

EP RESOLUTION FOR MACEDONIA

- ☒ The European Parliament adopted a resolution about Macedonia, drafted on the self-initiative report of Dutch MEP, Erik Meijer. The resolution welcomes the progress made and presses for further reforms, especially in the police, judiciary and public administration. MEPs condemned boycotting the Parliament practices by some political parties and called for intra-parliamentary political party dialogue. The resolution also recommends opening accession negotiations with Macedonia in the short term, while the controversial name dispute with Greece is mentioned as no obstacle to opening negotiations. The resolution was adopted with significant majority – 558 for and 47 against. Also, last week Macedonian PM, Nikola Gruevski, visited Brussels where he met EU Enlargement Commissioner, Olli Rehn. While Mr. Gruevski informed the Commissioner of the progress Macedonia made in fulfilling the requirements from the EU, Mr. Rehn insisted on improving political dialogue, as the key to stability and reforms. [European Parliament 12/07/07; Dnevnik 13/07/07, 19/07/07]

PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION BETWEEN CROATIA AND SERBIA

- ☒ The President of the Croatian Parliament, Mr. Vladimir Šeks, met his Serbian colleague, Mr. Oliver Dulic, in Zagreb to discuss prospects for parliamentary cooperation between the two countries. The two parliamentary leaders agreed that good relations between Croatia and Serbia are crucial for the stability of the entire SEE region and that this first meeting on parliamentary level is a good start in developing closer cooperation between the two countries. Among other issues that were discussed on the meeting, EU and NATO integration received most attention. Mr. Dulic also added that the relations between the two countries should be built on rational basis with no link to past models and experiences. At a recent visit to Banja Luka, BiH, Oliver Dulic also called for economic integration of the countries from the SEE region, which according to him, will assist the EU integration of efforts of all states in the region. [Jutarnji Vesnik 17/07/07]

COMMISSIONER REHN CALLS FOR REFORMS IN TURKEY

- ☒ EU Enlargement Commissioner, Olli Rehn, stated that after the general elections in Turkey on Sunday (July 22), the new government must speed up reforms related to Turkey's EU accession. According to Rehn, reforms in Turkey subsided due to last year's freezing of negotiations as well

the present reverberation in Turkey's political system regarding presidential election. The Turkish government is already running expenditures 25% higher than the planned due to the elections. A recent report from the Istanbul Chamber of Certified Public Accountants and Financial Advisors concluded that these extraordinary elections have turned the country's budget upside down. [Balkan Times 17/07/07; Seeurope.Net 18/07/07]

TURKEY'S AKP WINS ELECTIONS

- ☒ On Sunday, July 22, Turkey's ruling AKP party won a sweeping victory on the general elections. AKP won about 47% of the vote – a larger share of the vote than on the previous elections. The new Turkish parliament will be composed of three parties: the AKP, the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), the only parties that passed the 10% threshold. AKP leader and current PM, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, celebrated his party's victory and promised to continue with reforms and efforts for EU accession. AKP will most likely form a single party government, yet Mr. Erdogan does not have a two-thirds majority necessary for electing their presidential candidate in parliament or amending the Constitution. The issue of electing a new president will be one of the first tasks of the new government, since it was exactly problems with electing a new president of Turkey that led to early general elections. [BBC 23/07/07; Today's Zaman 23/07/07]