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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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MACEDONIAN LEGISLATION HARMONIZED WITH THE EU ACQUIS IN JULY - OCTOBER 2022:

- Law on Budgets
- Law on Financial Stability
- Law on Performing Accounting

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 20TH JPC MEETING IN STRASBOURG

At the 20th Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee – North Macedonia, held on 5-6 October in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, **Recommendations** were adopted by the two delegations, in which Members from the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia and the European Parliament reiterated that the country continues to demonstrate the best record for democratic transition in the Western Balkans in more regions. The Conclusions adopted by the Assembly were praised, which opened the way for the beginning of accession negotiations and the compromise reached that recognizes and respects the Macedonian cultural identity and guarantees the recognition of the Macedonian language. MPs highlighted the role of Parliament and opposition parties in the negotiation process, encouraging all political actors to reduce parliamentary polarization for the future of the country in the EU, calling for continuation of the Jean Monnet dialogue and the implementation of the previously reached agreement. Stable inter-ethnic relations and the continued implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement were welcomed, especially the attention devoted to the protection of the rights of the smaller ethnic communities. Regarding bilateral cooperation, participants called for continued implementation of the treaties with Greece and Bulgaria by all parties. The importance of solving all cultural-historical issues separately from the negotiation process was emphasized. The country's constructive role in regional cooperation and its full alignment with the EU's foreign, security and defense policy were also praised.



MEMBERSHIP IN THE EU BY 2030 IS A REALISTIC GOAL

At the meeting with Slovenian Vice-President of the Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tanja Fajon, President Xhaferi expressed gratitude for the continuous support in the achievement of the two state strategic goals, NATO and EU membership in the past decades. He also informed the interlocutor on the current screening process. With her first official visit to the Republic of North Macedonia in this capacity, in a year that marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the respected Fajon confirmed her personal and state determination to fully support the country in all fields of mutual interest. She particularly expressed satisfaction with the

current screening process and the fact that the country has over 40 percent compliance with EU legislation, a fact that makes the set goal of the country's membership in the EU by 2030 realistic and justified. The interlocutors welcomed the upcoming signing of the agreement with Frontex in the Macedonian language, which confirms the existing fears as unjustified. Regarding the potentials that exist in the diaspora itself, including the student diaspora in Slovenia, it was concluded that they should continue to be nurtured and promoted in the future.



BILATERAL VISIT OF THE GERMAN MP MICHAEL ROTH

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Talat Xhaferi, met with Mr. Michael Roth, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Bundestag from the Federal Republic of Germany. President Xhaferi welcomed his visit occurring in times when the country starts the screening process, after a long period of stagnation and blockages in the past decades. He informed the interlocutor about the country's contribution and obligations to NATO, about consistent adherence to EU sanctions against the Russian Federation and the support and assistance provided for the needs of Ukraine. President Xhaferi expressed special gratitude for the continuous support of the Federal Republic of Germany in the realization of our strategic goals. In that context, he particularly emphasized the cooperation with the German Bundestag for independent parliamentary security as one of the segments for the independence of the Parliament. Mr. Roth underlined that his visit is to support the next steps that the Parliament for smooth flow of the negotiation process. Expressing full understanding of the frustrations and disappointment with the current developments, Mr. Roth emphasized that the EU has no right to interfere in the linguistic and cultural identity of Macedonians and that must be respected. Regarding the upcoming constitutional amendments for entering the next phase of EU membership negotiations, he expressed the view that the undertaken obligations should be fulfilled and that this will not be to the detriment of any Macedonian man or woman in the country, and Germany will stand firm behind the implementation of the promises to the country given by the European Union, to speed up the European integration path, which is not only for the benefit of the region, but also for the benefit of all member states of the Union.

Mr. Roth also met with the President of the Foreign Policy Committee, who expressed doubt about the duration of the enlargement process, which may last for a long time not only for our country, but for other countries in the region as well. He pointed to the irresponsible attitude of Bulgaria towards our country and that as members chosen from the people, they do not have the mandate to vote the constitutional changes which should not be treated as a book in which each nationalist in the region would find reason for its change. Mr. Roth confirmed his support for the Euro-integration process and that should be subject of a wider political consensus. Both collocutors confirmed their openness for future meetings and cooperation.



GERMAN MP HOFREITER MEETING COUNTERPARTS IN THE ASSEMBLY

At the meeting of the Vice-President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Goran Misovski met with Anton Hofreiter, the Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee in the German Bundestag, the continuation of the intense political dialogue was welcomed and the German support towards the realization of the common strategic goals of the Republic of North Macedonia- membership in NATO and the European Union. Hofreiter stated that North Macedonia should already have been a member of the EU, pointing out that the EU will now have to act more intensively so that the process is no longer delayed, given the fact that the country has fulfilled all the criteria. He also assessed that North Macedonia has achieved great progress in the past period in terms of renewable energy sources and expressed gratitude for the support that our country provides to Ukraine.

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DEBATE AND MEETINGS IN PALIAMENT WITH MEPS STRIK AND BUTIKOFER

Within the framework of their visit, MEPs Tineke Strik and Reinhard Butikofer met with the President Talat Xhaferi, the President of the Committee on European Issues Arber Ademi, and participated in a public discussion on the topic: "The path of the Republic of North Macedonia in the EU – prospects and obstacles" in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. At the meeting with President Xhaferi, MEPs were informed about the activities of the state institutions related to our Euro-integration process. MEP Strik stated to be especially happy for the start of EU membership negotiations. At the same time, she expressed deep disappointment on the pollution of the European integration process with historical and bilateral issues, saying that his party will do everything in its power to clean up the process, because the country deserves equal treatment and membership according to the Copenhagen criteria. At the meeting with Committee President Ademi, MEP Butikofer outlined that the visit means support for the country in the process of negotiations with the EU and screening, while MEP Strik welcomed the compromises made with the aim of future generations living in a more prosperous society.

During the public discussion, the Committee President Ademi emphasized that the country made major compromises, and from today's perspective, we can say that the country's determination to walk the European path, despite all the obstacles. MP, Maja Morachanin pointed out the support of the Greens Party for our ongoing processes, including the energy crisis and reducing environmental pollution. MEPs stressed the importance of the inclusiveness of this process, in the sense of the joint action of all the parties from the position and from the opposition, because it is a matter of fulfilling serious European reforms, according to the Copenhagen criteria, and they especially stressed the importance of advancing processes in the rule of law and the fight against corruption and organized crime.



GERMAN MP HOFREITER MEETING COUNTERPARTS IN THE ASSEMBLY

Hofreiter met also with his counterpart Arber Ademi, President of the Committee on European Issues in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. Mr. Ademi pointed out that after 17 years of obtaining a candidate status, the country has taken positive steps, in which the unity of all political parties, both from the position and from the opposition, is necessary and that efforts are being made for greater inclusiveness in the process. The negotiations will include the Parliament as well, which will have a control role over the government and will represent a forum for constructive political dialogue, especially in relation to the reform agenda of the EU. He emphasized the importance of starting the process for the inclusion of the Bulgarian community, as well as the Croatian and other communities in our Constitution as soon as possible, in order to start the negotiations by clusters. Hofreiter confirmed his country's commitment to continuing the enlargement process with the countries of the Western Balkans, recalling that Germany was also the initiator of the Berlin Process. At the same time, he offered his country's support on this path.



CZECH PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES PRESENTED IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Ambassador of the Czech Republic in our country, H.E. Jaroslav Ludva, presented the Program and the Priorities of the Czech Presidency with the Council of the EU before members and invitees in the Committee on European Issues. Mr. Ludva emphasized that the Presidency will focus on the war in Ukraine and its consequences, as well as on the situation with secure energy supply, quick transition to the green agenda, strengthening of European defense capacities and the security of cyber space, the strategic resistance of the European economy towards global challenges and strengthening of democratic institutions, in order to maintain and develop democracy and the rule of law. Regarding the EU enlargement process, he stated that his country will remain principled supporter of Western Balkans. The EU Ambassador David Geer underlined that as the country met the conditions for opening the negotiations, now is the moment for the state to deliver reforms, in order for the country to move successfully towards joining the EU. Deputy President of the Government Maricikj talked about the extremely complex process for start of negotiations as this is a demand coming from the citizens, to bring European values implying rule of law, successful fight against corruption and creation of economic conditions for a decent life in the country. The President of the Committee on European Issues, Arber Ademi, shared his opinion that European integration process requires unity of all political parties, not only declaratively, but also in action, if we want to reach the goal of being a member of the European Union. In the discussion, MPs gave proposals for achieving inclusiveness of the process with mutual participation of the position and the opposition as a necessity in this process. The need for the active involvement of the Parliament in the process through the Committee for European Issues and the National Council for European Integration, which is managed by the opposition, was particularly emphasized.



POLITICAL MOBBING – PART OF THE LAW ON MOBBING

Lolita Ristova, President of the Women Parliamentarians' Club, addressed the "Political Mobbing - part of the Law on Mobbing" Forum, at the session "Women in politics and their influence". Representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, current representatives of the Assembly and representatives of local self-government and NGO's took part in the debate. Several women MPs spoke on different topics, as this legislative initiative regarding the Law on Mobbing was presented by representative from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Court and attorney representatives focused on the national legislation and the judicial process of proving mobbing, for which it was concluded that first of all, to prove whether mobbing exists or not, it is necessary to define mobbing. The debate on the draft-law was organized before it enters parliamentary procedure.



WHICH ELECTORAL MODEL FOR STRONGER DEMOCRACY?

The debate was organized by the Institute for Good Governance and Euro-Atlantic Perspectives (IDUEP) and the Youth Affairs Club in the Assembly, jointly with the young parliamentarians Monika Zajkova (LDP) and Jovan Jauleski and Bojan Stojanoski (VMRO DPMNE). Young alumni from NDI, IRI, IFES, Youth European Ambassadors, as well as youth activists of the Euro-Atlantic Council, the Youth Union, the Union of High School Students and IDUEP joined the debate. Participants in the debate on the topic “What electoral model do we need for a stronger democracy?” agreed that reforms are needed reflecting also their needs and interests to motivate them to vote. The MP Monika Zajkova, the Coordinator of the Youth Issues and Policies Club in the Assembly, expressed belief that such debates, especially with young people, are important in encouraging change. The opinion of young people matters, because the change in the electoral model will greatly affect the composition of the Assembly, enabling smaller parties a chance without loss of fifty thousand in the current model. MPs from VMRO DPMNE, Bojan Stojanovski and Jovan Jauleski, believed that the time is ripe for changes to the electoral model. The MPs should not hide behind the parties, but should be valued according to the merit system by the voters and the environment they come from. MP Jauleski proposed a combination of open lists with a proportional model would lead to those who are truly valued in the middle being elected and thus not ignored by the party leadership. Bojan Nikovski, who was the initiator of this activity, believes that young people should be heard, but also involved in making decisions about such important topics, because the type of democracy largely depends on the electoral model. They advocated an electoral model that will be chosen by the parties to allow voters to vote for the candidate they think is the best, and not primarily for a party or coalition as it is now. IDUEP President Bojan Kordalov emphasized that today, the most pressing question is whether there will be electricity or restrictions, or whether the prices of products will rise. But how we will deal with those crises, whether successfully or not, depends on what MPs, ministers and mayors we choose to represent us. That is why it is important what kind of electoral model we will have and how much it will affect the intensification of the cooperation of politicians and public office holders with citizens.



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