

Your contacts:

Chairman of the EU-MK JPC: I.Vasilevska@sobranie.mk

Members: jpc@sobranie.mk

Your links:

Members of the Assembly

Councils of the Assembly

Working bodies of the Assembly

Joint Parliamentary Committee EU – RNM

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

LAWS ADOPTED ACCORDING TO NPAA IN FEBRUARY 2025:

- Law Amending the Law on Payment Services and Payment Systems

23rd JPC IN SKOPJE

The Co-Chairs of the JPC EU – North Macedonia, MP Ivanka Vasilevska and MEP Karlo Ressler, opened its 23RD Meeting, first in the new mandate of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia and the European Parliament. In that context, Vasilevska emphasized that in the past year, despite the electoral processes, our country, after the completed screening for the six clusters, continued with the reform agenda and the implementation of the SAA, reaching 50% harmonization of our domestic legislation with that of the EU, and to align fully with the CSDP. She expressed gratitude for the EU assistance, including through the Growth Plan, and the EP, for supporting the adoption of the new Rules of Procedure. Ressler, in his opening remarks, emphasized the EP's commitment to the parliamentary dimension of relations, and that after 20 years of candidate status and the new geopolitical circumstances at the European level, enlargement is back high on the EU agenda. He emphasized that dialogue is important at all levels, towards a common European future. They remain our trusted friend and ally on the European path, and such meetings will only contribute to the parliamentary dimension. The presence of the MEP and rapporteur for our country, Thomas Waitz, was also welcomed. During the two days, parliamentarians exchanged views on the relations between the EU and North Macedonia, fundamental rights and freedom of speech, rule of law and the fight against corruption, good neighbourly relations, regional stability and regional cooperation, media and civil society, environmental issues, economic crisis and energy issues, transport and infrastructure connectivity, artificial intelligence and cyber security. The meeting was concluded with the adoption of [Joint Recommendations](#).



MEPS MET PRESIDENT GASHI

Before the start of the JPC meeting, MEPs met with the President of the Assembly, Afrim Gashi, who underlined that EU integration remains a top strategic priority for both the Government and the Assembly. The MEPs stressed that there is currently a window of opportunity in the context of the enlargement that should be used, and they also informed that the European Parliament sets as a priority the strengthened cooperation with the parliaments of the Western Balkan countries.



SLOVENIAN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE MEETS PRESIDENT GASHI

President Gashi met with Anzej Fragnes, Slovenian Special Representative for Western Balkans. During the meeting, President Gashi emphasized Slovenia's commitment to keeping the issue of enlargement high on the EU agenda, as well as the support it provides to our country on its path to the EU. Experience shows that the enlargement process is the only tool for ensuring prosperity, security and stability on the European continent, and as such should continue with even greater intensity.

Fragnes stressed that it is of particular importance that the process of opening the negotiation chapters begins as soon as possible and that the country joins the EU, for which Slovenia will provide constant open and strong support.

EP RAPPORTEUR WAITZ MEETS JPC CO-CHAIR VASILEVSKA

JPC Co-Chair Ivanka Vasilevska met with Thomas Waitz, EP Rapporteur for our country. Opinions were exchanged on current developments in Brussels and Skopje. The two interlocutors agreed that the focus at home should be on the future, not the past, and that the implementation of the remaining reforms should continue until full membership in the Union. It was also concluded that in building and nurturing a good neighborly policy, priority should be given to everyday topics that affect the citizens of neighboring countries and the wider region, such as transport and infrastructure, environmental protection, economic cooperation and trade, people-to-people contacts, and other issues of mutual interest.



EVENT IN THE EU DELEGATION DEDICATED TO UKRAINE

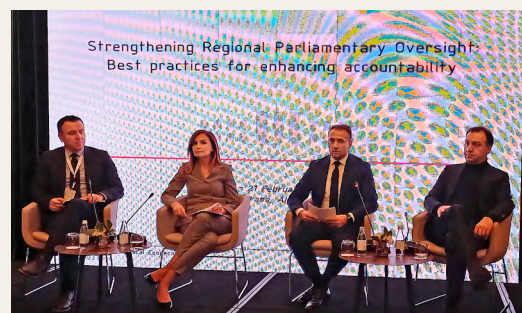
MP Slavjanka Petrovska participated in the event organized by the EU Delegation and the Embassy of Ukraine in Skopje, on 24th February, the day marking three years of resistance against total Russian aggression, organized by the Embassy of Ukraine and the EU Delegation in Skopje. In her address, MP Petrovska emphasized that support for Ukraine must not stop, because Ukraine is not only defending itself from aggression, but also fighting for the principles on which peace in Europe is based. She expressed support for all diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace – a peace that will be in accordance with international law and the will of the Ukrainian people. Underlining that the future of Ukraine is the future of Europe, she emphasized that ensuring the security and sustainability of the decisions that will be made is a shared responsibility. Representatives of the executive branch, the diplomatic corps, and civil society, also addressed the participants. The Ukrainian film "Rock, Paper, Scissors", which won the BAFTA (British Academy Film Award) in 2025 was screened at the end of the event.

STRUMICA CARNIVAL



EC ENERGY LEGISLATION IMPLEMENTATION PRESENTED IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Committee on Economic Affairs, Labor and Energy Policy; the Committee on Transport, Digital Transformation, Environment and Spatial Planning and the Interparty Parliamentary Group for Nature Protection and Combating Pollution and Climate Change, held a meeting with representatives from the Energy Community Secretariat. The Director of the Energy Community Secretariat pays regular annual visits to national parliaments of the nine countries - contracting parties to the Energy Community, where he makes a presentation on the level of implementation of the Energy Community legislation in these countries. The report states as the main achievements in 2024 that the country is one of the leading contracting parties in the development of renewable energy sources, the nominated electricity market operator (NEMO), the completed tender procedure and started implementation of the register for guarantees of origin, joining the regional system of the Energy Community, and a new draft- Energy Law, which aims to transpose the Electricity Integration Package. As a roadmap for the coming period, it is stated that the transposition of the Electricity Integration Package must not be delayed. Establishing an organised market for intraday trading and ensuring market coupling should be a priority. Transposition of the revised Trans-European Energy Networks Regulation should be prioritised. Accelerate the pace of oil stockpiling to achieve 90 days of net imports as soon as possible. Swift adoption of the Climate Action Bill is needed. The 2050 climate neutrality objective should be integrated into national legislation and the coal phase-out date included in key documents. The process of updating and adopting the National Energy and Climate Plan should be finalised as soon as possible. The Energy Community Decarbonisation Roadmap should be updated to strengthen regional cohesion in response to the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. The adoption of the Law on Renewable Energy Sources, together with the amendments to the Law on Energy Efficiency and the establishment of the Energy Efficiency Fund, should be completed. A harmonized legal system for project permits needs to be adopted, including full transposition of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive. The limits of the National Emission Reduction Plan must be respected without delay. The Chairman of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Labor and Energy Policy, Bojan Stojanoski, closed the session with the assurance that the Assembly will proceed with the adoption of the proposed legal solutions as soon as possible, as a priority for the country.



MP BOJAN STOJANOSKI ATTENDS REGIONAL OVERSIGHT CONFERENCE IN TIRANA

MP Bojan Stojanoski participated in the Regional Conference on Parliamentary Oversight, which was held in Tirana, Republic of Albania. Representatives from national parliaments of Albania, Kosovo, Moldova, the German Bundestag, the Swiss Parliament and international organizations attended the event. The conference was opened by the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania, Elisa Spiropali, who expressed gratitude to the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in the Republic of Albania for organizing the conference, which will enable the creation of a platform for the exchange of best practices between countries and increasing the accountability of national parliaments. Participants exchanged views on the models of parliamentary oversight. Parliaments should exercise constant control and make appropriate recommendations that should be implemented by the institutions they control. In the coming period, parliaments should pay attention to increasing digital tools, strengthening oversight mechanisms, the capacities of MPs and parliamentary services, as well as cooperation with the SAO and the Ombudsman. MP Stojanoski noted that in the last two years, committees have started to review individual final audit reports submitted by the State Audit Office. It enjoys great trust from all parliamentary groups in terms of its professionalism and objectivity, as well as in terms of the quality of the audit reports submitted to the Parliament. In addition to reviewing audit reports, another instrument for exercising the control function used by MPs is parliamentary questions. Sessions for asking parliamentary questions are held on the last Thursday of the month. In addition to these sessions for asking parliamentary questions by all MPs, in accordance with the new Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, parliamentary questions from MPs from opposition parliamentary groups and from MPs in the opposition who are not organized in a parliamentary group are asked once a month, on the day when a session of the Assembly is held. If no sessions are convened during the month, the President of the Assembly must convene one session for asking parliamentary questions. Parliamentary questions are asked after the agenda of the session is determined and lasts two hours.

STRUMICA CARNIVAL



STUDY VISIT ON COMMUNICATIONS IN BRUSSELS

At the invitation of the European Parliament, a study visit on communications for Parliament staff took place in Brussels. The group of 12 representatives of the parliamentary service was led by the Deputy Secretary General of the Parliament, Nikola Gjosevski. The topics covered by the two-day study visit, during which officials of the European Parliament and the European Commission exchanged views, experiences and best practices with officials from the Parliament of North Macedonia, were the strategic approach to communications, working with public information services, writing press releases, the role of the spokesperson, communication during crises, combating negative reporting, combating information manipulation and disinformation, communication on social media - challenges and best practices. The visit confirmed the importance of openness of the Parliament and public involvement in its work, which is of crucial importance for the democratic processes of the country.



As part of the study visit, the officials of the Parliament also met with MEP and EP Rapporteur Thomas Waitz. He informed that after the visit to the country scheduled for next week and meetings with representatives of political parties, civil society, and media representatives, he expects the first Draft-Report will be submitted to the Foreign Policy Committee of the European Parliament in the second half of March.

ACTION PLAN FOR PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY ADOPTED IN PARLIAMENT

The Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, adopted the Action Plan for Promoting Equality between Women and Men in the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia 2025-2027. The Action Plan emphasizes the country's commitment to promoting equality between women and men in accordance with the principles of the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and national standards and policies. Equality between women and men is a core value and a driver of economic growth, and means that men and women have equal rights and opportunities to realize their own potential - by contributing to the economic and social development of their country, drawing benefits from their participation in social life. Parliaments are the most important democratic institutions, they have a political and cultural duty to propose and maintain political processes and policies aimed at the effective representation of women. In view of this, parliaments should work towards ensuring a fairer and more equitable society for all.

The Committee also adopted conclusions from the public debate dedicated to prevention of violence against women and family violence:

1. Laws against violence should be consistently implemented to ensure a rapid response and better protection of victims (protection of every victim regardless of gender and age);
2. To ensure the real implementation of the reforms resulting from the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe, ratified by Macedonia in 2018;
3. To encourage awareness of social change through community education;

STRUMICA CARNIVAL



4. Professionals from the Centers for Social Work are obliged to act to protect every victim, regardless of her vulnerability and regardless of whether she comes from an urban or rural environment, whether she is employed or unemployed, whether she has primary or higher education;
5. The Government should work on expanding the network of specialized services for women, victims of violence in each planning region, to ensure the availability of services for every victim, both from urban and rural areas;
6. To show will, commitment and to mobilize greater resources (equipment and human resources) to stop violence against women and domestic violence;
7. Institutions to show zero tolerance towards violence. In this regard, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia to work on promoting equality between women and men, encouraging and supporting all activities on that path;
8. Together with citizens, institutions, non-governmental organizations and the media, to build a culture of respect, equality and support;
9. Lobbying for more financial resources from the National Budget and local budgets for the implementation of the laws that address this issue, and are defined in the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;
10. Lobbying for more finances to increase human resources in the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth;
11. Increase resources for prevention and suppression of violence in the Ministry of Interior - domestic violence inspectors and violence prevention inspectors;
12. Build the capacities of officials in the police, health, teaching staff, judges, lawyers and prosecutors so that they know exactly what the law says, how to recognize cases of violence and domestic violence and bullying, how to report and what the appropriate minimum penalties and appropriate procedures are;
13. Use the guidelines from the Directive against violence against women and girls, adopted in April 2024 by the European Parliament;
14. Follow the guidelines drawn from the Mapping of planning regions that lack Crisis Centers, Rape Victim Centers and Shelter Centers, as well as specialized counseling centers for psychosocial support for victims of gender-based violence;
15. Let us start preparing in time to deal with forms of technologically enabled violence or digital violence or violence on the internet (legal regulation of this type of violence);
16. To request amendments to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, in the part of the possibility of following the entire course (movement from beginning to end) of the procedures for violent acts that are forwarded to higher authorities and bodies competent for this issue;
17. To request amendments to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in the part of increasing the form and form of repeated discrimination by the same discriminator;
18. To work on raising the awareness of institutions and the quality of their work, in order to view calls for domestic violence as a priority, and to send specialized investigators immediately to the scene of the incident. From the moment of reporting to sanctioning the perpetrator, there is a huge gap;
19. To influence the reduction of the period in which police stations notify social protection centers after receiving a report of domestic violence, which can currently be longer than a week, which is a fairly long period for this type of violence;
20. To provide systematic information on the rights and opportunities available to victims to seek legal aid, i.e. the number of victims of domestic violence who are provided with free legal aid and free medical services for injuries caused by domestic violence. The media should also be involved in campaigns here;
21. To lobby for higher penalties for perpetrators who are almost never punished, or are punished only in 15% of cases, and only in 3% of cases was a prison sentence imposed;
22. To lobby for an amendment to Article 130 of the Criminal Code that would require bodily injury to be prosecuted ex officio, as well as further specifying the criminal offense of stalking;
23. Actively involve men and boys in preventing all forms of violence, in accordance with the Istanbul Convention;
24. Develop programs for perpetrators in prison environments, in order to prevent the possibility of relapse into their violent behavior after release from prison.



STRUMICA CARNIVAL





MEETING OF SECRETARIES GENERAL FROM EU MEMBER STATES PARLIAMENTS IN BUDAPEST

The Secretary General of the Parliament, Marina Dimovska, and the Deputy Secretary General, Boban Stojanovski, participated today at the Meeting of Secretaries General of EU Member States, in Budapest, Hungary. The meeting was attended by delegations from the parliaments of EU Member States, candidate countries, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The participants were welcomed by the President of the National Assembly of Hungary, László Kövér, who welcomed this format as crucial for the exchange of best practices and experiences, as well as the role of the Secretaries General in ensuring the smooth functioning of national parliaments in their countries. He referred to the country's past presidency of the Council of the European Union, with a special

emphasis on the priority of enlargement, which, as he pointed out, is of particular importance for Hungary and should continue to be credible and merit-based. He welcomed the fact that, thanks to their efforts, during the presidency, many Western Balkan countries have made a step forward in their European integration process. The debate was divided into two thematic panels, dedicated to citizen education programs and the cooperation of parliaments of EU member states with parliaments of candidate countries. The first panel presented programs for citizens in different age groups, created for parliamentary democracy, the role of parliaments, information on citizens' rights, their greater involvement in political processes, as well as new tools of modern technology for informing the public. Within the framework of this panel, Dimovska spoke about the programs of the Parliamentary Institute, designed to foster a deeper understanding of democratic governance and to encourage young people to be a strong voice in political processes from an early age. Investing in these activities to strengthen democratic awareness and foster an informed and engaged citizenry will continue to be our main priority in the future, as it is the foundation of every prosperous democracy, concluded Dimovska. In the second panel, dedicated to mutual cooperation, the parliaments of EU member states and candidate countries presented their joint activities, with an appeal for a proactive approach to the use of available funds for an even more dynamic exchange of parliamentary practices. Dimovska informed her colleagues about the successful parliamentary projects with a large number of parliaments of EU member states, through which we managed to apply a number of experiences in practice, thus confirming the benefits of this way of mutual cooperation. She requested further support from the parliaments of EU member states in order to reach the standards required for a parliament of a member state of the European Union.

On the sidelines of the Conference, Dimovska held a bilateral meeting with the Secretary General of the Hungarian National Assembly, György Such, at which the excellent cooperation between the two parliaments at all levels, including at the administrative level, was confirmed. The possibilities for further developing this cooperation in areas that will be further defined and implemented with the help of the instruments available to the European Union were also discussed.



MP IVANKA VASILEVSKA AT THE INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENT FOR TOLERANCE AND PEACE



MP Ivanka Vailevska attended the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace on its 12th plenary session in Geneva. The IPTP is consisted of members of parliaments of over 100 national and regional parliaments worldwide. During the discussions, participating members voiced profound concern over the crises and conflicts affecting various regions worldwide. They underscored the fundamental role of dialogue and tolerance in addressing these challenges, emphasizing that peaceful solutions should be pursued through negotiation, preventive diplomacy, and regional and international mediation efforts. The Parliament reaffirmed its commitment to rejecting violence as a means of conflict resolution and advocated for measures to promote reconciliation, social cohesion, and sustainable development. Additionally, it highlighted the necessity of integrating the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence into educational systems, media narratives, and national and international policies to cultivate long-term stability.

STRUMICA CARNIVAL



JPCCommittee - News from the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 86, February 2025

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

Photo Source: <https://dmka.mk>; <https://smart.sdk.mk>; <https://360stepeni.mk>

The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the publisher.



jpc@sobranie.mk



www.sobranie.mk

JPC