

EU TO TAKE OVER KOSOVO ISSUE FROM UN

- ☒ The European Union is fully capable and strong enough to take over the matters concerning Kosovo status from UN Security Council. This is a statement of EU's foreign affairs chief Javier Solana during his two days visit of Ljubljana. At his meeting with newly elected Slovenian President Danilo Turk, Solana refrained from giving any forecast of the Security Council sessions dedicated regarding Kosovo issue. As for the results of the Security Council work he said that progress was certainly made, although the Council has passed through different stages, including some painful ones. The current phase, he added will be difficult but it will be successful. Javier Solana also met Foreign minister Dimitrij Rupel. [Makfax, 19/12/07]

BULGARIA AND ROMANIA TO JOIN SCHENGEN ZONE IN 2010/11

- ☒ According to Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Ivaylo Kalfin, Bulgaria and

Romania are likely to join the Schengen passport free travel zone in 2010 – 2011. He added that the process will depend on Romania preparations since it would be odd Bulgaria to join the zone and at the same time the border with Romania to remain". The supervision of Bulgaria's preparations for admission into Schengen zone is expected to start next year and it will last two years. Therefore, Bulgaria has task to secure its borders with non-Schengen countries. This statement comes after nine, mostly Eastern European countries, scraped their borders with their western neighbors and joined the 15 nations in the Schengen treaty. [Makfax, 21/12/07. eubusiness, 21/12/]

GREECE, HUNGARY AND BULGARIA SUPPORT WESTERN BALKANS IN THEIR EURO – ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES

- ☒ At the traditional annual meeting in Athens December 22, the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, Greece and Romania expressed support for the European perspective of all Balkan countries. They agreed that further diplomatic efforts are needed to

settle Kosovo's future. On the other hand Serbia's future is within the EU and the membership of the country should not be connected in any way to the Kosovo status issue. In their joint statement they stressed that "We should be very careful in the search for a solution that would guarantee stability in the region". Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ivaylo Kalfin reminded that soon Serbia's Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU will be signed, but before that all criteria, including full cooperation with the UN war crimes tribunal, must be met. [Setimes, 22/12/07]

TURKISH ARMY CARRIED OUT ANOTHER AIR STRIKE AGAINST PKK

Last week the Turkish army launches another air strike which is the third offensive in a less than a week against suspected Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) based in northern Iraq. Similar attacks will continue General Staff said in the recent statement. According to Kurdish security officials there were no victims in Saturdays attack. [Reuters 22/12/07, Setimes, 22/12/07]