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### Kosovo as a Strategic Awareness of the EU

Ylber Limani

*University for Business and Technology, ylber.limani@ubt-uni.net*

Erza Ostrogllava

*University for Business and Technology - UBT*

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## **Kosovo as a strategic awareness of the EU**

Ylber Limani<sup>1</sup>, Erza Ostrogllava<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>UBT College, Prishtina,  
ylber.limani, eo40173 {@ubt-uni.net}

**Abstract.** Is Kosovo a strategic interest of the EU in terms of international policy and entrepreneurship? This paper is aiming to rise discussions about the international business with focus on challenges facing a developing country. The qualitative approach of the research is oriented towards clarifying the definition and the purpose of international business, while quantitative approach is directed to investigate the-state-of-the-art regarding international business in a developing country. International business represents all cross-border exchanges of goods, services or resources between two or more nations. These exchanges can go beyond the exchange of money for physical goods including international transfers of other resources, such as people, intellectual property (e.g., patents, copyrights, trademarks and data), and assets or contractual obligations (e.g., the right to use a foreign asset, provide a future service to foreign clients, or execute a complex financial instrument). Entities involved in international business range from large multinational firms with thousands of employees doing business in many countries around the world, since they found the interest of doing that. This broader definition of international business also includes transactions across profitable borders, as well as transactions motivated by non-financial profits (e.g., the triple line, corporate social responsibility, and political favoritism) that affect the future of a business. Nonetheless, it is hard to find the discussions about the equality of doing business internationally between developing and developed world. In this context this research discusses the case of Kosovo, a developing country within the Europe and still not recognized by all EU country. The purpose of this research is to mirror the prospects that Kosovo offers as a country in terms of international entrepreneurship and to discuss the challenges businesses are facing due to the fragile geopolitical and economic situation the country.

**Keywords:** strategic, Kosovo, EU, entrepreneurship, international business.

## 1. Introduction

### *The purpose of this research*

The main purpose of this research is to reflect on the identification and analyses of the policy and enterprise level challenges that businesses from a developing country faces in terms of international entrepreneurship, despite the many facts that show that things can be different and more favorable for businesses and the country. This determination is based on the information collected from various literature study, case studies, and from survey research within the country. The research assumes that Kosovo has abundant human and natural potential to be incorporated into international business, however, the country is neither sufficiently engaged in international economic activities at a policy nor at enterprise level. The research drives in the direction of finding the answer to this problem by incorporating various research tools and techniques. To elaborate the multiple assumptions, the research techniques and methods used in this paper are mixed from their nature and from their content, and provides with open qualitative and quantitative investigations. Research is directed but not entirely limited to international business aspects, nevertheless, it does take into account other business, economic and policy issues. Research is limited to the period of ten years in qualitative terms of time period, and survey research is quantitatively limited to investigation of enterprises and organizations from main cities within the country in the context of internationalization challenges.

### *Research objectives*

International business literature research, case studies and other information sources are intensely utilized in order to create a more critical and accurate view of overall developments in the international market. The survey conducted with businesses is aimed to data collection related to the identified and discussed problem of this research. The main carefully formulated questions and assumptions addressing the problem are from the descriptive and relational nature. The purpose of this research is set to be achieved by a couple of objectives: (I) providing a theoretical and practical overview related to the study topic; (II), demonstrating hypothetically the awareness of businesses from a developing country correlated to the main identified issues affecting their activities towards doing international business; (III) reminding EU policy makers that things and developments in a developing and transition country may also be different from their economic and political point of view.

### *Research questions and hypotheses*

It is not in the scope of the paper to investigate into the detailed specifications of the respective factors and indicators that explain international business. In this context, it is decided to comprise the possible problems of businesses from a developing country in the context of international market. The surveyed business representatives provide us with their beliefs, attitudes and views about the countries insufficient policy in leashing the business potential and utilizing that potential at the international market level, and about the obvious EU decision-making and policy problems in relation to the

country of Kosova. A set of questions addressing this problem have been transformed into hypotheses which have been tested by current statistical methods and techniques.

#### *Importance and contribution of the study*

The added value of this paper is a positive aimed and bold initiative that will continue further in several other papers with the aim of converging to the main problem: the problems and difficulties related to the inclusion of Kosovar businesses in the international market due to lack of EU proper decision making and unstable country governance. The identified research problem brought up important questions which preferably represent full and important topics of this research and of future research. We believe the results of the research will ensure an more clear outlook about the existing situation in which developed countries become challenged when it comes to doing business on international level.

#### *Research limitations*

The time period of conducting this research is known as uncertain time therefore the lack of in-depth interviews with one of the possible samples of the researched population can be considered as a deficiency or limitation that has been taken into consideration. For this reason, the represented results are of a general nature and not fully specified in the synthesis of each hypothesis. The research does not study domestic or EU policies in the context of political content, but investigates the real situation of businesses and the sources that cause complications in terms of doing business internationally.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Defining International Business (IB)**

There are a plenty of hypothetical and applied studies related to the international business. In most of the studies international business practically defined represents all commercial transactions including private and public sectors between two or more countries. The business sector usually undertakes such dealings for profits, while governments may do the same or something different in this regard. According to a research, the logical framework of international business is built around the actions of Multinational Enterprises pronounced by the internationalization process (Sinha and Mittal, 2012).

Modern definitions of IB characterize IB as the economic activity concerned with transactions that take place across national borders in order to meet the needs of individuals and organizations. These economic transactions consist of trade, as in the case of exports and imports, and foreign direct investment, as in the case of companies that finance operations in other countries (Collinson, 2006).

IB is defined as a business that engages multiple companies from various countries in international economic activity. Simply defined, IB can also refer to the act of doing business abroad. Other authors define IB as economic activities, which by definition of international business are usually associated with the multinational enterprises, defined as any business that is performing manufacturing and/or sales activities in two or more countries (Verbeke, 2013; Zamborsky, 2019; Ball and Ball, 2013).

Anything related to the production and/or sale of goods or services, logistics, transportation or investment is considered international business if it occurs between two parties based on different countries. Moreover, imports and exports, licensing and franchising or having production, distribution or research and development centers in other countries, all fall under the umbrella of international business (Smyth, 2018).

## **2.2 International Business in Developing Countries**

Exports of emerging economies have become more diverse where now the largest item of exports of goods is manufactured goods, while exports of services are driven by travel and transportation. The growth of global exports has increased since 2012 and the same is right for emerging economies. In 2018, the total value of exports originating from developing countries was 4.3 times higher than in 2000. The share of developing countries in global exports of goods and services has increased from 29.7 percent in 2000 to 41.5 percent in 2012 and has since been flattened (UN, 2020). Another study finds that Goods exports from developing economies and so named least-developed countries were seriously hit by significantly lower prices for fuels and mining products in 2015. Least-developed countries exports hurt the most by declining for almost 25%, while exports from developing economies decrease by 14%. Least-developed countries share of world exports dropped to below 1 per cent for the first time since 2007 (WTO, 2016).

Controlling as a modern management tool is becoming more and more important internationally. New controlling instruments and modern telecommunications are now making it possible for companies to call up important figures from business transactions worldwide and to check them at any time for their compatibility with the planned key figures.

As an instrument of numbers, controlling sometimes reaches its limits when the intercultural component comes into play. There are mainly differences in three areas: the so-called power distance, the avoidance of uncertainty and the species and way of information processing (Frank, 2020).

While we produce more goods and services today compared with before, a far greater proportion of that production is being traded across national borders than at any time in modern history. Moreover, the knowledge society that we live in has resulted in consumers knowing more than ever about goods and services being produced worldwide. The lowering of trade and investment barriers also allows firms to base production at the optimal location for that activity. Thus, a firm might design a product in one country, produce component parts in two other countries, assemble the product in yet another country, and then export the finished product around the world (Hill and Hult, 2020);

Despite low growth and established competition, developed markets also attract significantly. For example, there are over 500 million consumers in the European Union (EU), which is evolving around the principle of free movement of goods without hindrance in trade and with a minimum of administrative burden. Although with a slow growth, a Large addressable as the EU can provide the business benefits of lower unit costs, easier access to a wider range of trading partners and greater rewards for innovation (Lynch, 2020). In developed markets, entrants may need to pay special attention to established competition, and may need particularly aggressive marketing

and advertising to persuade competing customers to pass. For SMEs, in particular, "engaging at appropriate levels of brand management opens up all the initial channels for negotiating with government regulators and potential business partners - such as supply chain, manufacturing, warehousing solutions, distribution and delivery services - in foreign markets (Lynch, 2020).

### 2.3 Kosovo as a strategic awareness of the EU: resources analysis

Analyzing Figure 1 it can be seen that Kosovo has a lower number of employments in comparison with the selected group of countries. Knowing that Kosovo is the country with the youngest population in Europe with about 53% of the population under the age of 25, respectively the median age of 29.5 (Politico, 2018; European Commission Liaison Office to Kosovo, 2018; WB, 2019), Figure 1 displays the statistics that show that human resources are extremely not utilized for the purposes of economic activities. This statistic is worrying and should have been taken seriously by modern EU policy. In this context it can be said that Kosovo's demographic position is very favorable for an international perspective of doing business, and this should become self-evident within the EU executive circles.

Table 1 presents the natural resources of the countries being compared. Here too it is clear that Kosovo has sufficient natural resources which should be exploited legally. Exploitation of natural resources for the benefit of increasing business activities at the international level could be completed if EU regulations and standards would be applicable in Kosovo. Even in this context, the EU has made political delays and postponements in formalizing Kosovo's membership in networks and international communities which enable the internationalization of Kosovar businesses.

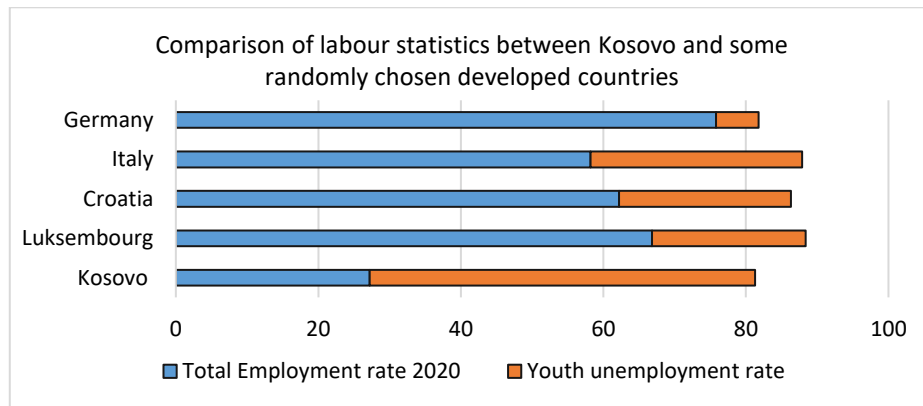


Fig. 1 Labour statistics-country comparison (Tradingeconomics, EUROSTAT, 2020; WB 2020, 2014)

Tab. 1 Natural resources- country comparison

Country	Natural resources
<b>Luxemburg</b>	Minerals, landscapes, iron ore (no longer exploited), arable land (Sawe, 2019; NationMaster, 2020 ).
<b>Germany</b>	Timber, natural gas, coal, lignite, uranium, iron ore, arable land, building materials, potash, nickel, salt and copper (Thomas, 2012; NationMaster, 2020).
<b>Croatia</b>	Oil, some coal, bauxite, low-grade iron ore, calcium, gypsum, natural asphalt, silica, mica, clays, salt, hydropower (Bada, 2019; NationMaster, 2020).
<b>Italy</b>	Coal, antimony, mercury, zinc, potassium, marble, grass, asbestos, pumice, fluorspar, feldspar, pyrite (sulfur), natural gas and crude oil reserves, fish, arable land (CIA, 2018).
<b>Kosovo</b>	Nickel, lead, zinc, magnesium, lignite, kaolin, chrome, bauxite, magnetite, ferronickel, NationMaster, 2020).

It is not in the scope of this research to analyze in detail the amount of each natural resource Kosovo possess, however, it is argued that the country possesses sufficient natural resources to compete to be included in the international business networks. Kosovo industries are oriented in minerals and metals production, lignite utilization, lead, zinc, nickel, chrome, aluminum, magnesium, and a wide variety of construction materials. However, the pillars of industry have declined their economic activities because of aging equipment and insufficient domestic and foreign investment, and by issues exacerbated by rival and unresolved ownership claims of Kosovo's largest mines (CIA, 2020).

Finally, the Kosova government and business leaders are also responsible for extending of business networking experience, minimizing the diverse and not focused enterprise organisational factors related to business excellence and knowledge, and changing organisational culture factors (Limani and Stapleton, 2016).

### 3 Problem statement, research questions and hypothesis

International business includes a large and growing share of total business in the world. Nowadays, almost all companies, large or small, are affected by global competition whether they are manufacturers, product sellers, insurers, or service providers.

Different nations around the world are experiencing a fundamental change in the way they offer and trade different items, products and services. Countries with more sustainable economy are currently leading the way for International Business, while developing countries are making their best efforts to connect to international business networks. However, developing countries have great difficulty competing in the international market. Difficulties may arise from within the country or even from abroad.

Evidently, businesses from a trading bloc of some developed economies are operating without having internal barriers, and they are actually setting up their particular networks. This networking and interaction approach to internationalization demonstrates the content of being able to influence decisions when one knows how global network actors operate or interact.

Although, a developing country like Kosovo has made progress in the harmonization process of business policy over the past years, the policy insufficiencies and internal and external barriers still exist to a large extent. There are evidences showing Kosovo has great potential and good opportunities to develop in terms of international entrepreneurship. For years, Kosovar businesses have been working towards a change in terms of entrepreneurship, but the limited opportunities from EU countries, and sometimes political and economic barriers from some particular EU countries have negatively impacted the exploitation of potential and access to the international business network as a result of potentially unclear sufficiently political demands. The policy barriers probably not-intended may look passive in their own structure, however, those barriers may manifoldly overcome the financial support a country may receive.

In this context, where research raises hypotheses formulated with arguments related to Kosovo's potential to do business internationally and with potential internal and external barriers that may relate to potential.

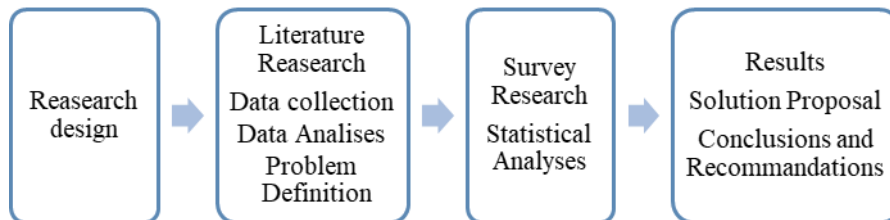
The hypotheses raised are tested using statistical test models: Chi Square, One Sample and Kolmogorov-Smirnov. and the results presented in the results section of this research paper.

#### **4 The methodology**

The working approach consists into four main stages. Research design represents the first stage, qualitative literature research related to the international business and case studies is conducted during the second stage and problem definition, survey research and statistical analyses are conducted during the third stage of work.

Results, conclusions and discussions are conducted in the fourth stage of this research work. The methodology applied in this study is based on literature research related to the effective many international business variable quantities, and on survey research aimed to find any correlation between international business issues. The primary and secondary data collection and data analyses are accomplished based on quantitative and qualitative methods.





**Fig. 2.** Working and research methodology (Limani, *et al* 2019)

#### *Population and sampling*

This study focused on the public and private enterprises consisting a sample of 144 randomly engaged companies from the main cities of Kosovo. Respondent groups within the sample are: operating industry, education, positions/functions within enterprises, among others.

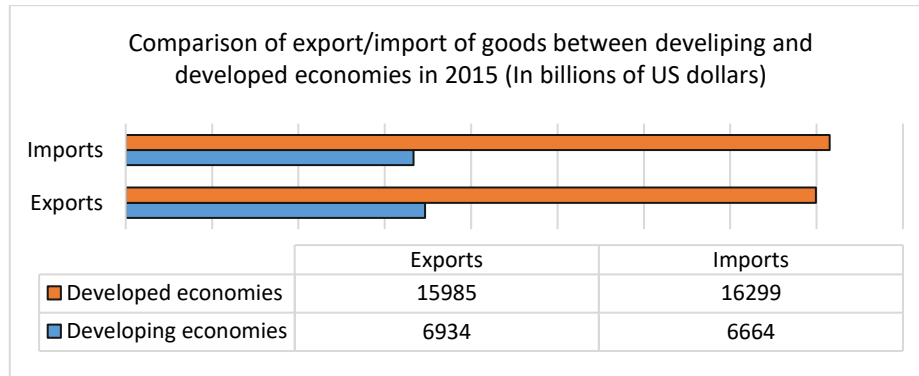
#### *Instruments*

The semi-structured questionnaire is used for the data collection.

Data analyses is conducted using software applications, and results are presented in the related section.

## **5 Results and discussions**

One interesting finding from the literature is represented partially in the Figure 3. The estimates display the differences between developing and developed countries in the setting of export/import ratio. Discussing from a critical point of view, the result presented by the WTO, developing countries have more appropriate export / import proportion compared developed countries. However, this statistical data cannot support our research hypotheses as it is not a significant value that can be competitive between developing and developed countries. Nonetheless, we considered this finding is of a particular interest.



**Fig. 3** Comparison between developed and developing companies in the context of export/import ratio in 2015 (WTO, 2015)

The set of questions related to the problem definition are translated into a set of simple hypotheses with some modifications. The hypothesis testing shows distinguishing results which are probably expected by us having into consideration the general situation related to the study topic.

**Table 1a.** The suppositions and decisions

Simple null hypotheses	The situation/decision
<i>Kosova businesses are not significantly active in international business</i>	Kosova businesses are significantly active in international business
<i>The Government is assisting sufficiently Kosova businesses in doing International Business</i>	<i>The Government is not sufficiently assisting Kosova businesses in doing International Business</i>
There is no relationship between <i>difficulty in international access</i> and doing <i>international business</i> for Kosovar companies	There is a strong relationship between <i>difficulty in international access</i> and doing <i>international business</i> for Kosovar companies
There is no relationship between <i>Kosovo's geopolitical position</i> and doing <i>international business</i> for Kosovar companies	There is a strong relationship between <i>Kosovo's geopolitical position</i> and doing <i>international business</i> for Kosovar companies

**Table 1b. The suppositions and decisions**

<i>Kosovo government has sufficiently promoted international business</i>	Kosovo government has not sufficiently promoted international business
<i>Kosovo government delivers adequate policies associated with for foreign investors</i>	<i>Kosovo government delivers inadequate policies associated with for foreign investors</i>
There is a strong relationship between the <i>Kosovo government strategy</i> and doing <i>international business</i> for Kosovar companies	There is a no strong relationship between the Kosovo government strategy and doing international business for Kosovar companies
There is a strong relationship between <i>Kosovo resources utilization</i> and doing <i>international business</i> for Kosovar companies	There is a no strong relationship between <i>Kosovo resources utilization</i> and doing <i>international business</i> for Kosovar companies
There is no relationship between promoting Kosovo's strategic position and doing international business for Kosovar companies	There is weak relationship between promoting Kosovo's strategic position and doing international business for Kosovar companies

Asymptomatic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05  
 Ranked variable with monotonic relationship and ranked ordered. (Pallant, J.2011).

The results with greater impact from research are showing various essentials with high significance that affect the process of internationalization in general, especially that in Kosovo as a developing country. We have listed most important findings as follows: low engagement of Kosova businesses in the international market; the need for government engagement in business internationalization; difficulties entering the international market needs to be addressed; Kosovo's geopolitical position is not conducive to doing international business; insufficient IB promotion by the government; Kosovo's natural resources are supposedly sufficient but not competitive; Kosovo's human resources are sufficient to compete internationally.

When it comes to resources, the observation is conducted only in quantitative terms in relationship to human resources, while the questions related to the natural resources are based in the variability terms of natural resources. ( EC .2019).

### 5.1 Discissions and Conclusions

Kosova businesses are significantly active in international business. The surprise in the survey was that in the assumption that Kosovar businesses will show that they are not engaged in economic activity in the international market, which assumption was rejected.

There is an association between Kosovo export/import quote and international business. This means the business and organizations representatives agree that the government should take measures towards changing the import/export quote regulations in order to support domestic businesses.

The Government is not assisting sufficiently Kosova businesses in doing International Business. In this regard the business managers and business leaders mostly agree that there should be more effective implication of the government in promoting and sustaining domestic companies towards their internationalization aspirations.

There is a relationship between difficult international access and doing international business for Kosovar companies. Both qualitative and quantitative studies from this research show that developing countries experience more difficulty accessing the international market than developed countries. Kosovo in this case is considered both a country in transition and a developing country, making even more complex the issue of the business process of internationalization.

There is a relationship between Kosovo's geostrategic position and doing international business for Kosovar companies. This assumption is rejected, taking into account that businesses think that there the geostrategic position is affecting their aspirations and plans towards doing international business.

Kosovo government has not sufficiently promoted international business. the promotion of businesses by the government has almost no meaning or importance as it is likely that this government activity is very vague.

Kosovo government is not delivering adequate policies associated with effective programs and projects for foreign investors. Foreign investment in Kosovo has been steadily declining, so the reaction of respondents to the question on this issue is very understandable.

There is a weak relationship between the Kosovo government strategy and doing international business for Kosovar companies. The current strategies of the government do not clearly define the strategic commitment of the state to help businesses in terms of internationalization of their business operations.

There is no clear relationship between Kosovo's natural resources doing international business for Kosovar companies. Respondents think that Kosovo has sufficient resources, both human and natural, to compete in the international market. But there is no evidence that there is a strategic plan for the exploitation of these resources in order to increase the opportunities to compete internationally.

#### *Future research*

In the context of international business, the study of equality and the provision of developing countries with added opportunity in the international market could be a research subject for interested individuals and different interest groups.

We are fully aware that this paper is representing an opening phase for the discussion of international business in developing countries, especially in the Kosovo and other developing countries which share similar attributes.

Our extended version of this research topic will include arguments related to the international business in developing countries and will provide with more sights related

to the relationship and significance between other specified arguments. An interesting question that requires attention in this regard is about the human resources.

The various demographic movements which are often supported by developed countries make possible the flow of potential labor force from underdeveloped countries to the developed ones and never vice versa. Also, the relocation of multinational companies from countries of origin to different destinations gives the same development spectrum. Companies from developed countries relocate their production arsenal to developing countries after securing multiple economic feasibility. How would it affect an international initiative that would bring about a more equivalent economic order of the globalization process? What would be the initiative that would transform the process of globalization into a sustainable and long-term process? These and other probably many other questions of this nature may be the questions of mutual interest, and potentially finding balanced answers would help develop a more sustainable global economic model.

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