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Pristina News and Opinion Analysis

Pristina Dailies Analysis

Based on the papers today, it seems that the **regional summit in Brdo** will go ahead. While *Koha Ditore* yesterday said the organisers are still searching for a formula on the representation of Kosovo that would be acceptable to all sides, today the same paper reports that the efforts for finding a solution have ended and that certain EU officials said no concessions should be made to Serbia. Most of the other papers, quoting a statement from the Slovenian Embassy in Belgrade, stress that all participants to the summit have confirmed their attendance apart from the Serbian President Tadic. *Bota Sot*, in an extensive article on the issue, quotes Kosovo institutional and opposition leaders insisting Kosovo can only go to the summit as an

independent nation while legal analyst Mazllum Baraliu considers Kosovo should be represented independently and should have no association to UNMIK.

The **statement issued by the EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele** is carried out in all the papers and has received positive coverage in the press. Most of the papers focus on Fuele's quote that Kosovo has made progress and that it has European perspective.

Papers today also report on a **meeting that Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Fatmir Limaj had with the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Stuart Jones in Washington**. The meeting is reported almost identically in all the papers with having a press release issued by Limaj's cabinet as the source. Most of the newspapers captions highlight the support Jones has given to the construction of the Vërmica-Merdare highway.

Other top stories include: **"Estonia pledges support to Kosovo"**, **"Sejdiu to speak at the NATO Council"** and **"NATO Admiral Fitzgerald to visit Kosovo"**.

Opinion Analysis

In an opinion piece in *Koha Ditore*, political analyst Halil Matoshi criticizes Deputy Prime Minister Hajredin Kuçi for saying that politicians do not apologize, during the severed relations between KFOR and KSF. Matoshi then quotes the 10 most famous apologies compiled by Time magazine. In closing, Matoshi notes, "What would happen if Kuçi and his boss [Prime Minister Thaçi] would publicly apologize to Kosovars, not only for Kuçi's statement, but also for the extremely corrupted governance; to apologize to judges and police officers for pressures and threats, and for insults by government offices, and to apologize to reporters for persecuting them... But no, there is government ethics or social pressure in Kosovo, because during this government we have signs of the criminalization of society itself, with the exception of some independent media. Therefore, they will never apologize for anything. Only Chris Dell can make them change, go home or go to jail. Kosovar society is proving to be impotent. It cannot do it by itself... So you do it, Chris!"

Columnist Arbana Xharra writes in *Zëri* that it is **obvious that someone else has forced Prime Minister Thaçi to make changes in his government**. Xharra even predicts that Thaçi will have a difficult time identifying which minister is better in his bad team, "or maybe the international friends will help him in this case, too". Xharra also says that all government ministries are involved in corruption affairs and scandals. **"Even if the reformatting happens, the Prime Minister will surprise us. He will go after a 'soft' minister. 'The wolves' will go on,"** Xharra concludes.

Political analyst Mufail Limani argues in *Express* that **one of the reasons why one should not have great expectations from the reformatting of the government is the triple victory of the PDK in the third round of municipal elections**. "In its electoral zenith and after a battle where it looked like a party that fights alone against everyone, I don't see the PDK having real political reasons to publicly admit any sins, let alone the sin of corruption. Let us also not forget the quick and harsh statement by Quint countries which showed that Hashim Thaçi is under no strong international pressure to damage himself. Simply, some of the ministers of this government might

be replaced, but not before a political package is in place that would make sure that no one feels punished or exposed to a negative public image, which would endanger the image of the ruling parties, too.”

Ernest Luma writes in *Epoka e Re* about **the Kiqina case which he says UNMIK started but never finished. “If EULEX doesn’t want to be like its predecessor (UNMIK), then this is the opportunity.** And we want to believe this. This is an opportunity for EULEX not to appear different and to make and not measure and create justice in a laboratory. **This opportunity is the case of former KLA combatants, Burim and Arsim Ramadani and Arben Kiqina, whom UNMIK unrightfully stole a decade of youth,”** he adds. Luma also argues that **the best description about the work of UNMIK in the area of justice is “it came, it made a mess and then left”**.

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Radio Headlines

Radio Kosova monitored at 12:00

EU Enlargement Commissioner Fuele begins Balkans tour today

Stefan Fuele today begins his first Balkans tour since taking over the post of EU Enlargement Commissioner. Fuele will first visit Belgrade, then Podgorica and Tirana and on March 19th he will stay in Pristina. On the eve of his tour, Fuele said the EU integration is crucial for the future of the region. “Kosovo should be proud for the progress it has achieved so far. Kosovo, like the whole region, has a European perspective, and now it is up to Kosovo to make this perspective a reality,” Fuele said.

Sejdiu in NATO to call for Kosovo’s participation in peacekeeping operations

Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu is visiting NATO headquarters in Brussels, where he is expected to reiterate the request for Kosovo’s participation in international peacekeeping operations. Sejdiu is accompanied by KSF Minister Fehmi Mujota.

Slovenian diplomacy: Conference to be held with our without Serbia

The Slovenian Foreign Affairs Ministry has confirmed the holding of the conference of Western Balkans on March 20th, regardless of Serbia’s possible boycott of the summit. The majority of Balkans countries have confirmed their high-level participation in the conference. Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi will represent Kosovo at the summit.

Germany to return 150 Roma refugees to Kosovo today

Germany will return today a contingent of 150 Roma refugees from Kosovo whose asylum requests were denied. German organizations informed that the refugees are mainly from Lower Saxony and they are being returned after the Government of Kosovo has promised it will secure their integration in their homeland.

Kosovo Police to guard Gazimestan Memorial

Members of the Kosovo Police will guard Gazimestan Memorial starting from tomorrow. The memorial so far was protected by KFOR troops but following a

decision by the NATO Council, the Kosovo Police will now assume this responsibility under the monitoring of EULEX. Meanwhile, Belgrade has reacted against the decision calling it unwise.

KiM Radio gleaned from www.radiokim.net

Memorial service and protesting gatherings to mark anniversary of pogrom in KiM (KIM Radio)

Memorial service remembering victims of March pogrom will be served in churches and monasteries throughout Kosovo and Metohija.

Administrator of Ras-Prizren diocese will serve a memorial service in S.Nicholas Church in Kosovo Polje, for victims of the attack on Serbs by Albanian extremists on 17 March 2004.

Protesting gathering, which will start at 11:00 in front of the monument, will be organized to mark anniversary of pogrom in Gračanica. Gathering is organized by Kosovo district, Municipality of Pristina with the seat in Gračanica and Health Center. Wreaths will be laid at the Monument of Truth in Kosovska Mitrovica. Monument which is placed in vicinity of the main bridge over river Iber is dedicated to the victims of NATO bombing and victims of Albanian terrorist's Kosovo Liberation Army.

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Also in the Press

CEFTA “overthrows” MAK (Infopress)

The idea of economy experts in Macedonia to create a so called MAK (Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo) regional market, has been opposed by institutions and experts of economy in Kosovo. Jovan Madzovski, regional manager of the Center for Development of Entrepreneurs and Managers (CEED), has assessed that Macedonian companies and houses should use the momentum and accept the challenge to go outside the borders of Macedonia, because according to him, Macedonian market is not sufficient for efficient development. “We should not be thinking any more about “our market,” but we should start as soon as possible the cooperation within the so called MAK region,” he said. Madzovski assessed as funny the idea not to extend business outside Macedonian borders. “Pristina is 86 kilometers from Skopje, and to say that you do not want to work in Kosovo, but only in Macedonia, is ridiculous. This is a mentality that existed 30 years ago. Macedonia alone, is not interesting as a market, but in the regional level, the situation changes. A market of eight million inhabitants in Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania, is a good market, that Macedonian companies should push through,” said for Macedonian daily Dnevnik, Jovan Madzovski.

On the other hand, this idea has not been supported in Kosovo, since all countries of the region are members of the Agreement for the Free Trade CEFTA. “We do have a joint market, CEFTA, that is quite a big market, and there is no need to create new mechanisms, when a much bigger one already exists,” said Minister of Trade and

Industry, Lutfi Zharku. According to him, Kosovo's business relations with Macedonia could function well even without such a regional market. According to Minister Zharku, in the economical aspect, CEFTA is not functioning that bad, however he said that this regional market could become perfect in the future. "There are good preconditions for CEFTA to function, while our problem with Serbia is political, not economical," said Zharku.

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Belgrade Headlines

Pogrom without punishment (Novosti)

In memory of 17 March 2004, when Serbs, their property, cultural monuments and sanctities of the Serbian Orthodox Church became the targets of the Albanians, a memorial service will be held today. The administrator of the Raska-Prizren Eparchy Bishop Atanasije will hold a memorial service in the St. Nicholas church in Kosovo Polje for the victims of the three-day pogrom, when eight Serbs were killed, 143 injured and two went missing. During these three days, around 800 Serb houses were set on fire and damaged, around 4000 Serbs expelled from their homes, while six towns and nine villages ethnically cleansed. One day prior to the anniversary of the pogrom against Serbs, KFOR transferred the protection of the Gazimestan, one of the most important Serb monuments in Kosovo and Metohija, over to the Kosovo police. Official transfer will be performed in several days, which is the first case where the Kosovo police will be responsible for the security of Serb cultural monuments. Kosovo Serb representatives assess KFOR's move as a big provocation, while Milan Ivanovic says that the date has not been chosen by chance. At the same time, the Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija requested yesterday KFOR to continue to secure Serb sanctities in Kosovo and to re-examine the decision on handing over Gazimestan to the Kosovo police. "The protection of Serb sanctities cannot be handed over to those who were destroying them or silently observed their desecration and demolition and creates suspicion in the sincere intentions to preserve them," reads the statement by the Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija.

Portugal not to cut its KFOR forces without consulting Serbia (Novosti/Press)

Serbian Defense Minister Dragan **Sutanovac** has stated that he was assured by Portuguese officials that KFOR's Portuguese troops will not be reduced without previous consultations with Belgrade. **Sutanovac**, who is on an official visit to Portugal, stated following a meeting with Portuguese officials that Portugal will not unilaterally reduce the number of its soldiers in KFOR, which is very important for Serbia because of the security situation in Kosovo and Metohija and the region. NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe Admiral James Stavridis recently told me that the reduction of the troops in Kosovo-Metohija will be carried out only in consultation with Belgrade. Following a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Luís **Amado**, Minister for National Defense Augusto Santos **Silva** and President of the Portuguese National Assembly Jaime **Gama**, **Sutanovac** said they concluded that their stances regarding Kosovo's future status differed. He also said he thanked his collocutors for the participation of Portuguese troops in KFOR, specifying that the Portuguese troops are the largest individual contingent in the Serbian province.

Four models for Belgrade-Pristina relations (Danas)

Danas writes that good and bad experiences from international models of the past can be used to implemented future relations regarding Kosovo. *Danas* writes that there is no international model that can be directly implemented for the future Belgrade-Pristina relations, but that former experiences from around the world can help. Foreign policy expert Nenad **Vasic** said that the model of cooperation between the former East and West Germany, mentioned during the Kosovo status talks of 2007, could be a good solution, adding that Belgrade and Pristina never gave the reasons for why such a proposal was rejected. He said that Belgrade's decision to reject the plan at the time was exemplary, considering the fact that there was a bipolar order after WW II marked by the differences between the USSR and U.S., which is not the case now. **Vasic** said that the other argument for not accepting the German model was the fact that the same ethnic group of people lived in these two German countries. However, he said that the tolerant and peaceful solution of the two German countries represent a good historical example. He said that the main difference between the Kosovo situation and China and Taiwan is that Taiwan is not a territory that is an international protectorate. "The model of China and Taiwan is not acceptable because there is an insistence on an international presence here, which is regulated by Resolution 1244, but Belgrade needs to intensify legal economic cooperation with Pristina, which is included in regional agreements under the name of UNMIK/Kosovo," **Vasic** said. Former Serbian ambassador to the U.S. Ivan **Vujacic** said that the given models are all specific, as is the Kosovo situation. "If we do not wish this situation to last endlessly, we need to offer a solution, and the example of Ireland is perhaps the closest one, and we should see in what way Ireland became an EU member-state," he said. He said that the unresolved relations between Palestine and Israel, China and Taiwan, Cyprus and the Turkish part of the country have been ongoing for many years. **Vasic** said that the Cyprus model is the most risky, even though Belgrade officials have shown interest in it. "If Cyprus is seen as a united country, this means that Turkey should refrain from the recognition of the Republic of Northern Cyprus if it wants to become an EU member-state. According to this scenario, Serbia should then one day accept the secession of Kosovo as a finished act, if the independence of the province is recognize by all 27 member-states of the EU," he said. **Vasic** said that a possible solution for Kosovo's status could follow the lead of the Free State of Bavaria, because that German province has independent executive, court, and legislative administrations, but does not have international legal subjectivity.

Ashton: Political situation in B&H becoming worse (Politika)

The political situation in B&H is becoming worse, the Dayton peace agreement is brought into question more often, while the Republika Srpska (RS) continues to be the key problem, the EU High Commissioner Catherine **Ashton** assessed in the regular three-month report to the UN. "The political situation continues to deteriorate. There has been a drop in communication among political leaders, rise of disuniting statements from the RS and inter-ethnic disagreements in the B&H Federation," **Ashton** said in the report quoted by the daily *Dnevni Avaz*. **Ashton** said that very little progress had been made in the key reforms, especially in relation to the five goals and two conditions of the PIC necessary for transforming and closing the Office of the High Representative. She warned that the RS political leaders "have occasionally" brought into question the B&H integrity and opened the issue of the possibility of secession. "The RS has openly violated annexes 2, 4 and 10 of the Dayton Accords and refused to respect the authority of the HR from annex 10. The

RS government also refused to abide by the OHR decision dated 18 September 2009 and any other similar decision. They have also announced they will sue the present and other HR for abusing the Bonn authorities," said **Ashton**. The EU considers that the safety situation is stable, voicing hope that it will remain this way despite the possible continuation of political tensions and nationalistic rhetoric.

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International News Clippings

Western Balkans summit to go ahead despite possible Serbia boycott (DPA)

The Western Balkans conference in Slovenia will go ahead this weekend regardless of a possible boycott by Serbia, the Slovenian foreign ministry said Wednesday.

The meeting in the Slovenian castle Brdo pri Kranju is set to bring leaders from former Yugoslavia plus Albania to the same table for the first time and signal their will to cooperate en route to European Union membership.

"The conference will go ahead in any case," the ministry said in response to the question.

But the joint organizers Slovenia and Croatia have so far failed to secure the presence of both Serbia and its mostly Albanian former province, Kosovo, which declared independence in 2008.

Kosovo was recognized by the United States, most European Union nations and countries in the region, but Serbia continues to challenge its secession and has already boycotted several regional conferences protesting Kosovo's participation.

"Most Western Balkan nations have confirmed their attendance at the highest level," the foreign ministry in Ljubljana said response to an inquiry. "Talks on the model for the participation of Serbia and Kosovo are still ongoing."

In Pristina, officials said that Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was set to travel to the conference in Slovenia to represent Kosovo. "We have no information that anything has changed," Kosovo Deputy Premier Hajredin Kuci told the German Press agency dpa.

But in Belgrade, officials have been repeating that Serbia will take part only if Kosovo is represented by United Nations. Tadic's cabinet did not respond to questions about the conference.

So far none of the high-level meetings held in the region since the start of the month to salvage the full conference produced a solution for Serbia's objections.

The conference is to be held under the name "Together for the European Union: Contribution of the Western Balkans to the European Future."

European nations, Germany, Great Britain and France, have warned Serbia that while it does not have to recognize Kosovo, it must begin cooperating with it in order to achieve closer ties with the EU.

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