

KAM KRÁČÍŠ, KOSOVO?

Bezpečnostní výzvy pro malý stát

QUO VADIS, KOSOVO?

Security Challenges for a Small State

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Abstrakt

Text se zabývá sektory bezpečnosti a jejich významem v aktuálním vývoji v Kosovu a možnými faktory ovlivňujícími stále křehkou regionální stabilitu. Autorka tvrdí, že Kosovo čelí mnoha výzvám, jejich řešení však závisí na otázce bilaterálních vztahů Kosova a Srbska. Text vychází z předpokladu, že status Kosova zůstává prozatím i do budoucna nejdůležitější otázkou v oblasti západního Balkánu do doby, než dojde k normalizaci vztahů Kosova a Srbska a jejich evoluci ke standardnímu vztahu dvou suverénních subjektů.

Abstract

The text addresses the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal challenges Kosovo faces. The author claims that Kosovo faces many challenges, though without solving the status issue, no other challenges could be addressed. The Kosovo question remains the main conundrum in the Western Balkan region.

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Klíčová slova

Kosovo; Srbsko; západní Balkán; bezpečnost; konflikt.

Keywords

Kosovo; Serbia; Western Balkans; Security; Conflict.

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INTRODUCTION

Kosovo¹ unilaterally declared its independence more than a decade ago, still, the country struggles with its recognition, as only 114 states have recognized it by now (2020). Furthermore, Kosovo has been under diplomatic campaign from Serbia to hinder Kosovo's integration into the international organisations, while Serbia claims that already fifteen countries revoked their recognition of Kosovo, so the number of countries that consider Kosovo an independent state has fallen below a hundred. This information is being denied by Kosovo authorities.² Nevertheless, recognition is not the only challenge Kosovo has been facing. The recognition impacts the internal politics, daily life in the Serbian enclaves, economy, technological development as well as the environment. The article tries to explore security challenges of this young state seeing it in the local, regional and global context.

The change in the Kosovo politics in the last elections and the victory of the populist³ Vetëvendosje movement led by Albin Kurti is the moment where we stand and gives us a strong reason to explore Kosovo's security challenges in a more detail in order to identify the tasks the new Kosovo government faces. The 2019 elections meant generational exchange and break with the past. The second reason for exploring Kosovo's security challenges is the transformation of the Kosovo Protection Force into a regular army despite the standoff of Kosovo's western partners.

The creation of the Kosovo army might have a significant impact on changing the regional balance of power and brings a new dimension into the regional stability. Building the Kosovo army means more "sovereignty" and more security for the newly born state. Kosovo's status is the principal issue in the Balkan regional security, which affects ethnic Albanians living in the whole region⁴ as well as other security puzzles in the region. It affects the future of Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina as such, it affects whether Serbia will lean to the West or to the East. Kosovo's status affects the future of Serbia and furthermore it affects the integration of the remaining Balkan states into the Euro-Atlantic structures. From a relatively large pool of studies on Kosovo, most

¹ The Albanians use Kosova/Kosovë, Serbs use commonly the term Kosmet - The Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, abbreviated as KiM as defined by the Constitution of Serbia. The text uses the English term Kosovo - this designation is without prejudice to any positions on its status. Local geographical names are written in both variants with the exception of Prishtina, which is left in the English transcription.

² PALICKOVA, Agata. *15 countries, and counting, revoke recognition of Kosovo, says Serbia*. 27.8.2019. Euroactiv.com. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/xzWcZ>

³ The movement defines itself as a centre-left political movement. Regarding socio-economic issues, the movement believes that the state should not be a spectator, but an active agent. AHMETI, Kreshnik, Levizja Vetëvendosje, e-mail interview on 18.10.2019.

⁴ For more, see e.g. VEREMIS, Thanos and TRIANTAPHYLLOU, Dimitros. *Kosovo and the Albanian dimension in Southeastern Europe: The Need for Regional Security and Conflict Prevention*. Hellenic 1999; ROSŮLEK, Přemysl. *Albánci a Makedonská republika (1991-2014)*. Libri 2015; KOKTSIDIS, Pavlos, I. *Strategic Rebellion: Ethnic Conflict in FYR Macedonia and the Balkans*. Peter Lang 2012.

of them focus on the Kosovo conflict,⁵ status of Kosovo⁶ and the security implications for the region,⁷ violent extremism⁸ and foreign fighters,⁹ Kosovo's politics in terms of democracy,¹⁰ organized crime, corruption and human security¹¹ while none offer a complex picture of security threats and challenges for Kosovo in all security sectors or are outdated.¹² The article tries to narrow the persisting gap in the scholarly literature by analysing Kosovo's security in the broader perspective and thus contribute to the academic debate about Kosovo's security and its implication for the region. It focuses not only on the geopolitical debate, but connects it to the security challenges on the local level in political, social, economic, technological and environmental sectors and builds a complex picture of Kosovo's security challenges.

The article presents a unique case study of Kosovo's security in broader terms relying on the qualitative method of analysis with the purpose to organize and elicit the meaning (with the effort to minimize any author's bias) from the data collected and draw a realistic conclusion from it. Having the space of a journal article, the goal is to provide an analysis of a broad surface structure. The analysis itself rests on the interpretation of primary sources through the lenses of established conceptual framework while relying on academic sources focusing on the politics and security of Kosovo.

⁵ E.g. JUDAH, Tim. *Kosovo: War and Revenge*. Yale University Press 2002; PETTIFER, James. *The Kosovo Liberation Army: Underground War to Balkan Insurgency 1948-2001*. C Hurst & Co Publisher 2014; KRČIŽ, Zdeněk. *Severoatlantická aliance a řešení ozbrojených konfliktů: komparace a angažmá v Kosovu a v Libyi*. Brno 2012.

⁶ KRIEGER, Heike. *The Kosovo Conflict and International Law. An Analytical Documentation 1974 - 1999*. Cambridge University Press 2001; PHILLIPS, David, L., PEČI, Lulzim. *Threats and Challenges to Kosovo Sovereignty*. Columbia University and KIPRED 2018. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/OzWcl>.

⁷ TERZIEV, Venelin, KOLECI, Redom, KOLECI, Baki. Security Dilemmas and Defence Challenges in Kosovo and Western Balkans. *Journal of Innovations and Sustainability*. Volume 4, Number 3, 2018. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://bit.ly/2MNs3s>.

⁸ KELMENDI, Vesë. *Citizens perceptions on new threats of violent extremism in Kosovo*. Prishtina: Kosovo Center for Security Studies, 2019. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/RzWcv>.

⁹ STOJAR, Richard. Islámský radikalismus a jeho násilné projevy v kontextu balkánského regionu. *Obrana a strategie* 1/2016. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/xziLp>.

¹⁰ ĐORĐEVIĆ, Vladimir. Kosovo: Structure of the Main Political Parties in Kosovo. In Sobolewska-Mysłik, Kosowska-Gastol, Borowiec, P. (eds). *Organizational Structures of Political Parties in Central and Eastern European Countries* (pp. 209-230), Jagiellonian University Press; ĐORĐEVIĆ, Vladimir. Building Democracy in the Western Balkans: The Case of Kosovo. In Ramet, S., Hassenstab, C. Listhaug (eds.). *Building Democracy in the Yugoslav Successor states: Accomplishments, Setbacks, and Challenges since 1990* (pp. 321-344), Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

¹¹ GËRXALIU, Selvete. *Human Security, organized crime, and terrorism challenges in Kosovo's Perspective*. HUMSEC. Undated. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/jzWcO>; VUČKOVIĆ, Vladimir and ĐORĐEVIĆ, Vladimir. *Balkanizing Europeanization: the fight against corruption and regional relations in the Western Balkans*, Berlin: Peter Lang 2019.

¹² KIPRED. *Kosovo in the Security and Defence context of the Western Balkans*. Prishtina 2014. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/5zWx6>.

Table 1: Kosovo's security

| Sector | Issues |
|---------------|--|
| Political | Internal and external politics |
| Economic | State of the economy |
| Social | Issues of a social nature in and in-between both ethnicities |
| Technology | Research and development |
| Environmental | Damage to the environment, threats to the society arising from the environment |
| Legislative | Justice and rule of law |

Source: Author

The text is divided according to the PESTEL structure - i.e. division into political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legislative dimensions. The influence of external actors (Russian Federation, Turkey, People's Republic of China, Gulf States, USA, EU, and NATO) and their stance toward Kosovo's status are being analysed in the political sector, the economic challenges are being described in the economic sector, the inter-ethnic distancing and phenomenon of Islamic radicalism are being dealt with in the social sector. Technological sector deals with the research and development while the environmental one with the pollution and natural disasters. Legal sector scrutinizes the rule of law in Kosovo. The conclusion then outlines the paper's main findings and broader implications for the region. The primary legislation, party manifestos, were used as the primary source, several country analyses by different authors were used as the secondary source. Several semi-structured interviews with local politicians, intellectual elites, journalists, scholars and members of civil society in Kosovo were undertaken to provide a better understanding of the issue during several field research trips in 2008-2019. The focus of the interviews was on the link between Kosovo's security challenges and security implications for the region. The author was also present in Kosovo during several electoral campaigns and observed several political gatherings.

KOSOVO AND ITS STATUS - (GEO)POLITICS MATTERS

The relations with the outside world are dependent on the still unresolved issue of Kosovo recognition and the relations with Serbia, which regards Kosovo as its autonomous province. The Serbian politics offers virtually no relevant player, who would continuously promote recognition of Kosovo as an independent state, apart from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its leader Čedomir Jevanović. However, LDP has been a marginal oppositional player with minimum gain in the elections and limited support;

its leader has received death threats many times and all his family lives under police protection due to his beliefs related to Kosovo recognition.¹³

In 2013, the so-called Brussels Agreement¹⁴ was concluded between the governments of Serbia and Kosovo on the normalization of their relations under the auspices of the European Union. Even though it was negotiated, it was not signed by either party. The document focuses mainly on the status of the Serbian minority in Kosovo and its further integration into Kosovo's political and legal structures, while omitting the recognition of Kosovo by Serbia, but accenting the beginning of normalizing of the relations with Kosovo. The Brussels agreement remains the only option for normalisation of relations between the two parties - it was the first time the two countries found compromise despite their diametrically opposing points of view. Under the agreement, Kosovo agreed to establish the Association of Serb Municipalities (ASM), thus dismantling the parallel structures operating in the north. The second agreement from 2015 gave the ASM significant powers over areas such as education, healthcare and welfare. However, in 2015, the Kosovo Constitutional Court ruled that these principles were not entirely in the spirit of the Kosovo constitution.¹⁵ Since then, the whole issue is deadlocked - Albanians insist that the statute of the ASM must be in the spirit of the Constitution, while Kosovo Serbs are calling for Kosovo to amend its legislation to enable implementation of both 2013 and 2015 agreements. Since then, we have seen no progress and, instead, an escalation of tensions in 2018, when Kosovo decided to impose 100% tariff on Serbian imports, blaming Serbia for its failed bid to join INTERPOL. Some parts of the Brussels agreement have been slowly implemented (joint Serbian-Albanian police patrols, telecommunications, representation of Kosovo on regional fora, integration of Serbian courts), but overall Kosovo still struggles to integrate the northern part of the territory. The obstacles which substantially mitigate the implementation and enforcement of the agreed measures are rooted in the existence of many different players with diverse interests. We have internal Kosovo players - representatives of Kosovo Serbs, Kosovo Albanian political parties with diverse interests and, in addition, we have Serbian political representatives, Serbian Orthodox church,¹⁶ Russia, USA, NATO, EU, Turkey, China and many others,¹⁷ while the credible incentives seem to be lacking.

¹³ C.f. N1. Mitić: *Pitanje Kosova - prepreka za našu budućnost*. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/2zWcb>; FAZLIU, Eraldin. *Jovanovic, Cedimir: If we only take care of Kosovo Serbs, we will only sacrifice them*. 16.11.2017. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/wzWcY>.

¹⁴ *The first agreement of Principles governing the Normalization of Relations*. Available from: <https://1url.cz/KzE9y>.

¹⁵ CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF KOSOVO. Judgement in case KO130/15, 23. 12. 2015. Available from <https://1url.cz/0zE8p>.

¹⁶ There are many historically and culturally significant Orthodox churches and monasteries in Kosovo, four of which are UNESCO world heritage listed. Many were severely damaged during the conflict and thereafter. Serbian Orthodox Church is therefore one of the key players in the conflict.

¹⁷ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. *Serbia-Kosovo relations. Confrontation or normalisation?* Brussel 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/TzEn1>; MARTINO, Francesco. *Kosovo: beyond the Brussels agreement*. ISPI 2014. Available from: <https://1url.cz/NzEne>; BERGMANN, Julian. *The European*

In 2018, the presidents of Kosovo and Serbia started bilateral negotiations about the so-called correction of the borders, which literally meant exchanging the territory (northern Kosovo for south-eastern Serbia) and recognition of both states in the revised borders. The proposal was criticised by many sides fearing that any territorial exchange risks might spark instability by calling into question other Western Balkan borders. Nevertheless, the 2019 November elections in Kosovo brought those negotiations to standstill, as the victor of the elections Vetëvendosje had campaigned firmly against the correction of borders¹⁸ and continuously spoke out against this solution. The party stands firmly for a referendum about unification of Kosovo with Albania,¹⁹ not to mention that Albin Kurti, the new Kosovo prime minister, loves to show up for media in front of the Albanian flag, thus irritating its northern neighbour. In striving for his goal, Kurti and his party promoted the opening of the branch party offices in Albania in order to promote the unification idea not only among Albanians in Kosovo. Besides the recognition, there are many other controversial issues between the two countries, ranging from the status and rights of the Serbian minority, licence plates, recognition of IDs, school diplomas, passports, driving licences, ownership of industrial enterprises to telephone calls between the two countries, Belgrade- Prishtina flights, or the daily crossing of the Kosovo-Serbia border.

Serbia has been backed by Russia and China, the veto players in the Security Council. Russian representatives repeatedly compare Kosovo with Crimea and Russia supports Serbia by all means. In 2009, an inter-governmental agreement on cooperation in reaction to the emergency situation was signed between Russia and Serbia, which led to founding a humanitarian centre created jointly by both countries. The Russian-Serbian Humanitarian Aid Centre in Niš²⁰ was then built in 2012. The centre remains under the veil of mystery and doubted by many. Besides Russia and its support, one must not forget five EU members - Slovakia, Cyprus, Romania, Greece, and Spain - that do not recognize Kosovo's statehood. People's Republic of China maintains diplomatic relations with all Western Balkan countries except Kosovo, rejecting its declaration of independence in 2008 as a possible precedent for Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang. The resolution of Kosovo's status is not only important for Serbia and Kosovo and their inhabitants, but for many important global and regional players.

Union as international mediator. Brokering stability and peace in the neighbourhood. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

¹⁸ AHMETI, Kreshnik, Levizja Vetëvendosje, e-mail interview 18.10.2019.

¹⁹ LEVIZJA VETËVENDOSJE. *Parimet dhe prioritetet programore të Lëvizjes VETËVENDOSJE! 100 pika që ndryshimi i Kosovës i bashkon.* Undated. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/lzWYt>.

²⁰ *Rusko-srpski humanitarni centar* is, according to its website, a NGO designed for fast assistance in case of natural disasters, removal of explosive devices, humanitarian aid. International actors have been highly suspicious about the centre and it has been repeatedly labelled by the US representatives as "a special centre for espionage and other nefarious activities". See the official website <http://en.ihc.rs/>; DOLAPČEV, Vanja. *The Bear never sleeps: The position of the Serbian-Russian Humanitarian Centre in Niš.* 24.12.2018. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://bit.ly/3hcnvnp>.

Meanwhile, Kosovo is backed by the USA and the Albanians belong among the biggest supporters of American politics in Europe. The USA has invested about \$2 billion in Kosovo since 1999, including a new embassy building, and contributed troops to KFOR.²¹ Despite NATO's direct involvement in Kosovo for 21 years, Kosovo is the only Western Balkan country left out of the NATO enlargement process, lacking any form of cooperation with the organisation. Until 2012, Kosovo institutions and representatives demonstrated no political will to enter into official relations with NATO. In 2012, the then prime minister Hashim Thaçi submitted a request for Kosovo to join Partnership for Peace (PfP) and only in 2014, Kosovo declared its aim to join NATO as a vision and priority.²² This decision was followed by the statement of the minister of foreign affairs Enver Hoxhaj that the goal is to become NATO member by 2022. In December 2018, the then prime minister Ramush Haradinaj stated that Kosovo would apply for NATO membership after the formation of the Kosovo armed forces.²³ Nevertheless, four NATO member states (Greece, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain) do not recognize Kosovo's independence. Furthermore, Kosovo does not have UN membership, which is considered necessary for NATO membership. In 2018, the Assembly of Kosovo passed legislation to redefine the Kosovo Security Force as a professional military force and establish a defence ministry. This move was endorsed by the USA and opposed by Serbia, EU and UN representatives, as the very first duty defined of KSF should be defending sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo.²⁴

The path of Kosovo towards membership in the EU and NATO differs in another aspect. Serbia has expressed the ambition to join the EU and the EU has conditioned Serbia's membership through normalizing relations with Kosovo under the principle of regional cooperation. Serbia, along with the EU states that do not recognize Kosovo, are under pressure to soften their attitudes towards Kosovo's aspiration to join EU. On the contrary, Serbia does not aspire to become a NATO member, which makes it more difficult to condition Serbia or influence the other NATO's states that do not recognize Kosovo to soften their attitudes towards Kosovo's aspiration to join NATO.²⁵ Still, without normalizing the relations between the two countries, integration of Kosovo into EU and NATO is not imaginable.

Balkan politics is not only about Russia and USA; the regional actor- Turkey - has to be taken into account. Political relations between Kosovo and Turkey are determined by a number of geopolitical, economic and socio-historical factors. A large community of Turkish citizens with their roots in Kosovo and the ethnic minority of Turks in Kosovo play an important role in this respect. Turkey was actively involved in NATO's intervention in 1999 and Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence.

²¹ U.S. EMBASSY IN KOSOVO. *History of the U.S. and Kosovo*. [cit. 2020-03-25] Available from: <https://1url.cz/PziiV>.

²² AVDIU, Plator. *Destination NATO: Kosovo's alternatives towards NATO membership*. Prishtina: KCSS 2015. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/dzWYJ>.

²³ ŽIVKOVIC, Vukašin. *NATO perspective of Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina*. 8.2.2019. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/zzWYe>.

²⁴ MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO. Mission. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://bit.ly/3dRptSd>.

²⁵ AVDIU, Plator. *Destination NATO: Kosovo's alternatives towards NATO membership*. Prishtina: KCSS 2015. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/dzWYJ>.

Since the establishment of the Kosovo-Turkish Chamber of Commerce in 2008, Kosovo has received €327 million in foreign investment from Turkey, making Turkey the fifth largest foreign investor in the country, after Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the UK. In recent years, Kosovo has imported goods in excess of €288 million from Turkey, while exports to Turkey amounted to approximately €8 million.²⁶ As in the neighbouring states, Turkish President Erdoğan exerts pressure to close the Gülen schools and extradite the Gülenists to Turkey. The capture and extradition of Gülenists opened up a rift between the then Kosovo president Hashim Thaçi, who endorsed the extradition, and the then Kosovo prime minister Ramush Haradinaj, who condemned the operation and fired the interior minister and head of intelligence as a result of the operation. Besides investments, Turkey uses all the possibilities of soft power in the Balkans. It includes the media, news agencies, education system and films portraying relations with Turkey in the best light. Turkey's Yunus Emre Cultural Center has offices in Albania, BiH, Kosovo and Northern Macedonia and focuses on Turkish language teaching. The Turkish state broadcaster TRT offers Internet news and radio in all Balkan languages, Anadolu Agency is very popular as well as watching soap operas that changed the perception of the Turks in the Balkans - Turkey is now perceived very positively as a modern society and country. Turkey reaps its fruits and is more or less accepted by the population very positively, despite the history of the Ottoman Empire.

Among the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have the greatest influence. Saudi Arabia invests mainly in the reconstruction of schools, health centres and mosques. Wahhabism also spreads through Saudi diplomacy; many contemporary imams have been educated in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia decided to support strategic projects (completion of the Prishtina-Mitrovica highway, health sector) in Kosovo amounting to a total of \$70 million.²⁷

The Kosovo status dominates the political sector even in internal politics, which is not divided along ideological cleavages but rather on ethnic lines. The ethnic Albanian part is then ruled mainly by one-man party charismatic KLA commanders tied to post-war organized crime activities, denying their accountability due to the unresolved status question and international mission in the country. The main cleavage in the ethnic Serbian politics is then devotion to Serbia or autochthonous and endemic Serbian Kosovo politics not being dependent on Belgrade. Political culture remains very low and political assassinations and gun attacks have been part of the political game since 1999.

ECONOMY MATTERS

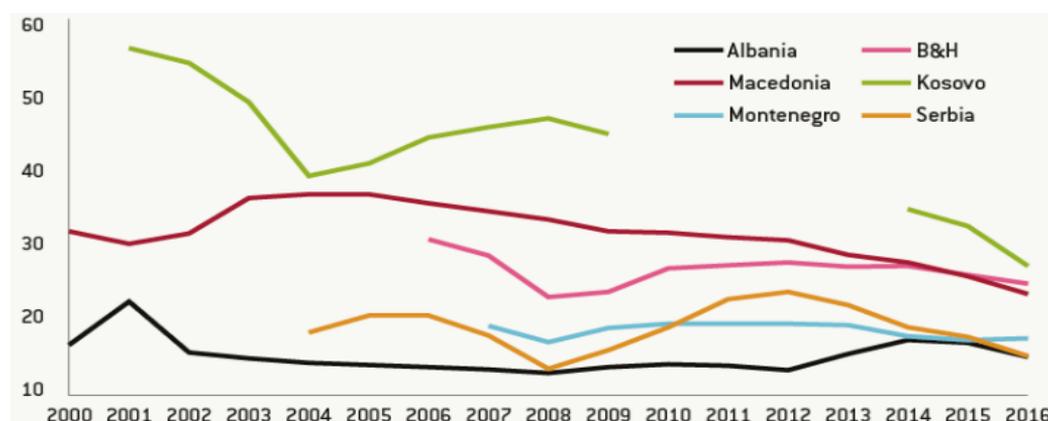
Since 2000, the Western Balkan region has seen convergence of per capita revenues towards Western European levels. The process of income convergence was particularly strong between 2000 and 2009, against the backdrop of rapid economic growth in the region and the global economic boom. After 2010, convergence slowed down due to the effects of the global and European financial crisis. Despite the progress in income

²⁶ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF REPUBLIC OF TURKEY. *Relations between Turkey and Kosovo*. Available from: <https://1url.cz/8zEnQ>.

²⁷ BALKANINSIDER. Kosovo deputy PM secures \$70 million Investment from Saudi Arabia. 28.12.2017. Available from: <https://1url.cz/SzEnH>.

convergence, the Western Balkan region continues to face the social risks of poverty, income inequality, unemployment - especially among young people - and other forms of social exclusion. In 2016, all countries in the Western Balkans, with the exception of Kosovo, were classified by the World Bank as having a higher middle income. This category includes countries with gross national product per capita between \$3,956 and \$12,235. However, most Western Balkan countries are in the lower part of this income group, from \$4,180 in Albania and \$5,310 in Serbia. Kosovo, the poorest country in the region, with its GDP amounting to \$3,850 per capita, falls into the category of lower middle income.²⁸ There has been some progress in reducing the poverty gap in the Western Balkans and Kosovo has achieved a substantial reduction in the number of people living below the \$5.50 daily threshold.²⁹

Graph 1: Unemployment rate in the Western Balkan region.



Source: DABROWSKI, Marek, MYACHENKOVA, Yana. (2018): *The Western Balkans on the road to the European Union*. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available at: <https://1url.cz/NzWYW>

The graph shows that Kosovo's unemployment rate has fallen by almost 50% to 30% since 2001. Youth unemployment remains high in the region, well above the overall unemployment rate. In 2016, 57.7% of youth in Kosovo remained unemployed³⁰ compared to the 18.7% EU average and 10.8% in the Czech Republic.³¹ The lack of job opportunities leads to the emigration of young people and brain drain - the population of Kosovo is shrinking and aging. The mean age in the Western Balkans is 8.7 years higher than the world average, while the birth rate is falling. With a median age of 29.6, Kosovo is among

²⁸ DABROWSKI, Marek, MYACHENKOVA, Yana. (2018): *The Western Balkans on the road to the European Union*. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/NzWYW>.

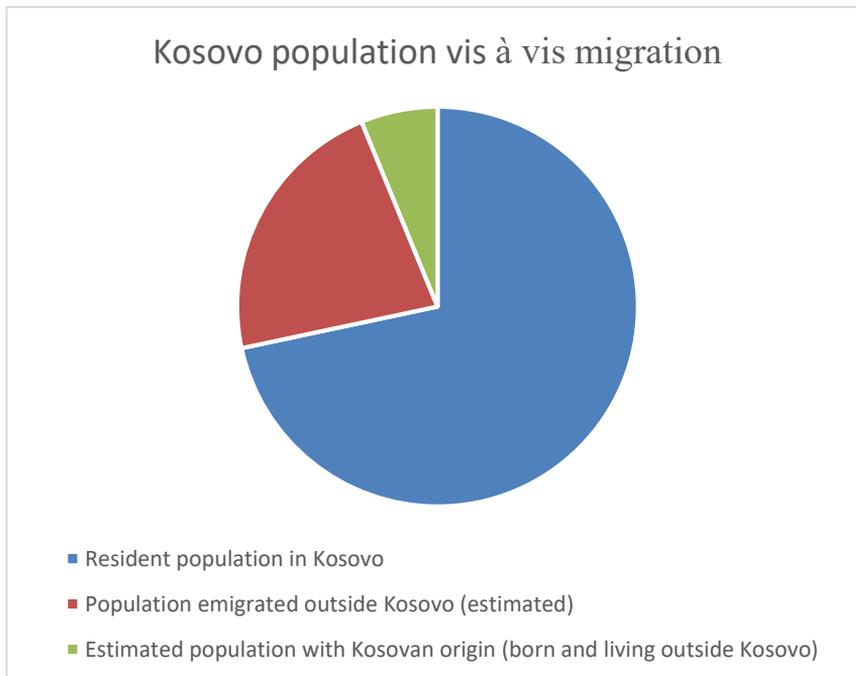
²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ TRADING ECONOMICS. 2020. *Kosovo youth unemployment rate*. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://bit.ly/2Uudoj3>.

³¹ TRADING ECONOMICS. 2020a. *Czech Republic youth unemployment rate*. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://bit.ly/2Ypg1ng>

the youngest populations in Europe.³² For now, pension systems, health care systems and long-term care systems have not been adapted to the new demographic trend.

Graph 2. Kosovo population vis à vis migration.



Source: KOSOVO AGENCY OF STATISTICS. *Kosovan migration*. Prishtina 2014. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/1380/kosovan-migration-2014.pdf>

Kosovo does not pursue state monetary policy and uses the euro as its currency. In Kosovo, which experienced considerable volatility in the past, from 2014 to 2017, we see low and relatively stable inflation. The amount of national debt is small compared to other countries in the region or seen in the European context. However, this does not automatically mean that it is a healthy economy from a macroeconomic point of view. The amount of debt in relation to the GDP is only one indicator, according to which various investment ratings are determined, which ultimately also influence the price of foreign loans. Thus, for the Balkan countries, their rating is generally worse and loans are more expensive than for most Western European countries.

According to statistics, Serbia exports goods worth CZK 10.3 billion a year to Kosovo and remains Kosovo's main trading partner in the region.³³ Bilateral relations with Serbia

³²INDEX MUNDI. 2020b. *Kosovo median age*. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://bit.ly/30sp6yr>.

³³ Imports from CEFTA countries amounted to €753.1 million (27%) in 2016, of which imports from Serbia amounted to 13.9%, Macedonia 5.6% and Albania 4.2%. KOSOVO AGENCY OF STATISTICS. *Kosovo International Trade Statistics 2016*. Prishtina. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from:

deteriorated in November 2018, after Kosovo had not been granted the application to join Interpol, responding by increasing import duties on goods from Serbia, initially by an increase of 10% and 14 days later by 100%, which confirmed that CEFTA was not in practice between Kosovo and Serbia, despite the signing of the relevant agreements. The new Kurti government has approved the decision to partially lift the import tariff on raw materials from Serbia (and Bosnia and Herzegovina) in March 2020; the import duties on other products should remain in place. Foreign direct investments play an important role in the region's economy; however, they are limited by the volatile political situation, unresolved status, high emigration and poor public infrastructure.³⁴ Nevertheless, the growth of investment and trade between the local states and their external partners can be twofold. On the one hand, they develop and assist local economies, which is certainly a positive benefit, but on the other hand, they create more suitable conditions for possible pressure in the political sphere, which could grow into becoming economic vassals or even assuming the form of an economic protectorate. In particular, massive investments and acquisitions in key industries, real estate and infrastructure can help external players dramatically increase their influence with their partners.

KOSOVO'S SOCIETY AND ITS CHALLENGES

Kosovo faces many internal problems and it is difficult to say which one is the harshest. The society is divided as never before along ethnic lines and the segregation starts in the basic schools, where the pupils do not learn the language of the other ethnicity. Serbian enclaves are dependent on the aid from Serbia in terms of social security, health and educational system and the local Serbian politicians remain puppets of Vučić's regime. Two parallel regimes co-exist next to each other: the Serbian one and the Kosovo one. In the past, citizens used both of them (e.g. claiming pensions from both systems, or seeking treatment in the Serbian hospitals for free rather than in Kosovo ones).³⁵ The most famous and flagrant case of segregation is the city divided by a river - Kosovska Mitrovica, where the future plans and thoughts go up to the international supervisory regime like in Brčko in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The conflict remains latent and any trigger could lead to its escalation.

The new state also suffers in terms of liberal democracy; political culture is very low, while nepotism, corruption and autocratic practices remain high.³⁶ While Kosovo is moving closer to the European Union in legislation, the dichotomy between the legislation adopted and its implementation in practice remains a central issue. The existence of these illiberal autocratic regimes entails not only protests but also the possible fall of these undemocratic regimes, posing a threat of instability. The interconnection

<https://bit.ly/30sxNIV>.

³⁴ For analysis of FDI in Kosovo, see JENSEN, J.D. An Analysis and Evaluation of Foreign Direct Investment in Kosovo. *International Journal of Business Administration*. Vol. 9, N. 5, 2018. pp. 88-95. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/Wzii8>.

³⁵ MARIJA RADULOVIC, Deputy Ombudsman in Kosovo, informal conversation, Prishtina, 13.10.2019.

³⁶ BEHA, A. and HAJRULLAHU, Arben. *Soft competitive authoritarianism and negative stability in Kosovo: statebuilding from UNMIK to EULEX and beyond*. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 20, 1, 2020, pp. 103-123.

of the state apparatus with organized crime is worrying. This situation arose as a result of the armed conflict, international sanctions, isolation and the impossibility of supplying markets via official channels, but also due to the rugged mountain terrain, which creates suitable conditions for the illegal movement of goods and people. The past incumbents very often used the services of the underworld to destroy political adversaries. Despite government declarations and the European Union's commitment to regional cooperation in the fight against organized crime, the results are not visible. The overwhelming number of round tables and meetings of defence and interior ministers at the regional level with the EU participation has only made the problem visible, but it has not solved it. In general, there is a reluctance in politics to give up the illegally acquired property, which prevents effective combating the organized crime. It can be assumed that in the future we will be informed about the accusation of high-ranking politicians and representatives of the state's force of connections to organized crime. The elections have brought a change into the Kosovo politics, however only time will show, whether there has also been a move towards liberal practices and away from the underworld ones.

The sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo are a frequent bone of contention. Although they are protected under Kosovo's Constitution and guarded either by KFOR or Kosovo police forces, they have been attacked a couple of times. The Church representatives complain about lack of will of Kosovo to protect the UNESCO world heritage listed monasteries and strongly oppose the independence of Kosovo, which they believe to be an inalienable part of the Serbian identity. Their minimum demand is that these sites should enjoy extra-territorial status.³⁷

Kosovo faces a new security challenge. The conflict created favourable conditions for rooting Islamic fundamentalism and for the use of the territories by terrorist organizations. Fundamentalist interpretation of Islam is something that is largely a foreign element on the Kosovo territory. The post-war environment, high unemployment, reduction of international forces, the fact that Kosovo was virtually impossible to control, and low control of what was happening in Northern Macedonia seem to be the ideal terrain for terrorist training and logistical security; the potential of this security threat should not be neglected. Investments by Saudi Arabia and other Arab states of Persian Gulf have contributed to an increase in Islamic radicalism. Another consequence may also be the split within Islamic communities between the advocates of the radical concept of Islam and the locally traditional "secular" concept of Islam³⁸. Especially the younger generation is often influenced by the Arab culture, clothing style, behaviour and religious rituals. Arabs and the Arab culture are synonyms of luxury, wealth and an easy way of life, impressing many young people, who try to imitate it. In the case of girls, it is wearing hijab, in the case of boys it is visiting madrasas or mosques. Besides, more than 300 Kosovo citizens joined the Islamic State, Al-Nusra and other Islamic groups in recent years. The young, unemployed and hopeless Kosovars are prone to radicalisation and see the solution of their situation in becoming foreign fighters. The tiredness with European integration is increasingly felt in society and the population is more vulnerable to new projects. The dissatisfaction is growing in Kosovo - Albanians lose their faith that the

³⁷ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. *Serbia-Kosovo relations. Confrontation or normalisation?* Brussel 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/TzEn1>.

³⁸ STOJAROVÁ, Věra, STOJAR, Richard. Moderate or Radical Islam for the Balkans. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*. Volume 21, 4, 2019.

desired economic, political and social change will come true and the dissatisfaction with the government, constant outflow of young people from Kosovo, and decline in turnout are growing.

LACKING TECHNOLOGY

The long conflict has left behind Kosovo which lacks human and technical capacities for research and development or innovation. The end of the conflict meant that the resources were related to post-war reconstruction, namely in terms of infrastructure. Given the weak nature of the private sector, dominated by micro-enterprises, businesses have been unable to step into filling the void in reconstruction and redevelopment investment and technology transfer left by the state. The result is that Kosovo has been unable to develop its research and technology capacity.³⁹

Sources agree, that the major constraints facing the research and development system are: insufficient human capital, under-developed linkages with global networks, low participation in technology platforms by universities, outdated infrastructure at research centres, and lack of incentives for private sectors in terms of research and lack of good governance. The result is that very few researchers work in research and innovation, the quality of universities is very low and their graduates insufficiently prepared.

Even though many mechanisms have been established to promote internationalism and links with global research networks, the participation of students and researchers in these global platforms still remains low. The enormous brain drain from the country resulted in the fact that the best students leave the country, get their education abroad and come back only for summer holidays. Post-conflict environment also means lack of money for research as investments are just simply needed somewhere else. For Kosovo to catch up, more investment is needed in universities, research centres, their human capital as well as infrastructure and more incentives for the private sector to perform research. Qualified human resources, huge investments and good governance are needed in order to catch up with the research and development in the world.⁴⁰

ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE

Not only in Kosovo, but in the whole Western Balkans, the environmental threats are mainly securitized by exogenous players.⁴¹ Local environmental NGOs are gradually gaining more attention, but we cannot talk about civil society in the true sense of the word and the wider public awareness of environmental issues. Although environmental protection had a tradition in SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic

³⁹ REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL. *Western Balkans Regional R&D Strategy for Innovation. Country Paper series Kosovo*. WB Technical Project 2013. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/2zWYo>.

⁴⁰ OECD. *Private sector development project insights. Assessment of the Kosovo Innovation System*. 2013. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/GzWYN>.

⁴¹ MONTINI, Massimiliano and BOGDANOVIC, SLAVKO. *Environmental Security in South Eastern Europe*. Springer 2009.

of Yugoslavia), it was disrupted by war conflicts and the economic decline. The local population does not consider environmental protection to be essential; the Ministry of the Environment was established only in 2003 and due to the economic situation, the country has a limited budget and environmental initiatives and funds are imported from abroad.

Conflicts have damaged the environment throughout the region and have been responsible for heavy metal pollution of water, air and soil (there is a well-known case of the Roma refugee camp in Mitrovica with high lead in water), toxic and other organic substances, pesticides, pharmaceutical and chemical waste. The Balkan fauna and flora suffer similarly. Humanitarian aid during the war left behind many unused pharmaceuticals, which have become an additional environmental burden.⁴² Kosovo has not yet been fully cleared of mines. However, the conflicts also had a positive impact on the environment. The heavy air polluting industry before the war was partially destroyed and many chemical complexes were closed. Improvements in air and water quality have been found around former factories. Endangered fish species requiring clean water or special aquatic fauna have returned to some rivers in the region.

The Gazivode lake, with its one-third in Serbia and two-thirds in Kosovo, has been the subject of disputes between Serbia and Kosovo since 2008. The Gazivode hydroelectric power plant is owned by Elektroprivreda Srbije (EPS). In addition, Gazivode is a strategic water reservoir for the thermal power plant in Obiliq/Obilić, supplying 80% of Kosovo's population, including the northern part of the Serb-populated region. In the absence of water in the summer months, the water from Gazivode is pumped to the Gračanice Lake, thus, the water supply in Prishtina is dependent on Gazivode. Given the key importance of the plant for the Kosovo economy, the Serbian government has an eminent interest in its ownership.

The thermal power plant in Obiliq/Obilić (Thermal Power Plant Kosovo B) is the largest polluter in the region. Kosovo has some of the largest lignite reserves, accounting for 97% of its energy. Kosovo has been warned several times that its two thermal power plants are among the largest polluters in the region. The plan was to rehabilitate the Kosovo B thermal power plant to meet EU environmental standards and to close the Kosovo A thermal power plant and build a new thermal block instead. Thermal power plants were built in Kosovo at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s and their planned lifetime was 25 years. Due to the situation in the region, however, they are still in operation and because of their insufficient maintenance, the performance of the heat units has also decreased and contributes to the deterioration of the air condition, especially in the winter months.

In October 2018, the World Bank declared that it was no longer willing to support the construction of a new thermal power plant and proposed a change in Kosovo's energy strategy, the construction of 400 MW of solar power, 170 MW of wind power and 350 MW of back-up power. Kosovo argues with the lack of finance and the need to use its own mineral resources - lignite.⁴³ Any accident and outage would mean the black out in almost the entire territory of Kosovo and due to the interconnectedness of the electricity distribution grid, it would affect electricity supply not only in the Balkans, but also in Central and Western Europe. In this context, it is possible to mention the situation from

⁴² UNEP. *The Kosovo Conflict and Consequences for the Environment and Human Settlement*. UNEP 1999.

⁴³ WORLD BANK. *Energy in Kosovo*. 2018. Available from: <https://1url.cz/TzE8V>.

the beginning of 2018, when the time on excitation, microwave ovens and other electrical appliances in Europe was delayed by six minutes beyond the exact time due to a dispute between grid administrators in Serbia and Kosovo.

Last but not least, out of environmental concerns, we have to pinpoint floods along with earthquakes. The region is seismically active with several earthquakes exceeding the value six on the Richter scale.⁴⁴ The most powerful one in last thirty years was the one in October 2019 with its epicentre in Albania. Kosovo has also a long history of floods caused by the heavy rains accompanied with deforestation and erosion. Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic presents the key challenge for Kosovo and its new government. Kurti's government collapsed after a vote of no confidence on the pretext that Kurti had sacked the interior minister without consultation with the coalition partner LDK and thus broke the coalition agreement.

The interior minister Agim Veliu supported calls by President Hashim Thaçi for a state of emergency to combat COVID-19. This was refused by the prime minister as unjustified fearing Thaçi would use the situation to swap the territory with Serbia, being backed by the USA. The pandemic together with the issue of the Gazivode lake showed that even the environmental sector is closely interlinked with the Kosovo status.

LEGAL DIMENSION - BACK TO THE STATUS

There is a general presumption in favour of maintaining the status quo of the territorial boundaries stemming from the 1975 Helsinki arrangements. This provision was agreed to avoid chaos with constant fragmentation of states accompanied by war, avoid domino effect and bring stability and peace. International law has only recognised the right of external self-determination in a narrow set of scenarios - colonial territories and people in Mandated and Trust territories and people subjected to racist/apartheid regime were given the right for self-determination. Another option is when an existing state disappears; this last-mentioned situation is an extreme case involving gross human rights violations.

The last category has been discussed by courts and commentators and the general view adopted has been that it reflects the direction the law might be going in, rather than the position the law is in now. The recognition of the right of self-determination under these circumstances means a key step in such a process of norm creation.⁴⁵ It is not our intention to present either arguments for the recognition or arguments against it, as these have been brought up many times. The main idea is that, until both Kosovo as well as Serbia agree on a compromise, the region will remain landlocked. Two different views remain also on war atrocities, ICTY and special Kosovo court set up for the Kosovo Liberation Army in the Hague. Without justice, no reconciliation takes place. Without reconciliation, there is no peaceful and stable future for Kosovo and the region.

The quasi-state allows for an uneven rule of law, weak justice system, and discrimination towards the Serbian minority, organised crime, and corruption. Public prosecutors,

⁴⁴ UNDP. 2016. *Human Development Report. Risk-Proofing the Western Balkans. Empowering People to Prevent Disasters*. Available from: <https://1url.cz/PzE8C>.

⁴⁵ CHATHAM HOUSE. *Kosovo: International Law and Recognition*. 2008. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/VzWY2>

courts, police prone to political interference and abuse of office. As a relic of war, since 1999, Kosovo has been governed by people tied to organized criminal activities. Racketeering remains the biggest problem in Kosovska Mitrovica and even NGOs have to pay private security companies.⁴⁶

Albanian paramilitary formations are still present in the region. In Kosovo, Northern Macedonia, south-eastern Serbia and Albania, groupings appear from time to time appear declaring a struggle for Great Albania and possibly for Great Kosovo. These armed groups have almost no support among the population, their risk potential lies precisely in connection with organized crime. From time to time, their public statements addressed to the top officials of Kosovo appear in the media. The Small Arms Survey listed Kosovo among the top 25 countries when it comes to the estimated rate of civilian firearms possession per 100 people.

In Kosovo, with a population of 1,831,000, the estimated number of firearms owned by civilians was 436,000. The firearms reviewed range from improvised craft weapons to factory-made small arms. Numbers include all firearms in civilian hands, both licit and illicit.⁴⁷ Populist Albin Kurti accented the links of politicians with organized crime, nepotism, corruption in his political campaign and won the elections. Nevertheless, in order to break the organized crime curse and build independent judiciary, the main step to be taken is negotiation with Serbia and resolution of the Kosovo status.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The 2019 elections in Kosovo meant a mental break with the past for Kosovo politics and society - for the very first time, the party and its leader has not been associated with the post-conflict UÇK-related politics as Kurti had become a professional protester after his release from Yugoslav prisons in 2001.

In 2010, he moved to politics and based his campaign on the criticism of Kosovo politicians. One of his key demands was to change the constitution so that Kosovo voters could decide in a referendum about their self-determination, i.e. unification with Albania. His party started to mushroom also in neighbouring Albania, promoting the idea of unification there. After not only three months, his government was toppled by a vote of no confidence. So, what are the challenges the new government will face?

Even though, Kosovo challenges are diverse, the status question reaches all sectors. The unresolved relations with Serbia mean not only obstacles in Kosovo's integration into UN, EU, NATO and other organisations, but impact also bilateral relations in the region and the regional security. The solution would have an impact not only on the future path of Republika Srpska, but on the future of all the diasporas living outside their borders, not only in the region.

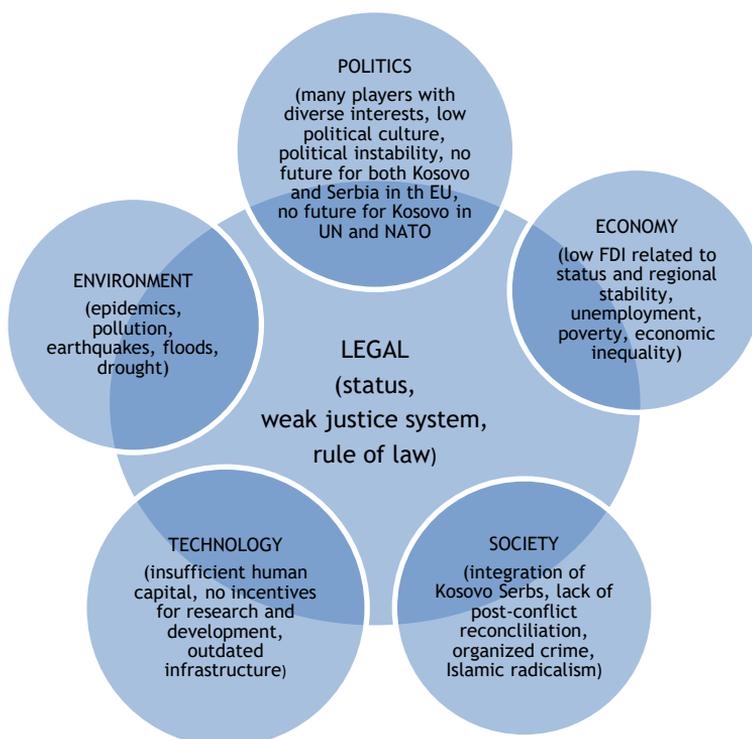
The future of Kosovo also impacts the daily Kosovo politics with different views on the solution and implies high volatility. It affects the politics in Serbia as not many political players dare to give up Kosovo for Serbia. It also means a schism in the political

⁴⁶ RADOSAVLJEVIĆ, Jovana. New Social Initiative, Interview, Kosovska Mitrovica 9.10.2019.

⁴⁷ KARP, Aaron. *Estimating global civilian-held firearms numbers. Briefing paper. Geneva: Small arms survey.* 2018. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/3zWYH>

representation of ethnic Serbs in Kosovo as different streams call for different solutions. The solution could be precedent for all similar conflicts and affect their development.

Scheme 1. Kosovo status and its sectoral impact.



Source: Author

The unresolved status affects bilateral trade with Serbia and foreign direct investments in the country, resulting in high unemployment and poverty. Kosovo belongs to the countries with high emigration rate with population living in Western Europe sending the remittances to their families in Kosovo. The emigration also affects the politics, economy and security of the destination states⁴⁸. The unresolved status issue reaches the societal sector - hopeless unemployed youth lacking EU vision being prone to radicalisation, extremism and organized crime.

The unresolved status means less money for technological research and development and less mobility for Kosovo students and scholars, resulting in poor human capital.

⁴⁸ FRANK, Libor, NOVOTNÝ, Antonín, FUČÍK, Jakub. *Official attitudes and political evaluation of international migration in the Czech Republic*. In: SOLIMAN, Khalid. S. Proceedings of 34th International Business Information Management Association Conference, 13-14 November 2019. Madrid; PROCHÁZKA, Josef, NOVOTNÝ, Antonín, STOJAR, Richard, FRANK, Libor. The long term perspective for defence 2030. Comparative analysis. *Politické vědy*, 21/4, 2018, pp 118.

The technological sector would advance with more student, academic and staff mobilities once the status is solved. The unresolved Kosovo status means no investments into cleaner environment. The solution also impacts the Gazivode lake, thus impacting the sector of economy. Even the pandemic crisis did not get around the Kosovo status and meant toppling of the government. The unfinished status means a deformed rule of law in the country combined with a weak justice system.

Last but not least, Kosovo status impacts the life of the inhabitants in Kosovo and Serbia. It impacts everyday life of citizens, graduates of Kosovo universities asking for a job in Serbia, people travelling with Kosovo/Serbian IDs, licence plates, driving licences and even the need to have two phone numbers and use of roaming charges. The inhabitants are those, who have to travel with two different IDs, change the licence plates on their cars when crossing the border (the stickers were already agreed but not implemented), those who seek job with diploma which is not recognized by the other party, those who live with two different SIM cards in the phones. The inhabitants are those who are punished mostly by the unresolved status. The unresolved status means unresolved inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo and unfinished post-conflict reconciliation. The unresolved status means a frozen conflict.

Even before the Brussels agreement, it was clear, that the Serbian/Kosovo dichotomy with two completely opposing views will never lead to a solution and that the issue needs a more sophisticated approach.

Scheme 2: Kosovo question: zero-sum game?



The Brussels agreement was offering a sophisticated approach, the solution in a style of Czech fairy tale about a smart girl, who managed to pay a visit dressed as well as undressed, combed and uncombed and bring a gift - no gift. The Brussels agreement offered the option to have your cake and eat it too, it offered not a recognition, but a normalization of the relations.

Table 2: Kosovo question - more than two solutions?

| Main Options | Key Supporters | Key Opponents | Result |
|------------------|--|---------------|-------------------------|
| Kosovo is Serbia | Most of the political parties in Serbia Serbian Orthodox church | Kosovo USA | Status quo - unresolved |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | Russia, China (EU members Spain, Slovakia, Cyprus, Greece, Romania do not recognize Kosovo) | | |
| Kosovo is independent | Consensus on the Albanian political scene (Rest of the EU recognizes Kosovo) | Serbia Russia China | Status quo - unresolved |
| Exchange of territory and recognition of Kosovo | USA putting pressure on Taçi and Vučić | All Kosovo Albanian political parties Most of the political parties in Serbia | Pandora's box and threat of a new conflict (Serbs, Croats, Hungarians, Northern Irish, etc.) |
| Greater Albania | Vetëvendosje | Serbia Russia USA | Threat of a new conflict |
| Non-recognition but normalisation of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia and integration of Kosovo Serbs into Kosovo, integration of both countries into the EU (implementation of the Brussels agreement) | All of the Kosovo political parties except Vetëvendosje approved the Brussels agreement (with some members deviating from the party line) Srpska lista | Vetëvendosje | Solution?? Ambiguous formulation leading to diverging interpretations and lack of implementation |

The Brussels agreement was supposed to be a founding stone for the normalization of relations between the two states. It was signed seven years ago and since then the normalization has been rather deadlocked. So, what are the main obstacles for the normalization of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia? The key problem is that there are too many different players with diverse interests (among others - government of Kosovo, government of Serbia, representatives of Kosovo Serbs, Serbian Orthodox Church, Russia, USA, EU). One has to bear in mind that also the local representation is fragmented and does not offer one opinion and one solution. The diverse external

players play with the carrot and stick policy. European Union eager to solve the hot issue in its Balkan courtyard offered its membership. However, with the EU enlargement fatigue, this seems no more credible. The Western Balkan countries and their population no more believe they will ever enter the EU and having more options they are ready to lean towards Russia, China, Turkey and who ever offers them better piece of cake. What more, both governments are reluctant to go against the public opinion as majority of the Serbs are against recognizing Kosovo's independence and majority of the Kosovo Albanians are in favour of suspending talks with Belgrade regardless of the international consequences.⁴⁹

The very first interviews after the elections with Albin Kurti have made clear, that he is not ready to make any compromise with Serbia. He has repeated that a dialogue with Serbia is not his top priority, that independence is a compromise as Serbia should actually pay for war damages and that the Serbian president should be like Charles de Gaulle ("France is great without Algeria.") and say that Serbia is great without Kosovo. Kurti has accented that his priorities include democratic state building, socio-economic development, break from the organized crime, strong rule of law, getting rid of the old politics looting the state and liberate the state from within.⁵⁰ Since assuming the power, Kurti has resisted the US pressure on removing the tariffs imposed on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and has suggested a partial lifting. In late March 2020, the government decided to partially lift import tariffs despite the rejection by the opposition and even his coalition partner pushing for full lifting. Kurti's decision not to fully meet Serbian demands along with the decision related to the spread of COVID-19 led to a political crisis as his coalition partner LDK decided to file a no-confidence motion in the parliament against the government. The former revolutionary insists on his priorities and does not want to make decisions together with his coalition partner LDK despite the coalition agreement.

It is essential for Vetëvendosje to realize, that they are no longer revolutionaries, but rather responsible and accountable politicians, who have to adapt to governmental politics and work with the political partners, through the institutions and within the boundaries of the law. It is important for the Kosovo government to realize that without good relations with Serbia there will be no stability and security in the entire region. It is crucial for Kosovo to enter into a dialogue with Serbia, leave behind old grudges in order to sort out Kosovo's future and the future of its citizens. It is critical to normalize defence relations between the two countries through confidence building measures. Without the normalisation of the relations, Kosovo citizens will remain hostages of their politicians and Kosovo will remain a country without future.

⁴⁹ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. *Serbia-Kosovo relations. Confrontation or normalisation?* Brussel 2019. Available from: <https://1url.cz/TzEn1>

⁵⁰ ILSE, Simon. *Interview with Albin Kurti. 'I want this state to succeed first.'* Heinrich Böll Foundation. 3.12.2019. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://bit.ly/2YjOdRn>; THE ECONOMIST. *New face, old grudges. Albin Kurti's new start in Kosovo.* 13.2.2020. [cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/QziNL>; GEORGIJEVSKI, Jovana. *Interview. Kurti: I will not fall into Vučić's trap.* EWB 26.11.2019. cit. 2020-03-25.] Available from: <https://1url.cz/hziNu>.