

**Republika e Kosovës**  
**Republika Kosovo-Republic of Kosovo**  
*Kuvendi - Skupština - Assembly*

TRANSCRIPT

FROM THE SOLEMN SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF KOSOVO ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO, HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2009

FEBRUARY 2009

Tuesday, 17 February 2009, 11:00 a.m.

The session is chaired by Mr. Jakup Krasniqi, President of the Assembly

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY JAKUP KRASNIQI:

Honorable Members of the Parliament,

Honorable guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear citizens,

Today, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the declaration of the independent and sovereign state of Kosovo, we shall have a solemn session.

(The anthem of the Republic of Kosovo)

(Applause)

Honorable President, Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu,

Honorable Prime Minister, Mr. Hashim Thaçi,

Honorable Head of ICO, Mr. Pieter Feith,

Honorable Head of EULEX mission, Mr. Kermabo,

Honorable KFOR Commander, General Gay,

Honorable ministers,

Honorable diplomatic representatives,

Honorable colleague deputies,

A year ago, in this assembly, we, elected representatives of people of Kosovo, having national and historic responsibility, had declared the Independence of Kosovo. A year has passed since the birth of the newest state of among Europe's most ancient nations. Upon historical and political events of a year ago, the Independence of Kosovo had been declared, given that people of Kosovo had suffered a lot and had fought long for its liberty, sacrificing entire generations of activists;

Given that conditions and democratic standards had been met for this historic act;

Given that finally, Yugoslavia had fallen apart, whereas Milosevic's regime, following autonomy abolishment, had exercised genocide in Kosovo;

Given that negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia had been concluded, mediated by UN and CG for resolution of Kosovo status, resulting with the Comprehensive Proposal

for the Kosovo Settlement by Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, UN Secretary General Special Envoy;

Given that peace had to be brought finally to our region, concluding so a dark page of history and by making impossible to returning of the past to Kosovo;

Given that on February 17, the time had come for justice for Kosovo.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, it is the beginning on counting the anniversaries of Independence of Kosovo.

Today, we call up with great esteem all men and women of Kosovo, who throughout generations sacrificed themselves by setting foundation for its independence. This nation had never bowed during its painful history. People of Kosovo had brought up many heroes, who don't belong only to Kosovo, but to mankind, since they fought and fell for universal values of freedom, democracy and humanism. Great is the nation that had brought men like Adem Jashari. Kosovo comprises them who made it, falling like martyrs and we, who are to fulfill their yearning. There's an American saying 'We belong to our homeland, like to our mother'.

On this day and on unending anniversaries of independence, our first thanks goes to our martyrs, to generations of National Movement activists, to our people who resisted against slavery.

On this solemn occasion, we express our deepest gratitude and thanks to the democratic world like USA, Europe, NATO and to our precious friends throughout the globe, who have helped Kosovo during difficult historic times of liberation, establishing peace and democracy, and rebuilding following the disastrous war.

Ladies and Gentlemen

On this first anniversary of our state, we can proudly represent great achievements of independence beginnings, like adoption of state symbols and constitution, adoption of Kosovo state laws, creation of its constitutional institutions, recognition of the Republic by 54 countries, promotion of democratic state and economic and social development. Representation of all minority communities in Kosovo institutions, adoption of all laws derived from President Ahtisaari's plan and reconciling and integrating processes within our society have made Kosovo a place of high standards on protecting minority rights, human rights and fundamental freedoms in general.

Consolidation of three powers in Kosovo, legislation, executive and independent judiciary, creating legal infrastructure and diplomatic network, establishing good and effective governance, a system of social welfare and distinctly improving road infrastructure, as well as education, improving teaching quality, and other achievements, are clear and uncontested results.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Republic of Kosovo has established friendly relations with many countries. We are proud for the friendship we have with USA, European Union, Turkey, Japan, Canada and other democratic and powerful countries. We place special significance on relations with our neighbors, with whom we would like to deepen our relations at all areas, as strategic partners, on mutual and common interests, friendship among our nations and cooperation and peace in the region. We are together in the process of European integration. Once a potential dangerous place, an independent Kosovo has become a peaceful element to regional stability.

All our neighbors have recognized the Republic of Kosovo, except Serbia, which still hasn't recognized our state. We keep an extending a hand to Serbia and invite them to acknowledge the new reality of an independent Kosovo, so the two countries could begin immediately the process of historic reconciliation and a new era of cooperation and good relations, benefiting both nations and countries, in interest of peaceful and stable region, as well as European integration of Western Balkans. The Serb community in Kosovo and the Albanian community in Serbia should be a reason more for relationship and cooperation between two countries. Working out remaining issues between the two countries should be continued by joint willingness and friendly spirit, and talks. There's a saying 'Love you neighbor, but don't crush the fence'. We should and must talk with Serbia, but by not interfering to each other internal affairs, since we are two sovereign states. Kosovo has its constitution, and it can not be violated for any one's sake.

Independence of Kosovo is a legal and irreversible reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen

On the anniversary of the Republic achievements are satisfying, but there's a saying, 'only a fool would be pleased with himself', since a lot has to be done in certain areas, and there is a long and difficult road ahead social welfare, economic and democratic development, consolidating rule of law, fighting against poverty, towards extending administrative power in whole country, towards Serb community integration in Kosovo society, towards fighting crime and corruption and towards our strategic priority of Euro-Atlantic integration.

Kosovo has a lot of development and progressing potentials, but doesn't lack international support and solidarity either. International civil and security presence, the commitment of our many friends on consolidating our country and last year Kosovo Donor's Conference, confirm the commitment of the international community for Kosovo and its people. EULEX deployment in Kosovo has gone very well, and we believe it will be completed very soon, in order to assist our citizens and institutions.

We expect to become members of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, but also to other international organizations including the UN.

Kosovo is a stable and safe place. KFOR, Kosovo Police and EULEX are securing peace, safety and law in Kosovo. Formation of the Kosovo Security Force is in progress, which is trained by NATO.

Independence has been creating favorable conditions for foreign investment in Kosovo, as are security and political stability, legal and physical stability, telecommunications and customs and tax facilities, a secure and sustainable business environment, which with our resources and youth potential will attract foreign investment and will enable a fast progress.

The future of Kosovo is safe and sound, and future independence anniversaries are to be stronger and more progressive.

Thank you for your attention!

(Applause)

Dear members of the Parliament,

Dear guests,

The floor is now for President of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu.

PRESIDENT OF KOSOVO FATMIR SEJDIU:

Honourable President of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr. Jakup Krasniqi,

Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr. Hashim Thaçi,

Honourable Representative of International Civilian Office. Mr. Piter Feith,

Honourable Head of EULEX Mission, Ive de Kermabon,

Dear Members of the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo,

Dear Ambassadors and representatives of friendly states in Kosovo,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear citizens of Kosovo,

It is my special honor to address the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo – the highest institution of our democratic state, and from here to also address all the citizens of Kosovo on the day we celebrate the first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

On 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 2008, exactly one year ago, the representatives of the people declared the Independence of Kosovo. It was a historical decision after much work, sacrifice and commitment of several generations.

17<sup>th</sup> February concluded a burdensome and difficult page of our history that contains significant human hardships and destruction, but also sublime deeds and actions that will never be forgotten. Included therein are also thousands of victims that are still missing and cannot be found since June 1999.

Today, we are proud of the deeds of our predecessors and we are fortunate to live and work in an independent and sovereign state of Kosovo.

One year ago, the capital project and aim of many generation was finally completed – a project that is symbolized by the names of the two great heroes of Kosovo – Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, the spiritual and political leader of our independence, and Adem Jashari, the hero of our liberation war for freedom.

The long and difficult negotiation process for the settlement of the status was closed by the declaration of independence by the representatives of the people of Kosovo, that was followed by international recognitions of the most powerful countries in the world, as United States of America, the European Union and many other states around the globe.

Thus, for an entire year now, the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo have assumed all necessary responsibilities and obligations, similar to all other nations and countries of the free and democratic world.

Today we ask ourselves whether we have done what is required of us, what has been expected by the citizens and what the friends of our beloved country have desired.

Dear Citizens of the Republic of Kosovo,

One year after its declaration of independence and sovereignty, Kosovo has made cautious but vital steps forward in building democratic institutions and full confirmation that our state strongly facilitates peace and stability in the region. It is evident that in the past year, Kosovo went through a sensitive political and state-building period.

Four months after the Declaration of Independence, we adopted the Constitution, the highest legal act that established the foundations of the democratic state of the Republic of Kosovo. The Constitution includes the recommendations of Marti Ahtisari's Proposal that derived from a very hard and difficult international negotiation process. Based on the Constitution, which reflects modern civilized and legal principles and values, we have passed and continue to pass laws that put into full and legal function all institutions that make an efficient state in the service of its citizens' interests.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo is the first and final sign of decisions for the present and the future of our country.

Today we have our state symbols: the flag and anthem. In the meantime, vital state institutions have been created such as the Kosovo Security Force, the Kosovo Intelligence Agency, and the creation of the Constitutional Court is well on its way. The work of these institutions guarantees sufficient stability and security for our citizens and the future of our state.

Dear Members of Parliament,

Until now, our country has been recognized by 54 states, and chargés d'affaires of the Republic of Kosovo have already been deployed in 10 countries. We have recently

decided to open another 8 new embassies and 9 consular missions. We thank all these states and their governments that decided to recognize our state.

Of those recognitions, we give particular credence to the decisions made by the neighboring countries, Macedonia and Montenegro. Good and friendly relations with all countries, preliminarily with our immediate neighbors: Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, and Serbia, as well as with countries of the European region, remain chief priorities of our foreign policy.

Our neighborly recognitions are yet to be concluded, because Serbia, not only refuses to accept reality, but fights it, continuing with its struggle to interfere and its tendency to destabilize us, especially in the northern part of our country.

The possibility of conflict and hate still rests in the main thoughts and institutions of Serbia. Belgrade's destabilizing policy does not help the Serbs nor the region.

Our country's policy is a policy of peace. We work daily in order for Kosovo to become part of the Euro-Atlantic integration processes, which remains our primary goal. Integration and membership in the European Union and NATO remains our fundamental goal for the future.

Our achievements are closely linked to the assistance from our numerous allies and friends. In this occasion, we thank UNMIK, including all countries that contributed with administrators and international civil servants in Kosovo, which is finalizing an important chapter in Kosovo. Special respect is granted to KFOR, which continues to be the primary security guarantee.

Surely, both the role of USA and EU were of extraordinary importance not only in achieving the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008, but also in the first year of Kosovo's life as a state.

We have welcomed the deployment of the international presence – EULEX Mission, led by the EU, that has the monitoring role in area of justice and security and to respect and we value its extension and work across the whole country. Working together, I believe, we will achieve our aim to bring our country closer to other EU states and gain membership into international institutions and organizations.

Dear citizens,

Kosovo has changed this past year, achieving obvious results in all aspects of economy, society and education.

The citizens and leaders of Kosovo have proven that they are capable of not living in the past. They want to work for the future.

We have the youngest population in Europe, 52 percent are under the age of 27 years old, which serves as a greater incentive to work even more for the future, for further economic

development, to create more jobs.

I am fully aware that there are still people that do not live well. There are many people that have no jobs, who need assistance and social care. Our state should be more sensitive to those social stratas.

Our success is closely tied to the functioning of a lawful state in all its sectors.

We should all work harder, so that Kosovo becomes a safe and attractive place for investments. Creation of legal benefits for local and foreign investors is a big opportunity for economic development. Facilitating the free movement of people and business investments will make possible a better utilization of human and economic potential in the region.

The trust that was expressed in the International Donor's Conference, where Kosovo received 1.4 billion euro, should be converted into relevant investments and results, in order to increase this trust and receive further support. Once again, we stress that Kosovo will pay special attention to the minority communities, treating all of them equally in compliance with the highest international standards. We are working to ensure equal conditions and opportunities for all, including the Serb community. Kosovo is a country of equal citizens, where domination of one over another is not permitted. This helps all of us become a part of the development of Kosovo as a democratic state for equal citizens.

Dear citizens of the Republic of Kosovo  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greeting you and congratulating you once again for this Anniversary, You deputies and citizens of the independent Republic of Kosovo, I invite you to jointly work in order that our beloved country - the Republic of Kosovo, becomes a prosperous and developed country, a country with stable and democratic institution, which are engaged to ensure full welfare for all citizens of the country.

Our aim encourages us to look confidently towards the future.

God bless the Republic of Kosovo!

God bless all allies of Kosovo!

Thank you!

(Applause)

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY: Thank you, President Sejdiu!

The floor is now for Prime Minister, Mr. Hashim Thaçi

PRIME MINISTER HASHIM THAÇI:

Honorable President of the Assembly, Mr. Jakup Krasniqi,

Honorable President of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu,  
Dear members of the Cabinet,  
Representatives of the people of Kosovo,  
Honorable Mr. Peter Feith,  
Honorable ambassadors who are present today in this anniversary of the independence of Kosovo,  
Honorable guests,  
Beloved people of Kosovo,

I have the honor and pleasure to greet you on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo!

Today is a day to celebrate together, with warmth, with joy and with solidarity. Exactly ten years ago, we the leaders of Kosovo, in the international conference at Rambouillet, in a time of survival, together with our international partners and friends, negotiated and decided that Kosovo would be free. Kosovo won!

Nine years of transition have passed, full of challenges, but successful.

Today is the first anniversary of our proud, independent, sovereign and free state.

Today we all have a birthday.

Today we mark a great and important celebration for the people of Kosovo.  
The celebration of an independent and democratic state with a multi-ethnic society.

I thank all of you, Deputies, the Government Cabinet, all the citizens of Kosovo, our international friends; for the work you have done together with us up until now and for that which you will do in the future to make our country more advanced and more democratic in the years to come.

The year which passed was a year of achievements and pride, a historic year of success for Kosovo.

Within one year, we constructed and made functional all of the state institutions of the Republic of Kosovo.

Working together, we have created a new feeling of optimism; a new feeling of faith; of strength and of unity; that there is no challenge which the citizens of Kosovo cannot deal with and overcome.

In the year of independence, our economic growth has increased by 6%.

We mark the first anniversary of independence with more new jobs, more new roads all over Kosovo, with more modern schools equipped with IT labs, a more secure atmosphere created for Kosovar business, even greater security for international

investors, better health care demonstrated, and the achievement of a higher standard of living.

But more than these achievements is our new feeling of purpose and courage.

You can see this in your family, at work, in the road and square, where people are helping and understanding each other more.

Believing in each other.

Committed even more to success.

We have shown the world that we deserved our independence, and that we know how to build and enjoy our country in the midst of other states that enjoy freedom.

The free world has noted and congratulated Kosovo's commitment and dedication to the principles of freedom, democracy and a free existence for everyone.

Kosovo is the homeland of all of its citizens, with equal opportunities for all, and with affirmative rights for minorities.

Kosovo has been officially recognized by 54 free states representing about 70% of the world's GDP.

Today Kosovo has active diplomacy all over the world.

During the coming months we expect new recognitions.

Kosovo will be recognized by the whole world.

This year, Kosovo will become a member with full rights in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Last year we received the European Progress Report for Kosovo, this year we will complete the feasibility study, I am convinced of our success.

Kosovo is moving securely towards integration in NATO, the European Union and the UN.

Honorable representatives of the people,

Our first year of independence is a year of achievements and of pride.

It was a year of the political, civil and state unity of Kosovo.

Every citizen has a stake in the independence of Kosovo; let everyone feel proud of our joint achievements.

Today, every family, town, village and district here and in the Diaspora are celebrating.

The celebration of Kosovo's independence goes beyond the borders of our Republic.

All of us are celebrating and working in order to find the best route for Kosovo to progress.

Even though we may differ in our ideas, we share the same objective, to build a better

Kosovo.

We may differ in our various political ideas, we may be of different faiths, or of different ethnicities, but one thing we all share together: We are all citizens of Kosovo, we all love Kosovo – let us therefore build our state together.

Honorable representatives of the people  
Dear guests,  
Beloved people,

In this room 61 laws together with 51 other laws which came out of the Ahtisaari Plan for the independence of Kosovo, were approved.

On June 15th, 2008, we approved the most important document for Kosovo; the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo.  
This modern Constitution, the first representing the will of the people of Kosovo, is an achievement of which to be proud of.

It guarantees freedom, democracy and good governance for all the communities of Kosovo.

Our commitment for civil unity in Kosovo is sincere and continuing.  
The key to our success is unity; Kosovo will continue to be united as a country and as a people.

As well as the Constitution, we have created popular symbols: A flag and hymn which represent the principle of a multi-ethnic Kosovo.

In cooperation with the International Civilian Office, the Government is working to protect cultural heritage locations.

The Government has approved the most advanced legislation for the rights of communities, building cultural centers, water utility systems and improving the quality of life for all.

I am proud that the independence of Kosovo has brought more stability to Kosovo.  
Everyone wants to build their future here, under the new flag of Kosovo.

Honorable representatives of the people,  
Dear colleagues,  
Honorable Mr. President,  
Dear guests,

Today the world is confronted with many challenges.  
The global economic crisis is a current problem.  
However we are progressing.

You can see this in our new roads, new buildings, better residences, in more care for our elderly and in better opportunities for our youth.

We are implementing standards of achievement which our country has never had before. We are moving securely towards greater results and a joint feeling that tomorrow will be even better.

You, representatives of the people and honored guests in this room,

You have contributed to make this possible.

But today is not a day to congratulate ourselves, but to thank the people, because it is the people who make Kosovo stronger.

It is more important to embrace the people and to nourish their hopes and dreams.

We will make promises a reality.

The state of Kosovo is in the hearts of the mothers who care for their children, shop-owners who open their doors every day and the farmers who work the fertile land of our country.

It is the sparkle of youth and the wisdom of age that we celebrate today on our first anniversary.

The people of Kosovo have been on a long journey to this point and as we stand on Independence Day.

Today, on Independence Day, our future has never been brighter, our freedom never greater, and our opportunities never so evident before us.

Honorable representatives of the people, signatories of Kosovo's independence, beloved people of Kosovo, you who have the greatest merits for our state,

Yesterday I visited the first child who was born in independent Kosovo.

Her name is 'Pavarësi' (Independence). She was beautiful and healthy, like our state.

Looking at this child and her family, many thoughts went through my mind.

What awaits this child in her life?

What opportunities will she have?

We have all sacrificed so much for her and all the children of Kosovo.

We came together so that she could be born in freedom.

The children of Kosovo will grow up like all children in the free world.

Now what else will shape her fate in life?

What education will she receive?

What career options will she be offered?

When she gives birth to the second generation in free Kosovo, she will have health care of the best European standards.

She will be able to raise her children in a beautiful Kosovo, with parks, with sports fields and with clean roads.

This is what we are working for.

This is why we are working together, every day, each from our own point of view and all focused on how to make possible for little ‘Pavarësi’ and all our children; the Kosovo of our hopes and dreams.

Today, honorable representatives of the people, Kosovo is celebrating.

Tomorrow, we all return to work for ‘Pavarësi’, for ourselves, for our children, for Kosovo.

Congratulations on the first anniversary of Kosovo’s independence.  
Let us celebrate together. Thank you and Happy Independence Day.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY:

Dear Members of the Parliament,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today’s solemn session is honoured also by the presence of the International Civilian Representative, Mr. Peter Feith, who shall address the Assembly and citizens of Kosovo with a speech.

INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN REPRESENTATIVE PETER FEITH:

President Sejdiu,  
Prime Minister Thaçi,  
President of the Assembly Krasniqi,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished Members of the Kosovo Assembly,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct honor to address you from the rostrum of the Assembly of Kosovo, the seat of the legislative branch of Kosovo’s government.

This is the People’s house, the rightful home for free speech and debate of all the political issues of the day, bearing in mind the broader national interest.

We gather here, in this legislature, to mark the first anniversary of Kosovo’s independence.

This year just past has seen many historic dates, many momentous achievements.

One year ago today, 17 February 2008, with the ratification of its Declaration of Independence, Kosovo joined the family of nations, as an independent and sovereign state.

At the heart of your Declaration of Independence, you, the legitimately elected political leaders of Kosovo, pledged your full commitment to the implementation of the Ahtisaari

Plan, the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (CSP).

This anniversary holds special meaning for you – and for me.

April 9, 2008 was another momentous day for your young state, as you took the principles that you expressed in your founding act – your desire for reconciliation, commitment to diversity, and devotion to democracy – and enshrined them in your highest law, the Constitution.

It was my honor to speak at that event as well.

Little more than two months later, 15 June, Kosovo’s highest law came into force, and with it was promulgated a host of legislation called for by the CSP, including laws to build the institutions of the new state, and some of Europe’s most advanced protections for the rights of communities and their members.

I walked this road with you.

I salute you for these efforts, and all the progress that has been made in the past year. December 9 marked another significant day for the Republic - the deployment of EULEX, throughout the entire territory of Kosovo.

Their arrival turned a page in Kosovo’s history.

May their work, in partnership with yours, strengthen the rule of law in this land, and bring you ever closer to your European future.

While today marks the end of Kosovo’s first year of statehood, let it also mark a new beginning, a recommitment to pledges in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, to build a multi-ethnic democracy, “a home for all of Kosovo’s citizens.”

Mr. Speaker,

As Kosovo begins its second year as an independent state, let us continue our efforts, as partners, to make this year one of further achievements for stability, reconciliation and reform.

First of all, let us work for stability, based on the rule of law - the guarantee of safety and security for all of Kosovo’s citizens. A country free from foreign interference.

Let us recommit, as the Declaration of Independence states, to address the past “in a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness”.

Let this spirit urge us on to value the richness of Kosovo’s diversity of language, religion and cultural heritage, and to fully implement the laws that you have passed to safeguard them.

Finally, together, let us commit to thoroughgoing reform – the daily work of every democracy, with a view to establishing full transparency and accountability.

In the economy, I urge you to improve the social and economic conditions of the poor and the vulnerable. Privatization of key publicly owned enterprises will be a strong message about the seriousness of your European perspective.

As for reform of governance, my message is clear – let us work together to make the decentralization process a success, both through the creation of the new CSP municipalities and the devolution of additional governing authority to all municipalities.

This process, in the tradition of local government in Europe and America, will benefit all of Kosovo's communities and all of Kosovo's citizens.

Mr. Speaker,

To conclude, let me thank you for the privilege to address this chamber on such a special day. And let me express my best wishes to all the citizens of Kosovo through their elected representatives.

May your work in this Assembly, and our work together, contribute to the continued growth of the Republic of Kosovo, as a multi-ethnic, democratic state, free, prosperous and at peace.

Urime ditëlindjen e Republikës!  
Srećan rođendan!  
Happy Birthday! Congratulations to all!  
Faleminderit, shumë!

(Applause)

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY:

Dear Members of the Parliament,

Dear citizens,

We thank the International Civilian Representative for his substantive speech and with this the solemn session ends.

Happy Independence!

Prepared by:

**Unit of Transcripts**