

SLOW POLICE REFORM IN BIH

- ☒ The mandate of the EU police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM) will be extended due to very slow progress with police reform. Reform of the police is one of the crucial issues set by the EU in the Stabilization and Association Agreement with BIH. Despite an agreement between political parties across BIH to support reforms, implementation is slow. According to the estimates of BIH Directorate for European Integration, the country will need about 130 mln EUR to implement the EU-related reforms. Part of these can be obtained through the EU's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), while the rest has to be provided by state funds or other foreign donor assistance. [*Seeurope.Net 24.4; 23.4*]

EP SUPPORTS CROATIA'S EU MEMBERSHIP

- ☒ The European Parliament adopted a resolution which expressed firm support for Croatia's EU membership. The EP resolution is very positive and recommends fast accession of Croatia in the EU. The resolution also contains provisions regarding the unresolved political issues between Croatia and Slovenia, and stipulates finding acceptable solution prior to Croatia's formal accession to the EU. At a recent visit to Croatia, former German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, also expressed confidence that

Croatia's future lies in the EU. Mr. Schroeder hailed the progress that Croatia has made in the past decade and its EU integration efforts. [*Balkan Times 26.4; Jutarnji 24.4*]

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP FOR MONTENEGRO

- ☒ Montenegro signed its first European Partnership agreement as an independent state. The European Partnership, which is EU's formal legal instrument for cooperation with the Western Balkans states, contains the extent of the financial assistance that Montenegro will receive from the EU. The document also lists the reforms that the EU requires from Montenegro in various areas such as: judiciary reforms, combating corruption and organized crime, emphasizing the conditionality between receiving financial assistance and implementation of reforms. In a recent survey by Reuters, 2015 was stated as the most probable date for EU accession of Montenegro, along with the other states from the region bar Croatia, which appeared likely to join the EU earlier. [*Vijesti 23.4; 24.4*]

TURKEY TO FACILITATE EU – IRAN TALKS

- ☒ The EU and Iran will resume talks on Iran's nuclear energy program at a meeting hosted by Turkey. EU's Xavier

Solana and Iranian nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, will meet to discuss the controversial nuclear enrichment efforts of Iran. Turkish officials have been trying to facilitate the talks between EU and Iran, after the standstill that negotiations in the UN reached in March. Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, had telephone talks with both sides in order to bring them back to the negotiations table. On Tuesday, Mr. Gul also announced his candidacy for president of Turkey, running as a candidate from the ruling Justice and Development Party. [*Balkan Times 26.4; Today's Zaman 24.4*]

REGIONAL NATO MEMBERSHIP EFFORTS

- ☒ Macedonian and Albanian Foreign and Defense Ministers met in Ohrid in order to discuss meeting the obligations required for NATO membership. Both states are hoping to receive invitations for joining NATO at the next NATO summit in 2008. At a recent visit to Macedonia, the US Deputy State Secretary for European and Asian Affairs, Rosemary Di Carlo, emphasized that the US strongly supports NATO membership for Macedonia and other states from the region. While saluting the progress made so far, Ms. Di Carlo also stressed that both the government and the opposition in Macedonia need to work together in order to implement the reforms necessary for NATO membership. [*MIA 23.4; Seeurope.Net 24.4*]