

Main Stories 7 March 2018

* **Veseli believes even Vetevendosje will reflect on demarcation (*RFE, Lajmi*)**
* **Lack of border ratification in March, leaves Kosovo without visas until 2020 (*Zeri*)**
* **Government not given green light for Association/Community statute (*Koha*)**
* **Chancellor Merkel’s adviser meets institutional leaders (*media*)**
* **Slovakia does not change position on Kosovo (*Koha Ditore/Lajmi*)**
* **Delawie: Ivanovic’s murder not a result of interethnic conflict (*Kosova Sot/RTK*)**
* **Hoti: LDK is preparing governing platform for new elections (*RTK*)**
* **Commission to look into cases dealt with by north’s courts (*Koha Ditore*)**
* **EU delegation notes delays in implementation of economic reforms (*Koha*)**
* **Court acquits the accused for the murder of 24-year-old woman (*media*)**

**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Veseli believes even Vetevendosje will reflect on demarcation (*RFE, Lajmi*)**

The President of the Assembly of Kosovo, Kadri Veseli, told ***RFE*** that he is working intensively with colleagues from the political parties to reach consensus on demarcation.

“We expect for the ratification of the Agreement of the demarcation of the border with Montenegro to happen this week. There is no reason for delays, we are already late,” Veseli said. Asked if he has managed to contact the Serbian List, and discuss their votes for ratification of the agreement, Veseli said that he would not make distinction among MP colleagues. “We expect from all MP colleagues, including Vetevendosje Movement to reflect, because voting of this agreement strengthens sovereignty of Kosovo state,” Veseli said.

**Lack of border ratification in March, leaves Kosovo without visas until 2020 (*Zeri*)**

Experts of European integration alarm that if the Assembly of Kosovo does not ratify the agreement for demarcation of the border with Montenegro during this month, then Kosovo will have to wait for EU visa liberalization until 2020, as European Parliament holds its elections next year. Experts claims that Kosovo institutions are too late on this matter and add that even if demarcation is ratified this month, visas will not be liberalized earlier than the end of this year. Kosovo institutions have to also fulfill the other criteria, which is fighting corruption and organized crime. Also liberalization of visas needs to undergo some regular procedures at the European Commission, the European Parliament and EU’s Council of Ministers.

**Government not given green light for Association/Community statute (*Koha*)**

The government of Kosovo has not given the green light for the drafting of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities despite the demand by the Serbian side in the recent round of dialogue in Brussels, the paper reports on the front page. The paper claims to have received information that that the Kosovo side gave assurances in the last Brussels meeting that it would allow the managing team to begin preparations for drafting of the Association/Community statute, which the government dismissed to be the case. In a reply, the government said that no Kosovo official is mandated to take decisions outside the constitution framework. “The statute will be drafted when the Government of Kosovo instructs the team created in 2016 by the past Government,” the reply reads.

**Chancellor Merkel’s adviser meets institutional leaders (*media*)**

Avdullah Hoti, caucus of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), and head of the Assembly committee for foreign affairs, Vjosa Osmani, met on Tuesday with Jan Hecker, principal adviser for foreign policy to the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. A press release issued by the LDK informs that they discussed Kosovo’s internal challenges, such is rule of law and issues related to the foreign policy, including dialogue with Serbia. “Federal Republic of Germany and Chancellor’s cabinet reconfirm support for Kosovo and our Euro-integration aspirations,” is noted in the press release. Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, took to Facebook to report that he had the pleasure to meet Hecker, while Foreign Minister Behgjet Pacolli wrote his meeting with Hecker was an important one. “Important discussions on reforms toward EU integration and coordination of our implementation agenda as a state. Economic cooperation with Germany remains our priority,” Pacolli wrote.

**Slovakia does not change position on Kosovo (*Koha Ditore/Lajmi*)**

Slovakia’s acting Foreign Minister, Ivan Korcok, said in a visit to Tirana that his country has not changed position on Kosovo and does not plan to recognise its independence. “At the same time, I would like to point out that Slovakia supports a pragmatic approach, it is in our interest to allow anything that helps Kosovo’s economic and social development,” Korcok said. Korcok’s statements triggered the reaction of the Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister Enver Hoxhaj who wrote on Twitter that Slovakia should recognise Kosovo on the same principles the other 23 EU member states have. “There is no foreign policy reason or political argument to hold back the recognition,” Hoxhaj said.

**Delawie: Ivanovic’s murder not a result of interethnic conflict (*Kosova Sot/RTK*)**

The U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, told news website ***Kossev*** that the murder of the Kosovo Serb political leader, Oliver Ivanovic, has not been ethnically motivated. “I think it’s become clear that the horrible, the tragic murder of Mr. Ivanovic was not necessarily an interethnic incident. We don’t know who, of course, we don’t have any facts yet about the homicide. But, I think the fact that people are not blaming other communities for this is very positive. And I would like to interpret that as being part of the gradual improvement in intercommunal relations, between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians,” Delawie said. Asked about his recent remarks that the ratification of the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro has “never been closer”, Delawie said he was an optimist and he believed the agreement could get a positive vote this week. “Certainly it is in the interest of all of Kosovo’s citizens that this agreement be ratified as soon as possible. Whether you are a Kosovo Serb, a Kosovo Albanian, a Gorani, a Roma or whatever- this is in the interest of every community here, that this be passed,” he said.

**Hoti: LDK is preparing governing platform for new elections (*RTK*)**

Avdullah Hoti, caucus of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), said his party has gathered eighty experts to prepare governing platform. “We will soon face new elections because the coalition is dissolved. We have started consultations to prepare the new platform. During the next days, we will be in the field to meet structures, citizens and others which will result with a new governing platform,” Hoti said. “LDK has been for quite some time the first party in the country and we have responsibility for the political developments in the country,’ he said. He said that internal elections at LDK are out of question and added that this party is more united than ever. Hoti also said that LDK leader Isa Mustafa will return to Kosovo very soon.

**Commission to look into cases dealt with by north’s courts (*Koha Ditore*)**

Chairman of the Kosovo Judicial Council, Nehat Idrizi, spoke to the members of the Assembly Committee on Legislation about the integration of the north into Kosovo’s judicial system. Asked by the chairperson of the committee, Albulena Haxhiu, on whether the justice agreement foresees recognition of rulings rendered by Serbia-funded courts in the north of Kosovo, Idrizi said that a commission will be set up for the purpose of reviewing over 2,500 cases dealt with by the judiciary in the north.

**EU delegation notes delays in implementation of economic reforms (*Koha*)**

A delegation from the European Commission visited Kosovo to assess progress in implementation of the Economic Reforms Programme and noted delays in the process and absence of measurable objectives. The team of experts concluded that only 40 percent of all activities planned for 2017 have been implemented. They also expressed concern over the insufficient funds set aside for energy efficiency for private households as well as what they said was a lack of sufficient analyses on the construction of the new coal-fired power plant “Kosova e Re”.

**Court acquits the accused for the murder of 24-year-old woman (*media*)**

The Basic Court in Peja/Pec has acquitted Naser Pajazitaj accused for the murder of his 24-year-old cousin, Donjeta Pajazitaj, in 2015. Donjeta Pajazitaj was first reported missing by her family and weeks later her lifeless body was found in the nearby woods. The family of the victim expressed outrage at the court’s ruling. The Kosovo Women’s Network also issued a statement saying that the justice system is failing in shedding light to the killings of women and girls in Kosovo.

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