

Key Quotes

Iceland suspends EU accession talks indefinitely. **"The government is in agreement on this subject. The process has been suspended. But nothing has been closed down, and we will improve our communication and strengthen our ties with the EU without actually joining,"** said Icelandic Foreign Minister Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson (Gegonos.gr, 13/9)

<http://www.gegonos.gr/athlitismos/%CE%B5%CE%BA%CF%84%CF%8C%CF%82-%CE%B5-%CE%B5-%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%AF-%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%8D%CE%BD-%CF%84%CE%B9%CF%82-%CE%BA/>

"Supporters of the 2004 influx of new member states saw enlargement as the best way of building economic and political bonds between the peoples of Europe in order to end the divisions of the past," BBC Online writes, claiming that **"Expansion is almost certain to continue. Bulgaria and Romania joined in January 2007. Croatia became the EU's 28th member state in mid-2013, and in 2009 Serbia submitted a formal application to join. Talks over Turkey's possible accession began in October 2005"** (BBC Online, UK, 12/9)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18788906>

Summary

EU membership remains a key priority for Serbia,

Prime Minister Ivica Dačić said *"I am sure that further progress in the talks with Pristina will make it possible to hold the first intergovernmental conference in January, which will kick off the irreversible process of accession officially"* (dnevnik.bg, 11/9). However Serbia is in a cleft stick with regards to policy towards Syria. According to a source in the foreign ministry, Serbia was waiting to align itself with a common European Union position and hoping for the best case scenario of a United Nations Security Council resolution agreed by all. This is tantamount to evading the question of whether the Serbian government thinks that there should be a military intervention. On the official level, ties to Damascus go back to the days of Tito and the non-aligned movement. These were used to persuade Syria not to recognise mostly Muslim Kosovo after it declared independence in 2008. In the diplomatic fight about Kosovo, Russia has been Serbia's staunchest ally. Yet backing Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, in the current climate on Syria, would irritate America and European Union countries, whose support for Serbia needs to make sure it begins EU accession talks by next January (economist.com, UK, 11/9).

- dnevnik.bg, 11/9, http://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/razshirivane/2013/09/11/2138566_chlenstvoto_v_es_ostava_osnoven_prioritet_za_surbija/?ref=rss
- economist.com, UK, 11/9, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2013/09/balkans-and-syria>

Escalation of the trade dispute between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo

The trade dispute between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo is on the verge of political escalation. The European Commission said it is still investigating all elements of the dispute in order to identify if the CEFTA agreement has been broken and by which side. Both sides blame each other for introducing political measures in breach of CEFTA, while ordinary citizens, small and medium businesses pay the heaviest price. This is an unacceptable move as it transfers the issue from a trade dispute to an issue affecting the freedom of movement of ordinary people. Petrit Selimi, the Kosovo Minister of Foreign Affairs, said both sides will need to revoke all decisions that break CEFTA rules, including the initial ban on grain imports. Selimi, despite his diplomatic passport, had to pay the €2 fee to enter the neighbouring former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. (euractiv.de, 11/9).

- euractiv.de, 11/9, <http://www.euractiv.de/erweiterung-und-nachbarn/artikel/grenze-ueberfuellt---lebensmittel-gestoppt-008001>

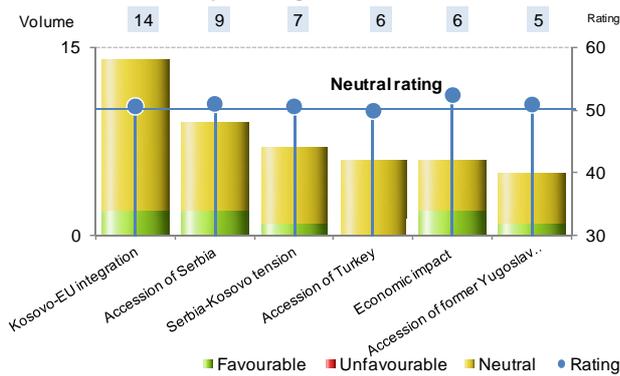
Rule of Law

"There is no way Europe can speak with passion about the rule of law around the world and not ensure it in its own backyard" was one of José Manuel Barroso's messages in his address. The Rule of law was a challenge which the EU faced after the big bang enlargement in 2004-2007, when the union grew with 12 new member states, most of which were infected with the virus of totalitarianism. The cure of the disease with the antibiotic of equality, democracy and numerous statements proved ineffective, so four member states from the northern part of the union demanded a mechanism to supervise the adherence to the rule of law. President Barroso announced that the Commission will soon come up with a communication on the subject because debate on this issue is a key part of our idea of Europe he said (euinside.eu, BG, 12/9).

euinside.eu, BG, 12/9, <http://www.euinside.eu/en/news/barroso-soteu-eu-is-not-the-enemy-in-bed>

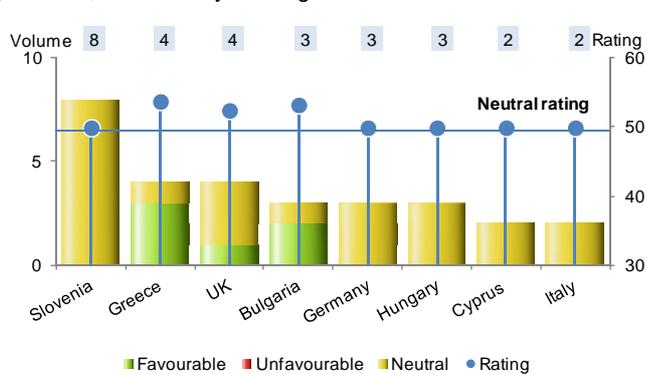
Charts

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Favourable %	20%
Unfavourable %	0%
Neutral %	80%

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ELARG: Key Stakeholders & Sources
by volume, favourability & rating

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	8
Borut Pahor (President, Slovenia)	8
Samuel Zbogar (Head of the EU office in Kosovo)	7
Atifete Jahjaga (President, Kosovo)	4
José Manuel Barroso (President, EC)	3
Brigadier General Merle D. Hart (Commander NATO HQ Sarajevo)	3
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	2
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	2

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