



Summary

Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić and Hashim Thaçi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, agreed to reopen four border crossing points between the two countries during talks under EU mediation. Additionally, both sides will designate liaison officers, who are due to have their offices in the EU representations in Belgrade and Pristina. Brussels clarifies the two liaison officers will not be responsible for any consular tasks but contribute to the implementation of negotiated agreements. Bilateral talks between the two countries have been chaired by HR Catherine Ashton since October. The EU seeks to promote both countries' "functional" collaboration to reduce tensions according to the Frankfurter-Allgemeine-Zeitung (DE, 6/12). The two prime ministers also agreed that a special unit of Serbian police officers will protect Kosovo Serb cultural monuments. Belgrade has promised to publish details of the financing of the Kosovo Serbs (Nepszava, HU, 6/12). This breakthrough is part of the "dialogue" between the two prime ministers, supposed to normalise relations between Pristina and Belgrade (Echos, FR, 6/12).

- Frankfurter-Allgemeine-Zeitung, DE, 6/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121206/mi/item_141981512.pdf
- Nepszava, HU, 6/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121206/mi/item_142002235.pdf
- Echos, FR, 6/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121206/mi/item_141970805.pdf

Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle was reported to have said that the Serbian government had showed courage in its dialogue with Kosovo (focus-news.net, BG, 6/12) and during his speech at a Brussels conference on the Balkans he also said that "*resolving bilateral disputes is an important priority for 2013 for EU candidate states and potential ones*" (ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 5/12).

- focus-news.net, BG, 6/12, <http://www.focus-news.net/index.php?id=n1725632>
- ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 5/12, http://ansamed.ansa.it/ansamed/it/notizie/stati/europa/2012/12/05/Balcani-Fule-soluzione-dispute-bilaterali-priorita-2013_7907377.html

Mr Füle also said he was sure that in July 2013 Croatia would have what it takes to make its entrance into the European Union. He added that "*The new approach to the EU enlargement process will act in such a way that candidate countries are more prepared to be member states at the time of accession, after a full application of the new legislative framework in line with EU standards*" (ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 5/12). Also concerning Croatia, the Slovenian Foreign Minister, Karl Erjavec, will propose an extension of term for France Arhar, the Slovenian expert tasked with tackling the defunct LB bank issue, as it is due to expire this month. Erjavec believes this is necessary to enable the continuation of dialogue with Croatian expert Zdravko Rogic (rtvslo.si, SI, 5/12). Erjavec also said "*we are not excited about the fact that Croatia does not respect the commitments it has made*" (Vecer, SI, 6/12).

- ansamed.ansa.it, IT, 5/12, http://ansamed.ansa.it/ansamed/it/notizie/stati/europa/2012/12/05/Croazia-Fule-sicuro-rispetto-impegni-entro-adesione_7907413.html
- rtvslo.si, SI, 5/12, <http://www.rtvslo.si/evropska-unija/erjavec-bo-predlagal-podaljsanje-mandata-arharju/297382>
- Vecer, SI, 6/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121206/mi/item_141995219.pdf

Again there was wide-spread coverage in the UK that an independent Scotland would have to apply to join the European Union if voters back the SNP's plans to break away from the United Kingdom. In a significant blow to the nationalists, the European Commission has written to a House of Lords committee stating that if Scottish voters back independence, existing treaties which cover the UK's EU membership will "cease to apply" (Scotsman, UK, 6/12). Daily Mail online reports (UK, 6/12) that the Spanish government has made clear it would 'veto' any attempt by Scotland to join. In a recent debate, Liberal Democrat Lord Wallace revealed that the UK government was clear that any attempt for Scotland to join the EU would meet with difficulties.

- Scotsman, UK, 6/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121206/mi/item_141991060.pdf
- dailymail.co.uk, UK, 6/12, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2243844/Brussels-says-block-independent-Scotland-automatically-joining-EU.html>

Key Quotes

Utrinski Vesnik: Macedonia is blocked in Brussels (Focus News, Bulgaria, 7/12).
<http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n294192>

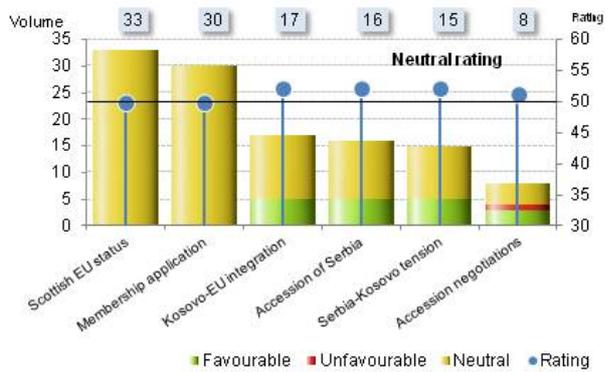
Vecer, Macedonia: EU has no magic solution to solve the name dispute Štefan Füle says (Focus News, Bulgaria, 7/12).
<http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n294193>

Barroso indicates independent Scotland out of EU (Telegraph, UK, 7/12).
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scotland/9728134/Barroso-indicates-independent-Scotland-out-of-EU.html>

Under Baroness Ashton, the EEAS has won some plaudits for: Helping to ease tensions between the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo (bbc.co.uk, UK, 7/12).
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-20522201>

Charts

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

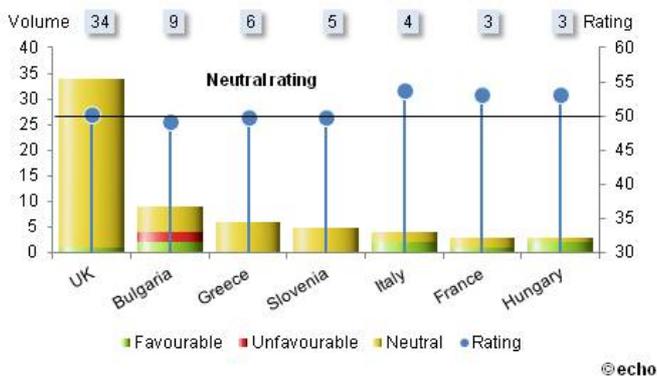


ELARG: **Highlights**
by volume, favourability & rating

Volume	66 items
Rating	50.6
Favourable %	12.1%
Unfavourable %	3%
Neutral %	84.9%

©echo

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



©echo

ELARG: **Key Stakeholders & Sources**
by volume, favourability & rating

ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
John Swinney (Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Scotland)	28
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	13
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	9
Baroness Catherine Ashton, (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	5
Štefan Füle (Commissioner for Enlargement, EC)	4
Alex Salmond (First Minister, Scotland)	4

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