

Summary

Discussion of Turkey's criticism of the European Commission's latest report on its progress towards EU membership as was widely reported and often negative in tone towards the Commission. For the first time Turkey presented its own report highlighting its reforms over the last year. "We observed that this year's Turkey progress report was overshadowed by more subjective, biased, unwarranted and bigoted attitudes," Turkey's EU Affairs Minister, Egemen Bağış said in a statement accompanying Turkey's own 270-page report. Mr Bağış said it was unacceptable that the EC report released in October had ignored Turkey's "courageous" reforms over the past year and that this undermined the EU's trustworthiness in the eyes of the Turkish public (Scotsman, UK, 1/1). He also commented that the EC report was "subjective, unreliable and biased" according to kathimerini.gr (EL, 2/1) and went on to say "Today there is no government in Europe which is more reformist than our government,while EU countries are struggling in crisis, our country is experiencing the most democratic, prosperous, modern and transparent period in its history". With an historical allusion he continued that "The 'sick man' of yesterday has got up and summoned the strength to prescribe medication for today's Europe" (bbc.co.uk, UK, 1/1).

- Scotsman, UK, 1/1, http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130101/mi/item_144122858.pdf
- kathimerini.gr, EL, 2/1, http://www.kathimerini.gr/4dcqj/w_articles_kathremote_1_02/01/2013_476602
- bbc.co.uk, UK, 1/1, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-20882239>

However Incyprus.com (incyprus.com, CY, 1/1) reported that Irish Parliamentarians have pointed out that Turkey's accession course cannot proceed further without a solution to the Cyprus problem, noting that the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus' northern Turkish occupied part as well as the withdrawal of all Turkish settlers is prerequisites for the continuation of Turkey's membership talks. Egemen Bağış speaking before the Irish Parliament, said that the Cyprus problem should not be an obstacle to his country's EU course and that Ankara is in favour of a solution based on "political equality" between the two communities. He went on to say that "nobody should challenge Turkey's military capabilities or push Turkey away from the Union", warning that "if Turkey is provoked or challenged in any way, both Cyprus and Europe will regret it".

- incyprus.com, CY, 1/1, <http://www.incyprus.com.cy/en-qb/Blogs/4324/32164/turkey-told>

In other accession negotiations it was reported that Greek Golden Dawn Party leader, Nikolaos Michaloliakos, said in an interview for the Greek newspaper Stoxos, that if a ruling in Athens "recognises Skopje with a name that contains the word Macedonia, they would have to deal with us. Such a thing cannot happen. Macedonia is one and it is Greek" (focus-fen.net, BG, 2/1). The President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) commented that the fYRoM had received the most positive European Commission Progress Report thus far and a fourth recommendation for start of EU accession talks. He said that although the expected date had not come, the European Council conclusions have made it difficult for those who blocked us to do it again, adding "The insistence on the imposition of a new name chosen by others, along with a new identity, is a precedent that leaves no one indifferent, however pragmatic and liberal EU politicians are" (elzoni.gr, EL, 2/1). He also said that joining the EU and NATO remained the primary objective of the country, "alongside the preservation of our national dignity and identity" (kerdos.gr, EL, 31/12).

- focus-fen.net, BG, 2/1, <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n295791>
- elzoni.gr, EL, 2/1, <http://www.elzoni.gr/html/ent/768/ent.29768.asp>
- kerdos.gr, EL, 31/12, <http://www.kerdos.gr/default.aspx?id=1855273&nt=103>

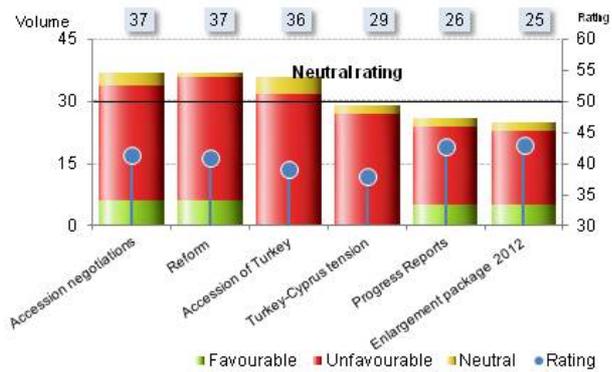
Key Quotes

Utrinski Vesnik: Macedonia facing Dublin again (Focus News, Bulgaria, 3/1)
<http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n295896>

2006 - Turkey's EU accession process hits a brick wall, after various accession chapters closed under pretext of Turkey's refusal to open full trade with Cyprus (LondonlovesBusiness.com, UK, 3/1)
<http://www.londonlovesbusiness.com/business-news/politics/the-good-bad-and-the-outright-ugly-of-britains-40-years-in-the-eu-part-ii/4305.article>

Charts

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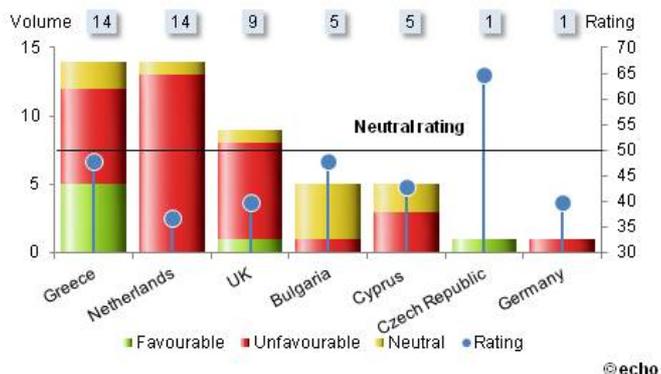
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Volume	49 items
Rating	43
Favourable %	14.3%
Unfavourable %	65.3%
Neutral %	20.4%

ELARG: **Key Stakeholders & Sources**
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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Egemen Bağış (Minister for EU Affairs, Turkey)	33
Nikola Gruevski (President, fYRoM)	6
Guido Westerwelle (Foreign Minister, Germany)	5
François Hollande (President, France)	5

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