



## How Wrong Diplomacy Costs a Young Nation Its Chances

*By Fisnik (Nick) Maxhuni*

Diplomacy is not theatre, it is trust in motion. For young democracies like Kosovo, diplomacy is not only a foreign-policy tool, it is the mirror of a nation's maturity. Each handshake and every statement carries the weight of a country still defining itself. When diplomacy becomes reactive or personal, a young state risks losing something far greater than prestige, it loses opportunity.

Every young democracy is allowed to make mistakes, but never to repeat them. Wrong diplomacy can close doors, but the right vision can open them again.

### Misuse of Diplomatic Posts

In small states, every diplomatic post matters. They should never be rewards for political loyalty or personal connections. Yet, too often, ambassadorial and consular roles are used as political favors instead of national instruments.

Kosovo cannot afford “ambassadors in name only.” Every embassy must function as a **national operations center**, serving simultaneously as a consulate, a trade mission, an investment office, and a cultural bridge.

Ambassadors must promote Kosovo's businesses, build economic partnerships, and mobilize the diaspora toward investment and knowledge exchange.

When appointments are made for comfort rather than competence, the mission loses its purpose. The embassy becomes decoration, not diplomacy.

Real diplomacy demands purpose, measurable goals, and a clear understanding that representing Kosovo abroad is not a privilege, it is a professional duty to the citizens who fund it.

### The Illusion of Visits

Diplomatic visits are powerful when they serve strategy, not when they serve publicity.

Kosovo has witnessed a series of high-profile trips by its foreign minister and prime minister that created headlines but no real outcomes. In some cases, there were no meetings with key officials at the U.S. State Department, no follow-up dialogues, and no visible agreements signed.

When visits are made without preparation or vision, they become symbols of isolation rather than engagement. The absence of meaningful dialogue with partners like Washington or Brussels sends the wrong signal: that Kosovo is performing diplomacy, not practicing it.

The European Union's recent sanctions and the temporary suspension of the U.S.–Kosovo Strategic Dialogue are not isolated political moves, they are direct reflections of diminished trust.



These moments remind us that diplomacy without consistency leads to consequences that no press release can repair.

### **Lost Chances: The European Path**

Kosovo has long aspired to strengthen its ties with European institutions, but aspiration alone is not enough.

The country's progress toward EU integration remains slow, largely because of diplomatic fatigue and misaligned priorities.

Support from key allies such as Germany and France has weakened at crucial moments, leaving Kosovo short of the political capital needed to advance its European perspective.

While Kosovo remains a **potential candidate** for EU membership, the momentum is fragile. The failure to coordinate strategy, maintain relationships, and present a unified diplomatic front has cost Kosovo credibility.

Each missed opportunity to align with Europe's key players delays not just membership but also the broader recognition and investment that come with it.

A young democracy cannot afford to appear unpredictable in front of partners who measure reliability over rhetoric.

### **Wrong Diplomacy Sends the Wrong Message**

Diplomacy is a long conversation built on predictability and trust.

When foreign policy becomes personal, allies become uncertain.

When dialogue turns into confrontation, support becomes conditional.

And when political leaders use diplomacy as an extension of domestic campaigns, they transform allies into observers.

Wrong diplomacy sends a message of instability, not independence.

It confuses partners who want to help and frustrates those who once believed in our story.

For Kosovo, wrong diplomacy does not only close one door, it locks an entire hallway of opportunities.

Allies invest in stability, not surprises. What Kosovo needs is a diplomatic doctrine based on professionalism, continuity, and respect for the institutions that protect its image abroad.

### **Rebuild Trust with Allies**

Kosovo must re-engage its traditional partners, the United States, Germany, and France, with clarity, maturity, and reliability.



For a young state, diplomacy is not about constant movement, it is about consistent direction. Allies do not expect perfection, they expect predictability.

A credible partner is one that acts and speaks with steadiness, not one that reacts emotionally or improvises under pressure.

Rebuilding trust begins with understanding that internal politics for internal consumption are acceptable, but only until they begin to damage Kosovo's international vision.

This is the fine line between strategic communication and short-sighted politics, between leadership and self-sabotage, between statesmen and opportunists.

In diplomacy, words weigh more than actions, because they travel faster and last longer.

A single public statement, issued in anger, arrogance, or for domestic applause, can undo years of relationship-building.

In bilateral or multilateral relations, where trust is fragile and credibility is constantly measured, one misplaced comment can cost a nation support, sympathy, or even access.

Small countries like Kosovo do not have the luxury of careless diplomacy.

They are not yet full members of the United Nations or the European Union, and every engagement, every summit, every statement carries amplified consequences.

A wrong tone in an interview, a misjudged reaction to an ally, or a poorly framed press conference can echo across capitals and shape perceptions that take years to repair.

Diplomatic maturity means knowing when silence builds more bridges than words.

It means recognizing that credibility abroad is earned not through slogans, but through patience, professionalism, and respect for partners.

Kosovo's future in NATO, the EU, and the broader transatlantic community depends not only on reforms at home, but also on the discipline of its voice abroad.

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## **A Way Forward**

To restore credibility, Kosovo must reform its foreign service into a professional, merit-based institution.

Diplomats should be selected for skills, languages, and results, not political loyalty.

Embassies must operate as multi-role missions, serving both political and economic purposes, while reporting measurable outcomes every quarter.

Continuity in foreign policy must be respected across governments, and diplomacy should no longer shift direction with every election cycle.

Kosovo's strategic future lies in demonstrating reliability, not rebellion; cooperation, not competition, with its allies.

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Diplomacy is not a stage, it is a bridge. Kosovo cannot afford to burn that bridge through short-term politics or pride.

Its story is still being written, but every statement, every meeting, and every diplomatic choice adds a line to that story.

Every young democracy is allowed to make mistakes, but never to repeat them.

Wrong diplomacy can close doors, but the right vision can open them again.