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THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MR. TRAJKO VELJANOSKI AWARDED CERTIFICATES OF GRATITUDE TO THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE ASSEMBLY THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF PARLIAMENTS OF SEECP, HELD IN OHRID, 27-28 MAY 2013.



PACE PRESIDENT MIGNON VISITS MACEDONIAN PARLIAMENT



The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Mr. Jean-Claude Mignon paid official visit to the Republic of Macedonia, where he had meetings with the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski, the Coordinators of the Parliamentary Groups and with the Delegation of the Macedonian Assembly to PACE. He also addressed the Members of Parliament and government representatives. At the meeting with his colleague, President Veljanoski underlined that the fulfillment of the obligations of the Council of Europe are essential for establishing a democratic society. He underlined that



the Council of Europe was the organization through which the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Republic of Macedonia started in 1993. The Macedonian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe demonstrated that the country is prepared and has the capacity to actively contribute in resolving the issues facing the Council of Europe, which represents the interests of 800 million European citizens. Mr. Mignon fully agreed with this statement and underlined the high level of diplomatic skill of the Chairmanship of the Republic of Macedonia. Both interlocutors expressed pleasure from the meeting and hope that the good cooperation will continue, as well as conviction that the Republic of Macedonia will finalize the Post Monitoring Dialogue with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in very near future. At the meeting with the Macedonian parliamentarians both sides exchanged views and opinions regarding the report on the post-monitoring dialogue with the Republic of Macedonia that PACE will discuss at its June session and assessed it as balanced and comprehensive.

In his address before the MPs and government representatives, Mr. Mignon emphasized that the region of South-

East Europe has clear perspective and that this is an excellent opportunity for all countries to speed up their reforms. We should help each other and learn from each other in order to advance faster. This is the philosophy of the Council of Europe, said President Mignon. In that spirit, he congratulated the Republic of Macedonia no fulfilling the obligations of the Council of Europe and for European Integration. Visiting you as friends, we fully recognized the progress made by your country, especially in the domain of judiciary and fight against corruption, the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement as essential element of the political and institutional system of the state, said President Mignon. However, he emphasized the necessity of continuous debate with respect to the rights of the opposition and promotion of pluralism in the media. Regarding the name issue, he said that the responsibility is joint, adding that it is absolutely necessary to search for compromise and called both states to use dialogue and constructive approach in finding a common solutions. Concluding his speech, he expressed his belief that the Republic of Macedonia will one day soon be in the same ranks as other states and become an EU Member State.

MACEDONIAN MP AT THE MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE EP



The Sub-Committee on Human Rights held a meeting in the European Parliament in Brussels, where the participants exchanged views on the legal aspects of freedom of expression and the media in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The meet-

ing was chaired by the Member of the European Parliament, Ms. Barbara Lochbihler. Mr. Ilija Dimovski represented the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia at the meeting. In his address, he pointed out the achievements of the country in the field of decriminalization of libel and defamation with the adoption of the Law on Civil Liability and the amendments to the Criminal Code. He said that the increased number of suspended lawsuits against journalists was confirmation for the implementation of the new legislation and expressed his expectations that, after consultations with the relevant international organizations and the stakeholders in the country, the Draft Law on the Media and Audiovisual Media Services that is subject to extensive public debate, will be an additional guarantee for freedom of expression and the status of the media in the coun-

try. Welcoming the efforts of the country, the EP Rapporteur on the Republic of Macedonia, Richard Howitt said that this issue is equally important for all the countries in the region and that the dialogue among the government and the media is a precondition for successful preparation and implementation of the regulations.

Mr. Dimovski also participated at the Second Speak Up! Conference on freedom of expression and media in the Western Balkans and Turkey, organized by the European Commission. Opening the Conference, Mr. Štefan Füle emphasized that freedom of expression is a fundamental value and an indicator of the situation with democracy in the countries, adding that the standards for freedom of the media and expression should be the same for the EU member countries and the candidate countries. The MEP Eduard Kukan pointed out the role of parliaments in the oversight of the implementation of the laws on the media.

15TH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL EURO-INTEGRATION COUNCIL

At its 15th meeting the National Council for European Integration discussed the Information on the activities deriving from the National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis - Revision 2013. Mr. Fatmir Besimi, Vice-President of the Government in Charge of EU Affairs, presented the document. He pointed out that it is of great importance that the EU-Integration process remains in the focus of interest of the institutions because it demonstrates the commitment of the Republic of Macedonia for the EU accession process. Regarding the political criteria, Mr. Besimi emphasized the importance of the High Level Accession Dialogue (HLAD) and the well-organized local elections, and also informed that after the elections activities have been undertaken regarding the electoral legislation, voter's list and further implementation of the recommendations from the OSCE/ODIHR report. The Program for Balanced Regional Development was adopted in the field of decentralization, and a new

law on administration is being prepared that will incorporate the SIGMA recommendations. He also said that the new law on general administrative procedure is being prepared and that since the beginning of 2013 new judges are being employed from the graduates of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors. In the field of anti-corruption policy, further elaboration of the conflict of interest disclosure forms has continued and that the State Audit Office Bureau is preparing measures that will ensure fulfillment of the criteria by the political parties in accordance with the Law on Financing of Political Parties. Mr. Besimi also informed the Members of the National Council that trainings have continued for implementation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights regarding decriminalization of libel and defamation and that new civil servants from the minorities will be employed in the state institutions according to the K5 Program. The review of the implementation



of the Ohrid Framework Agreement has been published and debates are ongoing on the future policies for its implementation. Regarding the economic criteria, amendments have been made to the Law on Banks, the Decision for Management with Credit Risk, and the Law on Securities.

PUBLIC DEBATE OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND WATER MANAGEMENT

The Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management held a Public Debate on the sale of state-owned agricultural land. The Deputy - Minister of Agriculture Mr. Zoran Konjanovski presented the Draft-Law before the participants in the debate, explaining that the Law provides possibility for farmers to buy land in a public and transparent way. He said that it has been prepared after consultations with the farmers, and that their remarks have been incorporated in the draft-law. The Committee Chair Ms. Lence Nikolovska said that this

Law should not be adopted in shortened procedure and that the public should be information with the solutions before its adoption. Other MPs, representatives of the Association of Farmers, the Regional Union of Farmers, the Trade Union of Farmers, professors from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food also took part in the debate. On the basis of the opinions obtained from the debate, the Committee shall prepare a Report that will be submitted for discussion at the plenary session.



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