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L'UNION EUROPÉENNE**

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NOTE

du:	Secrétariat Général
aux:	Délégations
Objet:	Séance plénière du Parlement européen, 14 mars 2012, Strasbourg Débats prioritaires – Élargissement à l'ARYM, à l'Islande et à la Bosnie-Herzégovine

Rapport sur l'élargissement à l'Ancienne république yougoslave de Macédoine (ARYM)

Déclarations du Conseil et de la Commission

Ouvrant le débat au nom du Conseil, M. Wammen a qualifié d'encourageante l'évolution de l'ARYM et a notamment relevé le caractère essentiel de la question du nom¹.

Au nom de la Commission, M. Füle a affirmé que l'ARYM avait réalisé des réformes dans cinq domaines: l'Etat de droit, la liberté d'expression, l'administration, le droit électoral et le développement de l'économie de marché. S'agissant de la question du nom, M. Füle a souligné que la Commission encourageait les pays concernés à trouver un compromis et qu'une plus grande implication de l'UE présupposait que ces pays soient demandeurs.

¹ Voir discours en Annexe I. Seul le discours prononcé fait foi.

Le rapporteur, M. Howitt (S&D, UK), a affirmé que les négociations d'adhésion devraient débiter sans délai et a souligné que, si son rapport notait les progrès accomplis dans certains domaines, il était néanmoins critique sur certains points, tels que la situation des Roms et la liberté d'expression. Sur la question du nom, il a estimé qu'il n'y avait pas d'alternative à une solution négociée. M. Kukan (PPE, SK) a également considéré que les négociations d'adhésion devraient débiter sans délai, tout en relevant que des progrès devaient encore être accomplis en ce qui concerne la corruption et la liberté d'expression. Mme Nicolai (ALDE, RO) a fait part de sa frustration devant le blocage des négociations et a appelé à ne pas décourager l'ARYM, tout en considérant qu'une réforme de la justice était essentielle. Mme Cornelissen (Verts/ALE, NL) a déploré l'absence d'accord sur le nom du pays et a proposé de soutenir l'idée de recourir à une dénomination composée. Mme Yannakoudakis (ECR, UK) a indiqué que son groupe soutenait l'ouverture de négociations d'adhésion et relevé que la protection des droits de l'homme avait été améliorée dans l'ARYM. M. Chountis (GUE/NGL, EL) a considéré que l'ARYM avait vocation à intégrer l'UE et que, sur la question du nom, un signal devait être envoyé à son gouvernement. M. Salavrakos (EFD, EL) a pour sa part affirmé que l'ARYM devait encore réaliser beaucoup de progrès et a déploré que le projet de résolution essaye de contourner la question du nom.

Parmi les orateurs s'exprimant à titre individuel, beaucoup ont insisté sur la nécessité de trouver une solution à la question du nom [M. Brok (PPE, DE), M. Kelly (PPE, IE), M. Landsbergis (PPE, LIT), M. Schöpflin (PPE, HUN)] et à tenir compte à cet égard de l'arrêt de la Cour internationale de justice [M. Rouček (S&D, CS), M. Paška (EFD, SK)]. Certains députés ont considéré que l'absence de solution était avant tout imputable aux autorités de l'ARYM [Mme Giannakou (PPE, EL), Mme Koppa (S&D, EL)], alors que d'autres ont appelé les autorités grecques au compromis [M. Tabajdi (S&D, HUN), M. Vajgl (ALDE,SI)].

M. Füle a indiqué qu'il se rendra prochainement à Skopje afin de discuter du processus de réforme, qui devrait en particulier mettre l'accent sur la liberté d'expression, et a indiqué qu'il avait appelé tant les autorités de l'ARYM que celles de la Grèce à trouver une solution sur la question du nom.

M. Wammen a conclu le débat en se déclarant convaincu que l'ARYM poursuivrait ses efforts de réforme en 2012 et a relevé qu'il convenait de renforcer l'indépendance de la justice et la lutte contre la corruption. S'agissant du nom, il a considéré qu'une solution devrait être négociée bilatéralement avant le début des négociations d'adhésion.

Rapport sur l'élargissement à l'Islande

Déclarations du Conseil et de la Commission

M. Wammen s'est félicité des progrès accomplis dans les négociations d'adhésion de l'Islande, tout en relevant que des dossiers difficiles, tels que celui de la pêche, devaient encore être discutés².

M. Füle a relevé que l'Islande était, en matière de transposition de l'acquis communautaire, plus efficace que la moyenne des Etats membres. Il a indiqué que la Commission espérait clore quatre nouveaux chapitres lors de la prochaine conférence d'adhésion et annoncé que les négociations débuteraient bientôt sur des chapitres clés, tels que celui de la pêche.

Le rapporteur, M. Preda (PPE, RO), s'est félicité des progrès accomplis par l'Islande depuis 2011. M. Färm (S&D, SE) a jugé important d'envoyer un signal positif à ce pays, tout en relevant que certains problèmes, tels que la pêche à la baleine, subsistaient. M. van Baalen (ALDE, NL) a considéré que l'économie islandaise devrait être davantage ouverte aux investissements étrangers et s'est félicité du fait que les autorités islandaises aient pris au sérieux leurs obligations s'agissant d'Icesave. M. Tarand (Verts/ALE, EE) a déclaré qu'il voterait contre le projet de résolution en raison de la référence aux droits de pêche historiques. M. Tannock (ECR, UK) a considéré que l'indemnisation des clients d'Icesave était en bonne voie et a affirmé que, en cas d'adhésion de l'Islande à l'UE, l'AELE ne serait plus viable et que la Norvège adhérerait à son tour.

Les députés intervenant à titre individuel ont souligné l'importance de la question de la pêche. M. Gallagher (ALDE, IE) a appelé à un accord sur les quotas de pêche de maquereau en raison du risque d'épuisement du stock. M. Millán Mon (PPE, ES) a souligné que l'Islande devait respecter l'acquis communautaire en matière de pêche, alors que M. Atkins (ECR, UK) a déploré l'intransigeance islandaise sur cette question.

M. Füle a assuré que la Commission était prête à prendre en compte les spécificités de l'Islande et s'est déclaré confiant dans la possibilité de trouver une solution aux questions ouvertes.

M. Wammen a souligné que des défis importants restaient à relever, citant à cet égard la pêche, et a assuré que la présidence danoise s'emploierait à soutenir le processus de négociation.

² Voir discours en Annexe II. Seul le discours prononcé fait foi.

Rapport sur l'élargissement à la Bosnie-Herzégovine

Déclarations du Conseil et de la Commission

M. Wammen a indiqué que les développements récents en Bosnie-Herzégovine permettaient de faire preuve d'un optimisme prudent, mentionnant à cet égard l'adoption de lois sur les aides d'Etat ainsi que sur le recensement de la population. Il a toutefois souligné que le pays devait modifier sa constitution afin de tirer toutes les conséquences de l'arrêt Sejdic-Finci de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme (CEDH)³.

M. Füle a considéré que les efforts déployés par l'UE commençaient à porter leurs fruits, citant à cet égard les progrès en matière de justice et d'infrastructure. Il a relevé que, après des années de stagnation, un élan positif pouvait être constaté à la suite de l'adoption de lois relatives aux aides d'Etat et au recensement de la population. A l'instar de M. Wammen, il a relevé que la constitution du pays devait être modifiée afin de tenir compte de l'arrêt de la CEDH.

Le rapporteur, Mme Pack (PPE, DE), s'est félicitée des nombreux développements positifs intervenus en Bosnie-Herzégovine dans les dernières semaines. Elle a toutefois souligné que des progrès restaient nécessaires en matière judiciaire, budgétaire et de lutte contre la corruption, et appelé à la modification de la constitution du pays. Mme Bozkurt (S&D, NL) a considéré que la Bosnie-Herzégovine avait réalisé des progrès, mais a appelé à trouver une solution pour les réfugiés et à tenir compte de l'arrêt de la CEDH. Mme Ludford (ALDE, UK) a mis l'accent sur la nécessité de mettre en place un Etat fonctionnel et sur les efforts restant à faire en matière budgétaire et de lutte contre la criminalité. M. Vlasak (ECR, CS) s'est déclaré en faveur de l'adhésion de la Bosnie-Herzégovine, mais a relevé que des progrès devaient encore être réalisés en matière de justice et de lutte contre la corruption.

Mme Cornelissen (Verts/ALE, NL), soutenue par M. Vajgl (ALDE, SI) et Mme Nicolai (S&D, RO), a considéré comme disproportionnée la référence faite dans le projet de résolution à la menace représentée en Bosnie-Herzégovine par le wahhabisme. Elle a été contredite sur ce point par MM. Stadler (NI, AT), Belder (EFD, NL) et Obermayr (NI, AT). M. Zala (S&D, SK) a pour sa part averti que, si l'UE insistait trop sur la centralisation du pays, ses efforts risquaient de s'avérer contre-productifs.

³ Voir discours en Annexe III. Seul le discours prononcé fait foi.

M. Füle a indiqué que la Commission ne se prononçait pas sur les différentes religions présentes en Bosnie-Herzégovine. Il a souligné qu'il était urgent de réaliser un recensement de la population et que la Commission était prête à s'impliquer activement à cet égard. M. Füle a également considéré que les dirigeants bosniens devaient davantage s'appropriier le processus de négociation.

M. Wammen a conclu le débat en affirmant que l'UE continuerait d'assister la Bosnie-Herzégovine, notamment par l'intermédiaire de son représentant spécial, M. Sørensen. Il a toutefois soulevé que le rôle principal revenait en la matière aux responsables bosniens.

President, Honourable Members,

On behalf of the Danish Presidency of the Council, it is a great pleasure for me to participate in this debate, and to review progress on enlargement and the accession negotiations.

First of all, let me underline how much we appreciate Parliament's interest in and support for the enlargement process. Your active and constructive contribution to the wider debate on enlargement is highly valued.

I would also like to begin our three debates this afternoon by highlighting the resilience of the EU's enlargement policy. This is sometimes overlooked, not least in times of great economic uncertainty. Last December, we were able to sign the Accession Treaty with Croatia, which is now in the process of being ratified by national Parliaments. This should allow Croatia to join the Union in July 2013. Only two weeks ago, on 1 March, the European Council granted candidate status to Serbia.

Both achievements show that the political momentum behind the EU's enlargement policy is driven by its power to transform and bring about positive change. The process has brought prosperity, and even more importantly it has proved to be a positive factor for peace and security.

I would like to turn now to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Since December 2005, the country has been candidate to become a member of the EU. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is important in the region, being fully engaged in regional initiatives such as the Regional Cooperation Council and the South East European Cooperation Process. It also contributes to the EU Althea mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At its meeting on 5 December 2011 the Council welcomed the further progress made by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the areas of reform, as well as the fact that it fulfils its commitments under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The Council broadly shares the Commission's assessment of the country's sufficient fulfilment of the political criteria. Since the early elections in June 2011, which followed a boycott of the Parliament, the governing coalition has been stable. Let me briefly mention the progress that has been made on issues such as the reform of the parliament, the judiciary, public administration and respect for and protection of minorities, as well as address the key challenges that remain.

We welcome the improvement, compared to 2008, of the handling of the parliamentary elections on 5 June 2011 which were competitive, transparent and well administered throughout the country. Naturally, the Government needs to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission, particularly regarding the separation between State and party activities during the campaigning period. We expect the 2013 local elections to be handled equally well if not better than the 2011 elections.

We also welcome the fact that the Government coalition has resolved earlier difficulties and has strengthened internal cooperation. It is important that the momentum of the reform process be maintained. A constructive political dialogue between government and opposition needs to be strengthened to ensure the smooth functioning of institutions.

Freedom of expression in the media remains a matter of concern. We welcome the opening of a dialogue on this issue. The closure, on grounds of tax evasion, of a major television channel and three newspapers which were critical of the government has raised concerns about the proportionality and selectivity of the procedure, and has reduced the diversity of the media landscape.

As for judicial reform, some positive progress has been achieved. This is also the case for the amendments to the legal framework in relation to the fight against corruption. The adoption of the new Criminal Procedure Code is a significant step forward in the fight against crime and corruption, but requires further institutional work in order to be fully implemented. Corruption remains continues to be a serious problem.

Further progress has also been made in the area of cultural rights and minorities. The 10th anniversary of the Ohrid Framework Agreement provided a good opportunity for enhanced dialogue between the communities in the country. Both the letter and spirit of the Ohrid Framework Agreement must be respected by all. There has also been some progress on implementing the Law on languages, on decentralisation and on equitable representation.

Integration of the Roma in the education system has improved, with increased enrolment in secondary and university education. Additional measures need to be taken as Roma continue to face very difficult living conditions and discrimination, in particular regarding civil registration.

In the area of human rights, we are concerned about cases of ill treatment by special police forces, as well as by discrimination against the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBTB) community. These need to be addressed.

Overall, the developments in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are encouraging. The Council has noted that the Commission has reiterated its recommendation that accession negotiations should be opened. We stand ready to return to this during our Presidency.

President, Honourable Members

Let me end by recalling that maintaining good neighbourly relations, which has to include a negotiated and mutually accepted solution, under the auspices of the UN, to the name issue, is essential. We very much hope that the on-going high-level dialogue will yield a positive outcome shortly.

President, Honourable Members,

Let us now turn to Iceland, and underline a number of points which are also duly reflected in your Resolution. On 5 December 2011 the Council welcomed the Commission's progress report on Iceland and took good note of its findings and recommendations. Iceland has made good progress indeed over the last year and has continued to do so in the first months of 2012. The process of screening the acquis is almost complete. And there is good momentum in the negotiations.

Due to its membership of the European Economic Area and Schengen, Iceland has come to the negotiations with another starting point. On a large number of policy fields, Iceland already lives up to or is very close to the acquis. In this regard, it is very much worth noticing that we managed to simultaneously open and close the very symbolic chapter 23 on judicial matters.

I will also like to add, that Iceland benefits from a very professional administration and a very committed negotiating team – also at political level. This impression was strongly confirmed to me two weeks ago, when I visited Iceland.

The Council is committed to continuing to take forward the negotiating process. As presidency we take this mandate very seriously and will push those negotiations forward as much as possible within the merit-based approach. It is clear to all that there can be no shortcuts to membership and that Iceland will have to satisfy to the same criteria in the enlargement negotiations as the other candidate countries.

The Council in December last year noted with satisfaction Iceland's progress in stabilising its economy. The recovery from the economic and financial collapse in 2008 and 2009 is well under way. This is not least due to responsible macroeconomic policies and tough decisions on structural and welfare reform. Also due to this, Iceland successfully completed its IMF programme in August 2011 and has just recently seen itself being upgraded by the rating agency Fitch [to 'investment grade' (BBB-)].

Iceland still faces challenges, but with the current economic outlook, we are convinced that Iceland will be able to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union over the medium term.

As regards the image of the EU in the public debate in Iceland, a lot of myths are thriving. The EU should stand ready to do its part in promoting an informed public debate about Iceland's accession process.

Let me move on to the state of play in the actual negotiations. We have now almost completed the screening process. That is the process which examines Iceland's level of alignment with the acquis. The Council has already received - and dealt with - all screening reports except for the Fisheries chapter. We expect to receive that report around Easter. As for the negotiations of the 35 negotiation chapters, 11 chapters have now been opened and 8 have been provisionally closed thanks to the efforts of previous presidencies. This is a remarkable result which underlines Iceland's very high level of preparedness for membership. It is also a momentum to uphold - which we will indeed.

The next Accession Conference with Iceland at Deputy level, is planned for 30 March. This should allow us to take stock of progress and send clear signals as to Iceland's and the EU's shared commitment to uphold momentum. We hope to open at least three new chapters [Competition Policy, Energy and Foreign, Security and Defence Policy], and provisionally close some of those chapters. The accession conference at ministerial level planned in June will confirm the results of the accession conference in March and sustain the momentum in the negotiations by opening and provisionally closing a further number chapters.

All in all, we expect negotiations to continue at very good speed this semester. Some more challenging negotiations, such as those on Fisheries, lie ahead of us. But given the commitment and focus from the Icelandic side, we are very confident that, with the right amount of goodwill and political determination, substantial progress can be achieved in these areas too. I am convinced on the commitment of all parties to bring the negotiations forward.

President, Honourable Members,

In conclusion, the aim of the presidency is to sustain momentum in the negotiations and bring them forward as much as possible. This is a task that we can only realize with the support and cooperation of the member states, the Commission and not least this parliament - as this debate is showing.

Let me also, on behalf of the Danish Presidency and the Member States, thank this Parliament, and in particular your rapporteur Cristian Dan Preda, for your work on this issue. Your continued commitment to enlargement is vital to its success, as is of course your particular role in promoting popular support in the EU for this cause.

The resolution on Iceland and its endorsement in the plenary is indeed a forceful political and strategic message. I also believe that in contacts with fellow parliamentarians from the Althingi in Iceland, this house will be able to make an important and much needed contribution to enhancing understanding of the EU, the values that we share and the way we work.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Dear President of the European Parliament,
Honourable Members, Commissioner,

Our third debate this morning concerns Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am happy to be able to give you a more positive assessment of the situation compared to that given in last autumn's progress report and reflected in the Council's conclusions of December 2011.

Important developments have taken place since then and we have reasons to be cautiously optimistic. We expect the newly established Council of Ministers to deliver on a range of issues, economic as well as political, in an effort to ensure the proper functioning of the State and to enhance the European integration agenda. Let me briefly mention some of them.

The most pressing need now is for agreement to be reached on a state budget for 2012, and for it to be adopted. Institutions that have a role in EU integration should be properly financed and specific policies also need to be funded.

A Global Fiscal Framework for 2012 – 2014 must also be developed to ensure sound fiscal management. Crucially, 100 million EUR of macro-financial assistance from the European Commission cannot be released until this Framework and an agreement with the International Monetary Fund is in place.

In its conclusions of last December, the Council urged all political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to live up to their responsibilities and to develop a shared vision of the future of their country. It has therefore been encouraging to see the different steps taken by the political actors since then in an effort to progress towards the EU.

In particular, the recent adoption of the Law on State Aid and the Law on the Population Census move Bosnia and Herzegovina in the right direction.

However a very important step on the path to European integration remains. This concerns the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to make credible efforts to bring its Constitution into full compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights in line with the Sejdic-Finci [Seiditch-Fintzi] ruling. The Bosnian authorities must address this urgently.

Improving and strengthening the efficient functioning of the state and its institutions is essential, including through the necessary constitutional changes. The European Union will need to see credible efforts made in this regard for Bosnia and Herzegovina's Stabilisation and Association Agreement to enter into force.

Finally, I want to take the opportunity to underline that establishing an effective coordination mechanism for dealing with EU matters is key. Bosnia and Herzegovina will need to be in a position to adopt, implement and enforce EU laws and rules in a more efficient manner than has been the case so far.

President, Honourable Members,

From my intervention this morning, it is clear that much remains to be done in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Certain developments have been encouraging and that is welcome. We will however continue both to encourage and to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in delivering on the important political and economic reforms which are needed. I know that we can count on the support of this Parliament to reiterate that message.

Thank you for your attention
