



Key Quotes

The European Union took steps on Wednesday towards lifting visa requirements for Turkish citizens, in a move underscoring a new thaw in relations between Ankara and the 28-member bloc. **"(The agreement) creates sustainable momentum in our relations that should first of all have the positive impact of putting accession talks back on track,"** EU enlargement commissioner Štefan Füle told reporters (Reuters, UK, 4/12).

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/12/04/uk-turkey-eu-idUKBRE9B30SS20131204>

Bulgarian President Rosen Plevneliev: **"Signing the agreement for cooperation and good neighbourly relations remains priority for Bulgaria and is crucial for the launch of the talks of the Republic of Macedonia for EU accession"** (President.bg, BG, 4/12).

<http://www.president.bg/news1616/podpisvaneto-na-dogovor-za-dobrosasedstvo-i-satrudnichestvo-s-republika-makedoniya-ostava-prioritet-za-balgariya.html>

Summary

Positive view of Kosovo Elections

European observers positively evaluated elections in Kosovo; *"With these elections Kosovo took a step forward on the democratic path. We hope that these elections will be a strong foundation for future democratic development of Kosovo"* said the Head of Mission Roberto Gualtieri (dnevnik.bg, BG, 4/12). Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, noted that the elections are crucial for Kosovo's future and for the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Ashton thanked OSCE and the EU election monitors led by the Italian EU parliamentarian Roberto Gualtieri for their hard work. Ashton said she would be meeting with the two Prime Ministers on December 5 for another round of dialogue to discuss how to move forward on the unresolved issues pertaining to implementation of the agreement signed in April (ansamed.info, IT, 3/12).

- dnevnik.bg, BG, 4/12, http://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/razshirivane/2013/12/04/2195814_nabljudatelite_ot_es_oceniha_polojitelno_i_vtorii_tur/?ref=rss
- ansamed.info, IT, 3/12, http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2013/12/03/Kosovo-Serbia-EU-Ashton-meet-PMs-5-12_9720395.html

Support for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

"It is time Macedonia began EU accession talks. No EU member state's interests will be injured if membership talks start," Austrian President Heinz Fischer remarked in a meeting with his counterpart from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov in Vienna, Macedonian Vecer daily reports. *"Austria has expressed its opinion clearly, presented good arguments and will support the process of Macedonian EU integration,"* Mr Fischer stated (focus-fen.net, BG, 4/12). Utrinski vesnik daily reported that EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle remarked in a Brussels-held debate on the Balkan countries that the European Commission would recommend again the following year that accession talks start with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia but the member countries needed to express their opinion on this. Commissioner Füle criticised Macedonia for the events of December 24, 2012 when opposition MPs were forced out of the plenary hall with the help of police officers. In his words, there had been a breakthrough in terms of good relations between Macedonia and its neighbouring country and in terms of reforms in Macedonia but that the incident made the country spend another ten months waiting [for the start of EU membership talks] (focus-fen.net, BG, 4/12).

- focus-fen.net, BG, 4/12, <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n320157>
- focus-fen.net, BG, 4/12, <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n320154>

Montenegro and reform

Štefan Füle has commended the path followed so far by Montenegro toward European Union. In a speech he said that concrete results must be shown in the talks as concerns the rule of law. According to him, the European Commission has expressed its willingness for Serbia to start accession talks. Talks between Serbia and EU may start in January of next year (balkaneu.com, EL, 3/12).

- balkaneu.com, EL, 3/12, <http://www.balkaneu.com/eu-enlargement-commissioner-fule-commends-montenegro/>

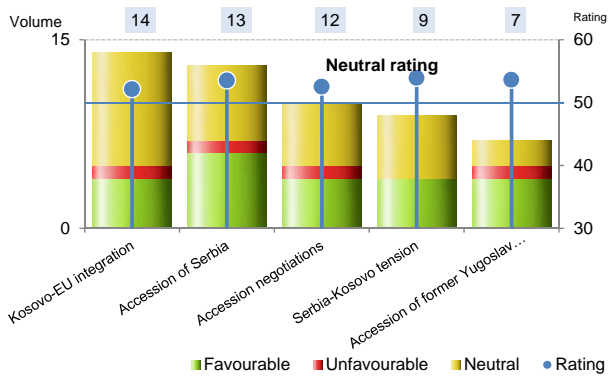
Visa free regime for Turkey

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan approved the agreement on readmission of citizens of third states in exchange for liberalization of the visa regime with the EU, Hurriyet Daily News reports. The readmission agreement will be signed simultaneously with the start of talks for the visa-free regime with the EU. Ankara has the right to stop the negotiations, if the European Council refuses to simplify the visa regime after implementation of readmission agreements. According to the best scenario, Turks will be able to visit Europe without visas in three years (balkans.com, UK, 4/12).

- balkans.com, UK, 4/12, <http://www.balkans.com/open-news.php?uniquenumber=185691>

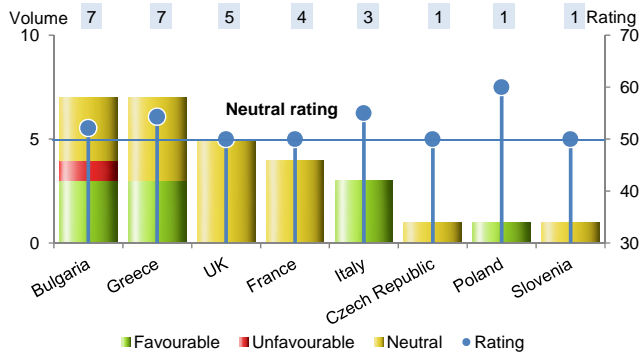
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ELARG: Key Stakeholders & Sources
by volume, favourability & rating

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	7
Rena Dourou (Politician, Greece)	3
Baroness Catherine Ashton, (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	2

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