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Members of the Assembly

Councils of the Assembly

Working bodies of the Assembly

Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-RM

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

Macedonian legislation harmonized with the EU acquis in May-July 2019:

- Law on Agency of National Security
- Law on Coordination of the Security and Intelligence Community in the Republic of North Macedonia
- Law Amending the Law on Interception of Communications
- Law Amending the Law on Internal Affairs
- Law Amending the Law on Foreigners
- Law on Excise Taxes
- Law on Social Protection
- Law on Free Legal Aid
- Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination
- Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Confidential Services
- Law Amending the Law on Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia
- Law on Free Access to Public Information
- Law on Inspection Oversight
- Law Amending the Law on Financial Discipline
- Law Amending the Law on Customs Tariff
- Law on Oversight of Foreign-Trade Turnover with Unprocessed Diamonds

Dear colleagues,



On behalf of the Delegation of the Joint Committee - the Republic of North Macedonia and the EU and on my own behalf, as the newly appointed Co-Chair of this Committee, allow me to congratulate you on your election as MEPs and wish you a successful parliamentary mandate and express our expectation for a fruitful future cooperation. In this context, I would like to emphasize the constructive role of all previous co-chairs and their commitment to successful meetings. In the spirit of consensus and common co-operation, the Committee has been able to make final recommendations at our meetings in the past mandates, which have always in a balanced way presented the situation in the country. I believe that our common denominator, as before, will be to contribute to the fulfillment of European standards and to contribute to the membership of the Republic of North Macedonia in the EU.

As parliaments and we, as parliamentarians, have gone through many challenges: we have managed to bring the country back on the Euro-Atlantic path, certainly with the help of our international friends, but also to successfully complete the required reforms. Among them,

many were brought in with the necessary two-thirds majority along with colleagues from the opposition, with whom we gave a personal stamp on the formulation of the necessary legal solutions, especially in the area of judiciary and security sector reforms. Also, in a European way, we have been able to overcome the decades open issues with Greece and Bulgaria, which have prevented us from working closely together in many areas. Our efforts have been rewarded by Euro-Atlantic institutions by launching NATO membership talks and screening with the European Union. I sincerely hope that with the incoming editions of this Newsletter, which will soon mark a decade of its publication, we will be able to inform you comprehensively of the Euro-Atlantic activities undertaken by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as of the natural beauties and cultural events in the country.

Sincerely,

Sonja MIRAKOVSKA,
JPC Co-Chair

SECOND JEAN MONNET DIALOGUE IN SKOPJE

The Second Jean Monnet Dialogue on Peace and Democracy was held at the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. According to the pre-established practice and concept of this process, the sessions were co-chaired by the President of the Assembly, Mr. Talat Xhaferi and outgoing MEPs, Mr. Vajgl, Mr. Fleckstein and Mr. Koukan, proven and committed friends of the country on the road to achieving full membership in the European Union, and actively involved in the work of this dialogue. Vice-Presidents, the Coordinators of the Parliamentary Groups, representatives of parliamentary parties represented in the Assembly, the Secretary-General of the Assembly took part in the event.

The participants signed conclusions that they have agreed to continue the dialogue on implementation of the EU agenda and institutional reforms, as well as on broader topics of common interest, committed to providing consensus on key areas, including through regular meetings in within the framework of the Jean Monnet dialogue with the European Parliament. There was also a huge appreciation expressed for the unreserved engagement of the three MEPs.



MEETING WITH PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA, MR. WOLFGANG SOBOTKA

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia Talat Xhaferi, met had a meeting with the President of the National Council of the Republic of Austria Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, during his official visit to Vienna. President Sobotka welcomed the signing and implementation of the Prespa Agreement and noted that it was an example for all European states to resolve disputes through dialogue. He expressed optimism that continued efforts to implement reforms of the institutions of North Macedonia in key areas would be recognized and that EU member states would decide to open accession negotiations. Speaker Sobotka further assured that the Austrian side would do everything to convince the countries that are skeptical that a date should be given for start of negotiations. President Xhaferi stressed the joint commitment of the ruling and opposition parties to support the strategic goal of EU accession and NATO membership. Stressing that while the aim of the reforms is to establish stable rule of law in the interests of the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia and not just a condition in the EU integration process, recognition of the progress already made is the best impetus to continue with reforms. In the end, both interlocutors emphasized that they would continue to foster close and friendly relations between the two legislative houses, both at the level of MPs at the level of staff services, and in this regard welcomed the Austrian initiative in cooperation with the European Parliament. Balkan Scholarship Fund for internships in the Austrian Parliament, intended for officials from the parliaments of 6 Western Balkan countries.



YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK AND YOU SHOULD CONTINUE IN THIS DIRECTION

President Talat Xhaferi met with a Delegation of the Committee on European Affairs in the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, led by the Chair Hayke Veldman, exchanging information and opinions regarding our European agenda and reforms on the road to setting a date for EU negotiations.

He expressed satisfaction with the cooperation and support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to our country through various projects, and expressed hope that in the forthcoming period, the parliamentary communication and cooperation will be intensified to a higher level. President Xhaferi took the opportunity to brief the guests from the Netherlands on what has been done in the current reform process. "As President of the Assembly, I will continue to ar-

ticulate the interests of all MPs, especially in my communication with the opposition, because I am President of all Members and I assure you that we are on a good path," said President Xhaferi. The Delegation expressed their gratitude and satisfaction with the meeting and the opportunity to be informed on the reform processes. Chair Veldman congratulated the successfully implemented constitutional changes and implementation of the Prespa Agreement, as well as the successfully conducted presidential elections, and expressed readiness on behalf of the committee, to present all information and opinions received about our European agenda and its implementation in the Dutch Parliament. At the end of the meeting, they concluded that the country is on the right track and that it should proceed in this direction.



COUNTERING MISINFORMATION IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

The General Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Security Cooperation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the South East European Cooperation Process, held a session in Skopje on the topic "Countering misinformation in SouthEast Europe".

"Freedom of speech and free access to information are fundamental human rights, and free, impartial and objective media reporting is one of the key pillars of any democratic society. Misinformation do not only undermines citizens' ability to make sound decisions, but also undermines trust in institutions and in digital and traditional media. Joint efforts are needed to curb misinformation and to find appropriate solutions to offset its negative impact. But in preventing the spread of fake news, care should be taken not to violate the right to freedom of use of information and freedom of speech, as well as to avoid measures and activities that may be classified as censorship." said the Vice President of the Assembly, Goran Misovski, who addressed the participants at the beginning of the meeting.

The relevant Minister Robert Popovski in his address underlined that the key is in the hands of journalism professionals. To self-regulate and adhere to ethical and professional standards. Governments and all political parties are obliged to uphold these standards. At the end, presentations were made by the Chairman of the General Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Security Cooperation, Xhevat Ademi and Zoran Popov, representative of the Regional Cooperation Council.



DENMARK APPRECIATES THE EFFORTS, PROGRESS AND REFORMS OF THE COUNTRY TOWARDS EU AND NATO

The Parliamentary Group of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia for Cooperation with the Parliament of the Kingdom of Denmark met today with a delegation from the Danish Parliament, led by the International Secretary Kenneth Finsen. Co-chair of the Group, Ivana Tufegzic, expressed satisfaction with the meeting. Regarding bilateral cooperation with the Kingdom of Denmark, she pointed out that we foster excellent relations and called for deepening of that cooperation, but also in other areas such as economy, youth policies and environment.

Following the developments in the country, Secretary Finsen said he appreciated the efforts, progress and reforms the country has made to move closer to the EU and the NATO alliance. At the same time, Danish officials expressed interest in developing the process of NATO accession, which has been initiated by ratification procedures in several Alliance member states, expected to be finalized by the end of the year. Interlocutors also exchanged views on the expectations of residents in remote and rural areas of EU accession, and whether there is a demand for foreign investment in the country in terms of the challenges and opportunities they face. The participants agreed that the reforms are at the request of the citizens of our country, regardless of the Euro-Atlantic perspective.



THE WEALTH OF SOCIETY LIES IN DIVERSITY

The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia marked the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, organized by the Inter-Party Parliamentary Group on the Rights of LGBTI People. MPs members of the Interparty Group, representatives of the diplomatic corps and member organizations of the National Network Against Homophobia and Transphobia took part at the meeting. The Group Co-ordinator, Maya Moracanin, opened the event, expressing satisfaction and honor that this day was marked for the first time in the legislature. She mentioned the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the first of which states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. The Interparty Group, which was formed in February last year and has 15 members, has made progressive steps in legislation, in particular the Law on Protection and Prevention of Discrimination, with particular reference to sexual orientation and gender identity. Particularly important is the commitment to

the implementation of the adopted laws, as this is the only way to experience the benefits of daily living. MPs' participation in the national campaign "Don't Judge Who Loves You" means contributing to raising awareness against violence and discrimination against LGBTI people.

MP Jagoda Jahpaska, a member of the Interparty Group, expressed confidence in this story. "No battle is easy, but every individual has to lead the battles on the front where he is. Breaking the ice goes hard, but if we are together it will be easier," she said, appealing to the media to condemn hate speech. "The wealth of society is diversity. The colors of the rainbow are the most beautiful spectrum," concluded Jahpaska. Jovana Jovanovska-Kanurkova and Antonio Mihajlov from the National Network for Fighting Homophobia and Transphobia expressed their gratitude to the Assembly for marking this day. They were unanimous that this long-standing struggle is a struggle for all citizens and it will not stop. Every small step of support and

understanding, individual and collective community building efforts, should be acknowledged. That is why they presented the Interparty Parliamentary Group on the Rights of LGBTI People with a Support of the Year award. In this context, a short video of joint activities in the fight to improve the status of LGBTI persons was shown.



CROATIA REMAINS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS

A Croatian parliamentary delegation composed of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and member of the European Affairs Committee - Domagoj Ivan Milosevic, Domagoj Hajdukovic and Vesna Pusic - Miro Kovac, accompanied by Croatian Ambassador Danijela Barisic had meetings with EU related bodies in the Assembly. In a friendly atmosphere, attendees had the opportunity to honestly discuss the challenges of EU and NATO membership. In this context, the Croatian side has been open to sharing experiences, cooperation and assistance, as a strong ally, partner and supporter.

Regarding EU negotiations, the guests stressed that it is not all about politicians, because the Union is a complex mechanism. Politics has some rules that are not fair. The most important thing at the moment

is for the country to get a fixed date and get public support, because it will one day be part of the EU. In the meantime, the reform process must continue so that the country can enter the larger European family more readily.

Croatia seeks full integration of the Western Balkans into the EU as a great chance for progress. Regarding bilateral cooperation, they pointed out that we foster excellent relations and called for deepening that cooperation in other areas, such as youth policies and the economy. Croatian officials said they appreciated the reforms and progress of the Republic of North Macedonia and pointed out that Croatia was among the first five member states to ratify the NATO Accession Protocol.



THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS IS A PROCES OF DEMOCRACY

A Delegation of the German Bundestag, led by the President of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with the SEE Countries, Josip Djuratovic, met today with the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the Committees on European Affairs and Foreign Policy. The President of the Parliamentary Group Vladimir Gyorchev pointed out that the parliaments of the two countries have long-standing cooperation. Germany is a friend, partner and ally of our country.

Gyorchev also highlighted the activities of the German political foundations in the country as really useful, the excellent cooperation with the German Chamber of Commerce, as well as the German Embassy in Skopje for its focus on economic cooperation. Membership in the NATO alliance and the start of acces-

sion negotiations with the European Union are currently two important issues for the country's future, Gyorchev appealed. The process of ratification of the NATO Accession Protocol in all member states has begun, on June 6 this year it was ratified by the German Bundestag, and its full finalization is expected before the London Summit in December. The European Commission recommends the start of accession negotiations, but the Council is the one implementing it, and the national parliaments are in the middle of the recommendation and implementation and therefore the cooperation among parliamentarians is very important - stressed German MP and President of the Group, Josip Juratovic.



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