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PRESIDENT GASHI WELCOMES CROATIAN PRESIDENT JANDROKOVIC

President of the Assembly Afrim Gashi met with the President of the Croatian Sabor, Gordan Jandrokovic, who paid an official visit to the Republic of North Macedonia. President Gashi expressed gratitude for the continuous and strong support that the Republic of Croatia provides to the European perspective of our country. President Jandrokovic reiterated his strong support for our European integration, recalled that during Croatia's first EU Presidency, a decision was made for opening negotiations with our country, and expressed hope that they would soon begin in clusters. At the meeting, experiences were shared on Croatia's path to the European Union, and opinions were also exchanged on current developments on the international scene.



IMPROVEMENT IN THE MEDIA IS INVESTMENT IN IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

President Gashi met with Anthony Belanger, Secretary General of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), at which they exchanged views on the working conditions of journalists in the country and considered the possibilities for their improvement, in order to improve the overall situation in the media sphere in the country. Secretary General of the Assembly, Marina Dimovska, as well as the President of the Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM), Pavle Belovski, and other representatives of this trade union organization and the IFJ also attended the meeting. The interlocutors specifically addressed the draft amendments to the Law on Media, which is already in parliamentary procedure and has been placed on the agenda, in first reading, at the first new session of the Parliament, next week. In doing so, suggestions were made for possible interventions in the text of the draft law, primarily in the direction of raising the level of labor rights of journalists and other media workers. President Gashi also emphasized his commitment to complete freedom and independence of the media, as well as to complete transparency and openness of the Parliament to the public. For this purpose, as he said, regular communication with media representatives is necessary, among other things. In doing so, Gashi also pointed out the steps that are currently being taken to ensure greater transparency of the legislative branch.





POLISH AMBASSADOR PRESENTED COUNCIL PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES IN PARLIAMENT

ening the security and EU resistance and partners. Enlargement, remains in the spotlight of the Polish presidency, and the commitment is to lead the process of accession to all partners both from the Western Balkans and the Eastern countries, on the principle of merit. The Presidency is also a good opportunity to reflect on the future of the transatlantic partnership, the need to boost economic co-operation and resistance to misinformation, and revitalization of EU relations with the United Kingdom. CEA Chair Antonio Milososki noted that the transatlantic dialogue is very important and useful for the entire continent, including with our country and the region. NCEI President Venko Filipche stressed the need to implement the reform agenda, noting that the partnership with the EU, as well as with the United States, should be shown with acts. Deputy Minister for European Affairs Viktorija Trajkov pointed out that the priorities coincide with our priorities aimed at peace and prosperity. Trajkov also referred to the reform agenda, pointing

The Ambassador of the Republic of Poland Mariusz Brymora, presented the program and priorities for the work of the Polish Presidency with the Council of the European Union to members of the Committee on European Affairs (CEA) and the National Council for European Integration (NCEI). He noted that the Polish Presidency, under the motto "Security, Europe!" is focused on maximizing support for Ukraine, maintaining sanctions policies towards Russia and Belarus and strength-

out that we have no choice but to continue shaking our priorities, which will enable us to access the European family. NCEI Vice President Maria Petrushevska referred to the importance of the battle against misinformation and false news in the EU accession process, as well as the current very specific geopolitical context. MP Halil Snapche stressed that cooperation between our EU institutions and the process of implementing reforms should strengthen.

MEETING VASILEVSKA - DIR

The President of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with the Parliament of Ukraine, Ivanka Vasilevska, met with the Ambassador of Ukraine, Larysa Dir. Vasilevska expressed regret for the state of war and respect for the sovereignty of Ukraine. In an open conversation, opinions were exchanged on social events in both countries, but also in the world. Ambassador Dir informed about the daily attacks from Russia, about the problems they are facing on the front. In this regard, she requested the implementation of the aid package from our country and appealed for the signing of agreements and resolutions, in order to provide support to Ukraine. The interlocutors agreed on mutual visits of the Parliamentary Groups for Cooperation, but also the need for meetings at a higher level, in order to strengthen bilateral relations.



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Ви благодариме!

Faleminderit!

Thank you!

Merci!



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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED IN PARLIAMENT

On the occasion of 8TH March - International Women's Day, the Assembly held its 39th session, thematically dedicated to the status and rights of women, under the topic "Thirty years of commitments and achievements to improve the status of women and future plans for action". President Afrim Gashi, said the purpose of this session is to confirm the efforts to promote women's status and rights in all areas. To that end, the legislature is taking a series of activities, Gashi said, stressing that not by accident 65 percent of the employees of the Assembly are women. The Speaker of the Assembly said that, despite the legal protection against discrimination and violence, women remain often discriminated against and are victims of violence, and the struggle continues and should be comprehensive, to be a common goal of the whole society. President of the State Gordana Siljanovska Davkova said that the force of the woman stems from the mother's instinct, the commitment, the courage, the empathy and the altruism. Speaking of gender -based violence, it is a crime that knows no bounds, surpasses cultures and therefore requires organized planetary action. Prevention and education are the biggest protection against gender -based violence. Zaklina Pesevska, Chair of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, referred to the factors that influence the increase in gender -based violence, despite the solid legal framework for its prevention. Over the years it has been proven that the greater representation of women in politics and leadership positions contributes to reducing conflicts and solving problems. MPs Diana Toska, Feride Haxhiu, Jovana Mojsovska



and Daniela Belimova, spoke at the session, on behalf of their parliamentary groups. The Secretary General of the Assembly, Marina Dimovska, outlined that women in our country do not require special privileges. They require equal access, fair chance and open opportunities. Only through female solidarity and equality, we will overcome stereotypes in society.

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IS ESSENTIAL FOR EVALUATION OF AUDIT REPORTS

Vice-President of Parliament, Antonio Milošoski met with the Chief State Auditor Maksim Acevski, the Deputy State Auditor, Orhan Ademi, the President of the Senate of the Supreme Audit Institution of Montenegro, Nikola N. Kovačević, and the member of the Senate of the Supreme Audit Institution of Montenegro, Branislav Radulović. Milošoski welcomed the cooperation between the Parliament and State Audit Office, through the Memorandum of Cooperation, enabling final audit reports to be subject to consideration in the legislature. Kovačević spoke about the structure and work of the Supreme Audit Institution of Montenegro, but also about the cooperation with the Parliament of Montenegro. The interlocutors agreed on the necessity of independent and strong audit institutions. The range of activities that can be subject to audit reports is wide, but for their value to be absorbed by the public, the role of parliaments is essential.



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OTA ANNUAL REPORT CONSIDERED

The Committee for Supervision of the Implementation of Communications Interception Measures at its 3rd session, reviewed the Annual Report on the Work of the Operational-Technical Agency (OTA) for 2024. The session was attended by Director Marija Janicheska, who provided an explanation of the Report, as a representative of OTA. The Commission reviewed this Report and forwarded it for further procedure in the Parliament, and designated the President of the Commission, Mile Talevski, as rapporteur.

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Thank you!

Merci!

SIGMA WORKSHOP ON "STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ADMINISTRATION FOR EVIDENCE-BASED LEGISLATION"

As part of the SIGMA program, jointly funded by the OECD and EU, a workshop was held to strengthen the capacities of the parliamentary administration for evidence-based legislation. The aim of the workshop was to identify specific areas for reform through the exchange of experiences and best practices from the SIGMA document on "Parliaments and Evidence-Based Legislation". Experts from Parliament of the Czech Republic and former MPs from Latvia presented case studies on their experiences in the coordination and planning of the legislative process between the government and the parliament, the submission of draft laws, their preparation, and oversight of implementation, as well as the research and analytical support to the legislative process provided by the research services.



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RESPECT OF FISCAL RULES FOR STABLE ECONOMY

An event on fiscal management in the EU and the role of the Fiscal Council was organized in Parliament, upon request by World Bank and Fiscal Council. The Chair of the Committee on Finance and Budget, Sanja Lukarevska, emphasized that long-term compliance with fiscal rules is a commitment to a prosperous and stable economy. The Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Labor and Energy Policy, Bojan Stojanovski, informed that the Fiscal Council has independent members, experts in the field, who provide opinions that the MPs then consider. Economic errors should be reduced to a minimum, Stojanovski said. Michalis Rokas, EU Ambassador and Massimiliano Paolucci, Director of the World Bank for our country and Kosovo, also addressed the participants. It was emphasized that public finance reforms are a key step in every country preparing for the EU, and the Fiscal Council is key to fiscal stability. Today, 105 countries in the world have adopted fiscal rules for the design and implementation of fiscal policy, as well as all EU member states. Fiscal rules in our country were introduced with the 2022 Budget Law and aim to limit the short-term tendencies of fiscal authorities. The Budget Law provides for the existence of a Fiscal Council as an independent, professional and objective body. The members of the Fiscal Council are appointed by the Macedonian Assembly in September 2023, and the constitutive session of the Fiscal Council one month later. As a newly established independent and professional institution, the Fiscal Council is also building the practice of relations



with relevant institutions. The cooperation of the Fiscal Council with the Finance and Budget Commission was particularly highlighted. Finally, the need to hold such conferences in the future was highlighted, in order to truly determine the economic parameters in the country, to respect fiscal rules and to advance our EU commitment.



WORKSHOP TO IMPROVE THE MPS CODE OF ETHICS

The Committee on Rules of Procedure and Mandate-Immunity Issues Working Group with the support of experts from the OSCE, ODIHR, and NDI, held a workshop on Parliamentary Integrity and the Code of Ethics. President of the Parliament, Afrim Gashi, addressed the Workshop, emphasizing that the code of ethical conduct, especially for MPs should be a principled force that guides and directs all other institutions. ODIHR representative Konstantine Vardzevashvili, stated that parliamentary ethics are very important for maintaining high standards and for building trust among citizens, as well as among MPs in the Assembly. Robert Scott Heaslet from NDI also emphasized the significance of the code of ethics for raising the level of political culture in society. He also welcomed the adoption of the Code of Ethics for the Service of the Assembly, wishing for its successful implementation. The Chairman of the Committee Mile Lefkov, said that political culture is built in this way – through constant discussion and dialogue. The aim of the Workshop was to determine mechanisms for strengthening parliamentary ethics through good practices in public ethics, as well as improving gender sensitivity, among other things, by supporting institutional solutions to violence against women in politics.

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