



**MULTI-ETHNIC
CARAVAN**
FOR PEACE AND
COHABITATION

**Meetings
in Gračanica/Graçanica:
Municipal and Religious Leaders**

September - October 2024

Prepared by:

*Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and
Development (KIPRED)*

Str. Major Mehmet Bushi, H.III/1, 10 000

Prishtina, Kosovo.

Tel: +383 (0)38 542 778 Web-site:

www.kipred.org

Email: info@kipred.org

NGO AKTIV

Str. Kralja Petra I, 183a,

Mitrovica, Kosovo.

Tel: +381 (0) 64 310 6660

Web-site: www.ngoaktiv.org

Email: office@ngoaktiv.org

Supported by:



The information in this publication is provided as part of the "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation" project, implemented by the Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) in partnership with NGO AKTIV, and funded by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS). It is intended to offer an overview of the outcomes and discussions from the multi-ethnic dialogues in Gračanica/Graçanica. The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of KFOS.

Foreword

The civil society initiative "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation" includes 10 representatives from the Albanian and Serbian civil society communities, led by the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED), based in Prishtina/Priština, and NGO Aktiv, based in North Mitrovica. This initiative is supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS).

The "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation" aims to foster dialogue, understanding, and cooperation between different ethnic and religious communities, and to contribute to strengthening inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

A unique aspect of this initiative is the "Letters of Desires and Expectations," written by the Caravan participants. These letters express their hopes and visions for cohabitation and mutual respect between different ethnic groups. They serve as a basis for our discussions with mayors and religious leaders, and they also include suggestions for improving relations and cohabitation between ethnic communities.

We invite you to support the goals of this initiative in strengthening the foundations and building a multi-ethnic, democratic, and liberal society in Kosovo.

Lulzim Peci
Executive Director
KIPRED

Miodrag Miličević
Executive Director
NGO AKTIV

Table of Content

I. Introduction	4
Key takeaways from meeting with the Deputy Mayor of Gračanica/Gračanica	5
Key takeaways from the meetings with religious leaders	6
II. Conclusions and Commitments for Future Actions	9
III. Letters of Expectations and Desires.....	12
Prof. Dr. Ljiljana Šubarić, Mayor Municipality of Gračanica/Gračanica	12
Bishop Teodosije, Eparchy Raška – Prizren of the Serbian Orthodox Church	25
Imam Xheladin Ef. Fazliu, Islamic Community.....	38

I. Introduction

The "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Coexistence" is an innovative civil society initiative implemented by the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) and NGO AKTIV supported by the Kosovo Open Society Foundation (KOSOF) (With operational bases in Pristina/Priština and North Mitrovica, these organizations lead a group of ten civil society representatives from both the Albanian and Serbian communities.

The "Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Coexistence" aims to address the deep-seated inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo, primarily between the Albanian and Serb communities, which have persisted due to historical conflicts, political challenges, and cultural and religious differences. These tensions have hindered efforts towards reconciliation and cohabitation, exacerbated by limited opportunities for meaningful dialogue and interaction between the communities. The project's main goal is to foster a sustainable environment of mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation among Albanian and Serb communities in Kosovo through innovative dialogue and engagement strategies.

To achieve this, the project has set specific tasks, including:

1. Promoting Inter-Ethnic Dialogue: Establishing new platforms for dialogue between communities, utilizing the collaboration between NGOs, municipal authorities, and religious leaders to bridge divides, and cultivate multi-ethnicity.
2. Fostering Inter-Ethnic Understanding: Enhancing mutual understanding and empathy among communities by confronting stereotypes and misconceptions, and promoting respect and goodwill.
3. Facilitating Collaboration: Encouraging joint initiatives and collaborative actions among civil society organizations, local governments, and religious leaders across ethnic lines to work towards common goals for the betterment of communities and societal change in Kosovo.

Through these efforts, the project seeks to not only mitigate the immediate tensions but also lay the foundation for a peaceful and cohesive multi-ethnic society, contributing to the broader goal of peace and stability in the region and European integrations.

As the second stop of the Caravan's journey, Gračanica/Gračanica – the largest Kosovo Serb majority municipality in central and southern Kosovo, provided an opportunity for its members to engage with influential municipal and religious leaders. These included the Deputy Mayor of Gračanica/Gračanica, Municipality, Mr. Leutrim Ajeti and Adviser to the Mayor Mr. Saša Denić, Bishop Teodosije of the Eparchy Raška – Prizren, and the local representative of Islamic Community, Imam Xheladin ef. Fazliu. The meetings took place on 13 September and 21 October 2024. Mayor of Gračanica, Dr. Biljana Šubarić, was unavoidably absent from the meeting due to an urgent engagement.

Central to this endeavor are the "Wishes and Expectations Letters," addressed to the key interlocutors in Gračanica/Gračanica: Mayor Ljiljana Šubarić, Bishop Teodosije of the Eparchy of Raška-Prizren of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and local representative of Islamic Community, Imam Xheladin ef. Fazliu, which are thoughtfully composed by the participants of the caravan. These letters are more than mere formalities; they embody the sincere hopes and visions of their authors for a future where different ethnic groups live together in respect and peace. The letters are foundational to the dialogue process, guiding discussions with mayors and religious leaders.

They contain insightful suggestions that are aimed at improving interethnic relations and enhancing daily cohabitation among communities.

The following text outlines the key insights drawn from these important discussions, as well as the letters expressing the aspirations and expectations shared by the Caravan members.

Key takeaways from the meeting with the Office of the Mayor in Gračanica/Gračanica

Meeting with the leadership of Gračanica/Gračanica Municipality, 13 September 2024. Through the letters of desires and expectations, members of the Caravan expressed their desire for a greater role of municipality of Gračanica/Gračanica in advancement of multi-ethnicity and tolerance, and have put forth concrete proposals for consideration

Key proposals from the letters of desires and expectations addressed to the Mayor:

- Work towards policies that address discrimination and ensure equal access for all ethnic groups. Implementing and supporting legal mechanisms to monitor and respond to instances of ethnic violence or discrimination will ensure fairness and protection for all citizens. Promoting economic collaboration between different ethnic communities through joint business ventures and creating platforms such as local markets for trade and cooperation will not only strengthen local economies but also foster a sense of cohabitation.
- Development of programs that highlight the importance of diversity and cooperation, ensuring that all citizens feel valued and included. Establishing a citizens' advisory council with representatives from various ethnic groups could be a meaningful step toward ensuring that every voice is heard and considered.
- Continue efforts to: a) Foster municipal leadership by supporting initiatives that empower members of ethnic communities to participate actively in decision-making processes. b) Promote grassroots peace building efforts through local organizations and initiatives. c) Encourage interethnic collaboration at the local level to address common challenges and opportunities. d) Advocate for the inclusion of the Municipal perspectives in regional and national policy-making. e) Lead by example by demonstrating a commitment to tolerance, understanding, and respect for diversity in your own actions and policies.
- Lead efforts to build a tolerant and inclusive community by actively engaging with both Serbian and Albanian residents, supporting initiatives that foster dialogue, and ensuring that local policies reflect the needs and aspirations of all ethnic groups.
- Exploring pathways to increase inter-municipal interaction, potentially through the following: a) Regular meetings with the mayor of Prishtina, in order to discuss mutually beneficial projects, including the joint planning and implementation for greater connectivity and joint economic projects between Gračanica/Gračanica and Prishtina/Priština; b) Potentially establish a Multi-Ethnic Youth Centre for youth of Prishtina/Priština and Gračanica/Gračanica, as a safe space for youth to meet and get to know each other. This Centre could also serve as a space for art, culture and meeting of IT specialists – areas where youth are most likely to cooperate; c) Joint promotion of multiethnic and inter-religious understanding by Gračanica//Gračanica and Prishtina/Priština, including an annual symbolic event jointly organized by the two municipalities.

- Explore the possibility of organizing events in Gračanica/Gračanica's schools that celebrate Kosovo's diversity. These events could educate pupils about the various ethnic groups and their cultures in Kosovo, with civil society organizations assisting in the planning and execution of these activities, placing greater emphasis on the functionality of the Municipal Communities Committees.
- Explore the establishment of intercultural centers and initiatives that promote dialogue and joint community projects, for example by establishing a "Cohabitation Council".
- Explore establishment of community workshops, cultural exchange programs, and educational activities that celebrate our century's long tradition of multi-ethnicity; Organizing festivals that showcase the rich traditions of various ethnic groups can help celebrate local diversity while promoting a sense of belonging, promote equal economic opportunities for all residents; Supporting local businesses, particularly those that embrace diversity in their workforce.

Deputy Mayor, Mr. Ajeti and Advisor to the Mayor, Mr. Denić expressed strong support for the initiative, acknowledging its importance and committing to ongoing cooperation. They shared insights into the successful inter-ethnic cohabitation within Gračanica/Gračanica, highlighting the municipality as a model of harmony in Kosovo. Notably, Municipality's efforts include resolving inter-ethnic disputes effectively and hosting inclusive cultural events such as an iftar attended by both Muslim and Orthodox community members. Furthermore, Municipality organized last year an iftar on the honor of the Islamic Community in Gračanica/Gračanica

The representatives detailed various community-oriented activities in Gračanica/Gračanica, such as an educational camp in Brezovica that welcomed youths from all ethnicities, and recreational activities designed for women across different communities. These initiatives underscore the municipality's commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Both municipal officials agreed on the importance of being more vocal about these positive examples of multi-ethnic cooperation. They stressed the need to highlight and celebrate these efforts publicly to inspire further integration and peace building across Kosovo.

Key takeaways from the meetings with religious leaders

Key messages from the letters of expectations and desires addressed to the religious leaders were centered along the lines of further advocating understanding and coexistence between ethnic communities, including joint activities. Key proposals from the letters were the following:

For the Diocese Raška-Prizren, Serbian Orthodox Church:

- Continue supporting community programs that bring together people of different backgrounds, promoting joint activities and intercultural exchanges. Sermons and public messages can further emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all, regardless of their ethnic or religious background.
- Consider the following specific actions to facilitate reconciliation and integration: a) Organize and support interfaith dialogues and events to promote understanding and respect between different religious communities. b) Provide educational resources and training to religious leaders and community members on topics such as conflict resolution, human rights, and intercultural communication. c) Support initiatives that promote social cohesion and civic participation among all ethnic groups in Kosovo. d)

Speak out against discrimination, hate speech, and violence towards any community. e)
Encourage the participation of young people in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

- Encourage the clergy and congregations to engage in inter-ethnic dialogue, support peace initiatives, and advocate for policies that promote equality and justice for all ethnic groups.
- Explore pathways for the establishment of an inter-faith council with other religious institutions
- Encouraging Interfaith and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue; Promoting Shared Values of Compassion and Peace; Supporting Youth Engagement in Peacebuilding: Collaborating on Community Projects.

Meeting with Bishop Teodosije - Gračanica Monastery – October 21, 2024. Bishop Teodosije opened the discussion by sharing his deep personal connections to the region, specifically to the monastic sites of Dečani/Deçan and Gračanica/Gračanica, which draw numerous visitors for liturgical services. This influx of visitors, he noted, underscores the profound spiritual resonance these sites hold for people across ethnic and religious divides.

He praised the Caravan's efforts, emphasizing the importance of this initiative for nurturing a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo, and offered his full support.

Bishop Teodosije expressed concerns about the dynamics of interfaith relations, recalling instances where nationalistic sentiments overshadowed spiritual unity, similar to his experiences in Croatia. He discussed the challenges faced by the Serbian community in maintaining their presence in various locations within Kosovo, such as Velika Hoča/Hoça e Madhe, Goraždevac/Gorazhdevc, and particularly Gračanica/Gračanica, where demographic shifts pose potential cultural and social transformations. A poignant topic raised by him was the politicization of religious sites and the inaccuracies encountered in the official designation of church properties, which have led to public misrepresentations of their heritage.

A specific issue was raised by the Caravan – that of the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Pristina being used by the Kosovo Anti-Corruption Agency which is not paying rent to the Church since 2019. Bishop informed the members that no progress has been made in this regard.

Despite these challenges, Bishop Teodosije emphasized the Church's mission of unconditional love and service, echoing the sentiment that "Love is only love if it seeks no return," highlighting his commitment to community service beyond ethnic and religious lines.

The discussion concluded with a mutual recognition of the complex socio-political landscape affecting Kosovo. Bishop Teodosije and the civil society members acknowledged the difficulties yet reaffirmed their dedication to overcoming these through continued dialogue and cooperative efforts aimed at fostering a peaceful and cohesive multi-ethnic society. This meeting underscored a collective commitment to navigating the challenges and working towards a harmonious community environment in Kosovo, and concluded with an agreement to continue the meetings.

For the local Islamic Community

- Provide guidance that emphasizes values such as peace, forgiveness, and mutual respect, thereby shaping the attitudes and behaviors of both the faithful and the broader community; convey messages of tolerance and peace, encouraging your followers to

embrace these values as essential for our coexistence; educating the community and inspiring the younger generation about the importance of coexistence and respect for diversity, you can play a vital role in shaping a more harmonious and inclusive society

- Contribute to bridging divides and fostering peaceful relations between different ethnic and religious communities.
- Promote interfaith dialogue and understanding, speak out against discrimination, hate speech, and violence towards any community, regardless of their religious beliefs, support initiatives that promote social cohesion and civic participation among all ethnic and religious groups in Gračanica/Gračanica, and encourage the involvement of young people in peace building and reconciliation efforts.
- Specific activities that could be undertaken to support interfaith dialogue and tolerance include: Organizing joint meetings of religious communities to promote unity and understanding; Establishing and supporting interfaith dialogue forums to provide a platform for open and respectful discussion; Supporting community-based initiatives that promote interfaith cooperation and collaboration.
- Continue leading efforts to build a peaceful and inclusive community by encouraging inter-ethnic dialogue, supporting initiatives that promote understanding, and advocating for equal opportunities for all ethnic groups.
- Facilitating the inclusion of respect for religious and ethnic diversity into the Jumu'ah sermons.
- Implement teachings within mosques that support interethnic and inter-religious understanding and cohabitation.

Meeting with Mr. Xheladin ef. Fazliu, Imam of the local Islamic Community - Hajvali Mosque, September 13, 2024. The discussion Imam Fazliu emphasized the critical role of religious leaders in fostering community cohesion. During the meeting, the Letters of Desires and Expectations were presented to Imam Fazliu.

Imam Fazliu expressed his appreciation for this inter-ethnic initiative, noting the historically positive relations between ethnic communities in the Municipality of Gračanica/Gračanica. He remarked on the absence of inter-ethnic clashes within the municipality and discussed the ongoing cooperation with the Serb Orthodox Church. Imam Fazliu highlighted that religious leaders from different faiths are regularly invited to each other's religious holidays and important events, fostering a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

Imam Fazliu praised the efforts of the leadership of the Gračanica/Gračanica Municipality, acknowledging their effective leadership in maintaining peace and cohabitation within the community. He also mentioned that businesses owned by individuals from various ethnic backgrounds cooperatively thrive, contributing to a peaceful coexistence.

Imam Fazliu reiterated his commitment to supporting the Caravan's objectives and expressed his willingness to actively participate in future endeavors to enhance inter-ethnic cohabitation. He emphasized the importance of continuing these efforts to ensure a peaceful and inclusive environment for all residents of Kosovo.

II. Conclusions and Commitments for Future Actions

Municipal Leadership's Role in Enhancing Community Cohesion:

Conclusions:

1. **Support for Multi-Ethnic Efforts:** The leadership of Gračanica/Gračanica Municipality has shown strong support for the Caravan's initiative, recognizing its importance in promoting multi-ethnic coexistence. They highlighted their municipality as a model of harmony in Kosovo, with a demonstrated commitment to resolving inter-ethnic disputes and hosting inclusive cultural events.
2. **Successful Community Initiatives:** The municipality's efforts in organizing joint activities, such as the iftar for both Muslim and Orthodox communities, and the educational camp in Brezovica, exemplify their dedication to fostering a multi-ethnic environment. These initiatives have contributed to maintaining peace and promoting mutual respect among different communities.
3. **Publicizing Positive Examples:** The municipality recognizes the need to highlight these successful initiatives to inspire other regions in Kosovo and beyond. They acknowledged the importance of showcasing their accomplishments as a means to encourage wider acceptance and adoption of similar practices.

Commitments for the Future:

1. **Ongoing Collaboration with the Caravan:** The Office of the Mayor commits to continuing its support for the Caravan's activities, working closely with all stakeholders to strengthen multi-ethnic cooperation in the municipality.
2. **Promoting Positive Models of Coexistence:** The municipality will take active steps to publicly advocate for the positive examples of inter-ethnic cooperation in Gračanica/Gračanica, including media campaigns, public forums, and community events, to inspire others to replicate these efforts.
3. **Expanding Community-Oriented Initiatives:** Gračanica/Gračanica Municipality is committed to further developing community-oriented activities, ensuring that future initiatives remain inclusive and bring together diverse ethnic groups, particularly through joint cultural, educational, and recreational events.

Commitments from Religious Leaders

Bishop Teodosije

Conclusions:

1. **Support for Multi-Ethnic Peace building:** Bishop Teodosije expressed strong support for the Caravan's efforts to promote a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo, emphasizing the importance of nurturing coexistence through mutual respect and understanding. He commended the Caravan's initiatives as vital for fostering unity in Kosovo's complex socio-political landscape.
2. **Challenges of Interfaith and Interethnic Relations:** Despite the positive support, Bishop Teodosije raised concerns about the challenges faced by the Serbian Orthodox

Church in Kosovo, including demographic changes, the politicization of religious sites, and unresolved property issues, which hinder efforts for full integration and peaceful coexistence.

3. **Service Beyond Ethnic Lines:** The Bishop underscored the importance of unconditional love and service to all communities, reiterating the role of the Church in fostering peace and cooperation across ethnic and religious divides.

Commitments for the Future:

1. **Continued Support for the Caravan:** Bishop Teodosije reiterated his full support for the Caravan's efforts, committing to actively engage in its initiatives and promoting the values of interfaith and interethnic cooperation.
2. **Addressing Property and Religious Site Issues:** The Bishop committed to continuing dialogue with the relevant authorities to address the challenges surrounding the Church's properties, with the goal of resolving ongoing disputes and ensuring the protection of religious heritage sites.
3. **Promoting Unity and Peace:** Bishop Teodosije will continue to use his influence to promote messages of unity and peace, encouraging other religious and community leaders to collaborate toward a harmonious and inclusive society in Kosovo.

Imam Fazliu

Conclusions:

1. **Support for the Caravan's Goals:** Imam Fazliu expressed appreciation for the Caravan's objectives, emphasizing the importance of fostering inter-ethnic cooperation, particularly through the leadership of Gračanica/Graçanica Municipality and the regular cooperation between religious communities. His support for the Caravan's mission highlights his commitment to peace and coexistence.
2. **Strong History of Cooperation:** Imam Fazliu highlighted the longstanding positive relations between ethnic communities in Gračanica and the active role of religious leaders in promoting unity. He praised the mutual respect demonstrated by different faith communities, particularly through joint participation in religious and cultural events.
3. **Commitment to Peacebuilding:** Imam Fazliu emphasized the critical role of religious leaders in fostering peace, reiterating that the cooperation between different faiths is key to maintaining a peaceful and inclusive environment for all residents of Kosovo.

Commitments for the Future:

1. **Continued Active Participation:** Islamic Community in Gračanica/Graçanica is committed to actively participating in future Caravan events, including interfaith dialogues and joint activities aimed at enhancing multi-ethnic coexistence and fostering mutual understanding.
2. **Strengthening Religious Cooperation:** : Islamic Community in Gračanica/Graçanica will continue to strengthen the cooperation between religious communities, inviting leaders of different faiths to participate in each other's events and fostering an environment of respect and shared understanding.
3. **Advocacy for Peace and Coexistence:** : Islamic Community in Gračanica/Graçanica will advocate for the continuation and expansion of initiatives that promote peace and coexistence, both within Gračanica and throughout Kosovo, ensuring that these efforts are sustained and supported by all religious communities.

Meetings in Gračanica/ Graçanicë: Deputy Mayor and Religious Leaders



Meeting with Mr. Leutrim Ajeti,
Deputy Mayor Municipality of Gračanica/ Graçanicë
September 13, 2024



Meeting with His Grace, Bishop Teodosije
of the Raška-Prizren Eparchy of the Serbian
Orthodox Church
October 21, 2024



Meeting with Imam Xheladin ef. Fazliu,
Hajvali
September 13, 2024



Letters of Desires and Expectations

Leonora Kryeziu, Jovana Radosavljević, Robert Muharremi, Dušan Radaković, Ilir Deda, Senad Šabović, Ramadan Ilazi, Dimitrije Obrenović, Mentor Agani dhe Zoran Savić

Prof. Dr. Ljiljana Šubarić, Mayor

Municipality of Gračanica

September 2024

**Leonora Kryeziu, Executive Director
Prishtina Institute for Political Studies
Prishtina, Kosovë**

Dear Mayor Dr. Šubarić,

My name is Leonora Kryeziu, and I am reaching out to you as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation, a project initiated by NGOs KIPRED and AKTIV. I am the Founder and Executive Director of the Prishtina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS), a think-tank based in Prishtina, established 22 years ago under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Our mission is to promote a new political culture in Kosovo, rooted in the core values of our constitution: freedom, democracy, and peace, and Kosovo a homeland for all its citizens. Over the past two decades, I have dedicated my career to advancing these democratic principles and fostering social cohesion across Kosovo. However, our efforts are being increasingly challenged by deepening ethnic divisions, underscoring the urgent need for greater civic engagement and a more proactive approach to address these issues. In light of these challenges, I have joined the Caravan and another civil society coalition, the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), both of which aim to make tangible contributions towards promoting peace and interethnic cooperation.

As a member of the Caravan, I have been asked to address in this letter my desires and expectations regarding the promotion of peace and harmonious ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo. As a mayor, your role in promoting multi-ethnic cohabitation is crucial. By standing firmly for this cause, you not only strengthen the social fabric of your community but also set a powerful example for others to follow. In societies with diverse ethnic backgrounds, leadership that actively promotes inclusion, mutual respect, and collaboration fosters a culture of trust, reduces tensions, and helps build a peaceful, cohesive future. Your commitment to these values can greatly enhance the community's resilience in the face of challenges and create a more harmonious environment for all. I acknowledge that it is increasingly difficult today to stand out as a leader in a society deeply divided along ethnic lines. However, the Municipality of Gračanica is uniquely positioned to become a model for peaceful cohabitation and interethnic cooperation. Its strategic location and rich cultural heritage give it the potential to demonstrate that unity across ethnic lines is not only possible but also beneficial for social and economic development. By embracing this role, Gračanica can become a beacon of hope and progress for other municipalities dealing with similar challenges.

To further this effort, I would invite you to work towards policies that address discrimination and ensure equal access for all ethnic groups is vital. Implementing and supporting legal mechanisms to monitor and respond to instances of ethnic violence or discrimination will ensure fairness and protection for all citizens. Secondly, promoting economic collaboration between different ethnic communities through joint business ventures and creating platforms such as local markets for trade and cooperation will not only strengthen local economies but also foster a sense of unity. Additionally, memorializing the past and fostering reconciliation are essential components of healing. By supporting initiatives such as memorials, workshops, or truth-telling processes that acknowledge past conflicts and traumas, you can help communities move toward a future rooted in understanding and shared hope. For these actions, you can support local NGOs that work on these topics.

Sincerely,

Leonora Kryeziu

Jovana Radosavljević, Executive Director
New Social Initiative
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Mayor Subarić,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Jovana Radosavljević, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica, committed to fostering reconciliation between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, especially in Gračanica.

As Mayor, your influence is crucial in guiding Gračanica toward a future of harmony and collaboration. I believe that your active engagement with citizens and attentiveness to their concerns is essential in building trust and cooperation among different ethnic communities. Regular interactions with residents, open dialogues, and addressing their concerns directly can foster a sense of safety, inclusion, and mutual respect.

Tolerance and respect for all individuals, regardless of their ethnic background, are fundamental to a peaceful society. I encourage you to champion initiatives that promote these values and that celebrate the diversity within Gračanica. Cherishing our diversity while ensuring that everyone feels safe and that their identity is respected and safeguarded will pave the way for a more cohesive community.

Looking ahead, my vision is of a Gračanica where multi-ethnic cohabitation is not just possible but actively embraced. I hope to see the development of programs that highlight the importance of diversity and cooperation, ensuring that all citizens feel valued and included. Establishing a citizens' advisory council with representatives from various ethnic groups could be a meaningful step toward ensuring that every voice is heard and considered.

In conclusion, I urge you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful, inclusive, and tolerant community. Your leadership in these areas can inspire others and help create a future where everyone feels secure, respected, and at home in Gračanica and across Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jovana Radosavljević

Dr. Robert Muharremi
Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Professor Dr. Ljiljana Subarić,

My name is Robert Muharremi, Director of the Center for Peace & Conflict Studies at RIT Kosovo. I am writing to express my strong support for the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation, a project initiated by the NGOs KIPRED and AKTIV. I also express my strong support for your efforts as Mayor of Gračanica to promote reconciliation and integration among the different ethnic communities in Kosovo.

I am writing to express my strong support for your efforts as Mayor of Gračanica to promote reconciliation and integration among the different ethnic communities in Kosovo. As a respected political leader within the Serb community, your role in fostering a peaceful and inclusive environment is crucial. I believe that by supporting initiatives that promote understanding, dialogue, and cooperation, you can contribute significantly to the overall stability and progress of Kosovo. By empowering local Serb communities to take ownership of peacebuilding efforts, we can ensure that sustainable and meaningful change occurs.

I would like to encourage you to continue your efforts to:

- Foster local Serb leadership by supporting initiatives that empower Serb community members to participate actively in decision-making processes.
- Promote grassroots peacebuilding efforts through local organizations and initiatives.
- Encourage interethnic collaboration at the local level to address common challenges and opportunities.
- Advocate for the inclusion of Serb perspectives in regional and national policy-making.
- Lead by example by demonstrating a commitment to tolerance, understanding, and respect for diversity in your own actions and policies.

By taking these steps, you can help to create a more harmonious and inclusive society for all citizens of Kosovo. By emphasizing the importance of local Serb initiative and leadership, we can create a more equitable and sustainable peace in Kosovo. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Muharremi

Dušan Radaković, Executive Director
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Prof. Dr. Ljiljana Subarić,

My name is Dušan Radaković, and I am the Executive Director of the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Born in 1984 in Mitrovica, I have been deeply committed to fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation since the end of the conflict in Kosovo. Over the years, I have participated in numerous multiethnic initiatives, working alongside various international organizations to promote peace and understanding among different communities.

With a Master's Degree in Law and extensive experience in civil society, including roles in media and project management, I have dedicated my career to advocating for democratic values and human rights. The purpose of this letter is to share my personal expectations and desires regarding the enhancement of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation.

As the mayor of Gračanica, a majority-Serbian municipality, your leadership is crucial in promoting a sense of unity and mutual respect between the Serbian and Albanian communities. I expect your support in implementing community projects that bring together these communities to work towards common goals.

My desire is to see a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation becomes a defining feature of Kosovo, especially in municipalities like Gračanica. I envision a future where Gračanica serves as a model for peaceful coexistence, with shared public spaces and joint cultural events that celebrate the rich diversity of the region.

I urge you to continue leading efforts to build a peaceful and inclusive community by actively engaging with both Serbian and Albanian residents, supporting initiatives that foster dialogue, and ensuring that local policies reflect the needs and aspirations of all ethnic groups.

I conclude this letter with a positive note, expressing my confidence that, together, we can make Gračanica a beacon of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo. I look forward to our collective efforts in creating a more harmonious society for all.

Warm regards,

Dušan Radaković

**Ilir Deda,
Civil Society Activist
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Mayor Subaric,

I have been engaged and involved in key issues for Kosovo and the Western Balkans for over two decades in various roles, including preservation and advancement of diversity and multiethnicity in Kosovo. The purpose of this letter is to explore opportunities to begin the creation of culture of peace, and to expand your involvement in promoting the multiethnic cohabitation and understanding. This is especially important now when populist and exclusive attitudes are gaining ground.

I believe there are a few short-term and long-term steps that can be explored and potentially establish them into practices. These steps are mostly focused on inter-municipal cooperation, primarily between municipalities of Gracanica and Pristina.

I believe you share my stance that the level of interaction of people, especially of mobility of youth from Gracanica to Pristina, is not at levels we would all like to see. In order to promote higher interaction, it is worth exploring the following suggestions:

1. Regular meetings between you and mayor of Pristina, in order to discuss mutually beneficial projects, including the joint planning and implementation for greater connectivity and joint economic projects between Gracanica and Pristina;
2. Potentially establish a Multi-Ethnic Youth Centre for youth of Pristina and Gracanica, as a space for youth to meet and get to know each other. This Centre could also serve as a space for art, culture and meeting of IT specialists – areas where youth are most likely to cooperate;
3. Joint promotion of multiethnic and inter-religious understanding by Gracanica and Pristina, including an annual symbolic event jointly organized by the two municipalities.

I believe each of us has a role to play in promoting wellbeing of our people based on universal values of mutual respect, peace, cohabitation and greater understanding. More than ever before, we need to start working towards culture of peace in Kosovo, for which Gracanica has a central role. I sincerely hope you will explore further ideas which contribute to wellbeing and tolerance among citizens and people of Kosovo.

With sincere regards,

Ilir Deda

**Senad Šabović, Senior Adviser
European Institute for Peace
Brussels – Prishtina**

Honorable Mayor Šubarić,

My name is Senad Šabović and I am writing to You as a supporter of the project called *Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation*. I work as a senior advisor with the European Institute of Peace, with the primary focus on supporting the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the normalization process in general. My organization is part of a civil society coalition, called the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), which strives to provide a tangible contribution in this field.

It is in the project's design for us to write a letter of expectations to the respected interlocutors we meet in the municipalities encompassed. This letter is thus meant to state my expectations from You in terms of multi-ethnicity and cohabitation. In our approach, we are driven by the principles of multi-ethnicity that are firmly embedded in Kosovo's constitutional and legal system. They also continue to be a key expectation of the international community as regards Kosovo. At present, these values are not necessarily upheld by all stakeholders in Kosovo, but there are also a lot of them – from the political, media, and civil society spectrum – who continue to believe in these values and are working to strengthen their implementation. Those who do cherish them need partners, so as to jointly demonstrate that multi-ethnicity works and that it is here to stay.

I understand that as a mayor of a Serb-majority municipality You do not necessarily feel empowered to initiate engagements of this sort. This is especially understandable under the present circumstances of strained inter-ethnic relations and a stalled normalization process. The Serb community, not just in the north, is reasonably concerned and will be looking to their political leaders for responses. In order for the responses to be effective, they should include openness to positively react to sincere multi-ethnic initiatives coming from Kosovo's mainstream social-political spectrum. Those who do not uphold multi-ethnicity in Kosovo are precisely the ones that benefit from the failure of such initiatives from those who wish to uphold it. Our project group has recently conducted a series of meetings in Pristina, including with Mayor Përparim Rama, in which we were very strongly assured that good will exists and that outreach in this regard has been attempted in recent times.

In light of all this, the colleagues from the project and I would like to encourage You to respond to – and even initiate when you feel it is appropriate – these initiatives and offer a few suggestions. In general terms, using the opportunities provided to stress multi-ethnicity as a value is extremely useful. This may include press releases or social media content by You and the municipality in community languages, for example on the occasion of their national days or religious holidays. It may also include publicized visits jointly with mayors of surrounding municipalities to community centers or multi-ethnic neighborhoods, encouraging peaceful cohabitation and multi-ethnicity

In more particular terms, an initiative could be taken towards joint inter-municipal projects with Pristina and other surrounding municipalities – which can later be expanded to other regions. This would be a great way to engage on development-oriented trust-building. It could develop into a standing inter-municipal cooperation structure that could then engage with the Association of Municipalities of Kosovo and perhaps other forms of municipal associations on projects reflecting this same concept.

Rest assured, Honorable Mayor, that my colleagues from the European Institute of Peace, from this project, as well as from the mentioned KCA coalition, would be more than willing to provide tangible support to You and Your team in the execution of the suggestions provided hereby.

With great respect and appreciation,

Senad

**Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Mayor, Dr. Šubarić,

My name is Ramadan Ilazi, and I currently serve as the Head of Research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). With a background in peace and conflict studies, holding a master's degree from the University of St. Andrews and a PhD from Dublin City University, I have dedicated my career to advancing Kosovo as a democratic and diverse society. My professional journey has included roles as an activist, organizational leader, and Deputy Minister for European Integration.

Kosovo's Constitution envisions a future where our country is free, democratic, peace-loving and home for all its citizens. This vision is essential for our shared goal of one day becoming part of the European Union, and it is our collective responsibility to bring this vision to life.

As the Mayor of Gračanica and the only female mayor currently serving in Kosovo, you hold a crucial role in promoting interethnic cooperation and understanding. I commend the steps you have already taken, such as appointing a Deputy Mayor for Communities from the Albanian community, and for fostering a generally positive interethnic atmosphere in Gračanica. However, I believe there is potential to do even more, and I would like to suggest three initiatives for your consideration.

First, I encourage you to explore the possibility of organizing events in Gračanica's schools that celebrate Kosovo's diversity. These events could educate pupils about the various ethnic groups in Kosovo, with civil society organizations assisting in the planning and execution of these activities.

Second, I suggest placing greater emphasis on the functionality of the Municipal Communities Committees. It is important to ensure that these mechanisms meet regularly, at least once a month, and that they serve as effective platforms for interethnic dialogue. Additionally, the conclusions and recommendations from these committees should be addressed appropriately by the municipality.

Third, I invite you, as the Mayor of Gračanica, to take a more proactive role in the media in Prishtina. By speaking out on the importance of interethnic cooperation and understanding, particularly in Kosovo's national media, your voice can contribute significantly to the discourse on minority rights and issues of common interest, such as the European integration process.

I am confident that these initiatives, combined with your committed leadership, will greatly enhance the efforts to build a more inclusive and harmonious society in Kosovo.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Ramadan Ilazi

**Dimitrije Obrenović,
Project Coordinator
NGO Aktiv
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Dr. Ljiljana Šubarić

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Dimitrije Obrenovic, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica. I am deeply committed to reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

As Mayor, your role is pivotal in promoting inclusive policies and events that celebrate our diverse cultures. I urge you to engage with all communities, address their concerns, and ensure their representation in local governance.

Looking ahead, my vision is for Kosovo to be a place where multi-ethnic cohabitation is a reality. I hope to see intercultural centers and initiatives that promote dialogue and joint community projects. Establishing a "Cohabitation Council" with representatives from various ethnic groups could be a significant step toward this goal.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to follow suit, creating a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dimitrije Obrenović

Mentor Agani, Senior Researcher
Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
Prishtina, Kosovo

Honourable Mayor Šubarić,

I am Mentor Agani, and I am a Senior Researcher at KIPRED, The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, as well as a Lecturer at the Dardania College in Prishtina. During the period 2003-2016, I was also a Lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. I am writing this letter with the intention of expressing some of my expectations and desires regarding the inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

As we navigate the complexities of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Gračanica, I am filled with hope for the potential that lies within our shared commitment to fostering an inclusive society. Gračanica is a place where various ethnic groups have coexisted for generations, and this diversity is both a strength and a challenge. We face ongoing tensions that, if left unaddressed, could undermine the social fabric of our community. However, I believe that through intentional and collaborative efforts, we can transform these challenges into opportunities for growth and understanding.

I respect your dedication to the community in the Municipality that you are leading. Your work and the continuous support of international community in Kosovo has already laid the groundwork for improved relations between different ethnic groups in our municipality. Yet, I feel there is much more that we can accomplish together. I am writing to share my vision for enhancing multi-ethnic cohabitation in Gračanica, with the hope that we can work collaboratively toward a brighter future.

One of my primary hopes is to see the establishment of inclusive policy-making processes. It is crucial that all communities feel represented and heard in decisions that affect their lives. Platforms for dialogue would enable residents from diverse backgrounds to contribute their perspectives and ideas. This initiative would not only empower individuals but also foster trust and cooperation among ethnic groups.

In addition to policy-making, I believe that inter-ethnic dialogue and education should be at the forefront of our efforts. Initiatives that encourage understanding and respect can break down barriers and challenge stereotypes. I envision community workshops, cultural exchange programs, and educational activities that celebrate our century's long tradition of multi-ethnicity, regardless of the hard times and tensions that occurred occasionally. Such initiatives would nurture empathy and create bonds between residents, ultimately leading to a more cohesive society.

Moreover, cultural and social events play a vital role in building community ties. Organizing festivals that showcase the rich traditions of various ethnic groups can help celebrate our diversity while promoting a sense of belonging. Events that bring together families and individuals from different backgrounds can foster friendships and create lasting memories that transcend ethnic divides.

Economic empowerment is also essential for fostering peaceful cohabitation. I encourage the municipality to promote equal economic opportunities for all residents. Supporting local businesses, particularly those that embrace diversity in their workforce, can create a thriving economy that benefits everyone. Initiatives aimed at job creation and entrepreneurship would not only improve livelihoods but also strengthen community bonds.

Lastly, engaging our youth in multi-ethnic initiatives is crucial for building a future rooted in understanding and cooperation. By involving young people in collaborative projects, we can equip them with the skills and values necessary for effective leadership. Their energy and creativity can drive positive change, inspiring future generations to embrace diversity.

I am eager to see Gračanica flourish as a model of inter-ethnic cooperation in Kosovo. I genuinely believe that, with your leadership and the collective efforts of our community, we can create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

Thank you for considering my thoughts and ideas. I look forward to the possibility of working together to enhance multi-ethnic cohabitation in your municipality.

Warmest regards,

Mentor Agani

Zoran Savić, Project Coordinator
NGO AKTIV
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Ljiljana Šubarić,

My name is Zoran Savić and I am a project coordinator in the non-governmental organization Aktiv from North Mitrovica. Although I was born in Pula, Croatia, I have actually lived in Mitrovica for 30 years and I am actively involved in social life in Kosovo, both through work and cultural life, considering that I am also a musician, and I have participated in various inter-ethnic projects with musicians of Albanian nationality.

At the same time, for many years I worked as a journalist in the Kosovo Sever portal - KoSSev, and through this job I became even more familiar with the political and security situation in Kosovo.

Your position as mayor of Gracanica can help a lot in promoting messages of peace and unity. Therefore, I am looking forward for your support in organizing inter-ethnic dialogues and community service projects that involve different ethnic groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where ethnic differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on cultural diversity and tolerance and support joint community projects.

Therefore, I encourage you to actively participate in creating a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, advocating for policies that guarantee equal opportunities for everyone.

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Zoran Savić



Letters of Desires and Expectations

Leonora Kryeziu, Jovana Radosavljević, Robert Muharremi, Dušan Radaković, Ilir Deda, Senad Šabović, Ramadan Ilazi, Dimitrije Obrenović, Mentor Agani dhe Zoran Savić

His Grace, The Right Reverend Bishop Teodosije,
Bishop of the Prizren - Raška Eparchy
Serbian Orthodox Church

August 2024

Leonora Kryeziu, Executive Director
Prishtina Institute for Political Studies
Prishtina, Kosovë

Honorable Bishop Teodosije,

My name is Leonora Kryeziu, and I am writing to you as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation, a project initiated by NGOs KIPRED and AKTIV. I am the Founder and Executive Director of the Prishtina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS), a think tank based in Prishtina, established 22 years ago under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Our mission is to promote a new political culture in Kosovo, rooted in the core values of our constitution- freedom, democracy, and peace, and to make Kosovo a homeland for all its citizens. Over the past two decades, I have dedicated my career to advancing these democratic principles and fostering social cohesion across Kosovo. However, our efforts are being increasingly challenged by deepening ethnic divisions, underscoring the urgent need for greater civic engagement and a more proactive approach to addressing these issues. In light of these challenges, I have joined the Caravan and another civil society coalition, the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), both of which aim to make tangible contributions towards promoting peace and interethnic cooperation. As a member of the Caravan, I have been asked to address in this letter my desires and expectations regarding the promotion of peace and harmonious ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

I believe in the transformative power of dialogue and empathy to bridge divides and build a more inclusive and peaceful society. Therefore, it is my earnest desire to see an increase in open and constructive dialogue between different ethnic and religious communities. Such conversations should be rooted in a genuine desire to understand each other's perspectives, experiences, and aspirations. Your Grace, as a religious leader, you have a profound influence in promoting peace and inter-ethnic cohabitation. As a moral and ethical leader, you can provide guidance that emphasizes values such as peace, forgiveness, and mutual respect, thereby shaping the attitudes and behaviors of both the faithful and the broader community.

Additionally, you can support reconciliation efforts by acknowledging past grievances and promoting healing processes, such as truth-telling initiatives and memorials. You can advocate for justice and equality, addressing issues of discrimination and ensuring fair treatment for all groups. Finally, by educating the community and inspiring the younger generation about the importance of coexistence and respect for diversity, you can play a vital role in shaping a more harmonious and inclusive society. In this context, I hope for your esteemed guidance and leadership in championing these initiatives. Your moral authority and commitment to peace can serve as a beacon of inspiration for others to follow.

I am confident that with your esteemed leadership and our collective efforts, we can make meaningful strides toward a more peaceful and cohesive society. I am eager to discuss these ideas further and explore ways in which we can work together to achieve these shared aspirations.

Sincerely,

Leonora Kryeziu

Jovana Radosavljević, Executive Director
New Social Initiative
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Your Grace,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. My name is Jovana Radosavljević, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica and an Orthodox Christian. I am deeply committed to reconciliation efforts between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and desires for fostering multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, particularly within our community.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has always been a pillar of spiritual strength and cultural preservation for the Serb community in Kosovo. Your leadership within the Prizren-Raška Eparchy is vital in guiding our people during these challenging times. I believe that by promoting tolerance, respect, and understanding among different ethnic groups, the Church can play a crucial role in bringing about peace and reconciliation. Encouraging dialogue and collaboration between communities will help build trust and mutual respect.

It is essential that we cherish our cultural and religious diversity while ensuring that all individuals feel safe and that their identities are respected and safeguarded. I encourage Your Grace to continue supporting community programs that bring together people of different backgrounds, promoting joint activities and intercultural exchanges. Your sermons and public messages can further emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all, regardless of their ethnic or religious background.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge Your Grace to continue your efforts in fostering a peaceful, inclusive, and tolerant community. Your leadership is not only a beacon of hope for the Serbian Orthodox faithful but also an inspiration to all those working toward a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time, guidance, and commitment to our community.

With deep respect,

Jovana Radosavljević

Dr. Robert Muharremi
Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Bishop Teodosije,

My name is Robert Muharremi, Director of the Center for Peace & Conflict Studies at RIT Kosovo. I am writing to express my strong support for the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation, a project initiated by the NGOs KIPRED and AKTIV.

This project aims to foster understanding, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence among different ethnic communities in Kosovo. I believe it is a crucial step towards building a more inclusive and harmonious society. As a respected spiritual leader, your support for this initiative would be invaluable.

I am confident that your blessing and encouragement would significantly contribute to the success of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan. I trust that you will continue to advocate for a multi-ethnic Kosovo, reconciliation, and the integration of the Serb community.

I would like to suggest that the Serb Orthodox Church could take the following specific actions to facilitate reconciliation and integration:

- Organize and support interfaith dialogues and events to promote understanding and respect between different religious communities.
- Provide educational resources and training to religious leaders and community members on topics such as conflict resolution, human rights, and intercultural communication.
- Support initiatives that promote social cohesion and civic participation among all ethnic groups in Kosovo.
- Speak out against discrimination, hate speech, and violence towards any community.
- Encourage the participation of young people in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

By taking these steps, the Serb Orthodox Church can play a vital role in fostering a culture of peace and tolerance in Kosovo. Your contribution in this respect is essential.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Muharremi

Dušan Radaković, Executive Director
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Your Grace, Bishop Teodosije,

My name is Dušan Radaković, and I am the Executive Director of the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Born in 1984 in Mitrovica, I have been deeply committed to fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation since the end of the conflict in Kosovo. Over the years, I have participated in numerous multiethnic initiatives, working alongside various international organizations to promote peace and understanding among different communities.

With a Master's Degree in Law and extensive experience in civil society, including roles in media and project management, I have dedicated my career to advocating for democratic values and human rights. The purpose of this letter is to share my personal expectations and desires regarding the enhancement of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation.

As the spiritual leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Prizren-Raška Eparchy, your guidance is instrumental in promoting peace and reconciliation among the faithful. I hope you will encourage initiatives that bring together people from different ethnic backgrounds, fostering a spirit of understanding and mutual respect.

My desire is for a future where the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo is seen as a bridge between communities, fostering dialogue and cooperation. I envision a future where churches are not only places of worship but also centers for cultural exchange and community building across ethnic lines.

I respectfully urge you to continue leading by example, encouraging your clergy and congregations to engage in inter-ethnic dialogue, support peace initiatives, and advocate for policies that promote equality and justice for all ethnic groups.

I conclude this letter with hope for a future where the Serbian Orthodox Church and its leaders are at the forefront of building a harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am confident that, with your leadership, we can make meaningful progress towards this noble goal.

Warm regards,

Dušan Radaković

**Ilir Deda,
Civil Society Activist
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Your Grace, the Right Reverend Bishop Teodosije,

I have been engaged and involved in key issues for Kosovo and the Western Balkans for over two decades in various roles, including preservation and advancement of diversity, multi-ethnicity and multi-religiosity in Kosovo.

The purpose of this letter in these difficult times is to explore opportunities to expand Your involvement, and the Eparchy of Raska Prizren, in seeking pathways to promote multiethnic and multi-religious cohabitation in Kosovo. I strongly believe this is especially important at present when populist and exclusive attitudes are gaining ground.

Inter-religious harmony must be preserved and further promoted. The Serbian Orthodox Church, as a very old institution in Kosovo, has a very important role in preserving and promoting this value. I believe there are a few short-term and long-term gestures that can be taken from you and establish them into practices. A few stem from the past practices.

In the past, there was a practice where religious leaders would publicly congratulate the most important religious holidays to each other. The reintroduction of this practice, although symbolic, would be the initial step towards advancing inter-religious respect in our country. This would mean respect for the most important religious holidays for members of Islamic, Catholic and Protestant communities.

Inter-faith dialogue and greater understanding is a modern form aiming to advance cohabitation and inter-religious harmony. Although we live in times when harmony is not valued, I believe it is the right time to consider the establishment of the inter-faith dialogue at the local municipal level, and begin creating the culture of peace. This forum would advance the mutual understanding between local religious leaders, including the understanding with local municipal authorities. It would also serve as a forum to discuss and address respective needs of each of the religious communities.

The wellbeing and prosperity of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serb people in Kosovo is closely linked with wellbeing and prosperity of all people and religious institutions in Kosovo. In times when political leaders promote exclusive attitudes, it is up to individuals of good will to work towards universal values of peace, cohabitation, mutual understanding and multiethnicity.

With sincere respect,

Ilir Deda

**Senad Šabović, Senior Adviser
European Institute for Peace
Brussels – Prishtina**

Honorable Bishop Tedosije, Your Grace,

My name is Senad Šabović and I am writing to You as a supporter of the project called *Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation*, run by the NGOs KIPRED and AKTIV. I work as a senior advisor with the European Institute of Peace, with the primary focus on supporting the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the normalization process in general. My organization is part of a civil society coalition, called the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), which strives to provide a tangible contribution in this field.

You may remember me from my time with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, where I headed the political office and participated in numerous meetings with You, from bilateral to those related to the Implementation and Monitoring Council and Inter-Faith Dialogue. Throughout those years and to this day, I have been thoroughly impressed with Your leadership, Your composition, and Your communication with your Church's external environment, ranging from the international community to the Kosovo institutions and the clergy and followers of other Faiths. Your tenure as the Bishop of the Raška-Prizren Diocese has been a unique opportunity for improving relations across the board, and I hope its full potential will be realized in the coming period despite the obvious challenges.

In line with the project's approach, this letter is meant to state my expectations from You in terms of multi-ethnicity and cohabitation. In our approach, we are guided by the principles of multi-ethnic society that are firmly embedded in Kosovo's legal and constitutional system. They also continue to be a key expectation of the international community and are the primary mechanism for the well-being of non-majority communities in Kosovo, in particular the Serb community. We very much hope to see these principles reflected in the religious life in Kosovo. A lot of work has been done in this regard, but it needs to further solidify and expand, especially at this time of increased tension and stalled normalization. Over the years, Your Church's active participation in different Inter-Faith dialogue activities and various other forms of contribution to peaceful cohabitation have certainly made their mark.

The colleagues from the project and I would like to encourage You to expand on these initiatives and offer a few suggestions in this regard. I very much understand the unique position of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) in Kosovo and the sensitivities that come with this position. Nevertheless, Your active contribution to enhancing the sense of multi-ethnicity and tolerance – as has indeed been the case – would create a significant added value. Thus, either in terms of responding to positive external initiatives or initiating Your own, every opportunity should be used to stress multi-ethnicity as a value. There may be some among the Kosovo stakeholders that are shaping a different atmosphere, one that is diverting from the principles of multi-ethnicity, but there are still many in the religious, political, media, and civil society life in Kosovo that remain truly committed. Of this we have been assured through our Pristina meetings with the Mayor, the Catholic Bishop, and the Head Imam of the Islamic Community. For example, we have learned that there is a visiting program between Your Church and the Islamic Community (Bogoslovia and Medresa), which was extremely pleasant to hear. Enhancing on programs such as this one would be beneficial. This may also include joint press releases, social media content, or joint visits with different religious or institutional leaders to community centers and sites. Emphasizing Your Faith's messages of tolerance and respect as appropriate in Your engagements with the believers would also be an effective way of contributing.

In more particular terms, I have also suggested to other religious representatives based in Pristina the creation of a council by the leaders of different Faiths in Kosovo that would coordinate and advise Kosovo's institutions and international donors in terms of the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable religious sites throughout Kosovo. You and Your Church may also wish to consider initiating this endeavor. This would not only enhance the physical wellbeing of these sites but also continuously reaffirm the message of tolerance and respect, so integral to Faith.

Rest assured, Your Grace, that my colleagues from the European Institute of Peace, from this project, as well as from the mentioned KCA coalition, would be more than willing to provide tangible support to You and Your fellow religious leaders the execution of the suggestions provided hereby.

With great respect and appreciation,

Senad

**Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Bishop Teodosije,

My name is Ramadan Ilazi, and I currently serve as the Head of Research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). With a background in peace and conflict studies, holding a master's degree from the University of St. Andrews and a PhD from Dublin City University, I have dedicated my career to advancing Kosovo as a democratic and diverse society. My professional journey has included roles as an activist, organizational leader, and Deputy Minister for European Integration. Kosovo's Constitution envisions a future where our country is free, democratic, peace-loving, and a home for all its citizens. This vision is essential for our shared goal of one day becoming part of the European Union, and it is our collective responsibility to realize this vision.

The Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo plays a significant role in promoting peace, tolerance, and interethnic cooperation. Your leadership can inspire efforts that emphasize mutual respect, and in this context, I would like to propose two ideas, not new, to further enhance interethnic understanding and cooperation in Kosovo.

First, I invite you to publicly support and endorse efforts and activities organized by civil society organizations from both Kosovo and Serbia that bring people together and provide a platform for dialogue and cooperation, especially among youth. In the current political climate between Kosovo and Serbia, it is crucial to have voices from the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo supporting civil society leaders and activities that promote reconciliation and normalization of relations between the two countries. I am particularly concerned, about the growing trend of ethno-political radicalization, especially among the youth in Kosovo and in Serbia, that are not very supportive of reconciliation efforts.

Second, I encourage you to take a proactive role in promoting interfaith dialogue. It is important for the citizens of Kosovo to see more instances where you and other religious leaders meet and send joint messages to all citizens in Kosovo. I would also like to encourage you to explore further cooperation with other religious leaders, such as those from the Islamic Community in Kosovo, the Catholic Community, the Protestant Church, and others. We urgently need to see all of you together more often, delivering messages of tolerance and cooperation.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Ramadan Ilazi

**Dimitrije Obrenović,
Project Coordinator
NGO Aktiv
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Bishop Teodosije,

My name is Dimitrije Obrenović, and I am a human rights activist living in North Mitrovica. I strive for equal human rights and the fostering of inter-religious cooperation, strongly believing that further cooperation is required for a better future.

Your leadership within the Orthodox Church in Kosovo places you in a unique position to promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can significantly enhance unity in our communities. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring together people from diverse backgrounds. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

Looking ahead, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation is a reality. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation.

In conclusion, I encourage you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to create a future where everyone feels at home in Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dimitrije Obrenović

Mentor Agani, Senior Researcher
Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
Prishtina, Kosovo

Honourable Grace, Bishop Teodosije,

My name is Mentor Agani, and I am a Senior Researcher at KIPRED, The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, as well as a Lecturer at the Dardania College in Prishtina. During the period 2003-2016, I was also a Lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. I am writing this letter with the intention of expressing some of my expectations and desires regarding the inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

I am writing to you with deep respect for your steadfast leadership and the spiritual guidance you provide to the orthodox faithful in Kosovo. In these times of both challenge and opportunity, I am reaching out to you with a heartfelt desire to discuss the future of multi-ethnic cohabitation in our region—a future that I believe can be greatly shaped by your influence and wisdom.

As someone who has dedicated their life to fostering peace and understanding, I am keenly aware of the critical role that the Church plays in our society. The Eparchy of Raška and Prizren, with its deep historical roots and spiritual significance, holds a unique position in promoting reconciliation and cooperation among different communities.

Kosovo's history is complex, and the wounds of the past still resonate within many hearts, including my. However, I firmly believe that through compassion, dialogue, and a shared commitment to our common humanity, we can transcend these divisions and build a society where every individual, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, can live in peace and dignity.

My hope is that we can work together to achieve this vision. I am confident that your leadership can inspire positive change and that the Church can serve as a bridge between communities. I see several areas where we could focus our efforts:

Encouraging Interfaith and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue: Dialogue is the first step towards understanding and reconciliation. By facilitating conversations between leaders and members of different ethnic and religious communities, we can begin to break down the barriers that divide us. Your voice, as a respected spiritual leader, can lend significant weight to these efforts.

Promoting Shared Values of Compassion and Peace: The teachings of the Church emphasize love, forgiveness, and peace—values that are universal and can unite people from all walks of life. By highlighting these shared values, we can foster a sense of common purpose and mutual respect among the diverse populations of Kosovo.

Supporting Youth Engagement in Peacebuilding: The youth are the future of our society, and it is crucial that they are involved in these efforts. By encouraging young people to participate in initiatives that promote understanding and cooperation, we can help them build a future where the mistakes of the past are not repeated. The Church's youth programs can play a vital role in this regard.

Collaborating on Community Projects: Practical actions speak louder than words. By working together on community projects that benefit all residents, regardless of their background, we can demonstrate the power of unity and cooperation. Whether through charitable initiatives, educational programs, or cultural events, there are many ways we can make a tangible difference.

Your Grace, I want to assure you that we are fully committed to supporting these efforts. We stand ready to collaborate with you and the Church to help create a more inclusive and peaceful Kosovo. Please note that you have our unwavering support in these endeavors.

Thank you for your time and for considering my thoughts. We look forward to the possibility of collaborating with you to achieve these important goals.

With sincere regards,

Mentor Agani

Zoran Savić, Project Coordinator
NGO AKTIV
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear bishop Teodosije,

My name is Zoran Savić and I am a project coordinator in the non-governmental organization Aktiv from North Mitrovica. Although I was born in Pula, Croatia, I have actually lived in Mitrovica for 30 years and I am actively involved in social life in Kosovo, both through work and cultural life, considering that I am also a musician, and I have participated in various inter-ethnic projects with musicians of Albanian nationality.

At the same time, for many years I worked as a journalist in the Kosovo Sever portal - KoSSev, and through this job I became even more familiar with the political, security and religious situation in Kosovo.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has always been a cornerstone for the Serb community in Kosovo, providing spiritual guidance and support. Your leadership at the eparchy places you in a crucial role in fostering inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can significantly enhance unity and mutual understanding in our communities. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring together people from diverse backgrounds. Your sermons and public addresses should continue to emphasize the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all.

Looking forward, I envision a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation and religious tolerance is embraced. Regular interfaith meetings and intercultural initiatives can foster dialogue and cooperation.

I envision communities where religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on religious diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all religious groups in local governance.

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zoran Savić



Letters of Desires and Expectations

Leonora Kryeziu, Jovana Radosavljević, Robert Muharremi, Dušan Radaković, Ilir Deda, Senad Šabović, Ramadan Ilazi, Dimitrije Obrenović, Mentor Agani dhe Zoran Savić

Mr. Xheladin ef. Fazliu
Imam of Ajvalia

August 2024

Leonora Kryeziu, Executive Director
Prishtina Institute for Political Studies
Prishtina, Kosovë

Dear Imam Xheladin Fazliu,

My name is Leonora Kryeziu, and I am writing to you as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation, a project initiated by NGOs KIPRED and AKTIV. I am the Founder and Executive Director of the Prishtina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS), a think tank based in Prishtina, established 22 years ago under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Our mission is to promote a new political culture in Kosovo, rooted in the core values of our constitution- freedom, democracy, and peace, and to make Kosovo a homeland for all its citizens. Over the past two decades, I have dedicated my career to advancing these democratic principles and fostering social cohesion across Kosovo. However, our efforts are being increasingly challenged by deepening ethnic divisions, underscoring the urgent need for greater civic engagement and a more proactive approach to addressing these issues. In light of these challenges, I have joined the Caravan and another civil society coalition, the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), both of which aim to make tangible contributions towards promoting peace and interethnic cooperation.

As a member of the Caravan, I have been asked to address in this letter my desires and expectations regarding the promotion of peace and harmonious ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo. I believe in the transformative power of dialogue and empathy to bridge divides and build a more inclusive and peaceful society. Therefore, it is my earnest desire to see an increase in open and constructive dialogue between different ethnic and religious communities. Such conversations should be rooted in a genuine desire to understand each other's perspectives, experiences, and aspirations.

I deeply value the role that religious leaders play in promoting unity and mutual understanding among different ethnic and religious groups. As a moral and ethical leader, you can provide guidance that emphasizes values such as peace, forgiveness, and mutual respect, thereby shaping the attitudes and behaviors of both the faithful and the broader community.

Hence, I invite you to embrace our efforts and, in your role, convey messages of tolerance and peace, encouraging your followers to embrace these values as essential for our coexistence. Finally, by educating the community and inspiring the younger generation about the importance of coexistence and respect for diversity, you can play a vital role in shaping a more harmonious and inclusive society.

In this context, I hope for your esteemed guidance and leadership in championing these initiatives. Your moral authority and commitment to peace can serve as a beacon of inspiration for others to follow. I am confident that with your esteemed leadership and our collective efforts, we can make meaningful steps toward a more peaceful and cohesive society.

Sincerely,

Leonora Kryeziu

Jovana Radosavljević, Executive Director
New Social Initiative
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Imam Fazliu,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and peace. My name is Jovana Radosavljević, a Kosovo Serb civil society activist from North Mitrovica, dedicated to promoting reconciliation between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. I am writing to you as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation to share my expectations and hopes for fostering multiethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

Your role as an Imam is vital in guiding the community towards understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect. I believe that your leadership can greatly contribute to bridging divides and fostering peaceful relations between different ethnic groups in Kosovo. By promoting dialogue, respect, and cooperation, we can create an environment where everyone feels safe and valued.

It is important that we cherish our cultural and religious diversity while ensuring that every individual's identity is respected and safeguarded. I encourage you to support initiatives that bring together people from different backgrounds, fostering joint community projects, intercultural exchanges, and dialogues that emphasize our shared values. Your sermons and public messages can further highlight the importance of unity, tolerance, and respect for all, regardless of ethnic or religious differences.

Looking ahead, my vision is for a Kosovo where multi-ethnic cohabitation is a reality embraced by all. I hope to see continued efforts to build understanding and cooperation across communities, with programs that celebrate our diversity and common humanity. Regular interfaith meetings and cultural initiatives can help to foster a sense of unity and shared purpose.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge you to continue your efforts in building a peaceful and inclusive community. Your leadership can inspire others to work towards a future where all people in Kosovo, regardless of their background, feel secure, respected, and at home.

With sincere respect,

Jovana Radosavljević

Dr. Robert Muharremi
Fred C. Cuny Center for Peace and Conflict Studies
Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosovo
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Imam Xheladin Fazliu,

My name is Robert Muharremi, Director of the Center for Peace & Conflict Studies at RIT Kosovo. I am writing to express my strong support for the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation, a project initiated by the NGOs KIPRED and AKTIV. I also express my strong support for your efforts to promote reconciliation and integration among the different religious and ethnic communities in Kosovo.

As a respected religious leader within the Muslim community, your role in fostering a peaceful and inclusive society is invaluable. I believe that by promoting interfaith dialogue and tolerance, you can contribute significantly to the overall stability and progress of Kosovo, and your contribution can make a significant difference.

I would like to encourage you to continue your efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and understanding, speak out against discrimination, hate speech, and violence towards any community, regardless of their religious beliefs, support initiatives that promote social cohesion and civic participation among all ethnic and religious groups in Kosovo, and encourage the involvement of young people in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

Specific activities that could be undertaken to support interfaith dialogue and tolerance include:

- Organizing joint religious ceremonies to promote unity and understanding;
- Creating educational materials that highlight the common values and shared history of different religious communities;
- Establishing and supporting interfaith dialogue forums to provide a platform for open and respectful discussion;
- Supporting community-based initiatives that promote interfaith cooperation and collaboration.

By taking these steps, and through leadership by example, you can help to create a more harmonious and inclusive society for all citizens of Kosovo.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Muharremi

Dušan Radaković, Executive Director
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Imam Xheladin Fazliu,

My name is Dušan Radaković, and I am the Executive Director of the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Born in 1984 in Mitrovica, I have been deeply committed to fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation since the end of the conflict in Kosovo. Over the years, I have participated in numerous multiethnic initiatives, working alongside various international organizations to promote peace and understanding among different communities.

With a Master's Degree in Law and extensive experience in civil society, including roles in media and project management, I have dedicated my career to advocating for democratic values and human rights. The purpose of this letter is to share my personal expectations and desires regarding the enhancement of multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo, as part of the Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation.

As a respected leader and an integral part of the Islamic Community of Kosovo, your influence is crucial in promoting unity and social harmony. Your work through "Bereqeti," particularly in supporting vulnerable families, reflects a deep commitment to social solidarity. I hope to see your continued leadership in initiatives that bring together members of different faiths and ethnicities, fostering a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

My desire is for a future where the Islamic community, under your guidance, plays a pivotal role in promoting multi-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo. I envision mosques and Islamic organizations as not only places of worship but also as hubs for community engagement that transcend ethnic boundaries.

I respectfully urge you to continue leading efforts to build a peaceful and inclusive community by encouraging inter-ethnic dialogue, supporting initiatives that promote understanding, and advocating for equal opportunities for all ethnic groups.

I conclude this letter with optimism, confident that your leadership will significantly contribute to the realization of a harmonious multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I look forward to our collective efforts in advancing this noble cause.

Warm regards,

Dušan Radaković

**Ilir Deda,
Civil Society Activist
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Imam Fazliu,

I have been engaged and involved in key issues for Kosovo and the Western Balkans for over two decades in various roles, including preservation and advancement of diversity in our country.

The purpose of this letter is to explore opportunities to expand your involvement in promoting the multiethnic and multi-religious cohabitation in Gracanica. This is especially important now when populist and exclusive attitudes are gaining ground.

Inter-religious harmony has been at the core values of our nation, and the Islamic Community of Kosovo has a central role in preserving and promoting this value. I believe there are a few short-term and long-term gestures that can be taken from you and establish them into practices. A few stem from the past practices.

In the past, there was a practice where religious leaders would publicly congratulate the most important religious holidays to each other. The reintroduction of this practice, although symbolic, would be the initial step towards advancing inter-religious respect in our country. This would mean respect for the most important religious holidays for members of Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox communities.

Inter-faith dialogue and greater understanding is a modern form aiming to advance cohabitation and inter-religious harmony. Although we live in times when harmony is not valued, I believe Kosovo given its unique history, can establish inter-faith dialogue at the local municipal level, to begin creating the culture of peace. This forum would advance the mutual understanding between local religious leaders, including the understanding with local municipal authorities. It would also serve as a forum to discuss and address respective needs of each of the religious communities.

Kosovo will be successful only if it preserves its multi-ethnic character, and the Islamic Community of Kosovo has a key role in preserving and advancing this character of our state.

I strongly believe that your leadership is critical at this point of development of our country, and express hope that you will consider the proposed actions.

With sincere regards,

Ilir Deda

**Senad Šabović, Senior Adviser
European Institute for Peace
Brussels – Prishtina**

Honorable Imam Fazliu,

My name is Senad Šabović and I am writing to You as a supporter of the project called *Multi-Ethnic Caravan for Peace and Cohabitation*. I work as a senior advisor with the European Institute of Peace, with the primary focus on supporting the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the normalization process in general. My organization is part of a civil society coalition, called the Kosovo Civic Alternative (KCA), which strives to provide a tangible contribution in this field.

This letter is meant to state my expectations from You in terms of multi-ethnicity and cohabitation. As we know, the Republic of Kosovo is defined as a multi-ethnic state of all of its citizens and communities. These principles are firmly embedded in Kosovo's constitutional and legal system. They also continue to be a key expectation of our international partners and the organizational system of the Euro-Atlantic community, to which we aspire. As such, the principles of multi-ethnicity, understanding and peaceful cohabitation should be fully reflected in the religious life of our country. A lot of work has been done in this regard, but it needs to further solidify and expand, especially at this time of increased tension and stalled normalization. Over the years, I have noticed with great appreciation the contributions of the Islamic Community of Kosovo in the context of different Inter-Faith dialogue frameworks and various Inter-Faith practical cooperation initiatives.

The colleagues from the project and I would like to encourage You to expand on these initiatives and offer a few suggestions in this regard. This would be particularly important in the multi-ethnic municipality of Gračanica/Gračanicë, whose creation is in itself the product of Kosovo's constitutional multi-ethnicity. In general terms, using the opportunities provided to stress multi-ethnicity as a value is extremely useful. This may include joint press releases, social media content, or joint visits with different religious or institutional leaders to community centers and sites. Facilitating the inclusion of respect for religious and ethnic diversity into the Jumu'ah sermons, as I am sure is taking place already, would also be an effective way of contributing. In more particular terms, I have proposed in some of my previous letters the establishment of a multi-confessional council that would coordinate and advise the state and international donors in terms of the protection and rehabilitation of vulnerable religious sites throughout Kosovo. Your municipality could be an ideal place to pilot this project that could then grow Kosovo-wide. This would not only enhance the physical wellbeing of these sites but also continuously reaffirm the message of Peace, so firmly embedded in the Muslim Faith both in Kosovo and worldwide.

Rest assured, Honorable Imam, that my colleagues from the European Institute of Peace, from this project, as well as from the mentioned KCA coalition, would be more than willing to provide tangible support to You in the execution of the suggestions provided hereby.

With great respect and appreciation,

Senad

**Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research
Kosovar Center for Security Studies
Prishtina, Kosovo**

Dear Imam Xheladin Fazliu,

My name is Ramadan Ilazi, and I currently serve as the Head of Research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). With a background in peace and conflict studies, holding a master's degree from the University of St. Andrews and a PhD from Dublin City University, I have dedicated my career to advancing Kosovo as a democratic and diverse society. My professional journey has included roles as an activist, organizational leader, and Deputy Minister for European Integration.

Kosovo's Constitution envisions a future where our country is free, democratic, peace-loving, and a home for all its citizens. This vision is essential for our shared goal of one day becoming part of the European Union, and it is our collective responsibility to realize this vision.

The Islamic Community in Kosovo plays a crucial role in promoting peace, tolerance, and interethnic cooperation. Your leadership can inspire efforts that emphasize mutual respect, and in this context, I would like to propose three ideas to further enhance interethnic understanding and cooperation in Kosovo.

First, I invite you to publicly support and endorse efforts and activities organized by civil society organizations from both Kosovo and Serbia that bring people together and provide a platform for dialogue and cooperation. In the current political climate between Kosovo and Serbia, it is crucial to have voices from the Islamic Community in Kosovo supporting civil society leaders and activities that promote reconciliation and normalization of relations between the two countries.

Second, I encourage you to take a proactive role in promoting interfaith dialogue. It is important for the citizens of Kosovo to see more instances where you and other religious leaders meet and send joint messages to all citizens in Kosovo. I would also like to encourage you to explore further cooperation with other religious leaders, such as those from the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Community, the Protestant Church, and others. We urgently need to see all of you together more often, delivering messages of tolerance and cooperation.

Third, I encourage you to implement teachings within mosques that support interethnic cooperation and understanding, as well as tolerance. These teachings can play a significant role in shaping a more inclusive and understanding society in Kosovo. For instance, during the regular Friday lectures, khutbah, or have guest Khatib deliver a lecture on the subject of tolerance.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Ramadan Ilazi

**Dimitrije Obrenović,
Project Coordinator
NGO Aktiv
North Mitrovica, Kosovo**

Dear Imam Xheladin Fazliu

My name is Dimitrije Obrenović, and I am a human rights activist living in North Mitrovica. I strive for equal human rights and the better fostering of inter-religious cooperation, strongly believing that further cooperation is required for a better future.

Your influential position in the Muslim community can help in promoting messages of peace and unity. I look forward to your support in organizing interfaith dialogues and community service projects that involve different religious groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where ethnic and religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on cultural diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all ethnic and religious groups in local governance..

Therefore, I encourage you to actively participate in creating a peaceful and inclusive community by supporting inter-ethnic initiatives, advocating for policies that guarantee equal opportunities for everyone, and fostering open and respectful dialogue between various ethnic and religious groups..

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Dimitrije Obrenović

Mentor Agani, Senior Researcher
Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
Prishtina, Kosovo

Dear Imam Fazliu,

My name is Mentor Agani, and I am a Senior Researcher at KIPRED, The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, as well as a Lecturer at the Dardania College in Prishtina. During the period 2003-2016, I was also a Lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. I am writing this letter with the intention of expressing some of my expectations and desires regarding the inter-ethnic cohabitation in Kosovo.

I am firmly convinced that you, and the respective institutions of Islamic Community in the municipality of Graçanica can provide a considerable and serious contribution to the improvement of inter-ethnic relations, where you are active, and, thus, in broader Kosovo. You can do this simply by following the fundamental principles most of which are advocated and professed by your own religious creed.

First, in your religious and social activities you can focus on promoting mutual understanding and respect among ethnic communities of Graçanica. Both major ethnic communities, Serbs and Albanians, should be introduced, and they should understand, the difficulties through which the other side has gone through in the past, in order for both of them to have a complete view of the complexity of Kosovar ethnic mosaic. This can, in turn, boost the dialogue between these two ethnic communities, and it can pave the way for the emergence of mutual respect in the future. Second – and related to the first – another feature that can be nurtured in your preachings and activities, as well as by your believers, is the cultural and religious sensitivity among the religious officials, as well as by the believers of different religions and ethnicities. Acceptance of other cultures, and respect toward them – which is the essence of multi-culturalism – is one from the fundamental features of the most advanced societies. No society can advance which is based on cultural exclusivity.

You can also make efforts to promote collaboration with other religious leaders. Conflicts in the Balkans, and in Kosovo, have caused large damages to normal relations between major religions in the region. Throughout the region, after the wars, the major religions have remained in the state of enmity and animosity. In Kosovo this was reflected in the relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church, on the one hand, and other, Albanian, religions, like Islam, Catholicism, etc. The condition of isolation in which the Serbian Orthodox Church has remained in Kosovo is not normal, and it is not acceptable. The Islamic Community of Kosovo and its institutions, at central and local levels – as well as institutions and representatives of other religions in Kosovo – should be willing and open to do everything that is possible for overcoming this isolation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo. The only way to expect that the Serbs will accept Kosovo as their own country is that Kosovo should accept the Serbs as its own citizens.

These are only some from the numerous activities that can be undertaken in order to improve the condition of inter-ethnic relations and cohabitation in Graçanica, and, more generally, in Kosovo. Indeed, in the meeting that we are looking forward to have with you in the future, numerous other ideas might emerge and discussed.

Thank you, and my best regards,

Mentor Agani

Zoran Savič, Project Coordinator
NGO AKTIV
North Mitrovica, Kosovo

Dear Imam Xheladin Fazliu,

My name is Zoran Savič and I am a project coordinator in the non-governmental organization Aktiv from North Mitrovica. Although I was born in Pula, Croatia, I have actually lived in Mitrovica for 30 years and I am actively involved in social life in Kosovo, both through work and cultural life, considering that I am also a musician, and I have participated in various inter-ethnic projects with musicians of Albanian nationality.

At the same time, for many years I worked as a journalist in the Kosovo Sever portal - KoSSev, and through this job I became even more familiar with the political, security and religious situation in Kosovo. Even today, I collaborate with many Albanian journalists and editors, both project-wise and through jobs that are not related to the same.

As you are the part of Islamic Community in Kosovo, you can greatly promote inter-ethnic harmony. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different religious and ethnic groups can help bridge divides. I urge you to support community programs and joint service projects that bring people from diverse backgrounds together. Your sermons and public addresses can emphasize unity, tolerance, and respect for all. Therefore, I am looking forward for your support in organizing inter-ethnic dialogues and community service projects that involve different religious groups working together.

In this spirit, I hope for a future where multi-ethnic religious cohabitation becomes the norm in Kosovo. I envision communities where religious differences are embraced as strengths rather than sources of division. To this end, you might focus on creating sustainable programs that educate on religious diversity and tolerance, support joint community projects, and ensure equal representation of all religious groups in local governance.

I conclude this letter on a hopeful note, envisioning a future where our united efforts cultivate a genuinely harmonious and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. I am certain that with our shared dedication, we can achieve remarkable progress toward this worthy goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zoran Savič