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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Avramopoulos to announce visa decision on Thursday in Pristina (*Koha*)**

***KTV*** reported that the European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship. Dimitris Avramopoulos, will visit Pristina on Thursday to announce a positive decision on visa liberalisation. Sources said that Avramopoulos expected to reveal the decision in a speech before Kosovo Assembly MPs.

**The week of the visa liberalisation (*Epoka*)**

The paper reports on its front page that the European Commission is expected to issue its recommendation for visa liberalization for Kosovo this week. Kosovo’s Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj informed that recommendations of the European Commission to the European Parliament and European Council will take place on 17 or 18 July. Kosovo leadership expressed conviction that the recommendation will be positive, and pledged that they will be very careful with regards to this process.

**Kosovars want visa liberalisation, because they’re fed up with “good news” (*Koha*)**

The paper’s Brussels-based correspondent, Augustin Palokaj, writes that by the end of the week the European Commission is expected to finally announce that Kosovo has met the final criteria for visa liberalization. “This will most certainly be followed by pathetic statements of Kosovo politicians as a ‘great success’ and as ‘good news’ but in practice it doesn’t mean anything. Now it is not important if the assessment is announced this week or in September, because the process has been delayed for another six months. Kosovars are fed up with hearing about ‘good news’ for eight years now, but visa were not removed, and they won’t be removed soon after this ‘good news’. Because in the European Union there is no honest readiness to remove visas and Kosovo politicians are well aware of this, but they manipulate with the people. They get visas for themselves and their families, or they get Albanian passports”.

**Thaci doesn’t want “limitations” in negotiations (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that the Office of President Hashim Thaci and the Kosovo Government have yet to comment on the platform suggested by the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) on the eve of the upcoming meeting in Brussels. Sources however told the paper that President Thaci does not like the platform because it limits him in negotiations, especially the proposal that Kosovo should have red lines that prevent border changes. “The negotiating position that would be based on the Ahtisaari Package and the ruling of the International Court of Justice on the legality of independence – was seen as an obstacle for reaching a compromise with Vucic,” the source told the paper.

**Coalition government united on dialogue (*Epoka*)**

Kosovo Assembly MP from the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) Muharrem Nitaj, told the paper that the governing coalition is united with regards to the dialogue with Serbia. He said that the governing partners are engaging to reach a consensus for this process and expressed hope that opposition political parties would join them as well. He said that AAK considers a political consensus on leadership of the dialogue as well as the platform and strategy, to be vital.

**LDK demands elections before final stage of dialogue with Serbia (*Zeri/RFE*)**

The largest opposition party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), demands early elections before resuming talks with Serbia in what Kosovo claims is the final stage of the dialogue for normalisation of relations. Head of the party’s parliamentary group, Avdullah Hoti, told ***Radio Free Europe*** that the government of Kosovo has no legitimacy as it has lost majority in the parliament while President Hashim Thaci has no mandate to lead the talks. He said however that LDK sees dialogue as the only way to resolve open issues but noted that this process needs to be led by credible institutions. “At present there are no legitimate institutions that could lead these important processes and we have therefore made it clear that the sooner we head to elections and produce legitimate institutions, the better for the country,” Hoti said.

**Norwegian Ambassador: Details on ACSMM should be reconsidered (*RTK)***

The Norwegian Ambassador to Kosovo Per Strand Sjaastad, told *Kosovapress* that it is essential to resume the dialogue with Serbia as the only way forward for the prosperity of both countries. He added further that political leadership of a country should always have a starting point the Constitution of the country, while Kosovo Constitution says that the president is the leader that should do it. He said the parties in the dialogue should avoid provoking behavior otherwise chances to reach a final agreement would be smaller. Speaking about the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities, he said that he hopes this question mark will be resolved, knowing that it has been an important issue for the Serbian party during the Brussels discussions and added that it is legal for the Association to establish in the manner of not mining the functionality of Kosovo state.

**Vetevendosje: Partition of Kosovo cemented by Mitrovica wall (*media*)**

Vetevendosje issued a press release saying that unconditional dialogue with Serbia on Kosovo’s internal issues is cementing partition of Kosovo and legitimising presence of Serbia. Vetevendosje said that the resumption of construction works on the wall at Iber River bridge in Mitrovica at a time when Kosovo leaders Thaci, Veseli, Haradinaj, and Limaj are in Brussels for dialogue with Serbia speaks about the incapacity of the state consolidation by agreements reached so far. “Vetevendosje considers the construction of the Wall and the absurd silence of the Kosovo Government in face of this continuous assertion of Serb sovereignty in Kosovo to be unacceptable,” the press release reads.

**Building of the wall at Iber Bridge continues (*Epoka*)**

The works of building a wall at the northern part of River Iber in Mitrovica continued Sunday. The wall that is being built at “Kolasinska Street” close to “Kralj Petar” square, is 40 to 70 centimeters high and 37.5 meters long. Between the two concrete walls, there is a 50-centimeter gap which will serve for planting plants. However, nine meters of this wall will be movable pillars which enable moving of emergency vehicles. A part of this wall was concreted on Saturday, and the other part continued on Sunday, and the wall is expected to be completed today (Monday). Revitalisation of the Iber Bridge is financed by the EU, while works at “Kralj Petar” square including the wall, are financed by Mitrovica North Municipality.

**Mitrovica South opposes wall on Iber bridge (*Koha*)**

Mitrovica South municipal representatives are opposing the construction of a wall on Iber bridge that divides the southern and northern part of the town, the paper reports on page two. Mitrovica South deputy mayor, Faruk Mujka, told ***KTV*** on Sunday that he was against the construction “but that work is being done based on the consent of state leaders”. He also said that based on informal discussions he had with people involved the process, citizens from both sides of the town will be able to move freely by the end of this month. Citizens told ***KTV*** that the wall would only lead to greater divisions between the communities.

**NATO: There can be no parallels between Kosovo and Crimea (*Zeri*)**

Robert Pszczel, NATO’s Senior Officer for Russia and Western Balkans said there can be no comparisons made between Kosovo and Crimea. “There are no similarities. We are dealing with completely different situations,” Pszczel said. He added that Kosovo issue was on international agenda for many years and that it was well known why NATO decided to intervene.

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