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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**In Pristina, Pahor urges ratification of border demarcation agreement (*dailies*)**

In his visit to Pristina yesterday, Slovenian President Borut Pahor urged Kosovo to ratify the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro and implement agreements reached with Serbia in Brussels. “We expect Kosovo to ratify agreement with Montenegro and respect agreement between Belgrade and Pristina on establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities,” Pahor said after meeting Kosovo President Hashim Thaci. Pahor said Slovenia would continue supporting Kosovo and congratulated its people on the tenth anniversary of declaration of independence. In his second day of the visit, Slovenian President Pahor is expected to deliver a speech to the Kosovo Assembly and met Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and Assembly President Kadri Veseli.

**Montenegrin PM Markovic to visit Kosovo tomorrow (*dailies*)**

Papers report that the visit of the Prime Minister of Montenegro, Dusko Markovic, which was originally planned for 6 February 6 but got cancelled at the last moment due to fog, is expected to take place on Wednesday, 14 February. “Montenegrin Prime Minister will visit Kosovo on 14 and 15 February 2018. Discussion topics will include relations between the two countries, bilateral cooperation as well as demarcation,” the government of Kosovo said in a response to ***Zeri***.

**Maliqi: Montenegrin PM’s visit contributes to resolving demarcation (*Epoka*)**

Political analyst Shkelzen Maliqi said in an interview to the daily newspaper that the upcoming visit by Montenegrin Prime Minister Dusko Markovic to Pristina could contribute to resolving the border demarcation between Kosovo and Montenegro. Maliqi said the ruling coalition in Pristina has tried over the last couple of days to overcome the stalemate and that there were contacts with Podgorica to resolve the issue. Maliqi also said that if Kosovo insists it is “losing territory” with the current agreement, it will ruin its relations not only with Montenegro but with the international community too.

**Thaci rejects ideas of Kosovo-Serbia territory exchange (*Epoka*)**

President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, has rejected ideas of a possible exchange of territories between Kosovo and Serbia calling them speculations. “Kosovo has its own territorial integrity which is inviolable, unified, internationally acknowledged and recognised. Debates on futile and outdated things ahead of the tenth yea of independence are concerning. These statements to me are dead,” Thaci said after a meeting with Slovenian President Borut Pahor.

**German Embassy: Games on territorial division, dangerous (*Express*)**

The German Embassy to Kosovo, noted in a response to the news portal that it supports unreservedly the territorial integrity of Kosovo. “We consider games with opinions on division of territories based on ethnic belonging to be dangerous, therefore we oppose them. This was proved in a tragic manner during the latest armed conflicts in the nineties,” was noted in the response of German Embassy.

**Austrian FM: Recognition of Kosovo irreversible (*Zeri*)**

The Austrian Foreign Minister, Karin Kneissl, said recognition of Kosovo by Austria is an irreversible decision. Kneissl statement comes after the Austrian Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache regretted Austria’s decision to recognise independence of Kosovo.

**EU does not know when dialogue could resume (*Lajmi/RTK*)**

Despite the request on the EU Strategy for enlargement for a final agreement between the parties and public announcements in Kosovo and Serbia that parties are interested to continue with the dialogue, the date for the next meeting in Brussels remains unknown. “Contacts are ongoing. We have nothing confirmed so far, but as you know both parties have confirmed engagement on dialogue,” said the European Commission Spokesperson, Maja Kocijancic.

**KSF Minister: KSF to transform into an army in 2018/19 (*media*)**

The Kosovo Security Force Minister, Rrustem Berisha, said on Monday that the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) is expected to transform into the Armed Forces in 2018/2019. “We are on a good path for this to happen through constitutional amendments and I believe 2018/2019 will be the year of transformation. We are working on a transformation process through constitutional amendments, because in this way our integration in NATO will be much easier. Our integration strategy includes the non-majority communities, we are trying to include them in the transformation process,” Berisha said during a visit to Decan municipality.

**Serwer: Army can be created without constitutional changes (*RTK*)**

The U.S. expert on Balkans, Daniel Serwer, told RTK that creation of Armed Forces of Kosovo is technically possible even without constitutional amendments, however he added that it would have been good to have the support of Serbs on the matter. “I think that this issue should be discussed with Belgrade, because Belgrade decides how Serbs will vote in Parliament,” Serwer said.

**President Thaci to meet U.S. Ambassador Delawie today (*Lajmi*)**

Kosovo President, Hashim Thaci, will meet the U.S. Ambassador in Pristina, Greg Delawie, this morning. The meeting has been scheduled for 09:00 at the Office of the President and it is not known what Thaci and Delawie will discuss. The news website recalls that Delawie has continuously called on members of the Kosovo Assembly to ratify the border demarcation with Montenegro as soon as possible. Delawie also told MPs that were in favor of the initiative to abrogate the law on the specialist chambers, that they should be aware of the consequences of their actions.

**Kurti: I don’t support joining Albania against EU wishes (*Zeri*)**

Vetevendosje leader, Albin Kurti, said in an interview to Slovenian paper ***Delo*** that Kosovo should have the right to join Albania but that he wouldn’t want this to happen without the consent of the European Union. “Unification of Kosovo and Albania would have to be decided with the people in both countries through referendum. Unification would be legitimate only if majority of the people on both sides of the border would decide so,” said Kurti adding: “I don’t support unification with Albania against the EU. A good solution would also be united Albanians in the united Europe.” Kurti said that dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade is a big political mistake which brought no benefits to Kosovo. And although he said he does not oppose dialogue as such, he is against the idea of it taking place without “principles.” “Serbia is not blamed for the crimes, no one ever apologized or paid war damages,” he added.

**Peterle calls for continuation of election reform (*Epoka*)**

Alojz Peterle, chief observer of the EU Election Observation Mission to Kosovo, presented to Kosovo President Hashim Thaci report on local elections and called on Kosovo institutions to continue election reform. Thaci said there is readiness within the political parties to conclude the reforms process which would result in strengthening of democracy and modernizing electoral system in Kosovo.

**Dacic: Dialogue is needed to resolve Kosovo issue (*Koha*)**

Serbian Foreign Minister, Ivica Dacic, said on Monday that the issue of Kosovo has yet to be resolved and that this requires dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. After meeting Austrian Vice Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache in Belgrade, Dacic said: “We are aware of the situation we have before us. Austria has recognized Kosovo’s independence, but it is important that there is understanding for our position too”.

**Two policemen arrested on Ivanovic’s case, released (*RTK/Koha*)**

The Basic Court in Mitrovica has decided to release the two Kosovo Police officers suspected to have been involved on Oliver Ivanovic’s murder. They were suspected to have manipulated with evidence on the case. Chief prosecutor at Basic Prosecution in Mitrovica, Shyqri Syla, confirmed their release. He said that the verdict came unexpected and added that he is going to appeal today (Tuesday). “The session started at 13:00 hours and it concluded at 19:00. The prosecutor informed me that our request for detention was rejected,” Syla said. ***Koha Ditore*** reports on its front page that the two officers, Zarko Jankovic and Dragisa Markovic, are suspected of hiding a cartridge from the site of the murder and that they did not submit this together with the other evidence.

**Turkish media praise Kosovo for banning Kurdish event (*Kallxo*)**

Media in Turkey have commended the decision of Kosovo authorities not to allow a Kurdish event take place in Pristina last Friday. Turkish media claim the musical event titled “Freedom for Kurdistan” would have been used for spreading terrorist propaganda while the Kosovo Police said it did not allow the event as organisers, “Social Centre Sabota”, failed to apply for permission. The police also said they received information that “unidentified individuals” could cause an incident at the event.

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