



Key Quotes

Gjorge Ivanov, President of former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, expressed his regret for not starting accession negotiations with the European Union: **"We are aware of the scale of damages and the consequences of Macedonia's blockade on the road to EU and NATO... The blockades are causing frustrations in Macedonian society, instability in political life and tensions in the inter-ethnic relations"** (elzoni.gr, GR, 19/12).

<http://www.elzoni.gr/html/ent/866/ent.50866.asp>

Summary

Albania demands Serbian recognition of Kosovo

The Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama has demanded that Serbia recognize Kosovo and face reality. In an interview for the Serbian TV channel, N1, the head of the government said that Serbia is not Albania's enemy and that the past must be left behind. *"Our relations must move forward. I believe that Serbia will lift a burden from its shoulders when it faces reality and recognises Kosovo. This will be good for everyone. Serbia is not our enemy, Serbia is our potential ally. We have a common enemy, poverty, unemployment, many things which have been caused by bad governance there and here. Let us offer a prosperous future to our countries"* Rama said. Rama confirmed that he has invited Mr. Vučić for a visit to Albania. According to him, football and the incident that occurred in Belgrade during the match between Albania and Serbia received more attention than it should have received (balkaneu.com, GR, 18/12).

- balkaneu.com, GR, 18/12, <http://www.balkaneu.com/serbias-albanias-enemy-pm-rama-belgrade/>

Chinese investment in Serbia

Serbia said on 17 December it expected Chinese construction of a new rail link between Belgrade and Budapest to begin by mid-2015, part of Beijing's strategy to accelerate the flow of goods into Europe through the Balkans. China, Serbia and Hungary signed a memorandum of understanding on the 370 km rail route on the second day of a summit in Belgrade between China and 16 central and eastern European states. Serbia also sealed a \$600-million loan deal with China Exim Bank for the construction of a new power plant. The rail upgrade fits with a Chinese plan to turn Greece's main port of Piraeus - where Chinese shipping giant Cosco Pacific holds a 35-year concession to upgrade and run two container cargo piers - into a regional trade hub. The rail programme was first agreed last year, but it remains unclear how it will be financed. Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić said a feasibility study and other paperwork would be finalised by June 2015 so that the railway could be built by June 2017 (EurActiv.com, BE, 18/12).

- EurActiv.com, BE, 18/12, <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/transport/balkan-railway-part-chinese-express-lane-europe-310940>

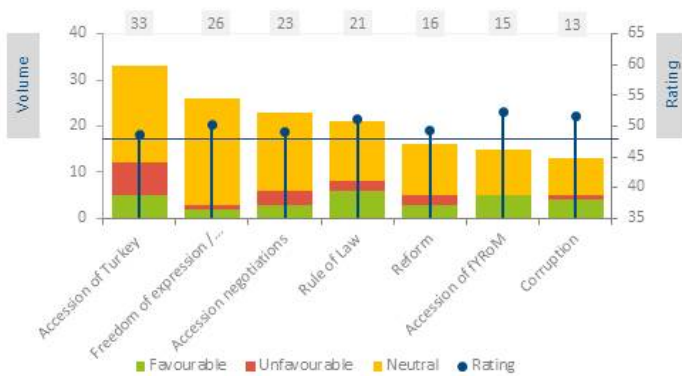
Package of pre-accession assistance

The European Commission has finalised its 2014 package of pre-accession assistance programmes to support reforms in countries wishing to join the EU. The funding, totalling EUR 2 billion, will be available to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Montenegro Serbia, Kosovo and Turkey. The package also includes multi-annual programmes to support specific sectors over the next three years in Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (etribuna.com, IT, 18/12).

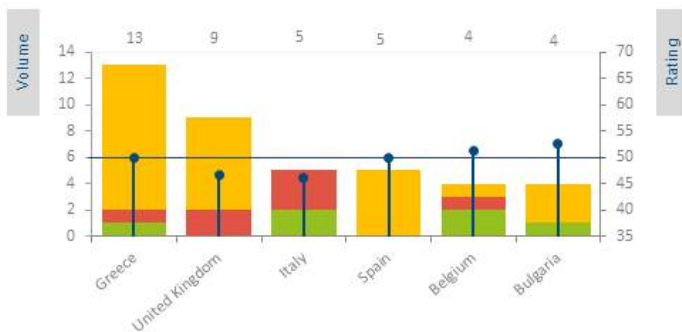
- etribuna.com, IT, 18/12, <http://www.tribuna.com/eportale/en/english/22345-eu-ipa-2-billion-package-to-support-reforms-in-the-western-balkans-and-turkey-in-2014>

Charts

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



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



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ELARG: **Highlights**
by volume, overall rating and percentage favourability

Volume	50 items
Rating	49.1
Favourable %	12%
Unfavourable %	16%
Neutral %	72%

ELARG: **Key Stakeholders & Sources**
by volume

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - Turkey President	17
Fethullah Gulen - US based Turkish politician	10
Johannes Hahn - Neighbourhood Policy & Enlarg	7
Aleksandar Vučić - PM Serbia	3
Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu - Turkey FM	3
Igor Lukšić - Montenegro FM	2
Vesna Pusić - Croatian FM	2

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