



Summary

Reuters UK reported on the question of migration and visa-free travel within Europe. It noted that more than 6,000 Serbian and citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) have applied for asylum in Germany so far this year, feeding resentment among German taxpayers. Rights groups, however, say that restoring visas would hurt the EU's standing in the Balkans, where the pull of membership has helped to bring peace and drive reform. The European Stability Initiative think-tank warned the EU against making a "fundamental and strategic mistake." The lifting of the visa regime was "the most significant decision made in the past decade to further the integration of the Western Balkans," it wrote. Re-imposing the requirement "would be a bad blow to the EU's credibility in southeast Europe" (uk.reuters.com, UK, 24/10). The French and German Interior Ministers, Manuel Valls and Hans-Peter Friedrich said in interviews with France's Le Figaro and Germany's Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung that they wanted the European Union to take steps to stop the tide of asylum seekers from Serbia and fYRoM, urging Brussels to increase aid to the two nations to halt the phenomenon (Frankfurter-Allgemeine-Zeitung, DE, 25/10).

- uk.reuters.com, UK, 24/10, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/10/24/us-balkans-asylum-idUKBRE89N12Z20121024>
- Frankfurter-Allgemeine-Zeitung, DE, 25/10, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121025/mi/item_138060243.pdf

The EU's Justice and Home Affairs Council discussed Bulgaria and Romania's Schengen bids but did not make a decision on the expansion of the visa-free area (dnevnik.bg, BG, 24/10). The accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen Area was postponed to March 2013, due to uncertainty about the ability of the authorities of both countries to meet their obligations, diplomatic sources said. According to Mediafax, a number of countries including the Netherlands and Germany currently do not consider that the conditions for membership have been met (cotidianul.ro, RO, 24/10).

- dnevnik.bg, BG, 24/10, http://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/novini_ot_es/2012/10/24/1932033_suvetut_na_es_otnovo_niama_da_vzeme_reshenie_za/
- cotidianul.ro, RO, 24/10, <http://www.cotidianul.ro/examinarea-cererilor-de-aderare-la-schengen-ale-romaniei-si-bulgariei-mai-asteapta-197907/>

The French media widely reported the tribute paid by Angela Merkel to Roma victims of the holocaust. In her speech she said "Roma still suffer discrimination and rejection, they have to fight for their rights even today. It is a German and European duty to help them" (lanouvellerepublique.fr, FR, 24/10).

- lanouvellerepublique.fr, FR, 24/10, <http://www.lanouvellerepublique.fr/Toute-zone/Actualite/24-Heures/n/Contenus/Articles/2012/10/24/Merkel-honore-les-Roms-victimes-de-l-Holocauste-et-promet-de-les-defendre>

Following reports on Scotland and Catalonia, the French press asked whether secession was Europe's new idée fixe (Echos, FR, 25/10). The UK media continued to scrutinise the actions of Alex Salmond, the Scottish First Minister, over the legal aspects of a possible Scottish secession. Meanwhile in Catalonia a feedback poll conducted for Catalan TV channel RAC 1 said that 62% of Catalans would vote for independence if they were given guarantees that an independent Catalonia would remain a member of the EU (openeurope.org.uk, UK, 24/10).

- Echos, FR, 25/10, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121025/mi/item_138051788.pdf
- openeurope.org.uk, UK, 24/10, <http://www.openeurope.org.uk/Article/Page/en/LIVE?id=9450>

Key Quotes

In the letters page of the Scotsman: "I am reasonably sure that most member states would be happy to welcome Scotland into the EU. I am equally sure that few, if any, would be prepared to grant special concessions – whether on the euro, immigration, competition policy, fisheries, structural funds etc – to allow that to happen on the basis hoped for by the Scottish Government. Some, notably Spain, would be firmly opposed in the light of the precedent created" (The Scotsman, UK, 26/10).

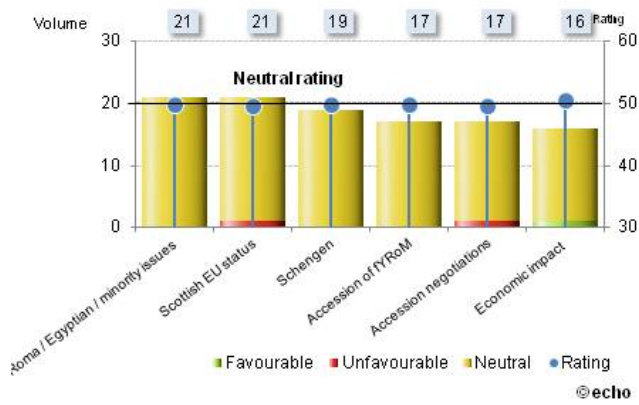
<http://www.scotsman.com/the-scotsman/opinion/letters/confusion-over-our-place-in-europe-1-2599503>

"Tsvetan Tsvetanov said that EU ministers are waiting for the monitoring report on Romania, which will be published in December or January" (Focus News, BG, 26/10).

<http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n290803>

Charts

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

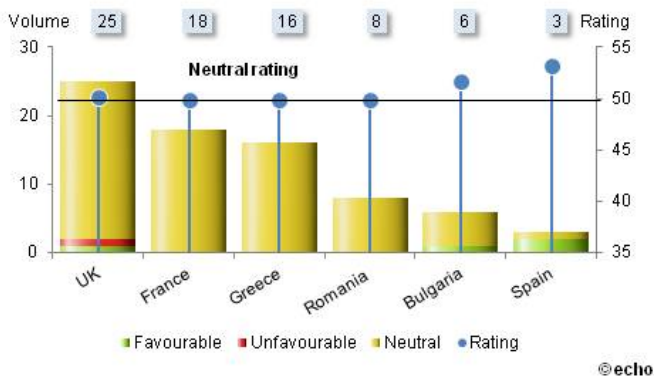


ELARG: **Highlights**
by volume, favourability & rating

Volume	80 items
Rating	50.3
Favourable %	5.0%
Unfavourable %	1.3%
Neutral %	93.7%

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



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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Alex Salmond (First Minister, Scotland)	19
Nicola Sturgeon (Deputy First Minister, Scotland)	15
Angela Merkel (Chancellor, Germany)	14
Nikola Poposki (Foreign Minister, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)	13
David Cameron (Prime Minister, UK)	6
José Manuel García-Margallo (Foreign Minister, Spain)	4
Victor Ponta (Prime Minister, Romania)	4