



Key Quotes

As a result of the reforms fatigue, the duration of the process, the weakening focus of the EU and the geopolitical shifts, the Western Balkans are starting to dictate the conditions. This has become crystal clear again on the occasion of the new tension that emerged between Serbia and Albania because of a statement by Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama. Serbia's first deputy and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dačić was indignant with the slow and weak international reaction, **"If a Serbian official had said something related to a country in the neighbourhood, they would have called the UN Security Council in no time,"** Ivica Dačić said and added: **"I can only confirm the diagnose that we are all suffering together from the same syndrome and that is to make a step forward and two steps back."** (euinside.eu, BG, 9/4)

<http://www.euinside.eu/en/news/albania-kosovo-serbia-tensions>

Summary

Albania, Kosovo and unification rhetoric

"Statements of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama and Kosovo Foreign Affairs Minister Hasim Thaçi on unification are unacceptable provocations and are not in line with the policy of cooperation in the region" the spokesperson for the European Commission Maja Kocijancic stated. In a press release issued on Wednesday, Kocijancic was reacting to the statement of Albanian PM Rama that he and Thaçi had discussed a classic unification of Kosovo and Albania "in case Tirana and Pristina failed to unite within the EU" (Sega Daily, BG, 9/4). Thaçi clarified pointing out that the statement did not refer to any change of borders. *"I believe that the statement was misinterpreted. We are not talking about changing the borders, but to reduce their visibility, according to the European model, so that people can move freely"* Thaçi said (Novi List, HR, 9/4).

- Sega Daily, BG, 9/4, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150409/mi/item_243140067.pdf
- Novi List, HR, 9/4, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150409/mi/item_243180357.pdf

Crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The foreign minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Nikola Poposki, declared that the current political crisis "has a negative effect on the image of the country abroad" adding "we must focus on our strategic objectives such as NATO and European Union. With this situation, we're justifying the claims who have been blocking our Euro Atlantic integration for years" (balkaneu.com, GR, 8/4). Delo (SI, 8/4) adds that the EU is co-responsible for the alarming situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as it will not launch accession negotiations due to the Greek block and observing that the deep political crisis and the internal tensions could compromise the stability of the region. MEP Ivo Vajgl, commented on the dispute between Athens and Skopje by saying that bilateral issues such as the name question should not prevent the opening of accession negotiations. He believes the countries should tackle this problem separately, though an agreement should be reached prior to the conclusion of negotiations.

- balkaneu.com, GR, 8/4, <http://www.balkaneu.com/political-crisis-damaging-image-country-foreign-minister-poposki/>
- Delo, SI, 8/4, http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150409/mi/item_243160551.pdf

Schulz criticises Ankara but stresses Turkey remains an EU accession candidate

The journalist Kai Küstner commenting for NDR (DE, 8/4) notes that the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz has always strongly criticised Ankara and notes that Schultz does not seem to have changed his attitude. However, he says, Schulz stands by Turkey being an EU accession candidate adding that Schulz is close to the European Commission's attitude, the strategy being to "change through rapprochement." Küstner suggests that not just Turkey would win from an accession, Turkey is interesting to Europe given its geo-strategic location.

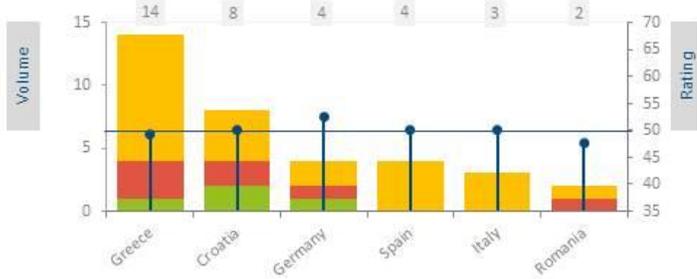
- NDR, DE, 8/4, <http://193.178.140.110/delivery/20150408/mi/6000-623903-001.mp3>

Charts

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



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



Copyright © Ebiquty plc 2015

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

Volume	42 items
Rating	49.9
Favourable %	14.3%
Unfavourable %	19%
Neutral %	66.7%

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

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Edi Rama - Albania PM	17
Hashim Thaçi - FM Kosovo	13
Maja Kocijancic - spokesperson	8
Federica Mogherini	7
Martin Schulz - EP President	6
Aleksandar Vučić - PM Serbia	5
Tomislav Nikolić - Serbia President	4
Johannes Hahn - Neighbourhood Policy & Enlarg	4

Disclaimer: The access to this press report is restricted to European Commission staff. It should not be forwarded or circulated.