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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Government to finish Association/Community statute in four months (*Koha*)**

The government of Kosovo has vowed to finalise the statute of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities in four months’ time as requested by the EU, the paper reports. Government spokesperson, Donjeta Gashi, said the statute will be drafted by the Managerial Team and will be in line with the Constitution of Kosovo. “It was made clear from the outset that only a final agreement in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo can be implemented. This is the position of Kosovo and of Brussels, as stated by Mrs. Mogherini,” Gashi said.

**Pacolli: Kosovo’s participation in Sofia cannot be impeded (*RTK*)**

Kosovo’s Principal Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Behgjet Pacolli, wrote on his Facebook page that no one can impede Kosovo’s participation at Sofia Summit. "It is already official in the Council of Europe agenda. This meeting should be viewed as an opportunity to give new energies to relations between the EU and the six Western Balkan countries: from strengthening infrastructure, digital, inter-human links to the closest co-operation in fighting of common challenges such as security, migration, geopolitical developments and good neighborly relations, "Pacolli wrote on Facebook. "History has proven that cooperation and integration into Europe has preserved peace, increased security, developed economies, and established citizens' well-being. This model remains irreplaceable," Pacolli added.

**Vulin and Thaci “declare war” on one another (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports that Serbian Defence Minister Aleksandar Vulin and Kosovo President Hashim Thaci have reverted to war-inciting rhetoric with Thaci most recently stating that Kosovo would respond to Serbia’s threats through arms, “as freedom fighters did 19 years ago.” Thaci’s statement follows that of Vulin who, commenting on the arrest of the Serbian government’s official Marko Djuric, said he would “respond to attacks on Serbs by demonstrating force.” At the same time, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said Serbia wants peace not war while Djuric said Thaci’s statement represents a threat not only to the region but also to Europe. In Kosovo, Thaci’s statement is seen as not serious and empty threat. Besa Gaxherri from the opposition Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) said Kosovo could do without such “patriotic bombs” at a time when the dialogue for normalization of relations would have to be at the final stage. Rasim Alija from the Democracy for Development think tank said Thaci’s statement should not be taken seriously. “These are completely empty threats for internal consumption of both sides,” Alija said.

**Dacic: Belgrade will try to stop Kosovo’s membership at UN (*RTK*)**

Serbia’s Foreign Minister, told Serbian news agency Blic that there will be no changes in the Agreement for the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities. He added that Serbia has completed its own part and now the agreements and deadlines should be respected. “Establishment of Association is a major test for the EU, their authority will be understood at this point,” Dacic said. Asked about partition of Kosovo, Dacic said that Pristina would accept a proposal to partition of Kosovo if it was talked to without its mentors. "Great powers, when delineation and partition are mentioned, count on a massive displacement of the population - because they do not take into account that the ethnic situation in the field is already in line with the proposal of partition itself." He also said that great powers did not want to consider a partition of Kosovo because they think the issue of Kosovo was closed in 2008 by them recognizing its independence. “I am sending a clear message to the international community. There will be signing of some agreement…EU should set deadlines and respect them. We have done our part of work,” Dacic said. He further added that Serbia would not allow Kosovo’s membership at United Nations. "The fact that we will not allow Kosovo's membership in international organizations is not a matter of quarrels or tears. We want a permanent solution that would include a solution for this segment as well.” “And if we are asked, it means that we have to ask Russia and China and give in after we asked them not to support Kosovo. Also, if we did this, it would be as if we called on all states that revoked recognition of Kosovo to recognize it again. This is not serious. Such an idea can happen, but it is difficult to be reached," he said.

**Kosovo does not accept discussion of privatisation fund with Serbia (*Koha*)**

Kosovo considers Serbia’s request for inclusion of the privatisation fund in the agenda of the Pristina-Belgrade talks in Brussels, to be unacceptable. Kosovo’s representative at Brussels discussions, Avni Arifi, called such request “Serbia’s joke with its own citizens.” He added that this matter would never become part of discussions. “This is a joke to make Serbs believe that they will gain money from Kosovo,” Arifi said and added that “they will be giving money to Kosovo.” He said that war or other damages caused to Kosovo can be part of the dialogue, but never the privatization fund.

**Pacolli: Kosovo will never discuss exchange of territories with Serbia (*RTK*)**

Kosovo’s Principal Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Behgjet Pacolli, took to Twitter to write that Kosovo has never and will never talk with Serbia about exchange of territories. “Kosovo has never and will never talk with Serbia any territorial swap or partition idea which in Belgrade remains in the minds of politicians since the 90’s. Get to the table and talk on the legally binding agreement for normalization of relations and mutual recognition,” Pacolli wrote.

**Juncker: Integration of Balkans into EU prevents repetition of conflicts (*Zeri*)**

European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, told ***Deutsche Welle*** that the integration of the Western Balkans into European Union could help in preventing new conflicts. “People in the EU should be more aware that the Balkans is at their doorstep,” Juncker said.

**Kosovo set to create investigating commission on Turkish nationals (*Epoka*)**

Caucuses of the political parties are expected to gather today to start work on establishment of an investigating commission that would enlighten circumstances of the arrest of Six Turkish nationals on 29 March. Different international organisations as well as local critics, claim that deportation of the six Turks represents violation of human rights as well as Constitution of Kosovo.

**Turkish FM with a harsh message for Kosovo (*RTK*)**

Turkey’s Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, said during a speech at Trade and Industry Chamber in Alanya, that Turkey was the second state after the U.S. to recognize independence of Kosovo. He added that Turkish President lobbies for recognition of Kosovo at each country that has not done so by now. Speaking about the recent arrest of six Turkish nationals in Kosovo, he said FETO supporters will be chased everywhere.

"I hope that Kosovo will be cleansed from these traitors. Our Kosovar brothers will find peace, but no matter whether in Kosovo or elsewhere, we will not allow sheltering of our traitors. Kosovo is not supposed to accommodate the traitors who have made a coup in Turkey, and that is what we are expecting from a friend. Hopefully, after this, Kosovo takes responsible steps and does what it is expected from friendship and brotherhood. " said the Turkish foreign minister.

**Tahiri: Kosovo does not need EULEX any more (*Epoka*)**

Kosovo’s Justice Minister Abelard Tahiri, said there was major engagement on the rule of law and war against corruption and organized crime during the last seven months. As a result of this dynamics, he said, obligations deriving from the European Agenda and which have impact on visa liberalization process, have been fulfilled. He assessed that Kosovo’s justice system owns capacities to commence its duties in accordance with the laws, without needing an executive mission, such as EULEX. Speaking about the Special Court, Tahiri said he will engage for this process to conclude with complete judicial security, in order for the truth about the KLA clean war to come out.

**Kurti: Format more important for dialogue than specific names (*RTK*)**

Albin Kurti, leader of Vetevendosje Movement, presented at “Jean Jaures” foundation in Paris the positions and alternatives of his political party with regards to the economic and social development, justice system and dialogue with Serbia. He noted that principals, conditions, agenda and format of the dialogue are more important than certain names that participate there and factors that will mediate. He also stressed importance of European integration.

**Vetevendosje to initiate draft law on referendum (*Zeri*)**

Vetevendosje movement has announced it will initiate this week a draft law on referendum. Albulena Haxhiu said in a press conference that Vetevendosje has prepared a draft law on the matter since no government of Kosovo has so far done it. Haxhiu said the draft law stipulates three types of referendum, two of which mandatory and the third of a consultative nature.

**Kosovo Police dismisses reports of Serbian police presence in Makoc (*Bota Sot*)**

Kosovo Police has dismissed claims made by the University of Pristina geography professor, Florim Isufi, that Serbian police troops have been observed in the Makoc village, near Pristina. KP spokesperson, Daut Hoxha, said that a movie is being filmed in the village and most probably its theme relates to Kosovo conflict.

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