



Members of the European Parliament

OPEN LETTER

Members of the Parliament
The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia
11 Oktomvri boulevard
1000 Skopje
Republic of Macedonia

Concerns: Anti-discrimination law put to the vote on the 6th April
Reference: 20100330/BS

Brussels, 30th March 2010

Honourable Members of Parliament,

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia is about to vote on an important piece of anti-discrimination legislation. This legislation will bring the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia a step closer to accession, but only if it is in line with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union.

This *acquis* is chiefly based on Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, as well as European Directives. The Employment Framework Directive (2000/78/EC) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of belief, disability, age and sexual orientation in the labour market; the 'Race' Directive (2000/43/EC) prohibits discrimination on grounds of racial origin; and further directives (Gender equality in goods and services, 2004/113/EC; and Gender equality in employment 2006/54/EC) guarantee equality to European citizens on grounds of gender.

EU Member States are bound to implement these directives into national law, and all countries wishing to join the EU will have to do this as well before they can accede. There are no exceptions to this.

More specifically, every country in the EU or wishing to join it shall adopt and implement legislation prohibiting:

- discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation in employment, training and membership and involvement in organisations of workers and employers;
- discrimination on the basis of racial origin in employment and training, education, social protection (including social security and healthcare), social advantages, membership and involvement in organisations of workers and employers and access to goods and services, including housing.

As staunch supporters of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's accession to the European Union as soon as it meets all the necessary conditions, we are

concerned about the fact that the current draft of the anti-discrimination law is not in line with the *acquis communautaire*. This is, among other reasons, because it fails to include sexual orientation as a ground on which discrimination is explicitly prohibited. In its current state, the law will need to be revised at a later date in order to enable accession to the European Union. This will cause an unnecessary delay in the accession process.

As Members of the European Parliament we want to kindly advise you, our colleagues in the Macedonian Parliament, to use the parliamentary procedure currently underway to amend the anti-discrimination law so that it satisfies accession criteria. We believe this will bring the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia an important step closer to joining the European Union.

Yours sincerely,

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Co-president of the Greens/European Free Alliance

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Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats
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Carbon copies: Mr Štefan Füle
Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

Trajko Veljanoski
President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia

Mr Spiro Ristovski
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Mr Jorgo Chatzimarkakis
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