



Accession talks with former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should start now

Plenary sessions

Parliament on Thursday called on EU Member States to begin accession negotiations immediately with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Regretting that the name dispute with Greece is causing deadlock, MEPs also expressed concern over the growing inter-ethnic tensions in the country, as well as corruption and recent attacks on freedom of the media and civil society representatives.

In a resolution adopted by 506 votes to 44 with 44 abstentions, MEPs congratulate the Government on the "effective and smooth implementation" of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU. They nevertheless regret that the Council has not taken a decision on the opening of accession negotiations, despite the recommendations of the Parliament and the Commission.

At the same time, Parliament is worried about growing inter-ethnic tensions in the country, as well as the deep problems with the political culture. MEPs note the recent call for early elections, and call on all political parties to play an active and constructive role in the electoral process.

High unemployment among the young, prevalent corruption, lagging reform of the judiciary, intimidation of civil society and the deterioration in media freedom, including politicisation of the media and interference in their work, are also mentioned as outstanding issues of concern.

The name game: who is to blame?

Parliament naturally stays silent about the merits of the opposing sides of the name issue that has dogged the country's accession progress since its beginnings. At the same time, it "strongly regrets the fact that the name dispute with Greece continues to block the country's road to EU accession." In addition, MEPs note with concern the "use of historical arguments in the current debate, including the phenomenon of so-called 'antiquisation,' which threatens increasing tensions with neighbour countries and creating new internal divisions".

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

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