



Summary

România Liberă has published an article written by European Commissioner Stefan Füle. Taking the annual assessment of the preparation level of Western Balkans countries, Turkey and Iceland as his starting point, the Commissioner says that, despite the current financial crisis, enlargement supports economic stability and offers more opportunities for commercial exchanges and business and stressed that the enlargement policy leads to profound economic and democratic changes in the countries that want to join the union (Romania-Libera, RO, 26/10).

- Romania-Libera, RO, 26/10, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121026/mi/item_138176870.pdf

German Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) is confident that Croatia will become the 28th EU member state in July next year. Of course, the criteria, listed by the European Commission have to be met, Merkel said (boerse-frankfurt.de, DE, 25/10). Speaking to Croatian PM Zoran Milanovic, Angela Merkel said "I count on it that we will be together in the EU on 1 July 2013." (chartmix.at, AT, 25/10). Günther Oettinger, the EC Commissioner for Energy, said "Croatia has done its homework" while the Chair of the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, Eckhard Cordes, said "We are deeply convinced that the enlargement must continue" (lr-online.de, DE, 25/10).

- boerse-frankfurt.de, DE, 25/10, <http://www.boerse-frankfurt.de/de/nachrichten/merkel+rechnet+mit+puenktlichem+eu+beitritt+kroatiens+4660707>
- chartmix.at, AT, 25/10, http://www.chartmix.at/index.asp?action=news_detail&menuid=6&menuid=67&id=18735298
- lr-online.de, DE, 25/10, <http://www.lr-online.de/nachrichten/wirtschaft/Alle-ROUNDUP-Merkel-rechnet-mit-puenktlichem-EU-Beitritt-Kroatiens;art77597,3996941>

Also on Croatia, a meeting has been held between the European Fisheries Control Agency and the Croatian Authorities in Split in order to establish a roadmap on their future cooperation with a view to the Croatian accession to the European Union in July 2013. (fishnewseu.com, UK, 25/10).

- fishnewseu.com, UK, 25/10, http://www.fishnewseu.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9208:croats-poised-for-eu-fisheries-accession&catid=46:world&Itemid=56

On reform and Schengen it was reported that the Council had postponed its decision on Bulgaria and Romania's accession to the Schengen area. "Consideration of request for accession of the two countries has been postponed to March 2013, due to uncertainty about the capacity of authorities in these countries to meet their obligations", said diplomatic sources in Brussels (dnevnik.bg, BG, 25/10). "The decision must be taken at the right time" insisted a diplomat from a member country of the Schengen Area (monitorulbt.ro, RO, 25/10). Netherlands, Germany, France and several other Member States are dissatisfied with level of corruption and the success of the fight against organized crime in Bulgaria and Romania (napi.hu, HU, 25/10). But the Romanian Minister of the Interior and Administration Mircea Dusa was reported this morning as demanding with his Bulgarian counterpart that a decision must be made at the Justice and Home Affairs Council in December or that a date should be set for the adoption of this decision (Focus News, BG, 29/10).

- dnevnik.bg, BG, 25/10, http://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/novini_ot_es/2012/10/25/1932688_rumuniia_produljava_konsultaciite_s_es_za_da_vleze_v/?ref=rss
- monitorulbt.ro, RO, 25/10, <http://www.monitorulbt.ro/Stiri/National/2012-10-25/Intrarea+Romaniei+in+Schenqen+amanata.html>
- napi.hu, HU, 25/10, http://www.napi.hu/nemzetkozi_gazdasag/elhalasztottak_a_dontest_a_roman_es_bolgar_csatlakozasrol.535085.html#
- focus news, BG, 29/10, <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n290996>

At a meeting of EU interior ministers in Luxembourg, Germany pushed for a suspension of visa-free travel for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) and Serbia. This came after asylum-seeking Roma rushed into Germany to claim the benefits available during the application process. Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, described the influx as "worrying". Despite the insistence of a dozen of member states, no decision on limiting visa-free travel is expected to be made until spring 2013 (Kurier, AT, 26/10). Swedish Interior Minister Tobias Billström said before a meeting with his EU colleagues "Everyone must live up to their responsibilities before joining the European Union" and adding that candidate countries should improve the lot of their minority populations. He then went on to say "These people do not have the right of asylum, they are leaving their country for economic reasons" (mykosmos.gr, EL, 25/10).

- Kurier, AT, 26/10, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121026/mi/item_138183664.pdf
- mykosmos.gr, EL, 25/10, http://www.mykosmos.gr/loc_mk/news/greece/1700277/epanafora-ths-bizas-zhtoun-efta-xwres-ths-ee.htm

Key Quotes

Civil service chiefs have come under fire for allowing the SNP government to “waste” thousands of pounds in taxpayers’ cash fighting a court battle during the row over an independent Scotland’s place in the European Union. (The Scotsman, UK, 29/10).

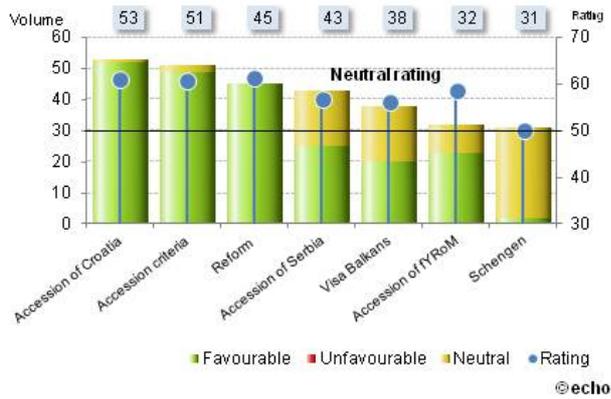
<http://www.scotsman.com/news/civil-servants-should-have-stopped-salmond-from-wasting-12-000-on-eu-advice-case-1-2603388>

The Romanian minister remarked that the Schengen accession could not be bound to the cooperation and verification mechanism and stressed that the two countries had met all the technical requirements. (Focus News, Bulgaria, 29/10).

<http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n290996>

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Zoran Milanovic (Prime Minister, Croatia)	46
Angela Merkel (Chancellor, Germany)	46
Günther Oettinger (Commissioner for Energy, EC)	15
Eckhard Cordes (Chair of the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations)	14
Norbert Lammert (President of the Bundestag, Germany)	14
Štefan Füle (Commissioner for Enlargement, EC)	10
Tobias Billström (Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy, Sweden)	9