



Key Quotes

"Serbia is the key country in the Balkan region and its openness to dialogue and compromise does not go unnoticed in Brussels," said the president of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz. **"Serbia plays a key role in the Balkans, and you are able to build bridges and establish common values,"** he added (ansa.it, IT, 15/7)

https://www.ansa.it/nuova_europa/en/news/sections/news/2015/07/15/eu-schulz-serbia-is-a-key-country-in-the-balkans_a60fe24b-dbb7-4988-a8a4-d87ab3453ebc.html

Summary

Parties agree on path to April 2016 election defusing crisis (Yahoo!, UK, 15/7)

EU enlargement commissioner Johannes Hahn brokered a deal between the government and opposition of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia early Wednesday to end a political crisis which had paralysed the country for months. *"I can tell you we have an agreement, an agreement signed by the leaders of the big four parties and I am grateful"* Hahn said after 12 hours of negotiations in Skopje ended successfully in the small hours of Wednesday. He hailed the agreement, which paves the way for early elections next year, as offering *"a lot of hope for the country"* (eubusiness.com, UK, 15/7). Under the new deal, the opposition will return to parliament in September, clearing the way for the formation of a unity government in October. Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski would then step down in January, clearing the way for a caretaker administration until elections on April 24th (Europeonline-magazine, UK, 15/7). A special prosecutor will be appointed to investigate the wire-tap scandal (Dailymail.co.uk, UK, 15/7).

- Yahoo!, UK, 15/7, <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/macedonia-parties-agree-path-april-2016-election-diffusing-071740602.html#XhJAeiy>
- eubusiness.com, UK, 15/7, <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/macedonia-politics.13ci/>
- Europeonline-magazine, UK, 15/7, http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/macedonia-sets-early-2016-elections-after-eu-brokers-end-to-standoff_402791.html
- uk.reuters.com, UK, 15/7, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/07/15/uk-macedonia-crisis-idUKKCN0PP0KO20150715>
- Dailymail.co.uk, UK, 15/7, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3161914/Macedonia-parties-agree-path-April-2016-election-diffusing-crisis.html>

Human Rights Watch urges EU to intervene in countries seeking membership

Journalists in several Balkan countries work in hostile environments that affect their ability to carry out their work, says a report issued by Human Rights Watch. The report, *A difficult profession: media freedom under attack*, documents attacks and threats against journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (theguardian.co.uk, UK, 15/5). Besides the inherent challenges of the job, reporters can face physical attacks, intimidation, even death threats. Reporting an attack to the authorities rarely brings justice. Journalists who offend powerful interests can face libel suits or smear campaigns and be called *"enemies of the state"* or *"foreign agents"* (euobserver.com, BE, 15/7).

- theguardian.co.uk, UK, 15/5, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2015/jul/15/balkan-journalists-face-threats-and-intimidation-says-report>
- euobserver.com, BE, 15/7, <https://euobserver.com/opinion/129647>

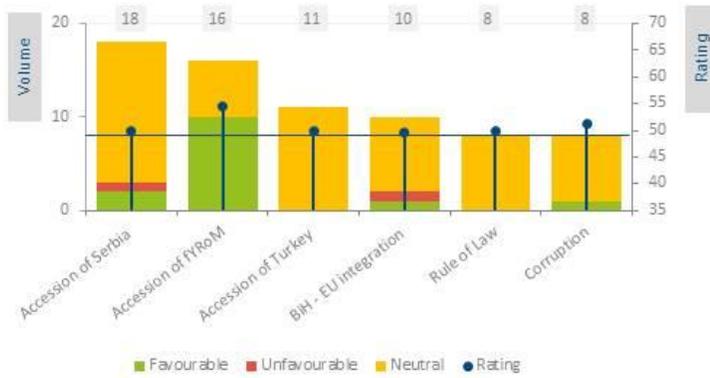
Possible Greek recognition of Kosovo

Greek Foreign Minister, Nikos Kotzias, declared in Pristina that Athens is looking into the possibility of recognizing Kosovo's independence. *"As far as the recognition of independence is concerned, we must bear in mind two criteria that relate to this matter. The first one relates to the needs of the entire region and the second one relates to our national European interest. In the future, we must see what sort of conjunction we can make between these two criteria"* Kotzias said after a meeting with Kosovo's Prime Minister, Isa Mustafa and Kosovo's Foreign Minister, Hashim Thaçi (balkaneu.com, GR, 15/7).

- balkaneu.com, GR, 15/7, <http://www.balkaneu.com/greece-recognizing-kosovos-independence/>

Charts

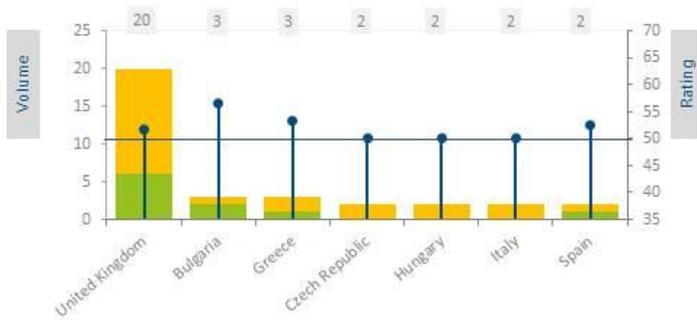
ELARG: **Leading Daily Issues**
by volume, favourability & rating



ELARG: **Highlights**
by volume, overall rating and percentage favourability

Volume	41 items
Rating	51.7
Favourable %	29.3%
Unfavourable %	2.4%
Neutral %	68.3%

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



ELARG: **Key Stakeholders & Sources**
by volume

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Nikola Gruevski – PM leader former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	12
Johannes Hahn - Neighbourhood Policy & Enlarg	12
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - Turkey President	11
Zoran Zaev – opposition leader former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	11
Fethullah Gulen - Turkish opposition leader in USA	8
Ahmet Davutoğlu – PM Turkey	5
Aleksandar Vučić - PM Serbia	4

Copyright © Ebiqity plc 2015

Disclaimer: The access to this press report is restricted to European Commission staff. It should not be forwarded or circulated.