



FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
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International Conference ***Macedonia looking ahead: the momentum to catch the EU train***

A conference of the Progres-Institute for Social Democracy (PI) in cooperation with Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and supported by Olof Palme International Center (OPIC), Westminster Foundation for Labour (WFL), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Skopje Office (FES) and European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity

Friday August 31st, 2018

Millennium I Hall, Hotel Holiday Inn

Skopje, Macedonia



Background and aims of the conference

Hopes are high that with the new progressive government led by Prime Minister Zoran Zaev, sworn in on the 1st of June 2017, the political situation in Macedonia – characterized by growing authoritarianism, corruption, mass street protest, physical attack on MPs in the parliament and standstill in EU integration – is about to change. The first test was passed: After the finalization of the two local election rounds, Zaev's Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) won in 57 municipalities, including the City of Skopje. The new government presented the "plan 3-6-9", which aim was to re-start the reform process and return the country to the Euro-Atlantic path. The successful implementation of the plan was noted in the latest report of the European Commission: Macedonia achieved significant progress in implementing the urgent reform priorities and has largely overcome the political crisis. The assessments of the political criteria, in particular the judiciary and the public administration, are very positive. What remains is further work on alignment with EU policies and legislation, to deepen the current reforms on urgent reform priorities, as well as to strengthen access to the judiciary, fundamental rights, justice, freedom and the security of the country. Finally, on 12 June 2018 Macedonia set a first step in de-blocking the Euro-Atlantic integration by signing a name deal with Greece. Conservative Macedonian President Ivanov and a referendum in fall 2018 on the new name seem to be the final obstacles of Macedonia's EU and NATO integration. The main aim of the conference is to bring together progressive parties, political foundations, civil society, academia and other stakeholders from EU, Western Balkans countries and Macedonia, in order to discuss and develop strategies for the European and Euro-Atlantic integration and sustainable democratization of Macedonia and the countries of South East Europe.

Thursday, August 30th

Arrival of international participants

20:00 Dinner at the hotel [Holiday Inn](#) Skopje

Friday, August 31st

09.30-10.00 **Registration and coffee**
Conference Hall, Hotel Holiday Inn

10.00-10.20 **Opening and welcome**

- Saso Dodovski, President, Progres - Institute for Social Democracy, Macedonia
- Ernst Stetter, Secretary General, Foundation for European Progressive Studies

10.20-11.30 **Keynote Speakers**

- Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of Republic of Macedonia
- Maria João Rodrigues, President, Foundation for European Progressive Studies
- Nils Schmid, MP in German Bundestag and Speaker for foreign affairs of SPD fraction, Germany
- Kati Piri MEP, S&D Group
- Bert Koenders, former Minister of foreign affairs, The Netherlands

Chaired by: journalist, TBC

11.30-11.45 **Coffee break**

11.45-13.30 **EU-Macedonia relations: new momentum, new challenges**

- Oliver Spasovski, Deputy PM and Minister of Interior, Macedonia
- Renata Deskoska, Minister of Justice, Macedonia
- Johan Hassel, International Secretary, SAP, Sweden
- Stevo Pendarovski, National Coordinator for NATO, Macedonia
- Uranija Pirovska, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of Republic of Macedonia
- Ranko Krivokapic, President and former Speaker of the Parliament, SDP, Montenegro

Chaired by: Kati Piri MEP S&D Group

13.30-14.30 Lunch

14.30-16.30 Round table on Social Democracy: reflecting and looking ahead on role of political foundations and parties, policy development, political education and dialogue

Short introduction by:

- Khalid Mahmood, MP and Shadow Minister for Europe, Labour Party, UK
- Teuta Vodo, Deputy Minister of Justice and Executive Director of Qemal Stafa Foundation, Albania
- Aleksandra Jerkov, MP and Vice-President of Democratic Party, Serbia

***Discussion:** Representatives of political foundations*

Chaired by: Toshe Zafirov, Project Coordinator, Progres – Institute for Social Democracy, Macedonia

16.30-16.45 Concluding remarks and closure

- Jan Marinus Wiersma, Vice-President, European Forum
- *Aleksandar Spasov, Program Manager, Progres – Institute for Social Democracy, Macedonia*