



Key Quotes

The European Union is moving nearer to signing an accord with Kosovo on improved ties which could open the way to eventual EU membership for the small Balkan country. **"We will have a decision soon,"** one of the EU sources said of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement which was initialled by the two sides in mid-2014. Asked about the report, European Commission foreign affairs spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic declined to comment on the possible timing. Kocijancic recalled that the EU executive had recommended in April that the European Council, which groups the member-state governments, should take up the SAA. **"The Council is now finalising the adoption procedures with a view to the signing of this agreement,"** she said, without elaborating (eubusiness.com, UK, 21/10).

<http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/serbia-kosovo.14ud/>

Summary

No agreement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, who was on a visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, left Skopje disappointed after the leaders of the four biggest political parties failed to reach an agreement on the open issues. *"I am disappointed. It was a bad day but I am still optimistic. The political leaders should realise the seriousness of the situation and demonstrate leadership. Europe cannot make decisions instead of them"* the European Commissioner remarked (focus-news.net, BG, 20/10). *"There will not be new deadlines"* said Commissioner Hahn in the early hours of the morning. Hahn added that this failure in the talks may be reflected in the process of integration, as the Progress Report is expected to be published in a few days and it's not known if there will be a recommendation for the start of talks with the EU (balkaneu.com, GR, 20/10).

- focus-news.net, BG, 20/10, <http://www.focus-fen.net/news/2015/10/20/386824/telma-macedonia-eu-commissioner-johannes-hahn-left-skopje-disappointed.html>
- balkaneu.com, GR, 20/10, <http://www.balkaneu.com/negotiations-political-leaders-skopje-fail/>

Orthodox Serb support for Republika Srpska

Serbian Orthodox Church patriarch Irinej talking at the rally *"Days of Srpska in Serbia"* said that the Bosnian entity of Republika Srpska, which was not proclaimed nor internationally recognized as the state, *"was created to gather Serbian people and become the factor of peace in this region."* Following a meeting with Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić last week, Patriarch Irinej said that Church supports Serbian path to European Union, but stated that Serbia cannot give up Kosovo. The Church is also sympathetic to current protest in Montenegro. The Church is also opposed to Montenegro's joining NATO (balkaneu.com, GR, 20/10).

- balkaneu.com, GR, 20/10, <http://www.balkaneu.com/republic-srpska-state-patriarch/>

Europe stuck in Turkey's grip

When the EU is not able to control its own borders it becomes dependent on a country that can, writes Per Gudmundson in an editorial for Svenska Dagbladet (SE, 20/10). For this reason, Turkey is now a political heavyweight in Europe. The country's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, can turn on the *"refugee tap"* anytime he chooses if he does not get what he wants. This explains the events of recent weeks, suggests Gudmundson. German Chancellor Angela Merkel simply has no choice other than to make political concessions on issues such as EU membership for Turkey, and visas for its citizens. Writing in the Financial Times (UK, 20/10) David Gardner writes that the panic in Europe at the waves of Syrian refugees surging across its borders is real enough, but the EU could hardly have chosen a worse moment to rediscover its interest in Turkey.

- Svenska Dagbladet SE, 20/10, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20151020/mi/item_270448993.pdf
- Financial Times, UK, 20/10, [Link not available]

Charts

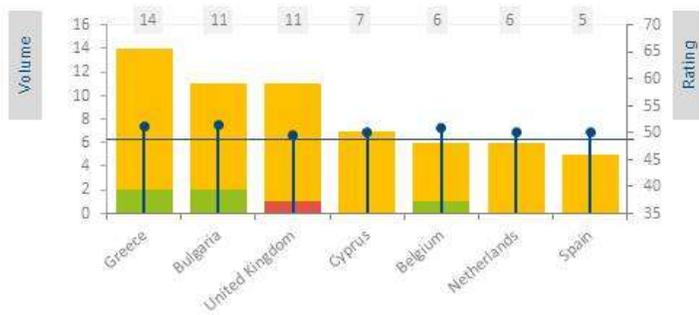
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| Christian Von Stetten - German politician | 6 |
| Gerda Hasselfeldt - German politician | 6 |
| Stephan Mayer - German politician | 6 |

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