



Key Quotes

The European Union said on Friday it was a priority to open the first chapters in accession negotiations with Serbia by the end of the year, after a delay caused by foot-dragging in relations between Belgrade and its former Kosovo province. **"It is a priority for the European Union to open chapters this year,"** the bloc's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, told a news conference in Belgrade. **"I cannot at this stage define when and which chapters we will be ready to open. There is some work to be done here, there is some work to be done in Brussels and in the capital cities, but I think that we share a common engagement to do it before the end of the year".** (Yahoo! UK, 27/3)

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/eu-wants-serbia-accession-talks-begin-earnest-150219941.html#sO1GeWK>

Summary

The EU is no longer inspirational

Marianne (FR, 27/3) considers that although this is not the case in countries which were formerly in the orbit of the Soviet Union and wish NATO to protect them from Russia, elsewhere euro-scepticism has the upper hand. Iceland's recent official withdrawal from the EU application process is revealing of how the times when Europe was a source of inspiration are gone. The paper admits that although the decision was partly due to the country's refusal to submit to fishing quotas, the article notes it also comes as a consequence of the financial crisis which shattered the country's illusions regarding financial experts everywhere, starting with the ones in Brussels.

- Marianne, FR, 27/3, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150327/mi/item_241206456.pdf

Support for Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović said on Thursday that Bosnia and Herzegovina needed Croatia's assistance on its path to the European Union and advocated equal rights for the Croats in that country. *"We have a duty to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path towards the EU. Croatia has a special responsibility in that regard"* Grabar-Kitarović said in her address at an event organised by Vecernji List newspaper in Mostar. *"Our task is to help the Croats to fully exercise their rights as one of the three peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina that enjoy equal status. We will not forget that task"* she said adding that this would not downplay the cooperation with the Bosniaks and the Serbs and that Croatia was more than an ordinary neighbour to Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dalje.com, HR, 27/3).

- Dalje.com, HR, 27/3, <http://dalje.com/en-croatia/grabar-kitarovic-pledges-croatias-support-to-bih-in-eu-integration-process/540387>

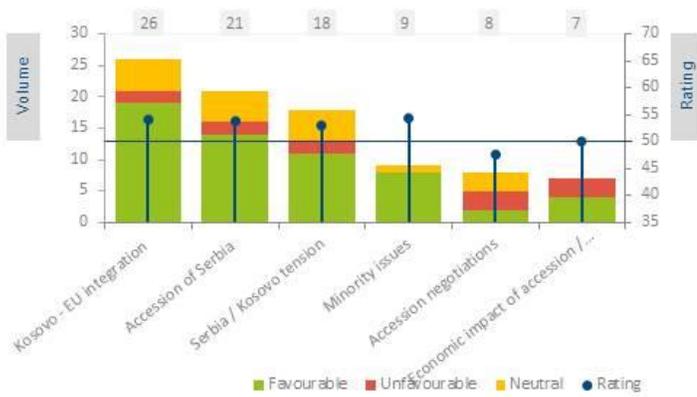
Don't leave Serbia to Russia and China

For a variety of good reasons, European leaders are focusing their attention on the war in Ukraine but at the same time, the Western Balkans have fallen to the bottom of the European agenda as have discussions on EU enlargement. This neglect could result, yet again, in the destabilisation of the Western Balkans. China and especially Russia are keen to jump into the vacuum left behind by the EU. Serbia is particularly receptive to these efforts, given the country's perception of itself as a bridge between east and west. EU leaders need to ask themselves if they can afford to neglect Serbia for at least another five years. The EU opened formal accession negotiations in January 2014 but since then no accession chapters have been opened. What the country needs right now, in order to become a successful European democracy, is a positive signal from the EU (euobserver.com, BE, 27/3).

- euobserver.com, BE, 27/3, <https://euobserver.com/opinion/128157>

Charts

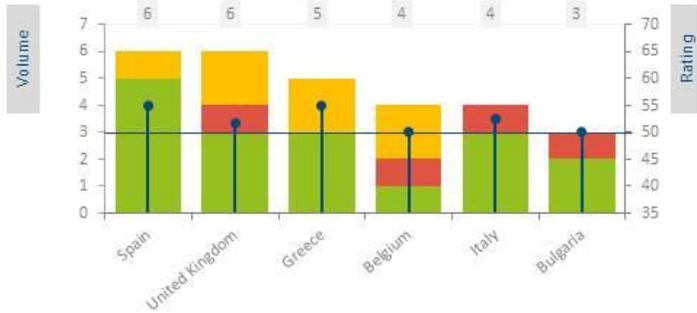
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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Federica Mogherini – HR Foreign Affairs	22
Isa Mustafa - Prime Minister Kosovo	12
Aleksandar Vučić - Prime Minister Serbia	9
Hashim Thaçi - FM Kosovo	6
Ivica Dačić – FM Serbia	5
Afitete Jahjaga - President Kosovo	5
Tomislav Nikolić - Serbia President	3

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