the southeast Kosovo, and dates back to the 14th century. Remains prove the existence of a monastery in the past. It is said that the monastery was initially dedicated to Saint Demetrius and later to Saint Barbara. The interior of the church used to be decorated with frescos dating back to the 14th century, but which sadly no longer exist. After the battle of Kosovo, in 1389, the church was severely damaged. The destruction of its entire layout occurred in the 18th century. Church stones were used for other social buildings and constructions, and what is left of the church today only serves for religious services on special days.

Church of Presentation of St. Mary

The Church of Presentation of St. Mary is located in the village Vaganesh, in the east of Kosovo, and was built between the 13th and 14th century. The church is dedicated to the Holy Virgin and it is believed to belong to the period of late antiquity or the early Middle Ages based on the inscriptions that indicate the time of construction.

After the fall of Prizren under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, in 1455, Isa Bey, a commander assigned by Fatih Sultan Mehmed, built the prayer room for the Ottoman soldiers.



A rare testament

The Islamic monuments from the early Ottoman period in Kosovo include the Mosque of Sultan Murad (built 1389–1440), in Prishtina, the Mosque and hamam of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1461), in Prishtina, and the Bazaar Mosque (1471), in Peja—all of them endowed by Ottoman emperors.

It is believed that the first mosque to be built in Kosovo, predating the Ottoman period by a century, was a mosque in the village of Mlikë (Gore) in the south of Kosovo built in 1289, by a Muslim family that migrated to the area from Aleppo, Syria. This rare testament of early Islamic presence in the Balkans was unfortunately caught in an accidental fire in the 19th century and destroyed, along with other invaluable books and documents.

Other notable Islamic monuments from the early Ottoman period in Kosovo include the Mosque of Sultan Murad (built 1389–1440), in Prishtina, the Mosque and hamam of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror (1461), in Prishtina, and the Bazaar Mosque (1471), in Peja—all of them endowed by Ottoman emperors. The Ghazi Ali Beg Mosque (1410) in Vushtrria, and the mosque and hamam of Hajji Hasan Beg (1462–85), in Peja, were founded by early Ottoman governors. The Llap Mosque (1470), in Prishtina, was endowed by a pious local Muslim resident.

Bazaar Mosque

The Bazaar Mosque is located within the complex of old Prishtina, in the central part of the city and it serves as the sanctuary of the Islamic faith. The mosque was built in the early 15th century by Sultan Bajaziti to commemorate the victory of the Ottoman forces and Sultan Murat on battle of 1389. Initially the mosque was located in the opposite of Old Bazaar which was demolished in the 60s, therefore even today it holds the name Bazaar Mosque. In functional, architectural and historical terms, this building

is a unique structure in harmony with time transformations, and its contest it preserves all characteristic elements of construction time, for which it ranks as the outstanding construction work.

Kerek Mosque Namazjah

The Namazjah is located in the north-western part of Prizren. The word “namazjah” comes from an old Persian word, meaning “prayer place”. After the fall of Prizren under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, in 1455, Isa Bey, a commander assigned by Fatih Sultan Mehmed, built the prayer room for the Ottoman soldiers. After the complete deployment of the Ottoman rule, Namazjah was left unattended, since regular mosques started being built. Later, since the Namazjah was in the suburbs of the former Prizren town, it was left to the use of farmers.

The Namazjah is also known by the people as Kerek Mosque, which means a broken mosque. Together with its surroundings, the building is a monument of historical value, and it is characteristic for the western part of Prizren.



THE NEOLITHIC PERIOD

The Vinca culture, dated from 5700–4500 BC 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.



THE NEOLITHIC PERIOD

The Goddess on the Throne is one of the most precious archaeological artifacts of Kosovo, typical of the Vinca Culture. The terracotta statue dates sometime between the 4th–3rd millennium BC.



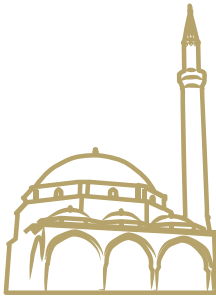
THE ROMAN ERA

An exceptional ancient find is the epigraphy monument from Smira from year 230 BC, featuring two labyrinths and a dedication to the “Goddess of Dardania”. Even during Roman times, the Dardanians kept their faith and continued to worship their Dardanian goddess along with other Illyrian gods.



THE MIDDLE AGES

There are many Serbian orthodox monuments from medieval times in Kosovo, four of which are inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The Gračanica monastery was built in 1321 AD, and many consider it as the culmination of Serbian medieval art of building in the Byzantine tradition.



THE OTTOMAN ERA

The Ottoman period left behind a wealth of heritage sites in Kosovo, including many distinctive mosques, houses, and even bridges. The Sinan Pasha Mosque is an Ottoman mosque in the city of Prizren, Kosovo, built in 1615. The mosque overlooks the main street of Prizren and is a dominant feature in the town's skyline.



THE OTTOMAN ERA

It is not known when exactly the Terzi Bridge was built, but it is thought to have been at the end of the 15th century, as it was erected on a medieval route, connecting Gjakova with Prizren. The bridge consists of 11 rounded arches, along which niches are embedded.



THE COMMUNIST ERA

In 1950, the early days of the communist regime in Kosovo, then part of Yugoslavia, the state motto for city planning was "Destroy the old, build the new". Two very atypical buildings as remnants of the time are the Youth and Sports Hall and the National Library of Kosovo.

NEWBORN

THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

A new era dawns on this small country. Many challenges lay ahead, but our will and determination to progress are stronger than ever.

AS WE ARE

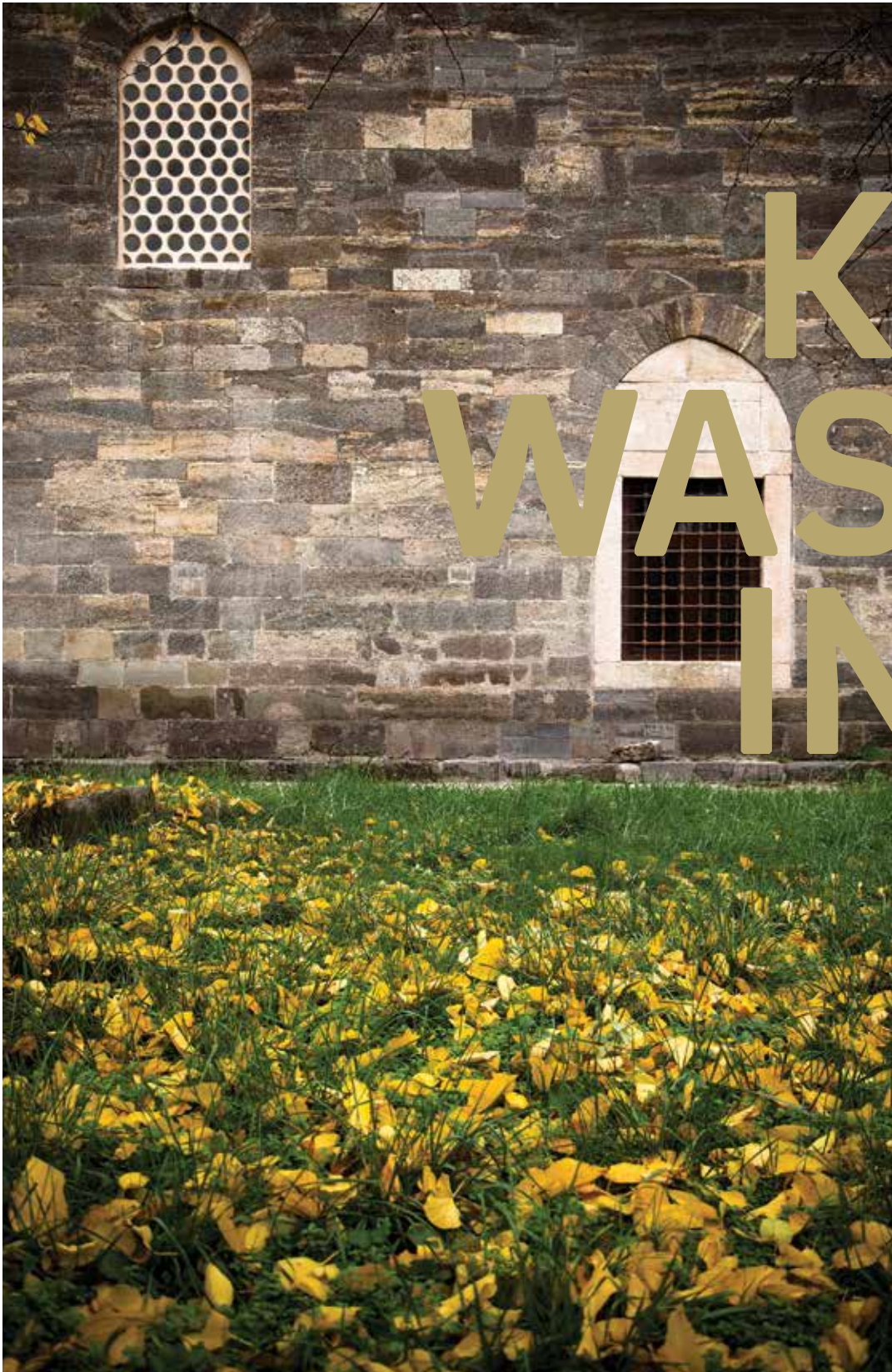
A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS





AS WE ARE

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



KOS WASN'T IN A

OSOVO T BUILT DAY

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

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.





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

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 very valuable in terms of archeology, history and tourism.

Over a cone-shaped hill, in an almost egg-shaped foundation, lies the Castle with fortified walls.

During research, traces dating back to the 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 the International Documentary Film Festival Dokufest, held in Prizren, an open cinema was built in the castle's gates, showing various films, and enriching the castle's functions with an important cultural activity. Each year young and passionate volunteers, mainly from Prizren, gather to organize the event of the year. It is both visually and spiritually fulfilling to either watch all this energy from the Prizren Castle, or to stop and watch a film in the castle's gates.



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.

Towers 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 at the central part of old town Prishtina 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 1970'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 an oda (the men's chamber), and traditional artifacts provided by the Ethnological Museum.



Ulpiana
Archeological Site

Archeological Sites

Ulpiana

Now only a collection of ruins, it was once known to be 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

Novoberde 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.



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

Tekkes

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, and it is the oldest tekke of the Saad Tarikat in the entire Balkans.



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.



Trepca Mosque in
Mazhiq built in 15th
century | Trepçë,
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.



Hammams

The Gazi Mehmet Pasha Hamam

This Hammam was 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.

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), over 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 function changes. But as a whole, complex "Emin Gjiku" remains one of the finest examples of town houses in the early XIX century.



Bridges

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. It consists of 11 rounded arches, among which niches are embedded. During the 18th century, the tailor guild of Gjakova sponsored the bridge's reconstruction, hence the bridge's name.





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 on 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.





AS WE ARE

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



AS WE ARE

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS

THE COL MEM OF HUN



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

LECTIVE ORY MANITY

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.



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 singlehandedly 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 Prishtina 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 egg-shaped instrument, which is where the sound is created. In the end, decorative lines, similar to the ones used in 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, available on Youtube.



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.

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 center 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 now, 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 ran it since the end of the 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.

68

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.

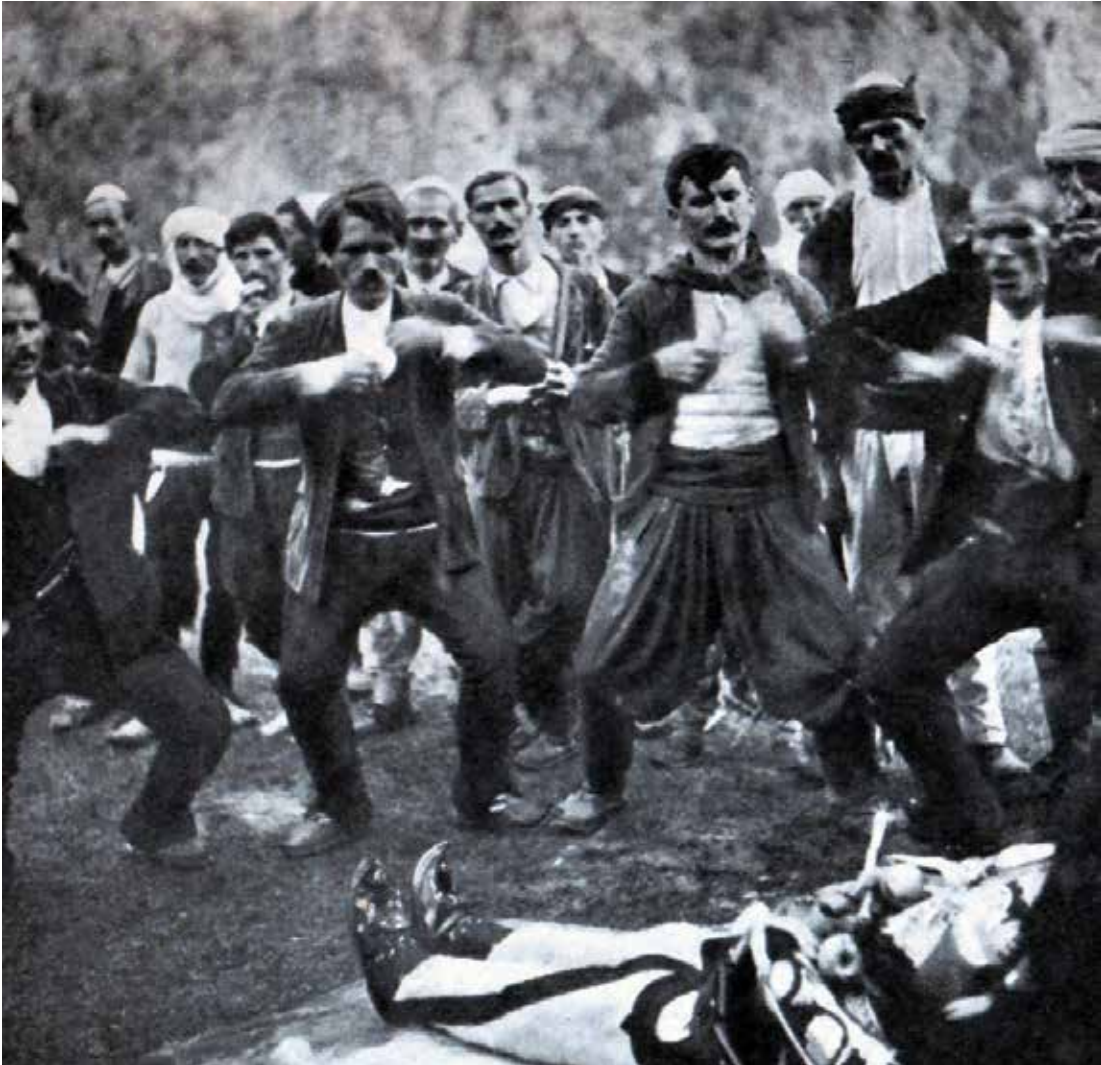
Currently, there are only two living people who know how to paint the brides' faces and are continuing the tradition – a woman aged 70 named Aziza Sefitagic, and her young student Elvisa Sagdati. Six other young women have been trained, but they are not practicing this art, posing a potential risk for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

AS WE ARE

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.



Oda

where social life flourished

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

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 members 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.

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

**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 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 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 djalin
(an Albanian can sacrifice his own son for besa)

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

Besa e shqiptarit si purteka e arit, etj
(the Albanians' besa is worth more than gold)

Alma Kushova, Albanian journalist, collecting old sayings about besa. OpenDemocracy, 22 July 2004 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".

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



Sofra

a precious treasure of cultural heritage in Kosovo

The ritual of SOFRA continues to be very popular and is present at almost every traditional wedding. One practically inevitable part of this ritual is indulgence in locally made wine and rakija.

Sofra represents a group of male artists and singers who sit together around the table, singing folklore songs and treating different social topics, which are followed by generations. These folk songs are accompanied with native many instruments like ciftelia or sharkia. Sofra is organized under traditional orders and represents a precious treasure of cultural heritage in Kosovo. Most popular sofra rituals are Sofra Pejane (Sofra from Peja) and Sofra Gjakovare (Sofra from Gjakova).

The sofra ritual continues to be very popular and is present at almost every traditional wedding. One practically inevitable part of the Sofra ritual is indulgence in locally made wine and, in particular, rakija – a strong fruit brandy, the (unofficial) national drink of Kosovo and many other Balkan countries.

AS WE ARE

A LIVING HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS



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 cross-gender and cross-dressing role in Europe”

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 cross-gender and cross-dressing role in Europe” (Robert Elsie, “Historical dictionary of Albania”, 2010).

¹ (Robert Elsie, “Historical dictionary of Albania”, 2010)



Kangë e valle songs with Def and dances holding hands



Valle happening across Kosovo involves men and women, holding each others hands, forming a circle and dancing by alternately lifting the left and the right foot.

103

Most of the songs are original creations that are a momentary dedication for the people getting married.

These songs are characteristic for weddings. They are separated in two parts. The first are songs for the bride before she gets married.

They're usually accompanied with Def – a traditional instrument and are similar to poetry. Most of those songs are original creations that are a momentary dedication for that person getting married. The second are songs for the couple. They are accompanied with lots of instruments and have interesting topics. Some of them express congratulations for the couple, the intricacies of living together, etc.

Wedding songs usually go together with specific traditional dances, therefore they are important in representing Kosovar tradition.

Dances or Valle may vary according to the respresting community based on national and religious belonging of the dancers. But the core idea of valle happening across Kosovo involves men and women, holding each others hands, forming a circle and dancing by alternately lifting the left and the right foot.

AS WE ARE

NURTUR TOMORROW

ING OUR RROW

50%

50% of people under the age of 25, a potential that can only be nourished through education.

2%

From 94% illiteracy by 1950s to 2% illiteracy among people aged 15-24 in 2014

98%

98% of primary school age children are attending school.



Overall ratio of male/female teachers is equal, although the ratio differs in their presence in preschool and universities.

500,000



1

17

free

ECTS

There are around 500,000 children and young adults currently attending all education levels, almost one third of the population, hosted in 1046 primary schools and 131 secondary schools.

On average there are 16 to 17 students per teacher, with a higher concentration of students in the cities and a lower one in the rural areas.

The education in Kosovo is free for all children from age 6 to 15.

Our higher education system is adapted to the Bologna process qualifications framework and we use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

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.

¹ 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

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

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

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.



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

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.

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 yearlong 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.



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



Essentials in advancing

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 many young scientists participating, it served 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). This is only the most recent example, as Kosovo and its youth constantly suffer from unfair and unnecessary obstacles that are counterproductive both internally, as well as in a wider regional context.

At this point in 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 – and all that Kosovo is asking is to not block our access to these opportunities.

AS WE ARE

HERIT ALL

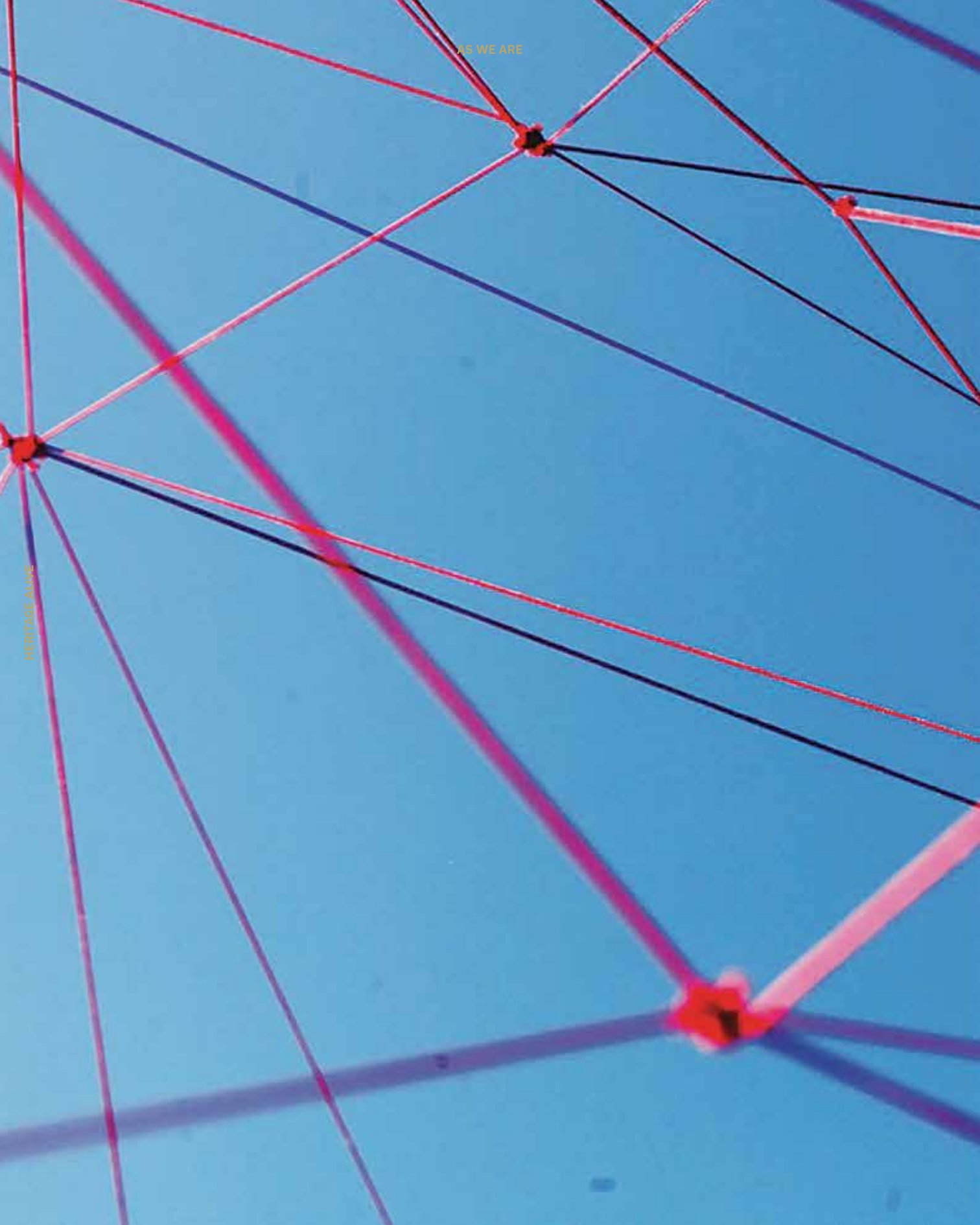
TAGE IVE

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

Cursed Mountains of Kosovo represent the most flourishing massive mountain in the Balkans, with the presence of over 1,000 flora species investigated so far, although this number is not definitive because researches would continue further.

AS WE ARE

HERITAGE ALIVE





AS WE ARE

HERITAGE ALIVE

CLIMATE CHANGE



CLIMATE CHANGE

Right now, the use of renewable energy sources in Kosovo consists mainly in the hydropower plant Ujmani/Gazivoda (=32 MW) and some small other hydropower plants (=10 MW) with a total of 42 MW available generation capacity.

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A developing country in favour of renewable energy development.

For the production of electricity, Kosovo is mainly relying on its 2 coal plants (Kosova A and B), with a total production of about 1000 MW.

But renewable energy sources represent an important part of the Energy Strategy of Kosovo. In implementing this energy policy, necessary legal and regulatory has been developed for Renewable energy sources.

In addition, incentive measures have been undertaken, such as feed-in tariffs for a number of renewable energy sources.

Hydropower

- Currently, the use of renewable energy sources consists mainly in the hydropower plant Ujmani/Gazivoda (=32 MW) and some small other hydropower plants (=10 MW) with a total of 42 MW available generation capacity.
- 77 locations have been identified so far, with a capacity of 128 MW.
- Another project, the Zhur Hydroelectric Power Plant, located in Prizren, has an estimated generation capacity of 305 MW.

In total, Hydropower could potentially generate 475 MW>Kosova plant A (450 MW)

Wind Power

- Three small wind power units have been built (only 1.3 MW) in Gotesht.
- Kosovo could be a very good starting point for the development of wind energy in the region. Seven project sites have been studied: the generation capacity would be 288 MW.

The windpower potential in Kosovo (288 MW) could produce the half of the current electricity production of the largest coal plant of Kosovo (Kosova B = 590 MW)

Solar energy

- Solar radiation in Kosovo is estimated to be between 1500 and 1650 kWh/m² per year.
- The solar radiation of the world's largest producer of solar energy (Germany) is between 1100 and 1300 kWh/m².
- Pilot projects for sanitary hot water by use of solar energy in public buildings have already been implemented by the Ministry of Economic Development.

Biomass

- The forest area in Kosovo covers close to 45% of Kosovo. In comparison, the forests in EU cover 40% of the total surface. Kosovo's forest area has increased to 5% (20,200 ha) from year 2002 to 2012.
- Forests of Kosovo have the potential to supply environmental services such as carbon sequestration.
- The biomass from these forests (wood) also represents a renewable natural resource.

Conclusion and other outlooks

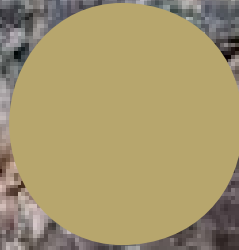
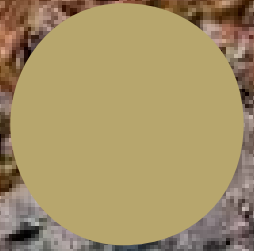
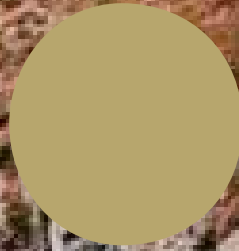
- With a potential capacity generation of 593 MW, the only use of wind and hydro power could potentially provide as much electricity as the largest coal plant of Kosovo (Kosova B)
- Some other renewable energy such as solar, biomass and geothermal energy are also seriously being envisaged.
- Innovative technologies are also studied, such as the use of landfill gas as a renewable energy resource, which would also reduce methane emissions from Kosovo's landfills.
- In addition, carbon capture and storage of CO₂ emitted by the coal power plants of Kosovo is considered. The legal and regulatory framework for geological exploration activities in place would enable to assess the CO₂ storage potential of Kosovo.

In a long-term perspective and with the assistance of the international community/European Union, Kosovo could reach the EU objective of 20% renewable energies.

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WATER

The water crossroads of the Balkans

- The topographic water catchment area of Kosovo is 11,645 km², while the country area is 10,887 km². It means that the majority of Kosovo's water resources are internal (93.5%).
- The water flowing through Kosovo, joining major rivers such as Danube and 7 countries in the region, reaches all the surrounding seas:
 - The Black Sea with 50.7% (Iber, Morava e Binces);
 - The Aegean Sea with 5.8% (Lepenc); and
 - The Adriatic Sea with 43.5% (Drini i Bardhe and Plava).
- Aware of this situation, Kosovo's authorities are actively involved in international water management programs, such as the Danube Water Program.
- Kosovo is also determined to play an important role in the establishment of transboundary cooperative management of river basins, especially for its longest river: the Drini i Bardhë. About 1.5 million people depend on the Drin basin, which covers a large geographical area which includes Albania, Greece, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro.

The Nerodime Bifurcation

- The bifurcation of the Nerodime River, located in the city of Ferizaj, represents the exceptional hydrological situation of Kosovo.
- This phenomenon is rarely occurring in the world and the fact that one river flows into two seas is very unique.
- The river springs in the Jezerc Mountains and in the village of Nerodime, it splits irreversibly into two branches, which are pouring in two different seas. Northern branch (left branch) flows into Sitnica River and continues its route to Ibar River, Morava and through Danube flows into the Black Sea, while the southern branch (right branch) through Lepenc River and through Vardar River flows into the Aegean Sea.
- The Nerodime Bifurcation streams' beds are currently protected to preserve this impressive natural phenomenon.
- It has been put under legal protection as special nature reserve since 1979. This natural curiosity is quite attractive for researchers and visitors and is of great educational, scientific and touristic importance.

Other information

- The ground water reserves being limited, the main source for drinking-water supply remains surface water. The artificial lakes of Kosovo (Batllava, Gazivoda, Radoniqi, Perlepnica and Badovc) provide 58% of the drinking-water produced in Kosovo.
 - 62% of the drinking-water produced in Kosovo is coming from surface water (lakes/reservoirs/rivers).
 - Groundwater and surface water resources are important in the west of Kosovo. They are located in a complex system of the Dinaric karsts area and remain insufficiently known. Kosovo could join projects such as the transboundary project DIKTAS, for the protection and sustainable use of the Dinaric karst aquifer system.
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NATU HERI





The forest area in Kosovo covers close to 45% of Kosovo. In comparison, the forests in EU cover only 40% of the total surface.

A SMALL TERRITORY
KM2 / 2,800-3,000
VASCULAR FLORA,
SPECIES / **200** SPECIES
BUTTERFLIES AND
WATER MACROZOO
TAXON / **237** PLANT
MAJORITY OF WHICH
ENDEMIC PLANTS

RY OF **10.908**
0 SPECIES OF
/ **250** VERTEBRATE
ECIES OF
OVER / **500**
BENTHOS
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OF BALKANS

Natural Sciences Serving Kosovo's Biodiversity

State of flora

- The Republic of Kosovo, although a small territory (10.908 km²), is rather rich in its plant diversity.
- According to data available by various authors, it is thought that in Kosovo there are approximately 2,800-3,000 species of vascular flora.
- This floristic diversity comes as a result of geographical position of Kosovo in Balkans, the historical background of flora and vegetation of Kosovo, diversified pedological and geological composition, climate factor, the position of mountains surrounding Kosovo and impacts of floristic elements from Mediterranean, Europe and Asia.

Red book of vascular flora

- Flora experts from Kosovo, in cooperation with regional natural scientists, managed to realize an exhaustive inventory of Kosovo's endangered flora.
- This inventory provides scientific and detailed information about each threatened species of flora, such as their level of risk factors and causes that have affected their risk.
- There are 237 plant taxa, the majority of which are rare, endemic plants of Balkans and endemic plants of Kosovo.

State of fauna

- In terms of fauna, Kosovo is characterized by a large variety of species, although research in this aspect has not been completed.
- The richest areas of fauna in Kosovo are mountains' massif (Sharr Mountains and Bjeshket e Nemuna).
- It is estimated that in Kosovo live about 250 vertebrate species, 200 species of butterflies and over 500 water macrozoobenthos taxon.
- The most representative species of the fauna of Kosovo are: Lynx (*Lynx lynx*), Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*), European Roe (*Capreolus capreolus*), Wild Goat (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Mountain Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), etc. They have a national and international protection status.

Red book of fauna

- The exact number of species of fauna should be determined based on the inventory that is planned to be implemented in the future both in the drafting of the Red Book for fauna and within other projects. Both of these Red books (Fauna and Vascular Flora) can serve as a guide not only for MESP, but also for all other scientific institutions, NGOs and researchers in general working to prevent negative impacts and other threats to disappear the Flora and Fauna of Kosovo.



A small country with a big natural potential to protect

-
- The last 15 years, the number of protected natural sites has increased threefold.
 - 80 new nature areas have been taken under legal protection and over 100 others have been proposed.
 - Two National Parks have been declared by the Assembly of Kosovo – NP “Sharri” and NP PK “Bjeshkët e Nemuna”, with a total area of 115,957 ha.
 - When it comes to the percentage of territory declared as a National Park, Kosovo is the 2nd country in Europe with more than 10% of lands covered.
-
- In addition to National Parks, Kosovo has:
 - One Special Protected Area of Birds
 - Wetland of Henci-Radeve with an area of 109 ha.
 - 99 Nature Monuments with an area of 5.972 ha. Out of them 66 with botanic character, 17 hydrological, 7 geomorphologic and 9 speleological.
 - 11 Nature strict reserves with a total area of 847 ha.
-
- This also includes the Regional Park Germia with an area of 1.126 ha, the Park of Shkugëza with an area of 70 ha and Pishat e Deçanit with 15 ha.
-



Zemra Lake is a mountain lake in Kosovo, located near the peak of Gushan, 2,539m high. Zemra Lake resembles the shape of a heart and is only one of a many smaller lakes found around this area.

National Parks

National Park Sharri

The National Park of Sharri covers approximately 53,469 ha. It is ranked among the six areas with the richest biodiversity in Europe. Parts of this rich biodiversity are:

Over 2000 species of plants, about 400 endemic plants, 20 types steno-endemic, over 250 medicinal plants, 160 types of wood; Over 180 communities (associations) plant; 32 species of mammals; 19 types of reptiles; 12 types of amphibian species; 200 species of birds; 147 species of butterflies.

National Park Bjeshkët e Nemuna

- The National Park covers a surface of 62,488 ha, or 5.7 % of Kosovo surface.
- The massif of Bjeshket e Nemuna, as the largest massif in the Balkans is characterized by a very rich fauna, heterogeneous, endemic and interesting.
- Bjeshket e Nemuna are among the most characteristic mountain massifs in the Balkans in terms of flora and vegetation diversity.
- It represents the most flourishing mountain in the Balkans, with the presence of over 1,000 flora species investigated so far.
- At Bjeshket e Nemuna, in only alpine and subalpine area, there are 128 Balkan fauna endemic species.

Wetland of Henc

- The wetland of Henc, also known as “cradle of biological biodiversity” providing water and primary productivity for the existence of numerous species of plants and animals, is a

very rich zone in terms of zoological diversity

- The Government of Kosovo in 2013 declared the Henc/Radeva wetland as a special protection bird area.
- The area covers 109 hectares
- Natural habitats of the Wetland of Henc provide shelter to many types of birds, many of which are rare and with an unfavorable protection status in Kosovo and in Europe.
- Until now, 78 types of birds have been recorded, but this number may result higher if a comprehensive systematic and professional study is conducted in this area.

Natura 2000 areas

- NATURA 2000 is a European network of protected areas aiming at securing the long-term conservation of the most valuable species and habitats of community importance.
- The areas of “NATURA 2000” represent a joint interest of EU and they are proposed by member states. However, as a potential candidate of European Union membership, Kosovo already started to work on setting up Natura 2000 areas on its territory.
- Kosovo’s authorities have identified 195 sites of high conservation value and proposed to be protected.

Mirusha Waterfall

- Promulgation of Nature Regional Park with a surface of 555ha in 1983.
- Promulgation of Mirusha Waterfalls Nature Monument of Special Interest with a total surface of 598ha in 2012.
- The canyon of Mirusha is one of most interesting nature areas in Kosovo.
- The downstream of Mirusha Rivers passes through a gorge of 16 exciting waterfalls with lakes that make the most attractive part of this canyon.

- 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 Lumbardhi 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.

Gërmia Regional Park

- The Gërmia Regional Park lies in the northeast of capital city Pristina, and includes an area of 1,126ha.
- Gërmia relief consists of hills with different altitude and slopes, divided between them with the spaces of valley, streams and rivers.
- Thanks to its geographical position, pedological and climate conditions, the mountain massif Gërmia is quite rich in terms of flora, vegetation and fauna.
- From research done until now, 610 vascular species of flora are evidenced which are collected in 82 families and 83 mushroom species not including taxons of weeds, ruderals and other low plants, out of which five species are endemic and 12 are medical types.
- According to the research conducted so far, five types of amphibians, seven species of reptiles, 19 species of mammals and 30 species of birds have been recorded there.

Joint Natural Heritage of Europe – Kosovo beech forests

Following the inclusion of the Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany as a serial transnational site in the list of World Natural Heritage of UNESCO in 2011, for the new phase of the enlargement process of the beech forests in Europe, experts from different countries of Europe identified potential candidate sites (44 locations from 20 European countries), and Kosovo's "Bjeshkët e Nemuna" (the Cursed Mountains) was included as one of those valuable beech forest sites. It was not however eligible to be inscribed in the list, as Kosovo is not yet a member of UNESCO.

Given the high value of beech forests in Europe in terms of natural heritage, and despite the fact that Kosovo is not a member of UNESCO, the Kosovo authorities are highly interested to participate in the process enlargement of beech forests in Europe, to ensure more effective protection of the site not only "Bjeshkët e Nemuna" but more broadly of this unique global ecosystem in Europe. The Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency has already started cooperation with multiple international partners about the project: "Beech Forests – Common Natural Heritage of Europe", aimed to protect and explore the vegetation of old beech forests located within the National Park "Bjeshket e Nemuna". Cooperation on this project started in 2013 with participation in various workshops and meetings and will continue until 2017, however it is difficult for Kosovo to work isolated on this project. Environment protection and forest preservation is a pressing global issue, and allowing Kosovo to participate in these efforts through its UNESCO membership can only result in positive outcomes for everyone.



Bjeshket e Nemu-
na includes the
mountains and unique
landscapes and is one
of the most important
areas for biodiversity
conservation in the
Balkans and in the
whole of Europe.

To Protect



—The continuity and connectivity of habitats in the border areas requires trans-boundary linkages, corridors which link protected area networks of neighbouring countries.
 —Kosovo being now a member of the European Environment Agency is clearly associated with this approach and participates actively in several regional and trans-boundary initiatives.

Dinaric Arc Parks, an “Undiscovered World”

- The Dinaric Arc is a region of South-Eastern Europe that covers some 100,000 km² and more than 6,000 km of coastline, stretching over the entire area oriented towards the Adriatic Sea from Trieste (Italy) to Tirana (Albania).
- With its natural and cultural values, the Dinaric Arc stands even with the Carpathians, Alps or any other known eco-region in the world.
- The Dinaric Arc Parks project, started in 2012 with the WWF, aims to create a network of nature and national parks in the territory of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.
- Kosovo environmental authorities are participating in the creation of this international nature protection project.
- Beauty, culture, geographical position and biological diversity of the Dinaric Arc countries are already a tourist attraction.
- Kosovo, in collaboration with the Dinaric Arc Parks, will ensure that employees of protected areas are introduced to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism of the EUROPARC Federation, as well as to its practical implementation in our region.

Trans-boundary protected Areas

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROTECTED AREA “BJESHKET E NEMUNA”

- The proposed area for protection is expected to include Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. Bjeshket e Nemuna includes the mountains and unique landscapes and is one of the most important areas for biodiversity conservation in the Balkans and in the whole of Europe.
- This region is considered to be the most inaccessible mountain range in Europe, and the wildest range on the Balkan Peninsula, especially with a very rare flora, not only in the Balkan Peninsula but in Europe as well.

TRANS-BOUNDARY PROTECTED AREA “SHARR - KORAB - DESHAT”

- This area, located in the border areas of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, harbours two mountain ranges of the alpine landscape, vast mountain grasslands, and forests that include primeval tree stands of the endemic pine.
- It includes a significant number of natural habitats and endemic, old, rare, and threatened flora and fauna species.
- Some of these are species of common European importance like the brown bear, the wolf, and the Balkan lynx.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN BELT ASSOCIATION

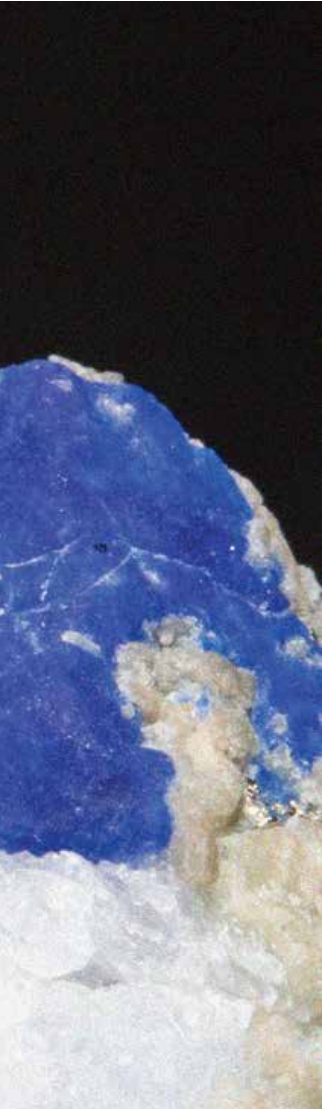
- The European Green Belt represents the initiative and ensure coordination and information exchange among the European Green Belt community.
- Kosovo is part of this initiative for years and will be represented in this Association by the Kosovo Institute for Nature Protection.

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A Geological Masterpiece



Geology of Kosovo

- Kosovo has not only outstanding geological and hydro-geological sites such as Gadime's cave or geothermal sources of "Banja e Pejës" and "Banja e Skenderajt" but also an extraordinary variety of geological formations and landscapes.
- Among these are rocks ranging from old crystalline Proterozoic to Quaternary age comprising sedimentary and magmatic types together with rather less frequent metamorphic rocks.
- Kosovo is a very important knot in the Balkan geology. In its territory are developed various sedimentary, magmatic and metamorphic formations.
- Most remarkable are the Vardari and Gjakove-Rahovec ophiolite formations representing the remnants of two branches of the Tethys oceanic basin.
- Kosovo is willing to join programs, such as the International Geosciences Program, and gather geoscientists to increase knowledge on its geological resources and processes. It would enable the country to direct its policies towards a more sustainable development, strengthening its natural disaster mitigation program and mineral and groundwater resource extraction.

Gadime's cave

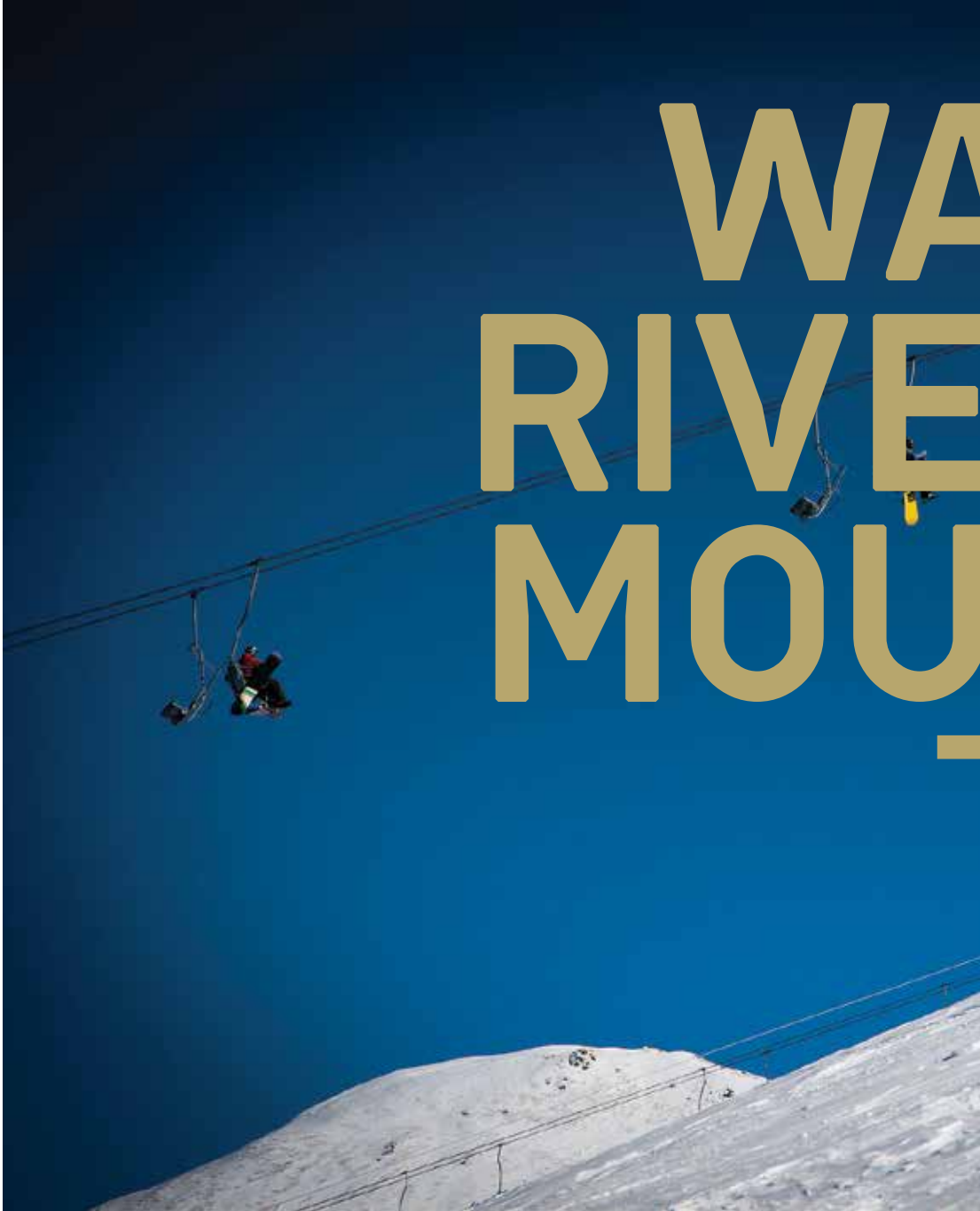
- Gadime Cave is a cave composed of Paleozoic marble, located in the village of DonjeGadimje on the eastern side of the Kosovo Valley.
- The northern passage contains displays of aragonite speleothems in a variety of rare formations.
- + Text from "KOSOVO IN UNESCO"
The genesis of a jewel – MARC PERRY
- Text from "KOSOVO IN UNESCO"

Geothermal water

- Kosovo has important thermal water resources, which are mainly used for healing and recreation purposes.
 - About 30 identified sources of thermal and mineral water in Kosovo.
 - The most famous ones are of "Banja e Pejës" and "Banja e Skenderajt".
 - The overall temperature of thermo-mineral water in the Republic of Kosovo ranges from 17 to 540 C.
 - These thermal water sources may also be used for thermal energy production.
-

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WAT RIVER MOUN

ERY, Y AND TAINY

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

▪ Recreational and Sport Ecotourism in Kosovo include: Many suitable terrains for the development of skiing. The capacity of skiing terrains of the centres can receive thousands of visitors during the winter season.

The average length of snowfall is 100 days in higher areas of Kosovo.

Many peaks which are very attractive for the development of climbing and mountaineering.



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 2,500 m. The mountains are known for their rich flora and fauna as well as wide and challenging ski terrains.



Mountain ecotourism and walking in nature opens real opportunities for the development of walking in nature, biking in mountain, but also expeditions and camping.

Besides Sharri and Bjeshket e Nemuna Mountains, this type of tourism can be developed in Shalla e Bajgores Mountains, Berisha Mountains and Jezerc.

Brezovica

Located in the south-east of Kosovo, with a territory of 80 km² and a highest point of 2,500 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.

Ecotourism of caves are amongst the most popular natural attractions. Besides Gadime's Cave, Kosovo has also some other caves: Gryka e Madhe Cave, Panorci Cave, Pjetërshitica Cave, Radavci Cave, etc.

Kosovo is improving their infrastructure to provide very good conditions for tourism development of caves.

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



▪ Educational and scientific tourism: Kosovo have a potential for the development of educational and research activities with pupils, students and scientists from Kosovo, but also for foreign research expedition.

Rugova Mountains

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.



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.

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.

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.



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.

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.

AS WE ARE

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AS WE ARE

HEART TO TECH





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.

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 Europe¹, 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), 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.²

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.

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

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

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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 multidisciplinary 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 projects, programmes, and social ventures. 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.



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.

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.



DOKU:TECH

A collective enthusiasm.

Bringing the Future Closer

For DOKU:TECH to happen, a community of mavericks, creators, techies, researchers, doers, investors, incubators and accelerators have joined forces to create a unique program. Both science and DOKU:TECH advance by discovering new things and developing new ideas together.

In the words of the artist-philosopher James Lee Byars: "To arrive at the edge of the world's knowledge, seek out the most complex and sophisticated minds, put them in a room together, and have them ask each other the questions they are asking themselves."

Those questions are raised by known founders, entrepreneurs and doers coming from more than 20 countries. They all have in common one thing and that is their readiness to challenge utopias of the world together in one room. A small miracle occurs in this manner: the international character of DOKU:TECH turns into a must-have inspirational event for coming generations.

In the program of 2015, DOKUTECH brought to Kosovo Yanki Margalit, Laurent Haug and Elizabeth Stark exploring that explored beyond the future by emphasizing social,

ecological and technical innovation, innovator's mindset, the future of decentralized technology, and the endless opportunities that tech brings to society.

But if technology is so exceptional, why was its impact so low? Is technology evenly and fairly distributed? If not, who controls it? Kentaro Toyama and Peter Sunde demonstrated the dark side of this cult of technology.

How do we restore this balance, bring forward the winning mindset for technology breakthrough and opt for the right path from thinking to concrete actions? Jan-Erik Nyrovaara, Arikia Millikan and Max Gurvits focused on ways of creating transformative actions by combining real world problems with challenging natural environments and high cultural diversity.



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

HackerShtellë

Prishtina Hackerspace+Baushtellë

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

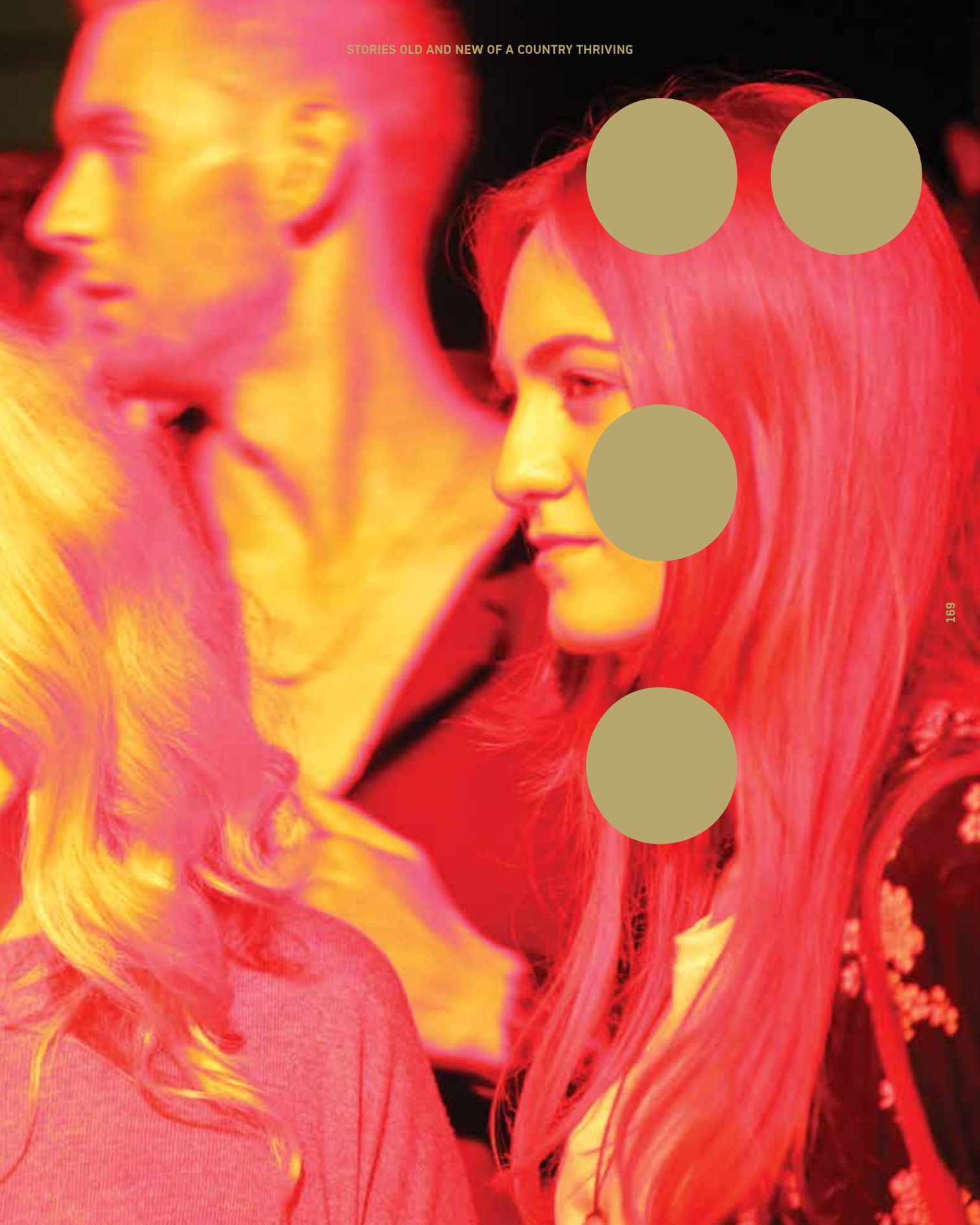
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STORIES CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

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Photo taken during
Gjon Miti Interna-
tional Photo Exhi-
bition/13th Edition

ALONE TOGETHER:
PHOTOGRAPHY
AND THE OTHER

Curated by Frits
Gierstberg at The
Kosovo National
Gallery of Arts

“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 Mulliqi, 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 Behluli, 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 the Balkans.

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



Flaka Haliti

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

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

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 a bull's testicles.

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



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



AS WE ARE

STORIES CONTEMPORARY



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.”

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 canaries, 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 Shkololli, director of the National Gallery of Arts at the time and curated by Kathrin Rhomberg.

AS WE ARE



STORIES CONTEMPORARY



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.

Right after the politically loud artists of the first generation, comes Sislej Xhafa, maybe the loudest and maybe also the most political artist, 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 machismo, 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 his work shown twice and officially in Venice Biennale. The most 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.



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.

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 a 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 Freeze show, organized by Damien Hirst. Since then she has exhibited widely internationally.

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.



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

STORIES CONTEMPORARY



COUNTRY GREAT FILM FESTIVAL

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 most important documentary and short film festivals in the World.

The Kosovo war of 1999 had left the city of Prizren without any cinema, but after a group of friends founded DokuFest in 2002, that did not only awake Lumbardhi, the oldest open air cinema in the city, but it influenced the invention of a series of 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 that 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 work-shops, 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 lets them caress it, offering charm and relevancy worldwide. This did not only help grow DokuFest into 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 introduces 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



PriFest 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 PriFest receive a statue called "Golden Goddess", based on 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 topics relevant to Kosovo. The other festival taking place in the capital is Nine Eleven, a short film festival dedicated to an 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.

AS WE ARE

STORIES CONTEMPORARY



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 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 involved in curating and exhibiting at the National Art Gallery of Kosovo 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.

AS WE ARE



REDO

International

Graphic Design

Conference

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

The REDO Conference is an annual cultural event in Prishtina, comprising speaker lectures, workshops and bookshops, which focuses on engaging practices, international tendencies, unconventional ideas and processes, panel discussions, and theoretical analysis; all 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 for graphic design.

Respected graphic designers, typographers, and many from the design field of academia have graced the stage in front of an ever-growing, eager crowd. Worth mentioning are 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 in the last year. Students and enthusiasts of all kinds, designers, architects, photographers and programmers, are all participants.



Stacion—Center for Contemporary Art Prishtina

A necessary momentum in the emancipation of the contemporary art scene and cultural environment of Kosovo.

Stacion Center for Contemporary Art Prishtina is a project institution for contemporary art and architecture, that was established in 2006 by artist Albert Heta and architect Vala Osmani.

Since then, Stacion served as a meeting point for artists, architects, thinkers, critics and other sociopolitical workers committed to reflecting and responding on relevant challenges of the contemporary society with an active, critical and emancipatory approach. It functions as an open platform that employs strategies to build up a dialogue with a differentiated public; works with clear social and political intents; encourages artistic practice and advanced architectural research, stands for intellectual independence and works to create conditions where contemporary thought and practice can happen.

This summer STACION brought to Kosovo the summer school called 'Summer School as School' (SSAS) a guide and an intervention, designed to collect and disseminate critical knowledge produced by selected professionals, thus exploring and responding to relevant challenges of today and establishing new models and possibilities in art

education and art collaboration. Structured as a hub with five core courses, public presentations and conferences an evening program and an exhibition, SASS produced a unique experience and a model that gathered the most relevant figures in art and education globally, including: Technical Assistant of the Museum of MoAA, Adrian Deva, Branislav Dimitrijević, Martin Fritz, Felix Gmelin, Edi Hila, Ibrom Hasanović, Vjollca Krasniqi, Nita Luci, Nebojša Milikić, Suzana Milevska, Miran Mohar, Alban Nuhiu, Adrian Paci, Amila Ramović and Pepi Sekulich, among others.

For years now, Stacion is committed to the recreation of the necessary momentum for the advance and emancipation of the contemporary art scene and cultural environment of Kosovo.

Lambda— Lambda— Lambda



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

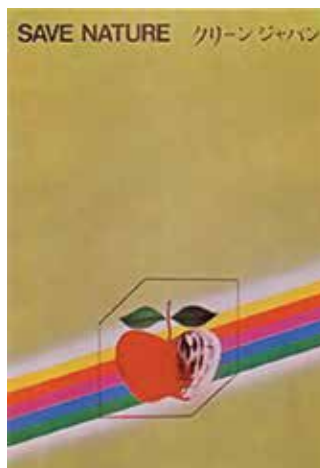
STORIES CONTEMPORARY

Is a art space that provides artists, professionals and audience with an intimate and informal environment conducive to experimentation, discussion and learning.

LambdaLambdaLambda was founded by Isabella Ritter and Katharina Schendl with the aim to strengthen the dialogue between local and international artists. During the summer 2015, Lamba hosted the exhibition of Tatjana Danneberg. The faces, shoes, the dress and her suit could be read as traces of fleeting fragments of memories that come to her paintings in a ghostly manner and seem to not be an image yet. Most of the works presented at Lambda Lambda Lambda use the inverse process as an attempt to dissolve materials involved. While the glass vessels that could act as a transparent frame to capture fleeting moments are infused with different perfume scents empahsizing the "essence of the past".

Shyqri Nimani,
poster 1976

Kosovo has an alternative graphic design scene



I am a failed graphic designer. This is a paraphrase of what somehow Cornel Windlin said in Prishtina in 2014. Cornel is a very influential swiss graphic designer and typographer known for his eccentricism other than his work. He has no website, no social media profiles, does not attend conferences, and almost never goes public. Yet, the participants of REDO Design Conference managed to have the rare opportunity to hear him talk about his life and work. In Prishtina. In Kosovo. REDO is an annual international design conference held in Prishtina. And is focused mostly on graphic design. It is one of the rare ones that does not deal with advertising in any way. It is conference for graphic design purists.

Graphic design in Kosovo started during communist administration. In the eighties there was a graphic design department opened at the University of Prishtina's Faculty of Art. It was opened by Shyqri Nimani, who had just returned from his graduate studies in Tokyo. Thus, it would make sense that the first real graphic design influences were closely related to japanese graphic design. It was a modernist approach that paved the way for the first wave of properly designed posters, logos and books.

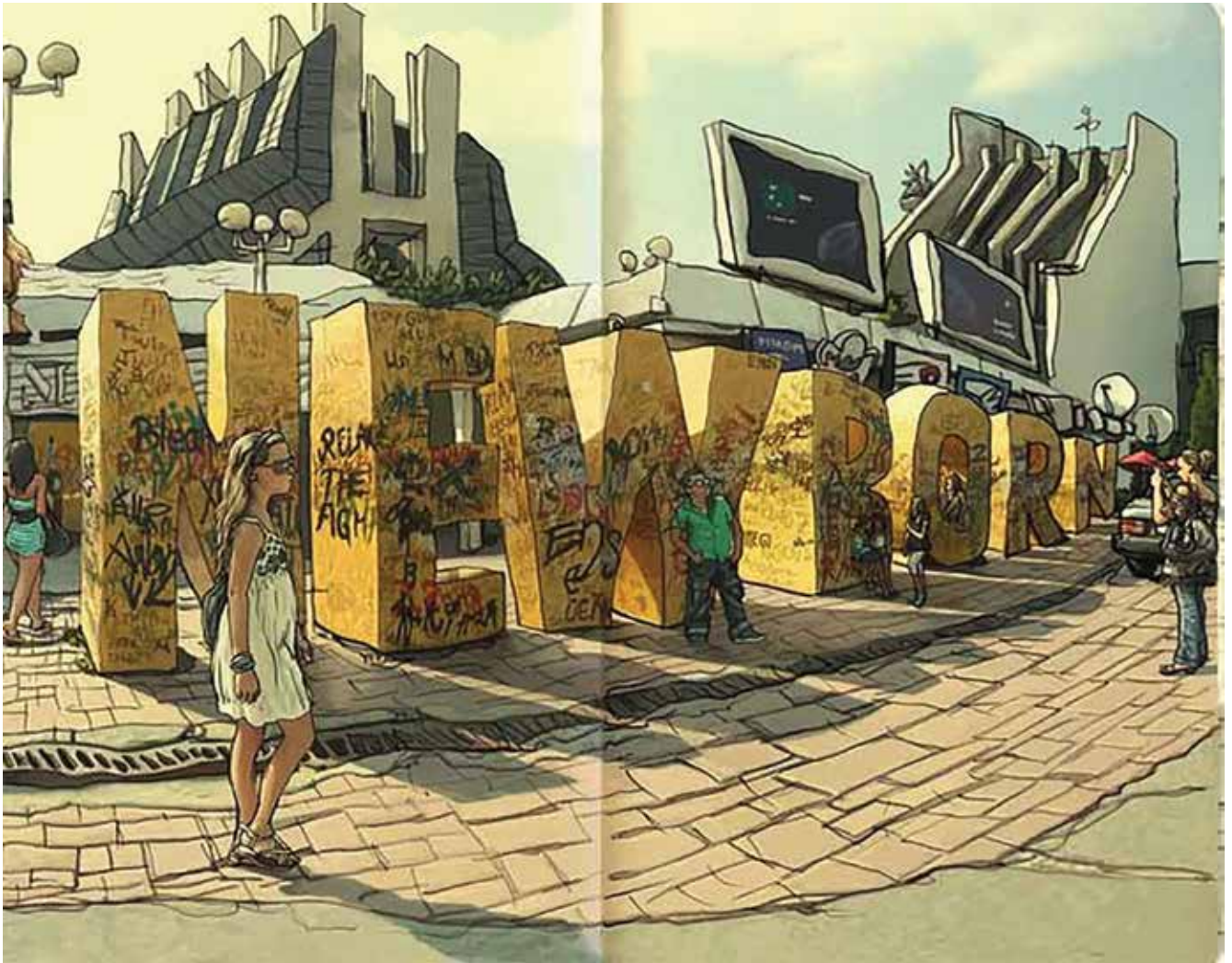
There were some posters and books made before the 1980's, but mostly by painters and other visual artists not specialised in graphic design.

But the late 1980's and early 1990's were also challenging for this first wave of designers. Computers became an essential component of the design process. A new postmodern tide was also hitting graphic design globally. Kosovo and Yugoslavia had huge political and economic problems, with Kosovo practically being at war. Kosovo designers had just started doing graphic design, and then suddenly there were bigger problems than following international trends and practices. During the 1990's there was a new tendency in graphic design of Kosovo. Because professional designers were resisting new technology, design was being done

by young untrained people, resulting in an abundance of typeface stretching, badly edited photography, etc. Weirdly enough, this was rather in line with new postmodern trends. Not rarely one could read a magazine set in a different typeface for each page.

If graphic design in Kosovo was viewed as a linear process, the 1990's were the second wave, and the third wave being designers that came back from studies abroad. During the 1990's, more than half a million Albanians from Kosovo left the country to go to western countries. After the Kosovo war, some of them returned with professional degrees.

Kosovo's graphic design is mostly influenced—even today—by modernist tendencies. Although the Graphic Design department of the University of Prishtina is still caught in the eighties, there are several individuals and initiatives that are helping create a new order of graphic design, such as the REDO International Design Conference, Design Talks etc. There are also several graphic design puritans doing remarkable work every day, setting the bar even higher for advertising agencies to improve the aesthetic and ideological aspect of their work.



NEWBORN, the typographic monument of Independence

this illustration is
part of the comic
book 'New Born - 10
Dias No Kosovo'
by the Portuguese
Comic Artist Ricardo
Cabral.

NEWBORN is the independence monument of Prishtina. It was unveiled on 17 February 2008, the day Kosovo declared independence. This typographic monument consists of the English-language word "Newborn" in capital block letters, which were painted bright yellow when the sculpture was first revealed.

NEWBORN was created by Fisnik Ismaili and the creative agency Ogilvy Kosova. At the unveiling of it the organizers handed out black permanent markers and invited then President Fatmir Sejdiu and Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi to sign it, an act that was followed by some 150,000 people attending the manifestations on 17 February 2008.

The monument is an internationally acclaimed work of design and has won prizes in six major international competitions in design category. Silver Clio Award was awarded at the 49th Clio Awards Festival for motivating human behavior in significant ways, the prestigious Cannes Gold Lion was awarded at the 55th Annual Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival,[5] Eurobest European Advertising Festival Silver Award,[6] Golden Drum Grand Prix and many other acclamations worldwide.

It weighs 9 tons, is 3 meters high and 24 meters long, all set in DIN Black typeface.

AS WE ARE

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

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First country in the Balkans to elect a woman as president in 2011. More than one third of members of the Parliament and Diplomatic Corps are women.



Almost a dozen of ethnic communities peacefully cohabit in Kosovo, the largest ones being Albanians, Serbs, Romani, Ashkali, Egyptians, Turks, Bosnians and Gorani.



Kosovo has five official languages, Albanian, Serbian, Turkish, Bosnian and Roma, the first two being national and the latter three being municipal official languages. English is the working language in most institutions.

#lovewins



#lovewins
Kosovo Constitution is the only one in the Balkans that bans discrimination based on race, gender, religion and sexual orientation since 2008.

More than half a dozen faiths are practised here. Kosovo is renowned for cultivating religious harmony over the centuries.

Kosovo is a champion. In 2015, soon after joining the International Olympic Committee, we won our first olympic medal.

AS WE ARE

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STORIES OLD AND NEW OF A COUNTRY THRIVING





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 female president – H.E. Atifete Jahjaga in 2011, and has steadily 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 female president – H.E. Atifete Jahjaga – in 2011, and has steadily 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, the second highest representation in the region. It should be noted that about half of them are elected without quota. Although few in number, the female ministers in our government hold very 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 almost doubled 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, with better access to education and strong female role models, our women will reach full empowerment 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.

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 specific matters related to European integration, and that of fighting the daily prejudices on the sources and causes of her success. Despite the challenges, Vlora pushed the European Agenda and moved the gender equality agenda at a rate that no other politician managed to do before, strongly supported the initiative to request justice for the victims of sexual violence during the war in Kosovo, advanced the communities inclusion agenda, opened her doors to the LGBT community, and today represents Kosovo in Washington.

Mimoza Kusari-Lila, the first female mayor in Kosovo, won her mandate in Gjakova in 2013. That was all thanks to the long years of dedication and perseverance in making things right, whether the cause was gender equality or economic development. Mimoza’s remarkable energy has allowed her to excel in everything that she puts her mind to – from start-ups of educational institutions, such as the American University in Kosovo, to changing national pol-

icies as a Minister. Her career choices reflect her desire to keep a balance between her entrepreneurial drive and her political ambition – she completed her graduate studies in business, but has never shied away from politics. Mimoza was first exposed to politics in 2003 when she became the spokesperson and political advisor to then Prime Minister of Kosovo Bajram Rexhepi. She was the face and voice of the Kosovo government for more than a year, garnering sympathy from many citizens for being the first woman to have such a position while remaining impartial in political beliefs.

Later she moved from the political spotlight to start up the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, which quickly became very politically influential, changing national fiscal policies and trade agreements. In 2011, she was appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo and Minister of Trade and Industry, where she stayed until 2013, before deciding to go back to her hometown and change the game there.

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. They are sometimes referred to as the RAE community - which is incorrect, as each of these communities is different. There are about 9,000 Romani, 15,000 Ashkali and 11,000 Egyptians living in Kosovo. The languages used vary for each community depending on where they live, and they include Romani, Albanian and Serbian language. All three communities are predominantly 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.

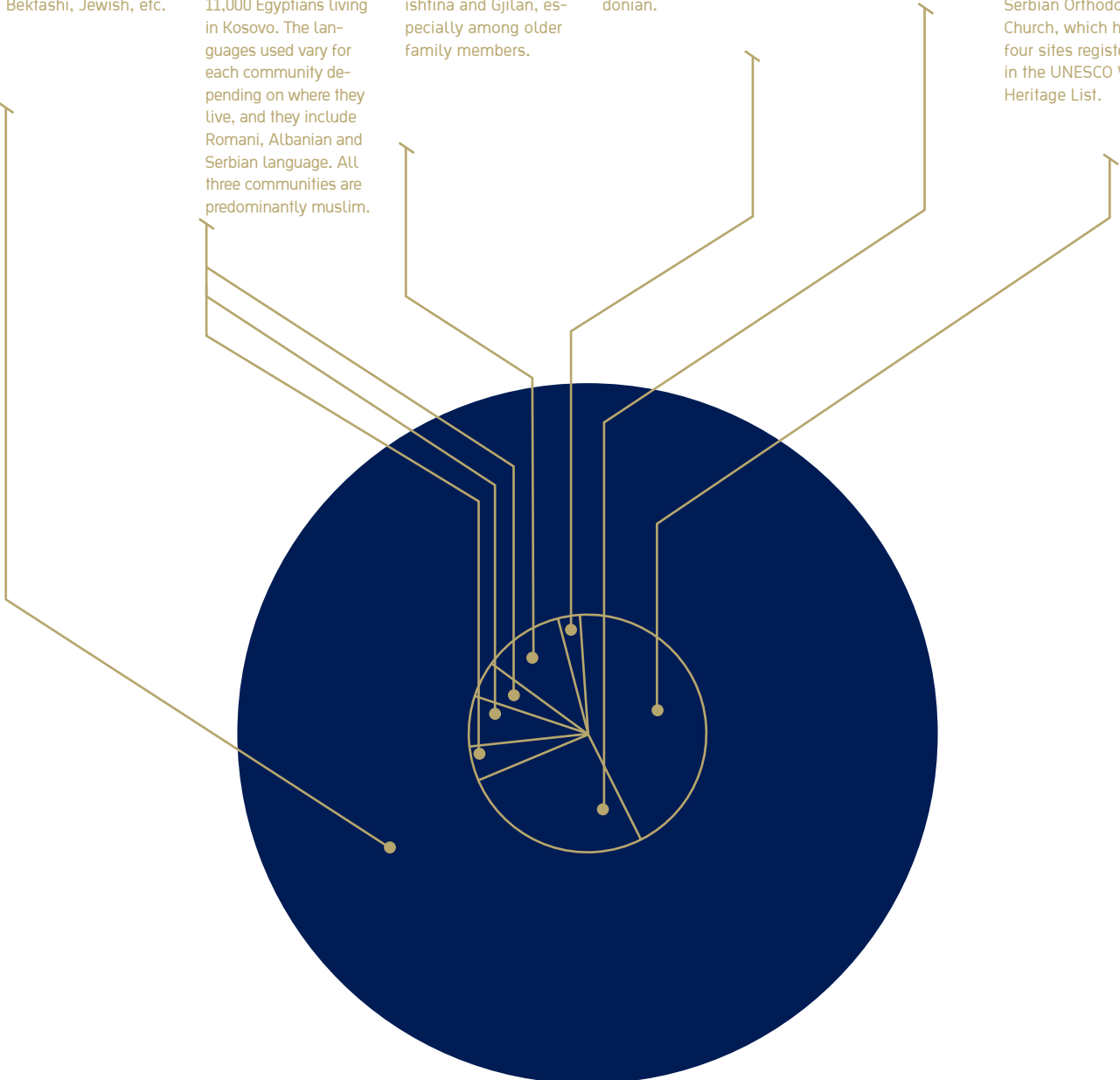
BOSNIANS

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

The second largest community in Kosovo, the Serbs number around 100,000 living in Kosovo, living in different areas across Kosovo, including the north, east and south, in cities such as Mitrovica, Gjilan and Gracanica. 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 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.



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.



A young media environment!

Sixteen years after the war and seven years after independence, Kosovo has a larger and a more diverse media market. In addition to print and television media, online journalism has gained ground as never before, which is inevitable in the era of internet.

A newborn country, emerging from a devastating war, whose people have gone through grim oppression and a systematic policy of apartheid, and resolutely facing challenges of transition and state-building, it is perfectly logical that Kosovo would face significant difficulties to building a sustainable media landscape.

Before the 1998-1999 Kosovo War, majority-Albanian population was predominantly banned from having media in their own mother tongue. End of the war gave birth to the public TV and radio broadcaster, with the help of the global community, and several private ones sprung up thanks to international donations. Sixteen years after the war and seven years after independence, Kosovo has a larger and a more diverse media market. In addition to print and television media, online journalism has gained ground as never before, which is inevitable in the era of internet. In 2013, the public service broadcaster in Kosovo, RTK, expanded its TV services by adding RTK 2, dedicated to members of minorities, as part of the ongoing positive discrimination towards non-majority communities in Kosovo. Several other media in Serbian and other minority languages operate nationwide.

Independent media regulatory bodies include the Independent Media Commission (IMC), established in 2015. IMC licenses public and private broadcasters and monitor their work in line with the Code of Conduct. Its members are elected by the Assembly of Kosovo and its composition reflects multi-ethnicity and gender diversity. The Press Council of Kosovo is a self-regulatory body found by journalists of various newspapers and news agencies and its aim is to protect the citizens from false information and the journalists from groundless complaints.

According to the 2015 Press Freedom Index by the Reporters Without Borders, Europe's youngest country performs much better than its neighbors, some which are EU members states, including Greece, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Macedonia.

Various researches have shown that the financial instability of the media, including the dependence of the public services broadcasters on the Kosovo Assembly budget, which is not in harmony with the practices of most EU member states, often hampers their objectivity.

It comes as no surprise that Kosovo, characterized with a young media environment, certainly needs further qualitative improvement in the media landscape. To achieve continuous progress and surpass "partly free" rating by the Freedom House, Kosovo has to overcome important challenges, including access to information, a friendlier environment for the journalists, funding and overall professionalism.

Nevertheless, the surprising successes compared to a number of countries with a long tradition of free media and media pluralism provide a positive outlook for the future of Kosovo's media landscape.



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 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.

Agon Maliqi,
Public Policy Consultant

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).

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photo Arben Lipaashica

FAITH MONY SOVO

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

The 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

“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*

“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, 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

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.

"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, speaking at the International Interfaith Conference 2015, Kosovo

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 di-

alog. 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.

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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 corresponding-ly called into question. Has it not entrenched patriarchal

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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.

AS WE ARE

Walking On Common Ground— Kosovo's Early Christian Heritage

FULL EMPOWERMENT



By Marc Perry,
international journalist, writer and photographer.
He is currently contributing digital editor for Interfaith Kosovo.

“In every part of Kosovo, if we dig with our fingers, we can find evidence of Christianity,” says Catholic Priest Don Lush Gjergi.

This common heritage, belonging to all the Christian faiths of Kosovo, was devoid of denomination. The first Christians of Kosovo were not Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant; they were simply Christian. During these times today's Kosovo sat within Dardania, a wider province ruled by Romans, who's pantheon of gods mixed with local pagan worship of suns, of animal and human figures and fertility goddesses. Stone altars, some of which can still be seen today, formed centrepieces for worship where the Gods would be revered through sacrifice and offerings.

By their refusal to worship the Gods early Christians were thought to bring misfortune, and as a result they were persecuted. Catholic Priest Don Lush Gjergi, Orthodox Monk Father Sava and Protestant Pastor Cakolli, all consider the martyred twins Florus and Laurus to be the earliest recorded Christians in Kosovo. The twins were visitors to Ulpiana, a Roman town near Gracanica, south of Prishtina; Archeologist Milot Berisha, picks up the story there:

“They moved to Ulpiana as experienced stonemasons to establish a temple to unknown deity. Later they built the temple, set a wooden cross on the roof and destroyed the stone and marble idols that were to be used in the temple.” In consequence, they were tortured to death sometime between 117-138 AD. Their ‘fame’ however, spread far and wide; today they are highly venerated by both Catholic and Orthodox Churches around the world.

Martyrdom such as theirs helped disperse the faith. “Christianity spread in the first three centuries mainly by the blood of martyrs.” said Pastor Cakolli. Crosses had to be hidden; everything was secret, even Christian Roman soldiers would pass on ‘the word’ quietly – until Edicts of Tolerance in 311 and of Milan in 313 granted religious freedom for all. By 380 the Edict of Thessalonica would make Christianity the legal religion of the Roman Empire. Ulpiana at that time was one of the most active and frequented centres connecting Constantinople with Rome – so the news may have quickly spread to Kosovo, a mere week or so ride on horseback. With repression lifted, Christianity could flourish: architecture, art, and economic life began to expand. Ulpiana developed into a Diocese, a place of great importance to the Bishops of the time. Growing congregations adopted large public spaces, such as Basilicas, whose architectural inheritance can still be seen in today's Churches. “The first three centuries were the centuries of

Roman Persecution, the following three centuries were of Christian freedom,” said Don Gjergi. People were converting to Christianity en-masse; their first baptisms were outside, in the open, in rivers, lakes, seas, springs and waterfalls. Following Roman acceptance baptisteries with large, ornately decorated pools were built. One such pool, found at Ulpiana, is strikingly similar to other fine late 4th and 5th century examples in Stobi (FYR Macedonia), Lebane (Serbia) and Thessaloniki (Greece).

This was a time of Christian unity. “It is very hard to divide the history,” explains father Sava: “It was one body which still retains so many things together. That's why when speaking about the beginning of Christianity, in what is today the territory of Kosovo, we cannot speak of the modern confessional point of view – either Catholic or Orthodox – we can simply speak of a Church which at that time was undivided.”

As in all histories, nothing lasts forever. Eighty years after granting religious freedoms the Roman Empire would split in two; laying fault lines that would cleave into the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches during a long slow division lasting more than 650 years. By the end of the fifth century Ulpiana was invaded by Goths, ruined by an earthquake, and plundered by passers by. As we speak archaeologists continue to bring its stories to the surface, whilst throughout rural Kosovo locals still use place names like, ‘Old Church’, ‘Church Creek’ and ‘Church Meadow,’ whose investigation, may yield yet further secrets. These names are echoes of a common Christian heritage: a heritage that would spread far and wide, to become part of the Christian tradition of Europe.



Deeper still there's more evidence: a possible crypt, catacomb or underground pathway, and a possible altar. The current historical enquiry is a work in progress with new facts being established week by week.



By Marc Perry,
international journalist, writer and photographer.
He is currently contributing digital editor for Interfaith Kosovo.

Unearthing the past under Prizren

An archeological investigation is reclaiming a fuller version of Kosovo's rich religious history based on unearthed evidence buried deep beneath the Catholic Cathedral in Prizren.

Dr. Don Shan Zefi, Chancellor of the Kosovo Catholic Church, is a charismatic man with a life long enthusiasm for historical enquiry. He showed Interfaith Kosovo around the site. "It's a big project," he laughed, his eyes shining: "its important we arrive at historic truths, this is a huge passion of mine, to make these investigations..."

Prizren has seen many sweeps of civilisation pass through its surrounds and the Christian Church has been witness to many of them: "The Cathedral of Prizren has a continuity of 2000 years: it has a Roman period, a Byzantine, an Ottoman," says Dr. Zefi. The new discoveries, it is claimed, reveal Christian heritage going way back to early periods following the missions of the apostles. Three distinct periods of church buildings have been discovered under the Cathedral with the present building being the last of the three. "This makes Prizren specific," says Don Zefi, "These are indicators that UNESCO needs to take not just the Cathedral but take the whole of Prizren under its protection."

The first church building dates from the early days of Christianity, before different traditions developed. Uncovering a deep excavation beneath the grand Cathedral floor he describes how the base of a pillar from the paleochristian church was found during restoration work. Deeper still there's more evidence: a possible crypt, catacomb or underground pathway, and a possible altar. The current historical enquiry is a work in progress with new facts being established week by week. Dr. Zefi considers the oldest remains to originate from around the 5th century but the exact date is yet to be confirmed.

The early paleochristian church did not stand the test of time though the reasons why it dissolved remain largely unstudied. And, this brings us to the second construction. Moving to a darkened room there is a deep trench holding evidence of a building that survived until 1832: "We have gone two metres below the floor," he explains, "according to archaeologists this church is 10th century or earlier, from 1000 years ago." He is so confident of his assertions that he would willingly welcome them to be tested: "I invite

archaeologists to visit and to find anything contrary to what I am saying." Then he asks me to climb into the trench for a moment of drama. There before my very eyes is a tomb...I can see the buried bones. DNA analysis, it is hoped, will uncover more secrets about the people buried including a possible Austrian General who fought against the Ottoman Empire with Pjeter Bogdani, the then Archbishop of Prizren. During the renovation many other old tombstones were found and one place has now been dedicated to mark all the graves; while a museum of artefacts is to be established in a nearby house.

The Third and final building dates from 1870 – during the modernising Ottoman era when the current Cathedral was completed. During renovation works, people started to remove plaster from the walls and frescos of five martyrs were uncovered. One of them Don Zefi tells me he rehid for its protection. The site also lays claims to egalitarian schooling with the first school for Albanian women of Catholic and Muslim beliefs being established by nuns in 1892 and also a kindergarten from 1846.

"Historical writings to date have unfortunately left Albanians without history," claims Zefi, but: "The truth as is, is finally being uncovered, and it will be testified by archaeology, anthropology and the style of church. It is God's will that 2000 years of history have been protected underground." Like all historical narratives it is a good idea to check them out your self and there is no time like now. As Dr. Zefi concludes: "Never in the history of Prizren have so many visitors...come to see Prizren, everyone is coming."

AS WE ARE

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