



To the Honourable
Enver Hoxhaj
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of Republic of Kosovo
Government Building,
Str. "Nena Tereze" 10000 Prishtinë

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Strasbourg and Trento, 15th April 2012

Honourable Minister Hoxhaj,

We would like to draw your attention to a serious and regrettable event that happened on Sunday, 15th April 2012, at the Prishtina airport.

In the framework of a youth exchange, organized within the Youth in Action Programme of the European Union, 5 young people from Georgia (Goduadze Giorgi, Kiriakidi Ketevan, Elbaqidze Nino, Gugunava Mariam, Gureshidze Shota, all aged between 18 and 25 years old) were treated by the customs agents as suspicious individuals and sent back to Istanbul (their transit point from and to Georgia) while they were supposed to come to Kosovo to attend a 7 days exchange in Peja/Pec promoting the principles of mutual understanding and tolerance.

The activity has been organized by the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) and by Tavolo Trentino con il Kosovo (TcK), our local partner. The exchange involved people from several European countries and none of the others had serious problems at the customs.

All the participants were provided with regular documents, return ticket and a letter explaining the reason for their visit in Kosovo, as required according to your official page. Despite the fact that the Georgian participants had ALL the needed documentation to enter Kosovo, they were sent back to Istanbul as unwelcome persons.

This episode represents an evident abuse towards 5 European young people coming to Kosovo to spend a week guided by the principles of tolerance and intercultural dialogue. We think that this one and similar events should be unacceptable and intolerable in a country with EU aspirations.

Moreover, this occurrence created several serious problems to the safety of the young people since they were sent back to Istanbul as deported and treated as criminals by Turkish authorities, which deprived them of basic rights such as fresh water and knowledge of their actual situation.

Luckily, at the moment the 5 Georgians are on their way back to Tblisi and hopefully they will reach their home on 16th April 2012 in the afternoon.

We strongly object to this inadmissible behaviour of the airport customs agents that created a dangerous situation for the persons involved, a loss of resources sponsored by the European Commission and a seriously damaged image for a potential candidate country to the European Union.

We hope that you will address the situation and the agents responsible forthwith and provide us with the necessary information about what happened and the reasons as well as what kind of reparation your country can offer.

Sincerely yours

Per Vinther
President of ALDA

Maurizio Camin
President of TcK