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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Kosovo Assembly to hold constitutive session on 3 August (*media*)**

All media report that Kosovo President Hashim Thaci called for the first meeting of the Sixth Legislature of the Assembly of Kosovo, on 3 August, at 10:00 hours. President Thaci instructed the President and presidency of the Fifth Legislature, to prepare the proposal of the agenda, in accordance with the respective legislation in power. President Thaci’s decision which came in power today, is based on Article 66 (paragraph 3) and Article 84 (point 3) of the Constitution of Kosovo, Article 6 of Law Number 03/L-094 for the President of Kosovo, as well as based on the decision of the Central Election Commission on 8 July 2017, for certification of the final results of the early elections for the Assembly of Kosovo, held on 11 June 2017. Under the leading front-page headline ***Thaci gives 10 more days to PDK-AAK-NISMA coalition***, the paper notes that this is seen as buying time for the PAN coalition to secure enough votes to form a new government. The paper also reports that the Vetevendosje Movement has warned they will send the President to the Constitutional Court if he does not give them the mandate to form a new government if Ramush Haradinaj fails to form a government. ***Zeri*** reports on the front page that Kadri Veseli will be the candidate of the PAN coalition for Assembly President and meanwhile Vetevendosje and LDK-AKR-Alternative representatives have said they will not vote in favor of Veseli. ***Bota Sot*** warns on its front page that President Thaci “will not give the mandate to Vetevendosje after PAN fails” and that “the President has a dangerous scenario to send the country to new elections”.

**Thaci to go to court if second-time mandate not given to Vetevendosje (*Bota Sot*)**

Vetevendosje MP, Glauk Konjufca, said Vetevendosje would send President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, to the Constitutional Court if he does not give them the mandate for forming the new government the second time around. He said all legal experts maintain that the second attempt at forming the government should be given to the entity that proves it has parliamentary majority and if Thaci fails to adhere to this, he would be committing a grave violation. Konjufca further said that Thaci is not acting as president of Kosovo but more as president of the PAN coalition and that he has intentionally been delaying calling for the Assembly’s constitutive session. He also made it clear that Vetevendosje would not be voting for Kadri Veseli as Assembly Speaker as they consider him to be the “main abuser of citizens’ interests”.

**Haziri: LDK has no votes to spare for PAN (*Zeri*)**

Deputy leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Lutfi Haziri, said in an interview to the paper that his party has no votes to spare for PAN coalition and that the support PAN’s candidate for prime minister, Ramush Haradinaj, received from the family of the late President Ibrahim Rugova doesn’t translate into votes for his government. Haziri said MP Teuta Rugova, daughter of the late president, has made it clear she would vote in line with her party’s position and that “LDK is unified in its positions”. “Those who have poisoned the well cannot make us drink from it”, Haziri said.

**Sejdiu: Progress in talks between LAA and Vetevendosje (*Zeri*)**

Deputy leader of the New Kosovo Alliance (AKR), Korab Sejdiu, said talks between the LDK-AKR-Alternativa coalition and Vetevendosje have made certain progress and that he hoped this would culminate in a coalition agreement. “Upon the failure of PAN to form the government, the broad coalition between our entities and Vetevendosje will take over the helm”, Sejdiu said.

**Hoxhaj: Change of Serbia’s policy should start with recognition (*BIRN*)**

Kosovo’s outgoing Minister for Foreign Affairs, Enver Hoxhaj, welcomed the statement of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic on resolving relations between Pristina and Belgrade, through internal dialogue in Serbia. He said that if such policy is true, then this would be a welcomed turn. “Breaking the silence and acceptance of the truth for Kosovo’s independence and sovereignty would open way for reconciliation of societies, regional cooperation, European integration and improvement of the international position of both countries,” Hoxhaj said. He added that if Vucic succeeds to turn policy towards Kosovo on the right track, he would not only free his country from historical myths and destructive policies, but also do a major favor of overcoming the past and conflict in the region.

**Tahiri: Opposition should be involved in third phase of dialogue (*Epoka*)**

Kosovo’s outgoing minister for dialogue, Edita Tahiri, said in an interview to the paper that in the concluding phase of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade in Brussels, Kosovo’s delegation should resemble the “Unity Team” that led the negotiations in Vienna. She told the paper that the opposition too should be involved in this phase of dialogue. According to her, these discussions should not be lasting long, and they would concern reciprocal recognition between Kosovo and Serbia. Speaking about the recent report that she has sent to Brussels, Tahiri said that the EU should be doing more in order for the agreements to be implemented.

**Petrovic: Serbian Lists represents Serbian government (*RTK*)**

The Leader of the Serbian Liberal Party (SLS), Slobodan Petrovic, said that there is a possibility for Serbs to have more than one position in the Kosovo government, which is guaranteed by the Constitution. Asked whether he considers himself a representative of only central Kosovo, Petrovic said “some analysts think that SLS does not represent only Serbs from central but from the entire Kosovo, being that the others, (Serbian List), are representatives of the Serbian government,” Petrovic said.

**Hyseni visits Interpol headquarters (*Zeri/Indeksonline*)**

Kosovo’s Interior Minister, Skender Hyseni, met Interpol’s Secretary General, Jurgen Stock, in Lyon, France and spoke about Kosovo’s membership in the ogranisation. A press release issued by Kosovo’s Interior Ministry reiterated that Interpol’s Executive Committee in its last meeting in June decided to include Kosovo’s membership bid on the agenda of its upcoming General Assembly set to take place in September in Beijing, China. “Interpol’s Secretary General, Jurgen Stock, is extremely happy with our progress and as a result the meeting today was very cordial and we discussed in great lengths Kosovo’s preparation for membership”, Hyseni told ***Indeksonline***.

**Rakic “disappointed” with EU’s decision to cancel €7.8 million aid (*Zeri*)**

Mitrovica North Mayor, Goran Rakic, has reacted to the decision of the EU Office in Kosovo to cancel €7.8 million of financial support to the municipality by accusing the Special Representative, Nataliya Apostolova, for political interference. “I am absolutely disappointed by this decision”, Rakic said. He alleged that ever since Apostolova succeeded Samuel Zbogar to the post, “she only dealt with political blackmail, which we will not accept”. Earlier the EU announced it was cancelling the funds which foresaw the construction of a cultural centre and of a new university building in North Mitrovica as the local authorities failed to remove the existing illegal buildings and free the access to all working areas.

**Results lacking even at the sixth anniversary of police intervention in north (*Koha*)**

In one of its front-page stories, the paper reports that it has been six years since Kosovo Police special units (ROSU) intervened in the northern part of Kosovo to regain control over the two border crossing points with Serbia. The action was seen as the first serious effort by Kosovo institutions to wield their authority in the north. The paper reports: although state leaders at the time, and even later in the anniversaries of the intervention, claimed this action prevented the division of Kosovo, many things remain unchanged in the north. Barricades on many of the roads in the northern municipalities were just recently removed. They are of little importance however because of the symbols of division and lack of freedom of movement, such as the Ibar Bridge and the main road in Mitrovica North, which remain blocked,” the paper reports.

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