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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Thaci meets Putin, says Russia supports Kosovo-Serbia agreement (*dailies*)**

President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci met President of Russia Vladimir Putin in Paris at the sidelines of activities organised to commemorate end of World War I. Thaci said in his social media accounts that he met the Russian president for the first time and wrote that dialogue for normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia and the possibility of reaching a comprehensive, legally binding agreement was the main focus of their conversation. “President Putin was clear: If you (Kosovo-Serbia) reach a peaceful agreement, Russia will support it,” Thaci wrote. Kosovo public broadcaster **RTK** headlined the meeting saying Thaci was preparing Kosovo’s membership to the UN but went on to say that it was not clear whether the Russian veto power at the UN Security Council was discussed in the Thaci-Putin meeting. **Indeksonline** news website meanwhile says the meeting ‘broke the ice’ in Kosovo-Russia relations. At the same time, **Gazeta Express** writes that the meeting is part of Thaci’s efforts to find allies that support his ‘border correction’ idea and that after encountering rejection from the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, “Thaci has set towards a different address – that of Vladimir Putin.” Koha Ditore says there have been mixed reactions in Kosovo to the Thaci-Putin meeting with some saying the meeting represents a new stage in Kosovo-Russia relations and others accusing Thaci of siding with Serb-Russian plans.

**Thaci: Meeting with Putin, enormous step for Kosovo diplomacy (*Klan Kosova*)**

In an interview with ***Klan Kosova***, President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci spoke about his meeting with the Russian President Vladimir Putin saying it lasted for several minutes and focused on Kosovo-Serbia dialogue and the possibility for a peaceful agreement being reached at the end of the process. Thaci said he received Putin’s support for Kosovo-Serbia agreement. “Putin underlined that this is a delicate matter but at the same time he was also very clear in that Russia would support the possibility of a Kosovo-Serbia agreement being reached,” Thaci said adding that the meeting was a high achievement for Kosovo diplomacy. “This is the first meeting between Kosovo and Russia at such a level,” he added. “Russia’s position is very important as if an agreement is reached it would not use veto at the Security Council regarding Kosovo’s UN membership. It is a step forward,” Thaci said adding that traditional relations between Russia and Serbia should not be an obstacle to Kosovo having “normal” relations with Russia. “We were neither friends nor foes and we can have normal relations as all EU countries have with Russia.”

**Veseli considers Thaci-Putin meeting, positive development (*Klan Kosova/Zeri*)**

Kosovo Assembly Speaker Kadri Veseli said President Hashim Thaci has duly represented Kosovo in the Paris ceremonies to mark the end of World War I and that the meeting with the Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the event is positive news. Veseli said the reactions to the meeting come as a result of Russia’s position against independence of Kosovo but said he hoped Thaci “managed to somewhat relax Russia’s stance on Kosovo’s journey to membership in international organisations,” Veseli told ***Klan Kosova***.

**Hoxhaj: Thaci-Putin meeting, recognition of Kosovo reality (*Telegrafi*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo and deputy leader of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Enver Hoxhaj, commented on Facebook on yesterday’s meeting of President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci with President of Russia Vladimir Putin saying it represents a new point in Kosovo’s international relations. “It is a positive event and recognition of the reality of independent Kosovo,” Hoxhaj wrote. He said the reaction of certain political parties in Kosovo to the meeting shows they only see things in black and white and fail to see the bigger picture. “President of any country, ours included, is a symbol of sovereignty in relation to the outside world and concerned voices should be heard in Serbia not in Kosovo. It was not Serbia but Russia that blocked our membership to the UN,” Hoxhaj wrote.

**Kurti: Thaci can discuss with Putin only his political asylum in Russia (*Zeri*)**

Albin Kurti, leader of the Vetevendosje Movement, took to Facebook to write that the President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci can only discuss one issue with the Russian President Vladimir Putin. “After many concessions he has made to Vucic, Thaci took a picture with Putin. He can reach agreement with him only on his personal request for political asylum in Russia,” Kurti wrote.

**Osmani: Thaci’s handshake with Putin does not do service to Kosovo (*Klan*)**

MP from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) Vjosa Osmani said President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci’s handshake with President of Russia Vladimir Putin does not do service to Kosovo as it sends a message in violation to Euro-Atlantic values and aspirations. “For the first time in Kosovo’s history an Albanian politician openly supports Serbo-Russian plans for partition of Kosovo. And Thaci does not do this by coincidence. The hope that dangerous stunts can save someone’s skin could be one of the reasons,” Osmani said. She added that a handshake with German Chancellor Angela Merkel would do Kosovo service as Germany is strongly fighting to protect Kosovo borders from internal and external enemies. “However, Thaci did not have such a picture yesterday so he replaced it with one taken months ago,” Osmani said referring to a Facebook post by Hashim Thaci showing him in conversation with German Chancellor Merkel published after the one about his meeting with Russian President Putin.

**Haradinaj: If borders are touched, we will request president’s dismissal (*T7, RTK*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj said if the President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci reaches an agreement to change borders of Kosovo, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), will sign at the Assembly of Kosovo for his dismissal from the position of the president. “If Thaci brings an agreement which touches the border and territory, then AAK will sign at the Assembly dismissal of Mr. Thaci from the position of the President,” Haradinaj said. “In no option can we compromise with our territory.”

**Veseli: If Serbia willingly gives us Presevo, we will take it (*Klan*)**

Kosovo Assembly President Kadri Veseli said Kosovo is ready to defend its integrity and sovereignty. “Kosovo is ready to finally stop any conflict with Serbian state in order to establish sustainable peace however Kosovo is even more ready, as an independent and sovereign state to become member of the United Nations,” Veseli said. He further expressed hope for final agreement with Serbia being reached. “We are ready, but our position is clear: unique Kosovo, undivided, with its territory, without Association with executive competencies, as said by the Constitutional Court,” Veseli said. Speaking about Albanians in Presevo Valley, Veseli said they will be part of the dialogue and Kosovo will seek reciprocity. “If we respect Serb citizens, wherever they live in the Republic of Kosovo, we will request the same treatment for Albanians in Presevo, Medvegje and Bujanoc,” he said. “If Serbia wants to willingly give Preseva, Medvegje and Bujanoc will would take it with the greatest pleasure. But not through exchange of territories,” Veseli concluded.

**Hoxhaj seeks Germany’s support on visas and dialogue (*RTK*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo Enver Hoxhaj travelled to Berlin to discuss visa liberalization for Kosovo people. He met with the principal adviser to Chancellor Angela Merkel for foreign policy and security Jan Hecker. “A pleasure to meet again with adviser for Foreign Policy and Security to Chancellor Angela Merkel, Dr. Jan Hecker, in Berlin. Germany remains Kosovo’s important partner. Good discussion on visa liberalization and dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia,” Hoxhaj wrote on his Twitter account.

**Government of Kosovo could be heading for a fall (*Zeri*)**

The paper on the front page reports that the government of Kosovo led by Ramush Haradinaj could soon fall if the opposition parties decide to cooperate with the Serbian List in gaining support for a motion of no confidence. Most recently, leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) Isa Mustafa has not ruled out the possibility of accepting Serbian List’s help in bringing down the government. In a meeting with LDK leadership, Mustafa said that they have initiated the no-confidence motion and “we will not exclude anyone that joins this LDK request.” Other two opposition parties, Vetevendosje and Social Democratic Party (PSD), have meanwhile expressed objections in relying on the Serbian List votes to bring down the government. Vetevendosje said cooperation with the Serbian List would make no sense. PDK also said there will be no cooperation with the Serbian List which they accused of blackmailing the government for interests of Serbia.

**Mustafa: Dialogue unacceptable until Serbia stops obstructions (*RFE/Koha*)**

Leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) Isa Mustafa said yesterday at the meeting of the party leadership that dialogue with Serbia is unacceptable for so long as Belgrade continues to obstruct Kosovo in the independence recognitions process and its membership in international organisations.

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