



## Summary

Three days after the Brussels agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle recommended that the 27 Member States begin negotiations on full membership to Serbia. According to Commissioner Füle, the beginning of negotiations is a decisive break with the past and a step towards a common European future. The agreement is a sign of power of the Union in times of crisis – the solution is pragmatic, and in accordance with the principles of European compromises. It has also clearly showed that the Union remains attractive for countries beyond its borders, particularly in the Balkans (Delo, SI, 23/4). The agreement was "*a game-changer for Kosovo, for Serbia, for the whole region*" Füle went on to say. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, a key long-time player in EU-Balkans relations commented "*The Rubicon has been crossed,*" adding "*I think it is a very big achievement*" (eubusiness.com, UK, 22/4). The Serbian government approved the deal unanimously at an extraordinary session and has ordered ministries to implement it, said government spokesman Milivoje Mihajlović (Scotsman, UK, 23/4). Serbia insists that Friday's deal, granting a high degree of autonomy to Serb-majority areas in northern Kosovo, does not mean that it has recognised Kosovo's independence (Sega-Daily, BG, 23/4).

- Delo, SI, 23/4, [http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item\\_154876828.pdf](http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item_154876828.pdf)
- eubusiness.com, UK, 22/4, <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/serbia-kosovo-talks.o57>
- Scotsman, UK, 23/4, [http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item\\_154872134.pdf](http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item_154872134.pdf)
- Sega-Daily, BG, 23/4, [http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item\\_154865337.pdf](http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item_154865337.pdf)

The landmark agreement to normalise relations led to Serb demonstrators in Kosovo taking to the streets to chant treason according to the Independent (UK, 23/4). In the ethnically split northern Kosovo town of Kosovska Mitrovica, 10,000 angry Kosovo Serbs protested about the accord, accusing Belgrade of betraying them and abandoning its former province. "*Implementation will be difficult*" the Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt admitted, while British Foreign Secretary William Hague stressed that "*it is now up to all involved to get on with implementation*". A European Commission report said that "*Kosovo had taken very significant steps towards visible and sustainable improvement in relations with Serbia*" (uk.news.yahoo.com, UK, 22/4). Serbia's Orthodox Church accused the government on Monday of surrendering the country's former province of Kosovo in exchange for talks on joining the European Union. Patriarch Irinej, heads of the Serbian Orthodox Church commented "*This appears to mark the pure surrender ... of our most important territory in spiritual and historical terms*" adding "*The price of eventual entry to the EU will be formal recognition by Serbia of an independent Kosovo*". On Sunday, hecklers demonstrated at the start of the Belgrade marathon, shouting "*We won't give up Kosovo*" and unfurling a banner that read "*We defend Serbia*". One protester approached Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić and asked him: "*Do you sleep peacefully at night?*" (uk.reuters.com, UK, 22/4).

- Independent, UK, 23/4, [http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item\\_154872478.pdf](http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item_154872478.pdf)
- uk.news.yahoo.com, UK, 22/4, <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/serbia-approves-kosovo-deal-government-072947992.html#QVFHVUa>
- uk.reuters.com, UK, 22/4, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/04/22/uk-eu-serbia-backlash-idUKBRE93L0P920130422>

Alongside the opening of talks with Serbia the European Commission has recommended that membership talks start with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the preparation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo, reported the Serbian News Agency Tanjug (Telegraf-Daily, BG, 23/4).

- Telegraf-Daily, BG, 23/4, [http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item\\_154865302.pdf](http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130423/mi/item_154865302.pdf)

## Key Quotes

Albania: EU tells political parties "*progress needed*". "*We're concerned about recent developments in the composition of the Central Electoral Commission and its possible impact on the elections*", said Štefan Füle, highlighting his disillusionment with Albania's lack of political cooperation. "*What's so complex that Albanian politicians can't agree like Serbs and Kosovans?*", he asked, contrasting Pristina and Belgrade's "*strong results*" on EU adhesion with Albania's stunted progress (Ansa, Italy, 23/4)

[http://www.ansa.it/europa/notizie/rubriche/politica/2013/04/23/Albania-Ue-bacchetta-partiti-politici-servono-progressi\\_8599975.html](http://www.ansa.it/europa/notizie/rubriche/politica/2013/04/23/Albania-Ue-bacchetta-partiti-politici-servono-progressi_8599975.html)

Croatia has completed its accession negotiations with the European Commission and a target date of 1 July 2013 has been set for it to join the EU. Judicial reform was among the toughest of the 33 negotiating areas, or "*chapters*". EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding said that "*in one year they have completely reformed their judiciary system and have made it irreversible*" (BBC online, UK, 23/4)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11283616>

Utrinski Vesnik: "*Serbian formula not to open European door for Macedonia*" (Focus News, Bulgaria, 24/4)

<http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n304939>

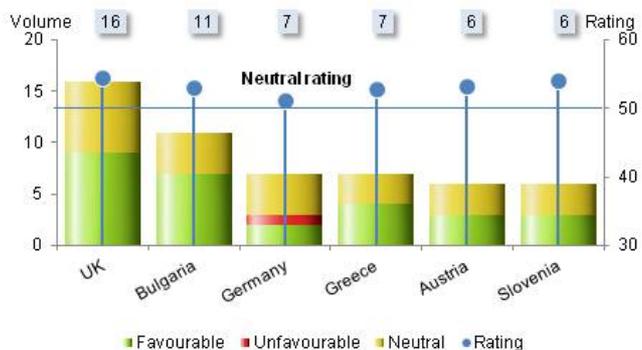
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ELARG: **Highlights**  
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Volume	78 items
Rating	53.1
Favourable %	48.7%
Unfavourable %	1.3%
Neutral %	50%

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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)	31
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	30
Baroness Catherine Ashton, (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	26
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	20
Guido Westerwelle (Foreign Minister, Germany)	10
Aleksandar Vučić (First Deputy Prime Minister, Serbia)	6
Carl Bildt (Foreign Minister, Sweden)	6

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