

Key Quotes

"The Western Balkans must not become a parking lot or no man's land for stranded refugees. That would be a grave geo-strategic mistake," says Johannes Hahn, the EU's commissioner for European neighbourhood policy. **"All must shoulder their fair share."** **"We cannot blame them for lax border controls if our own member states don't do their job,"** he says, also criticizing EU countries for not offering up enough funds to help tackle international problems that are fuelling Europe's migration crisis (europeonline-magazine.eu, DE, 17/9).

http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/extraeu-official-warns-against-balkans-becoming-refugee-parking-lot_412595.html

Juncker's EU common list of safe countries of origin raises questions. Manolis Kefalogiannis, chair of Parliament's delegation to the EU-Turkey joint parliamentary committee said that **"the European Parliament, in its recently adopted Resolution on Turkey's progress report, was highly critical of Turkey's violations in the areas of the judiciary and fundamental rights and of justice, freedom and security. This must surely be taken into account."** European Conservatives and Reformists group MEP Anders Vistisen, said: **"Turkey is an EU candidate country that fulfils the Copenhagen criteria - it guarantees democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities."** **"Moreover, one member state already designates it as a safe country of origin. The criteria are fair. Besides, were the situation to deteriorate, the Commission could suspend Turkey from the list"** (theparliamentmagazine.eu, BE, 17/9).

<https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/junckers-eu-common-list-safe-countries-origin-raises-questions>

Summary

Balkan past still ever-present

Greece beat the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in a tight basketball championship match this month. The game was played in Croatia but foreigners watching a thrilling contest on Greek television would have been at a loss to know who the Greeks were playing as the name of Greece's opponents was left blank on TV screens. This is part of the surreal failure of the West Balkans to come to terms with modernity after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. The region is now the EU's 'Zombie Zone' where the dead and the hates of the past seem more alive than the living. The West Balkan states from Greece northwards are better at finding reasons to oppose each other than to cooperate. The rest of the world laughs at the pretention that the hero of ancient Greece, Alexander the Great, has anything to do with today's Slav-Albanian state of Macedonia. But as with the Serbian pretence that Kosovo is just a breakaway province that one day will see the light and return to be ruled by Belgrade these nationalist populist passions have a debilitating effect on normal economic developments. Greece also refuses diplomatic recognition of Kosovo even if Greek businesses are important investors in the small landlocked and desperately poor state. This leaves Kosovo in an international limbo unable to join global bodies like the UN, the EU or even the Council of Europe and access international loans and investment. The endless clamour for punishment for the massive displacement of Serbs that followed the end of Belgrade's rule there also prevents reconciliation, trade and economic development (eureporter.co, BE, 17/9).

- eureporter.co, BE, 17/9, <http://www.eureporter.co/frontpage/2015/09/17/eu-zombie-zone-in-west-balkans-makes-refugee-solution-harder/>

Montenegro police block plans for 2015 Niksic Pride Parade for third time

Niksic Pride Parade organizers LGBT Forum Progress say that the Montenegrin authorities have banned them from marching on 18 September during celebrations to mark the town's liberation from fascism. The country has a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage but has passed some discrimination protections and has promised to provide some form of legal recognition to same-sex couples as it is seeking to join the European Union (Gaystarnews.com, UK, 17/9).

- Gaystarnews.com, UK, 17/9, <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/montenegro-police-block-2015-niksic-pride-parade-for-third-time/>

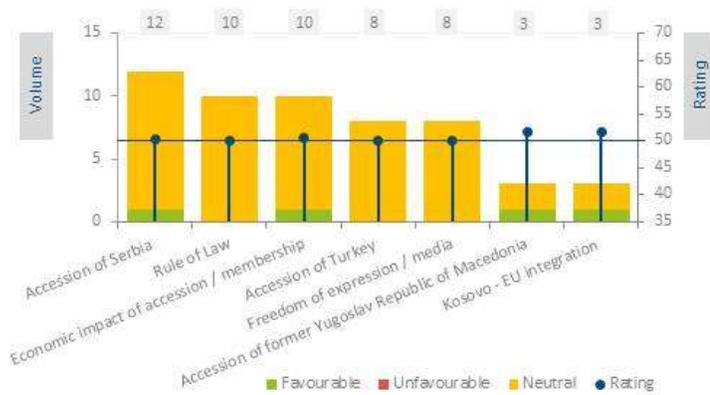
Kosovo justice system does not inspire faith

Lack of faith in the justice system has led to many people in Kosovo to hesitate when it comes to become part of the witness protection program. However, the head of the Department of Witness Protection at Kosovo Police, Skender Rrahmani, believes that Kosovo has the necessary capacities to protect witnesses (balkaneu.com, GR, 17/9).

- balkaneu.com, GR, 17/9, <http://www.balkaneu.com/kosovans-justice-system/>

Charts

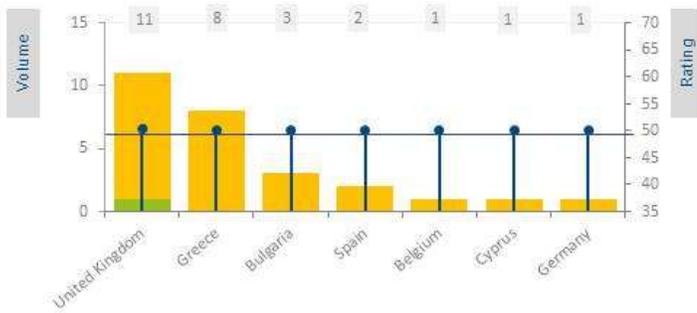
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Volume	27 items
Rating	50.2
Favourable %	3.7%
Unfavourable %	0%
Neutral %	96.3%

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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Aleksandar Vučić - PM Serbia	11
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - Turkey President	8
Fethullah Gulen – US based Turkish opposition politician	4
Federica Mogherini – HR Foreign Affairs	1
Denis MacShane - former UK MP	1
Ramush Haradinaj - Albanian politician	1

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