

## Summary

Despite the chaos of the Italian elections, Angela Merkel has spent the past 48 hours in Turkey, where she attended a forum of business people and held talks on possible Turkish entry into the European Union. To date, opposition from France and Germany has been the main reason for Turkish exclusion, but Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish Prime Minister, has strong cards to play. These include Turkey's refusal to extend its customs union with the EU to include Cyprus, used by the EU as an excuse to delay negotiations over Turkish entry. Lifting the blockade now would lift the Cypriot economy hugely as it awaits a bailout. Turkey is also doing much to liberalise its economy along lines prescribed by the EU. A day after halting a tender for private companies to run its busiest roads and bridges, as the offers were too low, Ankara said yesterday that it had begun an IPO process for the assets instead. (Times, UK, 27/2). Responding to a question submitted by MEP Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D), EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle stated that Turkey must urgently comply with its obligation to fully implement the Additional Protocol and achieve progress in normalising bilateral relations with the Cyprus Republic. MEP Papadopoulou had called the Commission for a more decisive stance towards Turkey with the aim of the immediate implementation of the Ankara Protocol, as well as an end to the provocative stance of the Turkish side towards the Cyprus Republic (Haravgi, CY, 27/2).

- Times, UK, 27/2, [http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130227/mi/item\\_149795465.pdf](http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130227/mi/item_149795465.pdf)
- Haravgi, CY, 27/2, [http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130227/mi/item\\_149812885.pdf](http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130227/mi/item_149812885.pdf)

In the past, Germany has played a second-fiddle role when it came to Balkan affairs. Today it seems to be conductor of the whole orchestra. According to Suzana Grubjesic, Serbia's deputy prime minister in charge of European integration, said *"it is clear that agreements are made in Brussels but that Berlin makes decisions"*. The reason for this is that following changes in German legislation in 2009, the Bundestag must be consulted on matters concerning EU enlargement. This makes the chamber unique amongst the EU's 27 parliaments. In April, the European Commission will make a recommendation as to whether Serbia should open negotiations. Most likely it will recommend that Serbia gets a date to do so, albeit conditional on the fulfilment of various tasks. By the time the Bundestag gets to vote on the matter the country will have received two visits from Bundestag members to help them make up their minds (economist.com, UK, 26/2). According to former Serbian President, Boris Tadić, he felt that Serbia deserved an EU talks date long ago, but instead of a date the country only faced new conditions and modifications, He also added that Serbia had achieved a lot and deserved to receive a date for the talks (focus-fen.net, BG, 27/2).

- economist.com, UK, 26/2, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2013/02/germany-and-balkans?fsrc=rss>
- focus-fen.net, BG, 27/2 <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n300501>

Kosovo's president said on Tuesday that Serbia has agreed to disband a security operation in the north of its former province that Belgrade - racing to clinch EU accession talks - denies exists. Serbia said no such deal had been done and has denied Western accusations for years that it maintains clandestine security forces in a northern, Serb pocket of neighbouring Kosovo, the majority-Albanian territory that broke away in a 1998-99 war and declared independence in 2008 (trust.org, UK, 26/2).

- trust.org, UK, 26/2, <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/kosovos-president-says-serbia-to-disband-clandestine-security-forces/>

## Key Quotes

Latvia's FM Edgars Rinkevics said Scotland would be considered a *"new country"*. Mr Rinkevics would not speculate on how long the process might take, except to say that an application by Scotland should be a *"bit quicker"* than that of Iceland or Croatia, because Scotland is already in the EU (BBC, UK, 28/2)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-21602456>

The international community expressed concerns over the political situation in Macedonia and the plans of the oppositional Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) to boycott the forthcoming elections. Aivo Orav, Head of the EU Delegation to Macedonia, sent a warning, too. He condemned the events that took place on December 24 and remarked that boycotting the elections was not the right move (Focus News, Bulgaria, 28/2)

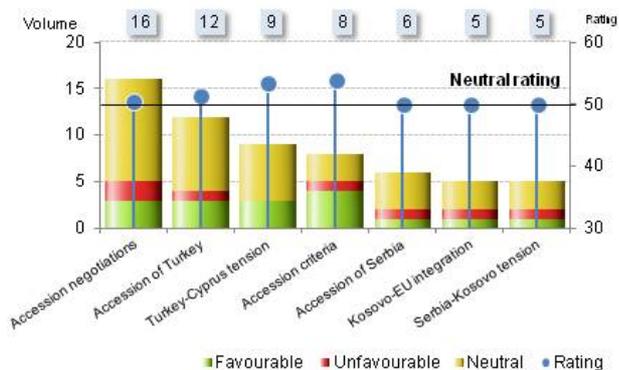
<http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n300565>

Vecer, Macedonia: MEP Richard Howitt to visit Skopje Thursday. *"If there is no change today, I will come to Skopje tomorrow,"* he said at a meeting with the Macedonian Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the European integration in Brussels (Focus News, Bulgaria, 28/2)

<http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n300571>

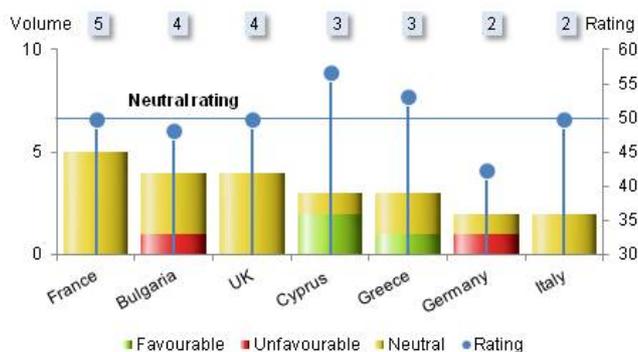
## Charts

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by volume, favourability & rating



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ELARG: **Highlights**  
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Volume	25 items
Rating	50.6
Favourable %	16%
Unfavourable %	8%
Neutral %	76%

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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Angela Merkel (Chancellor, Germany)	9
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Prime Minister, Turkey)	8
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	3
Antigoni Papadopoulou (MEP)	3
Boris Tadić (former President, Serbia)	2
Guido Westerwelle (Foreign Minister, Germany)	2

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