



## Key Quotes

Negative view in the EU for joint military exercises of Serbia and Russia. **"Good relations between Serbia and Russia in general do not pose an obstacle to the relations with the EU, but Serbia still needs to evaluate which measures it would take and at which point it would do so, and the country should also show its full commitment to its EU path,"** said MEP Knut Fleckenstein (naftemporiki.gr, GR, 23/3).

<http://www.naftemporiki.gr/story/930646/arnitiko-klima-stin-ee-gia-tis-koinis-stratitikes-askiseis-serbias-rosias>

## Summary

### Customs Union with Turkey

Turkey and the EU are preparing to strengthen their two-decade old customs union, in an effort to deepen ties despite Ankara's stalled membership negotiations and tensions over foreign fighters travelling through Turkish territory. Senior officials have agreed to explore extending the customs zone to areas such as services, agriculture and public procurement — a move Ankara long resisted by saying the trade deal should be superseded only by full EU membership. *"We are open-minded about these issues now — we weren't before"* said one Turkish official. The initiative reflects thinking in Brussels and Ankara — but not necessarily all EU capitals — that the relationship between Turkey and the bloc is too important in economic and strategic terms to deteriorate further. *"You cannot make progress on accession because the political conditions are not met any more"* said Marc Pierini, a former EU ambassador to Turkey. *"So you are trying other things... the only relatively innocuous thing is customs union"* (ft.com, UK, 23/3).

- ft.com, UK, 23/3, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/b03abe4e-d07e-11e4-982a-00144feab7de.html#axzz3VCTvzZ8r>

### Serbia accused of re-exporting Polish apples

Russia's food safety watchdog said on Monday it suspected Serbia of re-exporting Polish apples and was considering banning all fruit imports from the non-EU country, Russian news agency RIA reported. Serbia's trade minister, Rasim Ljajić, was quoted by Serbian newspaper Večernje Novosti as saying authorities would urgently investigate. *"We cannot allow one or two exporters to jeopardise the free-trade agreement with Russia"* he said. He also said authorities would verify the quantities of apples being exported from Serbia. According to data from Serbia's Chamber of Commerce, Serbian apple exports to Russia since the sanctions row erupted between Russia and the West have risen by 48 percent to 118 000 tons (Daily Mail, UK, 23/3).

- Daily Mail, UK, 23/3, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3007434/Russia-ban-fruit-imports-Serbia--RIA.html>

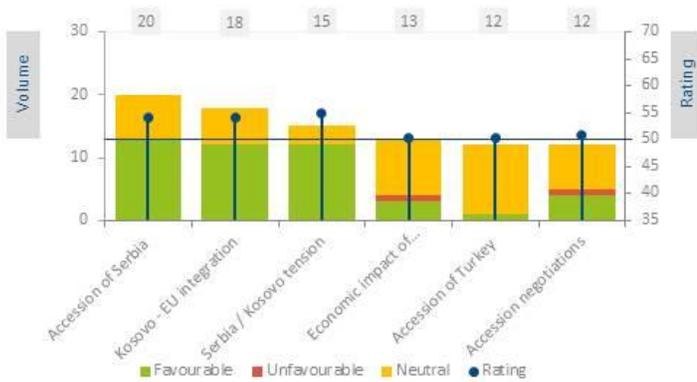
### Lack of confidence in the judicial system of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The wiretapping scandal in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has ruined the credibility of the judicial system and the confidence that citizens have in the institutions of justice. Tens of registered telephone calls published in recent months by the opposition in Skopje have revealed conversations between the Prime Minister, other ministers and the head of secret services with chief judges and prosecutors in order to discuss court rulings demanded by the government. The conversations also revealed that judges were implicated in election fraud. Other conversations have also been published revealing how the two parties in power VMRO-DPMNE and BDI decide on the appointment of chief judges, prosecutors etc (balkaneu.com, GR, 23/3).

- balkaneu.com, GR, 23/3, <http://www.balkaneu.com/wiretapping-scandal-put-judicial-system-tyrom-front-test/>

# Charts

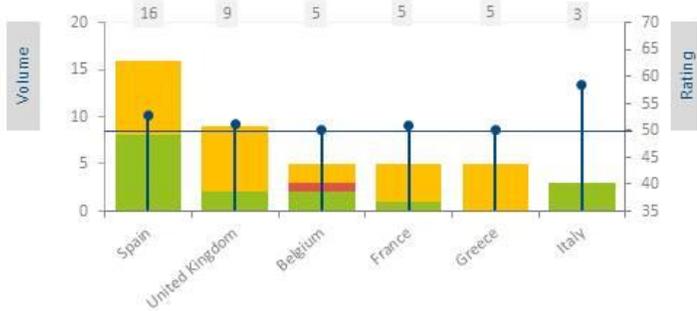
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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Federica Mogherini	13
Hashim Thaçi - FM Kosovo	10
Tomislav Nikolić - Serbia President	9
Aleksandar Vučić - PM Serbia	8
Isa Mustafa - Prime Minister of Kosovo	8
Afitete Jahjaga - President Kosovo	8
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - Turkey President	7

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