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PARLIAMENT SPEAKER VELJANOSKI MEETS HEADS OF MACEDONIA'S DIPLOMATIC OFFICES



Dear colleagues,

Dear friends,

In the eve of celebration of the fifth anniversary of our newsletter, I take this opportunity to express appreciation for the work done during its preparation, with a hope that from its date of first release, we have managed to present you a full picture of the European integration process in the Parliament for the past five years.

The process of accession for membership of the Republic of Macedonia to the European Union from the beginning until today remains a high national priority and is a result of long-standing social, interethnic and interreligious consensus. It has been a responsibility of all politicians and governments to implement the necessary reforms that have always been reflected in the European

FIFTH JUBILEE OF THE JPC BULLETIN

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS

Commission Progress Reports. Like this year, they all contain six times in a row a recommendation for starting accession negotiations. I hope that European approach will prevail among European leaders, with greater sensitivity to the name issue in finding a model similar to the Slovenian-Croatian model, since despite the challenges and obstacles along the way I remain convinced that it can be implemented. Republic of Macedonia, which has invested so much in achieving European values and goals, deserves soon to get a date for negotiations with the European Union, with parallel activities for finding solution to all open issues in the process.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee in this term in the two parliaments has maintained the continuity of meetings in the spirit of consensus and good will. I sincerely hope that at the next meetings we will work in full composition and we will manage to overcome the current

situation with the continued support of our European colleagues, because it is aimed at achieving full democratic legitimacy and is an important element for further positive development of overall relations between the Republic of Macedonia and the European Union.

Allow me, on behalf of the delegation from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia in the JPC - EU and Republic of Macedonia and on my personal behalf, to wish you good health and success in your personal and professional life in 2015.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Sincerely,

Kenan Hasipi, co-chairman of the JPC and EU-RM



PRESIDENT VELJANOSKI MEETS EP RAPPORTEUR IVO VAJGL

The President of the Assembly, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski, had a meeting with the newly appointed Rapporteur of the European Parliament for the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Ivo Vajgl. President Veljanoski informed the Rapporteur on the current developments in the Republic of Macedonia and the Assembly, underlining that all political entities are responsible for the parliamentary democracy and in this context referred to the present boycott of the opposition and its negative influence on the work of the Assembly and the overall impression to the public and international community. Mr. Veljanoski emphasized that he, as a President, is using all mechanisms of the Rules of Procedure and the Constitution to enable dialogue between the political parties. Rapporteur Vajgl outlined his support and political dialogue within the institutions, above all within the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. He also added that the full functioning of the Assembly will contribute in the building of positive image of the state and its European integration. Rapporteur Vajgl also pointed to the responsibility of all political entities who got the support from the citizens that should be realized through the institutions, in this case through the Assembly. He expressed support in facing all challenges towards the European integration of the Republic of Macedonia.



TWELFTH JPC MEETING IN STRASBOURG



The 12th JPC Meeting - EU and the Republic of Macedonia was held in the European Parliament in Strasbourg after the elections in the two parliaments. The EP Co-Chair Mr. Alojz Peterle expressed satisfaction for the organization of the meeting, emphasizing that the European Parliament has always been a friend of the enlargement process of aspirant countries, including the Republic of Macedonia. He expressed regret that the Council did not decide on the recommendation of the European Commission and the European Parliament for start of negotiations, at the same time expressing hope that open issues with the neighbors will be solved. He also emphasized that expects full composition of JPC with participation of the opposition in its activities. The Macedonian Co-Chair Mr. Kenan Hasipi expressed satisfaction from the clear signal of the European Parliament for the European aspiration of Macedonia by appointment of Mr. Peterle that is an experienced connoisseur of the region and of the state. He expressed his belief that the spirit of consensus in the work and the adoption of recommendations of the JPC will continue as well in this mandate.

During the open debate, MEPs and MPs discussed the current political situation in Macedonia after the early parliamentary elections, the rule of law, reforms in the judiciary and administration, fight against corruption, freedom of expression and the media, economic and financial developments and good neighborly relations within the SEECP context. Mr. Antonio Miloshoski, MP, referred to the early elections, stating that the Government accepted the demands from the opposition before the start of elections and that the opposition took part in the electoral process, but did not accept the results. He stated that their absence is a real problem and that the Government, with assistance of the European Commission, is working to create conditions for their return in Parliament. Mr. Sergej Stanishev, MEP, expressed expectation that the country must make progress in the field of freedom of the media, rule of law and democracy and a step forward to signing an Agreement on Good

Neighborly Relations with the Republic of Bulgaria. He also called for consideration of the demands of the opposition so that it can return in Parliament. Mr. Angel Dzambaski, MEP, stated that Bulgaria recognizes Macedonia under its constitutional name and expectation for organization of joint future activities of the two states and avoidance of activities which may cause provocations the neighboring states. Mr. Bekim Fazliu, MP, pointed out that as a member of an opposition party fully supports the Euro-Integration process for peace, prosperity and security of the state and called for further commitment in the implementation of the Framework Agreement, rule of law and the media and well as in the political dialogue. Regarding the freedom of the media, Mr. Miloshoski, MP informed of the activities of the Government regarding the regular dialogue with the journalists for improvement of the legislative framework in this field. Mr. Artan Grubi, MP, took part in the debate on good neighborly relations, stating that there is excellent cooperation with Albania on all levels such as opening of new border crossings and honorary consulates in both states, as well as with Kosovo having in mind the signing of the Joint Financial Agreement for Cross -Border Cooperation. With a view to the name issue, he underlined that Republic of Macedonia is committed to intensifying the process within the UN in good faith and with constructive approach and in accordance with principles and norms of international law. In this context, Ms. Maria Spiraki, MEP, spoke on the delay in the integration and called for avoidance of activities that will negatively influence the bilateral relations between the two states. Mr. Miloshoski, MP, called for implementation of the verdict from the International Court in Hague and called for a joint government session between the Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Greece, following the example of such sessions held with other neighboring states of Macedonia. Mr. Vladimir Gjorchev, MP, called for improvement of the infrastructure between the neighboring states. Mr. Peterle, MEP, called for a European and not nationalist approach with a greater sensitivity to the name issue, and for finding a model similar to the Slovenian-Croatian model, reminding that Greece accepted the Thessaloniki Agenda and the Stabilization and Association Agreement of Mace-



donia. Mr. Andrej Kovachev, MEP expressed expectation that one day the borders will be overcome and that progress will be made in the field of infrastructure and trade, and that young people can live and move freely in the region. Mr. Hasipi, MP, stated his belief that the neighbors, instead of obstructing Macedonia in the Euro-Integration process, will be a strong supporter of the Republic of Macedonia, enabling parallel start of negotiations and solving of open issues and leaving to the Academies of Science and Art to work on historical issues. Ms. Silvana Boneva, MP, presented the current developments in the field of economy, the decrease of unemployment as a result of good economic policies of the Government and the improved position, being ranked on 63rd place, in the Report for Global Competition of the World Economic forum. Ms. Ivana Maletic, MEP, stated that Macedonia made a great step forward in the economic reforms with a great enthusiasm than some member states in the Union and that regarding the name issue; it should not be an obstacle for the country to move on with the integration process. The meeting ended with adoption of brief statement.

3RD MEETING OF THE NATIONAL EUROPEAN INTEGRATION COUNCIL



At the meeting, the Report on the progress made in the National Program on the Adoption of the Acquis – Revision 2014 for the period 01.07.2014 - 30.09.2014 and the Activity Plan of the National European Integration Council for November 2014 – November 2015 were considered. The Report was presented by the Vice -Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia on European Affairs, Mr. Fatmir Besimi. He informed the Council on the activities that followed the EC Progress Report and that the priority areas were defined and included in drafting the NPAA 2015 such as : political dialogue, judiciary, freedom of expression and media, interethnic relations, regional cooperation. Since 11 November 2014, of 20 laws have been adopted (51%) and 64 bylaws (44.8%) from the envisaged in the NPAA. Regard-

ing the economic development, a growth of GDP of 2.9% was evident in the first 6 months of the year, which is the best achieved growth compared with the countries from the region and second in EU. The Council also adopted the Activity Plan of the National European Integration Council for November 2014 – November 2015.

MACEDONIA AND TURKEY: FRIENDLY STATES WITH SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION ON ALL LEVELS



Mr. Kenan Hasipi, Chair of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia with the Parliament of the Republic of Turkey and the Members, met a Delegation from the Grand National Assembly of Turkey headed by President Cemil Çiçek. Both sides concluded that bilateral relations between the two states are on the highest level confirmed with the Agreement for Strategic Partnership, and with the opening of many Honorary Consulates in Macedonia and Turkey. Also, with the ratification of the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation, several projects have been realized or initiated in Macedonia, such as the Memorial House of the father of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the building of the Turkish Theater as a unique professional Turkish Theater in the Balkans. Mr. Hasipi expressed gratitude for the financial assistance by Turkey to the Ministry of Interior as well as in the field of health care. President Çiçek emphasized the major importance of the Turkish community in Macedonia as a bridge between the two states. In the field of economy, Mr. Çiçek asked for establishment of free customs trade zone that will enable Turkish factories to open facilities in Macedonia and decrease the rate of unemployment, as well as facilitation of visa regime by issuing visas at the border crossings.

President Çiçek concluded that Macedonia is the heart and the crossroad in the Balkans and its integration in the EU will affect the overall relations in the region.

END VIOLENCE OF WOMEN NOW



The Committee on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men held a public debate on the "Action Plan for Implementation of Recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of Women and the Implementation of the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women". The debate was organized in the frame of the UN global call for activism "End violence of women and girls - now" to see the activities implemented from the Action Plan. The debate ended with adoption of conclusions, in which they welcome all activities of state institutions and the NGOs for improvement of the status of the women and called for increase of the network of social workers, psychologist and other experts in the social and educational institutions, increase of shelters, advisory centers for family violence and increased promotion for gender equality on all levels, strengthening of gender statistics and launching of a media campaign against discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice, with participation of people from public life from both genders.

PUBLIC DEBATE ON IPA II

The Committee on European Issues held a public debate on IPA II Framework 2014-2020 and the challenges for its use in future. The President of the Assembly, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski addressed the participants as well as Vice-Prime Minister on European Issues, Mr. Fatmir Besimi, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Mr. Zoran Stavreski, as well as EU Ambassador Mr. Aivo Orav. MPs from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia as well as their colleagues from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro took part in the debate. Ms. Nora Aliti, Vice-Chair of the Committee on European Issues in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, underlined

that the allocated 664.2 million EUR in the IPA II should be used for implementation the necessary reforms in the Euro-Integration process, commending on the development of parliamentary dimension of the regional cooperation in this field, for exchange of experiences in implementation of projects. She emphasized that the transparency of the overall process to the citizens is of crucial importance and a step forward in our integration process. In that context, she proposed intensified activities among the Committees on European Issues in the region in a form of conferences and workshops on IPA II. At the end of the debate, conclusions were adopted for the implementation of IPA II, with recommendations for the best possible use of these funds in the implementation of the strategic state objectives, establishment of national sector policies and strategies, middle-term economic planning and fiscal planning for national co-



financing of projects, establishment of state fund for co-financing of NGOs, raise of public awareness among the citizens for the successfulness of the projects and continuation of regional projects in this framework with the countries in the region, especially for development of a modern railway system connecting South-East Europe with other part of the continent and improving the business climate for decreasing differences among regions. Participants also called for intensified meetings between the Committees on European Issues of Countries in the SAA process - KOSAP.

OPPOSITION MPS MEET HIGH LEVEL EU REPRESENTATIVES

Opposition MPs Ms. Roza Topuzova Karevska, Ms. Solza Grcheva and Ms. Ljubica Buralieva had a meeting with Mr. Eduard Auer, newly appointed Head of Division for the Western Balkans in the European External Action Service. At the meeting, they discussed on the current developments in the state and called for finding solution



of the political situation. The EU High Representatives expressed support to their work in parliament.

WORKSHOP ON THE ROLE OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

In the organization of the National Democratic Institute and the National Council of the Slovak Republic, a workshop was held in Bratislava on the role of legislative committees in the work of the Parliament. MPs Ms. Svetlana Jakimovska and Mr. Ramiz Merko from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia took part in the workshop, together with colleagues from parliaments from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia, exchanging views also with colleagues from Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland on the competences and functioning of legislative committees in providing legal aid. Experiences were shared on the existence of Legislative Departments in the aforementioned parliaments as well as on the work of legislative and constitutional committees, their competences and role in the improvement of the texts of draft-laws, and their concordance with the Constitution. They also discussed the preparation of legal opinions by administrative services, the form of their preparation and the manner of their presentation.



VISIT SKOPJE FOR NEW YEARS EVE



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