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Working bodies of the Assembly

Joint Parliamentary Committee EU -RNM

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

MACEDONIAN LEGISLATION HARMONIZED WITH THE EU ACQUIS IN NOVEMBER 2021 - JANUARY 2022:

- Law Amending the Law on the Free Trade Agreement between Republic of Macedonia and EFTA States
- Law Amending the Law on Foreigners
- Law on Mediation
- Law Amending the Law on Trade
- Law on Development, Production and Distribution of Military Goods

PRESIDENT XHAFERI MEETS BULGARIAN PRIME MINISTER PETKOV

At the meeting with Kiril Petkov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, President Talat Xhaferi highlighted the improvement of bilateral relations with the Republic of Bulgaria and that signing of the Agreement between the two countries in 2017 presents a good basis for advancing the cooperation between the two countries and expressed the expectation that cooperation will be further strengthened and improved in the future, including parliamentary cooperation through more contacts on all levels as well. Concerning the holding the First Intergovernmental Conference, he emphasized that this is extremely important for the country.

Prime Minister Petkov expressed great satisfaction with the visit and all the meetings. He pointed out that around 65 million people live in the Balkan region, and in different circumstances, if there were no barriers and with good neighborly relations, the business ties would improve and a better picture for the whole region would be created worldwide. He supported the initiative for intensification of the parliamentary cooperation and stated that visits at the highest parliamentary level should take place soon. The Republic of Bulgaria will truly be part of the European Union when the other countries in the region join the EU and only then will all the benefits of the membership in the Union be felt.



POLISH SUPPORT OF THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS

At the meeting, President Xhaferi expressed special gratitude for the continuous support of the Republic of Poland for the European integration process. He said that our Assembly, despite the daily challenges, continues to meet the strategic goals and that the European integration remains a key strategic priority, as the only alternative for the country's future.

President Duda stressed that the Republic of Poland has always supported our aspiration for Euro-Atlantic integration. The high guest expressed gratitude for the role of the Republic of North Macedonia in the migrant crisis, emphasizing that the Polish border police implements the experiences gained in our country.

The two interlocutors agreed on the special importance of parliamentary diplomacy, given that it encourages governments to engage in direct and concrete cooperation.



MEETING OF PRESIDENT XHAFERI WITH THE MEP THIJS REUTEN

President Talat Xhaferi today had a meeting with the MEP Thijs Reuten, who paid a working visit to the Republic of North Macedonia. He outlined the decades-long cooperation with the European Parliament at various levels and welcomed their continued support, as well as their initiatives, such as the Western Balkan Speakers' Summit of President Sassoli, the Jean Monnet Dialogue, as well as the dialogue between the parliaments of aspiring Balkan countries. MEP Reuten praised President Xhaferi's role in improving the democratic culture in the country, which according to him, could serve as an example for some EU member states. He stressed that political actors should maintain the focus on the upcoming reforms, and the EU should complete its piece of the puzzle in this process. MEPs will continue to help the Assembly on its path to European integration through dialogue and partnership, especially during the membership negotiations themselves. His message to the President was to continue his work of maintaining political dialogue and openness to the public as before.

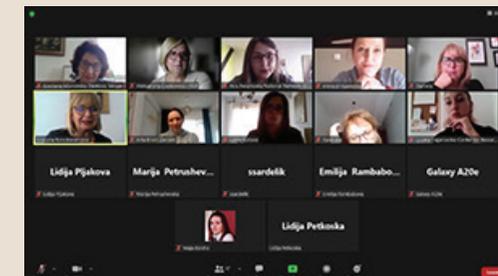


WORKING MEETING OF THE WOMEN MPS CLUB

The Women MPs Club met with representatives of the National Network against Violence of Women and Domestic Violence, to prepare a document for amendment of the Criminal Code and its harmonization with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. The aim is to introduce a comprehensive protection of women victims of violence and domestic violence and sanctioning perpetrators with an effective criminal sanction. The document has been prepared in cooperation with other civil society organizations, as well as with organizations that are part of the Platform for Gender Equality. The President of the Club, Lolita Ristova, the Chair of the Committee for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men, Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, Arta Bilali-Zendeli and Snezana Kaleska-Vanceva took part in the debate. The MPs expressed readiness to prepare proposals that will improve the text of the submitted law, which is generally good, and will pay special attention to the terminological harmonization.

EXPERT SUPPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY BY THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT

A Delegation from the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia headed by the Vice-President of Parliament Fadil Zendeli and the MPs Maja Morachanin, Aleksandar Veljanovski, Arbana Pasholi, Halil Snopche, Snezana Kaleska-Vancheva and Nikola Micevski visited the Swedish Parliament to exchange views about the legislative role of parliaments, the political dialogue, the role of opposition and the work of logla government, within the frames of the Swedish Support Program. Parliamentarians also exchanged views about the work of parliaments during pandemic times. The Delegation met the Speaker Andreas Norlén, who welcomed the cooperation between the two parliaments, established in times when Sweden is celebrating 100 years of the introduction of the universal voting rights and the first parliamentary elections in 1921, when 5 women out of 380 MPs entered the Parliament.



RIGHT TO UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

The Inter-Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) for the LGBTI Rights in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia held a round table discussion on the legal recognition of gender as part of the thematic review of Recommendation (2010) 5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The round table was opened by Maja Moracanin, the IPPG Coordinator, expressed hope that this discussion will contribute to strengthen the support for transgender people and their rights. Moracanin stressed the importance of adopting legal changes that will enable legal recognition of gender on the principle of self-determination. Eleni Ceceku, Council of Europe Representative, stressed the importance of the existence of a legal framework for gender recognition, reminding that universal human rights should be provided to all. Svetlana Cvetkovska, on behalf of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, mentioned the adoption of new laws for protection and prevention of discrimination and the law for prevention and protection from violence against women and domestic violence, which reflect also the protection of the LGBTI rights, steps placing the country to the 31st place on the Rainbow map.



DIALOGUE IMPROVEMENT BETWEEN PARLIAMENTS AND JOURNALISTS IN WESTERN BALKANS

The Assembly hosted a regional conference for improvement of the dialogue between journalists and parliaments from Western Balkans, a project financed by SIDA. President of the Parliament of Montenegro Aleksa Becic, Vice-President of the Serbian Parliament Radovan Trvdasic and BiH Assembly representative Lazar Prodanovic took part at the event. President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Talat Xhaferi, in his introductory remarks stated that journalists are our partners, partners of institutions and partners of citizens in building better societies in which free expression is imperative and close cooperation is crucial, both inside and outside the country. This project is aimed to provide easier access to the MPs, civil society organizations and media stakeholders from the region to reliable information on the existing shortcomings in the legal solutions and a basis for further upgrading, which will ensure the sustainability of the process, and expand the network of the Western Balkans Platform with other interested civil society organizations. The discussion was followed by the signing of a joint Declaration.



WORLD ROMA LANGUAGE DAY

On the occasion of November 5 - World Roma Language Day, the Inter-Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) for Support of Roma Rights, their Inclusion and Integration held a working meeting. The Coordinator of the Group, Latife Shikovska noted that celebration of this day, declared by UNESCO in 2015, is an act that enables further enhancement of Roma language and culture, as the official language of all Roma in the world, which is around 12 million speakers. The Romani language today is a language that transcends state borders and testifies to an unusual semi-nomadic culture inherited from the past, and alive and influential in the conditions of modern civilization. The Romani language has existed and still exists today in many countries, despite the fact that there are no institutions for its protection, study and affirmation. Bahtalo o 5-to Novembro Internaciobalno dive tari Romani chib/Happy Roma Language Day.



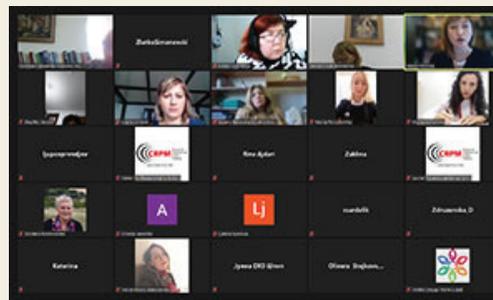
ENERGY COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTARY FORUM HELD IN BELGRADE

MP Laze Tanevski, member of the Committee on Economic Issues participated at the Parliamentary Plenum of the Energy Community dedicated to the roadmap for decarbonization and legislation on decarbonization, organized by the Secretariat of the Energy Community in Belgrade, in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. Representatives from national parliaments of the contracting parties of the Energy Community, members of the European Parliament, representatives of the Secretariat of the Energy Community and the European Commission also took part at the meeting. The participants stressed the need to take initiatives to introduce new technologies for the transformation of the energy sector in order to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to increase the role of national parliaments in energy transformation by proposing solutions and legislation. All countries should contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The need for EU financial support was emphasized in order to implement the necessary energy policies that will enable greater energy stability, greater participation in renewable energy sources and environmental protection.



GENDER PERSPECTIVE OF THE 2022 STATE BUDGET

MPs participated in a working meeting about the gender perspective of the 2022 Budget, within the project funded by the Austrian Development Agency and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Compared to the previous 3 years, this budget shows a positive change, i.e., growth in budget funds allocated for health, social protection, environment protection and education, which are sectors where women are most affected. MP Marija Petrusevska, pointed out that the funds for the Committee for Protection against Discrimination have been reduced three times compared to last year. MP Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova said that there is still no system for monitoring the costs of budget and how much they contribute to achieving gender equality. Lolita Ristova, thought that the main reason for the insufficient gender component in the Draft Budget is the delay in the adoption of the law on budgets. MP Snezana Kaleska-Vanceva agreed on the need to change the way the budget is reviewed and that there is still room for improvement in gender responsive budgeting. A similar view was expressed by MP Maja Moracanin that the Draft Budget must be simpler and more understandable. MP Zaklina Peshevska pointed out that all proposals for improving the procedure of adoption and implementation of the budget must be seriously considered.



DO NOT BE SILENT, PUT AN END!

With the support of UnWomen, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia joined the campaign by marking the 16 days activism against gender-based violence, under the slogan: Do not be silent, put an end! The Assembly ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2017, and committed itself to undertake legislative and other measures to ensure legal, institutional and organizational framework for prevention of violence, remaining vigilant in the Convention implementation.



HARMONIZATION OF THE CRIMINAL CODE WITH THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

The Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men yesterday held a public debate on the Draft-Law on Amending the Criminal Code, to ensure harmonization with the Istanbul Convention and its goals. Ana Avramoska-Nushkova, a legal expert from the National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, welcomed the commitment of the Government and the adoption of the five-year National Action Plan which envisages a series of activities, especially for the harmonization of all legislation with the Convention. The Executive Director of the Center for Research and Policy Making, Marija Risteska, said that the greatest success in the process of adopting these legal changes is the recognition of civil society as a partner of the Government in the process of harmonizing our Criminal Code with the Istanbul Convention. Academic Vlado Kambovski said that the Istanbul Convention is an important step in promoting the concept of human rights in general, because it breaks some centuries-old cultural and civilizational paradigms.



NSEI CHAIR IN PARIS

During his visit to Paris, the Chair of the National Euro-Integration Council (NCEI) Aleksandar Nikoloski met with the Deputy Director for European Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of France. They discussed the cooperation between the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia and the French Republic, noting that the Parliament is a serious partner with whom they can discuss fundamentals, such as the rule of law, economic cooperation and the EU integration. At the same time, Nikoloski expressed the desire for our country to get a date for the start of EU membership negotiations because its citizens deserve it. At the meeting with Bertrand Sorre, President and Liliana Tangi, Vice President of the Cooperation Group North Macedonia - France, at the National Assembly of the French Republic, colloquutors focused on the development of mutual cooperation and the upgrading of the great friendship that exists between the two countries.



FRENCH PRESIDENCY PROGRAMME PRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT

The Program and priorities of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the were presented by the Ambassador of the French Republic, H.E. Cyril Bomgartner in the National Council for European Integration. H.E. David Geer, Ambassador and Head of the EU Delegation and H.E. Milan Predan, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia, also took part at the debate. Ambassador Bomgartner informed that the Presidency will work under the motto "Recovery, Strength and Sense of Belonging", while Western Balkans will remain on the agenda with a thematic conference organized in June this year. The participants in the debate addressed the situation in the country and especially the challenges in the European integration path, the expectations for overcoming the dispute with the Republic of Bulgaria, the rule of law, the fight against corruption, dealing with the health, economic and energy crisis. Issues were discussed on the need for joint cooperation in the European integration process, parliamentary diplomacy, productive communication with citizens as well as the need to address transnational challenges such as terrorism, migration and climate change.



NEW ENLARGEMENT METHODOLOGY DISCUSSED WITH MPS FROM FRENCH REPUBLIC AND AUSTRIA

The Committee on European Issues, with the support of the European Commission held the TAIEX conference titled "EU Accession, the new methodology and cluster" Fundamentals ": what is changing for the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia? The President of the Committee on European Issues Arber Ademi, stressed the importance of discussion on the new methodology, which introduces stronger political oversight by member states and reversibility of the negotiation process, as well as that the start of the long-awaited negotiations with the EU will be an additional impetus for further implemen-



tation of the necessary reforms in the Assembly. The

Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs in the Austrian Parliament Reinhold Lopatka, and the Vice-Chair of the Committee on European Affairs in the French National Assembly, Liliana Tangi. In their presentations, special emphasis was placed on the central role of the Committee in the process of harmonization. In the context of European integration, the two speakers stressed the need to strengthen the role of the Assembly as a forum for constructive political dialogue, which should include citizens and civil society through their representatives in Parliament. It was emphasized that North Macedonia has been waiting too long for the start of negotiations and agreed that the delay in the start of accession negotiations increases the frustration of the population, and that therefore, it is necessary to have a political consensus on this issue. In the concluding remarks, the guests from Austria and France expressed the support of the French Republic and Austria and talked about the possibilities to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of a formal start of accession negotiations with the Union, referring to are, above all, the problem imposed by the Republic of Bulgaria.

VEVCANI CARNIVAL 2022



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