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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 September 2013:

- Law Ratifying the Protocol between the Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for Amendments in the Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for Mutual Implementation of Court Decisions in Criminal Matters;
- Law Ratifying the Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for Amendments in the Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina on Extradition;
- Law Ratifying the Third Additional Protocol of the European Convention on Extradition.

Independence Day



MEETING OF PRESIDENT VELJANOSKI WITH PRESIDENTS OF POLAND, CROATIA AND THE UK HOUSE OF LORDS SPEAKER



During September, the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski, had meetings with Presidents of Poland, Croatia and the UK House of Lords Speaker. At the meeting with President Bronisław Komorowski, President Veljanoski expressed appreciation for the permanent support from Poland, pointing out that the integration of the entire region will be an important factor for the stabilization of Europe. President Komorowski underlined that the Republic of Poland permanently supports the process of EU enlargement, especially the enlargement of the Balkans, because of their experience on how complicated the integration process is and the reforms on that path. He congratulated President Veljanoski for the

reforms made in this context, highlighting that the role of the parliament is crucial for every democratic nation in the integration process.

No open issues between Macedonia and Croatia, and satisfactory level of parliamentary cooperation with possibility for further promotion in future, were among the main conclusions from the meeting with President of Croatia, Ivo Josipović. With the accession of Croatia in the EU, Republic of Macedonia found yet another friend, having in mind that both states pursued this path together, but because of known reasons Macedonia was blocked by its southern neighbor. President Josipović highlighted that Croatia will continue to support the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Republic



of Macedonia through transfer of specific experience from political and technical point of view. He also addressed issues of the Croatian and Macedonian minorities in Macedonia and Croatia respectively, and welcomed the fact that both states have taken specific steps to improve their status. In relation to the name issue, Croatia will support any solution that is acceptable for the Republic of Macedonia.

At the meeting with the UK House of Lords Speaker, Baroness D'Souza, President Veljanoski expressed gratitude for the UK's continuous support, since the establishment of the diplomatic relations in December 1993, of the integration process of Macedonia's and its membership in NATO and the EU and also of the United Kingdom's use of our constitutional name in bilateral communication. He also thanked for the support through various projects, in cooperation with the Westminster Foundation that contributed to advancement of professional qualifications and a strengthening of the capacity of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

Baroness D'Souza expressed great plea-



sure for the opportunity to visit the Republic of Macedonia and the Parliament, especially because the visit coincides with the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Macedonia, and at the same time, emphasized that this visit reinforces and highlights the friendship of the two countries. She also noted that the United Kingdom continuously supports the enlargement of the European Union and emphasized that it is time that the Republic of Macedonia becomes a part of the European Union. At the end, she pointed out that there is no perfect democracy, that democracy is a process, not a product, and that in practice it requires constant work and investment.

POLITICAL PARTIES SIGNING MEMORANDUM FOR EU MEMBERSHIP

On 16th September 2013, the political parties in the Republic of Macedonia signed a Memorandum for accomplishment of the strategic goal for membership in the European Union. The strategic goal has been supported since 1991 from all political parties and citizens due to the fact that Republic of Macedonia is a European state that belongs in Europe, both historically and geographically. In the Memorandum,

the parties committed themselves continuously and without delay to implement all activities and decisions in the institutions for fulfillment of EU criteria, especially those regarding freedom of the media and freedom of expression, free and fair elections, rule of law, independence of the judiciary and fight against organized crime. They also committed that they will refrain from activities that may obstruct or negatively influence the

accession process, will resolve all disagreements within the institutions of the system by reaching harmonized positions, and will fully and continuously inform the political subjects and citizens for the EU Integration process. The Memorandum is open for all registered political parties in Macedonia. Any political party, who has not done that so far, can also sign the Memorandum in future.



JPC DELEGATIONS - ANOTHER BRIDGE FOR CONTINUATION OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN MACEDONIA AND TURKEY



Macedonia and Turkey are more than friendly courtiers; they exchange opinions, learn from each other and work jointly on the path to join the European family - this was the conclusion at the meeting between the JPC - the Republic of Macedonia and the EU and the JPC -Turkey and the European Union. It was underlined that JPC is yet another bridge in the successful cooperation between Macedonia and Turkey. Co-Chair Kenan Hasipi expressed appreciation for the selfless support provided by Turkey, as a significant world factor. Reminding that the two countries are focused on the EU Membership, Mr. Hasipi underlined

that the Balkan should be, as it naturally is, part of the Union, and hence the integration process should be supported. It will provide security in the region, establish development of the economy and the benefits will be mutual.

The Turkish Delegation, headed by Ms. Mehmet Tekeliouglu, Chair of the Committee on EU Harmonization and Member of JPC EU- Turkey, expressed his pleasure from the meeting and the hospitality, wished Republic of Macedonia a positive EC Progress Report, and in the same time extended an invitation for a visit in Ankara, aiming to deepen the cooperation.

OPEN PARLIAMENT SEMINAR IN SKOPJE



Open Parliament: Transparency of Parliamentary Activities was the topic for the Seminar organized in cooperation with the European Parliament. EP Vice-President László Surján, MEPs, MPs from national Parliaments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey, representatives from the RCC and several NGO representatives took part in the debate. The Seminar was an excellent opportunity for national parliaments to exchange opinions with the European Parliaments regarding transparency of parliamentary activities. Vice-President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Ms Svetlana Jakimovska, on behalf of the President, in her opening speech has pointed out that transparency and openness of parliaments are useful tools in democracy, and information provided to the citizens is not exclusive responsibility of media, but also of parliaments themselves. In that context, she informed the participants that since 2005, the Assembly has been organizing Open Days of Parliament, when groups of children, pupils, students, people with disabilities and all interested citizens can be

directly acquainted with the parliamentary work, the competences and parliamentary premises. The Assembly also provides many information regarding legislative work, activities of MPs and parliamentary groups, international parliamentary cooperation, daily activities and adopted acts, on the parliamentary website which is available in Macedonian, Albanian, English and French language. During the debate, importance of open parliamentary activities was highlighted, as a special contribution to the overall political culture of a state and as useful link for cooperation between the government and the opposition. Strong institutional capacities, functional and updated websites and use of social networks for communication with citizens were mentioned as crucial for modern parliaments. Regarding Code of Conduct for MPs and Rules of Procedure regulating this matter, there was a joint conclusion both by MEPs and MPs that they are directly elected from the citizens and responsible for their work before the citizens, which implies transparency regarding their prop-

erty status before and after their mandate, receipt of gifts during official meetings and visits etc. In relation to lobby groups in the EP, it was mentioned that the work of lobby groups is strictly defined that enables equitable representation of lobby groups of private companies, trade organizations, trade unions and other institutions.

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND IN MACEDONIAN PARLIAMENT



of Macedonia. During the meeting, Minister Tuomioja showed interest for the situation in the state with the media, civil society sector, as well as for the work and the activities of the National Euro-Integration Council.

The President of the National Euro-Integration Council, Ms. Radmila Sekerinska, met Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland and expressed gratitude for the support of Finland in the EU integration process and the positive attitude toward the EU enlargement process, which if of exceptional importance for the Republic



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