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Republic of Macedonia on the way to the EU

Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-RM

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and the EU

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

Macedonian legislation harmonized with the EU acquis in June 2012:

- Law amending the Law on Railway System
- Law Amending the Law on Aviation
- Law Amending the Law on Scientific and Research Activities
- Law Amending the Law on Standardization
- Law Amending the Law on Foreigners
- Law Amending the Law on Employment and Work of Foreigners

Days of Macedonian Culture in Ankara



JPC RECOMMENDATIONS: CONFIRMATION OF THE MACEDONIAN IDENTITY, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE



The 10th JPC-European Union and the Republic of Macedonia meeting was held on 4th June 2012 in Brussels. Both MPs from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and MEPs from the European Parliament participated at the meeting, also having representatives from the European Commission and the EEAS, on behalf of the European Council. **The debate on various topics resulted with adoption of *Final Conclusions*, where parliamentarians from both sides called on the Council to confirm the Commission's recommendation and to give the country a date to start the accession negotiations during the Cyprus Presidency 2012. JPC also regretted the**

omission of the term "Macedonian" with regard to the country's identity, culture and language in the Commission Progress Report 2011, and recommended the European Commission to re-establish its practise from previous Progress Reports. Parliamentarians welcomed the judgement of the International Court of Justice of 5 December 2011 with respect to the Interim Agreement and stated that it represents an obligation for Greece not to block the membership of the country in NATO and the start of negotiations for membership in the EU.

They welcomed the incoming Chairmanship of South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) of the country from June 2012 until June 2013, and emphasised the continuous participation and the constructive contribution of Macedonia in the regional cooperation as a particularly important element for EU membership. Also welcoming the launching of the HLAD and the commitment of the government to make further progress in key areas, such as freedom of expression, rule of law and fundamental rights, public administration and electoral reform, and strengthening of the market economy, they reminded however that HLAD should not be seen as a substitute, but a bridge leading to negotiations for membership. Regarding electoral reform, they noted the commitment of the government in line with the ODIHR and GRECO rec-

ommendations to be done by September 2012. They outlined the government's commitment to strengthening inter-ethnic relations, notably through a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement by June 2012, in order to achieve 'integration without assimilation' in the spirit of multiculturalism. Parliamentarians supported the facilitated procedures for company registration in the country, as well as accelerated judicial procedures, the new employment strategy and improved the functioning of financial markets and noted the country's appropriate macroeconomic policy mix in the context of the global crisis, achieving partial recovery of the economy, including positive economic growth rates, low indebtedness and maintenance of stable inflation. In relation to the waste management, they stated that further progress is needed and encouraged financing through IPA funds for capacity building and preparation of regional plans for waste management. MPs and MEPs also welcomes the first 8 small hydropower plants under construction in the country and called the government to make further use of its renewable energy potential. At the end, they called on the authorities to open the cross-border line for hiking and biking between Macedonia and Bulgaria, to improve the section of the "Iron Curtain Trail" by co-financing of the European Union.

EU-RELATED LAWS DEBATED IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The National Euro-Integration Council had a fruitful month, holding two public debates on the amendments to the Law on Interior and the Law on Interception of Communications. The adoption of both laws is envisaged in the NPAA (revision 2012). Both debates included participation of members of the government, MPs, representatives of various interest groups in the society, NGOs, experts and university professors. The amendments to the Law on Interior regulate the cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecutor's Office, especially regarding the rights and responsibilities of the police officers sent to the Public Prosecutor's Office Investigation Center, and payment ranks in the Ministry of Interior related to the achievement of expected results.

The Law is also aimed to provide basis for full implementation of legal provision in the Law on Criminal Procedure. Regarding the Law on Interception of Communications, the participants agreed that this draft Law covers a broad topic and a sensitive issue concerning certain important aspects such of life as protection of human rights, privacy and the guaranteed right to communicate. The Law also has to be harmonized with the Law on Criminal Procedure. Having in mind the fact that this is a draft text of the Law, the participants said they expect the opinions and suggestions expressed at the debate to be taken into consideration in the final version of the Law. The Chair of the National Council, Ms. Radmila Sekerinska, said that a summary of both public debates will be forwarded to the

Ministry of Interior for further consideration.



SLOVENIA IS A FRIEND AND ALLY OF MACEDONIA



The President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski and MPs from the Group for Cooperation with the Assembly of Slovenia, paid official visit to the Republic of Slovenia, where they had meetings in the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as with the Prime-Minister and President of the Republic of Slovenia. At the meeting with the President of the Assembly, Mr. Gregor Virant, President Veljanoski underlined his appreciation for the continuous support of Slovenia for Macedonia, especially on its Euro-Atlantic path. He also informed his colleague that besides the outcome at the NATO Chicago Summit, Macedonia remains committed to fulfilling the reforms and the obligations in the framework of the Alliance missions. He underlined that the reforms are aimed at achieving standards for the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia. President Virant referred to the name issue of the Republic of Macedonia with its southern neighbour, expressing his personal opinion that this issue is irrational and exaggerated, since one state cannot give up on its name and identity. He also expressed his conviction that the joint efforts by both sides can provide a solution to this issue.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Karl Erjavec expressed his conviction that all the countries in the region should be integrated in the EU, since the Union without the Balkans is not what it should be. The Delegation also had a meeting with the Prime Minister Janez Jansa, who underlined that Slovenia has always been a friend and an ally of Macedonia. He underlined that economic cooperation is in the interest of both states, and that the Slovenia like Macedonia is focused on attracting foreign investments, trying to overcome the consequences of the economic

crisis. He concluded that Macedonia survived the crisis without major recession. President Veljanoski emphasized that friendly relations and the continuous support of Slovenia, impose additional responsibility and obligation for Macedonia to achieve and implement the reforms, providing stronger arguments for their support. Mr. Danilo Tirk, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, pointed out that the Macedonia can count on the support of Slovenia on its Euro-Atlantic path and shared the opinion that every possibility should be seized that will enable Macedonia to reach its projected goals.

PUBLIC DEBATES ORGANIZED BY THE COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN AND MEN

The Committee on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men (CEO) in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia organized two public debates this month dedicated to "The Role of in the Rural Development of the Republic of Macedonia -possibilities and challenges", and "to the "National Strategy for Prevention of Family Violence 2012-2015." Government representatives, MPs, local government committees on equal opportunities of women and men, Embassies, international organizations like UNDR, UNICEF, as well as non-governmental organizations took part in the debates. The debate on rural development ended up with adoption of conclusions, welcoming government measures for support of women in rural areas through subsidies for food production and other traditional products, as well as the network and linking activities of women farmers by the so-called LEADER -Program to strengthen their role in rural areas. CEO also called on the Government to adopt and implement this LEADER Program as soon as possible, as well as to build infrastructure



and facilities necessary for everyday living in rural areas, also by use of EU funds for this purpose. CEO expressed interest to be actively involved in all activities for economic prosperity of women in rural areas and encouraged NGOs to implement similar activities in rural areas. The debate on the "National Strategy or Prevention of Family Violence 2012-2015", resulted with support of the adoption and the implementation of this strategy. CEO asked that two women MPs, from the position and the opposition, should be included in the work of the National Coordinative Body for Family Violence, key institutions and their employees should be well informed and trained for the implementation of the strategy, budget means should be provided for the implementation. Victims should receive full psychological, economical and other types of assistance, and more attention should be paid to the treatment of vandals in special centers and Counseling Units within Social Work Centers.

"ROLE OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE EU ACCESSION NEGOTIATION PROCESS" EP WORKSHOP IN MONTENEGRO

Delegation of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia composed of the Chairperson of the Committee on European Issues Mr. Hajrula Misini and the MPs Vladanka Avirovic and Biljana Kazandziska participated at the two-day Workshop held in Montenegro, jointly organized by the European Parliament and the Parliament of Montenegro on the topic: "Role of National Parliaments in the EU Accession Negotiation Process" Representatives of the national parliaments of the Western Balkan countries, as well as the Members of the European Parliament Mr. Eduard Kukan and Mr. Laszlo Surjan, participated in the workshop. The debate was focussed on the preparation of the national parliaments for the accession negotiations and on the need for development of the administrative structures and capacities for support of the process. The members of the Macedonian Delegation presented the latest developments in the country regarding the process of European integration, pointing out the opening of the High Level Accession Dialogue (HLAD) between Skopje and Brussels and presented the conclusions from the second session of the Dialogue, held on 7 May in Skopje. The Delegation also informed their colleagues about the role and the cooperation among of the Committee on European Issues, the Foreign Policy Committee, the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) EU-Republic of Macedonia, and the National Council for European Integration in ensuring effective oversight of the Government EU integration process.

BEROVO IN SUMMER



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