

Summary

Serbia's President's historic apology for the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of 8,000 Muslims in which he asked the people of Bosnia for forgiveness was widely reported on. President Nikolić apologised on behalf of Serbia for the first time, but stopped short of meeting demands to describe the atrocity as genocide according to the Daily-Telegraph (UK, 26/4). Analysts say Belgrade is keen to improve relations with its neighbours as it seeks European Union membership and the financial boost that could bring writes the Independent (UK, 26/4). President Nikolić said that the accusations of genocide "still had to be proven" (Presse-Austria, AT, 26/4). Both the Netherlands and Germany have always stated that public regret for war crimes during the 1992-1995 Balkan war must be a condition for Serbia's EU accession (Algemeen-Dagblad, NL, 26/4).

- Daily-Telegraph, UK, 26/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130426/mi/item_155190413.pdf
- Independent, UK, 26/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130426/mi/item_155190431.pdf
- Presse-Austria, AT, 26/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130426/mi/item_155209733.pdf
- Algemeen-Dagblad, NL, 26/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130426/mi/item_155183091.pdf

President Nikolić is planning a visit to Moscow on May 21 to sign a strategic partnership agreement with Russia, announced the press centre of the Serbian President's Office, cited by RIA Novosti. Last Wednesday Nikolić received the Russian ambassador to Belgrade Alexander Chepurin, who officially presented the invitation. Nikolić and Chepurin also discussed the latest agreement between Serbia and Kosovo which was approved in Brussels last Friday (focus-fen.net, BG, 25/4). Dnevnik.bg (BG, 26/4) reports that the Serbian PM Ivica Dačić and Vice-President Aleksandar Vučić have failed to convince the representation of the North Kosovo Serbs of the value of the Brussels agreement. The multi-member representation claimed that they will never implement the agreement. The EU High Representative Catherine Ashton stated that the agreement does not mean that Serbia acknowledges Kosovo as an independent state but it recognises Pristina's legal authority in the entire area, including the parts with Serbian majority, like the North Kosovo. Rizospastis comments however that Ms Ashton is playing with words (Rizospastis, GR, 26/4).

- focus-fen.net, BG, 25/4, <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n30507>
- dnevnik.bg, BG, 26/4, http://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/razshirivane/2013/04/26/2049622_surbii_obmislja_riskovan_referendum_za_sporazumenieto/?ref=rss
- Rizospastis, EL, 26/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130426/mi/item_155202516.pdf

José Ignacio Torreblanca says in his weekly El País comment piece that while Kosovo and Serbia are looking for agreement, Spain is digging in its heels over hostility towards Pristina. Mr Torreblanca refutes the Spanish argument that Kosovo's recognition might set a precedent for Catalonia, calling for the Government to maintain internal politics aside from the Kosovar conflict (Pais, ES, 26/4).

- Pais, ES, 26/4, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130426/mi/item_155199680.pdf

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) will decide in May whether to grant 104 million euros in loans to wind projects that will help Serbia and Croatia boost their energy mix and rely less on imports. The World Bank's private equity arm said the projects could help the Balkan countries meet European Union renewable energy targets in their run-up to accession to the bloc. "The region suffers from increasing energy deficits, which place a premium on domestic energy generation" the IFC said in a statement on its website (uk.reuters.com, UK, 25/4).

- uk.reuters.com, UK, 25/4, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/04/25/balkans-wind-ifc-idUKL6N0DC38A20130425>

Key Quotes

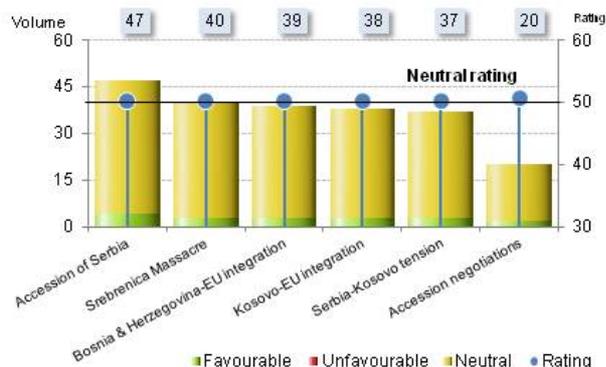
The Scotsman: **"The shift to the right following Saturday's parliamentary election will almost certainly shelve Iceland's plans to join the European Union, with which it has begun accession talks. Both the Progressives and Independents oppose membership"** (The Scotsman, UK, 29/4) <http://www.scotsman.com/news/international/iceland-votes-to-return-centre-right-to-power-1-2912651>

"It is not up to the European Commission to prescribe how the Serbian authorities would choose to ensure all stakeholders are on board when it comes to implementation of this very important agreement," EU enlargement commission Štefan Füle told reporters after meeting President Tomislav Nikolić in Belgrade (Reuters, UK, 26/4)

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/04/26/uk-serbia-eu-kosovo-idUKBRE93POWF20130426?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

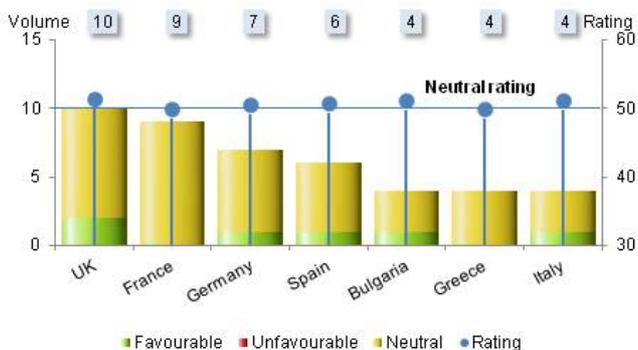
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Rating	50.6
Favourable %	11.1%
Unfavourable %	0%
Neutral %	88.9%

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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Tomislav Nikolić (President, Serbia)	40
Bakir Izetbegović (former Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency)	11
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	8
Enver Hoxhaj (Foreign Minister, Kosovo)	6
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	5
Neven Mimica (Commissioner designate for Consumer Affairs, EC)	5

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