

Project Management Update from Kosovo



By Kushtrim Mehmetaj
International Correspondent for PM World Journal
Prishtina, Kosovo

Football Federation of Kosovo joins UEFA

The Football Federation of Kosovo (FFK) was admitted as the 55th member association of UEFA with immediate effect after a vote at the 40th Ordinary UEFA Congress in Budapest.

A simple majority was needed for the FFK to become a member and it received 28 votes in favour, with 24 votes against and two invalid votes cast.



"I welcome our 55th member," said UEFA General Secretary ad interim Theodore Theodoridis. "It was a very democratic process, and very open discussions [took place] between the national associations. We respect the result of the Congress [vote]".

Kosovo journalists outside the hall cheered the decision, which means teams from Kosovo can enter European club and national team competitions and paves the way for the republic to apply for Fifa membership. Kosovo will apply next week to join Fifa and could play in the 2018 World Cup qualifiers if accepted.



Kosovo were granted permission two years ago to play friendly matches but with restrictions, which included a ban on displaying national symbols or playing national anthems at games.

Fadil Vokrri, president of the Football Federation of Kosovo, said the result was a "historic moment." "We will be able to bring people together through football on the pitch and around the pitch," Vokrri said. "This is our vision for the future as the 55th member association of UEFA." UEFA supported Kosovo's case after resisting previous efforts by FIFA in 2012 to let its national and clubs teams play opponents from other countries.

A breakthrough came in January 2014 when FIFA ruled that teams from Kosovo could play international matches, except against teams from other parts of the former Yugoslavia. Kosovo needs to be accepted as a FIFA member before it can enter a World Cup qualifying group, which kicks off in September. FIFA's ruling council will meet in Mexico City on Monday, and can send Kosovo's application for a decision by the FIFA congress four days later.

European Commission proposes visa-free travel for the people of Kosovo

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "Today we follow up on our commitment to propose visa-free travel to the EU for the people of Kosovo with biometric passports – facilitating people-to-people contacts and strengthening business, social and cultural ties between the EU and Kosovo.



This is the result of the hard work and successful efforts of the Kosovo authorities in achieving far-reaching and difficult reforms in the Justice and Home Affairs area and beyond, impacting areas such as the rule of law and justice reform. I know how important visa-free travel is for the people of Kosovo and I am very satisfied with the progress achieved. I hope that the European Parliament and the Council will adopt our proposal very soon."

In today's progress report, the Commission confirms that Kosovo has met all the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap, on the understanding that by the day of adoption of this proposal by the European Parliament and Council, Kosovo will have ratified the border/boundary agreement with Montenegro and strengthened its track record in the fight against organised crime and corruption. Once the decision is approved Kosovars "will no longer require visas when travelling for short stays of up to 90 days to all EU Member States except for Ireland and the UK" and four Schengen associated countries, the commission said in a statement.

Digital Kosovo

Kosovo, as a young country, is rapidly bridging the digital divide facing its citizens, institutions and businesses. Today, 76% of Kosovo households have a broadband Internet connection. Internet properties from LinkedIn to Twitter are updating their platforms, menus and options to include Kosovo and making it possible for everyone to take full advantage of all the opportunities available via the Internet. The Digital Kosovo platform helps us integrate Kosovo into the digital landscape.

Digital Kosovo is a new initiative powered by IPKO Foundation, with the support of the Republic of Kosovo Ministry of Foreign Affairs, British Council and the Norwegian Embassy. A concrete case to further digitalize Kosovo is Fingermarket case, an American – Albanian investment in Kosovo. Fingermarket signed a memorandum of understanding with German-Kosovo Economic Association. This will further open the doors to regional businesses to increase the cooperation for trade, investments, and e-commerce with international partners.

Fingermarket is a global company based in US. Lately, the company has opened its first branch in the Balkans, particularly in Pristina. Its main goal is to develop local businesses through the creation of a digital community by providing them identity, networking, and information for foreign investors on the various sectors of local industries. But also the development of online commerce (e-commerce) and on the other hand strengthening the employment and recruitment within a single platform. This combination enables companies to find potential clients, business partners or foreign investors.

By the end of the year the company aims to digitize the majority of businesses in Kosovo and also have expansion in the Balkans.

Success does not come by itself, but is the result of cooperation between many businesses and individuals together. Therefore membership will be offered to businesses with promotional price until June 30, 2016, in order to accelerate the digital economy in Kosovo.

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Prishtina, Kosovo

About the Author



Kushtrim Mehmetaj

International Correspondent
Prishtina, Kosovo



Kushtrim S. Mehmetaj, BS, MS (Strategic Management) is an International Correspondent for the PM World Journal for Albania and Kosovo. Mr. Mehmetaj is also working at the M4D OG, Management and Development consulting business. Mr. Mehmetaj has more than 12 years of professional experience in international environments including a number of management, support and advisory positions for various EU, USAID, SCO-K and other internationally financed enterprise and economic development organizations and projects, including the Hope Fellowship Program, the Kosova Private Enterprise Program, and the Kosova Trust Agency. Kushtrim has extensive knowledge & experience in enterprise change management, modern corporate governance, strategic management, project management, financial & investment analysis, and human resource development. He has experience in investment promotion and economic development, and good knowledge of European Affairs, Competition Law and EU Integration processes. He holds many certificates related to business research, international business, entrepreneurship, market development, corporate governance, strategic management and other subjects directly related to programme and project management. He has masters and bachelor's degrees from the University of Prishtina in Kosove and ABMS Switzerland. Kushtrim Mehmetaj is fluent in several languages, including English and German, lives in Prishtina, and can be contacted at K00752@gmail.com.

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