



---

*Delegation to the EU-North Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee*

---

**D-MK\_PV(2022)0915**

## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of 15 September 2022, 9.00-10.00  
Strasbourg

The meeting opened at 9:00 on Thursday, 15 September 2022, with Andreas SCHIEDER, (Chair, presiding). In his opening speech, Mr SCHIEDER welcomed the meeting of the EP Delegation to the EU-North Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee.

**1. Adoption of the draft agenda for the preparatory meeting ahead of the 20<sup>th</sup> JPC scheduled for 5 and 6 October 2022**

The draft agenda of the meeting was circulated by the Secretariat. It was adopted without changes.

**2. Adoption of the draft minutes of the Delegation meeting of 5 May 2022**

The draft minutes were adopted without comments.

The Chair welcomed the following speakers:

**Mr Mile PRANGOSKI**, chargé d'affaires, Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the European Union;

**Ms Michela MATUELLA**, Acting Director for Western Balkans in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission;

**Ms Elsa FENET**, Head of Division ‘South East Europe/Western Balkans’ in the European External Action Service.

In his opening remarks, the Chair announced that the preparations for the 20<sup>th</sup> JPC meeting scheduled for 5-6 October were well under way. He stated that the present meeting came at a good time for discussing significant events that had taken place since the last JPC meeting in Skopje in late June. Since the Council decision on convening the first intergovernmental conference and the beginning of the screening process, the Chair noted that exchanges and discussion at parliamentary level could take place. Afterwards, Mr SCHIEDER opened the floor to the exchange of views on the political and economic situation in North Macedonia.

### **3. Exchange of views on the political and economic situation in North Macedonia**

In his introductory statement, **Mr Mile PRANGOSKI**, chargé d'affaires, Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the European Union, noted the significant importance of the continued communications between the European Parliament and the Assembly of North Macedonia for the country's path to the EU. This communication, he stated, supports North Macedonia's overall efforts in the process of joining the EU. Mr PRANGOSKI then referred to the JPC meeting held in June in Skopje, after a delay of 2-3 years due to COVID-19 and other factors. He expressed that the meeting sent another clear message, indicating the strong support of the EP to North Macedonia's EU perspective. With regard to the political situation, Mr PRANGOSKI noted that the decision taken by the Assembly in July is of momentous and historical importance for the country and its people. He highlighted that the opening of the accession talks was a recognition of North Macedonia's efforts into maintaining good neighbourly relations, particularly with Bulgaria, culminating in the friendship treaty signed in 2017, and with Greece, culminating in the Prespa agreement signed in 2018. The political consensus did not happen overnight, he shared, nor was it easy; nonetheless, the right formula was eventually found. As for the screening process, Mr PRANGOSKI envisaged that it would be finalized by November 2023. Lastly, he stated that the government of North Macedonia was committed to making the necessary constitutional changes that would include Bulgarians, Croats and Montenegrins in the preamble of the Constitution.

**Ms Michela MATUELLA**, Acting Director for Western Balkans in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission, also noted that the present meeting was taking place at a highly important moment for North Macedonia. She highlighted that the country had indeed entered a new phase in its path to EU integration. Additionally, Ms MATUELLA stated that the first intergovernmental conference - which opened the accession negotiation process, was an important recognition of North Macedonia's determination to advancing on its EU path. She expressed that the Commission also remained committed to advancing the pace of the accession negotiations process, and that is why the screening process commenced immediately. The screening process, she claimed, would not only be a technical exercise for the country, but it would also need to be seen as a process that would cover all areas close to the everyday lives of the citizens of North Macedonia. Ms MATUELLA too envisaged the finalisation of the screening by autumn 2023, and added that the process is transformative in nature, which is the very essence of the accession negotiations. More than ever, the Parliament has a key role to play in the accession process, she stressed, as a forum for political dialogue. With regard to North Macedonia's progress in reforms, Ms MATUELLA noted advancement in those covered in the first cluster, namely in the judiciary, fight against corruption, organised crime; but also expressed that work needed to be stepped up further in the structural reforms, including green transition.

**Ms Elsa FENET**, Head of Division 'South East Europe & Western Balkans' in the European External Action Service, opened her speech by stating that the step that enabled the country to move forward, namely the decision taken by the Assembly in July 2022, had come at a cost and created deep divisions. She stressed that, as North Macedonia moved forward into the next

phases in the accession negotiations, there would be a need to build new consensus with the EU. Ms FENET noted that the country had proven to be a reliable partner to the EU, as it continued to align fully with EU policies. This alignment, she stated, is more than a symbolic act - it is a key commitment to their EU future. Ms FENET then mentioned the cyber-attacks in Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia, stipulating that the EEAS would be in close cooperation with the FBI and the European Commission, working towards deploying more forces to all three countries that were being attacked as a result of aligning with EU policies. Lastly, she mentioned that there were unfortunately attempts to use the disappointment and pessimism in North Macedonia to undermine citizens' faith in the EU, and welcomed the JPC in October as a way of sending a positive message to everyone, to come together and work on the reforms that will take their country forward.

**Mr Alexander ALEXANDROV YORDANOV** (EPP, BG) noted that any optimism on North Macedonia's path to the EU should be underpinned on a sound basis. He expressed concerns over North Macedonia's decision-makers not being aware of the choices made in July. In his own words, Mr YORDANOV asked why the country had endorsed the so-called 'French proposal'. He then stated that the larger part of the Macedonian elite continued to be against the country's European integration, against the treaty signed with Bulgaria and against incorporating Bulgarians as constituents, even though he claimed, Bulgarians are people that contributed to founding North Macedonia. In addition, Mr YORDANOV expressed concern over the Assembly's ability to achieve a 2/3 majority (the one needed to mandate the country's Constitution) in order to incorporate Bulgarians as constituents. He added that the country could contribute to stability on the Western Balkans, however, this stability could be achieved only if the signed treaties were to be implemented, referring to the treaty with Bulgaria, as well as the treaty with Greece. Concluding, Mr YORDANOV specified that North Macedonia could only join the EU if it would be successful in amending its Constitution.

**Mr Thijs REUTEN** (S&D, NL) asked to know more about the Commission and the EEAS' views on what would happen in North Macedonia in the aftermath of the decision to start the negotiation talks. He stated that the decision (that enabled the accession negotiations to start) was 'a quick and last minute deal hammered out by the French Presidency for a quick win at the end of their mandate.' In addition, Mr REUTEN inquired from the Commission and the EEAS over the likelihood of passing the constitutional changes in North Macedonia. He stated that both institutions would have certainly known that, by the time the 'French' deal was put forward, Prime Minister Kovačevski's pro-EU government would be put in an extremely vulnerable position. Following this remark, he questioned the Commission and the EEAS over the measures they would take in supporting North Macedonia's government in case they would not be able to achieve the majority needed for the constitutional amendments.

**Mr Ilhan KYUCHYUK**, the standing rapporteur on North Macedonia, said that there was time for celebration, as North Macedonia's efforts into joining the EU were finally recognised after 17 years of being halted. He referred to the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the friendship treaty with Bulgaria and the Prespa agreement with Greece, as significant moments in the country's history; events that brought North Macedonia closer to the EU. The rapporteur stated that the country ought to be supported in every step of the way, and referred to the energy package support as one of the ways that the EU is assisting North Macedonia in the process. Lastly, he pleaded for both parties - government and opposition - to work together, as the only way of fulfilling their citizens' expectations.

**Ms Michela MATUELLA** responded to Mr REUTEN's inquiry over the constitutional changes in North Macedonia. She conveyed that this would be a decision taken by the citizens of North Macedonia. Ms MATUELLA then referred to North Macedonia as a good example of a multi-ethnic and diverse society, one of the core values of the EU. She added that the amendment of the Constitution, which the country has committed to, would contribute to advance fundamental rights. It is important that all parties work together for the EU future of the country. The Commission would certainly contribute to duly informing the citizens over the entire EU integration process, starting with the screening.

**Ms Elsa FENET** also addressed Mr REUTEN's question. She underlined that what the EEAS could do was to monitor the progress of fundamental rights in the country. Lastly, she encouraged all parties to look forward and continue their work towards advancing North Macedonia on its EU integration path.

#### **4. Any other business**

No further questions / business was raised after the discussion.

#### **5. Date and place of the next meeting**

The date and place of the next meeting would be announced by the Delegation Secretariat.

The meeting closed at 10:00.

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/  
ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/KATAΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/  
LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/POPIS NAZOČNIH/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRS/DALVIŲ SĀRAŠAS/  
JELENLÉTI ÍV/REĢISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŚCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/  
LISTĀ DE PREZENĀ/PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA**

Бюро/Меса/Председништво/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Префектура/Bureau/Predsjedništvo/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/Biuras/Elnökség/Prezydium/Birou/Predsedništvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Andreas Schieder (C)
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Zastupnici/Deputati/Deputati/Nariai/Képviselők/Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputati/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov; Lefferis Nikolaou-Alavanos; Thijss Reuten
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedførtrædere/Stellvertreter/As endusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Zamjenici/Supplenti/Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantysnariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/Namestniki/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
Ilhan Kyuchyuk

209 (7)	
216 (3)	
56 (8) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/Päevakorra punkt/Ημερίσια Διάταξη Σημείο/Agenda item/Point OJ/Tačka dnevnog reda/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkēs punktas/Napirendi pont/Punt Aģenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dzennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/Tačka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr Mile Prangoski, chargé d'affaires, Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the European Union</li> <li>- Ms Michela Matuella, Head of Unit for Albania and North Macedonia, DG NEAR, European Commission</li> <li>- Ms Elsa FENET, Head of Division 'Western Balkans', European External Action Service</li> </ul>	
3	

Nаблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatörer/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Promatrači/Osservatori/Nověrotáji/Stebetōjai/Megfigyelők/Osservaturi/Waarnemers/Obserwatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/Opozovalci/Tarkkailijat/Observatörer
---

По покана на председателя/Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/Mε πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair(wo)man/Sur l'invitation du président/  
Na poziv predsjednika/Su invito del presidente/Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvetus/Az elnök meghívására/  
Fuq stedina tac-'Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitācia președintelui/Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nōukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Vijeće/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/  
Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (\*)

Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Komissionen/Kommission/Euroopa Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Komisija/Commissione/Bizottság/  
Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (\*)

Европейска служба за външна дейност/Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior/Evropská služba pro vnější činnost/  
EU-Udenrigstjenesten/Europäischer Auswärtiger Dienst/Euroopa välisteenistus/Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Εξωτερικής Δράσης/European External Action service/Service européen pour l'action extérieure/Europska služba za vanjsko djelovanje/Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna/Eiropas Ārējās darbības dienests/Europos išorės veiksmų tarnyba/Európai Külügyi Szolgálat/Servizz Ewropew ghall-Azzjoni Esterna/Europese dienst voor extern optreden/Europejska Służba Działalń Zewnętrznych/Serviço Europeu para a Ação Externa/Serviciul european pentru acțiune externă/Európska služba pre vonkajšiu činnosť/Evropska služba za zunanje delovanje/Euroopan ulkosuhdehallinto/Européiska avdelningen för yttre åtgärd (\*)

Други институции/Otras instituciones/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner/Andere Organe/Muud institutsioonid/  
Аллаа өсүмдүкә орында/Other institutions/Autres institutions/Druge institucije/Altre istituzioni/Citas iestādes/Kitos institucijos/  
Más intézmények/Istituzzjonijiet oħra/Andere instellingen/Inne instytucje/Outras Instituições/Alte instituições/Iné inštitúcie/Muut toimielimet/Andra institutioner/organ

Други участници/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης Παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Drugi sudionici/Altri partecipanti/Cíti klátesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Parteicipanti ohra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Altı participantı/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare

Секретариат на политическите групи/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppernes sekretariat/Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Secretariats of political groups/Secrétaire des groupes politiques/Tajništvo klubova zastupnika/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariáts/Frakcijų sekretoriai/Képviselőcsoportok titkársága/Segretarjat gruppi političi/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secr. dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupín/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristöt/Gruppernas sekretariat

PPE	Antje Ritzert; Dominika Kaczkowska
S&D	Jorgen Siil
Renew	
Verts/ALE	
ID	
ECR	
GUE/NGL	
NI	Evangelos Katsiavas

Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelár předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantselei/Γραφείο Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Ured predsjednika/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinet tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Președinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli

Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelár generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäribüro/Γραφείο Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Ured glavnog tajnika/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinet tas-Segretarju Ĝenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekretærarens kansli

Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/  
Directorate-General/Direction générale/Glavna uprava/Direzione generale/Generáldirektoráts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/  
Direttorato Generali/Directoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni  
direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat

DG PRES	
DG IPOL	
DG EXPO	
DG EPRS	
DG COMM	
DG PERS	
DG INLO	
DG TRAD	
DG LINC	
DG FINS	
DG ITEC	
DG SAFE	

Правна служба/Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Öigusteenistus/Νομική Υπηρεσία/Legal Service/  
Service juridique/Pravna služba/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teisés tárnyba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/  
Wydział prawnego/Serviço Jurídico/Serviciu Juridic/Právny servis/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättsjänsten

Секретариат на комисията/Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariát výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschussekretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/Γραμματεία επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétaire de la commission/Tajništvo odbora/Segreteria della commissione/Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteto sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Segretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissie secretariaat/Sekretariat komisji/Secretariado da comissão/Secretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottsssekretariatet

Igor Miskulin, Adam Isaacs, Andre De Munter

Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asystent/Pomočník/Avustaja/Assistenter

Vesselina Veleva

- \* (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair(wo)man/Président/Predsjednik/Priekšsēdētājs/Pirmininkas/Elnök/'Chairman'/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Președinte/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
- (VP) = Заместник-председател/Vicepresidente/Místopředseda/Næst formand/Stellvertretender Vorsitzender/Aseesimees/Avtutróedros/Vice-Chair(wo)man/Potpredsjednik/Vice-Präsident/Potpredsjednik/Priekšsēdētāja vietnieks/Pirmininko pavaduotojas/Alelnök/Viči 'Chairman'/Ondervoorzitter/Wiceprzewodniczący/Vice-Presidente/Vicepreşedinte/Varapuheenjohtaja/Vice ordförande
- (M) = Член/Miembro/Člen/Medlem./Mitglied/Parlamentiliige/Mέλος/Member/Membre/Član/Membro/Deputāts/Narys/Képviselő/Membri/Lid/Członek/Membro/Člen/Poslaneč/Jäsen/Ledamot
- (F) = Должностно лице/Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Dužnosnik/Funzionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficial/Ambtenaar/Urzędnik/Funcionário/Funcționar/Úradník/Uradnik/Virkamies/Tjänsteman