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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**EU: Pristina-Belgrade dialogue in close cooperation with U.S. (*Zeri*)**

European Commission spokesperson, Maja Kocijancic, said that the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade has continuously enjoyed the U.S. support and this cooperation will continue in the future. Kocijancic made the statement to Belgrade news agency ***Beta*** following statements by Kosovo leaders arguing for the need of the U.S. to be involved in, as they say, the final stage of the dialogue for normalization of relations with Serbia.

**Veseli: Serbia cannot rule Kosovo (*Epoka e Re*)**

Kosovo Assembly President and leader of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Kadri Veseli, said Kosovo will never be ruled by Serbia. “We are open to good neighbourly relations and we will continue our efforts to this end but provocations coming from Serbia about our stability and perspective are groundless,” Veseli said during an election campaign visit to the municipality of Rahovec/Orahovac.

**Serbs want Association/Community after local elections (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that Kosovo Serbs are planning to form the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities at the end of October, after the 22 October local elections. Serbs will insist that the only guideline to form the Association/Community are the Brussels agreements, and not the ruling of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo which found violations in seven chapters of the agreement on the Association/Community.

**Albanian PM Rama accuses EU of unjustly treating Kosovo (*Zeri*)**

The EU institutions have come under the criticism from the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, who said that the people of Kosovo are being treated unjustly with regards to the visa liberalisation process. In an interview to Austrian paper, ***Standard Vienna***, Rama said the people of Kosovo remain the only ones in the region that need visas to travel to Europe. “The EU tells them they need to ratify demarcation with Montenegro while at the same time it negotiates with Serbia that does not recognise Kosovo let alone its borders,” Rama said.

**Engel: The U.S. planned Kosovo’s admission at INTERPOL (*RTK*)**

The U.S. Congressman, Eliot Engel, told Jerusalem Post that the U.S. had a plan for Kosovo’s membership at INTERPOL. According to him, it was a joint plan with Russia and China, however the U.S. were deceived and Kosovo was left out. “American diplomacy clearly failed at INTERPOL and it appears that we did not have a plan B. This was the impact of Trump administration in foreign policy; Russia and China deceived us and now, Palestine is part of INTERPOL while our ally, Kosovo, is not,” Engel said. “I will request from our bodies to hear how they intend to correct this mistake,” he said. Kosovo withdrew its application after being warned by Trump administration that they would not have sufficient votes.

**“Kosovo tried to avoid membership procedures at UNESCO” (*Lajmi*)**

Serbian ambassador at UNESCO, Darko Tanaskovic, claims that Kosovo tried to avoid procedures for membership at UNESCO. He told Novosti that Pristina authorities tried to make surprises but they drowned. “Ideas to shorten the procedures appeared time after time… There were intentions to put Kosovo in the agenda at the General Conference, being that this request was rejected in 2015. Furthermore, there were information that Pristina would send a request to the UNESCO Director General, and not to the Executive Council, Tanaskovic said. “Pristina will certainly continue with its efforts despite the three defeats: at Customs Organisation, INTERPOL and UNESCO,” he said.

**Jaksic: New approach is needed in dialogue (*Koha*)**

Bosko Jaksic, a report and political analyst with extensive experience from conflict zones in the Middle East, in a front-page interview to the paper, said that the West is well aware of the threat from increased Russian influence in the Balkans and that this is why the West is trying to revive the process of talks between Pristina and Belgrade. Jaksic said dialogue must change its form because currently it is a process “on life support”. He also argued that he does not believe the European Union’s attempt to change the format of negotiations will suffice, “because the solution lies in the essential change of the approach”.

**LDK: Thaci interfering in election campaign (*Bota Sot*)**

The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) branch in Vushtrri/Vucitrn has accused President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, of interfering in the local election campaign after he reportedly visited the municipality and met officials from his former party, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). The LDK branch condemned President’s “attempts at political interference” and reminded him of his constitutional obligations of being an apolitical and impartial figure.

**Albanian PM appoints four deputy ministers from Kosovo (*media*)**

Most media report that Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, has appointed four Kosovo Albanians as deputy ministers in his government. Besa Shahini, Hajrulla Ceku, Valbona Shujaku and Ilirjana Bajraktari are four out of 33 deputy ministers in the new government of Albania. ***Koha Ditore*** covers the news under a front-page headline ***Rama “kosovarizes” the Government of Albania***.

**Albanian police deport Sadri Ramabaja to Kosovo (*Koha*)**

Sadri Ramabaja, former Vetevendosje’s candidate for MP, who is suspected by the Special Prosecution of Kosovo of planning attacks on high-level officials, was detained by Albanian police in Durres as he was trying to leave for Italy. Ramabaja was later deported by Albanian Police and handed over to Kosovo Police at the Vermice border-crossing point. The paper further notes that Ramabaja and several other personalities, who mainly lived in Switzerland, are suspected of being involved in the terrorist organization “Syri i Popullit” [The Eye of the People].

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