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## FESTIVAL OF TRADITIONAL SONGS AND DANCES "ILINDEN DAYS" - BITOLA



## WELCOMING NOTE BY THE JPC CO-CHAIR IVANKA VASILEVSKA

Dear colleagues from the European Parliament,

It is with exceptional pleasure that I am addressing you as the new JPC Co-Chair in this parliamentary mandate, with warm wishes for successful work of our delegations. Inspired by the spirit of consensus that, despite the differences, managed to prevail in the delegation and among parliamentarians in the past 20 years, and present the level of reforms made in our country in as balanced way, I would like to express my deep confidence that this spirit will continue to be our guiding star in the years to come. Unfortunately, the world and we as politicians learned that freedom, rule of law and European standards can not be taken for granted, and that we should all strive to preserve and protect them. I sincerely hope that this lesson of history will prove one more time that integration of the countries in our region is of geopolitical importance, but also of geopolitical stability and this project needs to be completed without further delay. With the publication of this Newsletter, which marked 80 editions so far, our aim is to inform you both on the EU related activities of our Assembly and the beauties and cultural events of our country.

Sincerely,  
Ivanka Vasilevska

## PRESIDENT GASHI MEETIS HIS ALBANIAN COLLEAGUE SPIROPALI

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia Afrim Gashi, welcomed his colleague Elisa Spiropali, President of the Parliament of Albania, during her official visit of our country. The two countries internationally have the same goals and interests, namely membership in the European Union, cooperation in the field of defense within the NATO Alliance and deepening of regional cooperation. The two interlocutors concluded that both countries share a common commitment for membership in the European Union, as well as for comprehensive development of the Western Balkans. Priority will be given to the future the construction of the road, energy, and railway connection between the two countries within the framework of Corridor VIII, and to the need to initiate a good-neighbor agreement between the two countries as a basis for strengthening friendship and cooperation in the future.



## LATVIAN SUPPORT ON THE ROAD TO THE EU

The Vice-President of the Assembly and President of the Committee on European Issues, Antonijo Milošoski, and the President of the Parliamentary Group of the Assembly for Cooperation with the Parliaments of the Baltic States, Monika Zajkova, met with a Latvian delegation led by Ingrida Levrence, Deputy State Secretary for European Affairs and Head of the EU Directorate. Milošoski thanked for Latvia's support, and informed the guests to the challenges that the country is facing on the European integration path, starting from the dispute with Greece and the current Bulgarian veto. In the last case, the halting of the EU accession process is not based on the Copenhagen criteria, but on bilateral issues, which can be resolved following the example of the Croatian-Slovenian dispute. Milošoski expressed hope that with the formation of a new Bulgarian government, it will be possible to discuss in the direction of mutual benefit, and in that effort, he asked for the support of friendly countries, such as Latvia. Zajkova welcomed the joint declaration of the Baltic countries on European integration of the Balkan countries, which would be good to renew in order to continue the support. As the chairperson of the Cooperation Group, she proposed the establishment of such a group in the Latvian Parliament in order to deepen relations. It would also be of mutual interest to bring the peoples closer together through culture, education and youth programs, as well as mutual visits at a higher level.

For his part, Levrence confirmed Latvia's support for the expansion of the European family with the countries of the Western Balkans. She emphasized as well that parliamentary cooperation as an important element in bilateral relations.



## MEETING WITH EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

Laima Lucia Andrikiene, a member of the European Court of Auditors, had a joint meeting with President Gashi, the Vice-President of the Parliament and President of the Committee on European Issues, Antonijo Miloshoski, and with the President of the Committee on Financing and Budget, Sanja Lukarevska. H.E. EU Ambassador Michalis Rokas also attended the meeting. The focus of the discussion was the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and the expected benefits of its implementation in the European integration process of the region and our country specifically. Special emphasis was placed on the criteria in the rule of law, as well as on the opportunities for economic growth and for raising the capacities of the institutions and the administration in the countries of the region, as aspirants for full membership in the EU.

## "ILINDEN DAYS" - BITOLA



Welcome to the Gender Equality Forum  
within the Berlin Process 2024

September 19, 2024, | Berlin, Germany

#BPGenderEquality



## MPs PESHEVSKA AND PETKOSKA ON GENDER EQUALITY FORUM IN BERLIN

On the occasion of the Berlin Process celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, supported by Kvinna till Kvinna, hosted a Gender Equality Forum focused on strengthening gender equality and gender sensitivity within the Berlin Process. The President of the Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Zaklina Peshevska, and Lidija Petkoska, Member of the Committee, participated in the event. Representatives of various stakeholders from the Western Balkans also took part, including members of parliaments, representatives from relevant ministries, gender agencies, mayors, representatives from regional organizations and from the European Union, as well as representatives of civil society. Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but also a cornerstone of a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. It is essential for achieving long-term regional stability and successful integration in the European Union. Empowering women and ensuring their equal participation in all areas of life contributes significantly to economic development, improved governance and social cohesion. The Berlin Process Gender Equality Forum seeks to address these issues by formulating actionable recommendations. These recommendations are aimed at improving gender accountability in policy-making, protecting women's rights and promoting women's participation in all sectors of society, including in the Berlin Process.

## YOUTH POLICIES CLUB REMAINS PARTNER OF ALL YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The Youth Policies Club held its first session dedicated to youth policies and the Law on Youth Participation and Policies. Several associates of the Club who are part of the non-governmental sector and state institutions were invited to the event. The discussants referred to the need for the implementation of the Law on Youth Participation and Policies by the institutions, but also highlighted recommendations for the improvement of the existing Law. It was emphasized that it is of great importance to pass the Law with a consensus between non-governmental organizations, institutions and MPs. At the end of the discussion, a message was sent that the Club remains a partner for all youth organizations and is open to cooperation with all interested parties regarding youth policies.



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## MARKING INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

Over two hundred children and young people - students from fifteen primary and secondary schools from the capital and the surrounding area, as well as a group of actors - pantomimes from "Team Theatros" paraded today through the Parliament, on the celebration of the International Day of Democracy - 15th September. President Gashi said that the essence of democracy, as a crucial value of the modern world, is the creation of conditions for integration in society for every individual, regardless of his ethnicity, gender, religion, social position, or political affiliation. The ambassador of Switzerland, Veronique Ullmann, underlined that they will continue to support young people in North Macedonia, and continue to cooperate with the Assembly to strengthen its independence and supervisory role. Secretary General Marina Dimovska, in her welcome address, emphasized that democracy is not only a form of government, but also a system of values, ideals and principles that guide and direct us. Robert Scott Heaslet, Senior Resident Director of the National Democratic Institute, emphasized that democracy is a big word. Democracy is when everyone has a say in how things are run, for example, how we choose our leaders and decide the rules that help us live together.



### "ILINDEN DAYS" - BITOLA



## REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WESTERN BALKANS INTEGRATION IN THE EU

A regional conference titled "Roadmap Process: The Way Forward" was held in Tirana, within the frames of the project "Promotion of European Integration" of the German Association for International Cooperation (GIZ). Mile Lefkov, member of the Committee on European Issues, and Marina Dimovska, Secretary General of the Assembly, took part at the conference. Lefkov emphasized that the active support of European integration by MPs from the Western Balkans is of crucial importance for the progress of the region. Dimovska shared her belief that the exchange of knowledge and experiences between parliaments will be of key importance for the advancement of the reform processes. The purpose of the conference was to provide a platform for regional exchange on how to strengthen the role of the parliaments of the Western Balkans in the EU integration process based on a common regional document on the principles of effective parliamentary supervision of this process.



# LEVEL OF PROGRESS IN THE BERLIN PROCESS: HOW TO INCREASE THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS FROM THE REGION IN THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS

The debate titled “North Macedonia’s progress in the Berlin process” was held, where reports from the monitoring of the Institute for Democracy (IDSCS) on the action plans for the Common Regional Market and the Green Agenda were presented. Emphasis in the discussion was placed on the modalities for strengthening the parliamentary dimension of the Berlin process. The Ambassador of Germany, Petra Drexler, pointed that, in the past 10 years, the Berlin Process has grown into an institution and reiterated that it is not an alternative to EU membership, but a driving force that will ensure faster integration for the countries of the region. The President of IDSCS, Marko Troshanovski, underlined that the civil sector, is here to encourage the deputies to be more dynamic in the process and to use their supervisory role to encourage the Government to implement the projects. The Coordinator of the PG of VMRO-DPMNE, Nikola Micevski, in his address, stated that the Berlin process started with skepticism

in the countries of the Balkans, but has grown into something visible, and therefore, as Parliament, we support this initiative to start providing concrete legal solutions. The coordinator of the PG of ZNAM, Boban Karapejovski, said that serious work has been done, but with little visibility, so he believes that all positive benefits should be better communicated to the public. The coordinator of the European Front, Blerim Bexheti, emphasized that it is a very important process on the way to the EU and that the Parliament should have a serious approach to the projects that started in the previous mandate, but have not been completed. The Secretary General of the Assembly, Marina Dimovska, said that ten years later, we are witnessing the realization of concrete projects. The governments, she said, undertake the obligations, but the parliaments are the ones that have the final role in passing laws and ratifying the agreements reached, as well as in harmonizing with the European legislation.



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