



Key Quotes

Relations between Croatia and Serbia plunged on Thursday to their worst since the end of the post-Yugoslav civil wars, as the growing migrant crisis rekindles old tensions in the Balkans. Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, spoke to the Serbian and Croatian premiers on Wednesday night, calling for them to calm the situation and work constructively towards reopening the trade flow. **"Closing borders is never a solution, and in that part of our continent might bring back difficult feelings and emotions that we don't need at this moment,"** she said. Johannes Hahn, the EU enlargement commissioner, will travel to Serbia on Friday to visit refugee camps. **"My plea is to disarm in terms of words and statements and to stay calm,"** he said (ft.com, UK, 24/9).

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/4cd1b600-62d7-11e5-9846-de406ccb37f2.html#axzz3mcpsLOnW>

Former Turkish Minister for EU Affairs Ali Haydar Konca: **"The biggest obstacle in the accession negotiations has always been the EU's worries about what it could mean to integrate a Muslim country". "But imagine if the EU had been willing to accept Turkey,"** he adds. **"The Middle East might be a very different place than it is today"** (spiegel.de, DE, 24/9).

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/turkey-under-erdogan-is-becoming-politically-riven-a-1054359.html>

Summary

The immigration crisis destroyed the Vysehrad Group and is now wrecking the Balkans

The immigrant issue destroyed the Vysehrad Group, with Poland alone voting for the immigrant allocation plan. But there had been tension inside the V4 for some time already, specifically over policy towards Russia. The immigrants have also caused tension and inflamed relations between Balkan countries, regardless of their being in the EU or not. Serbia, for its exemplary treatment for immigrants, was finally included by the European Commission in the common Civil Defence structure, thus providing Belgrade with EU funds for refugees (Dziennik Prawo i Gospodarka, PL, 24/9). The Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn urged all Western Balkan countries on Wednesday to open their borders to an undisturbed flow of goods and tone down their rhetoric. Hahn said that the closing of border crossings for cargo transport has direct economic consequences for the entire region. **"If borders are closed, if trucks cannot pass it has an immediate impact on the economy of the region"** said Hahn (Jutarnji List, HR, 24/9).

- Dziennik Prawo i Gospodarka, PL, 24/9, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150924/mi/item_266510914.pdf
- Jutarnji List, HR, 24/9, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150924/mi/item_266529721.pdf

Accompanied by the sounds of an accordion and guitar, in a restaurant in the centre of Serbia's capital, Belgrade, the band goes into a hit by one of Bosnia's best-loved musicians, Kemal Monteno, dedicated to the country's capital: "Sarajevo, My Love." Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić, had requested the song for his guest, the leading Bosniak politician, Bakir Izetbegović. For Izetbegović Junior, the son of Bosnia's first president, Alija Izetbegović, this was the first visit to Belgrade following the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The visit was Vučić's attempt to mend fences after an 11 July commemoration of the Srebrenica massacre ended in a fiasco (tol.org, CZ, 24/9).

- tol.org, CZ, 24/9, <http://www.tol.org/client/article/24987-western-balkans-my-love.html>

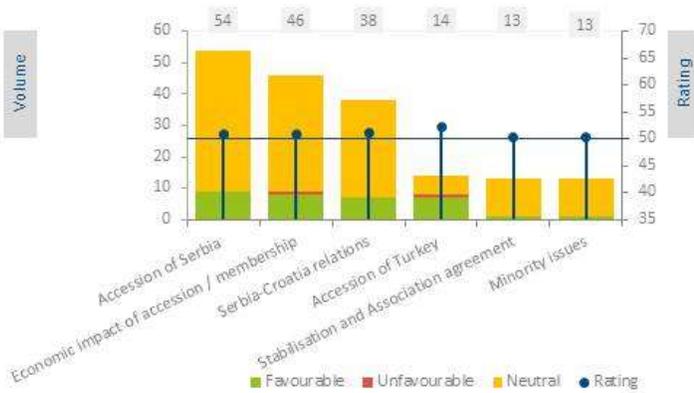
Europe's new doorman

In this commentary, Jürgen Gottschlich writing in Die Tageszeitung (DE, 24/9) reports on negotiations between Brussels and Turkey. According to him, Europe hopes to recruit Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as doorman for Syrian refugees. This is shown by plans to establish a programme backed up by €2 billion to stop and support Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees in Turkey, some of which would be sent on to refugee camps in Europe. Mr Gottschlich points out that it has been Frontex' policy to combat illegal immigration by extending European border controls into Africa and the Middle East. He suggests that Mr Erdoğan might accede to these plans to improve his international standing.

- Die Tageszeitung, DE, 24/9, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150924/mi/item_266488303.pdf

Charts

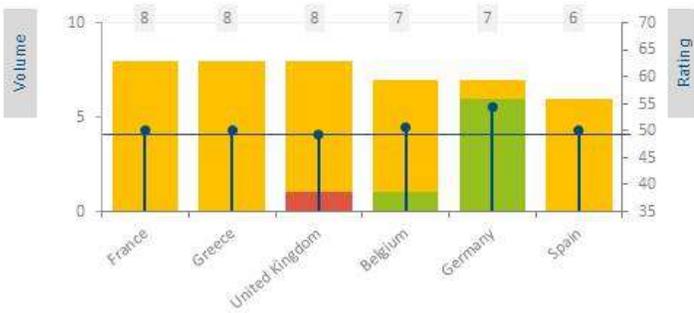
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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Johannes Hahn - Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement	28
Aleksandar Vučić - PM Serbia	23
Zoran Milanović - PM Croatia	23
Ivica Dačić - FM Serbia	21
Federica Mogherini - HR Foreign Affairs	18
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