

Summary

Aleksandar Vučić, the First Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, said that a paper was tabled during the 7th round of the Kosovo dialogue held on Wednesday. Vučić stressed that Serbia is dedicated to EU integration and expressed his hope that an agreement is reached, but warned "we cannot face our people empty handed" (abc.es, ES, 21/3). However, the shared impression by the participants; the Serbian Prime Minister, Ivica Dačić, the Kosovan Prime Minister, Hashim Thaçi and the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, was that there was progress, as they appeared optimistic about the continuation of the negotiations on 2 April. Mrs Ashton felt that Belgrade and Pristina are close to a solution. Following twelve hours of talks, Mrs Ashton praised the constructive positions of both Mr Dačić and Mr Thaçi, pointing out that the two sides must hold the necessary deliberations before any possible agreement (zougla.gr, GR, 22/3). "It is my personal view that we are very close to a solution on some of the most difficult issues concerning Northern Kosovo" Ashton said (ideal.es, ES, 21/3). The outcome of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue will probably determine whether Dačić will keep his post or will be replaced. The reason is that many Serbians accuse him of treason (focus-fen.net, BG, 22/3).

- abc.es, ES, 21/3, <http://www.abc.es/agencias/noticia.asp?noticia=1378862>
- zougla.gr, GR, 22/3, <http://www.zougla.gr/kosmos/article/servia-kosovo-prodos-stis-sinomilies>
- ideal.es, ES, 21/3, http://www.ideal.es/agencias/20130321/mas-actualidad/internacional/buscara-acuerdo-belgrado-pristina-sobre-norte_201303211311.htm
- focus-fen.net, BG, 22/3, <http://www.abc.es/agencias/noticia.asp?noticia=1378862http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n302303>

The European Union should open new chapters in the membership talks with Turkey, especially those regarding the justice sector and fundamental rights, say European Parliament members. The European MPs have underlined the importance of maintaining constructive bilateral relations between Brussels and Ankara. To this end, the work started by diplomatic offices through the positive agenda launched in May 2012 and complementary to membership talks, is important. At foreign policy level, the EU and Turkey should work more closely with their southern neighbours, in a region of critical importance for both. For this reason the resolution urges Ankara to coordinate its actions more with the EU-27. The EU MPs also asked Turkey to reform its judicial system, considered vital for its democratic consolidation (ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 22/3). The notorious and imprisoned Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan is now functioning as an apostle of peace, his written manifesto calls Turks and Kurds to dialogue instead of fighting. This manifesto may also prove that Mr Öcalan has come to terms with not winning. Turkish Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan also wants to put an end to the conflict, probably because it is a reason for Turkey's rejection by the EU. The fact is, Mr Öcalan's manifesto is the best shot at putting an end to a long and painful dispute (Welt, DE, 22/3). The US praised "the courageous efforts of the government of Turkey and all parties concerned to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict", State Department spokeswoman, Victoria Nuland said in a statement. Her comments were echoed by EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton and enlargement commissioner Štefan Füle, who called the ceasefire call an important step forward and called for follow-up and implementation (uk.news.yahoo.com, UK, 21/3).

- ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 22/3, http://ansamed.ansa.it/ansamed/it/notizie/stati/europa/2013/03/21/ue-turchia-eurodeputati-aprire-nuovi-capitoli-negoziati_8438298.html
- Welt, DE, 22/3, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130322/mi/item_151910143.pdf
- uk.news.yahoo.com, UK, 21/3, <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/turkey-awaits-historic-kurdish-ceasefire-call-050336929.html#S3lLbbq>

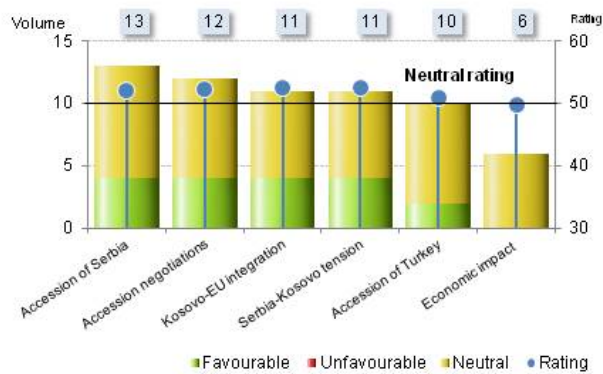
Key Quotes

Citizens from fYRoM avoid ethnic violence in vote, boosting EU chances. "We've probably had the best and cleanest elections so far," Interior Minister Gordana Jankuloska told reporters in Skopje after the voting ended. "We should all be proud because Macedonia showed its place is in the European Union" (dw.de, Germany, 25/3)
<http://www.dw.de/macedonians-avoid-ethnic-violence-in-vote-boosting-eu-chances/a-16696481>

The European Union has warned the fYRoM - a candidate for EU membership since 2005 - that democratic and fair elections are a key stipulation for getting a positive recommendation to open accession talks with Brussels (Yahoo! UK and Ireland, UK, 24/3)
<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/macedonians-vote-amid-political-crisis-153908901.html#rZiyJd0>

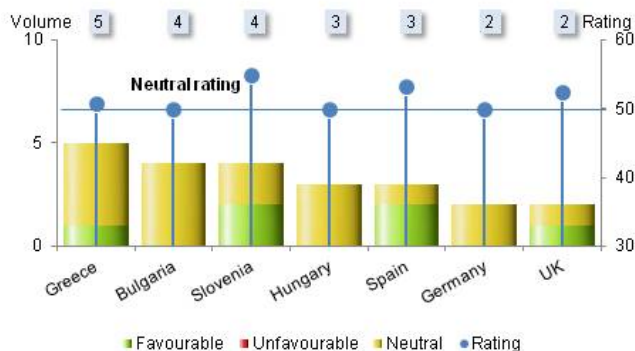
Charts

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ELARG: **Highlights**
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Volume	25 items
Rating	51.6
Favourable %	24%
Unfavourable %	0%
Neutral %	76%

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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Baroness Catherine Ashton, (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	12
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	10
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	10
Angela Merkel (Chancellor, Germany)	6
Gerhard Schroeder (Former German Chancellor)	6
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Prime Minister, Turkey)	4
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	3
Aleksandar Vučić (First Deputy PM)	3

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