

EU 4 Kosovo:

PAVING THE WAY TO
THE EUROPEAN UNION



NOVEMBER 2017
PRISTINA, KOSOVO

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NOVO BRDO/NOVOBËRDË FORTRESS
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Introduction: **EU changing lives in Kosovo**



Nataliya Apostolova,
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The EU's support to Kosovo is changing people's lives. In Kosovo, the European Union is disbursing the biggest sum of money per capita compared to the rest of the world. The EU is by far the single largest financial contributor in Kosovo. Since 1999, Kosovo has received more than €2.5 billion in EU support. This support, implemented through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, IPA, helps Kosovo on its European path. But, moreover, it supports people who wish to see their community better off, developed and with more opportunities.

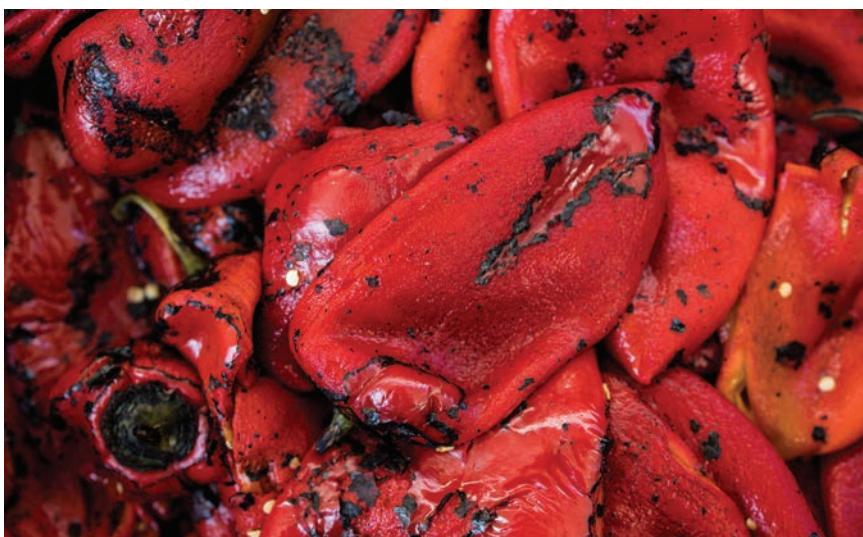
Such good examples are the women of cooperative 'Eva' in Klina municipality, involved in pigs breeding and meat processing, or the ones in Krusha e Madhe/Velika Kruša who now export their famous 'ajvar' across the borders. Access to reliable clean water is essential for living, and it is something that Kosovo citizens are enjoying more and more also thanks to EU support. Kamenica and Lipjan/Lipljan are municipalities where religious communities are dedicated to improve inter-community tolerance and respect for the cultural

identity through its protection. Novo Brdo/Novobërdë in the meantime became one of the places with quite a few touristic sites. If you decide to go there, you can now see and climb a restored Fortress dating from the 13th century, or go horse-riding or walking in the woods of "Gërshtëta Resort". The EU support has also helped protect the rights of the LGBT community. And juveniles sentenced with education measures now have a facility where they can receive proper education and training, so they can easily reintegrate in society.

In this publication, we present stories and testimonials of people whose life has, in one way or another, changed for better. We are thankful and proud for being part of this journey for a better life.

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs

WIDOWS OF KRUSHA E MADHE/VELIKA KRUŠA ARE BY NOW KNOWN AS HARD-WORKING LADIES WHO TRIED TO OVERCOME THEIR WAR TRAGEDY BY CULTIVATING THE LAND IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES AND EASE THE PAIN. THE VILLAGE DURING THE WAR IN 1999 LOST MORE THAN 100 MEN, AND THUS BECAME ALMOST MENLESS.



After seeking for their loved ones for years, these women realized that they have to do more in order to survive. They decided to turn to what they were best at - vegetable processing. Today, ajvar, peppers stuffed with cabbage, and peppers in sour cream are among the most famous products of "Krusha" Cooperative.

Until 2013, women of "Krusha" worked in private houses with no proper conditions, but thanks to the EU-funded project, they now have a food processing facility of 200 m2. This significantly improved their working environment.

"After we got the new facility, we managed to increase the number of our workers in the production section from 23 to 70. Besides

"I would like to thank the EU for extending their support to this category of women who lost their sons and husbands during the war. With this support, the EU has secured their monthly income."
Fahrije Hoti, director of 'Krusha' Cooperative.



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that, we have six groups who individually work within their own families for supplying our cooperative,” says Fahrije Hoti, Director of “Krusha” Cooperative.

The EU assistance of over €50,000 contributed to bigger production and increased number of contracts with over 70 farmers from the Rahovec/Orahovac region.

“This facility has now secured our market. Today, over 200 stores throughout Kosovo sell our products. We also managed to reach contracts with Switzerland and Germany for selling our products outside of Kosovo. And we are still growing,” Hoti added.

Women of Krusha are happy that they have this job to support their families. However, this is also a place where, through work and conversations they alleviate the pain from the past. Besire Duraku, who lost her husband during the war, supports her two university students with her job at Krusha Cooperative. During the holiday season, her children also work at the cooperative. She works from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and during the season time the cooperative works in two shifts, until midnight.



"This job has helped my body, my mind and my family. Thanks to the investment, we have far better conditions now, we are bigger and there is more working space," says Duraku.

"I would like to thank the EU for extending their support to this category of women who lost their sons and husbands during the war. With this support, the EU has secured their monthly income," the Cooperative's director, Fahrije Hoti, concludes.

The Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo, which outlines the strategic approach of IPA II assistance to Kosovo for the period 2014-2020, foresees the continuation of grant support for micro-enterprises and start-up businesses, focusing on innovative business models, export-oriented services and female entrepreneurs.

Such support, among others, helped women of Cooperative "Krusha" in Rahovec/Orahovac region, and women of Cooperative "Eva" in Klina municipality.

Tatjana Ilić was born in Pristina but never lived in Kosovo. For years, she resided in Serbia. Her husband, who was born in Vidanje, Klina municipality, decided to return to his birthplace in 2005, so she followed him. Ilić is another beneficiary of EU assistance and now leads "Eva Cooperative", involved in pigs breeding and meat processing activities, coming from a selection of small breeding farms from nearby. The assistance helped the establishment of the production, its development, group marketing and regional branding.

According to the IPA II Indicative strategy paper for Kosovo, the inclusion and participation of women remains a key challenge at all levels of society. Moreover, women from minority communities represent the most socially excluded groups. Thus, their empowerment depends on better education, health, and economic participation. The EU's assistance has also helped women coming from different communities.

This project under the name Action of Women in Agri-business worth € 449,856 was implemented by an Italian organization Reggio Terzo Mondo (RTM) from December 2014 - December 2016.

"We had their [EU] great support in financing. This assistance financially empowered women in this region, they became independent, and they feel stronger and better."

**Tatjana Ilić,
director of 'Eva'
Cooperative.**

WOMEN OF EVA COOPERATIVE
INVOLVED IN PIGS BREEDING AND
MEAT PROCESSING





Ilić says that women do all of the work in this cooperative, except of slaughtering the pigs.

“We were very persistent with our idea for meat processing. Thanks to this assistance and with RTM’s support, we registered our cooperative under the name “Eva”. We now have a factory where four women, including myself, are working, and we also have two butchers. There are 12 stalls with pigs where 12 women work. We sell our meat products to the local market,” Ilić tells her story.

“Eva” supplies four restaurants in Klina region, as well as some restaurants in Gjakova/Đakovica and Pristina.

Ilić adds that without the EU’s help, these women would never have come to the point where they are today.

“We had their great support in financing. This assistance financially empowered women in this region, they became independent, and they feel stronger and better. Moreover, our social life has improved. We are together in good and bad. I am 52, but this is the place where I met my best friends. This is all thanks to the EU’s support,” she adds.

Thanks to the grant of almost half a million euro from EU, Ilić now sees her future nowhere else but in Kosovo, by her co-workers from Serbian and Albanian community, whom she now considers a family.

Her fellow colleague, a Kosovo Albanian, Tone Gjergjaj, confirms that.

“We get along very well. We are like sisters. This is all thanks to the EU who helped us with this cooperative. The income helps us support our families, educate our children. We are very satisfied with the given support, but also because our customers are satisfied with our products. That gives us more will to work,” adds Gjergjaj.

Besides the job creation, this project also helped the local farmers in the region who are supplying the factory with animal products.

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**Tone Gjergjaj,
worker at ‘Eva’
Cooperative.**

Boosting tourism through rural development

THE FORTRESS OF NOVO BRDO/NOVOBËRDË, TVRĐAVA/KALAJA, HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN FOR YEARS AND IT WAS HARDLY VISIBLE. DATING FROM THE 13TH CENTURY, IT IS THE MAIN CULTURAL HERITAGE MONUMENT OF NOVO BRDO/NOVOBËRDË, IN SOUTH-EASTERN PART OF KOSOVO. DURING THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD, THIS PLACE WAS AMONG ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST TOWNS AND BIGGEST TRADING CENTRES IN THE BALKANS, AS ITS MINE WAS RICH WITH GOLD AND SILVER.

Thanks to IPA 2013, €1 million was put for revitalization of the fortress, implemented by UNESCO, whereas the revitalization of the business environment around the fortress is still ongoing with a budget of additional €1 million.

“We had a fortress in disappearing, and now we have a clear shape of the fortress,” says Fitim Bunjaku, a local tourist guide who was involved in the project implementation. Since the completion of the fortress revitalization in 2016, the number of visitors has increased for 50 percent.

The Novo Brdo/Novobërdë Fortress, at the top of the hill 1,124m above the sea level, was built during the reign of Prince Lazar; it was later fortified in the 14th century by the Turkish Sufi Sinan Pasha. In its surrounding are a number of other monuments, such as: the remains of an ancient cathedral, the St. Mary’s Church, a very old mosque, a Mausoleum, a Turkish cemetery. The fortress today, with its Upper and Lower town, represents the most important asset of the cultural heritage of this municipality.

“We had a fortress in disappearing, and now we have a clear shape of the fortress.”

**Fitim Bunjaku,
local tourist guide.**



The Upper town consists of six towers, but during the revitalization new objects were discovered inside the fortress, such as a small church, steamed bath, water tanks, and an entrance towards one of the towers. Previously, it was believed that the Fortress was empty inside. There's also a possibility to climb the top of the fortress walls, from where you have a breath-taking view of Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë and the surrounding attractions.

Bunjaku adds that the revitalization of the fortress could not have been done with the Kosovo budget funds alone, which is why the assistance of the EU was of crucial importance.

He expects that with the implementation of the rest of the project, which foresees the revitalization of the business environment around the fortress, these sites will largely contribute to the development of rural, cultural tourism and economy.

The Fortress is already now being visited by international visitors, but it is also popular among Kosovo diaspora.

Another EU-funded project has contributed to the development of local tourism in the Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë municipality.



About 18 km from Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë, in the village of Strazhe, “Gersheta Resort” is located. Under the project “Development of tourism capacities in Eastern Region of Kosovo,” the EU rural grant has made a difference inside the local community, created new jobs and helped the economy of the surrounding farmers.

Thanks to EU’s assistance, “Gersheta Resort” offers to its visitors walking paths of about 20 km, sport activities, horse riding, playground for children, camping site, bicycle riding, and besides that, a restaurant and bungalows with a mountain view.

Afrim Hasani, the owner of this family-owned business, says that the resort was built from scratch thanks to a half a million euro of EU assistance.

“Nobody believed that on this hilly landscape we can build such a resort,” Hasani says.

The resort employs 60 people from the surroundings, and it has contracted 15 local farmers to supply the resort with fresh food, after they have helped them with small grants. Hasani is still looking to hire more people and train them for work.

Gersheta’s customers and employees come from both Albanian and Serbian communities.

Abide Ramadani from Gjilan/Gnjilane works as an accountant at this resort. She says that people from abroad are now booking this resort online.

“Nobody believed that on this hilly landscape we can build such a resort.”
Afrim Hasani, owner of Gersheta Resort.



"All we need to do is to continue further with investments, eventually invest in a ski centre so we can attract tourists during the winter time, too," she adds.

The sector of agriculture and rural development is one of the keys for IPA II assistance because it plays an important role in providing employment opportunities and generating income. Support to this sector is one of five policy areas for IPA II financial assistance.

Kosovo's Agriculture and Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 is in line with IPA II regulation and it follows the IPA priorities in enhancing farm viability, competitiveness; restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems; promoting social, economic inclusion; transfer of knowledge, innovation.

The overall objective of IPA II assistance in this sector is to support Kosovo institutions align and implement the Common Agricultural Policy, including the improvement of living standards of Kosovo's rural population.

"All we need to do is to continue further with investments, eventually invest in a ski centre so we can attract tourists during the winter time, too."
Abide Ramadani, accountant at 'Gërsheta' Resort.

A taste of Kosovo for the world

RAHOVEC/ORAHOVAC IN SOUTH-WEST OF KOSOVO IS WELL KNOWN FOR ITS GRAPES AND HAS BEEN KOSOVO'S MAIN WINEMAKING REGION FOR AGES. THE WINE PROCESSING COMPANY 'BIOPAK' IS THE FIRST COMPANY IN KOSOVO IN THE WINE-MAKING BUSINESS. THEY STARTED IN 2001, UNDER THE NAME 'RAHOVEC', WHICH WAS LATER CHANGED TO 'BIOPAK', AND THE COMPANY BECAME KNOWN FOR ITS TWO BRANDS - 'ILLYRIAN' AND 'MURATTI'.

Illyrian is visible in Kosovo's market ever since 2001, whereas 'Muratti' was created in 2010, as a better quality of wine dedicated for export.

Today, "Biopak" exports 90 percent of its wine annually produced in the countries of EU, as well as in Japan.

The EU's assistance of almost half a million euro played a major role in it, which resulted to the increase of the wine quality and its production, as well as to the stabilization of internal and external market.

"Thanks to the assistance, we have increased the production capacity for about half a million of liters a year. Currently, we produce about 2 million liters of wine annually. We process around 1.5 million kilograms of grapes a year, out of which we can produce 1.1 million liters of wine", says Bejtullah Haxhimurati, a co-owner of 'Biopak'.

The recent investment made in technology has increased the quality of wine through stabilization of supply, better processing and storage facility. The production has increased for 50 percent.

"Thanks to the assistance, we have increased the production capacity for about half a million of liters a year. Currently, we produce about 2 million liters of wine annually. We process around 1.5 million kilograms of grapes a year, out of which we can produce 1.1 million liters of wine."

Bejtullah Haxhimurati, co-owner of 'Biopak'.



"The EU's assistance has helped us improve everything in our company and we are thankful for that. If there are more such investments across Kosovo, Kosovo will improve more, too," Haxhimurati adds.

Moreover, this investment has also helped local suppliers - about 60 of them - from whom 'Biopak' gets the grapes. Farmers have been sub-granted with 100 boxes each, which helped them preserve the quality of the grapes during the transportation.

Sulejman Durguti supplies 'Biopak' with up to 12,000 kilograms of grapes annually from his 2 hectares of vineyards.

"This assistance has helped us, too, because we reached a three-year long contract, we got the boxes for free, we now also get help during the transportation, harvesting and sorting. My entire family is engaged in this and it helped our household a lot," Durguti says.

About 14 percent of the GDP of Kosovo comes from the agricultural sector and it is the largest employer in Kosovo. Agriculture is one of the key for IPA II assistance because of its economic potential. The agriculture sector employs most of the population and counts as the main source of income for Kosovo citizens. According to the Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo, IPA II contributes to substantially increase of competitiveness of Kosovo's agriculture and food production, to raise food safety standards of local products and to improve the living standards of Kosovo's rural population. This sector also has potential for growth and exports.

Over 100 km north of Rahovec/Orahovac, in Leposavić/ Leposaviq, Vladan Milojević is doing final preparations for opening a factory for champignons mushroom production, processing and export. The EU assisted him with around € 243,000 for building a 600 m²

“This assistance was excellent. I’m very thankful to the EU and I hope it will continue to support the businesses. This will be good not only for Leposavić/Leposaviq, but the entire northern Kosovo.”

Vladan Milojević, champignon mushroom producer from Leposavić/Leposaviq.



facility for champignons production.

Vladan and his partner Ivan Milojević, came to this idea due to the lack of this product in the local market.

“We found ourselves in this area. Currently, there aren’t other producers of champignons so we thought this was a smart idea,” Vladan Milojević says. He plans to produce these champignons continuously, since they will be able to cultivate them in four separate rooms.

“We want our customers to be satisfied and respected,” he adds.

The capacity of this factory is production of 25 tons of champignons in a cycle of 40 days, or hundreds of tons during a year.

“The north of Kosovo is small for this capacity so we plan the export to Pristina, but also to Serbia – Novi Pazar, Raška/Rashkë, Kraljevo/Kraljevë,” Milojević adds. In the meantime, his plan is to hire 15 people.

“This assistance was excellent. I’m very thankful to the EU and I hope it will continue to support the businesses. This will be good not only for Leposavić/Leposaviq, but the entire northern Kosovo,” Milojević believes.

Strengthening Vulnerable Groups

THE EU OFFICE IN KOSOVO/EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE HAS BEEN SUPPORTING THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSO) THROUGH GRANTS FOR PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS, PROMOTION OF INCLUSIVENESS IN EDUCATION, AS WELL AS ADVOCACY SKILLS OF GRASSROOTS CSOS THROUGH GRANTS MECHANISM. ONE OF THE BENEFICIARIES OF SUCH GRANTS IS THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL GROUP DEVELOPMENT (CSGD) IN PRISTINA.

Although Kosovo has a good legislation on human rights, its implementation remains a challenge across the country.

This is especially the case with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community, which continues to face discrimination, threats and violence.

The CSGD Center gathers members from LGBTI community and its work is focused on advocacy for LGBTI rights, community empowerment, as well as on raising awareness in society on LGBTI issues and HIV prevention.

The first barrier LGBTI community faces in Kosovo begins inside the family, where they feel they are under pressure for having a double life, or sometimes are facing physical or psychological violence, says Agim Margilaj, the program manager at (CSGD). In most cases, he adds, that violence doesn't get reported because of its sensitivity.

The EU operating grant of €60,000 to CSGD helped the center develop advocacy and communication strategy, and thanks to it, in 2016 the Center started providing legal aid and legal assistance to the members of community who face discrimination or violence because of their sexual orientation.

“These achievements to some may seem as baby steps, but for us, it's a huge achievement to have the first LGBT case in which the rule of law institutions are being challenged with issues from the community itself.”
Agim Margilaj, programme manager at CSGD.

Margilaj says that CSGD is now capable of protecting its members from homophobes in front of the court.

"This is one of the services which led to the first case in court in 2016, when a gay man was attacked at work based of his sexual orientation. This case brought attention to the community and it opened the door to others to report such experiences. So after that one, there were three more cases reported," Margilaj adds.

Moreover, the case in court brought attention to take a look into the Criminal code of Kosovo, where the Center noticed certain legal gaps and is now a part of the group which works on the amendments of relevant articles.

"These achievements to some may seem as baby steps, but for us, it's a huge achievement to have the first LGBT case in which the rule of law institutions are being challenged with issues from the community itself," Margilaj adds.

The Center also started cooperation with the University of Pristina where a few lectures and essay competition were organized. The EU also helped the organization of the 2016 march of LGBTI activists in Pristina. After this event, the number of community increased for about 60 people who later dropped by the CSGD, Margilaj says.

"The help from EU is much appreciated. We didn't have advocacy or communications strategy, we didn't have a lawyer; we didn't have a communication officer or a legal officer who is now analyzing every legal issue and bringing recommendations. We didn't have services such as psychological ones offered in Pristina and in other cities. We now have all of these thanks to this operating grant," Margilaj concludes.

IPA II supports Kosovo in education and awareness-raising about fundamental rights and non-discrimination, so that a solid implementation of commitments in terms of anti-discrimination are seen, including the strengthening of protection, promotion, enforcement and reporting on fundamental rights on local and central lever.

An Association of Paraplegics and Paralyzed Children of Kosovo, HandiKOS, is also one of the organizations which benefited from the EU's support.

An annual grant of €60,000, which is foreseen to last for the next few years, provided this organization predictable core funding in order to support the annual operating activities. The purpose of the work program is to support HandiKOS in promoting and protecting the rights of People with Disabilities in Kosovo.

Afrim Maliqi, Director of HandiKOS, says that this assistance helped the organization finance four people in the organization who plan annual activities of the organization, and who also help people with disabilities.

"With this help, we managed to work a lot in the area of human rights among disabled people, in raising awareness, advocacy, lobbying and impacting the legislation, as well as on publications or research," Maliqi says.

"We can plan better and we can analyze better the needs of the people with disabilities," he adds.

The results were very visible. During 2017, the staff worked on getting a project with the organization Save the Children, and they succeeded. The organization also got to advocate and lobby for the rights of people with disabilities, and therefore managed to push for a Law on the status and the rights with paraplegia and tetraplegia, which is currently being implemented.

"This is the high-risked group of people of disabilities. I had more time to work on it and to make an impact," Maliqi says.

The number of people with disabilities in Kosovo is unknown, but the organization itself has registered around 18,000 of such. Maliqi believes that the number is much higher.

The organization also organized an event in Pristina in 2016, when the improvised wooden ramps were put across the city, so that people with disabilities can pass without any problems. The purpose was to raise awareness about the need to help them.

"With this help, we managed to work a lot in the area of human rights among disabled people, in raising awareness, advocacy, lobbying and impacting the legislation, as well as on publications or research."

**Afrim Maliqi,
director of
HANDIKOS.**

Supporting Tolerance Through Heritage Protection

KOSOVO HAS A RICH AND DIVERSE CULTURAL HERITAGE WHICH INCLUDES MONUMENTS, SITES, ARTEFACTS, BUT ALSO INTANGIBLE ATTRIBUTES CREATED BY ALL PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN KOSOVO FOR CENTURIES.



The European Union is very conscious on safeguarding and enhancing cultural heritage. It is dedicated to preserving and promoting it. During the planning of IPA II assistance, specific attention was brought for protection of cultural heritage.

To improve inter-community tolerance and respect for cultural identity and heritage of all communities, as well as inter-community trust at municipal level, the EU in Kosovo decided to implement a project on “Confidence building through Cultural Protection”, implemented by UNDP.

A million and a half of Euros was dedicated to five municipalities in Kosovo for regeneration and beautification works to 18 cultural heritage sites, among which were mosques, churches, cemeteries, museums, etc. The goal of it was also to increase engagement of the communities in the protection of religious and cultural heritage and improve the capacity of law-enforcement bodies to protect sites of religious and cultural significance.

The project also foresaw workshops for young people on protection and promotion of cultural heritage, education sessions in high schools for raising awareness of the need to respect

“This was a really good investment and very well welcomed from the community, and we will like to thank everyone who contributed in this project” says **Xhevdet Bytyqi, head of the Islamic Community in Lipjan/Lipljan.**



and protect cultural heritage. The project was implemented in Rahovec/Orahovac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Kamenica and Lipjan/Lipljan.

The priest of Serbian Orthodox Church St. Nicholas in Kamenica, Dragiša Jerenić, says that this is one of the rare municipalities in Kosovo where Albanian, Serbian and Roma population live together, instead of living next to each other.

The EU assistance contributed to the renovation of three sites in Kamenica - the Town park reconstruction, Haxhi Gani Sermaxhaj Mosque renovation and the upgrade of St. Nicholas entire yard.

“It was all ruined before here, decayed, and we couldn’t do anything about it because of the lack of finances,” says Jerenić, showing admiration to what has been done in the church yard.

“There was an Albanian company which worked here - we didn’t have any issues with them, they didn’t have any issues with us. We live here altogether, not next to each other,” Jerenić adds.

He believes that his project has contributed to the deepening of good relations and mutual respect.

“One should see the renovated Town Park where kids from all different communities play together. That you cannot see very often in other places in Kosovo. You should visit the Friday’s market and see how people work and live together here,” Jerenić says.

On the other side, the imam of Islamic community of Kosovo, Bejtullah Hashani, appreciates the help of EU in renovating the Haxhi Gani Sermaxhaj mosque and agrees that such projects help inter-ethnic relations.

About 60 km west of Kamenica, in Lipjan/Lipljan, through the same project, a yard of the town Mulla Sherif Ahmeti Mosque has been upgraded as well as a Muslim cemetery. The project also included the renovation of the Serbian Orthodox Church St. Flora and Laura.

“You could hear people around saying ‘the priest was in a mosque’ or ‘the imam was in a church’...

They saw pictures from the inaugural ceremony.”

Skender Mehmeti, imam of Lipjan/Lipljan mosque.



Head of the Islamic community in Lipjan/Lipljan, Xhevdet Bytyqi, and mosque's imam, Skender Mehmeti, agree that such projects contribute to good neighbourhood relations.

"This was a really good investment and very well welcomed from the community, and we will like to thank everyone who contributed in this project," says Xhevdet Bytyqi.

He adds that an extraordinary work was done at Muslim cemetery which was in a very poor condition. It now has a fence, walking paths and it's much cleaner than it was before.

"This project made tolerance very visible, which also existed from times before. It proved that we are dedicated to tolerance and cooperation," Bytyqi says.

Mosque's imam, Skender Mehmeti, believes that this project had an impact on the communities a lot.

"You could hear people around saying 'the priest was in a mosque' or 'the imam was in a church'...They saw pictures from the inaugural ceremony," he says.

Not far from the mosque, a facade of the Orthodox church St. Flora and Laura, first built between two world wars, was renovated, including the new windows and floor, as well as the fence around it, says father Srđan Stanković.

"The Serbian community, Orthodox Church and I personally were very satisfied with this project and the results are good. Our neighbors who are Albanians were also satisfied," says Stanković, adding that Lipjan/Lipljan is a good example of cooperation with Albanian neighbours and cooperation with municipality.

"It is very important that you work with all religious communities at the same time. I feel sorry the Catholic Church wasn't included in this project, even though in the town of Lipjan/Lipljan there is no Catholic church, but they are close by. It is important that the help is distributed among all of communities," he concludes.

"It was all ruined before here, decayed, and we couldn't do anything about it because of the lack of finances."
Dragiša Jerenić, priest of Serbian Orthodox Church St.Nicholas in Kamenica.

Better Infrastructure for a Better Life

ONE OF THE INVESTMENTS OF THE EU THAT IMPROVED LIVING CONDITIONS IN KOSOVO'S CAPITAL IS THE NEW WATER FACTORY IN SHKABAJ, CLOSE TO PRISTINA.

Kosovo has long been facing the problem of reliable supply of clean water. Because of very few water-treatment plants with not enough capacity, which in addition were in a poor state, the water restrictions were present on a daily basis. The water sector has been a high priority for the EU in Kosovo, and its assistance went towards the refurbishment of plants and pumping stations, extending networks and improving water quality.

Thanks to the project in Shkabaj, Pristina now has a 24h water supply. The total cost of the project was around €35 million and the EU supported it with €5 million.

Citizens of the Pristina region were facing water reductions throughout day and night from 2000 until March 2017, when the new water factory was opened. Besides Pristina, other places such as Obiliq/Obilić, Gračanica/Graqanicë, and Podujeva/Podujevo, benefited from this investment.

The Chief Executive of the Regional Water Company 'Prishtina' Ilir Avdullahu says that this new factory was a much needed investment.

"It solved a problem of about half a million of consumers. I would like to thank European taxpayers who enabled Kosovo citizens to have a 24h water supply with a very good drinking quality," he adds.

The new factory also employed 25 people of different profiles who work in three shifts.

"It solved a problem of about half a million of consumers. I would like to thank European taxpayers who enabled Kosovo citizens to have a 24h water supply with a very good drinking quality."

**Ilir Avdullahu,
Chief Executive
of Regional
Water Company
'Prishtina'.**



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Besides Shkabaj, during 2017 a water factory in Badovc/Badovac was inaugurated. v of water plant in Badovc/Badovac helped households with a stable water supply in Gračanica/Graqanicë and Pristina.

But that is not all. A water treatment plant was built also in Shipol/Šipolje for the Mitrovica region, in the value of €10 million and it benefited about 250 thousand inhabitants of Mitrovica region.

In Leposavić/Leposaviq, the EU through its projects for municipal social and economic infrastructure helped the municipality of Leposavić/Leposaviq to equip its Water Treatment Plant with necessary equipment to provide additional clean potable water with a value of over a half a million Euros.

EU's assistance in infrastructure has a wide reach.

Teuta Podvorica, a student of general medicine, commutes every day around 14 kilometers to and back from Lipjan/Lipljan, so she can in peace study in the newly built library in this town. She lives in nearby Kojška.



"I use it a lot, because it gives me a quiet time. There are private cabins for studying. There are other bigger rooms for study groups also. I come often, and I stay here pretty much as long as it's open, until 19 hrs," Podvorica says.

She has to figure her way to Lipjan/Lipljan since there is no public transportation from her place to the city. That, however, doesn't prevent her from coming. She is convinced that if other people find out about it, it will quickly become very popular.

Teuta is one of many students from Lipjan/Lipljan region who are enjoying the new EU-funded Library and Archive building, which cost about €740,000.

The Director of municipal department of Education, Youth and Sports, Basri Hashani, explains that Lipjan had a great need for the new building, since the previous was in ruins. Barely 10 people visited it during a month. The new one is now a three-floor building of 1500 m², spacious, with private cabins, and a big classroom for study groups.

"We can now see an increase of visitors, conditions are much better. It's a real pleasure to see more people coming. It's a well dedicated and planned investment," he says. "This library is really what our town needed," Basri Hashani adds.

"I use it a lot, because it gives me a quiet time. There are private cabins for studying. There are other bigger rooms for study groups also. I come often, and I stay here pretty much as long as it's open, until 19 hrs."

**Teuta Podvorica,
student from
Lipjan/Lipljan.**

Second Chance for Kosovo Juveniles

CURRENTLY, THERE ARE EIGHT JUVENILES SENTENCED WITH EDUCATIONAL MEASURES WHO WERE TRANSFERRED FROM THE LIPJAN/LIPLJAN CORRECTIONAL CENTRE INTO THE NEW EDUCATIONAL CORRECTIONAL CENTRE FOR JUVENILES IN LIPJAN/LIPLJAN FUNDED BY THE EU. IN COMPARISON TO THE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE, THEY SAY THAT THE NEW CENTER OFFERS THEM FAR BETTER CONDITIONS AND CHANCES.

“I like it better here. Conditions are much better. And there are no bars here, like in the other one. I spend days playing basketball, talking to my friends here,” says one of the juveniles.

“We can play sports; we can go walking whenever we want. We spend days by reading, watching TV, playing ping-pong, or basketball,” adds another one.

They believe they will not be the same once they get out of the centre.

“In the previous centre, you cannot improve yourself. Your movement is limited, you are behind bars, you are left on your own and that’s when all bad thoughts come. Here, it’s much better. I’ve improved my behaviour also. I know when I get out of here I will not be the person I used to be.

The best thing is that we socialize here, we spend time together,” says one of them.

Until not so long ago, juveniles sentenced with educational measures, which are not considered as punishment under the Juvenile Justice Code (JJC), were treated merely as convicted juveniles. They were put in a closed facility in the Correctional Centre in Lipjan/Lipljan,

“We can play sports; we can go walking whenever we want. We spend days reading, watching TV, playing ping-pong, or basketball.”

Juvenile at Educational Correctional Centre in Lipjan/Lipljan.



together with detained and convicted juveniles.

This was due to the lack of a specialized open-facility, which would be in line with the Juvenile Justice Code requirements and international standards.

But this came to an end thanks to the EU's support to judicial reforms. One of the focuses in this area was juvenile justice reforms in Kosovo achieved through legal framework compliant with international standards, enhancements of the education/training programme for all institutions involved in juvenile justice system, etc.

Under the IPA 2013 programme, juvenile justice is further supported through the construction of a facility for juveniles, which has been accepting children for five months now.

The third phase of EU's support to Juvenile Justice System foresaw 2.4 million of assistance. Thanks to it, just across the Correctional Centre in Lipjan/Lipljan, there is now a modern, colorful building with classrooms, indoor and outdoor basketball courts, a dayroom with a TV, double bedrooms with its own bathrooms, other sport facilities and similar. Juveniles are allowed to use these facilities all day long. They can also use medical and psychological services within the premises. They work during the day three to four hours, taking care of the facility.

The EU's assistance also supported the development and implementation of necessary trainings needed for this facility.

The lack of such institution impacted the extent to which judges were able to choose an appropriate and effective sentence in the best interest of the child.

“Providing services may be a unique opportunity for these juveniles in accessing proper education, vocational training and creating competitive advantages for employment in the labour market.”

**Ardian Klaiqi,
Justice for
Children Officer at
UNICEF.**



The new construction of an open educational and correctional centre will not only contribute to the full implementation of JJC, but will also ensure that children are provided with appropriate protection and assistance, supervision, educational and vocational training, aiming their reintegration in society.

The focus of the new facility will be resocialization through an education based programme. All juveniles will attend their regular school in public schools in selected municipalities. Also, there will be a regular vocational training programme.

Arif Beqa, Juvenile Justice Centre Director, says Kosovo had a great need for this centre which, besides activities, offers education to juveniles.

“The beginning is a bit difficult because we cannot say that we have reached all of our objectives, but we did start with some of our programmes on re-socialisation,” he says.

A great percentage of children transferred to this center have been let go because of their outstanding behaviour in the meantime.

Beqa adds that the success of this project depends on the engagement of different institutions, such as ministries of justice, education, labour and others. He believes the children will soon start attending local schools, also.

“This sector of juveniles needs a good coordination among institutions,” he concludes.

Ardian Klaiqi, Justice for Children Officer at UNICEF, an implementing agency of the project, also believes that the new facility has to prove that it serves and delivers concrete results in easing the social reintegration of children.

“Providing services may be a unique opportunity for these juveniles in accessing proper education, vocational training and creating competitive advantages for employment in the labour market,” Klaiqi says.

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EU OFFICE / EUSR

DESIGNED BY:
**KOPERATIVA
COMMUNICATIONS**

PHOTOGRAPHY:
ARBEN LLAPASHTICA
(PG. 1,4,7,8,12,13,14,15,22,23,26,28,29)

SAMIR KARAHODA
(PG. 5,21,25)

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Translation and print: EU OFFICE IN KOSOVO / EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, 2017.



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European Union Office in Kosovo and
implemented by Koperativa



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