

Main Stories 10 October 2018

* **EU: Brussels agreements, base documents for Association/Community (*Koha*)**
* **Haradinaj: There will be no games with border (*Zeri*)**
* **Haradinaj: In U.S., I received messages Kosovo’s borders are fine (*Telegrafi*)**
* **Thaci: I will raise border issue at OIF conference meetings (*RTK*)**
* **Opposition refuses to go to Veseli’s meeting (*media*)**
* **Ismaili: We don’t want border correction that damages sovereignty (*T7*)**
* **PSD: “Border correction” a serious public provocation (*Koha*)**
* **Gjini: Thaci has no constitutional right to dismiss Haradinaj (*Klan Kosova*)**
* **Kuci: We’re not afraid the government will be brought down (*Epoka*)**
* **Hoxha: Visa liberalisation in final stage (*Zeri*)**
* **Kosovo report approved, Soltes mentions Kosovo’s great chance on visas (*Epoka*)**
* **Thaci requested to return veterans’ lists at point zero (*Facebook/Epoka*)**
* **Assembly committee adopts bill for trying war crimes in absentia (*Klan Kosova*)**
* **PDK to hold convention which opens internal election process (*Klan*)**

**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**EU: Brussels agreements, base documents for Association/Community (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that the future competencies of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities have furthered clashes between Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. However, the executive competencies of the Association/Community derive from two of the Brussels agreements which were signed by Thaci when he was prime minister. The Constitutional Court of Kosovo had later ruled that these agreements are in violation with the Constitution and asked that violations in the draft statute are avoided in order to prevent a third tier of government in Kosovo. European Union officials meanwhile have made it clear that the base documents for the Association/Community will be the Brussels agreements. Maja Kocijancic, spokeswoman for EU High Representative Federica Mogherini, told the paper on Tuesday: “The Brussels agreement in 2013 and the August 2015 agreement are basis for the work of the management team. The latter is continuing its work in drafting the statute of the Association/Community. The EU works continuously with both parties to ensure the implementation of all agreements reached in the EU-facilitated dialogue”.

**Haradinaj: There will be no games with border (*Zeri*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj reiterated that Kosovo borders will not change. “I will not stand by and watch history repeating itself,” Haradinaj said adding that no matter how much of a friend he considers the President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci to be, “this has nothing to do with persons but with issues that are vital.” Haradinaj said the government of Kosovo wants to see an agreement with Serbia which would ensure mutual recognition but without shifting borders. Haradinaj made the remarks at a press conference following the government’s meeting.

**Haradinaj: In U.S., I received messages that Kosovo’s borders are fine (*Telegrafi*)**

Kosovo Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, said in an interview to ***RTV Dukagjini*** on Tuesday that during his recent meeting with U.S. Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, he was told that Kosovo’s borders are fine. “I don’t want to consume my conversation with Mattis, but according to my information Kosovo’s borders will not be moved,” Haradinaj said.

**Thaci: I will raise border issue at OIF conference meetings (*RTK*)**

President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci said he plans to speak about the “border correction” idea in all his meetings during the conference of the International Organisation of la Francophonie (OIF) in Yerevan, Armenia. In a Facebook post, Thaci said he has met in recent days people from different fields including academia, business, students, civil society mainly from the Presevo Valley and they all agreed that now is the historic opportunity to materialise “legitimate right of citizens of this area, expressed on 1 and 2 March 1992” to join Kosovo.

**Opposition refuses to go to Veseli’s meeting (*media*)**

Opposition political parties appear to reject the invitation of the Assembly President for a joint meeting for an eventual approximation of the positions on the dialogue with Serbia. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and Vetevendosje Movement have refused the invitation, while the Social-Democratic Party (PSD) has set some conditions in order to participate at this meeting.

**Ismaili: We don’t want border correction that damages sovereignty (*T7*)**

Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) deputy leader, Uran Ismaili, said in a debate on ***T7*** that the PDK does not believe that President Hashim Thaci’s initiative on border correction would lead to Kosovo’s partition. Ismaili, who is Minister of Health, said the PDK would not support a border correction that would damage Kosovo’s sovereignty.

**PSD: “Border correction” a serious public provocation (*Koha*)**

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) opposed on Tuesday Kosovo President Hashim Thaci’s initiative for border correction with Serbia, the paper reports on page two. PSD MP, Dukagjin Gorani, told reporters in Pristina that Thaci’s statement of “support from the international community” is also dangerous. “The sentence ‘the international community will agree with any solution that is acceptable for both sides’, the President chose to interpret it as an authorization to initiate a serious public provocation which is now known as ‘border correction’ … The Social Democratic Party reiterates that such claims constitute an absurd and ill-will provocation. They are formulated only to cause confusion among the people and political clashes,” Gorani added.

**Gjini: Thaci has no constitutional right to dismiss Haradinaj (*Klan Kosova*)**

Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) deputy leader, Ardian Gjini, said on Tuesday that President Hashim Thaci has no constitutional right to dismiss Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. In an interview to ***Klan Kosova***, Gjini said Thaci’s idea for border correction is dangerous. “If a politician has an idea or a vision, the best way to achieve it is to convince the people. I find this issue problematic, when someone has an idea and wants everyone to agree with it even though everyone opposes President Thaci’s idea. Prime Minister Haradinaj knows the way, his opinion is clear … The majority of people in Kosovo want the country to keep its current borders; more than half of the PDK [Democratic Party of Kosovo] are in favour of our opinion,” Gjini added.

**Kuci: We’re not afraid the government will be brought down (*Epoka*)**

Blerim Kuci, deputy leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK,) told the paper that the governing coalition is functioning as required and that relations among the coalition partners are good. He said they do not fear threats of the President to bring the government down and call for new elections. He said that such statements aim more Thaci’s factorization in this process. He said President Thaci should not be jealous for the successes of Haradinaj government, as they are successes of Kosovo as well. He said the government supports the process of the dialogue, however, according to him, the Assembly should play the crucial role.

**Hoxha: Visa liberalisation in final stage (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo’s Minister of European Integration Dhurata Hoxha said the process of visa liberalisation is at its final stage and that she expects a positive decision of the EU Council of Ministers. Speaking at the EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association committee meeting, Hoxha said European integration is the main foreign policy objective of the government of Kosovo.

**Kosovo report approved, Soltes mentions Kosovo’s great chance on visas (*Epoka*)**

The European Parliament committee for foreign affairs voted on Tuesday the Progress Report for Kosovo for 2018. The report was approved with 42 votes for, ten against and 6 abstentions. European Parliament Rapporteur for Kosovo Igor Soltes, said Kosovo is now at the closest point for visa liberalisation. “In order to reach this, a continuous war against corruption and organized crime is required. Also, all efforts should focus on creation of a healthy business environment, strengthening of independent judiciary and reach of a functional institution of implementation of the law,” Soltes said.

**Thaci requested to return veterans’ lists at point zero (*Facebook/Epoka*)**

The President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci met on Tuesday with the representatives of the KLA veterans, Hysni Gucati and Migjen Shala. Thaci took to Facebook to inform that the representatives requested from his to return the entire process of the veterans’ lists at point zero. “Representatives expressed their concern about KLA veterans lists and requested from me to exercise my authority in order to return the entire process at point zero, considering this as the only possibility to overcome many irregularities,” Thaci wrote.

**Assembly committee approves bill for trying war crimes in absentia (*Klan Kosova*)**

Kosovo Assembly’s Committee on Legislation, Mandates, Immunities, Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and the Oversight of the Anti-Corruption Agency approved yesterday with seven votes in favour and two abstentions changes to the Criminal Procedure Code paving way for war crimes to be tried against suspect that are absent. Head of the committee, Albulena Haxhiu from Vetevendosje said the draft law will enable investigation and trial of accused in absentia. Haxhiu said many countries in the EU and the Balkans have such a piece of legislation and that Kosovo is late in this respect.

**PDK to hold convention which opens internal election process (*Klan*)**

The Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) will hold today the Convention for the official opening of the internal election process. The leaders of the party, Kadri Veseli will also be present at the event. The latter was elected leader of the party after Hashim Thaci’s election as the President of Kosovo.

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