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NETHELRANDS PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES PRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT

The Committee on EU Affairs held a joint meeting with members from the Joint Parliamentary Committee - EU and the Republic of Macedonia and the National Euro-Integration Council, where Netherlands Presidency priorities were presented by H.E., the Ambassador Wouter Plomp.

Netherlands is taking over the presidency in very difficult times that can only be overcome with a joint effort of all countries, including the countries that are candidates for membership, whose role in overcoming the refugee crisis is crucial, said Ambassador Plomp. With regards to the enlargement, he referred to the Trio Program of the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta, according to which the credibility of the enlargement process is of great importance: "Effective progress of the Western Balkans region towards the EU remains strategically important. Rule of law, fundamental rights, fighting against corruption, economic criteria and public administration reform are the benchmarks against which progress is measured and the countries themselves have the responsibility to meet the conditions they have committed themselves to." Netherlands is committed to individual assessment by each candidate country, according to fair and strict criteria. Western Balkans is part of Europe and must become part of EU, outlined Ambassador Plomp. Implementation of Urgent Reform Priorities, inter-ethnic relations, Implementation of June/July Agreement and holding fair and inclusive elections according to international standards remain essential.

The Deputy-President of the Government in charge of EU Affairs, Mr. Fatmir Besimi, expressed gratitude for the assistance by EU Member States and by the European Commission in the resolution of the political crisis and enabling functioning of state institutions to carry out confident, democratic and inclusive elections. Macedonia works on implementation of the Urgent Reform Priorities and on obligations coming out from HLAD, outlined Mr. Besimi.

The EU Ambassador, H.E. Aivo Orav, stated that the implementation of the Przino



Agreement depends on political parties and their will to find outcome of the delays in the implementation of some points from the Agreement. Regarding Urgent Reform Priorities, Ambassador Orav noted the judicial and parliamentary oversight of intercepted communications, independent oversight regulatory bodies, fight against corruption, electoral reform, depolitization of public administration, implementation of recommendations of the Standing Inquiry Committee for 24 December 2012 events, public broadcasters, government advertising, and access to information

and defamation. The EU is following the implementation and in a few weeks time will assess the situation regarding conditions for holding of fair and inclusive elections, emphasized Ambassador Orav.

The Chair of EU Affairs Committee, Ms. Ermira Mehmeti, concluded that the agreements should be implemented with consensus by all political parties and that confidence should be regained in all state institutions.

Ms. Liljana Poposka, MP, called for greater engagement by the international community to overcome current situation, outlining that without security there is no democracy.

Mr. Orhan Ibraimi, MP, pointed out that the political crisis existed for years and asked for clearing of the voter's list and reforms in the judiciary with assistance of the international community.

Ms. Nola Ismajloska, MP, stated that opposition is participating in the government with their own ministers and work on implementation of the requests from the agreement, and called for adoption of laws with experiences of EU Member States.

Netherlands Presidency Priorities Presented in Parliament

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Mr. Pavle Trajanov, MP, noted that although there is a political and civil consensus for EU and NATO membership, the country is face with delays in the implementation of the Przino Agreement. He expressed confidence that with the reforms to be made, fundamental changes in the state will occur that will enable fair and democratic elections.

The JPC Co-Chair, Mr. Kenan Hasipi, concluded that there are delays in the implementation of the agreement, but the solutions to be adopted have to be accepted by all parties from the agreement in order to have early elections on 24th April, as stipulated by law. The crisis will deepen if implementation is delayed, which is not in the interest of the citizens and will also influence the decision of the European Council for giving a date for opening accession negotiations for the Republic of Macedonia.

NIKOLOSKI RE-ELECTED FOR VICE-PRESIDENT OF PACE

At the beginning of the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Head of the Macedonian Delegation, Mr. Aleksandar Nikoloski was re-elected for Vice-President of PACE and also as a first Vice-President of the Political Affairs and Democracy Committee of PACE. The Committee is reviewing the political affairs and urgent crisis issues in member countries.

Members of the Committee have the right to be represented in Delegations from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to relevant European Ministerial Conferences and to follow their activities, and also hold regular working meetings with European and international organizations, especially with the European Union, OSCE, UN and their agencies. The Committee is also promoting the ratification and implementation, by member states, of the Council of Europe Conventions. Mr. Nikoloski was also Vice-Chair of the PACE Monitoring Committee in the past two years.



PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE DRAFT-LAW ON FREE HEALTH CARE ZONES

The Committee on Health Care held a public debate regarding the proposed Law on Free Health Care Zones. Ms. Jagoda Shahpaska, Chair of the Committee, pointed out that as a member of the opposition party, is against adoption of this proposed law. The Minister of Health Care, Mr. Nikola Todorov, presented the proposed law and explained the benefits of its adoption. The aim of the law is to develop health care tourism, raise the level of health care in the Republic of Macedonia by attraction of foreign capital and introduction of new health care methods and procedures, transfer of know-how and technology, increase of employment, improvement of the quality of education in the field of medicine, promotion of values and practices and introduction of high quality educational methods. The opening of free health care zones will stimulate development of complementary industries, including tourism, hotel management and decrease the expenses in the Health Care Fund of Macedonia to send patients abroad. The implementation of the Draft-Law demands 30 million denars from the State Budget for providing a zone and its promotion to domestic and foreign investors. The first health-care zone is planned to be open in 2017.

Representatives from the Ministry of Health Care, MPs, representatives from the Open Society Foundation, the Macedonian Center for European Education and Committee for Protection of Competition also took part in the debate. Participants had the possibility to give their opinion and proposals regarding the proposed law, and the Minister Todorov stated that all comments will be taken into consideration before the adoption of the law. Such public debates are organized in order to incite strengthening of health-care system in the state and to provide qualitative basis for consideration of the draft-laws in parliamentary procedure.



VEVCANI CARNIVAL 2016



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