

## Kosovo's Dream Year: What Could Have Been in 2025

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*Disclaimer: Since it is so difficult to find some positivity in the current political situation, we had to invent a parallel reality to make a comparison of what we could have had if things went smoothly. The events set out in this op-ed, sadly enough, are entirely fictional.*

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year 2026!

The year that we are leaving behind was certainly memorable with many positive events that helped propel Kosovo's EU aspirations.

In the beginning of the year, the political parties were able to quickly come to an understanding that Kosovo needs a steady executive to pursue its strategic goals, therefore they left behind their ideological and political differences and created a stable government and a functional Assembly.

Once the government was created, it immediately went ahead with the signing of the Loan Agreement from the Reform and Growth Facility, and presented it to the Parliament together with the already signed Facility Agreement. The Members of Parliament, understanding their duty to serve the European aspiration of the people and not the daily squabbles, voted in favor of the treaties almost unanimously. After some technical steps, within weeks Kosovo was allocated the pre-financing of some €61.8 million, of which some 55% were allocated to the Western Balkans Investment Framework and the rest were dedicated as direct budget support for the government. After almost two years of punitive measures, this was a very positive sign by the European Union for Kosovo.

The responsible politicians of Kosovo understood that merely declarations of commitment to the European Union are not enough. As the old saying goes, words are good, deeds are better. Therefore, the new government set out to seriously and speedily implement all the reform steps laid out in Kosovo's Reform Agenda. As a result, until the end of this year, the Government of Kosovo successfully implemented all 40 reform steps set out for the first three semesters and as a result was allocated €300 million euros in total, after taking into account the pre-financing as well. Such a massive amount of investment spurred an impressive economic growth for Kosovo.

Such an exemplary performance from Kosovo became a prime factor in the decision of the European Council and Commission to retrieve the punitive measures introduced in June 2023. After all, it was so unfair to keep such measures against a country that had such a terrific record in the implementation

of the EU oriented-reforms. Even the most vehement opponents of the withdrawal of the punitive measures were robbed of their arguments by such a performance. In fact, there is a momentum to open accession negotiations with Kosova, but the discussions are still on-going.

Experts believe that by implementing the Reform Agenda in such a decisive manner, Kosova undoubtedly benefitted financially, however it also improved its chances of getting into the EU. This year's Country Report was very positive and there were improvements in the overall evaluation in the majority of the policy areas. Experts state that such a progress will help Kosova down the line to have smoother negotiations for accession.

As you can see, Kosova had an incredible year thanks to a responsible political class. They were able to move beyond slogans and set their differences aside to work for common good. One has to wonder how things would be if instead they stuck to their guns on minute differences and lost a whole year on fruitless debates!