



Key Quotes

Kalina Oroschakoff writes that the western Balkans are hoping to join the European Union one day, but governments across the region are investing in new coal-fired power plants at a time when the EU is championing renewables and energy efficiency. The problem is that Brussels's main tool for pushing its energy priorities on the Balkan countries is the carrot of eventual EU membership. But in the crisis-ridden EU, enthusiasm has faded for accepting yet more poor former communist countries that have problems with building well-functioning institutions and tackling corruption. **“Recent lack of tangible progress in the accession talks results in the western Balkan countries losing appetite for much needed energy system reforms,”** said Dragana Mileusnić of Climate Action Network (politico.eu, BE, 30/8).

<http://www.politico.eu/article/balkan-coal-greenhouse-energy-union-sefcovic/>

Summary

Progress in the Balkans

Ever since the end of the Balkan wars in 1999, the most important question in the region has been when and how to join the European Union. Slovenia made it in 2004 and Croatia followed in 2013. For the rest, however, the goal is still far off. The prospects of Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia—all at different stages of EU integration—have appeared stuck for some time. But recent months brought progress, mostly unnoticed in the rest of crisis-ridden Europe. On August 25th Kosovo and Serbia signed several EU-aided agreements, including one giving Kosovo's Serb-dominated municipalities more rights. The EU also mediated an agreement leading to new elections in Macedonia, where a political crisis had come to boiling point. An unworkable EU policy blocking Bosnia's advancement was abandoned (economist.com, UK, 28/8).

- economist.com, UK, 28/8, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21662601-balkan-laggards-harbour-new-hopes-entering-eu-knocking-heavens-door>

The EU as cash machine for the Western Balkans;

At the Western Balkans Summit in Vienna, European Commissioner Johannes Hahn called for resources from Jean-Claude Juncker's Plan for Europe to be opened for the countries of former Yugoslavia and Albania. These countries should be allowed to participate on the Juncker fund, he said, stating that the funds would be useful to companies in the region. Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama had also previously demanded access to the money. The European Investment Bank President Werner Hoyer however explains that the focus of the fund is on investments within the EU (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, DE, 28/8). In the Wirtschaftsblatt (AT, 28/8) Krsto Lazarevic warns that the Balkans should not be neglected. Mr Lazarevic says that there is a risk of EU infrastructure investments ending up in the wrong hands. It would be better to make serious reforms a requirement for EU funds, however, the economic underdevelopment of the region demands immediate action, according to Mr Lazarevic.

- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, DE, 28/8, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150828/mi/item_262581554.pdf
- Wirtschaftsblatt, AT, 28/8, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150828/mi/item_262599950.pdf

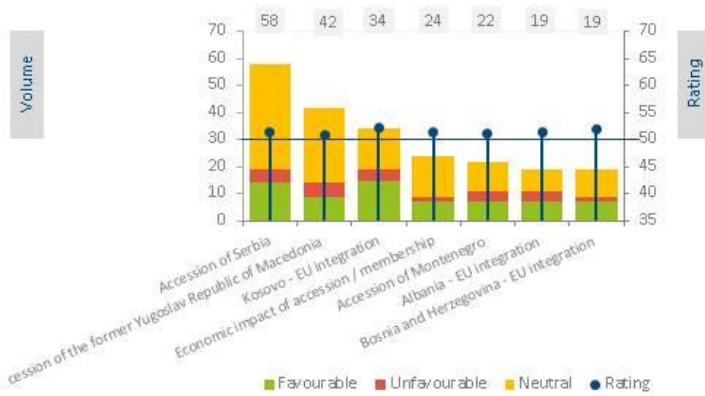
Serbia-Kosovo: Only a hint of normalisation

Serbia and Kosovo have signed four agreements; these were welcomed by all notable political players, from Vice-President and High Representative Federica Mogherini to the American State Department. Political analysts, on the other hand, are more sceptical. They have ascertained immediately that Belgrade and Pristina interpret the agreements in different ways. Kosovo perceives them as a step towards Serbia's recognition of their national sovereignty over the entire territory of the former region, whereas Serbia understands them as a safeguard for all Serbians in Kosovo (Dnevnik, SI, 28/8)

- Dnevnik, SI, 28/8, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150828/mi/item_262601284.pdf

Charts

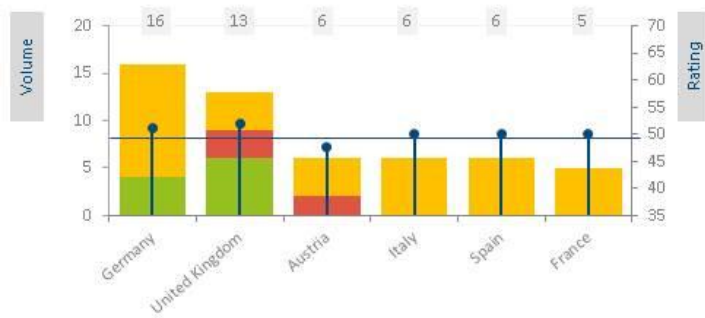
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| Werner Faymann - Austrian Chancellor | 14 |
| Johannes Hahn - Neighbourhood Policy & Enlarg | 10 |
| Aleksandar Vučić - PM Serbia | 10 |
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