

NATO URGES FURTHER PROGRESS WITH REFORMS

- ☒ During her visit to Skopje, U.S Permanent Representative to NATO Victoria Nuland, restated the US position that Macedonia had made a "truly remarkable progress with reforms aimed to meet NATO standards" but she also noted that "when you are running the marathon you can not relax just before the end, but you have to sprint to the finish". During the meeting with Macedonian Prime Minister she emphasized the need of strengthening the rule of law, reforming the judiciary and the promotion of good relations with neighbours, especially referring to the name dispute with Greece. Previously Greece threatened to veto Macedonia's bids to join NATO and the EU unless Skopje reconsiders its stand on the name debate.[05/11/07, Setimes; 09/11/07, B92]

EU COMMISSION PRESENTED THE PROGRESS REPORT FOR MACEDONIA

- ☒ In the EU Commission annual assessment of countries candidates performance, Macedonia was not given a date for launch of EU accession negotiations. The Report praises the economic reforms in the country, but is critical of insufficient reforms in judiciary and public administration, the work of parliament and political pressure towards media. During his presentation of Progress report of candidate countries and potential candidate countries EU Enlargement Commissioner, Olli Rehn, emphasized that Macedonia "made significant progress in the fight against the corruption" and Macedonia moved forward meeting the economic criteria and towards establishing a functioning market economy. On the other hand, remarks were made towards unemployment that remained particularly high and the functioning of the market economy which is still hampered by institutional weaknesses. According to the Report the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement continues to contribute to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law and the dialogue between all parties in the

parliament needs to be conducted in peaceful and constructive manner. [06/11/07/Makfax]

BELGRADE SUGGESTS HONG – KONG MODEL FOR KOSOVO

- ☒ In its last proposal regarding the status of Kosovo, Serbia suggested Hong – Kong's status within China to be used as a model for the broad autonomy of the province? The former British colony, transferred to China in 1997, was given a high degree of autonomy for at least 50 years, under the so-called "one country, two systems" policy. The proposal came during the last round of direct talks on Monday (November 5). In his statement, Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said that Serbia "is offering the Kosovo Albanians more than any ethnic minority in any country has ever been offered". He also rejected a 14-point proposal submitted by the EU-Russia-United States troika that is sponsoring the talks, saying it implied relations between two independent states. Kosovo's ethnic Albanian leaders immediately rejected the proposal and send away the "inappropriate" idea. According to Kosovo negotiations team spokesman Skender Hyseni, "Hong Kong and Kosovo have nothing in common. It is a confusing proposal that cannot function in reality".[06/11/07, Setimes]