

Macedonian DIPLOMATIC BULLETIN



The parliamentary adoption of the Law on Public Prosecution, Law on Public Prosecutors' Council, Law on Committee on Relations Amongst Ethnic Communities and the endorsement of the National Council on Euro-integration reflects the consensus among all the relevant political parties in the Republic of Macedonia and reaffirms their resolute commitment to the completion of the reform agenda on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration.

FLYING NATO DIPLOMACY



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
No. 11 / November 2007

**LAW ON RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES TO
PROVIDE MUTUAL RESPECT**

*Interview with Zvonko MUCUNSKI,
Head of the Commission for Religious Affairs*

National Council on Euro-integration for further focusing of the Macedonian EU agenda

By delivering a unanimous decision, the Macedonian MP's adopted a decision to establish a National Council on Euro-integration under the auspices of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Being aware that the Macedonian EU agenda shall be given boost, the Macedonian Parliamentarians have reached a consensus over the launching of this body. Seen as an impetus that is to lead to further engineering and streamlining of the national EU rapprochement, the decision was concurrently endorsed by the ruling parties, the opposition and the public itself. The National Council on Euro-integration composed of all the relevant parties (chaired by an opposition MP), representatives of the academia, business, the Union, media and think tanks will give advice and recommendations and provide for open forum for debate on the most burning issues regarding the Macedonian EU aspirations. It should guide the Assembly and hence the Government to overcome any impediments on the road to the EU. Besides re-affirmation of the national EU policy, and approximation of the national with the EU legislation, this body will enable and stimulate the public to "have its say" and to directly participate in the shaping of the national approach to the European Union. By doing this, the National Council on Euro-integration will contribute to securing the fast implementation of the obligations deriving from the European Union accession process. This momentum would confirm the notion that the European integration process is not solely a Government project but a national priority policy, which derives and belongs to the Macedonian citizenry. The broad "ownership" of the process implies proportional responsibilities and greater accountability of all actors and is thus justifying the EU reform process as inevitable. In times when the EU accession should be reinforced, the consensus to establish such a body confirmed the awareness of the Macedonian authorities that the EU integration should be topping the national priority list. At the same time the Council will represent a blueprint of the maturity of all political players and institutions to deliver and to reach consensus over even more burning decisions on our pathway to the European Union.

Edvard Mitevski
Member of the Editorial Board

President Crvenkovski Decorates Ambassador Hill with "8 September" Order

President Branko Crvenkovski decorated Christopher Hill, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs and first US Ambassador to Macedonia, with the "8 September" Order at a formal ceremony held in Skopje on 13 November. Hill was awarded for his outstanding contribution to the development and strengthening of the friendly relations and cooperation between Macedonia and the United States during his mandate as US ambassador to the country from 1996 to 1999.



"This forthcoming period will be very important for Macedonia's accession to NATO. Thus, everyone should unite and sit together on the same table so that they can cooperate, because these next six months are historic for Macedonia," Christopher Hill stressed.

President Crvenkovski at REF SEE 2007 in Dubrovnik

Macedonian President Branko Crvenkovski participated in the Regional Economic Forum for Southeast Europe "Competitors and Partners on the Way to European Union" in Dubrovnik on 22 November.

On the sidelines of this forum, President Crvenkovski held bilateral meetings with Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic and Zeljko Komsic, chairman of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency

Deputy MFA Petrov Meets with Delegation of Czech Parliament

Macedonian Deputy Foreign Minister Zoran Petrov met with a delegation of the Chamber of Deputies' Foreign Affairs Committee of the Czech Parliament, which was led by committee Chairman Jan Hamacek.

The Macedonian and Czech officials discussed the political and economic relations between the two countries, as well as the process and support for Macedonia's integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures.



Petrov and Hamacek also discussed regional issues.

CEFTA 2006 Possibilities - Sign of Political and Economic Maturity

CEFTA 2006 is very important for the whole region, not only as an economic unit, but also in view of the political and social stability of its members, said Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, opening the CEFTA 2006 Summit in Skopje on 21 November, when Macedonia put an end to its 2007 CEFTA presidency.

The CEFTA member states adopted a joint declaration for further implementation of the Agreement.

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PM GRUEVSKI PAYS OFFICIAL VISIT TO BULGARIA

Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski participated in the meeting of heads of government of the Central-European Initiative (CEI) member states in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 27 November.

The meeting takes place annually and represents the most important gathering of the organization.

Following the end of the CEI Summit, Mr. Gruevski continued its first official visit to Bulgaria in the capacity of Prime Minister, with meetings with Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov and Bulgarian Parliament Speaker Georgi Pirinski. The Macedonian delegation also included Deputy Prime Minister for Euro-Integration Gabriela Konevska-Trajkovska, who met with the Bulgarian Minister for European Affairs, Gergana Grncarova.

“The Republic of Macedonia is in a historical period in which it awaits an invitation for joining NATO in a few months, and also a period in which it is troubled by problems in the resolution of which it expects support from its friends,” said Prime Minister Gruevski after meeting his Bulgarian counterpart Sergej Stanisev.

At the joint press conference following their meeting, Mr. Gruevski said that Macedonia expected support and a “good word”

from Bulgaria on its way to NATO and the EU, in the process of which using the Bulgarian experience of meeting the conditions for membership of the two organizations would be of special significance.

“Bulgaria will be able to prove its friendship in this historical moment for Macedonia,” the head of the Macedonian Government underscored.

The two prime ministers appealed for closer communication between the relevant ministries, which will represent an additional incentive for closer relations and cooperation in the future.



OSCE 15-th Ministerial Council, Madrid, 30 November 2007.

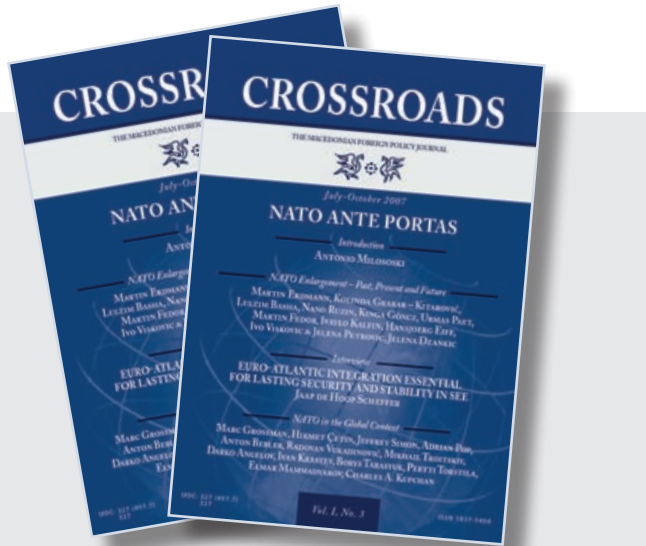
MFA MILOSOSKI AT MADRID OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

By underlining the OSCE’s position as a forum for continuous and durable dialogue on various security aspects and by emphasizing the necessity for boosting the cooperative and multidimensional approach to security, MFA Milososki addressed the participants of the third plenary session of the 15th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting held in Madrid, Spain. MFA Milososki stressed the importance of streamlined approach to the existing and new security challenges and singled out the collaborative multiparty approach as inevitable. At the sidelines of the Council, the Macedonian Foreign Minister had several meetings at which he expressed his profound optimism that Macedonia would be extended invitation for NATO membership at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008.

RUSSIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TITOV VISITS SKOPJE

Vladimir Titov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, paid a working visit to Skopje on 22 October, where he discussed promotion of the bilateral relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Macedonia. Mr. Titov was received by Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Milososki. During the talks, the high-level political relations were reaffirmed and the need for enhancement of the economic ties between the two countries was stressed. Milososki and Titov exchanged views and opinions regarding the determining of Kosovo’s final status.

In the course of his visit, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Titov was also received by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and Assembly Chairman Ljubisa Georgievski.





**INTERVIEW WITH MR. ZVONKO MUCUNSKI,
HEAD OF THE COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS**

LAW ON RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES TO PROVIDE MUTUAL RESPECT

Mr. Mucunski, you are a career diplomat and for a year you have been at the head of the Commission for Religious Affairs. How do you cope with this professional challenge?

Every work post change represents a change of the approach, of the rights and responsibilities and to a large extent of the activities you do every day, which suffices to conclude that my decision to leave the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, even if only temporarily, was not simple. Diplomacy is my main profession in which I have been working for almost 20 years and I believe that the acceptance of the position of chairman of the Government Commission for Religious Affairs does not mean that I have fully detached myself from what my dedication and attention are still strongly directed to. On the contrary, accepting the new challenge, I was aware that I was afforded an opportunity to engage myself in a different kind of activities aiming to protect the interests of the religious communities and promote individual religious rights and freedoms, assuring free profession of religion and activities in all forms compatible with the internationally accepted democratic principles.

The Law on Religious Communities has been adopted. In the light of how difficult its drafting and adoption was, please tell us what your personal role and participation as a seasoned diplomat consisted of in the reconciliation of all the parties involved?

The basic reasons why it was necessary to adopt a new law on the legal status of a church, religious community and religious group are a few cancelled provisions in the previous law on religious communities and religious groups of 1997, which made it inapplicable from a normative standpoint, as well as the need to harmonize the legislation with the modifica-

tions to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia of 2001. At the same time, the demands of the international community for liberalization of religious rights and liberties had an important influence in that process, imposing the need of adopting regulations that would be in full compliance with the valid international agreements on human rights and liberties, signed and ratified by the Republic of Macedonia and set on the level of criteria for Euro-Atlantic integration.

I was aware that the adoption of such a law on religious communities should primarily be in the service of further strengthening the lasting historical and traditional values, which the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia have always regarded with utmost respect. At the same time in addition to the liberal tendencies, the new law was also expected to take into consideration the positive processes and tendencies, which are deeply rooted in our centuries-long existence during which the religious and ethnic diversity has always been our advantage, while the high level of understanding and mutual respect have always been our code of conduct.

How do you see the law? To what extent will the law contribute to promoting further the inter-religious cooperation and what will that mean for the international image of the Republic of Macedonia?

With the aim of drafting a liberal, good and applicable law, domestic and foreign expert help was used, the necessary consultations were conducted with representatives of churches, religious communities and religious groups in Macedonia, as well as with the inter-religious council, and also other similar laws from other countries, primarily EU member states and candidate member states, were used. In addition, representatives of international organizations and diplomats were asked to voice their views, international forums were held and fruitful and constructive meetings and discussions were realized with OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe. The Government assumed a serious approach to their remarks and good-willed suggestions, incorporating them within the final version of the law.

Given that it was drafted in the spirit of the modern world, the law is expected to provide an incentive for further promotion of cooperation, understanding and mutual respect of all the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia and to improve the image of our country, as

a country that is rich in historical, traditional and democratic values.

The World Conference on Dialogue Among Civilizations was recently held in Ohrid. What are your impressions and how do you see the effects of an event of such a grand scale?

The Republic of Macedonia and its citizens had the honor and privilege to host the first World Conference on Dialogue Among Religions and Civilizations which took place in Ohrid, our cultural, religious and tourist center, from 26 to 28 October this year. I believe this event helped establish a new basis for better communication among cultures and religions, creating possibilities for intense and open dialogue of civilizations and a common ground for building a world free of prejudice, disagreement, discrimination, and extremism.

I would like to underline that all the participants in the conference, including numerous religious leaders, representatives of diverse churches, religious communities and religious groups, distinguished politicians, academicians, university professors and experts from 47 countries, left with very good impressions. We may say that the conference was a good start of an initiative that aims to grow into a traditional event. In that regard, on the last day of the conference, an international organization committee was established to organize the second world conference in 2010.

It is worth noting that the World Conference took place within the framework of the Global Agenda for dialogue among civilizations adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2001 and the ongoing Decade of the Culture of Peace, and is a follow-up to a line of important regional forums and conferences held in Macedonia over the past few years. In this regard, it is of particular importance that before the official end of the Conference a closing declaration on promoting dialogue and mutual understanding among religions and civilizations, which was provided to all important regional and international organizations across the world, was adopted.

The Conference was an excellent opportunity for the Republic of Macedonia to once again present itself not only as country that can mount excellent international events, but also as a country rich in creative potential, promoting the values of understanding, dialogue and mutual respect among civilizations, cultures and religions.

Macedonian DIPLOMATIC BULLETIN



MACEDONIA SENDS MESSAGE OF PEACE, TOLERANCE, AND LOVE

WORLD CONFERENCE ON DIALOGUE AMONG
RELIGIONS AND CIVILIZATIONS

“The contribution of Religion and Culture to Peace,
Mutual Respect, and Cooperation”

Ohrid, 26-28 October 2007

MACEDONIA SENDS MESSAGE OF PEACE, TOLERANCE, AND LOVE

The Republic of Macedonia hosted the “World Conference on Dialogue among Religions and Civilizations”, which was organized by the Government, in cooperation with UNESCO, and was held between 26 and 28 October year 2007 in the ancient town of Ohrid. Over 200 participants – members of all religions – from over 50 countries in the world sent a message of peace, tolerance, and love to the whole world. The topic of this conference was “The contribution of Religion and Culture to Peace, Mutual Respect, and Cooperation”.

In his welcoming address, Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski stressed, among other things, “The need for ever greater and broader unity and cooperation among religions world wide is really an issue that affects protection and maintenance of global security. Today, when the trend of stereotypes and prejudices against ‘the others’ follows an upward line, this need is really existential. We must foster the communication and dialogue amongst ourselves considering that inter-religious, inter-cultural, and inter-civilization communication is the road to a better world, a world in which our existence is supported by the existence of others”. He stressed that this year the Republic of Macedonia adopted a modern Law on the Legal Status of the Church, Religious Community, and Religious Group, with which

the traditionally good inter-religious relations in Macedonia received a legal basis.

The Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs called on all participants in this conference to pray for the health of Greek Orthodox Church Head Christodoulos.

Macedonian MFA Antonio Milososki stressed, “In the year when the world celebrates the 800th anniversary of the death of the great Sufi poet and thinker Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi, now more than ever we need to remind ourselves of his wise words that to learn to speak, we must first listen, learn to speak listening. Those of us who are actively involved in politics and who, to a great extent, design the national policies on inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue are obliged to create as many opportunities as possible to deepen the dialogue among the various communities, be they religious, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic. Education is one of the instruments we have available to uproot stereotypes and prejudices. The more we know about each other and become aware of the differences surrounding us, the more tolerance and cohesion in our societies grow and the more we limit the possibility of conflicts”. Minister Milososki reminded that “Macedonia participates in the preparation of the Council of Europe’s White Paper on Inter-Cultural Dialogue,





which will be adopted by the end of this year. Macedonia will be prepared to join EU's activities on marking year 2008 as the European year of intercultural dialogue".

The conference was also greeted by UN General Assembly Chairman Srgjan Kerim. He stressed in his message, "Although globalization has brought us together, it has also exposed the differences between us. One effect of this has been the exploitation of religion for political ends, often with violent consequences. Diversity is an inherent part of human civilization. Programs aimed at establishing uniformity around a particular ideology – be it religious or other – have failed. Open and sustained dialogue, respect and freedom of religion or belief are fundamental to safeguarding peace and unity in diversity".

The participants in this conference adopted a Declaration, which states, among other things, "Commitment to dialogue among different civilizations and religions is at the same time a commitment against terrorism and instability. This world conference is a significant meeting; it is an opportunity to see reality, determine the obstacles, and find solutions for the problems that we face. This message will also be sent to the UN institutions to maintain the momentum and strengthen their commitment to the promotion of dialogue among religions, cultures, and civilizations".

Ohrid and Macedonian Archbishop, His Holiness Stefan, stressed, "The holy duty of every real member of the faith, regardless of which religion they belong to, is not to participate in or provoke wars. If a war is fought somewhere, he or she



should work towards restoring peace. After all, the world is the creation of the wise creator and all of us peoples are his children and brothers. Today there is a lot of talk about globalization on an economic, cultural, and other basis. But does the world not need globalization of love most, which will give birth to peace, respect, coexistence, and so forth?”

“If we have agreed to participate in this conference, this means that we are led precisely by our good thought and good will to show that the religions that we belong to are not an obstacle, but on the contrary – a strong basis on which we can all build mutual peace, understanding, and coexistence.”

Metropolitan Theophilose Kuriakose (Varkey Saji), India, (representative of the Syrian Orthodox Church), said, “This is my first visit to Macedonia, but how can an Indian not know about Macedonia? This is the country of our Mother Theresa, who was born here, but who lived with us. So there is a bridge between Macedonia and India. It is only natural that Macedonia’s rich tradition and long history led to us gathering here. Macedonia’s

initiative is an expression of the generosity, openness, and great tolerance that exist in this country”.

Anuttama Dasa from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (United States) underlined, “I really enjoyed the opportunity to speak with representatives of a number of religions. I will convey to my community the deep dedication that I felt here. The fact that this conference is being held here indicates that the Government of the Republic of Macedonia has understood the need for us to learn from each other. Your country is very small, but it teaches us and leads us. After all, leadership does not depend on size, but on vision”.

Hadji Deder Ressayd Barda, world head of the Bekteshi, noted, “I want to stress that this is a great honor and opportunity for all religious leaders to come together in one place and work together for the good of humanity. Lets unite with each other, because God likes to see us united. May this conference lead to bigger love, may it bring people together, and may it help spread goodness”.



ERDMAN: NO RANKING AMONG ADRIATIC GROUP COUNTRIES

There's no ranking amongst the Adriatic Group countries, nor any secret decision as to which country should receive a NATO membership invitation at the upcoming Bucharest summit, stated Martin Erdman, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy after meeting Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski.

"Macedonia is conducting a successful regional policy, thus demonstrating that it is a key factor of stability in the region and making an economic breakthrough," Mr. Erdman said



"We hope that in the coming period everyone in the country with joint forces, including the opposition in the Parliament, will manage to fulfill our remaining tasks," Prime Minister Gruevski emphasised.

Assistant Secretary General Erdman is leading the expanded NATO team, which is to make a regular assessment with regard to the progress made by Macedonia on its road to the Alliance.

AMBASSADOR NULAND: MACEDONIA HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

Macedonia should continue with the reforms so that it can receive an invitation for membership in NATO in April 2008, for which it has clear support from the United States, US Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland said in Skopje after meeting Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski.

"Macedonia has made significant progress, especially in the economic sector, and in attracting foreign investments and fighting corruption and organized crime, but it should continue with the reform process, thus coming closer to Euro-Atlantic integration and our joint goal - NATO membership invitation at next year's Bucharest Summit," said Ambassador Nuland.

Ambassador Nuland and Prime Minister Gruevski agreed there was serious progress also in conducting defense reforms, and in implementing the Ohrid Agreement implementation and decentralization.

"We agreed there was serious progress in conducting economic reforms. GDP has increased by 5.5 percent in the first six months of



2007, exports have increased by 50 percent compared to the same period of last year, and foreign investments have noted improvement as well. However, a lot of work remains ahead in this regard. The Government will continue to work even harder," PM Gruevski emphasized.

Prime Minister Gruevski confirmed at the joint press conference that Macedonia would continue to invest in its strategic partnership with the United States.

CZECH-MACEDONIAN NATO CONSULTATIONS IN PRAGUE

In view of the intensified diplomatic activities of the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the run-up to the coming Summit of NATO, bilateral NATO consultations were held in Prague between delegations of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia and the Czech Republic.

The Macedonian delegation was headed by State Secretary Igor Ilievski and the Czech delegation was led by first Deputy Foreign Minister Tomas Pojar. At their meeting they shared views concerning Macedonia's candidacy for membership and the security in the region.

On that occasion Mr. Pojar said the Czech Republic supported the efforts of the Republic of Macedonia for completing the required reforms with the aim of meeting the standards for joining NATO and being granted an invitation for membership at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008.

FLYING NATO DIPLOMACY

With a carefully chosen timing, the Macedonian diplomacy has intensified to the fullest its activities on a high working level in the second half of 2007 to present the reforms and the attainment of the standards indispensable for joining the Alliance and to lobby directly for receiving an invitation for membership at the coming NATO Summit in Bucharest.

To this end a delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by Zoran Dabik, director for collective security systems at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and his team, occasionally reinforced by Ambassador Nikola Dimitrov, national coordinator for NATO integration, and Igor Ilievski, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as by representatives of the Ministry of Defense realized in this period a series of bilateral NATO consultations with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of certain NATO member states.

From September to November this year, NATO consultations with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Iceland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Hungary, Slovakia, Denmark, Norway, Spain and the Czech Republic were held, and the dates for holding NATO consultations with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Germany by the end of this year have been defined.

The Macedonian diplomacy also uses the numerous multilateral and regional meetings to lobby for the accession of the Republic of Macedonia into NATO. A number of successful ad-hoc consultations took place at the Autumn Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of NATO in Reykjavik, during the informal meetings of political directors of the Visegrad Group, the Vilnius Group and the Adriatic Group in Tallinn, Sofia and Budapest, as well as at the meeting in the format Adriatic-Baltic-Atlantic in Split, Croatia, this autumn.

The recommendations sent from these consultations to Skopje, without any exception whatsoever, are that Macedonia has so far done a lot, that it acts as a de facto NATO member state as regards the sharing of responsibilities with the NATO allies, and that they expect Macedonia, once the required reforms in the country are completed, to be extended the much desired invitation for membership at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April next year.



**AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR PRELA,
INTERVIEW FOR THE MACEDONIAN DIPLOMATIC BULLETIN**

ALBANIA-MACEDONIA RELATIONS SET COOPERATION PATTERN IN THE BALKANS

Please provide us with a brief introduction to the priorities, activities and operations of your Embassy in the Republic of Macedonia. Please give us an overview of/and present your personnel.

The Albanian diplomacy has already stated and elaborated its positions to Macedonia. The diplomatic relations of the past decade and a half established the bases of the Albanian-Macedonian relations and also created a positive tradition, which in certain aspects sets the pattern in the Balkans.

As for your question about the priorities, I would like to stress that Albania sees its relations with neighboring Macedonia as priority in its foreign policy, and those relations draw upon:

- Support for the stability of Macedonia, its territorial integrity and sovereignty. This policy made sure that today there are no bones of contention between our two countries.
- Support for the reforms in Macedonia, which Albania sees as support for the progress of its own reforms, and as a comprehensive Balkan process creating possibilities for the Balkans too to become an integral part of democratic Europe.
- We consider the Framework Ohrid Agreement a key to Macedonia's transformation into a modern and multinational country, a country of all its citizens and a base for the very good bilateral relations.
- Our common strategic goals constitute yet another positive distinctive mark of the relations between our two countries, bringing them even closer together. The Adriatic Charter is a concrete example of our common strategic goals and is a prelude to our accession to NATO.
- Albania and Macedonia are heading for the European family and cooperate in the process of their integration with the European community, considering that their eventual accession is their shared strategic priority. Every success attained by one of the countries is a success for the other as well.
- Both in Tirana and in Skopje it is thought that the promotion of the bilateral relations

and their advancement through concrete activities benefits regional stability. Kosovo is one example.

If we try to show how these priorities reflect on the activities and work of the Embassy, we will present a standard agenda of activities of a diplomatic office in a friendly country. A result of the fact that the Albanian-Macedonian relations have been moving forward over the past five years in terms of both quantity and quality is the positive climate thanks to the efforts of both the countries and the engagement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania, which created not only a climate, but also means for realization.

The political cooperation is supported first, because today in Albania and Macedonia political structures striving to side their countries with democratic and Euro-Atlantic Europe, open societies, global integrations and views of the Balkan history as a lesson rather than an inspiration are in office.

If we bear in mind the isolated societies, the inimical ideologies, the chauvinistic psychologies, the national hatred, etc, it is understandable that a diplomatic office in a Balkan country should first and foremost focus on rectifying the isolation, helping the countries get to know each other better, making them see that the multiethnic quality in the Balkans as a value rather than a means for exercising superiority, establishing reciprocal trust, avoiding paternalistic positions, building structure of reciprocal trust, creating integrative conditions and cooperation in the areas of art, science, culture, trade, finance, investment, etc.

Albania is a small country trying to attain prosperity, promote democracy and take its rightful place in the international community. Diplomacy is part of this process too. The Albanian diplomatic service is still undergoing reforms that will put it on the same footing with its Euro-Atlantic counterpart and it is this very path that the Albanian Embassy in Skopje has been walking as well. It is a small team of professionals trying hard to perfect themselves and promote further the main areas of the cooperation between Albania and Macedonia.

As a Diplomatic Representative, what is your opinion of the bilateral relations between your country and the Republic of Macedonia and tell us about the importance of the level of cooperation of these two countries?

I can say with confidence as well as pleasure that the stage of recognizing each other's countries is over. Covering all the areas of cooperation

that are of mutual interest with bilateral agreement (at least 45), which takes us very close to the European reality, has also been closed.

Today the cooperation in the areas of social order, security, intelligence, etc., which has been considered a taboo a decade ago, is normal.

In the areas of defense, the cooperation, whether bilateral or within the framework of the Adriatic Chapter (Albania, Macedonia and Croatia) aimed at joining NATO, represents a concrete success and experience, which has turned our countries into allies ready to take over the responsibilities as full-fledged members of NATO.

This has also been demonstrated by the latest bilateral and international successful military drills organized in the territory of Macedonia and Albania, the joint activities of the two ministries and the general staff of the armies of the two countries, the regular meetings of the officials from the defense ministries, the planned measures for reinforced control and border safety, etc.

In the area of security, the relations between the two countries are also noting great progress, and there is coordinated cooperation not only in dealing with operative border-zone problems, but also in fighting together criminal and terrorist groups in the region. In this regard, it is worth noting that there is good cooperation between the intelligence services of the two countries, which has now started yielding results too.

Could you please present us the upcoming steps and activities in Macedonia concerning the future development of the bilateral relations and the further improvement of the cooperation of the two countries?

What should be underlined in this case are the concerted efforts to transform the good political and strategic atmosphere in concrete activities with positive results in the best interest of both our peoples and countries, which will make them more attractive for investors or tourists.

At the last meetings between Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha and his Macedonian counterpart Nikola Gruevski, as well as between the Foreign Ministers of Albania and Macedonia, Lulzim Basha and Antonio Milososki, bilateral relations were looked upon from a broader perspective, not only in terms of joining forces in fighting crime, illegal trade, terrorism, etc, but also as regards taking joint actions on the market of investments.

The current structure of the regional cooperation has a lot more interesting aspects, such as

DIPLOMATIC CORPS SOCIAL EVENTS

The Board of Editors of the Macedonian Diplomatic Bulletin (MDB), starting from this issue of the bulletin, is introducing a new column "Diplomatic Corps Social Events". The idea behind this column is to present the diplomatic and social life of the Foreign Diplomatic Representatives to the Republic of Macedonia.

Once again the Board of Editors invites you for future collaboration and contribution to our diplomatic bulletin by sending our team information and a set of photos of receptions, upcoming ceremonies and other organised social events.

expanding trade in goods and services, creating regional energy, communication and telecommunication systems, and alleviating the movement of people, goods, etc. Undertaking major joint ventures would make the Albanian and Macedonian markets more attractive, while the resolution of the last unresolved issue in former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, will create more space for cooperation between our economies.

In this regard, our two countries insist on completing the Corridor 8, establishing better rail links, and building an integrated energy system and a common environmental and tourist zone.

At the same time, efforts are made to complete the road from Pustec to Stenje via Gorica in Mala Prespa, build new border crossings, etc. Both the parties try to seek out ways to set up direct or indirect air lines between Skopje and Tirana, ensure practical implementation of the agreement on the Ohrid-Podgradec lake passenger line, etc. This combination would make our relations even better.

How do you experience the diplomatic life in Macedonia and how did you and your personnel adopt to living in this country?

The professional experience for those serving in Macedonia is doubtlessly priceless. In Skopje there is a diplomatic corps, which is not very big, but is very professional, which gives professional satisfaction. In addition, a foreign diplomat in Skopje has serious domestic partners, not only politicians and diplomats, but also citizens who make a contribution and help their country. Macedonia is in the Balkans and is a country that got out of a historical experience such as former Yugoslavia. Here you have the opportunity to touch that experience alongside the good and bad things it left behind. Macedonia is undergoing a very interesting historical stage, where diplomacy plays a part of its own. However, to be an ambassador of Albania to Macedonia is an experience that is just as passionate as it is filled with stress and responsibilities.

As far as living is concerned, living in Macedonia is a pleasure for diplomats, especially if they come from a neighboring country. This experience affords the opportunity of realizing how much the peoples of the Balkans need to learn about each other. This is an opportunity to learn about Macedonia's respect and hospitality, culture, history and, undoubtedly, its natural beauties, which would hopefully remain untouched by modernization.

Skopje, October 2007

German National Day on October 3rd, 2007



The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany celebrated the Day of the German Reunification on October 3rd, 2007 at the "Kale" restaurant. Mr. Günter Gloser, Minister of State at the Foreign Office was present as a special and high ranking guest from Germany.

Day of Establishment of the Independent Czech Republic



Embassy of the Czech Republic in Skopje organized reception on the occasion of the National Day of the Czech Republic on 31 October 2007, which was attended by the Ambassador of the Czech Republic H.E. Mr. Ivan Jestrab (resident in Belgrade) and his spouse Mrs. Eva.

National Day of the Republic of Turkey

The National Day of the Republic of Turkey was celebrated at the Aleksandar Palace Hotel on 29 October, the day of the



foundation of the Republic. 1400 people attended the reception.

Embassy of Spain in Skopje Celebrates National Day of Spain



On October 15th, at the Aleksandar Palace hotel in Skopje, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain celebrated the National Day of Spain or the Hispanic Day (Fiesta Nacional de España or Día de la Hispanidad, in Spanish) for the first time since its establishment in this country. With Spanish traditional hospitality, the Ambassador José Manuel Paz Agüeras welcomed the Hispanic community, the highest political and military leadership as well as the Diplomatic Corps in the country.

58th Anniversary of the National Day of the People's Republic of China

On 28th of September, at the Holiday Inn hotel in Skopje, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China marked the 58th National Day. The hosts, Ambassador Dong Chunfeng received the guests for a pleasant celebration. Officially the National Day of the People's Republic of China is October 1.



National Day of the Republic of Hungary

On the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Hungary 23rd of October, remembering the 1956 revolution against communist tyranny, the Ambassador of Hungary in the Republic of Macedonia, His Excellency Mr. Ferenc Kékesi hosted a reception at the Continental Hotel.

STOJAN RUMENOVSKI, MINISTER COUNSELOR AND CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES
A.I. AT THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA IN ZAGREB

Lecture on Topic "Turkey and Turkey's Foreign Policy" in MFA

It has practically become a routine in the Directorate for Diplomatic Education for lectures to be organized for young diplomats of the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the frames of the cooperation with the accredited ambassadors to the Republic of Macedonia.

In the series of previously agreed lectures, the Turkish ambassador, His Excellency Taner Karakash, held a lecture on Turkey's foreign policy.

This lecture was a reflection of the two countries' commitment to development and enrichment of the mutual cooperation in the sphere of diplomatic education, which was confirmed recently with the signing of the Memorandum for cooperation between the authorized sectors of Macedonia and Turkey's Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

This lecture provoked great interest among the Macedonian diplomats, proof of which was the large number of questions asked.

Lence M. Avramova, director for diplomatic education, emphasized the interest for constant cooperation with Turkey in the sphere of diplomatic education.

Macedonian MFA Presents Us With IT Equipment

The Directorate for Diaspora at the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the daily Prespa with IT equipment recently. This equipment takes Prespa to a new era. We hope that we will be able to prepare the whole newspaper on computer soon and that we will have editorial staff who will prepare the daily by themselves. We will soon produce a modern daily that will be read by the Macedonian families in Albania. Danco Markovski, who was accompanied by his associate Stevo Simski, presented this gift of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to our daily. The Prespa



Editorial Board is eternally grateful for this valuable gift of the Department for Diaspora, H. Ivanovski writes in the daily Prespa.

Institute for Albanian Cultural Heritage Promoted

The Institute for Albanian Cultural Heritage Pjeter Bogdani was opened in Skopje on 22 November, in which way, in Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski's words, ethnic Albanians exercised their constitutionally granted right. The Prime Minister expects the Institution to be a source of many studies that would shed new light on the Albanian language and literature, as an integral part of the cultural legacy of Macedonia.

When in 1993 the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Denko Maleski, sent three diplomats including me to establish the first Macedonian embassies, he said to us: "You are embarking on diplomacy that is not classical. You are alone with your knowledge, skills and resourcefulness and therefore you will have to work 28 hours a day." In only a few months of my arrival in Sofia, I realized how insightful Foreign Minister Maleski's words were.

I am still overwhelmed by my impressions of the commemoration of Macedonia's Independence Day organized by one of the many Macedonian cultural associations in the Republic of Croatia.

OCTOBER. Accompanied by Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki I attended the Adriatic-Baltic-Atlantic meeting in Split on 12 October, where Macedonia, Croatia and Albania received strong support from senior US and NATO officials for receiving invitation for joining the Alliance at the Summit in Bucharest. On the fringe of the event, Minister Milososki and his Croatian counterpart Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic signed an agreement on protection of the Macedonian national minority in the Republic of Croatia and of the Croatian national minority in the Republic of Macedonia.

October 16 started as usual, but horrible news shocked us. The Macedonian mega pop star Tose Proeski died in a car crash some 100 km from Zagreb. I was instructed by the Ministry to immediately go to Nova Gradiska and make sure that Tose's coffin was sent home with all state honors. At the commemoration organized by the Embassy I conveyed the gratitude of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia and Tose Proeski's family to all the citizens of Croatia who bade Tose their last farewell with utmost respect.

NOVEMBER. Our regular contacts at the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions continued. The annual reports from the European Commission on the progress of the countries of the region arrived. A briefing was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia where the report on Croatia was assessed favorably. I had meetings with the administration for the EU at the Ministry and tried to find out more about their experience of the negotiating process with the EC. I also had meetings with the diplomatic corps and conveyed our expectations for receiving a joint invitation for joining NATO.

In the run-up to Croatia's parliamentary elections, my colleagues and I tried to guess the possible winners and governing coalitions. "I can imagine how difficult it is for you," a colleague of mine from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia said during an informal conversation at a reception. "You are asked to provide a forecast about the election outcome, while all opinion polls show that the race of HDZ and SDP will be a dead heat."

On 22 November in Dubrovnik together with President Branko Crvenkovski I attended the Regional Economic Forum. President Crvenkovski underlined in his address that the Republic of Macedonia as an EU candidate member state had to stay the reform course as the only condition for being given a date for starting accession talks.

I visited the Regional Economic Chamber in Rijeka in late November and met with its president and local businessmen, providing them with an exhaustive report on the legal and economic tools for attracting FDI recently adopted by the Macedonian Government.

During the long years of my diplomatic career I have always felt proud of my people, my country and its culture and customs, and I have always treated other peoples and their cultures and customs with the same respect. And whatever I did I always tried to see, convey and promote things from the viewpoint of my country's interests and positions, professionally, honorably and dignifiedly, always bearing in mind the fact that there are no big and small countries, except geographically, hence there are no important and unimportant diplomats, but only such who are or are not capable, honest, professional, dignified and proud of their country.

