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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Belgrade warns with increase of pressure on Association issue (*Koha*)**

Serbian representatives have warned that they will increase pressure on the government of Kosovo, to draft the governing decree, which is the first step towards the establishment of the Association of the Serb-majority Municipalities. Officials in Pristina on the other hand have excluded the possibility of any engagement on the matter prior to Kosovo’s obtaining the telephone code by the ITU. However, the paper notes that despite the lack of information about any official meeting regarding the drafting of the decree and statute of the Association, representatives of the Serbian government, together with the ministers from Mustafa’s cabinet and mayors of northern municipalities, have already started discussions on finding modalities of establishment of the Association.

**Serbian List MPs will not participate in today’s Assembly session (*Koha*)**

The Serbian List announced today in a press statement that its members will not participate in today’s plenary session of the Assembly, which among other things will discuss the Law on Religious Freedom, reports the news site. The statement also noted that the representatives of Serbs in Kosovo agree that this matter be regulated by law, but only “after the political conditions are right for Serbian List to return to institutions.” “Unfortunately, for now, there are no conditions for participation of Serb representatives in the central institutions because the Serbian people in Kosovo only received dried promises to respect their rights and vital interests in the process of making important decisions,” notes the statement.

**Increased readiness within EU for visa liberalisation for Kosovo (*Epoka* *e* *Re*)**

Kosovo’s Foreign Minister, Enver Hoxhaj, during his visit to Poland on Tuesday met with Polish Foreign Minister, Witold Waszczykowski and Slovakia’s Foreign Minister, Miroslav Lajcak, with whom he discussed the process of visa liberalisation for Kosovo. Since Slovakia currently has the Presidency of the EU, Hoxhaj asked Lajcak to have a positive decision by year’s end on the process of visa liberalisation for Kosovo. “I had very positive meetings with my counterparts from Poland and Slovakia. We talked about cooperation in many areas, but we mostly focused on the issue of visa liberalisation for Kosovo. Since Slovakia has the EU presidency, I have asked Minister Lajcak to have a positive decision in this regard. I believe that even within the EU there is an increased readiness for a positive decision on visas for Kosovo,” Hoxhaj said. All media report that Hoxhaj has criticised his Serbian counterpart Ivica Dacic during the meeting of foreign ministers of Visegrad and Balkans Forum which is being held in Warsaw. Hoxhaj compared Dacic’s behaviour and discourse in relation with Kosovo to former Serbia’s President Slobodan Milosevic.

**Prosecution to investigate Astrit Dehari’s visitors in prison (*Indeksonline*)**

The news site reports that all those who visited Vetevendosje’s activist Astrit Dehari who died while in Prizren detention facility, will become part of the investigation of the Prosecution Office. Unidentified sources told ***Indeksonline*** that Dehari’s visitors will be interviewed by the investigating officers for solving this case. This is because there are indications that someone from visitors has pushed Dehari to suicide. “There are indications that someone from the visitors could have affected Dehari’s mental state,” said the source. The same source also said that the Prosecution Office will issue a final report on this case sometime late December or early January.

**Amnesty International raises Astrit Dehari’s case (*Koha Ditore*)**

Dehari’s case was one of the issues that representatives of the Amnesty International expressed interest during their meetings with Kosovo’s senior officials on Monday and Tuesday, including President Hashim Thaçi and Prime Minister Isa Mustafa. The paper has learned that Amnesty International Deputy Director for Europe and Central Asia, Gauri van Gulik, accompanied by the researcher for Balkans, Todor Gardos raised the issue of Astrit Dehari’s death at the detention center, the issue of war crimes and Special Court. “Productive meeting with Kosovo PM Isa Mustafa Raised war crimes, women's rights, Roma and the Astrit Dehari case,” van Gulik wrote on her Twitter account.

**Drenas elections bypass demarcation (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports that the border demarcation with Montenegro currently is not on the agenda of the ruling coalition, since they are more focused now on the mayoral elections in Drenas/Glogovac. According to the paper, during the last days senior officials of the ruling parties were seen at the election campaign in Drenas/Glogovac. However, the Office of the Prime Minister said they are waiting for the opposition and Serbian List to support the process, while the opposition parties say the ruling coalition is not interested to solve this issue. Kosovo’s Deputy Minister of Local Government Administration, Bajram Gecaj, said the government is not neglecting the demarcation issue. “We are not neglecting the issue, but currently we don’t have many options. Opposition or Serbian List must cooperate and they don’t give promising signals,” Gecaj said.

**An additional month of detention for Vetëvendosje activists (*media*)**

The Basic Court in Pristina has decided to extend the current security measures for the four Vetëvendosje activists, suspected for the attack on the Assembly of Kosovo. Based on this decision, Atdhe Arifi and Egzon Haliti will continue to be detained for an additional month while Adea Batusha and Frashër Krasniqi will continue to be in house arrest during the same period of time. Petrit Ademi was released from house arrest, however, he is obliged to report to the police station for one month.

Vetëvendosje movement considers that the decision of the court is political and arbitrary.

**The court requests additional information on Ukë Rugova’s case (*media*)**

The court session on the case of late President Rugova’s son, Ukë Rogova and 18 other suspects for organized crime on the visa scandal, was held on Tuesday. The paper reports that president of the panel of judges on the case, Victor Partal, was replaced with another judge from the EULEX mission, Vladimir Micula. The court session could not be considered regular, being that one of the defendants, former Minister of Culture, Astrit Haraqija, was not present. The panel of the judges, however, requested the EULEX prosecutor, Allen Cansic, to change the indictment by concretizing the crimes.

**O’Connell: Nepotism culture needs to end in Kosovo (*RTKLive*)**

The British Ambassador to Kosovo, Ruairi O’Connell, met on Tuesday with Kosovo’s Minister of Public Administration, Mahir Yagcilar to discuss the British-funded project to support merit-based independent public appointments. “The culture of nepotism needs to end, and this requires political will and action from the Government,” O’Connell said.

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