

Summary

Poland's President Bronislaw Komorowski ratified a treaty dedicated to Croatia's entry to the EU, a sign that Poland's attitude towards EU enlargement was very positive according to TVP-Info (PL, 19/12). "We want to show our solidarity with Croatia, but also Poland's attitude of openness" said Mr Komorowski and added that Poland "is striving for the openness of the European Union in relation to countries that aspire to be part of a better world that is wiser, better organised, wealthier, and above all, based on values that make people and nations better" (e-prawnik.pl, PL, 20/12). The Croatian ambassador, Ivan Del Vecchio, said "I have no doubts that Croatia is ready for full membership in the most future-oriented commonwealth of western democracies" (rp.pl, PL, 19/12).

- TVP-Info, PL, 19/12 (no link available)
- e-prawnik.pl, PL, 20/12, <http://e-prawnik.pl/wiadomosci/informacje/prezydent-zgodzil-sie-na-przystapienie-chorwacji-do-ue.html#>

Elsewhere in relation to Croatia, it was reported by RTSLVO (SI, 19/12) that an unnamed EU diplomat had warned Croatia that it had underestimated Slovenia on its way to EU accession, adding that Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle is supposedly critical of the way that Croatia has handled the Ljubljana Banka dispute. According to reports from the Croatian daily Večernji list, Mr. Füle had stated as much on his recent visit to Zagreb. Most diplomats feel that the conflict needs to be resolved at the level of Prime Ministers, as was the case with the border dispute, since the financial experts have no mandate to truly address the issue.

- rtvslo.si, SI, 19/12, <http://www.rtvsl.si/evropska-unija/hrvaska-podcenila-moc-slovenije-na-svoji-poti-v-eu/298392>

Tension between Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) was evident as Skopje accused Sofia of undiplomatic behaviour in a statement by Bulgarian Culture Minister Vezhdi Rashidov during his visit to Athens on Monday. At a meeting with his Greek counterpart Kostas Tzavaras, Mr Rashidov commented that if the fYRoM does not become "a good child," it will not receive Bulgaria's support. On Wednesday, fYRoM's Foreign Affairs Minister, Nikola Poposki, responded sharply: "Membership of NATO and the EU is vital for us. We aspire to establishing good neighbourly relations. This has to happen based on actual facts, not on suggestions," (Sega Daily, BG, 20/12). The fYRoM President, George Ivanov added that the fYRoM "has no problems with neighbours" (Duma-Daily, BG, 20/12). Meanwhile in Bulgaria, the historian and director of the National Historical Museum in Sofia, Bozhidar Dimitrov, commented that the authoritarian political elite today in Skopje does not wish to join the European Union (newsbomb.gr, EL, 19/12).

- Sega Daily, BG, 20/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121220/mi/item_143297120.pdf
- Duma-Daily, BG, 20/12, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20121220/mi/item_143313280.pdf
- newsbomb.gr, EL, 19/12, <http://www.newsbomb.gr/prionokordela/diethni/story/263304/voylgaros-istorikos-ta-skopia-den-the-loyn-pragmatika-entaxi-stin-ee>

Novinite (BG, 20/12) reported that in Bulgaria the European Commission will be monitoring the vote for the new chief prosecutor closely and will prepare a report to be released early next year on Bulgaria's results concerning judicial reforms and the fight against corruption and organised crime. The warning was issued by EU Commission spokesman Mark Gray just a day before Bulgaria's highest juridical body voted to appoint a new chief prosecutor with a selection process that has been denounced by civic groups.

- novinite.com, BG, 20/12, http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=146229

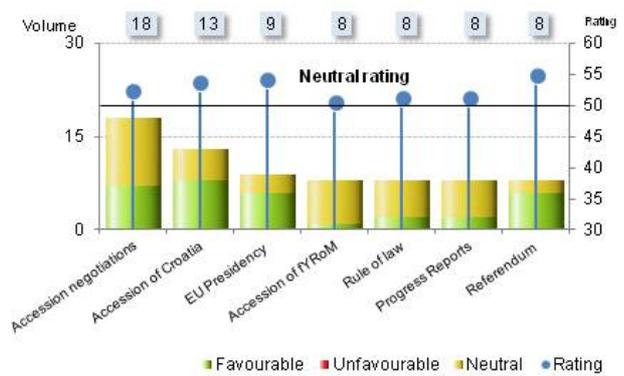
Key Quotes

The European Commission will publish an extraordinary report on Romania in January, but will have to keep its eyes shut tightly in order to mark any progress in the fight with corruption among high-ranking state officials. Whether or not the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council will ease its standpoint against Bulgaria and Romania's Schengen entry will depend on this report. (Focus News, Bulgaria, 21/12) <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n295103>

Davutoglu: "Greek Cypriots prevent Turkey's EU membership. They think that Turkey would be weaker and beg for membership. We will never beg" (Onalert.gr, Greece, 21/12) <http://www.onalert.gr/stories/ntavoutoglou-anan-oikonomia-kypros;>

Charts

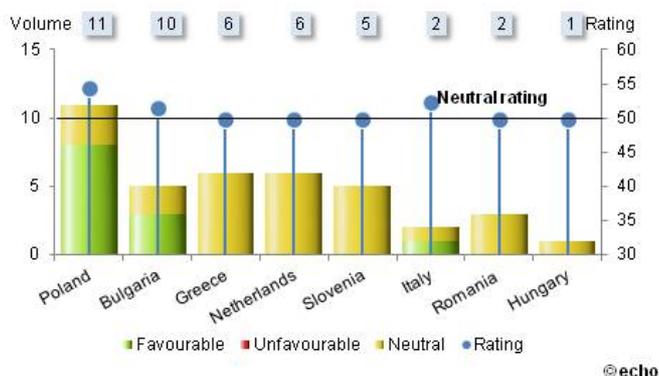
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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Bronislaw Komorowski (President, Poland)	11
Gjorge Ivanov (President, FYRoM)	4
Baroness Catherine Ashton, (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU)	3
Hashim Thaçi (Prime Minister, Kosovo)	3
Ivica Dačić (Prime Minister, Serbia)	3
Vezhdi Rashidov (Culture Minister, Bulgaria)	3
Nikola Poposki (Foreign Minister, FYRoM)	3
Mark Gray (Spokesman, EC)	3

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