



## Summary

It was reported that EU governments are planning to decide next March whether and when to take up negotiations with Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) about accession to the EU. According to Presse-Austria (AT, 4/1) this it would also be the earliest date for a decision on an association agreement with Kosovo. Kosovo can expect negotiations on stabilisation agreement if it improves its relations with Belgrade. The presidents of Kosovo and Serbia are due to meet in Brussels to discuss signing a peace treaty, the idea of which is an attempt to push forward the normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, disclosed a western diplomat on condition of anonymity (focus-fen.net, BG, 4/1).

- Presse-Austria, AT, 4/1, [http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130104/mi/item\\_144341335.pdf](http://194.250.231.110/delivery/20130104/mi/item_144341335.pdf)
- focus-fen.net, BG, 4/1, <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n295998>

In Serbia, the Foreign Minister, Ivan Mrkic indicated that the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity, EU accession and further development of relations with Washington, Moscow, Beijing and other international partners are the key foreign policy priorities of Belgrade in 2013, saying "*Brussels is still our priority, that is well-known, but we have excellent relations with Moscow, and in recent months we have significantly improved our relations with Washington*" (newsbeast.gr, EL, 4/11). Mr Mrkic expressed confidence that the country will have the best cooperation with the new U.S. Secretary of State and called the recent talks with Hillary Clinton in Belgrade '*meaningful and useful*' (defencenet.gr, EL, 4/11 and several other Greek media same date).

- newsbeast.gr, EL, 4/11, <http://www.newsbeast.gr/world/arthro/467822/epithesi-filias-tis-servias-pros-tis-ipa/>
- defencenet.gr, EL, 4/11, (No link available)

On Progress reports the President of Romania, Traian Băsescu said that the MCV report that the European Commission will present in late January is likely to punish Parliament for obstructing the criminal investigation of lawmakers. He said "*In my opinion CVM report in late January will punish Parliament for that. Because there seems to be a weakness in our understanding of the functioning of the judiciary and politicians*" (mediafax.ro, RO, 4/1).

- mediafax.ro, RO, 4/1, <http://www.mediafax.ro/social/traian-basescu-raportul-mcv-de-la-sfarsitul-lunii-ianuarie-va-sanctiona-parlamentul-10427573>

In Bulgaria bnr.bg (3/1) noted that Bulgaria's Schengen bid is not on the Dublin's list of priorities and suggested that Bulgaria can not count on Ireland, as it is not a Schengen member either. This is why according to the media source, Bulgaria will need to continue its work towards convincing opponents of Schengen enlargement that Sofia has achieved actual results in combatting organised crime and corruption. In 2012 Bulgaria continued to restate its support for the EU integration of the Western Balkans but in December it did not back the proposition for a start date for membership talks with the fYRoM. Sofia said this was due to the fact that the fYRoM had not managed to keep good relations with its neighbours. The Bulgarian government now aims to create a mechanism for increased bilateral cooperation with the fYRoM but knows that will not be an easy task. Bulgaria would also need to continue improving its cooperation with Serbia. As well as initiatives to promote economic growth and employment, the Irish Presidency will also focus on the environment, transport and new countries joining the EU according to etribuna.com (IT, 4/1).

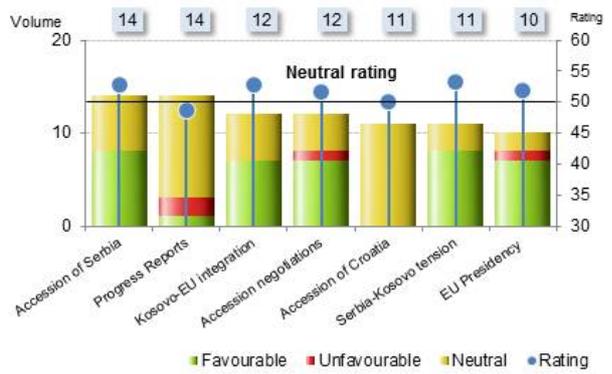
- bnr.bg, BG, 3/11, <http://bnr.bg/sites/en/Lifestyle/BulgariaAndWorld/Pages/0301Challengesforeignpolicyin2013.aspx>
- etribuna.com, IT, 4/1, <http://www.tribuna.com/eportale/tutti-gli-articoli-del-portale/17924-ue-lirlanda-al-timone.html>

## Key Quotes

Carl Bildt: "*Turkey's EU membership is not a given*" (Mykosmos.gr, Greece, 7/1)  
[http://www.mykosmos.gr/loc\\_mk/eidisi.asp?newsID=1847604](http://www.mykosmos.gr/loc_mk/eidisi.asp?newsID=1847604)

## Charts

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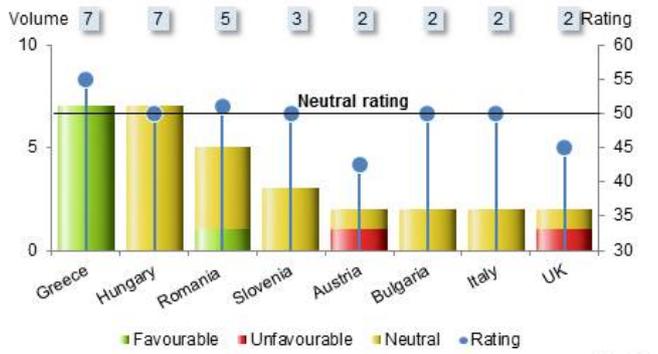
**ELARG: Highlights**  
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Volume	31 items
Rating	50.5
Favourable %	25.8%
Unfavourable %	6.5%
Neutral %	67.7%

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by volume, favourability & rating

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**ELARG: Leading Daily Countries**  
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ELARG: Stakeholders & Sources	Number of mentions
Ivan Mrkić (Foreign Minister, Serbia)	7
Dinko Mikulić (Veterans Affairs Secretary, Croatia)	6
Hillary Clinton (Secretary of State, US)	5
Traian Băsescu (President, Romania)	4

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