



Key Quotes

William Hague welcomed European Council decision to start EU accession negotiations with Serbia in January, an important milestone. The Foreign Secretary said: **"I welcome the EU's decision to open accession negotiations with Serbia. Serbia's leadership has shown sustained political will and taken concrete steps to improve relations with Kosovo"**. He added: **"The UK remains a strong supporter of EU enlargement to all the countries of the Western Balkans, including both Serbia and Kosovo, and Turkey. Enlargement benefits the UK. Expansion of the single market means greater prosperity for Britain. And stability in the Western Balkans means greater security for the UK"** (gov.uk, UK, 20/12).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-welcomes-serbias-eu-progress>

"Cut migration or I'll block Serbia and Albania from joining EU," warns David Cameron (dailymail.co.uk, UK, 21/12).

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2527398/Cut-migration-ill-block-Serbia-Albania-joining-EU-warns-Cameron.html>

The European Commission has adopted today a package worth 38.5 million Euros to support normalization process between Serbia and Kosovo. According to Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy Štefan Füle: **"EU Member States recognized yet again efforts made by the leadership of Serbia and Kosovo in normalization of their relations. And we are committed to help them move forward on their respective EU paths. The new €38, 5 million approved today should serve as a support in strengthening peace and stability in the region and will have direct impact on life of the citizens"** (neurope.eu, BE, 20/12).

<http://www.neurope.eu/article/385-million-euros-support-normalization-between-serbia-and-kosovo>

Summary

Serbia and Kosovo to pursue talks to mend ties

Serbia's launch of membership talks with the European Union will not spell the end of EU-mediated talks with Kosovo, the EU's top diplomat, Catherine Ashton, said on Thursday. Leaders of Serbia and Kosovo, will meet again in Brussels in January after some 20 rounds of talks in the last two years to decide what else they want to try to resolve in terms of practical cooperation. *"What has been absolutely clear is that they have said very openly that they want to carry on this process. And we have to help them be as ambitious to resolve the problems as they want to be,"* the EU's foreign policy chief said. Ashton, who has mediated the talks, said Serbia and Kosovo will also work in the coming months on implementing the April accord, a key issue watched by EU governments. *"We will have to keep checking and going back on implementation for two reasons,"* she told reporters. *"One is to make sure it really does happen. And secondly to check the things that may not have (been) thought about."* Ashton said of Dačić and his Kosovo counterpart Hashim Thaçi *"I have enormous respect and admiration for both prime ministers for their willingness to engage in this and work through important and difficult issues, both being respectful of their own red lines but very aware of each other's red lines"* (uk.news.yahoo.com, UK, 19/12).

· uk.news.yahoo.com, UK, 19/12, <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/serbia-kosovo-pursue-talks-mend-ties-21111343.html>

Stabilisation agreement for Kosovo

Kosovo meanwhile is also strengthening EU ties via a stabilisation agreement with the 28-nation bloc. Ashton said that at their first encounter, the EU handed both Prime Ministers a list of issues to make life easier for ordinary people along the border after former Serbian province Kosovo unilaterally broke away – issues such as recognising school diplomas or vehicle licence-plates. Still on the to-do list was the mutual recognition of property, how to both attend international meetings and sports events, and the more difficult question of missing people. Ashton said she and her team acted as facilitators throughout, intervening only when necessary and offering technical help if needed in a format that *"worked really well"* and which the EU will continue at least until her mandate ends later next year (eubusiness.com, UK, 19/12).

· eubusiness.com, UK, 19/12, <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/serbia-kosovo.se7/>

British views on Enlargement

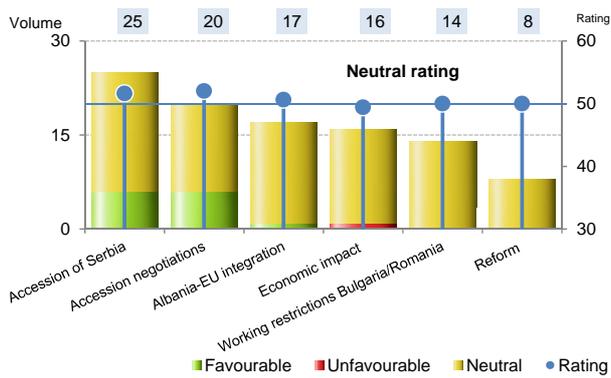
Widely reported and syndicated was the news that David Cameron will pledge Britain's full support for continued EU expansion - but with tougher rules on migrants' financial benefits and rights when taking advantage of the free movement membership brings. After announcing new national restrictions to stop immediate benefit claims when UK borders are opened to Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants from January 1, the Prime Minister is seeking support from an EU summit in Brussels for his concerns about the impact of current and future enlargement of the union. The controversial move has no wider backing from other member states for the moment and comes as the EU is extending its enlargement ambitions (beverleyguardian.co.uk, UK, 20/12). Curbing the rights of poor countries could prove controversial, as it would also undermine the EU's tradition of *"solidarity"* under which the richest members help the poorest (Independent, UK, 20/12).

· beverleyguardian.co.uk, UK, 20/12, <http://www.beverleyguardian.co.uk/news/national/cameron-bigger-eu-must-be-tougher-1-632799>

· Independent, UK, 20/12, [link not available]

Charts

ELARG: Leading Daily Issues
by volume, favourability & rating



ELARG: Highlights
by volume, favourability & rating

Volume	49 items
Rating	50.9
Favourable %	18.9%
Unfavourable %	2.7%
Neutral %	78.4%

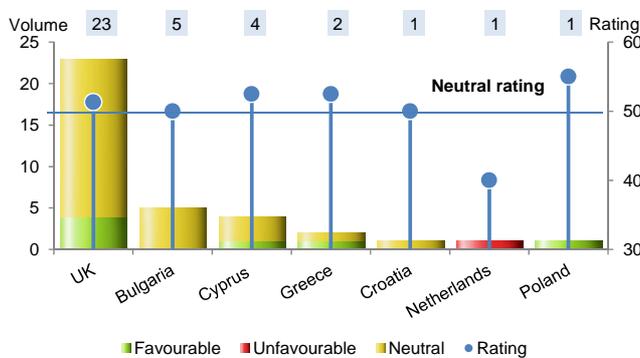
© Ebiquity 2013

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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Baroness Catherine Ashton (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	17
David Cameron (Prime Minister, UK)	5
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	5
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	4
Štefan Füle (Enlargement Commissioner, EC)	3

© Ebiquity 2013

ELARG: Leading Daily Countries
by volume, favourability & rating



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