Basic information

2007/2268(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
2007 progress report on FYROM **Subject** 8.20.01 Candidate countries **Geographical area** Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	AFET Foreign Affairs	MEIJER Erik (GUE/NGL)	13/09/2004
Council of the European Union	**Council configuration**	**Meetings**	**Date**
	General Affairs	2850	2008-02-18
European Commission	**Commission DG**		**Commissioner**
	Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations		REHN Olli

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
13/12/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/02/2008	Debate in Council		Summary
27/02/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
04/03/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0059/2008	
09/04/2008	Debate in Parliament		Summary
23/04/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0172/2008	Summary
23/04/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
23/04/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2007/2268(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Strategic initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP P.F. Rules of Procedure EP 089o
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/6/56656

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE398.675	19/12/2007	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE400.636	12/02/2008	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0059/2008	04/03/2008	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0172/2008	23/04/2008	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2007)1432	06/11/2007	Summary

2007 progress report on FYROM

2007/2268(INI) - 23/04/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 601 votes to 52 and 30 abstentions, a resolution on the 2007 Progress Report on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Erik **MEIJER** (GUE/NGL, NL) on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Overall, Parliament commends the considerable progress achieved by this country since the last Progress Report, published by the Commission. In particular, MEPs welcome:

-the adoption of the Law on the Public Prosecutors, the Law on the Council of Prosecutors and the Law on the Committee for Inter-Community Relations listing the laws to be adopted by the double-majority rule (Badinter principle);

-the establishment of the National Council for European Integration, which aims to achieve cross-party support for EU accession-related reforms;

-the sustained efforts of the Macedonian Government and Parliament in the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (on political aspects of inter-ethnic relations in the country) and the increased recognition of the multi-ethnic character of the state;

-the progress achieved in 2007 with regard to the fight against corruption, organised crime, human trafficking and narcotics;

-the progress made in the economic area (particularly, in tax policy, enhanced fiscal discipline, improved business climate and the reduction of legal and administrative barriers to business start-ups).

Parliament is concerned, however, by the level of unemployment, which remains high, and urges the government to address this issue. It notes particularly the situation in the villages bordering Kosovo, where tackling unemployment is vital in order to give the local population opportunities to earn legal income. Members commend the work that is being carried out in the public administration in preparation for the EU accession negotiation process, and call on the authorities to continue the reform of the public administration in order to ensure its de-politicisation, professionalism, expertise and efficiency, and to refrain from any action that may jeopardise the administrative capacity already built up. It is a shared challenge for all political forces and ethnic communities within the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to demonstrate that the country is now free of conflicts viewed

negatively both domestically and abroad, and to demonstrate that the country is ready for the process of integration into the EU. In this context, MEPs support the initiative of the Thessaloniki-based Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe and the Soros Foundation to publish textbooks on Balkan history, in both the Albanian and the Macedonian languages, intended for history teachers and secondary school students. These textbooks incorporate different views on the common past, provide a balanced perspective and promote reconciliation.

Electoral law: Parliament notes the draft Law on Revision of the Electoral Code, which would provide for the parliament to be enlarged by 13 seats in the interests of both representation of small ethnic minorities and representation of nationals living abroad. It expresses its concern at the fact that the proposed Law would have the effect of bypassing the use of the Badinter majority rule as intended by the Ohrid Framework Agreement. It is desirable that a broad consensus should be reached, with the participation of the Albanian representatives on any revision of the Electoral Code. Parliament hopes that all provisions of the Electoral Law, including Article 27 on the appointment of the President of the Electoral Committee, will be fully respected and that the ruling coalition will ensure fair and democratic early elections. Parliament takes note of the dissolution of parliament on 11 April 2008 and the calling of early elections in June 2008, and expresses the hope that the authorities will do their utmost to minimise any possible delay in the necessary preparations that should lead to the opening of accession talks before the end of 2008.

Fight against discrimination: Parliament draws attention to the continuing discrimination against the Roma community, particularly in the areas of education, social protection, health care, housing and employment. It hopes that the National Strategy for Roma will be implemented in accordance with its stated objectives in the near future. It also urges the authorities to ensure public compliance with EU and Council of Europe standards on countering the resurgence of "hate speech", particularly in the media, against neighbouring States.

Regional cooperation: Members welcome the active participation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the South East Europe Cooperation Process and its contribution to the establishment of the Regional Cooperation Council. They also welcome its constructive position on the status of Kosovo, whilst expressing concern over the delay in the technical demarcation of the border with Kosovo. This issue should proceed as envisaged in the proposal put forward by Mr Martti Ahtisaari, former UN Special Envoy for the Kosovo status process. Parliament welcomes the active cooperation with Kosovo in trade, customs and police cooperation matters and the fact that, at the same time, good-neighbourly relations are being maintained with Serbia and recommends a similar policy in relations with Albania, Bulgaria and Greece.

Name: MEPs welcome the increased bilateral cooperation, as well as people-to-people contacts between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece. They note that bilateral talks have been held in the region, under the auspices of the United Nations and assisted by Special Envoy Matthew Nimitz, with a view to finding a mutually acceptable solution to the difference that has arisen over the name of the country. Parliament calls on both sides to seize the opportunity to resume negotiations immediately in the light of the significant progress made recently and to reach a compromise solution, so that the issue does not continue to represent an obstacle to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's membership of international organisations, as provided for in the Interim Accord of 1995, which is still in force.

MEPs note that, although the country has achieved significant progress since 2005, it is the only country of the three candidate countries with which no accession negotiations have taken place to date. Parliament calls on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to ensure that the necessary reforms are undertaken. It refers to the list of eight benchmarks that the Commission has drawn up, derived from the key priorities of the new Accession Partnership, and hopes that the attainment of these by the country will lead to opening of the accession negotiations before the end of 2008. The Council is asked to evaluate at the next summit the progress made so far, and, if possible, to decide on a date for the start of the accession negotiations. Lastly, MEPs regret that the FYROM signed and ratified the Bilateral Immunity Agreement with the US authorities, granting citizens of that country exemption from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. They call on the Macedonian Government to bring its national legislation into line with EU principles.

2007 progress report on FYROM

2007/2268(INI) - 18/02/2008

The Council adopted a Decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the EU's accession partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – FYROM (see Council document 5351/08).

The Decision is based on Regulation No 533/2004 on the establishment of partnerships within the framework of the stabilisation and association process for the Western Balkans (see CNS/2003/0267). It updates the current partnership, identifying renewed priorities for further work on the basis of the findings of the Commission's 2007 progress report on FYROM's preparations for further integration with the EU.

The accession partnership is a key feature of the pre-accession strategy, identifying new as well as remaining priorities for action and providing guidance for financial assistance.

The Decision repeals Decision 2006/57/EC.

2007 progress report on FYROM

2007/2268(INI) - 06/11/2007 - Document attached to the procedure

CONTENT: this report reviews the progress made by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM) throughout 2007 in preparation for accession to the European Union. In particular, it details the efforts made by the country to comply with the Copenhagen criteria and supports the general strategy document on the enlargement policy of the EU (see COM(2007)0663) which reveals how the renewed consensus on accession, adopted by EU officials during the Summit in December 2006, will be implemented. The renewed consensus on enlargement is based on the principles of consolidation of commitments, fair and rigorous conditionality and better communication with the public, combined with the EU's capacity to integrate new members.

Although the country made a certain degree of progress in 2007, it will be in 2008 that most of this progress will be noticed. The main challenges to overcome will be improving governance and building a modern democracy by continuing to develop a political culture of tolerance and dialogue.

At the start of 2008, the Commission will evaluate the situation concerning the progress made and will provide guidelines for compliance with the programme set up by the EU for the Western Balkans.

The FYRM gained candidate country status in December 2005. No chapter has yet been opened for negotiation with this country.

Overall, progress made in the FYRM in 2007 as regards the three main criteria established in Copenhagen for accession to the EU is as follows:

1. **Political criteria**: the FYRM has made some progress in addressing the political criteria. The implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement continues to contribute to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law. Some progress has been made in terms of the judicial system and the results obtained in the fight against corruption are encouraging. Overall, human rights and the protection of minorities, including inter-ethnic relations have improved. However, the pursuit of political tensions in the country is delaying the implementation of reforms. It is important for dialogue between all parties represented in the Parliament to be led in a peaceful and constructive manner. Efforts should be made to ensure that all political stakeholders assume the role given to them by the Commission and cooperate in order to ensure the effectiveness of the democratic process. Further progress could therefore be made in priority areas such as police and the justice system, consolidation of the rule of law as well as the protection of rights of minority communities. Furthermore, corruption remains widespread. The country continues to participate actively in regional cooperation and has leant its support to the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), to the Regional Cooperation Council and to the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA);

2. **Economic criteria**: the FYRM has further moved towards establishing a functioning market economy. It should be able to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union in the medium term, provided that it vigorously implements its comprehensive reform programme in order to reduce significant structural weaknesses. The country has maintained a broad consensus on the essentials of economic policies. An appropriate policy mix has contributed to macroeconomic stability. The country's growth performance has been maintained while inflation has remained low. The current account was close to balance. Price and trade liberalisation are largely completed, and the privatisation of state property has continued. The process of property registration has been accelerated. Measures have been taken to improve the quality of education and training. However, unemployment remains particularly high. Institutional weaknesses still hamper the smooth functioning of the market economy. The judiciary continues to be a bottleneck and regulatory and supervisory agencies sometimes lack the necessary resources to fulfil their functions effectively. The degree of legal certainty is still low and labour markets are still functioning poorly;

3. **EU legal order**: the FYRM has made further efforts to improve its ability to assume the obligations of membership. There was some progress in the fulfilment of the short term priorities of the European partnership. The country still faces major shortcomings in implementing and effectively enforcing legislation. Adequate human and financial resources to fully implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement are lacking. Large scale replacement of qualified staff following political changes hampered efforts to improve administrative capacity.

EU financial assistance through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA): the FYRM should receive the following amounts over the period 2007-2011, in accordance with the IPA financial envelope:

- 2007: EUR 58.5 million
- 2008: EUR 70.2 million
- 2009: EUR 81.8 million
- 2010: EUR 92.3 million
- 2011: EUR 98.7 million
- Total: EUR 401.5 million.