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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Dialogue begins in June, could end this year (*Koha*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Prime Minister, Enver Hoxhaj, said on Thursday that the final part of dialogue with Serbia will begin in June and that he expects the process to end this year. The paper recalls that the European Union has called for “a comprehensive and legally-binding agreement for normalization” between the two countries, without which there can be no membership. Hoxhaj, who served as Foreign Minister in the previous two governments, told the paper on Thursday that currently a top priority for the EU is the name dispute between the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece and that once this issue is resolved the primary attention will shift on dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. “A first meeting can take place in June and there are also some principles on which dialogue should be based. There is also a timeline according to which the process could conclude by the end of 2018, which is rather soon, or by the middle of next year”. Hoxhaj said the timeline and principles are not specified in any document but that they were discussed with representatives of other countries. He did say that mutual recognition will be one of the criteria for the normalization of relations. The paper further notes that the Kosovo Assembly will discuss the government’s platform on dialogue on Monday and that next week the Social Democratic Party (PSD) is expected to host a roundtable of political parties focusing on dialogue with Serbia.

**Vucic: I will come up with a proposal for Kosovo (Zeri)**

Serbia’s President, Aleksandar Vucic, said on Thursday that it is in Serbia’s interest to reach a legally-binding agreement with Albanians and that this requires a wide-ranging consensus and will of the majority of Serbian society. Vucic said he is certain that if this agreement is reached, the door to the European Union will not be closed. Vucic added further that he will come up with a proposal for the solution of Kosovo matter. He stressed that Albanians should understand that there is no future if there is no agreement. He said that major western powers continue to support the fact that Kosovo’s territorial matter is already resolved, and that Kosovo is already independent. He said that they would not give up on Kosovo. “This is not only a matter of Kosovo Serbs, what is the most important is their security, their lives, their economic progress, their perspective and future. But this is not an issue that concerns only them but all those who live in Serbia,” Vucic said.

**Krasniqi: PDK is ready for elections (Zeri)**

Memli Krasniqi, caucus of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), told the paper that currently, Kosovo does not need early parliamentary elections, but stability and institutional sustainability. He however added that his political party is ready for elections if the other political parties decide to go for them. He added that despite PDK’s readiness, no political party in Kosovo wants elections in Kosovo, being that some important national matters are to be defined during the two or three nexts years. Speaking about the dialogue with Serbia, Krasniqi said Kosovo once again needs a unity team and that this process will be led by President Thaci, no matter the objections of the opposition parties.

**Hoti: No leader can make compromises against Kosovo’s Constitution (*Bota Sot*)**

In a front-page interview to the paper, Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) parliamentary group chief, Avdullah Hoti, said that “no institutional or political leader can make compromises that go against the Constitution of Kosovo”. Hoti said the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities must be formed in conformity with the ruling of the Constitutional Court. Hoti further argued that the Haradinaj-led government has lost the majority in the Assembly for several months now, and that “under the same circumstances, in any other democratic country, the Prime Minister would call for a motion of confidence against the government”.

**Assembly adopts harmful resolution for liberalisation (Zeri)**

The Assembly of Kosovo has adopted a resolution which requires removal of border control between Albania and Kosovo. However, according to the experts on European integration, this resolution is in contradiction with the recommendations of the European Commission in 2015, for double border control. According to the experts, both this resolution and the one for removal of roaming with Albania, will have the fate of earlier resolutions of the Assembly, they will not be implemented.

**Lobbying for visa liberalization starts next week (Epoka e Re)**

The Assembly of Kosovo will start from the next week a diplomatic offensive at the capitals of the European Union to seek support for visa liberalization. Kosovo Assembly President Kadri Veseli, said representatives of the governing coalition and opposition will guarantee during this tour the EU member countries that Kosovo people will respect procedures foreseen by the program for the free movement within Schengen zone.

**Rakic: Iber bridge will not open (Zeri)**

Goran Rakic, mayor of Mitrovica North, said for the Serbian daily Politika that opening of the main bridge on the River Iber is not on the agenda. He said reconstruction of the bridge is ongoing and assessed that except for technical conditions, those of security are not fulfilled either. “Based on the Brussels Agreement, this matter is directly conditioned with signing of a memorandum for the borderline of the Southern and Northern municipalities in village Suhodoll. All the announcements made by the mayor of Mitrovica South, Agim Bahtiri, are made for internal political purposes. I am sure that they are also very well aware of what the agreement says,” Rakic said.

**Janjic: Construction of existing road near Monastery will be allowed (*Kallxo*)**

Sava Janjic, the Abbot of Decani Monastery, told the news website on Thursday that the monastery is not against the construction of the existing road by the local authorities but against transforming this road into an international road linking Kosovo with Montenegro. Janjic further said the monastery will allow the road to be constructed in the existing perimeter. “This was proposed by the EU. If there is a local road of 10 kilometers, then it can be constructed within this perimeter. The problem however is that there is a tendency to use this road for linking Decan with the Plave region in Montenegro,” Janjic was quoted as saying.

**Chepurin: London is not the only one to be asked on Kosovo (Lajmi)**

Russia’s Ambasador to Serbia, Aleksandar Chepurin, told Belgrade daily ***Novosti***, that the UN Security Council meetings on Kosovo should be held in the same rhythm, every three months. Speaking about the allegations that it is expected that from August, when the Great Britain takes over presiding of the Security Council, these meetings could be held less frequently, Chepurin said London is not the only one to be asked on the matter. “These requests are not news, but this does not depend only on the presider,” he said.

**People with political immunity involved in money laundering (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on page two that the UNDP office in cooperation with Kosovo’s Financial Intelligence Unit published on Thursday the first report on money laundering typologies of politically exposed persons. According to the analysis, among the identified forms of money laundering by politically exposed persons are the use of loans by politically exposed persons, unusual deposits and the structuring of transactions, funds that don’t match the level of income, cash deposits by close associates, illegal transactions and funds, and including family members in cleaning income. During the conference it was said that report is aimed at creating a system where corruption is more easily detected, sanctioned and stolen funds repatriated. The UNDP issued a press release saying that “the report is expected to serve as a reference guide for private sector reporting entities in discerning which clients are of high risk and what suspicious activities to report; police and prosecutors in building their cases through uncovering evidence that leads them to initiate confiscation procedures; and finally, for judges in understanding how this type of white collar crime is committed and to adjudicate appropriate sentences for these types of serious offenses.”

**Arben Gjuka resigns as KEK director (*media*)**

Most online media report that Arben Gjuka has resigned his post as director of the Kosovo Power Corporation (KEK) on Thursday. “I submitted my resignation today, due to several reasons,” Gjuka told ***Koha*** on Thursday without providing further comment. Njazi Thaci, current operational director at KEK and whom ***Koha Ditore*** describes as a relative of Kosovo President Hashim Thaci, has been appointed acting director of KEK.

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