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Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo

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Ministria e Punëve të Brendshme – Ministarstvo Unutrašnjih Poslova /

Ministry of Internal Affairs

### Policia e Kosovës / Policija Kosova / Kosovo Police

Drejtoria e Përgjithshme e Policisë /

Generalna Policijska Direkcija / General Police Directorate



# SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME THREAT ASSESSMENT SOCTA

# 2014–2015



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# SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME THREAT ASSESSMENT SOCTA

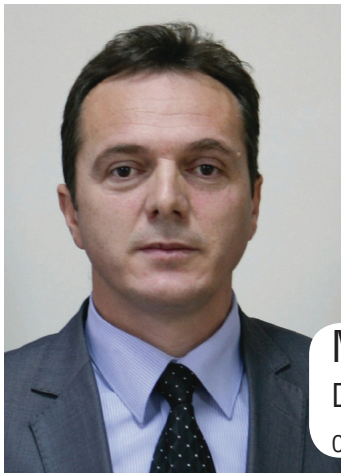
*Prishtinë, April 2016*

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**MR. SHPEND MAXHUNI**

DIRECTOR GENERAL  
OF KOSOVO POLICE

## THE MESSAGE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF KOSOVO POLICE

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It is with great pleasure that we present the second Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) conducted by the Kosovo Police. SOCTA presents the threat assessment of current and new expected serious and organised crime trends within our country. The assessment is based on the existing knowledge and expertise and it is done so that it enables the decision-makers to undertake adequate actions, in order to counter the predicted threats.

All national law implementing agencies have offered their valuable contribution, as have other institutions at the national level.

I am grateful to and I thank OSCE Mission in Kosovo, the Government of Switzerland, and DCAF for their continuous support during the preparation and drafting of this document.

Finally, the Kosovo Police staff in general and the KP analysts in particular, deserve an award for their work and efforts they have put in order to have this document prepared and compiled.

SOCTA will be considered as an important step for the increase of the level of cooperation between different competent authorities within the country. This will contribute to a further development of common goals in the prevention and combating of serious and organised crime. Referring to the SOCTA report, it will be invested in our potential so that our professionalism increases continuously, aiming the achievements to the maximum, in order to create a sound and safe environment for all the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo.

**Mr. Shpend MAXHUNI**

Director General of Kosovo Police

Date: 01.04.2016

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

A stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

## List of acronyms

<b>KAPS</b>	Kosovo Academy for Public Safety
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>CDCAF</b>	Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
<b>KC</b>	Kosovo Customs
<b>DCAM</b>	Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration
<b>EUROSTAT</b>	European Union Statistics
<b>EUROPOL</b>	European Police Organisation
<b>FRONTEX</b>	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External borders
<b>INTERPOL</b>	International Police Organisation
<b>KIPRED</b>	Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development
<b>MEST</b>	Ministry of Education Science & Technology
<b>MIA</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs
<b>SAA</b>	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
<b>OSCE</b>	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>UNO</b>	United Nations Organisation
<b>KP</b>	Kosovo Police
<b>UCCK</b>	University Clinical Centre of Kosovo
<b>SOCTA</b>	Serious Organised Crime Threat Assessment
<b>SELEC</b>	Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre
<b>KPIS</b>	Kosovo Police Information System
<b>STIKK</b>	Kosovo Association of Information and Communication Technology
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nation Development Program
<b>UNMIK</b>	United Nation Interim Mission in Kosovo
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## INTRODUCTION

Taking into consideration the trends and threats of organised and serious crime forms, the Kosovo Police has identified the need to draft a strategic document for assessing the current trends and for forecasting the assessment of these forms of crime in the future (SOCTA).

SOCTA document contains detailed assessments related to the most significant forms of organised and serious crime, threats that these forms of crime pose, pointing out the general threats to security, economy, society but also to individuals in particular. This document also deals with the identified challenges and difficulties for which concrete recommendations have been given in order to have them totally reduced and eliminated. SOCTA document will be drafted in two versions, the closed version which will be available for the local institutions, especially security institutions, and the open version that will be published on the webpage of the Kosovo Police and will be available to all the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo.

This assessment includes a two year period (2014-2015) by comparing the data and the crime trends with the previous two year period (2012-2013), aiming to be in line with the SOCTA document of EUROPOL which is drafted on a four year basis (the next document is expected to be published during the year 2017 or at the beginning of 2018).

The drafting and the publication of this assessment will be followed by the joint drafting and publication of SOCTA document between Kosovo and Albania, with the aim of identification of common threats from the forms of organised crime and organised criminal groups, as well as joint planning in order to confront with these threats.

The data obtained for drafting of this document are inclusive, including official data from the Kosovo Police, data from other relevant institutions, independent and specialised agencies, various NGOs, data from the private sector, but also data from open sources, including different researches from local and international organisations.

All the provided data were subject to the intelligence process, namely their thorough assessment, comparison and analysis.

While drafting SOCTA, some challenges and difficulties occurred, mainly regarding the quality of the data that were available. Some necessary data for the drafting of this document could not be provided, due to their unavailability or the difficulties during the comparison of the data stored in different formats. Most of these difficulties have been identified and emphasised in the content of the document, both during the assessment or even in the recommendations which are attached to this document as an integral part of it.

The findings in this document and the recommendations which derived as a result of the assessment based on the detailed analysis, will be implemented through the control strategy which will be drafted after the publication of this document, with the representatives of all security institutions in the country and other specialised agencies as a part of it.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The organised criminal groups** which run their activity in Kosovo are considered to be quite complex and well-organised, by being divided in smaller groups, but quite effective in achieving their objectives.

**The trend of trafficking and the use of narcotics** remains an issue of serious concern, although as a result of developments in the global level and the reduction of the offer there is a considerable decrease noticed of the quantity of narcotics which enter Kosovo or pass through Kosovo with the purpose of being trafficked in the EU countries. However, the number of drug users remains an issue of concern, including users of strong drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Taking into consideration the difference between the offer and the demand, in the local market these types of drugs are often found mixed with precursors and other dangerous substances which jeopardise not only the health but also the life of drug users.

**Human trafficking** remains another trend which should carefully be taken into consideration. In the recent years there was some progress noticed in the prevention and combating of human trafficking. Despite this progress, this trend still remains a challenge that must be carefully looked at, especially by focusing in the internal trafficking of the trafficking victims. This act is usually committed by using various methods of forcing the victims, with a special emphasis on threats and blackmails that the trafficking victims are subjected to, who are mainly forced to perform sexual services. A concerning element is the increasing trend of the number of trafficking victims of young age, including those underage (under 18 years old).

**Violent radicalism and extremism** of recent years continues to be one of the main challenges for the Republic of Kosovo. Although no attack or attempted attack was noticed within the territory of the Republic of Kosovo so far, what remains as an issue of concern is the participation of a certain number of its citizens in conflicts abroad in comparison to other regional countries, especially in terrorist groups, but also the direct involvement of some of them in terrorist acts.

**The smuggling of migrants** as a result of the difficult economic and social situation which the Republic of Kosovo is facing with, the readiness and the willingness of its citizens to migrate to western countries, mainly in EU countries still remains considerably at a high level. Unable to migrate legally, the citizens fall prey to organised criminal groups, which by taking advantage of the situation make profits and earn large amounts of money by smuggling citizens from Kosovo to western countries.

**The smuggling of goods** continues to represent one of the main threats to Kosovo and its citizens. Smuggling of goods is mainly based on the goods that are subject to the high value of excise and



customs duty. However, the smuggling of grocery products is also quite evident, especially that of meat and medical products which seriously jeopardise the health and the lives of the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo.

**Cyber-crime** is one of the increasing phenomena in the recent years, which mainly occur for the purpose of benefiting, respectively stealing and fraud through bank cards. However, some cases of child abuse have also occurred, namely child pornography on the Internet and unauthorised access in computer systems. Furthermore, the internet is very much used by individuals or extremist groups for propaganda purposes, which mostly identify and recruit new members through social media, with a focus on youngsters.

**Corruption and money laundering** are amongst the most discussed phenomena, which arouse the interest not only of Kosovo institutions, but also of the society in general. These phenomena continue to be the subject of different researches from local and international organisations. While the corruption continues to be the most widespread phenomena in the field of public procurement, health, privatization, etc, money laundering that derives from the criminal activities is mainly focused on investments in real estates, hotels, etc.

**Serious crimes** such as murders have marked a significant decrease in the recent years, including the murders by or for the interest of organised criminal groups; however, some of the forms of crime that remain quite evident and are not reported sufficiently are the cases of usury and extortion.

## **FACTORS THAT AFFECT CRIME – “PESTELO” ANALYSIS**

The PESTELO analysis is an acronym for a macro-analytic model that analyses factors from the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, and Organisational areas to determine their impact on the trends of organised and serious crime.

### ***Political Factors***

The Republic of Kosovo continues to face with political tensions which directly affect the efficiency of the security institutions in the prevention and combating of organised crime.

The political deadlock that characterized the year 2014, as a result of delays in the establishment of institutions has adversely affected the drafting and adoption of several important laws, but also in the appointment of board members in lots of public institutions and companies. This situation has directly affected the Kosovar society as well, by making them lose their trust in the local institutions.

Among the direct consequences of this situation was the delay in adopting the law on the prohibition of participation in conflicts abroad, which affected the efficiency of the security institutions in preventing the citizens of Kosovo to travel abroad in the conflict zone of the Middle East. This was one of the first laws adopted after the constitution of local institutions, enabling the security institutions to not only sanction the active participation in conflicts abroad, but also to sanction the propaganda and calls for the participation in conflicts abroad.

Individuals and specific groups took maximal advantage of the situation because of the non-functioning of some of the key institutions, including the assembly, but also by taking into account the constant description of the situation by the media, created favourable conditions for their criminal activity, especially for smuggling of migrants. This initially came as a consequence of the difficult economic and social situation on one side, as well as a result of the citizens' loss of trust in the local institutions on the other side, or even the loss of hope that this situation may change.

The local institutions established after approximately six months of the blockade, since their constitution they have been facing with new challenges, as a result of the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia and the reaching of some agreements on certain issues, agreements which have strongly been opposed by the opposition parties, by being considered as very harmful for the country. These objections of the opposition parties also supported by a large number of the citizens, have almost completely blocked or significantly hindered the parliamentary life in the country, and as a consequence there has been an escalation of the situation and damage to the public and private property.

This situation not only affected the shifting of the focus of the local institutions from the issues directly related to the prevention and combating of all forms of organised crime and in strengthening the rule of law in the whole territory of the country, but it simultaneously affected the sense of safety of the Kosovo citizens who are very concerned about their security as well as the safety of their property.

As a consequence of these objections and the organisation of violent protests, the local security institutions, especially the Kosovo Police, were forced to spend time and be more focused on maintaining the law and order, as well as on the protection of the public and private property. This directly affects the activity of the local institutions in the prevention and combating of the organised crime and in ensuring the safety of the citizens of the country, especially after the developments on the global level due to the terrorist attacks in different countries and the increase of concerns that similar attacks can occur in other countries as well, without excluding Kosovo.

### ***Economic/Social factors***

The low level of economic development followed by a high level of unemployment and a large number of job seekers which reaches the figure of almost 30% of people capable of working, may directly affect the security situation and the development of organised crime in the country.

This difficult economic situation of the majority of citizens in the country may affect some of them to start dealing with criminal activities in order to make money quickly. This does not mean that all the unemployed are involved in criminal activities, but criminal groups take advantage of this situation to recruit new members in criminal activities by luring them with promises that they will become rich in a short period of time.

Criminal groups take advantage of the difficult economic situation of the citizens (mainly those of young and unemployed with a low level of education) by involving them in criminal activities as couriers of narcotics, and in human trafficking – prostitution, street beggars, and other acts.

Another quite profitable activity for the criminal groups is the falsification of registered brands. The falsification is done mainly in the textile industry sector (clothing) since due to the lack of incomes, the request for such products has increased. Some of these products come as final products which are smuggled and some others are produced in Kosovo, but due to the lack of experts and laboratories for expertise, these products remain unidentified as forged.

The economic situation in the Republic of Kosovo is directly related also to the social situation. Kosovo is estimated among the countries with low economic development, where a considerable number of citizens live in difficult economic and social conditions. This situation is characterized with a large number of unemployed, lack of law on health insurance, minimal social incomes, high prices of material goods and public services, low salaries, especially in the private sector, the quality of education is in a non-satisfactory level and it is not run according to the labour market demands, etc.

The lack of health insurance forces the citizens to supply with medications and to look for a better health service, being forced to seek for such services in private institutions which are quite expensive or to seek such services in public institutions but only by bribing, thus, indirectly they stimulate the corruption.

The level of education can be seen as a facilitating factor for the development of organised crime, due to the fact that people with middle, low or semi-illiterate level of education are very little aware of the damages caused by the activities of organised crime, not to say that they are completely unaware of it.

This economic-social situation was taken advantage of by the criminal groups which have organised a large flux of migration by the end of 2014 and at the beginning of 2015, by promising to the victims that European Union countries are accepting the asylum requests of Kosovar citizens.

## ***Technological Factors***

The rapid development of information technology has also affected the occurrence of new criminal acts, the so-called cyber-crime, which have really taken off in the last few years.

According to the estimations of the local institutions but also of non-governmental organisations, the use of Internet in Kosovo is at a very high level and based on some statistical data this number may reach over 80%. However, despite the high level of the use of Internet, Kosovo still does not

possess its own code or provider for Internet services, relying on the services from other countries such as Albania and Serbia. Therefore, the local institutions are facing with the challenges regarding the safety of webs and information. This directly affects the possibility or the limited capacities of mobile phone wiretapping of foreign operators which have been operating in Kosovo.

Along with the use of Internet services and technology by Kosovo citizens, the same are significantly used by individuals or even by organised criminal groups, whose activity started to depend more on information technology. These individuals or organised criminal groups use Internet services for communication and organisation of their activities, which makes it quite difficult for the local institutions, especially those of security, to reveal their criminal activities.

Social networks on Internet are used by criminal groups also for the dissemination of their ideologies related to religious extremism and terrorism and also for the recruitment of new members.

The interference in the computer banking systems by performing illegal transfers for personal benefits, the intervention in personal data and official sites which very often not only violate the basic human rights, but they can also pose a threat to the security institutions. Furthermore, the interferences into the institutional security systems can disclose secret data that can pose a threat to national security. In combating cybercrime, the Kosovo Police needs to increase its capacities with the newest technology equipment and with trained personnel in order to detect and investigate cybercrimes.

### ***Environmental factors***

The geographical position of Kosovo is a factor which, in various ways, presents a suitable location for the development of criminal activities and organised crime. Although, Kosovo is not the key location which links the East and West, it is situated in a very strategic point of the Western Balkans and it is often used by criminal groups.

The climate that dominates in Kosovo is being used by individuals or criminal groups for the cultivation of Cannabis Sativa narcotic, although there are no available data on the quality of the narcotics which are being produced from the plants cultivated in Kosovo.

The boundary line of the Republic of Kosovo with the neighbouring countries mainly lies in a rugged mountainous terrain and in many parts it is inaccessible for motor vehicles; and being such a terrain it suits individuals or criminal groups for illegal crossings.

As far as the physical environment of the Republic of Kosovo is concerned, the current situation appears quite disturbing since there is an ongoing degradation of all natural resources such as the degradation of riverbeds and the illegal gravel extraction, as well as the illegal logging and destruction of forests.

## ***Legal Factors***

Since the declaration of independence, our country has continually been trying to adopt and complete the legislation with laws in the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo. The adopted laws are in compliance with the legislation of the European Union, which is a prerequisite for every country that aims to join this Union. Although Kosovo has a proper legal infrastructure the implementation of some laws still remains challenging for the law enforcement authorities.

The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo has recently managed to adopt the law on the prevention of participation in foreign wars. This law was necessary since a number of citizens of the Republic of Kosovo have joined terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. The adoption of this law will affect positively on the prevention of those individuals who aim to go abroad to fight in foreign countries.

One of the mechanisms for combating Organised Crime and for providing safety to all the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo is the review of the law on confiscation of property acquired through criminal acts. With this law, the subject would be obliged to prove the origin of the property, (the so-called anti-mafia law), which is applicable in all European Union countries but also in some countries that aim to be part of this Union. Through this law, it would be easier to inspect the origin of the property of the suspected people.

When combating criminal acts of the organised crime, in particular the trafficking with narcotics, it is necessary to review and amend the law on narcotics, psychotropic and precursor substances, since a number of precursors that might be used in the production of narcotic substances, with the law in force they are not foreseen as prohibited substances.

The adoption of the law on the compensation of the crime victims is also welcomed since it will compensate and it will positively affect on the rehabilitation of the victims. Also, the adopted law on wiretapping is of a significant importance for the security institutions in combating general and organised crime, taking into consideration that the rapid development of the information technology is also used by organised criminal groups and the individuals who deal with criminal activities.

## ***Organisational Factors***

Kosovo is in the consolidation phase of security institutions and it aims the full capacity building for performing the duties and obligations stipulated by the laws in force. Human and logistical capacity building of the security institutions is a primary duty of the management and Kosovo Government, institutions which are constantly trying to achieve this objective.

As far as inter-institutional cooperation is concerned, Kosovo Police cooperates closely with all the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo and with the security institutions of neighbouring countries and beyond. However, due to political reasons, Kosovo Police has not managed to be admitted yet

into police organisations such as Interpol and Europol, considered as very important international institutions.

## CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES REVIEWED ACCORDING TO THE SET PRIORITIES

### DRUG TRAFFICKING

Drug trafficking continues to be one of the most common forms of involvement of organised criminal groups in the Republic of Kosovo. Based on the assessments of international agencies and organisations that deal with the assessment of organised crime in general and drug trafficking in particular (UNODC, SELEC, EUROPOL etc.), it is estimated that Kosovo is located in one of the most important routes of international narcotics trafficking such as heroin, but also in one of the main routes of other international narcotics trafficking like marijuana and cocaine.

These assessments are not based on the official data of Kosovo Institutions, but they are provided in different ways, including the reports of the neighbouring countries or from individual reports of officials of international missions in Kosovo. This can also be supported by the official data on the confiscation of narcotics at the borders or within the territory of Kosovo, confiscations which, excluding marijuana, were in relatively small amounts, without surpassing the amount of 10kg for one shipment.

However, taking into consideration the geographical position, Kosovo is not the most crucial place in the so-called Balkans drug trafficking route, since it is neither the first nor the last place that connects the trafficking routes between the offer and demand, respectively Asia or Middle East with the countries of Western Europe. The quantity of narcotics intended to pass through Kosovo to Western Europe is mainly in smaller amounts, whereas its transportation is mainly done by private cars, using the Kosovar diaspora in the Western European countries, who frequently visit Kosovo. However, taking into account the limited capacities of Kosovo in the production of goods intended for export, the lack of companies for the transportation of goods or even the difficulties that citizens of Kosovo face with in order to move freely to EU countries, Kosovo is increasingly seen as less attractive country for the purpose of drug trafficking through its territory.

Despite the current trend of trafficking of narcotics, especially in EU countries and beyond, no cases of trafficking through postal deliveries have been recorded so far in Kosovo, and this is more a result of the strict customs procedures which are applied in Kosovo regarding the goods that enter in its territory. Moreover, no case of narcotics trafficking through Internet has been identified so far.

Based on the official data of the security institutions in Kosovo, a decrease in the amount of narcotics has been recorded in the recent years, especially that of heroin, whereas since 2014, a decrease in the amount of marijuana has also been noticed, which is also related to the recent operations undertaken by the Albanian authorities for the extermination of parcels (areas, lands) where cannabis has been cultivated. During 2014, in comparison to the previous years, there is a considerable increase recorded in the confiscation of narcotics like cocaine, but which cannot be considered as an indicator of a higher presence of this type of drug in the criminal market since



almost the whole confiscated quantity has been conducted during a joint operation with the Albanian authorities.

Type of drug	2012	2013	2014	2015
Marijuana	1238kg	581kg	738kg	462kg
Heroin	94.1kg	22.4 kg	9.6 kg	9.6kg
Cocaine	7.4kg	3.3 kg	21.1 kg	0.054 kg
Ecstasy	153	107	52	265
Cannabis plant	10584	1512	6930	2557
Cannabis seed	12508	1024	5165	141

**Table 1. Confiscations by the Kosovo Police over the years 2012-2015**

Based on the trends of the global and regional level of the presence of different types of synthetic drugs, it is suspected that such types of drugs are also present in the Kosovo criminal market. However, based on the data of the security Institutions and health institutions, including Non-Governmental Organisations as well, common drugs such as Heroin, Cocaine, Marijuana, and Ecstasy continue to dominate.

According to the data of the Kosovo Police regarding the confiscation of narcotics, since the year 2012 (see table 1), although based on the open sources and sources of intelligence there is information on the presence of some other types of synthetic drugs as well such as amphetamine, LSD, JSB, GHB except for the types of narcotics pointed out on the following table, no case of confiscation of these types of drugs has been registered and their presence on the Kosovo criminal market has not been proven.

Also, according to the data of the Non-Governmental Organisation "Labyrinth", which deals with the treatment of people addicted to narcotics where 1084 people have been treated in total since 2002, users of Marijuana, Heroin, and Cocaine dominate, and no case of treatment for synthetic drugs has been recorded.

According to the official data from the investigative units and the data from the intelligence, the narcotic drugs that are present in Kosovo - beside the destination of being trafficked in external markets, mainly in EU countries - a considerable quantity of them is destined for the internal market, although there is a lack of exact data regarding the percentage or the quantity which is destined for the external or internal market.

Taking into consideration the work reports or even the strategic assessment of drugs drafted by the Kosovo Police, respectively by the Directory for Drugs Smuggling Investigation, although they contain data on the confiscation quantity of the narcotics and the arrested people, no detailed assessment or analysis has been conducted regarding the precise partition of the amount or of the type of drugs destined for the external market or even of that destined for the internal market. The

partition of the amounts of confiscated drugs by region has also been made, however, taking into consideration the amount of all types of drugs confiscated during 2014, it results that the region of Peja has had the largest amount of confiscated narcotics, but based on the data of NGO "Labyrinth" regarding the number of users who sought treatment in this centre during 2014, about 40% of the users are from the region of Gjilan.

Generally estimated, Kosovo has sufficient legal basis for the prevention and combating of drug trafficking, by attempting to include all relevant International Conventions related to narcotics, including the Criminal Code, which with the changes that were made in 2013 has included the offences related to narcotics in a special chapter, at the same time toughening the criminal sanctions as well.

Another important law is the Law on Narcotic Drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, through which law the issue on the use even of narcotic drugs is regulated, which besides the descriptive section also contains the list of narcotic drugs, precursors and psychotropic substances. However, taking into consideration the progress in the global level and the identification of new substances which alone are not included in these lists but only as mixtures with other substances that create dangerous substances, the need to change this law has arisen, with a special emphasis on the update of these lists.<sup>1</sup>

Except for the legal basis, in 2012 Kosovo drafted the national strategy against drugs and the action plan 2012-2017, which aims to build a necessary mechanism to further the combat against drugs and their negative impact through the increase of cooperation between responsible institutions. However, despite the ongoing commitment for the implementation of activities that derive from this strategy, the establishing of a national database for keeping the records of the people addicted to the use of narcotics has not been achieved yet. Also, there has been no progress even in the management of methadone, which has been used in the treatment process of these people.

Kosovo institutions continue to face with numerous challenges regarding the prevention and combating of drug trafficking, starting from the need to change the Law on Narcotic Drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, then the lack of proper coordination of inter-institutional activities, but the greatest difficulties are encountered in the field of regional and international cooperation, since Kosovo except for reaching some bilateral cooperation agreements with some neighbouring countries and beyond, has not joined any of the regional or international police institutions.

## **The problem with the use of narcotics**

In Kosovo there is a lack of an inclusive data base on the number of users or abusers of narcotics, but according to some data/information from different local and international non-governmental organisations, the number of users or abusers of narcotics is about 15,000 – 30,000 or given in

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the conversation conducted with the officials of the forensic laboratory, there are loads of substances in the Kosovo market which in case of a mixture with any other chemical substances, might create quite dangerous psychotropic substances but because they are not foreseen in the list of the Law on Narcotic Drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, the people who possess such substances cannot be prosecuted



percentage with the general number of the population in Kosovo 0.8% - 1.6%, of which 5000-6000 or given in percentage with the general number of population in Kosovo 0.27% - 0.33% are estimated to be intravenous drug users.

Besides social problems, the reluctance of drug abusers to seek for treatment can seriously jeopardise the health of the users as well, or even cause death as a result of an overdose. According to the data of the NGO "Labyrinth", 73 out of the total of 1084 people who have accepted to be treated in this centre since 2002, died, although the exact cause of their death is not known, whereas according to the data of Kosovo Police, only during the year 2014, 10 cases of death suspected to have been caused as a result of overdose have been recorded. These cases are expected to be confirmed by the Department of Forensic Medicine.

Even though there is a lack of personnel and sufficient space, the laboratory within the Forensics Agency does not perform detailed analyses on the percentage of the drugs mixture which are taken intravenously with other substances, still the analyses of this laboratory provide data on the presence of other substances, especially on the amounts destined for the internal market, respectively for the use, such as: Caffeine, Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Amphetamine, etc.

Based on the data of the NGO "Labyrinth" and from the Department of the Forensic Medicine<sup>2</sup>, besides the drug abuse, there are also cases of abuse with medications belong to the group of narcotic drugs and which cannot be sold without the doctor's prescription, but such a fact is not respected by the pharmacists, therefore, the access to these medications, even including methadone is quite easy, which is one of other factors that affects the reluctance of people to get the treatment in the specialised centres for this purpose.

Besides the psychological consultations for people addicted to drugs, these centres also offer methadone treatment, a substance which is found on the black market and in pharmacies as well, including those pharmacies that are not licensed to sell this product, while its price is affordable for the majority of the people addicted to drugs. Due to the lack of treatment centres in the majority of the cities of Kosovo, it is more cost-effective to buy methadone in the black market or at any pharmacy, than to visit specialised treatment centres.

Kosovo deals with the lack of proper institutions for the accommodation and treatment of people addicted to narcotics. There are 5 centres in Kosovo so far, which deal with the treatment and rehabilitation of people addicted to narcotic substances and these are in UCCK Prishtina, Regional Hospitals in Gjilan and Gjakova, Dubrava Prison and the NGO "Labyrinth".

Based on the data from Labyrinth on the profile of people that are being treated, the average age of these people who started using narcotics for the first time is around 18 years old, therefore, the majority of these people are unemployed and also with a low level of education<sup>3</sup>, although no exact

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<sup>2</sup> During the discussions we had with the officials from the Department for Forensic Medicine some difficulties in their work have been identified, which are related to the lack of the modern equipment for toxicological analysis, limited number of personnel and insufficient space. The laboratory for toxicological analysis with the current capacities is able to make only 14 analyses and this is only possible with dead people not those who are alive.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the data from Labyrinth, from 1084 people registered as narcotic users in this centre or who were or are still being treated, 716 of them are not employed, whereas 72% of them have only finished secondary education.

data exist, it is believed that a considerable number of people addicted to drugs are included in various criminal activities in order to provide the means for getting narcotics for use<sup>4</sup>.

Although no proper survey exists regarding the factors that have forced these people to start using narcotics, according to the data from Labyrinth, it is believed that the majority of these people started using narcotics out of the curiosity or because of their involvement in social circles. What remains as a concerning issue is the fact that the absolute majority of narcotic users started out with marijuana or hashish but later ended up using stronger drugs, mainly heroin.<sup>5</sup>

## Marijuana

The largest quantities of marijuana enter from Albania to Kosovo, whereas smaller quantities come also from Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro. A part of the quantity of marijuana is kept in Kosovo for internal consumption whereas the other part which is considered a few times larger quantity passes transit to other countries, mainly to the markets of Western Europe. Marijuana enters Kosovo through land transport routes by different transportation means, including the transport of goods and passengers through the border crossing points but also through illegal ways, taking into consideration the configuration of the border line.

In the recent years, Kosovo Police has increasingly been identifying areas where cannabis sativa is being cultivated. It resulted that in these cultivated areas the plants reach the height up to 2 metres, which indicates that our country is a suitable area for the cultivation of this plant; therefore the number of narcotic plants cultivators has gradually been increasing. During 2014, 19 cases of wild or spontaneous sprouting have been encountered, with a total of 3724 cannabis sativa plants, and 39 cases of cannabis cultivation by suspicious people with 3206 plants in total.

The cultivation of cannabis was mostly registered in the regions of Mitrovica and Peja, mainly in deep rural areas, where the identification is quite difficult, and in certain cases they can be identified only based on the previous information on the existence of these plantations.

The following table presents the confiscations of marijuana and the destruction of the cannabis plants which have been encountered in different plantations within the territory of Kosovo.

Type of drug	2012	2013	2014	2015
Marijuana	1238kg	581 kg	738 kg	462 kg

<sup>4</sup> Based on the data from Labyrinth, from 1084 people that have been treated in this centre, 529 or 48.80% of them had problems with the law or have been imprisoned.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the data from Labyrinth, 798 people from the total number of 1084 that have been registered for treatment started with the use of marijuana, whereas 202 people started using drugs with heroin being the first drug used. But as the time went by these data have changed and now only 113 people are recorded whose first drug used was marijuana, whereas the number of users whose first drug used was heroin has increased to 941 in total.

Cannabis plant	10.584	1512	6930	2557
Cannabis seed	12.508	1024	5165	141

**Table 2- Confiscation of marijuana and cannabis seeds and the destruction of cannabis plants in the Republic of Kosovo for the period 2012-2015**

Due to the lack of detailed analysis from the laboratory within the Forensics Agency, and as a consequence of the lack of personnel and space, it was impossible to determine the exact origin of the confiscated marijuana, whether it was cultivated in Albania, within the territory of Kosovo or in another country .

Based on the trend of marijuana confiscations, a significant reduction in the confiscated quantities has been registered during this period of the year 2015, which is directly related to the operations undertaken by the Albanian Police for the destruction of cannabis plantations in different regions of Albania. This has affected the reduction of the offer in comparison to the demand which has resulted in an increase of marijuana price in the market, where a kilo of marijuana is sold for 600-900 €, whereas a dose of 5 grams is sold for 20-25 €.

The majority of people using marijuana in Kosovo are young school students, regardless of their gender, and the places where this substance is mostly being sold are areas near high schools and highly frequented cafeterias by the youngsters, including night clubs.

Taking into consideration that in the past it was thought that the use of marijuana does not create addiction for users, during the past years the readiness to seek treatment in any of the specialised treatment centres was not evident, but during 2014 a change regarding the attitude towards the use of this drug was noticed. According to the statistical data from the NGO Labyrinth for the year 2014, 50 out of 85 people in total who have been treated in this centre, or 58.82% use marijuana as a primary narcotic drug.

## Heroin

According to the police data regarding the confiscation of narcotics in Kosovo, since 2013 and especially in 2014, a drastic decline in the quantity of confiscated heroin has been registered, which is directly related also to the lack of this drug in the European market but even beyond.

Amongst the crucial factors of the lack of heroin in the European market are considered to be the conflicts in the Middle East, such as in Iraq and Syria, countries that have played a very important role in the trafficking of this substance or the raw substance of Heroin from Afghanistan - as a the main source country in the cultivation of Opium Poppy - to Turkey. From Turkey, the transport of this substance has been made through different land routes, including the transit routes through the Balkan countries, as well as maritime routes, towards European countries. This situation has forced the international organised criminal groups to seek for other alternative routes and markets.

However, although in significantly smaller quantities, based on the high demand of the European market for this drug, heroin continues to get transported through countries which are facing

internal riots and armed conflicts. Although no exact data exist, there is a grounded suspicion that the international organised criminal groups in cooperation with various extremist and terrorist groups are involved in the trafficking of heroin, raising the suspicion that a part of the profit from this criminal activity is used for financing the activities of extremist and terrorist groups.

This coordination of activities between organised criminal groups and extremist or terrorist groups, as well as the disproportion between the demand in relation to the offer has influenced also in the increase of the heroin price in the European market in general, including the increase of price in Kosovo as well.

According to the assessments of international agencies and organisations which deal with the assessment of organised crime in general and the trafficking of drugs in particular and based on the assessments of open sources, it was estimated that Kosovo is situated in one of the most crucial routes of international trafficking of narcotic substances such as heroin, as well as in one of the international trafficking routes of other substances such as marijuana and cocaine.

However, based on the Kosovo Police data regarding the amount of heroin confiscated in the last five years, since 2010, it has been noticed that the amount of confiscated heroin is relatively small in order to meet both internal and European market demand.

It is estimated that amongst the reasons that have influenced the creation of the perception that Kosovo is the main transit country of the heroin trafficking is the involvement of citizens with Kosovar origin in criminal activities in places where they live and the close relations they keep with their relatives in Kosovo, including the sending of remittances.

Type of drug	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Heroin</b>	94.1 kg	22.4 kg	9.6 kg	9.6 kg

**Table 3 – Heroin confiscations in the Republic of Kosovo for the time period of 2012-2015**

Taking into consideration the relatively high profit from the criminal activities, some organised criminal groups from Kosovo in cooperation with the organised criminal groups from regional countries and beyond, although in smaller amounts, they have been involved in the trafficking of heroin to Western European countries.

The transport of the heroin through Kosovo is mainly performed by private cars or even tourist agencies, by using the Kosovar diaspora in Western European countries, who frequently visit Kosovo. However, taking into consideration the limited capacities of Kosovo to produce goods with the aim of exporting them, the lack of companies for the transportation of goods, and the difficulties that Kosovo citizens encounter when it comes to moving freely in EU countries, Kosovo is increasingly seen as a less attractive place for the purpose of trafficking in narcotic drugs through its territory.

There were mainly small groups identified, whose activity was mostly the transportation of heroin to Kosovo and from Kosovo to Western European countries. . The investigative results towards these people or small groups, taking into account also the obstacles and difficulties that these

institutions encounter in treating these cases, due to not being members of security institutions at the regional or global level, have not resulted in the full analysis of this activity or the possible structure of these organised criminal groups.

A characteristic of these organised criminal groups is their ability to adapt or to be involved in more than one criminal activity. There have been cases recorded when the same organised criminal group was involved in the trafficking of both heroin and marijuana at the same time. This is assessed to be a result of the demand in the market but also of the exploitation of the same human and material resources, including the same route of transport.

According to the data provided by the NGO Labyrinth, out of 1084 people in total that have been treated in this centre since 2002, around 115 of them had infections or health problems, whereas only during 2014 there were 5 people in total, although these data do not clarify whether these people are users of heroin only, while the number of those who have experienced overdose since the year 2002 is 276. According to the data of the Department of the Forensic Medicine only during 2014, 10 cases of death suspected to have been caused from an overdose or as a result of mixture of drugs with other dangerous substances have been recorded, but these data have not been completely confirmed yet of whether the deaths were caused due to heroin only.

Due to the lack of sufficient institutions to accommodate and treat them, heroin users become a burden to their families, fellowship, and society in general. According to the data of the NGO Labyrinth, the significant majority of people who have been treated in this centre are unemployed and the same face difficulties in providing the doses for use so they aim, by all costs, to find the means for buying the heroin they need. Many of these people, although no exact data exist, are involved in criminal activities, especially in theft and robbery. According to the data of the NGO Labyrinth, out of 1084 people that have been treated in this centre, 529 of them were imprisoned, but these data include the users of narcotics in general not only those of heroin, but the highest percentage use heroin as a primary drug.

Taking into consideration the level of demand in relation to the reduction of the level of the offer, there is an increase of the price of heroin marked in the market. Currently, the price for one kilo of heroin is about 17,000-22,000 €, depending on the quality, whereas the price for one dose of about 0.6 gram is 20-25 €.

Taking into consideration the relatively poor economic situation of the users and the high rate of unemployment among them, these prices are almost unaffordable for the majority of them, who apart from the involvement in criminal activities try to find cheaper drugs with a higher mixture of other substances or misuse different medicines including methadone which they get on the black market or in different pharmacies without the doctor's prescription, although such thing is prohibited by law, trying to at least a bit replace the need for taking the dose of heroin.

The heroin which is found in Kosovo, especially the one which is destined for internal use, is mixed with different substances, including caffeine, different medicaments and dangerous substances. This happens because the heroin which is destined for use until it comes from the traffickers to the sellers it goes through many sellers, with each one of them aiming to profit for themselves.

Although these mixtures have been recorded during laboratory analyses from the Forensic Agency, these analyses are not detailed due to the lack of personnel and sufficient space, therefore the heroin is not analysed in details regarding its quality, respectively the presentation of the percentage of heroin content and other substances.

These analyses, which are also foreseen in the national strategy against drugs, are necessary for determining whether the amount of the confiscated heroin was destined for the external market or for use within the country. Through these analyses there is also a possibility of identifying which group was involved in this criminal activity.

## Cocaine

Although cocaine has been one of the most known drugs in Kosovo for years, its presence in the internal market is relatively low. In general, the confiscated cocaine in Kosovo was found in small amounts and mainly with people who use it or sellers, but so far, with an exception of one case during 2014 in the region of Peja, no organised criminal group that deals with cocaine trafficking has been identified.

However, even this one case where the organised criminal group was identified was done during a joint operation with the Albanian Police, where 20 kilos of cocaine, precursors and acid were confiscated, which were stored in a residential building, destined for mixture and preparation of cocaine. The hierarchy of this criminal group is based in Albania, in cooperation with some people from Kosovo. In this case, the territory of Kosovo was only used as a safe shelter for the mixture and the preparation of this substance and the same has entered Kosovo from Albania. Based on the investigative results, one of the persons arrested in Kosovo, but with Albanian and American citizenship is a chemist. After the mixture, this amount of cocaine was planned to be transported again in the territory of Albania.

Based on police statistics and those of the centres that operate in the territory of Kosovo, the number of people addicted to the abuse with narcotic substances is small as users of this category of drug. According to the data of the NGO Labyrinth, the number of people who have sought for treatment in this centre since 2002, whose first drug they used was cocaine, is 65 in total, whereas the number of those whose primary drug they use is cocaine is 12. Only during 2014, 4 users of cocaine as a primary drug have been treated in this centre.

According to the data from the Kosovo Police the price of cocaine in the market is around 60.000-80.000 Euros per kilogram, whereas a dose of 0.6 gram costs around 70-90 Euros.

According to the police data on the confiscation of narcotics in Kosovo during 2012-2014 there has been an increase in the quantity of the confiscated cocaine.

Type	2012	2013	2014	2015
Cocaine	7.4 kg	3.3 kg	21.1 kg	0.054 kg

**Table 4- The confiscation of Cocaine in Kosovo during the years 2012-2015**



## Ecstasy

The use of this narcotic substance in the Republic of Kosovo is quite low, since the effect of this substance is almost the same with the effect of marijuana, whereas its price is much higher in comparison to marijuana. This type of substance is mainly present in the European market, whereas in Kosovo it enters mainly through the youth of diaspora during their visits to Kosovo. As far as this type of drug is concerned, we do not have enough information and no involvement of any organised criminal group or confiscation of any large amount has been registered yet.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In the post-war period, organised criminal groups from Kosovo and neighbouring countries and beyond, taking advantage of the fact that the legislation adopted by the administration of UNMIK did not foresee human trafficking as a criminal act (except for prostitution which was considered only as an offence) brought to Kosovo a considerable number of victims trafficked with the purpose of sexual exploitation. The origin of the trafficked victims was from the poorest countries of Europe and Euro-Asia such as Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria and other countries. The lack of the legislation for sanctioning of this phenomenon and the presence of a large number of internationals in Kosovo who are considered as a very profitable clientele, have been an advantage for organised criminal groups.

There is no sufficient information regarding the way these victims are trafficked and the way they are transported to Kosovo, but the same were mainly put in night clubs and pubs, which were largely spread in almost all the regions of Kosovo, and they were registered as employees or dancers in these pubs but at the same time they were forced to also perform sexual services for the clients of these pubs.

Taking into consideration the increasing trend of this phenomenon, the UNMIK administration on 19.01.2001 through a special regulation no: 2001/4 defined Human Trafficking as a criminal act and later on it was also stipulated in the Provisional Criminal Code of Kosovo in 2004.

Kosovo legislation has constantly been advancing in this aspect and the Criminal Code of Kosovo, which entered into force in 2013, is in compliance with the International Convention of UN Organisation for combating of organised crime, as well as the Palermo Protocol on Human Trafficking of the year 2000.

According to the Criminal Code of Kosovo, the term "human trafficking" means recruiting, transportation, transfer, shelter or accommodation of people through threatening or use of force or other forms of coercion, kidnapping, fraud, abuse of sensitive power or position or through offering or receiving payments or benefits in order to get the consent of a person who has the control over another person, for exploitation purposes.

Whereas “exploitation” includes the following forms:

- Use of prostitution services,
- Pornography or other forms of sexual exploitation
- Begging
- Forced labour or services
- Slavery or other practices similar to slavery
- Captivity or organ and cells removal

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Human trafficking	34	38	28	24
Enabling prostitution	28	18	24	23
Other acts of human trafficking	38	15	21	18

**Table 5- The number of cases related to criminal acts of human trafficking during the years 2012-2015**

Based on the statistics presented in table no.5, a slight continuous decline of the cases of human trafficking is noticed. The number of other criminal acts that are related to the nature of this criminal act is relatively the same.

## Victims of Trafficking

According to the police data, a decrease in the number of foreign victims has been noticed each year, but on the other side there is an increase in the number of local victims of trafficking, especially after the declaration of independence in 2008, including the juvenile victims between 15-17 years old, who are the most vulnerable/affected due to various factors such as:

- Not getting proper parental or family care,
- Difficult economic-social conditions (poverty)
- School drop outs
- Lack of perspective
- High rate of unemployment
- Gender inequality and violence against women
- Conflict and post-conflict situations
- Lack of the social integration
- Lack of access in education

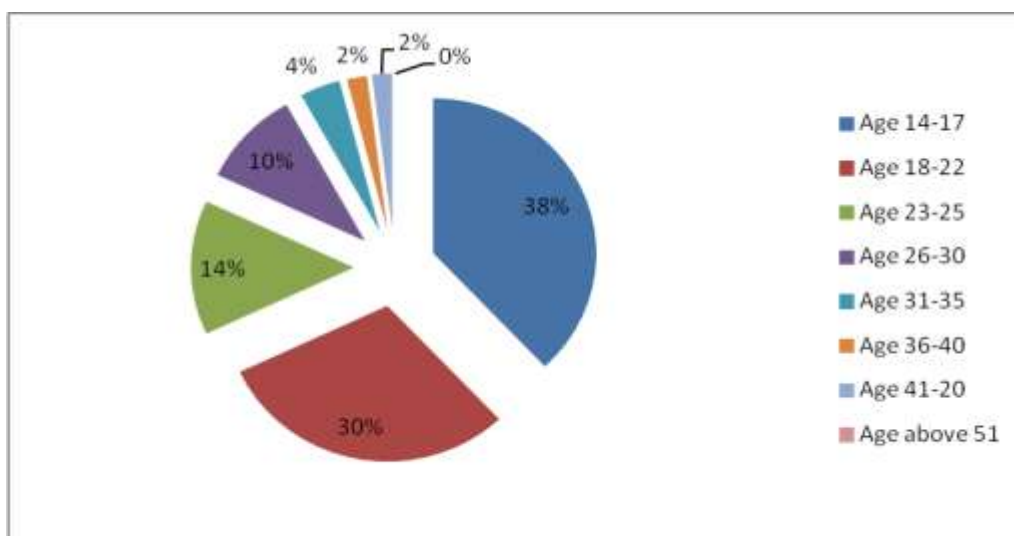
The nature of human trafficking in Kosovo is considered as conspiracy/secretive and most of the victims are threatened, blackmailed, frightened and deceived by being exploited systematically by traffickers, therefore the victims do not denounce (report the cases to the Police), neither have the courage to talk about the state they are in even when other law enforcement officers are in contact and talk to them. Also, the population in general perceives this type of crime as something done willingly and with the consent of the victims themselves.



Years	Kosovar	Moldovian	Albanian	Serbian	Others	Total
2012	29	23	1	0	1	54
2013	44	0	7	1	0	52
2014	36	0	4	1	1	42
2015	25	0	4	1	0	30

**Table 6- Identified trafficking victims according to their origin 2012-2015**

This table presents the number of victims according to their state origin over the years. According to the data presented on this table it is noticed that there is a trend of a continuous decrease of the number of identified victims of trafficking, especially during the year 2015.



**Graph 1 - Victims of Trafficking according to their age group 2012-2015**

The graph presents the percentage of victims according to their age group, and as it can be seen in the graph, the most affected age is that between 14-17 years old, followed by the age of 18-22, 23-25 etc, whereas the age over 51 years old results with zero (0) victims.

## Factors that affect human trafficking

Two types of factors have influenced the current trafficking trends in Kosovo:

Internal factors - that have affected on this change of the trafficking trend are considered to be:

Enactment of new laws, the Law on the prevention and combating of human trafficking, Law on foreigners, the Implementation of visa regime from Kosovo for 87 countries of the world etc. All these laws affected the creation of additional barriers and obstacles for the traffickers in order to make it more difficult for them to recruit, transport and bring victims from other countries to Kosovo, which is why the focus of traffickers is now on local victims.

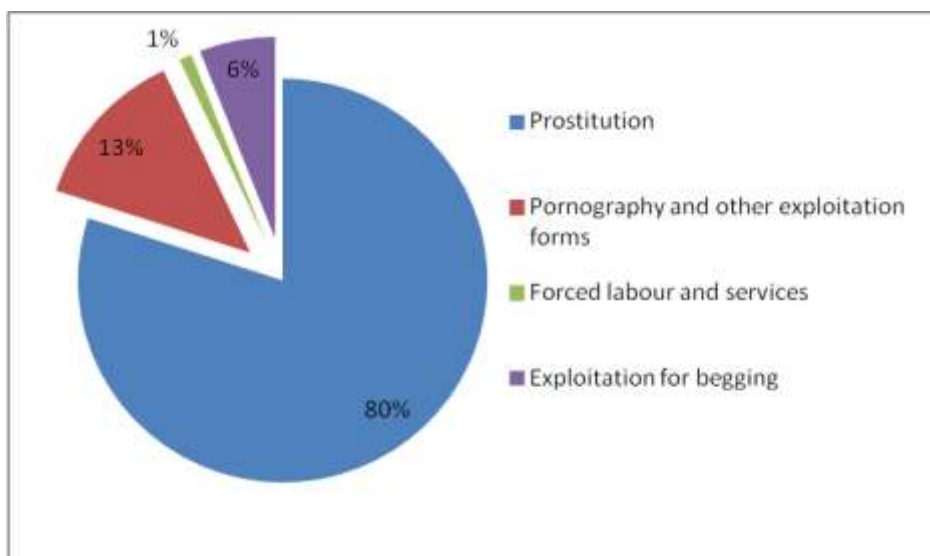
External factors – have also had an influence on this issue, such as the enlargement of the European Union with eastern countries like Romania, Bulgaria, and the removal of visa for Balkan countries, which is why Kosovo is no longer a favourite destination place, since the citizens (potential victims) from these places can already move freely to the countries of Western Europe. The majority of victims of trafficking are still found/located and identified in night clubs, pubs, restaurants, but there is an increase of the number of cases when the victims are also identified in private houses/apartments etc.

However, the identification of victims of trafficking continues to remain a challenge for all Kosovo institutions involved in the prevention and combating of this phenomenon, including the society in general as well. The society and the families of victims of trafficking still consider that the victims are not forced to get involved in these activities, but they are willingly involved in such activities. As a result, the identification of the victims of trafficking is mainly done by Kosovo Police through operational ways and based on previous intelligence.

As a consequence of pressure and fear from the suspected people, victims of trafficking still continue to be reluctant to cooperate with the security institutions and in certain cases, despite the fact that there is a grounded suspicion that they are victims of trafficking; it is difficult to get their claim.

## The form of exploitation of victims of trafficking in Kosovo

The statistics from the investigated cases show that Prostitution is the main form of exploitation of victims of trafficking in Kosovo, whereas the other exploitation forms such as: pornography, or other forms of sexual exploitation, begging, forced services and labour, slavery, or similar practices to slavery, robbery, or organs and cells removal are less present.



Graph 2- The form of the exploitation of victims of trafficking 2012-2015

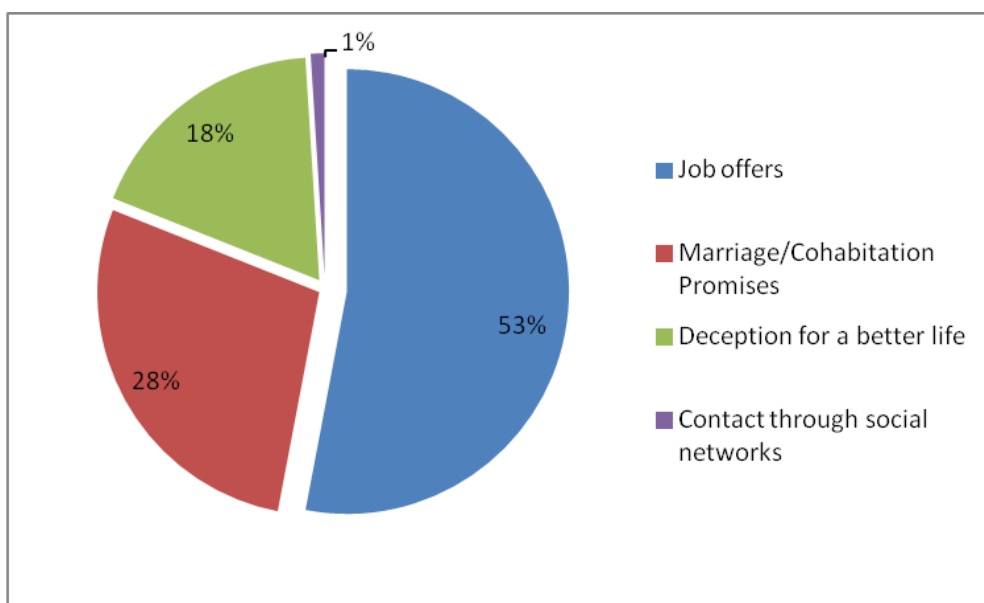
In 80% of cases, the forms of exploitation include exploitation for prostitution, 13% for forced services and labour, 6% Exploitation through begging, whereas 1% is Pornography or other forms of exploitation.

## *The methods of recruitment in cases of human trafficking*

Methods of recruitment vary significantly from one another and they depend on the method of operation and on the level of organisation of traffickers, as well as on the type of the targeted group (women/children/orphans/members of minorities) etc.

Traffickers mostly use these ways of recruitments:

- Job offers (waitress, dancer, bar tender, etc) where they are promised high monthly salaries
- False promises for marriage or for living together
- Deception through half-true promises, for example the opportunity to work in illegal conditions, but not in difficult conditions of exploitation or slavery, or organs or body parts removal, without being informed of the possible health consequences.
- Contact through Internet websites (facebook, twitter, badoo etc) – young women are contacted by different people.



**Graph 3- Statistics according to the way of the recruitment of victims 2012-2015**

Graph 3 presents the ways of the recruitment of victims, where 53% are job offers, 28% are promises for marriage/living together, 18% deception for a better life, and 1% contacts through social networks.

## The arrests of people involved in human trafficking

While treating suspicious cases of human trafficking no structured groups have been identified, but the trafficking trends in Kosovo are currently going towards the organisation of individual crime networks.

The treatment and investigation of the cases of human trafficking within Kosovo Police is done by the Directorate for the Investigation of Human Trafficking, whose personnel has sufficient experience and expertise for treating trafficking cases, however, in certain cases the personnel of this directorate is overloaded with other duties, since this directorate treats not only the cases of human trafficking, but other cases related to trafficking as well.

Arrested people	2012	2013	2014	2015
Human trafficking	121	91	66	48
Enabling prostitution	39	35	35	37
Prostitution	61	26	49	70
Other acts	7	30	11	23
TOTAL	228	182	161	178

**Table 7- Statistics of the arrested people 2012-2015**

The number of arrested people for criminal acts of human trafficking, enabling of prostitution and other similar criminal acts during 2014-2015 is relatively lower than during 2012-2013. This is also related to the lower number of the initiated cases and identified victims during 2014 and 2015.

The number of imposed sanctions to the suspected people involved in the forms of human trafficking continues to remain relatively low due to some factors:

- Difficulties in providing proof and evidence during investigations
- Possible witnesses almost do not cooperate at all in providing evidence.
- The change of declarations by the victims of trafficking, who in certain cases when facing pressure and fear for themselves or their families decide to change their declarations.
- Prolongation of court proceedings, when it is difficult to ensure the presence of trafficking victims, especially those of young ages, in judicial reviews at Court, especially in cases when the victims of trafficking have created a family.
- Non-satisfactory level of inter-institutional, regional, and international cooperation

## The protection of victims and reintegration

The protection of victims remains a challenge for the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, despite the fact that there has been an improvement in the creation of suitable conditions for the provision of protection, housing and reintegration measures of victims of trafficking.

The cooperation and the contribution of the civil society organisations are of special importance, especially those that offer specialised services and expertise in the treatment of this sensitive issue. The government of the Republic of Kosovo has supported the issues of the protection and reintegration of victims of trafficking and during 2012 it offered support for 43 victims of trafficking, while in 2013 it offered support for 52 victims of trafficking.

In Kosovo there are currently three shelters for victims of trafficking, a state shelter which provides housing mainly for the victims of trafficking who according to the previous estimation, are considered to represent an average or high level of danger, and two other shelters which are managed by non-governmental organisations where the victims of a lower level of danger are sheltered.

## **The national strategy against human trafficking in Kosovo**

The national strategy against human trafficking in Kosovo 2015-2019 empowers the institutional efforts as well as the efforts of the whole Kosovar society in the prevention and combating of human trafficking. Always by taking into consideration the recommendations that derive from the reports of international organisations, the reports of the European Commission and those of the local partners from the private sector and civil society, with the common purpose and aim of preventing, combating, and exterminating criminal phenomena such as that of human trafficking.

The National Strategy and the Action Plan against the Human Trafficking in Kosovo reflects the strategic objectives in a full compliance with the EU strategy to exterminate the human trafficking 2012-2016 and addressing the issue in the local and regional context.

## **Reports from the International Agencies and Organizations**

The combating of human trafficking continues to be one of the conditions that EU has set for Kosovo. Regarding this issue, some remarks have been given in the Progress Report for Kosovo, as well as in the progress reports for the fulfilment of the conditions related to the Guidelines for Visa Liberalization. With the exception of EU, even the Report of the American State Department related to Human Trafficking has pointed out that Kosovo continues to be a source and a transit country of human trafficking. Furthermore, the report points out that the Kosovo Government does not fully function in accordance to the minimal standards appointed for the elimination of trafficking, although there are notable efforts being undertaken in order to act in this direction.

Since the year 2008, when Kosovo declared its independence, similar criticism has been addressed to the ineffective prosecution and inadequate punishment of the crime of trafficking. Complementary legal and institutional mechanisms were established in Kosovo starting from the specialised units in the investigation of the trafficking within the Kosovo Police, institutions for the protection of victims in order to address the issue of the representation of victims of trafficking at courts, and specialised services of NGOs have been established with the purpose of offering help to victims of trafficking. However, the access has mainly been concentrated in the protection and

prevention of trafficking rather than on the execution of serious criminal investigation in order to seize organised groups of trafficking and to properly punish the perpetrators of trafficking.

### *Prosecution and punishment of the cases of human trafficking*

During the year 2014, judicial authorities have continued to offer a low level of prosecution and punishment of human trafficking crimes. Poor data have resulted from the collection of cases in the Courts of Kosovo, the persistent lack of Prosecutors and Judges specialised in dealing with criminal offences related to the cases of human trafficking, and as a result of the hesitation of the victims of trafficking to cooperate with the authorities of the rule of law<sup>6</sup>.

During 2014, 66 cases of human trafficking have been prosecuted in total against 181 persons in all the offices of Basic Procurement of Kosovo. However, the services for criminal prosecution were able to solve only 22 cases against 56 people, or 33% of them. 44 cases of human trafficking against 125 people or 67% of them in total<sup>7</sup> have remained unsolved by the end of the year.

## **EXTREMISM AND RADICALISM**

Even though the Republic of Kosovo has not directly faced potential terrorist attacks or direct threats for such attacks so far, still recent progress at national, regional, but also global level have also affected the development of new circumstances and challenges faced by the local Institutions and the Kosovar society in general.

Despite the political developments in the country, reaching of some agreements as a result of the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia and the achieved progress in the practical implementation of these agreements, the activity of some certain individuals or groups with extreme nationalist ideology continues to be present, and this presents a threat for the country. These individuals and groups are mainly concentrated in the Northern part of the country, where the Institutions of Kosovo are still encountering difficulties to fully implement the legality and functionality of institutional and state mechanisms.

Certain individuals and groups, mainly in the Northern part of the country, under the cloak of nationalism are involved in various criminal and organised crime activities, which on behalf of nationalism misuse the people of the Northern part of the country for the protection of their criminal businesses.

However, similar to other countries in the region, and beyond, another actual threat for the Republic of Kosovo continues to be the trend of the spread and influence of extremist ideologies which misuse the religion in order to achieve their intentions that are based on non-tolerance, inter-

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<sup>6</sup>KIPRED: EU requirements for Kosovo: combating human trafficking

<sup>7</sup>Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, 2014, Inter-Institutional Annual Report on Harmonization of Statistics, page 69. Available at, ,

religious and inter-sectarian hatred, rising against the democratic system and pro-western goals of the Republic of Kosovo.

So far, there have been no cases which are directly threatening the overall security so far, except for some isolated cases of violence mainly towards the “modernised” members of Islam. However, the participation of a huge number of the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo in the conflict in Syria and Iraq in the terrorist organisations ISIS and Al-Nusrah and the involvement of a number of them in direct acts of violence and terrorism, is a very concerning fact.

The first soldiers from the Republic of Kosovo have joined this conflict by mid 2012, and at the beginning they were relatively in a small number and they have mainly joined The Free Army led by the Syrian Opposition, whereas later on, soldiers from the Republic of Kosovo started to join terrorist organisations, initially Al-Nusrah and later ISIS, where the majority of the soldiers from the Republic of Kosovo are currently involved. According to the current data, soldiers from Kosovo have mainly used the air routes from the airports of Prishtina, Skopje and Tirana to travel to Istanbul in order to reach the conflict zone. However, there have been a few cases identified where several persons have travelled or tried to travel by illegal routes through Macedonia, Bulgaria, etc. But there is no case identified so far that they were helped by any organised criminal group from Kosovo.

Taking into consideration that travel documents of the people who join terrorist groups in conflict areas are confiscated by the police, there is suspicion that the same people will use illegal routes with the help of the organised criminal groups or hide among the refugees if they decide to come back to Kosovo.

The motives that have forced these individuals to participate in this conflict are various, starting from the humanitarian aspect, material benefit, and in some isolated cases because of ideological issues. It needs to be emphasised that some Kosovars do not travel in the area of the conflict with the purpose of actively participating in combat, but as they think - to live in the “Islamic State” and according to the “Islamic” principles.

The current trend of the radicalisation of citizens of the Republic of Kosovo and of their participation in conflict zones abroad is also related to the difficult economic-social condition that dominates in the Republic of Kosovo, especially in certain groups of the society which are exposed to the influence of certain radical elements and extremist ideologies which mainly target this particular class of society, through direct contacts by certain individuals, through lectures by radical imams, or even through the propaganda on Internet, especially on social networks.

Based on the data that the Security Institutions of the Republic of Kosovo have at their disposal, the number of Kosovars that have participated in certain time periods in the conflict area is up to 300 people so far, including about 50 people who are believed to have been murdered and about 140 others that are believed to currently be in the conflict area (this number also includes about 38 women and 27 children). Based on the profile of the people identified by the Security Institutions, people that have joined the conflict zone are mainly people that live in difficult economic-social conditions; they have low level of education and problems in the family. According to these data



the average age of the people that have joined terrorist groups in the conflict area in Syria and Iraq is between 18 and 27.

These people, but also others that can be radicalised as a result of the constant propaganda, present a direct threat towards the security situation and the constitutional order of the Republic of Kosovo, and they also influence the creation of a negative image of the Republic of Kosovo in the integration process. Another threat is the increase of the intolerance level or the social reaction towards the ideologies or actions of these individuals, that risks creating opposing extremist groups.

Therefore, taking into consideration these concerns and threats that these people may represent, Kosovo Police in cooperation with other relevant Institutions have undertaken concrete measures for the prevention of this phenomenon, as well as the awareness of other institutions of the need for concrete actions for the prevention and combating of violent extremism and terrorism. The drafting and adoption of the law on sanctioning the joining in conflicts abroad needs to be mentioned in this context, a law which would have a positive influence in the prevention of citizens of the Republic of Kosovo to join conflicts abroad, since besides the foreseen sanctions for people that join the military or pre-military organisations or formations it also sanctions the call for something similar, including the propaganda of any kind.

Kosovo Institutions have constantly expressed interest and willingness to cooperate also with religious communities, civil society, non-governmental organisations, taking into account that the prevention of violent extremism and combating of terrorism cannot be achieved only by a police approach, but an inclusive approach is necessary.

A full compliance has been achieved as a result of this engagement that except the National Strategy against Terrorism and the Action Plan, local institutions in cooperation with the civil society and the regional community need to engage more in the prevention of the spread of radicalism. After some inclusive meetings and debates during the second trimester of 2015, local institutions with the active participation of the civil society, NGOs, religious community etc. have drafted the national strategy against violent radicalism and extremism 2015 – 2020.

Through this Strategy it is intended to offer an inclusive approach on the early identification of radicalized people and of the riving factors by focusing on the prevention of the spread of radicalism, interventions as well as the de-radicalisation and re-integration of radicalized people.

Along the commitments and activities for the prevention of the involvement of citizens of the Republic of Kosovo in conflicts abroad or in terrorist groups, since 2013 the Kosovo Police in cooperation with the Special Prosecution and the Basic Prosecutions have initiated criminal investigations against more than 130 people on suspicion of having committed criminal offences of organising and participating in terrorist groups and other criminal offences from the chapter of criminal offences against the constitutional security and order of the Republic of Kosovo. As a result of these investigations, more than 100 people have been arrested, including people that have participated in conflicts abroad among terrorist organizations, people that deal with the organisation and recruitment, imams that inspire and promote radical ideologies, and some



militant imams or supporters of the participation of the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo in conflicts abroad amongst the terrorist organisations. The activity of about 15 NGOs with religious character was also suspended on the suspicion that they act contrary to the legislation of Kosovo, and that they are also involved in inciting religious and inter-sectarian hatred.

## ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Migration of certain categories of Kosovo citizens towards the countries of Western Europe is a current phenomenon, with its rises and declines and represents a constant concern for local and international institutions and also for the society.

*Kosovar emigrants* are of both genders, mainly of the middle and young age, they are unemployed or employed in the private sector, they have families and children, and they are of nationalities according to the representation of the population in Kosovo.

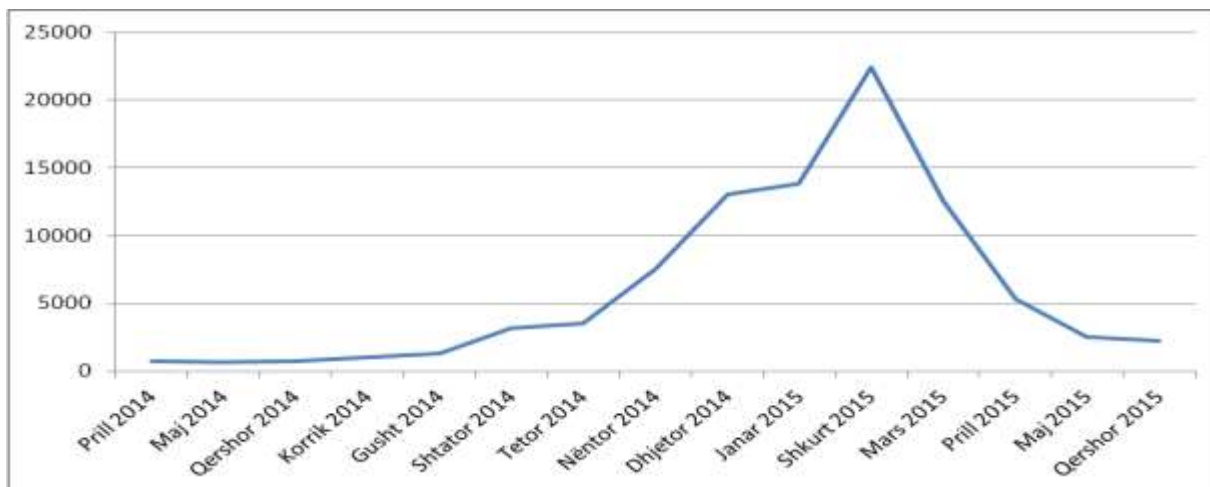
Kosovar emigrants are mainly people in difficult economic conditions, unemployed or employed mainly in the private sector, with low or average wages, on social assistance, some with unresolved issues of housing, unsatisfied with health, pension, security, education policies etc.

According to the EUROSTAT data in relation to the requirements for asylum in EU countries for 2013 and 2014, the number of requests from Kosovo is 20,225 during 2013, data which have ranked Kosovo in the sixth place in the list of European countries outside of EU whose citizens have requested for asylum, whereas the year 2014 marked a significant increase in the number of requests from the citizens of Kosovo to EU countries with a total of 37.895 citizens, ranking Kosovo in the third place for the number of requests for asylum, right after the citizens from Syria and Afghanistan. Expressed in percentage 6.1% of all the submitted requests for asylum in EU countries have been submitted by the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo<sup>8</sup>.

According to the EUROSTAT data the trend of the asylum requests in the EU countries from the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo has continued with an increasing pace during the first trimester of 2015, especially during February, where 22,460 requests for asylum have been registered. During this trimester Kosovo has been ranked in the first place by the number of asylum requests from its citizens, leaving behind even the citizens from countries like Syria and Afghanistan. But, during the second trimester of 2015 a rapid decrease has been marked in the number of asylum requests in EU countries by the citizens of Kosovo.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Countries\\_of\\_origin\\_of\\_\(non-EU\)\\_asylum\\_seekers\\_in\\_the\\_EU-28\\_Member\\_States,\\_2013\\_and\\_2014\\_YB15\\_III.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Countries_of_origin_of_(non-EU)_asylum_seekers_in_the_EU-28_Member_States,_2013_and_2014_YB15_III.png) &



**Graph 4 – Trend of the asylum requests in EU countries from the citizens of Kosovo April 2014 – June 2015**

Based on the trend of the asylum requests in EU countries by the citizens of Kosovo from April 2014 to June 2015, it is noticed that from October 2014 the number of asylum requests started to increase, reaching the peak during September 2015, whereas from March 2015 to June 2015 a constant decrease has been marked in the number of asylum requests. According to the data of the Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration (DCAM) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the following table the number of the asylum requests by the citizens of Kosovo is presented according to the countries of EU. According to the following table it is noticed that most of the asylum requests of 2012 – 2015 are submitted to Hungary. However, Hungary was not the final destination for the migrants from Kosovo, who for various reasons have remained in Hungarian camps, because they were not able to travel, or they were waiting for a more suitable chance to travel further.

State	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Jan – Jun 2015	Total
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,335</b>	<b>21,090</b>	<b>38,395</b>	<b>63,375</b>	<b>133,195</b>
Hungary	220	6,210	21,450	23,915	51,795
Germany	2,535	4,415	8,910	31,225	47,085
France	3,715	5,500	2,775	2,875	14,865
Austria	315	935	1,895	2,280	5,425
Sweden	1,045	1,280	1,485	1,285	5,095
Belgium	1,745	1,265	845	505	4,360
Switzerland	0	705	410	390	1,505
Norway	135	260	145	150	690
Italy	110	95	100	135	440
Others	305	275	235	615	1,930

**Table 8 – Number of asylum requests in EU countries made by Kosovars 2012 – 2015**

The citizens of the Republic of Kosovo that have submitted asylum requests in EU countries have entered into these countries in various ways, through illegal border crossings (mainly Serbia-Hungary), falsification or misuse of travel documents (mainly documents from Serbia), by illegal entries (by possessing various visas, but after the expiry of visas they have required asylum) etc. However, there is no accurate data on how the citizens of Kosovo entered EU countries, but it is believed that the illegal border crossing prevails.

According to the data from FRONTEX, respectively, referring to the reports on annual risk evaluation that are drafted by this agency, the number of Kosovars that illegally cross the Serbia-Hungary border has increased significantly in the second trimester of 2014 and the first trimester of 2015. During this time period the Serbia-Hungary border was used for illegal crossing by the citizens of various countries, including citizens from Syria, Afghanistan etc. but, based on the data from FRONTEX more than half of the cases of identification of illegal crossings of Serbia-Hungary border are citizens from Kosovo.

Among the key factors that have influenced the increase of the migration flow of the citizens of Kosovo to the countries of EU, except the factors mentioned above in this document (economic, social etc.) it is believed that a lot of influence has come from various media propaganda, which have spread rumours that the EU countries have made the procedures for asylum acceptance easier and these countries need workforce in different professions. Citizens of the Republic of Kosovo seduced by this propaganda and taking into consideration the low cost of travel to EU countries, have taken the risk to try their luck, taking into consideration that they can also return but will not have huge economic losses<sup>9</sup>. There is also doubt that Hungarian and Serbian authorities have quietly tolerated illegal crossings through their borders.

Among the factors that have influenced the reduction of the high flow of migration of the citizens of Kosovo during the second trimester of 2015 and onwards, are the quick returns of the asylum seekers to the country of origin (Kosovo), media campaigns of respective countries for the damage that can be caused by illegal migration, tightening measures in the Serbia-Hungary border etc.

Migration of Kosovars to the EU countries significantly undermines the engagement of institutions for the approximation of the Euro-Atlantic integrations, and the process of visa liberalization. Another threat which Kosovo encounters as a consequence of migration of its citizens is the inability of the institutions to deal with the new flow of the re-acceptance of the persons who returned from the EU countries and their reintegration in the society. Also by taking into account the data from the Kosovo Statistics Agency most of the people that emigrate from Kosovo are of young age, capable of working, so Kosovo risks to lose its labour force in the future. However, bearing in mind Kosovo wide diaspora and the close family relationships that the emigrants

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<sup>9</sup> In the past one person paid large amount of money - 3,000 Euros to the smugglers in order to migrate to the EU countries through illegal routes, whereas during this period there were cases when the whole family has travelled to an EU country with a lower amount than 1,000 Euros.

maintain with their families in Kosovo, it is calculated that Kosovo receives about 500 million Euros annually, which largely supports the economic development of the country<sup>10</sup>.

Except the phenomenon of migration of its people, the Republic of Kosovo faces other challenges as a result of exploitation of its territory by the citizens of Middle East and Africa who aim to migrate to EU countries. However, based on the statistics from the Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, this number is not high and does not currently represent any visible threat. Number of the people that have requested asylum in Kosovo since 2013 till September 2015 is 211 people in total, mainly citizens from Syria.

State	Year 2013	Year 2014	Jan – Sep 2015	Total
<b>Syria</b>	24	79	43	<b>146</b>
<b>Pakistan</b>	12	1	0	<b>13</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	0	7	6	<b>13</b>
<b>Other</b>	26	8	5	<b>39</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>211</b>

**Table 9 – Asylum requests in the Republic of Kosovo 2013 – September 2015**

Taking into consideration the huge flow of refugees from the countries of Middle East, mainly from Syria and Iraq, which the countries of the region like Macedonia, Serbia etc. have been facing with, and also the decisions for blocking the border crossing points, especially of the Serbia-Hungary and Serbia-Croatia borders, there is a risk that in the near future the refugee crisis would be transferred to both Kosovo and Albania, as an alternative way for the refugees that aim the countries of EU.

## **SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS**

Organised criminal groups have increased their activities in finding different ways to organise the smuggling of migrants taking into consideration the requests of the citizens of Kosovo to migrate and the profit that this smuggling may bring.

With the purpose of preventing the illegal migration of the citizens from Kosovo, especially their smuggling by individuals and organised criminal groups, country institutions have undertaken various measures, starting from the drafting of the strategy and action plan for the prevention of illegal migration, and also the capacity building of the law implementers in order to increase their efficiency for the prevention and combating of this phenomenon.

However, during the years 2012 – 2015 Kosovo Police has undertaken many measures in order to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants and has arrested suspected people involved in the smuggling of migrants from Kosovo and other countries, including suspects from the countries of Middle East.

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<sup>10</sup> Data from the Kosovo Statistics Agency

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Cases: Smuggling of migrants	28	42	69	55

**Table 10 – Statistics of the cases of smuggling of migrants 2012 – 2015**

According to the above given table it is noticed that the number of cases of smuggling of migrants initiated during 2015 is lower than during 2014; however, this number is relatively higher than during 2012 and 2013. It should also be pointed out that during the last trimester of 2014 and the first trimester of 2015 there has been marked an enormous increase of the cases of illegal migration.

According to the police data, from the operations that have been undertaken for the arrest of the suspects for their involvement in the smuggling of migrants it results that most of the organised criminal groups but also the suspected persons possessed weapons and ammunition, what can be considered as an indicator for the danger that these individuals and organised criminal groups represent for the law enforcement, but also for the society in general.

Taking into account that Kosovo is not a member of any of the security mechanisms or agencies at the regional and international level, Kosovo institutions, especially those of law implementation encounter difficulties in facing successfully with the prevention and combating of this phenomenon, since the smuggling of migrants cannot be prevented and combated efficiently without a close cooperation and coordination with the countries of the region and beyond.

### **The routes of the smuggling of migrants**



- Rruga e parë – Kosovë - Serbi - Voivodinë - Hungari
- Rruga e dytë – Kosovë - Mali i Zi - Bosnjë e Hercegovinë – Kroaci - Hungari
- Rruga e tretë – Kosovë - Maqedoni – Greqi - Itali

## **Map 1 - Shows the routes of the smuggling of migrants**

- *The first route - Kosovo - Serbia - Vojvodina - Hungary*
- *The second route - Kosovo - Montenegro - Bosnia Herzegovina - Croatia - Hungary*
- *The third route - Kosovo - Macedonia - Greece - Italy*

### **The first route - Kosovo - Serbia - Vojvodina - Hungary**

This is the shortest and the easiest route to reach the EU countries and it begins from Kosovo to Serbia, it is carried out by smugglers of Kosovar and Serbian citizenship, and it is mostly used in the Eastern border of Kosovo with Serbia, in the surroundings of Podujevo, Dardana and Gjilan and in the Northern border of Kosovo with Serbia in the regions of Leposavic and Zubin Potok municipalities.

Kosovar migrants make the crossing from Kosovo to Serbia without any problems because this crossing is made without visas, only by IDs but also the freedom of their movement through the territory of Serbia seems to be easy until they reach Vojvodina in the border settlements with Hungary mainly in the suburbs of the city of Subotica.

Unlike Kosovar migrants, African-Asian migrants who cross transit through our country, cross the Kosovo-Serbia border illegally on foot accompanied by Kosovar smugglers but the route across Serbia up to Subotica is more difficult even though they are accompanied by Serbian smugglers the whole time.

From Vojvodina to Hungary the border is mainly crossed on foot in 40 minutes for Kosovar and other migrants, and it is done in the surroundings of Hungarian cities of Hajós and Szeged. From here other smugglers deal with their transport to the place of destination but there are cases when the migrants even take this journey individually.

### **The second route - Kosovo - Montenegro - Bosnia Herzegovina - Croatia - Hungary**

This route is less used because the borders of many countries need to be crossed; however it remains a very important route for the smugglers since they have co-operators in all of these states, who take care of the illegal border crossings, shelter and transportation of migrants.

Smugglers accompany the migrants from Kosovo to Montenegro, near or through Kulla border crossing point and in some rare cases through Albania at Hani i Hotit border crossing point.

The border crossing points which are used by smugglers in Montenegro - Bosnia Herzegovina - Croatia - Hungary but also in Croatia - Slovenia are not exactly known, but it is known that smugglers with regular documents and vehicles with registration plates from EU countries accompany the migrants up to their appropriate destination.



## **The third route – Kosovo – Macedonia – Greece – Italy**

This route is used by migrants whose destination is Italy, France and Belgium and the journey begins from Kosovo through Macedonia where they move to Greece near Gevgelija and from there by ferry they move on to Italy.

Smugglers carry the migrants by private cars with registration plates of EU countries through this line, being equipped with false travel documents or documents that are regular but resemble to the smuggled persons.

This route is more seldom used for smuggling of migrants; it cannot be done on foot through the border lines.

### ***Media and their role***

Media have paid a lot of attention to the migration of Kosovo citizens during this period of time, by presenting this phenomenon in all of its phases from the time when the migrants set out, their journey, the refugee camps but also the interviews with the migrants.

Based on the interviews conducted by media with some people who returned and some others who stayed in the asylum camps in the countries of Western Europe, we realize that they are experiencing extremely severe conditions. However, there are also those who have returned but they say that they will try to migrate again.

On the other hand, some media have often released bombastic news which gave an impression that everyone is leaving Kosovo. This was done by broadcasting videos from the departure points when the buses were setting out.

Media had also published that Canada is seeking for people from different countries of the world with different professions and profiles who would like to go, live and work in this country by applying through the so-called "Canadian Green Card".

Similar information had also been published on media regarding Sweden<sup>11</sup> where it is mentioned that this state seeks for people of different profiles and professions from all over the world, but Swedish authorities have very quickly denied this information.

Also regarding the state of France, a variety of information has been published on media like for example that French authorities have introduced Kosovo among the unsafe and unstable countries and that this country has allegedly removed Kosovo and its citizens from the prohibition of asylum seeking procedure, but this information had also been quickly denied by the official French authorities.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.telegrafi.com/suedia-kerkon-specialiste-ne-profesionet-me-te-kerkuara-paga-mesatare-2730-euro-ne-muaj/>



## SMUGGLING OF GOODS

As a new state, Kosovo is also one of the states with the smallest territory as well as with the smallest economic influence in the region. Due to the lack of internal economic development, namely the lack of the production sector and industry, sectors that do not manage even closely to meet the needs of domestic consumption, the consumption which is covered mainly by imports.

In Kosovo and countries of the region there are still open opportunities for illegal trade and smuggling of goods with excise (alcohol, coffee, cigarettes, oil derivatives and pharmaceutical products, etc.), as well as other forged goods, because of the low economic standard and the low purchasing standard of people, which favours the growth of the black market and smuggling of goods.

Smuggling of goods in Kosovo and the region presents one of the most dangerous forms of crime in general and organised crime in particular, a phenomenon which has been expressed in a large scale after the last war in Kosovo.

During this fragile period with the institutions still under formation, the smuggling of goods has been carried out in almost every border area of Kosovo with neighbouring countries but the largest smuggling has been carried out in the Northern part of the country, in the border with Serbia.

The smuggling of goods causes major consequences to the society in many aspects of life, especially in the economic, political, and health aspects, whereas on the other side, organised criminal groups have major benefits from this type of crime, after benefiting significant financial means by avoiding taxes, excise and customs duties.

### *Smuggling of goods 2012 - 2015 - Cases initiated by the Police*

During this time period, the smuggling of goods is not in the proportions as it was in the earlier period and this smuggling is being carried out with all the neighbouring countries with a more significant difference with Serbia, especially in the Northern part of Kosovo.

In most of the cases we are dealing with goods in small quantities but also with individuals, but there are many cases when the police and the customs officers were prevented from pursuing the vehicles with smuggled goods by the members of criminal groups by blocking the road with vehicles or other things and by directly chasing and threatening these bodies.

Also the information from the intelligence points out the same situation which occurs in the cases initiated by the Police and customs; however, corrupted people who misuse their official positions are also mentioned in some of these cases.

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Smuggling of goods	328	259	184	182
Avoiding payment of mandatory customs fees	//	177	226	250

**Table 11- Initiated Cases by the Kosovo Police recorded in the database (SIPK) 2012 - 2015**

## ***Smuggling of goods by border regions, based on information from SIPK database***

### **Kosovo - Albania border**

Various goods have been smuggled from this area, starting from cigarettes with banderols, without banderols, chopped up tobacco leaves, coffee, animals and processed animal food, textile/clothing, pharmaceutical drugs. Smuggling of goods in this region is mainly done in villages of Gjakova in the border with Albania near the border crossing point Qafa e Prushit and in Zhub village. The smuggling is done by the individuals with vehicles, whereas in the difficult border areas they cross the border with horses.

### **Kosovo - Macedonia border**

As far as smuggling of goods is concerned, these routes are used by the smugglers whose destination is the domestic market. There are various goods smuggled from this area like animals, clothing, oil products (motor oil), alcoholic beverages, food products, electrical equipment, pharmaceutical drugs, cigarettes with and without banderols, chopped up tobacco leaves, etc. Smugglers carry the goods by vehicles, whereas in mountainous roads by tractors, trucks and horses. The locations which the police have identified are: Mjak, Globocica, Bllata, Muqiverce, Smire, Dimqe, Debellde, Novosela, Dremjak, Elez Han villages.

### **Kosovo - Serbia border**

The smuggling of goods from Serbia to Kosovo still remains in the focus of criminal groups because the products of this country are very present in the domestic market, with competitive prices. Smuggled goods are mainly fuel products, pharmaceutical drugs, birds, animals, dairy products, fruit, meat products, cigarettes, chopped up tobacco leaves, coffee, alcoholic beverages, vegetables, agricultural tools, electronic devices, textile. The main smuggling between Kosovo and Serbia is also done in the Northern part of Kosovo but not letting aside the region of Gjilan. The locations where the smuggling is done are the village of the northern part of the country in villages Sharpel, Serbovac, Zubin Potok, Stublina, Cerkoz - Istog, Dumnicë e Poshtme, Llugë. Whereas in the eastern part of the country in villages Hodonoc, Karaqevë, Rogoqicë, Breznicë. Smugglers use various transporting vehicles such as trucks, cars, tractors, vans and regular bus lines.

## *Inter-institutional cooperation*

Kosovo customs continue to be among the main institutions in the prevention and combating of smuggling in cooperation with Kosovo Police and Agency for Food and Veterinary (AFV). Based on the law for cooperation of the authorities involved in the Integrated Management of the Border (IMB) and the strategy for the integrated management of the border, these three institutions draft mutual regular monthly, quarterly and annual reports on the risk evaluation, with the purpose of identifying the level of risk along the borders of Kosovo, including the smuggling of goods.

However, taking into account the structure and the organisation of the customs at the central and local level, access towards the prevention and combating of smuggling has been decentralized to regional and local level, therefore it is very difficult to record the accurate number of cases of smuggling, smuggling of goods, or the assessment of the real value of the smuggled goods.

During 2014, the anti-smuggling units alone have processed 181 cases of detection of offences such as smuggling of goods, non-declaration of goods, false declaration of goods, prohibited goods and goods of protected brands.

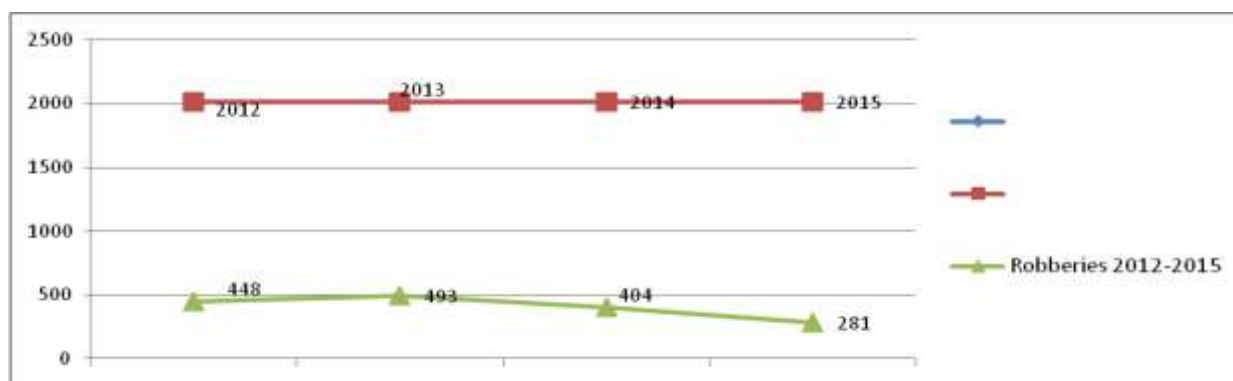
From the investigations of Kosovo customs for the time period of 2013-2015 there have been 292 criminal charges of smuggling raised in total for tax evasion and organised crime.

Year	Other cases				Cases of organised crime	
	Criminal charges	Avoidance	Raids	Arrested people	Cases	Arrested people
2013	159	5,797,867.69	24	3	1	9+2 escaped
2014	84	7,415,065.95	14	3	1	17+5 escaped
2015	49	3,771,775.36	20	1	1	0
Total:	292	16,984,709.00	58	7	3	

**Table 12 - Cases of smuggling initiated by Kosovo Customs, for tax evasion and organised crime in time period 2013 - 2015**

## *Smuggling of fuel and oil derivatives*

According to the data from Kosovo Customs smuggling of fuel and oil derivatives had marked a significant decrease from year to year, while on the other hand the amount of fuel and oil derivatives has marked a slight increase.



**Graph 5 - Smuggling of derivatives (Oil, gasoline, motor/hydraulic oils), time period 2012 - October 2015**

Factors that have affected in the decrease of the cases and the amount of smuggling of oil derivatives are numerous, but one of the key factors is believed to be the standardisation of the price of oil derivatives with the countries in the region, significantly reducing the profit by individuals or organised criminal groups that were involved in this criminal activity. The poor quality of the smuggled oil derivatives is believed to be another factor that has affected the citizens of Kosovo, who despite the difference in the price, should not target purchasing the oil derivatives whose quality and origin are suspicious.

However, regarding oil derivatives, applying fiscal policy in the selling points remains a challenge, including the hesitation of some of the greatest representatives, which directly impacts the internal competition between some of the biggest oil companies. This concern was also raised by businesses, which consider the unequal competition as the main threat, while they do not consider the current trend of the smuggling as a threat for the development of the business.

However, it should be emphasised that so far no business has been identified that has done a research of any kind on the impact that smuggling with oil derivatives may have on the development of their business.

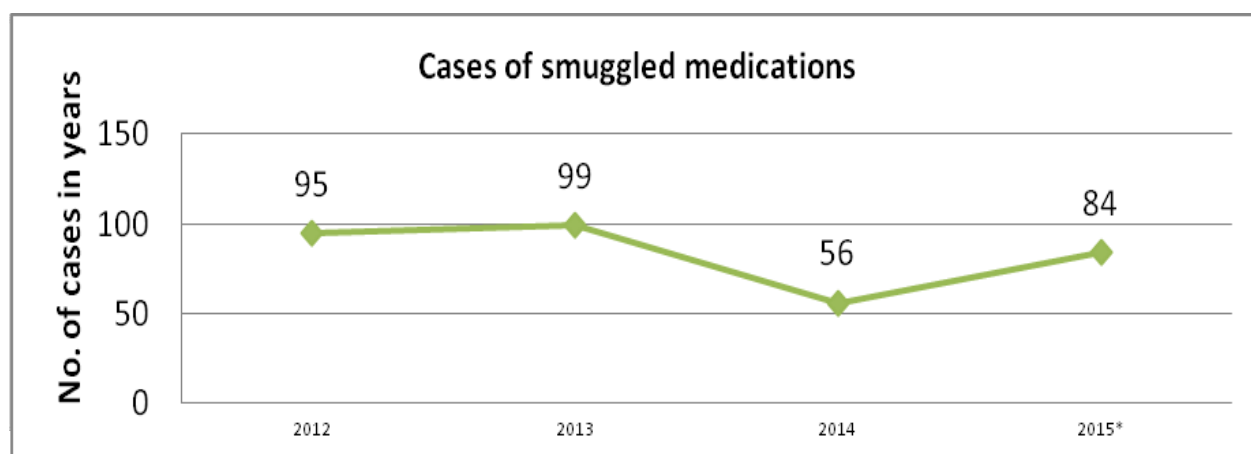
## *Smuggling of medications*

Although according to the data of Kosovo Customs the exact number or type of smuggled medications has not been identified, the number of cases of smuggling is relatively low and has remained about the same since the year 2012.

According to the evaluation of the experts from the private businesses, the smuggled medications although not in large number can pose a serious risk for the life and health of the citizens, taking into account that these medications are not subject to any kind of control over their quality, and the way they are transported does not comply with any standards of storage. This evaluation is also given by officials of the Kosovo Agency for Medical Products, although they could not provide precise data on the number of cases or the quantity of the confiscated medications by the pharmaceutical inspectorate for medical products and equipment, still they are aware of the danger that the smuggled medications can cause to the citizens.

According to the assessment of these experts, it is not only the smuggled medications that risk the health of the citizens, but also those that are regularly imported do not sufficiently adhere to the standards of storage, starting from their transport which in most of the cases is not done safely according to the criteria of storage and preservation, then their storage in depots is far below any standards, their transportation from these depots to the selling points is mainly done by improper transport vehicles and finally their preservation in the selling points is not done according to the standards and preservation criteria.

The presence of medications in the market without any prescription in any of the official languages in Kosovo is also a concern because the patients in many cases do not have any knowledge of the effects or side effects of the medications they use.



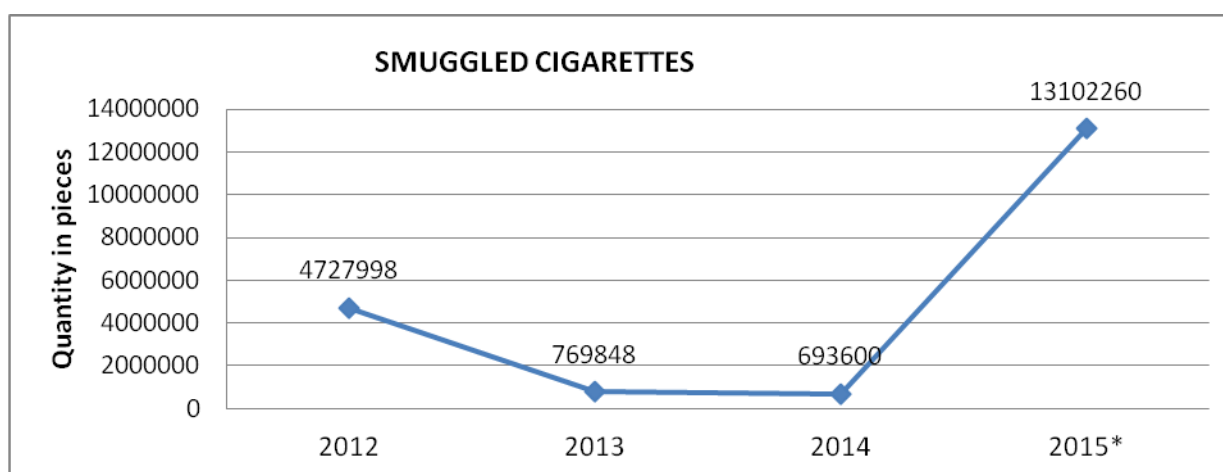
**Graph 6 – Number of cases of smuggling of medications in the time period 2012 - October 2015**

## Smuggling of Cigarettes and Raw Tobacco

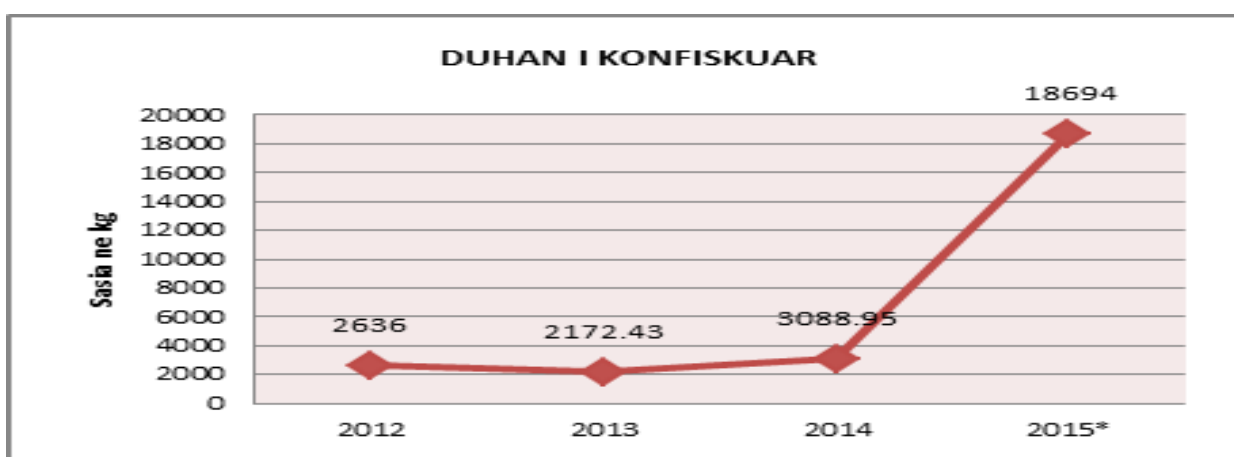
Smuggling of cigarettes and raw tobacco during the time period January-October 2015 has marked an enormous increase of the smuggled amount compared to the three previous years.

Although according to the data from the Kosovo Customs it was impossible to provide precise data regarding the type of smuggled cigarettes or even the destination of the raw tobacco, still there is a suspicion that despite the smuggling, the illegal processing of tobacco and their packaging is also done in Kosovo.

Among the factors that have affected the enormous increase of the smuggling of cigarettes and raw tobacco during 2015 is estimated to be the impact of raising the price of excise, but also the value on the added tax.



Graph 7- The amount of smuggled cigarettes 2012 - October 2015



Graph 8- The amount in kilos of the raw tobacco smuggled in 2012 - October 2015

## ***Smuggling of food products (general consumption)***

Based on the data from the Kosovo Customs and Agency for Food and Veterinary, as a consequence of the way the data were preserved, it has not been possible to obtain the correct statistical data related to the amount and type of food products that are smuggled. According to the estimates, it is believed that smuggling of meat products is more manifested and it also represents one of the greatest dangers for the life and health of Kosovo citizens.

An extremely concerning fact is that none of the smuggled goods which are identified by the Customs of Kosovo or by other institutions are not subject to laboratory analysis and instructions or warnings are not given to the costumers regarding the possibility of the presence in the market of items that may represent danger for their health.

Also, taking into account that according to the legislation in force, Kosovo Customs cannot prohibit the import of the products that are on the verge of expiry, despite the amount which is imported, it increases the suspicion that these food products after entering Kosovo may be subject of re-packaging and falsification of the expiry date, rand this fact represents a direct threat to the health of the citizens.

## ***Goods that violate intellectual property rights***

Kosovo Customs has also confiscated goods that violate intellectual property rights. Kosovo Customs in the protection of these goods has managed in the years 2014 and 2015 to confiscate goods in the value and quantity of:

- In 2014 the confiscated goods were in the quantity of 221,751 pieces and with the value of 881,348.00€.
- 56,025 pieces were confiscated in 2015 whereas their value reaches the amount of 934,454.00 €.

Goods that have been subject of fraud are mainly sports shoes, cosmetics products, accessories for mobile phones, vehicle parts, anti-corrosion spray etc.

According to the statistics China continues to lead with 37.67% as a source country of goods that infringe the intellectual property right, and then comes Turkey with 20% and Dubai with 10%. According to the type of goods, it is worth mentioning that so far mainly during the import of the textile and logos that infringe intellectual property, it is the goods from Turkey that are considered as a source point.



## ***Impact of the Stabilization and Association Agreement - SAA***

SAA agreement is divided into three chapters: Industrial, Agricultural, and Fishing as a special area. In the industrial chapter, those industrial products that are not foreseen in the annexes of the agreement are of 0%. We have a category of industrial products whose customs tax, as it is foreseen after four years, will be 0%, and it is called the quick proportional discount.

At the moment it is difficult to make a preliminary assessment of what will the impact of SAA be in the level of smuggling of goods, since according to the data from Kosovo Customs, smugglers are mainly focused on items which have a high level of tax, excise and VAT, allowing them higher profits.

## **CYBER-CRIME**

Today's contemporary society encounters with the greatest achievements of technical-technological development. This development has brought many facilities to the contemporary society in one hand whereas on the other hand the aforethought misuse of these technological achievements has created a number of problems and risks for both individuals and groups as well as for the society in general and the national safety in particular.

The significant increase of the number of Internet users in recent years in Kosovo has brought with it the increased risk of cyber-crime and cyber-attacks. Some criminal activities that have taken place are sufficient to highlight the weakness of the computer networks in place that are still considered to be in the developing stage.

The rapid growth of cyber-crime has created an urgent need for close cooperation between law enforcement authorities around the world in order to combat this phenomenon.

Cyber-crime will be one of the most important challenges for the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo in general, and for Kosovo Police in particular. The Republic of Kosovo has undertaken concrete steps in creating the legal framework for the prevention and combating of all forms of cyber-crime, but still many challenges remain, especially in the technical sense of successful confrontation with this form of crime, that is a relatively new phenomenon in Kosovo.

According to the available data, the main target of the cyber-attacks in Kosovo so far have been the accounts of Internet users, the banking system, and Internet web pages.

In 2013, the Kosovo Association of Information and Communication Technology (STIKK) published a study on Internet penetration and use in Kosovo. According to this study, Internet penetration based on the households is 84.8%, while based on the users it is 76.6%, which is very close to the average of the European Union (EU). Furthermore, this study emphasises that the behaviours of the majority of Kosovars in Internet can be compared to the global trends. This is a very important indicator for relevant institutions of our country which work on creating a safe cyber environment.

## *Cases of cyber-crime / Trends*

Referring to the “Analysis of the strategic review of the security sector in Kosovo”, cyber-crime as an unconventional crime was identified as one of the risks, challenges or global threats that may affect the security in Kosovo.

Cyber-crime includes the traditional criminal offences (e.g. fraud, falsification and breaking or stealing of identity), acts related to the content (e.g. sharing child pornography in Internet or incitement of racial hatred) as well as the actions that are unique for computers and informative systems (e.g. attacks against information systems, denial of service – DDoS, infection with viruses – malware etc).

Cyber-crime consists of criminal acts committed in networks, via electronic communication networks and information networks. This is a limitless problem, which can be classified into three broader definitions:

- Specific Internet crimes, such as attacks against information systems or phishing e.g. fake banking sites in order to get passwords that allow access in the bank accounts of the victims.
- Cyber frauds and falsifications: identity stealing, spam, cloning of the credit cards and other cards, malicious coding.
- Illegal online content, including material of child abuse, incitement of racial hatred, incitement of terrorist acts and idealism of violence, terrorism, racism and xenophobia.

Kosovo Police within its capacity building for the prevention and combating of the cyber crime has established the Department for Investigation of Cyber Crimes. The establishment of these mechanisms has been deemed as necessary, inter alia for the fact that it is taking new shape and because of the new circumstances created. This sector has faced with a significant number of cases but also the assistances for stations or units within the Police. Regarding the trend of this type of crime, based on the commitment and referring to the current statistics, it is noticed that this type of crime is increasing.

Cases treated by the Kosovo Police are:

- Child abuse via Internet (child pornography in the Internet);
- Unauthorised access into computer systems (DDoS attacks, stealing of passwords, attacks in the Government websites, websites of various public institutions, business companies, etc.);
- Threats and blackmails via e-mail (also towards important public personalities and institutions);
- False news (via falsified e-mail);

Activities	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015
Cases under investigation	18	24	21
Arrested people	11	7	10
Criminal charges	7	16	18
Criminal groups/destroyed	1	3	2

**Table 13 - Statistics on cases of cyber-crimes for the period 2013-2015**

## ***Legal infrastructure***

Some of the criminal offences that are related to cyber-crime are regulated by the Kosovo Criminal Code and 8 other criminal offences are regulated by the Law on Preventing and Combating Cyber Crimes.

The Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo and the Law on Preventing and Combating Cyber Crimes do not recognize the cyber-crime as a single criminal offence, but there are some offences that cyber-crimes include.

Criminal offences according to the Criminal Code of Kosovo:

- Reveal of classified information and failure to protect them,
- Violation of the confidentiality of correspondence and computer databases,
- Unauthorised reveal of the confidential information
- Abuse of children for pornography;
- Abuse of bank or credit cards;
- Access into computer systems.

### **Law on Preventing and Combating Cyber Crimes**

Law on Preventing and Combating Cyber Crimes aims the prevention and combating of cyber-crime with concrete measures, prevention, detection and sanction of violations through computer systems, by providing respect of human rights and protection of personal data. Although Kosovo did not sign the Budapest Convention on Cyber Crime, the law on preventing and combating cyber-crime was drafted based on this convention.

According to the Law on Preventing and Combating Cyber Crimes, cyber-crime is *“a criminal activity developed in the network whose subject or the way of committing the crime is the misuse of computer systems and computer data”*.

Criminal offences according to the Law on Preventing and Combating Cyber Crimes:

- Criminal offences against the confidentiality, integrity and availability of computer systems;
- Unauthorised transfer;
- Preventing of the computer systems operation;
- Unauthorised production, possession and attempts;

### **National Cyber Security Strategy 2015 – 2018**

The Government of the Republic of Kosovo has included in the Government Program 2015–2018 the drafting of the National Cyber Security Strategy 2015 – 2018 and the Action Plan. Ministry of Internal Affairs is charged with the task of issuing these documents and implementing them. A significant number of governmental and non-governmental organisations are included in the drafting of the strategy.

Concrete measures for the creation of a safe cyber space are foreseen to be undertaken through this strategy. Relevant institutions will be obliged to meet their planned activities in the Action Plan and the realisation of ongoing tasks and responsibilities under the Action Plan within set deadlines.

The National Cyber Security Strategy and Action Plan are in process. It is estimated that with the issuing of this document and the beginning of implementation of this cyber security level also the protection from cyber-attacks will significantly increase.

### ***Prevention and combating of cyber-crime in Kosovo***

Regarding the commitment for the prevention and combating of the cybercrime, except the engagement in the investigation of cases, Kosovo Police was and still is a part of various activities. These activities are related to the capacity building of the Police mechanism for combating cyber-crime, awareness of the society for cyber-crime safety, drafting of the strategies, cooperation etc.

Some of the activities are:

- Within cyber security, there were concrete efforts in many activities that aim the capacity building for cyber security. Most of these commitments are made within the “Construction of Cyber Security” project supported and financed by the European Union where Kosovo together with Macedonia and Moldova are the beneficiary countries. The main objective of this project is to support the drafting of the national strategy for cyber security and the establishment of national CERT.
- KCS, based on the decision of the Government, is engaged in Task Force activities against the Piracy and Falsification.
- Participation in the Forum of Kosovo Banking Association.
- Participation in the Working Group for the drafting of the national strategy for the protection of children from online dangers.
- Participation in a joint activity between Kosovo Police and MEST, facilitated by OSCE. The topic has been prepared (awareness for Internet safety / harassment via Internet) and has been lectured in KAPS for teachers and police officers who have transmitted the gained knowledge in the schools of Fushë Kosova municipality, being the pilot-project municipality.
- Preparation of the subject for cyber-crimes and its lecturing in KAPS Vushtrri for the Police cadets and investigators.

### **CORRUPTION/MONEY LAUNDERING**

Republic of Kosovo has sufficient legal basis for the prevention and combating corruption. However, according to many reports, publications and various local and international researches, it is estimated that the level of corruption in Kosovo still remains high.

According to the statistics of Kosovo Police in relation to the cases of corruption, almost the same number is noticed every year, but during 2015 compared to 2014 a slight increase of the cases of corruption is noticed initiated by Kosovo Police. The number of cases and criminal charge filed in 2015 is lower compared to 2013.

The level of reporting and detection of cases of corruption and money laundering remains quite low, as a result of the unwillingness of the citizens to report such cases, especially considering that the corruption by a part of the society is considered as the only way to gain benefits which they aim.

Statistics of the criminal offences of Corruption	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of criminal charges	139	236	96	154
Number of arrested people	65	69	65	67

**Table 14 – Criminal offences of corruption in time period 2012 – 2015**

No organised criminal group involved in the cases of corruption or money laundering has been identified so far.

Based on the evaluation, analysis and investigations made by different local and international components (projects, NGOs, surveys, police, etc.), corruption has mostly occurred in public institutions where it has to do with the expenses of public money. The most frequent forms of appearance of corruption are:

- a. In the field of Public Procurement,
- b. In the field of Health,
- c. In the field of Privatisation,
- d. In the field of Civil Registry.
- e. In the field of Construction,
- f. In the field of property issues (Courts, cadastral offices),
- g. As well as in other agencies.

Institutions of the Republic of Kosovo in their efforts to prevent and combat corruption have created an institutional and legal framework in order to deal with this problem. Some laws have been adopted such as: the Law for the Anti-Corruption Agency, the Law on Declaration, Origin and Control of Assets and Gifts of Senior Public Officials and the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Exercising Public Functions, the Law on Extended Powers of Confiscation of material benefits gained by offences, etc. The Government of Kosovo has drafted two strategies: the Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan for 2009 – 2011, and recently the Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan for 2013 – 2017, adopted by the Kosovo Assembly.

There have been challenges and difficulties identified in the practical implementation of these illegal instruments and policy documents.

Effective prevention and combating of corruption remain the key criteria and conditions that the international community has set to Kosovo for the European integration.

The EU Progress Report for Kosovo of the year 2014 and the second monitoring report for the fulfilment of the requirements of EU for visa liberalisation with Kosovo, lists a number of requirements related to the implementation of laws and political will in the implementation of policies for the creation of the appropriate structural responses, in order for Kosovo to start offering the results of its current efforts on combating the corruption and organised crime.

The EU Progress Report for Kosovo 2014 in the field of corruption highlights that even though the cases of corruption have been a priority of the judicial and prosecutorial services, data for detentions are still missing. Corruption is seen as a serious problem in many areas, but the public procurement remains a major concern for Kosovo, since most of the public budget has been spent on activities related to public procurement. Without the real commitment of the political elite of Kosovo that should be translated in their efforts for current results, Kosovo remains in the early stage of its combat against corruption. Kosovo institutions should further strengthen their inter-institutional cooperation empowering the judiciary and making it responsible and accountable in order to provide effective results in the combat against this phenomenon.

According to these reports, it is assessed that in general the implementation of the politics and anti-corruption mechanisms has failed to give concrete expected results. Although the laws have been improved to some extent in relation to the declaration of assets of public officials, the results remain poor with low number of imposed sentences and sanctions.

The lack of transparency of the central and local governance is among the issues highlighted in these reports.

However, these reports bring out some of the achievements and efforts of Kosovo institutions for the prevention and combating of corruption, such as the adoption and amendment of laws that are related to addressing the issue of corruption, but also in increasing the efficiency of the institutions of prosecution.

Money Laundering: Kosovo similar to other countries of the region is affected by the phenomenon of money laundering, especially taking into consideration the existence in large amount of the non formal economy, and other forms of criminal activities that are mainly developed in foreign countries and the money ends up in Kosovo, or vice versa.

Based on the reported and investigated cases in the Kosovo Police for the time period 2014-2015 related to the money laundering and criminal offences sent to respective prosecutions there are some ways of committing this criminal offence where the benefited money from the criminal activity is mainly transferred through bank accounts of physical or judicial persons in some countries by using “offshore” countries<sup>12</sup> and by opening fictive businesses in these countries without realizing any business activity.

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<sup>12</sup> Countries that do not require declaration of the origin of money

Also by buying real estate or by opening various businesses in different countries or by using different people that have opened registered businesses but have not realized any business activities with false documents.

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of criminal offences	3	4	2	4
Number of the arrested people	7	0	0	2
Number of suspects in criminal charges	14	6	6	27

**Table 15 – Statistics of the criminal offence of Money Laundering 2012-2015**

The laundered money deriving from criminal activities mainly ends up in:

- a) Investments in real estates,
- b) Construction,
- c) Hotels;
- d) Vehicles;
- e) Opening of various business activities or
- f) Continuation of existing businesses,
- g) Living expenses etc.

Taking into consideration that the informal economy is largely expressed in Kosovo, we can conclude that the most laundered money derives from criminal acts as the basis of tax evasion that is the most expressed act, and then other crimes like trafficking of drugs, misuse of official position, prostitution, smuggling, bribery etc.

Kosovo institutions despite all the existing difficulties are committed with all the legal and institutional mechanisms to combat this negative phenomenon of the society and therefore there are legal institutions and norms created with the purpose of preventing and combating the criminal offence of money laundering.

In order to prevent and combat money laundering Kosovo has established the Financial Intelligence Unit which monitors, analyses and distributes suspicious bank transactions for money laundering. Kosovo Police which within the DCEC has established the Unit against Money Laundering exclusively deals with the investigation of this criminal offence.

Kosovo Customs records each amount of more than 10 thousand Euros that enter in the Republic of Kosovo, and then other institutions report as foreseen by the law on the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism.



## GENERAL CRIMINALITY

### ILLEGAL WEAPONS

Criminal offences: smuggling of weapons, unauthorised possession of weapons and their illegal use are in general characteristics of the region and people of Balkan, a region of which Kosovo is also part of. The number of weapons in the hands of Kosovo population is estimated to still be large, although the police have continuously since after the war confiscated a large number of these weapons. According to some research it is said that about 350,000 weapons may be in the possession of the citizens<sup>13</sup>.

These weapons are mostly the remaining weapons from the last war in Kosovo, where a considerable number of them are found in abandoned military depots of the Yugoslav army, but also residential houses of persons that had left Kosovo after the war.

Based on the information, a similar phenomenon is also noticed in other countries of the Balkan region, because this region has gone through several wars, turmoil and transitions. These circumstances have made it possible for the people of Balkan to possess a large number of weapons which are being cleverly used by the smugglers by selling them in the region and also in the crisis zones in some distant countries. Also, according to the information, the smuggled weapons enter and leave Kosovo through all neighbouring countries and in all of these countries the Kosovar smugglers buy and sell weapons. This happens because of the specifics of smuggling groups, thus depending on where they find better demands for the weapon market.

This shows that the phenomenon of the smuggling of weapons in the Balkan region is significantly widespread and the cooperation of the criminal groups is obvious, including also the cooperation between the Serbian and Albanian smugglers.

Besides the smuggling of weapons from Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, weapons are also smuggled from Turkey, Bulgaria, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic etc. Based on the police data from the investigations of cases of unauthorised possession of weapons, it results that the weapons produced in former Yugoslavia (guns of TT model and AK47 automatic guns) are the most common. Whereas regarding the smuggling there have mainly been noticed hunting weapons, which mostly originate from Turkey, as well as modified EKOL guns, which according to the information from the intelligence and some investigative cases are modified in Bulgaria.

Weapon smugglers in most of the cases bring weapons based on the demands of their clients, which they bring to Kosovo through the ground routes from the countries in the region via different transportation vehicles such as cars, trucks, buses etc. The misuse of the legal selling or transporting businesses is often noticed which despite the legal work also perform criminal activities in selling the weapons and ammunition.

However it should be emphasised that Kosovo and its citizens are not threatened that much by the smuggling of weapons, in the cases when the territory of Kosovo is used as a transit country of their smuggling to other countries.

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<sup>13</sup> According to a research conducted by UNDP in 2012 it is estimated that there are about 350.000 small and light guns in Kosovo. This amount also includes the number of legal weapons that are available for the institutions of order.

The threat for the Kosovo citizens, but also for the local institutions, particularly those in charge of security, remain the illegal weapons that are in the possession of the citizens.

## MURDERS

Compared to the previous years, the 2012 – 2015 time period marks the lowest number of murdered people in Kosovo. Furthermore, even within this period the number of murdered people decreases every year and marks the lowest number in 2015.

Most of the murders in Kosovo during this time period have not been related to the organised crime as the main motives were: property disputes, low motives, personal benefits, disagreements, debts, usury, revenge etc. The motivation itself is determinant for the reveal of murders and therefore the reveal performed by the enforcement bodies is larger.

While the crime generally takes place in urban areas, when it comes to murders during this time period it is noticed that a larger number of murders have occurred in rural areas rather than in urban areas and based on the calculations it appears that 55% of the murders have happened in rural areas and 45% in urban areas.

Years	2012	2013	2014	2015
Cases of "murder"	55	39	35	25

**Table 16: Statistical data related to the number of murder cases in time period 2012-2015.**

## USURY/ EXTORTION

Despite being estimated among the most serious cases that businesses and society face with, still the number of reporting the cases of usury and extortion to the police remains quite low.

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Usury	13	23	32	25
Extortion	58	62	52	61

**Table 18: Statistics of the cases of Usury and Extortion from 2012 to 2015**

The criminal offence of usury based on the reported cases is not widely spread but it is believed that many cases remain unreported because people who receive amounts of money with usury do this with no pressure and in agreement with the people who give money with interest and only when they come to such a position when they are not able to pay the amount which increases rapidly then the threats, blackmails, and physical attacks begin from usury providers, therefore they are forced to report the case to the police.

In the cases where the usury receiver requires large amounts the usury provider takes movable and immovable properties from the usury receiver which are worth several times more than the amount that he/she has provided, then even if the usury provider receives the certain amount according to the agreement, yet he/she purposely cause delays of payment by the usury receiver in order for the amount to increase and the usury receiver to be taken another part of the guarantee.

According to the data from investigations related to the cases of usury, there was no organised and structured criminal group identified so far, but only individuals and small criminal groups, which mainly base their activity in the terms of family (large families). However, taking into account the nature of this criminal offence there are indications that this criminal activity is well organised, especially at the very low level that the reporting of these cases is estimated.

According to the data from the intelligence, the usury providers usually select their targets, respectively the usury receivers very carefully, first by seducing them with allegedly favourable conditions, and then through different forms of pressure and extortion they force the usury receivers, actually the victims to act to the detriment of their wealth.

Usually according to the estimations by law enforcement bodies the usury providers are known as very powerful people characterised with criminal background, causing fear among their victims.

There is a large lack of information on financial resources that the usury providers possess. In certain cases, as the usury providers justify to the usury receiver, that the financial means are not theirs, but belong to some famed criminal family or group and use their name as a form of pressure towards the victim.

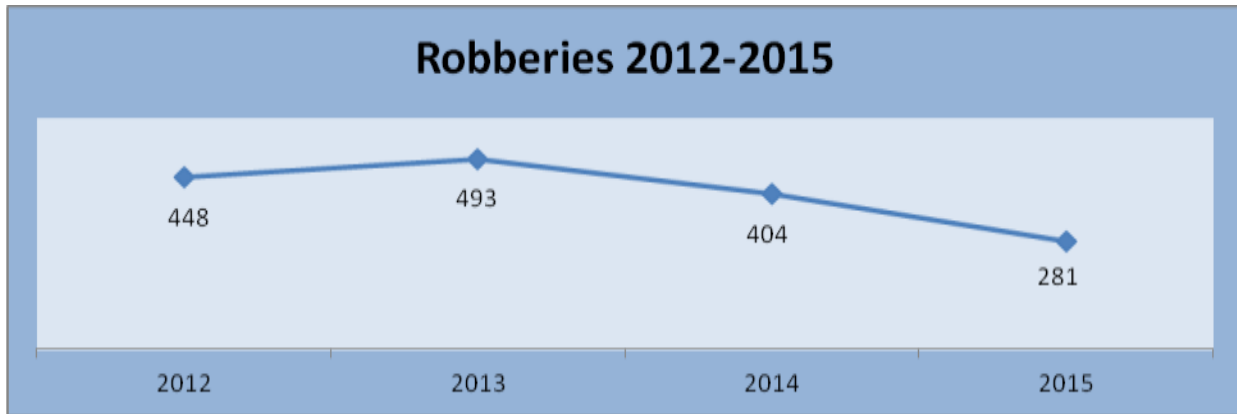
Extortion in our country, besides being associated mainly with usury, is manifested in other ways by threats, blackmail, and other forms by certain individuals and groups towards the people that possess businesses such as various shops, workshops, restaurants, factories, hotels, companies and corporations, in order to pay certain amounts of money in their benefit regularly or occasionally. These requirements are done in order to supposedly provide them with assistance and protection of their businesses from other criminal groups. Persons or groups that deal with extortion are mainly people with a criminal career, aggressive people, people with suspicious biography etc.

Because of the nature of the crime, extortion cases are less reported to the police, the most reported cases are mainly small or individual ones.

There is a public perception that extortion is evident, dominating mainly in legal businesses in Kosovo, which are believed to be targets of certain individuals or groups.

## **ROBBERIES**

During the time period of 2012 - 2015 robberies have been noticed in the whole territory of Kosovo, but mostly in Prishtina, due to the largest concentration of the people and businesses and they are mainly happening in the shopping centres, hotels, shops, casinos, betting shops, pharmacies, gas stations, houses, streets, banks, and other locations, where the offenders threat the victims by force with firearms, knives, and other solid objects.



**Graphs 9-** The following graph provides the cases of "Robbery" according to the years including those from 2010 to 2015

On the street and outdoor robberies, in the recent years, the victims of robbery are mainly females but also elderly people, whom are mostly, robbed their purses, gold jewellery, and mobile phones.

According to the data from the intelligence, there were no organised criminal groups that have been involved in the cases of robberies, even though some small criminal groups are very efficient in their criminal activity, mainly in robberies in banking institutions and micro financing, gambling facilities and selling points of postal services.

