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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Lack of demarcation votes “frustrates” coalition partners (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper reports on the front page that the failure to secure enough votes to ratify the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro has strained relations between coalition partners with the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) saying it is seriously concerned with latest events at the Assembly of Kosovo. The party’s deputy leader, Enver Hoxhaj, said in a press conference yesterday that they “share the citizens’ outrage” over the failure of the Assembly to ratify the border agreement. Meanwhile, officials from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) said Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj’s Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) is “frustrated” as it is not managing to secure necessary votes. Vjosa Osmani who also chairs the Assembly’s foreign affairs committee said AAK ought to clarify problems within the ruling coalition and not try to manipulate the opinion by claiming the committee changed the text of the agreement.

**Thaci: We aim to fully normalise relations with Serbia (*Zeri*)**

President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, said in a meeting with Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov at the margins of the EU-Western Balkans summit in Sofia that Kosovo remains committed to achieving a legally-binding agreement with Serbia that would ensure full normalisation of relations. The two leaders agreed that the EU enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans is a realistic opportunity that needs to be utilised by aspiring countries. Thaci said he was aware that the speed of the Western Balkans EU accession will depend on the implementation of reforms and the ability to overcome inters-state open issues.

**Hahn: No EU for Serbia without resolving problem with Kosovo (*Zeri*)**

European Enlargement Commissioner, Johannes Hahn, said in an interview to ***Deutsche Welle*** that Kosovo is a very sensitive issue in Serbia and that public opinion there should be made aware that there can be no European Union membership without reaching a final settlement with Kosovo.

**Vucic on meeting Thaci: I did it for Serbs’ benefit (*RTK*)**

The President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic and the President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, were seen sitting at the same table during the Sofia Summit. This meeting was not welcomed in Belgrade and immediately after it, Vucic had to explain the purpose of it, ***RTK*** reports. “I am doing this to save Serbs’ heads,” Vucic is quoted as saying to Serbian media. Vucic said he discussed with Thaci solution of historic conflict between Serbs and Albanians. “We discussed how to continue with the dialogue in Brussels and efforts to resolve our conflict. This is what I can say. This is my duty, to meet even Thaci,” Vucic said.

**PM Haradinaj under fire for pay raise decision (*dailies*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj faced fierce criticism from opposition parties yesterday at the Assembly for his decision to increase his salary and that of the government cabinet. MPs from Vetevendosje and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) said the decision needs to be annulled as it is unconstitutional and presents a clear case of conflict of interest. Haradinaj responded to criticism saying Kosovo’s prime minister, judges and prosecutors should have “dignified” salaries.

**Arifi denies conditioning by Serbian List (*Gazeta Express*)**

Avni Arifi, Chief of Staff of Ramush Haradinaj’s cabinet, denied the reporting that Serbian List is conditioning the government on voting the Agreement for demarcation of the border with Montenegro. “From what I saw in documents and meetings where I participated, there was no conditioning by the Serbian List. No new municipality was mentioned,” Arifi said. “Of course the meetings yesterday were held to try to convince the Serbian List to vote demarcation, but not with conditioning of the Serbian List,” he said.

**Pacolli denies reaching deal with Serbian List on demarcation (*Telegrafi*)**

Kosovo’s Foreign Minister, Behgjet Pacolli, denied he was instrumental in reaching agreement with Serbian List to postpone border demarcation vote until local elections in Serbia take place. In a Facebook post, Pacolli said such reports are “lies”. “The truth of the matter is that I only relayed the information that Serbs would not vote on Wednesday,” Pacolli wrote.

**PDK announces party elections (*dailies*)**

Deputy leader of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Enver Hoxhaj, said in a press conference today that the party will head to internal elections this year. He said PDK elections process will begin in the coming days and weeks and will conclude late in the year. Hoxhaj said that at the end of the process, PDK will be “reconfirmed as the party of change, hope and trust.”

**Pacolli invites Japanese investors to invest in Kosovo (*Epoka*)**

Kosovo’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Behgjet Pacolli, met on Thursday with the Japanese Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry, Hiroshige Seko. “We offer you a free economic zone, in a region where together with Albania we represent an attractive center for investments of your technology,” Pacolli told the Japanese Minister. Minister Sego reportedly told Pacolli that he is aware of a successful cooperation of a Japanese company with Kosovo and expressed confidence that other companies would follow their example.

**Extraordinary session for exclusion of Kosovo from EQAR (*Kosova Sot*)**

Avdullah Hoti, caucus of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), took to Facebook to inform that his political party has gathered forty signatures for an extraordinary Assembly session with regards to exclusion of Kosovo from the Europe’s Education Quality Assurance Register. “LDK parliamentary group submitted today the request with forty signatures of the MPs for an extraordinary session of the Assembly of Kosovo with regards to the arbitrary and illegal decision of the government, which led to expelling of Kosovo’s Accreditation Agency for from the European Register for Quality in Higher Education,” Hoti wrote.

**EU concerned with exclusion of Kosovo Accreditation Agency (*Klan Kosova*)**

Head of EU Office in Kosovo and Special Representative, Nataliya Apostolova said she discussed in a meeting with Kosovo’s Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Shyqyri Bytyqi, the recent decision of the European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR) to exclude Kosovo’s Accreditation Agency. In a Twitter post, Apostolova said she expressed concern over the EQAR move underlining that it was a setback in ensuring quality in the higher education sector. “We need to ensure safeguard for independence of KAA through the new law on Higher Education,” Apostolova wrote.

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