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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Thaci: Demarcation should be ratified (*dailies*)**

Kosovo’s President, Hashim Thaci, took to Facebook to write that Kosovo should ratify the demarcation of the border with Montenegro. “I few days divide us from the publication of the Council of Europe’s strategy for European integration of Western Balkans. This is a historic possibility for Kosovo to be also included in a dignified manner in this strategy and to offer clarity to Kosovo’s citizens for the next steps towards the European Integration. This clarity, together with the freedom of movement without visas, would be a good news for each citizen of Kosovo, on the tenth anniversary of the independence of our country. The EU which has this strategy in its hands, just as other significant decisions for our country, is not preoccupied with what does the citizen want, but it is interested to see how much are the requirements fulfilled by the institutions of our country. Therefore, there is nothing unknown here. The urgent question in front of us is: are we going to do what is required to remove doubt on whether we want a future in the EU? Do we want to give our youth a chance to make efforts for a meritorious future in the European family? Or do we want to want to involve them forever in short sighted political causes. Now is not the time to blame or justify, but for actions in the interests of the state and the citizens. I cannot emphasize enough that it is necessary at this moment to show proper leadership. And such a decision is also the ratification of the agreement on border demarcation with Montenegro, a country that made difficult decisions in relation to Kosovo, for which we are grateful. We need to do what is in the best interest of citizens, a clear European perspective and a free movement of our citizens in Europe,” Thaci wrote.

**“Secret border demarcation solution” (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports on the front page that a week before the Montenegrin Prime Minister’s visit, Deputy Prime Minister Fatmir Limaj has hinted at a possible solution on the border demarcation issue but did not elaborate further as to how this is planned to be achieved. At the same time, Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj said that they visit of the Montenegrin PM, Dusko Markovic, is primarily aimed at looking into ways to increase bilateral cooperation and that he thought there is not much room left to negotiate a border demarcation deal during the visit. Yesterday, President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci also made a plea for ratification of the border demarcation agreement as the only way that people of Kosovo would be able to travel freely to Europe.

**Deda: There is no renegotiation of the demarcation agreement (*RTK*)**

Kosovo Assembly MP from Alternative, Ilir Deda told ***TV*** ***Dukagjini*** that those who speak about renegotiation of the Agreement on demarcation of the border with Montenegro, are not based on the current reality. He added that the only solution is reach of a consensus, which was not sought by the previous government and neither is it not being sought by the current one. “After the visit of the Montenegrin Prime Minister, Kosovo’s Prime Minister should call a meeting with political parties to discuss together the ways of moving forward and build consensus,” he said.

**Not certain when initiative to abrogate special court will reach Assembly (*Zeri*)**

The paper writes that it is still not certain when the initiative of 43 MP to abrogate law on specialist chambers will be brought before the Assembly by the government. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj said they are treating the issue in line with all procedural steps and will be timely addressed while MP from the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), Teuta Haxhiu, said the initiative would have to be delivered to the Assembly as a matter of urgency. “The fact that it [initiative] has gone to the government is to me a mistrake,” Haxhiu said. Meanwhile, MPs from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) called on the government to stop “adventures” with the specialist chambers and put the interest of the people above all else. Analyst Imer Mushkolaj at the same time believes that the ruling parties are intentionally delaying the issue and predicts that in a month’s time the government will send the issue back to the Assembly which will then have two months to discuss it.

**EU reaffirms position against abrogation of special court (*Bota Sot/RFE*)**

The EU foreign policy spokesperson, Maja Kocijancic, told ***Radio Free Europe*** that the EU has not changed its position against the initiative for abrogating the law on specialist chambers. “There was a statement by our office in Pristina and this is our position,” Kocijancic said.

**Hoxhaj: Russia’s statements on Ivanovic, focus on destabilization (*BIRN, RTK*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Enver Hoxhaj told *BIRN* that official statements issued by the Foreign Ministry of Russia on the process of investigations on the murder of former Kosovo Assembly MP Oliver Ivanovic, are efforts to interfere on internal matters of Kosovo, and harm credibility of Kosovo’s justice institutions. He added that the focus of these statements is not justice but destabilization. “These statements are ill-intentioned and destructive…This has always been Russia’s role in relation to Kosovo and the region. Western Balkans remains politically, geographically and historically a European region, committed to EU, NATO and other Euro-Atlantic structures integration,” Hoxhaj said.

Spokesperson of Russia’s Foreign Ministry stated on Monday that Pristina and its allies are hiding something with regards to the investigation on Oliver Ivanovic’s murder.

**Kosovo government sends letter to Brussels about integration uncertainty (*Koha*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Prime Minister Enver Hoxhaj confirmed to the paper on Monday that on behalf of the Kosovo Government he sent a letter to EU Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn, expressing Pristina’s concerns over the uncertainty of Kosovo’s European integration perspective in the Commission’s new enlargement strategy. In the letter, Hoxhaj asked that before the strategy is finalized, there should be clear timelines and criteria that Kosovo needs to meet during the integration process. “If we take part in dialogue and if we are a factor of peace and stability in the region, we meet internal criteria, we implement the SAA, the question arises how we are going to be rewarded. It is very important for us that at the end of dialogue, both Kosovo and Serbia to get rewards of the same state importance. In any other scenario, dialogue would be meaningless,” Hoxhaj wrote in his letter.

**Pacolli and Government with different positions (*Koha*)**

The Kosovo government did not say if it will undertake actions to avoid contradictory statements such as the recent remarks by Foreign Minister Behgjet Pacolli who said that Serbia must not necessarily recognize Kosovo’s independence. The Office of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj told the paper on Monday that mutual recognition is inevitable. “Kosovo has resumed dialogue with Serbia and this process has no other alternative. However, we believe that dialogue must be structured and have timelines and that its outcome should be the mutual recognition between the two countries. The normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia guarantees peace and stability and ultimately facilitates the Euro-Atlantic integration of all the Western Balkans. A condition in this path are good neighborly relations and it should serve to achieve reconciliation and respect between our countries,” the reply noted.

**Anti-corruption agency rules Haradinaj’s decision on pay raise is unlawful (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo’s Anti-Corruption Agency has declared the decision of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj to increase the salary for himself and his cabinet to be unlawful. The agency said the decision is in violation to the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest and recommended the decision be reconsidered.

**PM Haradinaj meets Kosovo intelligence chief (*Zeri*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, paid a visit to the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA) offices yesterday and met director Driton Gashi. Haradinaj commended Gashi and his staff on their work and offered the support of the government of Kosovo on continuing efforts to provide security to all the people of Kosovo.

**FM Pacolli visits Sweden (*dailies*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Behgjet Pacolli, has set on a one-day official visit to Sweden where he met Foreign Minister, Margot Wallstrom. “We reconfirmed the level of very good relations that exist between the two countries and the friendship between the two people,” Pacolli said after the meeting. He said Sweden will continue to support Kosovo in its European integration process. Pacolli also met the State Secretary to the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Ulrika Modeer as well as representatives from the Swedish parliament and members of the Sweden-Kosovo friendship group.

**KSF, KFOR to reopen bridge in Mitrovica today (*media*)**

Several news websites are reporting this morning that “the ceremony of reopening the main bridge in Mitrovica will be held today after renovation by KSF and KFOR”. KSF Minister Rrustem Berisha, KSF Commander Rrahman Rama and KFOR Commander Salvatore Cuocci will attend the ceremony which is scheduled to begin at 14:00.

**Municipality of Pristina takes steps to tackle air pollution (*dailies*)**

The Municipality of Pristina has announced it will limit the number of vehicles coming into the city as part of measures aimed at tackling the record level of air pollution. Deputy Mayor Selim Pacolli said in a press conference that the ban will enter into force as of Wednesday and that parking space and transport means will be provided to the people coming into Pristina by car. Pacolli also said that they will also not allow coal sale in the city. These measures have been taken in coordination with the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning.

**Haradinaj condemns insulting graffiti (*Lajmi*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, took to Facebook to condemn insulting graffiti against Serb community in village Uglare. He wrote that these graffiti induce interethnic hatred therefore they are “unacceptable and in contradiction with principals of the state that we are building – democratic, comprehensive and tolerant. I request from the justice bodies to investigate the case of writing graffiti with hateful content and bring perpetrators in front of justice,” Haradinaj said.

**EULEX gives up on trial of Uke Rugova (*Koha*)**

The paper reports in one of its front-page stories that the European Union’s Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) has withdrawn from the trial of Uke Rugova, former MP, Astrit Haraqia, former Minister of Culture, and another 18 persons, who were charged of organized crime. The paper claims to possess a decision by the EU mission which notes that they have no capacities to continue working on the case. The paper further reports that the Basic Court of Pristina has already assigned a local judge to try Uke Rugova and others. Meanwhile, the defense attorneys are saying they have no information on EULEX’s withdrawal from this case and that they cannot comment on the matter.

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