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Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-RM

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

Macedonian legislation harmonized with the EU acquis in **SEPTEMBER 2015:**

- Law on Road Traffick Security

MACEDONIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY MARKED



URGENT START OF ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS IS PRIORITY FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, during his official visit to the Republic of Macedonia, met with MPs working on EU Affairs in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. The President of the National European Integration Council (NEIC), Ms. Dimova, expressed appreciation for the strong commitment of Commissioner Hahn in overcoming the state political crisis. Re-inclusion of the Council at the 5th HLAD Meeting is yet another proof and recognition of its work, having in mind that it is comprised of all representatives of the society in the state. Ms. Dimova stated that the country faced many challenges in the past period and very difficult tasks that need to be completed in the future, i.e. the country felt the effect of the "stick", and now it is high time for the "carrot". She raised the issue with the migrant crisis and underlined that this is the right moment to sit together with Greece and discuss the problems, including the problem with the name issue. Ms. Dimova expressed expectation that Macedonia will receive recommendation for opening accession negotiations with the Progress Report and that it is time for a decisive action by the European Council. Commissioner Hahn said this is an extremely difficult time for the European continent, which is facing a refugee crisis and that this is a challenge not only for Macedonia but also for the EU, which requires a European solu-

tion. He emphasized that the main purpose of his visit is European integration of the state and implementation of future reforms by all relevant stakeholders that are ambitious and politically hard, but that will also bring real changes in the state. The Vice-President of NEIC, Mr. Ilija Dimovski, expressed pleasure for having full composition of the Parliament and that the energy will be invested to implement recommendations regarding improved budget procedures, Rules of Procedure and Law on Parliament, strengthening the role of committees supervising the work of intelligence services and that is of high importance that agreements to be implemented and deadlines respected. Ms. Ermira Mehmeti, President of the EU Affairs Committee underlined that inter-ethnic dialogue should be strengthened in the period to come, as well as full and dedicated implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. At the 10th anniversary of the EU candidate status, Republic of Macedonia deserves to start negotiations for EU membership, said Ms. Mehmeti. The JPC Co-Chair, Mr. Kenan Hasipi said that the political crisis in the state had a negative effect on the implementation of EU reforms and that the following months are important not only for internal consolidation, but also in relations with the NATO and the EU and that the national interest and stability of the state, development of the economy and fair and democratic elections in April next year accepted by all, should have highest priority. At the end, he expressed satisfaction from the meetings with the JPC counterparts in the European Parliament, and their dedication to help the EU integration process.

Mr. Aleksandar Nikoloski, from the Foreign Policy Committee, stated that although the political agreement has been reached with great concessions from the ruling party, both government and opposition have to respect it. He asked Commissioner Hahn whether the name issue will be solved, if all the reforms are implemented by the Republic of Macedonia, question that is also often raised on meetings with his voters. Ms. Meral Uzeir Ferati, from the Democratic Party of the Albanians in opposition, pointed out that implementation of the agreed reforms will enable finding proper legal mechanisms, especially with the amendment of the Electoral Code as a corner stone of democracy. Mr. Naser Selmani, from the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, called for respect of freedom of media, institutional autonomy of the public broadcasting service, independent managers of the media regulators and higher tolerance by politicians to public criticism. Prof. Dr. Dimitar Mirchev, as representative of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, concluded that the political difficulties are reflection of the long delay in the accession process due to the name issue, which seems no longer a bilateral issue led under UN auspices, but a part of the EU common foreign and security policy. The proposal of the President of the State is start of negotiations, with the name issue as 35th chapter. Ms. Solza Grcheva, independent MP, asked for one electoral district in the state and decreased electoral threshold.

VICE-PRESIDENT DESKOSKA MEETS YOUNG FINNISH SOCIALDEMOCRATS



The Vice-President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Ms. Renata Deskoska, met representatives from the Social and Democratic Youth of Finland. At the meeting, Ms. Deskoska informed the guests on the role and the composition of the parliament. The guest showed particular interest for the preparations of the incoming elections next year and the implementation of reforms deriving from the Agreement of Przino. Ms. Deskoska informed the guest of the planned changes of the electoral legislation, cleaning the electoral register and improving the situation in the field of media. At the end of the meeting, it was stated that electoral and media reforms are a necessary precondition for fair and democratic elections.

MACEDONIA IS THE ONLY NON-EU COUNTRY RECEIVING MIGRANTS FROM AN EU MEMBER STATE

Mr. Aleksandar Nikolovski, Head of the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as a Vice-President during the autumn session, chaired the debate dedicated to the humanitarian and political response to migrant and refugee crisis facing Europe, challenges for the countries of transit, and the urgent need for a real European asylum system.



Nikolovski informed that the Macedonia faces a specific situation receiving thousands of migrants every day from the south, which is the EU external border. Nikolovski recalled that Parliament amended the Law on Asylum, thus allowing migrants who enter the country to express their intention to seek asylum, after which they are given written confirmation that allows them within 72 hours to file a formal request for asylum or leave the country. The priority of the state is to protect the life and health of migrants and the combat against smuggling and trafficking of migrants, protection of national and public security and general health of the citizens. Nikolovski called for a common European solidarity and responsibility and allocation of the number of incoming migrants in all EU countries. He stressed that Macedonia is not and should not be a victim of the failures of the EU, mainly from Greece to protect the external borders of the EU to deal with migration. Finally, reminded that Macedonia is the only country which is not an EU member, and which receives migrants from an EU Member State.

2014 ANNUAL REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY DEBATED IN PARLIAMENT

The Committee on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia held a public debate dedicated to the 2014 Annual Report on the Implementation of Gender Equality Strategy. Representatives from Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Health, UN Women Office in Skopje, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Education and Science and NGO representatives took part in the debate. At the end of the debate, common conclusions were adopted supporting the annual report and suggesting that it should be submitted at the beginning of June each year. Participants also agreed that fight against stereotypes and prejudice should continue in future, as well as activities to increase participation of women in politics, to increase financial means for economic strengthening of women, and also funds for information campaigns against family violence. They also supported increase of funds in the state budget for implementation of the Strategy and to consider possibilities for re-opening of university gender studies.



MANAKI BROTHERS FESTIVAL 2015



JPCCommittee - News from the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 47, September 2015

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