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His Excellency
Avni Spahiu,
Ambassador of Kosovo
To the United States

Facts about Kosovo

The Office of International Affairs & Diplomacy actively supports UVU's global engagement efforts by advancing UVU's presence and prestige in the international community; helping UVU students become globally competent graduates; promoting cultural literacy and diversity both on campus and in the community.

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His Excellency Avni Spahiu

was appointed as the first Kosovo Ambassador to the United States in August of 2008.



Career Highlights

1978: Journalist and reporter covering mainly foreign news at *Rilindja* daily newspaper

1980: Desk editor and special reporter at *Rilindja* daily newspaper

1982: Permanent correspondent to UN/USA in New York of *Rilindja* daily newspaper

1986: Foreign desk editor at *Rilindja* in Prishtina. In the meantime, reported from numerous international gatherings and events throughout Europe, USA and Canada

1990: Co-founder of the first free news agency in Kosova—*Kosova Information Center*

1994-1998: Editor in Chief of *Rilindja*

1999-2000: Editor in Chief of RTK (Television Kosova).

2002-2003: Director of Television of Kosova (Kosova's Public Broadcaster)

2003: Director of Radio Department of RTK (two nation-wide radios: Radio Kosova and Radio Blue Sky).

Areas of Interest

Human Rights: During early 90s, with leading intellectuals of Kosova, in the wave of the democratic movement, Mr. Spahiu was part of the first Human Rights Council. During that time he wrote reports, filed appeals to the UN and democratic Europe on human rights violations in Kosova. In that capacity he attended UN Sessions on Human Rights in Geneva, speaking on its behalf before the UN Human Rights Commission and holding round table discussions in various capitals on political issues and human rights, such as OSCE Human Dimension Conference at Copenhagen, in Norway, Sweden, Germany, Austria, etc.

Translation: In the meantime he was dedicated to translation from Albanian to English and vice versa. So far he has translated over 20 published books of literature and Western thought. He also translated poetry written by famous British and American poets.

Authorial works: He is author of several books, one of which is a collection of stories from the USA written during his work as a correspondent and reporter in the U.S.



- Kosovo means blackbird.
- Kosovo represents an important link between central and southern Europe and the Adriatic and Black Seas.
- Kosovo is landlocked and borders Central Serbia north and eastward, the Republic of Macedonia to the south, Albania to the west and Montenegro to the northwest (the latter three recognize it as independent). The largest city and the capital of Kosovo is Pristina (alternatively spelled Prishtina).

- During WWI, Kosovo was populated by Serbs. During WWII, many Serbs were driven out of Kosovo while many Albanians were brought in. In 1989 Slobodan Milosevic started ethnic repression of Albanians in Kosovo.
- In February 2008, the Assembly of Kosovo declared Kosovo's independence as the Republic of Kosovo. Currently, 65 UN states recognize the independence of Kosovo and it has become a member country of the IMF and World Bank as the Republic of Kosovo. Three out of five veto powers in the U.N. recognize Kosovo as an independent state. Russia considers this independence illegal.
- The Republic of Kosovo is a parliamentary representative democracy. The executive power is exercised by the Government of Kosovo led by the Prime Minister of Kosovo. The President of the Republic of Kosovo is the head of state. The judiciary is independent. The legislative power is exercised by the single-chamber Assembly of Kosovo consisting of 120 members, 100 of them directly elected by the people for a four-year term and twenty seats reserved for representatives of the ethnic minorities only. The assembly elects the president for five years and approves the government.
- Kosovo has a liberal trade regime. Kosovo currently enjoys a free trade within Central European Free Trade Agreement — CEFTA, enabling its producers to access the regional market comprising of 28 million consumers, free of any customs duties.
- Islam is the predominant religion in Kosovo, brought into the region with the Ottoman conquest in the 15th century and now nominally professed by most of the ethnic people. Islam, however, hasn't saturated the Kosovo society, which remains largely secular.



UPCOMING EVENTS

**Ambassador of Kosovo
lecture at UVU
November 15, 2010
10:00 AM
UVU Library
Timpanogos Room**



The flag of Kosovo has a blue background, charged with a map of Kosovo and six stars. The stars are officially meant to symbolize Kosovo's six major ethnic groups: Albanians, Serbs, Turks, Gorani, Roma (often grouped with the Ashkali and Egyptians) and Bosniaks. Unofficially, the stars are sometimes said to represent six territories with Albanian population: Albania, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The flag of Kosovo resembles that of Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of colors and shapes used (white stars and yellow shape of the country on a blue field).

