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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**EU calls for stable institutions in Kosovo (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper reports on the front page quoting sources that the European Union Office in Pristina has conveyed a message to political leaders asking them to focus on implementation of a number of tasks and that it does not oppose the view of Kosovo heading to fresh elections in 2018. The sources added that these tasks that according to the EU need to be fulfilled in the first half of the year include implementation of European Reform Agenda and establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities. In an official response to the paper however, the EU spoke of the need for Kosovo to have stable institutions. “EU should not interfere in the free, democratic and political debate in Kosovo. Nevertheless, we have a clear understanding that stability and effective governance are in the interest of the people of Kosovo,” the EU Office stated. The paper highlights that the EU message to Kosovo institutions comes at a time when opposition parties – Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and Vetevendosje – have renewed their calls for early elections.

**LDK and Vetevendosje ready to attempt to bring down government (*Zeri*)**

Two opposition parties - Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and Vetevendosje – could begin this week attempt to bring down the current government of Kosovo by collecting signatures of MPs for a no-confidence motion, the paper reports on the front page. The most recent boost to these attempts came yesterday from Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti who said that his party wants early elections as soon as possible. At the same time, LDK officials have stated they are waiting for other political parties to come up with a date for new elections. However, political analysts the paper spoke to seem skeptical about the possibility of opposition parties leading a successful no-confidence motion saying in order to do so they would need the votes from the Serbian List as well as the former Vetevendosje officials, now part of the independent group of MPs.

**Sejdiu: Independent MPs to support no-confidence motion, if “serious” (*Telegrafi*)**

Head of the parliamentary Group of Independent MPs, formerly from Vetevendosje, Dardan Sejdiu, said in a debate for ***RTV Dukagjini*** that if the initiative to bring down the government of Kosovo is “serious” and manages to secure 49 votes of MPs from the Albanian community, it will be supported by the 12 independent MPs. Sejdiu however cautioned against the initiative counting on the Serbian List votes to support the no-confidence motion, as this could lead to the motion becoming part of Serbia’s agenda.

**Krasniqi: No reason for early elections (*Telegrafi*)**

Head of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) parliamentary group, Memli Krasniqi, rejected the idea of Kosovo heading to fresh elections. In a debate for ***RTV Dukagjini***, Krasniqi said the opposition parties’ demand for early elections is legitimate but that there is no crisis that would validate such an undertaking.

**Kocijancic: Association/Community, in line with Kosovo legislation (*Koha*)**

Spokesperson for the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, Maja Kocijancic, said that the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities should be established in line with Kosovo legislation. Kocijancic’s statement came as a response to the Belgrade news agency ***Tanjug*** query of whether the draft statute of the Association/Community will be prepared based on the Brussels Agreement which, according to ***Tanjug***, grants Kosovo Serbs greater powers than the Constitution of Kosovo.

**Vucic: Association/Community according to Brussels Agreement (*RTK*)**

The President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, said that he has reiterated hundreds of times in Brussels that the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities should establish in accordance with the Brussels Agreement. He said that if harmonization with the Constitution of Kosovo is the only important thing for the EU representatives, then they are not neutral towards the status. “Let them make their own statement. We have documents, treaties and Brussels Agreement which does not says so. I know the Brussels Agreement by heart,” he said.

**Serbian List considers the efforts for Association to be a game (*RFE*, *RTK*)**

The Serbian List continues to defend its position that Serb representatives are the only authorized ones to draft the statute for the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities. “After the brutal violence of 26 March, communication is not at an envied level. But despite from this, there is no need for someone to call on the Serbian List to draft the statute for the Association of Serb Municipalities, because according to Brussels Agreement, this is a competency of the managing team, comprised by four Serb representatives. They are the only ones authorized to draft the statute and present it in Brussels,” said Igor Simic, Kosovo Assembly MP from the Serbian List.

**President Thaci to participate at Sofia Summit (*Epoka*)**

The President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, took to Facebook to write that he had a telephone conversation with the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Boyko Borissov. “I just had a telephone conversation with the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Boyko Borissov, the state which is currently presiding the European Union presidency. We discussed Sofia Summit, which is important for the journey of Western Balkans countries towards EU membership,” Thaci wrote. He further added that they confirmed their meeting very soon to coordinate bilateral, Euro-Atlantic agenda. “I stressed the need for clarification of the European perspective for Kosovo, as a pre-condition for creation of new dynamics on fulfillment of the required criteria for complete EU membership,” Thaci wrote.

Sofia Summit is a new chance for Kosovo to advance in relations with the European Union. It was a joint position that dialogue for normalization of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia should continue, being a necessity to ensure long-term peace is Western Balkans.”

**KIA director steps down following deportation of Turkish nationals (*dailies*)**

Driton Gashi, head of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA), has offered his resignation from the post as requested by Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj following the arrest and deportation of six Turkish nationals. The government of Kosovo confirmed Gashi’s resignation. Spokesperson Donjeta Gashi told ***Koha Ditore*** that Gashi had offered his resignation several days ago but that yesterday was his last day of work. President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, has not commented on the move although earlier he said that Gashi should not step down until investigation into the deportation of the six Turkish nationals is not concluded.

**Greek FM Kotzias to visit Kosovo as part of Balkans tour (*Epoka*)**

The Greek Foreign Minister, Nikos Kotzias, is expected to visit Kosovo as part of his Balkans tour that also includes Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). In Pristina, Kotzias is scheduled to meet Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister Enver Hoxhaj.

**Government pledges to review KLA veterans’ demands (*Zeri*)**

A group of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) veterans protested yesterday in front of the government of Kosovo demanding cleaning up of veterans’ lists and removing what they say are fake members and launch a new process of verifying the status of KLA veterans. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj who met the protesters said the government would carefully look into their demands.

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