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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Thaci: AFET considers border correction possible (*Facebook/media*)**

Kosovo President Hashim Thaci said on Wednesday that the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) has adopted a draft resolution on Kosovo and other countries of the Western Balkans. In a Facebook post, Thaci said AFET considers possible the border correction between Kosovo and Serbia. Thaci wrote: “I welcome and thank European MPs for yesterday’s vote at the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and the support to the immediate visa liberalization and a final peace agreement between Kosovo and Serbia. The decision for visa liberalization for Kosovo’s citizens is not only merited but was also unrightfully delayed. On the final phase of dialogue for the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, I welcome the fact that AFET calls for a comprehensive and legally-binding agreement that will be accepted by all sides, that will safeguard the multiethnic characters of our countries and will not create borders along ethnic lines. Above all, AFET considers as possible the option of border correction between Kosovo and Serbia, as a compromise solution for the final agreement. This approach and the content of the draft resolution adopted by AFET yesterday, which is expected to be voted at the plenary session of the European Parliament, is identical with our approach and arguments for a final agreement. The draft resolution is proof that European MPs have realized what is the most possible and realistic option for a final agreement that will ensure Kosovo recognition by Serbia and membership of the EU, NATO and UN. I hope that this draft resolution will help everyone in Kosovo, namely the institutions and political parties, to understand which option can lead to a final agreement. The European Parliament is the only EU institution that treats Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state. Therefore, yesterday’s vote at AFET is a strong support for a final agreement that will help overcome the current dangerous status quo which has deteriorating tendencies not only for Kosovo but the region too”.

**Hoxhaj: Resolution on dialogue includes viewpoints of all parties (*Epoka*)**

Enver Hoxhaj, deputy leader of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) said the draft resolution on dialogue with Serbia that will be presented today (Thursday) at the meeting of leaders of political parties includes state interests in the best possible manner. He added that the document includes the viewpoints of all political parties in Kosovo. He called on all political parties to reflect towards dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia adding that this process is responsibility of all.

**LDK calls on other parties to agree on date for new elections (*media*)**

The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) issued a press release on Wednesday saying that they have made clear their position on dialogue with Serbia several times. “These positions should be clear to the Assembly President too. As the biggest political party in Kosovo, we announce our positions to our membership and citizens, while at the Assembly, through our parliamentary group. LDK is ready to meet all parliamentarian parties to agree on the date of extraordinary elections and orientations for the dialogue after these elections,” the press release noted.

**Thaci – Haradinaj major disagreements could lead to new elections? (*Telegrafi*)**

The news website reports on what it calls deteriorating relations between Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj as a result of differing positions on the idea for border correction with Serbia. Political commentators told the news website that the major disagreements could take Kosovo to early general elections. Imer Mushkolaj, political analyst, said that disappointed by the lack of support for his idea, Thaci could convince PDK MPs to break off the ruling coalition with Haradinaj’s party. “If Thaci does not find the support he needs, he could provoke new elections. Haradinaj, on the other hand, knows that this can happen, and this is why he is continuing the same discourse against Thaci’s idea,” he said. Ramush Tahiri, political analyst, is confident that Kosovo is heading to new elections and even suggested that both leaders should now resign their posts.

**Kosovo must identify its strategic interests in dialogue (*Koha*)**

It is in Kosovo’s interest to seek a peace agreement that will end the conflict and to build a completely new relationship with Serbia, said publicist and author, Veton Surroi, yesterday in Pristina, the paper reports on its front page. During a discussion on dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, it was said that the two sides must identify their strategic interests and Kosovo must take ownership of the process. Surroi said the parties must look into all the issues that lead or can lead to war and resolve them with mechanisms that peace provides. He listed three non-negotiable issues that involve Kosovo’s strategic interests. “One, there should be no talks for changes to Kosovo’s territory, but rather about the way how Kosovo, with its territorial integrity, will establish peace relations with Serbia. Second, there should be no talks about changes to Kosovo’s identity which has been built so far and embodied in Kosovo’s constitutional system as a secular and multicultural European identity. Three, there should be no talks that go against Kosovo’s strategic interest, which is to live in peace with its neighbors and to become a part of NATO and the EU,” Surroi said. German Ambassador to Kosovo, Christian Heldt, who was part of the discussion panel, called for a more positive approach by both sides in order to overcome the current obstacles. He said it was important to shape a broader strategic vision on dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. Drawing from Germany’s past, he said he understands that one cannot move forward knowing that no apology was made for the pain inflicted. “We need both sides to identify their strategic interests in the process and the international community should not be the one to identify these interests, this is up to the parties. We need to have some ownership from this country and confidence to enter into a bilateral agreement. I think you can do this only after you have identified your strategic interests,” Heldt said.

**No agreement with Serbia this year (*Zeri*)**

Despite statements by EU officials and Kosovo President Hashim Thaci that they hoped an agreement with Serbia would be reached in the course of this year this is unlikely to happen, the paper reports on the front page quoting analysts. They are of the opinion that an agreement is highly unlikely to happen this year under the present circumstances. Opposition representatives are convinced dialogue with Serbia will not be concluded this year and point out to the need of Kosovo having a unified political platform to take to talks with Serbia.

**Apostolova’s message to Kosovo leaders: Don’t give timelines on visas (*media*)**

All media cover the launching of the new phase of the information campaign on the visa liberalization in Pristina on Wednesday. ***Gazeta Express***notes that the campaign, which aims to provide the people with information on what is the visa liberalization process, “was accompanied by pessimistic tones by both EU Head of Office Natalyia Apostolova and Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. Both leaders reminded the people of Kosovo that the process can be suspended even after liberalization is granted”. Apostolova also called on Kosovo’s leaders not to rush in “giving artificial deadlines” for visa liberalization. “In this phase, we cannot predict when the decision will be made, therefore, we advise Kosovo’s leadership to be patient and avoid raising expectations with artificial deadlines,” Apostolova is quoted as saying in ***Koha Ditore***. Apostolova also acknowledged the good work by Kosovo’s institutions and added that if the requirements and criteria are not respected, the process may be suspended.

**PDK launches internal elections process (*dailies*)**

The ruling Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) held its convention yesterday paving way for internal party elections. PDK leader Kadri Veseli said at the launch that every big achievement in Kosovo over the years bears the PDK stamp. “We transformed Kosovo into an independent and safe country for our citizens,” Veseli said adding: “When PDK stops, Kosovo stops but we will never stop.” In its coverage of the event ***RTK*** reports that speakers that took the stand at yesterday’s convention declared that Veseli was the next prime minister of Kosovo.

**Serbs in the north protest over Association/Community (*Zeri*)**

Serbian List staged a protest in Mitrovica North yesterday over the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities. The protest began at 12:44 as a symbolic reference to the UN Security Council resolution 1244 and the organisers said they wanted to show they have neither forgotten nor are they willing to give up their rights deriving from the Brussels Agreement that stipulates establishment of the Association/Community. Serbian List leader Goran Rakic it is evident that Albanians don’t want the Association/Community to come about and that this is also supported by the international community.

**At OIF conference, Pacolli calls for support to Kosovo’s Interpol bid (*media*)**

In his remarks at the Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF) conference in Yerevan, Kosovo’s Foreign Minister Behgjet Pacolli called on member states to vote in favour of Kosovo’s Interpol membership bid this November. “You are aware of the importance of this organization so I ask you, dear friends, to vote for Kosovo in Interpol,” Pacolli said.

**Government set to build new power plant, even without WB support (*Koha*)**

The paper reports in one of its front-page stories that even though World Bank Director, Jim Yong Kim, confirmed that this institution will not support the construction of a new power plant in Kosovo – Kosova e Re – the Kosovo government is determined to implement the project. Kosovo’s Minister for Economic Development, Valdrin Lluka, told the paper on Wednesday that together with the investor Contour Global they will implement the project as scheduled. “We will not make compromises to the detriment of electricity supply in our country. As Minister, I will not allow Kosovo to be dependent on energy import … knowing that we have exceptional capacities to produce electricity, not only for our own needs, but for export too,” Lluka said. “Contour Global is securing funds for the project from different sources, such as state exporting agencies and international financial institutions”. ***Zeri*** and ***Kosova Sot*** too report that the World Bank has confirmed that it will not support the construction of the new power plant.

**Indictment on veterans lists returned to Prosecution (*Epoka*)**

Basic Court in Pristina has returned on Wednesday the indictment on increase of veterans lists to the Special Prosecution. The court informed through a notification that factual descriptions were confusing and as such they require it corrections and clarification from the Special Prosecution, in order to avoid delays and obstacles in the process.

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