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## Ten years of Kosovo – and what this has to do with Switzerland



It sounds rather romanticised, as though the relationship between Swiss and Kosovans is some kind of shining example. The fact remains that the crime figures tell a different story and the behaviour of some young Kosovans

on the road or when going out shows little respect for their host country. There is still much work to be done in terms of integration.

MARKUS FLURY, HUA HIN, THAILAND

This was an article you can identify with as a Swiss Abroad. However, “freeing the nation from the stranglehold of the greedy elite” is (practically) a global issue, albeit one that is particularly evident in the small country of Kosovo.

FLOW BOHL, LONDON, UK

I went on a cycling trip through Kosovo four years ago. I knew practically nothing about the country beforehand but was pleasantly surprised. It is a very beautiful country with an optimistic outlook despite all of its problems, lack of infrastructure, unemployment and corruption. I certainly got the impression that it is a country on the up and that the next ten years will definitely be better than the previous decade. Pristina is also a fantastic city. I also noticed the return of expats over the summer. I’ve never seen as many Swiss number plates abroad as in Kosovo!

PIUS OTT, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Without going over the top, besides the much-celebrated goals, years of negative headlines have left a bitter taste. I think Switzerland would have fared better without the cultural influx.

MARTIN ANLIKER, ECUADOR

It is a shame that Serbia is being made to look like an evil oppressor. The fact that Kosovo has been the cultural and religious centre of Serbia and of its Orthodox church for over 1,000 years should not be forgotten. The Albanians in Kosovo are there as a result of the mass immigration organised by the Ottoman Empire at a time when the Turks found it difficult to contain the Orthodox Serb population. That is why they sent in their Albanian neighbours who had recently been converted to the Ottoman cause and Islam. Kosovo is a political football for the USA and Europe and its history and conflict are purely political. Anyway, happy birthday Kosovo.

SYED SIRAJE, ONLINE COMMENT

Switzerland’s financial support during the reconstruction phase has produced tremendous benefits for the people in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo, not least with the rebuilding of hospitals and in the area of apprenticeships. Personally, I think it would be beneficial if these countries introduced legislation like in Switzerland in areas such as nature conservation, animal welfare, the protection of life and limb, victim support, child protection (particularly for children born out of wedlock), insurance and vested rights. Switzerland could serve as a model in these areas. Unfortunately, in my experience as a Swiss Abroad, much of what I have mentioned does not exist here and the desire and moral will to introduce such laws are also lacking. Waste disposal is one of the greatest issues in my view. There are no waste disposal plants and the areas around the cities are becoming increasingly contaminated. The situation is completely out of control. I urge representatives of the Swiss Abroad – whether in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro or Serbia – to work towards ensuring that suitable waste disposal plants are built with Swiss help. This would help to make sure that a beautiful natural environment is passed on to the younger generation.

GORAN VASOVIC, PRIJEPOLJE, SERBIA

## Cyclists in Switzerland are moving into the fast lane



Bicycles are a great alternative way to get around Switzerland. Of course you have to have the infrastructure of dedicated bike lanes in large cities like Zurich, which involves politics and funding issues. It’s nice that rental bikes are

readily available but I’m guessing it’s mostly tourists that use these or do residents rent them as well? Denmark is a great biking country to emulate. I biked around in Denmark for two years and it was wonderful.

MIKE RIGERT, LEHI, UTAH, USA

As well as cycling, one car-free Sunday per month could also be introduced as in the past. This would improve air quality and allow families to enjoy the great outdoors in peace and quiet.

MADELINE MURPHY, ONLINE COMMENT