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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Kosovo Assembly postpones border demarcation vote (*dailies*)**

Kosovo Assembly President, Kadri Veseli, announced yesterday that the vote on border demarcation agreement with Montenegro has been postponed for today. Veseli said he was optimistic that parliamentary parties will by then reach consensus on the issue and that "we are on the right track". ***Klan Kosova*** reported that the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) has conditioned its vote with the removal of the government commission’s report authored by its former MP, Shpejtim Bulliqi, while the Serbian List has announced it will vote against the agreement. ***Koha Ditore*** also reports that yesterday’s session failed because of LDK’s refusal to vote an agreement containing Bulliqi’s report and that it has the support of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) on this demand. At the same time, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and Social Democratic Initiative (NISMA) insist on the report being included in the agreement. The parties’ positions did not change despite meeting the U.S. Ambassador Greg Delawie and the Head of the EU Office in Kosovo Nataliya Apostolova. The paper however underlines that even if parties in question reach consensus on the border agreement, the bill will still not pass because of the refusal of the Serbian List to vote in its favour. Meanwhile Veseli said he believed the issue will be resolved by next Wednesday, at the latest.

**Parties have agreed to ratify border demarcation deal (*Klan Kosova*)**

***Klan Kosova*** reported last night that the meeting of the political parties with Head of the Assembly Kadri Veseli was fruitful and that agreement was reached to ratify the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. According to the report, the voting can now take place either today but it could well be postponed for next week but that Kosovo leaders will do outmost to ratify the agreement before the visit of the European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, expected to take place February 28.

**Apostolova appeals to leaders: Think about citizens (*RTK*)**

Head of the European Union Office to Kosovo, Nataliya Apostolova, appealed to the politicians of Kosovo to ratify the Agreement for demarcation of the border between Kosovo and Montenegro. “Finding consensus for a vote on demarcation shows leadership. I call on KS politicians to think of Kosovo citizens and Kosovo’s youth,” Apostolova wrote on her Twitter account.

**Thaci urges MPs to ratify border demarcation agreement (*media*)**

President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, has urged MPs to vote in favour of the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. In a Facebook post, Thaci said the pro-vote would break Kosovo’s isolation for good and set a new momentum for Kosovo’s European integration. “The vote for ratification of demarcation is a vote for the citizens’ freedom of movement in the Schengen area, it is a vote for Kosovo in Europe. I therefore call on all parties to respect the will of all citizens, regardless of ethnic and religious background, to move freely. I urge the Serbian List to vote for the agreement by respecting the will of the Serb community in Kosovo,” Thaci wrote.

**PDK: Consensus on border demarcation near (*Koha*)**

In a statement to the media, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) said it was convinced political parties are very close to reaching consensus on the border demarcation issue with Montenegro and stressed that the agreement needs to be ratified as soon as possible. The party said it will continue today efforts to achieve consensus on the matter.

**LDK: We offered the most reasonable solution for demarcation (*RTK*)**

The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) appealed on Thursday evening to political parties of the governing coalition to agree with the proposal offered by LDK and assure majority of votes. “The Democratic League of Kosovo, in the meeting with the parties of the governing coalition, has offered the most reasonable solution, which opens way to ratification of the Agreement for Demarcation of the Border between Kosovo and Montenegro. LDK appeals to the parties of the governing coalition to agree with the solution proposed by LDK and assure votes of the governing coalition. LDK assures citizens that its will is in complete accordance with their will for the free movement and that the position of our parliamentary group is united,” reads LDK’s communique.

**NATO: Kosovo army through constitutional changes (*Koha Ditore/RFE*)**

Commander of NATO’s Joint Force Command in Naples, U.S. Navy Admiral James Foggo, said that transformation of the Kosovo Security Force into a Kosovo army should take place in line with constitutional reforms. Foggo added that all Kosovo leaders are aware that there can be no KSF transformation any other way. “NATO Alliance and North Atlantic Council were here several months ago and they made it very clear that to NATO, if KSF transformation into a Kosovo army is done, it should be through constitutional changes,” Foggo said at a press conference held at KFOR HQ in Pristina.

**Hahn: Serbia needs to normalise relations with Kosovo (*Zeri*)**

European Union Enlargement Commissioner, Johannes Hahn, told the German paper ***Die Welt*** that if Serbia wishes to become member of the EU, it needs to normalise relations with Kosovo by reaching a legally binding agreement. “The agreement needs to be broad, final, and legally binding,” Hahn stressed.

**Carl Bildt visits Kosovo, meets leaders (*Epoka*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, met on Thursday with former Swedish Prime Minister and current Co-chair of the European Council on Foreign Relations, Carl Bildt. They discussed recent development in Kosovo, Euro-Atlantic processes for Kosovo and the region. PM Haradinaj stressed that Kosovo has accelerated its process of fulfillment of European Reform Agenda, and Stabilisation Association Agreement, with the intention of gaining the status of the candidate by the end of the year. He also spoke about the importance of Kosovo’s membership at NATO and UN, stressing that this would contribute to peace and stability in the region. During his visit to Kosovo, Bildt met also with the President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci, Foreign Minister Behgjet Pacolli and Serb Orthodox Church representative, Abbot Sava Janjic.

**Pacolli: Kosovo will not remain a black hole (*RTK*)**

Kosovo’s Principal Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Behgjet Pacolli, said on Thursday during the meeting with the Co-chair of the European Council for Foreign Relations, Carl Bildt, that endorsement of demarcation with Montenegro would open a new page for Kosovo. “It was unfair from the European Union to condition Kosovo with demarcation of the border with Montenegro for visa liberalization. However, endorsement of this Agreement, which I hope will happen soon, will open many new opportunities for our citizens,” Pacolli said.

**Albania, FYROM refuse participation in regional event because of Kosovo (*Koha*)**

Representatives of Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) have refused to attend the conference of Western Balkans foreign ministers set to take place in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina because of exclusion of Kosovo from the event. Albanian Foreign Minister, Ditmir Bushati, informed his Bosnian counterpart Igor Crnadak of his absence saying it comes after the organizers did not respect the format of inclusion of all six Western Balkans countries and that no discussion can be complete without all regional countries participating in the event. FYROM Deputy Foreign Minister, Bujar Osmani, also pulled out of the conference saying he did so after learning that Kosovo representatives were not invited.

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