



Бр. 48 -

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia presents its compliments to the British Embassy in Skopje and has the honor to enclose herewith the Contribution of the Republic of Macedonia concerning the Call for Evidence on the Government's Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union on EU Enlargement. The document presents Macedonian views, experiences and lessons learned related to the EU accessions process.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the British Embassy in Skopje the assurances of its highest consideration.



Skopje, 27 June 2014

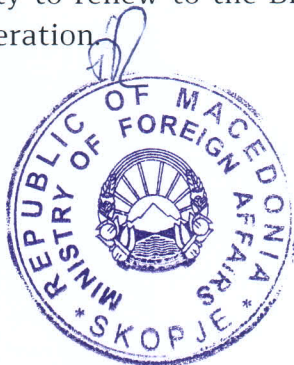
British Embassy  
SKOPJE



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Skopje, 27 June 2014

British Embassy  
SKOPJE



Republic of Macedonia  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
*Directorate for European Union*

Skopje, 26 June 2014

Your Excellency,  
Dear Ambassador Garrett,

We would like to thank once again for the letter of your predecessor Ambassador Yvon, dated 3 April 2014 concerning the Call for Evidence for the Report on the Balance of Competences between the European Union and Member States launched in several new fields, including on Enlargement Policy.

As a candidate country for EU membership and after 10 years of implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU, the Republic of Macedonia is honoured of the opportunity to contribute to the Enlargement review report and present herewith views on Macedonian experiences and lessons learned.

*- EU Enlargement policy and stabilisation and association process of the  
Republic of Macedonia-*

Enlargement policy is one of the most successful policies of the European Union extending further the zone of peace, prosperity and stability in Europe. Since the *Thessaloniki Declaration of 2003* the European membership perspective was the driving force for stability and prosperity in the countries of the Balkan region. Western Balkans countries have made much progress and many significant achievements in the European integration process over the past two decades and it can be concluded that the process of building democratic societies has been made irreversible.

Over the past decade, the region's economies and societies have seen significant integration with the EU and between themselves. Now, Western Balkan region is economically and politically closely tied to Europe and there is no real alternative to EU integration for Western Balkan countries.

Nevertheless, after the Big Bang Enlargement of 2004, considerable doubts have arisen on the level of preparedness of the new Member States but also of the Union itself to receive new members. In the present situation of dealing with the aftermath of the Euro crisis, Europe looks extremely inward-looking and some voices propose to slow down with the enlargement.

H.E. Ambassador Charles Edmund Garrett  
British Embassy  
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Republic of Macedonia strongly disagrees with this notion. Because of two reasons:

- Words (and commitments) on the side of the EU have to be honoured.
- EU should continue what it does best: using the power of membership to transform the countries in its neighbourhood. EU has to be able to be successful in its own "backyard" in order to be successful elsewhere. This, doesn't burden the EU, on the contrary, through these processes we can see it becomes stronger.

Latest developments with the situation in Ukraine show that challenges still exist. In this context, EU's proactive action is even more essential by putting strategic interests first, including undertaken enlargement commitments. It has never been clearer that "An EU that is no longer expanding will have much less influence".

Republic of Macedonia is a candidate country for nine years already, and has not started accession negotiations, although it has met all necessary criteria for 5 years now. EU membership was as a strategic goal in the early nineties of the 20 century and it was one agenda which did not separate the stabilisation from the association process. On the contrary, the two pillars of the process strongly underpinned each other.

While reforming and developing, Republic of Macedonia aimed for the end of the tunnel – the EU and NATO membership. Not as a solution to all problems, but as the non-contested point of national consensus, that has to be put into reality by ourselves, in dialogue and partnership with the EU and NATO.

Republic of Macedonia continues to work hard to further improve the track record of harmonisation and enforcement of EU standards and criteria for the benefit of our citizens; ready to deliver more, as requested. With five recommendations in a role in the past five years to start the negotiating process, the European Commission has also recognised that the level of harmonization of Macedonian legislation is higher than requested by the stage of process where Macedonia is today.

Republic of Macedonia established strong structures for EU accession process. On political and administrative level it is fully prepared to enter into accession negotiations, at any moment, as soon as the Council of the EU and the European Council make adequate decisions in that direction and accept the European Commission recommendations.

This year the 10th anniversary of unimpeded implementation of SAA was marked, date by which it has been estimated that Republic of Macedonia would be in very advanced stage of accession negotiations. What Macedonia strongly advocates against is not conditions, but the delays, because it has reached the "point of no return" – the integration/accession process is absolutely irreversible.

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In order to sustain the credibility of the whole process equal commitment is needed from the candidate countries but also from the EU. EU should respect its commitments and merit based approach in the enlargement and accession process, and should enable continuation of Macedonian accession process despite the imposed problem with the name issue.

What we need from our European partners is clearer horizon on enlargement. Keeping Macedonia out of the "EU doors" is counterproductive. EU should avoid scenario of creating disparities between countries in region. Macedonia has proven its credible track record. Political criteria are continuously reached and compared to some other countries in the region has most advanced fulfilment of requirements and best level of alignment with the *acquis*, but is still deprived from negotiations.

Macedonia has also proven its integrity - we are strong supporter of an international rules-based system, and working hand in hand with the United Nations. International law, in case of Macedonia, should also matter and be respected - International Court of Justice Decision of 2011 offered very clear direction towards solving outstanding disputes in line with established principles and means.

Outstanding bilateral issue continues to negatively affect the accession process. Republic of Macedonia is on the position that bilateral issues should not hold up the accession process. On the name issue a level playing field is missing between the two parties. European Commission and the Member States should facilitate the creation of the necessary political impetus in the search for solutions and to actively support related initiatives. Possible solutions include the dual track approach -opening of accession negotiations in parallel with continuation of the talks on the name issue (e.g. Ch 35).

Republic of Macedonia strongly supports European Commission's strengthened focus on the economic governance and competitiveness and growth, which needs to underpin the reform agenda in all countries to make it sustainable. It could be a useful tool to promote economic development of the Western Balkan countries and economic convergence with the EU. On the side of the Republic of Macedonia there is readiness to engage in dialogue with the European Commission and to assume the obligation to prepare the newly introduced programmes. The ultimate objective is to address what really matters - creating an environment more conducive to investment, growth and jobs. Republic of Macedonia had extensive and excellent communication with European Commission services on drafting the Pre-accession Economic Programmes. In this respect the financial assistance from the EU and the International Financial Institutions would be of paramount importance.

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Hoping that our reflections would contribute to a successful completion of the Enlargement review report, please accept Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

Director,  
Ramadan Nazifi

