



Weekly Media Report

6 – 9 January

International Affairs

France to extradite Kazakh tycoon Mukhtar Ablyazov – BBC (UK), 9 January 2014

A French court has ruled that Kazakh tycoon and dissident Mukhtar Ablyazov should be extradited to Russia or Ukraine to face fraud charges. He is accused of stealing billions of dollars from the Kazakh BTA Bank, which also operates in Russia and Ukraine. He denies the allegations. His children say his life would be in danger if he were to be transferred to Kazakhstan. Ablyazov is a former Kazakh energy and trade minister, who fled the country in 2009. In 2011, he was granted political asylum in the UK, but disappeared after being sentenced to jail for contempt of court, only to reappear in France. Ablyazov, 50, says the allegations against him are politically motivated and designed to eliminate him as a rival to Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25664782>

National Affairs

Hundreds of Turkish police officers dismissed – BBC (UK), 7 January 2014

Hundreds of police have been dismissed or reassigned across the country since last month's corruption investigation. Three cabinet ministers resigned after their sons were detained in the raids. The prime minister has accused the police and judiciary of a "dirty plot".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25634542>

90% of beef traded in Latvia is believed to be a contraband – db.lv (LV), 9 January 2014

Approximately 90% of beef found in Latvia's markets and shops are coming from unknown sources, admits the Beef Cattle Breeders Association manager Rihards Valtenbergs. He reports that only 10% of beef is coming from Latvian farms and none of it is coming from other EU member states, because then it would be much more expensive.

<http://www.db.lv/tirdznieciba/mazumtirdznieciba/uznemejs-tirdznieciba-90-proc-liellopu-galas-ir-kontrabanda-407879>

Camorra (Campania's mafia group) is taking advantage of the money flow allocated for the recovery of the Campania region – Corriere della Sera (IT), 9 January 2014

Investigators have found evidence of the *Camorra's* participation in the works for the recovery of the many polluted areas in the Campania region. This mafia group is also the main responsible for the damage that the area has suffered in the last years.

<http://www.corriere.it/inchieste/cosi-camorra-vuole-bonificare-terra-fuochi/7361530a-7915-11e3-a2d4-bf73e88c1718.shtml>

Economy

US Senate confirms Janet Yellen to lead Federal Reserve – BBC (UK), 6 January 2014

Fifty-six senators voted in favour of Ms. Yellen with 26 opposed - many members of the chamber were unable to attend the vote because of bad weather. It was the last procedural

hurdle for the 67-year-old before taking over from outgoing chair Ben Bernanke on 1 February. She is the first woman to lead the central bank in its 100-year history.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25631756>

Eurozone unemployment steady but retail sales rebound – BBC (UK), 8 January 2014

Some 19.2 million people (12.1%) were out of work in the 17 countries using the euro, according to the EU statistics office, Eurostat. But retail trade in the currency area went up by 1.4% month-on-month, the biggest rise since November 2001, led by booming sales of non-food products. That came after a 0.4% fall in October. The eurozone jobless rate has now been unchanged at its current record level for eight months in a row.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25652196>

Latvia has the second biggest unemployment rate's decrease in EU – delfi.lv (LV), 8 January 2014

Half of the EU member states experienced growth in the registered unemployment rate in one year period, but the other half, including Latvia, managed to reduce it. The lowest unemployment rate was in Austria (4,8%), Germany (5,2%) and Luxembourg (6,1%). On the contrary, the highest – Greece (27,4%) and Spain (26,7%). The steepest growth of unemployment rate has been in Cyprus, Italy, Greece and Netherlands, whereas the steepest decrease of this index has been in Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and Hungary.

http://www.delfi.lv/bizness/ekonomika_skaitlos/latvija-otrs-straujukais-bezdarba-kritums-es.d?id=44020180

Total tax burden in Latvia continues to reduce – delfi.lv (LV) 9 January, 2014

Total tax burden in Latvia is 35,9 % and it continues to reduce. It is the 11th lowest index in EU and the lowest in Baltic States. The average tax burden in EU is 41,1% but in the world – 43,1%. Average tax rate in Latvia consists of corporate income tax (4,9%), tax on labor (27,3%) and other taxes (3,7%). Also, the amount of payments required in Latvia is one of the lowest comparing with other member states. Less payments are required only in Estonia, France and Malta. Whereas, the time spent for doing these payments is one of the highest comparing with EU – 264 hours.

http://www.delfi.lv/bizness/budzets_un_nodokli/kopeja-nodoklu-likme-latvija-turpina-samazinaties-secina-petijuma.d?id=43884234

European Central Bank keeps rates at record 0.25% low – BBC (UK), 9 January 2014

The European Central Bank (ECB) has kept its benchmark interest rate at a record low of 0.25%. There had been speculation that the bank might act to bolster fragile growth in the 18-nation euro bloc. With eurozone inflation falling below 1%, there is also concern about deflation as consumers delay purchases in the hope of prices falling further.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25669663>