

High Level Accession Dialogue

Skopje, 15 March 2012

Conclusions

1. PM Gruevski and Commissioner Füle held a High Level Accession Dialogue in Skopje on 15 March 2012. The purpose of the HLAD is to inject new dynamism in the EU accession reform process, thereby strengthening confidence and boosting the European perspective of the country.
2. The High Level Accession Dialogue will also represent an inclusive framework involving other relevant national stakeholders, including civil society, for the definition and implementation of the national EU accession reform agenda.
3. Agreement was confirmed as to the main challenges ahead and reform targets were established in five key policy areas: freedom of expression in the media; rule of law; public administration reform; electoral reform; strengthening the market economy. These targets are set out in annex.
4. The HLAD focused on the concrete actions to be taken by the country with the support of the European Commission. The government, working in close cooperation with the European Commission, has already identified detailed measures and responsible bodies for their implementation. An operational roadmap, including the definition of the timeframe for each measure, will be adopted by the government by mid April and will be monitored in the context of the HLAD. The next two sessions of the HLAD will take place in May and September.
5. The government intends to make speedy progress. It will start by taking measures to further protect freedom of expression in the media. At the same time a dialogue will be pursued in order to strengthen professional standards in journalism.
6. Technical dialogue will also be started in line with the Commission's new approach on Chapters 23 and 24 and the discussions of the Stabilization and Association Council of 23 January 2012.

HIGH LEVEL ACCESSION DIALOGUE

Targets

I. MEDIA: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- 1) Target: Amend defamation legislation, improve court practice and strengthen professional standards**
- 2) Improve enforcement by the Broadcasting Council of media ownership rules and amendments to the legislation**

II. RULE OF LAW AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

- 1) Improve efficiency of justice**
- 2) Improve quality of justice and independence of the judiciary**
- 3) Strengthen anti-corruption measures and verifiable enforcement**
- 4) Increase efficiency and transparency of management of interception of communication investigative technique**
- 5) Improve inter-community dialogue**

III. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

- 1) Improve human resources management**
- 2) Improve framework governing administrative procedures**
- 3) Further decentralisation**

IV. ELECTORAL REFORM

- 1) Ensure sufficient separation between the state and party**
- 2) Address gaps and ambiguities in the Electoral Code**
- 3) Complete thorough audit and revision of the voters' list**

V. STRENGTHENING THE MARKET ECONOMY

- 1) Improve labour market and education**
- 2) Improve business environment**
- 3) Strengthen economic policy making and implementation**