

Summary

Serbia's government has approved an EU-brokered deal with its former province of Kosovo, paving the way for progress in both sides' drive to join the EU. The deal ushers in a normalisation of ties which have been strained since the 1999 Kosovo conflict. The Serbian government accepted the "*first accord on principles which regulate normalisation of relations, reached during the dialogue on Kosovo in Brussels*" said a statement on Monday quoted by the AFP news agency (bbc.co.uk, UK, 22/4). Krstimir Pantić, Deputy Chief of the Serbian Office for Kosovo said "*I remind everyone in Belgrade that it is necessary to keep faith in the Serbian Constitution, which says that Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia and that no one has the right to sign any document forcing Serbian municipalities in Kosovo to function under Albanian law*" (ansamed.info, IT, 19/4). Most Serbs in northern Kosovo feel betrayed by the historic deal reached by Belgrade and Pristina to normalise ties. "*Belgrade betrayed and cheated us*" Marko Dimitrijević, a 32-year-old pharmacist, said bitterly (uk.news.yahoo.com, UK, 20/4). However the Serbian president, Tomislav Nikolić said that the agreement signed was "*the only possible solution to ensure a peaceful life*" for Kosovo Serbs (Echos, FR, 22/4). "*Serbia and Kosovo have proved they can both focus on the future rather than staying entangled in the past. Our recommendations today are therefore clear: Both Serbia and Kosovo deserve to move on decisively in their EU perspectives,*" said Štefan Füle (Forbes.pl, Poland, 22/4).

- (bbc.co.uk, UK, 22/4, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22245931>)
- ansamed.info, IT, 19/4, http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2013/04/19/Serbia-Kosovo-accord-has-been-reached-Ashton-says_8581345.html
- uk.news.yahoo.com, UK, 20/4, <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/serbia-kosovo-historic-deal-normalise-ties-eu-144953615.html#lkCWKxZ>
- Echos, FR, 22/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130422/mi/item_154761770.pdf
- Forbes.pl, PL, 22/4 <http://www.forbes.pl/ke-zaleca-otwarcie-negocjacji-akcesyjnych-z-serbia,artykuly,153754,1,1.html>

Media in Pristina, on Saturday hailed the normalisation deal as "*new confirmation that Kosovo is independent, sovereign and free*", as the daily Express wrote. But in Belgrade, some local media took a gloomier view. "*Black day -- Kosovo is not ours anymore! Serbia's Capitulation in Brussels!*" the tabloid Nase Novine exclaimed indignantly (corsematin.com, FR, 20/4). Meanwhile it was reported that the Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić and his first deputy Aleksandar Vučić have received at least one death threat per second (Telegraf-Daily, BG, 21/4).

- corsematin.com, FR, 20/4, (no link available)
- Telegraf-Daily, BG, 21/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130421/mi/item_154762022.pdf

In other negotiations, Antonio Milososki, an MP from the ruling party in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, was cited by Dnevnik daily as saying it would be a precedent, if Serbia gets a starting date for EU accession negotiations and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia does not. Milososki also said he expected that the EU would increase its efforts to solve bilateral issues. According to him there is a difference between Serbia/Kosovo dispute and the one between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece: "*The difference is that the dispute between Belgrade and Pristina is obvious, while ours with Greece is irrational and absurd*" he said (focus-fen.net, BG, 22/4).

- focus-fen.net, BG, 22/4, <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n304781>

The European Union's Enlargement Commissioner said he expected a breakthrough this year in Turkey's stalled EU membership bid and welcomed Ankara's peace talks with Kurdish rebels and reforms of its justice system. He called on EU states to recognise Turkey's reform efforts, to open further policy negotiations with Ankara and to show more "*credibility*" in the talks (financialmirror.com, CY, 21/4).

- financialmirror.com, CY, 21/4, <http://www.financialmirror.com/news-details.php?nid=29568>

Key Quotes

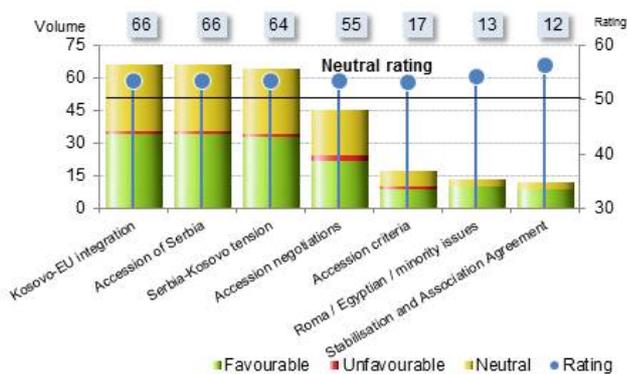
EU wants action, not words, from Kosovo and Serbia. German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said on Monday that the accord was "**good news, not just for the affected countries but also for all Europeans.**" His colleague from Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn, noted that "**The European Union is the only one that can offer such a perspective. Europe is more than the euro; it is also a peace project for Europe**" (dw.de, Germany, 23/4) <http://www.dw.de/eu-wants-action-not-words-from-kosovo-and-serbia/a-16763559>

"When accession negotiations start, essentially you have the whole Commission machine cranking into gear, providing support, advice, funding," said a Western diplomat, who declined to be named. "**It's about reaching the point of no return, where the positive reform process becomes inevitable, and not subject to the whims of a minister or party in government**" (TrustLaw, UK, 22/4). <http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/news/detail.dot?id=8cdc9a6f-a254-448c-ab1a-c50c8d9154e3>

The EU that Croatia will join is not the same as the one it was at the beginning of the process. But Croatia, too, is a very different place from the one it was before. "**We used the process to build our own institutions and stabilise our state,**" says Vesna Pusić, Croatia's foreign minister (London Wired, UK, 22/4). <http://www.londonwired.co.uk/news.php/1479761-Croatia-From-isolation-to-EU-membership>

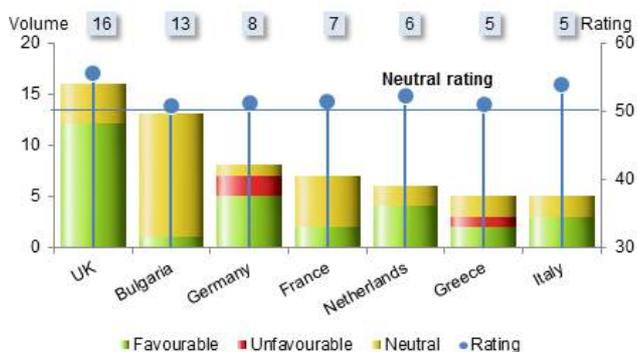
Charts

ELARG: Leading Daily Issues
by volume, favourability & rating



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ELARG: Highlights
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Volume	83 items
Rating	52.7
Favourable %	47%
Unfavourable %	3.6%
Neutral %	49.4%

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ELARG: Key Stakeholders & Sources
by volume, favourability & rating 42.9

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	52
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	51
Baroness Catherine Ashton, (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	49
Vlora Çitaku (Minister for European Integration, Kosovo)	18
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	16
Jose Manuel Barroso (President, EC)	10
Aleksandar Vučić (First Deputy Prime Minister, Serbia)	8

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