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Republic of Macedonia on the way to the EU

Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-RM

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and the EU

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Culture

Macedonian legislation harmonized with the EU acquis in May 2013:

- Law on Acquisition of Joint Stock Companies
- Law Ratifying the Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in the context of the accession process in the European Union
- Law Amending the Law on Market Supervision
- Law on Mobbing in the Work Place
- Law Amending the Law on Social Protection
- Law on Innovations
- Law on Financial Inspection in the Public Sector



NO AMENDMENTS AND CONSENSUS VOTE - FIRST TIME AT THE 11TH JPC MEETING



The 11th JPC EU-Republic of Macedonia meeting took place on 22 and 23 May in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, where both MEPs and MPs from the Sobranie had an opportunity to discuss reforms taken in the context of HLAB, good neighborly relations and alternative ways for using of renewable energy resources. The debate ended with adoption of **Final Recommendations**, which for the first time in the JPC history, were adopted without amendments and by consensus from both Delegations. Members called on the European Council to grant the Republic of Macedonia date for accession negotiations,

based on the progress noted in the EC Spring Report, as well as on recommendations given for several years by the European Commission and the European Parliament. The Parliamentarians stated that High Level Accession Dialogue provided a good platform for implementation of EU reforms and commended on the joint commitment of the European Commission and the Republic of Macedonia for successful accomplishment of key reform priorities. The 1 March political agreement was noted, and all parties were called upon to work on the sooner establishment of the Committee on Enquiry and on a cross-party commitment for EU integration. They welcomed the successful Macedonian SEECF Chairmanship and the country's constructive role in the regional cooperation. The development of good neighborly relations with the neighbors was noted and outstanding issues should be resolved. Both Delegations welcomed the efficiently conducted and competitive local elections and encouraged the Government and the parties to complete the electoral reform. Reforms in the freedom of expression and the media were positively assessed, but strengthening of the confidence between the Government and the Association of Journalists was deemed as necessary. Framework Agreement is well implemented, especially regarding the inclusion of smaller communities in state institutions, and

the education. They also welcomed legal changes aimed to increase the efficiency and transparency of the judicial system that would contribute to increased confidence among citizens and will eliminate risks for judiciary independence in practice. Anti-corruption legal framework was also noted and the JPC encouraged the Government to establish a track record for convictions in high level cases and to improve verification capacities of state authorities and their authorization. Public administration Reform Strategy was also welcomed and its full implementation was demanded. Commitments of the state for maintaining macroeconomic stability, good business climate for attraction of foreign investments and clearance of all outstanding payments were also welcomed. In that context, they recalled on the importance of regular consultations among the Government, trade unions and companies to alleviate the economic crisis. High structural unemployment was noted as a serious problem also in EU member states and measures taken for employment of young people was particularly welcomed. In the field of renewable energy resources, the parliamentarians encouraged the Government to continue with the measures for direct foreign investments having in mind the geographical location and the country's potential and welcomed the 21% target for use of renewable energy resources until 2020.

MACEDONIAN DELEGATION VISITS IRELAND

Parliamentary Delegation headed by President Trajko Veljanoski, paid official visit to Ireland. At the meeting with the President of Ireland, Mr. Michael Higgins, the excellent friendly relations without open issues between the two states were emphasized. President Veljanoski expressed gratitude to Ireland for using the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia in the bilateral communication. The Delegation also met the Minister of European Affairs, Ms. Lucinda Creighton where they discussed the fact that after several positive EC Progress Reports, the Republic of Macedonia has not been given a date for opening accession negotiations. At the meeting with the Joint Committee on European Affairs and the Irish-Macedonian Friendship Group,

President Veljanoski thanked the state authorities for the overall dedication and support in Dublin, 2004, when the application for Macedonia's EU Membership was handed over. Members of Committee were interested in the good neighbourly policy, the economy, the unemployment and other social affairs in Macedonia and presented the benefits from their EU Membership. The Ceann Comhairle, Mr. Seán Barrett, at the meeting with the Macedonian Delegation, mentioned that the small countries such as Ireland, find it hard to have allies, which is the case with the Republic of Macedonia as well. President Veljanoski underlined the need for future deepening of the parliamentary cooperation and invited his colleague to visit the Republic of Macedonia.



PRESIDENT VELJANOSKI AT THE AUDIENCE WITH THE POPE FRANCIS

President Veljanoski, accompanied by Members of Parliament, attended the Audience with the new Pope Francis. President Veljanoski congratulated the election of the 266th Head of the Catholic Church, expressing sincere wishes for further promotion of the peace, cooperation and friendship in the world. The new pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church expressed support to the Macedonian people and underlined that Macedonia has done a lot for the Christianity. Veljanoski invited the Pope to visit Macedonia and the region, underlining that under the leadership of the Pope Francis, the Holy Chair will

continue to provide the irreplaceable and essential contribution for strengthening of the faith in God, spreading the Holy Word for mutual love, assistance, as well as the traditionally good relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Macedonia. The visit also corresponded with the celebration of the Day of St. Cyril for the 45th time in the Eternal City, which deeply bonds together Macedonia and Rome. President Veljanoski gave the Pope a woodcarving in walnut tree of a Rosetta. He also met the State Secretary of the Holy See Cardinal Teracisio Bertone.



EURO-INTEGRATION IS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE FOR MACEDONIA AND KOSOVO

Members of the Committee on EU Affairs paid official visits to the Republic of Kosovo, where they had meetings with Mr. Jakup Krasniqi, President of the Kosovo Parliament, the Minister for EU-Integration, Ms Vlora Çitaku and with the President of the Republic of Kosovo Ms. Atifete Jahjaga. Both sides reiterated good neighborly relations between the two states and expressed commitment for further deepening of the overall bilateral cooperation, the proof of which are the 25 signed mutual agreements in all fields, the recognition of the independence of the Republic of Kosovo and the envisaged opening of the border crossing Belanovce-Stanchich. The positive trend should be maintained also in the Euro-Atlantic pro-

cesses, since integration in NATO and the EU is the only alternative both for the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Kosovo. Macedonia expresses readiness to share experiences and assist Kosovo on its path towards integration in NATO and the EU. The Chair of the Kosovo Committee on EU-Integration, Mr. Haziri, presented the initiative for the Committee to become a full member of the Conference of Committees on European Issues in the Stabilization and Association Process of South East European States -COSAP, at the COSAP forthcoming meeting in the Republic of Macedonia in September 2013. Macedonian colleagues expressed willingness to put all efforts for realization of this initiative.



ESTONIA SUPPORTS MACEDONIA ON ITS PATH TOWARDS MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Ms. Liljana Popovska, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with the Parliament of the Baltic States, and the Members of the Group had a meeting with the Delegation from the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Estonia headed by the Chairman Arto Aas. Macedonian counterparts expressed appreciation for the support of Estonia, especially with the Resolution on Macedonia that the Parliaments of the three Baltic States Estonia, Estonia and Lithuania adopted last year. The Resolution clearly states that the EU should start the accession negotiations with the Republic of Macedonia, regardless of the dispute over the name that the country is having with Greece. Ms. Popovska said that the integration of a country should not

be impeded if it carries out the necessary reforms and receives positive reports, and added that the name issue is illogical and absurd, especially because it affects the identity of the nation. She pointed out that the vast majority of the Macedonian citizens support the integration in the EU and NATO, but that the continuous postponements result in disappointment and frustration, although there is unanimous conviction that there is no alternative to the Macedonia's EU membership. Mr. Arto Aas said that despite the good relations between the two countries there is lack of information due to rare visits and the modest economic cooperation. Estonian MPs were interested to discuss issues such as population policies and problems with immigration in other countries.



SPRING IN MACEDONIA



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