



Summary

Croatians have voted in their first EU elections, with a low turnout reflecting limited support before the country joins the bloc this summer. The State Electoral Commission said about 15 per cent of 3.7 million eligible voters cast their ballots yesterday for Croatia's 12 representatives (scotsman.com, UK, 15/4). Croatia's opposition right-wing coalition won most seats in the country's first vote for the European Parliament. The ruling Social Democrats (SDP) and their two junior partners, tipped by pre-vote surveys to win most of the 12 seats, finished second followed by the opposition Labour Party. The right-wing coalition, led by the main opposition conservative HDZ, won 32.94 percent of the votes (focus-fen.net, BG, 15/4). The new Croatian MEP will represent their country for one year only, as new elections for the European Parliament will take place in 2014. The main topic of the election campaign was the election register, as it is no secret that it exceeds the list of actual voters by more than 350,000 (Delo, SI, 13/4).

Hannes Swoboda, leader of the Socialists and Democrats group in the European Parliament reacted to Croatia's first EU elections: *"The low turnout of 20.84 per cent is regrettable but I hope that the impending accession of Croatia to the EU and the work of the country's newly elected representatives will increase voters' participation in next year's elections, when all 28 member states will elect a new parliament"* (Publicserviceeurope, UK, 15/4). Sta.si, (SI, 16/4) reported Delo's headline: *"Croatian EU Elections a Bad Day for Democracy."*

- scotsman.com, UK, 15/4, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/international/poor-turnout-in-croatia-s-eu-poll-1-2894929>
- focus-fen.net, BG, 15/4, <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n304178>
- Delo, SI, 13/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130413/mi/item_154115824.pdf
- Publicserviceeurope, UK, 15/4 <http://www.publicserviceeurope.com/article/3330/croatias-first-eu-elections-see-dismal-voter-turnout>
- Sta.si, SI, 16/4, <http://sta.si/en/vest.php?s=a&id=1876355>

EU foreign affairs head Catherine Ashton will visit Montenegro, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia this week, with other stops possible in a region where the EU is trying to mediate between Serbia and Kosovo. Despite rejecting the latest EU proposals on normalising ties with Kosovo, Belgrade said it still wanted an urgent resumption of dialogue with Pristina with EU mediation (focus-fen.net, BG, 15/4). Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi made it clear that he would not negotiate directly with the leaders in Belgrade, without the mediation of the European Union (kisalfold.hu, HU, 15/4). Vecer reported that the EU's Commissioner for Enlargement, Štefan Füle, might replace Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy in Prishtina-Belgrade talks (Vecer, SI, 15/4).

- focus-fen.net, BG, 15/4, <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n304176>
- kisalfold.hu, HU, 15/4, http://www.kisalfold.hu/kulfold_hirek/hashim_thaci_nem_hajlando_kozvetlen_tarqyalasokra_belgraddal/2328723/?utm_source=ssfeed
- Vecer, SI, 15/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130415/mi/item_154130169.pdf

The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not have high expectations that a solution will be reached to resolve the name dispute with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia following the latest proposal submitted by the UN Special Envoy, Matthew Nimetz. According to information the new proposal is based on a geographic determination. In the meantime, the Commission is expected to publish its interim progress report on the fYRoM. According to Real-News (GR, 14/4) Commissioner Füle is doing the best he can to speed up the solution which is why he is visiting the country regularly. The solution of the name issue is a matter of credibility for Commissioner Füle and it will be no surprise if he recommends the opening of entry talks again. Focus-fen reports that pressure on former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski for final solution to the long-lasting name issue is intensifying (focus-fen.net, BG, 15/4).

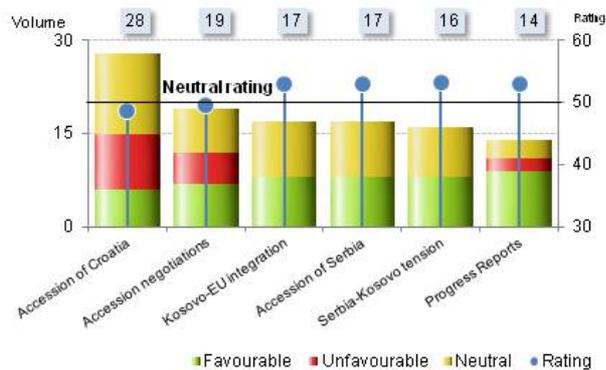
- Real-News, GR, 14/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130414/mi/item_154117979.pdf
- focus-fen.net, BG, 15/4, <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n304194>

Key Quotes

"The Irish Presidency is delighted to have opened and provisionally closed Chapter 26 on Education and Culture with Montenegro today, the second chapter to have been opened and provisionally closed since Montenegro began its negotiations in June 2012," declared Rory Montgomery, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the European Union. ***"This event is a positive reflection of the effort that Montenegro has been putting into the process. We expect to see this work continuing and intensifying, particularly in areas of core importance to the process, especially the chapters on judiciary and fundamental rights, and justice, freedom and security"*** (Novinite, Bulgaria, 15/4). http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=149571

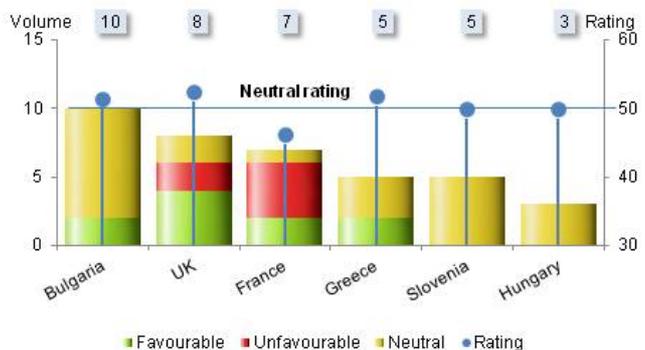
Charts

ELARG: **Leading Daily Issues**
by volume, favourability & rating



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ELARG: **Leading Daily Countries**
by volume, favourability & rating



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ELARG: **Highlights**
by volume, favourability & rating

Volume	45 items
Rating	50
Favourable %	24.4%
Unfavourable %	20%
Neutral %	55.6%

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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)	14
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	9
Zoran Milanović (Prime Minister, Croatia)	5
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	5
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	3
Jose Manuel Barroso (President, EC)	2

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