

Main Stories 30 November 2018

* **Government: Tax not aimed against Serbs in Kosovo (*media*)**
* **Haradinaj: Tax remains in power until recognition by Serbia (*RTK*)**
* **Serbia cannot sue Kosovo over import tax without recognising it (*Koha*)**
* **Announcement of elections in the north, constitutional duty (*Koha Ditore*)**
* **Mustafa calls for government’s resignation (*dailies*)**
* **Bahtiri’s failed attempt at unification of Mitrovica (*Zeri*)**
* **Arifi: Mayors of northern municipalities could influence Belgrade (*Bota*)**
* **Thaci in the U.S. gains support on KSF transformation (*Epoka*)**
* **Veseli: We will have the army in December (*media*)**
* **EU Parliament calls for visa liberalisation for Kosovo (*Epoka*)**
* **Thaci calls on EU countries not to isolate citizens of Kosovo (*media*)**

**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Government: Tax not aimed against Serbs in Kosovo (*media*)**

Several news websites cover a statement issued by the Kosovo government today in which it rejects claims that the 100-percent tax on products from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are aimed against Kosovo Serbs. “Claims and statements by different actors both in Kosovo and abroad that the 100-percent tax on goods originating from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, are aimed against the Serb citizens of Kosovo, are not true and unacceptable for the true purpose and objective of this decision made by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo. This sovereign decision made by Kosovo comes as a result of Serbia’s continuous obstacles against our country,” the statement notes.

**Haradinaj: Tax remains in power until recognition by Serbia (*RTK*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj said on Thursday at the Producers’ Convention that the 100 percent tax on import of Serbian products will remain in power. “Let this tax serve as a message for everyone, yes we woke up, yes, we are aware, yes, we are ourselves and it is a sovereign decision. Plan that it can remain in power for a very long time, as long as Kosovo is not recognized by Serbia, as long as a comprehensive agreement, which includes everything: recognition, UN membership, debts, pensions, the missing and removal of tax, is not reached,” Haradinaj said.

**Serbia cannot sue Kosovo over import tax without recognising it (*Koha*)**

***KTV*** reports that Serbia cannot sue Kosovo at the Court of Arbitration over the 100-percent import tax as it does not recognise it as an independent country. According to article 43 of the Central Europe Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), disputes between parties which have not been settled through direct consultations within 90 days may be referred to arbitration by means of a written notification addressed to the other party. ***KTV*** says that since Serbia does not recognise Kosovo it cannot implement the above provision but it can however send the case to UNMIK as a signatory party on behalf of Kosovo.

**Announcement of elections in the north, constitutional duty (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper writes on the front page that the resignation of the four northern mayors should be considered irreversible and the President of Kosovo needs to announce early elections in these municipalities. The paper recalls a 2010 case when the then mayor of Rahovec/Orahovac had announced his resignation only to attempt to withdraw it days later in which case the Constitutional Court had ruled that the resignation of any mayor is considered final and irrevocable. Officials at the Ministry of Local Government Administration confirmed having received the resignations of mayors in the north but did not say whether they passed them on to the President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci. Former president of the Constitutional Court, Enver Hasani, said the president of Kosovo should immediately announce new elections as soon as the relevant ministry confirms the resignations. The failure to do so, according to Hasani, will represent a violation of the Constitution of Kosovo.

**Mustafa calls for government’s resignation (*dailies*)**

Leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) Isa Mustafa has called for the resignation of the government of Kosovo following the recent events in the north of Kosovo. In a Facebook post, Mustafa said the failure of the government to take any action in face of resignations of mayors of four northern municipalities is a clear indicator of Kosovo’s north beginning to split. He said the Kosovo leaders, despite of their public statements, are becoming accomplice to the project for partition of Kosovo.

**Bahtiri’s failed attempt at unification of Mitrovica (*Zeri*)**

Mitrovica Mayor Agim Bahtiri has called an urgent meeting of the Municipal Assembly for today to initiate changing the law on administrative boundaries between municipalities in an effort, as he said, to unify two municipalities of Mitrovica. In a letter to municipal councilors, Behtiri said the meeting is being convened following the resignation of Mitrovica North Mayor Goran Rakic and "the fact that local government administration according to the Law on Local Government of the Republic of Kosovo is no longer in place." Bahtiri said that as a result of this, the citizens of the north have remained in the mercy of fate and without provision of basic services. ***Zeri*** however reports that theinitiative has failed for the fact that municipalities or mayors cannot initiate changes to the law Bahtiri cited. The paper writes that the right to legislative initiative can be exercised by the President of Kosovo, Kosovo Assembly MPs, the Government or a petition signed by at least 10,000 citizens.

**Arifi: Mayors of northern municipalities could influence Belgrade (*Bota*)**

Avni Arifi, adviser to the Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj, called on the mayors of the northern municipalities with Serb majority to influence Serbia on not causing problems to Kosovo. “This would have been the best solution. Even today, because they are visiting Vucic, they should request from him to stop with the campaign against Kosovo that he is leading,” Arifi said.

**Thaci in the U.S. gains support on KSF transformation (*Epoka*)**

The President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci, met on Thursday with U.S. Senators Marco Rubio and Joni Ernst. “We discussed the possibility of enlarging our bilateral cooperation, transformation of KSF, Kosovo’s Euro-Atlantic perspective as well as using the momentum for the reach of an agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, which would ensure Kosovo’s membership in NATO, EU and UN. In all these matters, Kosovo has the support of both Republicans and Democrats,” Thaci wrote on his Facebook account.

**Veseli: We will have the army in December (*media*)**

The President of the Assembly of Kosovo Kadri Veseli, chose Drenica to announce the big news on creation of the army of Kosovo. He said that by mid-December, the Assembly of Kosovo will gather to vote transformation of the Kosovo Security Force into an army. According to him the date of voting the law on KSF transformation will be decided next Monday at the meeting of the Assembly presidency.

**EU Parliament calls for visa liberalisation for Kosovo (*Epoka*)**

The European Parliament has approved on Thursday Progress Report on Kosovo, which requests from the Council of Ministers of the European Union to liberalise visas for the citizens of Kosovo. The report stresses that Kosovo has fulfilled all the required criteria for removal of visas. The report assesses the achievements and stumbles of Kosovo institutions, requests depoliticizing and restructuring of the public administration. However according to Euro-deputies, corruption and organized crime continue to be a concern.

**Thaci calls on EU countries not to isolate citizens of Kosovo (*media*)**

President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci has hailed the European Parliament’s adoption of document in support of visa liberalisation for Kosovo saying it is a call to EU countries not to keep Kosovo isolated. In a Facebook post, Thaci wrote that any delay in the process is in conflict to European values and the dignity of the citizens of Kosovo.

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