

20

VJET-YEARS  
RIINVEST

MONOGRAPH

20

VJET-YEARS  
RIINVEST

MAY 15, 2015

# 1995

Under Professor Muhamet Mustafa's leadership, Kosovo intellectuals and economists establish the Riinvest Institute.



**1998** Riinvest's first study entitled "Economic activities and economic development of Kosovo" is published. The study is presented in Budapest. First contacts with OSI in Budapest are established.



**1999 (April)** Riinvest team and offices are deported or relocated as refugees in Tetovo, Macedonia.

**1999 (July)** After the liberation and return, in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Riinvest Institute organizes the first international conference in Pristina; the conference was dedicated to the country's reconstruction.

**1999 (August)** Under the DFID support, the survey of 3500 Kosovar families about the war consequences starts. Riinvest's first summer school is also organized.

**2003** For the next 8 years, Riinvest is engaged in the development of over 20 municipal strategies in Kosovo.



**1996** CIPE and the NED Boards approve Riinvest's first international project proposal.



**1997** The first agreement between the CIPE and Riinvest is signed.



**1999 (September)** Begins Kosovo's private sector survey. Since then, the SME survey was conducted in regular basis.

**2000** The first contract with USAID is signed. In the next four years, Riinvest with the USAID's support would produce over 20 research reports, conference and discussion tables.

**2001** Under Professor Iraj Hashi's leadership, begins the collaboration with Staffordshire University.



**2002** In cooperation with KFOS represented by Luan Shllaku, and KACI represented by Vetton Surroi, the "Forum 2015" is established. Up to today, this forum serves as an umbrella of organizations and the most important discussions for the country.

**2005** Riinvest Institute is awarded the “Golden Medal of Independence” by President Ibrahim Rugova on the merits for the freedom, Kosovo’s independence and democracy, and its contribution to economic development and the design of Kosovo’s future.

**2009** Riinvest’s first engagement outside the region begins. In collaboration with CIPE, Riinvest is engaged in an international project in the Middle East.



**2012** Begins the long-term cooperation with the European Commission Office in Pristina. The Development Academy is established.



**2013** Supported by the European Commission, Riinvest becomes part of the two regional initiatives; that for anti-corruption SELDI and for open government.

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**2015**  
Riinvest marks its  
20 year anniversary.



**2007** Riinvest College is established, one of the Institute’s most synergistic partners.



**2010** Leading managerial responsibilities are transferred to the new management. Lumir Abdixhiku is appointed the Executive Director, while Alban Hashani the Research Director.



**2014** Riinvest, supported by SDC, in partnership with Swiss Contact and PEM, establishes the office for the Promotion of the Private Sector and Employment-PPSE.

**2006** Riinvest team engages in advising for the Unity Team in the Vienna dialogue process for defining Kosovo’s final status.

**2011** Starts the first long-term cooperation with SDC in the field of horticulture.

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# 01



INTRODUCTION

# 01 / INTRODUCTION

**T**his monograph was written on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Riinvest Institute and it contains a summary of activities, engagements and perceptions towards Riinvest throughout this time. The monograph presents Riinvests' journey throughout the years, from the first day of its establishment to the overall society efforts for freedom, from the reconstruction and development all the way to the independence and post-independence commitments. This publication summarizes the thoughts, perceptions and valuations of national and international stakeholders, partners, friends and associates of Riinvest through the years.

The monograph contains eleven chapters. After the introductory chapter, the publication starts with an overview of Riinvest's current state, followed by an elaboration by the management about the potential development and institutional path for the future years consisting of writings by Lumir Abdixhiku (Executive Director), Sejdi Osmani (Chairman of the Board) and Alban Hashani (Research Director). The third chapter contains memories of the establishment and development of Riinvest, from the organization's founder, Muhamet Mustafa. Chapter four summarizes the views of Riinvest's key partner organizations through the years, such as USAID, CIPE, SDC, KFOS and FES, along with Government of Kosovo. In chapter five, the monograph is enriched with the writings of Riinvest friends, starting with Iraj Hashi, Veton Surroi, Shkëlqim Cani, Ilaz Ramajli,

Michael Weichart, Agron Bajrami (Koha Ditore), Arbana Xharra (Zëri) and Afërdita Saraçini (RTV21). Chapters six and seven summarize Riinvest's efforts throughout two decades. Eighth chapter provides Riinvest staff's personal impressions (sorted in alphabetical order): Agon Nixha, Albana Gashi, Antigona Uka, Diellza Gashi, Edona Kurtolli, Eranda Basholli, Faton Selani, Fisnik Bajrami, Fisnik Reçica, Gent Beqiri, Ilire Mehmeti, Isren Fejzullahu, Mensur Mustafa, Merita Zhushi Peja, Premton Hyseni, Saxhide Mustafa, Visar Vokrrri and Ylli Tafarshiku. The other chapter, ninth in order, continues with an overview from noted colleagues throughout the years, respectively with the writings of Alban Zogaj, Artane Rizvanolli, Naim Hoxha, Bujar Pira, Venera Demukaj, Bardhyl Meta and Besnik Krasniqi. Finally, the last chapters explores further Riinvest projects, focuses on biographies of current staff, and notably on the memories of the beloved colleagues who are no longer with us.

Riinvest is grateful to all its partners, friends, associates, and its own staff, for their continuous support in realizing its mission.



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RIINVEST  
TODAY

# 02 / RIINVEST TODAY

**R**iinvest Institute is the oldest “think tank” in Kosovo operating since 1995. Riinvest promotes modern economic development based on the philosophy of entrepreneurship. Over the past two decades, Riinvest has produced analysis, publications and different socio-economic reports; developed markets, sectors, and interventions in the value chain; organized seminars, conferences, roundtables and meetings with high economic and business value for the country. The knowledge and experience allowed Riinvest to be competitive and competent in addressing socio-economic and business issues. Today, this institution is a leading, non-partisan, “think-tank”, in the field of socio-economic development in the country. Riinvest staff consists of 18 full-time researchers (two doctors of science; two PhD students; eight master of science and four with bachelor title) and five full time administrative assistants – in total 23 full time employees. Riinvest Institute management consists of Lumir Abdixhiku, Executive Director; Alban Hashani, Research Director; and Sejdi Osmani Chairman of the Board. Among other organizations, Riinvest’s partners and donors are: the European Commission (EC), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS), the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung foundation (FES).

One of the strongest advantages of Riinvest is its staff equipped with professional and academic qualifications, as well as the experience and dedication in carrying out activities in accordance with its mission; a mission which aims to promote sustainable economic development in Kosovo, based on market economy. Consisting of distinguished individuals from the Kosovar society, the majority of Riinvests’ team is composed of young researchers with western academic qualifications – and as a result of this group of distinguished researchers, Riinvest’s product quality has always been to the highest professional and ethical standards. In fact, due to the quality of reports, analysis, seminars, discussions and advocacy missions, Riinvest has managed to ensure sustainability and maintain partnership relations with donors, partners and other relevant organizations in Kosovo; moreover, it managed to retain credibility towards the general public by taking stance in various socio-economic issues. Riinvests’ reputation has allowed to be more effective during advocacy in parliamentary committees, during discussions in public debates, or in consultations with businesses, entrepreneurs, market actors, political parties or international organizations in Kosovo. An important part of this stability derives from the strong ties within the organization, which ensures quality, transparency and good institutional governance. Riinvest continually strives to adhere to the highest governance principles.

While future developments constantly create new challenges, Riinvest Institute remains ready equipped with expertise and experience, upon the principles of credibility and impartiality, and the continuous activation of development, providing, building, and offering solutions to the overall society development.

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Today, Riinvest is engaged in four main areas: a) research and advocacy; b) market development; c) education and training; and d) academic research.

The research and advocacy field represent organization's main focus: where most topics and important socio-economic developments in the country are addressed. Over recent years, Riinvest has produced a great deal of qualitative reports on important socio-economic topics in Kosovo, among others including employment, privatization, corporate governance, energy, small and medium enterprises, informality, public procurement, corruption, transparency, diaspora and remittances, finances and public investments - which were later used, cited, and addressed from interested parties; mainly by the government, the parliament, the international organizations, the civil society and many business associations.

In the area of market development, Riinvest has been engaged in providing technical assistance and knowledge in various markets; particularly in horticulture, tourism, food processing and health sectors. Many years' experience with most developed research methodologies, has prepared our team to not only provide local assistance, but to implement utmost complicated activities in this regard.

In the field of training and education, Riinvest was involved with municipal officials, business owners and/or representatives, civil society and journalists, in order to increase and improve their capacities in several

areas specified under training programs. Riinvests' cooperation has been expressed in particular with almost all the municipalities of Kosovo.

Finally, given the rich available information Riinvest researchers have been actively engaged in academic research, resulting in the preparation of various guidance documents and works to address and empirically contribute in many areas of economy where literature was scarce.

While future developments constantly create new challenges, Riinvest Institute remains ready equipped with expertise and experience, upon the principles of credibility and impartiality, and the continuous activation of development, providing, building, and offering solutions to the overall society development.



／ LUMIR ABDIXHIKU  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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However, this year's celebration becomes even more significant because on May 15th of this year, we conclude a two-decade walking, full of challenges - but also full of successes, friends and even more partners.

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**F**or Riinvest Institute, the 15th of May has always been more than a day of celebration; it was a marking of remembrance. In these yearly celebrations we have recalled more to ourselves than to others, the mission and the vision of being an independent think-tank, as we often remind ourselves, innovative and credible and above all, contributors to the modern economic development of Kosovo.

However, this year's celebration becomes even more significant because on May 15th of this year, we conclude a two-decade walking, full of challenges - but also full of successes, friends and even more partners.

Today, Riinvest continues to be the largest thin-tank in country. With a highly professional staff developed in and out of the country, with an extensive domestic and international experience, with alliances and partnerships within the country, the region and around the world, Riinvest remains an asset that exceeds the definition of a common organization. The experience, knowledge, human and intellectual capital that this organization carries in it, in coordination with the credible commitment, independent and innovative - and above all active - are some of the reasons why today Riinvest Institute is considered a consolidated address for treating and explaining the most important economic topics for this country and the entire society. This address also served for the further

development of several generations of economists, distinguished individuals committed to serving their country in various decision-making institutions. In fact, only thanks to such a legacy, Riinvest has managed to meet its mission throughout the past 20 years.

And in this 20th anniversary, in this jubilee marking for Riinvest, we recall the Institute's first steps, the post-war consolidation, contribution on the path to independence and local and international engagement after it. In this summarized commemoration and in this Monograph, we unfold not only the birth and our march, but also our achievements and our future. And it is the opinions of others - except our impressions - that give the real picture of our path.

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And in fact, our entire journey - birth, maturity and all the way to the eternal learning - complies with our country's journey, Kosovo's journey. Riinvest was born at the worst possible time nonetheless it was the most necessary time. On 15 May 1995, Kosovo intellectuals and economists have founded the first think-tank organization, whose purpose was to promote the economic development of the conquered Kosovo at that time - through the philosophy of entrepreneurship. In this period, the country's economic viability, as an independent and sovereign state, would be

documented. At this time, Riinvest received the very first support from the Centre for International Private Enterprise - in Washington D.C. - a partnership which lasts even today, 20 years from then. The following years - the same as for Kosovo - are struggling for survival - up to 15 May 1999 - that finds Riinvest expelled. At that time, refugee offices were opened in Macedonia. May 15 of the following year - after the liberation - except the return and restart, marks the birth of a long-term partnership with USAID - whose aim was to provide economic alternative opinions towards rebuilding the country. In this period, new partnerships are also built which last even today with the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS), Swiss Office for Cooperation (SDC), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), with local and international organizations - all engaged in the recovery of Kosovo. The entire ten-year journey, on 15 May 2005, is distinguished and decorated by the President of Kosovo, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, with the "Golden Medal of Independence". The medal is given to the Riinvest merits for freedom, independence and democracy of Kosovo, and for contributing to the economic development and the projection of Kosovo's future. A medal like this, before the gratitude of service, was a burden reminder of the importance of the work we were doing here, the design of the Kosovo's future. May 15, 2006 and 2007, holds Riinvest's team as advisory to the Kosovar delegation during negotiations on the final status of Kosovo - independence. And on May 15, 2008, when the Riinvest's dream was ripe and reached, our commitment is directed to economic development, social democratization and Kosovo's European integration. In this line, in addition to past alliances, the partnership with the European Union Office in Kosovo becomes unique. Post-independence Riinvest continues to maintain a credible independent voice in analysis, research, and advocacy of socio - economic commitments to the most important topics in the country.

When we look at all these stones of history - of our mature foundation

- we understand the greatness of a vision initiated by the few Kosovo intellectuals, built with the help of partners and friends in difficult and good times, and continuously inherited by other generation of researchers and scholars who have passed and will pass through Riinvest. When we look back at this history, we understand our institution's idea and mission; we understand that above all, Riinvest is an asset of Kosovo.

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On this day of remembrance and celebration, we express our deepest gratitude for the Riinvest founders, in particular for Professor Muhamet Mustafa, whose ideas, leadership and professional heritage have designed and built a foundation that will hold Riinvest standing evermore. It is only because of his vision and commitment that such a large project manages to survive - despite all odds - repression, expulsion, uncertainty - all the way to the development and sustainability.

On this day of remembrance and celebration, we express our gratitude to all our partners; from international organizations and local friends who provided their support when we were alone, up to others with which even today we continue to build bridges of cooperation for an European Kosovo; developed, modern and democratic. We are grateful to all the media, civil society organizations, business associations, various stakeholders and other individuals who have shared our path through the past 20 years.

Above all, Riinvest remains grateful to its staff, professional individuals - pillars of the organization - open minded and with full dedication, who through their daily efforts that seem routine, execute a vision for the entire mission of their country. It remains a special honor and privilege the sharing of time, route and purpose - with such people. Riinvest also remains grateful to all those professionals and associates that once were part of our and their institution through these years.

And finally, beyond the celebration, Riinvest reminds itself of the need



for further engagement in economic and democratic development of Kosovo. Because, despite all the challenges and achievements over the years, all events difficult repeatable in Kosovo - although free and independent - facing of the new difficulties continues and will continue in the

future, with new opportunities and new transformations. In this entire route, Riinvest will remain active, independent and innovative -to serve as a domestic alternative voice and as a foreign promoter of the country.

Until next markings and celebrations, congratulations and thank you!



SEJDI OSMANI  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

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## A phone call, then a departure to a path full of challenges and successes

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It was the beginning of spring, March 1995. I do not remember the date. A typical day, monotonous, blackness everywhere. I had just returned home after finishing work as an accountant for few private businesses at that time, a job that was imposed to me so I could support my family since the Serbian occupier regime had dismissed me from my regular job six years before. The phone rings “Sejdo you must come to my house immediately, I have a business idea, and we need you as well – said Muhamet and hung up”.

We met very often with Muhamet (Mustafa), consulting about everything, for our family matters, tough situations. I had no idea what was he going to say to me this time. The fact that he said that we needed to meet immediately made me believe that it was something important. I was living at the “Bregu i Diellit” neighborhood, near the Trade Center. After 10 minutes, I was at Muhamet’s home located about 150-200 meters further from the city’s old bazaar market, now Prizreni Street, nr.161. It never occurred to me that as of the next day, I would be passing this street everyday now, sometimes few times a day. This house would also be the Riinvest Institute’s address until the end of the war.

-I have discussed the idea of establishing an institute with few friends and we need you too in the team to develop this project, he told me as soon as I entered the RIMA Company offices, which was adjacent to the courtyard entrance of the family home. It was a small office,

not more than 10 square meters, which was adapted as the administration office for the private commercial enterprise that Muhamet had founded few years before.

Muhamet further elaborated and provided details on the idea of establishing the institute. He had even formulated the institutes’ mission statement.

- With people’s contribution that I expect to engage in this work, I am sure that this institute will relatively become a respectable name in Kosovo and the region, he said with absolute certainty. For those who have not known prof. Muhamet, as I did, this idea would seem just as an illusion, impossible to realize in those circumstances, under the classic occupation of Serbia. But, knowing him quite well, since childhood, I knew that when Muhamet wanted to achieve something, there was nothing to stop him.

I was happy and very delighted. I believed in this project with no reservation. I continue elaborating in detail, those technical on its establishment, the way of the functioning under conditions of occupation, its disguise, its mission under the umbrella of the RIMA Company as a research unit within it. There were even ideas for the first projects that would be starting.

We were under a cruel occupation. Schools, universities and institutions were all shut down. Albanian cadres, university professors, academics, engineers, lawyers, doctors, were thrown from their places of work by the

panairi  
i 8<sup>të</sup> i librit  
prishtina  
19-24 maj 2006  
pallati i rinisë



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Serbian regime, practically on the street, without an opportunity of their contribution to the benefit of the people and the country. Serbia, in addition to physical violence, was making havoc even in the field of Kosovo's wild economic and financial exploitation, and its ethnic Albanian population. The world was aware of physical violence exercised against Albanians but was lacking reliable information on financial and economic violence that the Serbian regime was exercising against Albanian businesses, social enterprises, mineral resources, and the looting of our population.

-This is the ultimate goal for establishing this institute- said Muhamet. Soon we will begin field research, surveys and interviews, in order to inform the world with facts, even for the size of economic and financial violence that Serbia is exercising against us - he said.

The future institute, which was named the Institute for research and development RIINVEST, soon began work. Teams were formed to do research in the field, analysis and recommendations for addressing the consequences of the Serbian occupation and survival of Albanian businesses and families. It involved about 100 experts from different fields, economists, engineers, lawyers, sociologists, mostly professors from the University of Prishtina, experts from the economy, students, and external consultants.

He told me that he had spoken to some other friends, colleagues and associates from the University, such as Muhamet Sadiku, Naim Hoxha, Haki Shatri, Halim Gjergjizi. He told me that he planned to also engage Nail Reshidi and Ymer Havolli. They worked until late in a concept of the organizational structure, in drafting the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the Institute. The work began with great enthusiasm. We started to call associates and training student teams to do research in the field.

- Until obtaining financial resources from Institute's projects, RIMA Company would cover all the operational and logistical expenses--Muhamet pointed out at the first meeting with the Institute's staff. This was a great relief.

Once we developed few research activities about the difficult position and occupation of Albanian businesses, there was a need to have a comfortable environment to organize debates and conferences to present the findings from our research. It was a coffee bar adjacent to the rectory of the University of Prishtina in Velania. The owner, Xhevdet Shoshi, offered it to us for use. We made some necessary technical adjustments required to be used as hall debates, conferences, but also for trainings.

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It was mid-August 1996. It was the last day when we had to send in the project proposal "Economic Activities and Democratic Development of Kosovo" to CIPE in Washington for approval. Under the supervision of prof. Muhamet, we stayed up until 2 o'clock in the morning to complete it. Individuals involved in this project were: myself, Naim Hoxha, Ymer Havolli, Muhamet Sadiku, and Nail Reshidi.

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We managed to provide the truth to international factor, with arguments that Serbia had Kosovo under occupation for colonial motives, because

the economic benefits were too high. Months earlier, the electronic version of this study, in Albanian and English, was placed on the Internet.

We managed to send it even as a book abroad, in main western capitals at the right time, in the hands of the most influential diplomats. The study, "Economic Activities and Democratic Development of Kosovo" also served the Kosovo delegation during Rambouillet negotiations. The realization of this project in those difficult conditions was a successful test for Riinvest that would open the paths to its rapid development, especially after the war in Kosovo.

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It was December 1998. With prof. Muhamet Mustafa's proposal, we decided to participate at the Book Fair in Tirana with our publications. It was decided that I represent Riinvest for the first two days of the fair, and after two days Ymer Havolli would replace me. Books were sent illegally through a private company. Our participation aroused great curiosity among the participants and visitors. "Economic Activities and Democratic Development of Kosovo" was receiving special interest. Colleagues and visitors were amazed how we managed to realize such a project in Prishtina, right in front of Serbian repressive apparatus, especially considering that this project would reveal real facts of Kosovo Serb occupation, particularly economic repression exercised against Kosovo Albanians and the projected new economic system of the future state of Kosovo.

While in Tirana, I was also responsible for another task: registration and certification of the Institute with the Kosovo Ministry of Education operating in exile, through the Office of the Republic of Kosovo in Tirana.

Those days, the diplomatic premises of the Kosovo Diplomatic Office in Tirana was frequented by many Kosovars, officers and soldiers, who were preparing to enter Kosovo, families of wounded soldiers who were being healed in hospitals of Tirana, and other troubled individuals seeking



some service or information on the situation in Kosovo.

Ilaz Ramajli, who at that time was a Kosovo diplomatic representative in Tirana, with a charisma of a career diplomat, impressed everyone on how he did the work from the domain of his mission. He simultaneously managed to offer the Kosovars, who, like the river ready to overflow its bed were entering his office, to provide a solution, reflect hope and security for the prompt arrival of freedom and independence.

I delivered the required documentation and a few days later, we received a Certificate of registration of the Riinvest Institute from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kosovo operating in exile. The certificate held the number 1 in the Protocol, a number that still has an important symbolic for us.



ALBAN HASHANI  
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

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Riinvest Institute has created broad research bases which represents an important intellectual capital and are unique to the Kosovo circumstances.

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**R**iinvest Institute is celebrating its twentieth anniversary. On this occasion, we would like to express our greatest appreciation for our supporters and our partners and honor the efforts of all those who were part of the Riinvest Institute throughout the years and who helped us so that today, we welcome and celebrate this day.

Established in extremely harsh conditions, Riinvest Institute indeed remains a special project for the entire region. Riinvest Institute has followed a similar trajectory to that of the political processes in Kosovo. In fact, in many key topics related to the country's economic and political developments, Riinvest had the initiators' role.

During these twenty years, Riinvest Institute has managed to maintain and strengthen its reputation that distinguishes it for quality and reliability. Unquestionably, Riinvest Institute studies remain an important point of reference by scholars, the media and policy-makers regarding economic issues in the country. Riinvest Institute has created broad research bases which represents an important intellectual capital and are unique to the Kosovo circumstances.

Moreover, Riinvest Institute has created and cultivated a number of strategic partnerships with the local and international organizations in order to implement its mission. First of all, this cooperation has been possible due

to the Riinvest's dedication and qualitative work as well the non-partisan attitude that it held on specific topics during these years. Riinvest Institute cooperation with local and international organizations is on permanent development and the list of our partners continuously adds new members.

Riinvest Institute has been and remains an extraordinary batch of dedicated people. During the two decades of its existence, it has undertaken and implemented projects from different sectors and of different sizes. Supported by a large number of donors and in collaboration with our strategic partners in the project implementation, Riinvest Institute has gained a significant experience which is organically transferred to the new staff that has become part of the Riinvest Institute throughout the years. Today, Riinvest Institute has a qualified cadre with a very qualitative education and significant experience in the field of research in social sciences and the implementation of development projects. In collaboration with partner organizations, Riinvest Institute has received a significant support for its staff development. Moreover, Riinvest Institute has supported and continues to support its staff in advancing their academic and professional careers.

Beyond that, Riinvest is distinguished by its work culture and organizational behavior. Ingrained since its establishment, Riinvest Institute has cultivated a work environment where culture and organizational behavior exceed contractual obligations. In fact, Riinvest Institute has managed to in-



herit and retain a collective memory that positions this collaboration among the workers to the highest level. This environment enables employees to be more devoted, to identify with the organization as well to embody their long-term career with the Riinvest Institute mission.

Riinvest Institute has a unique position in Kosovo and a clear knowledge about the country's strategic needs. Riinvest Institute has been and remains an important part of the economic and political developments in Kosovo. Based on its research, Riinvest manages to understand the circumstances in which the country's economy is developed and to recommend steps that would ensure accelerated and sustainable development of Kosovo. Riinvest Institute has always been ready to withstand the challenges that it encountered during this twenty-year journey. No doubt that the further journey

will bring new challenges but we are equally convinced that the team that Riinvest has today, will be able to successfully face the challenges to come.

We believe that the twentieth anniversary offers a unique opportunity to reaffirm our position that the realization of the Riinvest Institute mission is only possible thanks to the dedication of the people who work there. While we proudly look at the years that have passed, we are also excited about the future years. We continue remaining committed to the mission that we have set to ourselves. Personally, I am very glad that as part of this house, I continue to give my modest contribution to this mission's fulfillment.

By thanking all of you who have supported Riinvest Institute during these two decades, I invite you to join us in celebrating this accomplishment.

Cheers!





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RIINVEST THROUGHOUT  
THE YEARS



MUHAMET MUSTAFA  
FOUNDER OF RIINVEST INSTITUTE



# 03 / RIINVEST THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

## An Engineering of Economic Independence

By the mid- 90s of the last century discussions concerning the settlement of the Kosovo problem and generally the long Serbian-Albanian conflict were quite intense, however; economic matters were almost entirely neglected. Serbian academic and political circles had mythologized Kosovo history and events from the middle ages. Albanians saw their authenticity here since ancient Illyrian-Albanian. Serbs had considered and propagated Kosovo as their ground, but in reality they behaved as a colony, in continuity. They had worked to create better living conditions for the Serbian enclaves, so that Serbs are employed in the public sector, have better schools, but in essence they held Kosovo in an economic dependency, undeveloped since the first Yugoslavia, then in the second socialist one until late '60. Only about two decades Kosovo, to some extent had governed their resources, and had created a meaningful budget. And in the early processes of destruction of Yugoslavia in the 90s they had reoccupied while undoing the autonomy and its institutional structure and putting it under the subordination of the Serbian government. While Albanians were still forced to pay taxes to the Serbian government although they received nothing out of it except repression and violence. It was evident that the Kosovo issue will be brought to the negotiating table

or would go off to war. In global outlook and political analysis the Kosovo issue was treated more as a separatism issue, separating of a territory from an existing state, a border change not as an occupied land that was held by a colonial politic. Colonialism was not associated even in the discourse with Europe. Apparently this concept did not go with Europe; it was more linked with Africa, Middle East, or in some regions of Asia and Latin America. Kosovo in fact was a colony. And this should be documented by proper studies, rational, economically and politically argued. Kosovo's political philosophy from which the idea for its independence was born, lacked I say some type of economic genetic engineering.

## Riinvest-Kosovo's new Political and Economical Philosophy

It seemed that a group of friends and collaborators here could contribute and that we must provide this contribution. While I was discussing this matter with Muhamet (Sadiku), Halim Gjergjizi in the beginning and later with Haki Shatri, Sejdi Osmani, Naim Hoxha, Ymer Havolli and Nail Reshidi, sometime in March or February 1995, we came to the conclusion that we must establish an institute for research development or something similar. I made a concept for the mission and programmatic orientation

of this institute which we jointly discussed, filled in and agreed to it. On May 15, 1995 we signed an agreement for the establishment of the Institute for Research Development "Riinvest", as a private non-profitable institute. At first, the institute would work under RIMA Company as a separate research unit. RIMA was registered while Kosovo institutions were still functioning. According to the Law on Enterprises, companies were allowed to have special research units within their framework without having to register it. We grasped this opportunity to make our work public without having to register as a research institute, which at that time; we would have to register it with the Serbia's Ministry of Science. We did not want to do this. RIINVEST's name was created by RIMA's first two letters and the word "invest" that is a synonym for the development and it has the meaning of continuous investment in knowledge development. In fact we had thought Riinvest's mission to promote modern economic thought in Kosovo, free and private initiative, to contribute to better education and information for local and international factors, and also to the general public about various aspects of Kosovo's economy, namely the construction of a vision and policies that accompany them on sustainable economic development. We began work in the RIMA Company offices adapted to the entrance of my house. We started being seen in public and participated in gatherings that the League of Kosovo economists organized, where I was vice president. We organized a joint rally with the League of Economists associated with the economic position of Kosovo with special emphasis on the private economy which turned out quite successful. Publication of this rally was organized and prepared by Riinvest. In cooperation with LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo), we supported activities for creating the Association of Kosovo businessmen, known as SHAK, through which we intended to create a strategic partner to organize the private sector even better in the function of peaceful active insurgency. Later on, few people from tourism agencies came in with a request to write a project for the creation of a union, or the holding of agencies that would strengthen their competitiveness against third partners, especially against airlines that dealt with transportation of regular lines and charter for our immigrants from Western Europe. We decided to go in and become partners so we created a business plan. Those days



we also organized a training workshop on business planning and financial analysis. Consequently, the first phase of our work was associated with a partnership with private business and academic community. Obviously, at this stage we had no funds to pay salaries, an office or other expenses. We invested our time and effort, while operating expenses were covered by Rima and our private funds.

Sometime in early 1996, a colleague H. Gjergjizi brought a NED document (National Endowment for Democracy, Washington) funded by the US government funds promoting democratic development and reform worldwide. He had heard that they were active in Kosovo. He had received a document containing the NED objectives and priorities, as well as a guideline for preparing project proposals that could be routed to be considered for financial support. We decided to prepare a proposal according to those instructions that seemed quite clear. Our best contribution at this time was to analyze the economic situation in Kosovo, colonial position imposed by the Serbian regime, the way on how one ensures survival and also to develop the a projection

**In early 1997**, CIPE informed us that the signing of the contract would take place in Bucharest, at the end of March where CIPE was organizing a major regional conference on various aspects of economic reforms

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on how Kosovo in terms of market economic reforms, based on its natural, human and other resources is able to build its sustainable economy (viability) . This in fact means building its economic independence. There was much speculation, especially by those opposed to Kosovo's independence as though the country could not survive as independent, that it cannot budget its own economic independence. We added some further improvements to the proposal based on some suggestions we separately received from Veton Surroi. We created a budget somewhere around \$90 thousand if I remember correctly, of which about \$60 thousand we were requesting from the NED and the rest would be covered by other sources. We translated the document in English, edited and sent it to the NED address in Washington D.C. The project envisioned the exploration of experiences in transition, analysis of the literature, foresaw studies on Kosovo's private economy, a historical overview of the economic position of Kosovo in the former Yugoslavia and the position in the Serbian regime after the year 1989/1990, it included a brief history of the development. What was more important, it projected the progress and content of reforms needed to build a system of free-market economy; it outlined the strategy and economic policies that ensure Kosovo's economic sustainability. The project consisted of five modules, a professional scientific conference for each, study visits in Slovenia and Croatia and possibly in other countries as well. We named it "Economic Activity and Democratic Development of Kosovo". It was a title that expressed the content of activities but even more NED's philosophy.

### **Cipe: Worthy to Consider**

Three months went by, and sometime in early summer, we received a letter from Howard Wallack, Senior Program Officer at CIPE (Center for International Private Enterprise) for Central and Eastern Europe. Wallack send us a letter explaining that the NED had forwarded our project proposal to CIPE since they were the ones that take in NED projects in the field of economic reforms, market economy and private sector development. The letter was encouraging and full of warmth. After giving very clear instructions on how our project should be modified saying that if you follow these guidelines and amend the proposal according to their standards it may be seriously considered for approval by the Board of CIPE. The moment I read these words, I was absolutely certain that we have now entered a path where our vision associated with the Riinvest Institute, to create an Institute with international standards could become a reality. We had captured a joy because required corrections were clearly formulated and it was actually only a better correlation between project objectives, modules and activities that we had proposed a better indicator and budget specifications. Clarifications were so clear that we did not have any problems in implementing them. It was clear that Riinvest's road to development would be faster than we had presumed. Towards the end of August, as guided by Wallack's suggestions we completed all the necessary improvements. Ameliorated our English, although we were aware that this would not be the strength of our proposal. We were expecting a final decision. During that autumn we considered necessary to inform the American, German and British Embassies in

Belgrade regarding our project by delivering a copy of the proposal and asking for their support with additional funding. In November 1996, Andrew Wilson who was the CIPE program officer for Central and Eastern Europe, phoned me one afternoon (morning, his time). He asked me some questions about the project by also asking whom we are directing the recommendations of our study. We will lobby with our recommendations to the Kosovo legal institutions, Kosovo Albanian political factors, to international factor; we will improve the level of knowledge and information about the factors involving Kosovo such as economic aspects of Kosovo's unresolved problem.

- Even the government in exile?

-Yes, I said.

- Well he said, I had to explain and wish to inform you that we will propose CIPE Board to approve your project and hope that everything will be fine. We usually do not approve projects without knowing the partner and having visited their headquarters, but we were unable to obtain a visa. Our visa was denied by the Yugoslav government, when we said that we want to visit Kosovo.

It wasn't too long, maybe 30-40 days when we received the news that CIPE Board had approved our project and the same had done the NED Board as well, approving around \$42 thousand. This was a good argument to ask for the support of Soros and the German and British foundations. At the German embassy, we met with the ambassador in duty Mr. Victor Pelett, who in fact was a general counsel. He welcomed us warmly. He understood the essence of the project and was walking around the table. I am thinking of how I could help you, he kept repeating for many times. I will speak with German foundations. On the same day we also had an encouraging conversation with the British Embassy where they managed their "British Know How" fund. In Prishtina this was heard within the LDK. Apparently, NED informed them that they would support an important project for the economy. We received congratulations from Fatmir Sejdiu and Alush Gashi. Now we had to prepare a series of documents in preparation of the contract.

## Some Concerns and "Happy-End"

In early 1997, CIPE informed us that the signing of the contract would take place in Bucharest, at the end of March where CIPE was organizing a major regional conference on various aspects of economic reforms, private sector development and entrepreneurship. Along with Muhamet and Naim, we left for Bucharest traveling through Sofia by car. An entire travel day about 700 km to Bucharest. When we arrived at the initial meeting for dinner, at the entrance, we met with A. Wilson, who greeted us warmly.

- It is so nice that we finally met, we will get to know each other and sign the contract so we could start the project, I said.

-Yes, he said. About the contract, there are some concerns.

Xhyljeta Mushkolaj from the American Information Centre in Prishtina that was founded shortly before, while we were in Bucharest, had called me home several times. She had left a number and asked to contact her as soon as I arrived. I knew Xhyljeta from the Faculty of Law where she was teaching. I called her immediately although it was already 11 pm.

- Professor, she said, Mr. Gregory Burton, has been staying in Prishtina for two days now, he will not leave without meeting with you and insists that he only sees you and your staff, without interpreters and demands that the meeting must take place in your offices.

I was glad that we would meet with the US embassy representative so soon and explain projects objectives in detail. The next day Mr. Burton arrived at our premises at 9 am. The entire discussion was conducted in English, without translation. I briefed him about Riinvest, about who we were, why we were establishing the Institute, how did we view Kosovo's current economic situation, what were the opportunities and solutions. I presented the project, which should shed light on the economic outlook in the context of an optimal solution to the Kosovo matter, and this solution would not be realistic if the economic aspect was neglected, which unfortunately was not considered as a priority neither by the international nor the

local factors. I told him that we wanted to contribute with an objective study, that we knew that our project was approved by the Board of CIPE, and that there was some hesitation by the Embassy and more precisely by himself. We told him that we had just returned from CIPE Regional Conference in Bucharest, where we went to sign the contract but this did not happen because the US embassy in Belgrade has asked for further clarifications.

- No, he said- CIPE decides anyway, we do not intervene. Tell me to whom do you direct recommendations from your study?
- To the international and political factors, political parties and other legitimate structures of Kosovo, we said.
- What about the Government of Serbia, he asked?
- No, we said we do not communicate with them.
- And why not?
- We consider them illegitimate and Kosovo occupators - we answered: However, we will publish the study in both languages, Albanian and English, and they can read it if they chose to do so.
- And Bukoshi's Government, he asked?
- Yes - we said, of course we will be presenting and discussing the results of our study and its recommendations with the Kosovo government in exile, known as Bukoshi Government.
- But that Government is not recognized by anyone- he commented.
- I do not know - I told him, but he is still meeting with the State Department, the German and other Governments.

He also posed other questions regarding the project's content, the way in which we will realize it, modules and activities. In the end, he said that he was pleased with the conversation, that he liked our approach and that he had met with several other groups, smiling, he also mentioned another institute, referring to the Economic Institute. I wasn't sure how to interpret this smile that actually contained a type of question mark. I supposed that they may have spoken something against us. Yes, we know each other, they are my colleagues from the university, and it

does not mean though that we think alike on all matters- I explained. After about a month, along with M.Sadiku we managed to schedule a meeting at the embassy. Now, apart from Burton, another individual responsible for political affairs Nicholas Hill was present (brother of the well-known politician involved in Kosovo matters, Christopher Hill, ambassador in Skopje at that time). The conversation was about the project, we had taken the project plan with us, research methodology, including the questionnaire that would be used for research with private enterprises for their business conditions under the Serbian rule. This impressed them.

## America for the first time: Controversial Venture for Colonization and Occupation

We spent that hot summer preparing for the project activities. With A. Wilson we had planned my first visit to CIPE, respectively in Washington and the US for the end of September. We had to send the progress report and expenditure statement for the first three months. We were also sending a report on the development and problems for the private sector that had developed in the meantime, along with the publication from the conference we had held on this subject. I was visiting the US for the first time, I was pleased about the meetings and discussions at CIPE but I was also thrilled to be visiting my daughter Qefsere and my son in law Edmond in Kansas City. The night before the trip, we hardly slept preparing all the reports. Naim and Ymer stayed longer, even after everyone left, after the midnight (Sadiku, Sejda and Naili went home).

CIPE had invited a selected audience of experts and politicians that dealt with Kosovo at the State Department and elsewhere and I had to deliver a presentation on the political and economic situation in Kosovo. This happened almost every time I later visited CIPE and Washington. After accommodations in central Washington, I started with the intense program of conversations. Conversations in American Commercial Chamber which has a close cooperation with CIPE were followed with meeting and talks with a great number of nice people from CIPE in particular H. Wallack who was the first one

to contact us. I thanked him for the valuable instructions he provided regarding the project proposal and his plan. With him, we also discussed the progress report and the report we had prepared for the private sector. He was surprised with our rapid progress in the first three months of the project. He provided many valuable suggestions for ongoing access. A conversation that remains in memory for positive energy and constructiveness. Wilson had really prepared a very rich program of visits in Washington. Besides conversations with CIPE, I was also meeting USAID, NED, State Department, two well-known think tanks in Washington, CATO and Brookings (One extremely liberal, the other more toward the Democrats and Keynes), National Federation of Business (NFB), Small Business Administration in the American Government, Atlas Economic Foundation, American University, German Marshall Foundation, Kaufman Foundation which impressed me mostly with the building, staff, program and publications. Without doubt, it was one of the foundations and institutions that did the most for entrepreneurship globally. I took a lot of books and publications, which will certainly help us make a difference in our work and academic research. In Washington, I met with Wilson again to summarize our discussion and the future works expecting us. He had bought and packaged kits available for Riinvest Institute that would make us among the most well equipped organizations in the region. Upon return, when I summarized the outcome of the visit, I realized that I had learned so much and had received very valuable literature and equipment, I had established contacts with very important people and institutions and I noticed that Riinvest was creating its space for Kosovo even in Washington. What impressed me most was Wilson's and CIPE's staff commitment to make my visit a success. They invested lots of time and commitment for this. Explanation for American success, the effectiveness of their work, it is primarily a serious commitment, full dedication to work and for the achievement of their objectives. Here we must calculate the culture of commitment to the highest and perfect achievements. The work must not only be done but must also be done well. And then I was thinking about how many other points in the complicated world are interdependent like Kosovo and Riinvest, that this country pays attention to, how much financial resources and large investments are required for all this.

## PROFILE: Dr. Muhamet Mustafa



Dr. Muhamet Mustafa

**D**r. Muhamet Mustafa wasn't sure what he would say to Madeleine Albright. After all, Mustafa, an academician from Kosovo, wasn't accustomed to sharing the limelight with the U.S. Secretary of State. He had spent months behind the scenes, toiling with his colleagues to lay the groundwork for Kosovo's reconstruction. In the end, when the opportunity to meet with Mrs. Albright presented itself in mid-September, Mustafa didn't miss a beat. "I told her about our appreciation of the U.S. role in assisting Kosovar efforts to rebuild our society," he says, "and I expressed a hope that our next meeting would take place in Pristina."

Being in the limelight is new to Mustafa. In the 1970s, he was a newspaper editor at a weekly youth magazine, and he subsequently served as head of the Kosovo Association of Youth Organization. By the mid-1980s, he had worked his way up to become Yugoslavia's Minister Coordinator for Development and Planning, responsible for reinvigorating his nation's economy through foreign direct investment and joint ventures. But by early 1989, under pressure from strongman Slobodan Milosevic, Mustafa resigned from the government.

Mustafa linked up with CIPE in 1997, when he was serving as President of the Riinvest Institute, a private think tank. With funding from CIPE, and under very difficult conditions, Riinvest produced a groundbreaking report, a blueprint for the future, "Economic Activities and the Democratic Development of Kosovo."

Following NATO's bombing earlier this year, col-

laboration between CIPE and Riinvest produced another key report, "Kosovo's Reconstruction." The very first words of this report read: "The renewal and postwar reconstruction of Kosovo should be a comprehensive and integrated process resulting in the creation and strengthening of democratic institutions and the establishment of an open market economy." The return of Kosovo's deported population doesn't mean simply a continuation of previous living standards, but

in most cases it means the rebuilding of lives from the beginning, not only for individuals and families, but also in the public sector."

This policy paper, coupled with Mustafa's indefatigable dedication to reconstructing Kosovo, played a vital role in hammering out in September the so-called Landsdowne Declaration, which envisages a "multi-ethnic society that includes equal opportunity for all."

Mustafa says that his relationship with CIPE has made a big difference in the Riinvest Institute's ability to encourage democracy and a market economy in Kosovo. He notes, "Without CIPE, the realization of our first and most important study would have never been possible. CIPE's recognition of Riinvest and the importance of our work came at a critical time for both Riinvest and Kosovo."

When he's not laying groundwork for the future of Kosovo, Mustafa heads the Department of Management and Informatics in the Faculty of Economics at the University of Pristina. He also serves as Vice President of the Association of Economists of Kosovo.

Does Mustafa ever have doubts about the ability of Kosovo or Kosovars to get back on their feet? "Of course," he admits, "but ten years of repression couldn't dampen the entrepreneurial spirit and energy of the Kosovar people, and now we're looking at a whole new world of opportunity."



Mustafa greets U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

*"Without CIPE, the realization of our first and most important study would have never been possible. CIPE's recognition of Riinvest and the importance of our work came at a critical time for both Riinvest and Kosovo."*

— Dr. Muhamet Mustafa

## A project for independence administration

That autumn we're extremely involved in completing other modules of the project besides the one on private sector development. We also had the modules on managing reconstruction and transitions projects, module for development strategy and reforms, module for regional and European integration, module for education with a concentration in business education. The work was conducted in a way that the project's team first made a draft analysis, projections and recommendations, we would also ask for an opinion or contribution from external consultants, these were presented in the workshops and conferences and after this, we would modify the study report one more time finalizing a draft which would be included in the relevant chapter of the final report of the study. Therefore, considering the conditions under which it was being developed, this project marked a unique event. So until June 1998 we have held five Thematic Conferences based on the project modules which were approximately 100 team and author contributions. This way, the project was affirmed as a form of resistance and it enjoyed a great support from many members of the political forces, especially by the media, intelligence and the representatives of the insurgency institutions that were associated with the LDK. Our cooperation evolved especially as emphasized with Naip Zeka. He received all the inputs he needed. He had an idea for developing an economic governance strategy and was very interested for a skills training plan on human resources for the administration that should be created after Serbia's departure from Kosovo. This, I must say impressed me. He asked us whether we at Riinvest could prepare a profile proposal, the training that should be done and the budget that must be provided. I suggested that we create a wider team so this does not only take a Riinvest color/way, and he agreed to it. In June of 1998, we had almost completed all project modules and now we had to only finalize the final study report where we would synthetically present the results and recommendations of our study. Because this required greater effort and commitment, we received a 3 months extension on the project.

## The project that made a difference

Towards the end of September 1998 we had finished the research report "Economic Activities and Democratic Development of Kosovo" in Albanian and English, and published it in an impressive design designed by Naim. He had no experience in graphic design, he was one of the best experts in Kosovo for business software but it seemed that all the inspiration that had conquered the entire team had affected him as well to come up with a cover that symbolized European Kosovo, not only from the colors but also from the content and ideas that emerged from the study. Shortly, sometime in early November CIPE invited us for another regional conference that treated the same topics as the prior one did when we met for the first time CIPE leaders about a year and half ago in Bucharest. We were traveling again with Naim and Muhamet same as last time. We took with us about 50 copies of the study.

In Bucharest, while checking in, at the lobby, we met with Zef Preçi, for whom I had heard before since he managed the Albanian Centre for Economic Research in Tirana, but we had never met before. While we were greeting each other, I passed a copy of the study report to him. Amazed, he looked at the 200 page report and started apologizing. We were surprised as to why he was apologizing. – Yes, he said, I have known you, and when CIPE asked information about you, I asked a director of an economic institute I knew. He sent me a fax with quite negative assessments. He said that Riinvest does not exist, that you had no office, calling you names such as communists, similar Titits and so on. That is how he wrote and I sent it that way it was to Washington. Luckily, they ignored it- Zef was saying. I still have a copy of that fax, I can give it to you when you visit Tirana-he ended. J. Sullivan, the Executive director at CIPA found us distracted from Zef's speech, but we soon recovered. We told him that we have completed the project and that we brought a research summary. When we were handing it to him, we realized that the design impressed him. He gave a glance and thanked us. We were a bit touched by what Zef was saying. He noticed and to ease the tension, he said to not pay attention to this because the most important thing is that we won the project and that we did such a good job in completing it. We

now understood why the US Embassy representative wanted to meet with us in our offices and without any interpreters. Once, when I was discussing this with A. Wilson, I asked him how they treated that fax and smiling he said that they were receiving information from a number of sources. One of the sources with greater influence had been Veton Surroi, who spoke in superlative and certainly had strong influence. They had also talked with the head of the office of the Soros Foundation, Anton Berisha, who also spoke positively about our capacities and our ethical and political integrity

- After that he said, it was clear the fax was biased.

The next morning, before conference while eating breakfast, Sullivan came to our table.

- I have read your study all night, he said. I am impressed by the content but also about the fact that you could actually produce something like this considering the conditions under which you work. Madeline Albright is my college friend and I will give her a copy of the report with joy and pride once I am in Washington. When we approved your project we have not expected something like this-he continued. *"I would like to change the conference agenda with a presentation announcing your project if you agree".*

Of course we agreed. The presentation went well even though we prepared it very fast. There were good questions and comments.

## Informative discussion in Subotica and promotion in Budapest

We were trying to further promote results of this project to the international and political factors and possibly outside of the country as well. In early December, I received an e-mail from Alush Gashi, a Master studies student in the Political Science in the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest. He was inviting us to present our study. They say the study on CIPE's website, that he talked with his professors and they have shown an interest.

Many students from Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia and few professors showed up for the presentation. There were plenty and overall it went well which justified the trip. There, among others, we met with Alush Gashi, Nexhmedin Spahiu (now an analyst and owner of the TV Mitrovica), Altin Ilirijani from Albania, now in the sector of democracy with USAID in Washington D.C.) Iva Zajmi (later was a Deputy Ministry of Interior in Albania). We stayed long after the presentation with the students. Besides Alush and Nexhmendin, Altin gave quite an impression on demonstrated maturity and sharpness. He also had links with OSI and said that he had talked to their sector about local government and that they were interested to study the functioning of active insurgent institutions and he also had an idea about this. He proposed that we meet with them the next day. We told him about the proposals we sent but that we weren't receiving any response. He proposed that it is perhaps better to meet with Katalin Konts and to inform her about our applications. She wasn't present in Budapest that day but we tried anyway because it wasn't easy to make an appointment with her. Before returning, we discussed with Altin about possible cooperation with OSI in the local governance sector and the development of higher education. They seemed interested in the project concerning peaceful active insurgency institutions and asked that we prepare a project proposal. Also, the Higher Education Support Provider (HESP) representatives asked that we prepare a short report about University of Prishtina and its functioning. With these two projects, almost a month later we were going there again with Muhamet Sadiku while we were also invited to another conference. I had arranged an interview with a magazine that was published in Budapest which was similar to The Economist which had a great number of readers. There we would discuss about our new project proposals. By then, we had completed the report on University of Prishtina and we were seeking ways to meet with Katalin Kontz. While everything was going well and as planned, the meeting with Kontz was stalling. The editor in chief of the Hungarian magazine took us out for lunch after the interview. On the way back, I asked him if he happened to know Katalin Kontz because we needed to meet with her and discuss our plans about new projects.

Yes, he said. Every three days, we hang out together with our families. He called her right away and explained our worries.

-Can you meet her at 3 pm at her office?

This would be approximately after one hour and half from now. We took Altin with us since we intended to make him our contact there. Katalin Kontz impressed us with warm welcome and care. We handed a copy of the study that we just completed and we talked about our plans and activities then we moved to the project proposals-- it had been more than two months without receiving an answer. She looked at the Deputy Director Slobodan Nakarada in a way like seeking more information or clarification. He started with justifications asking on how is our communication with the SOROS office in Prishtina, trying to throw the blame over there. -Soros calls me every two weeks and requires that we launch projects similar to this one in Kosovo, and we have them here and we neglect them – commented angrily Katalin. She thanked us for the visit and promised that we will have their attention and support. And really our projects were soon approved and Riinvest's cooperation with OSI lasted almost the entire time.

## Deportation from Kosovo and Riinvest's work continuation in Tetovo.

In early April 1999, in the center of Tetovo more than two-thirds of people were from Prishtina and others from other parts of Kosovo who had experienced violent deportation. Along with Muhamet Sadiku, we created a sort of temporary Riinvest office at Isak's Company "Fama Cola". I sent an e-mail to A. Wilson from CIPE in Washington. I explained how the situation was with us and informed him that Riinvest planned to continue working from Tetovo on current projects we had and that we were planning to prepare projects for the period after the NATO bombing ends and Serbia fulfills the conditions set by NATO. Andrew answered immediately saying that he was glad that were all safe and sound by also telling us that we had all his support and assistance

if needed. He had also informed all other partners at CIPE about us and told them that we were in Tetovo. Zef Preçi also called inviting us to go in Tirana but we have decided to stay in Tetovo. Soon after that, we rented an office at the commercial center of Tetovo and opened a bank account at the Commercial Bank.

## Scenarios: The Balkans 2010

We started receiving invitations to various regional meetings. Center for Liberal Studies (CLS) and the National Institution for Market Economics (IME) from Sofia along with the Washington Freedom House had summoned a panel of experts to discuss Balkan Scenarios 2010. The leaders of these two think tanks Ivan Krastev and Krassen Satnchev I had met often at gatherings everywhere. I wanted to participate in this gathering but we had problems leaving Macedonia since we had a refugee status. We needed a special permission from the Macedonian Police. Arben Xhaferi was aware of the importance of our presence in these meetings so without any hesitation, he pledged to take the necessary permits and documents for this trip. He assigned Arben Lufi for this duty, who if I recall right was the deputy minister of internal affairs. We left with Muhamet. When we arrived at the hotel where the conference was held, the dinner was almost finished. There were only two free seats. One near Predrag Simic and the other on the opposite side of the table. I chose the one that was away from him and the other one was left for Muhamet. He went and took the chair and came and sat close to me. This of course did not pass unnoticed. Predrag Simic was the director of the Institute or the Serbia's Center for Strategic Studies, (quite prepared); he firmly stood in nationalistic line, a bit more careful but with no essential differences from Milosevic's goals. I was surprised to see him there, but in fact it was difficult to find someone for attending this type of conference especially in times of war.

## Was this freedom?

The next day began this interesting conference. We were paid a significant attention not by only hosts but by media as well. I gave dozens of interviews on that day for the Bulgarian and other media. The conference was followed by diplomatic corps coming from the region. It was there that I sensed freedom. While I was saying that Balkan Scenarios 2010 depend on Kosovo's independence, quality of economic reforms in the region, especially if Serbia would give up the policy of current and old habits and tendencies to dominate the region. Opposite me was sitting the Yugoslav ambassador that took notes during the entire time, I felt that time that he would never be the ambassador of the state that I would belong to, notes that he would send about what I was saying were irrelevant to me personally. In Sofia, I felt freedom for the first time. And Simic really disappointed them with his speech.

-We are not at war with NATO-he said. Only America bombs us. Look at this pack of cigarettes. This was given to me by the Chinese Embassy Secretary who was killed by the American bombing few days ago. This action is America's greatest mistake, said Simic; it will end in failure and breach of unity within NATO. Many NATO countries will seek to halt the bombing.

## Borshard: A plan for service organization after return

It must have been mid May 1999 when Afrim Etemi, the owner of Ada Rei and one of the earliest Riinvest partners approached me inviting me to meet with Ben Borshard; I think that he was with OSCE at that time, later he served as a German Ambassador in Tirana and as Chief of EULEX in Pristina. Borshard was preoccupied with how to organize life in Kosovo after the end of the war, for Serbia to leave and for refugees to return. Basic public services must be organized- water, energy, flour and bread production, transport, commerce, administration, construction. He requested that we prepare some material



with our evaluation of how could the situation be in these sectors and what were the most urgent tasks to resume the operation of these basic public services, vital to the daily lives of citizens. In Tetovo, we created several teams to prepare these proposals and sent them to Borshard. His request was a good signal for us. We will soon be back in Kosovo.

These days we even received an invitation from CIPE and NED, Freedom House and German Marshal Funds, to attend important meetings in Budapest which would be held at the end of the month. We needed Arber Xhaferi's intervention again to take that trip. CIPE

was holding a closing conference on the work they had done over a decade to promote economic reforms and market economy in Hungary and they were also shutting down their office in Budapest. It was a good opportunity to see how the transition has progressed in Hungary. Andrew Wilson along with deputy director of CIPE Mission Stephen Rogers and Jean Rogers Director of the Budapest's Office were expressing a touching carefulness to us all the time feeling the suffering of Kosovo. We wanted you to see the experiences but we also wanted you to change the refuge environment for a moment they said. The second gathering was way larger. It included participants from the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe and all the states that were created from the former Yugoslavia. The bombing still continued.

The next day, I was reading a text in Financial Times about an agreement that Marti Ahtisari had offered and Milosevic had signed, because as stated Ahtisaari had said that this was the best text that will be offered, future versions would be even more cumbersome for him. The agreement provided complete fulfillment of the conditions that NATO had set. The withdrawal of the Serbian army and police from Kosovo would begin on 9th of June and the same day NATO would cease bombing, and on 10th of June NATO would enter Kosovo and so on. Sasho Ordanovski, a journalist from Skopje was commenting: this looks like capitulation. Many could not imagine that Milosevic would kneel down like this. We were back in Skopje somewhere between 7th or 8th of June. On the 10th and 11th of June NATO and the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) were going towards Prishtina and right behind them the refugees as well. We left together with Isak Arjulli in his car. After all that care, Isak was making sure that I was getting home safe and sound as well. Full of emotions. We were passing the border for the first time without Serbian police presence. Along the way we noticed signs of war. Burned houses, burned trucks, chaos everywhere. NATO had a visible presence. Prishtina did not have any noticeable signs of war; it looked like that from the outside. Still there was no internet and this was essential for communication about the projects that we had started. At this time, I also had a trip to Ljubljana. It was a conference organized by CEPS (Centre for Economic and Political Studies) a Brussels think tank headed by Professor Michael Emmerson, a former British ambassador to Moscow.

## Policies of reconstruction

Somewhere around 10th of July in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung we were holding most likely the first conference in Kosovo's post-war dedicated to reconstruction. Many local experts, UNMIK and international organizations were attending. Transitional Government and the Bukoshi government did not attend. There is a review of published contributions to this conference. The Red Hall Youth Center where the conference was being held more or less expressed a postwar atmosphere, dripping from the rain. A group of KLA officers came there and this was not only a symbolic importance.

We were preparing a research—a respectable sample survey (3500 families) regarding the consequences of the war with the support of the British DFID. We were in the process of organizing two summer schools, one in Oher and the other in Prizren. We were carrying out a project with CIPE related to business education as well as the Budapest's OSI for the experiences on functioning of local government during 90s through active insurgent institutions especially regarding financing system of training and education. So we had a lot of work. In early July I went to the UNMIK headquarters to meet with Joly Dickinson, Leader of the economic pillar IV - as suggested by Professor Emerson. He noted that he had received our study and also mentioned that the study was the only source in English from which he was able to obtain some information about Kosovo's economy and its development opportunities. There, I met with his closest collaborator and assistant, Renzo David. Both had been professor of Economics and promised that they would come to give a contribution to our summer schools. In early August after a training of more than 50 interviewers, with a complex questionnaire, that included demographic and migration consequences of war and deportation of houses and flats, household appliances and other family goods, automobiles, tractors, livestock funds, looting of valuables and money, what was their perception of the reconstruction and what were the expectations, we were starting a research about the war consequences. The survey was done according to standard methods of selecting the sample while the large sample, nearly three times more than the standard was made to avoid errors. A similar survey was done in October with private businesses. In addition, we established

17 teams of experts to assess the damage in the public sector, in the main industries that were not included in the survey for family and private businesses. In these 17 teams we had involved more than 50 experts, the best that Kosovo had. All this was supported by the UK's DFID. I can say that these studies are now unique and of great value. Probably the only documentation based on scientific methodology associated with severe consequences of war. The survey was led by Nail and Ymer. We had received a donation of 25 computers from the USAID in Skopje and now, by the end of August, more than 20 students were working on entering the survey data. In parallel with this study we had organized the Summer School of Entrepreneurship from the 8th to the 29th of August, where besides us, two British, one Dutch and one American professor were teaching. The dedication of the 30 students who had recently completed or would soon complete Economics was impressive. All of them would be soon employed at Riinvest, international organizations and at first banks in country and almost all of them hold high positions. We would often find them up at 2 o'clock in the morning along with the guest professors completing their homework and preparing presentations for the next day. Please tell them to go and relax, James Skyrmes and Ger Yonkergouw two excellent professors and friends of Riinvest from Maastricht kept telling me. But students did not even want to hear about leaving work before completing everything necessary so they could be prepared for the next day. They were captured by enthusiasm about the new life in freedom and about all the new opportunities. With dedication, intelligence and potentials, they were not behind their peers in Europe. Even then as well as today I was proud of them.

Andrew Wilson from CIPE came at the beginning of September to visit us and receive first-hand information regarding the consequences of war. With Wilson and Muhamet Sadiku, I was also visiting the post-war Kosovo for the first time. I had been busy with Ohrid Summer School and other activities. We were traveling with him to Peja, Gjakova and Prizren. Damages in Peja and Gjakova were very significant with devastating consequences. Fortunately, Prizren had been preserved, with the exception of the compound of the league of Prizren. Barbarity of the Serbian military machine was visible and disastrous. Wilson was taking plenty of pictures. There was havoc everywhere but enthusiasm and

energy for reconstruction were stronger. When we returned at the Riinvest office which was not located in center, right in front of the Grand Hotel, Director of Freedom House Peter Wibler and the European Director of German Marshal Funds Pavol Demesh (former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia) also came. Like Wilson, he had also taken lots of pictures. I will return after ten years in the same places and I will try to take pictures of the same people he said. An interesting idea! After all those disasters, cemeteries and human suffering that he photographed, he became impressed by those 25 students who were entering the data collected from the field research on war consequences. He took plenty of pictures. We created a good relationship with everyone from that time including Kosovo's friend Demesh who was not at all satisfied with the policy of his country's government regarding the recognition of Kosovo's independence. While I was talking to Wibler and Demesh, Wilson was writing in one of the computers. After an hour he gave a concept for a project that we had to realize in coordination with CIPE. The idea was for Riinvest to conduct a research on key economic aspects of post-war reconstruction and economic reform and promote them. The idea was to create an authoritative Advisory Board comprised of businesses and academia that will determine topics of studies. These research reports were to be written in both English and Albanian. To form an international forum involving international actors, political parties, business and civil society to discuss the research findings and recommendations.

*- You will be governed by UNMIK. UNMIK is a heavy bureaucratic machine, you need to wake up and create the opposition, Wilson explained his idea. Kosovars' voice must be heard before the institutions are created, he was reasoning this interesting idea.*

By mid-September, we were starting another summer school for a group of 30 students on Economy and Finances. We were capturing only few days of that summer just so we could gain the epithet of the summer school. Even here the professors were mostly from Britain and everything was in English. While I was going through Suhareke (today's Theranda), before starting work, some strong emotions have gripped me. Historical and ancient Prizren was free from the Serbian oppression now. We were staying at Hotel Theranda which was not yet fully consolidated and was smelling of war. Lectures, semi-



nars and discussions that lasted nearly all day were being held in a restaurant in Marash. Police curfew was starting at 8pm and lasted until 6am in the morning. There was no curfew in Prishtina but here, everything was commanded by the German KFOR as part of NATO and they did not allow anything to just happen randomly. In those conditions, it was hard to organize anything at the required level. The two professors that carried the largest portion of the program-Iraj Hashi professor from Staffordshire University and Will Bartlett, professor from the University of Bristol now with London School of Economics, would become Riinvest friends. A portion of the course was also covered

by Joel Dickson and Renzo David. Together with Professor Iraj Hashi we would start a number of projects with a number of which are still being developed. On the next visit to Washington after a consultative meeting of leaders of political forces and civil society in Kosovo where they were discussing about how would Kosovo's future look, I had to present recommendations from the gathering to Ms. Albright. She promised the US government help and support with the post-war reconstruction, economic reform and democratic institution building. It seemed that the partnership and the US care would also continue in time of peace. After that CIPE had made a special program. It seems that they had won a special credit for the work that they did in Kosovo with Riinvest. Those days J. Sullivan and A. Wilson had published an article about Riinvest in Washington Times. This was a golden time and opportunity of our cooperation with CIPE. Riinvest was an inevitable address in Prishtina.

## Riinvest in the new role

Riinvest had a lot of work. Ilazi (Ramajli) and Isa (Mustafa), after returning from exile were not so active in political life and knowing their potential I invited them to come join us at Riinvest, one as vice president (Isa) and the other as the administrative director (Ilazi). This strengthened our composition quite well. We were working on several fronts. The greatest work was being done in analyzing the collected data about the consequences of war and the strategy and policy of post-war reconstruction, preparation of a specific report which we were thinking of presenting it at a major international conference. Everything was ready and the conference would be held in February of 2000. The conference was indeed magnificent. It brought together over 200 participants from different countries, the most important factors, political, academic and civil society of the country. Large presence showed the main actors in the Kosovo crisis such as Americans, Englishmen and Germans. Kosovar political factors as well as many professors and friends that we have made along the way. Joly Dickson and Renzo David were very active in this conference. The conference will be remembered for an excellent overview of Nicolas White from

At the end of the project, we have employed 30 researchers who had completed their studies at least at the master level—mostly abroad in the field of economy, business and information technology.

CEPS (Center for Political Studies of Brussels) who said that previously he did not think so but from what he heard in this conference, he was definitely convinced that Kosovo should become independent saying it openly in the panel. In this conference we saw the first cracks between Riinvest and the international administration over economic policies, concerning the nature of social ownership of Kosovo and Kosovo's right to government privatized the same way as all other entities of the former Yugoslav federation. As of this time Riinvest was seen as an opposition to UNMIK therefore, a part of UNMIK and few Kosovars joined to develop ongoing propaganda against Riinvest as an institution more or less nationalistic and "incredibly Kosovar". This trend was particularly strong within the European Agency for Reconstruction and sponsored by a group of locals and internationals. While our recommendations for economic policies and necessary economic reforms encountered an understanding by the USAID. We had no empowerment from CIPE or USAID regarding our attitudes. We simply got along in this matter.

### **Our first contract with USAID: 20 study reports**

In the fall of 2000, CIPE and Riinvest signed a two-year contract with USAID based on the concept developed the same night A. Wilson was back from the visit in Peja full of tough impressions on ruins from the war. But now it was being broadened with strengthening of business associations that we would help, we would ensure a

robust technical assistance for Riinvest's capacity building that would contribute to the development and institutional strengthening of Riinvest. This project would last for two years during the period of 2002-2004, contributing to the development and publication of 20 research reports on issues vital to the development of Kosovo, to formation and consolidation of AKB (Kosovo Business Alliance) a significant increase of Riinvest's capacity and its position strengthening in the society. The reports were to be published in both Albanian and English languages. At the end of the project, we have employed 30 researchers who had completed their studies at least at the master level—mostly abroad in the field of economy, business and information technology.

### **Staffordshire University and Iraj Hashii**

Major support to capacity development came through cooperation with Staffordshire University, created through Professor Iraj Hashi, by also forming another great support from the Soros Foundation in awarding scholarships. This project started sometime in 2001 and it continues today. Since then, more than 80 people graduated with master degrees and about 205 of them with PhDs'. They have created a critical mass of modern economic thought in Kosovo. Most of them have worked or still work at Riinvest or are associated with research and teaching. For this contribution in Kosovo, Professor Hashi was decorated by Queen Elizabeth. Together with Professor Muhamet Sadiku, we wrote a proposal and rationale with the initiative from the British Embassy in Prishtina.

In addition to the scholarship that Soros gave through their program to support higher education HESP, until recently Riinvest also paid them a portion of salary to support their families because most of them come from families in need. Most of them have remained devoted and fair to Riinvest even when they left work with us going to work for various international organizations and elsewhere. Avoiding a chronological sequence next, I will present some of the areas in which Riinvest was committed with its research same time becoming a subject of an extensive discussion. This discussion in a way still continues despite all the implications and solutions made, mostly by UNMIK and the international community.

## Privatization

Most countries in transition had already more or less completed the privatization by applying experiences and different models. Kosovo was facing major dilemmas and various obstacles to the start of this process. End of the war found roughly 500 public and social enterprises attempting to resume work. Employees and management of those enterprises, which the Serbian regime had dismissed and discharged from managerial positions before forcefully installing its structures, were returning to where they have worked until September 1990. Kosovo's interim government had taken over these companies' administration, declared them state-owned and had intervened on several occasions to change the management teams. After a time when two separate governments of Kosovo ceased to exist, when various economic departments were created within UNMIK's Pillar IV, public and social enterprises were put under the jurisdiction of the Department of Trade and Industry. Alongside international leaders there also co local coordinators but real competence was given to the chief of UNMIK, who often came from the EU. Discussions about the start of the privatization process had begun before the liberation with our project. We had raised the necessity of privatization and had proposed models that could be applicable in Kosovo and the respective effects on economic development. Howev-

er, UNMIK and the international community, excluding the Americans were reluctant to enter this process. They had a profound misunderstanding about the nature of social property and powers of the federal units of the former Yugoslav federation, including Kosovo, to govern this property within their borders. They went from a misconception that social property was a derivative of state property and because Kosovo was not even a country yet it did not have state property. They did not say this openly but led to an understanding that these rights could go with Serbia, or at least Serbia could have a stake in this. Joly Dickson, one of the most correct UNMIK professionals was immersed in this hall and was interested to find an opportunity to start privatization despite objections that Serbia and part of the international community were making. He and his deputy Renzo Daviddi were preparing a report known as the "White Paper" trying to go ahead with privatization. However, sometime in the beginning of their text they had written a sentence that undermined their whole purpose. "Property in Kosovo is unclear ..." At a dinner with Renzo and Will Bartlett professor from the University of Bristol, we had discussed the White Paper before being published. I was explaining to Renzo that Kosovo's authority on social property had been the same as all other units of the federation including Serbia, for this reason Serbia did not have a legal basis for any interference in this matter. He wasn't convinced and in a moment Will Bartlett intervened: Renzo, I think that Muhamet is right. Renzo did not object. Will was the authority and dealt with those circles also as an expert of the specific economic system of the former Yugoslavia based on the Yugoslav self-governing. I thought this would be enough so Renzo could emerge from this misunderstanding. So I was surprised when in the White Paper I saw this sentence which lowered the value of a good project idea and in fact undermined it. Because how can you privatize something that was not clear, something that we did not know who is the owner? This was very serious because it was damaging the essence of Kosovo's sovereignty. While supporting other ideas in the White Paper, this sentence was harshly criticized by Riinvest. A little later, in the fall of 2000, when Washington's CIPE and Riinvest signed a contract with USAID for the research and debates project concerning social and economic reforms in Koso-

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The Washington Times

JOHN SULLIVAN / ANDREW WILSON

As American and European leaders continue to discuss the framework for reconstruction in Kosovo and the Balkans, much attention is being paid to the lessons previously learned from other large-scale political upheavals.

Whether it's the reconstruction of the post-Marcos Philippines, the transitions in Central and Eastern Europe or the more recent efforts in Bosnia, one of the key lessons to be learned is that local stakeholders must be in the forefront of reconstruction.

Without the direct involvement of the people of Kosovo in the planning effort, international aid runs the risk of being viewed as an imposed set of priorities, plans and structures, lacking reference to the economic, societal and cultural conditions in Kosovo.

To avoid such pitfalls, the international community must engage representative private organizations from the earliest possible stage to ensure the objectives of the redevelopment process match the aspirations of those that are most affected. Fortunately, over the last three or four years, a number of Kosovar nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as leaders with strong links throughout the local community and experience in working with international organizations.

For several years, we at the Center for International Private Enterprise have been privileged to work with one such courageous group in Pristina, the Riinvest Institute.

Despite the oppressive conditions within Kosovo during the 1990s, Riinvest managed to produce the first and only economic analysis of Kosovo and a concrete blueprint for Kosovo's inclusion into regional and European trade structures. Much of the recent analysis and planning for Kosovo we read about today was recommended by Riinvest a year before the recent conflict began. Muhamet Mustafa and his col-

## Reconstructing Kosovo



narrowly escaping arrest by death squads, the core of Riinvest's staff escaped to Macedonia, where with the assistance of local colleagues they quickly established an office in exile. Riinvest researchers immediately set to work salvaging their programs, planning for their return to Kosovo and engagement in its reconstruction.

Based on their existing knowledge of Kosovo and the shared experiences of their colleagues and others, Riinvest's researchers have already created a strategy for Kosovo reconstruction that deserves to be heard by those international players currently planning its redevelopment. Key to the Riinvest strategy is the active engagement of the local population not only in the physical reconstruction of the coun-

entrepreneurial. Riinvest highlights five critical strategic objectives for Kosovar reconstruction:

(1) Creating and then strengthening Kosovo's economic independence from Serbia, through economic reconstruction and development within regional, European and other economic integration structures.

(2) Maximizing the use of the labor-capable population through dynamic development.

(3) Mobilization of the natural, human and financial development potentials of the population by creating a system of free markets and entrepreneurship as a fundamental philosophy of development.

(4) Strengthening civil society institutions.

(5) Incorporation in technologi-

were unable to participate in government or industry, and where economic policy was based on wealth extraction rather than creation. Ironically, these weaknesses have contributed to Kosovo's strengths in reconstruction, which if well used may help in avoiding a repeat of the problems of previous reconstruction efforts.

The effects of Serbian domination on Kosovo's civil society are well documented. During that era, Albanians formed parallel institutions in health care and education; an independent media flourished, and the seeds of democracy—while fragile—were planted.

In the economic sphere, Albanian exclusion from the traditional engines of economic growth forced individuals to become entrepre-

adverse conditions and therefore are well-placed to actively participate in all phases of reconstruction. No one would discount the importance of international support and leadership in Kosovo's reconstruction. To the contrary, Kosovars view international support as critical to establishing long-term stability, by providing a framework in which democracy and civil society can develop, and in which reconstruction and economic reform can be coordinated.

The Riinvest strategy, however, does emphasize that the key to Kosovo's long-term stability and viability is the creation of an entrepreneurial class that has access to new regional markets and domestic policy supportive of private sector growth. These are the factors that have proven to be the downfall of private sector growth in Bosnia and have continued to foster regional instability. Kosovo is at a crucial turning point.

The albatross of the former regime has been removed and attention is now focused on humanitarian assistance. However, it is unclear whether either the leadership of the KLA's new political wing, the PDU, or the previous shadow government of Ibrahim Rugova possess the philosophical and political will to pursue market-oriented reform. International support for independent pro-market groups, such as Riinvest, is therefore essential.

Such support will ensure that Kosovars can play a leading role in the development of a market economy in Kosovo. It will also strengthen the prospects that democratic dialogue in Kosovo occurs. Both are essential to growing an entrepreneurial economy by restoring business confidence and creating conditions for Kosovar businesses to participate in reconstruction.

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vo, privatization was at the epicenter of our research and efforts. In the following two years we did an analysis on social enterprises situation. Somewhere more than 60 % were activated, working with a 20-60 % capacity with a tendency of improvement. However, it was clear that large investments were needed to improve the technology and the management. Those investments could only be made with privatization. Therefore, we began to lobby and advocate strongly for this. Besides the economic aspect there was also another aspect related to the political status of Kosovo and Serbian claims. Kosovo's political factor was very passive in this matter. We decided to try and possibly make it very interesting. We introduced the problem with short information despite economic and political dimension and asked all political parties to form a joint venture with the following statement which sought from UNMIK and other international factors to begin privatization. We organized a series of discussions, where we had recruited Professor Iraj Hashi as our consultant. Iraj was an expert of transition and privatization and had a doctoral degree in the economic system of the former Yugoslavia. Our views and Professor Hashi's were identical, but his as an international expert was useful to strengthen our credibility. We created a 10 page material shortly describing the problem, possible solutions, economic and political consequences and sought unity of the political factor in this matter. We conducted discussions with each of the party leaders. With regret we found that except President Rugova, no one else had read that short material and although they did not openly opposed it, the joint statement did not happen. By keeping this issue constantly open and in debate putting pressure on UNMIK with USAID to start privatization while opposing cut up operations such as the commercialization of property or similar forms of former socialist government. In May 2002, UNMIK came out with a new regulation for KTA (Kosovo Trust Agency) through which they were forming and authorizing this agency to execute privatization through sales, as stated with a transparent procedure with best offer providing the best price. This was relatively good, but it left the ownership still undefined and unclear. It was left "vague" and therefore the funds derived from the sale would remain frozen out of the economic function, in separate accounts for each company until all the con-

temporary needs of creditors or other claimants to the property were resolved. It was completely unfair so we rejected many arguments but UNMIK and others from the international community were not very disturbed by it. Unfortunately, neither did the political actors operating in Kosovo, who were not preoccupied with economic problems and less when they had to confront certain international community representatives. In June of that year, we organized a major international conference on privatization of social and public enterprises, with more than 200 local and international participants, with the most renowned experts from Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary), Slovenia, Montenegro, Albania, then with experts from the UK, Germany and the USA. During the preparation for the conference, Riinvest prepared and presented an extensive analysis of the context in which privatization was being done; arguments that Kosovo had and should have full jurisdictions to implement privatization and that special election for freezing of funds created by privatization were harmful and unnecessary. We were also in favor of partial privatization of public enterprises. Although USAID (Americans) and the British agreed with our arguments, to them the most important fact was that the privatization would take place and in turn they had agreed with the freezing of funds that indeed was and remains an economic nonsense. This conference presented perennial research results by eminent scientist, theoretical results that were verified with the successes and failures of privatization in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe. But UNMIK representatives still remained loaded with prejudice for Kosovo's property.

## Riinvest rejected Marie Fucci's concept for the privatization

Serbia was acting with all its propagandistic power that supposedly beginning of privatization in Kosovo meant that its property is being sold and by this, the international law is being violated, and that it was Serbia that established that property and all investments belonged to it. All this was far from the reality but some circles of international community and a part of the international administration were affected by this, cringed from the possible legal consequences, or simply working for Serbian interests. Under the influence of this propaganda, a round of privatization began in the summer of 2012; while during fall it slowed down and ceased entirely. With this, Serbia wanted to say that Kosovo's property was theirs, and consequently there is nothing to talk about the status that includes independence. Precisely at this time of intensive propaganda from Serbia at KTA (Kosovo Trust Agency) came a director named Marie Fucci, who became almost a spokesperson of Serbian propaganda here and she practically interrupted the development of privacy. Even the new leader of UNMIK Pillar IV, Lambsdorff was indolent and did not care about the machinations of the former. We had an ongoing USAID project on issues related to economic reforms. I proposed to prepare an analysis on M. Fucci's concepts and changes that she was proclaiming, to arrange a table at Forum 2015, open public debate which would be broadcasted live on KTV and in this way we would expose these evil concepts before the media, experts and the public pressure. USAID was supportive of this approach. Within a short time with Professor Iraj Hashi, sometime in the spring of 2003 we were preparing this analysis that presented the damage that is done by the work of UNMIK and KTA and the volatility of the concepts and dilemmas laid by Marie Fucci. I wrote a letter and politely invited her to come to our debate and present her views. She originally accepted our invitation and therefore we placed her on the agenda that her, I and Professor Hashi would present our views before the debate opened. Shortly before starting, about 10 minutes before, Ahmet Shala, who was her deputy, came and told me that she could not attend and that she had tasked him to present her views.

He told me that he had to present the concepts with which he disagreed and asked if it would be okay. I thought about it and decided that still it was better for the opinion to hear of those evil thoughts. I said alright. Ahmeti presented the KTA views, stating that they were thoughts of his boss, not his personal thoughts. Professor Hashi and I gave an argument critique to them with the entitled paper: "Privatization in Kosovo, a step forward, two steps behind". Further debate which included a colleague who was Minister of Trade and Industry Professor Ali Jakupi, Veton, Professor Selman Selmanaj, Professor Muhamet Sadiku and many others through harsh critiques, exposed the KTA. All this was being broadcasted live on KTV. It was evident that they could not stand any longer M. Fucci's concepts and behavior and she quickly left. New Director G. Dick, and after a while the chief of pillar IV Joachim Ruecker changed course and continued with this process, with its accompanying weaknesses, but they were much more constructive and cooperative. Rucker actually worked to create Kosovo's economic independence and we have cooperated well. Some think that privatization was not supposed to happen. Riinvest thinks, and so do I, that privatization has been inevitable. It also had its great political importance regarding the status. There were failures and abuse and possibly hatch between buyers and also between buyers and sellers which unfortunately in our society remain unpunished. Equipment and technology were already obsolete and insignificant, but what sold very cheap is the land, agricultural land and the land around the factories and other enterprises. In fact, this is already a nominal damage anyway after damage value pricing sold in a real sense becomes not very important when selling as funds were still frozen with the exception of 20 % paid to workers immediately after the sale since the damage of price value sold in a real sense becomes unimportant when either way selling funds remain frozen with the exception of 20 % paid to workers immediately after the sale. But there are also examples of companies that were in the total collapse and which private investors managed to re-activate them. The next most important fact was that Serbia lost the battle with its own propaganda about the property and privatization in Kosovo. It is this mix that led to creation of another more recent study report on privatization effects in Kosovo titled: "Privatization in Kosovo, a glass half empty or half full".



RIINVEST



Konferencë ndërkombëtare  
PRIVATIZIMI I NDËRHËMBËSIAVE SHOQËRORE DHE  
REFORMA E NEKËTËSIAVE KE NË KOSOVË

SPONZOR

TAEA

Juergen VOSS  
Deputy Heads of Pillar IV  
UNMIK

Ekrem BEQIRI  
President of the Board  
KFOS

## Forum 2015

At the beginning of year 2002, after several initiatives taken by Jusuf Berisha, as I said above, KFOS- Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (represented by Luan Shllaku and Jusuf Berisha) KACI - Kosovo Action for Civic Initiatives (Veton Surroi and Ylber Hysa) and Riinvest(I and Muhamet Sadiku) signed an agreement to establish a partnership in the form of a forum that would engage society in debates on important issues in a broad background related to Euro- Atlantic Integration. When we were discussing the name, the word “forum” was straightforward, but something else was needed to distinguish it. We added the “2015” thinking that until then, for the next thirteen years, not only Kosovo’s political status would be solved but Kosovo if not integrated in the EU, it would be closer to integration, or at least it would be a Euro-Atlantic featured corporation in the level of democracy and economic development. Some have criticized us for this name, saying that we were pessimistic and defeatist, “From today’s perspective, ten years after the establishment of the forum I see that we have been too optimistic”. There is little progress in economics, democracy level is low. Kosovo’s independence is declared and accepted by more than 100 countries and this is the capital result. Seven years after Kosovo’s independence, a great victory and a difficult leap, the country is gripped by many problems in its march towards development and integration into Europe and NATO. Forum discussions initiated many serious topics. Kosovo’s international position, identity, privatization, energy, diaspora... In the forum board, along with six other individuals were also present: Muhamedin Kullashi Philosophy Professor at “Paris 8”, Besnik Pula, professor in the USA, while in the composition to determine the work program we regularly invited Azem Vllasi, Anton Berisha, Shkelzen Maliqi, Venera Hajrullahu, Vjose Dobruna, Avni Mustafaj (then at the AUK), Fatos Hamza, Ulpiana Lama, and others. After the violent demonstrations that erupted in Kosovo in spring of 2004, when people expressed dissatisfaction and revolt for the status quo under UNMIK, and slow movement around the Status of Kosovo, with Forum 2015 we organized several meetings, of which one international related to the status quo sometime in June 2004 and continued to it as a hot despite the pressure



placed by political factors. Michael Stiener a representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, a kind of Kosovo governor had come up with a proclamation “Status after Standards”, whereas targets for resolving the status he declared about eight points to different areas in a very general way, aimed at a state (benchmarks) to be achieved before the assigned status. But as I said these were quite general and difficult to decipher. Flaka Surroi who at that time was a general secretary for the Kosovo Government, and Bajram Rexhepi, Prime Minister, invited me and Isa and asked whether we would be able to work in breaking down these political standings in a program of works and actions and if we could fetch the cost of implementing the standards. This was indeed a difficult task and Flaka has rightly categorized it as a crucial problem and almost without even asking us left this task in our hands. We had created a host of skills for problem formulation, then to draw targets to overcome

this problem by issuing the necessary work activities and budget. So, we needed to implement project management techniques, namely the decomposition of project activities, sub activities, which could be assigned, time required for performing and their cost, allocation of resources and the creation of the budget for them and for the project (WBS, Work Break Structure). Flaka has agreed with DFID and their contractor PAI that they would provide the budget for this work. We created 10 groups, in each ministry, prosecution, the court and for municipalities to train them in this technique, to provide assistance with our staff that each from its field draws projects with deadlines, costs and the works would be completed in 4/5 months. With PAI we had an excellent cooperation. Isa was listing this project together effectively. He also listed the additional budget needed, which reached over 200 million euros. This work had set in motion many structures and proved useful.

That summer Forum brought many politicians, analysts, columnists from different countries of Europe and neighboring countries in the Conference (2005) to discuss on the topic "Status quo and Status". There was a consensus that the status quo is unsustainable and dangerous and also most guests, including Athens ELAIMEP representative emphasized the independence as inevitable. This was a complete result.

## Energy and National Development Plan

In 2005 and 2006 the issue of long-term energy development in Kosovo became actualized based on lignite reserves Obilic near Prishtina in other regions. The government was also preoccupied with building a development plan that would determine long term priorities that could be taken as the basis for more qualitative governance with sustainable priorities. Both these issues pursued and constantly impelled by the Minister of Energy and Mining Ethem Ceku. There were perhaps 10 thousand pages of documents from the World Bank, the German institutes and other similar institutions. EU, namely the European Agency for Reconstruction had brought two experts from Greece and paid them to create a document in the form of development strategy that

could be approved by the Kosovo Assembly. In the process of consultation where I participated as well, we clearly saw that these two "experts" were trying to perhaps create their first strategy in their practice and although they tried very much, they lacked the necessary knowledge and experience for this kind of work. The Minister was losing his patience with them and once he even asked them to leave but their employer European Agency for Reconstruction kept them until they provided another useless document like many others. After a while the Minister inquired whether we at Riinvest could produce such a document. This was something that could be done. It was evident that there were different views on the opportunities and needs of power generation from lignite. Those days during a study on energy needs and production opportunities in the region of Southeast Europe, it came out that the country had comparative advantage and that there could be built up to 4400 MW power plants. This was not a new idea. They tried to put this in practice back in early 80s but it was opposed by the Kosovo Government of that time headed by Ymer Pula. It was clear that the strategy should put some limitations in this regard, but also to ensure energy supply to households, businesses and other organizations and institutions for the period of 10-15 years. Building of such an aggressive and massive exploration of lignite and its burning produced a series of direct and adverse side effects. Air pollution, soil and water which was already critical, population displacement, loss of agricultural land, high water consumption for this purpose instead of agriculture were just few of the risks difficult to calculate. We did not dare to take such decisions. Therefore, in consultation with many experts, we came to a conclusion that the maximum that could be approved for building the new capacity in the period of 2005-2015 was a TC to 1000 MW or two with 500 MW. Besides the Riinvest team, we had also engaged one of the best experts in this field Professor Ali Hamiti. During our work we were faced with the demands of a group that insisted on larger capacity, but being generation engineers, they did not understand the social and economic problems. However we remained at 1,000 MW limit with many obligations to eliminate the existing pollutants and their effects are illustrated at the large ash hill in Prishtina. When we built a consensus and were working on some final edits to this document with Professor

A. Hamiti, before sending it to the Minister as a final product, the Minister called and asked that we write a document that involved production capacity of 2700 MW. This number reminded me of a request made by his advisor. I reminded him about the arguments and discussions that we had done, but he did not give up.

-Alright, I said. This work is in your hands anyway. You could change it any way you want, before sending it to the Assembly for approval. It doesn't mean that you have to send it the way we recommend it but we cannot provide a proposal for more than 1000 MW and put our firm on it. And if you go to the Assembly with a changed proposal, we will present our views and our proposal publicly in the press conference.

Besides this, I told him that we are not putting a permanent point to this but for building a greater capacity multidisciplinary studies should be undertaken for quantity, restrictions and locations. He no longer insisted. The document went to the Parliament for approval sometime in August the way prepared, we also presented it to the international community and everything seemed fine. The Parliament approved it and now we were just waiting its implementation. However, as soon as we entered, a directing committee for Kosova C 2100MW was created, which was headed by the Minister but administered by a young engineer that graduated in Slovakia, quite talented but also very limited. It was astonishing how he promoted a project that stepped on a strategy approved by the Assembly. The promotion was so aggressive that it included almost all the structures of society including the Academy of Sciences and Islamic Community! And almost everyone was applauding it!!! The new project was given support in a row by all international factors, apart from some parties in the EU that were most sensitive to environmental protection. We opposed it but we were almost alone apart from couple media and of course a large part of the public who supported us. A large part of the intelligence and experts remained silent. With Luan Shllaku KFOS director and Forum's co-head, we decided to go strong on this issue. We created a group of experts from various fields led by Luan and Professor Ekrem Beqiri, who was one of the Riinvest's pillars. They would prepare a report that will be discussed in the Forum 2015 for the public with live broadcasting from KTV. We came out with a report with many arguments grouped into 13 areas emphasizing why we should not

implement such a project. The report took a provocative title: "Kosova C2100MW: A modern fairy tale" so, a fairy tale was called the argument that this project will save Kosovo in terms of development. Before the Forum was held, we asked the minister to come with a team and present his views at the beginning, we did the same with other international components that were part of this project among which the World Bank as well, although many procedures were violated among which the strategic environmental assessment. But the hall was filled. No one from the government came and international institutions only sent few observers who were mainly local staff. We knew they were now in front of the TV screens in their offices watching our conference, the fact that they did not attend meant that they were defeated. Luan Shllaku made a powerful presentation of the report and convincingly illustrated our arguments. Discussions were supporting the report. Veton Surroi said that even in Africa, natural resources are handled with more caution. The project Kosovo C2100 MW became a tale. During lunch I told Luan that if I know anything on politics, this project failed today and it will not be realized. He was still skeptical, there are major interests behind it, he said. In fact the project was kept alive for a long time. There is still a steering committee but the young engineer had resigned in the meantime I think. Even the new government, although they have opposed the project while in opposition, took the new project with enthusiasm by just changing the name from Kosova C 2100 to the New Kosovo 2100. Nevertheless, the World Bank, the European Commission and the new Minister Prof. Justina Pula discreetly and carefully began to withdraw from this project. The bank made an environmental study and came to the conclusion that we cannot go with more than 1000 MW, in fact now it even reduced to 600MW.

The National Plan was being prepared sometimes in spring of 2006. Riinvest won that project in an open competition. Our duty was to train about 120 experts working for the ministry on strategic planning, along with them to produce 22 sectorial and cross-sectorial reports and formulate draft a strategy. We had formed a strong team, all chosen and strengthened with the best experts outside Riinvest. We had also hired Mojmir Mrak and Mateja Rojec- excellent Slovenian experts as consul-

tants. The project was being financed from the Kosovo budget but a large portion was covered by the British DFID and Swedish SIDA. SIDA was supporting civil society activation and DFID external consultancy. We also organized broad consultations with civil society. Everything was going well until many actors who were either jealous of Riinvest or had robbery ambitions were involved, but I think that it was more the problem of development concepts where Kosovo C was included. At the time when we were about to start designing the draft plan, after creating a team of over 25 best experts an advisor from the World Bank came in my office and suggested that it would be the best solution that the draft is written at the Secretariat formed for it at the Ministry of Economy and Finance since the one you would be writing would always be considered as Riinvest's plan not the government's. And you could make your contribution over there. It seemed to be a fair deal and I agreed. There was lots of tension about this later; a draft by the external consultants at the Secretariat was produced. It contained a number of problems since according to it we must rely on energy and mining, a fact that we strongly opposed. Besides, the Americans did not believe in the effectiveness of this kind of comprehensive plan either. Riinvest was harshly criticized about this from some uninformed and ill-willing people, spreading diverse misinformation to those supposedly we were doing it "for material gains about 2 million euros"; although the entire Riinvest contract for all this work was 250 thousand euros. The work was completed with a draft that never went any further by raising lots of dust and even today, Kosovo does not have a national plan with clear priorities for development.

## Early Warning

Not long after the war, by the end of 2000, we were visited by a senior UNDP delegation. They were proposing that we prepare and publish a quarterly report that would reflect movements in the society. Through a research that conveys the opinion perceptions and analysis of analysts in the field of economy, the

functioning of institutions, inter-ethnic relations and security and it would serve as warning to potential crises, - an "Early Warning" to policy makers about the sources of the crisis and eventual political and social tensions. The report would also provide the public perception about institutions and key office holders reflecting the mood of the voters. So it was a golden source of information. Of course we accepted immediately. We created a team that would make the survey research with the public led by Ymer (Havolli) and the team of analysts (Shkelzen Maliqi, Muhamet Sadiku, Sejdi Osmani and others from Riinvest and as well as Lulzim Peci and Vesel Latifi). The whole project was run by prof. Ekrem Beqiri who also was editing the report in three languages: Albanian, English and Serbian. The report became increasingly popular, the international administration and UNMIK often used it, and it was referenced and quoted by journalists and scientists everywhere. Unfortunately, much less was used by our politicians. They only knew to react if something bad had come to their perception of the public: "Aiii you have messed it all up, why did you publish me like that" ...Once, one of them conveyed a discontented message to me through the chief of staff. When I met the chief of staff, I explained that we publish public perception not our own. So if you are working correctly, the reason why the public thinks the opposite is because they are probably not properly informed or I am afraid that they are very well informed I told him half-joking half-serious.

It is interesting that the March 2004 publication of this report, somehow warned of the dangers of increasing discontent with local and international institutions. The report warned of rising tension in the opinion indicating that perception for UNMIK and Kosovo institutions was largely negative, only 19% of respondents had a positive opinion about the UNMIK's work. Kosovo was tired of the status quo, UNMIK bureaucracy and local politician's negligence. Sadly, this was not read well by neither the government nor politicians or internationals and when demonstrations occurred, soon afterwards, toward the end of April it seemed like almost everyone was "surprised". But it was not only the locals who were smitten with the findings of the report.



President Rugova  
congratulating Prof. Dr.  
Mustafa on his award, the  
chairman of Riinvest then.

## President Rugova awarded riinvest with the Golden Medal of Independence

14 MAY 2005

“I am very honored to participate in your conference dedicated to the Riinvest’s 10th anniversary. I welcome the 10th anniversary of your institute; these are 10 years full of fruitful work for you and for Kosovo in the difficult days and now in the years of freedom of our country. This important jubilee is stimulant to continue the productive activity. In this jubilee, you will discuss the overall development of Kosovo. This is very important for Kosovo and its democratic institutions now when large national mid-term projects are being prepared for country’s economic development. I believe that valuable conclusions for our institutions will come out of this debate. Also, we must commit to all economic areas to find ways for investment security that we started and for other forms that will most likely be included into these major projects. On the issues that Riinvest deals with for Kosovo thus for economic and other issues, it is important direct recognition of Kosovo’s independence.

In this case, with special decree, I have decided to award Riinvest Institute with the Golden Medal of Independence on its 10th year anniversary, for its merits, for freedom, independence and democracy of Kosovo and contribution to economic development and design of the future of Kosovo. “

**Dr. Ibrahim Rugova**  
**President of Kosovo**  
**14 May 2005**

Riinvest has become larger with new researchers. In 2004, it had about 30 employees, researchers from three generations - founders, and two generations of young researchers who were recruited as the best students of Faculty of Economy. In the autumn of that year we completed a four-year project with USAID which had absorbed 60-70 % of our capacity so, finding work had not been a major concern. At the end of August or in September at a meeting with USAID, it had become clear to us that timing of such large and multi-year projects has ended as they told us, Riinvest would have to try its own sustainability in business services and donor investment market to earn the necessary income that would cover the costs of its operations. If Riinvest is not able to do it, how would Kosovo be able to remain independent, joked Dale Pheipher, the USAID director, very dedicated to his work to create positive difference. This was right from their perspective since they had invested so we could build our own institutional capacities during the last four years, but on the other hand it appeared as a kind of therapy "Shock", because all of the sudden, we needed to look in the market for major portion of our income - salaries and expenses for a research organization of 30 and that was not easy. This time was not without challenges, but it was replaced with a broad portfolio of smaller projects contracted with the Soros Foundation, World Bank, UNDP, the government and other similar institutions. On May 15th, 2005 we were celebrating the 10th anniversary of our work with a conference where we were presenting for discussion our studies. President gave a speech and congratulated for our jubilee. At the end of his speech he urged everyone present to stand up as he was proclaiming an important decision. In carefully chosen words he announced and justified its decision to decorate Riinvest with the "Gold Medal of Independence". It was a surprise for all, but a surprise that honored Riinvest very much, which had become a sustainable organization, independent in its views over a decades' working with full of sacrifices and dedication.

## Education

Somehow at this time and with fast and often chaotic pace, private universities were being created. They were being based mainly on professors and teachers from the University of Prishtina, but knew to offer attractive salaries especially when faced with inspections and assessment from the Ministry, or later with the Agency for Accreditation. This way, Riinvest staff was being required whether for additional teaching or even full working relationship and we feared that we were losing our staff. Also, the need to create a stable income and competitive salary so we are not totally dependent on grants and contracts for research or consultancy work led us to consider more seriously the possibility of creating "a university" and to offer studies in the field of economy and computer science. The idea about computer sciences has enforced my cooperation with Idriz Smajli who had been my assistant and earned a doctoral degree in software engineering in Vienna where he was working, but he also had a group of friends such as, Nysret Musliu, Yll Haxhimusa, Driton Statovci, and Arian Shala. They had previously discussed the need of a serious program to train for programmers-software engineering since the European market would require a growing number of this profile and with young population that he had, this was a chance to take advantage of this opportunity since they could work for these west companies even from Kosovo. When we discussed this idea with them, they supported it and showed readiness to take over program design and quality assurance which created a feel of security for us. After the preparations for the program, we applied for a license at the Ministry and were willing to start offering these studies in September 2007. Two reasons made us initiate this activity: one was the sustainability needs for income flow at Riinvest and the second the bad study conditions at University of Prishtina and the fact that this condition was not being improved. For the first year, the recruitment was not as bad. But in May of 2007, the Ministry of Education contracted the British Council of Accreditation for an inspection. They presented a report, which clearly made a distinction between the many private providers of higher education in Kosovo regarding the programs,

staff, research and potential for development, however Ministry penalties did not follow the facts from the report, but were taking punitive and horizontal measures against everyone by preventing new student registration for one academic year. And for those of us who were in the beginning of the development, this was a very big handicap. Nonetheless the intention to have a small and qualitative college, were being put into a serious test. In these conditions, we created a partnership with AAB bringing together potentials to meet the requirements so we could be accredited as a university. In March 2009 the Commission composed of external experts after evaluating the AAB-Riinvest proposed that AAB-Riinvest is accredited as a University but this was not respected by the Agency's Board. Complaints were futile. All these institutions only covered political positions that were taken away, and it is evident that the institutions attempting to differentiate in quality were suffering the most in this process. There, we saw that institutions were captured by the politics. We never received a written response on complaints that we filed under the Government and Ministry administrative procedures. However we decided that despite these difficulties we would continue with our vision. Based on the agreement that we signed with Staffordshire University where most of our young experts were educated, we started offering studies in the English language in business management where students earned a British degree, similar to the one that a student would earn if he/she was studying at Staffordshire University in the UK. We passed the validation from this university which was way more stringent than the inspection by our accreditation agency. This validation proved that we had the capacity and conditions with our staff to develop the same studies that this university was offering in the UK. And instead of providing support and seeing this as an achievement by the Agency and the Ministry we were constantly encountering unexplained difficulties. After three years of partnership with AAB, we decided that we would develop better and more successfully as independent institutions considering our profiles and development orientations that we had. Now this college has about 450 students, offering seven programs in the Albanian language and four in English - providing qualitative studies at bachelor and mas-

ter levels in this disturbed market of higher education. Our mission is to create an organization that produces experts, with competitive knowledge for Kosovo's development needs and capacity to compete in the global market is a concern and inspiration is strong. The college has now taken the path of achieving international standards under the leadership of Bardhyl Meta, Bardha Qirezi, Dr. Alban Zogaj, Hazir Gashi, Dr. Arben Damoni, Diana Lekaj.

### **Year 2009: Riinvest's governance responsibility is transferred to the new generation**

Seeing Riinvest Institute's stabilization, in the fall of 2009, we decided to post a job announcement seeking an executive director oriented to select someone external from the institute's founders. Among the applicants was also Dr. Lumir Abdixhiku, one of Riinvests' talented researchers who applied from Staffordshire University where he was completing his doctoral degree. We also had other candidates, but the fact that Lumi was willing to take responsibility and recognizing his capacities the board decided to appoint him as a director. We decided to gradually pass governance responsibilities to the third generation researchers. There are also Dr. Alban Hashani, Dr. Alban Zogaj, Dr. Artane Rizvanolli, Fisnik Reçica, Albana Gashi, Saxhide Mustafa and then those from the newer generation like Agon Nixha, Ilir Mehmeti, Gent Beqiri, Premton Hyseni, Fisnik Bajrami, Diellza Gashi, Etida Zeka and many others that have worked or remained connected with Riinvest like Dr. Petrit Gashi, Dr. Besnik Krasniqi, Dr. Valentin Toçi, Dr. Arben Mustafa, Dr. Sokol Havolli and Salvador Elmazi and many others. They would make new positive difference and this was one of the greatest results we achieved in building the sustainability of this Institute which was not only tested in an uneasy environment but proved so far that it had created resources and competencies that will successfully face the future always sticking to the mission and vision of Riinvest.



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PARTNERS  
IN DECADES



## ISA MUSTAFA KOSOVO'S PRIME MINISTER

**R**iinvest Institute reached its 20 years of operation, an Institute which marked the beginning of new and different economic thinking in Kosovo. It was founded in a dark political environment, in occupation conditions, with the objective to promote the idea of modern economic development. Great ambitions' considering circumstances, but it was realized successfully.

Today, Riinvest can be proud of the great achievements in scientific research and educational preparation of a capable generation for the future, laying the foundations of a credible institution of higher education.

I happened to be in exile in the Western countries, in the mid-nineties of the last century when prof. Muhamet Mustafa announced the initiative of establishing the Riinvest Institute. Prof. Muhamet had the will, first and foremost, to provide a space for other economic thinking in Kosovo, to create a mechanism of cooperation with institutions and international institutions in an important phase/transition awaiting Kosovo. At that juncture, this seemed just as a wish, but today, it is a reality experienced and accomplished, not utopia.

I joined this wish as soon as I returned to Kosovo in 1999, once as a supporter and then as a senior researcher and vice president of the Institute. I say, unequivocally, that the most productive years of research I have passed with a wonderful team of boys and girls at the institute. But

first and foremost with a man of incomparable work habits, with lots of energy and lots of ideas, prof. Muhamet Mustafa. There was a great work on many projects with the support of international donors but also with international expertise in areas vital to building an economic system. A large number of researches have been developed, derived from primary data that have filled a huge gap for Kosovo's macroeconomic evaluations. Many of today's economic experts have been prepared and are educated people who have taken the responsibility to govern important pillars of our state.

Established partnership with many international institutions has a special value because, the way this partnership has developed, it also raised reciprocal values of cooperation. When we completed a project, discussion table, or created a new partnership, I had the impression that it added a new value of our work. A job that was not commercial, but appreciated the qualities, knowledge; ability to deliver solutions. Of a team that cultivated internal solidarity in sharing experiences and results management.

As a prime minister of the country, today I see with great interest Riinvest's contribution for the country. This institute, not only has written a new history of economic thinking in our country, but it has created a foundation of scientific ideas to economic and social future of our country, it has created people who can do this with confidence and competence.

I wish for new successes in the third decade!



**James Hope**  
USAID/Kosovo  
Mission Director

March 12, 2015

**Attn:** Monograph Editorial Team, Riinvest Institute  
**From:** James Hope, USAID Mission Director

USAID was one of the first international donors on the ground in 1999 and has been a steady partner to Kosovo—and one of its biggest financial backers – ever since. Thanks to the generosity of the American people, USAID has committed nearly \$800 million over the past 16 years to help rebuild the country, establish democratic institutions, and build the foundation for sustainable growth.

Over that time, we have partnered with Kosovo's leaders to provide creative, lasting solutions to serve both the immediate and future needs of the citizens of this great country. USAID is proud to include Riinvest Institute among our partners. Seeing Riinvest's potential as a leading Kosovo think tank, we began our cooperation with the institute almost immediately in the fall of 2000. Between 2000 and 2004, USAID worked to help develop the institute's capacity to conduct research and make policy recommendations on economic issues.

Another key objective of our cooperation was to broaden the representation of the business community in the policy dialogue. Through our partnership with Riinvest, USAID helped establish the Association

of Kosovo Businesses, which remains very active in promoting domestic products and advising the government in developing policies to benefit Kosovo's business community. Developing the capacity of local organizations to meet the needs of a country's citizens is a core tenet of the USAID Forward initiative. Using this philosophy here in Kosovo, we endeavor with each program to prepare our partner institutions and organizations to take over the work we have begun together.

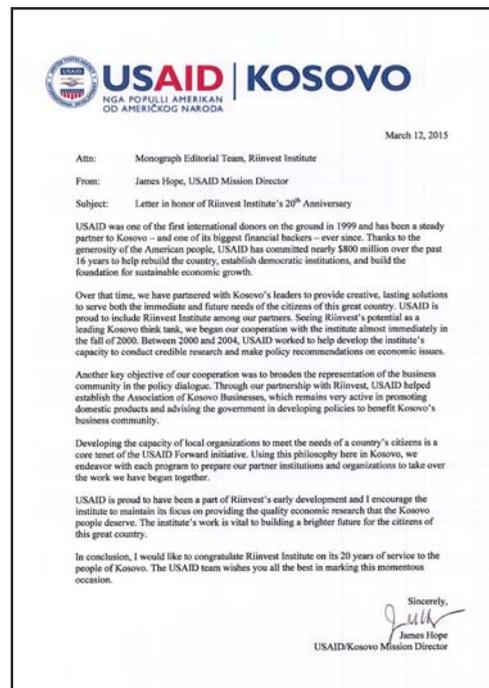
USAID is proud to have been a part of Riinvest's early development and I encourage the institute to maintain its focus on providing the quality economic research that the Kosovo people deserve. The institute's work is vital to building a brighter future for the citizens of this great country.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate Riinvest Institute on its 20 years of service to the people of Kosovo. The USAID team wishes you all the best in marking this momentous occasion.

Sincerely,

**James Hope**

USAID/Kosovo Mission Director



CIPE



**John D. Sullivan**  
Executive Director

March 15, 2015

Lumir Abdixhiku, Executive Director  
Riinvest Institute for Development Research  
Lidhja e Prizrenit no.42  
10000 Prishtina, Republic of Kosova

Dear Mr. Abdixhiku,



**Andrew C. Wilson**  
Deputy Director

The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) would like to congratulate the Riinvest Institute on its 20th anniversary. Since its establishment, Riinvest and CIPE have been strategic partners to strengthen Kosovo's democratic institutions and improve its business regulatory environment for small and medium-sized enterprises.

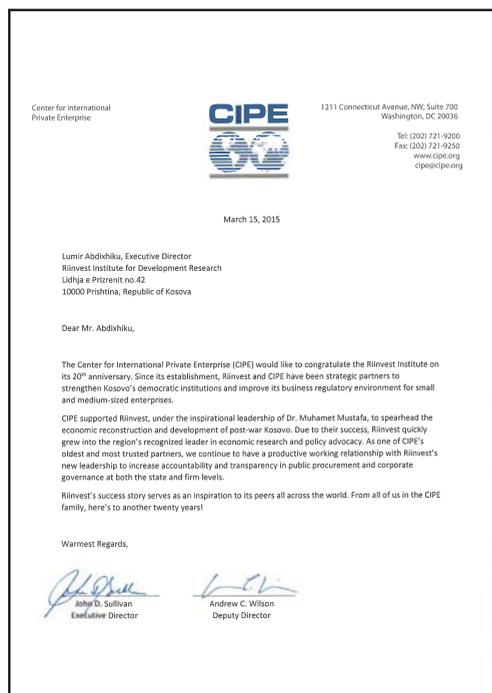
CIPE supported Riinvest, under the inspirational leadership of Dr. Muhamet Mustafa, to spearhead the economic reconstruction and development of post-war Kosovo. Due to their success, Riinvest quickly grew into the region's recognized leader in economic research and policy advocacy. As one of CIPE's oldest and most trusted partners, we continue to have a productive working relationship with Riinvest's new leadership to increase accountability and transparency in public procurement and corporate governance at both the state and firm levels.

Riinvest's success story serves as an inspiration to its peers all across the world. From all of us in the CIPE family, here's to another twenty years!

Warmest Regards,

**John D. Sullivan**  
Executive Director

**Andrew C. Wilson**  
Deputy Director



# EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## Samuel Žbogar

Head of the  
European Union  
Office in Kosovo  
and EU Special  
Representative



May 5, 2015

When I think about Riinvest, three things immediately come to my mind: it is a centre of producing knowledge, sharing education – and accepting the experience of the others. When we wanted to have a thorough insight into the habits and expectations of Kosovo citizens, Riinvest helped us with a survey. When we are naming good education hubs to our colleagues and guests, visiting Pristina, Riinvest is the name we often mention. And I am personally proud that I was able to share some of our policy priorities and experiences with Riinvest students – and professors!

All these shows that a serious academic institution today needs to have both educational and research ambitions if it wants to attract best students and compete on a global academic market. Riinvest's focus on economic studies and research is even more important in the context of contemporary Kosovo situation. We like to say, especially after 2014 elections, that Kosovo needs to redouble its efforts in the field of economic governance. It is the most important game Kosovo is playing – since it is for the victory of all citizens, not just some or few of them.

European Union supports activities, dedicated to economic development, employment and welfare. You know very well our priorities: economic development and welfare can be best motivated through market economy by improving fiscal policies for promotion of small and

medium entrepreneurship and improving business environment. We support strong focus on agriculture and we found it important that Kosovo has recognised strong potential in developing tourism.

But let me use this solemn opportunity of 20 years of your work to stress the importance of focus on such growth-oriented sectors as education is. While investments in education do not give immediate results, there are an absolute precondition for Kosovo to develop a knowledge-based society and sustainable economic development. It should be done in an all-inclusive way, involving civil society, businesses, foreign investors and even media.

Society flourishes if economic does well – but in fact the best proof of such flourishing are seen in other, softer, but essential fields of social life, such as education, health, science and culture. Kosovo should not underestimate them, since they are crucial longer-term development policies.

And it is here, not only in searching for new opportunities, but always insisting on human dimension of future economic development and the importance of high ethical standards of knowledge-based society, that academic institutions such as Riinvest should find their role – and future! Knowing the dedicated staff and the leadership of current Riinvest, I am more than confident that these expectations will be fulfilled.

You know how.

# SDC

## SWISS COOPERATION OFFICE IN KOSOVO

**Markus  
Baechler**

Country Director,  
Swiss Cooperation  
Office in Kosovo



# Congratulation to Riinvest's 20 anniversary form the Swiss Cooperation Office

March 17, 2015

Attn: **Monograph Editorial Team, Riinvest Institute**

From: **Markus Baechler, SDC Country Director**

As Swiss Cooperation Office we have always worked hand in hand with local partners aiming to ensure development of local capacities as well as ensuring local ownership of our interventions. As soon as we have started our operations in the field of Economy and Employment we got in touch with the Riinvest Institute which was at that time almost the only local think tank that was active in the field of Economic Development. In almost all our stages of programme development we came across Riinvest, being it for the informative meetings or by using their research studies that always helped us to better understand the Kosovo context and its related trends.

Except that we have benefited a lot from the Riinvest's Institute know how, we have also mutually agreed to start the joint cooperation in the year 2005. At that time Riinvest Institute, in cooperation with the Open Society Institute (OSI), has been implementing in Kosovo the project Delta (Developing Enterprises Locally through Action and Alliance). The aim of this project was human capacity building of municipal officials in designing and

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implementing strategies and local economic development projects in terms of creating a better environment for the development of economic activities in these municipalities. Around 5 municipalities have been supported at that time through our joint cooperation with the Riinvest.

In 2011 together with Riinvest Institute we have launched a report on Improving the Kosovo Serbian Business Community Involvement in Economic Activities in Kosovo. The purpose of the project was to generate a comprehensive framework and recommendations on how the stakeholders, can contribute to, support and improve business environment of K-Serbian business community in the Kosovo market. The research study investigated the actual situation of K-Serbian businesses, their potentials for development, barriers to development and the level of cooperation with other business communities in Kosovo. The research work and the report were prepared by the Riinvest Institute.

At the same time together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFAD) we have entrusted to the Riinvest Institute the implementation of the Facilitation Entity for the Horticulture Sector in Kosovo; a two year project that aimed at implementing a structured research and development in specific market chains or sectors to boost pro poor impact in the Horticulture sector. The whole intervention was done jointly with the key local stakeholders of the Horticulture value chains that led in developing

a sound analysis, finding joint market opportunities and implement new products and innovative technologies that were increasingly used by the actors involved in the Horticulture sector.

At the moment we have a program that aims at creating employment opportunities in the private sector that is more dynamic and generates additional jobs and income opportunities. This project is implemented by Swisscontact and Riinvest Institute that work together under the consortium partner modality.

We appreciate a lot a good cooperation that we have had till now with the Riinvest Institute and are looking forward to a good and successful cooperation of the actual Promoting Private Sector Employment/ PPSE program but also to work with Riinvest in other endeavors. We would like to congratulate Riinvest for its work done till now, for being able to adopt its mandate towards development goals of the country and for providing a good quality service that has always been remarkable.

I would like to congratulate Riinvest to its 20th anniversary and I am looking forward to continuing an excellent cooperation.

Best regards,

**Markus Baechler,**

Country Director, Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo

WORLD  
BANK

**Jan-Peter  
Olters**

Country Manager,  
World Bank in Kosovo



April 15, 2015

Riinvest's 20th Anniversary: Congratulations and Best Wishes!

Dear colleagues,

Weak labour market outcomes remain the Achilles' heel of Kosovo's economy. Across the political aisle, among key stakeholders in academia, civil society, the private sector, and media, there is a broad consensus on the need to foster more dynamic rates of sustainable and inclusive growth to generate more-and, especially, more high-quality and better-paying-jobs for citizens and residents. However, there is much less of a consensus among the political elite and within society on the key pillars and core priorities of such a comprehensive socio-economic development strategy that is to guide economic policy-making in decades to come. In fact, some of the most striking debates circle around the role that the private sector (the most important generator of new jobs) can and should play in Kosovo's economy.

For Kosovo to become a modern, dynamic, and prosperous country with economic perspectives similar to those prevailing in other European countries, all important stakeholders will have to (i) debate and ultimately agree on core ingredients of an appropriate growth model; and (ii) anchor its key elements into the development programmes of successive governments formed by political parties that, today, are in government, opposition, or not yet established. Kosovo has few (functioning) fora in which to debate development priorities and, as such, pillars of its growth model—with very few exceptions.

With its track record in high-quality research and the focus on key development challenges, Riinvest has earned, over the past 20 years, not only the credibility as an independent, professional stakeholder with a proven ability to produce high-quality, rigorous, yet accessible and policy-oriented research but also as a convening power capable of bringing together government and opposition politicians, academics, and representatives from the private sector, civil society, and international development partners to focus on, debate, and seek agreements on core challenges, including public policy-making, the business climate, economic informality, or corporate governance. In that, Riinvest is an indispensable research institute (a think tank in the best sense of the word), and it remains unrivalled—cementing its position at the very centre of the debate on development challenges and the search for means to improve the situation for businesses and citizens alike. With declining marginal rates of development contribution from the “traditional” sources of growth, it becomes even more central for society as a whole to take fullest advantage of all opportunities to increase the productivity in key sectors of the economy and, as such, “endogenise” growth to make it more dynamic, more sustainable, and more inclusive in years and decades to come. And that, of course, makes Riinvest even more indispensable, in years and in decades to come!

Congratulations on what has been achieved and courage for what lies ahead!

Yours sincerely  
**Jan-Peter Olters**  
Country Manager  
World Bank in Kosovo



# KOSOVO FOUNDATION FOR OPEN SOCIETY



**Luan Shllaku**  
Executive Director

March 12, 2015

When I started working in 1997 at the Soros Foundation, I have to admit that I knew very little about the civil society in general, and especially for the one in Kosovo. In the 90's there were so many civil initiatives on one hand, and so few registered civil organizations that would brought an interesting paradox: when the whole country was placed in civilian leadership binary, and functioning in general, the number of organizations which today we call non-governmental organizations or non-profit organizations, was symbolic. There were three or four of them. They were very strong, well organized, and had captured an important position within the political and socio-economic developments of that time, which were quite turbulent. At this time, I knew of one of this organization-Riinvest Institute. Under the leadership of Muhamet Mustafa, who already had a huge baggage of expertise and experience in the economic field but also in politics, Riinvest Institute had soon taken an important place in the regional stage of development institutes, for whom

we learned that were called "think-tank". With analyses that Institute would constantly conduct, the region's economic mosaic was being fulfilled, which came to be seen with a specific dioptrics after disintegrating economic movements of the former Yugoslavia.

We were lucky that I and my colleagues from the Soros Foundation were able to establish a very close partnership in the years before the war. With Riinvest, which culminated after the war when we became co initiators of the Forum 2015, which together with KACI organization we put in motion in March 2003. An advocacy platform like this one had constantly been fed with deep analysis on Kosovo's economy conducted by Riinvest Institute, as well as public policies in different resorts that not only constantly generated better information for the public on these development issues, but also concrete recommendations to advance the issues with which Forum 2015 dealt.

What makes Riinvest Institute very specific within civil institutions scene in Kosovo is that they constantly have educated cadres, especially in the field of economy, who today have become carriers

of some crucial initiatives, not just civil society's initiatives, but also the university academic and administrative ones. To achieve this, long before forming its university structure the Institute made sure that all its staff are educated and specialize in the European prestigious universities. It was a very visionary and effective action that marked positive developments in the economic and social scene in Kosovo.

And finally, such a healthy and forward-looking developmental trajectory definitely paves a new way for the new generations, which Riinvest educated them by also giving them a chance to not only gain expertise but also experience in the affairs of a modern "think tank". The Institute is led by a new generation of experts who are in the best path to become the Kosovo's top experts in their fields much needed in this country. I have no doubt that Riinvest will continue to have a very important role in future developments in our new country, and will be, as it has been until now, a new energy for Kosovo experts.

**Luan Shllaku**  
Executive Director

## FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION (FES)



**Dr. Besa Luzha**  
Program  
Coordinator,  
Friedrich Ebert  
Stiftung

March 12, 2015

Riinvest Institute is one of the first institutes with which Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) has cooperated since its establishment in Kosovo. Analysis on economic vision, privatization model and Kosovo's economic development directions, have been few of the topics with which we have launched a public debate, between the institutions, civil society and experts on the issues that are fundamental for Kosovos' society development. Along with Riinvest, we have offered first trainings to the parliament members and first mandaters on budget and economic and development policies and have also cooperated in the concrete analysis of these policies which have helped parliament members to make good and informed decisions.

Analysis of the situation of the agreement created after CEFTA's blockade, energy policy, and the first study on informality in Kosovo, which offers concrete data on country's infor-

mal economic sector are all important documents that local and international institutions refer to.

All of these products realized by RIINVEST and supported by Friedrich Ebert Foundation, have helped the debate on policies, based on the arguments and data which have offered specific recommendations, many of which are taken into consideration by decision makers. These were made possible only thanks to the dedication of all RIINVEST's staff who with their knowledge and professionalism have contributed to the realization of these and many other common products in the scope of economy and sustainable development.

Lately, Regional Development Academy in partnership with the European Commission and Riinvest Institute is providing concrete assistance in local economic development, by assisting officials at local municipalites to increase their capabilities in designing, assessing and implementing projects which are important to the development with great impact for the locality or municipality through

the component of small grants but even more important is that they are being trained on how to apply for European and other donors projects that facilitate sustainable development.

This is the duty of civil society and the FES mission in Kosovo, that with deepening and specializing of some fields according to certain disciplines to analyze the policies and actions of decision-making institutions with critical overview by offering models, concrete alternative solutions for specific problems.

On this finding, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung thanks RIINVEST Institute for this multi-year cooperation which will continue even in the future, based on the same mision – the development of a democratic Kosovo with a clear vision for development and integration.

**Dr. Besa Luzha,**  
Program Coordinator,  
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung



PROMOVIMI I ZHVILLIMIT EKONOMIK  
NËPËRMJET SHOQËRISË CIVILE



Muhamet MUSTAFI  
RIINVEST

Andreas HEDERHART  
GAP-CEB

Renzo BALZANO  
EU Commissioner

Imr MUSTAFI  
RIINVEST

Muhamet SADIKI  
RIINVEST



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OUR FRIENDS



IRAJ  
HASHI

STAFFORDSHIRE  
UNIVERSITY

**K**al have been associated with Riinvest Institute since 1998 and visited them several times each year since then. I have worked with them on a variety of research projects, conferences and educational activities such as Summer Schools. I have seen them move from one place to another every few years and noticed new faces each time I visited them. I have seen them grow not only in numbers but more importantly in the quality of their work and maturity of their young staff. I have seen the leadership of the Institute transferred from the older generation, the founders, to the new generation who worked their way through the ranks, developing their knowledge, qualifications and skills on the way. While in earlier years, they relied very much on the help of foreign consultants for their projects, they gradually developed their own skills and became more capable and self-confident so that the bulk of their work is now done by themselves without any foreign consultants.

This has been a remarkable journey for Riinvest Institute, its founders, its past and present leaders and its staff. Over the years, the Institute has been a training ground for many young Kosovars who worked there for a few years and moved on to other institutions and companies where they made use of what they learnt at Riinvest. Riinvest Institute has been fantastic at investment in human capital and though it has not always benefited from its investment directly, it has made a significant contribution to raising the intellectual and academic level of several generation of researchers and academics in Kosovo.

Three factors have made Riinvest special for me. First, they have always worked with integrity and independence and never succumbed to political influences and pressures. They have not been dependent on the Government of the day and, therefore, have been able to pursue

their project objectives without worrying about the reaction of the government or the funders to their investigations. They may have paid a price for their independence and integrity but it has been worth it.

Second, they have always been willing to support their young staff to improve their knowledge and raise their intellectual level and become better researchers. Even though many of them left the Institute after gaining higher qualifications, this did not stop the Institute supporting the next generation of their staff. On the contrary, they continued to offer opportunities for self-improvement to their staff irrespective of whether or not they will remain in the Institute. Not many institutions here in Kosovo or in Western countries are so generous with their staff. But then, not many institutions in Kosovo or in Western countries command such respect and affection by their present and former staff.

Third, Riinvest has also played the role of a serious civil society organisation, encouraging the involvement of citizens in debating issues which have had significant impact on the society and raising the public awareness of these issues – ranging from alternative methods of privatisation of socially owned companies in the early 2000s, corporate governance of banks and large POEs in late 2000s, and now the current debate on the Trepca Mining Complex. This is a service to the society which has not been offered by other organisations.

In the last 20 years, Riinvest Institute has gone from strength or strength, expanded the scope and quality of its work significantly and, most importantly and to its founders' credit, the younger generation have taken over the running of the Institute. It has made a significant contribution to Kosovo's human capital and economic development. I congratulate the founders, represented by Professor Muhamt Mustafa and the new generation of leaders, represented by Dr. Lumir Abdixhiku. May your good work continue for many years to come.

## Riinvest's 20th anniversary: a well-designed dream



VETON  
SURROI  
PUBLICIST

**20** years ago when Muhamet Mustafa asked me for a favor, to write a supporting letter to CIPE (Center for International Private Entrepreneurship) in Washington I did not know exactly what is it that I had to support. It sounded like an enterprise name, RIINVEST, meaning a commercial activity that leads towards ri-investing. Back then, in 1995, entrepreneurship and every other aspect of life in Kosovo was suppressed under the Serbian occupation and the very idea that someone is starting a new initiative was both tedious (because of difficulties easily evident from the Serbian authorities) and challenging (because they still had the energy to start anything, even though the difficulties were known).

I had faith in Muhamet Mustafa when he explained that an institute that will be dealing with economy, that will analyze the economic situation and prepare a vision for the future is being planned. In the occupied Kosovo, we were all dreamers, we all lived and acted dreaming that the occupation will come to an end. Riinvest's dream seemed like a well designed dream: one day, when we free ourselves, we will need people and ideas to lift the country's economy which occupation was deliberately sinking.

This belief in the dream of the founders of Riinvest made me feel rewarded throughout the years of the life of Riinvest. During these years, while attending international conferences by institutes and other notable organizations in the world, Riinvests' voice as participants whether in discussion or as analytical material for debate (quoted from the speakers, including me) established the level of seriousness that the arguments for and about Kosovo gave adequate reliability.

In 1999, when Kosovo's delegations was leaving for Rambouillet, I sought Muhamet Mustafa's and other Riinvest experts' help, so that, if necessary, the Kosovo delegation could rapidly consult about economic issues, on diverse issues such as regulation of tax relations between Kosovo and Serbia at the time when Kosovo should be under the protectorate or for the issue of succession (including property and international debts).

At that time, I noticed a discrepancy between the adviser and the one being advised: Riinvest was the right path to create a consistent economic advice, but Kosovo was not in the right way to create a leadership that would listen to it, consistent economic advice.

In this environment, more or less Riinvest's activity developed after the liberation. In this environment, the institute may have not produced many tips that were heard by the powers, whether international or local powers in Kosovo, but with a consistency it has created a new generation of researchers and practitioners who maintain their academic dignity as well as their independence from the submission and compliance to politics, pre-politics and its pressures.

Throughout the years, Riinvest's vast participation in the civil society tables has been a necessity in terms of the depth of the debate and even as evidence that creative and analytical thinking is evident in Kosovo, even though it is not heard in state institutions.

Today, in its 20th anniversary, Riinvest is prepared for a different time, when we will be liberated from the primitivism in leading elites, when in this country the discrepancy between the capacity to give advice and lack of capacity to accept them is diminished.



## SHKËLQIM CANI

MINISTER OF  
FINANCE OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF  
ALBANIA

**R**elationship and cooperation with Kosovo, part of the Albanian nation, has been a long-standing dream. Due to conditioned circumstances by political regimes in Albania, Kosovo, and because of the events that made history in the late 20th century for the Albanian nation, the possibility of cooperation was severely restricted and the dream remained a dream...

Nonetheless not infinite. The events that followed the war of 1999 opened a brand new site for Kosovo, which was finalized with the Declaration of Independence on 17 February 2008. It was a coronation, where we somehow felt like contributors. That's because in 2007 I began cooperation with Riinvest.

Cooperation with Riinvest started with fire and desire of knowing the other part of Albanians, so near and so far. With greatest pleasure, I accepted the invitation for cooperation and also with the excitement of doing a new thing. Responsibility of contribution, participation in academic life in Kosovo and the education of the new post-war generation were covered by special sensation. Because I wasn't very aware of the situation, I remember that there were times that a numerous questions would invade me. Starting from the language, the vocabulary to be used, the rate of speaking ... and so on. Of course these may sound childish now but today, eight years later; these questions have seen an unprecedented development. As in many other areas, these assumptions no longer exist. Nevertheless, for me they remain beautiful, as they are from the start.

Cooperation with Riinvest included teaching in master programs and research studies, where Riinvest definitely has a merit as a leader institution in Kosovo, with studies that include not only Kosovo, but also the region.

I was proud that together with Riinvest faculty and staff, we have worked closely to create the first specialized programs at Master level courses in the field of modern banks, banking development strategy, international finance, banking risk management and economy development. With the aim of attracting a significant number of students who come not only from the school banks, as the normal process of

the study, but also with direct experience in the field of finance and banking, people wish to advance their knowledge, to increase competitiveness in the market and to enhance their skills and knowledge. An admirable interest from those seeking knowledge, seeking to capture the lost time, an unprecedented willingness of those who did not stop their studies even in difficult conditions before the war. We were with them not only in teacher - student relationship, but also as friends, as brothers. Their curiosity to know more about Albania, just like mine to know more about Kosovo, was a separate school. And for this, I have to thank Riinvest for the given opportunity to have more friends of friends on this side of the border.

The relationship with students was one side. But as special and exciting was the relationship with the academic staff at Riinvest. A dedicated staff to ensure first element in attracting students -academic quality. Developed and revised programs each year were the basis of the teaching success. The needs of the Kosovo's new economy were the foundations of scientific research. In this particular field many students were included through the topics of the course or degree work. While as an academic staff I was engaged in many activities of national and international character. I was impressed by their abilities, especially in analytical work, advanced scientific research methods, high level of knowledge in statistics and IT, connections with many public and private institutions in Kosovo and beyond. Along the routes of development, we have often discussed about macroeconomics, finance and banks. These are areas that I love very much and do not hesitate to share my experience and knowledge with anyone. Open to colleagues who brought experience and original perspectives, especially regarding the features representing Kosovo's economy. A dialogue and cooperation that even now that I am a Minister of Finance, I have not underestimated and whenever I find time, I try to be present. This is because in one way or another, whether I want or not, I am part of this honorable institution. For me, Riinvest is a strong connection point with Kosovo. Therefore I appreciate it; I honor it and continue to do so. Thank you for this irreplaceable experience Riinvest!



BATON  
HAXHIU

KLAN KOSOVA

**A**t a time when everyone ran to make politics, at Riinvest, they were making an institution. This kind of intellectual engagement in the postwar period was hardly explainable. But it remained limitedly understood even today, when everybody wants overnight fame and money.

Riinvest is one of the rare institutions that rejected the postwar model where the main motto has been the overthrow of everything that has an origin of having knowledge as a concept. Riinvest refused the postwar motto: "Times have changed, people have changed, and values have changed- now we are the decision makers?!"

Riinvest has changed the trend by ameliorating primitive patriotism and has set criteria being clear with patriotism; that patriotism is relative.

Riinvest was clear that patriotism and love for the country is not only the capture of the gun: because they clearly knew that for someone else patriotism, presents a concrete commitment, financial or material; for the third, the symbolism of the flag is the beginning and the end; for the fourth, patriotism is the provision of a book, a film and the Riinvest group have established a knowledge institute.

In our country, now, in most cases, they achieved success and don't have even the slightest connection with intellectual, with knowledge, institutes, and conjectural successes; they are inversely proportional to intellectual impact.

After the war, Kosovo has refused to have an opinion on institutional knowledge and has been in crisis being with no chances in front of the mediocrity rush. Riinvest, unlike many others, has rejected all the trends found on their path and by working quietly with continued impact; it has become the leader of transformation of social and political reality in Kosovo.

How this will be assessed in the future, it has nothing to do with the Institute, but with consciousness and morality of those for whom the sacrifice was made. In societies where there is lack of rule, the people of knowledge are promoters of social debate and have an impact on conceptual analysis of key processes.

Becoming an intellectual of an independent institute, of a small and underdeveloped nation is always a weighted decision.

Adversity of countries such as Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia is that the evaluation of the public intellectuals' role is closely linked to the political changes in election and party. That has not happened with Riinvest.

Essays readers of Riinvest group, then the political, economic, sociological, philosophical analysis, for religion, power, globalization, identity, geostrategic changes, and other would have created a sense of pride for having a public Albanian institute that contributed locally to global debates without being influenced by politics.

It is a sin that they have not received proper size of seriousness in Kosovo because of the victory of mediocrity, and unfortunately they remained only within Kosovo.

Under normal circumstances, each time period creates its own generation of important public intellectuals. Then, with gradualism it is amended with subsequent generation. In Kosovo, the distortions in social developments did not allow maximum victory of Riinvest, but this Institute has created individuals who bear the economic and social analysis for all. Therefore, it is painful we wasted time by not accepting Riinvest to be our guide for economic and political programs of the Kosovo institutions.

Riinvest Institute is not only an institute for the people who created it; it is knowledge and culture, at the same time.



AGRON  
BAJRAMI

KOHA DITORE

**N**ews is of no value, if not based on facts. In fact, news without facts is not news! But, what one learns very quickly as a journalist is that getting to the facts is not at an easy job. On the contrary! The discovery of the facts, interpreting them correctly, and finally their presentation before the reader in a credible way, reliable, is what makes a newspaper item to be reliable.

Of course, this applies to any type of reporting, but particularly it weighs more when reporting about economic affairs, where specialized knowledge is often necessary to interpret a fact, to identify a trend, to properly convey a development, or to foresee the consequences for Kosovo and its citizens, even when we talk about global developments that to many they have appeared too remote to affect us such as the economic and financial crisis in the past few years in Europe and the US.

Riinvest Institute with their analysis, reports, conferences and meetings organized all the time has been a central factor in informing about economic and development issues. It has been a source of facts to see where we went wrong in the past, how to work today and what awaits us in the future. It was a main interpreter of policies that plunged Kosovo each time deeper into economic stagnation, but also a proper provider of how we should come out of it. It has been active in advocating valuable issues for the society, as part of a small piece of Kosovo's active civil society. It raised its voice against the harmful policies, regardless of who invented them, who has sponsored them, and who has supported them. It has been, and remains an institution that works in the service of citizens, and not to the interests of a narrow political, economic or social group, like many others.

For this reason, and for many other things, since its establishment 20 years ago until today, Riinvest has been irreplaceable, for journalists and the public. Especially Koha Ditore has benefited from Riinvest Institute expertise, whose analysis has served us in our mission for accurate information, fair and timely for the Kosovo public for events and economic prospects. While the columns of Institute's director, Lumir Abdixhiku have become synonymous with accurate economic analysis of the developments that have occurred, and early warning for those to come.

Currently, as everyone may say what they think, even when wrong, the value of words based on facts, and their objective interpretation, has multiplied. However, when it comes to economy, the word spoken by Riinvest, weighs more than any other.

And not only the economy...



## AFËRDITA SARAÇINI

RTV21

**1** 995 marks very important steps taken at the time by civil society. One of the main steps with high influence to the country's economic development is the founding of the Riinvest Institute. Riinvest Institute in pre-war conditions brought additional information for everyone in Kosovo, especially during the period of 1995 -2000, and from these years forward, Riinvest brought a new spirit of thinking and a different view on economic developments in Kosovo and the region.

Riinvest Institute served as a reference point for RTV21 on matters of economic development while consulting them and their expert opinions who have contributed in this institution for many years.

Many major domestic economic crisis, many issues that were treated as taboo, have been treated in our TV debates, not only through our journalists' consultations with experts of the Institute, but also with experts' participation in such debates.

Riinvest has made its contribution through numerous publications on the modern economic development of Kosovo, it has published research on policies for the advancement of business and creation of necessary conditions for businesses especially for small and medium ones, and as such it also created public opinion on how to create these conditions and what is the direction for sustainable economic development in Kosovo.

Riinvest parameters related to economic development are mentioned in RTV21 television debates not only by Institute experts, but also by a number of other local and foreign economic development experts.

Some of the main issues that economic experts have considered and evaluated always referring to Riinvest's researches were mainly related to the labor market and unemployment reduction, Kosovo's

economic sustainability, Institute's research associated with foreign direct investment in Kosovo and other issues vital for the economy.

20th anniversary, finds the Institute in an environment where more work is still needed and where this Institute will have its own role in critical thinking related to the sustainable economic development in Kosovo always based on research and overall professional work that this institute does in this field.

Respectfully,

Afërdita Saraçini Kelmendi



ARBANA  
XHARRA

ZËRI  
NEWSPAPER

In different times and circumstances, everything you see, read and understand you do it differently. Fourteen years ago, I was only 19 years old, when I started working as a journalist. A new journey for me full of challenges and uncertainties. Economy was the last sector I thought about covering for more than ten years during my career. I had no knowledge on economic issues, and less on reading the budget lines, or analyzing political interests through numbers.

But I found a door that was always open for me, and a group of experts that without hesitation would sit at the table to clarify what I needed to know, those that actually define essential problems of state building. At first I read them just as texts and statistics, I saw reports about conferences without realizing that this door mobilizes public opinion through the media on major economic issues.

Riinvest Institute for Development Research was not just an Institute for the publication of reports, analysis and research. It challenged the authorities with facts and arguments. Difficult circumstances of the transition period at the times when politics dominated the economy were constant challenges, but Riinvest - diligently continued its mission towards development policy advocacy, while staying with a magnifying glass, to anyone that came, fell, and returned to power again.

Dealing with degradation was not new for Riinvest because this institution had begun its activity in the worst possible time, that of Milosevic's regime. Established in 1995, working for two decades, with dedication and professionalism, in partnership with international organizations, Riinvest has gradually become one of the most influential factors of economic issues in Kosovo's public opinion.

In each period, for the past 20 years, Riinvest has never been sub-

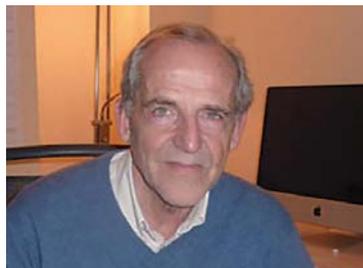
missive to the politics, but in contrary criticizing it by introducing findings before the public, whilst offering solutions through economic development strategies.

This institute was the instigator of debates on the investment environment in Kosovo, the degraded privatization process of social and public enterprises and so on. Riinvest, also brought a new spirit, unknown to the civil society in Kosovo, another model of providing solutions, followed by its weight and importance, by offering not only findings but also expertise in the various economic fields and alternative policies.

This institute gained its credibility with professionalism, testifying about country's degradation with facts on the table, while meantime offering solutions to economic sustainability. For many years, Riinvest has led with initiatives, through public forums, conferences, debates, publication analysis. Its influence has grown along with experts that have developed within this institute. The first "think tank" institute of such nature in Kosovo opened its doors to a new generation, which grew and developed within it. "Riinvest"-has managed to present the most influential experts on economic issues in the country, the promoters of the new spirit of public discourse.

This institute remains the most credible address and plays a key role in opening debates on the country's economic challenges. Often times, Riinvest has changed the flow of economic events by opening public debates with impact on the most important events in Kosovo economic sectors.

Today, 20 years since its creation and 14 years since I have closely followed their work, I see, read and consider it as the most credible institution in the country. Riinvest has managed to install the highest standard of modern economic mentality in place!



## MICHAEL WEICHERT

FRIEDRICH-  
EBERT-  
STIFTUNG

**F**ES has been partner of Riinvest since 1997. During the period between 1999 and 2005 I had the pleasure to be responsible on the side of FES for the cooperation between both institutions. My first contact with Prof. Mustafa and his colleagues has been in spring 1999. As an observer from outside, I remember well those days of the war in Kosova, the terrible news coming from there, and the dramatic pictures and the preoccupying news in the media during these days. Coming from Sofia, where we had our regional office, I arrived in Tetovo where many people from Kosova had escaped the war and had found shelter. The small city was full of people and cars, one could hardly find a free seat in one of the many cafes which were at the same time the meeting point for everybody, including the many internationals who were present as part of international aid programs or as correspondents from media outlets all over the world.

Riinvest had established a small office in the center of town. Not knowing when the war would end, we started in those days a program of studies and proposals for the (re-) construction of Kosova after the war. We knew that many experts from Kosova were in Tetovo, waiting for better days to come, in the cafes of the town. While waiting in Tetovo, we wanted to offer them the opportunity to make use of their intellectual and visionary capacities to contribute to “the days after” and the enormous challenges which were to be addressed once war was over and the people of Kosova would return to their country.

As a result, Riinvest and FES organized the first international conference after the end of the war, in the early days of July 1999 (it would be good, to include, here, the title of the conference).

The venue was the sport-palace (??), which had suffered from bombardments during the war. Windows were broken, and during that rainy day the water was coming into the conference room through a variety of wholes and broken windows. It was a challenge to provide technical equipment, but the conference brought together a relieved and enthusiastic community of people who wanted to contribute to the (re-) building of a new country and a new state.

I imagine that some of the papers presented and many of the proposals made found their way into the reconstruction process which has continued since then, up to today. The heart-warming experience of our cooperation and the contact and the communication between our teams and in particular with Prof. Mustafa remain very prominently in my memories.

Sarajevo, March 31, 2015

Michael Weichert



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RIINVEST  
BOARD



## ILAZ RAMAJLI

BOARD MEMBER



**F**rom September 1990 I was forced to stay abroad. Despite frequent contacts with family, friends and associates I completely lacked information about how was life being developed in Kosovo, and what were people that I knew and worked with doing. One of them with whom I met occasionally in Ljubljana, Skopje and Tirana was my friend Prof. Muhamet Mustafa. In 1995, President Rugova appointed me as the head of the office for Republic of Kosovo in Tirana. In early 1996 prof. Muhamet Mustafa had come on a visit to Tirana and of course met. He told me that along with some of his friends, experts in various fields, they had created an institute and named it Riinvest. The founders' idea was that the institute deals with economic studies. Muhamet spoke with enthusiasm about this enterprise and expressed confidence that they would do interesting and valuable work for Kosovo. I was glad for this initially but it wasn't clear to me what was the dimension and importance of such an undertaking.

In December 1998, Sejdi Osmani, also a friend of mine came in Tirana. On behalf of Riinvest he would introduce

this Institutes' publications in Tirana Book Fair. Within the presented publications there was also a publication entitled: "Economic Activities and Democratic Development of Kosovo". Like many others who had the opportunity to see this publication even I was also surprised by the content, quality, data, findings and recommendations contained in this study. I asked Sejdi to give me some copies of this publication in order to scatter it to the foreign country embassies in Tirana. Initially, I distributed about 10 copies to the main state embassies such as the USA and EU embassies. Despite the fact that 1998 was a year of war in Kosovo and there were already about 28,000 refugees from Kosovo in Albania, almost all embassies that had received the publication asked me to meet with their political or economic attaché to explain who Riinvest was, who were the founders and experts who had worked in publication, how was it possible that such a substantial and important study has been done in occupied Kosovo and so on. Seeing the interest about the publication and in absence of original necessary copies, I made a number of photocopies and send it all foreign embassies in Tirana.

After the war and my mission in Tirana ended, I went back to Kosovo. At the invitation of prof. Muhamet Mustafa I started working at Riinvest as a Managing Director and stayed there until April 2002. During this time, despite my experience of many years, I had the opportunity to learn many new things from employees and external Riinvest collaborators. I believe that Riinvest has played and is playing an important role for Kosovo and its citizens. Riinvest was and continues to be, in my opinion, the reference point which is visited and cited by many international, financial and political institutions when it came to post-war reconstruction and economic development of the Republic of Kosovo. I consider it to be an honor and privilege that for a while I worked at Riinvest and had the chance to work with local affirmed experts as well as young experts from many fields who were and continue to be employed or are external collaborators with Riinvest.

## NAIM HOXHA

BOARD MEMBER



**E**xactly 20 years ago an institution was founded, a fragile place, which even its friends look at it suspiciously. There were also those who assessed it as a daily favor to some egocentrics. In one word, it seemed out of time doomed even with a failure. However, as usual when something is successful and worth, as something rare, it comes out that it actually was the realization of an objective, a dream and the will of those who disagreed with daily events, with the reality as bitter and humiliating as it was by discouraging any idea and initiative. Riinvest was a scholar sample of a courageous, good and timely vision, of a resistance, courage and determination to respond to the intellectual and professional alert. From its creation, Riinvest was as productive as it was comforting and encouraging for academia, professionals all the way to the students who were the executive foundation and support of the Institute projects and activities.

Before the war in Kosovo, the Institute played an important role in terms of knowledge and internation-

alization of the Kosovo issue. With its publications not only about the current economic and social life of Kosovo, but also with the vision and postwar development solutions, participated in many international conferences. Publication, already classic and unsurpassed work of Kosovar economic thought, "Activities democracy and economic development of Kosovo" was a paper that served as an academic inspiration, why not scientific and patriotic.

On the other hand, those local spaces - scarce and inadequate, became central for the students and teachers where they were being trained and engaged in various projects. A large number of professors, ministers and deputy ministers, bank directors and senior officials who today work in various government institutions, that are known as experts, were inspired and trained in those limited spaces (garage and shops) of Riinvest Institute.

Even in times of war, the Institute did not stop its activities. Proving their skills to adapt to the harsh conditions and find topnotch inspiration and motiva-

tion, Riinvest continued working on the issue internationalization and supporting of local and international organizations with advice, reports and with multiple social and economic data. With its daily activities, conferences, qualitative and comprehensive meetings it influenced on the Kosovo case clarification and information and became the center of important information.

Riinvest's presence in international conferences and meetings with its members, with intellectuals and other professors, with various experts, it led to the establishment of the truth about Kosovo and alternative mechanism against a Serbian fascist propaganda and its supporters.

The post-war Riinvest, is a new story with similar goals. It became the epicenter of economic thoughts by dominating academic and professional space not only in Kosovo but also abroad. It was standing right next and in service to the local and international institutions with advices and criticism, with conferences, meetings, various roundtables, and above all with pro-

## YMER HAVOLLI

BOARD MEMBER



fessional and scientific publications often backed by frequent surveys, by involving all the local creative potential in support of overcoming the increased problems in country.

At the end, I must mention Riinvest's strategic role in creation of new cadres and experts. Riinvest directed all its potential to create more favorable conditions for students and young experts by helping them get educated with master's and doctoral degrees abroad. With no fear that I may be mistaken, I conclude that no other institution outside of the University of Pristina had the influence and merit that they did in increasing the scientific, academic and professional quality in general and more specifically in the field of the economy.

What was written above was just a small portion detached from Riinvest's vast opus, but I can conclude that Riinvest Institute represents a rare example of a subject that made its own in place in the modern history of Kosovo. It is undoubtedly an institution to be proud of.

**W**e had just returned from Macedonia to Kosovo where we stayed as refugees during the war. At that time nothing was functional. Missing data, documents and information that internationals wanted them at any cost. I remember a visit of a State Department official who had come to visit the offices of Riinvest and during the conversation also requested any information, statistics, economic evaluation, etc. Prof. Muhamet explained that all the documents we have left behind were destroyed. I said that I could find a copy of the project: Economic activities and democratic development of Kosovo.

I quickly fled to a house where I had hidden a number of copies of this project, which I had wrapped in a plastic bag and buried them in the sand of that house's courtyard. Of the total hidden samples (50 or 60) only 2 or 3 of them could somehow be legible since other copies were completely damaged by mold and humidity. I took

them and returned running. I handed one to Professor Muhamet. He slightly shook his head and said: "This is not right, Ymer. It's the only sample we have for the moment", "and this sample has also been a refugee like us" - I said.

The guest from the State Department thanked us very much. "It is very valuable for me; it will also be an interesting story for my colleagues when I show them this sample and its history. I will also tell them about the work and enthusiasm to help your country. This project, the way it is, is valuable and will enrich my library", he said.

Days later we found out that Naim Hoxha had saved an electronic copy of the report, and through the Kosovo Government in exile this report was published twice in thousands of copies in Albanian and in English.

## ISUF BERISHA

BOARD MEMBER



In a situation where activities in almost all areas of Kosovar society were reduced in an attempt for survival, the formation of the Riinvest Institute in 1995 had not been left unmarked by few media chronicles of that time in Kosovo. But my first meeting with some of the founders and directors of the Institute was somewhere in 1996, when Muhamet Mustafa and Muhamet Sadiku visited our Soros offices in Pristina seeking support for their projects.

Considering the quality of submitted projects, as a coordinator for the programs of the Office of the Soros Foundation in Pristina, I recommend support for the Riinvest Institute. However, my recommendation was viewed with reservation and was rejected by a part of the Soros Management Office in Pristina, which had had a negative resonance at the Central Office in Belgrade, where the final decisions were made. After much effort and commitment on my part but also from outside lobbying by the Riinvest leaders, this institute gained Soros support

although a bit reserved initially. But what was more important, soon after its establishment, Riinvest had attracted attention and received full strategic support from important international institutions such as CIPE from Washington.

And this attention and support from alike international institutions was understandable and fully deserved by the Riinvest Institute. Because RI had started its work at the time when the Kosovo society was increasingly vulnerable, not to say that the despair dominated that came as a result of several years of stagnation and lack of political imagination and initiative of the so-called passive peaceful resistance. In this situation of confusion and general frustration, Riinvest Institute was a very bold venture aimed at making strategic studies and research on the prospects of development of Kosovo society.

Riinvest Institute with its vision was gradually changing this situation where the mentality of survival dominated testifying to its founder's intellectual and civic courage. What had impressed me most

during my first meeting with the Institute founders was the fact that their manly determination was accompanied by a youthful enthusiasm. And Kosovar society at that time was in desperate need for this kind of commitment and enthusiasm, for the strategic vision of its development, for a projection on overcoming the disappointing situation under the Serb colonial occupation.

Today, on the 20th anniversary of the founding of Riinvest Institute, when we see that it sustained its growth over the years by consistently proven that it as a 'think tank' leader in the field of economic studies in Kosovo, I feel good that I contributed the support to its initial development.

## ARTANE RIZVANOLLI

BOARD MEMBER



If I had to describe Riinvest Institute as an organization and my experience there in three words, these would be: challenge, collaboration and professional development.

The challenge because for me as well as for many young economists who started their professional career there, Riinvest Institute has given us the ability and confidence to work on interesting and challenging research, which have addressed important topics for country's economic development. These themes have often been unexplored themes in Kosovo and the Institute has played an important role in informing and promoting the debate among policy makers and public opinion.

Professional development because coping with professional challenges within a wide range of research, enabled the staff skills and abilities, and especially the problem solving skills in an innovative way, to constantly evolve during work. Nevertheless, just as important as the skills development at work is the fact that this organization has always

valued education and employee training and almost the impossible was done so we could each have the ability to balance work with our academic and professional development.

Cooperation, because support and cooperation was always present there which has enabled us to complete challenging tasks successfully as individuals and as a team. The combination of experienced experts and young economists' full of motivation and commitment to work as well as friendly environment always open to new ideas; have been key factors in this regard. Professional connections and friendships created during work at Riinvest have continued to be important to each of us well beyond the work at the Institute.

All these features make Riinvest Institute special and successful as an organization and have contributed to the formation and professional success among its staff. Now when the Institute celebrates its 20th anniversary, I wish the Institute many more years to continue playing its role of mobilizing in-

formation on key economic topics with professionalism, objectivity and independence for which it excels, and continue being a center that will attract many generations of economists and young researchers in Kosovo.

## MERITA GASHI

BOARD MEMBER



**F**rom Paris to Prishtina, “Riinvest”, an important part of my professional life!

When Professor Muhamet Mustafa invited me to be part of the Riinvest Institute board, I had just finished my studies in Paris and have decided to go back to Prishtina. Reasons for returning were countless! Of course the invitation from Professor Muhamet Mustafa, felt very good and I accepted, (how could I not accept it!) Knowing that I would be dealing with Riinvest!

With Professor Muhamet Mustafa, we knew each other when I was publishing some of my writings in several newspapers in Kosovo at the time when I lived in Paris, and in fact I was very critical of many unfair things that Kosovars had to go through. And each time during our conversations, he spoke about the Riinvest challenges and successes, as well as my writings, and him as an optimist as he was, and I as a pessimist as I was, we would always conclude the conversation about the state of Kosovo.

Riinvest Institute, of which I was certainly aware because I had read almost every report that this Institute published. One thing that I valued and it impressed me very much is that they have never been submissive to the daily politics. Riinvest, talked, published and it continues to tell the truth to the public.

Their hard work is the main reason why today every publication/report that they produce is taken very seriously by all local and foreign organizations. They are always based on the Institute reports, mainly due to the fact that Riinvest holds the courage, dedication and professionalism towards the work done within the Institute.

What impressed me the most at Riinvest today are the people who work with dedication. I mainly meet with the Board of the Institute, and to work with Alban Hashani, Lumir Abdixhiku Saxhide Mustafa and others on the board, it is truly extraordinary. Having such a great staff, I have no doubts that Riinvest will live for many decades.

Great work is done at Riinvest and I feel lucky. Riinvest has written the Kosovo history on the Kosovo economy.

Live long Riinvest. We need you!



Greece  
Special Participation in BLAGONICE 2012  
TIF

FOLKAN  
Special Participation in BLAGONICE 2012

GRATE  
SERVIS

AMBALAZNI SERVIS

RIINVEST

FRUTAT E KOSOVES  
RAHOVECI

Winery - Kulla  
RAHOVECI  
the best wine & brandy from KOSOVA

'ATJONA'

UNIONI I PEMETAREVE TE KOSOVES

SHOQATA E VERETAREVE TE KOSOVES  
'ENOLOGJIA'



7

PERIOD  
2000-2009

# 07 / PERIOD 2000-2009

**A**fter the war ended, Riinvest entered a new stage of development. Even with a significant experience, however, With significant experience, enlarging the institutional research capacity was a necessity to realize its mission, now in the liberated Kosovo, under the international administration. During this period, Isa Mustafa and Ilajz Ramajli were engaged in the institute after returning from their state-building duties in exile with many other young people. At this stage, in the period of 2000 – 2004, Riinvest realized a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In the two prior years, projects under this agreement were implemented in collaboration with CIPE, while in the following two years the projects were developed independently. This project has fully reached its objectives in strengthening the institutional capacity of Riinvest and implementation of an intensive research agenda.

This has been the most substantial intervention which prepared Riinvest to become a viable research organization to produce a series of research reports comparable to international standards. Due to complex research in many areas, Riinvest seized a pioneer role that did not leave out of the research observation any of the vital issues. Various research reports on numerous fields were prepared under this project, starting with tax policy, business finance, education, rural development all the way to foreign investments. Areas of research, constituted a priority for Kosovo, were determined after an extensive discussion at the Advisory Board. Best practices on reform and research on market economies and economies in transition, were used to explore development and reform issues in Kosovo. Riinvest forum where debates on such issues were happening, while there were no local institutions, played the role of a specific Parliament where the voice of researchers and intelligentsia was heard, independent thinking and often critical of UNMIK and local political factors.

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

2004-2010 periods test Riinvest on its financial and program sustainability on the market condition and competition. This was not an easy period without concerns because along with this, Riinvest's stability in the position of political and financial independence was also being tested, in the conditions when the same was employing 30 people with approximately similar salaries to international organizations working in Kosovo. Riinvest Institute during this period contribute in many areas, starting cooperation with most municipalities, supporting strategic planning at national level, supporting Kosovo's' progression success in implementing the standards as a key to open the issue of the political status, and substantive support to the negotiations in Vienna on the political status with all of our research funds and intellectual capital. This way, Riinvest strengthened its role and position as a credible and impartial institution.

During this period, a particularly important project is the alliance with KFOS coalition in the "Forum 2015". This project has expanded Riinvest

opportunities but also intelligentsias' and civil society's to influence the policies vital to the development and Euro-Atlantic integration. During this period, Riinvest also built long-term partnership with the World Bank, IFC, OSI/LGI (Open Society Institute/Local Government Initiative) in Budapest, Friedrich Ebert Foundation –FES, KFOS, Swiss Office for Development (SDC) in DELTA project implementation-Developing Enterprises Locally Through Action and Alliance, with a focus on institution building within the municipal government and the use of private sector resources to support political reform and private sector development.

## 2000

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During 2000, Riinvest continued its commitment to the most critical issues facing the country. During March 2000, Riinvest drafted a report entitled “Rebuilding Kosovo after the war”. This study on the effects of war and reconstruction policy was and remains a very valuable asset. The same included assessing the war consequences for private households and businesses, as well as social and public enterprises. Besides the two major surveys, the first of 3,500 families and the second with 300/600 private businesses, a team for assessing the situation in different sectors was also formed which consisted of 17 groups of experts. Based on this research activity a report was prepared, which was later presented at the International Conference: “Rebuilding Kosovo after the war: Strategies and policies”. Reports from this conference and supporting studies provide a unique documentation about the grave consequences of the war in Kosovo and some of the most effective reconstruction policies.

Also, in 2000, Riinvest started the implementation of the project ‘Promoting economic development through civil society’. This project was realized in collaboration with CIPE in Washington and supported by the United States Government through funding provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Post-War Reconstruction of  
Kosova - Strategy and Policies



## 2001

Within the project “Promotion of economic development through civil society” in March of 2001, Riinvest was engaged on a research preparation about social enterprises and their privatization. The purpose of this report was to present the situation of the social enterprises before this time and identify changes in their business in recent years. This study, as well as the conference that followed it, have contributed to the present stakeholders’ standpoint in relation to the privatization process in Kosovo, while it encouraged a broad debate among Kosovo’s democratic institutions emerging from elections, UNMIK and civil society to create the preconditions for the successful realization of the privatization process.

Likewise, during March -June of 2001, Riinvest prepared a summary report concerning the establishment of fiscal policy in Kosovo. This study analyzes the current situation along with recommendations for a sustainable fiscal policy that developed by a combination of changes to the existing system and the inclusion of new components in order to put in function the economic reconstruction of post-war Kosovo.

In September of 2001, Riinvest made a study on the financing system and development of small and medium enterprises in Kosovo. Doing field research and interviews with interested parties, Riinvest analyzed business access to financing sources and thoroughly analyze the business environment in Kosovo. Besides analyzing the situation in the business environment, the study also offered recommendations on how to strengthen certain segments of this environment.

In December of 2001, Riinvest conducted a study on the social situation and the development of the pension system in Kosovo. Creation of the new pension scheme, namely the pension system in Kosovo, in the context of the overall social situation, unemployment and poverty represented one of the most urgent social and economic situations in Kosovo at the time. The purpose of this report was the recommendation and advocacy of a pension building system in Kosovo, as an important segment of social security and important subsystem of Kosovo budget, in close relationship with financial institutions. To present the current social situation in Kosovo, relating to the situation of pensioners, starting from the current problems of the functioning of the pension system in Kosovo as well as from the experiences of building and reforming pension schemes in other countries.

Promoting Economic Development  
Through Civil Society



## 2002

During April 2002, Riinvest Institute organized a roundtable of the international forum related to local economic development in Kosovo. Some of the core subjects of this roundtable were findings of the research related to local economic development. The report was aimed at presenting current problems in the area of local economic development in Kosovo and making recommendations on priority activities needed to build the role of local government in economic development in accordance with the requirements of the market economy.

Riinvest made an extensive study regarding the privatization of socially owned enterprises and treated public enterprise reforms in Kosovo in June of 2002. The main objective of this study was to present the current situation of social enterprises and to identify changes that have occurred in the operation of social enterprises in recent years. The study was based on primary data collected through a survey of a statistically representative number of social enterprises. This report was followed by an international conference at which eminent personalities in the field of property transformation and transition have contributed with their work and discussions. In this period, Riinvest Institute was the most meaningful platform where the issue of privatization and other key issues for sustainable development of Kosovo were treated.

During September 2002, Riinvest completed a detailed study regarding foreign direct investment in Kosovo. This study tackled the business environment and the strategy of promoting Kosovo as a destination for foreign

investment. Through extensive table meetings, the study initiated debates and committed to raising awareness about the problems present in the area of economic policy. The report specifically addressed important issues related to foreign investment, among others, barriers, legislative framework, promoting institutions and as well as the presentation of international experience in attracting foreign investment. At the end, the report also issued recommendations on measures to be taken in economic policies for creating a more favorable institutional environment for stimulating and attracting foreign investment.

In December of 2002, Riinvest conducted a study related to performance of building a tax policy in Kosovo. The study dealt with the factors that led to the consolidation of taxes and tax policy. Among other things, the study analyzed tax revenues and tax structure performance, harmonization of tax policy with development problems facing the country in that period, including opportunities for tax breaks for equipment and agriculture. The report also made recommendations about steps to be taken, among other things, to ensure budgetary sustainability; to eliminate market inequality; to create tax breaks for equipment and raw materials; redefinition of the VAT threshold; reform of personal income tax.

All these studies were conducted and followed with important discussion roundtables when discussing the findings and recommendations and have been communicated to a wide audience.



# 2003

In January 2003, Riinvest finished a study on the labor market and unemployment in Kosovo.

This report addressed labor market issues, employment and unemployment in Kosovo, and dealt with policies related to labor market developments. Analysis of the unemployment problem dimensions and unemployment structure in Kosovo. (ii ) Overview of the legal framework related to the labor market and unemployment and the current stage of development of institutions and labor market policies in Kosovo. (iii) Analysis of the experiences of other transition countries relevant to labor market developments in Kosovo. (iv) Proposal of recommendations for the development of the labor market and appropriate employment policies.

In March 2003, Riinvest has compiled a report on the performance of the financing of small and medium enterprises in Kosovo. This research report analyzed the business environment from the data collected through the survey. The report on small and medium enterprises besides access to financing, among others, analyzes the trends of enterprise performance; the level of exports and imports; barriers to doing business.

In June 2003, Riinvest drafted a study on Kosovo budget system. The report was intended to promote an engaged dialogue between policy-makers and other interested party in Kosovo, associated with building a budget system and adequate budget policies that ensure stability of Kosovo's' budget, transparency and efficiency in its management. This research report aimed to address fundamentals budget relations with Kosovo's

economic growth and with current structural problems, characterized by high levels of unemployment and poverty, difficulties in the development of the private sector, delays in the privatization of the social sector and public sector restructuring, high deficit in the trade balance and the lack of qualitative financial means for investment support.

During the month of November, Riinvest conducted another study on trade policy and export promotion in Kosovo. This study, among other things, addressed the dynamics and structure of trade exchange; issues related to liberalization and trade regime in Kosovo; survey results of 110 exporting enterprises over export obstacles, internal and external factors that affect their competitive ability; as well as current problems, difficulties and necessary commitments for better institutional organization in Kosovo and for implementing an integrated approach to promoting export. In addition to collected data through the survey, this study also compiled case studies from different countries designed for the purpose of this report.

## 2004

During March 2004, Riinvest drafted a study on education and economic development of Kosovo. The focus of this study were appropriate measures needed for increasing the level of younger generations involvement at different levels of education, particularly while in preschool, the greater involvement of female students in high school and the involvement of youngsters in higher education. Also the focus of this study was the combination of the education and economic development. In this context, the report dealt with the modalities of increasing investments in education which was rated as one of the most important challenges that the Kosovar economy and society must face. In this context, the report highlighted that such investment growth requires a combination of increased government spending, higher participation of domestic private funds and increased funding from donors. Through these funds Kosovo could build basis of a modern education system able to withstand the challenges of the knowledge economy, globalization and rapid technology development.

In May of 2004, Riinvest also developed an assessment report on the progress of foreign direct investment in Kosovo. The report addressed the advances and impediments in improving the business environment, and the strategy of promoting Kosovo as a destination for foreign investment. The study continued with a comprehensive discussion table and an extensive debate aimed at raising awareness about the problems present in the field of economic policy.

In July 2004, Riinvest prepared a research report related to rural de-

velopment in Kosovo. The objectives of the report were to prepare an analytical basis for establishing a qualitative debate on the issues of rural development; identification of the agriculture role and other non-agricultural activities for rural development; identifying factors and sustainable development policies with broad-based rural development as well as the issue of agricultural policy recommendations focusing on creating broad base for economic growth in rural areas. Based on data collected through the survey with 1,000 households in the entire territory of Kosovo and interviews with key stakeholders, this report is an exceptional source of information for policy makers and researchers.

In September 2004, Riinvest prepared a research report on the progress of the privatization process. The research report "Privatization in Kosovo: Forwards and backwards, which was developed specifically to be discussed at the Forum 2015 has managed to contest all the dilemmas presented in the dispute related to the legal base which was mentioned as the main motive for process termination. Results from this report and the debate held at Forum 2015 gave a powerful impetus to efforts for restarting the privatization process.

## 2005

During 2005, Riinvest prepared an extremely well elaborated analysis concerning Kosovo's economic sustainability; challenges, policies and opportunities. This report had been prepared to serve as a basis for a discussion table which inflicted a debate by stakeholders. This report aimed to briefly address the challenges facing Kosovo on its path towards creating a sustainable economy, when negotiations for resolving the political and legal status of Kosovo have already started. The main objective was to provide an overview of the current situation and to outline strategic priorities and policies needed to be implemented by the government and supported by other parties of interest, which will serve for creating a perspective of sustainable economic growth. The report and other accompanying activities were funded by Fridrich Ebert Foundation.

In 2005, as in previous years, Riinvest conducted a survey with enterprises in Kosovo. The series of interviews with SMEs, with over 600 of them, coupled with research reports were conducted by Riinvest during a ten year period. As such, it presents a rich base of data on SMEs in Kosovo. Annual surveys and research reports represent the opinions of the private business community on various issues. Data collection was carried out by our surveyors, using face-to-face interviews with managers/owners of these SMEs in Kosovo. These reports had targeted provision of information for decision-making bodies of Kosovo on the institutional environment, conditions in doing business and barriers to



the development of SMEs, and to create valid databases associated with the development and business environment.

During this year, Riinvest accumulated data regarding early warning report. The project was supported by UNDP. The data analyzed the expectations of Kosovo citizens on various socio – economic phenomena and as such it created an image associated with possible scenarios of social developments in the country. This and other reports within the series of early warning reports were important for national and international policymakers in forecasting socio – economic developments. During 2005, Riinvest also prepared a report on fiscal and budgetary sustainability culture.

## 2006

During 2006, Riinvest drafted a study on corporate governance framework in public enterprises in Kosovo. The report supported by CIPE, promoted modern concepts of corporate governance based on OECD principles, elaborating best international practices by also providing recommendations for Kosovo.

During this year, Riinvest Institute facilitated the preparation of the strategy and development plan of Kosovo (2007-2013). In an inclusive process, technical assistance was provided to 22 technical teams consisting of 120 officials to prepare reports for the 22 sectorial and cross-sectorial issues. This project contributed to the training of a critical number of experts on strategic planning and produced 22 reports that served and still serve as a basis for the design of a medium-term expenditure framework.

Throughout this year, Riinvest also prepared the report on the Millennium Development Goals (Second report on Kosovo). Based on an extensive pool of data, Riinvest Institute identified the situation and highlighted the targets that Kosovo must reach in order to meet objectives. In addition to the eight goals that were part of the generic report, report on Kosovo added a target which was related to the quality of governance. This report was presented to the parliamentary committees and at comprehensive discussion tables. The same was supported by UNDP.



## 2007

During 2007, Riinvest prepared a study on diaspora and migration policies. This study provided information about the Diaspora and underlined Diasporas' participation challenges and opportunities in improving the economic situation and economic development of Kosovo. Among the areas addressed were: Diaspora's size and socio-economic profile; its current contribution through remittances, investments, contributions with various goods, diaspora's "tourism"; Kosovo institution organization against Diaspora and the extent to which they address their needs and interests; which policies should be implemented to increase the impact and social contribution, Diaspora's human and financial and appropriate emigration policies that would be consistent with the current socio-economic, as well as expected developments in the EU integration process and its labor market.

During 2006 and 2007, Riinvest Institute supported the Kosovo delegation with negotiations taking place in Vienna on Kosovo's political status. This mission was preceded with the project on Kosovo's cost assessment standards, making them operational at all levels of institutional organization as a condition of starting the discussion related to the country's final status. Within these efforts, it is worth pointing out that Riinvest provided technical assistance to the Kosovo delegation during Vienna negotiations. Concerning this, Riinvest mobilized a considerable number of national and international experts for the preparation of an analytical platform targeting the most critical issues from these ne-

gotiations in favor of a successful confrontation with the Serbian side.

Using the entire research fund, databases and intellectual capital, Riinvest Institute supported the Kosovo Negotiating Team during the negotiations on Kosovo's status held in Vienna, during the period of 2006-2007. Riinvest responsibilities in this effort were: leading the Group of Experts on Finance and Economy; establishment of 10 sub-working groups under specific areas: compensation for war damages (direct and indirect), social status and public property, pension fund compensation, offsetting foreign currency savings, damages in the budget system, compensation of damages in the banking sector, privatization, cadaster, Kosovo's participation in the division of property of former FRY, etc. 55 local and four international experts were engaged within this group. Experts have given their contributions to the drafting of reports and analyzes in the respective sectors, as well as the coordination of the subgroups; provision of argument materials and analyzes on issues foreseen to rise on the agenda in negotiations with Serbia, from the field of economy and finance; Providing research and economic analysis on the economic and financial viability of the future state of Kosovo; Providing external consultancy for expertise in the most sensitive issues; Offering Riinvest's entire research base for Kosovo Delegation needs during negotiations; Participation in the negotiations in Vienna.

Riinvest Institute experts, with the help from many other international and local experts produced a series of documents and analysis

for the needs of the negotiating team. Below we will provide a list of them: The report on war and other damages caused by the Serbian authorities, with annexes and illustrative case studies; the report on the principles of succession between Kosovo and the FRY/respectively, Serbia and Montenegro by adhering to analogous principles approved by the commission for succession between the entities of the former Yugoslav Federation, including the external debt and its payment obligations; Viability Report/Kosovo's Economic Sustainability; Reports on damage caused by Serbia in: Kosovo pension fund , foreign currency savings, the banking system of Kosovo, Kosovo budget system, cadastral documentation and cadastral technical equipment; The report on external debt; The report on Kosovo's social and public property status in the former Yugoslavia, and privatization; The report on Federal Fund.

The experts of the economy and finance group participated in two rounds of talks in Vienna and presented arguments on Kosovo's colonial position under the Serbian regime. They have introduced Kosovo's full subjectivity within the Yugoslav federation and successfully defended the Kosovar party requests while rejecting Serbian claims on social and public property of Kosovo.



## 2008

During 2008, Riinvest prepared a study on research capacities in Kosovo. This report was supported by the University of Freiburg. The same research analyzed the framework of public and private institutions, both at the university, colleges, academies of sciences and other public and private institutions.

In 2008, Riinvest also developed a report on socio - economic trends in the country. This study was supported by the Balkan Trust for Democracy. The same identified the progress and stagnation in different economic sectors of the country, including real sector and financial sector. It also reflected the progress in structural reforms that Kosovo had undertaken during this transition period.

Riinvest also designed an investigative report about the level of corruption in Kosovo. Supported by UNDP, this report was based on quantitative data collected through a survey of over 1,000 households in the entire territory of Kosovo. The report analyzed citizen's perception about the level of corruption and investigated their direct experiences with certain public institutions. The report also addressed the causes that promote high levels of corruption in Kosovo and also offered recommendations for policy changes.

In 2008, Riinvest Institute developed a study on forestry in Kosovo. Supported by USAID, this report made a cadastral for Kosovo forestry, and its potential to supply the market with woody material either as a source of energy or as a raw material in the wood industry.

In 2008 Riinvest made a study on the course of the privatization process in Kosovo. Prepared in the context of the Forum 2015, the same highlights the advances and setbacks in this process. Using quantitative data collected through the surveyed representative, the report identified performance indicators of these enterprises before and after privatization, while analyzing the impact of various performance characteristics on these enterprises. The report is also enriched with case studies and its findings were presented at an international conference within the Forum 2015.



## 2009

In 2009, Riinvest Institute developed Kosovo's industry strategy (2009-2013). This study provides an original overview on the state of the industry and manufacturing sectors in Kosovo as well as reindustrialization challenges in country. It was based on a comprehensive survey of 1,200 manufacturing businesses regarding their productive capacity. Recommendations were related to the launch of modern development policies to ensure an appropriate business environment and an active role of the state avoiding damages that may arise in market deregulation. The analyses presented in this document provided information that significantly improves the level of information on industrial sectors, which will assist in the development of industry sectors in the medium term of 2009-2013.

Moreover, in 2009 Riinvest with CIPE's support did a study on corporate governance in financial institutions in Kosovo. This study analyzed and assessed the quality of corporate governance in financial institutions (banks and insurance companies) in Kosovo, based on the requirements and standards known as the principles of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The purpose of this report was to improve the information for relevant stakeholders, on the achievements and the situation in terms of corporate governance in banks and insurance companies, and make recommendations on different policies for the Government, CBK (Central Bank of Kosovo), and financial sector companies and other interested parties to further advance the situation in this field.

In October 2009, Riinvest conducted a study on the privatization of public enterprises in Kosovo. This research report was intended to improve the awareness of decision-makers and other interested parties regarding the current situation of public enterprises, related to the need of their privatization taking into account the experiences of other countries in transition; and to urge transparency improvement, accountability, and in particular to encourage public policies aimed at successful completion of this important process. Findings from this report were presented at an international conference.





8

PERIOD  
2010-2015

# 08 / PERIOD 2010-2015

**T**he year 2010 is characterized by the managerial transition process initiative at Riinvest Institute and by passing over managerial competence from the founders to Riinvest's member staff. In this process, on January 1st, 2010, Lumir Abdixhiku is appointed as Institute's Executive Director with a four year mandate (this mandate was extended later in 2014 for four additional years).

In late 2010, due to his political engagement, President of the Board and also one of Riinvest founders Muhamet Mustafa resigns from all his leading positions at the institute. For the same reason, Alban Zogaj also resigns from his Research Director position. Sejdi Osmani is elected as the new President of the Board while Alban Hashani is appointed as the new Research Director. Management team is completed on January 1st, 2011 with the appointment of Saxhide Mustafa as the deputy executive director.

The new management structure in 2011 begins reforming research positions, thus completing with a four-level ranking system - an applicable system even today. Based on this system, the first level constitutes of "research assistants"; the second level consists of "researchers"; the

third level is comprised by "advanced researchers" while the last level consists of "senior researchers". This ranking determines the advancing procedure for the new and actual staff at Riinvest

The period 2010-2015 is characterized mainly with Riinvest's engagement in long-term European Commission (EC) projects. Thus, through two projects (each with a duration of two years), Riinvest starts building a new cooperation with the EC- cooperation aimed at training of central and local officials, as well as civil society representatives, for accessing EC's grant funding. This cooperation will be extended later to two -wide encompassing regional initiatives through two other projects (each with two years duration) and through the Riinvest and the European Commission inclusion in the northern part of Kosovo; namely on the research and analysis of the business environment there and business capacity building of local business actors in the north.

In this period, Riinvest initiates another long-term cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) - a partnership that would extend for the next five years (from the time when this report was written). Initially through a two-year project to promote horticulture

2010

2011

2012

sector in Kosovo, and then through a consortium for constructing tourism markets and food processing markets- Riinvest's cooperation with SDC reaches the highest level of cooperation in its 20 years' experience.

Equally important remains the cooperation with the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) during the period in question which carried four long-term projects in the areas of corporate governance (including family businesses) and public procurement in Kosovo.

Other collaborations, elaborated in the subsequent sections include the most credible institutions, both local and international. Include long-term and sound cooperation with Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) and implementing of some of the critical projects in the field of capital investment, open governance and the banking sector; it includes long-term cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in advocating on issues of interest for the private sector, informality, equal employment opportunities and similar socio-economic themes; it includes sound cooperation with the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) in designing and presenting one of the most prestigious UNDP reports - to be precise the Human Development Report (HDR); and finally it includes

a two-year collaboration with Budapest Think Tank Fund (TTF) to increase Riinvest's advocacy capacity.

Other collaborations in this period include international institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFAD); United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF); International Organization for Migration (IOM); Danish Refugee Council (DRC); PASOS Network; Center for Study of the Democracy (CSD); Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC); Booz Allen Hamilton Kosovo (BAH); Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RFB); Profound Netherland; EDA Banja Luka; and it includes local institutions of Kosovo Government (i.e. the Ministry of Diaspora and the Ministry of Health); most of Kosovo municipalities; business associations (first the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce and the American Chamber of Commerce); CIVIKOS; ProCredit Bank Kosovo; Sole Mizo Kosovo; Marigona Residence; International Village in Prishtina; Italiane Reggio Terzo Mondo (RTM); humanitarian organization CARITAS - among others.

# 2010

In 2010, to mark the 15th anniversary, Riinvest Institute begins organizing an International Conference named "Activation of the sources of economic growth in Kosovo"; a conference which is to be conducted continuously since then. The main purpose of the conference was the presentation of new the knowledge and advanced experiences on activation of economic development resources in a developing open economy, with special reference to the case of Kosovo. The conference also aimed to promote research activities in Kosovo which dealt with economic and social development and to strengthen connections and partnerships with academia and economic development experts in Europe, the US and elsewhere, as well as with international organizations. During the conference, academics and international and local experts presented their works, which were mainly related to institutional development and sources of economic growth, sectorial aspects and industrial policy and the role of the intellectual human capital and economic development. The keynote speech of the conference was held by the USA Ambassador in Kosovo at that time, Mr. Christopher Dell. The other participants of the conference speakers were Andrew Wilson (CIPE, Washington); Franz - Lothar Altmann (Southeast Europe Association, Munich); Borko Handjiski (World Bank); Ken Jackson (University of Auckland); Peter Sturm (economic consultant, Paris); Iraj Hashi (Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent ); Will Bartlett (London School of Economics, London); Erol Katircioglu (Bilgi University, Istanbul). The conference presented 19 papers.

In 2010, Riinvest starts for the first time, its trans-continental engagement in research and advocacy. As part of an extensive partner network under the umbrella of the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Riinvest Institute was engaged in corporate governance in countries like Turkey and Pakistan. With CIPE's justification, Riinvest was selected as the regional partner because of the high level of representation, professionalism and experience that the institution carried at the time.

In 2010, for the first time, Riinvest launches the economic development indicator "Leading Economic Indicators" as a result of a partnership with "Booz Allen Hamilton - South Branch" in Prishtina. The index in question, using the standard methodology "American Leading Indicator Index" aimed at forecasting economic activities for the next six months. To this day, LEI index continues to be an important index for Riinvest.

In 2010, the Institute engages in designing two municipal strategies, that of Podujevo municipality and municipality of Fushe Kosovo. The two documents were prepared in coordination with representatives from the respective municipalities. The entire project process had gone through several stages: organization and empowerment of teams and working groups for strategy design, collection of relevant data and analysis of the socio- economic situation in the municipality, analysis of the municipality's competitive position (SWOT), vision definition, goals identification, objectives, programs and projects, including a brief description of the project, identifying sources of funding and human resources, all

these activities in line with the municipality's development priorities. By issuing directions, direct assistance throughout the process of developing strategies and training programs, officials and other municipality employees are trained to independently lead the process of developing strategies for local economic development. Besides the permanent assistance that Riinvest experts have provided to these municipalities in developing these important development documents, our institute has developed two 3-day training for members of the municipal team on local economic development, working group members and other officials coming from these municipalities. In addition, we have also developed a special module on the construction of mechanisms for monitoring the strategy and project implementations of the municipality.

In this year, Riinvest was contracted by UNDP for the realization of a feasibility study and drafting a business plan on the possibilities of building a vocational training center based on the industry deficiencies.

The same year, Riinvest is also involved in several commercial-research projects by analyzing the housing market for the "Marigona Residence"; customer satisfaction survey for "ProCredit Bank Kosovo"; market survey of dairy products and business plan for the company "Sole Mizo" and housing market survey about the needs of the "International Village in Prishtina".



# 2011

Year 2011 marks the beginning of the implementation of one of the most important Riinvest Institute projects, that of "Horticulture Promotion in Kosovo". In 2011, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFAD) represented by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo had chosen Riinvest Institute to implement the Facilitation Entity for the Horticulture Sector in Kosovo, a two-year project. The focus of activities were concerned with the methodology set out by "the participatory market chain approach" (PMCA)", a methodology which provided guidance on planning and implementing a structured research and development in specific markets chains- in this case that of horticulture - or sectors to increase the positive impact on poverty. During the year, thematic and working groups were held: about 30 of them, 15 in Rahovec and 15 in different villages (making a total of 30 planning papers for these thematic groups). Arrangements have been made with Interex, FatosiCom, ETC, and various retailers for the sale of fruit and branded wines, which are detailed in the reports. The project also organized participation in fairs: MTEF - Tirana, AGROKOS, Prishtina International Fair, Grape Festival, study tour to Germany and study visit in Elbasan. Additional reports were drafted: VAT report, agribusiness finance report, the wine portfolio report, the fruit standard, and the Rahovec standard. During this project, over 100 products (wine, brandy and fruit) were re-branded under the "Nga Rahoveci" regional brand (the first of its kind in Kosovo). Part of the project was also the launching of the brand "Fruits of Kosovo", which would unify Kosovo fruit producers under one umbrella brand..

In the same year, for the first time, Riinvest is engaged in designing and presentation of the prestigious UNDP report, the "Human Development Report 2011. Titled "The private sector and employment", the seventh report on human development in Kosovo which focuses on the interrelationships between human development and expansion of the private sector. The report had served for many years as a point of referencing of topics related to private sector employment. The report was presented at a national roundtable with different participants from the political spectrum, economic and social development of Kosovo.

In 2011, CIPE and Riinvest continue their many years cooperation through involvement in the field of public procurement in Kosovo. Within this project, Riinvest and CIPE developed an extensive research on public procurement process in Kosovo and compared it with other good practices from the region. In addition, a report on Corporate Governance and Transparency in Public Enterprises was planned to take place to keep previous and joint projects active. To determine the weaknesses of the public procurement system and develop a set of recommendations, Riinvest Institute would be collecting data from a wide range of stakeholders within the business community, civil society and the media through in-depth interviews, a survey of 600 small and medium enterprises, and a focus group. Riinvest would complement the work with an analysis of the legal framework for public procurement with a strong focus on the recently adopted law on public procurement. Also Riinvest would conduct two case studies to highlight specific practices of the private sector with public procurement. To assist in the formulation of recommendations for best

practices and lessons learned, Riinvest would also examine regional public procurement experiences that were able to create a greater transparency of competition and reducing corruption and public funds mismanagement. The project was completed with an all-encompassing regional roundtable.

In the line of cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in 2011, for the first time, Riinvest was engaged in a study of the business environment in the north of Kosovo. The aim of the project was to create a comprehensive framework and consequently the issuance of recommendations for interested stakeholders and their ability to contribute to the support and improvement of the business environment for the Serb community in Kosovo market. The study aimed to survey the current state of Serbian businesses, their potential for development, obstacles to the development and level of cooperation with other business communities in Kosovo, with particular emphasis on Albanian businesses. Moreover, the study analyzed the political impact on business cooperation between business communities. The final report was presented at a national conference.

The year 2011 is also characterized by the presentation of the report "Banking sector: help or barrier", part of a collaboration between the Riinvest Institute and Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS). The report provided an analysis of the banking system current state, and the potential impact of the banking sector on economic development. The report was presented at a national conference with participants from the political spectrum and experts on the banking system in Kosovo.

In 2011, part of its advocacy mission, Riinvest Institute in cooperation with the Foundation "Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)", organized four public tables whose aim was to increase citizen participation in economic decision making. Topics of the tables in question were "Economic challenges in 2011 plus"; "Private sector development"; "Alternative energy access"; and "Effects of reciprocity measures on the Kosovo's economy".

In 2011, Riinvest Institute, in collaboration with UNICEF, organized a series of workshops for the "Ministry of Education, Science and Culture". The project entitled "Training for statistical research and data analysis" was organized into three sections from which over 60 participants benefited from it.

In 2011, Riinvest had implemented a project called "KPEP Satisfaction Report", in order to measure the overall level of performance and level of support that was given by KPEP for its beneficiaries. Moreover, the study assessed the extent, to which customers and other stakeholders are informed about the program, particularly its main objectives, their satisfaction about the program delivery by the KPEP team, and the relative benefits they have gained from being an actor in the program. The report was written based on primary data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from interviews. Quantitative data was necessary to compare and measure the tangible effects of aid or partnership, whereas qualitative data served to assess and evaluate the relationship and overall satisfaction of the beneficiary firms and partnership organizations towards KPEP. Finally, in addition to the survey results, conclusions and specific recommendations were specified in the report.

## 2012

In 2012, respectively, in May of this year, Riinvest Institute organized a two-day international conference named "Activation of resources for economic growth in Kosovo". The purpose of the conference was the discovery and introduction of new knowledge and advanced experiences for resource activation for economic growth in an open and undeveloped economy- with emphasis on Kosovo. The conference also aimed to strengthen relations with academic and developmental experts across Europe, America and elsewhere. The conference was organized in plenary sessions where contributors presented their work and discussed it with the audience. Topics presented included numerous economic issues in developing countries: agriculture, foreign investment, human capital, state promotion. The conference presented 21 papers.

In 2012, Riinvest was engaged by the Ministry of Diaspora in developing a research report on the incentives and facilities implemented in other countries to attract investment from abroad.

The main objective of this study was to analyze the laws that regulate aspects of doing business in Kosovo and salience of provisions which are hindering attracting investment from abroad. Important parts of the report were recommendations that would be presented at a national table.

In the same year, Riinvest has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Health in health reform on health insurance law, and in organization of health units in Kosovo. During this year, Riinvest provided ongoing advice

to potential format of the new organization management in primary and secondary health care.

Also, in 2012, IOM and RIINVEST have reviewed the program "Support to Return and Reintegration of Repatriates Volunteers in Kosovo". The goals of the evaluation have been analyzing the success of the program; analysis of reintegration package and its effectiveness in contributing to sustainable return and successful reintegration; assessing the performance of beneficiaries in opening small businesses; and evaluation of the strategy implemented by IOM . Numerous meetings and interviews were held with IOM offices in Kosovo (and the IOM office in Vienna by phone); research and questionnaire preparations; field visits and interviews with beneficiaries were made; and the final report was compiled.

In this year, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) had engaged Riinvest Institute to train and do a market research in Kosovo for the project "Stabilization of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Mitrovica through Socio - Economic Professional and Educational Initiatives"; in the Roma neighborhood in Mitrovica .The work has been divided into three phases: needs assessment for the workshop leaders , individual counseling for market analysis and business planning and market research with 600 respondents .

In 2012, Riinvest Institute in cooperation with CIPE in Washington has made the presentation of the evaluation report of PEs in the country. Appraisal report and analysis were prepared in 2012 and presented with the new findings from interviews with representatives of local institutions,



public enterprises and other relevant actors. Discussions at the conference have served to enrich the final report which was published in December of that year.

In the same year, Riinvest was engaged by UNDP in order to survey about a thousand beneficiaries from active employment program, ALMP. The survey – based on which a final report was built- was done throughout Kosovo. The survey was compiled; beneficiaries (1082) and control group (150) were surveyed to identify employment status and ability for employment of both groups. The processing of data was done through SPSS and finding of the 21 relevant indicators.

As part of CIVIKOS network, Riinvest has provided an analysis of tax and fiscal issues with which Kosovo NGOs are faced. An analysis of the legal framework of NGOs in the country alongside European practices was also completed. An analysis of variance certain laws and their implementation in practice; analysis of the implementation of public benefit status for NGOs in Kosovo; analysis of the association law, income tax, property

tax, handling donations, VAT and handling imports. After comparison with European practices, recommendations that can improve the situation for local NGOs were provided.

In 2012, we continued to implement long-term projects, namely “Horticulture Promotion in Kosovo”, funded by SDC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark; as well as the “Public Procurement” project supported by CIPE.

In the field of engagement in commercial projects, during 2012, Riinvest Institute designed a business plan for the Italian organization Reggio Terzo Mondo (RTM). The business plan included a customer survey and interviews with relevant stakeholders, market research and brand development. In the same year, we held a five-day training on project management and quality assurance for the association Caritas.

# 2013

2013 marks the beginning of Riinvest's first cooperation with the European Commission; more specifically, with financial support as part of the EURED funds. Through a two - year commitment, entitled "Strengthening the capacity of regional economic development of Kosovo, through the Development Academy, municipal entities for development and management of projects and the implementation of quick impact projects", Riinvest intended to consolidate and strengthen the regional capacity to participate and actively contribute in regional economic and overall Kosovo's development. The main activity of the project was the establishment of the Development Academy, the body which will organize lectures in two cycles with a duration of three months each, where 24 participants will undergo intensive lectures. The aim of these lectures was therefore to develop and strengthen the capacity of regional actors to apply, manage and implement development projects funded by different donors, with special emphasis on projects funded by the EU office.

From both cycles about 80 municipal officials from all municipalities in Kosovo and members of regional NGOs have graduated. At the end of the project, we allocated grants amounting to 10 (each) from 10,000 euros to 10 best municipalities and local organizations. Nine Republic of Kosovo municipalities and a regional non-governmental organization, who have won grants for the implementation of small projects with quick impact were honored these grants in a special ceremony held in Prishtina. Implemented development projects included supply greenhouses for women

farmers, distribution of sewing machines for people with disabilities and beehives distribution to farmers. Municipalities that benefited from this project were the municipalities of Prishtina, Gjilan, Mitrovica, Suha Reka, Rahovec, Drenas, Skenderaj, Istok and Mamushe and the regional NGO Handikos Peja.

2013 is also characterized by involvement in two, long-term international projects (twice by two years) also funded by the European Commission. The first, titled "Civil Society for good governance and anti - corruption in Southeast Europe: capacity building for monitoring, advocacy and awareness raising" constituted a commitment of 23 civil society organizations throughout the region. Based on the strategy and joint action plan , the project led by the Center for the Study of Democracy ( CSD ) from Bulgaria aimed at building a coalition of civil society organizations in Eastern Europe that share similar thoughts , to improve: their capacity , knowledge , and dedication to providing analysis , monitoring and policy advocacy , measures and reforms related to good governance and anti - corruption, and to increase cooperation and understanding between civil society organizations beyond the regional and national levels. Through the Legal Development Initiative in Eastern Europe aimed to promote dialogue between governments and civil society and improving the environment for civil society activities at national and regional level.

The second was titled "Open Government Advocacy Support of the Right to Information in Southeast Europe" and it was intended to encourage



## 2013



the Western Balkan governments to be more transparent. The project is funded by the European Union and led by PASOS network. This project aimed to target governments in Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Using the same methodology, to address the same framework for open government, the project will

include training of civil society experts on the methodology of drafting of commitments in "Open Government Partnership (Open Governance Partnership - OGP)" for each state, as well as training to civil society organizations based advocacy, monitoring and policy analysis. The project monitored the impact of government policies, and will carry out the commitments that governments will take under the "Partnership for Open Governance" initiative.

Another long-term project which would start in 2013 was the one in partnership with the Swisscontact and PEM Consult funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Through building a winning consortium, Riinvest would be the holder of a five year commitment in the field of interventions in tourism and food processing. In this area, a new office "Promoting Private Sector Employment - PPSE" would be established; an essential part of project management would be part of Riinvest team.

In cooperation with FES, in 2013, Riinvest Institute develops a study on informality in Kosovo. Through the development of the questionnaire in line with the most recent literature, Riinvest Institute had surveyed 600 small and medium enterprises in Kosovo; to later collect, process and presented the study findings at a national roundtable report and in a report. The roundtable presentation of the report had brought together a large number of business representatives, government and international institutions.

In 2013, Riinvest was contracted by the European Commission Liaison Office in Kosovo to carry out a study that included a survey of 400 Kosovo Serb. The survey included northern Kosovo municipalities in Northern Mitrovica, Zubin Potok and Leposavic (with 200 respondents) and southern Kosovo municipalities of Graçanica, Shtërpcë, Partesh, Hoça e Madhe, Rahovec and Priluzhë (with 200 respondents).

In cooperation with the BSC Kosovo, in December 2013, Riinvest Institute had presented the results of the survey and research with 600 businesses in the country. Present in this discussion table were representatives of business organizations and other advocates on business issues. The roundtable was broadcasted live on national media and has also served as a reference to some future articles.

In 2013, the collaboration with CIPE is continued through the project "Improving Competitiveness of Kosovo Businesses on Public Projects". This project was intended to improve transparency in public spending to ensure a more efficient allocation of public funds to serve the common needs. A large part of the project included the creation of a manual (Toolkit) that would serve as a step-by-step guide for businesses so they could make competitive bids and hold public institutions accountable for any public non-optimal expenditure. Riinvest, within the framework of the project, had also organized trainings and discussion tables, in cooperation with external consultants, the final outcome of which included the need on more accountability, improved capacities of civil society organizations to



monitor the procurement process, as well as a healthier competition by businesses to gain and utilize mutual funds.

In 2013, Riinvest Institute launched a survey on the mode of financing the studies of students in Kosovo. Survey of 360 respondents aimed to draw data on the mode of financing the studies of students in Kosovo. These data would later show whether students use the possibility of financing their studies through bank loans and how widespread is this phenomenon in Kosovo. The derived data examined ways and alternatives for banks for providing these student loans. The survey included five different respondent groups: active students; students who have abandoned their studies; parents of active students; high school graduates; and potential employers (like those in the public sector as well as those in the private sector).

## 2014

In 2014, was apart from continuing to implement the European Commission long-term projects (including regional initiatives) and other than the continuation of the project with PPSE, for the first time, the “Think Tank Fund” Foundation for Open Society based in Budapest had approved an institutional grant for Riinvest. Through a two - year grant, Riinvest would reform and significantly improve its advocacy own capacities, through utilizing modern communication tools. This grant would open a new communication window for Riinvest beyond the use of traditional communication methods. Essential part of the grant was the opening of data through free delivery for any interested party wishing to use Riinvest’s data collected throughout its operation. Making data readily available, would spur the interest of other researchers outside Riinvest, for producing and delivering additional studies.

In 2014, Riinvest Institute expands its cooperation with the European Commission through involvement in northern Kosovo, i.e. the three north minority municipalities (North Mitrovica, Leposaviç, Zubin Potok); offering studies on business environment there (surveying of 150 Serb owned businesses) and providing eight training cycles for 30 beneficiaries (local businesses and municipal officials).

In the same year, in collaboration with the European Commission, Riinvest Institute conducts the largest study ever done in country- about private sector- by surveying 1000 business all divided into five regions of Kosovo. The research report was presented at a national conference with over 200 participants from government, international institutions,

businesses, media, civil society and other stakeholders.

In 2014, Riinvest Institute, supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS), starts the implementation of the one-year project titled “Capital Investments in Kosovo”. The project was foreseen to conduct five analytical reports on major capital projects in Kosovo. More precisely it was supposed to conduct a research and analysis of the following processes a) concession of Prishtina International Airport; b) privatization of KEDS; c) concession of Brezovica; d) the construction of the highway Prishtina - Skopje; and e) restructuring and privatization of PTK. The first four analysis were planned to be done by Riinvest, and the analysis regarding PTK was planned to be done by the organization Çohu. Advocacy on the analysis in question is intended to become throughout 2015 by Riinvest and KFOS.

As part of its commitment to the PPSE project, during 2014, the Institute had conducted two studies (and surveys) in the field of tourism (for the western region of Kosovo) and in food processing (in cooperation with Profound – Advisers in Development, from the Netherland). Studies and databases had served for further commitments during the implementation phase as part of the market assessment - within PPSE’s office.

With the ongoing yearly cooperation with CIPE, in 2014, Riinvest was engaged in “corporate governance in family businesses”. The one year project had three components, (i) development of a handbook for Corporate Governance, (ii) advocacy in improving the situation regarding corporate governance and (iii) establishment of a training cycle for private enterprises.

Business Climate in Kosovo



## 2015

This current year, finds Riinvest with the continuation of the most important projects in the past five years; namely the continuation of the second phase in three commitments implementing projects funded by the European Commission. Thus, in 2015, after a successful implementation of the first phase, Riinvest is engaged for the next two years in the development and implementation of the project known as "Development Academy II". Similarly to the previous commitment, the main purpose of the project "Development Academy II", remains the training of central and local government officials, as well as members of business associations, in managing and efficient implementation methods of the EU development, and other instruments that promote the creation of new jobs. Results of the engagement in the "Development Academy I" were impressive, with a very positive impact, and extremely high interest of mayors and municipal officials, and other beneficiaries from various local associations. In the first cycle of Developmental Academy, after attending 24 lectures and various organizations 40 municipal officials graduated in a solemn ceremony. Also during the first cycle, high interest showed regional NGOs, and business members, farmer associations and others. The project "Development Academy II" is headed by Riinvest in close cooperation with the German Foundation "Friedrich - Ebert - Stiftung" and the EU Office in Kosovo.

The same year was also continued with two regional projects; proceeding with the second phase (two years) of the project "Civil society for good governance and anti - corruption in Southeast Europe: capacity building for

monitoring, advocacy and awareness raising" - again led by the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) in Bulgaria; as well as the second phase of the project "Open Government Advocacy Support of the Right to Information in Southeast Europe" led by PASOS network.

In 2015 Riinvest continues cooperation with the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) through involvement in research report - and allocative activities - for trade relations between the Republic of Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Open Society Foundation in BiH, the research organizations from Banja Luka EDA were also engaged in this project. The study was aimed at raising awareness of BiH citizens about the importance of trade relations between the two countries and consequently the need for political rapprochement.





DEVELOPMENT  
ACADEMY  
Vushtri

Graduation Ceremony

Commit  
Social  
Democr

Strengthening Kosovo's  
Economic  
Capacity

CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE

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CERTIFICATE

DEVELOPMENT  
ACADEMY  
**GRANT**  
10,000 EURO

CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE





9



OUR  
IMPRESSIONS

## AGON NIXHA

Advanced researcher



**M**y commitment at Riinvest years ago marks the opening of a new chapter of my career. It was exactly the time when I finished my studies and ready to valorize my academic experience, at the same time being very curious for absorbing as much as possible from this organization's multi-year experience.

Interviews, surveys, studies, reports, articles and debates - which rounded the work of a researcher, now were an inseparable part of this new life cycle. From the moment when I signed in, in the morning, all day revolved around research work. The topics were diverse. There were times when I was dealing with the business climate, sometimes with agriculture, other times with energy, open government - all these very important to the country's development, but also for my intellectual shaping. When we talk about the work that I was dealing with, I want to focus a bit more and to individualize an experience that for me was quite exceptional.

The sound master was doing its last tests, cameramen from around seven TV stations from Kosovo and Albania had raised cameras, guests had taken their places, the opening would start any moment. The event was about the mega - conference "Business Climate in Kosovo 2014", organized by Riinvest Institute. It was said that this was the largest conference ever organized by Riinvest. No reason not to be. A very voluminous report genuinely reflecting the economic environment in Kosovo was about to be presented. It was based on the 1000 business prospects and

all others who are stakeholders in the country's economy. I also had some share as well. I was given the job of leading project's implementation, quite a significant weight for me. With my colleagues' help, with the synergies created during this work, we successfully managed to hold this conference. Unfortunately, the report showed a tough economic environment in the country. Nevertheless, a detailed presentation of the economic situation and therefore the recommendations that came out of this report, I believe that in some way provoked everyone's attention and will contribute to the country's economic construction.

Let me return back to daily life at Riinvest. I almost forgot the lunch breaks. At Riinvest, lunch breaks are special ceremonials. It is not about the food, no. It is simply the discussions with full flap opinions that characterize these breaks. Sometimes, even often, we start with football, sometimes with politics, sometimes with the economy, sometimes with cinematography, and sometimes even the showbiz. At the end, sometimes agreeing and sometimes not - but it doesn't really matter, all the discussions end with coffee as a ceremony after food to avoid the after - meal fatigue. It may appear normal, but for me it is irreplaceable. Although all this sounds like enthusiastic work, sometimes it is followed by challenges not always very pleasant. But, when I think that if it weren't for these challenges, the other benefits offered by this work would lose its beauty. They are simply a part of any job; there is no reason to not be part of ours as well. Happy Riinvest's 20th anniversary! Many other successful anniversaries!

## ALBANA GASHI

Deputy Financial Manager



grew up at Riinvest. It may seem like a joke, but this is how I feel. At the time when the Institute was established, I was a third year student at the Faculty of Economics. Professor Muhamet Mustafa, one of the Institute's founders, engaged me along with other students as surveyors in one of the first surveys conducted by the Institute, the research entitled "Economic Activities and Democratic Development of Kosovo".

As a distinguished student and also selected by the professor to participate in this research, this was a motivation to learn even more and complete my studies on time because we had a job waiting for us. That is what we all thought, and it was really the truth. With this will, I completed my studies on time and as required, and from time to time and as necessary, I would also engage in Institute's research. I remember meetings that we held to be trained for the surveys, in a house in Velani, and whenever I pass by that route, I become nostalgic.

Not only I, but many, many other students, originally have been part of the institute, especially during the post-war period. Truth be told, I came back from France (where I stayed during the time of war, the 90s) for Riinvest Institute. I loved it, liked the job, the staff. Initially we were small but soon we began to announce open positions. We were hiring researchers; each one was more skillful than the other.

There have been full 15 years since I have been a

part of Institute's staff, and during these years I have passed through various projects. I learned a lot, even more than during my studies. Participation in various projects, financed by various donors, has been a school in itself from which I learned a lot, I have met many people of different profiles.

What makes it very special for me is my participation in the DELTA project, initially as a facilitator and then as a project manager. A project which for me has been one of the best schools. Even if blindfolded, I know all the stages of drafting the strategy for local economic development. I know villages of those municipalities which have been beneficiaries of the project. I have good professional but also social relations with the staff from those municipalities even with few of them that no longer work there.

In general, staff treatment and working environment at Riinvest make it as an institution with strong organizational culture which stems from the proper communication and teamwork which is realized and supported regardless of gender, position or level of education, based on the logic "the right person in the right place".

Nothing else remains but to say that I am very proud to continue to be part of Riinvest, whereas on the occasion of the 20th anniversary I wish all the staff all the best and much success for many years!

**ALBAN ZOGAJ**

Advanced researcher



have the honor and pleasure to be part of the staff that celebrates the 20th anniversary of the founding of the “Riinvest” institute and to explore my path for the past 10 years, with “Riinvest” my second family. This celebration has brought back my memories when I was accepted to be a part of the Riinvest institute ten years ago. Ten wonderful years, full of events, with many successes, but also difficult moments for all of us. Ten years of Riinvest’s development, but I was also developed with it as well.

It was March of 2005 when I started work at the Riinvest Institute as a young researchers, in the team with the honored professors, Muhamet Mustafa, Ekrem Beqiri, Isa Mustafa, Muhamet Sadiku and Ymer Havolli, who had prepared me for work ( while I was studying at the University of Pristina),but also with my honorable colleagues from the young generation. To start working at Riinvest, immediately after graduation, and with such a tem, it was a lifetime dream.And soon after my employment there; I continued my graduate studies at the Staffordshire University in the United Kingdom, another dream come true.

After approximately two years of study at Staffordshire University, I return back to Riinvest, even more prepared for work to immediately be engaged in a very important project with the World Bank, which was led by Professor Ekrem Beqiri. This project dealt with the development of energy projects in Kosovo. It was an extraordinary experience to work on a daily

basis with Professor Ekrem and international partners in this project.

One of the key moments for me, in 10 years with “Riinvest” will always remain the foundation of the Riinvest College in 2007, and starting my work as an assistant lecturer there. Working with students gives me a unique pleasure and is a very important part of my career.

In 2009, the Institute’s board appointed me as a research director, a task that I performed with great devotion until 2011, when I began my doctoral studies in Italy. During 2012-2014, I was appointed as the executive director at Riinvest College.

During 2014, I intensified my work towards completing my doctoral studies which I have successfully completed in February of 2015. In this regard, I would like to thank all my colleagues at Riinvest for their understanding and support. Without their support, especially the one from Professor Muhamet Mustafa, everything would be more difficult.

Currently, I am a lecturer of Economics at the Riinvest College, but I also lead the department for master studies while at the same time, I am a part of the numerous Institute projects.

Finally, once again, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Riinvest family for the 20th anniversary of its “birth” and to emphasize my deep conviction that there numerous other success awaiting Riinvest in the future.

**ANTIGONA UKA**  
Research Assistant



**A**s if i want to start to extricate Riinvest's importance as an institute of socio-economic developments in the academic world (educational); I can freely say that seminars that I prepared during my studies have introduced me to Riinvest Institute, which was a reference point for almost any study project. As such, Riinvest has always updated and added credibility value in the sphere of economic discussions on university premises.

The starting point for the formation of my knowledge on the theories of developmental research is IBCM College (International Business College Mitrovica) where I finished the first two years of BA studies BA in Marketing Management. Later, Riinvest became my target for practical work. According to the hierarchical structure of the institution, practice is the first step towards professional advancement. The 4 month practice during 2013 at this institute was a very valuable experience of work. Boosting environment, motivating and challenging work inspired me even more. As a result, in August 2013 I earned a scholarship at Liberty West University, in West Virginia of the United States, where I finished the third and final year of my BA studies. During my stay in the US I was also engaged part time at the Department of Institutional Development of West Liberty University, and as a research assistant in "The Havana consulting Group".

After a fruitful internship at Riinvest, and all my involvement at WLU and THCG, I returned back at the institute. More specifically, since 1 September of the last year I'm engaged as a full time research assistant (a higher position after the practice work as set in the hierarchy) at Riinvest Institute. Returning to a very productive and influential environment at the institute that among other things, I admired it for the organizational structure, was another step towards my professional goals. Detachment from being just a student, and moving forward towards research work was most welcome-yet still challenging.

Riinvest with all its fame in the field of socio-economic developments, surely must increasingly adapt to the environment and the global pace. New arrivals in the society with all human and intellectual capital within the institute should be seen as an ideal conjugation towards achieving the vision and adaptability to any eventual change of environment and research development. Moreover, by knowing that Riinvest has always been on the side of young scholars, I expect that this attribute is further strengthened and given the adequate importance. As far as I understand, the work of a researcher initially requires will and energy, without ever leaving aside interactivity and interpersonal communication and then the immeasurable expertise and professionals who would do anything to effectively accomplish their goals.

**DIELLZA GASHI**  
Advanced researcher



**D**uring my studies I heard and learned a lot about research institutes/think tanks and the role and influence of such unique institutions in the society. Since then, I developed an interest that after graduation I work in such a place, that way I would be able contribute a little bit, with the knowledge I gained in the society development, part of which I also am.

After my return to Kosovo, from the United States of America, this wish became an opportunity after being employed at Riinvest Institute where I now mark my fourth year of employment. These last four years at the Institute have enabled my highest professional development so far. First steps in the institute I started working as a research assistant assisting advanced and senior researchers with their daily chores. Over time, I began to advance and take on greater responsibilities. I have been offered the opportunity to engage in various activities and I learned a lot about all the steps needed in drafting the project proposals, research report writing and project management. This period helped me develop as a person and learn how to manage different situations that may arise during group work.

A special experience, along my journey at Riinvest that I want to share is when I had to present my work for the first time in a television. There was quite some time that I was trying to avoid the management recommendations that as staff we need to be much more present in the media, in order to present the work that we do

as a researcher at the Institute. In early 2013, with the publication of the report “Attracting investments from the Diaspora” and the presentation at the conference organized together with colleagues, we received the invitation from local media to participate in TV programs. Although again I tried to elude, this time I was not able to because the director insisted that I participate and share our work with the public. However, except for the insistence, the Director also helped with advice on how to introduce myself by sharing his first experience. The next day I was introduced in a TV show in which citizens could be connected through a telephone connection to ask questions directly. Emotions were floating, the topic was very sensitive and I was afraid that I would not be able to answer the questions asked. Fortunately, the entire interview went well. It was that interview and advice provided by the director that helped me overcome fear of the presentation in the media.

Thinking about the Institutes’ 20th anniversary and the future, makes us remember that the work over the years has been filled with full of challenges, and the various challenges will continue to follow us in the future. However, as a result of the experience that we have gained over the years will be able to easily cope with situations which we may face in the future. I want to conclude this article with the wish for many other anniversaries full of success!

**EDONA KURTOLLI**  
Advanced researcher



**R**iinvest is a very important part of my professional formation. After a period of about eight years, after obtaining a master's degree, and after professional work experience in western countries, I was hired by Riinvest Institute in Prishtina. At the age of 23, I started working as a Marketing Manager but soon after I was involved in the research field; which as we all know, is an inseparable and the main part of the Institute. Passing through various projects, and being faced with various requirements from the donors, as well as private clients, from Riinvest I have learned three things: 1) quality speaks for itself, 2) the success of a project depends on team harmony, and 3) networking is the key to success.

Quality makes its own promotion; therefore it was effortless and without obstacles to manage marketing at Riinvest. In every newspaper, media appearance, professional report, publication, book, thesis, anywhere, Riinvest was quoted, Riinvest was mentioned, and the data and research conducted by Riinvest were the ones always placed first in sequence. If you ask anyone about Riinvest, the answers will be similar; that Riinvest is a source of wisdom, that Riinvest is among the first in the field of professional research, and that Riinvest is definitely a reliable leader in every professional aspect. These values are the ones that I as an individual tried to adapt from Riinvest, leadership, professionalism, and reliability.

But who is Riinvest Institute? Riinvest are the people, the researchers, administration, managers, directors, founders. Riinvest are people who work with dedication showing professional success through each step and always producing high-quality work. The willingness of senior researchers to assist and guide has been my main inspiration to work with as much might and diligence on each project. Their motivational words, and their work examples, was the best way to learn.

Working with various public, international, and private institutions, are a good opportunity for networking, and no matter how many jobs you changes, for a long while, or even for a few years, people will identify you with Riinvest. And for me this is the greatest satisfaction.

There is no school in the world that would replace the experience gained at Riinvest Institute, and I believe that there is no organization from which I could acquire vast knowledge and information, except at Riinvest, which is already and will continue to be my second home.

**ERANDA BASHOLLI**

Financial Assistant



started working for Riinvest Institute 15 years ago. Since then, Riinvest Institute enjoys a reputation based on the quality of its work and commitment in applying academic skills against the challenges of the reality in which we live.

Riinvest has enabled the mutual development of its staff and Institute, during all these years of operation, it always offered job satisfaction and commodity where each of us have found motivation to work. The Institute has also managed to go abreast with changes and to train its staff in accordance with those changes, which enables learning new things; and staff cooperation is consistently shown.

It has provided the basis for success and career advancement; it has provided great opportunities for its staff and always created new cadres that are known for the public. It is the ideal place enabling you to demonstrate your knowledge, capabilities and qualities; it consistently perfects your professional skills and at the same time allows you to continue gaining professional knowledge.

Riinvest always enabled its staff to effectively apply their knowledge and everyone has felt respected and dignified.

My work at Riinvest Institute was made easier through the support from the management and from colleagues at work, where despite the burden of being the mother of four children, peer support and motivation, is the inspiration for my work and success.

If Riinvest has believed that knowledge on research activities can push forward the changes that must take place in a society in order to achieve this vision, then Riinvest Institute has achieved this purpose.

**FATON SELANI**

Creative Director



Leaving the modesty aside, Riinvest Institute has always been the benchmark for any given economy.

I was part of the media for almost 15 years and it is there for the first time that I heard about the Institute from my fellow journalists, who from time to time, were directed to the “Riinvest experts” for any uncertainty about the economy. It is then that my sympathy for the Riinvest Institute was born. And normally my desire after the “Information Design” so that all that research information and Institute’s socio-economic charts for over 20 years become accessible, clear and understandable for everyone, whether they are economists, journalists or even students.

Perhaps initially, this was the only reason and desire as to why I joined Riinvest Institute team. My goal and desire is that shortly, Riinvest has a completely different image, the one it deserves. It has already been few months that I have been working as a creative director at the Institute and besides starting with the solidification of the Office of Public Relations, I believe that we now have a new image - normally we still have a lot of work to do.

Ahhh ... my colleagues - nearly all of them are of the same age and our conversations may be endless “but work calls us”. Perhaps this is only one sentence - but it explains our collegial relations by also not forgetting that they are all professionals.

With full of energy and excellent colleagues, this is Riinvest that I found and this will not stop even though “we are the best”.

## FISNIK BAJRAMI

Advanced researcher



often think of what makes long-lived companies and organizations to be leaders in various markets. Obviously, their experience matters. However, shouldn't old methods fall in the shadows of new ones? Shouldn't old companies and organizations be replaced with new ones? Isn't the life cycle worth in this case as well?

Innovation should prevail, right? I believe it should! Innovation, whether in the literal sense, or in the sense of promotion of new ideas and thinking, is always triumphant! In fact, this is the key of how successful long-lived companies and organization manage to always be leaders. I see this case at Riinvest Institute, which has managed to prevail for decades, by providing excellence in work with up-to-date methods and ideas. Let me illustrate how.

I was employed at Riinvest Institute at a young age. Even though I had just gained my degrees from esteemed education, I was professionally unexperienced. I continue to work with the zeal and ambition that has followed me from the first day at work. Always ready to fight outdated ideas, I stubbornly stand by what I consider to be right. Unfortunately, these virtues commonly are unrecognized in Kosovo, but necessary for Riinvest Institute, where I found space to contribute with work and ideas. On the one hand, at Riinvest I met some of the most renowned experts of various fields in Kosovo, while on the other, I met a group of young professionals, characterized by high spirits, energy, work, zeal, ambition, ideas and

knowledge. Yet the best was the teamwork and cooperation of these two groups, always producing excellence. It rarely encounters in Kosovo that the work and ideas of youth is appreciated, praised, supported and embraced. However, all these happened daily at Riinvest. My work and ideas always found support. It was due to this work environment that my motivation and professional ambition has always increased.

Within Riinvest, our mission was to support as well as learn from our colleagues. The excellent teamwork harmony, diversified ideas and productive discussions helped everyone in professional development. My ambition grew at Riinvest, rather than fade as it usually happens in Kosovo. At Riinvest we were always active for the actual. We research for business trends, economic barriers, citizens' opinions or enabling policies. Our aim is always the same. In the case of business plans, we developed the concept with the latest business methods, in the case of economic and enterprise research, we always advocate for laws and support in achieving the western world economic levels, as well as in the case of development projects, where we offer support for improving competitiveness in regional and even European levels. At Riinvest, our mission is to lead our economic development.

**FISNIK REÇICA**  
Advanced researcher



**M**y first experience with Riinvest Institute dates back to the end of 2009, when Riinvest hired me to support the drafting of Kosovo's industry strategy. At that time I was working at ProCredit Bank. Although it was a short experience, the seriousness of the work, team support as well as numerous opportunities for professional and academic development made me leave the banker career in March of 2010 and become part of the Institute, that year Riinvest was celebrating their 15th anniversary.

When I joined Riinvest, I viewed it as a leader in the field of scientific research, in support of the private sector and public policy advocacy necessary to create a suitable business environment for domestic and foreign investors. Teamwork and management support were key factors in achieving continuous success. I verified this during multiple engagements in projects of different nature, as in market research, capacity building and the provision of business services to private enterprises, as well as in research and government policy advocacy to address the needs of the private sector. Lately, I have been proving this in the project "Promotion of employment in the private sector" where Riinvest is part of an international consortium led by Swisscontact, aiming market development and employment generation, which is essential for our country.

In these five years of experience at Riinvest I ben-

efited from knowledge of different colleagues and national and international partners with whom we cooperated in various projects. Moreover, thanks to the Institute's approach to support internal capacity building, I had the opportunity to simultaneously be part of the Institute and pursue doctoral studies in the UK. Proactive and innovative approach of Riinvest leaders enabled Staffordshire University programs of Great Britain to be offered by Riinvest College in Kosovo, where I have the honor to be a part of the academic staff.

Today, on Riinvest's 20th anniversary, I think that the quality and serious commitment of staff, ensuring of uncompromising quality, close cooperation with local, regional and international partners, innovations that bring and promote professionalism, make Riinvest an important actor paving the socio-economic development in Kosovo. Today, Riinvest is part of international consortiums implementing multimillion euro projects with the ultimate goal of improving the overall business environment, increasing the competitiveness of private sector enterprises and creation of new jobs. With this development trend, on its 25th anniversary, I see Riinvest implementing similar projects in the region and beyond, exporting experience and knowledge generated over the years.

**GENT BEQIRI**

Advanced researcher



**A** few days after the loss of my father, during most difficult moments of my life, I started working for this well-known institute. I remember even today the strong sense of responsibility even reluctance to impose the dilemma of whether I will be able to justify the expectations which were naturally related to my father's work of many years at this institute.

I was adapted faster than I thought to this environment and with colleagues who are obviously outside the standard stereotypes. A staff that functioned as a big family with human relationships, understanding, collegiality and cooperation that makes you feel good, motivated and dedicated to work.

Undoubtedly it is an honor and privilege to be part of Riinvest, of this institution which is not only one of the most famous, the most prestigious, the most respected, the most credible with the strongest reputation in the country, an institution that brings together the best of the Kosovo's intelligentsia and the most outstanding professionals of the economy, an area so important for the country's development.

And it is expected that in such an environment where professional and intellectual cooperation, communication, confrontation of opinions and ideas are at the right level, have advancements, progress and new staffing formation.

I feel privileged that for these few years I managed among other things a solid training in survey manage-

ment expertise, data processing and interpretation, and preparation of research reports as well as built an important academic experience.

And finally, I want to give special thanks and express a deep gratitude to a distinguished and a highly respected Professor Mr. Muhamet Mustafa for his continued, sincere and unreserved support towards me.

**ILIRE MEHMETI**  
Advanced researcher



**R**iinvest as a workplace has become an integral part of my life. Both in terms of collegial proximity, professional development and in establishing contacts. I have built significant and unforgettable experiences here, which will remain in my memory.

The most memorable event during my years at the Institute has been my meeting with women of Handikos network in Peja. The two years project “Strengthening the capacity of regional economic development of Kosovo”, supported by the EU Office in Kosovo, aimed at strengthening of regional actors to participate and contribute actively in regional economic and overall development in Kosovo. In particular, participants from around Kosovo were trained to apply, manage and implement development projects funded by different donors, with particular emphasis on projects funded by the EU office in a body named Development Academy. The most valuable work of the whole project has undoubtedly proved to be the writing and submission of real project proposals from the participants, from which they expected to generate funding in the form of grants.

Of the 10 funded projects, which were quite various and really necessary for their community and across the country, the Handikos project was the most significant for me. The Handikos branch in Peja had proposed to support women with special needs from the Dukagjin region, by distributing to them sewing machines, embroidery and engraving for manual work (handicrafts) to enhance the welfare of their families. With this, we intended to provide

opportunities for work by utilizing the capacities and capabilities of these women with special needs and increase opportunities for income generation through handicrafts. This support not only supports the development and promotion of the role of people with disabilities in society through their involvement in the labor market and the advancement of their professional aspect ( in the field of handicrafts and sewing ) but more importantly it provides long-term activities that will impact these people’s lives and dignity.

After one month of training on the use of new machines and donating ten sewing machines for ten participating women, these women organized a reception for us, the project team, to show us the work that was done and thank us for the support. From the moment I met with these women, I was very impressed with their willingness and excitement for the new work. Excitement that was expressed by their desire to explain the entire process of their work to me. Their warmth was evident by the way they would address to me calling me with my first name, although they were meeting me for the first time, which impressed me a lot. These generous women who at the end they even gave me a handmade piece embroidered with their impressive mastery.

Projects and contributions like these, which are powered at Riinvest Institute, make me appreciate this job and give me a motive for further work and to overcome any difficulty. I hope that this motive will follow me even more in the future and will enable me to contribute to many projects of this kind.

**ISREN FEJZULLAHU**  
Financial manager



**B**eing a part of such a well-respected Institute, with tremendous credibility and qualified staff definitely makes me feel proud and lucky at the same time. Naturally, the work seriousness and the potential it holds pushed me to be a part of it. But I cannot believe that I have been here for 11 years surrounded by a harmony and familiarity between colleagues. Certainly my experience and expertise gained over the years cannot be ignored. Since the first days of my work, I noticed the care and skill that this Institute was enriched with. It is these things and the respect for each other along with an ambition to advance ourselves as one of the reasons that we continue to work and to be part of Riinvest.

It is worth mentioning the fact that we had a tremendous advancement during these years, I am speaking in professional terms and more specifically for my profession. I have learned so much during many years' experience that I don't even have words to explain and describe. I can freely say that our achievements during this time are innumerable. The history itself tells this thing as well. Why am I mentioning history, it is because with the full 20 years of relentless work and constant development, we have become the leader of resistance and of efficient work. This is why we made history, nonetheless it does not mean that we have finished our work; there are plenty of activities ahead of us. The unstoppable will accompanied with dedication characterizes us as an Institute even more, as a family.

The collective creativity is our product which is one of the highest achievement personalizing our work. The symbol of this Institute is undoubtedly the achieved success, although faced with many challenges. But it is the challenges that empowered us and professionalized us even more. I cannot say that is a utopian place, as it would seem unbelievable, but I can confidently say that it is an ideal place for an employee who wishes to work, to become emancipated and to be part of our family.

Development, inclusion and further advancement of new staff which is of course linked with the communication and cooperation of intellectual powers, it was and hope it remains the goal of the Institute. Constant research and endless projects make us even more dedicated to our work. I hope to continue to remain in this hyperactivity rich with numerous activities and always euphoric for our work.

**MENSUR MUSTAFA**

Logistics



In 1995 I began work at Riinvest Institute, while it was still under the private company Rima. I was one of the first workers after the founders. Being part of this institute creates the feeling of confidence considering the mutual communication between the employees and the management. Offering flexibility at work and mutual trust is not commonly found, and it is rare in institutions and as a result, this institution has created its name, by doing professional work and creating a culture of internal communication and organization.

As a Logistics Officer, I engage in different activities including, fee payments, office supplies, facility maintenance, and assistance in the field of logistics activities. My involvement with almost all workers has created a sense of trust with colleagues for the joint work and the institution in achieving timely and quality work.

It is a sense of pride and honor, to be part of the 20 year success. During our work, we seldom learn through activities, we have mutual understanding and very rarely work under pressure; as activities are prepared well in advance. Daily schedule is prepared in advance so it rarely happens to be under time pressure for the implementation of our activities.

Establishing communication between us during work, but also between our families, has made me feel of this job as a second home.

Being employed at an Institute such as Riinvest is a

privilege for the entire family because you carry with you the success of the entire Institute and obviously this working culture is reflected everywhere.

I feel extremely happy with all this institution's achievements and wish for many more success in the future.

**MERITA ZHUSHI PEJA**

Receptionist



**1**998 was a difficult year since our family decided to leave the country and emigrate to the United States of America. America is a country that offers many opportunities, and although I spent seven years there my mind remained here, to return to my country. In 2005, we returned in Kosovo realizing that there were no great employment opportunities, and it was quite difficult to exploit those few opportunities. We spent several years without any professional engagement and often considered the possibility of returning back to America.

In November 2007, I applied at Riinvest for a receptionist position and was fortunate that I was accepted for two reasons: one, Riinvest was a well-known brand for professionalism where most famous names of economists were engaged and was a pleasure to be in such an environment, and the second reason was the opportunity to not leave the country again. Being part of Riinvest is a great privilege, to work with such an advanced and respected staff really makes you feel very good.

I have been here for seven years now, not all the moments were great and easy, there were times where I lacked the knowledge to carry out a job, or execution of tasks on time because of great intensity but with great commitment and with the help of my colleagues everything was finalized well. Riinvest is as a second school to me. Here, I was able to learn many things and still continue to learn which makes me very proud.

Riinvest Institute is an institute that offers you all the opportunities for advancement, if you are willing to accept them. I often think that there is a great need to have institutes of this kind in Kosovo that offer employment conditions as Riinvest does.

I can say that Riinvest is a source of wisdom and a reliable leader. I hope that our work will continue with the same willpower and with this wonderful staff for many years.

**PREMTON HYSENI**  
Advanced researcher



**R**iinvest, as the first Institute for Research has made an extraordinary contribution to the development of social science in Kosovo. This way Riinvest has become the reference point for researchers to obtain data on Kosovo's economy being the first private institution that has provided such impartial evidence.

After 20 years of activity and commitment the Institute has changed to reflect the needs of the target market and Riinvest's objective to avoid dependency on public funds and achieve exercise activity as the "think tank" leader in Kosovo. Consequently today Riinvest has clients/serious donors who prioritize on optimizing their funds in quality. Riinvest work is used to improve public policies and informed business making.

This has made Riinvest attractive for young people seeking career advancement. Being part of Riinvest comes with a first place seat for many important developments. Riinvest serves as an information collection point being an Institute with the most developed infrastructure in the field of research and discussion forum on current events.

Work at Riinvest is followed by what could be expected from an external observer. Besides numerous commitments there are also privileges that accompany the research such as the space where you have to be updated on the study literature in which Riinvest is engaged; networking with colleagues of similar interests and academic study; working challenges with

not precisely measurable results; and being part of an industry that does not limit your future choices.

Riinvest College adds value to the Institute by making it attractive for qualified staff who intends to practice the academic experience by doing research and communicating it to young scholars.

Riinvest's presence in networks, forums, academic and political life, have made Riinvest's label easily identifiable even outside of Kosovo. Riinvest's work since before the war with prominent donors (such as CIPE) has created an unequal experience from other organizations in Kosovo. The institute with its staff's academic portfolio has a passport for of the application and implementation of projects that carry important weight.

Riinvest in its –five year strategy envisages to maintain the position of a leader for research and "think-tank" activities in Kosovo. Riinvest will achieve this by continuing to produce quality research and views. Riinvest will focus on expanding, and to buckle connections with businesses as the main instigator for Riinvest's mission which is Kosovo's economic development based on the philosophy of entrepreneurship.

**SAXHIDE MUSTAFA**  
Deputy Executive Director



**M**y professional link with Riinvest started 12 years ago. In the postwar years, when the country's development was slow, a great amount of work was being done within Riinvest. Research and economic analysis developed with a rapid pace that engaged a large number of local and international expertise so that the government and the international community is offered more accurate information about the economic situation, business environment and private sector development. Riinvest was considered the second door after government visits by various delegations visiting Kosovo. This was thanks to overcoming the limits of the work by Riinvest, analysis and projects and solutions it offered. Internal organizational culture, freedom of expression, professional development, collaboration with experts, are some of the values of this institution that make it stand with credibility, and enter the third decade. Staff collaboration, sharing of knowledge and communication skills and not just eight hours of work but it continues even today as a tradition from the first generation. This socialization creates even more powerful connection with this institution not only with the staff but with our families as well.

I was engaged at Riinvest as a lawyer, but my professional advancement and further development is related to the economy. It wasn't simple just plain ambition to reach the same level as my colleagues

but it was a motive, a push for progress and professional benefit.

Challenges have also been part of the work which in this working environment are common and easily manageable. Strengthening, staff advancement was done and is done with dedication and is to be valued and we can say that it is an additional value and differentiation from others. Recruiting young people with higher transparency and merit continues to be a priority, recruitment of potential youth and their further development. In the capacity of the manager of the administrative and judicial issues for Riinvest Institute, I am going to share an applicant's opinion in 2005, who after being tested for employment for the position of the researchers said, I quote "It was like we were being tested to become a minister, what is it with all this testing". It seemed a lot to him, but it made it easier for us to choose the best. I often remember his words and it makes me very proud, for organizing a professional recruitment process, for hiring based on merit, for all colleagues who are now part of Riinvest, but also for others who now exert very important position in the country.

During these two decades, work at Riinvest strongly supports its founder's mission and we are developing by following the vision towards the development trends at global level. I am very proud to have been part of Riinvest for 12 years. Happy 20th anniversary, all the best in the future!

**VISAR VOKRRI**  
Advanced researcher



It was the first post-war years when I started university studies and began to take the first lessons in economics. It was the beginning of a new era, the return of hope to a devastated country exhausted by war and multiyear occupation. While the country was still under the drunkenness of freedom, after four years of work under the occupation, Riinvest Institute now was back at its activities in completely new circumstances in a liberated Kosovo with full of challenges to her new journey. Kosovo may have lacked freedom, but not visionary experts who have implemented the only “think tank” type institute in Kosovo which would deal with economic research and analysis with the sole purpose of promoting the economic development of Kosovo. Throughout the study period, but even afterwards, I tried that besides academic resources to enrich my knowledge with additional resources. For me Riinvest was unquestionably the only credible reference point in Kosovo. My knowledge with Institute begins here. For me Riinvest with time became synonymous with research and advocacy activities related to economic development. Consequently, my interest to follow these activities as constantly increasing; I found myself in most tables, presentations or conferences where the Institute was present. Privatization, private sector development, trade, or even energy, were the main topics of the time. All those studies and analyzes made by Riinvest had become part of my library.

At the time when Riinvest was marking the 19th anniversary, I joined its team. I still believe that it was one of the best decisions throughout my professional career. I was convinced that my experience of ten years either in the public or private sector would be an added value to the professional team of Institute and also a tremendous opportunity to expand my research knowledge. I was not mistaken, my expectations were exceeded. For a short time I was able to absorb many new things. Moreover, I was no longer just an admirer of the work and their contribution to socio - economic development of Kosovo; now, I had the opportunity to have my portion to this contribution. There, I found a dedicated team, professional and eager to work and further success. They all share the same passion, great desire to make positive changes that will enable sustainable development in the country. Alike success, challenges are also common. It is exactly the internal synergy which makes this institution a model employer in Kosovo.

Now that Riinvest has filled twenty years of activities, numerous successes and challenges, I say fully convinced that it is a privilege to be part of this family where the dedication to its mission, is unmatched. I believe that this spirit will follow the Institute even after twenty years; full of other successes and further expansion of this big family.

**YLLI TAFARSHIKU**  
Research Assistant



**A**fter nearly 10 years of experience in the media sector and marketing, specifically in Kohavision, Studio Moderna and Entermedia, I joined the team of Riinvest Institute. My expectations were high before, since I was joining the most prestigious economic Institute in country, so the pressure was also great. Although I was coming from a rich professional experience but quite different from that of the economy for which Riinvest Institute was known, my academic qualification concentrated in Public Policy, Management, and minor in Economics, along with professional experience made a very interesting mix for the task that was just entrusted to me: Research assistant for the project that has to do with the advancement of communication with the public, the Office of Public Relations at the Riinvest Institute.

In September 2014 I officially started work at the Riinvest Institute. Within the institute, I found colleagues that were extremely friendly and close, most of them profiled and with several years of experience in the field of economic research, who immediately made me feel part of the family and the culture of work created at Riinvest Institute. Also, the horizontal extent of management and organizational structure of the organization, where most of the decisions for the organization are taken together and in close consultation with the institute's staff, was also another great reason to feel as a very valuable member of the organization.

Together with Faton Selani, my colleague at the Office of Public Relations, we started work on strengthening the office, and increasing the level of communication with the public, strategy for achieving the main goal, thus raising the level of communication with the public, we thought it of as a tool through which to create a new method, very modern and efficient of communication. Identification of the organization's publications on public through the creation of a standardized set of printing and typography; establishing a media office that will deal exclusively with communication with journalists; strengthening of digital media, specifically social networking website and institute; creating a digital platform where collected data from institute's research would be published; and communication through the creation of a modern application for Android and iOS operating systems, are just some of the means provided for achieving the objectives.

Most of the projects in question now have already started to be realized and take shape, while some of them are already in the final stage. Over a period of two years, Riinvest Institute through the Public Relations Office, will build a very modern model of communication with the public, model which will be self-sustaining, thereby enabling institute's audience a very easily accessible and modern communication.





# 10



ASSOCIATES  
THROUGHOUT YEARS

BUJAR  
PIRA

RIINVEST  
COLLEGE

**W**hen I sat down to write these lines I remembered a Chinese proverb: “It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness”. This darkness in which our country was introduced, especially in the 90s, failed to dampen the will and to stop the momentum of the work of a group of experts who instead of cursing the situation, decided to work on changing this situation, opening up an institution that would deal with the country’s development policies . This Institute soon became the “most dazzling candle” in its field, a position which it continues to hold even today. Thankfully, I also had the opportunity to give my contribution at this Institute, in a later period, a mutual contribution considering that the experiences that I have received during my work there have only met my previous achievements.

Being part of the Riinvest Institute for me it’s not only fun but also a privilege. This Institute generated, created and developed dozens of experts from various fields, whose contribution goes beyond the Institute. One of these cadres that Institute has developed is me as well. Before I joined the Institute in 2008, I was a mechanical engineer with engineering qualifications in all three levels of study, and modest experience in management and university education.

Seven years, as I call them “the Riinvest years”, as part of the Institute, are the years that have had influence on my professional development and research participating in various research and professional projects, from the development of projects to their

execution. Among many projects that have been part of are: the project “Analysis of energy consumption and energy balance development” (supported by the Ministry of Energy and Mines), the project “Development of Kosovo’s industry strategy” (funded by the Ministry of Trade and Industry), the project “Technical Support to SMEs” (funded by SPARK), the project “Horticulture Promotion in Kosovo” (funded by the SDC), etc.

My experience at Riinvest has not only developed aspects of my research, but it opened other horizons as well: that of the economy, energy and industry and promoted the critical assessment and strategic thinking, elements which are complementary parts of my engineering education and that have given a power to my professionalism. Thus, Riinvest Institute not only enables the use of existing potential of its researchers, but it also offers the opportunity of expanding these research potentials and the opportunity of further study such as the master and those of doctoral studies through its international strategic partners .

My engagement with Riinvest, other than the Institute, continued in the teaching process at Riinvest College, as well as bachelor and MBA programs, with Staffordshire University from the UK in Kosovo, offered by the Riinvest College. Being part of Riinvest is honor and pleasure, but it is also a responsibility. And this 20th anniversary proves this institution’s the best performance and reliability.

BARDHA  
QIREZI

RIINVEST  
COLLEGE

In 2007, I was engaged at Riinvest University in the quality of the consultant and leader of quality assurance. In addition to this commitment, I also started to cooperate with “Riinvest” Institute. At the institute, I was engaged mainly in the projects on education, assessments, migration and training for public officials and businesses in various Kosovo municipalities with the Delta and the Academy development projects .

One thing that always attracted me to cooperate with the Institute is its vibrant and constantly developing community. In 2007, Institute’s main staff had just completed their graduate studies abroad and were enrolling for their doctoral studies. During this time they brought new ideas, energy and commitment, and at the same time, they were also developing personally.

This development gradually transformed the Institute and added productivity, quality and new ways of penetrating into Kosovo’s but also international

society. But the institute as a vibrant community enjoys the advantage because it always uses previous experience and this way it engages staff from the college. Depending on the type of research, the institute constantly engages people with experience this way creating a synergy of experience, expertise and generations. In my cooperation as a director for academic planning and international relations , I have had the opportunity to work on creating the internship at the Institute module by engaging our students in that module. This particular contribution from the Institute has made Riinvest College a unique place where the Institute’s staff work with students on various projects.

From my perspective as a manager and as a teacher, this cooperation contributes to more informed and attractive teaching, interdisciplinary research, and engagement with the business community and public institutions with which we cooperate.

PETRIT  
GASHI

LECTURER,  
UNIVERSITY OF  
PRISHTINA

**T**wo decades of Riinvest operation, show an outstanding commitment towards a very challenging mission: to support the country's economic recovery. Among the main pillars of civil society in Kosovo, Riinvest's contribution is not properly valued as an honest voice in the process of public policy making and institutional development in Kosovo. The scope and depth of Riinvest analysis are unique for the country. For two decades, Riinvest Institute researchers have demonstrated an exceptional ability to identify and address fundamental issues of the economic life in Kosovo, including private sector

development, property privatization in Kosovo, institutional reform, competitiveness and foreign trade, fiscal policy reform, reforms in education and health, and many other relevant issues.

I was fortunate to be part of Riinvest for eight years and to have contributed a little to its mission. In this jubilee, I wish Riinvest a long life and active participation in the country's economic development. Today, when the country needs deep economic and political reforms to create a sustainable development and prosperity for all, Riinvest's voice is needed more than ever.



## BESNIK KRASNIQI

LECTURER,  
UNIVERSITY OF  
PRISHTINA

joined Riinvest in 2001. As a 22 year old, it was a privilege but also a challenge in building my career as an economist. It was a privilege, because I became part of an organization with Kosovo's best professionals in the field of economic development. On the other hand, it was a challenge because from the student's position I became a part of my dear professor's team. This challenge became the main motive for professional and scientific research.

Working at Riinvest is a "lifetime chance". "Riinvest" made me feel part of something special and that I was important to help the organization in achieving the noble goal – Kosovo's economic development. This noble mission made me feel proud and also to be responsible in my work, aware that the quality of my work would affect the noble mission of this knowledge and research temple.

An organization where every day, you learn new things and cultivate the spirit of teamwork and develop a different thinking. At "Riinvest" I have enjoyed the full sense of teamwork. Creating critical thinking and providing alternative choices for country's economic development was the main orientation. Therefore, for me "Riinvest" is a school of economic thoughts which continues to be a leader in promoting the values of the market economy and economic development of Kosovo.

A particular fragment from the work at "Riinvest" was the cooperation with prestigious universities and international experts from the USA, the UK and Europe. This was an open door to the world to integrate into the field of knowledge and research. It should be noted that an expert from Florida University, who after long a residence at "Riinvest" as an external consultant said "I am fascinated by your work; your work intensity and standards are comparable to the standards in America. This was a tremendous motivation for us, especially for the young researchers.

As such, "Riinvest" offered a motivational environment and support to grow up professionally and change the way of thinking so I could create the difference in our society. An environment where the employee identifies with the organization and its mission. An organization that turned mistakes into learning for us, the pressure on productivity and skills into power. But about professionalism and career, the most important thing we have learned from you was that we become honest people with integrity, and to learn that success is only meaningful when it is acquired in a fair and right way.

Thank you for enabling me to make the difference in my life and somehow contribute to the creation of the difference for my country.

HAZIR  
GASHI

RIINVEST  
COLLEGE

**E**stablishment of the Riinvest Institute occurred at the most appropriate time for Kosovo's economic development and represents a very important moment for Kosovo's historical turning points.

My collaboration and commitment to the Riinvest Institute dates from the beginning of its work, but my first official cooperation started with my participation with a presentation in a seminar titled : Computerization of the economic problems in Kosovo on 16-17.01.1998 –presentation of my paper concentrated on the topic of the middle school curriculum subjects in informatics. Present in this conference and in another similar one were a large number of experts in information technology, economics, lawyers and engineers, who conducted research and made many important suggestions for Kosovo's development.

Riinvest played a very important role immediately after the war in different forms. This important moment is the organization of the summer school in Ohër in September of 1999, where for three consecutive weeks, distinguished students from the Faculty of Economics, University of Pristina, along with their professors and assistants conducted a training on business development ranging from business planning and further.

I was a trainer for Internet and Excel and I must

say that this was an excellent experience for me. The knowledge and experience I gained from this summer school helped me start my own business which proved to be very successful for me, my family but also for the municipality.

The great respect for the Institute and good experiences that it followed, were just few of the reasons that made me join this institution. From 1 July 2008, I have been employed at Riinvest in full time basis.

Since my expertise is the application of informatics in economics, computer training and knowledge of different software , I have been engaged with Institute in following projects: The Delta project with several municipalities in Kosovo for developing municipal strategies, MEM Project for drafting Kosovo's energy balance and software for the study of energy balance, LOGOS project for evaluation of strategies for the two municipalities (Kaçanik and Han i Elezit), MTI project for developing Kosovo's industry strategy : ICT enterprises research, MBPZHRK Project for training officials in statistics, The project for the training of MEST officials on statistics, etc .

The analysis and recommendations of Riinvest Institute are used by all as an accurate indicator of the economic and social situation in society.



MUHAMET  
SADIKU

CO-FOUNDER

**Y**ear 1996. At the first sight nothing new. The main concern for the Riinvest's founder group was the preparation of the project "Economic activities and democratic development of Kosovo" which carried the message and the idea that Kosovo can function as a democracy and market economy under the umbrella of independence and integration.

Within the analysis of international experiences related to the transition and in particular the challenge of privatization, we started visiting the regional countries that inherited a common political and economic past.

To learn more about this issue, I arrived in Zagreb. I made contacts, conversations and efforts to draw

lessons on what should and should not be done with the privatization in Kosovo. One day I contacted a friend of mine in Zagreb.

I told him about the purpose of my visit, with a focus on lessons from privatization in Croatia. Don't you think that it may be too early to talk about privatization in Kosovo? You are still occupied by Serbia, my friend replied. Yes, we are occupied, but it is not too early to think about independence, democracy and capitalism in Kosovo, I replied.

He was thinking for a moment and replied: "Yes, if you prepare now, the errors will be smaller and the cost will be lower".

SELMAN  
SELMANAJ

RIINVEST  
COLLEGE

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## At the end of the tunnel a light was seen

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**A**t the time of total darkness in all its forms: media, education, culture, science, employment, and other forms, in 1995, at the end of the tunnel a light was seen which began to be reflected not only in the area of this tunnel, but also outside of it.

This light began to reflect with the establishment of Riinvest Institute in 1995. The light began to be reflected through the design of published studies, their promotion and through the organization of seminars and scientific roundtables, particularly, in the period 1995 to March 1999, and international cooperation of the Institute with similar institutions in several European countries.

An important event for me was the fact that I was participating in the promotion of the study "Economic activities and economic development in Kosovo". The promotion of this publication in Albanian was organized in Prishtina. This promotion, for me, left a great impression in Prishtina of that time, where the Serbian regime was continuing efforts to extinguish everything that had an Albanian national character. English language publication was launched in the Central European University in Budapest.

With the establishment of Riinvest Institute, I was elected as the first chairman of the Scientific Council. Before the war in Kosovo, the activity of the Institute was reflected in the organization of seminars and scientific roundtables, with a particular significance such as "Critical Analysis of the Law on privatization and transformation of property in

Serbia", "The factors limiting private sector construction in Kosovo", "Building of Economic System in Kosovo", "The development of democracy" a roundtable which was held three days before the NATO bombing.

The greatest achievement of this institution in this period was the consolidation of scientific and professional staff, development of economic and political thought, and what is more important in my opinion, was the return of confidence to professional and scientific staff, who rallied around this institute, and preservation of the middle class which, after the revocation of SAP Kosovo, with great speed turned into workers hired on salaries.

During the war in Kosovo, Riinvest Institute continued its activities in Tetovo, and after the liberation of Kosovo, the institute continued its activity in the new circumstances, which mainly focused on diagnosing problems and providing proposals for their resolution, especially in the field of transformation and privatization of property and the creation of new cadres, who gained scientific titles such as masters and doctorate in economics. Riinvest Institute passed from the stage of adolescence in the development stage to diagnose new areas of research.

With pleasure I will emphasize that Riinvest so far has published three of my authorial books.

From all this, I will say that I am proud to have been and continue being part of this Institute. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the founding of this institution, I wish for further success in the future.

## SALVADOR ELMAZI

ASSOCIATION  
OF KOSOVO  
MUNICIPALITIES

**W**ith special pleasure, I accepted the invitation to write about my impressions as Riinvest's associate on the 20th anniversary occasion of its founding. I must say that it is a distinct honor for me to write about this well-known institute that goes beyond the borders of Kosovo. On one hand I say that work at Riinvest is really a reinvestment and requires serious efforts and maximum commitment. On the other hand, this work presents a golden opportunity for researchers to do something positive for their professional career but also for the country, because Riinvest Institute, through years remains an organization with a large public importance in Kosovo.

One unmatched advantage of working at Riinvest is this institution's credibility and the created perception about it, because Riinvest is indeed a reliable research institute, whose recommendations are useful and constantly sought by all interested parties, from government to donors and private sector. Anyone wishing to dig deeper not only about economic issues related to Kosovo, either from outside or within Kosovo, Riinvest is their unsurpassed and precious source. This, admittedly, is a great relief for all those interested in developments in and around Kosovo.

Another point which I would like to underline is that Institute's research reports and recommendations are designed with a particular style. They are good and

carefully analyzed recommendations, which primarily protect the public interest. Riinvest recommendations are designed in such manner that they are accessible to all levels of our society. I have a strong belief that the public can find valuable and applicable things in Riinvest's research reports for themselves whether they are political decision makers, academia, civil society, business community, but also researchers whoever they are.

Work at Riinvest does not halt; it moves gradually and is inclusive. Why do I say this? To focus a bit more on the two areas where I personally have been more focused. For instance, in the local area economic development, Riinvest supported Kosovo municipalities equally whether giving support for designing strategies on local economic development, or the construction of the concept of sustainable local development. Meanwhile, in the field of corporate governance for public enterprises and financial companies, Riinvest has been a leading institution in Kosovo that raised the challenges of building an advanced system for company's good governance and has provided concrete recommendations in this regard.

To conclude, I wish Riinvest a long life and look forward to continuous cooperation in the future!



VENERA  
DEMUKAJ

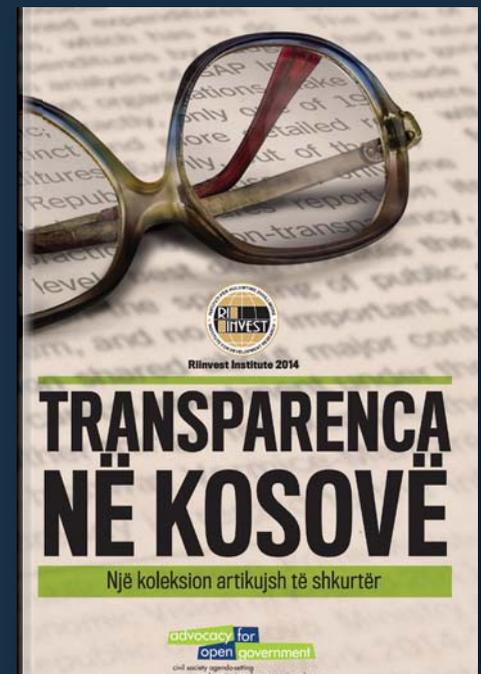
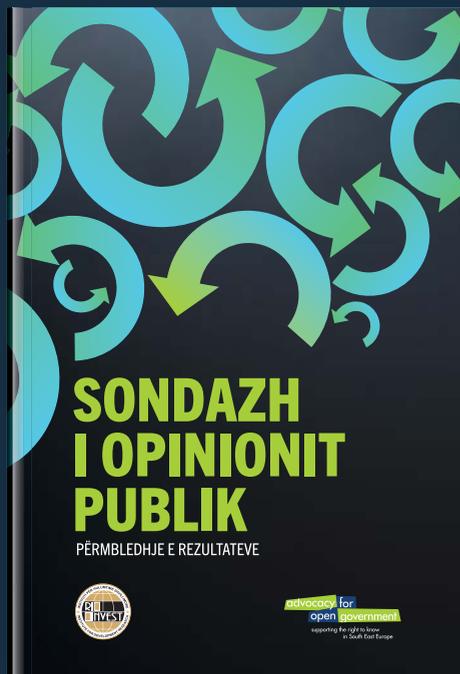
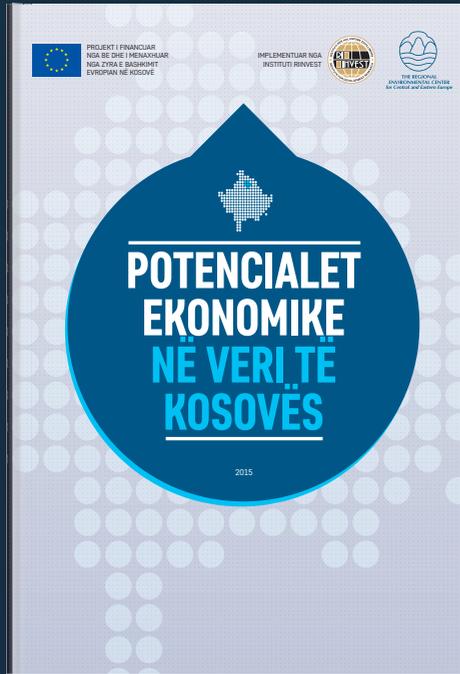
LECTURER  
AT THE AUK

**B**eing part of Riinvest for six years is a remarkable experience for me. Since the first days of my work at Riinvest, I realized that the Institute's leadership, consisting of the most renowned professors and professionals in the country had a clear vision for the Institute: the development of research potential and attracting of young and promising students as well as their support in building and developing their research / academic career. Serious commitment to the realization of this vision can be best evidenced by the achievement of Riinvest Institute throughout the years, but also through staff's personal achievements.

Thus, the commitment within Riinvest's team of researchers had an impact on the professional and personal aspect of my life. In professional terms, work at Riinvest has taught me how to explore and discuss about various aspects of economic development in

Kosovo, skills that I have capitalized during further steps in my career. Not only that. Thanks to the right combination between and open-minded leadership and the young team, at Riinvest Institute a vibrant, challenging, and at the same time very pleasant work environment was created. Being part of this team, I had the opportunity to understand my advantages and disadvantages as a researcher. As a team, we learned a lot from each other and together, we grew up professionally. All this experience then also affected our personal lives, since as young and enthusiastic researchers we created friendship and close ties, which we continue to keep even beyond our commitment at Riinvest.

Riinvest is the cradle, which grew and developed a new generation of researchers and scholars in post-war period, and I proudly say that: "I am also a part of this generation"!





11

RIINVEST  
PROJECTS



**Figure 12: Payment of taxes (in %)**



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**Businesses tend to trust the Serbian Government with 85.7% and the Kosovo Government with only 4.6%**

The 2013 Spring study also highlights the low level of trust in the Serbian Government (85.7%) and the Kosovo Government (4.6%).

The 2013 Spring study also highlights the low level of trust in the Serbian Government (85.7%) and the Kosovo Government (4.6%).

## 2015

- Transparency and accountability: Prishtina - Skopje Highway
- Concession of the Brezovica Complex Resort
- The privatization of the energy sector
- Airport Concession
- Economic Potentials in the North of Kosovo

## 2014

- Monitoring Report: National Action Plan 2014-2016
- The opinion poll: citizen's level of trust in institutions
- Public procurement toolkit
- Business Climate in Kosovo 2014
- Transparency in Kosovo
- Globalization and state building:  
PROF. DR. SELMAN SELMANAJ:

## 2013

- Economic Directory 2013
- Identification of open government policies
- "To pay or not to pay" A business perspective of informality in Kosovo

## 2012

- Corporate governance in publically owned enterprises in Kosovo
- Practices used to attract investment from diaspora;
- Analysis of the wine portfolio in Kosovo
- Improving transparency and governance of public funds in Kosovo
- Agribusiness financing in Kosovo;
- Human Development Report in Kosovo, the private sector and employment
- Improving the Kosovo Serbian business community involvement in economic activities in Kosovo

## 2011

- State and budget: mind the bill
- Banking Sector in Kosovo: Facilitator or Barrier

## 2010

- Industry Strategy: 2010-2014
- Corporate Governance 2

## 2009

- Improving the Corporate Governance and Transparency in Banks and Insurance Companies in Kosovo
- Dilemmas and Backwards in a Fast Track privatization of POEs in Kosovo
- Investment Management:  
PROF. DR. MUHAMET MUSTAFA

## 2008

- Privatization and Post privatization in Kosovo:  
A glass half empty or half full?
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Shtime
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Obiliq
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Dragash
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Kamenica
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Malishevo

## 2007

- A framework for development and community consultation guidelines for mining in Kosovo:  
Diaspora and Migration Policies
- Development of small and medium enterprises in Kosovo 2007
- Transition and Institutional Reform in Kosovo:  
PROF. DR. MUHAMET SADIKU
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Gjilan
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Ferizaj
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Peja
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Drenas
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Lipjan

## 2006

- Early Warning Report for Kosovo
- Corporate Governance 1
- Globalization and transition:  
PROF.DR.SELMAN SELMANAJ
- Small and Medium Businesses:  
MUHAMET MUSTAFA, PETRIT GASHI, BESNIK KRASNIQI
- Economic dictionary: HAJRULLAH GORANI
- Economic stability in Kosovo: challenges, policies and opportunities
- Fiscal culture

## 2005

- Early Warning Report for Kosovo;
- Profile and challenges of socio-economic development of Kosovo

## 2004

- Early Warning Report for Kosovo
- Local economic development and foreign direct investment in Kosovo
- Leadership: ISA MUSTAFA
- Foreign direct investments and local economic development
- Rural development in Kosovo
- The system of education and economic development in Kosovo
- Development of small and medium enterprises in Kosovo 2004
- Evaluation report on privatization trends;
- Project Management and Investment:  
PROF. DR.MUHAMET MUSTAFA
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Podujevo
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Istog
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Kacanik
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Klina
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Vitia
- Local Economic Development Strategy: Municipality of Vushtrri

## 2003

- Corruption and its impact on the economy of Kosovo
- The budgetary system in Kosovo: Policies and Sustainability
- Trade policy and export promotion in Kosovo;
- The labor market and unemployment in Kosovo
- Development of small and medium enterprises in Kosovo 2003
- Human Resources Management: DR. YMER HAVOLLI
- Commercial Establishment: PROF. DR. IBRAHIM KUKAJ

## 2002

- Foreign direct investments in Kosovo;
- Local economic development
- The privatization of socially owned enterprises and reforming of public enterprises in Kosovo
- Development of small and medium enterprises in Kosovo 2002

## 2001

- Key aspects of the social situation and the construction of the pension system in Kosovo
- Some issues of the construction and implementation of the fiscal policy in Kosovo
- Buildings trade policy and taxes in Kosovo
- Development of small and medium enterprises in Kosovo in 2001
- SOEs and transformation: their privatization
- The post-war building in Kosovo: strategy and policies
- A Dictionary of English–Albanian and Albanian–English of marketing terms: DR. NEXHMI REXHA

## 2000

- Construction and operation of local administration institutions in Kosovo
- The war consequences and the reactivation of the 193 SOEs
- The war consequences and the development of SMEs

## 1999

- The strategy of economic development and the generation of SMEs
- Rehabilitation and reconstruction of post-war Kosovo: policy and management
- Market Research and Promotion - DR. NAIL RESHIDI;

## 1998

- Open market economy system and transition in Kosovo;
- Economic system and development of Kosovo: PROF. DR. MUHAMET SADIKU
- Economic Activities and Democratic Development of Kosovo
- Financial market: DR. FADIL GOVORI
- Management of investment projects: DR. MUHAMET MUSTAFA
- Basics of Marketing: DR. NEXHMI REXHA DHE DR. NAIL RESHIDI
- The strategy of economic development and the generation of SMEs
- Computerization problems of the Kosovo Economy
- The war consequences in the economy and family businesses

## 1997

- Market Research: Dr. Nail Reshidi

## 1997

- Contemporary Economic Systems: PROF. DR. SELMAN SELMANAJ
- Business, Problems and Prospects



# 12

RIINVEST'S  
ACTUAL STAFF

LUMIR  
ABDIXHIKU, PHD  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Lumir Abdixhiku is the Executive Director at Riinvest Institute. He joined the Institute in 2005 and since then he has been involved in several advocacy and development research projects in Kosovo and abroad. After completing his undergraduate studies at the University of Prishtina, in 2006 Lumir received his Masters of Science degree at the University of Staffordshire, UK; in the “Fiscal Morality”. In 2013, he received the title of Doctor of Economic Science from Staffordshire University after four years of research in the field of “Determinants of Business Fiscal Evasion in Transition Countries”. Since 2007, Lumir is also a lecturer of microeconomics and business environment subjects at Riinvest College in Prishtina. Lumir also holds a regular weekly column, with the most prominent daily newspaper in Kosovo, “Koha Ditore”. Over the past ten years at Riinvest Institute, as a researcher and as the Executive Director, Lumir has been engaged in projects related to the field of economic governance, privatization, capital investment transparency, market development in the field of horticulture , tourism, food processing , business climate and private sector development , corporate governance , tax evasion , budgetary policies , open government- As well as advocacy activities about the most important socio - economic development topics in Kosovo .

SEJDI  
OSMANI  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



Currently Chairman of Riinvest’s Board, Sejdi Osmani is one of the founders of the Institute. He has been engaged in management positions and as a project manager for many Institute projects: Riinvest Institute Executive Director (2004-2009); Administrative Director at Riinvest (2001-2004); manager of several projects in the field of local economic development; Project coordinator, team member of many research projects. He is the author of about 20 articles related to fiscal policy and tax system, author of a series of works in the field of public administration, privatization, corporate governance, local administration and public services. He has a rich experience in the field of publications: Editor of weekly magazine for young people “Voice of Youth” (1978-1982); editor of more than 30 publications and author and co-author of approximately 30 research reports drafted by Riinvest Institute. He participated in a series of national and international conferences.

ALBAN  
HASHANI, PHD  
RESEARCH DIRECTOR



Alban started working at the “Riinvest” Institute in 2006 after working in the banking system for a while. Currently, he holds the position of the research director at the “Riinvest” Institute. After completing his undergraduate studies at the University of Pristina, Alban continued his Masters and PhD studies at Staffordshire University in the UK, in the area of corruption and property transformation. Within the “Riinvest” Institute, Alban has been involved in many research projects related to the country’s socio- economic issues, including, among others, the issue of privatization, corporate governance, corruption, energy, and business environment. Besides, Alban regularly publishes in scientific journals and participates in international conferences on the topics of industrial democracy and property transformation. He is also a lecturer at the Riinvest College where he covers several subjects related to economics.

SAXHIDE  
MUSTAFA, MSC  
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Saxhide Mustafa is deputy executive director. Saxhide is part of Riinvest since 2003, when she started working in an administrative assistant position. She completed her legal studies at University of Prishtina, then the MA studies at the Riinvest College on “Corporate Governance and Transparency in public companies at the Local Level - Case Study Termokos JSC”. From 2012 she is pursuing doctoral studies at the Faculty of Economics, Public University of Tirana on “Corporate Governance and Performance of Companies in Kosovo”. Saxhide holds the position of the deputy executive director since 2010. She has attended several trainings such as: Women in Leadership- program followed in Kosovo and in Washington, funded by USAID; Corporate Governance, Risk Management, Corporate Strategy, boards, accountability, transparency funded by IFC and SDC, Innovation Management - Ljubljana Economics Faculty funded by TEMPUS project etc. Besides dealing with the legal and personnel issues at the Riinvest Institute, Saxhide is also a participant in research projects in the field of corporate governance and Local Economic Development. Since 2010, Saxhide is a lecturer in the subjects of Business Ethics and Business Law at Riinvest College.

DIELLZA  
GASHI, MSC

ADVANCED RESEARCHER



Diellza Gashi, holds the advanced researcher position at Riinvest Institute. She joined the Institute in 2011 as a research assistant. Diellza completed her basic studies at the American University in Kosovo in 2009. After completing the basic studies, Diellza continued her master studies at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York, in the area of Business Administration with a focus on International Business. Since 2014, Diellza is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, with specialization in Management and Organizations. Since March 2011, Diellza works as teaching assistant at Riinvest College teaching subject related to organizations management. During 4 years at Riinvest Institute, Diellza has been involved in various projects related to the field of market research, human capacity building, promotion of regional economic development, business climate, diaspora investment and remittances, and private sector development.

ILIRE  
MEHMETI, MSC

ADVANCED RESEARCHER



Ilire Mehmeti joined Riinvest Institute in November 2011 and since then she has been involved in many research and development projects. Initially, she has been engaged in the preparation of reports such as “From Rahovec, -Regional Brand”, “Wine Portfolio Analysis”, and “Financing of agribusiness”, the project for Horticultural Promotion in Kosovo. The engagement has involved designing questionnaires, interviewing of relevant actors, data extraction and compliance and their interpretation in a final report. However, Ilirja is also involved in other projects that have addressed the areas of private sector development, business climate and economic development in general. During the past two years her focus has been in the field of regional economic development and regional capacity building, more specifically through the coordination and organization of the “Development Academy”. Since 2012, Ilire is also engaged as an assistant lecturer at the Riinvest College in field of corporate financial management. Ilire graduated with a Bachelors of Economics from the American University in Kosovo (AUK) and an MA from the University of Trier, Germany.

GENT  
BEQIRI, MSC  
ADVANCED RESEARCHER



Gent Beqiri works for Riinvest Institute since August 2008 and since then has been involved in research and economic analysis, market studies, business plans and feasibility studies for businesses as well as SME and local economic development. Gent's focus is on the management and implementation of various surveys primarily of the ones for SMEs. Namely, he is focused on the preparation of samples for conducting surveys, designing questionnaires, and training of enumerators, process monitoring survey and data processing, extraction of advanced statistical analysis and data interpretation. Lately, his full commitment concentrates on creating a platform accessible by the general public, platform which contains and unites all Riinvest's statistical data since its founding. At Riinvest College, Gent is working as a lecturer in the subjects of Management and Statistics since 2009. He holds a BA and MA in Economic Faculty of Management and Informatics at the University of Prishtina.

AGON  
NIXHA, MSC  
ADVANCED RESEARCHER



Agon Nixha holds the position of the advanced researcher at Riinvest Institute. Agon joined Riinvest in 2011 and since that time he has been engaged in various projects of socio- economic nature. Besides research at the Riinvest Institute, he is also engaged as a lecturer at the Riinvest College in subjects of "Microeconomics II" and "Cash and Banks". Agon holds a master's degree from the "University College London", with a focus on economics and comparative politics in transition. He completed his undergraduate studies at the American University in Kosovo, which is partnership with "Rochester Institute of Technology". The focus in these studies has been the economics and management. During his engagement at Riinvest Institute, Agon has led projects related to: business climate, open governance, corporate governance in family businesses, indicators of economic activity and energy potential in the country. In addition, he is engaged in projects on informality, development of the processed fruit and vegetable industrial policy. Agon is active in advocating issues exploring the print media and on social networks. Moreover, he has participated in many conferences organized at prominent universities such as, "Oxford", "London School of Economics" and "University College London". In the past, Agon has been working as a research associate at the "Center for Energy and Natural Resources", where he conducted researched about energy efficiency.

PREMTON  
HYSENI, MSC  
ADVANCED RESEARCHER



Premton Hyseni holds the position of the advanced researcher at Riinvest Institute. Premton has studied Economics and Public Policy at the American University of Kosovo, and holds a Masters in International Political Economy at the London School of Economics on the topic of “Political Business Cycles”. Earlier, Premton worked as Internal Auditor at Pro-Credit Bank, and completed an internship program in the Department of Finance, at Raiffeisen Bank. Premton joined Riinvest in 2012 and has since been engaged in many research projects and advocacy such as informal economy, Good Governance, Public Procurement, Macroeconomic Policy, Tourism Development, and others. Premton has participated in many policy forums and contributed to the debate on the informal economy, good governance, and interest rates in Kosovo. Premton also teaches “Econometrics” and “Macroeconomics” at Riinvest College.

VISAR  
VOKRRI, MSC  
ADVANCED RESEARCHER



Visar has joined the Institute in July 2014 in the capacity of the advanced researcher. Visari has completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Prishtina in the field of Management. Moreover, he is a graduate with a master’s degree from the University of Nottingham in the UK in Development Economics and Economic Policy Analysis with particular focus on trade policies. Visar is also engaged as a lecturer in International Economic System and the European economy at Riinvest College. Prior to joining Riinvest, Visar has worked in various institutions whether in the private or public sector in Kosovo including the banking sector , the privatization process in Kosovo , UNDP projects , the EBRD , and the World Bank , and also the Government. Furthermore, Visar has been engaged in various research and advocacy activities related to open government, Kosovo’s export potential, market development in food processing industry, and many other projects related to the development of the private sector.

ANTIGONA  
UKA

RESEARCH ASSISTANT



Currently, Antigona Uka works as research assistant at the Riinvest Institute. She has completed her basic studies at the International Business College in Mitrovica (IBCM). A part of her studies she has completed in the US, more precisely at the University “West Liberty” of West Virginia. Her engagement at Riinvest started in March 2013 where she worked as an intern being mainly engaged in the field work; such as surveys and interviews, and as a research assistant since September 2014, and key project has been the data dissemination. Her position provides space for the advancement of knowledge in the field of general economic developments.

YLLI  
TAFARSHIKU

RESEARCH ASSISTANT



Ylli Tafarshiku holds the position of the Assistant Researcher at Riinvest Institute. He joined Riinvest in September 2014, and more specifically is involved in projects dealing with communication and advocacy. Ylli graduated from the American University of Kosovo, and holds a Bachelor's in Arts and Science, with the main concentration in Public Policy and Management, and minor in Economics. He joined the Riinvest team, after a long and rich experience in the media sector and marketing. In 2006, he began work at the Kosovo's national TV channel Kohavision, in video graphics, and later as a TV performer. After a period of 5 years in electronic media (KTV), he joined the team of Studio Moderna in Kosovo as a Print Manager, getting acquainted closely with the opportunities of direct marketing and the printing industry, through the print's channel, as a special form of direct marketing. In 2013 he joined the Promo communications company, being involved in projects dealing with digital marketing.

FATON  
SELANI

CREATIVE DIRECTOR



Faton Selani holds the position of the creative director at the “Riinvest” Institute. He joined the Institute in September of 2014, and mainly deals with projects dealing with communication and advocacy. Faton has graduated with a Bachelor’s in Marketing from the Dardania University. But he is always enthusiastic and committed after design and art. He joined the Riinvest team after a long and extensive experience in design, mainly in the media. As a 16 -year-old, he started working at Kosova Sot as layout – designer then for some time( in 2005) as an artistic director at Gazeta Express and recently at Zëri Newspaper as a creative director. After an 8 year period in the print media, he joined the Trembelat team having a direct impact in changing the image of many print and digital media in Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia. In 2012 he founded a design studio called “Tedel” where he still operates on his free times as a “freelancer” having ample experience in branding, design and layout information for many national and international organizations.

ISREN  
FEJZULLAHU, MSC

FINANCIAL MANAGER



Isren Fejzullahu is head of finance at the Riinvest Institute. Isren is part of Riinvest since 2004, when he started working in the position of an accountant. He completed his undergraduate studies at Faculty of Economics and MA studies (Banks, Finance and Accounting) at the University of Zagreb in 1994, and MA studies (in Management) in 2010, at Riinvest College. Isren also completed the first level of certification as an Accounting Technician in 2006 and the second level as a Certified Accountant in 2008, at the Association of Certified Accountants and Auditors of Kosovo (SHKACK - SCAAK). Isren holds the position of as a Financial Manager since 2008. Besides his work at Riinvest Institute, he also teaches subjects in Financial Accounting, Management Accounting and Financial Analysis at Riinvest College since 2007. He has attended several trainings such as: The strategy of public funding of NGOs held in Kosovo and in Budapest, Hungary, funded by USAID, and much other training which have certainly influenced his work and further helped with advancement and professionalism.

ALBANA  
GASHI, MSC  
DEPUTY FINANCIAL MANAGER



Albana Gashi Zhinipotoku has completed her undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Economics, University of Prishtina. She works at the institute since 2001, first hired as a researcher, contributing to numerous development research projects. Her extensive experience is related to her engagement as a project manager in the field of local economic development that deals with local capacity building in developing strategies for local economic development. For a one year period, more particularly during the initial phase, Albana was engaged within the PPSE project. This project is implemented in a consortium of Swisscontact, Riinvest Institute and the organization PEM Consult. The project aims to promote employment in the private sector. Since November of 2014, Albana has joined the Finance Office assisting with financial and accounting tasks for both the College and Institute.

ERANDA  
BASHOLLI  
FINANCIAL ASSISTANT



Eranda joined the Institute in 2001 in the position of administrative assistant. Later, with the success achieved at work, accuracy and the gained confidence, she joined the Office of Finance in the position of financial assistant, a position which she holds now for about 10 years. Eranda is responsible for the identification and reporting and finances for all of the Institute projects.

MERITA  
ZHUSHI  
RECEPTIONIST



Is part of Riinvest since 2007 holding the position of a receptionist. She completed high school and also some training on the administration office while in the US. Being part of the administration for 8 years, Merita has successfully managed to fulfill her work commitment based on professional ethics. Except being responsible for the director's daily agenda and direct communication with staff and clients, covers photocopying jobs, scanning, and organizing of different events. Merita facilitates in preparing the discussion tables, conferences, seminars and workshops.

MENSUR  
MUSTAFA  
LOGISTICS



Mensur holds the position of logistics officer since 1995. He completed the economics high school. Mensur has worked in Germany for five years in the construction sector. At Riinvest Institute his responsibilities are supplying offices with the necessary materials, and based on the project needs, care for the supply and maintenance of inventory within the institution, postal deliveries etc. Mensur is also responsible for the institution's archive.





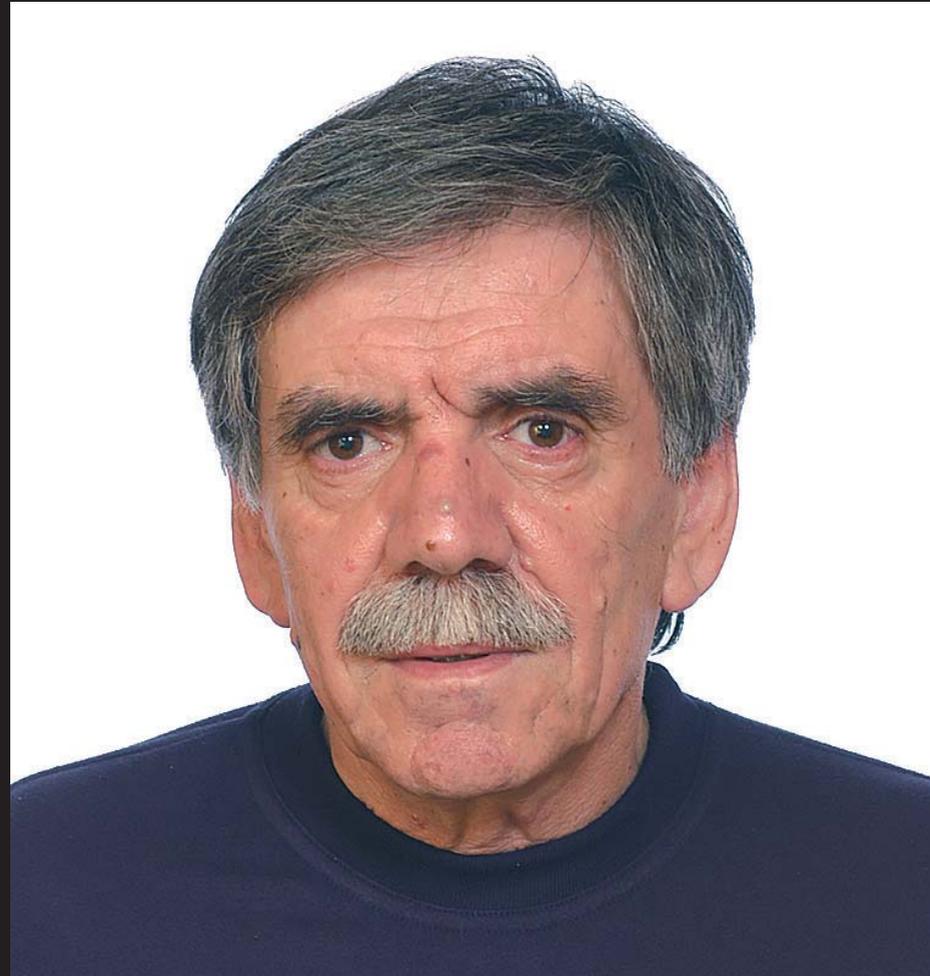


IN MEMORIAM

# Prof. Dr. Ekrem Beqiri

(1944 — 2008)

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Dr.sc. Ekrem Beqiri was born in Peja, on March 10, 1944. He completed his elementary and secondary school in Peja, in 1962 with excellent results. In the same year, he starts his undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy at the University of Belgrade. He completed his studies in Chemical Engineering in 1967 with distinction. He continued his postgraduate studies in the same field at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy in Belgrade and completed them in 1972 with great success. In 1982, he defends his doctoral thesis at the same university. After completing his university studies in 1968 he was employed at the Higher Technical School in Mitrovica, first as a teaching assistant, and in 1969 as a high school professor. He continues to work at the Economics Commercial High School in Peja, as a professor.

For various professional purposes in 1966, through IASTE he spends two months in Poland, he spends six months at the Polytechnic Faculty Institute in Naples (1974) and six months as a Fulbright student at the Polytechnic Institute "Rensselaer" in the US. Since 1972 he is engaged in the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy where in 1983 he is employed at this university with the Docent title for the subject called "technological operations".

Dr.sc. Ekrem Beqiri was active in other fields of activity as well, where he treats different manifestation of social and political life of Kosovo (alternative magazine, the Republic, and the Forum). He is one of the founders of the Kosovo Committee for Human Rights Protection and vice president of the committee, Chairman of the Board

of the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society. He was a member of the University of Prishtina Board. In the period of 1996 -1999 Professor Beqiri was vice president of the Riinvest Institute's Scientific Council where he works regularly since 2000 as manager for several projects of great social importance. He coordinated the work of Kosovar intellectuals to draft the first report on the UNDP Human Development. For four years he led the important project on early warning system to produce 14 reports EWR with care and extraordinary success. The project on the impacts of exploitation of ore in the community development a work done for the needs of the World Bank and led by Professor Ekrem Beqiri is highly valued for promoting advanced practices of community involvement in the consultations for the development of mining and the benefits from their exploitation. Wanting to contribute his knowledge and great creativity he became actively involved in the preparation and the launching of Riinvest University, as a major figure, owner and member of the Management Board. Professor Beqiri led the group of experts to assess the war damages in Kosovo, in the framework of the expert team for the economy and finance and participated in one of the rounds of talks in Vienna in the economic realm.

He was an author or co-author of six textbooks and 40 scientific articles nearly half of them published and presented abroad. Professor Ekrem has been one of the most productive contributors to the "Forum 2015". He had remarkable affinities in the field of design and has won a number of competitions for the logo designing for

many institutions and organizations. He is the first logo author of the Self-Government Provisional Institutions and the logo for the Kosovo Protection Corps.

Professor Beqiri was multifaceted intellectual of high profile. Although he was a professor of chemical engineering, professor Beqiri had a great culture; we can say without hesitation, his culture was a multidimensional culture. He knew and recognized particularly well social and economic problems as well as political problems. He was a success in the implementation of quantitative methods and models as well as qualitative research. With greatest honesty he set high standards as rigor but was willing to guide and help others to advance the scientific research methodology. He was silent at work but had an insatiable desire like a volcano in his work for the benefit of education, knowledge and progress in Kosovo. His personal interest was far below from the national and social. Rare humanist. Although too preoccupied and engaged in the issues of development of Kosovo and that in many areas simultaneously: education - educational, scientific, humanitarian and civic engagement, society's attention has often overlooked the ignorance that had to do with one of its best intellectuals and from ignorance to undermine the necessary mass to recognize and use the diligence, knowledge and his fairness.

# Vjollca Jashanica

(1965 — 2008)



Mr. Vjollca Jashanica was born in Suharekë. She completed her undergraduate studies at the Agriculture Faculty in Prishtina in 1989, while in 2005 she earned the MA degree from the University of Sarajevo in agronomy sciences. Before starting work at the Riinvest Institute, V. Jashanica prior to war worked for few agricultural enterprises, providing a valuable contribution to the advancement of modern methods in use of agro inputs.

After the war, she was involved in several important FAO projects in Kosovo as a national advisor in the field of production and processing of seeds. From 2004 until her employment at Riinvest Institute, she gave her contribution as the undisputed expert in this sector being engaged in counseling / training for farmers and training of public and private advisors.

Vjolla Jashanica was hired by Riinvest In-

stitute in April 2006 as a senior researcher. Initially, she was involved as a facilitator in the DELTA project. She was known for the extraordinary dedication to work, research and organizational skills. She was engaged as a researcher and gave valuable contribution in some other Riinvest projects such as corporate governance and transparency in public enterprises in Kosovo and forest - industry development challenges and balanced exploitation. As manager of the project "Modernization of municipal services", she showed her excellent managerial and analytical skills.

She was very dedicated to Riinvest. With her features of a personality with strong human and professional character, she always created the work atmosphere and optimism for the Riinvest's future. Her early death was a great misfortune for the family and our institute.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



On the occasion of this jubilee, Riinvest would like to acknowledge the Institute's first Council members.  
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prof. Dr. Gazmend Luboteni, prof. Dr. Afrim Dushi.

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*duke promovuar zhvillimin ekonomik të Kosovës bazuar në filozofinë e ndërmarrësisë  
promoting economic development of Kosovo based on philosophy of entrepreneurship*

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