



Weekly Media Report

19 – 23 January

International Affairs

Claudio Abbado died Today, 20 January 2014 – *The Guardian (UK)*, 20 January 2014

One of the world's finest conductors, with La Scala, the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics, and his own orchestra in Lucerne, Claudio Abbado was a world-wide known artist that deserves a mention even in this modest and political-oriented section.

<http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/jan/20/claudio-abbado>

Syrian civil war peace talks at risk as Iran accepts invitation – *The Guardian (UK)*, 20 January 2014

UN invitation to key Assad ally Tehran endangers Syrian opposition presence at Geneva talks and risks new US-Russian row. The UN's secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, is "urgently considering his options" in light of the "disappointing conduct of some participants" involved in the Syria peace talks after he invited Iran to attend.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/20/syrian-peace-talks-geneva-risk-iran-invite-un>

Syria accused of torture and executions – *BBC (UK)*, 21 January 2014

There is clear evidence that Syria has systematically tortured and executed about 11,000 detainees since the start of the uprising, a report by three former war crimes prosecutors says. The investigators examined thousands of still images of dead prisoners reportedly smuggled out by a defector. One of the authors told the BBC there was evidence of government involvement. Damascus has denied claims of abuse.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25822571>

The Front Lines: Germany's Difficult Year in Africa and Afghanistan – *Spiegel (GE)*, 21 January

It won't be an easy year for new Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen. The German military is facing a new mission in Africa while at the same time orchestrating a challenging withdrawal from war-torn Afghanistan. Potential pitfalls are numerous.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-military-faces-a-difficult-year-in-africa-and-afghanistan-a-944553.html>

Russian plan to reduce coal export through foreign ports can badly affect Latvian ports and railway – *db.lv (LV)*, 23 January

Russian Ministry of Energy requires the entire Russian coal export to be organized only through the ports of Russia by 2030. These changes have been included in the long-term development plan. If such plan is to be implemented, the Latvian ports cargo turnover will fall by almost 30%. Currently, Russia is exporting only 55% of coal cargo through its ports in the direction of Atlantic Ocean. The remaining export is organized through the ports of Baltic Sea states and Ukraine. Cargo volume of coal in 2013 drew 30% of total Latvian ports' cargo and 38% of Latvia's Railway cargo.

<http://www.db.lv/razosana/transports-logistika/krievijas-plans-var-dot-smagu-triecienu-latvijas-ostam-un-dzelzcelam-408736>

European Affairs

Citizenship must not be up for sale – Viviane Reding – *MaltaToday (MT)*, 19 January 2014

Viviane Reding, EU commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, in a plenary debate entitled '*Citizenship must not be up for sale*' warned that she is seeking the possibility of opening infringement procedures against Malta for its *Individual Investor Programme*. The programme is expected to reap €1 billion from the sale of Maltese passports, thereby granting successful applicants EU citizenship. The Maltese Government shielded itself from criticism reasserting that the regulation of citizenship is a member state prerogative not of the European Commission.

<http://maltatoday.com.mt/en/newsdetails/news/national/Can-European-Commission-take-Malta-to-court-over-citizenship-scheme-20140119>

Ukraine unrest: Second night of violence on Kiev streets – *BBC (UK)*, 21 January 2014

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov blamed some European politicians for encouraging the protests. He warning the situation was "getting out of control". His warning echoed that of President Viktor Yanukovich, who on Monday cautioned that the violence threatened the country's stability. Controversial anti-protest laws passed last week are due to come into force. The measures, which have been criticised by European Union foreign ministers, include a ban on unauthorised installation of tents or amplifiers in public places, and large fines or jail for breaches of the law. Protesters have been camped out in Kiev since late November, angered by the government's turn to Moscow and its rejection of a planned treaty with the EU.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25823091>

Ukraine protests: Opposition issues 'attack' ultimatum – *BBC (UK)*, 23 January 2014

Opposition leader Vitali Klitschko said he would lead pro-EU protesters "on the attack" in the capital, Kiev, if the government refused to call snap elections. Prime Minister Mykola Azarov said compromises "might be possible", but the opposition should avoid ultimatums. Two activists were killed in clashes with police in Kiev on Wednesday.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25853329>

Rehn clears way for Verhofsadt to lead Liberal's election campaign - *EurActiv (EU)*, 21 January 2014

The leadership race of the Alliance for Liberal and Democrats Alliance for Europe's (ALDE) candidacy for the European Commission presidency has been brought to a close. The candidature of Olli Rehn, the current Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro and Vice-President of the European Commission, has been withdrawn, leaving Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament Leader of the party, the only ALDE candidate for the European Commission presidency.

<http://www.euractiv.com/eu-elections-2014/rehn-clears-path-verhofstadt-lea-news-532887>

Serbia Starts EU Membership Talks - *EU Observer (EU)*, 21 January 2014

On Tuesday 21st January Serbia officially started EU membership talks. At a ceremony in Brussels the Serbian Prime Minister, Ivica Dacic, joined the European Commissioner, Jose Manuel Barroso, to officially initiate accession negotiations of the Serbian republic. On the normalisation of relations with Kosovo, the Serbian Prime Minister assured that there will be continued support towards normalisation of relations with Kosovo, but avoided answering the question of whether Serbia will ever recognise Kosovo. Expected to finalise negotiations by 2020 the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Stefan Fuele, warned of new elements in the accession process based on the evidence of persistent corruption in the most recent countries to join the European Union.

<http://euobserver.com/enlargement/122809>



Revised EU climate goals slammed – *Deutsche Welle (GE)*, 22 January 2014

The EU's executive has proposed a less ambitious plan to reduce carbon dioxide, prompting condemnation from environmentalists. The plan still hinges on European Parliament debate.

<http://www.dw.de/revised-eu-climate-goals-slammed/a-17380379>

EC turns to the EU Court of Justice against Latvia – *db.lv (LV)*, 23 January 2014

European Commission has decided to refer against Latvia in the EU Court of Justice, because in Latvia, only the citizens of Latvia can become notaries. Already on May 2011, EU Court of Justice concluded that such a nationality requirement is contrary to the principle of freedom of establishment and the activities of notaries are not covered by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union 51st article on exception in a connection with the exercise of official authorities, confirmed European Commission Representation in Latvia. Since Latvia has not changed its position, the Commission has decided to refer the matter to the Court.

<http://www.db.lv/nodokli/likumi/ek-versas-es-tiesa-pret-latviju-408761>

National Affairs

Italian electoral reform: proposal from the Democratic Party's leader finds wide consensus – *Repubblica (IT)*, 21 January 2014

The new electoral system, which still has to be voted and approved, would introduce a two-round election which would assign to the winning party the absolute majority of the seats in the Deputy Chamber. The proposal also envisages the elimination of the bi-cameral system. Some members of the Democratic Party contest the fact that voters would still vote for a list without having the possibility to choose single candidates. This system has been pushed forward by Berlusconi who, in this way, will remain the only right-wing main representative.

http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2014/01/21/news/legge_elettorale_ecco_il_doppio_turno_re_nzi_strappa_il_s_a_berlusconi_ma_il_pd_si_spacca_e_cuperlo_va_via-76513826/?ref=HREA-1

India: Woman gang-raped on orders of 'kangaroo court' – *BBC (UK)*, 23 January 2014

Police in India's West Bengal have held 13 people in connection with a gang rape of a 20-year woman allegedly on orders of village elders who objected to her relationship with a man.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-25855325>

Great War Centenary: Britain's Careful Celebration of WWI – *Spiegel (GE)*, 22 January 2014

The Great War has long played a significant role in Britain's historical memory. This year, the country is planning several events to celebrate the 100th anniversary and several new books have already hit the shelves. Jingoism, however, is to be avoided.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/britain-begins-a-year-of-celebration-for-world-war-i-centenary-a-943645.html>

Rokanas briefs EU Integration Parliamentary Committee, DP Chair on Greek EU Presidency's priorities, (Ballkan Web), 23.01.2014

Greek Ambassador Leonidas Rokanas appeared yesterday before the Parliamentary Committee on European Integration in his capacity as the diplomatic representative of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). He was accompanied by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) in Albania, Ambassador Ettore Sequi. In his remarks before the Committee, Rokanas said that enlargement remains one of the key priorities of the EU but the countries of the region need to meet the related requirements by implementing the needed reforms for this purpose. Before elucidating the key points of the Greek EU Presidency, Rokanas praised Albania's achievements in recent times, the most notable being the successful 23 June parliamentary elections. According to him, the key fields of action of the Greek EU Presidency will be first, ensuring economic growth, creating new jobs, and enhancing the cohesion of the European economies; secondly, the further integration of the EU member states and the Eurozone by promoting the banking union and the further integration of the new EU/Eurozone economic governance mechanisms; third, the Hellenic EU Presidency will concentrate its efforts at highlighting the positive aspects of a comprehensive migration management, in order to solve the problems posed by often unlawful migration flows and unsafe borders as well as by the mobility of the EU peoples across the EU space; last but not least, the Hellenic EU Presidency will pay attention to the maritime policies, being this a thematic that will run horizontally through the Presidency's priorities. The Committee's Deputy Chair, Taulant Balla (Socialist Party), also on behalf of the ruling majority, expressed his hope that Greek EU Presidency's semester will be the period when Albania will be finally granted the EU candidate status, and also when the Kosovo citizens will be allowed to circulate without visas in the Schengen area.

<http://www.balkanweb.com>

Serbia starts negotiations for membership in the European Union – (Balkan Web), Serbia on 21.01.2014

On 21 January 2014, the First Intergovernmental Conference was held between Serbia and EU that means this Balkans country will start negotiations for EU membership in Brussels. Serbia is represented by Prime Minister Ivica Dacic and Vice Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, and EU is represented by the

EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fule. The chairman of conference will be the Greek Foreign Minister Evangelos Venizelos whose country chairs rotating presidency of the EU. Serbia received official candidate status for membership in March 2012, but Brussels announced the opening of negotiations a year later, in April 2013, when Serbia reached her historic agreement to normalize relations with Kosovo.

<http://www.balkanweb.com/serbi/2797/serbia-fillon-negociatat-per-anetaresimin-ne-bashkimin-europian-168800.html>

No pardon to Serbia – (Balkan Web), Serbia 20.01.2014

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has says that Ankara will not beg pardon to Serbia regarding declaration of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan released in



Prizren, Kosovo. He stresses that declaration conducts only positive messages and he says once more: "Yes, Kosovo is Turkey and Turkey is Kosovo". He denies the declaration of Serbs that his boss's statement has had a political character according to his interview on Blic press. "Kosovo is our second country and we have culture's affiliation, so I believe it is enough to illustrate our positive goals against Serbian government", Davotuglu said at the end. <http://www.balkanweb.com/serbi/2797/ministri-turk-davotuglu-nuk-i-kerkojme-falje-serbise-167613.html>

Civil society grouping holds protest against FYROM hydro-power project on Radika River – (Balkan Web), Albania 20.01.2014

A civil society grouping baptised as the Alliance against the Rivers' Deviation and Dibra citizens have held a rally near the Prime Minister's Office in protest against the projected deviation of Radika River by the FYROM authorities in order to build a Hydro-Power Plant in Llukova. The protesters urged the Albanian government to refrain from signing an agreement with the FYROM authorities granting them the right to deviate the river's course for this hydro-power project. The protesters claimed that the Skopje government has said earlier that Albanians can do whatever they want but we will take Radika where we want, and urged the Government to frustrate this arrogant approach on the part of the official Skopje. Some of the protest's participants were the young men, who led the protest against the import of Syrian regime's chemical weapons over two months ago. They warned the government that they would be able to repeat the same protests in front of the PM's Office should the government agree to their FYROM counterparts' plans to carry on with the Radika hydro-power project. A similar protest was held yesterday in Peshkopi as well (a city north east bordering with FYROM). Similar protest was organized in front of UN Building in NY last weekend. <http://www.balkanweb.com/kryesore/1/devijimi-i-lumit-radika-grupi-i-lsi-kerkon-interpelance-urgjente-me-bushatin-168597.html>

Tonga is another state to recognise Kosovo – (Balkan Web), Kosovo 20.01.2014

Tonga recognised Kosovo as a country for the first time on 18 January 2014, so it augmented the list which have recognized her up to 100 countries. Tonga is a sovereign country made of 176 islands, surface 750 Km², and population 103.036 residents.

<http://www.balkanweb.com/kosova/2686/tonga-njih-kosoven-e-para-njohje-per-2014-n-168180.html>

Economy

2013 tax evasion in Italy up to 60 billion euros – *Repubblica (IT)*, 23 January 2014

8 thousand legal entities evading taxes, 15 billion euros transferred illegally in other countries, 5 billion VAT not paid and 27 thousand irregular workers: these are the figures of an endemic Italian problem.

http://www.repubblica.it/economia/2014/01/23/news/gdf_evasione_2013-76703488/?ref=HREA-1

Camorra: network across the Campania, Lazio and Tuscany Regions for money laundering – *Repubblica (IT)*, 23 January 2014

Various real estates and businesses have been confiscated for a total value of about 250 million euros. Among the businesses involved there are many restaurants located in Rome.

http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2014/01/22/news/camorra_90_arresti_in_campania_lazio_e_toscana_sequestrati_beni_per_250_milioni_di_euro-76604847/?ref=HREC1-8