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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Kosovo Assembly faces crucial test today (*dailies*)**

The main focus of daily papers today is the Assembly’s constitutive session and whether PAN coalition will prove it has sufficient votes to form new institutions. ***Koha Ditore*** runs through the procedures expected to take place at the session set to begin at 10 o’clock, and notes that although Kadri Veseli is the most-talked about candidate for the post of Assembly Speaker, his candidacy has not been officially confirmed. ***Zeri*** on the front page writes that Kadri Veseli enjoys the support of PAN to be elected as the Assembly Speaker, but Vetevendosje and LAA coalition have openly opposed his election while the Serbian List has not yet come out with a definite stance. The paper also carries a list of MPs and which way it expects them to vote today. According to the list, PAN coalition has only 50 certain votes while 58 are expected to vote against. However, there are 12 MPs for whom the paper is not sure which way they will vote and this figure also includes two MPs from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Naser Rugova and Teuta Rugova and one from the New Kosovo Alliance (AKR), Labinot Tahiri. Meanwhile, ***Bota Sot*** writes that PAN’s plan to “smuggle” MPs has failed and that Teuta Rugova will vote in line with her party’s position.

**Rugova: There will be sanctions for any LDK MP that supports Veseli (*Zeri*)**

Deputy leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Haki Rugova, said in an interview to ***Gazeta Observer*** news website that the party will remain in the opposition and will not enter a coalition with PAN. Commenting on the reports that certain LDK MPs are expected to vote for Kadri Veseli as Assembly Speaker, Rugova said he didn’t believe in such a scenario. If, however, there are LDK MPs who choose to support Veseli, the party would take measures against them, Rugova said.

**Thaci: Kosovo should join NATO (*Epoka e Re*)**

President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, said in his address at the U.S.-Adriatic Charter summit taking place in Podgorica that it is not enough for NATO to be in Kosovo but “We need Kosovo in NATO”. Thaci said he was aware that before joining NATO, Kosovo needs to finish the transition of Kosovo Security Forces and to establish a multiethnic army. “And I promise this is our goal. We will do this in full coordination with NATO and with our partners,” he said. Thaci also warned of “unfinished business” in the Western Balkan region and of forces that try to delay Euro-Atlantic integrations. “Europe cannot afford black holes and Brussels should not delay further reaching to the region. This delays is creating a vacuum, and anti-western ideologies and influences, be it Russian or fundamental Islamism, are rushing to fill this vacuum”.

**President Thaci meets U.S. Vice President Pence (*dailies*)**

President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, met with the U.S. Vice President Mike Pence yesterday in Podgorica, papers report. Thaci said he had a very friendly meeting with Pence whom he assured that Kosovo is a factor of peace and stability in the region. “We are therefore working jointly to establish Kosovo Armed Forces, as a professional and multiethnic defence force in the service of all citizens”, Thaci wrote on Facebook after the meeting. He also expressed the zero-tolerance stance of Kosovo institutions towards any type of extremism, radicalization, and terrorism and the commitment to continue dialogue and good neighbourly relations. “The U.S. stood by our side in the past and we will be together in the future too. The U.S. leadership is irreplaceable to our Euro-Atlantic aspirations”, Thaci said.

**KEK: Kosovo avoids energy crisis (*Zeri*)**

In a press conference yesterday, director of the Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK), Arben Gjukaj, said they have managed to avert a possible energy crisis by reaching agreement with families to allow expropriation of their land for coal extraction. Gjukaj said KEK managed to reach agreement with two families at this stage but hoped that other families living in the area and affected by expropriation law would accept their offer soon.

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