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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**In Vatican, PM Haradinaj meets Pope Francis (*dailies*)**

During his visit to the Vatican, Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj met Pope Francis to whom he expressed the commitment of the people of Kosovo to preserve and foster spiritual and democratic values for the common good. “Kosovo is grateful to the Holy See for always finding open doors. The blessing of Pope Francis is further encouragement for the path being pursued by Kosovo and its people, the path of European civilization,” Haradinaj said after the meeting.

**PDK’s Hoxhaj rules out prospect of early elections (*RTK*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Prime Minister and senior member of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Enver Hoxhaj, said in an interview to ***RTK*** on Thursday that the roundtables of political parties are useful but he ruled out the prospect of early parliamentary elections requested by some parties. He added that the roundtables are aimed at coordinating efforts on capital issues such as the formation of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities, the transformation of the Kosovo Security Force into the Armed Forces and Kosovo’s EU agenda. Hoxhaj also said that President Hashim Thaci has the government’s support to lead the process of talks with Serbia. He added that he was certain that at the end of the process Kosovo will become a member of the United Nations.

**Jevtic: We will not support creation of Kosovo army (*Zeri*)**

Serbian List official and Minister for Communities and Returns, Dalibor Jevtic, said they will not support efforts for creation of a Kosovo army. “This is a position we have made clear before,” Jevtic said. He also warned that the Serbian List and Serb representatives in Kosovo institutions will not allow “games being played” with the Brussels agreement which should serve as basis for the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities.

**Serbian List wants legal amendments for the Association/Community (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that Minister for Local Government Ivan Todosijevic said on Wednesday that the government needs to amend laws to make way for the formation of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities. Todosijevic did not specify which laws he thinks should be amended but criticized the government for failing to form the Association/Community five years after the agreement was reached in the Brussels talks. “I insist that the Kosovo Government should start harmonizing the legal framework for implementing the Brussels agreement on the Association of Serb-majority municipalities. Even without the draft statute for the Association, Pristina should decide which provisions must be amended in order to form the Association,” he added.

**Analysts: Constitutional Court in danger of being politicized (*Zeri*)**

Last week, Assembly of Kosovo failed to elect three Albanian judges to the Constitutional Court which analysts say is a result of political parties bargaining. This, according to analysts, is a clear indication that the new judges will be people that are somehow politically affiliated. Ehat Miftaraj, researcher with Kosovo Institute for Justice, said the Constitution of Kosovo stipulates that the recruitment of judges should be independent, the practice shows that political interferences are being openly displayed in the process. “Politics is making sure it is sending to the court obeying people and people who will serve its causes,” Miftaraj said. This allegation is however being rejected by members of the ruling coalition parties. Head of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), Ahmet Isufi, said that the fact no Albanian judges were elected last week goes to show that MPs voted on their own free will.

**EULEX to transform into advisory mission (*Epoka e Re/RFE*)**

The EU rule of law mission, EULEX, is expected to undergo transformation of its mandate and remain only an advisory mission, ***Radio Free Europe*** reported quoting Kosovo government officials. Minister of Justice, Abelard Tahiri, said it is an assessment of both local and international institutions that Kosovo has enough capacities to take over EULEX competencies. “We will no longer have a mission with an executive mandate in the Republic of Kosovo,” Tahiri said noting that the remaining part of EULEX after 14 June will have a different name. Meanwhile, EULEX spokesperson Donika Berisha said they cannot comment on the future of the mission beyond 14 June but that it is expected that EULEX will retain certain monitoring activities, particularly with regards to court cases that are being transferred to local authorities.

**Ministry of Interior to open deradicalisation unit (*RTK*)**

Minister of Interior, Bejtush Gashi, said a unit for deradicalisation of persons involved in fighting in Syria and Iraq will soon be established by the ministry. Gashi said in a visit to Kamenica that the new unit will focus on reintegrating persons who were in conflict areas. “We have a number of countries and international projects that support us in this effort,” Gashi said.

**Tahiri calls for greater inclusion of women in peace talks (*Epoka*)**

Edita Tahiri, former Kosovo chief negotiator and head of the Regional Women’s Lobby in Southeast Europe, took part in a UN Women conference in New York that focused on women’s empowerment in peace negotiations. Tahiri spoke of her experience as one of the negotiators of the Rambouillet Peace conference in 1999 and chief negotiator for Kosovo in the dialogue for normalisation of relations with Serbia. She said women have potential to be successful negotiators of peace and urged the UN and its Secretary-General to make efforts to ensure a greater participation of women in peace processes.

**New status gives Trepca units financial and business autonomy (*Koha*)**

The paper claims to have secured a copy of the new statute of the Trepca mining complex, according to which the three units will be independent in their financial and business plans. The mining complex is divided into three business units, one of them being located in the northern part of the country and managed by Serbs. A supervisory board has drafted the new statute and it now needs to be adopted by the government and the Assembly. Unlike other public enterprises, the Trepca complex will not be managed only by a single executive officer but also by a managing board. In addition to the executive officer and a deputy, the board will include heads of business units which will have decision-making powers in the management of the enterprise.

**Minister Rikalo owns private business in agricultural field (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports on the front page that although appointed to the post of Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development nine months ago, Nenad Rikalo has not yet given up ownership of a private company active since 2005. Rikalo declared ownership of a private business in the anti-corruption agency’s applications and still continues to appear as the authorising person for the company. The paper claims this represents a legal violation, especially being that the private business is in the same field as the one he leads as minister. The paper reached out to Rikalo to comment and he said that he is in the process of leaving the private company which he said is currently inactive.

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