



Key Quotes

The Serbian Foreign Ministry condemned in the strongest terms the Vukovar City Council's decision to amend the city's Statute envisaging ending the use of bilingual signs on city offices, institutions, squares and streets in Vukovar, announcing it would send a protest note to Croatia. The Serbian Ministry claims that the adopted amendments **"directly deny the equal use of languages and scripts, which violates fundamental human and minority rights of Serbs."** **"The Republic of Serbia warns the Republic of Croatia that it is obliged to respect its international obligations and we demand an urgent reaction of Croatian state bodies regarding this decision of the Vukovar authorities,"** the Serbian ministry said (dalje.com, HR, 17/8).

<http://dalje.com/en-croatia/serbia-to-send-protest-note-to-croatia-over-vukovar-city-council-decision/552968>

Summary

Montenegro and Bosnia to Sign Border Agreement

Montenegro and Bosnia are to sign a historic demarcation agreement by the end of August, having agreed to bury their recent dispute over the Sutorina area. Montenegrin President Filip Vujanović on Sunday said Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina will be the first ex-Yugoslav republics to sign a border demarcation agreement. *"The ratification of this agreement and its signing definitively resolves the border between our two countries"* said the Chairman of the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dragan Čović. He added that Montenegro has taken a big step forward on the European road. *"We have to catch up and our commitment is very clear - the Euro-Atlantic path of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no other way"* said Čović (net.hr, HR, 17/8).

- net.hr, HR, 17/8, <http://net.hr/danas/svijet/sastanak-u-tivtu-crna-gora-i-bih-potpisuju-sporazum-o-granici/>

Western Balkans in the EU

The Integration Commissioner of the German SPD parliamentary group, Josip Juratović, in a commentary for Tagesspiegel online (DE, 17/8), writes that people migrate to the EU because they have lost faith in faltering EU accession negotiations. He says that instead of building walls on the EU's external border, we should consider the causes of flight and combat them by restoring the lost EU perspective. One thing is certain, he says, either the Western Balkans enter the EU or their people will come to us. Juratović suggests that the introduction of visas is not the way forward as people would abruptly turn away from Europe and major powers outside the EU, such as Russia and Turkey would increase its influence in the region. German MEP, David McAllister, when asked by Bild (DE, 17/8) why so many people flee from the Balkans replied *"You cannot generalise about the situation in the countries of the Western Balkans, for example the Serbian government is pursuing impressive economic reforms. Generally speaking though, the economic situation in all six countries, is difficult. There is a high unemployment and people have few.... perspectives."*

- Tagesspiegel online, DE, 17/8, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150817/mi/item_261227326.pdf
- Bild, DE, 17/8, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150817/mi/item_261227403.pdf

Election fever

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's two biggest parties – ruling VMRO-DPMNE and the opposition Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) have already started their election campaigns despite the fact that elections are 8 months away and an agreement on an election code has yet to be reached. VMRO-DPMNE representatives travel in the country presenting the government's achievements while SDSM leader Zoran Zaev has paid visits to a number of eastern towns. Meanwhile, the campaign headquarters exchange accusations of crimes and corruption on a daily basis (focus-news.net, BG, 17/8).

- focus-news.net, BG, 17/8, <http://www.focus-fen.net/news/2015/08/17/380862/utrinski-vesnik-macedonia-parties-start-negative-campaign-over-elections.html>

Charts

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



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

Volume	40 items
Rating	50.6
Favourable %	10%
Unfavourable %	5%
Neutral %	85%

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



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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Dimitris Avramopoulos - Migration & Home Affairs	6
Angela Merkel - German Chancellor -	6
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - Turkey President	5
Aleksandar Vučić - PM Serbia	4
Jadranka Joksimović - EU Affairs Serbia	4

Copyright © Ebiquty plc 2015

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