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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Merkel: Change of borders could bring consequences for the Balkans (*Epoka*)**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said at a press conference after her meeting with the Prime Minister of Croatia Andrej Plenkovic, that eventual agreement between Kosovo and Serbia to change their borders, could create a precedent and lead to similar negotiations for other countries in Balkans. “We, of course, support all talks that lead to the goals, but at the same time we must say that the territorial integrity as it is today is an important value”, she said. Merkel added that she had made that clear during the visits of Montenegrin and Bosnian Prime Ministers and that actions that occur at one place should not be allowed to influence actions at other places. “Croatia supports territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of conflicts, and we follow everything that is happening between Kosovo and Serbia from that position”, stated Plenković.

**Thaci: No to exchange of territories (*RTK)***

The President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci took to Facebook to once again clarify his position with regards to the claims for exchange of territories between Kosovo and Serbia. “Yes to unification with Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedje as one unity with Kosovo. Yes, to mutual recognition between Kosovo and Serbia, Kosovo’s membership at the UN and other international organisations. No to division, no to exchange of territories. The others are fake news,” Thaci wrote.

**Haradinaj: There are no discussions for territories and borders (*Zeri*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj has repeated his and the government’s position that division of Kosovo and change of the borders is impossible. “The position of the government and mine is this: we aim a legally binding agreement among the two countries, for reciprocal recognition, Kosovo-Serbia. Borders and territory are not an issue of discussion, they are no one’s mandate in Kosovo to discuss this. Borders and territory in this case are a setback for Kosovo, but they are also destabilization of the region and they only suit president Putin, no one else has an interest on this,” Haradinaj said. He added further that the opposition political parties should count on his vote for endorsement of a resolution at the Assembly, which stresses clearly that territory and borders should not dare to be discussed at the dialogue. Speaking about the recent statements of Kosovo’s President Hashim Thaci, Haradinaj said this could be some kind of counter-rhetoric to what is being said in Belgrade. “This will be certainly clarified in a near future. But it is impossible for someone from Kosovo to negotiate territory and borders,” Haradinaj said.

**AAK, NISMA join opposition for session against border “correction” (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that “the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) is the only party that does not want to prevent President Hashim Thaci from negotiating Kosovo’s borders with Serbia”. The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo and NISMA, partners in the ruling coalition, confirmed on Tuesday that they will attend the extraordinary session of the Assembly called by the opposition, which aims to adopt a resolution stopping Thaci from negotiating the borders. The session, which has been called for September 4, would not be held due to lack of quorum if the AAK and NISMA MPs would not attend. The paper recalls that PDK leader and Assembly President, Kadri Veseli, said recently that the opposition’s initiative to call an extraordinary session was an absurd and unnecessary act and that “institutions will not become part of dark scenarios, false causes and sessions that incite tensions and panic”.

**Rasic: Germany does not want ‘a new Syria’ within Europe (*Zeri*)**

Nenad Rasic, leader of the Democratic Progressive Party in Kosovo, told the paper on Tuesday that exchange of territories could induce a new war in between Kosovo and Serbia. He argued that Germany would not want to import ‘a new Syria’ in Europe.

**Knaus: Movement of borders or people means explosion (*Koha/Dnevni Avaz*)**

The European Stability Initiative Director, Gerald Knaus, said in an interview to ***Dnevni Avaz*** that the idea for border changes between Kosovo and Serbia is a method that will lead to new conflicts. “The idea that problems with minority communities are best solved by moving borders or people was always explosive. It is a method to create new conflicts and to send the Balkans back to the 1980s, when instead of discussing reforms, intellectuals and politicians in the former Yugoslavia focused on borders and ethnic issues. We all know how that ended. Anyone with knowledge of history or with a clear logic would oppose such an idea,” Knaus said.

**LIBE to discuss visa liberalization today, decide tomorrow (*Zeri*)**

The European Parliament LIBE Committee will discuss today visa liberalization for Kosovo, while tomorrow it is expected to come out with a decision on the matter. Kosovo’s Minister for European Integration Dhurata Hoxha is optimistic that Kosovo will receive positive news, while representatives of the opposition political parties and experts on integration processes do not share the same opinion, especially due to the recent developments at the justice system after the resignation of the prosecutor Elez Blakaj.

**Delawie: Investigations without political interference into “fake” veterans (*media*)**

The United States Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, wrote in a Twitter post on Tuesday that he was “carefully watching the investigation of corruption in the awarding of veterans’ benefits”. “The case must be dealt with without threat, intimidation, or political interference. Citizens – especially veterans – must see the system deliver justice,” Delawie said.

**Another protest today in Pristina against interference in judiciary (*media*)**

All media report that civil society will hold another protest in Pristina today at 18:00 calling for the dismissal of State Chief Prosecutor Aleksander Lumezi, a vetting process in the judiciary and for cleaning the lists of war veterans. Organizers of the protesters said on Tuesday that it would be good for “true veterans” to join the protest.

**Five people arrested in protest against visit by Serb IDPs to Gjakova (*media*)**

All media cover the protest in Gjakova on Tuesday against a planned visit by Serb IDPs to the orthodox church in the city. The Serb pilgrims cancelled their visit citing the lack of security. Police arrested five protesters saying that they prevented police from carrying out their duties.

**Rashit Qalaj appointed general director of Kosovo Police (*media*)**

Print and online media report that Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj has appointed Rashit Qalaj as the new general director of Kosovo Police. Before taking the new post, Qalaj was head of the operations department in Kosovo Police.

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