

Monthly e-bulletin of the Secretariat for  
European Affairs  
Government of the Republic of Macedonia  
February 2016



**Deputy Prime Minister Besimi participated on the  
Conference "Balkan Partnerships- Strengthening the  
region's ties" in Brussels**



During the visit in Brussels, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Fatmir Besimi PhD addressed at the conference "Balkan Partnerships - Strengthening the region's ties" organised by the think tank organisation Friends of Europe. The Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Mr. Johannes Hahn also participated at the Conference.

Deputy Prime Minister Besimi and Commissioner Hahn addressed at the first panel dedicated to the challenges that arise from the dealing with the migrant crisis. Therefore, Besimi stressed the need to establish a mechanism through which the cooperation between the Western Balkans and the EU institutions will further strengthen.

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### **Besimi: Hahn confirmed- we will wait for the Report from OSCE/ODIHR and SEC on the early elections in Macedonia**

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### **Donor meeting on migration**

Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in charge of European Affairs Fatmir Besimi PhD addressed at the regular donor meeting devoted to migration and refugee crisis, in order to coordinate efforts and actions of all stakeholders in dealing with this challenge of global sizes.

The ambassadors of the EU Member States, representatives of international organisations involved in the process, and representatives of the state institutions and experts were participants at the event.

Deputy Prime Minister Besimi referred in detail to the specific activities and efforts to build the capacity needed to deal with the situation, as well as the current needs arising from daily care for refugees.

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### **State Secretary Blazheska on the first annual forum on personal data protection**

State Secretary for European Affairs, Ana Blazheska on the first annual forum on personal data protection expressed gratitude to Norway for the generous support in this area, provided in the past three years through the program for project cooperation.

The Secretariat for European Affairs, as an institution responsible for coordination of the programme of cooperation with the Kingdom of Norway actively contributes and assists in the implementation of obligations under the NPAA in all segments, including the protection of personal data, said Blazheska.

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## Address by Deputy Prime Minister Besimi at a conference on Gremia Hill - Pristina

In his address at the panel "Global Challenges and the role of NATO and the EU in the Western Balkans" Besimi referred to the global and regional geopolitical challenges through the prism of current political and economic developments. In addition he stressed that for Macedonia being a small country that is still developing its economic capacities, with only two decades of independent running of politics, the EU and NATO perspective will remain a strategic decision and a key factor in all political and social processes in the country.

The conference, in Besimi's opinion is of particular importance due to the possibility of exchanging ideas and experiences and sensitizing the public about the importance and role of the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkan region, for which the EU is the only aspiration, and NATO is a goal for most of them.

t; "f"> Address by Deputy Prime Minister Besimi at a conference on Gremia Hill - Pristina

[more](#)



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## The Embassy of the Republic of France and the Secretariat for European Affairs signed a letter of cooperation

The Ambassador of France, Mrs. Laurence Oer and the Deputy Prime Minister Fatmir Besimi PhD signed a letter of cooperation in the premises of the Secretariat of the European Affairs.

This letter will further strengthen the technical cooperation that already exists between both countries as a way to improve the reform process related to country's integration in the European Union.

This cooperation includes the presence of a French expert on EU affairs Mr. Bertrand Millet at the Secretariat of European Affairs and bilateral support in further harmonisation of the national legislation with the Union Acquis Communautaire, strengthening of the institutional capacities, including the line ministries and the management of the national and regional IPA funds, focusing on visibility projects and infrastructure and interconnection for the entire Western Balkans region.

[more](#)



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## IPA Press Conference

Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs, Fatmir Besimi, PhD together with the Ambassador of the EU Delegation in Macedonia HE Aivo Orav, on February 17, 2016 held a press conference where they presented the status of implementation of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance IPA.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Besimi stressed that in the previous period IPA 2007-2013 and IPA 2014-2020 were operated



simultaneously. Particular attention was paid to the implementation of the current IPA and the programming of IPA 2 based on positive experiences and lessons learned. Special emphasis was put on transparency and inclusiveness in the implementation of IPA are in order to bring closer IPA projects to the citizens.

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## Union Programmes as an instrument for EU support

Presentation of Union Programmes as an instrument of EU support was held on February 18, 2016 at 10:30 am in the premises of the Secretariat for European Affairs. Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs at the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, PhD Fatmir Besimi, Mr. Michael Samec from the German Agency for International Cooperation- GIZ and Mr. Martin Klauke From the Delegation of the European Union opened the event.

In his introduction remarks, Deputy Prime Minister emphasised the importance of Union Programmes for the Republic of Macedonia as an opportunity to upgrade the European values of our society, the implementation of reforms in the European agenda by promoting inclusion, social cohesion, active civil society and creating better opportunities for all.

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## Working visits



### Meeting of the Deputy Prime Minister Besimi with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium Mrs. Anik Van Kalster

At the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Besimi expressed gratitude for the support that the



### Meeting between the Deputy Prime Minister Besimi and Mr. Miroslav Lajčák

At the meeting the interlocutors



### Besimi- Çollaku: Strengthening the cooperation in the area of European integration

On 22nd of March was signed a

Republic of Macedonia receives from Belgium in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration of our country and the region. During the conversation the activities undertaken to implement the key reforms of the country's European agenda were especially highlighted with particular focus on the independence of the judiciary, electoral reforms, good neighbourly relations, freedom of expression and media and implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, and the importance of meeting the obligations of the political agreement was also stressed..

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discussed the urgent reform priorities of the Republic of Macedonia in the process of accession to the European Union, determined with the conclusions of the EU Council, and particularly emphasised the importance of fulfilling the obligations of the political agreement.

Regarding the current migrant situation, the Deputy Prime Minister pointed out that the cooperation regarding the migration crisis is of crucial importance because the Western Balkan countries, including Macedonia, are transit routes for migrants and therefore need the support of the Union.

[more](#)

cooperation agreement in the field of European integration in Kosovo by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia in charge of European Affairs, Fatmir Besimi PhD and the Minister for European Integration of Kosovo, Mr. BekimÇollaku.

The Memorandum confirms the European perspective of both countries and strengthen bilateral relations and promote continuous cooperation of mutual interest. During the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Besimi stressed the importance of regional cooperation for the exchange of experiences in the field of European integration, exchange of information and know-how for the adoption of European legislation and its implementation in the chapters.

[more](#)



### **Meeting of the Deputy Prime Minister Besimi with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy Gentiloni**

The support of the Republic of Italy in the Euro-Atlantic integration of Macedonia was highlighted at the meeting, and the position of Italy was emphasised that the process of EU enlargement will not be complete without all of the Western Balkans countries.

Regarding the country's commitments in the EU integration process, Besimi informed about the implementation of the Urgent reform priorities which are particularly important given that after the elections, the country will receive another Report



### **Delegation from the European Affairs Committee of the Dutch Parliament on a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Besimi**

Deputy Prime Minister of the Government Republic of Macedonia, Fatmir Besimi PhD had a meeting with a high delegation from the European Affairs Committee of the Dutch Parliament, led by the President of the Commission, Mr. Malik Azmani. The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Mr. Willem WouterPlomp accompanied the Delegation .

Deputy Prime Minister Besimi congratulated the

from the European Commission on the basis of which will be determined the future perspective of Macedonia

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Dutch takeover of the EU presidency and expressed hope that the cooperation between the Netherlands and Macedonia will continue, and that the Netherlands will continue to support European-Atlantic aspirations of the country.

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#EUstars

## EU Stars Debate on topic "Social media and freedom of expression"

The Secretariat for European Affairs held the second debate of the cycle "EU Stars" on topic: "Social media and freedom of expression", was held on FON, where the students of FON-first private university in Skopje were debating. Before the start of the debate, Deputy Prime Minister Besini, Vice Rector for International Cooperation prof. Nano Ruzin PhD and General Manager MS Sefer Canoski addressed and they highlighted the role of debates in the development of the democratic societies.

Today's debate aims to increase the interest and knowledge of the youth on issues and topics related to the EU. Through debates, SEA aims at providing an open forum for debate among young people aimed at encouraging critical opinions and encouraging a culture where the debate is seen as a democratic way to resolve differences of opinions.

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## EU in Macedonia Destination Spain- Sport

The Secretariat for European Affairs in cooperation with the Spanish Embassy held the event "European Union in Macedonia" at the MK-EU Info Centre: Destination Spain- sport.

Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs Fatmir Besimi PhD, together with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain in the Republic of Macedonia, HE Ramon Abaroa Carranza in the setting of the beautiful sounds of Spanish music, in an informal conversation shared Macedonian-Spanish values, sports experiences together with the guests at the event Raul Gonzalez, Alex Dujshebaev, Jorge Macqueda and future youth hope of the Macedonian handball from HC Vardar.

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## Reform process

- On 12 February 2016 media have signed the Charter of ethical reporting during the election that is based on the basic principles of journalistic work
- The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia in February 2016 adopted 2 Laws from NPAA - Revision 2016
- There is a decline in the non-performing loans ( NPL ) growth, from 8.3% in 2014 to 4.7% in 2015, that contributed to improvements in the credit portfolio quality. The NPL ratio declined from 11.3% in 2014 to 10.8% in 2015. The credit risk is mainly concentrated in the corporate portfolio.
- The Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, adopted the Law amending the Law on Copyright and Related Rights
- The 12th Subcommittee on transport, environment, energy and regional development was held I Brussels on 23rd of February 2016
- The Government has adopted the new Competitiveness Strategy and Action Plan of the Republic of Macedonia 2016-2020
- First Kick off meeting for the IPA project Reform in the system for water supply, collection and treatment at local level, was held on 04.02.2016, Skopje
- On 3 of February 2016, the Subcommittee on Internal Market and Competition was held in Skopje

The activities for preparation of new PAR Strategy for the period 2016-2021 started including creation of a Working Group with representatives from relevant institutions, academia and SIGMA experts.



[EU Talks cooperation with civil society, interviews with the Foundation Open Society Institute - Macedonia and the Macedonian Centre for European Education](#)

[EU Talks held with the youth organisations "Youth - creators of the European values in Macedonia"](#)

## IPA Projects

### "Further strengthening of AFSARD and preparing the Agency for the programming period 2014 - 2020"

**Financed**

by: The European Union

**Project objective:** Providing advice and practical assistance to the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD, acting as the IPARD Agency) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD).  
**A budget of:** 1,550,000 EUR  
**Duration:** 21 months starting from 15th of December 2015

**Key beneficiary:**

Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development .

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### Further improvement of the system for development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework"

**Financed by:** EU

**Project objective:** Strengthening national capacities for efficient and effective system of National Qualifications Framework. The activities aim to improve the capacity of the country in the implementation of the National qualifications framework, including legislation, administration and development of skills in the key economic sectors.

**A budget of:** 2,250,000 EUR

**Duration:** January 2016- July 2017

**Key beneficiary:** Ministry of Education and Science.

[more](#)

### "Strengthening of administrative capacities at central and local level for the transposition and implementation of the new Directive on industrial emissions 2010/75/EU"

**Financed by:** EU

**Project objective:** "Strengthening of the administrative capacity at central and local level for the transposition and implementation of the new Directive on industrial emissions

A budget of: 900,000 EUR

Duration: 1st of October- December 2016

Key beneficiary: Ministry of environment and physical planning, Environment Administration

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## EU News

- [Eures network: helping people to find a job in another EU country](#)
- [NewsHub: A tool to follow EP politics as they happen](#)
- [EU launches new European Medical Corps to respond faster to emergencies](#)
- [A new settlement for the UK in the EU](#)
- [Winter 2016 Economic Forecast: Weathering new challenges](#)

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## Did you know...?

- [Since the beginning of 2016, out of the people who arrived in Greece to seek asylum in the EU, 55% are women and children, unlike in June 2015 when the percentage was 38](#)
- [70% of infectious diseases in humans are common in animals and in humans](#)
- [Out of 241 million European workers 7.5 million ie about 3.1% work in another EU Member State](#)
- [10 billion is lost due to smuggling of tobacco and cigarettes from the annual income of the EU.](#)

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## International days

- [March 21 - World Poetry Day](#)
- [21 March-International Day of Forests](#)
- [March 21, International Day of Persons with Downs syndrome](#)
- [March 22 - International Water Day](#)
- [March 23 - International Meteorology Day](#)

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***Thank you !***