



Summary

Resistance toward adding new members to the European Union is growing in an increasing number of EU Member States. German Chancellor Merkel stated very clearly on Thursday to the Bundestag that she did not intend to take any further decisions on EU accession aside from Croatia, as the time was not yet ripe. Austrian Foreign Minister Spindelegger's initial reaction was that of disappointment, pointing to the danger of a serious "enlargement fatigue" that may end up backfiring on Europe. EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle is urging the EU Members to continue preparations for further accessions (Presse-Austria, AT, 14/12). In Germany Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, foreign editor of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung agrees with Angela Merkel, saying that as of now, the EU has no capacity for further enlargement. The crisis has absorbed all energies, leaving no strength and strategic will for allowing additional states to join. (Frankfurter-Allgemeine-Zeitung, DE, 14/12).

- Presse-Austria, AT, 14/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121214/mi/item_142771932.pdf
- Frankfurter-Allgemeine-Zeitung, DE, 14/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121214/mi/item_142760433.pdf

In an article for Trud daily, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nikolay Mladenov refutes claims that Bulgaria had dug a grave for the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) or blocked the country's road to Europe by refusing to set a date for the beginning of EU accession talks. According to Mr Mladenov, Bulgaria's goal is to have a Balkan Peninsula with no borders, with a single currency and interrelated business. He notes that the responsibility for the fYRoM's accession now depends on the fYRoM government alone and that there is only one way to Europe and it is a road of cooperation, not denial, adding "*we know that European integration is the best scenario for the development of our region*" (Trud-Daily-Bulgaria, BG, 14/12). Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov commented "*Our position toward the fYRoM is resolute: we have always wholly supported the country in its EU and NATO accession. It is our closest country and our best friend, but criteria have to be met first, especially good neighbourly relations*" (newsbeast.gr, EL, 14/12).

- Trud-Daily-Bulgaria, BG, 14/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121214/mi/item_142770951.pdf
- newsbeast.gr, EL, 14/12, <http://www.newsbeast.gr/world/arthro/458794/prepei-na-ekplirothoun-prota-ta-kritiria/>

Serbia's richest man, retail tycoon Miroslav Mišković was placed in pre-trial detention on Friday after being arrested by police investigating a series of disputed privatisation deals. Mišković, for two decades one of the most influential figures in Serbia, was arrested two days ago after the six-month-old government vowed to root out organised crime and corruption as it seeks talks on joining the European Union. The European Commission declined to comment on the case but said it was "*encouraged*" by the government's commitment to fight crime and graft. A spokesman added: "*This is a long-term process that requires effective commitment at the highest political level and a consistent, comprehensive and non-selective approach.*" (uk.reuters.com, UK, 14/12).

- uk.reuters.com, UK, 14/12, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/12/14/uk-serbia-tycoon-idUKBRE8BD0DS20121214>

There was wide-spread coverage in the UK national and regional that Politicians in Catalonia have reached an agreement to call an independence referendum in the same year as the Scots. The decision to hold the referendum in the same year as the Scottish vote creates a double headache for the EU. Officials have so far maintained that newly independent countries must apply for EU membership - which normally takes many years and can be vetoed by a single member state (Guardian, UK, 14/12).

- Guardian, UK, 14/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121214/mi/item_142770857.pdf

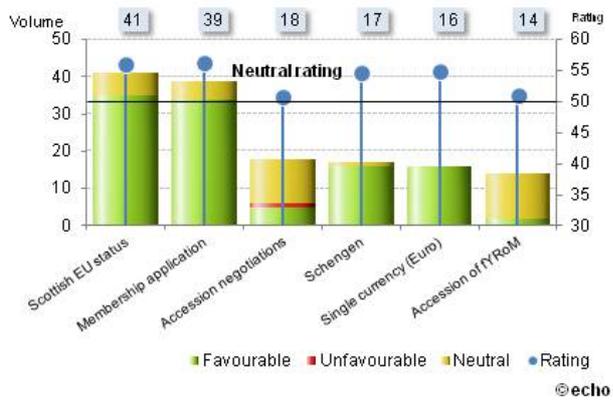
Key Quotes

Ivica Dačić: "After many years Serbia received a very positive signal from the EU with good prospects of starting the accession negotiations in the spring". (Stockwatch, Cyprus, 17/12)

http://www.stockwatch.com.cy/nqcontent.cfm?a_name=news_view&ann_id=163564

Charts

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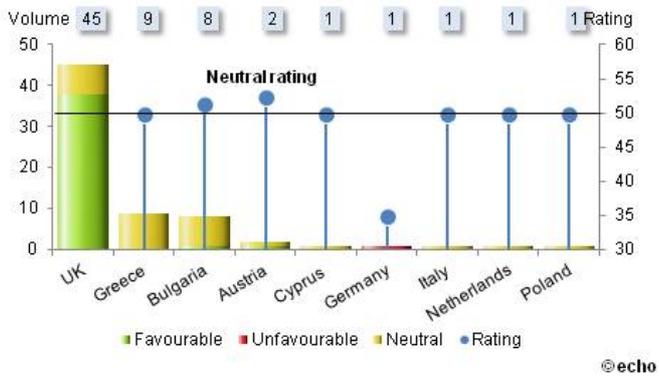


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Volume	69 items
Rating	53.9
Favourable %	58%
Unfavourable %	1.4%
Neutral %	40.6%

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ELARG: **Key Stakeholders & Sources**
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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Jose Manuel Barroso (President, European Commission)	39
Nicola Sturgeon (Deputy First Minister, Scotland)	39
Alex Salmond (First Minister, Scotland)	18
Ruth Davidson (Conservative leader, Scotland)	17
Willie Rennie (Liberal Democrat leader, Scotland)	17
John Swinney (Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Scotland)	16
Johann Lamont (Labour leader, Scotland)	16
Boyko Borisov (Prime Minister, Bulgaria)	7

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