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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Hahn: No visa liberalisation until 2020 (*dailies*)**

In their coverage of the visit of the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn to Kosovo, majority of daily paper highlight his statement regarding visa liberalisation where he said that 2020 is the most realistic time when this could happen. Hahn called on the citizens of Kosovo to bear patience and wait for several more months before they can travel freely to the EU. “The work has been completed on Kosovo’s part and it was our turn to implement visa liberalisation. European Parliament has voted in favour and the issue is now with the EU Council of Ministers. I have faith that 2020 is the most realistic option for liberalisation but don’t remain hostage to dates,” Hahn said yesterday in Pristina. ***Koha Ditore*** reports on the front page that EU and Kosovo disappointed one another: EU by not delivering on visa liberalisation promise and Kosovo by introducing a 100-percent import tax on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. ***Zeri*** meanwhile reports that Hahn did mention 2020 as the likeliest date for visa liberalisation, but he also said this could happen a bit earlier than this. Under the caption, *Hahn kills liberalisation hopes*, ***Bota Sot*** reports that opposition parties have called on Kosovo leaders to resign in face of visa liberalisation chances for this year having been squashed by Commissioner Hahn. ***Kosova Sot*** on the front page writes that Hahn brought disappointment with his statement that visa liberalisation will not happen until 2020.

**Kosovo leaders react to Hahn’s statement on visa liberalisation (*dailies*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj told European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn that they expected he would deliver good news that visa liberalisation would happen before Christmas. Haradinaj admitted however that he received no guarantees the issue would be in the agenda of the EU Council of Ministers meeting this week. “The possibility of it happening in the near future is not ruled out because the Council convenes every three months but we have not been given any guarantees that this will be the case this time,” Haradinaj said. Kosovo Assembly Speaker Kadri Veseli meanwhile highlighted to Hahn that it is unfair for the people of Kosovo to remain isolated despite all conditions having been met. Minister of European Integration Dhurata Hoxha noted that Kosovo has implemented all 95 criteria from the visa liberalisation roadmap and now rightfully expects the EU to deliver on its promise. Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti at the same time said Haradinaj, Veseli and Hoxha should all resign after their promise that visa liberalisation would happen this year has been squashed. As for President Hashim Thaci, Kurti said he is probably negotiating visa liberalisation with Russia. “With these people in power, Europe is becoming distant and Kosovo is shrinking,” Kurti said.

**Hahn: EU disappointed with import tax (*dailies*)**

European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn said yesterday in a press conference following meeting with Kosovo leaders that the EU was “shocked” and “disappointed” with Kosovo government’s decision to impose 100-percent import tax on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. “One of our goals was removal of trade barriers between countries,” Hahn said adding that Kosovo needs to lift the decision and both sides need to address issues of concern.

**Haradinaj remains unshaken in import tax on Serbia and Bosnia (*dailies*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj has not given any signs he plans to retract import tax on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina despite international pressure, several papers report. Following meeting with European Commissioner Johannes Hahn, Haradinaj said the decision will be withdrawn the moment there is a comprehensive and legally binding agreement between Kosovo and Serbia. “We can sign comprehensive agreement on debts, missing persons, the rights of the Serb community including free trade between the two countries. This is the position I presented in meetings today,” Haradinaj said adding that members of the Serb community are not endangered by the tax. “We will deliver medicaments in the north based on demand,” he added.

**Kosnett: U.S. will support Kosovo (*dailies*)**

The U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo Philip Kosnett presented to President Hashim Thaci his credentials upon taking the new post and said that his country will continue to support Kosovo. “Our cooperation is incomparable, and I am happy to be here to see the progress. We will continue our excellent and close cooperation,” Kosnett said. The new U.S. ambassador also met Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj yesterday.

**NATO supports Belgrade-Pristina dialogue (*Zeri*)**

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said in Brussels that the Alliance strongly supports dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and that when it comes to possible border arrangements, it hopes the two sides will find an acceptable solution. Stoltenberg made the remarks ahead of the meeting of NATO heads of states with EU High Representative Federica Mogherini that will focus on relations with Western Balkans countries.

**Kosovo Assembly to vote on armed forces on December 14 (*media*)**

Most media report that the Kosovo Assembly Presidency decided on Monday that on December 14 the Assembly will vote on the package of laws for the transformation of the Kosovo Security Force into the Kosovo Army. All political parties, except the Serbian List, are expected to attend the assembly session. Assembly President Kadri Veseli told reporters on Monday that December 14 is definitely the date when the KSF will transform into an army. “The Kosovo Army will be a Western and professional army and our people will continue to have good relations with its neighbors,” Veseli was quoted as saying.

**PSD and Alternativa to join government team for dialogue (*Koha*)**

Citing unnamed sources, ***KTV*** reported that two opposition parties – the Social Democratic Party of Kosovo (PSD) and Alternativa – will join the Kosovo government team for talks with Serbia. Sources also said that the ruling parties will try to adopt in tomorrow’s assembly session the resolution on dialogue and the government’s negotiating team. PSD leader Shpend Ahmeti is expected to co-head the negotiating team together with NISMA leader Fatmir Limaj. Sources also said that this is the start of a longer cooperation between the PSD and Alternativa.

**Haradinaj meets Albanian representatives from northern municipalities (*media*)**

Kosovo’s Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, met today in Pristina with Albanian representatives of the northern municipalities. Haradinaj wrote in a Facebook post: “they informed me about coexistence between the communities in that part of Kosovo, the current situation and the need for institutional support for the well-being of citizens in these municipalities. I assured them that the government is committed to be as close as possible to the residents there and address their concerns”.

**Police confirms it issued arrest warrant for Milan Radojicic (*Kosova Sot*)**

Kosovo Police General Director, Rashit Qalaj, told a press conference on Monday that police have issued an arrest warrant for Milan Radojicic as a suspect in the assassination of Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic. “As you know, police have launched an operation and arrested four people. One of the suspects could not be found and I can confirm that police has issued an arrest warrant,” Qalaj said.

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