

Ahmet Ismaili: Speech - Kosovo Finance Forum 2025

Speech by Mr Ahmet Ismaili, Governor of the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo, at the Kosovo Finance Forum 2025, Pristina, 20 May 2025.

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Dear Mr. Panxha, Director of the Chester Group and organizer of this forum,
Distinguished members of the CBK Board, esteemed Deputy Governors,
Honorable leaders and representatives of the public institutions of the Republic of Kosovo,
Esteemed leaders and colleagues from the central banks of the region,
Respected leaders and representatives of local and international financial institutions,
Honored representatives of associations of financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society,
Distinguished representatives from Embassies,
Honorable participants from academia,
Dear colleagues and partners,

Allow me to begin this speech with a sincere thank you to the organizers of today's forum, a new and important initiative and platform for open and constructive dialogue on the financial future of Kosovo.

The participation of the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo in this forum aligns with 4th Strategic Goal and reflection of our institutional commitment to contribute to the development of policies that ensure stability, trust, and transparency in our financial system, as well as an open approach toward initiatives from civil society and professional organizations.

The CBK has decided to participate in this forum and is represented today at all levels, by organizing today's panel related to financial stability and regional cooperation, for which I express my sincere gratitude to the Central Banks of the Region, starting with Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. This also reflects the excellent level of cooperation between the highest levels of our central banks.

Therefore, on behalf of the CBK, I have the pleasure to welcome you to this important financial forum, the Kosovo Finance Forum 2025.

This forum is taking place at a dynamic and challenging time for the world, and certainly also for the Western Balkan countries, which, although they have made significant progress, still face structural and cyclical challenges that require reforms and sustained coordination.

The economies of the region showed resilience during 2024, with economic growth rates ranging from 2.5% to 4.4%, averaging 3.4%, with Kosovo having the highest growth. Meanwhile, inflation has continued to ease, ranging between 1.6% and 4.8%, at a time when the eurozone's annual inflation is expected to reach around 2.3% in 2025, according to projections by the European Central Bank (ECB).

In this context, this forum is organized with the understanding that financial stability, financial inclusion, technological innovation, and regional cooperation are essential pillars for building a more resilient economic future. Financial stability remains a fundamental objective for all central banks in the region, particularly in an environment characterized by geopolitical uncertainty, inflationary pressures, and monetary tightening in global markets. We are witnessing a noticeable increase in non-traditional risks-from climate change to cybersecurity- which require new supervisory approaches and a higher degree of inter-institutional and international cooperation.

Kosova, in this regard, has demonstrated its commitment to maintaining financial stability. The banking system remains stable, liquid, and carefully supervised by the Central Bank of Kosovo, while reforms toward digitalization, strengthening consumer protection, and alignment with European Union directives are progressing rapidly.

At a time like this, we believe it is difficult for a single country to face global challenges without proper cooperation. Therefore, forums like this play an important role in fostering regional dialogue, sharing experiences, and strengthening joint mechanisms for crisis response. Cooperation among central banks and regulatory authorities in the region - through joint supervisory agreements, information exchange, and regulatory harmonization - is essential for building a more stable and integrated financial market.

Likewise, European financial integration remains a strategic pillar for stability, development, and institutional transformation. Progress on this path requires mutual commitment – from our countries to deepen reforms, and from the EU to ensure a credible, fair, and predictable enlargement process.

Distinguished participants,

The Kosovo Finance Forum 2025 features a comprehensive program with panels and workshops addressing topics such as financial stability, the transition to a green economy, digitalization, insurance, microfinance, cybersecurity, personal data and customer experience, as well as the latest developments in artificial intelligence. This is a clear reflection of the complexity and interdependence of the challenges facing the financial sector today. I am confident that today's discussions will generate concrete ideas, useful recommendations, and new partnerships.

In closing, allow me to thank all participants for their contributions, the organizers for their commitment, and our international partners for their continued support. A special thanks goes to the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo for their constructive cooperation in full respect of the independence of the Central Bank of Kosovo.

I hope this forum will be fruitful and serve as a catalyst for more effective policies, stronger institutions, independent central banks, and a more resilient financial system in the service of our citizens and economies.

Thank you and I wish you successful proceedings!