

Kosovo News Update



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I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Republic of Kosovo.

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The US & Kosovo's Friendship Continues to Grow

- US President Trump sent Kosovo's President Thaci a letter congratulating the country on its 10th anniversary of independence, writing "Over the past 10 years, Kosovo has made great strides in strengthening its sovereignty and multiethnic democracy. While more work has to be done, we applaud your progress... We look to Kosovo to be an important partner to the US. On this historic occasion, I wish the people of Kosovo my best".
- US Congressman Elliot Engel has expressed immense support of Kosovo, stating, "As an independent and sovereign state, Kosovo must have its own army and should be granted the visa free travel regime".
- Kosovo PM, Haradinaj met with US CIA Director, Pompeo and US National Security Advisor, McMaster, where McMaster, stated "The USA will stand by your side as you reinforce democratic institutions, protect human rights, face corruption and hold onto your international commitments, as you revive the dialogue with Serbia in order to overcome one of the most difficult chapters of history".
- During a meeting with Kosovo PM Haradinaj and US State Department officials, Haradinaj stated, "Kosovo's independence was achieved through joint efforts with the US. Our friendship with the US is special and we take pride in this".
- The US was one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence, and US VP Pence recently confirmed the US's support of Kosovo, with US Ambassador to the UN, Haley congratulating Kosovo on

- US Secretary of State, Tillerson, stated, "The United States continues to support Kosovo's citizens as they work to strengthen democratic and multiethnic institutions, increase economic growth, and booster the rule of law on the path toward full integration in the international community".

<http://dailysignal.com/2018/02/23/where-kosovo-stands-after-10-years-of-being-republic/>

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/19022018-kosovo-celebrates-a-decade-of-sovereignty/>

<http://www.gazetaexpress.com/en/news/donald-trump-sends-a-letter-to-kosovo-president-thaci-173592/>

<https://www.rtklive.com/en/news-single.php?ID=10717>

<http://balkan.eu.com/kosovo-must-have-its-own-army-us-congressman-engel-says/>

<http://top-channel.tv/english/kosovo-pm-in-usa-meets-trumps-adviser-cia-director-and-das-mitchell/>

European Countries Back Kosovo

- The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Pahor, said Slovenia will support Kosovo on its path to European integration and economic development.
- Albania's President Meta stated, Albania will help Kosovo find a solution on the challenges that it faces and called on the EU to encourage countries, like Albania and Kosovo to focus on European integration.
- Albanian PM Rama congratulated Kosovo on its demarcation agreement with Montenegro, and Kosovo's President Thaci thanked Rama for Albania's support in Kosovo's independence and in its strive for European integration.
- French Ambassador, Chabert met with Kosovo's Minister of European Integration, Hoxha, where Chabert stated, France will continue to support Kosovo in its European integration path.
- Kosovo's Minister of European Integration, Hoxha, stated, "I am honored that today, together with the Deputy Prime Minister Osmani, we will deepen the cooperation, align and coordinate the facilitations to each other, the integration process. We are determined to our path, integration processes, being part of Europe, integrated within European values and achievements".
- EU foreign policy spokesperson, Maja Kocijancic, stated that the EU welcomes the readiness of Kosovo's President Thaci and Serbia's President Vucic to continue dialogue for normalization of relations.
- Kosovo's Assembly President, Veseli, said the EU treated Kosovo as a member state for the first time, after having a meeting with the head of the EU Office in Kosovo, Apostolova.
- President of the European Commission, Juncker, declares a 2025 entry date to all Balkans countries, stating that as long as countries have met all the criteria for membership, the EU will proceed to recognize those efforts.
- Croatian PM Plenkovic expressed support for Kosovo in its European integration process and stressed that Croatia was willing to help Kosovo in these efforts.
- German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gabriel stated that Serbia should recognize Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state, if it wants to integrate into the EU.
- German Ambassador in the UN, Heusgen stated, "We want Kosovo to be successful. We are working a lot in order for those countries of the EU who don't recognize it, to recognize it. I think we will be able to overcome this obstacle".

<http://balkan.eu.com/kosovos-achievements-and-challenges-on-the-10th-anniversary-of-independence/>

<https://www.rtklive.com/en/news-single.php?ID=10686>

<https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/25712-kosovo-has-croatia-s-support-in-eu-integration>

<http://www.rtklive.com/en/news-single.php?ID=10756>

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/923985/eu-jean-claude-juncker-balkans-serbia-montenegro-bosnia-herzegovina-kosovo-macedonia>

<http://top-channel.tv/english/kosovo-president-decorates-albanian-prime-minister/>

<https://www.rtklive.com/en/news-single.php?ID=10493>

<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/12/05/hoxha-requests-kosovo-involved-enlargement-plans/>

<https://www.rtklive.com/en/news-single.php?ID=10547>

<http://balkan.eu.com/albania-will-help-kosovo-to-strengthen-its-international-position/>

<https://www.rtklive.com/en/news-single.php?ID=10778>

Kosovo is Aiming to Adhere to the Council of Europe

- Kosovo is aiming to apply for the Council of Europe.
- Deputy Prime Minister, Hoxhaj stated, "As far as the Council of Europe is concerned, we have made several preparations and there is progress. We have first adhered in the Council's bank and our priority was

Kosovo Leads the World in Cheering for Trump

- With 75% of people in Kosovo expressing support for the leadership in the US, President Trump's support is higher in Kosovo than anywhere else in Europe.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-shows-highest-support-for-us-leadership-in-europe-poll-01-18-2018>

Albania & Kosovo Improve Bi-lateral Relations

- Albania and Kosovo signed 12 cooperation memorandums covering: environmental preservation, culture, agriculture, and energy.
- Albania and Kosovo signed an MoU on the establishment and cooperation of a common energy exchange, as part of their common energy market.
- Both governments believe the energy market is an important component in increasing electricity transmission and hope it will improve power supplies to consumers.

<https://tsarizm.com/news/2017/11/28/one-nation-two-governments-albania-kosovo-sign-12-agreements/>

<https://secnews.com/news/albania-kosovo-sign-mou-to-set-up-common-energy-exchange-592848>

NATO is Not Concerned About Kosovo's Stability

- NATO Admiral Foggo stated that EULEX and KFOR are competent and capable of maintaining the security and stability of Kosovo.
- Kosovo's Security Force Minister, Berisha, says that Kosovo's Security Force is aiming to become a member of NATO.

<http://www.balkan.eu.com/kosovo-and-fyrom-aim-at-becoming-nato-members/>

<https://www.rtlive.com/en/news-single.php?ID=10630>

Kosovo & Serbia Look Forward

- Kosovo's President Thaci stated, "Kosovo will not forget the genocide that Serbia committed in Kosovo, but we are committed to peace".
- President Thaci said he is convinced Kosovo and Serbia will reach an agreement on normalization of relations to foster peace and sustainable reconciliation.
- Serbian Defense Minister Vulin said, Serbia should seek a partition agreement with Kosovo.
- Kosovo signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU.
- For Kosovo's President, there is only one vision for the future, EU and NATO membership.
- After a decade of independence, recognition from 115 countries, and support from the US and most of the EU, Kosovo's President anticipates that 2018 will be the year Kosovo can work out an agreement with Serbia.

<http://www.gazetaexpress.com/en/news/kosovo-president-binding-agreement-with-serbia-this-year-173636/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-usa-sanctions-exclusive/exclusive-u-s-nulls-sanctions-on-venezuela-to-put-pressure-on-maduro-idUSKCN1GD3LR>

<https://www.neweurope.eu/article/interview-bernard-nikaj-the-ambassador-of-kosovo-to-belgium/>

<https://ins Serbia.info/today/2018/02/hashim-thaci-hopes-for-historic-agreement-with-serbia-in-2018/>

<https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/live-feed/36295-kosovo-president-seeks-final-deal-with-serbia-in-2018.html>

The EU Helps Kosovo Modernize Its Railway

- The EU donated \$48 million to Kosovo to advance a railway line that will connect Kosovo to Western Europe, with the additional financing coming from the EBRD and the European Investment Bank.
- Kosovo's Finance Minister Hamza, stated, "This is not only important financially but also a signal of the trust, commitment and confidence the EU, the EBRD and our international partners are putting in us."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/kosovo-eu-railway/eu-helps-aspirant-member-kosovo-to-modernise-railway-idUSL8N1Q55L1>

<http://balkan.eu.com/kosovo-benefits-38-5-million-euros-for-the-rehabilitation-of-railways/>

<http://www.ebrd.com/news/2018/upgrading-kosovos-only-international-rail-link.html>

<http://www.railway-technology.com/news/eu-co-finance-rail-upgrade-project-kosovo/>

Kosovo Improves Ranking on Transparency International Corruption Index

press, and target corruption in the government.

<http://prishtinainsight.com/kosovo-improves-ranking-transparency-international-corruption-index/>

<http://www.balkan.eu.com/ti-kosovo-marks-progress-in-the-fight-against-corruption/>

A Week of Celebration for Kosovo

- Kosovo had its first Olympic debut at the Pyeong Chang 2018 Olympics.

<http://www.eurolympic.org/a-week-of-celebrations-for-kosovo/>

Kosovo & Montenegro Enhance Bi-lateral Relations

- Kosovo Speaker of Parliament, Veseli, confirmed that they reached a consensus related to the voting of the agreement regarding the border demarcation with Montenegro.
- Montenegro PM Markovic visited Kosovo to meet with Kosovo's President Thaci and Speaker of Parliament Veseli to discuss the economy, infrastructure, tourism, boarder security, and border cooperation.
- Kosovo and Montenegro announced that they've reached a deal on the 2015 border agreement, which is a step toward Kosovo gaining visa-free travel to the EU

<http://www.gazetaexpress.com/en/news/kosovo-parties-reach-consensus-on-ratification-of-border-deal-with-montenegro-173689/>

<http://www.gov.me/en/News/181662/PM-Markovic-arrives-in-Pristina-on-official-visit-to-Republic-of-Kosovo.html>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kosovo-montenegro-border/kosovo-and-montenegro-reach-deal-on-2015-border-agreement-idUSKCN1G0111A>

<http://www.gov.me/en/News/181693/Prime-Minister-Dusko-Markovic-ends-official-visit-to-Republic-of-Kosovo.html>

All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler