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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Hahn’s proposal on tariff under condition for “ceasefire” (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that EU Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn has proposed a special format to address all economic obstacles between Kosovo and Serbia. The senior EU official has first called for a “ceasefire” between Pristina and Belgrade from actions that caused provocations and led to heightened tensions between the two countries. Hahn’s office told the paper on Sunday: “during visits to Belgrade and Pristina, Commissioner Hahn proposed to the parties to address different irritating actions on trade in a dedicated format. This offer was repeated in a letter by the EU High Representative, Commissioner Malmstrom and Commissioner Hahn, which was sent to Prime Minister Haradinaj, and was discussed again at the meeting of the Stabilization/Association Council in mid-December, and then at a meeting with Prime Minister Haradinaj during Commissioner Hahn’s visit to Pristina in mid-January … The approach would be that both sides, as a gesture of good political will, would temporarily stop all measures and actions that were considered provocative and impeded trade for several months, awaiting a final resolution … This would also unblock the EU-brokered dialogue, for which both sides have declared their commitment. The proposal remains on the table and it is up to the parties to address it”.

**Veseli’s proposal on tax foresees reciprocity measures (*RTK/Klan*)**

On 23 January, Kosovo Assembly President Kadri Veseli presented to the U.S. Ambassador Philip Kosnett and Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj his proposal on the import tariff on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina according to which the measure would be suspended for a period of 120 days during which time Serbia would have to meet a number of obligations stemming from CEFTA and Brussels Agreements. Veseli recommended that if Serbia fails to meet these conditions within the set period, Kosovo authorities would introduce full reciprocity.

**Albanian PM Rama dines with Kosovo’s leaders (*media*)**

Most online media published a photo on Sunday evening of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama having dinner with Kosovo President Hashim Thaci, Assembly President Kadri Veseli, Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and Foreign Minister Behgjet Pacolli. Koha published the photo of under the headline ***A relaxed dinner between coalition leaders and Rama and Thaci***. ***Gazeta Express*** reports that the dinner was held at President Thaci’s new house. ***Telegrafi*** asks in a headline if ***The leaders managed to convince Haradinaj to lift the 100-percent tariff on Serbian goods***. ***Kallxo*** notes that the dinner was held “after increased disagreements between President Thaci and Prime Minister Haradinaj, especially on the 100-percent tariff”.

**PM’s Office: Pressure will not lead to lifting of tax (*Zeri*)**

Avni Arifi, chief of staff to Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj, said the government’s position on the import tariff on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina remains unchanged. “We have the position of the Government and as chief of staff to the prime minister I have no indication or any other basis suggesting that there is a change of position on the tax,” Arifi said.

**Pajaziti: Solution for tax will be found these days (*Epoka*)**

Kosovo Assembly MP from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) Zenun Pajaziti, told the paper that partners of the coalition government in coordination with the international partners, will find the right solution for tax on the goods imported from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina within these days. According to Pajaziti, the tax will not represent problem for the functioning of PAN coalition. He added that the tax has reached its impact, no matter the fate of it in the future. According to Pajaziti, there will be no shaking of the partnership with the United States. He added that political parties from the opposition should not commence populist campaigns but unite with the government and focus in the momentum of the final solution with Serbia.

**Will UN Security Council debate Kosovo on February? (*Klan Kosova*)**

***Klan Kosova*** reports that the UN Security Council has not yet approved February agenda through consensus and there is currently a fierce debate among member states on whether to continue the practice of having quarterly debates on Kosovo. There is still no official agenda for February at the UN website and all it says is that there will be a meeting on 4 February focusing on threats for peace and international security, ***Klan Kosova*** adds.

**Beqiri: LDK would join a broad-based government (media)**

Ismet Beqiri, Secretary General of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), said on Sunday that the LDK would agree to join an eventual broad-based government, online media report. “We are ready to talk to everyone. But all need to part of that agreement [broad-based government], no political party should be left outside,” Beqiri was quoted as saying.

**Haradinaj: We have awoken Kosovo’s economic giant (*Zeri*)**

Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj commented on Kosovo Assembly’s approval of the statute for Trepca mining complex saying the move “awoke Kosovo’s economic giant.” “This is the main step to give this asset power for investment and stable generation of revenues and employment,” Haradinaj said adding that the votes the legislation received shows the unity of Kosovo’s political spectrum. “This statute gives Trepca the necessary legitimacy to operate with all its capacities by bringing it back to the full function of the country’s economy, the state of Kosovo and the miners,” Haradinaj stated.

**LDK and Vetevendosje against Law on dialogue (*Epoka*)**

The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and Vetevendosje Movement (LV) rejected once again the offer of the government to become part of the dialogue with Serbia. These two opposition political parties voted against the Law for Kosovo delegation in the dialogue with Serbia, even after a long debate at the Assembly. The Law was voted with 61 votes. According to the opposition, this Law does not limit the President and his ideas for this process, while officials from the governing coalition and the Social-Democratic Party (PSD) claimed the law regulates what can be discussed in the dialogue with Serbia.

**Vetevendosje to send Law on dialogue to Constitutional Court (*Epoka*)**

Albulena Haxhiu, MP from the Vetevendosje Movement (LV), announced on Sunday that her political party will send the draft law on duties, responsibilities and state competencies of Kosovo in the process of the dialogue with Serbia, at the Constitutional Court. “Those who took LV votes have no need to legitimise Thaci’s actions. There is no need for someone to make decision with LV votes. This draft law is scandalous in the political sense an on behalf of LV, I am saying that we will send it the Constitutional Court,” Haxhiu said.

**Hoxhaj responds to Russian diplomat (*RTK*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo Enver Hoxhaj, took to Twitter to comment the statement of the representative of the Russian Federation at the OSCE, Aleksandar Lukasevic that Kosovo is become each day more a destabilizer of the region and is aiming to cause crisis that would result with a new war. “Member states of OSCE shouldn’t be impressed with Russian Ambassador statement! More worrisome is that Russian diplomats misuse OSCE missions in Balkans as platform for their hybrid war against the mission of the organization itself and against the Western values,” Hoxhaj wrote.

**Thaci and three MPs to attend Prayer Breakfast (*Kosova Sot*)**

The President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci, will travel to the U.S. to participate at the Prayer Breakfast in Washington. Kosovo’s Foreign Minister Behxhet Pacolli, and MPs Memli Krasniqi, Slobodan Petrovic and Arben Gashi, will also be part of this ceremony. The paper further reports that PM Ramush Haradinaj will not be able to participate as his traveler’s visa was rejected. According to the paper, MPs Dardan Sejdiu, Saranda Bogujevci and Muharrem Nitaj were also invited to participate, but they are not able to travel due to the problems they had with obtaining visas.

**Following dismissal, Rikalo says there is no place for Serbs in Kosovo (*Zeri*)**

Nenad Rikalo, former Kosovo Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development dismissed on Saturday, said that the Kosovo Government’s actions show “there is no place for Serbs in Kosovo.” In a Facebook post, Rikalo said he received the news of his dismissal through a text message and that he has not received any official notification. At the same time, he recalled that the Serbian List, which he is part of, has announced resignation of its officials since March of last year in a sign of protest against the way Serb interests were being neglected by the Kosovo authorities.

**KSF structure to be approved by March (*Zeri*)**

The paper writes that in its recent discussion regarding the Kosovo Security Force transition, NATO Council gave Kosovo 120 days to commence the transition to enable Alliance’s member states to come up with comments on how the process is being implemented. To this end, Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj is expected to approve the new KSF structure by 5 March. KSF Minister, Rrustem Berisha, said the new Ministry of Defence will be an integrated department which could consist of about 75 percent of civilian staff and 25 percent military. “I am confident this will be achieved in 120 days,” Berisha said.

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