

THE START OF NEW TALKS BETWEEN EU AND SERBIA

- ☒ Last week the negotiations between EU and Serbia on the Stabilization and Association Agreement resumed in Brussels. The negotiation round will be opened and led by EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn and Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Bozidar Delic. According to Serbian estimates there will be two technical and two official rounds of talks. While the official ones will focus on the contents of the SAA, the technical round will discuss annexes and protocols. During the first round the negotiation team has already reached agreement on eighty percent of the document. The talks are expected to be finished by the end of July. As Deputy Prime Minister Bozidar Delic stated the goal of the Government is to get Serbia on the White Schengen list by 2009, which will enable Serbian citizens to travel without visa in the Schengen zone. [B92, 13/06/07]

NO PENALTIES FOR BULGARIA

- ☒ The European Commission spokesman, Mr. Mark Gray, announced that there will not be any penalties for Bulgaria regarding the EU report on Bulgaria's compliance with

recommendation towards fighting corruption and organized crime. This was an answer given to Reuter's article concerning the possibility of the EU to withhold financial aid to Bulgaria. However, there is a proposal by the Bulgarian branch of the Helsinki Committee aiming to enforce financial sanctions on Bulgaria in order to make the Government accelerate reforms towards eliminating corruption among politicians. [Balkantimes, 15/05/07]

A STEP FORWARD TO NATO ACCESSION

- ☒ Representatives of Macedonia, Albania and Croatia last week during a meeting in Skopje, Macedonia, signed a statement as a guarantee for common efforts for NATO accession. This act, demonstrated strong will and support for Euro-Atlantic integration among the states of Adriatic Charter. The statement clearly declared support for Mr. Marti Ahtisaari's road map regarding the future status of Kosovo, as well as support for fight against terrorism, organized crime, illegal trade and corruption. The President of Macedonian Assembly, Mr. Ljubisha Georgievski, stated that after the American support, Macedonia can be proud of the improvements made and should proceed fulfilling the NATO membership criteria. During this meeting, US ambassador in

Macedonia Mrs. Gillian Milovanovik stated that Macedonians should be satisfied and proud, since after the signing of the Adriatic Charter significant progress has been achieved. According to Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, now is the time for the Adriatic Three countries to go through the last assessment before achieving the common goal and celebrating together after the NATO Summit in Bucharest in 2008. Almost ninety percent of the Macedonian population support a NATO membership. [Dnevnik 13/06/07]

ITALY WILL CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT FOR TURKEY'S EU ASPIRATION

- ☒ During the visit to Ankara, Italian Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema stated that Italy will support Turkey in its efforts for EU membership. During his meeting with the Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul, Mr. D'Alema said that Italy will seek the start of negotiations on more chapters of the acquis with Turkey. Further he mentioned that it is important for Turkey to avoid any moves that could provoke tensions, such as cross-border operations against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Northern Iraq and called Iraq to contribute combating terrorism in the region. [Balkantimes, 14/06/07]