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Joint Parliamentary Committee EU -RNM
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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MACEDONIAN LEGISLATION HARMONIZED WITH THE EU ACQUIS IN FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024:

- Law on Prohibition of Unfair Trade Practices in the Supply Chain of Agricultural and Food Products
- Law on the Management of Confiscated Property, Property Benefit and Confiscated Items in Criminal and Misdemeanor Proceedings
- Law on Property Recovery Office
- Law on Financial Instruments
- Law on Prospectus and Transparency Obligations for Issuers of Securities
- Law on Justice for Children
- Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Law on Wine
- Law Amending the Law on Electrical and Electronic Equipment and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Management
- Law Amending the Law on Extended Producer Responsibility for Management of Special Waste Procedures
- Law Amending the Law on Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors
- Law Amending the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services

PRESIDENT MITRESKI VISIT TO UKRAINE

On the second anniversary of the Russian military aggression outbreak against Ukraine, the President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Jovan Mitreski, paid a visit to Kyiv. At the meeting with the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Ruslan Stefanchuk, President Mitreski emphasized that the visit is a confirmation of the firm and unwavering support of the Republic of North Macedonia for Ukraine, its territorial integrity and sovereignty. The President of the Assembly pointed out that North Macedonia fully joined all restrictive measures and sanctions of the EU towards the Russian Federation, supported numerous resolutions and initiatives regarding Ukraine, and sent military and humanitarian aid to the country. At the same time, he welcomed the efforts of the deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, who continue to represent the interests of their voters. The Speaker Stefanchuk thanked for the consistent support, as well as for the support of the "Peace



Formula" proposed by the President of Ukraine. He emphasized that the peoples of Ukraine and North Macedonia are very close, have a similar history and share common goals for membership in the EU and NATO. The presidents of the parliaments referred to the European integration processes, expressing their belief that North Macedonia and Ukraine should become members of the European Union as soon as possible, and the task of the parliaments is to implement all the necessary legal changes in this regard.

President Mitreski also addressed at the special session of the Verkhovna Rada, to send, as he underlined, a strong message that the democratic world is united in supporting Ukraine in its struggle for justice, defense of its territory and defense against the imperial appetites of its neighbor, expressing his firm conviction that democratic values will defeat aggression, and cooperation will focus on talks for a better standard of living, prosperity and development, cultural cooperation and exchange.



MEP TINEKE STRIK MEETS JPC MEMBERS

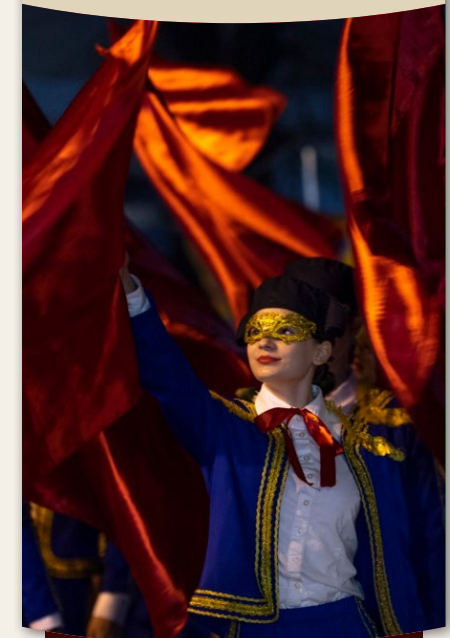
The members of the Joint Parliamentary Committee - Republic of North Macedonia and the European Union MET with MEP Tineke Strik. MPs Sonja Mirakovska, JPC Co-Chair, and the members: Maja Morachanin, Jaklina Peshevska, Halil Snopce and Snezhana Kaleska-Vancheva attended the meeting. Mirakovska expressed special gratitude for the support provided on our European integration path. The European Parliament has always reflected the situation in our country in a balanced way, by accurately detecting the areas in which we as a country are making progress and in the areas where additional efforts are needed to improve them. MEP Strik emphasized that the support of the EU for the European integration path of the country will continue, because it is significant for the perspective of the citizens in North Macedonia. The EU is strongly committed to enlargement and the moment should be seized. The MPs at the meeting were unanimous that the long waited accession to the EU increases polarization among the citizens, and that unity is needed to solve the issues that are of national interest.

BELGIAN EU PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES PRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in the Republic of North Macedonia, Frederic Meurices, presented in Parliament the priorities of the Belgian EU Presidency priorities, at a joint session of the National Council for European Integration and the Committee on European Affairs. EU Ambassador David Geer, as well as the Hungarian Ambassador András Klein, and the Deputy Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain, Ana Grazia, also attended the meeting. In his address, Ambassador Meurice highlighted the 18 priorities of the troika Spain - Belgium - Hungary, specifically explaining the six key priorities of the current Belgian presidency: defense of the principles of the rule of law, democracy and equality, green and just transition, strengthening the social and health agenda, protection of people and borders, and promoting the EU as a global factor. He also emphasized that the focus of the Belgian presidency is the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and the enlargement of the EU, so, as he said, he hopes that an intergovernmental conference for North Macedonia and Albania will be held in this mandate. EU Ambassador Geer pointed out that the process of accession to the EU is based on reforms and progress, and that constructive dialogue regarding the necessary reforms is of general interest. The EU Committee Chair Arber Ademi, expressed satisfaction that the Western Balkans is among the priorities of the Belgian presidency. For North Macedonia, he said, it is very important to establish strong mechanisms for the fight against corruption and for the rule of law, such as vetting. "It should be taken into account that the opening of the clusters in the negotiations with the EU is a key point before us whose only task is to make the constitutional amendments. We, as representatives of the people, should think about the future of our citizens and fulfill our obligations and tasks," Ademi said. The Vice-President of the National Council, Sonja Mirakovska, said that time does not leave room for maneuvers, but that we should all work together to fulfill the strategic goal of our country's membership in the EU. MP Gordana Siljanovska Davkova expressed her hope that the EU and its member states will remain firm on the principles of democracy, despite the strengthening of nationalist political forces in certain countries. For Europe, she said, it is crucial to maintain the enthusiasm and motivation for reforms and to neutralize nationalist tendencies. For our country, on the other hand, as he said, it is important to enable the rule of law, to strengthen the fight against corruption, to hold fair and democratic elections and to respect the procedures, especially in relation to the laws adopted with the European flag.



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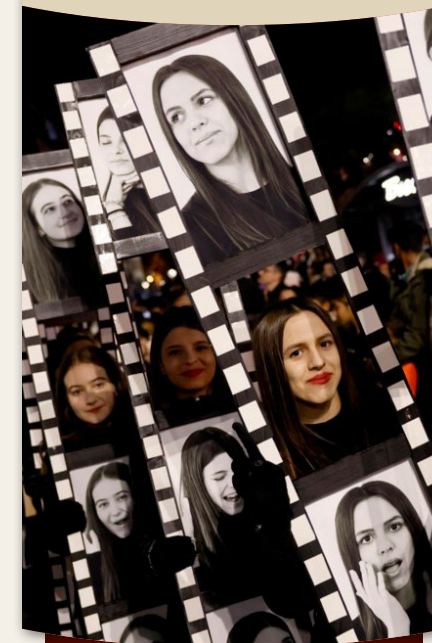


TRADITIONAL SUPPORT FROM GERMANY ON THE EU INTEGRATION PATH

The Foreign Policy Committee and the Committee on European Issues held separate meetings with the Delegation of the German Bundestag - Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with countries from Southeast Europe. The delegation also met with members of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with the Bundestag. The Chair of the Foreign Policy Committee and Chair of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with the Bundestag, Antonijo Miloshoski, expressed his gratitude for the traditional support from Germany in all fields. Regarding European integration, he said that all parties are in favor, but the approach is different. There is well-founded disappointment and mistrust among the citizens, given the promises that by changing the name in the dispute with Greece, that the EU doors are open, which did not happen, and now we are facing a veto from Bulgaria, which is demanding changes to the Constitution, but there is no guarantee that there won't be other requests afterwards. The Chair of the Committee on European Affairs Arber Ademi, especially thanked them for the adopted Resolutions in the Bundestag, with which, among other things, Germany welcomed the Ohrid Framework Agreement, supported the beginning of negotiations for EU membership and recognized the Macedonian culture, identity and language, clarifying that Europeans are characterized by a great variety of languages and cultures that are an integral part of the European common cultural heritage. Ademi assured the guests that the country has achieved internal political, ethnic, economic and social cohesion in every respect, and above all for the European integration process. The country aims to implement reforms related to the rule of law, public administration and the protection of minority communities. In a multi-ethnic society, such as ours, the EU is the strongest cohesive factor that moves us forward. The German delegation, led by the president of the Group, Josip Juratović, showed understanding of the situation in the country, gave support for the European integration path, which was proven by the adoption of the last Resolution for our country in the Bundestag. But as Juratović said, even though they are the strongest nation in Europe, they still do not decide on their own in the EU and are of the opinion that they need to move away from the principle of unanimity. For the upcoming elections, he called for a competition of ideas and arguments based on the principle of democracy, with a focus on the best for the future of the country and its citizens. He marked the Berlin process as very important, in which the Parliaments are involved. Expansion with the countries of the Western Balkans will also mean a strengthened European family. We see Europe as a Europe of values, not of businesses - concluded Juratović.



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EU INTEGRATION EXPERIENCES SHARED IN THE GEORGIAN PARLAMENT



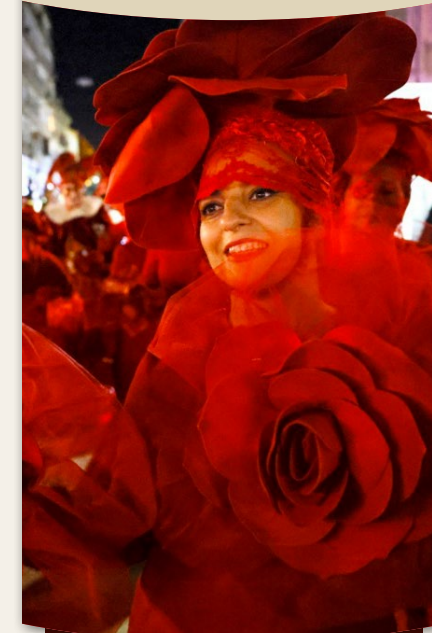
The Chair of the Committee on European Issues, Arber Ademi, gave a video address today at a Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia. The conference was organized by the Commission for European Affairs of the Parliament of Georgia, in which, in addition to parliamentarians from Georgia, parliamentarians from the candidate countries of the Western Balkans region, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia, participated. In essence, the Conference represents a platform for exchanging experiences on various aspects of our European integration paths and identifying ways to strengthen mutual positions in this regard. Ademi congratulated Georgia on its candidate status, emphasizing that it is the result of many months of hard work by the government and the people of Georgia, but also that this hard work must continue to progress on the road to the EU. He stressed that the issue of enlargement must always be at the center of attention, adding that he expects the principle of merit to remain an absolute imperative – when our countries deliver, each in their individual files, then the EU must deliver. At the end of the presentation, Ademi reiterated that our goal is to become a fully-fledged member of the EU.

VIOLENCE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IS A SOCIETAL PROBLEM

The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women and the Women Club of Deputies, together with the Macedonian Women's Lobby, organized the second Conference on "Prevention and protection from violence against women and girls, recommendations for action by institutions, politicians and the civil sector". Participants emphasized that women's rights are fundamental human rights and the public should be influenced to support women's rights. The struggle began with non-governmental organizations, which taught politicians to overcome stereotypes related to European institutions and organizations, and now, after 30 years of efforts, some rights have been achieved. The Committee Chair Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, sent powerful messages and a desire to put an end to violence against women and girls. Steps have been taken that cannot be stopped. The problem is societal, not personal, concluded Siljanovska-Davkova. MP Snezhana Kaleska-Vanchevaspoke about the results achieved by the Club of Women Deputies and the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, especially in the area of changing the legislation according to the guidelines given in the Istanbul Convention. The Secretary General of the Assembly, Cvetanka Ivanova, thanked the Macedonian Women's Lobby, the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, and the Club of Deputies, for their commitment to women's rights. Violence against women is not a women's problem, it is a problem for the whole society, Ivanova was decisive. On behalf of all women, she made a request to the president of the European Women's Lobby to create a women's lobby in the European Parliament that would give selfless support to our country, which is doing a lot on this issue.



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CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT FOR THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS AMONG COMMUNITIES

The 2023 Work Report was considered by the Committee on Relations Among Communities, presented by its Committee Chair Arbana Pasholi. In her address, she referred to the last June session, which celebrated the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe, the Commemorative Session on the occasion of July 11 - Remembrance Day of the Genocide in Srebrenica, as well as on the Draft version of the National Strategy for the Development of Interculturalism and Social Cohesion with Action Plan 2024 - 2026. She was particularly satisfied with the working visits and activities like the ones with the Agency for Realizing the Rights of Communities, to Ohrid Municipality took, and the participation in the Summer School in September 2023. The Committee held also working meetings with the Consultative Council for Communities within the Office of the President of Kosovo, and joint activities with the Inter-Party Parliamentary Group for supporting the rights of the Roma, their inclusion and integration in our country. Members deemed necessary for the Committee to continue with the affirmation of the concept of



“one society for all” in order to maintain values such as equality, non-discrimination, the promotion of the rights of all communities and the improvement of intercultural dialogue, and thus the improvement of the cohesion of the communities. Also convinced that the unifying component in the state is necessary, the Committee will continue to focus on the topics related to the rights of all marginalized and vulnerable categories of people.

THE FIGHT FOR GENDER EQUALITY WILL CONTINUE IN FUTURE

In the past more than 20 years, a lot has been achieved in the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, especially in politics and in the economy. But in reality, it is necessary to take many more steps for equal opportunities for all, which will mean a more prosperous and free society. Such messages were sent by the deputies in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, who spoke at today's 146th plenary session, on the occasion of March 8, International Women's Day. The only item on the agenda of this session was Information on the activities and role of female MPs in improving gender equality and advancing the rights of women. The President of the Assembly Jovan Mitres-

ki, pointed out that the Parliament has shown great commitment in promoting gender equality by exceeding the threshold of 40 percent of women MPs, a commitment shown in a practical way, that make us leaders in the promotion and implementation of gender equality. When it comes to the rights of citizens, not only when we talk about women, but also when it comes to the rights, standard of living and prosperity of vulnerable categories of citizens, we should aim for a common and consensual approach because that is a guarantee for its full implementation and respect, Mitreski said. The President of the Women Club of Deputies, Lolita Ristova, emphasized that we must seriously break stereotypes and encourage initiatives for changes in public awareness of the importance of equal opportunities for all. The Chair of the Committee for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, Gordana Siljanovska Davkova, said that women, especially in Parliament, must fight for a “room of their own”, as Virginia Woolf says, to really be a respected subject in politics and a factor in politics. MP Rina Aidari pointed out that we cannot face the challenges of the time we live in without women being represented by 50 percent in decision-making. MP Maja Moračanin emphasized that March 8 is a day when we celebrate the successes of many generations of women, but also a day when we should all say that the fight for equality continues. MP Monika Zajkova outlined that the bumpy road that we have traveled through history is a proof of our strength, perseverance and perseverance, a kind of reminder that we can bring about changes and that we are capable of overcoming differences for the good of our country. MP Zaklina Peshevska emphasized that gender equality is a fundamental value, the achievement of which has significant socio-economic effects such as prosperous economy, encouraging productivity and economic growth.



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19th SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES FOR INTERCEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee on Oversight of the Implementation Measures for Interception of Communications held its 19th session, on which it considered the 2023 Annual Report on the work of the Operational Technical Agency Skopje. The director Marija Janicheska also attended the session, as a representative of the Agency. After the debate, the committee forwarded the Annual Report to further proceedings in the Parliament.

PANEL DEBATE ON THE PROMOTION OF ROMA WOMEN

At the panel discussion initiated by the "Roma for Democracy" Foundation, experiences and opinions were exchanged about the progress of Roma women not only in the social community, but also in public institutions and in politics. Participants pointed out that the initiative entitled "Good for Roma women, good for the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia", provides a voice for equality, inclusivity and strengthening of the political will for the capacity of Roma women and their contribution to progress in the country. Deputy Secretary General Bojan Vasilevski, pointed out that the Roma community is an integral part of our society and that it contributes to cultural heritage, artistic expression and collective identity. However, Roma women continue to face systemic barriers. And that's why he emphasized that the commitment of the legislative house is to hear the voice of all who live in the state. Selvije Mustafi Alkan from the "Roma for Democracy" Foundation indicated that the purpose of today's initiative is to remind the state institutions about the capacity of these women. The advisor for Roma issues to the President



of the State, Fikrija Tair, pointed out that it is essential to reflect on the possibilities for participation in the decision-making, as well as the readiness and openness of the institutions on gender issues, for the advancement of the position of the Roma and their participation in the political processes. The panel discussion was addressed by Irene Ketoff from the French Embassy, who welcomed and supported the initiative.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR THE RIGHT OF SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES AND SINGLE PARENTS

The Inter-Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) for the rights of single-parent families and single parents was established in the Assembly, with the aim to improve the status of single-parent families, single parents, girls and women from marginalized groups. Priorities in the work will be providing efficient and effective legal and institutional mech-

anisms for protection against discrimination, violence and hate speech based on family structure, improvement of educational policies and programs, advancing the rights of this group of people and enabling a dignified life. The initiator for establishment of this IPPG is the Association of single-parent families "EDNA MOŽE" Skopje and the Network for gender equality, prevention of violence, fight against discrimination and advocating for the improvement of the status of single parents JUNA JTEFDEM, with the support of fifty MPs who signed supported this group. An inspiring speech was given by Dorothy Pachkova from the "EDNA MOŽE" Association, who said that this is a historic event, which will open a new window to the world from a male, but also a female perspective. The strength of a nation lies in the empowerment of all its citizens, Pachkova said, and this sends a message that the voice of single mothers is important and together we will build a society in which everyone will have the opportunity to develop. The Group Chair, MP Eli Panova emphasized that the single parents are very strong and prove that every day, but they live in an insufficiently mature society, which calls for efforts and work in this IPPG, in order to prove that progress can be made.



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