



**Republic of Macedonia
Government of the Republic of Macedonia
Secretariat for European Affairs
- Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister Ivica Bocevski -**

INFORMATION FROM THE OPEN GOVERNMENT SITTING
**PRESENTATION ON THE REGULAR ITEM OF THE AGENDA – STATUS
OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS**

12.10.2008

KEY POINTS

- The annual reporting cycle of the European Commission is coming to finalisation.
 - On October the 3rd we communicated to the Commission an updated contribution on the fulfilling of accession criteria.
 - In addition to the appraisal of the fulfilment of Copenhagen criteria as a whole, this year, the Commission will present a review on the implementation of the Key priorities of the Accession Partnership, set as benchmarks for opening accession negotiations. We have as a Government reviewed the status of implementation at each Government session.
 - The status of implementation of the benchmarks was also discussed at the first session of the National Council for Euro-integration in this parliamentary sitting.
 - The Council approved the submitted report on the level of implementation and called on all institutions to invest maximum efforts for implementation of the measures and actions noted as not realised or undergoing.
 - Related to the benchmarks, I would like to single out two achievements from last week in the implementation of the Action Plan:
 - The Assembly appointed two constitutional judges, proposed by the President of the Republic of Macedonia.
 - **The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia is now completed.**
 - Related to the political dialogue and the electoral process.
 - The leaders of political parties demonstrated a serious approach and understanding in critical moments and reached key decisions by **consensus - this especially**

refers to the proposed amendment to the Constitution and the Election Code.

- Tomorrow the Committee on European Affairs in the Assembly will deliberate on the Information on the V Stabilisation and Association Committee, held in September – an information which we adopted as a Government after the Committee.
- **The findings of the EC Progress Report will be analysed in detail and present a blueprint for the work of the Government connected to its EU agenda.**
 - **In communication with the EC Delegation and DG Enlargement, we are already working on the integration process, which will accelerate upon the publication of the Progress Report.**
 - **The Secretariat for European Affairs is working on the further steps, measures and actions in the European integration process.**
- The Working Committee on Euro-integration is now fully functional. As defined in the Decision for the establishment of the Committee, the main focus will be on the coordination and synchronisation of the activities in the accession process, monitoring of the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, the monitoring of the NPAA implementation and administrative preparation for the accession negotiations as defined in the National Platform for accession negotiations.
 - **Moreover, the Committee shall become the government's hub for the European integration process and key administrative filter for the upcoming negotiation process.**
- From the next session, in addition to the monitoring of the implementation of the benchmarks, we shall more closely monitor the implementation of the NPAA
 - As far as EU-related laws are concerned, 46% of the NPAA laws planned for 2008 have been adopted.



PRESENTATION ON THE REGULAR ITEM OF THE AGENDA – STATUS OF THE VISA LIBERALISATION PROCESS

- Concerning visa liberalisation, **we can say that the Republic of Macedonia is the most advanced in the region concerning the fulfilment of the benchmarks** (this is a statement by the Vice-President of the Commission Mr. Barrot). Three key points – we have biometric passports, functioning visa and IBM centre.
- **We have been given reassurances that this process would be finalised in 2009**
- But we also need to intensify our lobbying, especially towards countries that are more reserved towards this process.



DETAILED REVIEW OF THE BENCHMARKS:

The first benchmark: proper implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

- We consider that we have substantially accomplished the envisaged measures. The first measure was on electronic communications, particularly the termination of the concession agreements with the concessionaires. **This measure has been implemented following the amendments to the Law on electronic communication.**
- Concerning full implementation of Article 95 of the SAA in regard to the competitive safeguard measures in line with Article 146 of the Law on electronic communication - during the 5th meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Committee, **it was stated that the Republic of Macedonia is not longer in breach with the provisions of the SAA**, for the first time after entry into force of the Agreement.
- Concerning measures envisaging termination of the discriminatory road charges for using the transport infrastructure by the foreign vehicle, we had a technical meeting in Brussels. On this issue, we will continue to work in the Secretariat for European Affairs together with the Ministry for Transport and Communication.
- The chairperson of the SAC was appointed.

Regarding the second benchmarks, on promoting an inclusive political dialogue:

- The first measure was on the ensuring of functional cohabitation between the President of the Republic and the President of the Government. The Government proposed continuous meetings for securing functional cohabitation. On this process we will expect the assessment by the Commission.
- In terms of the consensus in the Parliament regarding the implementation of the Framework Agreement and the implementation and the functioning of the Badintaire principle, as well, I have to mention that the **Committee for inter-ethnic relations is functional and there is no outstanding issue**, due to the fact that the Law clearly defines the laws which require Badintaire majority. The comment by the EC could relate to the time lost for the full functioning of the Committee.
- Regarding the establishment of regular coordinative meetings between the political parties, the President of the Parliament commenced with the practice to call for coordination every Monday at 10:00 o'clock. **The Government nominated two of its cabinet members to assist in the drafting of the working agenda of the Parliament.** For the laws deriving from the NPAA, I



was appointed [the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs], and the second representative is Nezdet Mustafa as a member of the Government with solid parliamentary knowledge.

- The Rules of Procedure of the Parliament have been adopted. **Currently, the focus is on the implementation of the Rules of Procedure.**
- The Parliament prepared an Action Plan for improving its efficiency and this Action Plan has been adopted as well.
- **The functioning of the National Council for Euro-Integration has been a priority since its establishment and the Council was reactivated.**
- In terms of taking actions in line with the Report on the incidents in the Parliament, this Parliament could not decide upon the Report.
 - The President of the Parliament took a proactive approach to prevent this occurring in future and introduced changes in the Rulebook for the order in the Parliament in line with the new Rules of Procedure.
 - **Regarding the “parliamentary benchmark”, the President of the Parliament has the full capacity to act upon the implementation of this key priority with full support by the Government.** We are aware that the events that were not assessed positive will be reported in the Progress Report.

On the third benchmark - implementation of the Law on Police:

- We are expecting the Commission to recognise all efforts made to meet the benchmark.
- All commanders of the police stations have been appointed.
- On the dissemination of the Policing Rulebook, the police already is informed and this measure will continue in future according to the Information by the Ministry of Interior.
- The Action Plan on human resources with budgetary allocation was adopted.
- In line with the measure on the reform of the police and the equitable representation, the Government analysed the provided numbers by the Ministry and we have agreed to assist the Ministry in providing this measure.
- The Ministry established a coherent in-service training system, particularly for the border police. The training centre was created.

On the fourth benchmark connected to Judiciary Reform

- The procedure for establishment of the Public Prosecution Office in Gostivar is ongoing.



- The Plan for Training by the Academy for training of judges and prosecutors has been completed and the training for the judges and prosecutors is implemented according to the plan.
- Alignment of the laws with the Law on Misdemeanours is being brought to an end. **185** laws were adopted and harmonised.
- IT Centre for Judiciary - the public procurement with USAID is finalised. The USAID and the Ministry of Justice will determine the pilot-unit in the courts where the new system will be tested.
 - The whole IT system should be functional by the beginning of the 2009 due to the fact that this reform required allocation of financial resources, training of the staff, and procurement of all necessary equipment to support the system.
- On the functioning of the Judicial Council:
 - Evaluation form for the work on the judges – the first report based on the evaluation form is expected by the end of November. After that, the Judicial Council will examine the report and act accordingly.
- Public Prosecution Council
 - The EC will note the delay of the establishment of the Council.
 - The role of the public prosecutors in the investigation is being increased and the focus will be on the functionality of the system.
- **The Parliament adopted the proposal by the President of the Republic on the two remaining judges for the Constitutional Court.**
- **What is important and expected to be noted by the EC is the need for sustainable track record of the judiciary reform.**

On the fifth benchmark - implementation of the anti-corruption policy:

- Budget funds for the implementation of the Action Plan of the Government on the fight against corruption - 1, 5 million Euros have been allocated.
- All law-enforcing agencies appointed liaison officers for exchange of information.
- On interoperability of data-bases:
 - A Strategy has been drafted and the Management Board had its first meeting.
 - A civil servant from the MoI has been appointed to manage this Board.
- The amendments to the Electoral Code envisage changes of provisions regarding financing of political parties.
- The Law on Interception of Communication has been adopted.
- Regarding the Programme for prevention of conflict of interest, **the Government in the period to come has to allocate budgetary resources for proper implementation of the Programme.** The same applies on the



amendments to the Law on the prevention of corruption in regard to the Tax Administration and the Commission for Anti-Corruption.

Regarding the sixth benchmark related to the public administration,

- Progress has been made in meeting all indicators.
 - The functioning of the merit-based system, or full implementation of Chapter IV of the Law on Civil Service
 - Staffing of the Units for human resource management in all institutions.
 - Further efforts will be invested to secure that these units are functioning properly.
 - Implementation of the appraisal system
 - Adopted Programme for training of the civil servants
- **On the de-politisation of the civil service, the EC will call upon further efforts and sustainability of the reform**

On the seventh benchmarks - reducing of unemployment,

- The proportionality of the minimal health and pension insurance and the lower levels of the contributions have been implemented by the Government.
- On the implementation of the active measures for employment of the young people, the process of implementation is on-going.
 - What matters is a qualitative analysis of the implementation in regard to the Action Plan for employment of young people.
- Regarding the Long Life Learning and vocational education, the EC will call for a **functional link between labour market needs and long life learning and vocational education programmes.**

Regarding the eight benchmark - business environment:

- The project of the regulatory guillotine is in final stage. Based on the overall recommendations and analysis, the Government has adopted three sets of measures (two in July and one in November 2007), scoping around 64 Laws and 481 by-laws.
- The Law Amending the Company Law was adopted by the Parliament envisaging simplified procedures for business close up, introducing voluntary liquidation.
- On the simplification of the customs procedures for the small and medium sized companies progress will be noted, but the EC will insist on further enhancement of the system.



- By the beginning of 2009 we shall have secured financial independence of the regulatory and supervisory bodies, amendments of the Law on Budget and Law on Budget Execution were adopted by the Parliament in July. These amendments allow regulatory bodies to decide for spending the budget for new employments without requesting approval from the Ministry of Finance. Thus, regulatory bodies and supervisory bodies increase their level of independence from the executive authority.
- By 25th September 2008, decisions according to which the **Real Estate Cadastre is established on 80,15%** of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia were published.
- According to the Law on Real estate cadastre the Agency for Real estate cadastre acts as a successor of the State Authority for Geodetic Works. The Statute of the Agency for Real estate cadastre was approved by the Government on 12.08.2008. The preparation of the by-laws is well advancing. 8 of the bylaws were published in Official Gazette on 19.09.2008.
- Over 90% of the actions and measures foreseen in the Action Plan on the Implementation of the Benchmarks have been realised; however, **what we expect from the Commission in its Progress Report is a qualitative analysis.**
- As critical points we can identify the electoral process, political dialogue, and reform of the public administration.
 - Judiciary can be assessed positively, but here sustainability is important.



As stated by the end of the presentation on the status of the implementation of the key priorities from the Accession Partnership and endorsed by the Prime Minister, the focus in the upcoming period shall be on:

- **Ensuring inclusive political dialogue** between all political parties as demonstrated by the renewed political consensus on issues of national and state interest and specifically on the EU integration process.
 - Adoption of the Constitutional Amendments and Electoral Code amendments by consensus
 - Organisation of model elections in 2009
- Sustainable track record of the Judiciary reform
- Further efforts in the reform on the public administration

