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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Vucic glorifies Milosevic during Kosovo visit (*dailies*)**

In their coverage of the Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic’s visit to Kosovo, several papers accuse him of glorifying the former Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic. ***Zeri*** on its cover writes that in the two-day visit, Vucic continued to employ nationalistic rhetoric saying Serbia will defend Serbs in Kosovo and that in the past Serbs laid their lives down for places like Knin, Sarajevo, and Pristina. Also on the front page, ***Koha Ditore*** writes that for two days Vucic undermined the state of Kosovo. “He glorified his former boss, Slobodan Milosevic, calling him a ‘great statesman’ who had ‘good intentions’; he spoke of Great Serbia; and vowed to never recognise independence of Kosovo,” the paper writes. Meanwhile, under the caption “*Drenica stops short Vucic’s promenade through Kosovo*”, ***Epoka e Re*** highlights how Drenica residents prevented Vucic yesterday from visiting a nearby village after putting up roadblocks. ***Bota Sot*** covers Vucic’s visit in an editorial titled ***A cruise by Seselj’s associate in the silence of cowards***. The editorial also suggests that “the only way to stop the humiliation of the people of Kosovo, are protests to remove the fake ‘brave’ people from power”.

**Thaci: Protests and roadblocks not helpful (*dailies*)**

President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, reacted to the protest of Drenica residents against the visit of President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, saying that protests and roadblocks are not helpful at a time when peace and reconciliation efforts are underway. “I fully understand the reaction of Drenica citizens who expressed their justified revolt against such a visit. This shows the wound of pain and war are still very much fresh. Nevertheless, at a time when we are making efforts for peace and reconciliation, protests and blocking of roads are not helpful. I therefore understand the disappointment of Serb community residents in the village of Banje,” Thaci wrote on Facebook. “All need to refrain and demonstrate minimal human culture of understanding and communication. We have to rise above ourselves, above the wounds and many pains. We need to do this for the sake of peace and reconciliation,” Thaci concluded.

**Veseli: Vucic continued Milosevic’s rhetoric (*media*)**

Kosovo Assembly Speaker Kadri Veseli commented on President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic’s visit to Kosovo by accusing him of continuing the same rhetoric as that of former Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic. In a Facebook post, Veseli wrote that Vucic was not in Kosovo to help Kosovo Serbs but to promote himself. “I think it was good his visit took place as it showed yet again that Serbia’s leaders are continuing Slobodan Milosevic’s legacy,” Veseli wrote.

**Hoxhaj: Vucic’s visit puts in doubt EU’s role on the dialogue (*RTK*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo Enver Hoxhaj said President Aleksandar Vucic is playing dangerous games by coming to Kosovo with Slobodan Milosevic’s guidelines. ‘Vucic is playing dangerous games as he comes to Kosovo with Milosevic’s guidebook. Serbia is returning to its dark past and EU should immediately condemn such policy. This visit puts in doubt the role of EU in dialogue, if it is turning from a facilitator to an undermining factor,” Hoxhaj wrote.

**EU regrets Vucic’s cancelled visit to Banje (*Telegrafi*)**

European Union has reacted to the decision of Kosovo authorities not to allow Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic to visit the village of Banje after local residents protested the visit by putting up roadblock. Spokesperson Maja Kocijancic said the EU regrets the decision of Kosovo authorities and called on law enforcement institutions to guarantee free movement. She said that what is necessary now is for wisdom and calm to prevail.

**Vetevendosje: Vucic’s visit increases Serbia’s claims towards Kosovo (*Zeri*)**

Vetevendosje has issued a press release regarding the visit of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic to Kosovo over the weekend saying granting permission for such a visit only increases Serbia’s claims towards Kosovo. Vetevendosje said such a visit undermines Kosovo’s institutional and territorial integrity.

**Merkel: Territorial integrity – starting point for EU membership (*Koha*)**

The paper reports that during her visit to Skopje, German Chancellor Angela Merkel reiterated that Berlin is against changes to Kosovo’s borders. “From the German and European standpoint, we have great interest in a stable region. When you look at the map, you understand that the Western Balkans is crucial to the stability of the entire European Union. This is why we gave all the countries in the region the perspective for membership, not only because we want something good for these countries, but also because this is in our interest too. I personally believe that territorial integrity is an important starting point to bring the region together, one day, there can be even closer cooperation when everyone will become a member of the European Union,” Merkel said.

**Scott: Compromise and normalization of relations are needed (*Bota Sot*)**

The United States Ambassador to Serbia, Kyle Scott, took to Twitter on Sunday to say that “tensions during Vucic’s visit to Kosovo once again highlight the need for compromise and the normalization of relations. It is regrettable that road blockades prevented the President’s planned visit to Banje, but it is good that there were no incidents during the rest of his important visit to Kosovo”.

**Palokaj: EU allows Vucic to rehabilitate Milosevic in Kosovo (*Koha*)**

The paper’s Brussels-based correspondent Augustin Palokaj writes in an opinion piece, “Instead of meeting expectations and talking about a historic agreement and acknowledging reality, Vucic said during his to Kosovo that Serbia will not recognize Kosovo’s independence, he sang ‘This is Serbia’ in the heart of Mitrovica, he said that Milosevic had good intentions but that he miscalculated the situation in the world and criticized those that gave up Milosevic to The Hague. It is understandable why Vucic wants to rehabilitate the politics to which he belonged in the past. But it does not make sense why the EU is keeping silent about this”.

**US Senator meets Kosovo leaders (*dailies*)**

A delegation of a US Congress led by Senator Ronald Johnson met yesterday Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, papers report. In a Facebook post after his meeting, Thaci stated that they discussed developments in Kosovo and the region, in particular dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. “We are working for reaching a final agreement that would be in the interest of Kosovo, the region, the US and the EU,” Thaci wrote. Haradinaj on his part said he briefed the US senator of the government’s priorities and progress in the field of rule of law, economy, European integration and reforms. He said relations with the US are the best indicator that Kosovo and its people are eternally grateful for US support.

**Caplan: Negotiated border changes can normalize relations (*media*)**

In an interview to ***Radio Free Europe***, Richard Caplan, professor of international relations at Oxford University, said that the negotiated border changes between Kosovo and Serbia would be in compliance with international law and that it would normalize relations between the two countries. “Today the difference in the situation between Kosovo and Serbia is that the border changes which are being considered would be a negotiated and consequently peaceful correction. Consensual changes are in line with international law and such changes were made in other regions too … Consensual border changes were discussed even at the 1991 conference on Yugoslavia, but without any success. While border changes can solve a problem such as the dissatisfaction of Kosovo Serbs north of the Ibar River, and that of Albanians in Presevo Valley, there is a possibility that it could cause the migration of minorities from these parts of Kosovo and Serbia, because they would not want to live under the authority of a foreign sovereign. Those that would remain would not feel so secure. So the potential for further conflict could be reduced if Kosovo and Serbian authorities would engage in undertaking measures for protecting the rights and promoting the interests of these minorities, although results in this respect so far have been mixed,” Caplan said.

**Thaci to meet Presevo leaders on Moday (*RTK*)**

The Office of Kosovo’s President informed on Sunday that the President of Kosovo will meet on Monday (today) political leaders of the Presevo Valley. They are expected to address media at a joint press conference after this meeting.

**Dacic: Problems in Kosovo are not a result of Milosevic’s crimes (*RTK*)**

Serbia’s Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic, spoke on Sunday about the time when Slobodan Milosevic held the notorious speech at Gazimestan in 1989 and the recent visit of the Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in Kosovo. “What Milosevic, and all of us lacked at that time was assessment of international circumstances. At Milosevic’s time our army and police were in Kosovo and hundreds of thousands of people could come. It was a different situation. Today we are in a position when we cannot tell Serbs in Sterpce that battles are awaiting us. “Times change and it is good that there is a big difference between Milosevic’s and Vucic’s speech,’ he said and added that problems in Kosovo are not a result of Milosevic’s crimes but of “separatism and secession, which happened in the past.” He reportedly said that if many politicians were on Milosevic’s position at that time, they would have been much more radical than he was.

**A Kosovo bus attacked in Serbia, Pacolli reacts (*RTK)***

A Kosovo bus that was traveling from Cologne to Pristina, was attacked on Sunday in Serbia, but no one was injured. Kosovo’s Foreign Minister Behxhet Pacolli condemned the incident stressing that such attacks are unacceptable and should be urgently condemned by the EU, international community and institutions of law and order in Serbia.

**Haradinaj: Vetting is not problematic in Balkans (*RTV21*)**

The U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie took to Twitter on Sunday to write that “Need to continue to work hard to reduce tensions between Kosovo and Serbia and normalize relations; I hope this weekend will be seen as a positive turning point.” Later on, the day Delawie added “I acknowledge that this has been a tough weekend. Appreciate the efforts to ensure safety. Peaceful protest would have better shown off the Kosovo I know.”

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