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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Government acknowledges 254 drawbacks from EC report (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper reports on the front page that the government of Kosovo has acknowledged the drawbacks identified in the latest European Commission report on Kosovo and has vowed to address them this year by drafting an action plan. While the EC report has made mention of a number of areas in which Kosovo has made progress, it mostly speaks of challenges and shortcomings. The action plan adopted by the government yesterday aims to tackle all these. “All ministries and relevant institutions are requested to show greater commitment and focus on implementing these activities,” the plan states. The paper reports that with regards to the rule of law aspect, namely the fight against corruption, the government has planned to carry out eight activities including increasing the number of prosecutors with the special prosecution, provide capacity building training to prosecutors to investigate financial crimes, confiscate illegally-obtained assets, and effective witness protection. Furthermore, the government pledges to expand the scope of the law on confiscation of illegally-obtained wealth.

**“Visa liberalisation recommendation expected in June” (*Zeri*)**

Members of the Kosovo Assembly committee on European integration said they expect the EU to come out with a recommendation on visa liberalisation in June, following a fact-finding visit of a European Commission delegation in May. European Commission oficials said however that Kosovo needs to fulfill the corruption criteria before receiving a positive decision. Halil Matoshi, advisor to PM Ramush Haradinaj, said Kosovo will get visa liberalisation by the end of 2018. “The EU report on Kosovo was the most positive so far and a verifying commission will identify Kosovo’s progress,” Matoshi said.

**LDK calls political parties to a roundtable to discuss “key” issues (*Koha/Zeri*)**

The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) is planning to organise a roundtable with representatives of major political parties in an effort to reach consensus on issues it considers are of national interest. The invitation the party leader, Isa Mustafa, has sent to political parties, states that the current political situation in Kosovo can only be resolved through early elections. Meanwhile, the head of LDK parliamentary group, Avdullah Hoti, said they would not stand by and allow “irresponsible” people who do not represent the majority of Kosovo citizens to negotiate on their behalf. Hoti said the recently-approved dialogue platform by the government of Kosovo “settles nothing” and makes no mention of issues such as the fate of missing persons, compensation of damages incurred in the conflict, repayment of pensions.

**Thaci: Kosovo is a success story (*Epoka*)**

The President of Kosovo, invited by the Hollandaise Institute for International Relations “Clingendael” held a lecture in The Hague on “Vision, challenges and possibilities for Kosovo” in front of many state representatives, diplomats, journalists and representatives of the civil society. He said that The Hague is the place where Kosovo’s independence was legally confirmed by the International Court of Justice. He said that after this advising opinion in 2010, started the political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia started, which produced a historic agreement in Brussels, five years ago. “This happened after 100 years of conflict,” Thaci said. He added that The Hague is of course also the place where a part of the Kosovo justice system is currently established, by proving Kosovo’s readiness to always cooperate with the international justice. “We are proud with our war for freedom and we have nothing to neither hide nor fear the truth. No one has ever tried to escape of hide from justice, compare to the other countries in the region,” Thaci said. Speaking about the challenges of Kosovo, Thaci said the main one remains conclusion of the dialogue with Serbia.

**Pacolli: Kosovo wants to normalise relations with Serbia (*RTK*)**

Kosovo’s Foreign Minister, Behgjet Pacolli, said at the summit of South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) in Brdo, Slovenia, that Kosovo remains committed to regional cooperation and normalisation of relations with Serbia. Pacolli also spoke about the issue of digital interconnection as being of immense importance for the region and enabling sustainable economic and social development.

**Spain to put veto on EU-Western Balkans joint statement (*Zeri*)**

Spain has decided to use veto to a joint statement the EU hopes to sign at the end of the EU-Western Balkans summit in Sofia, Bulgaria in May. Spanish paper ***El Pais*** reported that Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy doesn’t want his name to appear on the same document with the signatures of Kosovo officials. The paper has also reported that Rajoy could even decide cut short his participation in the upcoming summit in protest of Kosovo’s participation.

**Tahiri: EULEX to leave June 15 (*Koha Ditore*)**

Kosovo’s Minister of Justice, Abelard Tahiri, said the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo (EULEX) will depart June 15. However, Tahiri said it is possible that the EULEX special police unit to remain further as it will be mostly focused in the north of Kosovo. “As of June 15, there will be no more [EULEX] prosecutors and judges. We are still discussing the special police units,” Tahiri said in an interview to ***KTV***. He also said Kosovo will fully cooperate with specialist chambers. “We have the will and opportunity to cooperate. It is a court established on our laws,” Tahiri said.

**Government: Serbian List has not left definitely (*RFE, Bota Sot*)**

Despite the statements of the Serbian List on leaving the government of Kosovo, this decision appears not to be final. Kosovo government spokesperson, Donjeta Gashi, said PM Ramush Haradinaj is continuously contacting representatives of the Serbian List and invited them to return to the government. “There is nothing official so far, about their final leaving of the government… In the meantime the work at these ministries is going on, by other officials. This means nothing is definite or final when the Serbian List is concerned,” Gashi said.

**Investigation opened into police officers that arrested Djuric (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo Police Inspectorate has opened an investigation into all police officers involved in the arrest of the Serbian government official Marko Djuric on 26 March. Deputy Interior Minister, Milan Radojevic, is reported to have requested an investigation into the arrest operation which left several persons injured, including the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Nenad Rikalo.

**Delawie requests more determination on increase of security level (*Epoka*)**

The Ambassador of the United States of America to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, visited on Monday Kosovo’s Ministry for Internal Affairs and met with Minister Bejtush Gashi. He said that greater commitment to safeguard and increase security level in Kosovo is required. He offered support of the U.S. on further strengthening of Kosovo’s security institutions. Minister Gashi expressed appreciation for the U.S.’s continuous support on strengthening security agencies in Kosovo and requested further support in the future.

**North’s residents owe over €13 million to Mitrovica water company (*Koha*)**

The paper reports that the residents of Mitrovica North and Zvecan have not been paying their water bills and that the unpaid bills have now totaled over €13 million. Operating under losses, the Mitrovica water company asked for assistance from the Minisry of Economic Development. Sources inside the ministry told ***KTV*** that a waterwork company in the north, funded by the government of Serbia, is soon expected to begin supplying the northern municipalities with water and disconnecting them from the Mitrovica company.

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