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Joint Parliamentary Committee EU -RNM

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

MACEDONIAN LEGISLATION HARMONIZED WITH THE EU ACQUIS IN JULY 2023:

- Law on Expertise
- Law Amending the Law on Financial Companies
- Law Amending the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services



THE COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Committee on Constitutional Issues, with 10 votes “for” and 7 “against”, supported the Proposal for amendment of the Constitution, submitted by the Government. The President of the Assembly Talat Xhaferi, as the Chairman of this Committee, closed the first session of this committee. The proposal for amendment of

the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, submitted by the Government, with guidelines, was the only item on the agenda of this session. The President of the Government Dimitar Kovachevski, explaining the proposal, said that it is solely and completely in the direction of achieving our consensual and the supreme strategic

goal - membership in the EU, set since the independence of our country in 1991. The proposal, Kovachevski said, was prepared based on the Conclusions of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, adopted at the session on July 16, 2022 and the Conclusions of the Council of the EU and the Common position of the EU at the political meeting of the Intergovernmental conference for the accession of North Macedonia to the Union. The proposal stipulates that, in the original Preamble of the Constitution, which was first replaced by Amendment IV, and later with Amendment XXXIV, after the part of the Bosniak people, the part of the Bulgarian people, the Croatian people, the Montenegrin people, the Slovenian people, the Jewish people, and the Egyptian people are to be added. Then, it is proposed in the amendment XXXVI of the Constitution, which replaces Article 49 and Amendment II, after the part of the Bosniak people, to add the part of the Bulgarian people, the Croatian people, the Montenegrin people, the Slovenian people, the Jewish people and the Egyptian people.



CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES ARE THE ONLY PRE-CONDITION FOR OPENING OF NEGOTIATION CHAPTERS

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Talat Xhaferi, together with the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, the coordinators of the parliamentary groups of SDSM and the coalition, VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition, DUI, Alliance for Albanians and representatives of the political parties Alternativa and BESA, met with Anna Luhrmann, Minister for Europe of the Federal Republic of Germany, Laurence Boone, State Secretary in charge of Europe at the Council of Ministers of the French Republic, and Szymon Szykowski vel Senk, Minister for European Affairs of the Republic of Poland. President Xhaferi welcomed this visit at the right moment and reiterated our country's commitment to achieving the strategic goals of membership in NATO and the EU. Minister Boone expressed the support that exists in the EU for the enlargement process and the interest in advancing the integration path of the countries of the entire region in the Union, which will contribute to greater stability and security on the European continent. This changed reality and this window of opportunities that are currently created should be used to the maximum. Minister Shinkovski vel Senk informed about the historical past of the three countries, the disagreements, and problems they faced in the past, but also about their unique support for the process of expansion and unification. Minister Luhrmann emphasized that at this moment, the party interests should not go above the strategic interests of the state, repeating that the negotiation framework adopted by the EU member states will not change and it is the basis for the negotiation process of the Republic of North Macedonia and that there are no new requirements and new preconditions for the opening of the negotiation chapters except for the adoption of the constitutional amendments. In the end, he emphasized the Resolution adopted by the German Bundestag in support of the national interests of the Republic of North Macedonia. Those present at the meeting expressed different points of view regarding the adoption of the constitutional amendments. Agreement prevailed for their adoption, except for the Parliamentary Group of VMRO-DPMNE and the coalition. At the same time, more support and guarantees were requested from the European partners for the negotiation process to prevent new demands from the Republic of Bulgaria.



MEETING OF PRESIDENT XHAFERI WITH THE AUSTRIAN, CZECH AND SLOVAK MFA

The three MFA of the Republic of Austria, Alexander Schallenberg, the Czech Republic, Jan Lipavski and the Slovak Republic, Miroslav Vlahovski as part of the Austerlitz format, during their visit in the country met President Xhaferi and the parliamentary leadership to foster implementation of the constitutional amendments, ensuring the collocutors that there will be no changes to the agreed negotiation framework and that this opportunity should not be missed. President Talat Xhaferi emphasized the friendly bilateral relations with all three countries and expressed gratitude for their continued support for EU membership.



INTERNATIONAL ILINDEN FOLK DANCES FESTIVAL



SPAIN CONTINUES WITH THE COMMITMENTS FOR EU ENLARGEMENT

The National Council for European Integration and the Committee for European Affairs held a joint session, during which a presentation was made of the program and priorities for the work of the Spanish Presidency with the Council of the EU by the Spanish Ambassador, H.E. Jose Luis Lozano Garcia. These priorities imply that the Spanish Presidency will work to reduce the EU's excessive dependence on third countries in areas such as energy, health, digital technologies, and food, and will promote the development of strategic industries and technologies in Europe and with a common strategy to guarantee the economic security of the EU. H.E. Ambassador David Geer, Head of the EU Delegation spoke about the reforms that should be implemented, referring to the rule of law, the fight against corruption, the judiciary, then the role of the Parliament and cooperation with the civil sector. Regarding the constitutional amendments, he called for an open debate on this issue and for political responsibility. The President of the Committee Arber Ademi, emphasized that big compromises have already been made, with one remaining condition, and that this is our country and we should jointly think of future generations and not put the European perspective in danger.



PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE SYSTEMIC REFORM FOR CHILDREN'S JUSTICE

The Committee on Political System and Relations between Communities held a public hearing on the topic related to the revision of the normative framework, the systemic reform for justice for children, which will ensure complementarity of laws and their successful implementation in practice. The public debate was organized at the initiative of UNICEF, with the aim of consulting stakeholders on key aspects of the systemic reform of justice for children, in terms of improving the legal framework and support for its implementation, with a special focus on the commitment to the allocation of appropriate budget funds. Introductory presentations were made by Sonja Mirakovska, President of the Committee, Viktorija Avramovska-Madić, Deputy Minister of Justice, the EU Ambassador Geer and Patricia Di Giovanni, Representative of the UNICEF Office. Academician Vlado Kambovski gave a presentation of the identified deficiencies in the Law on Justice for Children and proposed changes, while Aleksandar Nikolov, social policy specialist from UNICEF, presented the findings of the Analysis of the adequacy, efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness of the budget allocations for justice for children of the government and local self-government.



INTERNATIONAL ILINDEN FOLK DANCES FESTIVAL



COMMEMORATING SREBRENICA 28 YEARS OF THE GENOCIDE

"Srebrenica - a city that the whole world has heard about, but it would have been better if it didn't." This is how MP Sanela Shkrijelj began her address at today's session of the Inter-Community Relations Committee, dedicated to commemorating the genocide that happened 28 years ago in BiH. "It must not be relativized. Srebrenica must be called by its true name – genocide. Those who planned and carried out this monstrous act wanted to deprive humanity of its races, ethnicities, and religions. That is why we now must advocate for respect for diversity and protection of the weaker and more vulnerable," said Shkrijelj. The President of the Assembly, Talat Xhaferi, in his opening address, emphasized that after the war, nothing is the same as it was before. The void that remains on the streets, in the homes, cannot be compensated. The pain that is implanted in the chest does not decrease either. The president of the Committee Arbana Pasholi, emphasized that today we remember the dark and soulless side that is one of the most gruesome events in recent history. "Life goes on, but memories remain, not only for those who personally survived the pain, but also for generations to come. That is why we have the responsibility to educate our children to be free in mind and heart and to respect diversity," said MP Pasholi.



MEETING OF THE SUPPORT FOR THE ROMA IPPG

The members of the Inter-Party Parliamentary Group for the Support of the Roma held a working meeting. The IPPG coordinator Ljatif Shikovski proposed on behalf of the civil society, that each last Thursday of the month members of IPPG could ask parliamentary questions related to the needs of the Roma. In that direction, Šikovska said that issues in the field of education, health, employment, discrimination, and other challenges faced by the Roma in the country will gain greater visibility in the public. The members of the IPPG accepted the proposal of Šikovska to organize a meeting with the civil society, because, as they pointed out, they will be closely acquainted with the real picture of the needs of the Roma. Some of the IPPG members proposed to act at the local level as well, that is, to inform the local communities about the interests of the Roma community in the given municipality through a letter. Šikovska pointed out that the idea is also acceptable for the National Democratic Institute, which constantly provides support to the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia.



INTERNATIONAL ILINDEN FOLK DANCES FESTIVAL





WOMEN MPS REPRESENT A PILLAR FOR THE STRATEGY ON DEMOCGRAPHIC REFORMS

The Women Club of Deputies of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, held a consultative meeting with the UN Population Fund and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, at which the Draft version of the Demographic Policy Strategy was presented by prof. Dr. Dragan Tevdovski. The purpose of this meeting was to inform and familiarize with the process for the development of the new Strategy. Lolita Ristova, President of the Club expressed satisfaction with the participation of the MPs in this consultative meeting. Marija Dimitrovska, analyst of the United Nations Population Fund emphasized that the demographic policy has no ideological determination and therefore the involvement of all stakeholders in this process, identifying the challenges and finding solutions for a sustainable policy of North Macedonia is important. In the presentation, Professor Tevdovski emphasized that the goal is the widest possible support and involvement of the state institutions, universities, MASA, civil society organizations and international agencies, should be the pillar of this Strategy.

The last census of the population indicated a negative natural increase, a decrease in the birth rate, external emigration, aging of the nation, a process that is not only in our country but also in European countries, large demographic disparities, and uneven spatial distribution. This is the third Strategy for Demographic Policies 2024 - 2044, for a period of 20 years, but with the possibility of revision every 5 years. The MPs initiated the need to adopt an action plan for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy.

ACCESS TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO A HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. Zaklina Lazarevska, MP and Member of the Inter-Party Parliamentary Group for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and President of the Committee on Education, Science and Sports, participated at an event organized by the Association for Assistive Technology "Open the Windows", in cooperation with the country's Ombudsman. At the event, the key findings from the Analysis on access to higher education for persons with disabilities were presented. Namely, the initiative for this study stems from the obligation of the signatory states to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to higher education, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. This is the reason for the necessary to enable reasonable adjustments for persons with disabilities. Essentially, the Analysis determines the physical accessibility of state colleges, accessible literature, assistive technology, and other supports for students with disabilities. MP Lazarevska, as a speaker at this event, emphasized that the members of the IPPG strive for full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, she indicated that the National Strategy for Education, as well as the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, contain numerous activities, which are generally under the competence of the Ministry of Education and Science, with the aim of continuity in the promotion of the rights of young people and the creation of an inclusive environment.



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