

Main Stories 27 March 2018

* **Kosovo police arrest Marko Djuric, deported to Serbia (*media*)**
* **Thaci, Veseli and Haradinaj mobilized for Association/Community (*media*)**
* **President Thaci meets Quint ambassadors to discuss Association (*Klan Kosova*)**
* **Kneissl: Results on fighting corruption required for visa liberalisation (Epoka)**
* **LDK thinks Haziri’s idea for exchange of territories is dangerous (*Koha*)**

**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Kosovo police arrest Marko Djuric, deported to Serbia (*media*)**

All media report that Kosovo Police special units arrested the Serbian Government Office for Kosovo Director, Marko Djuric, in Mitrovica North yesterday for illegal entry into Kosovo. Djuric was transferred to Pristina and then later deported back to Serbia. Kosovo President Hashim Thaci said “Djuric entered Kosovo illegally” and that police acted in line with their competencies, with professionalism and protected the rule of law. “This case should not impair the communication between Kosovo and Serbia, dialogue between the two countries and efforts for normalization, good relations and reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia,” Thaci said. Assembly President Kadri Veseli said the state of Kosovo implemented its laws and exercised full sovereignty. “The Republic of Kosovo does not allow any provocation from Serbia and they should understand that this country has its own master,” Veseli added. The U.S. Ambassador in Kosovo, Greg Delawie, tweeted on Monday that he was very concerned by the events in Mitrovica and added that “there is no alternative to dialogue”. The U.S. Ambassador in Serbia, Kyle Scott, said on Monday that the events in Mitrovica represent a major step backwards. “I hope cooler heads will prevail and help calm down the situation. There is no alternative to dialogue and the peaceful coexistence of all nations in the Balkans,” Scott tweeted. The Russian Ambassador to Belgrade, Aleksandar Chepurin, said on Monday “we are outraged by Pristina’s serious provocation. We stand united with Marko Djuric and Serbia”. The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) issued a press release on Monday citing SRSG Zahir Tanin as saying, “today’s developments in Kosovo are unacceptable. I call on Belgrade and Pristina authorities to act with good will, to avoid provocation and to take the steps necessary to maintain peace and human security. The responsibilities of leaders to their constituencies demands nothing less. Furthermore, it is essential for all concerned to avoid any rhetoric or measures that could escalate the situation. Dialogue is the only mechanism to address and resolve differences”. EU spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic said on Monday that the EU expects both sides to show restraint and maturity so that the situation does not escalate. “All issues of mutual concern must be addressed within the EU-brokered dialogue whose final objective is the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia,” she said. Kosovo’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs issued a press release after the arrest of Serbia’s Director of the office for Kosovo, Marko Djuric, in Mitrovica north. The Ministry assessed Djuric’s entrance in Kosovo without permission as a provocation, at the time when Kosovo and Serbia entered the final phase of the dialogue for a legally-binding agreement for peace. “Illegal entrance of senior Serbian officials in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo is a provocation, tendency to escalate the situation in the field in order to strengthen position in the discussions as well as clear incite on interethnic relations,” is written in the reaction of the Ministry. It further notes that Kosovo and Serbia have reach agreement during the Brussels dialogue which specifies in detail procedures of the visits of senior officials from both respective countries. “The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, calls on the Quint States, European Union and international community in general, to urgently call on Serbia to distance from provocative actions and policies, which intend to escalate and destabilize the situation”. Under the front-page headline ***Premeditated destabilization***, ***Koha Ditore*** reports that Djuric was arrested and then later dragged in the streets of Pristina for failing to respect the Kosovo authorities’ ban. ***Bota Sot*** carries a front-page picture of Djuric being man-handled by Kosovo Police special units under the headline ***Kosovo Police brings Marko Djuric to his knees***. Some dailies and online media report that the Serbian List is considering is considering withdrawing its ministers from the Kosovo government following Djuric’s arrest. Serbian List leader Goran Rakic said in a public letter that soon they will launch an initiative to leave the government. He said that Serbian legitimate representatives have been treated “brutally” today in Mitrovica North. “Following this abuse and demonstration of force, Srpska has held an urgent meeting to launch an initiative on withdrawal from the Government in Pristina,” Rakic said. “We will inform Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic on this decision.” According to Rakic, the dialogue under current circumstances is meaningless. ***Kosova Sot*** notes in its front-page editorial that on the day when the Kosovo President instructed the Assembly President and the Prime Minister to start working on the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities, the public’s attention was suddenly shifted to the action of Kosovo Police special units in the north and the arrest of Marko Djuric. “The history of ‘normalization’ of relations between Serbia and Kosovo shows that after every action, such as the one on Monday, new concessions are made,” the editorial says. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Monday that by arresting Djuric, “terrorists want to prove that they can take the north of Kosovo”. He added that Kosovo security authorities were helped by EULEX and that Djuric had to seek medical help after he was sent back to Merdare. “Djuric survived, but we are not going to let this fly. All those that took part in this will be held responsible by Serbian authorities. Two Serbs that helped the Albanian terrorists to kidnap Marko Djuric will also be held responsible,” he said. Asked about the Serbian List’s initiative to leave the Kosovo government, Djuric said: “I will not decide for them, the decision is in their hands, but we should decide with cooler heads”. Nikola Selakovic, General Secretary of the Cabinet of the President of Serbia, said Djuric was arrested to humiliate Serbia and position of the Serbian team in Brussels. “While we were discussing for Kosovo in the internal dialogue, uniformed men with long batons appeared and threw shock-bomb and arrested Marko Djuric. I was close to him, but they were only interested on Djuric,” Selakovic said. He added that the arrest was intentional, in order to humiliate Serbia and Serbian team, which is participating in the Brussels dialogue.

**Thaci, Veseli and Haradinaj mobilized for Association/Community (*media*)**

Most media report that Kosovo President Hashim Thaci met on Monday with Assembly President Kadri Veseli and Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. The Office of the President later issued a press release saying that the meeting focused on dialogue for normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia that will conclude with a legally binding agreement for both countries. “It was also decided that a broad-based institutional working group will be set up which will cooperate with the management team and the OSCE, in drafting the statute of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities, in line with the Constitution of Kosovo and the ruling of the Constitutional Court,” the press release noted.

**President Thaci meets Quint ambassadors to discuss Association (*Klan Kosova*)**

The news website reports that Kosovo President Hashim Thaci met on Monday with Quint ambassadors to discuss recent developments. EU Office Head Natalya Apostolova and OSCE Head of Mission Jan Braathu were also present at the meeting. On dialogue with Serbia, Thaci said Kosovo is committed to meet all its obligations, including the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities. “Kosovo is committed and will be accountable in functionalizing the working group that will draft the statute of the Association,” he said. Thaci also said the Association/Community will be in line with the Constitution, Kosovo laws and the ruling of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo.

**Kneissl: Results on fighting corruption required for visa liberalisation (Epoka)**

Austria’s Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Policy, Karin Kneissl, said on Monday in Pristina that after ratification of the Agreement for demarcation of the border with Montengro, Kosovo should reach significan progress on combating organized crime and corruption, in order to gain visa liberalization. After her meeting with Kosovo’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kneissl offer cooperation of her state for Kosovo’s membership at international organisations.

**LDK thinks Haziri’s idea for exchange of territories is dangerous (*Koha*)**

Two deputy leaders of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Agim Veliu and Haki Rugova, said on Monday that the idea of LDK deputy leader Lutfi Haziri for exchange of territories with Serbia is dangerous and that it does not represent the position of their party. “The topic of exchanging territories was never discussed at the LDK chairmanship. Our leader is Isa Mustafa and he never opened this topic,” Rugova told the paper.

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