

KOSOVO



Country Dialing Code (Tel/Fax): ++381

ZYRA E ASOCIACIONIT KOSOVAR TË TURIZMIT KOTAS ADRESA:

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Capital: Pristina (Pristine), time difference: UTC+1

Background: Serbs migrated to the territories of modern Kosovo in the 7th century, but did not fully incorporate them into the Serbian realm until the early 13th century. The Serbian defeat at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 led to five centuries of Ottoman rule, during which large numbers of Turks and Albanians moved to Kosovo. By the end of the 19th century, Albanians replaced the Serbs as the dominant ethnic group in Kosovo. Serbia reacquired control over Kosovo from the Ottoman Empire during the First Balkan War (1912), and after World War II (1945) the government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia led by Josip Broz TITO reorganized Kosovo as an autonomous province within the constituent republic of Serbia. Over the next four decades, Kosovo Albanians lobbied for greater autonomy and Kosovo was granted the status almost equal to that of a republic in the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution. Despite the legislative concessions, Albanian nationalism increased in the 1980s leading to nationalist riots and calls for Kosovo's independence. Serbs in Kosovo complained of mistreatment and Serb nationalist leaders, such as Slobodan MILOSEVIC, exploited those charges to win support among Serbian voters, many of whom viewed Kosovo as their cultural heartland. Under MILOSEVIC's leadership, Serbia instituted a new constitution in 1989 that drastically curtailed Kosovo's autonomy and Kosovo Albanian leaders responded in 1991 by organizing a referendum that declared Kosovo independent from Serbia. The MILOSEVIC regime carried out repressive measures against the Albanians in the early 1990s as the unofficial government of Kosovo, led by Ibrahim RUGOVA, tried to use passive resistance to gain international assistance and recognition of its demands for independence. In 1995, Albanians dissatisfied with RUGOVA's nonviolent strategy created the Kosovo Liberation Army and launched an insurgency. In 1998, MILOSEVIC authorized a counterinsurgency campaign that resulted in massacres and massive expulsions of ethnic Albanians by Serbian military, police, and paramilitary forces. The international community tried to resolve the conflict peacefully, but MILOSEVIC rejected the proposed international settlement - the Rambouillet Accords - leading to a three-month NATO bombing of Serbia beginning in March 1999, which forced Serbia to withdraw its military and police forces from Kosovo in June 1999. UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) placed Kosovo under a transitional administration, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), pending a determination of Kosovo's future status. Under the resolution, Serbia's territorial integrity was protected, but it was UNMIK who assumed responsibility for governing Kosovo. In 2001, UNMIK promulgated a Constitutional Framework, which established Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG), and in succeeding years UNMIK increasingly devolved responsibilities to the PISG. A UN-led process began in late 2005 to determine Kosovo's future status. Negotiations held intermittently between 2006 and 2007 on issues related to decentralization, religious heritage, and minority rights failed to yield a resolution between Serbia's willingness to grant a high degree of autonomy and the Albanians' call for full independence for Kosovo. On 17 February 2008, the Kosovo Assembly declared its independence from Serbia.

Location: Southeast Europe, between Serbia and Macedonia

Map References: Europe

Area: total: 10,887 sq km, land: 10,887 sq km, water: 0 sq km

Climate: influenced by continental air masses resulting in relatively cold winters with heavy snowfall and hot, dry summers and autumns; Mediterranean and alpine influences create regional variation; maximum rainfall between October and December

Terrain: lat fluvial basin with an elevation of 400-700 m above sea level surrounded by several high mountain ranges with elevations of 2,000 to 2,500 m

Natural Resources: nickel, lead, zinc, magnesium, lignite, kaolin, chrome, bauxite

Population: 2,126,708 (2007 est.)

Nationality: noun: Kosovoan, adjective: Kosovoan

Ethnic Groups: Albanians 88%, Serbs 7%, other 5% (Bosniak, Gorani, Roma, Turk)

Religions: Muslim, Serbian Orthodox, Roman Catholic

Languages: Albanian, Serbian, Bosniak, Turkish

Economy: Kosovo's economy has largely transitioned to a market-based system but is highly dependent on the international community and the diaspora for financial and technical assistance. Remittances from the diaspora - located mainly in Germany and Switzerland - account for about 30% of GDP. Kosovo's citizens are the poorest in Europe with an average per capita income of only \$1900 - about one-third the level of neighboring Albania. Unemployment - at 50% of the population - is a severe problem that encourages outward migration. Most of Kosovo's population lives in rural towns outside of the largest city, Pristina. Inefficient, near-subsistence farming is common - the result of small plots, limited mechanization, and lack of technical expertise. The complexity of Serbia and Kosovo's political and legal relationships created uncertainty over property rights and hindered the privatization of state-owned assets. Minerals and metals - including lignite, lead, zinc, nickel, chrome, aluminum, magnesium, and a wide variety of construction materials - once formed the backbone of industry, but output has declined because investment is insufficient to replace ageing Eastern Bloc equipment. Technical and financial problems in the power sector also impede industrial development, and deter foreign investment. Economic growth is largely driven by the private sector - mostly small-scale retail businesses. Both the euro and the Serbian dinar circulate. Kosovo's tie to the euro has helped keep inflation low. Kosovo has maintained a budget surplus as a result of efficient tax collection and inefficient spending. While maintaining ultimate oversight, UNMIK continues to work with the EU and Kosovo's provisional government to accelerate economic growth, lower unemployment, and attract foreign investment. In order to help integrate Kosovo into regional economic structures, UNMIK signed (on behalf of Kosovo) its accession to the Central Europe Free Trade Area (CEFTA) in 2006.

Industries: scrap metals, mining and processed metal products, plastics, wood

Currency: Serbian Dinar (RSD); euro (EUR) is also in circulation

Airports: 10 (2008)

Heliports: 2 (2008)

VISA: americans and eu citizens do not need a visa but if you are planning to stay in Kosovo for more than 90 days you must register at the police department for the registration of foreigners, which is next to the central police station. Citizens of other countries that have significantly contributed to the rebuilding of the Kosovo probably also do not need visas either, although kosovo is starting to implement a stricter visa regime. N.b. the 90 day rule for the registration of foreigners applies to everybody.

HOTELS•MOTELS•INNS

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AIRLINES/HELICOPTERS/AIRPORTS

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