Dear friends, welcome to the 23rd edition of the MKSF’s newsletter.

Happy New Year! 2014 will be an exciting and busy year for the Ministry and the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), a year in which we shape our future force.

Last year was pivotal for KSF’s development; in July NATO declared Full Operational Capabilities for our force. This year’s efforts are even more significant because we will complete and release the results of the Strategic Security Sector review and will define Kosovo’s future security needs.

The MKSF’s traditional New Year’s Concert, performed by our Wind Orchestra, received high accolades by all those present. We shared our Wind Orchestra and this concert so we could thank the Kosovar public and our partners for their many contributions which led to our many successes.

In December we published a brochure titled "The Kosovo Security Force in the Service of the Country". This brochure is the embodiment of the KSF’s dedication to be a "Force for Good" by supporting all communities in need.

I wish you and your families a very prosperous new year; one filled with good opportunities that will enable you to achieve your potential.

Have a pleasant reading.

Sincerely Yours,

AGIM ÇEKU
MINISTER ÇEKU PAYS VISIT TO TURKEY

On December 6 and 7, Minister Agim Çeku and Commander of Land Force Command Major General Rrahman Rama visited the Ministry of National Defense of Turkey and other Turkish military institutions. During the visit Minister Çeku met with Minister of National Defense of Turkey Ismet Yılmaz, Chief of General Staff General Necdet Ozel, Dean of Institution of Defense Brigadier General Murat Yetgin, Commander of Centre of Excellence Defense against Terrorism Colonel Isa Aslan and Commander of War College General Yalçın Ataman. During his visit Minister Çeku discussed ways to further enhance the partnership between the two countries in the field of security, KSF’s access to Turkish military schools and KSF’s possible contribution to peace support missions. Minister of National Defense Mr. İsmet Yılmaz pointed out that Turkey would continue to support KFOR’s mission in order to promote regional peace and stability as well as confirmed the support in training and educating KSF members. Minister Çeku also visited KSF members studying at the Turkish Military Academy and the War College.
MINISTER ÇEKU VISITS ALLIED JOINT FORCE COMMAND NAPLES

On December 12 and 13, Minister Agim Çeku and Commander of the KSF (COMKSF), Lieutenant General Kadri Kastrati paid a visit to Headquarters Allied Joint Force Command Naples (JFCNP) in Italy. Minister Çeku and Lieutenant General Kastrati met with Commander of Allied Joint Force Command Naples (COM JFCNP) Admiral Bruce W. Clingan, Deputy Commander Lieutenant General Jon Vance, Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Leonardo di Marco, Deputy Chief of Staff Operations Major General Jean Fred Berger and other senior staff members. Minister Çeku informed COM JFCNP and staff about developments, achievements and objectives of the KSF and the ongoing Strategic Security Sector Review. Minister Çeku and COM JFCNP discussed a wide range of political and security issues of Kosovo. He stressed that the agreement between Belgrade and Pristina is historical for the entire region and both countries have made a big step toward the road to Euro-Atlantic Integration. Minister Çeku requested COM JFCNP’s support for KSF members’ attendance at NATO schools. He also suggested establishment of a formal relationship between NATO and the KSF.
On October 8, the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Turkey, General Necdet Ozel, visited the MKSF and had a meeting with Lieutenant General Kadri Kastrati and other officials of the Ministry and the KSF. Lieutenant General Kastrati thanked the Turkish delegation for Turkey’s continuous support in standing up the KSF by offering training, education, materiel and other assistance. He briefed his Turkish colleagues on the recent developments in the KSF; its structure, tasks and objectives.

On December 18, Minister Agim Çeku had a meeting with the Slovenian Defense Minister Roman Jakič. The meeting covered KSF’s development issues, the current and future co-operation between Kosovo and Slovenia in the field of security, Slovenia’s participation in KFOR mission and other topics. Minister Çeku thanked the Slovenian Defense Minister for the excellent service provided by Slovenian KFOR contingents and the highly professional work of advisors on the NATO Advisory Team. He also asked for Slovenia’s continuous support for Kosovo’s participation in regional and international security initiatives and integration in international organisations; namely, the European Union and NATO.
PORTUGUESE MINISTER OF DEFENCE MEETS WITH MKSF AND KSF LEADERSHIP

On December 20, the Portuguese Minister of Defence José Pedro Aguiar-Branco, accompanied by the Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces General Luis Araujo, visited the MKSF and had meetings with the Minister Agim Çeku, and COMKSF, Lieutenant General Kadri Kastrati. During the meeting both sides discussed the security situation in Kosovo, KSF’s current and near future activities, the process of the Strategic Security Sector Review and other issues. Minister Çeku expressed his appreciation for Portugal’s contribution to KFOR, outlining the professionalism and commitment of the Portuguese troops. Minister Branco pointed out that Portugal will continue to support the mission of KFOR and the further development of the KSF. During his staying in Kosovo Minister Branco also visited the Portuguese soldiers who are currently serving in Kosovo.
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DONALD CAMPBELL
CONFIRMS FURTHER SUPPORT OF THE US ARMY
EUROPE

On December 4, Minister Agim Çeku, and COMKSF, Lieutenant General Kadri Kastrati received a delegation of senior servicemen from U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) led by the Commanding General of the USAREUR Lieutenant General Donald Campbell. Minister Ceku presented his vision for the KSF’s future, emphasizing building up a force for good which will contribute to regional and international security. Lieutenant General Kastrati informed on the KSF activities and objectives, joint operations and exercises with regional countries, education of young officers abroad, operations and engagement of KSF in service of communities and the ongoing Strategic Security Sector Review. Lieutenant General Campbell confirmed further support by USAREUR for the KSF in the areas of training and doctrine.
On December 17, the KSF held a certification ceremony for 119 KSF Search and Rescue Task Force members. The ceremony culminated four months of search and rescue training provided by US instructors. COMKSF, Lieutenant General Kadri Kastrati thanked the US for the help they are providing to the KSF in general and highly appreciated the US instructor team for their work and commitment during this training. The Civil Protection Regiment’s Commander, Colonel Shaip Haziri said that the training has enhanced the professional development of the Search and Rescue Task Force as well as strengthened Task Force members physically and psychologically so that real-time operations can be done in the best possible way. US Defense Attaché, Colonel James Kott said: “It is an honour for me to be here today where the KSF is taking another step forward. We are very proud that the United States has played an important role for these members to get certified for training their own members.”
On December 6, COMKSF, Lieutenant General Kadri Kastrati participated in the certification ceremony of 12 KSF non-commissioned officers (NCO) in the Advanced Leader Course “Train the Trainer”, which took place in the Professional Leadership Development Center of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). During his address, Lieutenant General Kastrati emphasized that the enhancement and development of the NCO Corps is of a special importance to the KSF, and that with strong support of the United States and other countries its development is taking place in the best possible way. Lieutenant General Kastrati also congratulated the certified instructors who will now have the opportunity to pass the knowledge from this course to other NCOs throughout KSF units. The Advanced Leader Course took place from the 21st of October through the 6th of December and was conducted by the US instructors from KFOR at Camp Bondsteel.
On December 16, the MKSF launched a brochure “The Kosovo Security Force in the Service of the Country”. The brochure gives insight into the efforts the KSF is investing in assisting citizens and civilian authorities and civil-military projects that have been carried out in cooperation with local and international institutions, municipalities, ethnic communities, and NGOs.

“Stories included in the brochure speak for themselves and affirm that the KSF has both, capacity and capability, to help citizens. I am confident in the capacity, professionalism and commitment of our KSF members to tackle any task thrown at them,” said Minister Çeku. He pointed out that according to “Kosovo Security Barometer” in 2013 the KSF was again rated as the most trusted security institution in Kosovo. Civil-Military cooperation has been one of the most important areas of KSF’s work ever since its establishment. As a new institution, the KSF immediately established trust with all ethnic communities and proved that it was in the service of all citizens of Kosovo and provided assistance to anyone in need.
On December 20, in a ceremony organized in the Ministry of KSF, the COMKSF, Lieutenant General Kadri Kastrati handed over to Colonel Ilaz Derguti the decree of the President Atifete Jahjaga dated 16 December 2013 announcing his promotion to the rank of Brigadier General. Brigadier General Derguti is the Commander of the KSF’s Operational Support Brigade; he has previously served in the Ministry of KSF as a military adviser to General Secretary. During his service, Brigadier General Derguti has been decorated with the Presidential Medal of Service and the Medal of Service in the Kosovo Protection Corps.
PRIVATE ERDAL HYDAVERDI GRADUATES FROM
PT INSTRUCTOR COURSE AT THE BRITISH ARMY SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL TRAINING

In December, Private Erdall Hydaverdi, KSF Rapid Reaction Brigade, graduated from a two-months long Physical Training Instructor Course at the British Army School of Physical Training. The aim of the course was to teach students how to deliver safe, effective and progressive physical and recreational training, conduct physical testing and advise on health-related matters. By the end of the course students knew how the body works, the principles of physical training and were able to conduct all types of fitness training and testing. “The course was tough and only 101 students out of 190 passed it. I was very happy to be among the graduates,” says Pvt. Hydaverdi. Now, after graduation from the course, he is eligible to work as a Physical Training instructor within the KSF. Pvt. Hydaverdi, half Albanian and half Turk, has served in the KSF since July 2010. He admits that fitness and physical training are his hobbies and there are times when he is at the gym at 3 o’clock in the morning. “I want to be professional in my work therefore I read a lot about physical fitness, anatomy and how the human body works,” he says.
KSF WIND ORCHESTRA GIVES
A NEW YEAR CONCERT

On December 19, the KSF Wind Orchestra performed its traditional New Year concert. The invited guests could hear world-famous melodies along with Albanian songs performed by the orchestra and singers Besa Llugiqi, Riad Ymeri and Marigona Cerkezi. Minister Çeku’s welcome speech stressed that the KSF ended the year with many remarkable achievements. "I want to express my thankfulness to everyone who has worked hard and has supported, advised, assisted and promoted the KSF. My gratitude goes to all KSF members as well as to our international, state and municipality colleagues, friends and partners,” said Çeku. The KSF Wind Orchestra was established in 2003 under the Kosovo Protection Corps. Currently 36 musicians play in the orchestra, most of whom have long term civilian music careers. Under the leadership of Captain Shkumbin Bajraktari and conductor Baki Jashari, the Wind Orchestra regularly performs music at official KSF and government ceremonies, as well as other special events and concerts. The Wind Orchestra also represents Kosovo abroad.