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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Veseli: Kosovo will emerge victorious in dialogue, we have U.S. with us (*RTK*)**

Kosovo Assembly President and Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) leader, Kadri Veseli, told ***RTK*** on Wednesday he is confident that political parties will achieve consensus on dialogue with Serbia. He called on the opposition to rise beyond party interests and work together for the good of the people. Veseli said Kosovo will emerge victorious in dialogue with Serbia. “Kosovo needs to achieve internal consensus in order to prove the seriousness of its statehood and also prove that we are determined for our sovereignty. We have no reason to fear this process … Our past is painful. I strongly believe that the suffering of our people is now part of the past, because we have our international partners by our side. We have the United States of America and other powers like Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy, by our side,” he said.

**No concrete proposals for final agreement with Serbia (*Koha*)**

The Kosovo government and the President do not speak in unison about compromises in the final phase of talks with Serbia and there are different positions even among partners of the ruling coalition, the paper reports on its front page. The Prime Minister’s Office has not commented on a recent statement by Deputy Prime Minister Enver Hoxhaj who said that if there are no red lines in relations with Serbia, then the same should apply for Kosovo’s relations with its southern neighbor, Albania. President Hashim Thaci meanwhile on several occasions has mentioned “painful compromises” that Kosovo will have to make in the final phase of the process, without elaborating further. Prime Minister Haradinaj said on Tuesday that the most painful compromise is mutual recognition with Serbia, because in his words this would imply pardoning Serbia for the crimes committed in Kosovo. Opposition representatives on the other hand have warned that ideas for partition or exchange of territories are dangerous and they said they will not agree to be part of a delegation led by President Thaci.

**Kosovo Assembly to discuss dialogue with Serbia today (*media*)**

Several online media report that members of the Kosovo Assembly will discuss today dialogue with Serbia, among other topics.

**Vucic: Currently there is no possible solution on Kosovo (*media*)**

Several online media report on the meeting between Serbian List representatives and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic on Wednesday in Belgrade. Belgrade-based ***Tanjug*** news agency quoted Serbian List deputy leader Igor Simic as saying that Vucic told them currently there is no solution on the Kosovo issue that he can offer to the people. “We talked openly about the position of our people in Kosovo. The Serbian President told us that currently there is no solution in sight,” Simic said.

**Kurti: Kosovo-Serbia dialogue measured in Mitrovica (*Koha*)**

Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti in a meeting with the French Ambassador Didier Chabert on Wednesday discussed recent developments in Kosovo with special focus on the dialogue with Serbia. According to a press release issued by Vetevendosje after the meeting, Kurti explained their position on dialogue for normalisation of relations with Serbia and stated that the six-year process should be reviewed to determine “what happened and where we are.” Then, “we can prepare well: formulate jointly at the Assembly our goals and demands towards Serbia and agree on the principles and the framework of the new dialogue.” Once these principles are agreed upon, Kurti said, comes the decision on the composition of the negotiating team and stressed that “any dialogue and agreement is measured in Mitrovica”.

**Pristina-Belgrade dialogue: From technical talks to option of partition (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo and Serbia began technical dialogue in 2011, continued with that on the political level and now, seven years on, on the final stage of the process there is talk of possible partition of Kosovo or exchange of territories as part of the final agreement, the paper reports on the front page. In the course of this period, the two sides reached a total of 33 agreements, notes the paper adding that majority of these has not been implemented. Kosovo’s former chief negotiator, Edita Tahiri, told ***Zeri*** that Kosovo’s red line in talks with Serbia was that it would never discuss its status, sovereignty and territorial integrity and that no one can discuss these topics. Political analyst Azem Vllasi meanwhile said talk about partition of Kosovo or exchange of territories are “nonsenses” of the Serbian side. He said issues that the Kosovo delegation should never discuss include the status, Kosovo territory and borders, internal constitutional order, and strategic resources.

**Pacolli: We have no Note Verbale revoking recognition of Kosovo (*RFE*)**

In an interview with ***Radio Free Europe***, Kosovo’s Foreign Minister Behgjet Pacolli said they have not received any Note Verbale from countries alleged to have revoked recognition of Kosovo. “Normally, countries that have recognised Kosovo have acknowledged that through a Note Verbale addressed to Kosovo institutions and this was used to open the chapter of good relations with the respective country. If something changes in this sense, the country in question should address to Kosovo a Note Verbale saying that they do not recognise it anymore,” Pacolli said adding: “We have not received such a Note Verbale or any piece of paper from any country.” He said they have information that officials of different countries that happen to visit Serbia are presented with the same document, “I imagine drafted in Belgrade”, and are asked to sign it and then use this to claim the specific country has revoked recognition of Kosovo. Asked about the dialogue with Serbia, Pacolli said he believed the process will end in recognition of Kosovo. “I see the dialogue concluding in a peace treaty whereby Serbia would recognise Kosovo and vice-versa,” Pacolli said. He noted that this would in turn pave way for Kosovo to gain membership in international organisations. In this respect, he said Kosovo plans to apply for Interpol membership this November and to UNESCO in 2019.

**Kocijancic: Establishment of Association/Community takes time (*Zeri*)**

Maja Kocijancic, spokesperson for the EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, said that European Union expects all agreements reached by parties in the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue to be implemented without delays but pointed out that establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities is a process that takes time. “Kosovo has set up a team to draft the statute of the Association. This is an ongoing process that will take time,” Kocijancic is quoted to have told Serbian media.

**Vetevendosje to host debate on Kosovo-Serbia dialogue (*Bota Sot*)**

Vetevendosje is expected to host a debate today on the topic of dialogue with Serbia and has also invited Albanian political representatives from Presevo Valley. The debate will be moderated by Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti and will take place at the Assembly of Kosovo premises.

**Sava Janjic writes to diplomats to halt construction of Decan-Plave road (*RTK*)**

Sava Janjic, Abbot of the Orthodox Monastery of Decani, has written a letter to the diplomatic corps in Kosovo asking them to halt construction of the Decan-Plave road which he says infringes the special protective zone around the monastery. According to international sources, several representatives of embassies in Kosovo are scheduled to visit Decan/Decane today to hear the concerns raised by the Orthodox clergy.

**Kosovo government removes protective measure on 14 products (*media*)**

The Kosovo government has retracted a decision to introduce a 30 percent customs tax on the import of fruits, vegetables and flour, most media report. Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry, Fadil Arifi, confirmed the news to ***Radio Free Europe*** but said that the measures would remain in effect for seven products. “The measures will continue to apply for tomatoes, peppers, apples, pears, plums, berries and grape. The decision was made yesterday (Tuesday). The Ministry asked the government to amend the decision. We have removed measures on other products. The measures that will remain in place are provisional. The measures were then approved by the government,” he said. Arifi said the decision was changed after “various pressure”. ***Koha Ditore*** reports that Trade and Industry Minister Bajram Hasani was not available for comment. The paper talked to Kosovo Customs whose officials said they are notified about changes in the decision. “Customs have been notified by the government about the changes and now there are protective measures only for seven products,” a customs spokesperson told the paper. The government of Serbia has stated that if Kosovo fails to withdraw tax measures of seasonal produce from Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Bosnia and Herzegovina, it will be faced with counter measures from these countries. Serbian Minister of Trade Rasim Ljajic said after meeting representatives of the abovementioned countries to CEFTA that reciprocity measures will be unavoidable. Ljajic said they have received unconfirmed information that Kosovo has lifted tax on corn but not on other produce like tomatoes, peppers, grapes, blackberries, raspberries, pears, and apples. “We welcome the decision and we expect the other measures to be lifted as soon as possible,” Lajic said.

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