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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Demarcation vote postponed yet again (*dailies*)**

Papers report that the vote on border demarcation agreement with Montenegro has yet again been postponed yesterday after the coalition parties failed to secure a majority. At the start of the session, majority of MPs supported the proposal to vote on the agreement through a quick procedure which prompted the Assembly President Kadri Veseli to announce a session break to give time for parliamentary committee to harmonise the text of the agreement. However, the session did not resume afterwards and the Assembly said in a statement that heads of parliamentary parties agreed to reschedule the session for next week. “Assembly chairmanship will decide on its continuation,” the statement read. On the front page, ***Koha Ditore*** quotes sources saying that the Serbian List has agreed to reconsider its position against demarcation but only after Serbian local elections this Sunday. According to the source, the Serbian List fears that if it votes in favour of demarcation this will translate into loss of votes for President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic’s party. However, Serbian List insists on establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities as a condition for its demarcation vote. In a separate box within the same article, the paper reports that “the situation on demarcation has become complicated” and that the Haradinaj-led Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) is threatening to return the process to zero. The AAK has namely accused the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) of changing the text of the agreement for the ratification of demarcation. Pristina-based news website ***Gazeta Express*** carries Prime Minister Haradinaj’s letter to leaders of political parties in which he wrote that “any potential amendment of the principle agreement on the draft law could send back to zero all processes and efforts”. LDK parliamentary group chief, Abdullah Hoti, and LDK MP, and Vjosa Osmani, chair of the foreign affairs parliamentary committee, denied the accusations saying that the text of the agreement remains the same as the one agreed upon in the office of the Assembly President.

**Haradinaj: We will have demarcation votes in a matter of days (*Telegrafi*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, said after the meeting of the government that the votes for ratification of the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro will be secured in a matter of days. Asked by reporters whether there is agreement with Serbian List to endorse demarcation, Haradinaj said: “Thankfully, Albanians have reached agreement and I believe we will manage to also agree with the communities.”

**Veseli: EU officials’ visit confirmed Kosovo’s European perspective (*Klan Kosova*)**

President of the Kosovo Assembly, Kadri Veseli, said that the visit of the EU senior officials confirmed Kosovo’s clear European perspective. In a Facebook post, Veseli it was unfortunate that on the day of the visit, a part of Kosovo MPs failed to reflect and ratify the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. “I will continue the efforts, fully committed, to pave way for visa liberalisation by reaching the necessary consensus in the coming days,” Veseli wrote.

**Haradinaj strongly opposes concept of border changes (*Zeri*)**

In an interview to ***BBC***’s Hardtalk, Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, was asked whether he was prepared to cede the north of Kosovo to reach a settlement with Serbia. Haradinaj opposed the idea saying that talk of territories has in the past led to tragedies in the Balkans. “I am not in favour of another war in my region. I am fully against,” Haradinaj said. He said he would be ready to sit down with Serbian leaders and finish unresolved issues between Kosovo and Serbia which he said included recognition of Kosovo. “We are ready to forgive. Not to forget but to forgive. We are ready for this but not for exchange of territories,” Haradinaj stressed.

**Juncker: Demarcation crucial for visa liberalization (*Epoka*)**

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker called on Kosovo to ratify the Agreement on border demarcation with Montenegro and seek better ties with Serbia. He made it clear that demarcation is the crucial step towards visa liberalization. After the meeting with Kosovo political leaders, Juncker pledged that European Commission would recommend liberalization of visas for Kosovo people if the demarcation agreement is ratified. The session on demarcation is expected to resume next week. He also admitted that it is not fair for Kosovo people to be the only ones in Europe that cannot move freely. Asked if there is a certain date for visa liberalization, Juncker said the date does not depend on EU. “I am not here to lecture on democracy. It is not up to us to tell Kosovo when and how to do this. This is a democracy of grownups and I cannot give you any dates,” he said. Juncker, together with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn, discussed with Kosovo leaders also about the process of normalization of relations with Serbia. He said that "ties between Kosovo and Serbia are fundamental" in their path toward Europe. “We want relations between Kosovo and Serbia to be put on new grounds. It is basic for Kosovans and Serbs to reconcile and this will be legally binding for joint path towards Europe,” Juncker said.

**EU senior officials appeal to fight corruption (*Epoka*)**

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, together with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn, had on Wednesday at Kosovo’s National Library, an open discussion with Kosovo’s civil society, media representatives, and representatives of the political parties. Jucker gave a clear message on the war against corruption and organized crime. “Nothing will happen while there is corruption and organized crime,” he said. EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini spoke about relations between Kosovo and Serbia. “I see determination and will of both parties for a legally binding agreement. Let us leave the parties decide on their consensus. I am optimistic for a good conclusion,” she said. EU Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn said no one can join Europe while having problems with neighbors. “We will not accept any new member in the EU if it did not resolve territorial problems. So it is crucial for Kosovo and Serbia to have a legally binding agreement,” Hahn said.

**Haradinaj to report to Assembly today (*Lajmi*)**

The Assembly of Kosovo is expected to hold today its regular plenary session where the Prime Minister of Kosovo is expected to report on two different matter. Vetevendosje Movement Parliamentary Group called for Haradinaj’s motion with regards to Astrit Dehari’s death at Prizren detention center. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), also called PM Haradinaj for a motion on the decision to increase salaries for his governing cabinet and salaries that have to be paid by the budget of Kosovo.

**Western Balkans leaders to meet in Sofia today (*media*)**

Most online media report on a meeting of Western Balkans leaders and the EU leadership in Sofia, Bulgaria, today. The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, EU High Representative Frederica Mogherini and commissioner for EU enlargement, Johannes Hahn, will attend the meeting. Kosovo and Serbia Presidents, Hashim Thaci and Aleksandar Vucic, will also attend. Thaci’s office told ***RTK*** that the President will also hold bilateral meetings with heads of states and EU senior officials. The meetings will focus on the European perspective of the Western Balkans after the announcement of the EU strategy.

**Jeremic: Vucic will give Kosovo a seat at the UN (*Gazeta Metro*)**

Vuk Jeremic, leader of the People’s Party in Serbia and former Foreign Minister, claimed on Wednesday that Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic plans to allow a seat for Kosovo at the United Nations only so that he can remain in power. “Vucic has made this promise to Westerners as he has already made many concessions, primarily with organized crime, money laundering and arms trade. He must do this so that he can remain in power,” Jeremic said. He also said he was confident that Vucic promised in Berlin that he will sign a comprehensive agreement that will enable Kosovo’s seat at the United Nations.

**Kosovo accreditation agency dismissed from EQAR (*Zeri*)**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency has been dismissed from the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education, a mechanism that works to increase the transparency of quality assurance in higher education in Europe. The EQAR decision states that the move comes after the Kosovo Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Shyqyri Bytyqi, dismissed the accreditation board. As a result, EQAR considers that the agency is no longer able to act autonomously and cannot take full responsibility of its actions.

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