Kosova and the Arab World

International conference, held in August 25, 2008 in Prishtina

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Konferencë ndërkombëtare, e mbajtur më 25 Gusht 2008 në Prishtinë
INTRODUCTION

In response to the urgent need of an effective, pro-active public relations campaign for Kosova’s international image, Forum 2015 has initiated the process of improving Kosova’s image abroad. In this respect Forum 2015 is preparing the analysis on bigger prejudices promoted by international press about Kosova and its post-independence reality. In parallel, a civic diplomacy campaign foresees utilization of Forum 2015 experts and intellectuals to improve Kosova’s image in different parts of the world, mainly skeptical about independence and badly informed due to strong anti-campaigning. The first step was sending of a group of Kosovar intellectuals to Amman (Jordan) to establish contacts and hold meetings with influential intellectuals and civil society leaders of Arab world. During this visit, Forum 2015 in cooperation with Jordan’s Al Quds Center for Political Studies, organized a conference titled “Kosova and the Arab world”, gathering around 60 influential personalities from Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and other Arab countries. The conference in Amman was received very positively in the Arab world, reflecting once again on the lack of communication channels between Kosova and this part of the world. In order to make the outcomes of this process more sustainable and long-lasting, Forum 2015 organized the follow-up activity of Amman conference by gathering a number of influential intellectuals from Arab World in a conference in Prishtina. The guests from abroad, together with Kosovar scholars and civil society leaders presented papers relevant to Kosova-Arab world relations. The conference was held in August 25th 2008 gathered a high-level audience comprised of institutional leaders, diplomats, local and international civil society leaders, intellectuals and media.

The conference offered an impulse towards establishing and strengthening communication channels between the civil society of Kosova and Arab countries. After the first step, taken in Amman (Jordan), panelists of Prishtina conference, coming from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, etc, discussed about the statehood of Kosova and Kosova-Arab relations. The conference welcomed many prominent personalities from public, civil and academic life of Kosova, which presented their papers: Fatmir Sejdiu, Skënder Hyseni, Veton Surroi, Muhamet Mustafa, Muhamedin Kullashi, Ferid Agani, Nehat Islami, Bekim Sejdiu and many others.

This publication consist of papers, presentations and discussion from the international conference “Kosova and the Arab World”, held in Prishtina, in August 25, 2008. The publication offers a strong written reference exclusively related to the relations of Kosova with countries of Arab world, where prominent experts and intellectuals from Arab countries and Kosova offer their analysis and perspectives on the need, form and benefits from establishing and deepening the relations between our countries.
LUAN SHLLAKU
Kosova Foundation for Open Society

Dear President of the Republic, Mr. Sejdiu, and Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Hyseni, dear Prishtina Mayor, honoured guests from Arab countries, from Embassies and liaison offices in Kosova, honoured representatives of government institutions, political parties, civil society, media and businesses,

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this edition of the Forum organized by the Coalition for Euro-Atlantic Integration, Forum 2015. We have assembled here today to discuss on the topic “Kosova and the Arab World”. This is the second conference about this topic. The first conference was held in Amman in July. We have invited numerous honoured guests from various Arab countries, and on behalf of Forum 2015 and all participants here today I would like to use this opportunity to thank them for accepting our invitation and for joining us here today in this conference which will discuss important topics for the future cooperation of our countries.

Dear participants, Mr. President and Mr. Minister, allow me first to inform you that Forum 2015 has now entered the third cycle of topics or issues that it addresses with the broad participation of Kosova’s intellectual capacity from government institutions, civil society, the University, businesses and media, to initially debate and then act in strategic fashion for resolving the current problems faced by society in Kosova.

The cycle of topics that we are elaborating involves Kosova’s image abroad, which is presently not realistic and in most cases burdened by stereotypes, and all this is causing us a lot of problems while we work on improving our international standing. This comes as a result of what we have and have not done in the past to correct this situation, and not only in the post-independence period when misunderstandings and the propaganda of certain circles known to all of us has multiplied. Forum 2015 has concluded a study on this issue, arguing that the situation involving many phenomena such as the overall crime, interethnic crime, trafficking of human beings and narcotics, corruption, etc. is far better than what is being propagated by many circles outside Kosova, and in some cases we even stand better than many European countries. The Forum will soon publish these findings and present them in a roundtable in Prishtina and outside Kosova in international decision-making centres.

I said earlier on that this is the third cycle of issues addressed by Forum 2015. Allow me to recall that in November 2004, Forum 2015 launched the first cycle of topics, conducted numerous analysis and presented them both in Kosova and abroad, in Brussels, Paris, Tirana, London, with the title “Why independence for Kosova?”. Later on, we launched the second series of important issues for the pre-status period, which we called “Status vs. Status Quo”.

During this period, organizations and authors from Kosova and abroad have addressed numerous important topics and conducted many studies, and you can easily find all of them on the Forum 2015 webpage. Our goal remains to mobilize the Kosovar potential in resolving the major problems we face today.
Honoured participants, today we will discuss an important topic which in a way covers all debates we held at the Forum so far: today we will discuss on foreign policies, especially vis-à-vis the Arab countries, and I am glad that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be an active participant in the debate, we have the Minister and other representatives here with us today. We will also discuss on economic, social and cultural cooperation and on other issues of vital interest. We will especially focus on the challenge of opening new channels of communication as a prerequisite for creating long-term and sustainable partnership with the Arab World. I believe we are in a perfect position to understand, to talk and to help one another. This is a universal platform for genuine cooperation between states.

Kosova aspires to join the European Union. This is quite reasonable. In the time of globalization, being part of broad unions is an advantage especially for new states, like Kosova. Kosova lies in Europe, and Europe can provide Kosova with a perspective for resolving its current and pressing problems. But in the time of globalization, it is not only the economy which challenges these trends – the trends of being part of a broader organization.

We have many things in common with other parts of the world as well. In addition to challenges of political and economic cooperation, what unites us with Arab countries is a 500-year common history, which gave birth to many relations, friendships and challenges of cooperation. During this period, we benefited greatly from the rich heritage of this part of the world, and we believe we too made our contribution as a small country that was part of this large empire. I am confident that many participants today will talk about this common heritage.

Kosova today is in a very important period of development, alongside its statehood it also needs to build its economy. For Kosova it is equally important and vital to create conditions for being recognized by at least one new state every day, and to be able to employ 100 people on a daily basis. And above all we must work every minute in developing and implementing projects that will move forward our statehood, economy and democratic institutions. The Arab World has the sufficient political and economic potential to help us in this respect, and I am certain that it will do so sooner or later. Forum 2015 has not accidentally invited important and influential members of Arab society, to give them a better picture of our reality, our projects, needs and challenges. They gladly accepted our invitation to help us in this project, and we are deeply thankful for their readiness.

Today, Kosova needs friends more than ever. It needs friends with whom it will build its future on solid bilateral grounds, a friendship from which we will all benefit. Kosova has a potential for development in almost all areas, but we need foreign investments. The majority of Arab countries have the potential to make investments, and we hope they will invest in Kosova soon. We have gathered today to send messages of cooperation, and to inform our Arab friends about our immediate needs. We need Arab countries to officially recognize Kosova’s independence as soon as possible, and we need to establish more efficient communication between economists and businessmen on both sides, between cultural and spiritual institutions, between civil societies, the media, and the Universities in order to better and further explore our institutional and intellectual capacity. This conference and the conference organized in Amman are testimony of this potential and of good-will intentions.
Kosova is a small country and cannot afford the luxury of making differences between those that have and those that don’t have the mandate to advance processes that push Kosovar society forward. I am certain that in this point there is full consensus between Kosovar institutions and intellectuals.

Mr. President, Mr. Minister, distinguished participants, let us speak in one language today!
Thank you Mr. Shllaku, Mr. Mustafa and honored representatives in this important conference organized by Forum 2015.

I will start by welcoming the important initiative you have launched and the numerous topics that will be addressed here and which relate to the present and future and the overall perspective of the development of the society and state of Kosova. I also attended other previous conferences on the topics that you chose to address. You shall have mine and the Kosova institutions’ cooperation and support and I think that today’s topic that you chose to address deserves a multidimensional approach which will primarily be an important part of opening a new chapter of cooperation between institutions of culture and civil society, and why not even an important foundation for the development of relations between countries.

I trust that during this debate you will address numerous aspects of the areas you highlighted and those that relate to the recognition of the reality in Kosova, namely the state of Kosova, which is based on its values, its clear identity, in opening new opportunities for economic cooperation, in opening new opportunities for cultural cooperation and in opening opportunities for cooperation in other areas that are highly important and which also involve inter-university exchanges.

I will use this opportunity to say that at these times, we are especially committed, and I believe so are the people who have joined us here and others that we contacted through various channels, to accelerate in the best way possible the recognition of this reality and to open up numerous opportunities for developing relations.

For us it is very important to say that Kosova expected and confidently expects that the countries of this region represented by our guests here today will have the opportunity to join the group of other countries that have recognized the independence of Kosova. 46 states from continents and four corners of the world have supported the approach of the state of Kosova to become a democratic state, a state for all its citizens and their future, a state that fosters and protects human rights and freedoms.

In this regard, I say now that Kosova will remain committed to this approach, knowing very well that it can best express its identity through these values. For us it is important to emphasize that we are in Europe, what you Mr. Shllaku stressed earlier on, we support and strongly aspire Euro-Atlantic integrations, to become members of a family in the old continent, part of a joint family, with the latest development trends, but at the same time we have the approach and sense of cooperation with all countries for the good of the future and development of our citizens and countries. In this respect, I want to say that based on these premises Kosova has given and will continue to give strong testimonies for becoming an important factor for peace and stability, starting with good neighborly relations with all neighboring countries, in the future even with Serbia, despite Serbia’s harsh positions and rhetoric that is misusing even its own people. We hope and believe that there will come a time of new levels of cooperation and that Serbia will acknowledge the reality in Kosova as
a reality of a bright future for all its citizens and will cease its destructive campaign and approach. We also hope it will cease the approaches that intend to cut short Kosova’s development trend and other developments by targeting or by trying to create special obstacles to the recognition of the Republic of Kosova, and by trying to destabilize Kosova in various ways.

We are committed to focusing on our work. We are committed to sending the best positive signals of cooperation with Serbia and with other countries; we are also committed to develop new levels of cooperation with all countries as soon as possible.

Without further a due, I want to welcome this initiative that you have launched as part of cooperation at this level and with distinguished guests that represent important institutions of science, culture and civil society. I hope this conference will be an additional voice of reason, calling and cooperation and that it will stimulate processes for important cooperation.

Kosova wrote in its Constitution that it is especially committed to be a state of all its citizens, a state that will respect human rights and freedoms, religious freedoms and the rights and freedoms of all communities. This is why we have called this a value and this will be important for a successful life in the future.

Thank you.
Dear ladies and gentlemen, distinguished participants,

It is a pleasure for me to address this conference which is being held at an important time for Kosova and the region in general. The magnitude of this conference becomes even greater given the content of topics that are addressed here and also the high-level participation. Based on these facts, I will use the opportunity to thank the organizers, Forum 2015, for inviting me to attend this conference. Allow me also to welcome in particular the academic and intellectual representatives of various Arab countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, on February 17th 2008, the Assembly of Kosova declared Kosova an independent and sovereign state. This was the culmination of the aspirations of the people of Kosova to live in freedom. Ultimately, thanks to the determination of the people of Kosova and the support of the free-loving world, Kosova is today free and is working on building its democratic state on the principles of respecting human rights and ethnic minorities. Kosova therefore remains strongly committed to President Ahtisaari’s Comprehensive Proposal and the Kosova Government has already drafted special programs to implement the provisions of this package on the ground, especially the part that involves the protection of minority communities, in particular the Serb minority. The Government of the Republic of Kosova is fully aware that the declaration of independence has not solved our numerous social and economic problems. It is clear to all of us that in the current phase a crucial issue for the institutions and the people of Kosova is the international recognition of the state of Kosova. This is an important prerequisite for political stability and the economic and social development of the Republic of Kosova and also for the development of the whole region. The Government of Kosova is working at full capacity to ensure as much international support for Kosova as possible, including in particular the Arab countries with which we have frequent contacts and meetings. Often, these contacts and meetings are not easy due to various and even logistical obstacles. Kosova rightfully asks and expects support and recognition from these countries at these historical times for Kosova, historical times for all of us. We are aware that the process of recognizing new states is a complicated matter of international politics, based on this fact the Kosova Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was established on June 16th, has focused a considerable part of its capacity in accelerating this process.

Notwithstanding numerous political and logistical obstacles, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has managed to convey the voice and interests of the Republic of Kosova in various countries and regions of the world. As regards the international recognition of the state of Kosova, the strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is based on direct and indirect contacts with as many world countries as possible. We have prioritized regions that still have not recognized Kosova’s independence, and influential states within those regions and within certain international organizations. In this respect, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from day one has treated as priority contacts with various countries of the Arab and Muslim world in general.
Ladies and gentlemen, the Government and the people of Kosova hope and strongly believe that Arab countries will once again stand by the side of the people of Kosova. I say once again because various Arab countries and organizations gave generous support for the reconstruction and stabilization of post-war Kosova. The people and institutions of Kosova are and will always be grateful to Arab countries that offered their assistance be it through their military presence in KFOR or through numerous humanitarian and economic aid.

Allow me to recall that at the Donors Conference for Kosova, Saudi Arabia pledged US$ 50 million. We thank this important country and we certainly expect recognition and cooperation from this and other countries in the area of economy and in all other life activities.

Ladies and gentlemen, we hope and trust in great opportunities for political, economic and other relations between Kosova and the Arab World. The recognition of the state of Kosova by Arab states would open a new chapter that would foster and further these relations. The people and institutions of Kosova have clearly confirmed the commitment to build a democratic state that holds at high esteem and protects human liberties. Kosova aspires to become a responsible international actor and contributor and not only a consumer of global security and of the aspiration for human freedom and dignity. This aspiration strengthens the bridge that connects the different cultures, religions, ethnicities and races of the world.
1. One hundred years ago, a relatively short historical distance, the predecessors of Kosovar and Arab participants in this roundtable, were part of one Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and part of the same historical moment, the crumbling of the same Empire.

One hundred years later, we are still experiencing in one way or another, the tremors or the aftermath of tremors of that historical moment. The creation of the independent state of Kosova, the latest power crisis in Lebanon, the lack of a Palestinian state and the possibility of the survival of the Iraqi state are all origin products of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the self-determination efforts of nations within this Empire. And certainly the positioning of the great Western Powers vis-à-vis these efforts.

2. Forced by history to be together one hundred years ago, what is happening today? The simplest answer for the current developments in relations between Kosova and the Arab world is that whatever is happening it is happening according to an inertia, sporadic individual connections, and as the next couple of days will prove, a sporadic media debate.

Kosova as a state does not have a policy toward the Arab world. If it’s any condolence for our Arab friends, we must explain to them that Kosova in fact lacks a foreign policy. The Assembly of the Republic of Kosova has not discussed yet the country’s foreign policy, be it in its respective committee or in a plenary session. For the time being, there is no guiding document for the country’s foreign policy, which would explain the goals of this country in the short-term, mid-term or long-term period in its relations with the world, including with the countries known as the Arab world.

3. In the absence of an official policy, allow me to explain some of the premises of the Kosovar movement for independence over the last two decades, in which I was actively involved, and some parts of the context on which Kosova should build its policy toward the Arab world.

First, Kosovar politics for independence has been strongly identified with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing process of the unification of Europe based on fundamental Western values.

Consequently, the building of the independent state of Kosova is based on the broader historical context of the unification of Europe of free nations and states, and in this respect, the building of the independent state of Kosova marks its alignment in what is called the Western world. Today, to the geographical east of Kosova are NATO and EU members – Bulgaria and Romania.
The future of Kosova is without a doubt that of integration in NATO and EU, in other words a culmination of its Western identity.

But, if the liberation of Kosova is a product of the active policy of the West, the U.S. and the European Union, the process of Kosova’s independence has also been a product of a global policy. In the last eight years, Kosova has been administered by the United Nations. Every decision on Kosova since 1999 has had global repercussions. Kosova’s independence, after a process of negotiations sponsored by the United Nations Secretary General and after the recommendation of his Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari, is an act that requires a global response, therefore, it also requires a response from the Arab world.

In a short summary, one can say that Kosova had and continues to have its natural course to find a place in its hearth of origin, the West, but at the same time in a parallel way to find its way within the global family.

4.
I think that four fundamental factors should play a special role in the position of the Arab world vis-à-vis the independence of Kosova.

First, our common heritage. An important part of Kosova’s identity was shaped during the Ottoman Empire. Kosova, as I said earlier on, belongs naturally to the West, but this belonging does not rule out the cultural and religious influence of Islam that has left deep traces in our country during the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

Second, our common effort for self-determination. Kosova’s independence marks the fulfillment of the aspirations of a society for freedom, aspirations that the Palestinian people has not fulfilled yet.

Third, statehood as the fulfillment of basic international duties for maintaining peace and stability. Kosova’s independence is at the same time implies an obligation for the country’s institutions to address the needs of its citizens on the one hand, and on the other hand to maintain regional security and stability. The Balkans could not become a region of stability without the creation of states that would assume their own responsibilities. The same thing is happening in the Middle East, a region of turmoil that won’t be able to find peace without successful state-building.

Fourth, the Arab support for a European project. In the next couple of years, Kosova’s independence will be an important part of the unification of the continent. The support for Kosova will be an advanced positioning of Arab foreign policy toward the European Union.

5.
Nonetheless, I think that Kosova and Kosovars, namely the future foreign policy of our country, have a great role in the position of the Arab world toward Kosova’s independence.

In this regard, below are some suggestions.

First, more understanding is needed. Although we use it as a term, there is no "Arab world". There are different Arab states, with their specific histories, their constitu-
tional orders, their economic lives, and their different approaches toward religion, technology, the U.S., money... We must get to know them better.

Second, each and every one of these states requires and deserves to be respected. One of the fundamental mistakes of Kosova’s institutions is to imply that Arabs would automatically support Kosova, or an even greater mistake to think that the Arab support for Kosova will be influenced by great Western powers, primarily the U.S.

Third, we need to eliminate stereotypes. In the last couple of weeks, a pro-government newspaper has published two non-intelligent articles filled with stereotypes about Arabs and Kosova’s relations with Arabs. These two shortsighted articles claimed that Arabs do not have a civil society, that the imam has the role of an intellectual, and even that the Arab world today practices an irreligious Islam.

Such an approach, which gives way to the triumph of ignorance, also views Arab societies as unworthy of communicating with Kosova. With such stereotypes, it is impossible to have dialogue, let alone ask for support.

Fourth, Kosova needs to build a long-term approach toward Arab states, beyond the immediate need for recognition. This long-term approach must define the cardinal points for identifying Kosova’s interests, including:

a) the dialogue on Islam and how to further advance tolerant thinking within Islam
b) the charging effects of the growing support of countries that export oil
c) access on the ever-growing powerful markets of the Middle East

One hundred years later, state-building is the key word both in the Arab world and in Kosova. After this long period, we are in dire need of a mutual assistance in this historical process.
RIDWAN AL-SAYED
Advisor to Lebanon Prime-Minister Fouad Siniora, Lebanon

We a group of studiers, intellectuals and reporters from several Arab countries are participating in the conference “Kosova and the Arab World” organized by Forum 2015 for primarily two reasons: to show solidarity in the sense that we know the value of this new experience and we think that it will have an influence among Arabs and on Third World countries, and to draw lessons from this new experience on building the system of a state in the new context of states after the end of the Cold War.

To begin with, I would like to relate to my colleague Veton Surroi who says that Albanians and Arabs experience together the consequences of a common moment which according to Surroi was the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. I believe we do share the experiences of a common moment, but I think that this moment was the end of the Cold War and not the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

Allow to make a brief historical description in order to argue my opinion:

World War II led to the disintegration of two empires, the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire; it could’ve also led to the fall of the Russian Empire and thus all multinational empires would crumble, but this did not happen. It did not happen because the communist revolution brought a new dictatorial system which gave the Russian nation leadership and rule over other nations that were part of the Empire. Russia grew even more stable after it emerged victorious from World War II.

In the end of 1940s, the Cold War began and this aggravated relations between the victorious powers and aggravated all world developments, therefore, Arab states and the nations of the Balkans could not benefit from the liberation movement. The Cold War aggravated the results of World War II and when the liberation movement was launched in the 1950s in Africa, Asia and Latin America, Arab states and the nations of the Balkans could not benefit from it because their countries were ruled by those that encouraged the liberation movement and which emerged victorious from World War II, although one was ruling in the Balkans and the other one was ruling in the Middle East.

Now that the Cold War is over, we Arabs and nations of the Balkans share the experiences of the final moment of that war and that world whose fate was sealed by World War Two and was then left in the same state by the Cold War.

After the end of the Cold War, the Balkans, Middle Asia and the Caucasus, unlike Arab countries, were off to a quicker start because of the cleverness of the people of these countries and because of the opportunity to seek their rights, liberties and independence. These countries had experienced difficult times and were subject to great injustice over four centuries by the great empires and powerful states such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire and the averagely powerful Serbian state. Injustices committed upon these nations gave birth to a national feeling and they desperately waited for the right opportunity to seek their rights, liberties and independence. Such developments are yet to take
place among Arabs.

There are two facts why these developments took place among the nations of the Balkans and not among Arabs: 1. The pursuit of rights and liberties among the nations of the Balkans is fortunately linked to the request for the democratization of the governing system, whereas leading Arab countries were formally independent and there the Cold War solidified a dictatorial leadership and kept in power the same military rulers that after World War Two began exercising their power in the name of Arab nationalism and in the name of liberating Palestine but meanwhile failing to do a single good action for their nations. 2. The country that has influence over our states is the United States of America and this has not changed, so the U.S. continues to this day to exercise its influence over us and does not promote changes in the system of Arab leadership which is still a dictatorial system. This system has remained the same throughout the Cold War and unfortunately still persists, because as we said before the same system that had influence on these countries during the Cold War continues to have the same degree of influence today on Arab countries who were formally pro-Russian but which in reality worked for American interests.

Therefore, we Arabs are awaiting developments that have already taken place in your countries, developments that push forward progress and the democratization of governance. After this brief summary of the overall circumstances in your and our countries, I ask you not to be surprised why Arab countries still have not recognized the independence of your country.

One also needs to explain that depending on the levels they represent, Arabs have different perceptions concerning the developments that have taken place in your country. At the popular level, these developments have enjoyed extraordinary support. In almost all Arab countries there were protests and other forms of organization expressing outrage over Serbia’s actions against your people and earlier against Bosniaks. I witnessed the arrests of many such protesters, some of them even expressed their outrage in extreme manner, because the people simply knew that justice was on your side.

The situation is seemingly different when it comes to the perceptions by Arab governments. I attended the meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers in the Arab League when the decision was made to postpone the recognition of the state of Kosova, and together with Prime-Minister Fouad Siniora I attended the session of the Islamic Conference which discussed on the recognition of the state of Kosova.

It should be known that the pretext that Arab countries do not want to recognize Kosova’s independence because they don’t want to ruin relations with Russia and Serbia is not true. It is also not true that Arab countries do not want to recognize Kosova because they fear that the precedent for Kosova could be used to solve some problems in the Arab world and this would not suit them. This false concern and pretext for non-recognition does not stand, because over 90% of residents of Arab countries are of Arab ethnicity, Arab is their mother tongue and also over 90% of them are Muslim, so in the Arab world there are no cases of ethnic or religious duality as in other non-Arab countries which had no problem with recognizing the state of Kosova. So if someone should be worried about this it is those states and not Arab states because like we said they don’t have cases of ethnic or religious duality, with the exception of Iraq and the Kurdish problem.
The real reason why Arabs are running late in recognizing Kosova’s independence is simple: Arab government officials do not like the idea of a nation fighting a liberation war, as it is said in leftist terminology, and to declare independence despite the rejection by the state that ruled over it and that immediately after the war – which is the very source behind this disapproval – to build in that country not a military system but a popular democratic system based on elections and other democratic values. Arab governments cannot accept this and this is precisely the reason why they are hesitating to recognize Kosova’s independence.

If we accept the new reality in Kosova and if we properly analyze the resolution of the issue of Kosova, we Arabs have 5 interests:

1. The right of the people of Palestine for self-determination. Notwithstanding international decisions, an armed conflict and 7-8 wars, we still haven’t managed to drive Israel away from at least 28% of Palestine territory which is inhabited by an absolute Palestine majority. President Bush on a daily basis takes pride that he has declared for two states, but the problem has been going on for 60 years and nothing has changed for Palestine. Arabs should recognize the new reality in Kosova and bring to the attention of the United States of America and European states that assisted Kosova with force that they should use the same experience in finding a solution for the Palestine issue.

2. Cultural expansion. We are witnessing how France and Britain are building together with countries that have made cultural rather than political invasions, whereas it has been a long time that we Arabs have not come up with a genuine strategy for cultural expansion. When we see that countries like Kosova are open to us why shouldn’t we be open to them?

3. European Islam. I know that initially this term was used for negative purposes in the sense of claiming that Islam is characterized by fundamentalism and that Muslim communities that migrated to Europe from Turkey, Pakistan and Arab countries would prove this. Later on, this term took on a new meaning and in my opinion this should be the crucial meaning: the fact that there are native Europeans that have embraced the religion of Islam, and they don’t feel a minority because they are native Europeans, they have an experience influenced by the European experience of statebuilding, about the relation between religion and state and religion and nation and we in Eastern Arabia, where we are facing problems with religious fundamentalism and attempts to create a religious state, can benefit greatly from such an experience. It is true that in Turkey there are cases where this European Islam is displayed, but circumstances in these countries are closer to the circumstances of countries of Eastern Arabia than to circumstances in Turkey. We can benefit from this new experience, especially with regards to the democracy of institutions, the relations between religion and state and state and nation.

4. Revival of cultural and religious relations. It is not known that throughout centuries we had good cultural and religious relations be it during the rule of the Ottoman Empire or later, in times that are still fresh in the memory of the scholars of these areas. I believe it is in the interest of both parties to study, revive and renew these relations.
5. Kosova would prove an ideal country for the wealth of Arabs especially in the last decade and for which they are having difficulties of choosing countries where to invest. Investments can be made not only by Arab governments but also by Arab capitalists on individual basis. I have talked to some Arab businessmen and I have noticed that a great number of them do not know that Kosova can prove a successful investment. The recognition of Kosova’s independence by some or all of our countries would certainly stimulate them to invest in Kosova.

In closing, I would like to say that our common task is to familiarize Arabs with these beautiful countries and with this wonderful people, with their experiences and with the necessity and interest to have as much connections as possible, while you as the government and civil society have the task of raising the voice even higher and increasing the voices that speak on your behalf in the Arab World.
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Allow me to open the first panel of the Conference “Kosova and Arab countries”, aimed at elaborating the issue of building Kosova’s statehood, the continuity of specific historical circumstances that have brought to this long and difficult process, and to focus on the current conditions and challenges of this process after the declaration of independence and the approval of the Constitution of Kosova. One of the most challenging issues for Kosova’s state-building today is to strengthen as quickly as possible Kosova’s international position and its membership in international organizations, including the United Nations. The recognition of Kosova’s independence by 46 states from almost all continents needs to be accompanied by a quick pace of recognitions from other countries in order to achieve this goal as soon as possible. On the one hand, we can be satisfied with the number of EU member states (21 out of 27) that have recognized Kosova’s independence and the relations with most of our neighbouring countries, but on the other hand, many people are surprised by the lack of results in other parts of the world, especially in Arab countries. If we look closely at this problem, we will see that there is a whole spectre of circumstances, namely two basic reasons behind such delays: the lack of understanding for the sui generis case of Kosova’s statebuilding process and the lack of communication between Kosova and Arab countries. Some of these reasons were highlighted at the Conference organized by Forum 2015 and Al Quds Centre in Amman on June 12th this year.

1. Although the majority of participants at the meeting in Amman (which gathered 60 intellectuals, analysts, writers, MPs and representatives of political parties) were in favour of the quick recognition of Kosova’s independence by Arab countries, a number of debaters asked if Kosova’s independence was just and fair, by adding that “Kosova has separated from Serbia and is a creature of the West and whose aim is to endanger the integrity of Arab countries. Kosovars may find such observations rather strange, bearing in mind the fact that the Arab countries showed us solidarity and understanding during the war and then provided humanitarian assistance for repairing the consequences of the war. However, we should not forget that 10 years have passed since that dramatic situation, and present-day world has seen many developments and old and new geo-strategic problems. A basic conclusion is that this part of the world needs to see once again the context of creating Kosova’s statehood and especially in the last decade of the previous century which culminated with the war in Kosova and its grave consequences. Without dwelling on the historical context, we must emphasize that Kosova’s statehood is a natural right of the people of Kosova who must decide on their fate, freedom, independence and building a democratic society; after the dissolution of the federal state, where Kosova was equal to the other republics such as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia, whose independence has been recognized by Arab countries. The process of Kosova’s independence has nothing in common with claims that Kosova was violently seceded from Serbia; on the contrary, Serbia invaded Kosova after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and reinvented it by violating the 1974 Federal Constitution. During that period, Serbia displayed tendencies to dominate all of former Yugoslavia and to create a Greater Serbia. Serbia thus destroyed the so-called Tito’s Yugoslavia by triggering bloody wars in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Kosova. In response to the harsh invasion by Serbia, Kosovars initially organized a peaceful active resis-
tance and later engaged in armed conflict, and the intervention by NATO and the international community was a response to the apartheid, mass killings, deportation, major destructions and the evident risk of genocide. This sui generis should be understood today especially in the Arab World, in order to narrow down the influence of Russian and Serbian propaganda which is trying to ignore the abovementioned developments and threaten to use Kosova’s case for its own geo-strategic interests. The context of Kosova’s independence has its own distinctive features and cannot be compared to problems faced today in the Arab World.

2. Kosova is a European country with a Muslim majority; it builds democratic institutions of a plural society and a market economy; it is a place where Islam coexists with democratic practices and civil society; all these facts make Kosova an interesting place, a model of building a democratic society, a secular state, which coexists with Islamic principles that are one part of the identity and religious culture of the majority population.

In discussions I had with many intellectuals and leaders of civil society in Arab countries, we agreed that this is a very interesting experience and that the exchange of experiences with civil society, academia, cultural and institutional circles is in our mutual interest. Multiculturalism and religious tolerance in Kosova and among Albanians in particular is a very important social capital which makes up the core of social harmony in the state of Kosova. The Kosova conflict, caused by Serbian hegemonism and chauvinism, did not have a religious character. The conflict, first and foremost, had the character of national liberation and statebuilding, although Albanians were condemned and blasphemed for their Muslim and Catholic beliefs, for the violence against the heritage of monuments and Albanians were blasphemed by Serbian state propaganda as fundamentalists (the Serbian state institutions, academia and the Serb Orthodox Church followed suit). The actors of this propaganda in the west wage a campaign saying that the creation of the state of Kosova endangers Western civilization. The same actors tell Arab countries that Kosova is a creature by Western civilizations meant to ruin the integrity of Arab countries.

3. Due to institutional-building delay and insufficient engagement, Kosova has so far not provided the Arab world with sufficient information. Contacts were very few and ignored and we have to remedy this as soon as possible. Forum 2015 has launched a project of contribution to creating a positive image of Kosova in the world, and as part of this has initiated cooperation with partners in the Arab world. Today’s conference is a continuation of the debate in Amman, the topics are more or less the same, and we expect that this panel will further elaborate the issues that I presented as an introduction to this discussion. In this regard, we have an impressive list of presenters and debaters.
Concerning the topic of secularism in Kosova, I will focus on a thesis that has been disseminated over the last couple of years in some political and intellectual circles in Belgrade and then appropriated even by media in other countries: this thesis argues that the biggest danger that an independent Kosova will pose for the Balkans and Europe, is that it will become a stronghold of Islamic integration and international terrorism, and serve as a bridge between Bosnia and Turkey and the Middle East. There were several versions of this thesis; it even intertwined with other thesis about danger lurking from « the separatism » of minorities throughout the world. Such political colloquialisms, which produced certain political visions and effects for Kosova, should face the concrete historical-political developments and the reality of events that have characterized the last two decades in the Balkans. Even a superficial political analysis of these developments will reveal the mystifying character of this thesis. In fact, if we take into consideration only Serbian official sources, we will notice that the conflict between the Serbian regime and Kosova Albanians was not an inter-religious conflict but a purely political conflict between the Serbian state and Albanian political movements. This conflict took on increasingly harsh dimensions, especially in the early 80s, and is a conflict that involves a multiple political crisis of the Yugoslav federation. All official reports by Serbia on these conflicts clearly show that the political leaders of Kosova Albanians, starting from illegal groups to political parties that emerged in the 90s, had purely political requests and programmes that were free from religious elements. In fact, there was an apparent contradiction between these reports and official sources on concrete developments and lectures for the needs of the international public opinion which aimed to portray Albanians as dangerous Islamists. This became even more evident in the analysis of observers and researchers from other countries that dealt with the problem of Kosova.

The historians of political history, including many politologists of the Balkans, place the abovementioned phenomenon within a broader historical horizon. The comparative analysis of relations between politics and religion and state and church in various countries of the Balkans, highlight an apparent difference between these relations among Albanians and Serbs. In their researches, George Castellan, Paul Garde, Ivan Djuric, Radmila Rajic, Rajwantee Lakshman-Lepain, emphasize the following characteristic difference: while the political movements of Albanians, since the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, affirmed the establishment of political connections beyond the differences between the three religions (Islam, Orthodox and Catholic), as well as differences between tribes and religions, among Serbs the Orthodox Church would play a major political role in mobilizing masses through religious-political preaching. These researchers conclude that multiconfessionalism is a comprising part of the national identity of Albanians, while among Serbs the Orthodox religion is related to the definition of nation. They have mentioned concrete examples from this secular approach of Albanian political movements and parties. For example, in 1924 in Albania, the popular masses with a Muslim majority supported the rise to power of Fan Noli, who was an archbishop of the Orthodox Church. However, Noli was seen in the Albanian public first and foremost as a renowned political figure, one that takes into account the national interest of Albanians, and this implied a political connection beyond the religious differences of Albanians.
Certainly, in this political history, the approach of Enver Hoxha’s communist regime has nothing to do with secularism, but with a brutal violation of the basic rights of the followers of all three religions among Albanians, a violation that denied human rights in Albania, including political freedoms.

Meanwhile, among Serbs, the Orthodox Church and religion would take on a crucial role especially in the early 80s, namely in the beginning of the end of federal Yugoslavia, and especially vis-à-vis the issue of Kosova, more specifically about the political orchestration of a historical remembrance. I refer to the political mythology built around the 1389 Battle for Kosova and its utilization during the political crisis in Yugoslavia. One aspect of this crisis was unfolded during mass popular rallies organized by Milosevic’s regime and strongly supported by the Orthodox Church, who would focus primarily on Kosova as a theological-political complex.

I will briefly illustrate the connection between the religious and political aspects of this movement with two events. In the period between June 1988 and June 1989 (which marked the 600th anniversary of the Battle for Kosova), a political-religious rally was held in Serb-inhabited municipalities in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosova: the ceremony included the transportation of the bones of Tsar Lazar (who was killed in the 1389 Battle for Kosova) in these provinces, and political-religious preaching (by priests, politicians and artists), in several villages and towns where events from World War Two, namely crimes committed against Serbs, were also recollected. During the ceremony, the bones of the victims of this war were also exhumed. The letter that was read during these ceremonies, among other things contained the message which was addressed to “the enemies of bloodied and martyred Serbia”: “we will do everything in our power to uproot their tribes so that history never mentions them again”. The letter, which was published in Belgrade-based Politika daily newspaper (17 September 1988) triggered numerous reactions, including one by a high-ranking Serb official from Bosnia, Miroslav Jancic, who warned about the danger lurking from the message.

The second event is closely linked to the first, because the abovementioned ceremony ended in Fushë Kosovë, in a giant rally organized by Milosevic’s regime. The rally manifested the connection between politics and religion, between the state and the church. In front of over one million people, Milosevic gave a speech that would be often analyzed by the observers and researchers of the dramatic developments in the Balkans. I will mention only two characteristic elements from the
speech: the definition of the Second Yugoslavia (1945-1991), highlighted by Tito’s rule, as a “betrayal” of Serbian interests, and Kosova as a “symbol of this betrayal”, and on the other hand the indication of upcoming armed conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia. In literal and church publications, this qualification also included the figure of the “Trojan Horse”. Milosevic found inspiration for his speech in the 1986 Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and in the fuming preaching of the clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church. One of the famous slogans of these preaching, invented by Dobrica Cosic, a central figure in the Academy of Sciences, and later President of the Third Yugoslavia, said: “we have lost in peace what we have won in war”. Thus, on the one hand the Second Yugoslavia was seen as a loss for Serbian interests, and on the other hand the need was stressed for new wars and to reconquer what had been lost. The numerous political and political-religious lectures will elaborate these ideas in detail, as central ideas of a political platform that prepares and legitimizes the consequent military aggressions against Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosova, during an eight year period, along with consequences with which you are familiar. These lectures can be qualified in Michel Foucault’s terms as « lectures-events »: lectures that indicate events and as such have the importance of events.

On the other hand, not accidentally, Kosova is defined in its Constitution as a secular state. The political and intellectual elites of Kosova Albanians have found support on this issue in the relation between politics and religion, in the national political tradition and the best European tradition, which managed to end religious wars in Europe thanks to its secular culture, by on the one hand dividing the state from the church and politics from religion, and on the other hand, with the model of the democratic state, neutral toward religious affiliations, it managed to secure rights and liberties for all religious communities, be they majority or minority.

However, the event in Fushë Kosovë in 1989 has an explanatory character for the second topic, multiculturalism.

And this is precisely where I will move on the second topic, multiculturalism. I will make a brief analogy on this issue, between the theoretical and political experiences of Western countries and countries from South-East Europe, namely the Balkans.

**Multiculturalism**

For the sake of clarifying the meaning of «multiculturalism», a distinction is often made between three levels: the social, the political and the philosophical. Multiculturalism relates to the multiplicity of cultures as a reality of modern societies, a reality that emerges from a social evolution with the apparent growth of cultural differences that find room within various typologies of cultural diversities.

The term multiculturalism surfaced in the political context of Canada (at the end of the 70s), where the idea was articulated for the Canadian nation as a multicultural nation consisting not only of two founding nations but also from the ensemble of immigrants. In 1982, multiculturalism rose to a constitutional principle in Canada, affirming the idea that civic equality is in line with respecting cultural differences. This officially marks the secession from the model of assimilation, which prevailed in the majority of democratic countries and according to which political integration
depends on embracing the cultural norms of the majority. More concretely, this implies the implementation of political and legal measures aimed at guaranteeing equal treatment for ethnic minorities when applicable norms are not favourable for them. Multicultural policies are not limited only to the adjustment of laws by courts, but also involve a whole spectrum of political measures aimed at facilitating the integration of immigrants (for example, the affirmative action programme in economy and education, which implies a specific political representation, courses for minority languages, etc).

Similar policies have been implemented in Australia, Great Britain, Switzerland and the Netherlands, although multiculturalism has not risen to a constitutional principle. However, one can say that these countries have implemented what M. Wievorka calls « integrated multiculturalism », different from « eclectic multiculturalism » in the U.S. In the first case, policies of multiculturalism aim to promote the respect of cultural diversity through a form of public recognition. The second case has more to do with fighting racist stereotypes.

The implementation of multicultural policies was accompanied with dense political and philosophical debates and polemics. Most distinct was the critical debate concerning the liberal theory of citizenship, in the political sense, the polemics between communitarians and liberals, or even polemics between the model of a society consisting of multiple communities and a society limited essentially to citizenship, or with the republican model of the nation. These polemics also took the shape of confrontation between citizenship and multicultural citizenship.

The defense of the idea of multiculturalism has been often articulated as criticism of « abstract universalism », namely its inability to guarantee the political independence of individuals that have different identities and lifestyles, minority identities. Representatives of this orientation (such as Iris Marion Young), argue that genuine universalism should favour the political representation of subordinate groups in order to integrate perspectives in the process of political debate.

Charles Taylor on the other hand (in the famous article “The policy of acceptance”) defends policies of multiculturalism for ethnic communities, especially the right to use minority languages. He criticizes “the procedural republic” and “the liberalization of rights” to the extent where they rule out the promotion of the cultural identities of minorities; in support of a modern notion of the right, which takes into account the universal value of dignity (of the individual) and the specific value of cultural authenticity.

Will Kymlicka (in Liberalism, Community and Culture) develops the idea of “multicultural citizenship” and the idea that political liberalism should respond to the challenge of multiculturalism. Kymlicka argues that if the state can be neutral in a confessional way, it cannot be neutral in a cultural way; the state continuously promotes the culture of the majority, to the detriment of minority cultures, by selecting an official language, national symbols, religious holidays, etc. This concerns the establishment of cultural rights that can establish equality between majority and minority groups. The theory of multicultural citizenship makes the distinction between national minorities (formed after an invasion or annexation) and ethnic minorities formed from immigration. The first group can claim a level of self-government, in
order to control political decisions concerning the future of their culture (language, education, etc).

Here, cultural rights are understood as “external protections” that aim to establish equality between groups, and they do not imply, contrary to claims by some Liberals, the establishment of “internal restrictions” that aim to limit the freedom of members of a minority group. Kymlicka’s theory is considered the most developed version of the liberal defense of multiculturalism. Some Liberals, like Joseph Raz, do not stop at only one political justification of multiculturalism but see as an expression of a new moral awareness, a reflexive identity awareness that is open to multiple cultures.

These political and intellectual orientations require the overall equality before the law to be compensated with a system of specific protections, based on a principle differentiated with the idea of equality that is considered more superior.

On the other hand, the criticism against multiculturalism has developed in different, some softer and some harsher, versions. Thus, Brian Barry in Culture and Equality criticizes the critical stance of multiculturalists toward the Universalist ideal, inherited from 18th century illuminism. Barry argues that by raising the practice of rule and exemption to the rank of a political model, in order to build “differentiated citizenship”, multiculturalists are compromising the meaning of equality of citizens before the law. In this way, Barry claims, multiculturalism favours a political clientele and ruins the foundations of civic solidarity, it does not promote a higher form of equality but recreates conditions for political conflicts over incompatible values and at the same time aggravates and does not alleviate tensions between cultural groups.

In France we find harsher versions of criticism against multiculturalism. In his texts, Pierre André Taguieff’s for example argues that political or institutional multiculturalism comprises a model of a society with multiple communities (a multicommunataire society), which essentially objects to the Republican model of nation, or more precisely, to the model of a civic nation. There, the political community as such no longer has unity; it evaporates for the good of the multiplicity of ethnic micro-communities that aim the territorialization of their populations, starting from the district and to the region.

Multiculturalism becomes dangerous, argues Taguieff, for democratic pluralism and civil peace when it is accompanied by programmes of “positive discrimination” or “affirmative action”, that aim to correct in authoritarian fashion the social discrimination of certain groups with legal and voluntary counter-discriminations. In that case it fosters interethnic and inter-religious races which aim to replace the meritocratic system that implies guarantees for equal opportunities between individuals. The interethnic rivalry, in particular, can become radical and a spark from the everyday conflict between two individuals is enough to light a clash that will lead to civic war. Multicommunitarianism, according to this interpretation, normalizes a state of ethnic civic war, by bringing to light the inability of the state or the weakening of its governing functions and thus directly endangers the principle of equality of all citizens before the law and damages the principle of justice.
Though multiculturalist theories are more supportive of various forms of rights and freedoms, one can however not ignore the critical remarks by their opponents, because some multiculturalist practices in some contexts have weakened the common political links of citizens.

Now we will place the issue of multiculturalism in the context of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Some politologists from Eastern Europe (like Stéphane Pierré-Caps for example), have defined the states of this part of Europe as multinational states (and not nation-states), consisting of two or more nations that exist as different communities, each of them aware of their specific features (the language, the cultural heritage, and a memory for common historical experiences). Here, one can draw an analogy with the idea of the Canadian society as a « multicultural nation », or with the idea of «multicultural citizenship», despite apparent historical-political and cultural differences.

Because of the multinational character, these states were forced to seek legal-political and cultural models that should provide solutions for some problems that emerged from interethnic tensions. They had limitations and flaws, especially because their role was to conceal various features of the discrimination of ethnic groups (minorities), but nonetheless they constituted a historical experience of alleviating conflicts between various ethnic communities. This concerns different historical-political experiences from those of Western Europe, in the understanding of the state, the nation and citizenship, their relations, and in particular the relations between nations and national minorities. Differences not only vis-à-vis Western Europe, but also differences between them in various periods of the previous century.

Thus for example, as far as Kosova is concerned, we can mention the difference between the first Yugoslavia (1918-1941), as a model of a unitary and centralist state, and the second Yugoslavia as a federal state that institutionalized the principle of ethnic and cultural differences of nations. The difference of the status of Kosova and Albanians in these two Yugoslavias was apparent, although Albanians were subject to repression in both cases. The 1989 rally in Fushë Kosovë indicated the downfall of the federal structure and constitutional principles of the second Yugoslavia, which to a certain extent tried to find a balance between ethnic and cultural diversities and the reduced form of citizenship.

It is for this reason that political speeches by Belgrade officials today, i.e. the speech by V. Jeremic at the Conference of the non-aligned countries in Teheran, constitute a contradiction within Serbian official policy. While before representatives of non-aligned countries, Jeremic tries to portray present-day Serbia as the legitimate heir of Tito’s Yugoslavia, this speech is absolutely unacceptable for the majority of the public in Serbia, because throughout the years Tito’s Yugoslavia was seen by political and scientific authorities in Serbia as a betrayal of Serbian interests.

Several aspects of problems that are characteristic for multiculturalism in the Western world were presented in the last two decades in two characteristic and essentially different processes: parallel with the dissolution of three communist multinational federations (the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) and the creation of new states, emerged the process of the integration of these states in EU supranational structures.
In the end, I would like to recall that the Constitution defines the Republic of Kosova as a democratic state and at the same time as a “multiethnic society that consists of Albanians and other ethnic communities”. The Constitution recognizes Albanian and Serbian as the official language. But other languages (Turkish, Bosniak and Roma) are also recognized at the level of municipalities inhabited by these minorities. In this Constitution one can detect the attempt to establish a balance between the affirmation of the principle of citizenship and the principle of multiethnicity. In our country there were some quite interesting polemics and debates about the dimensions of these principles in the Constitution, about the political circumstances behind its creation and ratification, most notably the legitimacy of the Ahtisaari Package, as the basis or framework of this constitution. Many aspects of these issues have been discussed and continue to be discussed. Here I would like to stress that these debates tackle one of the most important issues: the relationship between citizenship (in the political sense) and multiethnicity, the relationship between the majority and the minority, between the nation and the state. Another characteristic aspect of these debates and polemics sometimes emerges with the affirmation of the nation-state which emphasizes the equality of all citizens before the law, ruling out differences between ethnic groups, namely their specific rights. At times there is support for the conception of the nation as a monoethnic block in which there is no room for ethnic diversities: a conception of the ethnic model of nation, which aims to be identical with the state, and which rules out the existence of other ethnicities and sometimes reduces their rights. This political conception surfaced in all new countries that emerged from the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Thus, Slovenes, Croats and Albanians, in former Yugoslavia, during the 60s criticized the political centralism and stiff universalism of Yugoslavism (sometimes described as exaggerated Serbianism) and called for the affirmation of distinct cultural and political features. The 1974 Constitution, with some legal-political changes, can be seen to a certain extent as an outcome of these demands and political fights. However after the creation of new states that emerged from the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, another political tendency came to play: the affirmation of a stiff model of the nation-state which left very little room to the affirmation of policies of cultural diversities and their political support. Thus, J. Rupnik interpreted this position with the formula: « it’s better if you are a minority in my state, than I a minority in your state. »

However, it is worth emphasizing that the remark that the Ahtisaari Plan strengthened dimensions of multiethnicity to the detriment of other aspects is unfounded. Precisely due to this, the challenge for Kosova’s institutions and the political leadership is to find (in political practice) the required balances that must ensure the unity of the society, along with respecting the cultural specifics of ethnic communities. This issue deals with the essence of the debate in Anglo-Saxon countries between communitarians and liberals, between forms of equality and be it within the republican and citizen model or be it within a society that accepts in its constitution the multiethnic character of society and the possible consequences in political life. The Ahtisaari Plan has foreseen, as part of decentralization, forms of self-government for the Serb community in municipalities they inhabit, in several areas: education, justice, police, healthcare, culture. The danger lurking from creating areas which are separated and isolated from the society, with independent systems, is not minor. How can one maintain the cohesion of society, and at the same time respect the legitimate requests of ethnic communities? How can one maintain the balance between the dimension of citizenship, the common interests of the society and the
legitimate cultural and political rights of ethnic communities? Between the majority and the minorities? These questions remain as challenges for the political leadership and Kosovar society.

(United Europe, as a political project, and not only as a geographic space and a model of civilization challenges the history of nation-states, their political traditions, their governing practices, and opens debates about relations between the nature of its political (supranational) institutions and the diversity of cultures of member states, while taking into consideration multiculturalism as a possible answer.)

(Here lies the challenge: how, by enabling the free manifestation of languages, customs, cultural traditions, can one not foster divisions, factions, mistrust and hatred but tolerance and coexistence, the cohesion of a society and the coherent functioning of a democratic state; divisions at schools) Amarty Sen: by focusing on communities, we have not done service to multicultural freedoms. On the contrary.)
The Republic of Kosova is not officially recognized as independent and sovereign state by majority of the states, members of the Organization of Islamic Conference. This unpleasant surprise left the Republic of Kosova without naturally expected support from the Muslim world at the critical period for membership at the United Nations. Nevertheless, there are hopes that initial confusion caused by multiple factors on both sides would be quickly over come strengthening long lasting friendship with the majority of these countries, in particular with countries from the Arab world. At my presentation I’ll focus at the factor correlations that encompass religious identity of the Kosovar Albanians; constitutional laicism or secularism of the Republic of Kosova (dependent on which language is Constitution red); and their reflections on the foreign policy of our newly born democratic state.

I
Firstly, why so much emphasize on religious identity of the citizens in the situation when country is facing serious economic, political, and social difficulties? Established religious identity of the majority of Kosovar citizens intrinsically integrated within the national Albanian identity corpus represents important cornerstone for overall psychosocial stability and prosperity of the country, both on the individual and collective level. As William James, America’s first professor of psychology has stated in his book *Varieties of Religious Experience*: religious consciousness gives the believer “a new province of power” that provides stability, continuity, consolation, and strength for dealing with life’s challenges and contingencies – illness, death, evil, personal tragedy. For the believer, religious consciousness is the center of dynamic energy, “the hot place in a man consciousness, the group of ideas to which he devotes himself, and from which he works, call it the habitual center of his personal energy” (James 1902/1963, p. 200).

Many studies has revealed that established religious identity had a significant effect on the meaning and purpose of life, reduction of anxiety, positive self concept, lack of distress and worry, job and marital happiness, general happiness, life satisfaction, mental wellbeing and personal competency. In this direction, Markstrom (1999) has demonstrated that ego strengths of hope, will, purpose, fidelity, love, care, and school self-esteem in adolescents were associated with various forms of religious involvement. Results of this study are in particular relevant for our country that by far is the youngest population in Europe with about half of the population below the age of 20.

Saying this, I don’t disregard, in any way, opinions of the individuals that don’t see religion or believe in God as a source of strengths. Nevertheless, the large majority of Kosova population has already established religious identity, in approximate

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numbers 90% Muslim, 6% Orthodox Christians, and 4% Catholic Christians⁴.

II

Acceptance and manifestation of the religious identity is constitutionally guaranteed for each Kosova citizen in Article 38. Paragraph 2 of this Article says: "Freedom of Belief, Conscience, and Religion, includes the right to accept and manifest religion, the right to express personal beliefs, and the right to accept or refuse membership in a religious community or group". Paragraph 3 of this Article guarantees that: "no one shall be required to practice or be prevented from practicing religion or manifest publicly his or her convictions or beliefs"; while paragraph 4 of the same Article emphasize that: "freedom of manifesting religion, beliefs and conscience may be limited by law if it is necessary to protect public safety and order, or the health or rights of other persons".

Among Kosova political parties it is widely accepted postulate that secularism represents a foundational category of political modernity. Nevertheless, there is serious ambiguity related to use of this notion in the Constitution. Article 8 of the Constitution in English and Serbian version defines Republic of Kosova as a “secular” state “neutral in matters of religious beliefs”; while in Albanian version as a “laic” state! Is this discrepancy of words accidental?

Simultaneous use of the notion “laic” in Albanian version of the constitution and the notion “secular” in English and Serbian version, could be understood as simple translational issue suggesting similar juridical meaning, but may also reflect genuine political confusion related to bases of relationships between state and religious institutions as well as public and religious issues in the Republic of Kosova. This confusion may have direct negative impact on the implementation of constitutionally guaranteed rights of Kosova citizens for freedom of belief, conscience, and religion, like for example recent banning of school education for girls with head scarves and banning of work for female school teachers with head scarves.

What are the politics of laicism and secularism, by definition? The origin of the term laicism is “laicus” in Latin and “laikos” in Greek that means belonging to the people and to the masses, and not to a particular class, namely the clergy and priests⁵. After the French revolution this meaning changed and it came to mean keeping religion separate from the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of the government. This includes prohibitions on having a state religion, as well as for the government to endorse any religious position, be it religion or atheism. Close to the word ‘laïcité’, which was used in France by the Catholics, the term ‘secularism’ was widely used in England among the Protestants.

Literature review shows that differences between both notions are not simply linguistic. Metin Camcigil, President of Ataturk Society of America says that “there is widespread ignorance of the distinction between laicism and secularism and of their history. Laicism is the exclusion of religious authority over the public, while secularism is a contract of separation of authority over the public entered between two equals, church and state (called by some political philosophers the Victorian compromise). The former may be called a unitary, and the latter a dualist system, where there is a wall between the Civil Authority and the Religious Authority in Laicism, and a balance between them in Secularism⁶. Typical examples of laic states are France and Turkey and of secular states, United States and the majority

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⁶ Metin Camcigil. The Concepts of the Turkish Model and the Greater Middle East Initiative. President of Ataturk Society of America
of European Union countries\(^7\).

The French concept of laicism implies the absence of a state religion and the subsequent separation of the religious institutions and state ensuring absence of religious institutions interference in government affairs and government interference in religious affairs. Nevertheless, the promotion of other concepts such as respect for freedom of thought has distorted concept of laicism to absolute rejection of religion from the public life; to disguised form of anticlericalism and obstruction of the individual right to religious expression, which instead of promoting freedom of thought and freedom of religion, prevents the believer to observe his or her religion. In this way laicism establishes itself as an dogmatic ideology that imposes what must be thought and said, endangering religious freedom\(^8\).

Implicitly, in laic states like France or Turkey, religious disputation is generally considered incompatible with reasoned political debate. Political leaders may openly practice their religion, but they are expected to refrain from mixing their private religious life with their public functions.

President Sarkozy has criticized this approach as a “negative laicite” and wants to develop a “positive laicite” that recognizes the contribution of faith to French culture, history and society, allows for faith in the public discourse and for government subsidies for faith-based groups.\(^9\) Sarkozy sees France’s main religions as positive contributions to French society. He was elected on a platform proposing a modernization of the republic’s century-old principle of laicite\(^10\). In December 2007 while highlighting the importance of freedom of thought\(^11\), he stated that faith should come back into the public sphere.

Related to this issue John Paul II’s has stated: “a well-understood secularism must not be confused with laicism”. While secularism is the “respect for all beliefs on the part of the state, which ensures the free exercise of worship and of spiritual, cultural and charitable activities of the communities of believers”; Laicism, he explained, is when the state pretends to ignore this dimension, either at the personal or communal level.\(^12\)

The modern legal concept of religious freedom as the union of freedom of belief and freedom of worship with the absence of any state-sponsored religion, originated in the United States of America. In his opus Democracy in America\(^13\), Alexis de Tocqueville notes the synergy between religion and democracy in the United States, and decries what he sees as the excesses of laicité and anti-clericalism among French democrats.

\(^9\) Beita, Peter B. French President’s religious mixing riles critics Christianity Today, Jan. 23, 2008
\(^10\) http://www.lexpress.fr/info/france/dossier/sarkozy/dossier.asp?ida=430149 Reli- gions, République, intégration, Sarkozy s’explique
\(^12\) Jan. 12 2004 address to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See
\(^13\) Democracy in America, Vintage Books, 1945, p. 31-32
First amendment at the US Constitution includes clauses prohibiting both governmental interference with the “free exercise” of religion, and governmental “establishment” of religion. Together, the “free exercise clause” and “establishment clause” are considered to accomplish a “separation of church and state.” However, separation is not extended to bar religious conduct in public places or by public servants. Public servants up to and including the U.S. President, often make proclamations of religious faith. In contrast to France, the wearing of religious insignia in public schools is largely noncontroversial as a matter of law in the U.S. In addition, the U.S. government regards religious institutions as tax-exempt non-profits provided that they do not overtly interfere with politics. Moreover, the military includes government-paid religious chaplains to provide for the spiritual needs of soldiers.

Consequently, Kosovar executive, judicial and legislative authorities need to overcome existing constitutional dichotomy as soon as it is possible through legal determination of a Republic of Kosova as a secular state also in Albanian version of the constitution with all its political implications. They also need that, based on the previous constitutional tradition and continuity, through relevant legislation recognizes religions (like in Belgium) or religious organizations (like in France). In the previous constitutions of Kosovo (Constitutional Law 1969 and Constitution 1974), Islamic Society of Kosova, Catholic Archiepiscopate of Kosova and Serbian Orthodox Church, had constitutional status as traditional religious communities. Actually, constitutional status is given only to Serbian Orthodox Church, neglecting without any reason Islamic Society of Kosova and Catholic Archiepiscopate of Kosova. Although laic or secular five from 27 European Union states have an official state religion, these being Cyprus (Cypriot Orthodox Church), Denmark (Danish National Church), Greece (Church of Greece), Malta (Roman Catholic Church) and England in the UK (Church of England). Some other churches have a close relationship with the state. So, as it can be seen relevant solutions has been found in accordance with the specifics of each country.

Legislation to be adopted on these issues need to bring together two basic democratic principles, the concept of a secular state with open and free society that is widely not contestable; and the concept of respect for the will and tradition of the majority, in line with highest human rights standards.

It seems to me that Belgium model of understanding the concept of “secularism” is the most appropriate for Kosova circumstances. Through this model, under the Belgian constitution officials of the main “recognized” religions (Catholicism, Protestantism, Anglicanism, Orthodoxy, Judaism and Islam) are paid with government funds and similarly persons that fulfill similar functions for the laicist community. Belgian public schools must offer all pupils the choice between the study of one of the above mentioned “recognized” religions and a course in non-religious morals. I believe that similar solution is necessary also in the Republic of Kosova.

III

As such the Republic of Kosova would represent unique arena of multiculturalism in which Islamic values intrinsically embedded into the Albanian national identity corpus as well as in other ethnical communities, would represent a guarantee for inter-faith tolerance and collaboration as well as valuable promoter of the peace and

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stability, in the region and broader.

The Mighty Merciful God in the holly Koran directing to his prophet Muhammed, peace and the Mercy of God be upon him: “Say, We believed in Allah, and in every-
thing that was brought to us by him, and in what was brought to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and their followers. And in what was given to Moses and Jesus, and in what was given to prophets...”¹⁵.

Innate rational creativity of human kind is the most valuable component of human existence; nevertheless natural pulsation within a human being for metaphysical co-
herence with the surrounding micro and macro cosmos is inevitable, having in mind its perceptual limitations. Ways of reaching this coherence are different and multiple as are the roads of human thinking; they may go through the doors of structured religious experience; through nonstructural spiritual levitation; or as partial or total negation of both, in agnostic or atheist material mental trajectories. Each individual has the right to search and reach this coherence or to deny its necessity. State in-
stitutions should support citizens in these efforts aiming establishment of healthy and creative personalities as well as modern and prosperous society based on the authentic, individual and collective values that are not mutually exclusive.

Democratic, secular, modern, European state of Kosova represents a natural bridge of collaboration with countries of the Arab world that in the institutions and the people of Kosova would always found reliable partner and sincere friend.

¹⁵ Kur’an, Ali Imran (III), 84
Dear participants,

It is a special pleasure for me to participate at this conference with such an interesting and important thematic for us. Allow me first to thank the organizers of the conference for the invitation. Also, I would like to welcome the respected guests from the Arab world. I think this conference is a very good opportunity to see different perspectives on the relations between Kosova and the Arab world.

The perspective that I will offer, regarding the relations between Kosova and the Arab world, is a political one. I think this is in accordance with the capacity in which I am invited to participate in this panel, namely that of the political adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosova.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is understandable that when we speak here in Kosova, at this particular time, about the political relations between Kosova and the Arab world, we think primarily about the recognition, or non-recognition, of the independence of Kosova by the Arab countries. This is understandable if we take into account the fact that with the proclamation of the independence of Kosova, 17th February of this year, Kosova has entered in a crucial phase of its history, namely that of the building its statehood in practice. The recognition of the state of Kosova by as many countries is a precondition building in practice of the statehood of Kosova. So the recognition contributes to the strengthening of the political stability and the rule of law, particularly in the North of Kosova where the constitutional order of Kosova is been openly challenged by the Serbian illegal structures. Also, the speedy international recognition of the state of Kosova enables the membership in international organizations and helps the economic development of the country.

Taking into account this fact, and its legal mandate, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during three months of its existence has dedicated all its potential to the process of international recognition of the state of Kosova.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

During the last days there was a lot of expression surprise in Kosova for the lack of recognition of Kosova by the Arab states, until now. In many occasions the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosova also has been exposed to the criticism for this. Naturally, in most of the cases these criticism was understandable and with good intention. However, this feeling stems from at least 5 misperceptions upon which we base our view about the Arab world. I will elaborate briefly this wrong perceptions and I hope we can comment them more during the debate.

The first wrong perception in Kosova is that in the Arab countries religion is the most important, or the sole, factor which influences the foreign policy. Based on this wrong perception, in Kosova there was a widespread believe that these countries
will recognize the independence of Kosova immediately and without any hesitation.

The factors which influence the formulation of foreign policies of different countries are many and much more complex. Identity, including the religious one, is a constant geopolitical factor. But it is not the only and it is not necessarily the most important one. Each country formulates its foreign policy towards a specific international issue, based on the way it projects its interests in relation to that specific issue. Now, what is the role of the identity in this, and what is the role of the religion in the construction of the identity, is another topic. This is by the way one of the most contending issues in the International Relations Theory.

The second wrong perception in Kosova is that there is one single position of the Arab countries towards the independence of Kosova. In fact, when we in Kosova speak about the recognition of the independence of Kosova by the Arab countries, many times we neglect the fact that there are several Arab countries. The Arab League has 22 member states. When it comes to the recognition of the independence of Kosova, although there are tendencies by many Arab countries to reach a collective position, at the end of the day each country makes individual decision and calculates first its own interest. Also, the position of each country is influenced by internal factors and dynamics. Therefore, I don’t think it is possible to speak for one, single, Arab position towards the independence of Kosova.

The third wrong perception in Kosova has to do with the wrong impression that Kosova the Arab countries and Muslim countries in general have not recognized Kosova because Kosova has been liberated and created as a stated in a process in which the influential countries of the West, particularly the USA, have played crucial role. This perception is a logical consequence of an imagined rivalry between the Muslim East and Christian West.

I don’t think that it is possible to speak about such a political division between East and West. Moreover, I don’t think it is possible to speak about any rivalry or conflict between East and the West, a conflict which would have necessarily unfold in mythical terms, and hence would be irrational. In reality, the relations between the Arab countries with the Western ones, especially with the EU, and NATO, are characterized primarily by a high level of cooperation; political cooperation, cooperation in the sphere of security, primarily on the war against terrorism, economic cooperation and so one.

Therefore, the natural orientation of Kosova towards the Euro-Atlantic integrations is not a factor which inhibits the recognition of the independence of Kosova by the Arab countries. Moreover, integration of Kosova in EU and NATO would contribute to the further strengthening of the relation between these two important organizations and the Arab countries.

The fourth wrong perception is that Kosova is the major priority of the foreign policy of every country, including the Arab ones. Although Kosova has been one of the most important issue in the international political agenda during this year, it is wrong to think that Kosova is always at the top of this agenda, or that Kosova has the same importance in every country and every region. I think that the foreign policy agenda of the Arab countries is dominated by problems such as: Iranian nuclear crisis, Iraq, Palestine, or the tendencies for destabilization of the Lebanon.
It is quite natural that these problems are much more important for the Arab countries than Kosova, because they are directly affected by these problems. While the developments in Kosova do not affect directly the Arab countries.

The last wrong perception in Kosova is that the Arab and Muslim countries in general, have not recognized Kosova still, exclusively because of the lack of official contacts between Kosova and these Arab countries. I don’t pretend to minimize the importance of direct official contact, which is not always easy to make as many people think. However, I think that it is wrong to believe that had there been more official contacts there would have been immediate recognition of Kosova by these countries. As I sad earlier, the factors which shape the foreign policies of different countries are different and complex. Some countries need more time to put Kosova on the agenda and to take a decision. And we have to understand this.

As to the criticism that the Kosova’s institutions have not been enough active with the Arab countries, I would like to reiterate what the Foreign Minister said in his speech this morning. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has considered with the high priority the contact with the Arab world. We are fully aware about the importance of the Arabic countries in the global arena. We are also aware about the interests of Kosova to have economic and political cooperation with these countries. We are grateful to many Arab countries for their contribution in the post-War recovery and stabilization of Kosova. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has used any opportunity to meet with the officials of the Arab countries. In most of these meetings our Arab counterparts have show understanding and have expressed positive attitude towards our demand for the recognition of the independence of Kosova. Now, accurate prediction in foreign policy is not easy. But I strongly believe that the independence of Kosova will be recognized by many Arab countries and than will not take to much time. This would be a support for the legitimate aspirations of the people of Kosova to live in freedom. This would also contribute to the peace and stability in the region. This would also open a new perspective for the relations of Kosova, and the region in general, with the Arab world.

Thank you.
JAMAL BAROUT
Forum Syria 2025, Syria

Allow to make some remarks in relation to what previous speakers said and to address the following issues: 1. The civic state, 2. European Islam, 3. The secular state, 4. Recognition of the state of Kosova by Arab countries

1. I find it fortunate that a non-governmental organization like Forum 2015 has embraced the idea of state for all its citizens instead of the idea for a national state; it has wisely constructed the vision for the future that correlates with the vision for the future embodied in the Constitution of Kosova. The fact that civic initiatives are embracing such ideas in line with the Constitution will only serve the realization of the new state.

The idea of a state for all citizens is an interesting thought for us Arabs, too. If we translate into a constitutional language the efforts of Arabs that live in the state of Israel through their civil society and parties, it will turn out that they are trying to make Israel a state for all citizens. Israel today is defined as a state of Jews.

The experience of Kosova truly brings new ideas on how to resolve the most pressing problem in the Middle East – the Arab-Jewish conflict. The possible transformation from a Jewish state into a state for all citizens in no way implies that this would be done based on the idea of Arab aversion toward Jews. If we look thoroughly into the history, we will notice that Jews returned to Quds twice, once thanks to the help of Muslim leader Omer Hatabi and second thanks to the help of Salahuddin Ayyubi, whereas it is also true that they were also expelled such as the case in Andalusia. In this respect, I would also like to recall the hospitality and solidarity they enjoyed from Albanians.

In addition to the pressing problem of the Middle East – the Arab-Jewish conflict, the idea of a civic state would also be helpful for us Arabs, for the democratic transformations that are happening in our countries as part of reforms in government structures.

The Arab countries, as Dr. Ridvan Al-Sayed pointed out, are having sensitive problems in the process of establishing democratic governance; with the exception of nation, they still haven’t found another comprehensive element to identify by. Among the first things that Arab countries can benefit for their democratic transformation, from the experience of Kosova as a civic state, is to address multiculturalism and religion-state relations.

2. As far as European Islam is concerned, I must emphasize that this term does not relate to a new dogma of religion as can be misunderstood, but it relates to the anthropological sense of culture, namely it expresses the way Islam is experienced and practiced without against the values and spirit of modernism.

In support of this concept, I will not interpret it and I will let everyone understand it in their own way, I will bring the example of the Egyptian Imam Muhamed Abduhu who during his visit to France in the 19th century said he saw Islam there without
Muslims whereas in Egypt he saw Muslims without Islam.

3. I fully agree with the differences that Dr. Ferid Agani made between laicism and secularization and other theoretical differences. But reading the Constitution of Kosova, and I believe to have read it thoroughly, I find that the definition of Kosova as a secular state aims more at secularization than at laicism in the French traditional sense as an anti-religious belief, because the Constitution accepts religion, it allows for religious conversion and it protects religions; these elements are in opposition to the French traditional sense of laicism.

I even think that Arab countries, which in the process of democratic transformations are having problems with addressing the issue of religion, can benefit from the Kosovar constitutional experience and the building of relations between the religion and the state. Secularization among Albanians goes back in history and it has a tradition. In this case, I would like to recall the efforts of Ahmet Zogu to envelop the state in a secular nature. Zogu’s efforts were a subject of books by leaders of the Arab Renaissance in the 1920s. I am referring to this fact also in the context of highlighting our historical and cultural relations.

4. I would like to express my belief that Arab countries, namely the majority of Arab countries have absolutely no reason not to recognize the state of Kosova.

Recognizing Kosova would not create problems in their relations with the U.S. or European states, and for most of them it would not be a pretext to jumpstart a separatist movement.

We Arabs, who are attending this conference and who have a role in the decision-making process of our governments and as opinion-makers, have an obligation to encourage Arab countries to recognize Kosova, but the Kosovar society also needs to liven up its relations with Arab countries knowing all along that countries build their policies based primarily on their interests.

Before I conclude my speech, I believe it is useful to emphasize the fact that recognition by one country does not necessarily imply building close relations, for example: all Arab countries recognize Albania as a state, but how many embassies do Arab countries have in Albania? Another example is Syria. It recognizes all world countries, yet it has embassies only in 60 or 70 countries.

This is why Kosova should by all means attract Arab investors in order to have as lively relations as possible and for making the recognition of the state of Kosova an interest of Arab countries.

Let us hope that the recognition by Arab countries is just a matter of time!
I want to thank Forum 2015 for inviting me to this conference in Kosova, and I am very glad to visit Kosova. This conference is the first step and I think it comes very late. The role of intellectuals, thinkers and reporters should first of all be to find the truth and then to orient peoples and governments on their respective positions toward the truth they have revealed. I am confident that this conference will help of all us find the truth.

Mr. Veton Surroi said Kosova still lacks a foreign policy strategy. I think that Arab countries too lack a foreign policy strategy vis-à-vis Kosova. This is the venue where the role of us intellectuals, thinkers and reporters can help orient our governments.

Kosova should not be treated as simply an internal affair of Europe. Islamic countries should also be interested in the issue of Kosova. We, as Muslims, certainly thank Westerners and Christians for coming to the aid of Kosova Muslims and I personally think that Kosova can emerge as the first international peace project between civilizations and thus change the role of the Balkans which has been a powder keg of wars.

One day before coming to Kosova, I met the deputy editor-in-chief of the magazine “Foreign Policy” which is an official magazine. He told me that Egypt’s silent position is only provisional and dictated by foreign pressure. I also found out that Egypt is reviewing its position vis-à-vis Kosova’s independence, especially after seeing that Serbia is welcoming back ambassadors of European countries that recognized Kosova’s independence.

Although Kosova has a population of 2 million and only 11,000 square kilometres, it can play a major role in bringing civilizations closer to one another, similar to Turkey’s role; therefore, the entire world should be interested in Kosova and it should not be treated solely as an internal European affair.

I think that a lot of mutual work is required to further relations between Arab countries and Kosova; this work would be in the mutual interest of both sides, especially Kosova. Kosova can invite Arab businessmen to invest in Kosova, as Berisha had done in 1995. The Kosovar national team can go to Arab countries and play games there, and I am confident that thousands of people will wait for them at the airport. More work can be invested in getting to know each other. If Arabs see Kosova’s natural beauties, the latter would become their favourite destination for vacations.

In closing, I wish that Arab countries will recognize the state of Kosova as soon as possible, and that Kosova will become a bridge between the East and West.
I would like to make some remarks that are perhaps related to the first panel or which could link the first panel to the second panel, and that involve the main topic of this panel, the Arab Discourse toward Kosova.

The first remark concerns Mr. Veton Surroi’s speech, and I believe it is important to emphasize once again in this panel that discussions on the Arab world are generalized and create the impression that this in fact one world, that it has one single institution (The Arab League), that it has one single foreign policy, and so on.

In reality this is not true. This is but an illusion. We have several states that have great contradictions and differences. This is what we need to take into account when we talk about the Arab discourse because the Arab discourse toward Kosova is not the same, be it in general or within states themselves.

The second remark is about professor Ridwan Said’s speech, namely he highlighted a very important difference for us: the Arab position should be looked at from two dimensions, the first dimension that of systems and regimes, and the second dimension that of peoples. In reality, those that have even some information about the Arab world, will immediately notice these two positions. There for example, in all states, be it in Syria, Iraq or Kuwait, we have major gap between the two positions.

The third remark that was heard in the first panel: it is often said that Arabia or Arab states do not have much information about Kosova. This is not true and we in this panel must reject this claim. It is not true that Arab states have no information about Kosova. If you go to Google or any other website you can find hundreds and thousands of articles on Kosova. So it is not true that they have no information on Kosova. After these three remarks, I believe we can now proceed to the second panel.
The issue of Kosova had a considerable place in Arab political lecturing from 1999 to 2008. Positions vis-à-vis the issue of Kosova depended on discourses, political orientations and the ideological orientations of Arab decision-making entities. Positions were very different, and on the issue of Kosova’s independence there were even neutral, indifferent and supportive positions.

The best way to address and analyze the way Arab political lecturing treated the declaration of Kosova’s independence on February 17th 2008, is to talk about this on three separate levels: the official, political and intellectual levels.

1. The official level
At the official level, it was silence that characterized the position of Arab governments and political establishments toward the declaration of Kosova’s independence. To date, no Arab country has recognized Kosova’s independence.

It was particularly interesting that the coverage of Arab official media, especially Arab satellite TV stations, was negative and at times showed no interest in a great development such as the declaration of an independent state. This lack of interest is even more surprising given the fact that the celebrations of the people of Kosova for their great and long-awaited achievement were an interesting material for the broadcast media.

There were but a few official Arab reactions toward the declaration of Kosova’s independence, and the few reactions were surprising. The Arab League kept silent, resembling an organization that is not informed about developments in other countries and one that lacks a certain strategy and objectives.

Egypt sufficed to say that it wishes for the Balkans to remain stable. The spokesman of Egypt’s Foreign Ministry, Husame Zeki, expressed his wish that all international and regional developments in the aftermath of Kosova’s independence would follow the logic of dialogue and understanding.

Members of the Palestinian Government tried to relate the declaration of Kosova’s independence with the declaration of their independence, among them Jasir Ad-durabbihi who said: “We should declare independence, the same way Kosova has done.”

However, the head of the Palestinian Government rejected this parallel, by saying: “We are negotiating a peace settlement with the Israelis”. The Palestinian chief negotiator Saib Urejkat rejected any unilateral declaration of independence.

The Libyan Ambassador to the United Nations Security Council said Libya does not accept Kosova’s case to become a precedent for breaching the principle of the territorial integrity of states. Xhadulla Aziz Talha expressed his wish that the declaration of Kosova’s independence would not return the Balkans to the turmoil of the 90s, by adding: “Libya was and will always be in favor of the full respect of principles of
Aspects of the Arab official position

Most Arab countries preferred silence over the declaration of Kosova’s independence and to this day have not articulated a clear position. They are continuing to observe international reactions, as if waiting for independence to become reality and then support it.

A large number of factors have influenced the current position of Arab countries, chief among which are:

1. The fear that the recognition of Kosova’s independence would trigger the separatist movements in multiethnic Arab countries, the Kurds in Iraq and Syria and Emaziks in Western Arabia.
2. The wish not to upset Russia and Serbia; it is well known that Russia is in excellent political and economic terms with certain Arab countries.
3. The lack of a political strategy of Arab countries which would establish a link between national interests and international issues,
4. The lack of coordination in Arab political activity, and
5. The division between Arab countries and the inability to hold a coherent and active position.

2. The popular-Islamic position

One cannot talk about a popular position in Arab countries, because Arab public opinion is lacking in general, it is inactive in the course of events and it is not very interested in international affairs.

The Arab people is preoccupied with securing their existence and most of them are influenced either by the official position of their countries or by the position of Islamic political movements. As a result, the majority of the Arab people see the issue of Kosova from a religious perspective. They see the issue of Kosova with the eyes of Islamic political movements: as an issue of a Muslim people who must be helped and whose independence must be recognized.

Based on this perspective, the Islamic MP in the Kuwaiti Parliament, Velid Attabtabai, has called on the Kuwaiti Government to recognize Kosova’s independence, saying that the majority of Kosovars are Muslim and therefore deserve political support for their legitimate claim to freedom and independence. Attabtabai also called on the Kuwaiti Government to further cultural relations with the new state of Kosova.

In Jordan, the Labour Islamic Front party has called on all world countries, in particular Arab and Islamic countries, to recognize the independence of Kosova. The same goes for Islamic political movements in other Arab countries.

3. The intellectual level

The positions of Arab nationalistic and Islamic intellectuals are characterized by an excessive ideology. In their opinion, the United States of America and Western states are always against Arab and Muslim issues. They further argue that the U.S. and Western intervention in the Balkans war was not done to help the Muslim people of Kosova, but for their own strategic interests, including their goal to weaken Russia and to punish Serbia as a successor of former Yugoslavia.
In their analysis and positions vis-a-vis Kosova’s independence, Arab nationalistic and Islamic intellectuals relied on the idea that the state of Kosova was created by Western forces and that their interest was not independence, but the interests of Imperialist powers and their efforts to engulf and globalize Euro-Asia, an effort that can be noticed in the dissolution of federations into national states such as the case of the former Yugoslavia and its successor Serbia. According to them, we are living in an ever-transforming world which is being reconstructed with the goal of domination.

Some of these intellectuals believe that the fact that the U.S. is the main force behind Kosova’s independence also implies the idea that the U.S. is trying to establish new international criteria and to make Kosova a precedent for other countries. Embracing this idea, some Arab nationalistic intellectuals said that Kosova’s independence should not be recognized because this would endanger the territorial integrity of Arab countries, from South Africa to Western Asia, in smaller countries. They argued that the U.S. was trying to repeat the case of Kosova in Iraq by breaking away Kurdistan and that this would mark the beginning of the dissolution of other Arab states.

Some Palestinian Islamic intellectuals argued that Kosova’s independence was a result of the sacrifice of thousands of martyrs and the century-long resistance of Kosovars against Serbian invaders. The same intellectuals placed this within the context of the readiness to continue their own resistance against Israeli invaders which has been going on for over 60 years.

On the other hand, democratic and secular Arab intellectuals said the declaration of independence on February 17th 2008 was a result of a long conflict in the Balkans, and given the situation in the Balkans perhaps the only solution or at least one of the viable solutions, but one that would not be easy bearing in mind the problems, challenges and tensions that it creates in the Balkans despite the major support from the United States of America and NATO countries.
NEHAT ISLAMI
Press Council of Kosova

Listening to the discussions this morning I often found myself because since 1974 I lived in the Arab world as a correspondent and I covered all wars there, coup d’etats, and all the efforts for the democratization of Arab society, so I found it easy to recall the developments that were covered by the press in Kosova, namely by Rilindja newspaper and Pristina Television. And now the time has come for the Arab press and TVs to repay the debt and they are reporting on Kosova on regular basis.

However, the question is: what must we Kosovars do concretely in order to be as present as possible in Arab media. I can tell you that we as Kosovar reporters have done less than Arab reporters who have visited Kosova, starting from the TV stations of Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt and other countries, as well as leading Arab newspapers that reported regularly on the key developments not only after the 1999 war but also prior to the conflict, on the efforts of the Albanian people for independence and to break free from Milosevic’s oppression who at that time was supported only by Libya.

Now is the time when we must only renew our relations which were forged 2-3 centuries ago, starting from the Dynasty of Mehmet Ali Pasha of Egypt, who as a common boy came from these lands and created the independent state of Egypt and recognized the rights of the Egyptian people and educated Egyptians so that they can become their own masters. Then were was also Pashko Vasa who for 9-10 years brilliantly led Lebanon turning it into a modern state, and there are also hundreds of philosophers and intellectuals, including our renowned poet Filip Shiroka who took part in the construction of the railway and the port of Beirut.

The time has come for the two nations to learn more about each other especially through the media because the media is the key window which brings together people and nations.

I have another suggestion: we must make use of KFOR soldiers and UNMIK international police officers from Arab countries who served with honour in Kosova since 1999 and who carried out their duties honourably and then returned to their countries, because they too are key witnesses of the truth surrounding Kosova, of the sufferings of Kosova and the current development of Kosova.

The issue of Kosova, which was discussed today comprehensively, and it was said that it is not an Arab-Kosovar issue, but an issue of every Arab countries vis-à-vis Kosova; this issue will start to be resolved in 2-3 months, and with several Arab states. Based on my experience as a reporter in all those Arab countries, I saw that the most important element in Arab society is for someone to break the ice, especially if this will come from an influential state, then things will progress more easily. I believe that the resolution of the Golan issue, the resolution of Palestine’s independence and Kosova will be a symbol of great change in the relations that are expected to improve between Arab states and the West.
QEMAJK MORINA
Faculty of Islamic Studies Prishtina

The second conference “Kosova and the Arab World” will be held on August 25th in Pristina on the initiative of Forum 2015. The first conference was held on July 14th in Amman, Jordan, following the initiative of “al-Kuds” Centre for Political Studies. The conference is expected to attract participation from a considerable number of civil society representatives from various Arab countries, intellectuals, academics and analysts, who will have the opportunity to get to know the new reality in Kosova after 1999 especially after the declaration of the sovereign and independent state of Kosova on February 17th, 2008.

This initiative is a joint enterprise of civil society in Kosova and the Arab World, aimed at raising the awareness of the Arab public opinion for Kosova as an issue that requires the attention and contribution of Arab governments, as the newest European state with a Muslim majority. Arab countries also need to make investments in various areas of Kosova’s economy for mutual interests.

So far, Kosova’s independence has been recognized by 46 world countries, but no Arab country from the total of 22 member states of the Arab League have recognized the new state.

So the question for the participants of this conference, be they Arab or Kosovar, is: what is the source of hesitation by Arab countries, and methods need to be found to overcome this situation.

Given their strategic relations with the Russian Federation, Arab countries faced unprecedented pressure, with the Federation even conditioning their future cooperation with the non-recognition of Kosova’s independence.

The unilateral declaration of Kosova’s independence by Albanians in cooperation with the International Community (US and EU) is being presented as a secession in Arab countries, and claims are being made that Arab countries could very well face the same secessions in the future.

The Serbian diplomacy had its effect in this respect by taking advantage of the reputation that the former Yugoslav Federation enjoyed in Arab countries as leader of the Non-Aligned Movement and for its principle position on the Palestine issue.

As a result of lack of institutional and political contacts between Kosova and Arab countries, Russian and Serbian propaganda were successful in convincing these countries not to recognize Kosova’s independence.

The Arab and Islamic world was somewhat irritated by the fact that our political representatives emphasized our Western affiliation at the expense of our Islamic religious affiliations.

As a result of all these factors, including the national interests of each country, the
Arab countries hesitated to help us when we were need and hoping for their support.

Following are our arguments in favour of the recognition of Kosova’s independence by Arab countries:

One: The faith of Arab countries in the right of nations for self-determination. All Arab countries have gone through a similar period, and Kosova and its people cannot be denied this right.

Two: The faith of Arab countries in human and Islam solidarity.

There: The new realities that were created after the fall of the Berlin Wall, in the former Soviet Union where 16 new countries were created. Slovakia’s secession from the former Czechoslovakia. 7 new states from created from the former Yugoslav Federation; Kosova is the last episode. Initially, both Russia and Serbia were against the independence of new states, but in due time they accepted the new reality on the ground. The same will happen with Kosova, after a certain period of time, when Serbia will recognize Kosova and will establish diplomatic relations.

Four: Despite claims made by Serbian propaganda, the independence of Kosova cannot be considered a biased act. The declaration of independence was made after a period of internationally-mediated two-year talks between Kosova and Serbia. The UN Status Envoy and former Finnish President, Martti Ahtisaari, came out with his proposal which was embraced by Kosova but rejected by Serbia. Ahtisaari’s proposal suggested that Kosova should become an independent state under international supervision. The Proposal granted numerous rights and privileges to the Serb minority both nationally and in the area of cultural and religious heritage.

Five: Present-day Serbia has nothing in common with Tito’s Yugoslavia. The Serbian hegemonism for creating a Greater Serbia led not only to the destruction of the former Yugoslav Federation but also all tragedies that happened in former Yugoslavia.

Six: Many nations such as the Croats, the Muslims and Kosova Albanians suffered from the ethnically and religiously-motivated Serbian aggression.

Seven: This war had a religious dimension because Serbian troops carried out the ethnic and religious cleansing of Muslims and destroyed their mosques both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosova.

Nine: Over 90% of people arrested and tried at The Hague Tribunal are not only Serbs but also members of the ruling elites in Serbia, which shows that Serbian aggression and genocide was well-prepared. The Serbian ruling elite that was responsible for crimes committed in Kosova will stand trial these days at the ICTY, and Radovan Karadjic, former President of Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the mastermind of the Srebrenica Massacre has been arrested recently.

Kosova needs special attention from the governments of Arab and Islamic countries and their recognition of the new reality in this part of the world, especially bearing in mind that Kosova has the unreserved support of the U.S. and the majority of EU member states. Along with the recognition of independence, Arab and Islamic
countries are supposed to show their Islamic solidarity for a powerful economic support as a sign of solidarity with the century-long heroic stance and sacrifices of the people of Kosova for freedom.

We hope that the message from the capital of Kosova, Prishtina, will reach the kings, princes, sultans and presidents of Arab and Islamic countries and that they will uphold the level of their historical responsibility and answer the appeals of a small but proud nation that has written its latest history with blood.
MOHANNAD MUBAIDIN
Philadelphia University in Amman, Jordan

I am really happy to be in Kosova for the second time now and I want to deeply thank Forum 2015 for giving me this opportunity. The first time I visited Kosova was last year and I was in this very room where we assembled to contribute to the issue "Six centuries of Islam in Albanian lands" and I was lucky to meet with famous intellectuals.

I recall that when we went back to our countries we wrote in the Jordanian and Saudi press about the promised state of Kosova and the dream of Kosovars for statehood.

Meanwhile, the issue of Kosova was extensively covered in Arab newspapers and magazines even in editorial pieces.

Televisions, especially satellite televisions gave extensive coverage to developments in Kosova; as far as I know, Al-Jazeera came here to do a special program on Kosova.

In addition to coverage in the media, the conference on Kosova held two months ago in Amman, also gave the Arab world an opportunity to get familiar with developments in Kosova.

When we talk about the negativism that partly characterized the coverage of Arab media on Kosova, we must also take into account the fact that even Western media sometimes have a negative tone in their coverage on Kosova.

I happened to be in Italy when independence was declared on February 17th 2008, and a newspaper there reported that Kosova’s independence was a bomb for Europe. I think this report was published one day after the declaration of independence, and I recall that after reading it I called the Mufti of Kosova, Mr. Naim Tërnava, and congratulated him on Kosova’s independence.

When talking about the negativity with which some non-Arab media treat the issue of Kosova, I don’t intend to devaluate the criticism against the negative tone of some Arab media toward the issue of Kosova.

On the contrary, I think that our cooperation with Kosovars should be based on the logic of cooperation between state and not the logic of cooperation between nations.

Based on these remarks, I think that when we talk about the issue of Kosova from a political perspective, we should not focus on our common history, common identity and cultural relations of the past.

It seems that Kosovars are trying to convince us about their right to statehood, while Arab states, except one of them, have no problem with recognizing the state of Kosova, at least they did not publicly say they have a problem; the question of when they will announce their recognitions is another matter and we don’t know when this will happen.
The cooperation between states is done according to concepts familiar to experts, and this is not the venue to talk about this; however, I would like to repeat my earlier conviction that we should now treat Kosova as a state.

The question of religion also deserves a proper explanation. Kosova’s eventual recognition by Arab countries would be based exclusively on the right of Kosovars to self-determination and on a humanitarian aspect and not due to our common religious identity.

It is true that Islam is a comprising part of Arab and Kosovar identities, but there is no reason to discuss this from a political perspective; it would be important to have this discussion if Kosova was going through an identity-building phase, but it has already emerged from this phase.

In addition to treating Kosova as a state, we should further our relations without waiting for recognitions from Arab states. The cultural centre and civil society should wait for nothing and they should make steps toward furthering Arab-Kosovar relations. Several important fields in this respect are sports and universities, and the care for parentless children in Kosova, as there are many Arab associations that can take care of them.

In closing, I wish that Arab states will recognize the state of Kosova as soon as possible, and from now we should politically address each other’s issues as states and not as nations.
Influenced by the remark made by my friend Muflih Odwan, I will try to focus my remarks on the issue that is being discussed here today. I work in journalism, mainly in print media; therefore, I find it appropriate to talk about the presence of the issue of Kosova in Arab media.

To begin with I am going to try to determine the origins of a greater coverage of the issue of Kosova in Arab media, and then I will express my opinion about the reasons why despite the great presence in Arab media, the issue of Kosova is not at the centre of attention.

As a result of events in 1999 and 2000 Kosova won the opportunity to be covered in Arab media. In fact, these developments did not only make it possible for the issue of Kosova to be extensively covered in Arab media, but it was also an opportunity for Arab society to get to know for the first time the fact that there is a former Yugoslav country with a Muslim majority, called Kosova. In the same way, Bosnia and Herzegovina had once made its way in the Arab media and society.

I think there are two reasons why the issue of Kosova is not at the centre of attention in Arab media:

1. Arab media are overly politicized and primarily focus on breaking news. Under such circumstances, Arab media can treat the “quiet” process of building the state of Kosova only as the third or fourth topic. The same certainly cannot be said for world media which unlike Arab media are focusing primarily on issues of multiethnicity, human rights and the reconciliation of parties that were once at war with each other.

2. The second reason has a political nature. Kosova addresses the Western world trying to prove that it respects minorities, human rights that it implements economic and legal standards, and this makes Arab system and a large part of the public opinion to view Kosova as something foreign. This happens because there is a great misconception in Arab and Islamic countries about these values.

3. But if we talk about the future, we can rightfully predict a greater role that the Kosovar experience toward a rapprochement between the Arab world and these values.

Kosova has great chances of playing this role because Kosovars have a cultural closeness with the East and at the same time Arabs, acknowledging Kosovars as Muslims, are pleased with their achievements.

I will conclude by saying that I hope that as soon as possible Kosova will have even greater coverage in Arab media and be at the centre of attention, and this will certainly have a positive effect on our systems and the public opinion.
I would first of all like to thank Forum 2015 for organizing this conference and I want to express my pleasure for having the opportunity of participating and addressing this conference. With the aim of orienting the hearing of fellow participants in this conference and avoiding eventual misunderstandings – before starting my speech, I find it reasonable to explain the capacity of my presence here. Although as Dr. Muhamed Mufaku introduced me as a high-ranking official in the Kingdom of Jordan, my speech here is that of an observer and not of a decision-maker, because my duty as director of the Section of Culture in the Kingdom of Jordan and as member of several cultural institutions that work on culture, thinking and information, has a cultural nature and is not related to political decision-making.

I noticed that many participants focused on historical and cultural relations, on the common religious identity and other similar things which are axioms that no one can put to question, and some participants enthusiastically expressed the wish and hope to further relations and for recognitions. I think we should miss the essence of our assembly; we are facing a political question that requires an answer from the political field. The question is: will Arab states recognize Kosova as a state? I will try to partly answer this question by focusing only on my country, Jordan.

I will first try to highlight several indicators for bright predictions for relations between Jordan and Kosova in the future, and second I will mention some activities which if implemented I think would be very positive for relations between our two countries. The indicators for relations between our two countries, that I am going to highlight, have different natures: official and popular indicators, depending on whether they refer to government officials or to the people; more direct and indirect indicators if they are compared with each other; theoretical and practical indicators depending on what activity they engage in.

I will try to highlight the most important indicators and place them in accidental order:

1. Several months ago, our King was at the European Parliament in Brussels, where he gave a speech highlighting among other things his admiration for the fact that Europe respects all identities and his admiration for the axiom of respecting the right of nations for self-determination. In the King’s speech I find signs which in my opinion predict positive relations between our countries.

2. Long before the declaration of Kosova’s independence, in 2000 our Queen visited Kosova and supported some projects of interest for Kosova and gave a humanitarian contribution, which would have been very difficult if our state had not been increasingly interested in Kosova’s future.

3. There are several academic centers in Jordan that have connections with Kosovars. There are several Kosovars that have graduated at the University "Alulbejt" and most of them now work as professors and play an increasingly approximating role between our countries.
4. Jordanians and Kosovars are often united by common interests on global affairs. There have been and still are contacts between interested Jordanians and Albanians on relations between civilizations. In our country, even princes are interested in this area, and as far as I know the former Mufti of Kosova, the dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Dr. Rexhep Boja, had the opportunity to meet some of them. The Mufti of Kosova met several days ago with the Director of the Centre “Alulbejt” Emir Elgaz who is a powerful decision-maker in our country.

5. There is a continuous Jordanian presence in Kosova through Jordan troops in the KFOR peacekeeping force. The Jordan troops, which rotate on a regular basis, do the work of ambassadors for Kosova upon their return to Jordan.

6. The Conference on Kosova in Amman several months ago was the first of its kind organized in an Arab country after the declaration of Kosova’s independence. This conference would certainly not be held and the issue of Kosova’s recognition would not be addressed if there were no indications – at least indirectly – that Jordan would recognize Kosova as a state.

7. The issue of Kosova is getting increasing coverage in print and electronic media in Jordan, even by the country’s most prominent analysts, including the direct calls and appeals to recognize the state of Kosova as soon as possible.

Among activities which in my opinion would have a tremendous positive effect on relations between our countries, I will highlight the following three:

1. Establish a Joint Popular Committee, which will continuously highlight mechanisms that would: further relations between the countries; identify areas of possible cooperation; influence Arab print and electronic media to cover the issue of Kosova as extensively as possible; apply pressure on Arab parliaments in a way that if the policies of an Arab country would display a negative indicator in the future they would react successfully by making it meaningless.

2. Find and use ways of encouraging Arab nations to apply pressure on their governments to decide on recognizing the state of Kosova.

3. Attract Arab investors to Kosova. This can be facilitated by the fact that there is ongoing privatization of public enterprises in Kosova. We all know that often the economic decision precedes and determines the political decision.
ABOUT FORUM 2015

Forum 2015 is a project of Kosova SOROS Foundation and RIINVEST Institute that offers expertise and advocates development issues in Kosova. Forum 2015 through its activities stimulates the debate on different topics and promotes the development of an advanced political culture. In broader perspective, Forum 2015 aims to prepare Kosova for Euro-Atlantic integration.

Previous roundtable discussions (seminars and conferences)
New Kosova (C) – Where is the national interest in this project? – 14 April 2009
International Image of Kosova – 21 November 2008
Privatization and Post-Privatization in Kosova – October 9, 2008
Kosova and the Arab World II (Prishtina conference) – August 25, 2008
Kosova and the Arab World I (Amman conference) – July 14, 2008
Absorption for EU pre-accession funds – April 11, 2008
Diapora and Migration Policies – December 18, 2007
European Identity of Kosova – June 26 & 27, 2007
Kosova’s post-status Foreign policy – May 9, 2007
A Modern Tale - Kosova C 2100 – April 18, 2007
Post-status Status – Kosova’s future international oversight – December 14, 2006
Qualitative Elementary Education in Support of Human Development in Kosova – November 10, 2006
Kosova Decentralization Dialogue – June 14, 2006
Higher Education for Minorities in Kosova – May 18, 2006
Fiscal Culture and Budget Sustainability – January 19, 2006
United Nations 60th Anniversary – Making Development Work for All – October 25, 2005
Status against Status Quo – July 11, 2005
Media in Kosova: Challenges Regarding Independence and Sustainability – March 21, 2005
Kosova and integration into European Higher Education – December 23, 2004
The Status of Socially Owned Property in Kosova: Contests and Privatization – June 4, 2004
Privatization in Kosova: Forwards and Backwards – March 9, 2004
Electoral System in Kosova: Advantages and Shortcomings – February 2004
Operationalization of the Standards – November 26, 2003
Platform on Pristina-Belgrade Dialogue – October 7, 2003
Thessaloniki Summit – the Challenge of European Integration – June 11, 2003

Previous publications
Kosova one year later (documentary) – February, 2009
Image matters – November, 2008
A modern tale (documentary) – April, 2008
Absorption for EU pre-accession funds: Concept and implications for Kosova, March 2008
Diaspora and Migration Policies – December 2007
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Kosova five years later - What agenda for the future? - 2005
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