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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Demarcation vote still uncertain (*media*)**

Under the leading front-page headline ***Doubts of deals in exchange of votes***, ***Koha Ditore*** reports that the ruling coalition is not certain if it has the required number votes in favor of the demarcation deal with Montenegro. The Kosovo Assembly will resume its session on the deal on Tuesday. Sources in the government told the paper that efforts are being made to reach an agreement with the Serbian List or with individual MPs by Tuesday. The paper also notes that individual deals with MPs have raised doubts over deals in exchange of votes in favor of the demarcation deal. ***Zeri*** on the other hand reports on its front page quotes ruling coalition representatives as saying that they have 79 votes in favor of the deal and that by Tuesday they will secure another vote. PDK MP Elmi Recica told the paper: “you know that we have secured 79 votes. Now we need one more vote. All political leaders but also individual MPs are engaged in convincing the MPs to vote in favor of the demarcation deal. I hope that after a lengthy and exhausting debate on Tuesday, the demarcation deal will be adopted”. ***Epoka e Re*** too reports on its front page that government officials are confident that the demarcation deal will be adopted on Tuesday. ***Bota Sot*** reports that Serbian List MPs have said they will vote against the demarcation deal on Tuesday. Serbian List representative Dalibor Jevtic denied media reports that his party has met PDK leader and Kosovo Assembly President, Kadri Veseli, on the matter.

**Hoxhaj: SL and opposition MPs to vote demarcation bill (*Zeri/Gazeta Express*)**

Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister Enver Hoxhaj said on Sunday that all the ruling coalition MPs would vote the demarcation bill on Tuesday's session. He says also the Serbian List as well as some opposition MPs would vote the bill. Hoxhaj told ***Gazeta Express*** that they had meetings with all parties and that the agreement on border demarcation with Montenegro would definitely pass this time. “During the past three weeks we had talks with the Serbian List, as well as with other Albanian parties in the opposition to secure the necessary votes and to finally ratify the demarcation agreement. All the ruling coalition MPs will vote in favor of the agreement, and there will be MPs from the opposition parties as well as the Serbian List who will also vote the bill,” Hoxhaj said.

**Hoxhaj: Any changes to Balkans borders would open Pandora’s Box (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Foreign Minister Enver Hoxhaj said on Sunday that any changes to borders in the Balkans would open the Pandora’s Box and create a domino effect across the region. “When Belgrade speaks of territorial partition in Balkans, they actually have Bosnia’s partition in mind. This is reconfirmed by Milorad Dodik. Any border changes in the Western Balkans opens the Pandora box and will have a domino effect across the region,” Hoxhaj tweeted.

**Pristina-Belgrade dialogue to resume today (*media*)**

All media report that the EU-brokered dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade will resume today in Brussels. The implementation of agreements reached so far, such as the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities, energy, Mitrovica bridge, freedom of movement and management of administrative crossings are the topics to be discussed today. The Pristina delegation in these talks is headed by Avni Arifi, while Belgrade's by Marko Djuric. The European Union has stated that it is necessary to accelerate the discussion on the implementation of existing agreements in order to normalize relations between Belgrade and Pristina. Reportedly, the technical delegations will now meet every two weeks in Brussels. The previous round of talks took place on 26 and 27 February. The dialogue between Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and Serbia's Aleksandar Vucic will begin on 23 March.

**Vucic: I will meet with Thaci to resolve problems (*Zeri*)**

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Sunday that he will meet with his Kosovo counterpart, Hashim Thaci, in Brussels next week “as part of efforts to resolve our problems”. “Dialogue will resume, we will try to resolve our problems, even though I might not trust them … We have no other choice,” Vucic said. He also said that the meeting will take place on March 23.

**Vetevendosje: No visa liberalization this year, corruption is an obstacle (*Zeri*)**

The Vetevendosje Movement believes there will be no visa liberalization for Kosovo this year because of corruption and that even if the demarcation deal with Montenegro is adopted Kosovo would still not get visa liberalization. Vetevendosje MP Fitore Pacolli told a press conference on Sunday that in addition to the demarcation deal, another criteria for getting visa liberalization are concrete results in the fight against corruption and organized crime. Vetevendosje MP Albulena Haxhiu called on the government to withdraw the demarcation deal and added that Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti sent a letter to Prime Minister Haradinaj calling on him to correct the deal before it is send to the Assembly for ratification. “We don’t have to rush the demarcation deal. [Kurti] has written to Prime Minister Haradinaj offering him cooperation to resolve the matter,” Haxhiu added.

**Spain rejects Western Balkans because of President Thaci (*Kosova Sot*)**

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said he will not attend the Western Balkans Summit that will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in May. Spanish media reported that Rajoy will take part because he does not want to take a picture with Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and because Spain does not recognize Kosovo’s independence.

**Pacolli reacts after Spain’s threats (*Kallxo*)**

The Pristina-based news website reports that Spain is threatening not to attend the EU summit in Sofia, if Kosovo is represented there, because Spain does not recognize Kosovo’s independence. There are even reports that Spain will try to prevent Kosovo’s presentation with state symbols. Kosovo’s Foreign Minister Behgjet Pacolli took to Facebook to address the matter. “Kosovo, like all other countries in the region, will participate in the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia in May, where the leaders of EU and of member states are expected to express their support for a clear perspective of all countries in the region, including Kosovo … Any attempt to undermine Kosovo’s presence at the summit or exclude its state symbols represents a lack of vision and clarity for the region. At the time of increased Russian influence in the region, the unity of the EU towards our region is a must. Any other tendency weakens the EU in the region and undermines the EU prospect of the Western Balkans. I have told my European counterparts several times that non-recognition by the five EU member states is not only slowing Kosovo's progress towards the European integration but is also dividing the EU in the region and making it a weak actor towards third parties who are trying to infiltrate,” Pacolli wrote.

**Gashi: Schwendiman may have been dismissed by US administration (*Bota Sot*)**

Pristina-based attorney Tome Gashi said in an interview to the paper that the Prosecutor of the Specialist Chambers, David Schwendiman, may have been dismissed by the US administration because he failed to raise the first indictments by now. Gashi further claimed that there is increased mistrust among Kosovo citizens in the special court.

**Mitrovica Mayor Bahtiri calls for calm after incident in the north (*Epoka*)**

Mitrovica Mayor Agim Bahtiri has condemned the demolition of a medical center in the northern part of Mitrovica and has called on citizens to keep their calm. “I call on law enforcement authorities to identify the perpetrators of this act as soon as possible. These acts are unacceptable … I call on Mitrovica North Mayor Goran Rakic to condemn the incident too because such acts make the lives of citizens in the north more difficult,” Bahtiri said.

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