

### Your contacts:

Chairman of the EU-MK JPC: [I.Vasilevska@sobranie.mk](mailto:I.Vasilevska@sobranie.mk)

Members: [jpc@sobranie.mk](mailto:jpc@sobranie.mk)

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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### LAWS ADOPTED FROM THE REFORM AGENDA IN JANUARY 2025:

- Law Ratifying the Facility Agreement Between the European Union, Represented by the Commission and the Republic of North Macedonia, Represented by the Government of North Macedonia on Specific Arrangements for Implementation of Union Support to the Republic of North Macedonia under the Reform and Growth Facility



## MEETING WITH NORWAY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR WESTERN BALKANS

The President of the Assembly, Afrim Gashi, met with the Special Representative of Norway for the Western Balkans, Erik Mathiasen. The two interlocutors welcomed the excellent political relations and friendship, emphasizing that they have been further strengthened through NATO membership. President Gashi emphasized that the appointment of a Special Representative for the Western Balkans demonstrates the interest that the Norwegian government devotes to the region. He also expressed his gratitude for the strong support that Norway, which, although not a member of the EU, due to its close ties to the Union, provides for the European aspirations of our country. Views on advancing the country's accession path were also exchanged during the meeting, given that Mathiasen has many years of experience working in relations with the EU.



## FIRST SESSION OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS' CLUB



47 female MPs in the current parliamentary mandate constitute the new Women Parliamentarians' Club. At the first meeting they took an unanimous election for MP Jovana Trenčevska as its President, and MP Silvana Angelevska as its Vice-President. The Club includes representatives from all parliamentary groups represented in the legislature, who, during the constituent session, reaffirmed their commitment to continuing the non-partisan battle against all forms of discrimination and to promoting gender equality. President Afrim Gashi who addressed the audience, emphasized that no society can be called just and developed if it does not guarantee equal opportunities for women and men. A society that does not ensure gender equality, he said, has not utilized its full capacity and potential and, as a result, its development is limited. Vice-President of the Assembly Vesna Bendevska thanked the founders of the Club of Representatives for their contribution 22 years ago, pointing out that their efforts have borne fruit. Key legal solutions have been adopted, she said, to ensure and promote gender equality, but there is still much work ahead of us. The Secretary General of the Assembly, Marina Dimovska, pointed out that the establishment of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus was a milestone that positioned the Assembly as a leader in protecting women's rights and overcoming stereotypes that have limited women's participation in politics for years. This club is a symbol of cooperation and unity in the legislature. It should represent a shared vision and reflect the potential of women's leadership in creating more inclusive and sustainable policies," concluded Dimovska.



## EC PROGRESS REPORT DEBATED IN THE CEA AND NCEI



which the implementation of essential reforms should continue. The country, the EU ambassador emphasized, continued its alignment with the EU's CFSP, played an active role in a complex geopolitical context during its mandate as OSCE Chairman-in-Office and actively engaged in the implementation of the new Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. Deputy Minister for European Affairs Viktorija Trajkov assessed that the recommendations are very important for planning and creating reforms in the country. She pointed out that the assessment of the country's overall readiness for the EU for last year is "a good level of readiness", i.e. 3.22 compared to 3.13 in 2023 and is solid and constant compared to previous years. Vice-President of the NCEI, Marija Petrushevska stressed that the recommendations are strongly linked to the reform agenda, which in turn is linked to the Growth Plan. The President of the NCEI, Venko Filipche, pointed to the remarks from the Report regarding the Parliament, which indicate that the work on reforms in the EU accession process needs to be accelerated and that in that context, inter-party cooperation is of essential importance. The President of CEA, Antonio Milososki, in his address referred, among other things, to the remarks regarding the adoption of laws with a European flag. He emphasized that the common commitment of this composition of the Commission is that in the future, the envisaged procedures should be followed regarding the adoption of regulations for harmonization with European legislation. This EC Report covers the period from 15 June 2023 to 1 September 2024 and, in practice, covers the work of three governments, including the technical one in the pre-election period. With regard to the Parliament, in the section "Fundamental values of the accession process/democracy", it is noted, among other things, that the legislature should carefully plan and adopt its agenda and limit the use of fast-track legislative procedures or the inappropriate use of the "European flag" procedure. Inter-party cooperation, as stated, is essential to accelerate the implementation of EU-related reforms, in the interest of citizens.

The National Council for European Integration (NCEI) held its first session after its establishment in this parliamentary composition, at which, together with the Committee on European Affairs (CEA), discussed the 2024 European Commission Progress Report. The conclusion of the speakers was that the country should continue with reforms, in order to open the clusters of the negotiation process for full membership in the EU. Presenting the Report, EU Ambassador Michalis Rokas said that North Macedonia has consistently emphasized its political commitment to the strategic goal of EU integration and its ambition to progress in the accession negotiations process, for

## MEETING WITH MEPS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN STRASBOURG

A Delegation from the JPC -EU and the Republic of North Macedonia headed by the Chair Ivanka Vasilevska, met MEPS in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Zaklina Peshevska and Sonja Mirakovska, Vice Co-Chairs, and Saranda Imeri Stafai, Member and Dijana Roska, Deputy-Member were part of the Delegation.

MEP Dan Barna showed interest in the steps to be taken for opening of negotiation chapters. He pointed to the positive momentum within the Union for enlargement, which should be used, including by fulfilling the required reforms in the judiciary, the fight against corruption and the reform of the administration. He particularly welcomed the benefits available to candidate countries for gradual accession to the Union, which will enable access to European markets even before EU membership. He appealed for investment in education and the animation of young people for the European agenda as a key prerequisite for successful integration.



### VEVCHANI CARNIVAL



Vevcani Carnival  
in North Macedonia

Вевчански  
карневал 2025







becoming a member of the Union by 2030 are real. He appealed for the implementation of key reforms and the adoption of constitutional amendments to open the negotiation chapters. He pointed to the



country and the European Parliament. Ondruš advised his colleagues to continue with reforms, especially in the fight against corruption, the spending of public finances and the use of European funds. Finally, he indicated that he will be an active player in the committee and will regularly participate in meetings in the Assembly and the European Parliament.



MEP Vladimir Prebilić informed about the support by Slovenian MEPs, a fact that indicates the conviction of the Republic of Slovenia that the place of the country and the entire Western Balkan region is with the European Union as soon as possible. His position was that enlargement, above all, has a significant security and geopolitical component and it is important that all efforts are undertaken by both the member states and the candidate countries to fully complete the European project.

MEP Matej Tonin, expressed full support for membership of the Republic of North Macedonia in the EU. His assessment was that our country is a leader in reforms in the region and if a step is taken in the last prerequisite for the continuation of negotiations, the chances of the country to the visible benefits of the membership of the Republic of Slovenia, which celebrated 20 years of EU membership last year, on the quality of life of its citizens.

MEP Thijs Reuten, warmly welcomed the visit of the delegation from the Assembly and the interest of the MEPs in meetings with their colleagues in the European Parliament. As a good expert on the situation in our country, he once again expressed his strong support for European integration, emphasizing the need to adopt the constitutional amendments as soon as possible, given the political momentum in the member states and their positive support for enlargement.

The delegation also met with MEP Branislav Ondruš, with whom they exchanged views on the functioning of the meetings of the JPC, the priorities of our country and the European Parliament. Ondruš advised his colleagues to continue with reforms, especially in the fight against corruption, the spending of public finances and the use of European funds. Finally, he indicated that he will be an active player in the committee and will regularly participate in meetings in the Assembly and the European Parliament.

EP Rapporteur Thomas Waitz, stated that the country has achieved significant progress in reforms in the past decades, has resolved open issues with its neighbors and deserves to move forward on the European path. He pointed out the need to fulfill the last condition for opening the chapters and continue with reforms in priority areas. Regarding the Resolution that the European Parliament adopts every year for our country, based on the European Commission Report, he confirmed that it, as always, will objectively reflect the situation in the country, with praise for the achieved results and indications for continuing with reforms in areas that require additional progress.



## VEVCHANI CARNIVAL





At the meeting with the JPC Co-Chair, Karlo Ressler, opinions were exchanged on Croatia's experiences in the EU accession process, the way in which sensitive issues that were a prerequisite for membership were resolved and how those experiences can be beneficial for our country. He emphasized that he would make efforts to maintain the spirit of consensus and the constructive way of working during the committee meetings as before and that, as delegations through this type of parliamentary diplomacy, we will jointly contribute to accelerating the country's European agenda.

During the meetings, our delegation presented all the concessions and compromises, and the reforms that we have made as a country, especially in the past 20 years after receiving candidate status, as well as our strategic role that we played in moments that were decisive for the member states. The failure to fulfill the promises made, the irrational demands on issues that have no place in the 21st century, are the main factors that have drastically reduced the support of citizens for European integration and which make it difficult for politicians to convince citizens of the benefits that await us after membership in the Union. It was clearly emphasized that despite everything, citizens see themselves in the EU, a place where as a country we naturally belong.



## IFES REPORT PRESENTED IN THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Representatives of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) today presented the findings of the roundtable titled "Money, Media and Elections" in the Committee on European Affairs. The topic was dedicated to state financing in North Macedonia, in order to contribute to a fairer, stronger and more transparent system. The Committee President Antonio Molososki, emphasized that the findings of this analysis should serve to improve electoral regulations, primarily in the area of state financing, which, as he said, still requires the involvement of all stakeholders, such as the competent ministries or journalist associations. To this end, as Milošoski said, a debate may soon be organized in the committee, given that local elections are coming up in the country and the need for appropriate further regulation of paid political advertising during elections has been recognized, by including internet portals in the legal framework. According to the analysis of IFES, in the last (parliamentary) elections last year, a total of 251 internet portals registered with the State Election Commission for publishing paid advertisements. According to reports, 150 of these media outlets (60 percent) actually published paid advertisements. In total, it is estimated that the portals received 811,013 EUR public funds, or 20 percent of the total expenditures for paid political advertisements, which emphasizes the influential role of parties and portals in shaping public perceptions of the election campaign and the candidates. The meeting with the IFES representatives also discussed the need for a clear definition and separation of the roles during the elections of the oversight bodies. Opinions were also exchanged on the possibilities for integrating gender equality in public financing, as a way to improve the participation and representation of women in political and public life, as well as on the prohibition of hate speech in paid political advertising.



### VEVCHANI CARNIVAL



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Editorial Board: Marijana Opashinova Shundovska, Ivanka Vasilevska and Sasho Zashov (Evropa 92)

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jpc@sobranie.mk



www.sobranie.mk

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