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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 JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2023:

- Law on Financial Inspection in the Public Sector
- Law Amending the Law on Border Control
- Law Amending the Criminal Code
- Law Ratifying the Agreement between the Republic of North Macedonia and the European Union on Operational Activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in the Republic of North Macedonia

MEETING OF PRESIDENT JAFERI WITH AMBASSADOR GEER

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Talat Xhaferi, the Vice Presidents Goran Misovski and Husni Ismaili and the coordinators of the parliamentary groups represented in the Assembly, Jovan Mitreski, Nikola Micevski, Arber Ademi and Surija Rashidi held a working meeting with the ambassador of the European Union in the Republic of North Macedonia, David Geer. At the meeting, opinions were exchanged about the current developments in the Assembly, the parliamentary dialogue, the work of the EU agenda and the dynamics of the adoption of laws, the inclusion of the Assembly in the screening process and the progress of the Jean Monnet Dialogue, and the interlocutors also referred to the constitutional amendments.

It was jointly assessed that building trust and good cooperation between parties in the Parliament is not only important for the successful implementation of reforms related to European integration, but that this cooperation is also important because it shapes the political culture in the country. It was agreed that such meetings would be held on a regular basis, in order to take a close look at the state's progress on the road to the European Union.



HUNGARIAN SUPPORT TO THE EU- INTEGRATION PROCESS

President Xhaferi met with the President of Hungary, Katalin Novak, who paid an official visit to the country. Gratitude was expressed for the support that Hungary provides for our integration in the European Union. He informed the guest that the screening process is currently taking place, expected in the fall to continue with the process of accession negotiations, and in the meantime, it is necessary to approach the constitutional amendments. He confirmed that efforts are being made in the Parliament to find the necessary majority for those changes. President Novak, on her behalf, praised the efforts of our country for regional cooperation, while emphasizing that the country can always count on the friendly support of Hungary. President Xhaferi concluded that the integration of our country and the entire region into the European Union will contribute to raising the standard of living and, consequently, will reduce the pressure for emigration.



MEETING OF PRESIDENT JAFERI WITH PRESIDENT ZUPANCIČ

President Xhaferi, who paid an official visit to the Republic of Slovenia, met with the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, Urška Klakočar Zupančič. President Xhaferi expressed immense gratitude for the unreserved and proactive support of the Republic of Slovenia for the realization of our highest state priorities, membership in NATO and membership in the European Union. He informed about the current activities on the domestic level, including the presidency of the Republic of North Macedonia with the OSCE and with the SEECP this year and our planned contribution to the advancement and promotion of their goals, principles and values. President Zupancic called for the intensification of mutual cooperation between the two parliaments and between the two states, especially in times when the world is dealing with crises of global proportions in the past years, citing the pandemic, military, energy and economic crisis as issues for necessary joint action. At the same time, she expressed her full support for the negotiation process to be conducted exclusively on a reform basis, welcoming the efforts to continue with the necessary steps at home for the opening of the clusters and chapters during the negotiations.



OVERSIGHT DEBATE DEDICATED TO THE UNREGISTERED PERSONS

The Committee on Political System and Relations between Communities held an oversight debate on the application of the legal provisions in the Law on unregistered persons in the birth register.

The purpose of the hearing was to supervise the implementation of the law and its successfulness related to unregistered persons in the birth register, what are the benefits of this law, what difficulties do unregistered persons face in the registry, what is the opinion and what is the experience of the holders of the specific (assigned special) identity number, and what problems and situations do the holders of these persons who have been assigned a special ID number deal with and what difficulties do they face in exercising their basic rights? Government representatives and other concerned institutions for implementation of the law were invited to give their statements. Based on the information received during the discussion, the Committee will prepare conclusions for further consideration and actions to be taken by relevant actors.

SCREENING PROCESS DEBATED IN THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN ISSUES

The Committee on European Issues held a session dedicated to the ongoing screening process with Deputy-President of the Government in charge of European Affairs, Bojan Maricic. He spoke about the screening of the Fundamentals cluster, carried out from September to December last year and that the preparations for the bilateral screenings for the other clusters are underway. At the same time, he pointed out that the Secretariat for European Affairs is intensively working on the operationalization of the negotiation structure, preparation of the administration for the accession process and strengthening of the Permanent Mission of North Macedonia in Brussels. The Vice Prime Minister also emphasized the importance of the Parliament in the negotiation process, and that information during the screening will be provided in a timely manner as well as that the Parliament will be an active stakeholder in the process. The Chair of the Committee Arber Ademi, emphasized that the momentum in the accession process has been restored in the EU, after more than a decade, especially due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and that we should take advantage of that. That's why he emphasized that it is crucial that in the following years we gain the image of a country that delivers reforms, for which we need, first of all, a national consensus for EU reforms, not only party-wise, but also broadly a civil consensus. Ademi expressed the expectation that the opposition will be actively involved in these processes, including constitutional amendments, with the aim of introducing the Bulgarian community into our Constitution. Deputies Snezhana Kaleska Vancheva, Halil Snopce, Marija Petrushevska and Gordana Siljanovska Davkova took part in the discussion, who agreed that it is important to inform the Parliament about the progress of the screening. It was pointed out that the MPs should be actively involved in the negotiation process, for which it will be necessary to find a model through which they can exercise control

over the Government. There was also talk of constitutional amendments, as part of the negotiation framework, as well as the importance of quality administration, which is an important tool in the European integration process. In addition to the attendance of the diplomatic corps, representatives of civil society also took part at the meeting, in order to emphasize its importance and significance in the screening process of our country through its greater involvement in this process.



PRIORITIES OF THE SWEDISH EU PRESIDENCY PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL EUROPEAN INTEGRATION COUNCIL

The National Council for European Integrations held a session dedicated to the Program and the priorities of the Swedish Presidency with the Council of the European Union with H.E. Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden, Ms Ami Larsson Jain.

H.E. Mr. David Geer, Ambassador and Head of the EU Delegation in Skopje and H.E. Mr. Jaroslav Ludva, Ambassador of the Czech Republic, as well as representatives from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain and the EU Delegation also attended the session. Ambassador Jain pointed out in her presentation that the priorities, build on the achievements of the Czech presidency, are in line with the broader program of the current trio. The program establishes four priorities and main directions for the six-month presidency of the EU Council: security - unity, competitiveness, green and energy transitions and democratic values and rule of law. She emphasized that the future of the countries of the Western Balkans is in the Union and that the EU will continue to support the reforms that are part of the accession process. She outlined the programs of her country for cooperation with the countries of the Western Balkans, including our country receiving money under such a program of an amount of 6 million EUR in 2022.

The participants in the discussion referred to the challenges ahead for the state in terms of European integration, the dynamics of reforms, the rule of law, organized crime and corruption, the security of the Union during the current Russian aggression in Ukraine, the common security and foreign policy, dealing with high inflation and the price of energy that directly affects citizens and companies.



PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE GENDER EQUALITY LAW

MPs from the Women Deputies Club participated in a public debate, which is the ninth in a row regarding the Draft Law on Gender Equality, organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

In addition to female MPs, there were also experts working on the preparation of the new legal solution and representatives of the OSCE Mission in Skopje. The Chair of the Committee on Equal Opportunities Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, in her address referred to the time when the first Law on Equal Opportunities was adopted and pointed out that seventeen years since then, the real situation has changed a lot and that this alone imposes the need to adopt a new law. At the end of the introductory speeches, the president of the Club of Deputies, Lolita Ristova, made a comparison of the draft text that was proposed for the first time with the version that was prepared today and that of course has room for improvement, based on the comments from the conducted public hearings. so far, until the final adoption of the law

PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION PROGRAM WITH THE SWEDISH RIKSDAG

A delegation of the Steering Group for Democratic Development of the Swedish Riksdag held regular meetings with their counterparts in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. The hosts and guests shared experiences of parliamentary work as a contribution to democratic development between the two legislative houses. In his address, the Chairman of the Assembly Fadil Zendeli said that the Assembly within the framework of the "Jean Monnet" dialogue is in the process of improving parliamentary procedures and that it counts on the strong and constructive support of the Riksdag, especially since Sweden currently presides with the Council of the European Union. Members also shared experiences among others about the legislative procedure, the engagement of young people in politics, gender equality and parliamentary oversight function. Parliamentarians from the Riksdag showed the greatest interest in the open offices for meetings of parliamentarians with citizens, public debates, and transparency in the passing of laws.



MEETING WITH COLLEAGUES FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Chairs of the Foreign Policy Committee and European Issues Committee Antonio Miloshoski and Arber Ademi, met with the deputies from the Czech Republic, Marek Zenisek, President of the Committee for Foreign Affairs and Ondrej Benesik, President of the Committee on European Affairs.

The Czech Republic was confirmed as a supporter of the expansion of the EU with the countries of the Western Balkans. At the same time, hope was expressed for the completion of the screening by the end of this year and for the successful course of North Macedonia's negotiations for full membership in the EU, as well as for overcoming the obstacles, after several years of waiting for the country to move to this last stage of the process of integration in the EU. The interlocutors specifically addressed the developments in Ukraine, highlighting the support and assistance from North Macedonia and the condemnation of Russian aggression.



VISIT OF A GERMAN BUNDESTAG SECURITY EXPERT GROUP

In 2022, the President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Talat Xhaferi, initiated the realization of the third strategic goal - independent parliamentary security.

In that context, a study visit was made to the German Bundestag, which was followed by a visit of a delegation of security experts from the German Bundestag to the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. German representatives held meetings and shared his professional experience. During the "Mountain Talks" at the beginning of 2022, the Minister of the Interior, Oliver Spasovski, expressed overall support for the achievement of the goal of independent parliamentary security and underlined that the Ministry makes its resources available to support this reform. For the realization of this strategic goal, there is a consensus in the Parliament from all political parties, and within the framework of these activities, a working group for cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Justice was formed. The purpose of the working group is to determine the modalities of functioning and organization that will provide the highest level of security for the deputies and for the parliamentary services, but, at the same time, that the legislative authority remains open and accessible so that the citizens can participate in the democratic processes.



ROMA RIGHTS REPORT UNDER DEBATE

The Inter-Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) for support of the rights of the Roma, their inclusion and integration in the Republic of North Macedonia held a working meeting, which was opened by the coordinator of the group, Ljatif Šikovska.

The coordinator presented the Report on the work of this group for 2022, which represents all the activities for the last year, with the exact number and description of held work meetings and other activities. In addition, Šikovska also presented the proposals for the future activities. The MPs were informed that the preparation of the action plan for 2023 is in the final stage.

In her presentation, the coordinator Šikovska thanked the members for all their proposals for the future and emphasized the mutual cooperation of IPPG with the Committee for Relations between Communities in the Assembly, as well as that their joint work will contribute to improve the needs of the Roma community.



14TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

The Committee for Relations between Communities held its 14th session, during which an evaluation of the achievements and work of the Work Program for 2022 and promotion and determination of activities for 2023 was carried out, with the participation of the members of the Committee.

Regarding the work of the Committee, the members of the Committee assessed that the working atmosphere is positive, transparent, and interactive. It is evident that there is an improvement in field supervision, for which the Committee will continue the practice of working visits to the municipal Commissions for relations between communities and individual municipalities in the state. In the Program for 2023, which was prepared as a continuation and in consistency with the old Program, a further focus is placed on respecting the ethnic identity and interests of all citizens and harmony in inter-ethnic relations in the state. The already well-established mutual cooperation with partner institutions should continue and be upgraded. President Pasholi thanked the members of the Committee for their contribution so far and their engagement in the Committee's sessions. It was proposed at a special session of the Committee to discuss the program policy and the financing of the newsrooms for the smaller ethnic communities. The Intercommunity Relations Committee remains committed to solving open issues exclusively through dialogue and mutual understanding, respecting cultural and linguistic diversity and strengthening coexistence among citizens in the state.



MEETING COLLEAGUES FROM MONTENEGRO IN THE ASSEMBLY

The members of the Committee for Political System and Relations between Communities and the Commission for Local Self-Government in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia today had separate meetings with fellow MPs from the Committee for Political System, Judiciary and Administration of Montenegro, who are on a study visit to the country. At the meeting, the Chair Sonja Mirakovska referred to the current activities of the committee and planned changes in the Rules of Procedure, pointing out that their adoption should enable additional strengthening and greater efficiency of the working bodies in the legislature. Momo Koprivica, President of the Committee for Political System, Judiciary and Administration of Montenegro, also spoke about the competences of this body, as well as about the setting and the normative framework of the Montenegrin Parliament. The Chair of the Local Self-Government Committee Ane Lashkoska, spoke about the position of the municipalities in the country, about the strategies for balanced regional development and about the decentralization process. She said that decentralization, as a complex process of transferring responsibilities from the central to the local government, imposed the need to establish a special commission in the Parliament. MPs from Montenegro also shared experiences with their colleagues from the country regarding the negotiations for membership in the European Union, concluding that the EU and NATO are the only guarantee for the stability and security of the region.



WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT - THE PROFESSIONS OF THE FUTURE REQUIRE SKILLS TODAY

The National European Integration Council (NEIC) held a session dedicated to the analysis titled What young people want - the professions of the future require skills today, prepared by from the Institute for Good Governance and Euro-Atlantic Perspectives (IDUEP).

The analysis was presented by Bojan Kordalov, communicator and president of the Institute for Good Governance and Euro-Atlantic Perspectives. The project was implemented from March to December 2022, with participation of over 30 youth organizations. Regarding the main conclusions that emerge from the analysis, Kordalov informed about the following: young people want quality jobs that offer opportunities for skill development; a well-paid job; legal regulation to work from home; flexible working hours; zero percent tax for young people in the IT sector; opportunities for social and health insurance for freelancers; strengthening measures for self-employment and opening one's own business; paid internship and volunteering, training and further qualification for young people within the companies with state aid; quality educa-

tion, dual education as part of the system; private health insurance as an alternative to overburdened public health care; involving young people in the fight against corruption, as well as a healthy environment by supporting youth initiatives to deal with the challenges in the area. The participants in the discussion referred to issues related to the selectivity of the institutions in the management of youth policies, the problem of emigration of young people, operationalization of plans for realizing the priorities of young people, possibilities for arranging youth policies according to the example of highly developed countries, revising of the Law on Labor Relations in relation to issues related to young people, creation of a strategic approach to employment, depoliticization of the employment process, establishment of a merit system in employment and allocation of a larger state budget for science and education. Questions were also raised about the need to formalize the Youth Affairs Club in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. NEIC unanimously decided that analysis, with the conclusions and recommendations, to submit it to the Government for further action.



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