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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**PM Haradinaj requests Assembly session on demarcation on Thursday (*RTK*)**

Kosovo Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, has requested from the Assembly of Kosovo to hold an extraordinary session on the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro on Thursday. He said “the state needs to make an important decision”. “It is important to have the understanding of all, the Serbian List, Vetevendosje and every MP, because this is a moment when all of us must be united,” Haradinaj said.

**Delawie: I hope every political party will vote in favor of demarcation (*RTK*)**

The U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, stated that he hopes all political parties at the Assembly of Kosovo will vote pro agreement for the demarcation of the border with Montenegro. “Passing Border Demarcation Agreement is essential to ensure the ability of citizens from all of Kosovo’s communities to travel freely in Europe. Everyone can agree on this - I hope MPs from EVERY party will vote YES,” Delawie wrote on his Twitter account.

**Assembly chairmanship to set date for border demarcation vote (*media*)**

The media are reporting that the Kosovo Assembly chairmanship will meet today and set the date for when the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro will be put to vote. Head of the Assembly, Kadri Veseli, sent out invitations for a meeting to take place at 4 p.m. today and called on MPs to think about the interests of the citizens and vote in favour of the agreement which he said strengthens Kosovo’s sovereignty and paves way for visa liberalisation.

**Montenegro FM: Statement not very different from demarcation deal (*Telegrafi*)**

Montenegro’s Foreign Minister, Srdjan Darmanovic, said there is no significant difference between the statement signed recently by Kosovo and Montenegro presidents and the actual border demarcation agreement already ratified by Montenegro parliament. Darmanovic said the presidents’ political statement confirms what already stands in the border demarcation agreement, specifically under article 7. “Border agreement needs to be ratified, and we are dealing here with possible technical corrections that bring no negative result for any of the party,” Darmanovic told Montenegro-based media.

**Haradinaj’s battle for demarcation (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports on its front page that members of the Kosovo Assembly will vote on the border demarcation with Montenegro on Thursday. 80 votes in favor are needed for the ratification. Serbian List MPs have not said if they will vote in favor or against. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj said the session will be held on Thursday but did not say if he has managed to secure the Serb votes. Vetevendosje MPs have said they will not vote in favor of the agreement, unlike the other opposition party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) which said it will support the deal.

**Shala: NISMA will support border demarcation agreement (*Klan Kosova*)**

Haxhi Shala, MP from the Social Democratic Initiative (NSD), formerly NISMA, said they will vote in favour of the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro this Thursday. “The leader of our party, Fatmir Limaj, has negotiated the deal with Montenegro and we support it,” Shala said. He added that the border agreement without the joint statement by presidents of Kosovo and Montenegro attached to it would be unacceptable but that the new deal guarantees the review of areas which were flawed in the past agreement.

**Hoxhaj to Kusari: No elections, we don’t accept conditions (*RTK*)**

Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister and Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) deputy leader, Enver Hoxhaj, responded to a statement by Alternativa leader Mimoza Kusari-Lila who said that their vote in favor of demarcation with Montenegro is conditioned with setting a date for parliamentary elections. Hoxhaj said there will be no elections this year. “The Haradinaj-led government will have a four-year mandate and there is no reason or room for elections,” he said. Hoxhaj also said he was optimistic that MPs on Thursday will vote in favor of demarcation and that Kosovo will get visa liberalization this year. Hoxhaj also said there is consensus on the matter and that he expects all MPs, including Serbian List MPs, to vote in favor of the agreement.

**Apostolova: There has been impressive work on visa liberalization (*media*)**

Nataliya Apostolova, head of the European Union Office in Kosovo, said today in Pristina that recently there has been impressive progress in meeting the requirements for visa liberalization for Kosovo. At a roundtable on EU enlargement and Kosovo’s benefits from the process, Apostolova said: “Kosovo has done an impressive job in meeting 93 out of 95 visa liberalization requirements. I think we have seen some very positive developments recently. We are concluding the vote on demarcation in the Assembly and we hope this will happen tomorrow or the day after. On Friday we had a meeting with all parliamentary parties, except for the Serbian List, and only Vetevendosje did not join the consensus on demarcation”. Apostolova said another criteria for visa liberalization is the fight against corruption and organized crime. She added that after demarcation is ratified, European institutions will announce a new report. Apostolova also said that she will be meeting with political representatives to facilitate the process of voting in favor of the demarcation deal with Montenegro.

**Soltes: CoE strategy, a positive message for Kosovo (*Pristina Insight/RTK*)**

Kosovo must solve all bilateral disputes and undergo reforms before joining EU, said Igor Soltes, the new European Parliament rapporteur for Kosovo. The new European Commission enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans is a “very positive” development, said European Parliament rapporteur for Kosovo Igor Soltes. The Greens–European Free Alliance member and Slovenian MEP discussed the Commission’s new communication strategy adopted two weeks ago and Kosovo’s prospects for its European integration path as the country prepared to mark its 10th anniversary of independence, with celebrations held all weekend. “We have to look at the larger picture,” said Soltes in a phone conversation with Prishtina Insight. “The strategy paper is very positive, and [on February 13] I attended the plenary debate… the atmosphere was very positive”. For Kosovo, which will continue to implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, the strategy said that these reforms, as well as “objective circumstances,” are necessary to progress further on the European path. http://bit.ly/2FgVKX2

**Brussels talks to focus on implementation of Kosovo-Serbia agreements (*media*)**

Head of the Kosovo delegation in talks with Serbia, Avni Arifi, said at the meeting of the Assembly committee on foreign affairs that the upcoming meeting set for February 26 will focus on implementation of agreements reached so far between Kosovo and Serbia. He said Kosovo government sees the dialogue ending in a mutual recognition. Asked whether there is a government decision on who is in charge of leading political side of the dialogue, Arifi said he is only tasked with heading the technical dialogue but also that there is no decision for President Hashim Thaci to lead the political talks with Serbia. AAK MP and committee member, Time Kadrijaj, is quoted as saying in Indeksonline that it is senseless to reach new agreements with Belgrade without implementing the existing agreements. Arifi said the process of talks is not easy and is quite complicated. “The more we are all engaged in the process, the better the decisions. The reason why we are not accepting new talks is the agreement on the energy which has yet to be implemented even after five years. This agreement must be implemented first before proceeding with other agreements,” he said.

**Rama says statement on single president was taken out of context (*Klan Kosova*)**

In an interview for the Tirana-based ***Top Channel***, Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama said his statement that Kosovo and Albania should have a single president in the future was taken out of context. “If we speak about context, I would like to note that before that sentence there was another one stating that by this time Albania and Serbia will become members of the European Union, the difficult dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia will have successfully ended, Albanians and Serbs will be living in peace as good neighbours, work together in the future and so on,” Rama said.

**Kouchner ready to take on role for Kosovo-Serbia reconciliation (*media*)**

Bernard Kouchner, former French Foreign Minister and the first UNMIK chief administrator in Kosovo, told ***Klan Kosova*** that he would take on the role of reconciliation between Albanians and Serbs. “The Serbian President and Hashim Thaci can talk and have understanding, they can certainly do this, but it cannot be a public debate. If Serbs want to join Europe they must talk to Kosovars, and Kosovars know this,” he said. “If I could have a role in this I would take it on with great pleasure.”

**Vucic: I ripped off westerners’ documents on Kosovo’s independence (*RTK*)**

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Tuesday he had a frank conversation with German Foreign Minister, Sigmar Gabriel. “He said there are no more discussions and that everything is over with regards to the territory of Kosovo, that Kosovo is independent. I told him all right, and how come you could earlier discuss Kosovo, ten years ago, and now you cannot speak?” Vucic explained the conversation for Happy TV. He added that the conversation was quite frank despite the contradictory opinions and that he further asked German FM “and what do I tell to my Serbs now Sigmar?” Vucic said Gabriel is for independence of Kosovo and he does not hide this at any moment. Vucic further explained how he has many times ripped off documents of western officials that mentioned independent Kosovo.

**President Thaci pardons persons convicted of murder (*Kallxo*)**

The news website is reporting that President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, has decided to pardon seven persons, four of whom are serving their time in prison for murder. The other three persons are serving time for less serious offences.

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