



# CQ contents

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**ON THE COVER:** After terrorists struck the 2013 Boston Marathon on April 15, amateur radio played an important role in assisting medical teams when cell phone circuits were overwhelmed. Inset photo, from left: Nick Weber, W3BER; Ed Gustaf, W1FBI, and Andy Maroney, W2AJM, handle radio traffic at the Net Control Center. See Public Service on p. 13 for the complete story. (Bombing scene photograph by Aaron Tang, licensed via Wikimedia Commons. Inset photograph by and courtesy of Bruce Tinkler, N8BJT.)

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*Whenever a new country has come on the air in the past 50 years, there's a good chance that Martti Laine, OH2BH, has had something to do with it. Here is his story of the rebirth of amateur radio in Europe's newest country, the Republic of Kosovo.*

## **Z6: Last New Country from the Heart of Europe**

### **The Story of Amateur Radio in the Republic of Kosovo**

BY MARTTI J. LAINE,\* OH2BH

**E**urope today looks rather peaceful, and it's not surprising. The European Union (EU) was the recipient of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize following the 2011 prize conferred on President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland. Both events symbolically underlined the

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achievements of recent years, the EU's efforts to stabilize Europe and Ahtisaari's efforts to sort out the many conflicts in the Balkans and elsewhere. Such efforts included his role as the UN Envoy for Kosovo in drafting a road map for peace in Europe's last new country, the Republic of Kosovo. Ahtisaari's aim was to enable Kosovo to enter the inter-

national scene in a structured and peaceful manner, putting hardships and arms to rest. As a result, a new country was born in Europe.

The year 2012 was also historic for Kosovo as a multinational amateur radio delegation and, with International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Region I participation, the country's amateur ser-



*Photo A— The amateur radio delegation worked hard at the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) to complete even smallest details of modern amateur radio regulations. The regulations were released on September 17, 2012 as part of the opening ceremony. At the rear of the working group are (from left) Hans Blondeel Timmerman, PB2T, President of IARU Region 1; Martti Laine, OH2BH, Coordinator of Mission Goodwill Kosovo; Nikola Percin, 9A5W, IARU R1 Executive Committee Member, and Robert Barden, N2BB/MD@CCE. TRA Chairman Ekrem Hoxha (at head of table) chaired the meeting along with his regulatory team (on the left). (All photos courtesy of the author)*

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*Photo B—Hans, PB2T (center, with moustache), is surrounded by the first 11 relicensed Kosovar amateur radio operators, who are proudly showing their new licenses.*

vice was launched—with governing regulations—allowing Kosovar amateurs to end their 25-year hiatus and rejoin the ham radio ranks (photo A). Representatives of six nations experienced highly spirited days in the capital city of Pristina. They witnessed and shared in the smiles and tears when Kosovo hit the radio waves with pride and in style.

September 10, 2012 had marked the end of Kosovo's supervised independence as the 25-nation-strong International Steering Group ended its role in guiding Kosovo toward functional independence. The steering group confirmed the establishment of all legal functions and a variety of procedures in an evolving society and placed all functions of state into the hands of the sovereign nation of Kosovo. Among those procedures was the issuance of the Z6 callsign block, allowing the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Kosovo (TRA) to release its amateur radio regulations and subsequently the first series of Z6 licenses.

Those who had worked hard to see this memorable day were in tears as they shared the happiness of the new Z6 hams when they made their first QSOs on September 17, after a ceremony at the Pristina Emerald Hotel. The occasion was put together by the government of Kosovo to show its appreci-

ation to the international delegation for their years of support in bringing amateur radio back to Kosovo. Hans Timmerman, PB2T, IARU Region 1 President, made official congratulatory remarks, while Sabit Zymberi, Z61AA (ex YUBAA), as President of the Kosovo

Amateur Radio Association, reciprocated. Representatives of the Kosovo government then released the first eleven licenses (photo B), including one, Z60K, to the visiting international team (photo C). The visiting team and the new Kosovo hams followed by conducting



*Photo C—The Z60K QSL cards illustrate the happy occasion with the project group meeting their patron, Dr. Besim Beqaj, Minister of Economics (including telecommunications). A total of 18,545 QSOs were handed out with modest setups at two different locations. Nigel, G3TXF, one of the participants, acts as the QSL manager. All of the cards are already released through the QSL bureau network.*