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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Border demarcation to be voted on Tuesday (*dailies*)**

Kosovo Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, has announced that the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro will be put up for vote at the Assembly on Tuesday but most papers claim that they coalition parties still need one more vote to ratify the deal. Vetevendosje MPs, including the splinter group, have reaffirmed their position against the agreement, as has the Serbian List. ***Zeri*** however reports that the last vote could be secured from the Serbian List MP, Adem Hoxha, or former Vetevendosje now part of the independent group of MPs, Dukagjin Gorani or Shqipe Pantina. After a meeting of the Assembly chairmanship yesterday, which was boycotted by both Vetevendosje and Serbian List, President Kadri Veseli said he strongly believed the agreement would be ratified on 20 March. “I am convinced we can make it together; it is in the national interest,” Veseli said. Similarly, Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj also expressed belief the border demarcation will be passed next week. “To be honest, it was not an easy process for me but I cannot see my people blocked and isolated as is presently the case,” Haradinaj said.

**Spain to boycott EU-Balkans summit because of Thaci (*Koha*)**

Spanish Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, is reportedly planning not to attend the EU-Western Balkans summit set to take place in May as he doesn’t want to be in the same picture with Kosovo President, Hashim Thaci, the Madrid-based paper ***El Pais*** reported. Rajoy, said the paper, fear a possible picture together with Thaci could be used by separatist leaders in Catalonia to push for their independence. However, President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, will meet Rajoy on Friday in an attempt to convince him how important it is for all EU leaders to be present in the summit.

**FM Pacolli travels to Sarajevo to attend WB6 meeting (*Klan Kosova*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Behgjet Pacolli, has travelled to Sarajevo to take part in the Western Balkans 6 meeting of foreign ministers. In a Facebook post, Pacolli said he was warmly greeted by the hosts and added that today he would present the position of Kosovo on European integration strategy.

**Haradinaj slammed for defending Azem Syla, accused of organised crime (*Koha*)**

The Kosovo Judicial Council has condemned the statement of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj in defence of former MP, Azem Syla, currently on trial for organised crime and money laundering. In a statement, the KJC said it was concerned with statements of institutional officials regarding ongoing cases. It said such remarks seriously undermine independence of the judicial system.

**Brnabic: EU cannot blackmail Serbia with Kosovo (*Zeri*)**

The Prime Minister of Serbia, Ana Brnabic, said she hopes the EU will consider Serbia’s flexibility and performance on resolving Kosovo matter. However, she added that Serbia is not an economically or politically weak country to be blackmailed. Speaking about the meeting she had with U.S. Assistant Secretary Wess Mitchell, Brnabic said that Serbia’s and U.S.’s point of views on Kosovo are very different when Kosovo is concerned and that “new proposed policies” do not make any sense.

**Opposition’s conditions for involvement in the dialogue (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo’s opposition political parties responded negatively to the call of President Hashim Thaci to be part of the dialogue with Serbia. Both Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and Vetevendosje movement claim that they would not accept to be part of the dialogue, however when asked if they would accept to lead the dialogue, these two political parties gave different answers to *Radio Free Europe*. Avdullah Hoti, LDK caucus at the Assembly of Kosovo, said his party would not become part of the dialogue. “Today Kosovo has its institutions, it has the President, government, Parliament and functional supervising bodies. Opposition has its role, so we will observe this process and we will request regular reporting at the Assembly of Kosovo. On the other hand, Vetevendosje’s MP Xhelal Svecla, said that such responsibility would be taken over in case some conditions, such as creation of a national consensus for dialogue and establishment of a commission for the process so far, would be fulfilled.

**UNMIK chief Tanin visits Kamenica, meets mayor Kastrati (*media*)**

The Mayor of Kamenica, Qendron Kastrati, together with Deputy Mayor Faton Jakupi, Deputy Mayor for Communities, Bojan Stamenkovic, received the Special Representative of the Secretary General and head of UNMIK, Zahir Tanin. Tanin organized the first visit after the local elections in Kosovo, in Kamenica, and commended the work of the municipality as well with regards to gender equality. Kastrati meanwhile expressed interest in advancing the position of women, the integration of all communities, return process, as well as attracting various donors to invest in the municipality. SRSG Tanin pledged to support the municipality and stressed that Kamenica is being used as a role model for other municipalities. He emphasized that UNMIK is not in Kosovo to govern but to assist the local authorities.

**Haziri: Gjilan, best example of integration of communities (*RTK/ Telegrafi*)**

Organized by the Ministry for Communities and Return, a coordination meeting on return and functioning of the municipal bodies responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of communities was held today in Gjilan/Gnjilane. Mayor Lutfi Haziri, mayors of the region as well as representatives of UNMIK and municipal offices for communities attended the meeting. Haziri said during the meeting that the municipality he leads is the best example with regards to the integration of communities and encouraging of interfaith dialogue in Kosovo. "We worked very hard on integration of communities and I feel proud that Gjilan is the best example in this regard. The Municipal Office for Communities and Return and Communities Committee are functional. In Gjilan, pupils attend classes in four languages, while the best news is we will benefit construction of 40 houses for social cases from the Ministry for Communities and Return," Haziri said.  During the meeting the participants also discussed needs assessment on the interest to return to this region, reconciliation, security, municipal action plans on return as well as funding opportunities.

**Explosion in Mitrovica north (*RTK*)**

A powerful explosion was heard at late hours on Thursday in Mitrovica North. According to *Kosovapress* sources, it is suspected that the explosion was caused by a hand grenade thrown at a house in “Car Dusan” street. It was also reported that explosion caused material damages but there are no casualties.

**OSCE organizes conference on role of media in fighting violent extremism (*media*)**

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo will organize today a conference on ways to engage media in countering violent extremism. Prominent local and international experts, representatives of media, civil society, police and the Islamic Community in Kosovo, will discuss the importance of acquiring accurate and relevant information on Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism. Panels on ethical and factual reporting, appropriate terminology, and counter-narratives will present journalists’ experiences in reporting violent extremism and responses of public institutions and law enforcement bodies in countering it. In addition, a five-point guide on reporting violent extremism will be presented at the event. The conference will be opened by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Jan Braathu, and Lulzim Fushtica, VERLT National Coordinator.

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