

## Key Quotes

The EU's decision to initiate accession talks with Serbia in January have been met with scepticism and negative reactions in Kosovo, where analysts believe the EU overestimated the progress made by Belgrade in its dialogue with Pristina. According to the political expert and director of the Kipred institute Ilir Deda, the dialogue mediated by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton **"favored Serbia, which continues to hold onto its influence in the (Serb majority, Ed.)"**. Arten Korenica, from a foundation for legal and political studies, also said that **"Brussels wanted to speed up Serbia's path towards European integration despite the fact that Belgrade has not yet"** - in his view - **"applied all the points of the agreement signed on April 19 in Brussels"** (Ansamed. IT, 18/12).

[http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/it/notizie/stati/kosovo/2013/12/18/Serbia-negoziato-Ue-reazioni-negative-Kosovo\\_9799484.html](http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/it/notizie/stati/kosovo/2013/12/18/Serbia-negoziato-Ue-reazioni-negative-Kosovo_9799484.html)

David Cameron is expected to raise the rights of people from other European Union countries to move to Britain at a summit in Brussels today. One source said he wanted to **"put markers down"** about future EU enlargement. An EU source said: **"You can expect the Prime Minister to use it as an opportunity to reiterate his concerns. He's got 24 hours or so with European leaders and he will be talking about some of the issues on his mind and his priorities. This is about getting the debate going, it's not an issue that's going to be discussed in detail at one of the formal working sessions but if they do discuss countries joining the EU in the future then you can expect the PM to make clear his view and to put markers down"** (Telegraph.co.uk, UK, 19/12).

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/10526522/Ex-pat-Britons-hit-by-benefit-curbs-aimed-at-Romanians-and-Bulgarians.html>

## Summary

### EU enlargement: negotiations with Serbia to start on 21 January

The council of EU foreign ministers has decided that the accession talks with Serbia will start next January. The first intergovernmental conference will be held on 21 January. EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton says that Serbia has met the agreement's requirements, although it has failed to reach an agreement on the jurisdiction of Kosovan law courts yet (Magyar-Hirla, HU, 18/12). Ms. Ashton said that Serbia had made convincing progress in the normalisation of relations with Pristina and that the time had come for the opening of accession negotiations with the EU (Vecer, SI, 18/12). The EU is taking a big symbolic step towards incorporating all of the Balkans now that Serbia has been given the go-ahead to begin membership negotiations, writes Henrik Brors in an article in Dagens Nyheter (SE, 18/12), but the conditions of membership are tough, most likely requiring Serbia to recognise Kosovo. The first meeting for the negotiations will be held on 21 January. However, a legally binding agreement on normalisation of relations with Kosovo must be entered into before the negotiations can be concluded. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Antanas Linkevičius, chair of the General Affairs Council said about accession negotiations with Serbia. **"We congratulate Serbia on the imminent start of negotiations. We look forward to the first intergovernmental conference in January. We also commended Belgrade and Pristina for good progress in their dialogue, noting that the work on the implementation of the April agreement must continue as many challenges remain"** (neurope.eu, BE, 18/12).

- Magyar-Hirla, HU, 18/12, [http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20131218/mi/item\\_180491542.pdf](http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20131218/mi/item_180491542.pdf)
- Vecer, SI, 18/12, [http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20131218/mi/item\\_180492720.pdf](http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20131218/mi/item_180492720.pdf)
- [http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20131218/mi/item\\_180483970.pdf](http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20131218/mi/item_180483970.pdf)
- neurope.eu, BE, 18/12, <http://www.neurope.eu/article/council-approves-accession-negotiations-serbia>

### Disappointment for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Bulgarian Foreign Minister Kristian Vigenin stated that the unsettled name dispute between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece as well as the agreement on good neighbourly relations which Macedonia and Bulgaria did not sign last week, were the main but not the only reasons for the decision of the Foreign Affairs Council not to open negotiations (focus-fen.net, BG, 17/12). While addressing the Council of General Affairs, Evangelos Venizelos, the Vice President of the Greek government, stated that Greece supports enlargement for Serbia, and other Western Balkan countries. However, he said that issues concerning the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia remain, emphasising that it is not only the name issue, but a deeper issue of democracy and state of law (Naftemporiki, EL, 18/12).

- focus-fen.net, BG, 17/12, <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n321449>
- Naftemporiki, EL, 18/12, [http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20131218/mi/item\\_180490870.pdf](http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20131218/mi/item_180490870.pdf)

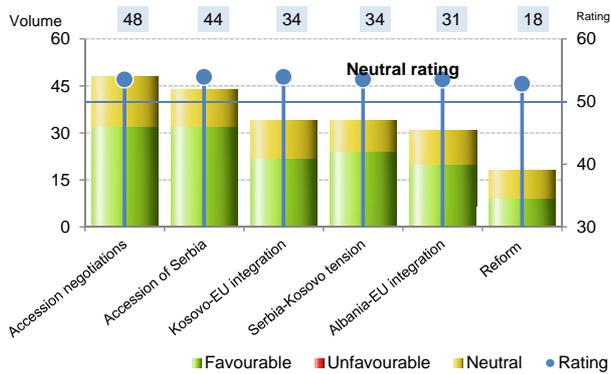
### ... and for Albania

Once again, the European Union has not granted Albania candidate status. This was stated by the EU Enlargement Commissioner, Štefan Füle, who announced the decision of the 28 EU member countries. Sources in Brussels said the refusal came because at least 5 member countries including Holland, Denmark, Germany, France and Great Britain were against granting Albania candidate status. During the afternoon these 5 countries proposed a change in the content of the draft conclusions to read **"The Council welcomes further action in the fight against corruption and organized crime and the engagement of the new government to intensify efforts in this domain. The Council hopes to take a decision in relation to the EU candidate status for Albania in June 2014"** (balkaneu.com, EL, 17/12).

- balkaneu.com, EL, 17/12, <http://www.balkaneu.com/european-union-doesnt-grant-candidate-status-albania/>

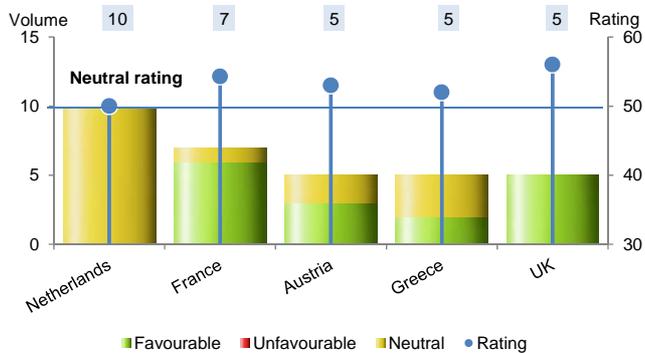
## Charts

**ELARG: Leading Daily Issues**  
by volume, favourability & rating



© Ebiquity 2013

**ELARG: Leading Daily Countries**  
by volume, favourability & rating



© Ebiquity 2013

**ELARG: Highlights**  
by volume, favourability & rating

Volume	67 items
Rating	52.8
Favourable %	53.7%
Unfavourable %	0%
Neutral %	46.3%

© Ebiquity 2013

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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	28
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	18
Baroness Catherine Ashton (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	16
Linas Linkevičius (FM Lithuania)	7
Carl Bildt (Foreign Minister, Sweden)	7
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Prime Minister, Turkey)	4

© Ebiquity 2013

**Disclaimer:** The access to this press report is restricted to European Commission staff. It should not be forwarded or circulated.