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Working bodies of the Assembly

Joint Parliamentary Committee EU -RNM

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

MACEDONIAN LEGISLATION HARMONIZED WITH THE EU ACQUIS IN NOVEMBER 2019 - FEBRUARY 2020:

• Law on Strategic Investments in the Republic of North Macedonia

• Law on International Private Law

• Law on Energy Efficiency

• Law on Management with File Movement in Courts

• Law on Personal Data Protection

• Law on Public Prosecutor's Office

• Law Amending the Law on the Law on the Public Prosecutors' Council

• Law on Non-Registered Persons in the Birth Register Book

WESTERN BALKANS SPEAKERS' SUMMIT IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia Talat Xhaferi took part in the Western Summit Speakers' Summit organized in the European Parliament in Brussels, under the auspices of the President of the European Parliament David Sasoli.

The Summit included a discussion on the strengthening of inter-parliamentary cooperation and the future of Europe, together with Political Party Coordinators and with members of the Western Balkans Working Group in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. It was agreed that the organization of the Summit shows that the European Parliament sees the Western Balkan countries as partners and wants to hear their voices, as well as that the enlargement policy is one of the strongest and most successful policies of the European Union. Participants agreed that co-operation should be intensified and relations should remain close as the aim is shared, to overcome skepticism that parliaments should have a stronger role in the European integration process. The Presidents of the Western Balkans Parliaments, together with the President of the European Parliament and the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, as the representative of the Croatian Presidency adopted and signed a *Joint Declaration*, reflecting the common commitment and commitment to strengthening the parliamentary di-

mension of the enlargement process.



THE MISTAKE FROM THE OCTOBER SUMMIT MUST BE CORRECTED

President Xhaferi met with the Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy and EU Enlargement Negotiations, Mr. Oliver Varhelyi who paid a two-day working visit to the Republic of North Macedonia, as his first trip abroad after assuming office. Stressing that the visit is seen as support of the country's firm commitment to stay on the European path, President Xhaferi expressed hope that joint efforts would result in a decision to start negotiations in March or May this year. He underlined that despite the great disappointment after the Council October Summit, the country's political actors have managed to stay focused on the country's strategic goal for full membership in the European Union. Commissioner Varhelyi noted that his first is realized in order to demonstrate that the Republic of North Macedonia did its utmost to fulfill its European integration aspirations. He presented his plan that would create opportunities for opening accession negotiations by March this year and the new proposed methodology. Commissioner Varchelyi stressed that a mistake was made at the October Sum-

mit and that the new methodology was the way to correct that mistake. President Xhaferi thanked the Commissioner for all his efforts to quickly adopt the new methodology and make a well-deserved decision to start accession negotiations for the Republic of North Macedonia, and at the same time welcomed these efforts by Croatia being as one of its presidency priorities.



THIRD JEAN MONNET DIALOGUE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

The Third Jean Monnet Dialogue on Peace and Democracy was held in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, co-chaired by President Xhaferi and the three MEPs: Andreas Schieder and Marion Walsman, Chair and Vice-Chair of the JPC EU-North Macedonia and Ilhan Kucuk, Permanent Rapporteur for the country.

Following a two-day open and constructive dialogue, political groups and the leadership agreed on changes in the Rules of Procedure that would ensure the new parliamentary composition efficiency, transparency and effectiveness in its work. "We aim to strengthen the role of the Parliament, and we are convinced that this dialogue offers a real opportunity to put the Parliament not only at the center of consensus building on legislation, but also to be a leader of the reform agenda. Our strategic commitments, namely NATO and EU membership, require functional institutions, a functioning Assembly", stressed President Xhaferi. "The political dialogue is at the heart of modern parliamentary democracy, and we see today's agreement as part of a broader political consensus on the country's European future, expressed by political leaders after the disappointing October European Council. We are happy that yesterday's consensus was confirmed by all political leaders. The political parties have again demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that Parliament is highlighted as a regional leader in parliamentary reform and embracing a European culture of consensus building through dialogue and compromise", said the three MEPs. Seen outside the elections, the Jean Monnet



dialogue has the potential to contribute to other key topics, including the independence of the Assembly. The EU negotiation process, once launched, will bring new opportunities and challenges, and the Jean Monnet dialogue can play a key role in empowering Parliament to take the lead.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER ASPECT

The Committee on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men held a public debate on the influence of climate change on gender balance with representatives from the relevant ministries, the NGO sector and experts in the field. The participants concluded that the Paris Agreement recognizes the gender balance and its ratification imposes obligations to the countries for gender-sensitive policies. In our country, it will focus on support of women, vulnerable and marginalized groups, and their role to combat climate changes.

Our country is first in the region where energy and climate change are integrated within the energy community. Participants also called for collection of gender separated data, intersection of gender and climate change in the existing strategic and legal framework, strengthening of capacities of major actors in the process and efficient implementation and monitoring of policy implementation. They also demanded increase of awareness among farmers regarding adaptive measures towards climate change in the agricultural production and preservation of natural resources and the rural development.



CROATIAN PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES PRESENTED IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Program and Priorities for the work of the Croatian Presidency with the EU Council were presented by the Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Nives Tiganj. Ambassador Tiganj, mentioned as an important priority of Croatia, the enlargement with new member states, in line with the new European Union methodology.

The President of the Committee on EU Affairs, Mr. Artan Grubi, congratulated Croatia on its first EU presidency, and pointed that the upcoming six-month period is a turbulent period for North Macedonia and Albania, who expect to be deservedly given a start date for negotiations. The EU Ambassador to North Macedonia, Mr. Zbogor and Deputy -Prime Minister for European Affairs, Dr. Osmani, emphasized the need for an inclusive approach of the whole society in the country, in order to realize the necessary EU reform and the country to advance on the EU path. The MP of SDSM, Mr. Betijane Kitev, as well as the MP of VMRO-DPMNE, Mr. Antonio Milososki stressed that the country should start negotiations on the chapters as soon as possible. Kitev noted that the country has done a lot in terms of the reforms required and that he expects progress in the EU process by the end of this presidency, while MP Milososki referred, among other things, to the need for genuine implementation of the laws, above all, in the judiciary.



ROMANIA STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

President Xhaferi met today with Senator Ioan Cristian Chirtes, President of the Friendship Group with the Republic of North Macedonia in the Romanian Parliament. President Xhaferi stressed that this visit was of particular importance, given the overall good relations between the two states. It was emphasized that the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia will continue to foster friendly relations with the Parliament of Romania in the future, in particular by intensifying the inter-parliamentary cooperation, as well as at the level of the parliamentary groups for cooperation.

Senator Chirtes expressed great satisfaction for this meeting and conveyed the assurances of the highest state Romanian leadership for further support of the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Republic of North Macedonia. He pointed out that Romania will continue to strongly urge EU member states to urgently integrate the country in the European family to which it belongs. For him, compromise agreements with neighboring countries that put an end to open issues are a huge contribution to the positive outcome of this process.



HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE DELEGATION IN THE BUNDESTAG

Delegation of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, headed by the Chairperson of the Committee on Health Care, Mirsada Emini-Asani paid an official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany, where they met their counterparts from the Committee on Health in the German Bundestag, and with representatives of the Federal Ministry of Health care and the National Association for Legal Insurance in Germany. During the meetings, they discussed the health care system and health insurance in both countries. There is no ideal health care system, but the German concept is compatible and acceptable. It was emphasized that in the context of the European integration processes and the support given by Germany in the process of enlargement of the European Union, it is essential to obtain information, to share experiences from both normative and application of health care activities. In this regard, the exchange of positive experiences between the two parliamentary committees is extremely important and this kind of cooperation should continue in the future.

SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES

The Inter-Party Parliamentary Group for the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Movement Against Handicap - Polio Plus, organized a solemn event in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia to mark the adoption of the Declaration for the Right of Political Participation of Citizens with Disabilities. This Declaration was adopted by the Assembly as a common cross-party commitment by all MPs, together with the Inter-Party Group and the Movement Polio Plus. "Thanks to their persistence and of course the support of all of us here, we can be at peace with our conscience and the responsibility we have as representatives of all citizens. Life has challenges, expected and unexpected barriers; let us focus on enabling accessibility, inclusivity for each individual and contribute to building a more humane and above all society with equal treatment of all", said President Xhaferi. IPPG MPs received special acknowledgments for their work and for their special contribution and commitment to persons with disabilities.



PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE DRAFT-LAW ON THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

The Committee on Defense and Security held a public hearing on the Draft Law on the Intelligence Agency. The President of the Committee, Mr. Hari Lokvenec emphasized that this is the fourth and final law related to security sector reforms, following the laws passed on the Operational-Technical Agency, the National Security Agency and the Security-Intelligence Community Coordination, all passed through a public debate, with coordination and consensus among lawmakers, groups, experts and relevant stakeholders. Having in mind that the Intelligence Agency is a security-intelligence service, whose main responsibility is to collect data and information from abroad pertaining to the protection of national security of the State, there is a need to adopt a new law compatible with the aforementioned laws and to make a clear distinction between the National Security Agency, whose competence overlaps with that of the Intelligence Agency, under existing law. The new law clearly defines the Agency's competence to collect, process, analyze, exchange, store and protect data and information from abroad that are important for the security, defense, foreign policy interests of the state. By adopting the new law on the Intelligence Agency, the country will acquire a modern, professional and efficient foreign intelligence service capable of facing the challenges at any moment. The reform of the security system will also be completed, all for the benefit of national security and citizens in general.



PRESPA AGREEMENT AND YOUTH POLICIES

Members of the European Parliament Andreas Schieder, Marion Walsmann and Ilhan Kyuchuk, together with President Xhaferi met with the leaders of the Youth Union of Krusevo and the UNESCO Youth Union of Thessaloniki, Metodija Stojcevski and Babis Papayoannou, organizers of the Youth Cultural Event within the frames of

the Prespa Agreement.

Representatives of youth organizations are active in the Assembly through the Inter-Parliamentary Group on Youth and with the adoption of the Law on Youth Policies, thus emphasizing their greater participation in the process. Both NGO representatives from the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Greece referred to their long-standing cooperation, which after the signing and entry into force of the so called Prespa Agreement is placed in a different context, with the main aim of exchanging ideas, knowledge, experience and cooperation between young people from both countries. MEPs welcomed this initiative because, as they emphasized, nationalism has no future and only united nations can make a step forward in European integration and the future of the European Union. The EU, besides being a project of peace and economic prosperity, is also a project for young people. It is therefore very important that youth organizations set an example and unite young people on the essential issues and problems facing civil society today.



ENLARGEMENT WILL REMAIN HIGH ON THE EU AGENDA

The MP Ivana Tufegljic met with high representatives from the French Foreign Ministry who came to get closely acquainted with the real situation on the ground. Ms. Tufegljic informed the guests about the Youth Affairs and Policies Club in the Assembly, composed of members of all parliamentary parties, aimed at pursuing the interests of young people in the country. In this context, she called for greater inclusion of issues affecting young people on the EU agenda. The French side emphasized that the EU wants to make sure that all the reform processes are fulfilled before the start of negotiations with the Western Balkan countries. They also expressed interest in tackling corruption and conflicts of interest, as well as law enforcement.



VEVCANI CARNIVAL 2020



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