

Main Stories 11 September 2018

* **Presevo Valley calls on Assembly to pass resolution for joining Kosovo (*dailies*)**
* **Presevo Valley representatives meet LDK leaders (*Koha*)**
* **“Resolution proposed by Valley representatives, anti-constitutional” (*Insajderi*)**
* **US Senator: Border change talk causes legitimate concern (*VOA/Zeri*)**
* **EU reacts to Vucic’s speech on Milosevic (*media*)**
* **Pack: Is EU sacrificing its convictions, like in the early 90s? (*Koha*)**
* **Hoxhaj: Russia not interested in Kosovo – Serbia compromise (*Epoka*)**
* **Limaj: I am ready to hand over dialogue lead to opposition (*Zeri*)**
* **Ymeri: There cannot be dialogue without consensus (*Epoka*)**
* **Latest Public Pulse shows youth is pessimistic about their future (*Telegrafi*)**

**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Presevo Valley calls on Assembly to pass resolution for joining Kosovo (*dailies*)**

Papers cover yesterday’s meeting of Kosovo President Hashim Thaci with Albanian representatives of the Presevo Valley and highlight their call to Kosovo Assembly to pass a resolution expressing clear support for it joining Kosovo. Thaci said in a press briefing following the meeting that he would do everything in his power to enable Presevo Valley to join Kosovo but said this would not imply Kosovo’s partition. “If I strongly supported this cause yesterday, I support it even more today. This issue needs to be closed once and for all,” Thaci said. He said they discussed further course of action and called on all relevant institutions and political parties to ‘rise above themselves for a common cause’. He made it clear however that he did not expect Belgrade to receive this proposal with open arms but said: “I want to assure you that under no circumstance and under no price will Trepca be discussed.” Asked to comment on the recent statements by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in support of Western Balkans’ territorial integrity, Thaci thanked Germany for its support and said Chancellor Merkel asked Thaci in their last meeting to step up efforts for reaching an acceptable agreement with Serbia. He said such an agreement would enable Kosovo to gain global recognition and UN membership. With regards to the visit of the Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic to Kosovo over the weekend and his praise of Slobodan Milosevic, Thaci said he heard during the visit words of peace but also glorification for Milosevic whom he referred to as the “Balkans Butcher”. He said such contrasting statements do not go hand in hand and do not contribute to the dialogue for normalisation of relations. Asked about a possible visit to the Presevo Valley, Thaci said he has never asked for a permission to visit the region because he anticipates what the reply by Serbian authorities would be. “You know I have a conviction by Serbia. Serbia has not pardoned me for it nor have I asked to be pardoned,” he said.

**Presevo Valley representatives meet LDK leaders (*Koha*)**

Leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Isa Mustafa, and deputy leader, Lutfi Haziri, met in Pristina yesterday Albanian representatives from the Presevo Valley and said after the meeting that he was informed about the worsening situation there. “While expressing my and the LDK’s concern about the current situation and the permanent interest of LDK towards Albanians in the Presevo Valley, I informed them that LDK considers that border correction at a time when Serbia does not recognise Kosovo’s current borders and the opening of the issue of territorial integrity are not only in conflict to the Constitution of Kosovo and the Declaration of Independence but also risk putting the statehood of Kosovo at a table,” Mustafa wrote on Facebook after the meeting.

**Hoti: Resolution proposed by Valley representatives, anti-constitutional (*Insajderi*)**

Avdullah Hoti, caucus of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK,) commented the request of leaders from Presevo Valley, Bujanovac and Medvedja, for the Assembly of Kosovo to endorse a resolution that would support their political will expressed on 1 and 2 March of 1992, to unite with Kosovo. According to Hoti, such a resolution is anti-constitutional. “With all due respect for the Albanians of the Valley, such a resolution is anti-constitutional. Therefore, we will not vote it, unless there is a will to change the Constitution,” Hoti said.

**US Senator: Border change talk causes legitimate concern (*VOA/Zeri*)**

In an interview with ***Voice of America*** regarding his visit to Pristina and Belgrade, the US Senator Ron Johnson spoke about the option of border changes as part of the final agreement between Kosovo and Serbia saying such a prospect is causing legitimate concern. “If you start to change borders in one part of the Balkans, there will be other claims from people wanting to also change borders. In today’s world there are many multiethnic societies and people have learnt to live together,” Johnson said adding however that the US will make its position known only once the parties reach agreement. “From the United States point of view, our key message is that the solution needs to be found by both sides. We are here to support and encourage but the two sides, Serbia and Kosovo, need to reach a solution which is not easy. Once they do so, we will look at it to see if we have any concerns and convey them,” Johnson said.

**EU reacts to Vucic’s speech on Milosevic (*media*)**

European Commission spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic was asked by the reporters in Brussels about Serbian President Vucic remarks on late Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, during his recent visit to Kosovo. She said that there must be no room for any supporter of policies which led to the suffering of the people of the Western Balkans. “Reconciliation, normalization and good neighbourly relations are only possible if the policies of the past are rejected and overcome. We must not leave any room for ambiguity or praise for those who upheld these policies or actions. Reconciliation and good neighbourly relations are the very essence of what in the EU stand for and all partners in the region have clear European perspective and are required to uphold these principles,” the EU spokeswoman said.

**Pack: Is EU sacrificing its convictions, like in the early 90s? (*Koha*)**

Doris Pack, former member of the European Parliament, took to Twitter on Monday to comment on Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic’s remarks about Slobodan Milosevic during his recent visit to Kosovo. “The actual Serbian president speaks in Kosovo on Milosevic as ‘a great leader’ without any echo of EU officials? Are we sacrificing our convictions for the so-called realpolitik as we did too long in the early nineties?” Pack tweeted.

**Hoxhaj: Russia not interested in Kosovo – Serbia compromise (*Epoka*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo Enver Hoxhaj, told Austrian daily ***Der Standard*** that Russian Federation is not interested on the reach of compromise between Kosovo and Serbia, but that its interest is to reach its own compromises outside Balkans. He said that Kosovo and Serbia are only at the first phase of the final phase of the dialogue. “This agreement has to be signed in Brussels, ratified by both parliaments and adopted at Security Council,” Hoxhaj said. He insisted that Kosovo will remain a multiethnic state and added that Kosovo needs an agreement with Serbia only if this ensures its membership at the United Nations.

**Limaj: I am ready to hand over dialogue lead to opposition (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Social Democratic Initiative (NISMA), Fatmir Limaj, who has recently been nominated by the government to lead the dialogue with Serbia, said in an interview with the paper that he would be willing to hand over the new post to a representative from the opposition but urged on all parties to join the process of dialogue with Serbia. “Dialogue cannot be led individually, it needs a mandate and the opportunity should be extended to all but at the same time there needs to be will from the other side,” Limaj said. He did not specifically address President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci’s proposal for, as he says ‘border adjustment’ with Serbia, but stated that Kosovo is an independent country and its end goal from the dialogue is to get Serbia to recognise it as such and gain UN membership. “Serbia has not yet come out with a concrete proposal indicating on what condition it would be prepared to recognise independence of Kosovo. Until such a proposal is made we don’t know what Serbia’s position is,” Limaj added.

**Ymeri: There cannot be dialogue without consensus (*Epoka*)**

Visar Ymeri, deputy leader of the Social-Democratic Party, said on Monday that there cannot be dialogue with Serbia without a political and social consensus in Kosovo. He told the paper that it is necessary to pass the decision-making on the dialogue to the Assembly of Kosovo in order to prevent “President Thaci’s impossible adventures on territory and sovereignty of the country”. He stressed that dialogue with Serbia has to take place under the conditions of complete transparency and with everyone’s consent for a state platform on Kosovo’s aims and goals in this dialogue. He said that only after voting a state platform with two-thirds of the MPs, the dialogue process could gain legitimacy and strategy.

**Latest Public Pulse shows youth is pessimistic about their future (*Telegrafi*)**

The news website reports that the UNDP Office will publish today a Public Pulse analysis on youth-related issues in Kosovo. The study looks into the perceptions, positions and expectations of youths on issues such as migration, education, employment, interethnic relations and their views about the future in Kosovo. Results of the study show that the biggest number of respondents are pessimistic about their future in Kosovo; the majority of respondents believe the lack of employment opportunities, poverty, nepotism and corruption are the biggest challenges to their future in Kosovo.

**Disclaimer**

This media summary consists of selected local media articles for the information of UN personnel. The public distribution of this media summary is a courtesy service extended by UNMIK on the understanding that the choice of articles translated is exclusive, and the contents do not represent anything other than a selection of articles likely to be of interest to a United Nations readership. The inclusion of articles in this summary does not imply endorsement by UNMIK.