

High Level Accession Dialogue

Skopje, 7 May 2012

Conclusions

1. Prime Minister Gruevski and Commissioner Füle chaired the second High Level Accession Dialogue (HLAD) on 7 May 2012. The discussions confirmed that the HLAD is providing valuable support to the accession process of the country by focusing on key reform priorities. The next HLAD will be held in September, in advance of the publication of the Commission Progress Report in October.
2. The Commission welcomed the adoption of an operational roadmap for meeting the reform targets established in the five priority areas by the government. The roadmap addresses these targets by defining the specific measures, establishing the time frame and including certain financial allocations. It is important now for these measures to be implemented. The Roadmap exercise is a dynamic process and an interim review of results in implementation will be carried out in June.
3. The government has developed measures to further protect freedom of expression in the media. Inclusive dialogue with the profession's association will continue to be pursued as regards decriminalisation of defamation as well as on strengthening of professional standards in journalism. The decision by the Broadcasting Council concerning conflict of interest and illegal concentration is a step forward.
4. The government is committed to achieving comprehensive electoral reform, in line with the ODIHR and GRECO recommendations, by September 2012.
5. The government has, further, committed to strengthening inter ethnic relations, notably through a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement by June 2012.
6. On rule of law, the country participated as observer in the screening of chapters 23 and 24 in Brussels in March. The professionalism of the judiciary will be strengthened by amending the Law on Courts to accelerate the implementation of new professional requirements for the selection of judges in higher courts. The legal provisions on disciplinary procedures and dismissals will be reviewed in order to further enhance the independence of the judiciary. Concerning anti-corruption, the legislation against conflict of interest was strengthened. The track record in the fight against corruption will be more closely monitored. Preparations for important reforms of public administration have advanced. A new Law on Administration will consolidate the professionalisation of public administration.
7. Concerning the strengthening of the market economy, a range of actions will be undertaken, notably through sound medium-term macro-fiscal strategies and strengthened institutional legal frameworks conducive to a better functioning of markets. Labour market challenges will be addressed, inter alia, through active measures in order to achieve an inclusive and effective labour market and a strategic study on the underlying causes of unemployment. Youth employment will be targeted through education, vocational training and other programmes.

8. The government and the Commission reaffirm their commitment to continuing the High Level Accession Dialogue as an inclusive and transparent process. The Assembly and the National Council for European Integration, as well as other national stakeholders, including civil society, will continue to be informed and systematically consulted. The operational roadmap is publically available.