

## SPECIAL ISSUE: KOSOVO IN UNESCO

# Kosovo's New Diplomat



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## Kosovo in UNESCO will provide more opportunities for Kosovar youth

I am a typical London girl. I'm a pop star. But I was a refugee. Actually, I was 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 flew 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, - preconditions 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



RITA ORA

Kosovo-born Londoner Rita Ora is a current judge at X-Factor UK and a global music and fashion star.

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.

(from La Lettre Diplomatique)



## Diplomatic Bits & Pieces

### FOUR QUICK QUESTIONS

SAMUEL ŽBOGAR, HEAD OF THE EU OFFICE IN KOSOVO



# EU-Kosovo relations irreversibly progressing through years

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

I see huge amount of youth energy and I experience willingness to build better future.

Compared with some "old" democracies, there is still enough hope here that things can be shaped at an early stage of institution-building and not all the mistakes of the others have to be repeated.

At the same time, our position gives us the "luxury" to work with the most prominent and brilliant people on every field, from politics to media, from business to culture.

## 2 How do you see EU-Kosovo relations developing?

Irreversibly progressing through years, with very tangible milestones, such as Stabilization and Association Agreement and prospect of visa liberalization, but above all with a clear goal on both sides: living together.

## 3 What is your favorite part of Kosovo?

If I would be in position to combine some of the most powerful impression from Kosovo in one day, it may start with running in Germia early in the morning, visiting Decani monastery during a sunny day, checking the latest exhibition in National Gallery with friendly guidance of Erzen Shkololli and late-evening screening at Prizren's Dokufest. But since I do not have one single entire free day in Kosovo, I have to divide them in moments.

## 4 What is your current reading list?

Draft Law on Specialist Chambers. Kosovo Report on the implementation of Visa Liberalization. Architectural and urbanistic Plan for Mitrovica Bridge ...

And if I manage to spend few summer days on Slovene coast, maybe even some untouched books from Soma bookshop.

# DIPLONEWS

FROM THE EMBASSIES



## Greece announces it will vote for Kosovo membership in UNESCO and INTERPOL

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, has received his Greek counterpart, Nikolaos Kotzias. They discussed cooperation between the two countries, Kosovo's European perspective, as well as the swift opening of the Kosovo Office in Athens. Kotzias announced in press conference that Greece will vote for Kosovo in UNESCO and INTERPOL.



## Deputy PM Thaçi in Dubrovnik: Development is a prerequisite for lasting peace

Kosovo's Deputy PM Hashim Thaçi, spoke at the annual Croatia Forum held in Dubrovnik. Thaçi spoke about Kosovo's experience in terms of the aid received in the postwar period, stressing the role of the international community in reconstruction of the country.



## Congressman Eliot Engel: Kosovo, a model of interfaith harmony

Congressman Eliot Engel, a Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was on a visit to Kosovo in July. Engel met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, Petrit Selimi, and Kosovo's faith leaders. Congressman Engel congratulated Kosovars for promoting religious harmony in the country.



## Kosovo applies for membership in INTERPOL

Kosovo Interior Minister Skender Hyseni announced that Kosovo has applied for full membership to world's policing body INTERPOL. Kosovo has established regular interaction with INTERPOL in the past via UN presence in Kosovo, however direct contact with the organization is needed to improve cooperation in fight against organized crime, terrorism, etc.



## Kosovo wins its first Olympic medal

Kosovo won its first medal at a major games organized at an Olymppic event when Nora Gjakova earned bronze in women's judo at the European Games. European Games held in Baku are the first ones organized by the International Olympic Committee in Europe. Kosovo became a sovereign member of IOC in December 2014.

NOS SCIMUS,  
NON SOLUM  
SCRIBERE



BRITISH COUNCIL  
Kosovo



## Kosovo's New Diplomat

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# NEW KOSOVO READS

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

**Title:** This Is How We Do Soft Power: A Practical Guidebook in Public and Digital Diplomacy Of a Small Republic

**Editors:** Gent Salihu, Arjeta Emra, Petrit Selimi

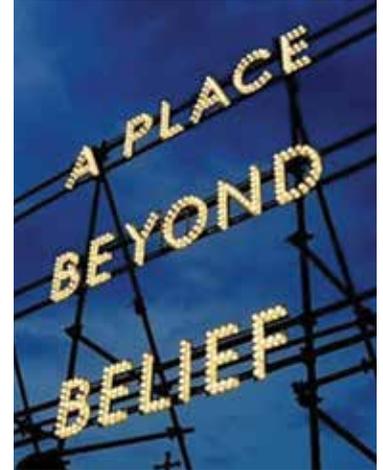
**Publisher:** British Council and MFA Kosovo

**Publication Date:** 2015

This book presents the initiatives of Kosovo's nascent public diplomacy portfolio, focusing on three active years of concerted efforts to advance Kosovo's national interests. Our soft power supports the wider objectives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including consolidating Kosovo's statehood, promoting regional cooperation, enhancing Kosovo's

Euro-Atlantic integration, and strengthening bilateral relations with Kosovo's allies and partners. The overarching mission of our soft power is to present Kosovo as it is and emphasize positive developments in the Balkans at large. Kosovo dominated the front pages of global newspapers during the Yugoslav wars of 1990s. Although Kosovo has been sidelined from the international spotlight since then - due to transformational developments in Kosovo and the shift of international attention to current pressing global matters - Kosovo's war still dictates the country's image. Within this context, enhancing Kosovo's public diplomacy outreach became a vehicle of addressing the image of this fledgling nation. Improving Kosovo's image did not

entail launching advertising campaigns that present a unified, official Kosovo narrative. Kosovo citizens were engaged through the social media to share their images and stories of Kosovo. Grassroots representatives were deployed to interact with their counterparts in countries that have not recognized Kosovo yet. International opinion- and decision-makers in Kosovo were invited as an opportunity for us to share Kosovo's multi-layered narrative and for them to conduct in-depth analysis that also takes into account the country's challenges. People-to-People Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy, Regional Cooperation, Global Issues and Issue-Based Initiatives were among the necessary tools to ensure greater impact of Kosovo's public diplomacy efforts.



## Rita Ora becomes honorary ambassador to Kosovo

President of the Republic of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga, has decorated Prishtina-born UK singer, Rita Ora, as honorary ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo. President Jahjaga, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and members of Rita's family attended the inauguration of the new building of Kosovo's Embassy in London, where Rita Ora received

the honorary award.

Kosovo singer thanked President Jahjaga and all her fellow compatriots for being decorated as honorary ambassador of Kosovo, adding that it is an honor for her to be an ambassador of her country of birth and that she received this title with great pleasure.

Rita said that "we are trying to

do is blur the social/cultural barriers we have, because right now with social networks, there really is not any barrier within the countries, like Brazil and Kosovo," adding that "it is almost like all of our problems have merged into one. What I am trying to do is make our generation be aware of what, politically, we can do as a team to change our future".



## Public diplomacy publications launched at DOKUFEST

In the framework of the International Festival of Documentary and Short Film Festival, DokuFest, Kosovo MFA has promoted in Prizren the following books: "Kosovo in UNESCO", "Faith in photography" dhe "How we do soft power".

In the presence of representatives of various embassies in Kosovo as well as many local and international guests at DokuFest, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Petrit Selimi, said that this international festival is an additional opportunity for the MFA to further promote Kosovo through public diplomacy at a time when the country is expected to join UNESCO. The book "Kosovo in UNESCO", which reflect the cultural, social, scientific and educational features of Kosovo, has been used as a lobbying tool throughout a long and fruitful period of lobbying by the MFA in Paris for Kosovo's accession to UNESCO.

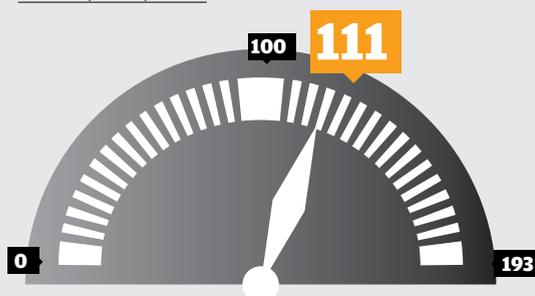
On this occasion, Deputy Minister Selimi said that UNESCO does not represent only tradition and preservation of heritage of Kosovo, but it also ensures a better future for young people and offers education and development opportunities for all youth in the country, regardless of their nationality. Another book presented was "Faith in photography", which is a joint publication of the Foreign Ministry, the German Embassy in Kosovo and dozens of local photographers who have documented cultural and religious features as well as rituals from all over Kosovo. Book includes photographs that were part of the competition for the promotion of religious diversity in Kosovo, organized by the German Embassy,



and the photographs published in the Spanish magazine, "OjodePez", curated by Andrew Testa, photographer. Also, participants were provided with the book "How we do soft power", which is a narrative publication on the development of the strategy and projects of MFA's digital and cultural diplomacy, in cooperation with the British Council, the Norwegian Embassy and the British Embassy. This book document alternative diplomatic activities of Kosovo in the country and abroad.

### RECOGNMETER

**THE PACIFIC ISLAND STATE OF NIUE, A MEMBER OF SEVERAL UN AGENCIES INCLUDING UNESCO, HAS RECOGNIZED THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO. KOSOVO IS NOW RECOGNIZED BY 111 STATES ON BILATERAL BASIS. THE YOUNG REPUBLIC IS ALSO A MEMBER OF IMF, WORLD BANK, IOC, ETC**



The Republic of Kosovo is now recognized by 111 states. In June of this year, the Pacific island of Niue, formally notified Kosovo authorities of its decision to recognize Kosovo as independent and sovereign republic. In recent months Kosovo also became a member of the International Olympic Committee as well as the International Organisation of La Francophonie.

## Kosovo Diplomats & Kosovo Events



### Young and cosmopolitan

A tour of Pristina, capital of Kosovo, reveals a few surprises for the Austrian Airlines magazine

By Georges Desrues

It's often described as 'Europe's youngest capital' - a reference not just to its status as a place, a crown Pristina has held since Kosovo's independence in 2008, but also the average age of the population, lower here than anywhere else in the continent. You see this clearly along Mother Teresa Boulevard, pulsating heart of the capital, as the young people of the capital scroll along beneath trees, window-shop and chat away on crowded cafe terraces. Coffee turns up again and again, indeed, most noticeably in the form of macchiato, which the people of Pristina will proudly tell you they make better than anyone else.

Thanks to its size, Pristina is perfect for a weekend break away from the traditional destinations, particularly during the warmer months. Although the city doesn't boast a vast plethora of tourist attractions to visit, there's plenty to discover beneath the surface. The mood and joie de vivre are upbeat in the popular cafes away from Mother Teresa Boulevard.

In this way, visitors can enjoy new perspectives of a surprising city, a place whose charm is filled with a cosmopolitan and tolerant mood full of life, and just waiting to be discovered.

(Excerpts from an article in Skylines - Austrian Airlines Magazine)



#### AMBASSADOR MUHAMEDIN KULLASHI

**1)** I have been serving as the Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to the French Republic since 2008, and as a professor of philosophy at the University of Paris 8 since 1992.

**2)** What I appreciate most is communication with diplomats of countries from different continents on issues pertaining to Kosovo and the respective countries, but also on the relations with France. This communication contributes to mutual perceptions of different aspects of a political system, the specifics of the culture of a society, the relations that a country establishes with another country. Through diplomatic communication we gain a greater understanding of different interests (not only economic) that may affect the political orientation of a country and to what extent a political decision may depend on specific interests but also on prejudices. Thus, when communicating with diplomats from different continents

regarding the likelihood of their countries recognizing Kosovo or to support Kosovo in an international organization, one could notice a multitude of factors (political, economic, cultural) that affect their perception of our country, today's reality or the cultural and historical past. However, communication is not just a courteous conversation but also a "communicative action" (Jürgen Habermas), to the extent it affects the change of perception of us and the decisions related to us.

**3)** I live in Paris since 1992, since the Serbian regime forced us out of the University of Pristina. Besides opportunity and space for diplomatic cooperation, besides the beauty of the city, Paris seduces with its very rich cultural and intellectual life. What I appreciate most here is the diverse theater scene but also panels on arts, literature, psychoanalysis, politics.



#### TEFTA KELMENDI MERRAN

**1)** I work at the Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo in Paris. I am advisor and technical assistant for the IOF and UNESCO. I am also in charge of developing new cooperative programs and events between Kosovo and France in the fields of education and culture.

**2)** I don't like my job, I love it! I love being directly implied in important processes for Kosovo's further international presence, and moving Kosovo a step ahead in its history. I enjoy working in an environment that reminds me of home, with a team that focuses in making positive changes and moving forward, a team that dares to act. I believe culture and education are significant tools in

building a sustainable Kosovo as well as developing new diplomatic relations, I therefore appreciate that aspect of my work.

**3)** It is not difficult to like Paris for what it simply is - the beautiful Haussmann buildings, the gastronomical cuisine, the good wines, the Seine and the enormous cultural sites. I love Paris for its beautiful people, for their lifestyle, for the enormous cultural events and the opportunities to develop new tastes for food, fashion, and travel. Even if almost impossible, if I had to pick one thing I like best about Paris it would be: the June evening picnics by the river Seine in Île Saint Louis.



#### FITOR MURATI

**1)** Since September 2014, I work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a Senior Officer for EU and Europe. I am part of the Department of EU and Europe and I cover the European Council and a group of countries including the United Kingdom, France, and Spain. In 2013, I earned a master's degree at the London School of Economics (LSE, UK) in Political Economy of Europe.

**2)** Diplomacy is a profession that has a lot of advantages, but also requires sacrifices in return. Nevertheless, among the highlights is the fact that this profession allows you to represent your country in various discussions, debates, summits, and other meetings. At the same time, diplomacy pushes you to learn new languages, cultures, and customs, making it a great

profession for those who are interested in exploring the world.

**3)** Pristina is not a city which you can fully appreciate or understand through pictures or words. You have to live it, meet its people, taste its food, enjoy a beer (in one of the numerous café bars around the center) and most importantly relive your life through a 'makiato'. On the other side, Pristina is a city with a lot of stories ranging from a lost river to a fierce passion for music, culture and sports (titles are an obsession for us). As someone who has spent most of his life in Pristina, while visiting many cities around the world, I am sure that no city in the world can replicate the warmth and loveliness of Pristina.

## NEW DIPLOMATS

Every issue we ask our diplomats three questions?

**1. What do you do, where are you based?**

**2. What is the most you like about the job you do?**

**3. What is the best thing about the city you live in?**

## SPECIAL ISSUE: KOSOVO IN UNESCO

# Q&A on Kosovo membership bid to UNESCO

### **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.

The founding document is the UNESCO Constitution. Paragraph 2 of Article 2 of UNESCO Constitution is the relevant provision. It 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."

### **How can Kosovo benefit from UNESCO membership?**

One needs to look at the purposes and functions of a particular organization to ascertain the value and benefits of joining that organization.

With regard to UNESCO, its 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.

Substantively, the 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.

### **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 two dozen more 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.

### **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. Indeed, it rejected Serbia's initial proposal for entertaining such a process of dialogue (and the approved draft was sponsored by the EU and Serbia).

For the foregoing reasons, the status of Kosovo is not an open one according to the UN.

International Court of Justice, has confirmed that Kosovo's declaration of independence has not violated any applicable rule of international law. UN General Assembly has welcomed this ruling of the ICJ.

### **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. Kosovo membership in UNESCO 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 statehood and the Serbian heritage in Kosovo are not incompatible, and indeed are mutually reinforcing; and Kosovo's UNESCO membership, far from threatening the Serbian heritage, will in fact 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 deriving 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.

### **Are the UNESCO Heritage sites safe in Kosovo?**

They are safe, as they are protected by a very consolidated and modern legal framework, adopted by Kosovo and, in large part, sponsored by the international community present in Kosovo.

Concrete measures have been taken by Kosovo's institutions. As stated in the European Commission's 2014 Kosovo Progress Report, "the Implementation and Monitoring Council continues to facilitate cooperation between the Kosovo authorities and the Serbian Orthodox Church", and that "concerns of the Church and the Kosovo authorities have been addressed resulting in a number of concrete actions".

The European Commission Report further notes that the "special unit of the police protecting Serbian religious and cultural sites in Kosovo continues to function well, covering four regions and employing 203 Kosovo Police officers". The Medieval Monuments in Kosovo, listed in the UNESCO Heritage sites, do thus enjoy special and effective institutional protection.

### **Does Kosovo membership in UNESCO create a legal precedent for other cases of disputed territories?**

No it would not, given Kosovo's exceptional circumstances and perhaps most importantly the position of the UN towards Kosovo, as described above.

Given the above, one can hardly say that Kosovo's membership in UNESCO would or could create a legal precedent for other cases of disputed territories.

### **Is UNESCO the first UN agency or international organization to which Kosovo is seeking admission?**

No, UNESCO would not be the first UN agency or international organization to which Kosovo is seeking admission. UNESCO would constitute the third UN specialized agency to which Kosovo has sought admission.

Kosovo is already a member of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, both UN specialized agencies. This is in addition to membership of the EBRD, the Venice Commission the Council of Europe and many other regional and international organizations, as explained under question no. 3 above.

## SPECIAL ISSUE: KOSOVO IN UNESCO

# Leaders of religious communities united on Kosovo's membership in UNESCO

Leaders of religious communities have come together on the occasion of Kosovo's application for membership in the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO). They have sent a joint letter to the Director General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and the delegations of the member states of UNESCO.

The letter was signed by Mufti Naim Tërnavja, Head of Islamic Community of Kosovo, Dr. Dom Lush Gjergji, General Vicar of the Roman Catholic Church in Kosovo, Pastor Driton Krasniqi, Head of Protestant Church of Kosovo, Sheh Lulzim Shehu, Union of Kosovo Sufi Tarikates, Baba Mumin Lama, Head of Kosovo Bektashi Community, and Votim Demiri, Head of Kosovo Jewish Community.

**Below you will find the full letter signed by the leaders of religious communities in Kosovo.**

Honorable Madam Director General,

We are you on behalf of the vast majority of all the religious communities in Kosovo that represent 96% of all the population of Kosovo. Please consider this letter as a further argument in your support for the membership of Kosovo in UNESCO.

Kosovo has always been at the crossroads of civilizations, empires and religions. Even today, although the majority of the population considers itself Sunni Muslim, strong historic presence of Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic, Muslim Bektashi, Muslim Sufi, Evangelical Protestant and Jewish communities and others enrich the joint land that we call Kosovo. We consider to have been truly blessed with this richness.

We cherish the historic tolerance and interfaith cooperation although a vicious war tore apart our country only 16 years ago. Kosovo is the country where a young

girl named Gonxhe Gojaxhiu took her first vows to become Mother Teresa of the entire humanity and where Albanian Muslim Righteous families hid Jews to save them from Shoah or Holocaust.

The richness and diversity needs preserving and protecting.

Too much of our heritage was lost throughout history, especially in the last decades. Houses of God must remain intact so they serve as lighthouses for future generations. Borders and empires come and go, but all the people, regardless of religion, must have their Houses of God intact. This being said, the religious communities of Kosovo today have contributed great to build peaceful, tolerant society where we can coexist and support each other, regardless of our ethnicity or religion. These efforts have been noted in the reports of Secretary General of UN, Ban Ki-moon.

**This is why we strongly support Kosovo's membership to UNESCO.**

We are neither political individuals nor representatives of political organizations. This being said, we believe that Kosovo's secular authorities must have all tools at disposal, legal, technical and financial, to protect our joint heritage – and we, as religious communities, must also have all tools at disposal to pressure present and future governments of Kosovo to be mindful and commit themselves to protection of our sites, traditions, intangible and tangible heritage.

We hope you will do your utmost to support Kosovo's bid. Leaving our population isolated and without direct access to UNESCO will not help the cause of protection of our joint heritage, promotion of interfaith dialogue and inclusive approach to all peace-loving people in the world. You must also understand that Kosovo's population is very young and in need of good education, access to science and connected to global culture.

Leaders of Islamic Community of Kosovo, Roman Catholic Church, Jewish Community of Kosovo, Sufi Tarikates, Protestant Church of Kosovo and Bektashi Community, signed a joint letter endorsing Kosovo's bid for UNESCO membership.



Image of three Kosovar women of different faiths from the Interfaith Conference in May 2015

# Kosovo, stories old and new!

Kosovo is the youngest nation in the European continent. It was born out of a lengthy process of negotiations under the facilitation of UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. Ahtisaari recommended for Kosovo to obtain a status of 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 interethnic violence, today the country looks ahead for a future firmly within the European family of nations. Kosovo has concluded the negotiations and is on the verge of signing the EU Stabilization and Association Agreement, the first formal step to EU Accession.

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

Kosovo is also the youngest European nation in terms of the average age of its population. Every year, more than 25,000 pupils enroll in primary schools, in a country that has total of 1.85 million inhabitants. After half a century of communist model and 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, upgrade teaching methods and increase scientific output through more research and development. As the Kosovar economy notes steady growth, it is important to stress that it has recorded the highest average economic growth in all Southeast Europe in the past seven years. More focus is also needed to improve environmental record.

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

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



**HASHIM  
THAÇI**

First Deputy  
Prime Minister  
and Minister of  
Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic  
of Kosovo

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

## The virtue of being right and fair

**M**y 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. And I won a Nobel Prize! 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. (Le Lettre Diplomatique)



**DR. FERID  
MURAD**

Nobel Prize  
Laureate

# #LOVEWINS



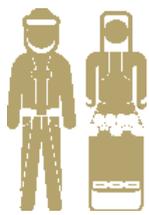
Led by a female president, the first one to be elected in the Balkans. Kosovo boasts more than 30% female representation in the Parliament and Diplomatic Service.



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.

## 70% YOUTH

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



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



## 86%

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



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



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



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



Landlocked, but very watery, rivery and mountainy.



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



It's safer in Kosovo than elsewhere in Europe. In statistical terms, 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.



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