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Kosovo News Update

RW Robert Wexler

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Sent Items

I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Republic of Kosovo.

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Kosovo Strengthens Relationships with European Neighbors

- The European Parliament voted in favor of talks on visa liberalization for Kosovo.
- The European Commission confirmed in July that Kosovo had fulfilled all the benchmarks required for its citizens to qualify for visa-free travel within Europe's Schengen Area, including: strengthening its fight against corruption and organized crime, as well as the ratification of a border demarcation agreement with Montenegro.
- As of January 1, 2019, the border between Kosovo and Albania will be opened for free movement between the two countries.
- Kosovo's Minister of Finance Hamza signed an agreement with the German government to create a €6.5 million fund designed to support the creation of jobs in the agriculture sector, facilitating access to finance for SMEs that are crucial for economic development in Kosovo.
- With the signing of this agreement, there have now been €101 million in grants signed with different donors since 2017, of which more than €50 million are German contributions.
- Germany is one of the largest donors in Kosovo, and since 1999 has contributed over €500 million into Kosovo, which has boosted the private sector, has given young people and women easier access to financing for businesses, and created new jobs, all of which has improved the quality of life in Kosovo.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/european-parliament-votes-in-favor-of-talks-on-visa-liberalization-for-kosovo/29487932.html>

<https://www.balkan.eu/stating-from-1st-of-january-there-will-no-longer-be-a-border-between-kosovo-and-albania/>

https://www.b92.net/eng/news/world.php?yyyy=2018&mm=08&dd=02&nav_id=104771

<https://emerging-europe.com/news/kosovos-agriculture-sector-gets-boost-from-german-fund/>

<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/green-light-eu-visa-liberalisation-kosovo>

Business is Booming in Kosovo

- Net FDI inflow into Kosovo rises to €22.4 million in May, up from €18.3 million in May 2017, with the largest investment interest in real estate, rentals and business activities.

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- Compared to the same quarter in 2017, with trade being the main industry in which businesses were opened.
- Serbia plans to invest \$15 million in the construction of a car battery factory in northern Kosovo. The factory will produce 700,000 car batteries annually and employ over 200 Kosovars.

<http://www.globaltradedmag.com/global-trade-daily/twelve-best-economies-to-start-a-business-2018>

<https://scenews.com/news/serbia-plans-to-build-13-mln-euro-car-battery-factory-in-northern-kosovo-626153>

<https://scenews.com/news/net-fdi-inflow-to-kosovo-rises-224-yy-in-may-622076>

<https://scenews.com/news/newly-registered-companies-in-kosovo-increase-178-yy-in-q2-622287>

Kosovo Sees Tourism Increase

- Foreign tourist arrivals in Kosovo were up 6.1% in the second quarter of 2018 compared with the same time in 2017.
- The number of nights spent by foreign tourists in Kosovo's hotels increased to 71,086 in the second quarter, up from 65,308 during the same time a year earlier.
- Most foreign visitors to Kosovo came from Albania, Turkey, and Switzerland.
- Pristina and Prizren have been the most popular Kosovar destinations of 2018, thus far.

<https://scenews.com/news/foreign-tourist-arrivals-to-kosovo-rise-61-yy-in-q2-table-625754>

All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler