

Your contacts:

Chairman of the EU-MK JPC: k.hasipi@sobranie.mk

Members: jpc@sobranie.mk

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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MACEDONIAN LEGISLATION HARMONIZED WITH THE EU ACQUIS IN FEBRUARY-MARCH 2016:

- Law Ratifying the Agreement between Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Albania on Social Insurance
- Law Ratifying the Sectoral Agreement between the Government and the EC on establishment of provisions for management and implementation of the Union financial assistance for the Republic of Macedonia, according to the Instrument for Pre-Accession in the field of Agriculture and Rural Development Policies (IPARD)
- Law Ratifying the Agreement between Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro for Legal Aid in Civil and Criminal Matters
- Law Ratifying the Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro on Mutual Implementation of Court Decisions in Criminal Matters

EXCELLENT BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO STATES



A Delegation from the EU Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives of Netherlands paid official visit to the Republic of Macedonia and had an opportunity to have meetings with the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski and the Members of the EU Affairs Committee. The Delegation was headed by the Chair, Mr. Malik Azmani and the

Members, Ms. Marit Majj, Ms. Attje Kuiken, Ms. Sharon Gesthuizen and Mr. Kees Verhoeven, accompanied by Ambassador Wouter Plomp. President Veljanoski expressed gratitude for the continuous support regarding EU integrations and for the successful realization of projects and investments in the state, and willingness for deepening of parliamentary cooperation on all levels. Mr. Malik Azmani pointed out that such meetings are an excellent opportunity for promotion of bilateral relations between the two states and extended an invitation for a Macedonian parliamentary delegation to visit the Dutch Parliament. Regarding challenges in the region with the migrant crisis, President Veljanoski emphasized that Republic of Macedonia will respect European decisions on this issue, as long as they are not to the detriment of the state. They agreed that good neighbourly relations are of key importance for overcoming open issues and for further prosperity and stability. At the meeting with the Chair, Ms. Ermira Mehmeti and the Members

of the EU Affairs Committee, Ms. Lidija Dimova, Ms. Meral Uzeiri Ferati, Ms. Solza Grcheva, Mr. Kenan Hasipi, Mr. Saso Akjimovski and Mr. Mirvan Xhemaili, Macedonian counterparts expressed gratitude for the meeting and the interest of Netherlands and its Parliament for the exchange of views regarding Macedonian EU-integration process and the migrant crisis. They also discussed issues regarding the implementation of the EU related reforms and of the political agreement, the Framework Agreement, the name issue with neighboring Greece and IPA funds.



PACE MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETS COUNTERPARTS IN THE MACEDONIAN ASSEMBLY

The Chair of the Foreign Policy Committee, Mr. Antonijo Miloshoski and the Members Mr. Aleksandar Nikoloski, Mr. Sasho Vasilevski, Mr. Pavle Trajanov, Ms. Liljana Popovska, Mr. Gjoko Kamchev, Ms. Sofija Kunovska, Mr. Ljubomir Josifovski and Mr. Hari Lokvenec met with Ms. Lise Christoffersen and Mr. Valeriu Ghiletschi, Rapporteurs of the post-monitoring dialogue with the Republic of Macedonia. The Chair Miloshoski concluded that the guests are coming in a very exceptional period for the Republic of Macedonia, and informed them on the political crisis in the state that ended with the political agree-

ment of Przino. The Rapporteur Christoffersen's interest was on the implementation of the political agreement, the electoral reforms and the law on media, as well as the state of play in the field of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. They also discussed the current political situation, the cleaning of the voter's list, the composition of the State Electoral Committee and the preparedness of the state for organizing fair and credible parliamentary elections. The Monitoring Committee, on the basis of the visit, should make conclusions for participation in the election process with own observers.



MODERNISING TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE - MOST IMPORTANT GOAL OF SEE STATES

The MP Ljubomir Josifovski, member of the Delegation to the SEECP PA took part at the meeting on the Committee on economy, infrastructure and energy held in Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria. The Member of the Committee discussed the Draft-Report and the Resolution on the improvement of infrastructure in the region and speeding up of priority projects that will be adopted in plenary in June 2016. The common conclusion was that the modernization of transport infrastructure is the most important priority of all South-Eastern European states and reaching the level of Trans-European Transport Network. Mr. Josifovski proposed that migrant crisis and economic challenges should be further discussed in the Committee that was supported by all members. They also adopted the annual committee program 2016-2017.



URGENT REFORM PRIORITIES DEBATED WITH THE PUBLIC IN PARLIAMENT

The Committee on EU Affairs held separate specialized public debates on several issues raising from the Urgent Reforms Priorities on *Independent and Professional Media and Freedom of Expression, Rule of Law and Judiciary and Depolitisation of Public Administration*. Regarding the media, Ms. Mehmeti pointed out that the public debate is aimed to exchange views with representatives of the media in order to improve legal solutions on the Law on Media and the Law on Audio-Visual Media Services. Journalist and representatives



from NGO's debated with representatives of the government, the Agency on Audio Visual Media Services and with Members of Parliament. At the debate on the judiciary, MPs, Government representatives, judges, public prosecutors, and representatives from the Ombudsman's office exchanged views on the situation in the field of judiciary and steps to be taken for greater independence and professionalism of the judiciary of the Republic of Macedonia. Regarding the debate on depolitisation of the public administration, participants discussed the implementation of the Law on Administrative Servants and the Law on Public Sector Employees, with full respect of the principle of transparency, merit and equal representation. The aim of these series of specialized public debates with experts from the civil sector was to obtain relevant expertise and improve the legal framework and its implementation regarding the aforementioned topics.

EP RESOLUTION DEBATED IN THE NATIONAL EURO-INTEGRATION COUNCIL

The National Euro-Integration Council held a session to debate the European Parliament Resolution on the Progress Report of the Republic of Macedonia for 2015, prepared by the EP Rapporteur, Mr. Ivo Vajgl. The Vice-President of the Government in charge of EU Affairs, Mr. Fatmir Besimi stated that the text of the Draft-Resolution is satisfactory and expressed gratitude to the support of the European Parliament. With the establishment of the informal group Friends of Macedonia in the EP, as well as with the cooperation between parliamentary groups and political parties, positions of the state are strengthened regarding EU integration. MPs and members from the civil society discussed the need this resolution to be de-



bated on committee session in future, since Euro-Atlantic integration projects has no property and does not belong to any political party and that the cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be strengthened in the future.

ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF THE STATE

The National Euro-Integration council organized a public debate on the Role of Civil Society in the European integration of the Republic of Macedonia. The Vice-President of the Government in charge of EU affairs informed the participants that the Government is holding regular exchange of views on various topics with civil society organization on different topics related to the EC Progress Reports, IPA projects, and national programs for harmonization with the EU acquis.

Participants referred to the need for a more transparent institutional approach to NGOs in the policy-creation process and the need to destigmatize civil society organizations. They also called for their strengthened cooperation on local level, the need for economic independency and self-sustainability, demonopolisation of sources of financing, inter-disciplinary approach in their activities and establishment of a National Fund for Financing. Also, civil society organization pointed to the importance of think-tank organizations and their expertise that could be used by the Parliament in the accession process.



CARNIVALS' SEASON IN MACEDONIA

2016



Strumica Carnival



Strumica Carnival



Prilep Carnival

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Editorial Board: Marijana Opashinova Shundovska, Ana Kachakova, Kenan Hasipi, Dragan Antonov

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