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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Markovic: Montenegro ready to help Kosov ratify border deal (*dailies*)**

Prime Minister of Montenegro, Dusko Markovic, said at a joint press conference with Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj that Montenegro is ready to help Kosovo ratify the border demarcation agreement. ***Zeri*** reports on the front page that no breakthrough on the issue was reached between the two prime ministers and that although both said they were hopeful an agreement would be found, they gave no detail as to what that could entail. Markovic however pointed out that his country views the issue as being closed the moment the parliament ratified the agreement. “We discussed this issue with best intentions as good neighbours in an effort to find the best solution so that the agreement is ratified and Kosovo has an easier path towards integration,” Markovic said. He also spoke about the Montenegrin community in Kosovo and called for its inclusiveness in all aspects of Kosovo life. Haradinaj on his part said that there is a more favourable climate for resolving the issue of border demarcation with Montenegro. “There is good will to find a way out of the situation in which we are in. I am hopeful the ideal solution will be found,” he noted.

**Gabriel: No EU for Serbia without recognising Kosovo (*dailies*)**

German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said in Pristina that Serbia must recognise independence of Kosovo I before it can hope to join the EU. “If Serbia wants to move towards the EU, it needs to fulfill the rule of law criteria and of course recognise independence of Kosovo. This is a precondition for its path to the EU and you can count on our support for this,” Gabriel said in a joint press briefing with Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. He also expressed Germany’s support in Kosovo facing challenges ahead, particularly with regards to the specialist chambers and said he was pleased to hear that there is readiness on the part of Kosovo to ratify the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. “We support the implementation of this condition as it is in the good of the citizens of Kosovo and paves way for visa liberalisation,” Gabriel added. In his second day of the visit, Gabriel is expected to meet President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci and President of the Kosovo Assembly Kadri Veseli.

**Danielsson: Two criteria remain open for visa liberalisation (*Koha*)**

Director General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Christian Danielsson, said Kosovo still needs to fulfill two more criteria before being granted visa liberalisation. “There were 95 criteria Kosovo has to fulfill before the Commission recommended visa liberalisation. 93 have been met and there are still two that remain: one is border demarcation with Montenegro and the second is fight against corruption. Progress has been made during this period and we following this closely,” Danielsson said adding that if these two criteria are met “we can move forward.” Danielsson visited Kosovo together with the Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia in the European External Action Service, Thomas Mayr-Harting and met Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and Minister of European Integration Dhurata Hoxha. The two EU officials later in the day also met Kosovo Assembly President Kadri Veseli.

**Thaci: Specialist court for Albanians like a court for the Jews (*Zeri*)**

In an interview to ***AP***, President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci reiterated his view that the specialist chambers present a historic injustice to Kosovo and said their establishment is the same as if a court was created to judge Jews persecuted in World War II. He said the government of Kosovo reluctantly agreed to the establishment of specialist chambers and that Kosovo led a defensive war for its existence and attacked no one.

**Delawie: Demarcation has complicated U.S.-Kosovo relations (*Zeri/RTV21*)**

The U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, told ***RTV21*** that Kosovo is a success story. He mentioned the rule of law, fight against corruption and organized crime as challenges that Kosovo faces and added that the U.S. engagement in Kosovo will continue to be powerful. Asked about the delays on demarcation of the border with Montenegro, Ambassador Delawie said this has complicated relations between the United States and Kosovo. He also said that no matter the model of the next phase of the discussions between Kosovo and Serbia, the U.S. will be part of it. “The United States will be an active part of the dialogue. I believe that we have played a significant role in the dialogue. No matter the format of the new phase of the discussions, we will be part of the dialogue,” Delawie said.

**“UNMIK will not leave Kosovo” (*Koha/DW*)**

The UN Secretary-General Spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, said to Deutsche Well that UNMIK will continue to stay in Kosovo for as long as there is mandate from the Security Council. Meanwhile, Kosovo officials insist the UN ends mission in Kosovo. Deputy Prime Minister Enver Hoxhaj said in New York that “UNMIK has concluded its mission and it would be good for the resources to be used in other parts of the world which are in greater need for them than Kosovo.” Teuta Sahatqija, Kosovo’s consul in New York, said Russia was opposing the changing of the UN’s mandate in Kosovo and added that quarterly reports on Kosovo are uneccesary. “We are discussing quarrels over parking spaces between two Kosovo citizens, which happen to be one Serb and the other Albanian, and this is defined as ‘interethnic incident’. These and other similar things fill a futile report every three months,” Sahatqija said.

**Kurz: Austria has recognised Kosovo and this will not change (*Zeri*)**

Austrian Chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, said Austria has recognised independence of Kosovo and this position will not change. Kurz said ahead of the meeting of his cabinet that Austria is a friend of Kosovo and supports Western Balkans as well as normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Kurz's statement follows that of his deputy, Heinz-Christian Strache, who said Austria should not have recognised independence of Kosovo as it was part of Serbia.

**Strache explains his statement on Kosovo (*Klan Kosova*)**

Austria’s Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache, has explained for media his opinion about Kosovo. He said that he did not say that Kosovo is Serbia. However, he said this while speaking in presence while speaking in presence of his boss, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, ***Klan Kosova*** reports.

**President of Basic Court in Mitrovica resigns (*Kallxo/Kosovapress*)**

Nikola Kabasic, president of the Basic Court in Mitrovica, has handed over his resignation to the Kosovo Judicial Council which is deliberating on whether to accept it or not. Kabasic was appointed to the post several months ago when the judicial institutions in the north integrated into the Kosovo’s legal system in line with the agreement reached between Kosovo and Serbia. Meanwhile, ***Kosovapress*** sources claimed that there are indications that Nikola Kabasic’s resignation is related to the investigations on the case of Oliver Ivanovic’s murder. This news portal has learned that resignation came after Kabasic’s clash with the chief prosecutor regarding the two arrested police officers, suspected to have hidden evidence on the case. This portal reports that their attempts to contact Kabasic were unsuccessful, while deputy president of the Basic Court in Mitrovica, Ali Kutllovci, said he was not aware of the resignation.

**Zeka: Demarcation will bring down Haradinaj’s government (*TV Dukagjini*)**

Kosovo Assembly MP from Social-Democratic Initiative (NISMA), Milaim Zeka, said MPs from the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), with their position against current version of demarcation, are not aware that they are bringing down the government. He said that AAK is more persistent in objecting the demarcation agreement reached with Montenegro, than Vetevendosje movement, and this, according to him, is concerning. “Instead of helping their and my Prime Minister to overcome this crisis, AAK MPs are not aware that demarcation can bring the government down,” Zeka said.

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