



**Republika e Kosovës**  
**Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosova**  
*Kuvendi - Skupština - Assembly*

T R A N S K R I P T

NGA SEANCA PLENARE SOLEMNE E KUVENDIT TË REPUBLIKËS SË  
KOSOVËS ME RASTIN E VIZITËS SË KONGRESISTIT AMERIKAN ELIOT  
ENGEL NË KOSOVË, TË MBAJTUR MË 16 QERSHOR 2008

SA SVEĆANE PLENARNE SEDNICE SKUPŠTINE REPUBLIKE KOSOVA  
POVODOM POSETE AMERIĆKOG KONGRESMENA ELIOT ENGEL KOSOVU,  
ODRŽANE 16. JUNA 2008. GODINE

QERSHOR – JUNI  
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## TRANSKRIPT

### NGA SEANCA PLENARE SOLEMNE E KUVENDIT TË REPUBLIKËS SË KOSOVËS ME RASTIN E VIZITËS SË KONGRESISTIT AMERIKAN ELIOT ENGEL NË KOSOVË, TË MBAJTUR MË 16 QERSHOR 2008

Seanca filloi punën në orën 11,00.

Seancën plenare e kryesoi Kryetari i Kuvendit, zoti Jakup Krasniqi.

(Duartrokitje me rastin e hyrjes në sallë të kongresistit Eliot Engel)

**KRYETARI I KUVENDIT:**

I nderuari, zoti President, Fatmir Sejdiu,

I nderuari Kryeministër i Kosovës, zoti Hashim Thaçi,

Të nderuar përfaqësues të ambasadave dhe të zyrave diplomatike në Kosovë,

Mysafirë të ftuar,

Mirë se keni ardhur sot në Seancën solemne me rastin e vizitës së kongresistit të Shteteve të Bashkuara të Amerikës, zotit Eliot Engel!

Të nderuar deputetë,

Kuvendi ynë sot është i nderuar dhe i privilegjuar ta ketë mysafir mikun e çmuar të Kosovës dhe popullit të saj, anëtarin e shquar të Kongresit të Shteteve të Bashkuara të Amerikës, zotin Eliot Engel.

Zoti Engel, mirë se erdhët në Republikën e Kosovës, mirë se erdhët në organin e saj më të lartë legjislativ – Kuvendin e saj!

Duke ju përshëndetur juve dhe bashkëpunëtorët që ju shoqërojnë, dëshiroj që në emër të Kuvendit të Kosovës t'ju falënderoj për vizitën që po na e bëni në këto ditë solemne me rastin e shënimit të 9-vjetorit të lirisë së Kosovës dhe të hyrjes në fuqi të Kushtetutës së Pavarësisë.

Emri juaj, zoti Engel, është shumë i njohur dhe shumë i dashur gjithandej në Kosovë. Angazhimi i pandërprerë, shumë i gjatë dhe shumë i frytshëm për të drejtën e Kosovës dhe të popullit të saj, Ju ka bërë figurë embleme veçanërisht të respektuar në mendjen dhe zemrat e qytetarëve të Kosovës.

Unë dua ta shfrytëzoj edhe këtë rast, që me pietet t'ju shpreh juve dhe Shteteve të Bashkuara të Amerikës, Presidentit Bush, Presidentit Klinton dhe Presidentit të vjetër Bush mirënjohje të thella dhe falënderim të pafundmë në emër të Kuvendit të Kosovës, të

qytetarëve dhe në emrin tim për të gjitha çfarë keni bërë për Kosovën dhe për qytetarët e saj.

Pavarësia e Kosovës, e aspiruar nga populli i saj dhe e shpallur më 17 shkurt 2008, së cilës i keni kontribuar kaq shumë, ju zoti Engel dhe vendi juaj i mrekullueshëm, tashmë është njohur nga 43 vende – anëtare të Organizatës së Kombeve të Bashkuara dhe po mbështetet gjerësisht nga bashkësia ndërkombëtare.

Pavarësimi i Kosovës dhe Kushtetuta e re do ta bëjnë shoqërinë tonë të lirë dhe sovranë. Do të sigurojnë barazi të plotë për të gjithë qytetarët e saj, pa asnjë dallim, duke kthyer vendin tonë në një faktor paqeje e stabiliteti në rajon.

Prioritetet e shtetit tonë të ri janë: anëtarësimi në organizatat ndërkombëtare, duke përfshirë OKB-në, zhvillimi i gjithmbarshëm, ngritja e mirëqenies dhe integrimi rajonal dhe euroatlantik.

Kosova është kthyer drejt së ardhmes së saj demokratike evropiane, duke lënë pas historinë e saj të dhembshme.

Ju sigurojmë se investimi juaj dhe ai ndërkombëtar për shtetin e Kosovës do të shkojë në dobi të të gjithë qytetarëve të saj, në dobi të demokratizimit të vendit tonë dhe do t'i shërbejë paqes e sigurisë jo vetëm në Kosovë, por në gjithë rajonin tonë.

Zoti Engel, duke ju falënderuar edhe një herë, kam kënaqësinë t'ju ftoj t'i drejtoheni me një fjalë Kuvendit të Republikës së Kosovës.

(Duartrokitje)

KONGRESISTI ELIOT ENGEL:

Prime Minister Thaci, President Sejdiu, President Krasniqi, and members of the Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, and friends all,

It is just such an honor and a pleasure for me to address the Assembly of a new and independent Kosova. This is the second time that I have had the great privilege of speaking before the Kosova Assembly, but obviously because of independence, this is especially meaningful to me. I believe I am the first person who is not in the Government of Kosova to address this Assembly since the Declaration of Independence. What an honor for me is and how happy and proud I am to be here. After 20 years supporting and working for a free Kosova, I can't think of a place I would rather be today than right here with all of you. Thank you President Krasniqi for the opportunity to appear here in the Parliament. Thank you for the meeting with me earlier today, thank you for your frankness in discussing the problems and priorities facing Kosova. We will always work together to make sure that the problems in priorities become successes because the people of Kosova and the nation of Kosova is one great success story. I am joined by my colleague in the House of Representatives, Jean Schmidt from Ohio,

(Duartrokitje)

Jean is visiting Kosova for the first time and I know you will welcome her as warmly as you have always welcomed me. We are in different political parties, Jean and I but we share a love of Kosova and a love of democracy and freedom. We've just have a wonderful time.

(Duartrokitje)

As you are aware, I have been to Kosova many many times in the past but I want to talk very briefly about one time I came to Kosova, really didn't come to Kosova, that was when I came back in 1998, when Kosova attempted to have free elections, but the authorities in Belgrade would not permit them. I wanted to come to Kosova at that time to help monitor and show my support for the elections. I was refused a visa by the Serb authorities in Belgrade, and when I tried to get into Kosova, I was turned away at the border with Macedonia.

The next week we had a rally for Kosova independence outside of the United Nations building in New York and I remember it very well, there were about a 1000 people there, all very enthusiastic. I addressed the crowd and this is what I said and repeated many times since. I said "Last week, I tried to go to Kosova and Milosevic would not let me in. But I have news for him, one day we are going to be in a free and independent Kosova and we're not going to let him in."

(Duartrokitje)

Well, my friends, we are in a free and independent Kosova, and Milosevic, for all the reasons you know, is not coming to celebrate freedom with us. When independence was declared on February 17th, I was so moved when I watched the celebrations in Pristina and other places in Kosova on television. I was particularly touched by the fact that thousands of citizens of Kosova were waving American flags on the streets of Kosova. On the very next day, which happened to be my birthday, the United States recognized Kosova. This was one of the best birthday presents I have ever received.

(Duartrokitje)

I want to assure you that the United States will always stand by the people of Kosova in their quest to build a strong, independent nation and a free society. The United States and Kosova have a lot in common, including the ideals of freedom and democracy. And, of course, you have my personal assurance that as long as I continue to serve in the United States Congress, I will keep the best interests of our two countries at heart. I will make sure that ties between our two nations remain strong and that the U.S. provides Kosova with all the assistance we can give. I have always said that the people of Kosova are the

best friends that America has, and I want you to know the people of the United States of America are the best friends that Kosova has.

(Duartrokitje)

Whenever I mean Kosova I can feel the warmth of people of this great nation toward the United States and towards me personally wherever I go. When I walk down the street or eat in a restaurant or shop in a store, people come up to me and thank me for helping in the struggle for so many years. I truly feel at home here in Kosova.

As you know, the Albanian American community in the U.S. helps foster strong ties between our two countries. I am joined by many of them today, including my good friend, Harry Bajraktari. Kosova needs investment, and the Albanian-American community should lead the way. Harry and Rustem Gecaj, both born in Kosova, are the leading American investors in Kosova, and others should follow their lead. And the new government in Kosova should do everything possible to encourage and enhance investment with privatization and a business friendly tax code.

Building a nation is obviously a difficult task. When I was growing up in New York, I would read about the American patriots who formed a new country. People like George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson are names that are repeated again and again in American history textbooks.

But, here in Kosova we don't have to read about them in textbooks. This generation is the generation of patriots who are carrying the weight of building a new nation. Again, we don't have to read about these patriots in history textbooks. The patriots are all of you. The patriots are the people sitting in parliament today in Pristina. The patriots are the people of Kosova who endured tyranny, dictatorship, discrimination, and so many other indignities for so many other years. The patriots are the ones who came back to Kosova in 1999 to see their houses destroyed and burned, and who worked hard to rebuild them and to rebuild their businesses and to put their families together again. The patriots are the people of Kosova who never lost the dream of independence, and who continued to believe that independence would someday come, even when it seemed like it might never happen. The people of Kosova are all patriots who by their actions played an important part in the rebirth of Kosova, making it possible to have a new independent democratic state.

However, as happy as we are to be in a free and independent Kosova, obviously there are many challenges which lie ahead. Much work needs to be done and the hard work is really in front of us not behind us. The economy needs help. Democratic institutions need to be strengthened. Corruption needs to be stamped out. Unemployment must be reduced. Jobs must be created. There are other problems like water and other things that must be addressed. The energy sector urgently needs revamping and a decisive investment strategy. And, all people of this country need to know that there is a bright future in Kosova, not only for majority Albanians, but for minorities as well.

Kosova must be a multi-ethnic democracy, with protections for minority rights and minority religions. Mosques, monasteries, churches, and all houses of worship must be protected. Kosova must set the example for the region. We must never treat the Serbs and other minorities the way Milosevic mistreated Albanians.

(Duartrokitje)

By opening the doors of freedom to all of the people of this land, you will enshrine your new country in the halls of the Western democracies and will take your place beside the United States and your neighbors in Europe.

And I must say that it starts right here in the Parliament. I had the honor last night yesterday to meet with so many members of the Assembly. Today I met with some opposition members. Yesterday I met with many members of the ruling coalition. This morning I met with members of the SLS, people who say they believe and they want to be an independent Kosova and work with all the people of this country for the rights of all the people.

Today, your country is led by able leaders. I know that you, Prime Minister Thaci, and others fought long and hard during the many difficult years to remove the yoke of repression on the people of Kosova. Those who took up arms so that their nation could one day be free are the heroes of this land, who were not content to be subjugated as second class citizens in perpetuity.

Mr. Prime Minister, I take my hat off to you, you are a hero

(Duartrokitje)

and all of the brave warriors who fought in that struggle. I deeply appreciate meeting with you yesterday at your family home. Your hospitality to me and my delegation will always be remembered. We discussed so many issues, but what is most important is that you know that I am here for you and your country, and always will be.

Freedom does not come easily. The nation of Kosova has endured many indignities and years of strife and hardship. Many families, like the Jasharis, the Haradinajs, and so many others, have sacrificed so that the nation might one day be free. Coming here into the Parliament building we see the pictures on the fence of so many people who are missing, who went away and never came back in the darkest years. Yesterday I saw the graves at Gillogjan Kulla of falling heroes and fortunately these are all over Kosova. Sad times, bad times, time of sadness but times to remember but never forget. These people are also the heroes of Kosova and together, working together we will continue to make the dream come true.

I want to say hello to so many of my friends here in the Assembly today. President Sejdiu, it is always a pleasure to see you. At our meeting yesterday when we talked about the future of Kosova, it was obvious to me that you are truly a man of vision. Thank you for the kind words you said about me at last night's dinner. Foreign Minister Skender Hyseni, I want to address you also, because I remember about 10 years ago

when you worked in my office in Washington as a fellow in a training program. I always joke that people who leave my office get trained so well that they always move on to bigger and better things, and Skender, that certainly is especially true with you.

I would remiss if I didn't also mention the man who was your leader in the most difficult and darkest of times, and was instrumental at ensuring that Kosova would one day be a free and independent nation. I had the honor to call him my friend for many years and had the sadness to attend his funeral in Pristina a few years ago. I am of course referring to Dr. Ibrahim Rugova

(Duartrokitje)

who sacrificed so much for his nation. It is truly tragic and ironic that he never lived to see Kosova become totally free. But the foundation he laid is strong. It is the foundation upon which we are all building.

However, now, it is the year 2008 -- the year of independence -- and we are at the threshold of a new beginning. More than 40 nations have recognized Kosova, and it is my hope and belief that many more will follow. I had discussions about that with the Prime Minister yesterday and I am going to do everything I can in Washington and elsewhere to convince other nations that they must recognize a free and independent Kosova.

Last night, I had the honor and high privilege to attend the ceremony to welcome the entering into force of your new Constitution. How proud I was to sit in the front row next to the Prime Minister and the President. How happy I was to see the American flag on the platform along with the flag of Kosova. To me it rightly emphasized the lasting bond between our two nations. With this new and modern Constitution, Kosova is taking its place in the community of democratic nations where the rule of law is paramount. This modern Constitution enshrines the values of Kosova in a document protecting forever the basic rights of all citizens. My friends, democracy is firmly taking root here. The Ahtisaari plan, in my opinion, provides a good framework on which to build and expand your new Republic. The Ahtisaari plan might not be perfect, but it is a good step forward and a good vision. I wish to praise former President Marti Ahtisaari of Finland for his important contribution, his sense of fairness, and his grasp of the practical realities facing this region. His tireless work has helped the people of Kosova reach this day.

So many leaders around the world have stood with your country in the quest for freedom. President Krasniqi mentioned a few Americans. President Bill Clinton reversed the ethnic cleansing by authorizing the bombing of Milosevic's army of terror and oppression. I remember speaking with President Clinton in Washington during the ethnic cleansing and telling him that we must not let this happen; we must do something about it, to which the President replied to me, don't worry "I will not let this happen." It is fitting that one of the streets in Pristina is named Bill Clinton Boulevard. I must also tell you that it is an honor for me to have a street named in Peja called Congressman Eliot Engel Boulevard.

(Duartrokitje)

In the United States they don't usually name something after you until you die; I am glad that's not the case with Kosova.

I am happy that President Bush has followed similar policies of friendship and support for the people of Kosova. United States policy toward Kosova is truly bipartisan, and I am glad that my Republican colleague, Jean Schmidt, a Congresswoman from Ohio, is here with me today. Together, we demonstrate that Democrats and Republicans share the commitment to this region.

I firmly believe that progress is only made when the United States engages intensively and directly in southern Europe. American leadership has been the driving force behind the progress here in Kosova and throughout the Balkans, and we must not walk away from the challenges that lie ahead. Whoever is elected President of the United States later this year must carry on the policies of engagement and close ties with the people of Kosova. You have my personal assurance that I will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that the new United States President whoever he may be will strengthen the friendship with Kosova and brings our relationship into a new era. I pledge to speak with the new President to educate him on the relationship between the US and Kosova and to make sure that we continue the policies of working together closely.

But, the international community must also understand that the bond between Kosova and the United States is strong and will always remain unshaken. Our friendship is solid and our commitment to your democracy is firm. Likewise, the world must know that the new Republic of Kosova is permanent and here to stay. It has joined the family of freedom-loving nations and stands proudly in this region of newly independent countries forging a Euro-Atlantic future. And, if I have my way, Kosova will one day join Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia, too, in NATO and the European Union.

(Duartrokitje)

Let me also comment on another important issue of the day. As I stand before you today, the international community is deciding when and how to make the transition from the United Nations to the European Union here in Kosova. While this is a decision for others to make, the imperative is clear. The time for the U.N. to lead the international presence in this country is over.

(Duartrokitje)

We must not allow the rejectionists in Moscow, Belgrade, and elsewhere to block progress in Kosova and foster instability. The Secretary General should accelerate the transition and permit the EULEX mission to begin full operations as soon as possible.

The shift is not only from UNMIK to EULEX. The real transition is to the Government of Kosova. We have learned during the UNMIK years that delaying the turn-over of

power to your elected leaders prevents the people of Kosova from running their own lives and only engenders resentment. The transfer of most competencies happened in the last year or two, but through the Ahtisaari plan, I hope we can hasten the day when the process is complete and Kosova is fully sovereign.

Finally, I would also like to pay special tribute to the United States armed forces based at Camp Bondsteel. Yesterday, Jean Schmidt and I visited the American soldiers and told them how much we appreciate their service. They have helped provide security to all people in Kosova, regardless of ethnicity, and have lived up to the values the United States espouses throughout the world. They have my deepest appreciation and the thanks of a grateful nation.

Again, I want to share what an honor it has been to speak in the Assembly of a free and independent Kosova. I recall that when I entered Congress almost 20 years ago, the notion of Kosova becoming a sovereign land was merely a dream. Then we were grasping at straws as we fought against the Milosevic oppression. But today, the dream is a reality and justice has been done. Your freedom is a benefit to the community of nations and your salvation is a testament to humanity. I wish you all the best as you embark on this magnificent journey and look forward to helping you in the days ahead. Thank you so much for letting me speak.

Përgatiti:

**Njësia e Transkripteve**