

### Your contacts:

Chairman of the EU-MK JPC: [k.hasipi@sobranie.mk](mailto:k.hasipi@sobranie.mk)

Members: [jpc@sobranie.mk](mailto:jpc@sobranie.mk)

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## PRESIDENT VELJANOSKI OFFICIALLY VISITS THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski, upon the invitation the President of the Croatian Parliament, Mr. Josip Leko, officially visited the Republic of Croatia. At the meetings, the interlocutors shared the pleasure from the traditionally good and friendly relations between the two states, without open issues, as well as the preparedness for promotion of the cooperation on every level. Mr. Josip Leko expressed pleasure from the good relations, important for the bilateral and multilateral cooperation and the mutual support in the regional and international organizations. He also underlined that the Republic of Croatia is prepared to assist the friends and neighbours to the requested degree and that the fulfilment of the high standards of NATO and EU by the Republic of Macedonia is well recognized. He welcomed the good economic growth of the Republic of Macedonia as well as the low debt rate, considering the economic situation in Europe and in the world.



Macedonian legislation harmonized with the EU acquis in

### DECEMBER 2013/JANUARY 2014:

- Law on Audiovisual Media Services

- Law Amending the Customs Law

- Law on Mediation

- Law on Financial Police

- Law Ratifying the Agreement between the

Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Amending the Agreement between Republic of Macedonia

and Bosnia and Herzegovina for Legal Aid in Civil and

Criminal Cases

## PRESIDENT VELJANOSKI OFFICIALLY VISITS THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

In the framework of the official visit, President Veljanoski met his colleague, Mr. Ilir Meta. At the meeting, both Speakers expressed pleasure from the established good relations between the two Parliaments, on level of Speakers, but also on the level of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation and Committees. Mr. Meta underlined that Albania expresses open support for the Republic of Macedonia, emphasizing that it should be Member of NATO and should open accession negotiations with the EU. The interlocutors expressed expectations that the Republic of Albania will receive the candidate status and preparedness to share the gained experience of the Republic of Macedonia as a candidate state. Regional Cooperation, initiatives and concrete projects, were areas were recognized as good opportunity for joint approach in the European institutions and for regional prosperity. One of the topics were also minorities in the two states and the dedication to strengthening the mutual trust, implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the significance of the two minorities for the states they live in as a reality and a possibility for building a more stabile bridge in the relations of the two states. The significance of the visits and the meetings on every level are considered to be an additional impetus and a contribution for the strengthening of the overall relations, promotion of friendly connections, clear message and signal to the citizens and the business community for closer and better cooperation.





## PRESENTATION OF PRIORITIES OF THE GREEK PRESIDENCY WITH THE COUNCIL OF THE EU



The EU Affairs Committee organized a joint session with the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Delegation to the JPC Committee EU-Republic of Macedonia and the National Euro-Integration Council, on which the program and the priorities of the Greek Presidency were presented by the Greek Ambassador Mr. Haris Lalakos. The Head of the EU Delegation in the Republic of Macedonia, Ambassador Aivo Orav, also attended the session, as well as many resident Ambassadors from EU Member States. The Ambassador Lalakos in his introductory address presented the program and the developments in Greece both on political and economic field. He outlined that the focus in the following six-months of presiding will be focused on four priorities: growth and job creation, EU integration and EU zones, borders, mobility and migration and inclusive EU maritime policy. The EU Affairs Chair, Mr. Misini emphasized the determination of the Republic of Macedonia for EU membership and the problem due to which five years in a row, Macedonia can not start the negotiations. "I have to admit, it's contradictory that Greece, which has always been an engine for European enlargement and has strongly believed in the need for enlargement of the Union with the membership of Balkan states since the time of launching of the Thessaloniki Agenda, as well as the last initiative Agenda 2014, now when it's presiding with the Union, not to put enlargement in its top priorities.", concluded Mr. Misini. The JPC Co-Chair, Mr. Hasipi

pointed out that the European Union should remain open for the countries which fulfill the criteria and which are ready and willing to share its values. Open bilateral issues should be treated separately from Euro-Integration issues. The lack of interest for establishment of closer bilateral relations on political level, as well as non-respect of acts and commitments under international law can not lead to normal flow of mutual relations and to support of our EU-integration process, said Mr. Hasipi. He expressed belief that Greece shall show preparedness in the following months to be an engine of the European perspective primarily to its northern neighbor, through a visionary and open policy with respect of basic democratic values.

## DIALOGUE FOR GREATER TRUST BETWEEN MACEDONIA AND BULGARIA IS NECESSARY

Increasing the cooperation in specific areas and on all levels is of mutual interest of Macedonia and Bulgaria - this was underlined at the meeting of the Parliamentary Group of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for Co-operation with the Parliament of the Republic of Bulgaria with the Bulgarian Minister on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kristian Vigenin. The Chair of the Parliamentary Group, Mr. Ilija Dimovski, and the Members of the Group: Mr. Vasil Pishhev, Mr. Gordan Georgiev, Mr. Save Marachkov, Mr. Naxhi Xhelili, Mr. Panche Orcev and Mr. Nexhati Jakupi, expressed pleasure from the meeting, underlining that there is no anti-Bulgarian position in Macedonia among the citizens and that more than 90 percent of the citizens would like Bulgaria to support



Macedonia in its EU integration process. The support from Bulgaria is very important and its experience should be used before and upon the Membership in the European Union. Mr. Vigenin pointed out that EU membership is a top priority for each aspirant country and initiated bilateral cooperation between the EU Affairs and Foreign Affairs Committees in both Parliaments, which could in future also be expanded to other parliamentary committees. He also called for greater cooperation in the field of transport infrastructure, cross-border cooperation and economy, as well as for increased contacts between politicians from both states which will have a positive reflection among the citizens and in the public. The joint session of the two Governments, as well as the joint meeting of the Academies of Science and Arts of both states was welcomed, opening the possibility for future cooperation between universities, chambers of commerce, civil associations, sports clubs, etc. The role of the media in the communication between the two states was evaluated as very important in this regard.

## PACE RAPporteur ROBERT WALTER IN MACEDONIAN PARLIAMENT



The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Monitoring Committee Rapporteur, Mr. Robert Walter, during his visit to the Republic of Macedonia, had a meeting with the Committee on Political System and Relations among Communities in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. The Vice-President of the Assembly, Mr. Svetlana Jakimovska welcomed the Rapporteur and informed him on the work of the Committee, also expressing gratitude for the assistance provided to the Republic of Macedonia in its Euro-Integration

process. Mr. Walter, as a great supporter to the EU membership process of the Republic of Macedonia showed interest on the progress in several areas such as: amendments in the Electoral Code, reforms in the public administration, decentralization process, media, as well as developments from the past 24th December events. The MPs informed him on the progress made in these areas, especially on the amendments in the Electoral Code, administration and media reforms.

## PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE PREPARATION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE LAW

The Committee on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men held a joint public debate with the Committee on Labor and Social Policy, Women's Parliamentarians Club, representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy as well as Macedonian's Women Lobby on preparation of a Law on Family Violence. Several NGO's representatives also participated in the debate. The event ended with adoption of conclusions supporting the preparation of such law that will respect the dignity of the woman, will provide immediate action and enlargement of the scope of victims as well as the scope of economic aspects of family violence, that will provide special attention to children and protection of other vulnerable groups, will determine institutions and NGO's where family violence will be reported, will give greater role of municipalities, will also increase competences of relevant services. The Committee also supported establishment of multi-sectoral approach team for preparation of the law from relevant institutions, NGO's, the Parliament, judiciary, health care and other competent professionals, in order to have a good a high quality law.



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Editorial Board: Kenan Hasipi, Susannah Gjorceva, Marijana Opašinova Šundovska and Dragan Antonov.

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