



BLACK SEA NEWS UPDATE

EU – BLACK SEA OBSERVATORY

29 January 2010

No. 22

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I. ARMENIA

1.

Armenia: refugee draft exemption controversy

21.01.2010, IWPR

[READ MORE: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=359475&apc_state=henpcrs](http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=359475&apc_state=henpcrs)

Exactly 20 years have passed since Soviet troops moved into Azerbaijan to halt bloody attacks on ethnic Armenians, yet the children of those Armenians displaced by the violence still have problems enforcing their one right – to avoid serving in the army. In the late 1980s, Armenia demanded that Nagorny Karabakh – mainly populated by Armenians, but part of Soviet Azerbaijan – be joined to Armenia. That angered Azeris and caused the pogroms, leading more than 300,000 Armenians to flee Azerbaijan at the end of the communist period.

II. AZERBAIJAN

1.

Russian and Azerbaijani forum opens in Baku

22.01.2010, RIA NOVOSTI

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20100122/157645424.html>

Azerbaijan and Russia are opening an international forum on humanitarian cooperation in the Azeri capital, Baku, on Friday. The two-day forum is expected to attract some 350 participants including the Russian delegation headed by Presidential chief of staff Sergei Naryshkin. The Azeri presidential staff said that the forum would focus on cooperation between the countries in the spheres of culture, medicine, science, education, sports and energy. The two ex-Soviet states signed a contract on October 14, 2009 under which the Caucasus nation was to supply 500 million cu m of gas to Russia from January 1, 2010 with the possibility of increasing the import levels.

2.

Twenty years after 'Black January,' Azerbaijan still struggles for freedom

20.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Twenty_Years_After_Black_January_Azerbaijan_Still_Struggles_For_Freedom_/1934366.html

Twenty years ago today, on January 20, 1990, Soviet troops stormed Baku by order of the Kremlin in an ultimately failed attempt to save Communist rule and put down Azerbaijan's independence movement. For several days, those 26,000 troops cracked down on protesters, firing into crowds without warning and killing more than 200 people. At least 700 were injured. Moscow declared emergency rule, which lasted for more than a year. Thousands of Popular Front members and sympathizers were arrested, imprisoned, and tortured.

III. BULGARIA

1.

Bulgaria risks losing 20% of EU funds

26.01.2010, Euractiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/regional-policy/bulgaria-risks-losing-20-eu-funds/article-189233>

Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov claimed on Sunday (24 January) that his country could lose up to 20% of its much-needed EU financing due to environmental shortcomings, blaming his political opponents for the problems. EurActiv's partner in Bulgaria Dnevnik reports. The claim, which has become the latest twist in Bulgaria's complicated saga of EU funding misappropriation, has also become a political battle between the new prime minister and his opponents. Borissov's statement comes in the wake of a European Commission threat to pull the plug on environmental project funding unless the Bulgarian government adequately explains - by the end of January - how and where they are spending the money. The warning was written in a letter by the Commission's director-general of regional policy, Dirk Ahner, received by Sofia on 13 January.

2.

Greek farmers end Bulgarian border blockade

24.01.2010, Hurriyet Daily News

READ MORE: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=greek-farmers-end-bulgarian-border-blockade-2010-01-24>

Protesting Greek farmers ended a five-day blockade at the main borderpost between Greece and Bulgaria on Friday, police said, but maintained nearly 20 other roadblocks. Long lines of trucks that had been stalled on either side of Greece's Promahonas border post since Sunday began moving after the farmers met with Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, a police official said. The farmers had

decided to let the traffic through as a gesture of "goodwill" after the meeting, which was at Borissov's request and held just inside Bulgarian territory, the Greek news agency ANA said.

IV. GEORGIA

1.

Georgia says worst over for economy

21.01.2010, IWPR

READ MORE: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=359473&apc_state=henpcrs

The Georgian government has declared that the financial crisis has passed, and that 2010 will see the economy returning to growth – though experts say its policies are harming rather than helping the country. They can all agree that last year was a tough one for Georgia, and that the war with Russia in 2008 was a cruel blow to the nation. The government expects official figures to show the economy contracted by four per cent in 2009 but it is forecasting a revival with growth of two per cent this year. The combination of the war, the wave of refugees it caused, the global crisis, political tension, a halt in investment and problems with producing goods for export, all severely harmed the economy and the government was forced to slash its budget. However now, say officials, the worst is over.

2.

Nino Burjanadze: "We are people struggling for democracy in Georgia and for real prospect of the western family membership"

21.01.2010, European Dialogue

READ MORE: <http://eurodialogue.org/osce/Nino-Burjanadze-We-are-people-struggling-for-democracy-in-Georgia-and-for-real-prospect-of-the-western-family-membership>

An exclusive interview of the Leader of the party "Democratic Movement "United Georgia".1. Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia stand at different levels of their development and Euro-integration. How important are local elections in these countries today? I wouldn't like to focus on Ukraine and Belarus, as Ukraine holds very important elections at the moment. And in general for any normal country all elections are significant: local, parliamentary and presidential.

3.

Saakashvili announces yet another volte face in Georgia's defence policy"

18.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Saakashvili_Announces_Yet_Another_Volte_Face_In_Georgias_Defense_Policy/1933107.html

After years of progressive increases in military spending and raising the maximum number of armed forces personnel, the Georgian leadership has apparently decided to bite the bullet and comply with NATO's recommendations to downsize. The reservist battalions created with huge fanfare in the early years of Mikheil Saakashvili's presidency are to be scaled back, but at the same time the population -- including school children -- will be trained in the basics of civil defense.

V. GEORGIA-RUSSIA

1.

Russian troops keep Georgian students from crossing border

21.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Russian_Troops_Keep_Georgian_Students_From_Crossing_Border/1936185.html

A Georgian school principal says he is concerned by the refusal of Russian troops to let 12 children from the Abkhaz village of Saberio cross into Georgia proper to attend school, RFE/RL's Echo of the Caucasus reports. Vakhtang Gogokhia, school principal in the village of Tskau in the Gali district,

told RFE/RL that several students from Saberio who cross the administrative boundary from Abkhazia every day to come to his school were stopped on January 20 and sent home. Gogokhia added that the children were stopped in Gamtiadi, which is 2 kilometers from the border post.

2.

Russia warns against remilitarization of Georgia

21.01.2010, Global Security

READ MORE: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2010/01/mil-100121-rianovosti02.htm>

Russia will call for the international community to prevent the remilitarization of Georgia, the Russian Foreign Ministry said on Thursday. A new round of talks on the Transcaucasus, launched after Russia's war with Georgia in 2008, will start in Geneva on January 28. They also involve Georgia's breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, recognized by Russia as independent states.

3.

Hopes fade for Russia-Georgia flight deal

21.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Hopes_Fade_For_RussiaGeorgia_Flight_Deal/1936117.html

Russia has said it would consider restoring direct flights to Georgia, severed by war in 2008, only if Georgia first requested it, but Tbilisi said it would not. Many Georgians with strong family ties with Russia have been forced to make expensive stopovers in Kyiv or Yerevan to reach Russia since Moscow severed air links in August 2008 as it moved to crush an assault by U.S. ally Georgia on rebel South Ossetia. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said in December he saw "no problem" in restoring air links, lifting visa requirements for Georgians and opening the only land crossing between Russia and Georgia proper through the Caucasus mountains.

VI. GREECE

1.

Greece 'will not leave euro', says central banker

22.01.2010, Euractiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/euro/greece-leave-euro-central-banker/article-189172?Ref=RSS#>

Bank of Greece Governor George Provopoulos sought to allay fears that the financial crisis could force the country to default on sovereign debt or leave the euro. "The problems faced by the Greek economy are extremely serious. However, the key question is whether it will be easier to solve them from inside or outside the euro zone," said Provopoulos, who is also a European Central Bank Governing Council member. "My answer is that it will be unequivocally easier to solve these problems from within the euro area," he said.

2.

Greek experience to spur EU request for audit powers

20.01.2010, EU Observer

READ MORE: <http://euobserver.com/19/29302>

Frustrated by the ongoing story of Greece's public finance problems, the European Commission has indicated it will seek audit powers for the EU's statistics office, Eurostat, in order to verify elements of national government accounts. EU member states have increasingly queried the reliability of statistics leaving Athens after the country's newly elected Socialist government raised its 2009 deficit forecast last October by more than four percentage points to 12.5 percent of GDP. The following month saw the figure rise to 12.7 percent, while a damning report issued by the European

Commission last week talked of "severe irregularities" in Greek statistics that left the accuracy of the estimate still in doubt.

VII. MOLDOVA

1.

Romanian President visits Moldova

27.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Romanian_President_Visits_Moldova/1941395.html

Romanian President Traian Basescu is visiting Moldova for the first time since a pro-Western government came to power in Chisinau last year, RFE/RL's Moldovan Service reports. Basescu today said his country will help Moldova move closer to the EU, which Romania joined three years ago. Several hundred Moldovans waving Romanian, Moldovan, and EU flags hailed Basescu in downtown Chisinau chanting "Unification!" and "Moldova, Romanian land!" Basescu is due to sign several bilateral agreements with Moldovan leaders and is expected on January 28 to visit a cemetery for Romanian soldiers who fought against the Soviet Union in World War II.

2.

Moldova's window of opportunity

21.01.2010, Today's Zaman

READ MORE: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=199232>

Ask most Americans and Europeans to identify Vladimir Filat or find Moldova on a map and you're likely to get a blank stare. Both, however, are worth getting to know. Filat is the new prime minister of Moldova, a small country of four million people that emerged from the break-up of the Soviet Union nearly 20 years ago and borders Ukraine and Romania. Despite its size, Moldova is an important piece to the puzzle of trying to achieve the vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

VIII. ROMANIA

1.

Romania seen receiving IMF/EU loans, struggling with cuts

26.01.2010, Romanian News Watch

READ MORE: <http://www.romaniannewswatch.com/2010/01/romania-seen-receiving-imfeu-loans.html>

Romania is widely expected to win approval for delayed loan tranches from an International Monetary Fund-led rescue deal next month, but the government faces a tough task in enforcing cost-cutting reforms. Analysts say that after political turmoil in the recession-hit economy put the 20 billion euro (\$28 billion) package on hold in November, mass sackings to shrink a bloated administration and planned fiscal reforms may be the next stumbling blocks. "Playing with jobs, pensioners and the people's purchasing power has never been an easy task ... if public discontent rises nationwide, this could pose a real risk including to the (IMF) programme," said political analyst Bogdan Teodorescu.

2.

Romania presses EU on Moldova membership hopes

20.01.2010, Romanian News Watch

READ MORE: <http://www.romaniannewswatch.com/2010/01/dpa-romania-presses-eu-on-moldova.html>

Romanian President Traian Basescu received new European Union President Herman van Rompuy for talks Monday evening, with the Bucharest leader putting in a good word for neighbouring country Moldova's EU membership aspirations. Basescu urged the EU to provide clear prospects to

Moldova on future membership. It was an important political signal for Romania itself for Moldova to be taken on in the EU's expansion plans for the western Balkans region, the Romanian leader said. "Moldova needs positive signals as well as financial and political support," he told van Rompuy, who was in Bucharest for a brief visit.

IX. RUSSIA

1.

Obama calls for comprehensive nuclear disarmament

28.01.2010, RIA NOVOSTI

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20100128/157700639.html>

U.S. President Barack Obama has reiterated his pledge to work toward comprehensive nuclear disarmament and confirmed progress in talks on a new strategic arms reduction treaty with Russia. "I have embraced the vision of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan through a strategy that reverses the spread of these weapons, and seeks a world without them," Obama said in his annual State of the Union speech on Wednesday. "To reduce our stockpiles and launchers, while ensuring our deterrent, the United States and Russia are completing negotiations on the farthest-reaching arms control treaty in nearly two decades," he said. A new document to replace the START 1 treaty, which expired on December 5, has not been signed yet over disagreements on verification and control arrangements to be included in the document. Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev agreed in a telephone conversation earlier on Wednesday to order the speedy completion of the deal, which is almost ready to be signed, according to officials on both sides.

2.

Russia state arms trader declines comment on Iran deal

28.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia_State_Arms_Trader_Declines_Comment_On_Iran_Deal/1941933.html

Russia's state arms trader declined today to say if it will go ahead with a deal to sell S-300 anti-aircraft systems to Iran, a sore point in Moscow's relations with the United States and Israel. "I just don't quite understand why supplies of the S-300 system to Iran trouble you so much," the head of Rosoboronexport, Anatoly Isaikin, replied during a press briefing after being repeatedly asked about the deal. Isaikin added that its weapons exports this year will be no lower than last year's total of \$7.4 billion, and that its portfolio of export orders for upcoming years exceeds \$34 billion.

3.

Council Of Europe urges Russia to crack down on Caucasus abductions

22.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Council_Of_Europe_Urges_Russia_To_Crack_Down_On_Caucasus_Abductions/1936467.html

Europe's top human rights official has urged the Kremlin to end a wave of abductions in North Caucasus and to prosecute the killers of a prominent rights activist. Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner, said after a meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he raised the issue of abductions and forced disappearances of people in Chechnya and other regions of Russia's North Caucasus.

X. TURKEY

1.

First message of PACE head to Turkey: Get new Constitution

26.01.2010, Today's Zaman

[READ MORE: http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=199662](http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=199662)

AK Party Antalya deputy Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (L) has been elected president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Former President Luis Maria de Puig conducted the symbolic handing over of the presidency to Çavuşoğlu. Turkish deputy Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, newly elected president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), has issued his first statement to Turkey, saying, "Turkey should adopt a new civil constitution." Çavuşoğlu, an Antalya deputy of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party), was elected as the new president of PACE on Monday.

2.

Ergenekon case key to Turkey's democratization, says Rehn

22.01.2010, Today's Zaman

[READ MORE: http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=199316](http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=199316)

The ongoing investigation into Ergenekon, a clandestine organization accused of attempting to create chaos and undermine the stability of Turkey in order to trigger a coup d'état, is key to democratization efforts in the European Union candidate country, a senior EU official has stated.

In 2009, important progress was made in regards to civilian-military relations in Turkey, EU's outgoing Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn, the nominee for the post of EU commissioner for economic and monetary affairs, said late on Wednesday while speaking at a plenary session at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

XI. TURKEY- ARMENIA

1.

Turkey and Armenia at odds over protocols

19.01.2010, Financial Times

[READ MORE: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/09db382e-051a-11df-aa2c-00144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/09db382e-051a-11df-aa2c-00144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1)

Turkish and Armenian efforts to overcome a century of hostility hit fresh obstacles this week, as Ankara protested against a ruling by Armenia's constitutional court on their bilateral agreement to normalise relations. Protocols signed last October, after mediation by Hillary Clinton, US secretary of state, set a framework to restore diplomatic ties and open the shared border, while mandating a commission of historians to deal with the most difficult issue: the Ottoman-era massacres of ethnic Armenians that Yerevan says constituted genocide. International pressure to ratify the agreement, which would ease Armenia's economic isolation and remove a big irritant in US-Turkish relations, will increase in the run-up to April 24th, when Armenians around the world commemorate the bloodshed.

2.

Armenia is Turkey's second enemy, after the U.S.: public poll

19.01.2010, Tert AM

[READ MORE: http://www.tert.am/en/news/2010/01/19/turkeystreet/](http://www.tert.am/en/news/2010/01/19/turkeystreet/)

For Turks, their first enemy is the United States; the second, Armenia. The outcome of a recent public poll carried out by the Ankara University European Research Center seem to testify to this statement. The study found that 37.5% of participants named the United States as an "enemy country," while only 10.9% of participants identified Armenia. Other participants named Israel (10.6%), Greece (6.1%) and France (5.1%) as adversaries. About 29.9% of participants considered Azerbaijan as Turkey's ally, while 15.7% named the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as their country's friend.

XII. UKRAINE

1.

Berezovsky: Ukraine vote 'key' for West's future

25.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Berezovsky_Ukraine_Vote_Key_For_Wests_Future/1939234.html

Fugitive Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky says the world's key political event is currently taking place in Ukraine, not Iran, RFE/RL's Russian Service reports. Berezovsky told RFE/RL from London that he thinks "the West does not comprehend the importance" of the political situation in Ukraine, which he said is more complex than in Iran and the Middle East. Berezovsky said that in addition to "Russia's fortunes," the "future of the values of Western civilization" is being decided in Ukraine.

2.

Did Georgian leadership try to influence Ukraine presidential election?

23.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Did_Georgian_Leadership_Try_To_Influence_Ukraine_Presidential_Election/1937589.html

Several prominent Georgian oppositionists have expressed concern at the political implications of two telephone conversations, posted first on Ukrainian then on Georgian websites, which could be construed as evidence that the Georgian leadership sought to influence the January 17 Ukrainian presidential election to secure a victory for Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

XIII. BLACK SEA

1.

Living hell in heaven

26.01.2010, Hurriyet Daily News

READ MORE: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=living-hell-in-heaven-2010-01-25>

The hard living conditions of Black Sea women is now the subject of a documentary film made by Orhan Tekeoğlu, a Black Sea native himself. The film takes its name from İfakat, a female victim of an unsolved murder in an upland meadow house in Trabzon. The 50-minute film will be screened in Istanbul next month. The women of the Black Sea region are always seen as cheerful characters in films, TV series and anecdotes. Many women, however, especially those living in mountain villages, have painful stories that are never shared with the outside world.

XIV. CAUCASUS

1.

Armenian, Azerbaijani Presidents agree on preamble to 'Madrid Principles'

26.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Armenian_Azerbaijani_Presidents_Agree_On_Preamble_To_Madrid_Principles/1940349.html

Meeting in Sochi on January 25 with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Serzh Sarkisian and Ilham Aliyev, reached verbal agreement on the wording of the preamble of the most recent revised version of the "Madrid Principles" that constitute the outline of a more comprehensive Karabakh peace agreement, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told journalists. Lavrov added that the two sides will prepare "concrete ideas and formulations" to be inserted in those points of the revised text on which they still disagree.

2.

"Adyge Khasse": idea of united Circassia is no threat to Russia's integrity

22.01.2010, Caucasian Knot

READ MORE: <http://adygea.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/12289/>

In Karachai-Circassia, critical statements of Vladimir Ustinov, President's plenipotentiary in the Southern Federal District (SFD), about the idea of the united Circassian region were differently estimated by activists of public organizations. The "Adyge Khasse" thanked Mr Ustinov for his general focusing the problem, but noted that "someone had misinformed the speaker."

3.

Moscow uses Commission on "Historical Falsification" to deny Circassian rights

21.01.2010, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35942&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=13&cHash=91c33b2c32](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35942&tx_ttnews[backPid]=13&cHash=91c33b2c32)

The two main targets of the special commission as indicated by Sergei Markov (the Ukrainians and the Circassians) are becoming more of a headache for the Kremlin not because those two issues are falsifications of history, but because there is in fact unbeatable historical evidence behind the genocide claims. Focusing on the Circassian issue, the Circassian Congress NGO claims that the genocide committed by Russia against the Circassians can be easily proven based solely on the official documents from the Russian Imperial archives. According to the Circassian Congress, approximately 1,500,000 people were massacred and partly deported from the Caucasus, and the Circassians lost 99 percent of their population during the war and deportation.

4.

Russia names Khloponin as new Caucasus supremo

20.01.2010, BBC

READ MORE: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8470310.stm/>

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has appointed a new special envoy to the North Caucasus, which remains racked by Islamist and separatist violence. Alexander Khloponin will be given the specific task of promoting economic development in the impoverished region. Mr Khloponin is not from the Caucasus, but is a former governor in Siberia. Rebellions against Russian rule led by Muslim militants have stepped up over the past two years, particularly in Ingushetia and Dagestan.

5.

Who's out to exacerbate Chechen-Ingush tensions?

19.01.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Who_Is_Out_To_Exacerbate_Chechen_Ingush_Tensions_/1933105.html

Over the past several years, relations between Chechnya and neighboring Ingushetia, which from 1934-44 and again from 1957 to June 1992 constituted a single Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, have become increasingly strained and acrimonious. The most serious single incident was occurred in September 2006, when nine police officers were killed and 19 wounded in a shootout by Chechen and Ingush Interior Ministry staff. The standoff is increasingly being perceived as a proxy conflict pitting Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, his protege, Ingushetian President Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, and Russian Military Intelligence (in which Yevkurov made his career) on the one hand, and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Chechen Republic head Ramzan Kadyrov, and the Federal Security Service (FSB) on the other. But what may have been a further attempt last week to trigger a new exchange of barbs between Yevkurov and Kadyrov failed to elicit the desired reaction.

XV. ENERGY

1.

Compressed gas as Nabucco alternative?

26.01.2010, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/01/26/Compressed-gas-as-Nabucco-alternative/UPI-64601264523691/

A January 2009 row between Moscow and Kiev left Europe in the cold for weeks when Russian gas monopoly Gazprom shut off the gas. Europe has pushed for its Nabucco pipeline to transport gas from the Middle East and Central Asia. Despite political support for the project, supplier nations are slow to commit. Nabucco would travel across a land route through Turkey to European markets. The Russian-backed South Stream gas pipeline is slated for a route through the Turkish waters of the Black Sea.

2.

Nabucco notes Oettinger's support

21.01.2010, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/01/21/Nabucco-notes-Oettingers-support/UPI-25771264089699/

The Nabucco pipeline consortium noted the incoming European energy commissioner's support for diversifying the European energy sector. Guenter Oettinger, who takes over for Andris Piebalgs as the energy commissioner for the European Union, testified that European partners should continue to push for the Nabucco pipeline as a way to diversify the European energy sector. He told European lawmakers that reducing Europe's dependence on Russian gas "involves firstly Nabucco," though the bloc should avoid alienating Russia, which supplies about a quarter of Europe's gas currently.

3.

Minsk-Moscow electricity talks positive

19.01.2010, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/01/19/Minsk-Moscow-electricity-talks-positive/UPI-37081263918600/

Moscow and Minsk expect negotiations on the transit of electricity through Belarus to bring both sides closer to an agreement, officials said Tuesday. Officials at Belenergo, the Belarusian electricity monopoly, said Jan. 4 that supply concerns and "inappropriate fees" could force it to cut the power to the Belarusian energy grid and to Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast. Unified Energy Systems, the Russian electricity monopoly; complained Minsk wanted a substantial increase in transit fees.

4.

EU, Iraq ink energy memorandum with an eye to Nabucco

18.01.2010, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/98619.php>

The European Union and Iraq on 18 January signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen their strategic energy cooperation in areas such as natural gas, energy security and renewables, also hoping that gas resources in Northern Iraq would be used to kick start the flow of energy via the EU-backed Nabucco pipeline. "It's an important landmark," Ferran Tarradellas Espuny, spokesman for EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, told New Europe telephonically from Bagdad on 18 January. He said that the primary source for Nabucco is Azerbaijan, but Iraqi gas supplies would be a welcome boost to the project. "The primary source will be Azerbaijan – Shah Deniz II - and Iraq will be important secondary source. It is not that without Iraq we cannot do Nabucco. We can do Nabucco also without Iraq," he said.

XVI. EU

1.

'Struggling transitions' at Europe's borders

22.01.2010, Euractiv

READ MORE: <http://euractiv.com/en/enlargement/struggling-transitions-europe-borders/article-189154>

The EU's influence on its greater neighbourhood - from Eastern Europe to Central Asia and North Africa - is fading in some places but offers under-utilised potential in others, according to Richard Youngs, research director at a Spanish think-tank, who presented a new study this week in Brussels. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) aims to forge closer ties with countries to the south and east of the EU without offering them a membership perspective. Through this policy, the EU seeks to promote greater economic development, stability and better governance in its neighbourhood.

2.

EU to export supervision rules to Balkans and Turkey

20.01.2010, Euractiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/financial-services/eu-export-supervision-rules-balkans-turkey/article-189061>

The European Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) yesterday (19 January) agreed on a two-year programme of €2.65 million to boost macro- and micro-prudential supervision in the Western Balkans and Turkey. A hundred and fifty supervisors from countries waiting for accession to the EU are to receive training on the bloc's existing and pending rules on financial supervision as a result of the crisis, according to a statement from the ECB yesterday (19 January). The beneficiaries of the funds will be the central banks and supervisory authorities in Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Turkey, Serbia and Kosovo.

3.

Jeleva pull-out upsets Barroso II plans

19.01.2010, Euractiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/priorities/jeleva-pull-upsets-barroso-ii-plans/article-189049>

Rumiana Jeleva, the embattled Bulgarian commissioner-designate, announced her resignation from all political responsibilities on Tuesday (19 January), following accusations of wrongdoing during a parliamentary confirmation hearing last week. A vote on the new college is now scheduled for 9 February.

XVII. PROTRACTED CONFLICTS

1.

Hague court team to probe start of South Ossetia conflict

22.01.2010, RIA NOVOSTI

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20100122/157647519.html>

International investigators will arrive in Georgia in early February to investigate the start of the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia over South Ossetia, a Russian daily said on Friday. Nezavisimaya Gazeta quoted an unidentified source in the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying the International Criminal Court decision to send a group of officials to the former Soviet state was taken following a request by Moscow to The Hague. "There were many requests to The Hague from both Russia, which considers that real aggressors should be revealed, and South Ossetia, which, besides, has many concrete, factual claims against Georgian military officials," the official said.

2.

Transnistria remains the only really “frozen” conflict

22.01.2010, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35950&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=27&cHash=82d8516da3](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35950&tx_ttnews[backPid]=27&cHash=82d8516da3)

In 2008, Russia “unfroze” the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia through outright war and occupation of these Georgian territories. In the latter part of 2009, the United States and Russia each accelerated negotiations on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, each pressing for some kind of quick results. Although the US and Russian initiatives are inherently competitive, they both proceed from the same flawed point of departure, breaking the link between Armenian troop withdrawal from seven Azerbaijani districts and normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations. This approach can only keep the Karabakh conflict unresolved, although it creates the appearance of intensive negotiations toward settling it.

3.

OSCE Minsk Group: Azerbaijani, Armenian Presidents are ready to continue talks on Nagorno-Karabakh

22.01.2010, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/1623756.html>

During the meetings between the OSCE Minsk Group and the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and Serzh Sargsyan, both leaders expressed their willingness to continue the process of peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, reconfirming the seriousness of both parties to the talks, the Minsk Group's statement said. On January 21, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. A day before they met with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan in Yerevan.

XVIII. SECURITY

1.

Kazakhstan to call OSCE summit in 2010

26.01.2010, Euractiv

READ MORE: <http://euractiv.com/en/east-mediterranean/kazakhstan-call-osce-summit-2010/article-189230>

In an exclusive interview with EurActiv, Kazakh Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev voiced his country's intention to call a summit of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) this year, the first since 1999. He voiced his intention to lobby for an OSCE summit in an attempt to give renewed prominence to the organisation, which gathers 56 countries from Vancouver to Vladivostok and was first known as 'the Helsinki Process' when it was established in 1975. "Eleven years have elapsed since the last OSCE summit, held in Istanbul in 1999."

2.

OSCE's Corfu Process key for future of European security, says EU president Spain's foreign minister
19.01.2010, OSCE

READ MORE: <http://www.osce.org/item/42403.html>

The OSCE-anchored dialogue on the future of European security known as the Corfu Process brings an opportunity that must be seized, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos told the OSCE Permanent Council today. Moratinos, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, said the Corfu Process had "reactivated the role of the OSCE and was offering a strategic perspective and structured procedure for discussion." "The anchoring of the Corfu Process in the OSCE shows that security in Europe has a global and indivisible character," he said.

Black Sea News Update (BSNU) is a fortnightly brief of political and economic developments covering the Black Sea region. It is produced by the **ICBSS**, a think-tank aiming to foster regional cooperation in the Black Sea area.

The contents of the BSNU are exclusive responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ICBSS.

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