

Summary

Speaking about the election of Croatian MEPs, Martin Schultz, the President of the European Parliament said *"It is happy news when a family grows, especially our family whose values are a commitment to democracy, justice and the rule of law"* (Croix, FR, 16/4). MEPs have blamed the poor turnout to the elections on the Croatian President Ivo Josipović and the government because they decided to hold EP elections separately from the local elections, which will be held on 19 May. In the pre-election campaign, the media did not pay much attention to the candidates, but focused mostly on their salary levels and their knowledge of foreign languages (Večer, SI, 16/4). Wilhelm Christbaum writing in the Munchner-Merkur comments that it would be *"a mistake to admit Croatia into the EU"*. He says *"the European Commissioner for Enlargement can work on preparing accession candidates - but would that be a sense of achievement"*? He points out that politicians such as Martin Schultz are awestruck by Hungary's President Orbán, who abolished the separation of powers and intimidates Jews and Roma through extremists and adds that Mr Schultz claims there is nothing the EU can do, to which the author adds that therefore Europe is susceptible to blackmail (Munchner-Merkur, DE, 16/4). French media also highlighted the fact that *"Croats were tired of the accession negotiations, accompanied by sometimes painful reforms, such as privatisation and restructuring of the shipyards"*. (actu.voila.fr, FR, 15/4).

- Croix, FR, 16/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130416/mi/item_154193979.pdf
- Večer, SI, 16/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130416/mi/item_154207835.pdf
- Munchner-Merkur, DE, 16/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130416/mi/item_154196393.pdf
- actu.voila, FR, 15/4, http://actu.voila.fr/actualites/monde/2013/04/15/croatie-le-pays-a-elu-ses-deputes-europeens-prelude-a-l-adhesion-a-l-ue_12349375.html

The European Council in a press release commented that Montenegro has made progress in its accession talks with the EU with chapter 26, education and culture, opened and provisionally closed again in Brussels. The Montenegrin media, quoting Štefan Füle, the European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, say that *"however great the progress in the negotiations, this has to be accompanied by the efforts of all implied parties in order to strengthen the confidence in public institutions"*, (Wirtschaftsblatt, AT, 16/4). Baroness Ashton commented *"Montenegro is an example in the region when it comes to European integration, but the fight against crime and corruption needs to stay among its top priorities"* (kerdos.gr, GR, 16/4).

- Wirtschaftsblatt, AT, 16/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130416/mi/item_154221605.pdf
- kerdos.gr, GR, 16/4, <http://www.kerdos.gr/default.aspx?id=1906796&nt=103>

Ethnos newspaper reported that Commissioner Štefan Füle is attempting yet again to support the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) through the publication of the interim report on the progress of the country. Ethnos comments that Mr Füle is trying to *"promote the beginning of the accession negotiations, while trying to get Greece's consent, even though the name issue is pending"*. UN Special Envoy, Matthew Nimetz has given another proposal on the name issue which the Greek side finds unacceptable. *"They are playing games in order for the fYRoM's accession negotiations to begin"*, the newspaper concluded (Ethnos, GR, 16/4).

- Ethnos, GR, 16/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130416/mi/item_154212577.pdf

Commenting more generally on enlargement, Catherine Ashton has once again stressed the EU's commitment to integrating the entire region of the Western Balkans. The EU foreign policy chief made the comments during a meeting on Monday in Podgorica with the Montenegrin leadership. Notwithstanding the current difficulties and challenges, Ashton remarked that *"Brussels considers the future of the western Balkans to lie within the European Union. The obligations of the European agenda justify the hard work that must be done for the well-being, security and better standard of living of the entire region"*, she said (ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 16/4).

- ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 16/4, http://ansamed.ansa.it/ansamed/it/notizie/rubriche/politica/2013/04/16/Ue-Ashton-Balcani-occidentali-sono-parte-Unione_8558718.html

Key Quotes

EU Commissioner Štefan Füle underlined once again the importance of good-neighbourly relations. He stated that the accession process should avoid causing bilateral problems in the EU. ***"We don't want bilateral 'mines' to explode in the middle of the accession process, which could hold up or derail the process,"*** Mr Füle said (Focus News, Bulgaria, 17/4) <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n304352>

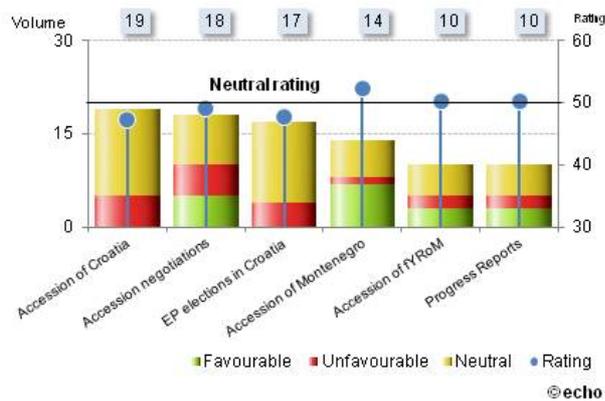
The European Union urged Albania on Tuesday to restore the trust of its people in an election in June. ***"The European Union considers it of crucial importance that the 2013 parliamentary elections are in line with international and European standards,"*** said EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton. ***"This will be a test of the smooth functioning of the country's democratic institutions and progress on the European Union path,"*** she said (Yahoo!, UK, 16/4) <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/albanian-election-must-restore-peoples-trust-eu-163055934--business.html#wxpxnLI>

Last-minute drama is not usually a phrase associated with the publication of monitoring reports by the European Commission on the progress made by EU applicants wishing to join Europe's elite politico-economic club. But that's exactly what happened on April 16 when the Commission announced it was temporarily delaying the publication of reports on Serbia and Kosovo to allow for further negotiations between the two countries which, if successful, would give a major boost to both states' EU accession ambitions. Štefan Füle said: *"It is time for Serbia and Kosovo to move on from the past and look ahead to a common European future. We hope the two leaderships will seize the historic opportunity that lies before them"* (Business New Europe, UK, 17/4)

<http://www.bne.eu/story4819>

Charts

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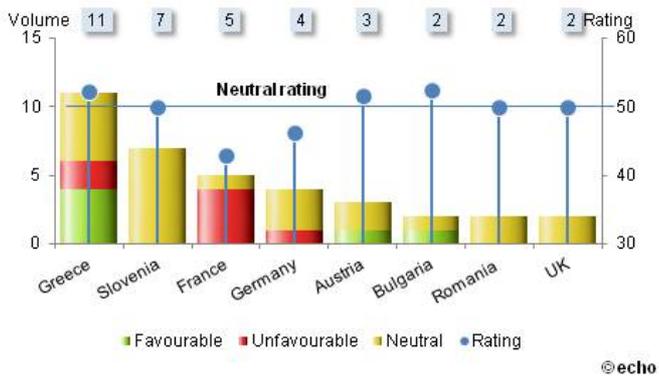


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ELARG: Key Stakeholders & Sources
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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Baroness Catherine Ashton, (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	9
Zoran Milanović (Prime Minister, Croatia)	5
Nikola Gruevski (President, FYRoM)	5
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	4
Martin Schultz (President, EP)	2
Matthew Nimetz (Special Representative for the naming dispute between Greece and the FYRoM, UN)	2
Rory Montgomery (Ambassador to the EU, Ireland)	2
Milo Đukanović (Prime Minister, Montenegro)	2
Igor Lukšić (Foreign Minister, Montenegro)	2

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