

Main Stories 18 April 2018

* **EC adopts enlargement package and progress reports for Western Balkans (*dailies*)**
* **Mogherini: Kosovo needs to make more progress (*Zeri*)**
* **Apostolova: More efforts required for EU integration (*Koha Ditore*)**
* **Thaci: Kosovars are tired of reports, visa liberalisation as soon as possible (*Zeri*)**
* **Haradinaj: Kosovo has work to do to fully join EU (*RTK*)**
* **Opposition requests extraordinary session and elections (*Kosova Sot*)**
* **Hoxhaj on EU report for Kosovo (*Lajmi*)**
* **Soltes hopes Kosovo will be granted visa liberalisation (*Telegrafi*)**
* **Haziri: Motion to bring down the government is not priority at this phase (*Epoka*)**
* **Skopje removes Haradinaj form the list of wanted by Interpol (*Bota Sot*)**
* **Pacolli promises new recognitions (*Zeri*)**

**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**EC adopts enlargement package and progress reports for Western Balkans (*dailies*)**

European Commission adopted yesterday its annual Enlargement Package, including progress reports on Western Balkans countries. While the EU notes that the enlargement perspective requires sustained efforts and irreversible reforms on the part of aspiring members, the EU needs to be ready to accept new members. “The Union must be stronger, more solid and more efficient before it can be bigger,” European Commission said.

The progress report on Kosovo stated that the government has had limited success in implementing EU reforms and building consensus on key issues. “Unacceptable actions by a number of parliamentarians during the reporting period, such as the use of teargas, have disrupted parliamentary proceedings. However, the ratification of the border/boundary demarcation agreement with Montenegro in March 2018 was an important breakthrough,” the report states. The EU hails local and general elections in Kosovo saying they were “well administered in most places” but does highlight cases of intimidation within many Kosovo Serb communities. The report also stresses the importance of Kosovo fully cooperating with the Specialist Chambers in the Netherlands and the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office and “show full and unequivocal commitment to these institutions.” Furthermore, the report identifies “some level of preparation” in the public administration reform while notes that the judicial system in Kosovo is “at an early stage”. “The integration of Kosovo Serb judges and prosecutors and their support staff across Kosovo into the Kosovo judicial system was a big achievement of 2017. The judiciary is still vulnerable to undue political influence and rule of law institutions need sustained efforts to build up their capacities. The administration of justice remains slow and inefficient.” Fight against corruption and organised crime is also considered to be “at an early stage”. The report says Kosovo has made some progress in fighting high-level corruption and organised crime but corruption remains widespread and an issue of concern. Regarding normalization of relations with Serbia, the EU finds that Kosovo has remained engaged in the dialogue but needs to put more effort and contribute to the establishment of circumstances enabling full normalization.

***Koha Ditore*** in its coverage of the report writes that Kosovo’s progress has been assessed as small or none and only in some instances was it considered to be significant. ***Zeri*** at the same time calls the report one of failure and writes that it calls on Kosovo institutions to make greater efforts in fighting organised crime and corruption and that it does not give any hopes for speedy visa liberalisation.

For more: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

**Mogherini: Kosovo needs to make more progress (*Zeri*)**

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, said at the presentation of European Commission reports that Kosovo has made progress in many fields but that still a great deal of work remains to be done. Mogherini pointed out that Kosovo needs to implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and that the EU also expects it to respect agreements reached in the framework of the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue. At the same time, Mogherini hailed the work on the drafting of the statute for the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities.

**Apostolova: More efforts required for EU integration (*Koha Ditore/Bota Sot*)**

Head of EU Office in Kosovo and Special Representative, Nataliya Apostolova, said in a press conference yesterday that while Kosovo has made progress in its European integration path, more work is needed, particularly in fighting corruption. “Kosovo is at an early stage of fight against corruption. “Corruption is widespread and remains cause of concern,” Apostolova said. The report however also notes progress in improvement of legislation, prevention of regular and irregular migration, and ratification of the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. As for economy, Apostolova said the report has expressed concern. “The government has adhered to the fiscal rule on budget deficit; however, war veterans' benefits continue to pose a challenge for future sustainable public finances. While the labour market participation has increased, this has not been matched but gains in employment yet,” Apostolova remarked. She also said she did not know whether Kosovo will gain visa liberalisation this year as the final say will be on the part of EU member states. She also hailed the beginning of work on the drafting of statute for Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities. Meanwhile, Bota Sot quotes Apostolova as saying at the press conference that Kosovo should think twice before decided to head to early elections. She said the arrest of the Serbian government’s official, Marko Djuric, in the north of Kosovo was “unfortunate” and stressed that the EU has called on parties to discuss all matters of concern through dialogue.

**Thaci: Kosovars are tired of reports, visa liberalisation as soon as possible (*Zeri*)**

Following the European Commission endorsement of report on Kosovo, President Hashim Thaci said all institutions need to reflect on the content and the findings of the report and address them. “I commend the fact that the report has positively reflected on the process of implementation of visa liberalisation criteria. I therefore consider it is urgent for this process to be closed as soon as possible by the EU because the citizens of Kosovo are tired by frequent reports. Now is the time for something concrete,” Thaci wrote on Facebook.

**Haradinaj: Kosovo has work to do to fully join EU (*RTK*)**

In a Facebook post, Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj said the government of Kosovo has analysed European Commission’s report and said it is an indicator that Kosovo has a great deal of work to do before it can fully join the EU but that it also highlights “great progress made in the last year.” “This report is the most positive one Kosovo has had in recent years,” Haradinaj wrote. “Kosovo has no dilemma on its path towards the EU, despite the fact that the EU is split over Kosovo’s integration in the Euroepan family. The identified progress in the report is clear evidence that all visa liberalisation criteria have been met,” Haradinaj said adding that Kosovo rightfully expects the EU to acknowledge this development and give green light for visa liberalisation as quickly as possible.

**Opposition requests extraordinary session and elections (*Kosova Sot*)**

Avdullah Hoti, Caucus of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), has reacted after the publican of the EU Progress Report for the Western Balkans countries. He said that required technical preparations to organize extraordinary elections should take place, in order to have a stable and responsible government. On the other hand, Vetevendosje Movement Parliamentary group has requested a parliamentary debate on the EU Progress Report. Vetevendosje requested an extraordinary session on the matter, stressing that the Assembly and government of Kosovo should discuss the findings of the Report without delay.

**Hoxhaj on EU report for Kosovo (*Lajmi*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Enver Hoxhaj, took to Twitter to express his opinion of the EU Progress Report for Kosovo. “In the new country report, EU acknowledges Kosovo’s hard work to lift the visa regime. Soon, our citizens will receive the good news of visa free travel. More work left towards EU accession,” Hoxhaj wrote.

**Soltes hopes Kosovo will be granted visa liberalisation (*Telegrafi*)**

European Parliament’s rapporteur for Kosovo, Igor Soltes, said he hoped visa-regime will soon be lifted for the people of Kosovo. “Regardless of the content of the progress report published today by the EU Commission, it is important for Kosovo government to continue reforms they started to implement already and to focus all its energy on implementing them in practice as well,” Soltes wrote.

**Haziri: Motion to bring down the government is not priority at this phase (*Epoka*)**

Deputy leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Lutfi haziri, told the paper that motion to bring down Ramush Haradinaj’s government is not excluded but it is not a priority at this phase. He said that reach of a political agreement among all political parties is the best way for Kosovo to overcome political and institutional crisis. He said that this agreement aims harmonization of a list of priorities of work as well as setting the date of extraordinary elections. Speaking about LDK’s election process, Haziri said there will be two candidates for the leader of the party.

**Skopje removes Haradinaj form the list of wanted by Interpol (*Bota Sot*)**

A day before Kosovo PM Ramush Haradinaj’s visit to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Skopje authorities have removed him from the Interpol list of wanted by Serbian authorities. According to the paper the list was updated last week, and PM Haradinaj was on the top of the list of twenty KLA commanders, activated recently by Serbia. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj will be visiting Skopje to meet with PM Zoran Zaev and participate at a joint dinner with the Prime Ministers of the region and EU Commissioner for Foreign Policies, Frederica Mogherini. Haradinaj will also participate at Digital Summit of Western Balkans which will be held on Thursday in Skopje.

**Pacolli promises new recognitions (*Zeri*)**

The Principal Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Behgjet Pacolli, spoke about the statement of Serbia’s Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic, who said that several countries will withdraw recognition of Kosovo. Pacolli said he has not received any notification for withdrawal of recognition and added that lobbying is ongoing and there will be new recognitions of Kosovo.

**Disclaimer**

This media summary consists of selected local media articles for the information of UN personnel. The public distribution of this media summary is a courtesy service extended by UNMIK on the understanding that the choice of articles translated is exclusive, and the contents do not represent anything other than a selection of articles likely to be of interest to a United Nations readership. The inclusion of articles in this summary does not imply endorsement by UNMIK.