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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 October 2013:

- Law on National Qualifications Framework;

PRESIDENT TRAJKO VELJANOSKI PARTICIPATES IN THE 6TH CONFERENCE OF THE SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENTS OF THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES



PRESIDENT VELJANOSKI PAYS OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC



At the meeting with the President of the Senate, Mr. Milan Štěch and the Prime Minister, Mr. Jiří Rusnok, the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski, expressed his pleasure for this first meeting at highest level as an additional impetus for the traditionally good and friendly relations between the two states, and also underlined the mutual interest for promotion of the overall parliamentary cooperation. He also expressed gratitude for the decision of the Czech Republic since February this year to use the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia in the bilateral communication and for the continuous support in the EU integration process. The President of the Senate, Milan Štěch, underlined the preparedness of the Czech Republic to support the Republic of Macedonia for integration in EU and NATO as soon as possible. He expressed his regret that the economic crisis contributed in the destruction of the attention dedicated to the enlargement of the Union, but also underlined that they seize every opportunity to popularise this topic on international level, that the citizens should not lose hope and the Balkans should not go through the past years again. The First Senator expressed his preparedness to share the experiences and steps in the EU negotiations as well as the experiences regarding the attraction

of foreign investments, to which the Czech Republic is paying great attention in the past 10-15 years, since they provide prosperity and low rate of unemployment. The Prime Minister Rusnok stated that the relations with the Republic of Macedonia are very close and friendly and that the Czech Republic is interested in sooner integration of the Republic of Macedonia and its neighbourhood in EU and NATO, since this is the path and the manner for stabilization and enlarging the zone of prosperity. The Prime Minister Rusnok underlined that the support and the good relations with the Republic of Macedonia will remain as such regardless of the political entities.

DELEGATION FROM THE BUNDESTAG MEETS PRESIDENT VELJANOSKI



The President Veljanoski, as patron of the Program - International Parliamentary Scholarship (IPS) in the German Bundestag, welcomed the Delegation from the Bundestag, headed by the Mr. Steffen Claudio Lemme, MP and member of the selection team in the IPS Program for students who will work in offices of the German MPs in the Bundestag. IPS is a traditional activity of the German Bundestag, which in cooperation with the Technological University, the Free University and the Humboldt University in Berlin, provides opportunity for the graduates of the South East Europe countries to be acquainted with the parliamentary

system of Germany. The interlocutors exchanged opinions on the current political affairs in the Republic of Macedonia and in the Federal Republic of Germany, but mainly referred to the importance of the Program, as well as to the possibilities for development and upgrade thereof, in the context of implementation of the experience and the knowledge gained by the scholarship students during their stay in the Bundestag. The meeting also referred to the preparedness and the possibility for promotion of the parliamentary cooperation on all levels and exchange of legislative parliamentary experiences.

MEP RICHARD HOWWIT AT THE NEIC SESSION

At the Session of the National Euro-Integration Council (NEIC) dedicated to the 2013 EC Progress Report, besides the EU Ambassador, Mr. Aivo Orav and the Ambassadors of several EU Member States, MEP and European Parliament Rapporteur for Macedonia, Mr. Richard Howitt attended the meeting. Presenting the Report, the EU Ambassador Orav pointed out that is of particular importance that the European Commission issued for the fifth time its recommendations for start of negotiations with the Republic of Macedonia. MEP Richard Howitt said that NEIC plays very important role in providing broader consensus for EU integration as well as for the political dialogue as mentioned in the Progress Report. Regarding the reform of the public administration, Mr. Howitt mentioned that additional efforts are needed to guarantee professionalism and independence of the administration and the equal representation. Absence of specific number of people employed in the public administration raises concerns among member states. Involvement of civil society in the parliamen-

tary process and adoption of decisions is particularly important. Implementation of recommendations from the Committee of Inquiry regarding 24th December events and amendments to the Rules of Procedure in the spirit of the signed Inter-Party Memorandum is an important step to be taken before the December Council Summit. Freedom of expression and situation in the media will be one of the key issues discussed in the European Parliament. Mr. Howitt emphasized that Republic of Macedonia can not stay in a status quo situation and the position both of the European Commission and the European Parliament is that Copenhagen criteria have been met, but part of EU Member States do not agree with that and they have to be convinced in this matter.

The Deputy-Prime Minister in charge of EU Affairs, Mr. Fatmir Besimi informed the audience that the Working Committee in the Government held a meeting, after the analysis on the Progress Report and made by the Secretariat for EU Affairs and that relevant institutions started to prepare NPAA revision to take into consideration the recommendations in the Progress Report. He pointed out that it is very important for the Republic of Macedonia to start the negotiations that will contribute to the intensity of making reforms and for finding solution to the name issue with the Republic of Greece. The Council will adopt conclusions on the EC Progress Report that will be submitted for adoption on plenary session.



MEPS KASTLER AND KELAM MEET JPC CO-CHAIR IN PARLIAMENT



MEPS Martin Kastler (Germany) and Tunne Kelam (Estonia), Members of the informal group in the European Parliament "Friends of Macedonia", during their visit in Macedonia, had also an official meeting with the JPC Co-Chair, Mr. Kenan Hasipi. Mr. Kastler expressed gratitude for the meeting, mentioning that as part of the Informal Group Friends of Macedonia, he will strengthen the image of Macedonia on all European levels. Both MEPS welcomed the signing of the Memorandum by all political parties in the Republic of Macedonia. Mr. Hasipi conveyed his respect for their work and their personal engagement to sincerely help Macedonia in its Euro-Integration process. He emphasized that Republic of Macedonia fulfilled most of the reforms outlined in the High Level Accession Dialogue, carried out fair and competitive local elections, established Committee on Enquiry after the 24th December events and now implements the recommendations from the Committee. Mr. Hasipi also noted the 11th JPC Meeting in Strasbourg as one of the most successful ones, since without any amendments, final Recommendations were accepted by all. At the end, he expressed his belief that the activities of Friends of Macedonia shall contribute for the promotion of Macedonia among colleagues MEPs who are not fully informed with its integration process, and for the goal that everybody has been working on in the past years to obtain a date for negotiations.

Mr. Kastler pointed out that the European Parliament is one of the biggest friends of Macedonia for EU membership, as proved by the Resolutions adopted several years in a row by the European Parliament, prepared by the Rapporteur Richard Howitt. He also said that the lack of bilateral contacts on Presidential level between two neighboring states for more than 25 years should be changed in future. Mr. Tunne Kelam, also being a former JPC Co-Chair, mentioned that the JPC meetings contribute for a direct bilateral cooperation with the European Parliament and their Final Recommendations played an impor-

tant role for Government negotiating positions during Estonia's EU integration. Regarding the reforms to be made and the overcome of the political crisis in Parliament, Mr. Kelam said that if continued in this manner, the country is on a good track to receive its deserved place in the European Union.

PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION CONTRIBUTES TO THE STRENGTHENING OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MACEDONIA AND POLAND



Vice-President of the Polish Sejm, Mr. Jerzy Wenderlich, paid official visit to the Republic of Macedonia, where he had meetings with his colleague, Ms. Svetlana Jakimovska, Vice-President of the Assembly and with the Committee on EU Affairs. Ms. Jakimovska emphasized the deepened and developed bilateral relations between the two states and the fact that in every parliamentary mandate, there is a Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with Poland. She also informed Mr. Wenderlich on the reforms made in Macedonia related to the EU integration process. Mr. Wenderlich noted that he is aware of the problems Republic of Macedonia is facing with and that they come from the historical point of view. He also mentioned that Poland had problems during the integration process and still has some problems even today and that Euro-Integration process should include position and opposition as well as all ethnic minorities. Mr. Wenderlich congratulated on the positive EC Progress Report 2013 and wished Macedonia to get a date for start of EU negotiations. At the meeting with EU Affairs Committee, the Chair Mr. Hajrula Misini expressed gratitude for the support of Poland and for its open door policy for Euro-Atlantic integration. Mr. Wenderlich shared Polish experiences in this process, noting that the compromise is one of the best possible solutions but the compromise should be

made by both sides. At the end, Macedonian MPs mentioned their differences on all levels, but also their unity in the foreign policy criteria and the goal for NATO and EU membership.

CLEAR AND FRIENDLY MESSAGES TO MACEDONIA FROM LITHUANIA AND ROMANIA

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Mr. Linas Linkevičius, presiding the Council of the European Union and Mr. Titus Corlăţean, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, chairing the Southeastern European Cooperation Process, during their official visit in the Republic of Macedonia, met Mr. Hajrula Misini, Chair of EU Affairs Committee, Mr. Antonio Miloshoski, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. Kenan Hasipi, JPC - EU and Republic of Macedonia Co-Chair, and Ms. Radmila Shekerinska, President of the National European Integration Council. 24th December events, the reforms made within HLAD and the EC Progress Report were in the focus of the meeting. Mr. Linkevičius expressed support to the integration process in NATO and in the EU, as well as the progress made after the 1st March Agreement. Mr. Hasipi expressed appreciation of the Lithuanian Presidency position that the enlargement process should remain credible for all aspirant countries and thanked for the last year initiative from the three EU Affairs Committee Chairs from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia sent to the Danish Presidency for start of negotiations for the Republic of Macedonia. Mr. Corlăţean mentioned the importance of the regional cooperation and he also expressed understanding of the history of Macedonia. He pointed out that it is in the interest of Romania to create a positive atmosphere and that talks with Greece and Bulgaria are very important. Both Ministers send friendly and clear messages to the Republic of Macedonia, to be more dedicated to the issue of the media and the freedom of journalists, as well as reaching of bilateral agreement on the name issue.



SKOPJE JAZZ FESTIVAL 2013



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