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Republic of Macedonia on the way to the EU

Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-RM

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and the EU

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

Macedonian legislation harmonized with the EU acquis in March 2012:

- Law on Ratification of the Agreement with Montenegro on Extradition

Montenegrin President Vujanovic Presented with Plaque "Honorable Citizen of Skopje"



The President Veljanoski informed the new EU Ambassador, Mr. Aivo Orav, on the successful cooperation with the previous Heads of the EU Delegation that resulted in three consecutive positive EC Progress Reports, and especially the part for the Parliament. He also underlined the efficient cooperation with the Vice - Presidents and the Coordinators of Parliamentary Groups in the Parliament, which has contributed to the positive image and evaluation of the Parliament, and expressed preparedness to maintain this positive evaluation in future. He emphasized the need for promotion of the parliamentary diplomacy which should be given wider dimension, since this kind of diplomacy opens, but also closes many issues, which cannot be solved in any other way. "Our state belongs to Europe, not only as a territory, but also, formally. It is the responsibility of politicians how they will contribute and when this formality will make Republic of Macedonia part of the European family", said President Veljanoski.

Ambassador Orav has been for 7 years a non-residential Ambassador of the



Republic of Estonia to the Republic of Macedonia, which is an advantage for his mandate as Head of EU Delegation to the Republic of Macedonia. He stated that he sees the Republic of Macedonia as familiar and close country, and expressed assurance that he will continue with the positive work as his predecessors in the representation of the European Union and all its Members, as well as of all aspiring countries. Ambassador Orav stated that the EU Delegation of the European Union will be prepared in case of opening accession negotiations. The Progress Report is very important document, and requires efforts from both sides for a positive evaluation. The high degree of public support for the

Euro-integration process is also necessary and important, said Ambassador Orav. He mentioned the work of the Committee on European Issues, the National European Integration Council, the implementation of the OSCE/ODHIR recommendations, as well as the opening of the high level accession dialogue as significant tasks for both sides.

PRESIDENT OF MONTENEGRO IN THE MACEDONIAN PARLIAMENT



At the meeting, President of the Assembly Trajko Veljanoski underlined the role of both states in the development of good neighbourly relations, which contributes to the stability and the Euro- Atlantic integrations of all states in the region. In this context, the President Veljanoski congratulated the President of Montenegro Vujanovic on the progress of Montenegro in these processes. He referred to the economic relations that offer many possibilities and to the regional approach in the development of these relations, since it will enable both states to be more easily involved in the European and global economy and to be more attractive for the foreign investors.

The President of Montenegro, Mr. Filip Vujanovic, once again expressed gratitude for the support from the Republic of Macedonia to the Euro-Atlantic integration of Montenegro. "We are all aware that the Republic of Macedonia has achieved all criteria for membership in NATO and I personally hope that all international entities and organizations will respect the Hague verdict", said Mr. Vujanovic. He also underlined the need and the possibilities for stronger regional economic cooperation, especially in the field of major infrastructural and transport projects.

PRESIDENT OF CROATIAN PARLIAMENT SAYS: "MACEDONIA DESERVES TO BE IN NATO AND TO START EU NEGOTIATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP"



The President of the Croatian Parliament, Mr. Boris Šprem, paid official visit to the Republic of Macedonia, where he met his colleague Mr. Trajko Veljanoski as well as with the MPs -members of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia. The Macedonian hosts

expressed interest to exchange views and experiences in various fields, especially regarding the EU integration process and expressed appreciation for the continuous support of Croatia for Macedonia's membership in NATO, ahead of the Chicago Summit.

President Šprem said that the Republic of Macedonia deserved to be member of NATO a long time ago, as well as to open the EU accession negotiations. Both sides agreed that there are no open issues between the two countries, that the relations are friendly and should be further intensified, and that both countries share a common history on the Balkans. Regarding the situation of the Croatian minority in the Republic of Macedonia as well as the Macedonian minority in Croatia, both states are taking concrete measures to preserve their ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity, underlining especially, that both communities demonstrate loyalty to the states they live in. At the end, they also stated that the future cooperation should be expanded in the field of culture and business relations, and to use Croatia's experiences in the field of tourism, agriculture, infrastructure and construction.

SWEDEN WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT EU ENLARGEMENT



Delegation from the Parliamentary Friendship Group from the Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden headed by Mr. Oskar Öholm, had been hosts of their colleagues from the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation and the Committee on European Issues in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

Macedonian MPs Marinela Tuseva and Arben Ljebenista said that the political relations between the two states are characterized by a high level of friendship and understanding. They expressed appreciation for the continuous support from Sweden for opening EU accession negotiations and the visa liberalization process, and for the readiness of the

Swedish Government to assist Macedonia in several areas with twinning projects. The Head of the Swedish Delegation Mr. Öholm pointed out that they too can learn something from Macedonia and its people, and said that he was surprised by the enthusiasm of the Macedonians. Both sides agreed that they should work on intensification of the parliamentary, bilateral and multilateral, economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries. Mr. Öholm expressed satisfaction that the Swedish Parliament has established the Friendship Group with the Republic of Macedonia and said that they have come to Macedonia to learn more about the path of the country towards EU membership, but also to strengthen the already good relations between the two countries. He added that Sweden has always supported EU enlargement, and that although Sweden is a small country they will do everything in their power to assist Macedonia in its Euro-integration process.

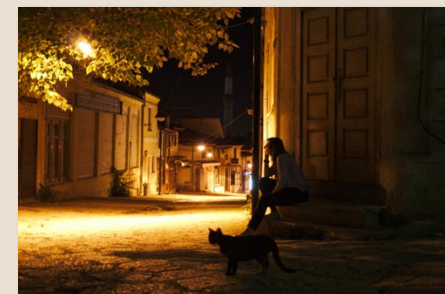
PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON ENVIRONMENT

The National Euro-Integration Council held a public debate on the proposed amendments to the Law on Environment, which is one of the 10 laws from its Annex 2 adopted one month ago, and part of the Opinion on the adoption of the acquis for 2012. The debate included representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Macedonian Parliamentary Green Lobby Group, Government Secretariat for European Affairs, Parliamentary Committee on EU Affairs and Committee on Transport, Connections and Environment, as well as representatives from universities, civil society organizations and various experts in the field.

The Deputy-Minister on Environment elaborated the amendments, stating that the law adopted in 2005 requires changes to harmonize it with several European Directives in the field of environment, especially Directive No9/82/EC of the Council on the major accident hazard, involving dangerous substances. The proposed amendments introduce policy for prevention of hazards that should guarantee high level of protection of people and the environment and give legal basis for adoption of by-laws that will prescribe criteria to determine hazardous accidents. The amended law will also enable simplified procedure for preparation of a study for protection of environment for farmers, craftsmen and small-sized trade companies and specifies provisions for the integrated prevention and control of pollution. Participants welcomed the debate and presented their proposal and comments to the law to be taken into consideration before the adoption in plenary.



City of Skopje contest for best photograph THE OLD SKOPJE BAZAAR



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