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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**EC publishes Progress Report on Kosovo (*dailies*)**

The European Commission has published this year’s Progress Report on Kosovo which, according to ***Koha Ditore***, identifies almost the same challenges as last year. The report speaks about slow and inefficient administration of justice, lack of accountability of judicial officials, widespread corruption and shortcomings in the legislation for fighting organised crime. It also claims there is a low number of convictions in organised crime cases, political influence over the public administration and independent agencies. The head of the EU in Kosovo, Nataliya Apostolova said it is clear Kosovo remains at the early stages of preparations for taking on EU accession obligations. President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, said that while the challenges in the report may be a reflection of the situation in Kosovo, they are “excessively” highlighted to justify the inability and lack of unity on the part of the EU towards offering Kosovo clear EU perspective. At the same time, Prime Minister of Kosovo Isa Mustafa said he will analyse the findings of the report and come out with an official position at a later stage.

**Apostolova: If there is a decision for elections, we will support it (*Zeri*)**

The head of the European Union Office in Kosovo, Natalyia Apostolova, told the paper that if early elections are the will and desire of the people, then of course the European Union will support early elections. According to her, the EU would support any democratic process, but called for caution about this idea because the process is not clear at the moment. In regards to the Progress Report, Apostolova said the report represents a real picture. “The Assembly did not function for a long time, opposition did not use democratic means to express disagreement, and they even used teargas. This report highlights these issues but also calls on all political leaders to work together and overcome the crisis. One of the causes of this crisis is border demarcation with Montenegro, which is very important for the visa liberalization process,” she said. Apostolova also called on the Serbian List MPs to return to work in Parliament as that is the only way to contribute to issues of relevance to them.

**Lunacek: Kosovars deserve visa liberalisation (*Zeri*)**

The European Parliament Rapporteur for Kosovo, Ulrike Lunacek, said on Wednesday that Kosovo politicians hold the key to visa liberalisation. She said she believes that the citizens of Kosovo deserve visa liberalisation as soon as possible. “The lack of prospects for the travel freedoms which are being enjoyed anywhere else in the region, is an unacceptable situation which must come to an end. The green light from the Commission for visa liberalisation as soon as the remaining two criteria are fulfilled, is very good news. Now it is up to the Parliament and government of Kosovo. This means that Kosovo politicians hold the key to visa liberalization. Ratification of the agreement on demarcation with Montenegro must be finished,” Lunacek said. ***Koha Ditore*** and ***RTK*** report that Lunacek is expected to visit Kosovo today and hold a press conference at the EU Information and Cultural Centre in Pristina.

**Journalist association concerned with Progress Report findings (*Koha*)**

The Kosovo Journalist Association has expressed concern with the findings of the European Commission Progress Report in the field of the media. Freedom of expression and of the press are guaranteed rights in Kosovo, recalled the association in a statement adding that unfortunately this right is being violated. “We are concerned with the findings of the Progress Report regarding the freedom of expression and the working environment for the journalists in our country,” the statement reads. The journalists note however that the findings presented in the report are only some of the challenges that they face in their day-to-day work. “A certain number of journalists continue to work without contracts and oftentimes are subject to censorship in their work places,” the Kosovo Journalist Association further said.

**Delawie: The U.S. policy toward Kosovo, unchanged (*Bota Sot*)**

The Ambassador of the United States to Kosovo, Greg Delawie considers that no matter who wins the presidential competition in the U.S., relations with Kosovo would not change. He said that Kosovo has always had U.S support and it will remain so. Relations between the U.S. and Kosovo are excellent, Delawie said.

**Hoxha: There is security camera recording in Dehari’s case (*dailies*)**

Chief Prosecutor of the Prosecution in Prizren, Sylë Hoxha, spoke for ***KTV*** about the evidence and investigation into the death of Vetevendosje activist, Astrit Dehari. He stressed that among the evidence, there are also security camera recordings which can prove if there were movements of people to Dehari’s cell. “There was a camera at the corridor which leads to the room of the deceased. It is confiscated and watched by the police. The recording exists and it was watched to see if anyone entered or left the room of the deceased at the time when the case happened,” Hoxha said.

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