

Summary

The European Commission interim report published on Wednesday on Romania's justice system attests to the country's progress while also urging it to do more for constitutional democracy. According to European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, Romania has not complied with all of Brussels' recommendations. However, the report lauds the country's anti-corruption institutions for resisting political pressure. Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta has partly denied the EU's criticism on constitutional democracy in his country according to the Standard (AT, 31/1). Mediafax.ro (RO, 30/1) reported that the Romanian President, Traian Băsescu had not commented on the MCV report saying "I would not want to make any statements before I have thoroughly studied the report". The Dutch Telegraf suggests that since joining the EU Romania has failed to convince the bloc that its justice system and anti-corruption efforts are sufficient (Telegraf-Daily, NL, 31/1).

- Standard , AT, 31/1, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130131/mi/item_147315284.pdf
- mediafax.ro, RO, 30/1, <http://www.mediafax.ro/politic/basescu-nu-a-comentat-raportul-mcv-nu-as-vrea-sa-fac-niciun-fel-de-afirmatii-pana-nu-studiez-atent-si-raportul-si-declaratiile-10533726>
- Telegraf-Daily, NL, 31/1, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130131/mi/item_147316322.pdf

Two Balkan leaders talking in Brussels is not usually news. But next week's meeting of Tomislav Nikolić and Atifete Jahjaga, the presidents of Serbia and Kosovo respectively, is important. Even if they say little, the symbolism of a new normality between the two countries matters. It is also an untrumpeted success for Cathy Ashton, the European Union's much-maligned foreign-policy high representative (The Economist, UK, 1/2).

- The Economist, UK, 1/2, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21571182-new-normality-slowly-emerging-between-two-old-balkan-foes-inching-closer?fsrc=rss>
- focus-fen.net, BG, 31/1, <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n298292>

In Slovenia Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec and his Croatian counterpart Vesna Pusić agreed to step up the dialogue to solve the problem of Yugoslav era savings deposits and are due to meet with the financial experts France Arhar and Zdravko Rogić on 6 February (sta.si, SI, 30/1). Pusić in an interview with PublicServiceEurope.com, revealed why the EU's current difficulties have not caused Croatia to regret that it had taken the road to membership. Firstly, the accession process was as much about institution building and state building as it was about the end goal of membership and secondly, there was the harrowing spectre of the Balkan wars (publicserviceeurope.com, UK, 30/1).

- sta.si, SI, 30/1, <http://sta.si/vest.php?s=s&id=1848558>
- publicserviceeurope.com, UK, 30/1, <http://www.publicserviceeurope.com/editor-blog/193/how-will-croatia-fare-in-an-eu-of-crisis-and-instability>

Key Quotes

The proportion of Serbs in favour of the country's efforts to join the European Union has fallen to the lowest level since the first poll a decade earlier. "People are sensitive about everything they see as political conditions (for membership), like mending ties with (the government in) Pristina," said Milan Pajević (Eidhseis Shmera.gr, Greece, 1/2)

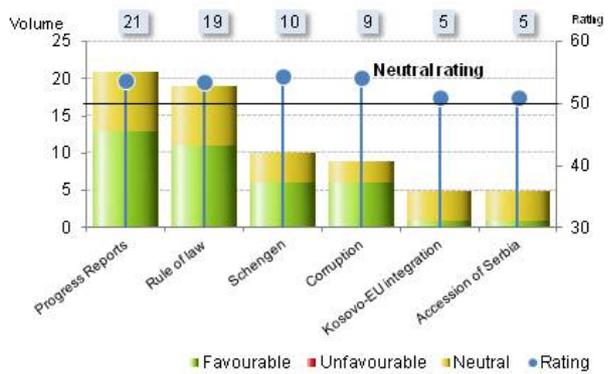
http://tro-ma-ktiko.blogspot.com/2013/02/blog-post_6646.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+blogspot%2FhyMBI+%28tromaktiko%29

Erdoğan: "If we enter the SCO, we say goodbye to the European Union. The SCO is better, much more powerful" (ABC.es, Spain, 1/2)

<http://www.abc.es/internacional/20130201/abc-turquia-valor-unirse-organizacion-201301312019.html>;

Charts

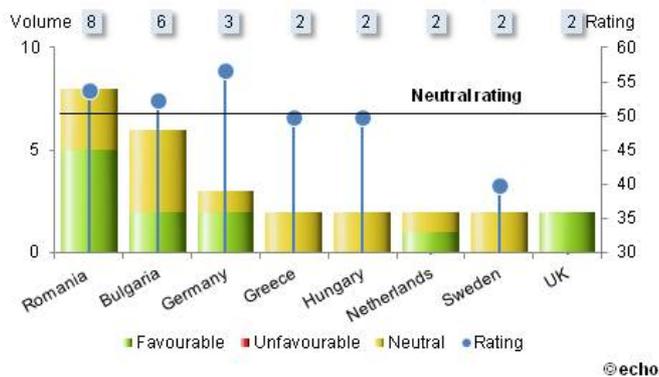
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ELARG: **Key Stakeholders & Sources**

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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Victor Ponta (Prime Minister, Romania)	11
Mark Gray (Spokesperson, EC)	8
Traian Băsescu (President of Romania)	7
José Manuel Barroso (President, EC)	6
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	4
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	4
Vesna Pusić (Foreign Minister, Croatia)	3
Karl Erjavec (Foreign Minister, Slovenia)	3

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