

Summary

In an interview with Kleine-Zeitung, European Commissioner for Enlargement, Štefan Füle explained that new members mean progress for the EU and said he did not believe that the problems in Slovenia will endanger Croatia's EU accession in mid-2013. He also talked about EU enlargement in general saying; *"We are in ongoing accession negotiations with Turkey, Iceland and Montenegro. Perhaps - although this is up to the member states - the accession process for Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) can begin in the middle of the year."* He affirmed that he does not see the enlargement process as a problem, but among other things as a solution to the current crisis in the EU (Kleine-Zeitung, AT, 20/2).

- Kleine-Zeitung, AT, 20/2, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130220/mi/item_149180057.pdf

High Representative Catherine Ashton invited government heads of Serbia and Kosovo, Ivica Dačić and Hashim Thaçi, to talks about Northern Kosovo. The talks were about the reorganisation of the so-called parallel institutions for the Serbian population of Kosovo. The EU has demanded that the flow of funds from Serbia be made more transparent and that the administration of the four communities with a Serbian majority be reorganised (Standard, AT, 20/2). President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso told Kosovan Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi that 2013 could be a *"crucial year"* for Kosovo with regards to adhesion to the European Union despite the fact that Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Romania and Slovakia are yet to recognise it as an independent state (ansamed.info, IT, 19/2). He expressed the hope that the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo would still be characterised with a constructive approach. Vincent Degert, the head of the EU mission in Belgrade, thinks this week is also important because the content of the report which High Representative Catherine Ashton will present to the European Commission in April, may also be decided (Nepszava, HU, 20/2).

- Standard, AT, 20/2, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130220/mi/item_149173675.pdf
- ansamed.info, IT, 19/2 http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/nations/greece/2013/02/19/Kosovo-Barroso-2013-crucial-year-EU-adhesion_8273349.html
- Nepszava, HU, 20/2, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130220/mi/item_149169310.pdf

European Council President, Herman Van Rompuy, commented that successful dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade is *"essential for progress towards the EU, for both countries,"* and praised Ashton, Dačić and Thaçi on progress made so far. He then *"strongly encouraged"* the Kosovan leader to carry on in the same *"constructive spirit"* saying; *"I reconfirm the European outlook for Kosovo, for which we have an ambitious agenda in 2013"*. He said *"Pristina must satisfy short-term priorities on the rule of law, public administration, trade, and protection of minorities"* and emphasised that Kosovo must place *"particular focus on maximum cooperation with EULEX in fighting corruption and organised crime"* (ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 19/2). Commission President, José Manuel Barroso said that Prime Minister Thaçi had an opportunity on his hands to make a big step to the next stage of Kosovo's European path (focus-news.net, BG, 20/2).

- ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 19/2, http://ansamed.ansa.it/ansamed/it/notizie/rubriche/politica/2013/02/19/Bosnia-Ue-50-mln-assistenza-ora-attese-riforme_8273667.html
- focus-news.net, BG, 20/2, <http://www.focus-news.net/?id=n1751471>

It was reported in Bulgaria that Turkey is seeing the beginning of change in France's once hostile attitude towards its decades-long struggle to join the European Union under new President François Hollande. Turkey's EU affairs minister, Egemen Bağış, commented that blocking the process of Turkey's accession makes no sense (dnevnik.bg, BG, 19/2). European Commissioner Günther Oettinger harshly criticised several aspects of the European Union's policy concerning Turkey. At an event hosted by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, he called for less hesitation (Bild-Zeitung, DE, 20/2).

- dnevnik.bg, BG, 19/2, http://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/razshirivane/2013/02/19/2005988_turcii_ochakva_nachaloto_na_promiana_v_poziciata_na/?ef=rss
- Bild-Zeitung, DE, 20/2, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130220/mi/item_149149658.pdf

Key Quotes

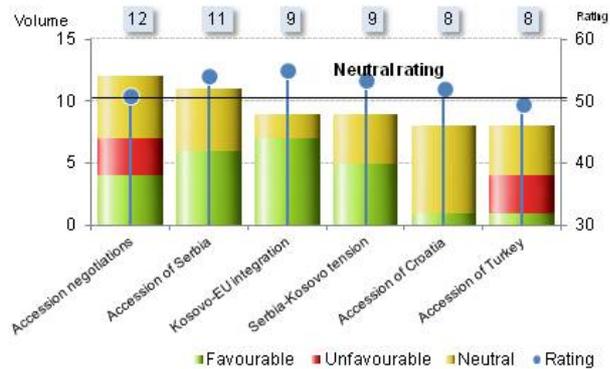
Croatia will join the European Union without Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification, as was imposed on Bulgaria and Romania (Dnes.bg, Bulgaria, 21/2) <http://www.dnes.bg/world/2013/02/21/hyrvatija-vliza-v-es-bez-monitoring.180735>

Utrinski Vesnik notes that Borisov's resignation after nationwide protests, questions the success of the initiative to break the ice in the ties between Skopje and Sofia, although, given the current ratings of the political parties in Bulgaria, it is not impossible for the outgoing prime minister to regain his post and take part in the first intergovernmental meeting with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Focus News, Bulgaria, 21/2) <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n300025>

Dnevnik, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Good neighbourliness will be strengthened by new government (Focus News, Bulgaria, 21/2) <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n300028>

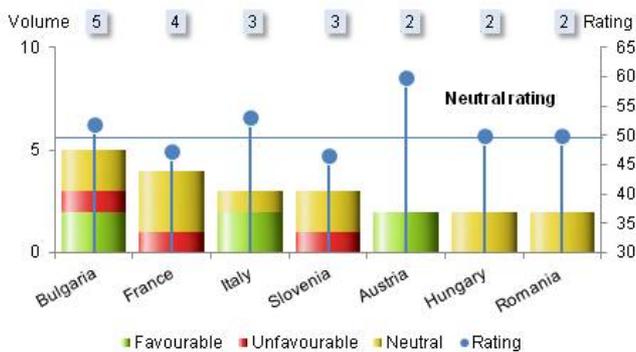
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Volume	28 items
Rating	50.7
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Unfavourable %	14.3%
Neutral %	60.7%

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ELARG: **Key Stakeholders & Sources**
by volume, favourability & rating

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	8
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	7
Baroness Catherine Ashton, (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	5
François Hollande (President, France)	5
Jose Manuel Barroso (President, EC)	4
Laurent Fabius (Foreign Minister, France)	4
Egemen Bağış (Minister for European Affairs, Turkey)	3

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