



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
Secretariat for European Affairs



И Сонцето е звезда · Македонија во ЕУ
The Sun, too, is a star · Macedonia in the EU

MONTHLY PROGRESS BRIEF
ACCESSION PARTNERSHIP
No. 06/2009

SKOPJE, June 2009

INTRODUCTION

The first edition of the Monthly Progress Brief was released in January 2006 on the implementation of the European Partnership 2006.

In February 2008 the Council of the European Union adopted the Accession Partnership for the Republic of Macedonia containing eight key priorities as benchmarks for launching accession negotiations.

The Monthly Progress Brief provides a summary of the achievements of the Republic of Macedonia in the process of accession to the European Union, vis-à-vis the priorities contained in the Accession Partnership 2008.

The Brief is intended to provide timely and accurate information to the European institutions and EU Members states, as well as to the domestic decision-makers and broader public, on the progress made.

Additionally, the reporting mechanism serves as a constant reminder to the line ministries and other responsible agencies of their commitments, while providing an opportunity for summarising the realised progress in the preceding month.

This edition covers the major developments during the month of June 2009.

I. POLITICAL CRITERIA

In regard to the benchmark: ***Promote a constructive and inclusive dialogue, in particular in areas which require consensus between all political parties, in the framework of the democratic institutions:***

The newly elected President of the Republic of Macedonia and the President of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia continued the regular consultations regarding issues of national interest.

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia continued the coordinative meetings with the coordinators of the parliamentary groups, which proved to be an efficient instrument in the planning and coordination of the sessions of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

The Draft Law on the Assembly, which had been elaborated by the parliament's political groups, was submitted to Parliament. The Law sets out provisions on: establishing the Budgetary Council of the Assembly in order to ensure its financial autonomy; public debates; operation of the parliamentary TV channel; support of the work of the parliamentary groups; contact day with the citizens; procedure for signing decrees on adopted laws and their proclamation; introduction of E-Parliament; precise provisions on disciplinary measures and sanctions for MPs; establishing a Parliamentary Institute, etc.

The Council for Euro-integration discussed the progress in meeting the benchmarks from the Roadmap for visa liberalisation, as well as in the Blueprint for Implementation of the European Commission recommendations in the Progress Report for 2008.

The Government communicated to the municipalities recommendations regarding the implementation of the benchmarks, aiming at increased involvement of the local self-government units, as well as strengthened co-operation and dialogue between central and local level. Recommendations included issues of the implementation of the relevant laws related to the Ohrid Framework Agreement, such as the application of the Badintaire principle on local level and use of languages, as well as the implementation of the Law on Civil Servants - recruitment and promotion based on merit. Consequently, meetings of the Prime Minister and relevant ministers with representatives of the Association of the Local Self-Government (ZELS) were held to promote dialogue and co-operation.

The **Law on Inter-municipal Cooperation was adopted** by the Parliament. The law provides mechanisms for cooperation and performing joint services and actions by the municipalities, thus facilitating the exercise of their competences.

Concerning the key priority ***Ensure effective implementation of the Law on Police:***

Guidelines on dismissal of commanders of local police stations of general competence were drafted.

The training of 8100 police officers on the Operational Manual was completed.

Concerning the **key priority *Establish a sustained track record on implementation of judiciary reforms and strengthen the independence and overall capacity of the judicial system. Implement the reform of the prosecution and finalise the appointment of the Judicial Council:***

The Ministry of Justice prepared a Review on the Law on Administrative Disputes to devise a concept for amendments to the Law . The Review includes issues on: the right to appeal; procedure for temporary measures: the principle of public sessions: acting of

the court when evaluating the legality of acts adopted in a misdemeanour procedure; acting of the court when evaluating the legality of the acts related to the elections: extraordinary legal remedies for protection of legality.

9 public prosecutors trained by the Academy were appointed on the Council of Public Prosecutors session held on 26.06.2009 (two appointed prosecutors are members of the communities).

The Judicial Council completed the evaluation of the judges for 2008 has been completed.

The Appellate court was strengthened with 5 new employments, while the procedure for 7 new employments is ongoing in the Public Prosecutors Office for Fight against Organised Crime.

In terms of the **key priority *Establish a sustained track record on implementation of anti-corruption legislation:***

The fourth version of the National Intelligence Data Base (NIDB) was finalised. The Law on the NIDB has been published on the web site of the Ministry of Interior, for wider consultation.

Amendments to the Law on Financing of Political Parties entered government procedure.

The State Audit Office carried out audit of the reports of 4 political parties (selected by the risk-assessment method) on the donations in the electoral campaigns for the 2009 elections.

The provision on illicit enrichment is incorporated in the Criminal Code.

The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption on 25.06.2009 held a Conference for evaluation of the implementation of the State Programme for Prevention of Corruption.

A training on corruption in public procurement was held on 1-2 June in Skopje. Besides representatives of the relevant state bodies (State Appeals Commission, Public Procurement Bureau), representatives of NGOs also participated in the seminar.

In terms of the key priority ***Ensuring that recruitment and career advancement of civil servants is not subject to political interference, further developing a merit-based career system and implementing fully the law on civil servants:***

Amendments to the Law on Civil Servants were approved by the Government. The Law widens the scope of civil service and includes provisions to improve mobility within the Service.

The Coordinative body on the implementation of the Strategy for Training of Civil Servants, headed by the Civil Servants' Agency held its second meeting. It was assessed that the inclusion of a specific budgetary programme for trainings in the 2009 budget has significantly improved ownership of trainings, while further development of exchange of information and co-ordination was agreed.

Concerning ***follow-up to elections:***

The established working group on revision of voters' lists worked continually and developed a Methodology for the revision, which is under consultation.

Concerning cases on irregularities from the 2008 elections, by the end of May 2009 a total of 11 criminal cases were decided by the courts and 27 persons sentenced.

II ECONOMIC CRITERIA

On June the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Supplementary Budget, including revised macroeconomic projections, due to the impact of the world economic crises.

The revised budget is a part of the third package of Government anti-crises measures, which also include: Credit support to enterprises through EIB credit line intended for a/ long-term investments, b/ short-term working capital, c/ subsidised interest rates for the enterprises, d/ issuance of guarantees, as well as other measures to support the enterprises, including measures to facilitate export of goods, reduce costs, etc.

On 25th June the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Macedonian Bank for Development Promotion (MBDP) signed in Skopje a EUR 100m loan aimed at financing projects in the Republic of Macedonia. The operation is intended to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and any size industrial investment in the fields of knowledge economy, energy and environmental protection throughout the country in compliance with EIB eligibility criteria.

In June the Parliament approved the EUR 18.9mn loan agreement with the World Bank aimed at improving transparency, financial sustainability and delivery of targeted municipal services, including investments in the fields of water supply, hard waste management and other activities generating revenue or contributing to expenditure cuts. Municipalities that have entered the second phase of fiscal decentralisation and have met the conditions for long-term borrowing are eligible. Municipalities meeting the criteria are also entitled to a non-refundable grant amounting up to 20% of the approved loan.

The Republic of Macedonia issued the second 175 million euro Eurobond with a 9.875 percent coupon. The transaction was conducted on 30 June and the money from the bond, maturing in January 2013, will arrive on July 8. Eurobond was bought by investors from Great Britain (59,9%), Switzerland (11,3%), Brazil (8,6%), Austria (6,9%), Denmark (5,1%), Germany (3,1%), Greece (2,9%), Benelux (1,5%) and 0,7% by investors from other countries.

Concerning the benchmark ***Reduce impediments to employment creation and address in particular youth and long term unemployment***

The administrative capacities of the relevant institutions to pursue an integrated approach in developing and implementing active employment measures have been continuously strengthened.

The Council for Adult Education was established and held its first session, where, *inter alia*, the preparation of programme for life-long learning was discussed. The Statute of the Centre for Adult Education and its job-description document were adopted, as well as the Annual Programme and the Financial Plan of the Centre. Five persons were employed in the Centre for Adult Education.

The Centre for Vocational Training prepared the guidelines for programming, organising and realising the optional classes, as well as the practical training in the four year vocational education. A model curriculum and plan for different vocations and skills in demand on the labour market was prepared and distributed. New facilities were provided for the Centre for Vocational Training.

As part of the implementation of the Government's Operational Programmes and Measures for Employment 2009, 5,000 people will be engaged from July till November 2009 for public services in municipalities across the country. Earmarked funds are denar 795 million - tripling the funds spent last year. The Employment Agency has published an announcement for municipal public works projects related to maintaining, reviving of the infrastructure and environment protection.

Concerning the benchmark ***Enhance the general business environment by further improving the rule of law, strengthening the independence of regulatory and supervisory agencies, speeding up legal procedures and continuing registration of property rights:***

On June 15th the Parliament appointed a new president of the Regulatory Energy Commission.

The establishing of Real Estate Cadastre proceeds according to the plans of the Real Estate Cadastre and Registration project. By 18th of June 2009 88.78% of the territory of Republic of Macedonia was covered with real estate cadastre.

III. ABILITY TO ASSUME THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

Freedom of movement for workers

On 1 June 2009 the Bilateral Agreement on Social Insurance between the Macedonian Government and the Belgian Government entered into force.

Right of establishment and freedom to provide services

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia discussed and adopted the Report of the Agency for Posts for 2008, as well as the Financial Plan of the Agency for 2008.

Free movement of capital

The Directorate for Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism signed a Memorandum for cooperation with the Unit for financial intelligence of United Kingdom (SOCA).

On 27 May the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia **ratified the Warsaw Convention No.198 of the Council of Europe on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism.**

The Council of the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Decision of the method and procedure for establishing and use of the program of bank for prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism.

Public procurement

The model of standard tender documentation for negotiated procedure was prepared and published.

On 3 June the Public Procurement Bureau, in cooperation with SIGMA/OECD, organised a seminar for contracting authorities on "Good European practice in implementing framework agreements".

On 9 June in Brussels, representatives from PPB participated at the EC Advisory Committee on Public Procurement.

Intellectual property law

The comprehensive Draft Strategy for Intellectual Property 2009-2012 is in inter-ministerial consultation and available for public consultation.

On 14 and 15 May 2009 in organisation of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors a seminar was held on the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights. 27 judges acting in civil cases took part.

A training for recognition of certificate for cement was held on 17.06.2009 and a workshop on Clearing House of bio-safety as an implementation mechanism of the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety (22 -23.06.2009) were customs officers participated.

Representatives from the State Office of Industrial Property participated at several seminars and conferences: an Interregional seminar concerning the legal, administrative and economical aspects of the industrial property held in Geneva and Strasbourg within the period of 09 – 27 June 2009; Annual conference of the Member States of EPO for the cooperation projects held in Oslo, Norway, 1 – 5 June 2009; Symposium on geographical marks, held on 0-12 June 2009 in Sofia; Training in Oslo, Norway, 21 – 27 June 2009. The Macedonian representatives participated at the Permanent Committee for trademarks held in Geneva, 22–26 June 2009; and Administrative Council held in Munich, Germany, 23–26 June 2009

Representatives from the State Office of Industrial Property and one judge from the Appellate Court in Skopje participated in a seminar on appeals procedure seminar in EPO held in Munich, Germany, 22–26 June 2009. A judge from the Administrative Court of Republic of Macedonia, participated in training on the industrial property rights held in Athens, Greece, 18–19 June 2009. Representatives from the Coordinative Body for Intellectual Property participated at a TAIEX seminar on enforcement of the intellectual property rights, protection against piracy, illegal commerce and counterfeiting was held in Athens, Greece, 29–30 June 2009.

In June the Coordinative Body for Intellectual Property carried out 3 coordinated actions (in Skopje and Prilep) over 26 entities (20 natural persons and 6 legal entities). 12.810 items were seized, out of which 12,805 DVDs and CDs, 5 computers and 112 pieces of counterfeited sport equipment from the Puma, Adidas and Nike trademarks. 3 criminal procedures and 11 of misdemeanour procedures were initiated.

From 1 June until 30 of June 2009 the Customs Administration acted in 13 new cases of goods infringing intellectual property rights reported in customs procedure. 121.939 pieces and 196 kg of goods were temporarily retained, while 1732 pieces of counterfeited goods were destroyed¹. The Customs Administration acted *ex officio* in three cases. 11 requests for undertaking customs actions pursuant to the Law on Customs Measures for the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights were submitted.²

Financial services

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia discussed and adopted the Report of the Securities and Exchange Commission for 2008.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued notice to more than 50 joint-stock companies for failing to submit reports to the Register of Joint-Stock Companies.

The SEC issued a decision for temporary prohibition of 30 working days for authorised broker, due to violations of the Law.

The SEC issued consent for directors of several brokerage houses, one licence for broker and once licence for investment councillor.

¹ Jeans *Roberto Cavalli*, sports wear *Nike, Adidas and Puma*, headphones, mobile phone batteries *Nokia* and floor covers *Mercedes-benz*

² For the trademarks *Nutritionist, Promesse, Ambre Solaire, Attraction, Attitude, Cerruti, Drakkar Noir, Magnifique, Kerastae, Peme and Vichy*

Information society and media

The Ministry of information society initiated a project on interoperability, in line with Recommendation No.3 of the European framework on interoperability and the European Commission Programme for Interoperable Delivery of European e-Government Services to public Administration, Businesses and Citizens.

The Draft Law on Electronic Governance providing the implementation of the Interoperability project and regulating exchange of data between state bodies was submitted to the Parliament.

The Ministry of Transport and Communication established a working group on amendments to the Law on Broadcasting, aimed at alignment with the AVMSD and solution for the public service broadcaster. Due to the complexity of the issues envisaged, 4 subgroups were established for the following issues: 1. Stable mechanism for financing of the public service and the management of the public service broadcaster (coordinated by the Ministry and MRTV); 2. Competences of the Broadcasting Council, including issuing fines (coordinated by BC and the Ministry); 3. Alignment with the AVMSD in the area of advertising, teleshopping, sponsorship, general scope of the directive, programme standards and broadcasting licenses; 4. Non-linear services introduced with the new Directive, broader scope of operators, flexible procedure for the catalogue and regulation of intellectual property rights and broader functions of the Broadcasting Council.

The Broadcasting Council at its website opened a public debate on the draft amendments to the Law on Broadcasting (www.srd.org.mk)

The Ministry of Transport and Communication, based on the work of an inter-ministerial body, proposed to the Government 4 options - models for financing of the public broadcasting service, in accordance with the EU practices and CoE recommendations.

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia discussed and adopted the Annual Report of the Agency for Electronic Communications for 2008, as well as the Report and the Financial Report of the Broadcasting Council for 2008.

Agriculture and rural development

In June the Rulebook on determining representative markets of agricultural products, was published, determining representative markets for agricultural products from plant, animal and organic origin, the type amount and the deadlines for submission data, as well as the farms that submit the data for the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS)

Enterprises and Industrial Policy

The Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Economy signed a Declaration for promotion of entrepreneurship studies in all types of education. The subject Business and Entrepreneurship was introduced as mandatory in the senior year of secondary education.

Transport policy

In line with the Law on Railways, the JSC Macedonian Railways-Transport obtained a license by the Ministry of Transport and Communications for performing public transport.

The newly established Agency for regulating the railway services market has been provided premises. It is operational and functioning.

The public call for public obligations in passenger railway transport has finished. The evaluation of the offers by the Commission for public procurement is ongoing.

In the air transport, the Law amending the Law on Aviation has been sent for comments to the EC. On 2.06.2009 The Government has adopted the Statute of the state owned JSC for performing the activity of air navigation service provider (*“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia”* No.80/09). The new JSC is registered in the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia on 4.06.2009.

Energy

Security of supply

The Director of the new Directorate for mandatory reserves of oil and oil derivatives was appointed on 19 May 2009. The activities for establishment of the Managing Board are ongoing.

In order to meet the EU standards in the field of oil and oil derivatives, the Directorate has prepared a Plan for reaching the needed reserves of oil and oil derivatives, including appropriate measures.

Internal energy market

On 15 June 2009 the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia nominated Mr. Dimitar Petrov for President of the Energy Regulatory Commission of the Republic of Macedonia with a mandate of 5 years.

On 19 June 2009 the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) published public invitation for selection of holder of the license for supply with thermal energy.

On 17 June 2009 the Energy Regulatory Commission had meeting with the representatives of the Austrian Energy Regulatory Authority E-Control in order to finalise the Contract for the IPA 2007 Twinning project for Institutional Strengthening of the Energy Regulatory Commission.

In June 2009, the Energy Regulatory Commission participated in the following events: 13th ECRB Electricity Working Group meeting, held in Athens, Greece; 10th SEE Coordinated Auction Office Implementation Group meeting, held in Athens, Greece; Workshop on the SEE CAO Related Studies, held in Athens, Greece; 11th ECRB Gas Working Group meeting, held in Vienna, Austria; ERRA Intermediate/Advanced Training Course: Price regulation and Tariffs, held in Budapest, Hungary.

Nuclear protection and radiation safety

In the field of radiation safety, 6 licenses for practices with ionizing radiation have been issued and 6 inspections have been performed.

Economic and monetary policy

The Strategy for Management of Public Debt (2009-2011) was adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

Statistics

The National Nomenclature of Industrial Products (NNIP 2008), harmonised with the European Nomenclature (PRODCOM 2008), was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (*“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia”*, No. 75/09).

Statistical Release on Municipal Waste was published for the first time. Data on municipal waste were sent to Eurostat via eDamis web form.

Data on forestry for the period 2004 - 2008 were published and for the first time data on regional level were presented.

For calculation of quarterly GDP, two weeks mission was conducted in the SSO. New methods for calculation of several categories were examined and new calculations were prepared for further improvements.

In June the following in-house lectures were realised: Basics of econometrics; Application of sample theory and basic sample techniques in the SSO and Generic statistical business model.

Social policy and employment

Labour Law

With support provided from the Twinning project, "Review of the national labour legislation", two days conference took place during the month of June. Trainings were held on the topics: "Equal treatment between man and women and antidiscrimination at work" and "Labour inspection and occupational health and security".

During June 2009, consultations with the social partners took place, regarding the drafted amendments of the Law on Labour Relations, which deal with setting the criteria for representation of the social partners.

Representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) participated in the regional TAIEX workshop that took place in Zagreb, about the directives for information and consultation, European working Councils and transfer of enterprises.

Training on migration flows and migration policies for labour migrations of Western Balkans was organised by MOT and IOM, with participation of members of MLSP and other relevant ministries and institutions, social partners and representatives of academic institutions.

Occupational health and security

With the experts support from the TAIEX instrument, a Rulebook transposing the Directive 1999/92/IEC of the European Parliament and the Council from 16.12.1999, for minimum requirements for improvement of security and health of workers that are potentially exposed to risk of explosive atmospheres (15th individual Directive according to the article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) was prepared and enacted ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*" No. 74/2009). Trainings for labour inspectors of the State labour inspectorate were organised, in order to present the new regulation and its implementation, and enforcement of the new penalties introduced with the amendments of the Law on Labour Relations.

Social Dialogue

During June, representatives from the MLSP organised separate meetings with trade unions and organisations of employments, where the amendments of the Law on Labour Relations were discussed, related to the definition of the criteria, method and procedures for determination of the representation of the social partners, as well as harmonisation of the Law with the Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and the Council from November 2003, that refers to certain aspects of organization of the working time.

The social partners have examined the amendments of the Law on Retirement and Invalidity Insurance that refers to implementation of the gross salary concept.

The social partners took part in the 98th June session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva.

Certain changes have been introduced in the Collective agreement for primary education, Collective agreement for secondary education and Collective agreement for

public children institutions. Amendments have been signed in the General collective agreement for the public sector in Macedonia, which lead to decreasing the percentages for payment of salary supplements based on overtime work, work in three shifts, work on weekends and work on holidays.

Employment policy and ESF

Employment policy

The planned activities in the Operational plan for active programmes and measures for employment in 2009 are realised.

European Social Fund (IPA Component IV)

An audit mission from the European Commission examined the capacities for decentralised management of the IPA Component IV.

The auditors from the Sector for internal audit for EU-IPA funds examined the methods and procedures in the programming phase.

New procedure for selection of members in the Sectoral Monitoring Committee for the Operational programme "Development of human resources" was prepared by the civil sector and the social partners.

On 18 June 2009, a meeting of the Sectoral monitoring committee for the Operational programme Development of human resources 2007-2013 for IPA Component IV took place.

Social inclusion and Social protection

The **new Law on Social Protection has been adopted** (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 79/2009*).

In cooperation with the Ministry of Information Society, new web portal adjusted to the people with disabilities is being prepared.

Regarding deinstitutionalisation of social protection, two housings were opened in Negotino and Demir Kapija, where 23 people with intellectual disabilities are situated.

A meeting of the Working group on drafting a Strategy for combating poverty and social exclusion was held, and subgroups for the four priority areas: employment, education, health and housing were defined.

The process for creating a draft Law on Social Housing started.

The Republic of Macedonia signed the Revised European Social Charter.

Antidiscrimination and Equal opportunities

In June 2009, a promotional conference of the project "Support of the commissions for equal opportunities between women and man in the local self governance", supported by UNDP and the Norwegian Government took place in Skopje.

The Parliament committee for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, in cooperation with the UNIFEM office, organised a public debate.

A workshop on the concept of gender budgeting was organised, where the target groups were public administration officials from all ministries and agencies where a contact person for gender equality is appointed.

A project promoting the equal treatment of Roma people, especially Roma women has started in cooperation with the UNIFEM office in Skopje.

Trans-European networks

The **Ring Road Skopje** has been fully completed and officially put into operation on 22.06.2009. The Ring Road Skopje is part of Corridor VIII, with great impact on the shortening of the travel and transit time, as well as on the improvement of the road traffic safety. A completely new highway was constructed with two lanes, with several intersections, overpasses, underpasses and bridges, as well as with noise protective fences, in line with environmental standards.

The construction of the Ring Road Skopje was conducted in two phases: phase I – section Hipodrom to Suto Orizari with length of 14.7km financed by EIB and national contribution; phase II- section Orizari-Saraj, with length of 11.8 km, financed by EBRD, EIB and national contribution.

Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments

Legal Framework

Pursuant to the Law on Balanced Regional Development a *Decision for specific criteria and indicators for determining the areas with specific development needs* and *Decision on determining the areas with specific development needs for the period 2009-2013* have been adopted (“Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia” No.78/2009) accompanied by the Lists of inhabited places (“Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia” No. 79/2009) belonging to these areas.

The decisions respond to the major imbalances of economic and social indicators in the Republic of Macedonia; in this sense - mountain, rural, border and areas with natural and cultural in-heritage constitute areas that require specific actions. With the adoption of these decisions the legal framework for balanced regional development is finalised.

Institutional Framework

The institutional framework for balanced regional development has been completed with the registration of the remaining Regional development Centre within the Skopje Planning Region.

The Council on Balanced Regional Development, as national coordinative body held its third session on 1st of June 2009, with participation of the newly elected mayors, chairing the planning regions development councils and the President of the Association of Local Self-Government Units. The Council approved the text of the draft Strategy for Regional Development, as well as the final texts of the Decision for specific criteria and indicators for determining the areas with specific development needs and Decision on determining the areas with specific development needs for the period 2009-2013.

The Draft Strategy for Regional Development was approved by the Government.

The Ministry of Local Self Government and Regional Development Bureau, assisted by Slovenian expert, designed a new internal organisation of their respective institutions, adjusted to the requirements of the Euro-integration process.

Activities related to IPA Component 3 - Regional Development

The revised IPA Application for the Major Project Waste Water Treatment Plant Prilep was submitted to European Commission on 26 May 2009.

Sectoral Monitoring Committee (SMC) for Regional Development Component was held on 24 June 2009.

The National IPA Coordinator assigned an inter-ministerial Working Group to revise the IPA Operational Program for Regional Development.

Activities related to IPA Component 4 - Human Resource Development:

Audit Mission from EC for verifying the compliance of the management and control systems for pre-accession assistance of IPA Component IV in the Republic of Macedonia took place in the period 26-29 May 2009.

Sectoral Monitoring Committee (SMC) for Human Resource Development was held on 18 June 2009.

The second Risk Panel for IPA Component IV took place on 11 June 2009;

Administrative capacities

In June regional centre managers have been appointed in South-west Planning Region and in Vardar Planning Region Development Centre

Supported by the GTZ-RED Programme, from 1-3 of June the second training module was held for officials dealing with regional development.

Project Cycle Management courses have also been conducted at regional level for the staff in the East, Southeast, Southwest and Polog Planning Regions

Justice, freedom and security

The amendments to the "Rulebook on the application form for recognition of the right to asylum and the manner of fingerprinting and photographing asylum seekers, the form and the procedure for issuance and replacement of documents of the asylum seekers and persons with recognised right of asylum or temporary protection in the Republic of Macedonia and on the manner of keeping records" were enacted ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*", No. 76/09). The amendments are defining the form and the contents of the personal identification card for persons under subsidiary protection, which ensures further harmonisation with the Directive 2004/83.

The Law on Social Protection which guarantees the right to social protection of persons under subsidiary protection, was adopted ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*", No. 79/09).

Migration

The preparation of Integration Programmes for Persons Returned Based on Readmission Agreements has been initiated.

Action Plan with fiscal implications on the implementation of the measures and activities, defined in the Resolution on Migration Policy 2009-2014, has been prepared.

The National Action Plan on implementation of the Strategy on Integration of Refugees and Aliens in Republic of Macedonia has also been finalized.

Police cooperation and fight against organized crime

The Financial Police Directorate adopted rulebooks on the use of the symbol of Financial Police; on the manner and procedure of evaluation of financial police officers' work; on the manner and procedures of evaluation of working skills for employment in the Financial Police, as well as on criminal and tactical measures and on usage of technical equipment ("*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*", No. 76/09)

In scope of the Programme for supporting development of transnational mechanisms for treatment of victims of human trafficking in South-Eastern Europe, a seminar was held in Ohrid, as the last one of a three-years Programme. The Programme resulted in preparation of procedures on identification, help, protection, resocialisation and

reintegration of victims, as well as the way of treating them during the criminal procedure.

An International Police Symposium, organised by the Ministry of Interior, took place in Ohrid. The 5-day IPES Conference under the theme "Police work, private sector, economic development, society changes" was attended by 120 participants.

9 day training held by French experts took place in the Training Centre in Idrizovo. 27 police officers attended the training "Techniques of conducting conversation with a child-victim of sexual abuse". At the end of the training a "Handbook for conducting a conversation with a child" was disseminated to the police officers and to the Training Centre.

According to this year's Annual Report on Human Trafficking of the State Department, Republic of Macedonia was once again placed in Tier 1, which means it is among group of countries that completely meet minimum standards foreseen in the Act for Protection of victims of human trafficking. According to the report the country is defined as country of origin, transit and destination for women and children. The Report notes that usually victims are smuggled from Albania and Kosovo, while Macedonian victims and those who transit through the country usually end in South-Central and Western Europe.

The Police discovered in Gostivar 11 foreign female citizens with illegal stay in the country. 10 of them are citizens of Serbia and one is from Albania.

An international criminal group, which has been smuggling migrants was dismantled in joint operation of the Macedonian and Serbian police. In Republic of Macedonia 12 persons have been arrested out of the total number of 24 persons arrested. The group have been smuggling migrants from China, Macedonia and Greece to the Western European countries.

In the first half of 2009 the Financial Police has discovered abuses in amount of 4,7 million Euros in total. 41 criminal charges have been submitted in the same period, against 113 natural persons and one legal person for committing 75 criminal acts.

Drugs

The second Centre for prevention and treatment of drug abuses was opened in Skopje on 18 June 2009. The interdisciplinary team of doctors working in the Centre will provide methadone therapy for drug addicts. The Centre is located within the Clinic Centre in Skopje, with capacity for accommodating of 100 patients and has its own entrance and premises separated from other parts of the Clinic.

Science and research

Seventh framework programme

On 1 June 2009 an Info day on the topic "How to get funding from FP7" in the areas Health, Mobility and Science in society, intended for representatives from SMEs was held. The process of preparation of a budget of a project proposal, examples of successful projects in the area of biotechnology, as well as the possibilities for financing small and medium enterprises were presented.

On 30 June a workshop on the topic "Swot analysis of the Research potential of the Institute of Chemistry and food science in Macedonia" was held in the FP7 project SWOT-Chemistry-Food. The main goal of the workshop was evaluation of the research capacities and creation of a strategy on development of the chemical industry and contribution to the development of the food industry.

The National contact point for HEALTH participated at the annual meeting of the NCPs, held on the 15 and 16 June in Brussels.

On 18 and 19 June in Italy, the representative from the Republic of Macedonia participated at the Annual meeting of the NCPs of the Joint Research Centres. Future cooperation was agreed, including a study visit of Macedonian researchers and bilateral collaboration between the institutions of the JRC and interested research institutions from the Republic of Macedonia.

European Research Area

WBC INCO NET project

On 16-17 June, a consultative session - workshop was held with 53 representatives from all West Balkan countries, Germany, Holland and a representative from the EC participated. The current situation in the area of the protection of the environment in each WB country was presented, priorities set for the region and recommendations provided for improving the cooperation between WB countries in the European Research Area and especially the FP 7.

COST

On the 174th meeting of COST held on 26-27 May, 30 new actions of all the COST domains were approved. In June the Republic of Macedonia submitted applications for joining in 4 of the approved actions: COST Action IC0602, "Algorithmic Decision Theory; COST Action FA0901, "Putting Halophytes to Work: From Genes to Ecosystems); COST Action MP0801; "Physics of Competition and Conflicts); COST Action ICO 909 "Towards Integration of Trans-sectoral IT Design"

Cooperation with the International Agency for atomic energy concerning the project cycle 2009 -2011

The Liaison officer for Republic of Macedonia from IAE had a mission from 13 to 15 June to discuss the project cycle 2009 -2011. Working plans and trainings were discussed with all project coordinators (8 projects). Priorities for the following period were defined, including preparation of a national programme on cooperation with IAE, preparations for participation at the IAE general conference, supply of equipment, a training course for storing radioactive sources, study visits of domestic experts abroad etc.

Education and culture

Adult education

The Council for Adult Education the Council held its first session. The Statute of the Centre for Adult Education was adopted, as well as the job descriptions, the Annual Program and the Financial Plan of the Centre. 5 persons were employed in the Centre.

With the support of the CARDS Lifelong learning project, Modules for basic skills for adults were drafted.

The process of drafting the National Qualifications Framework started by workshops on developing awareness of issues involving creation of NQF, and preparation of a work plan for the working groups. Two technical groups (on NQF and qualifications design and on accreditation) were formed.

Vocational education and training

The Methodology of standards was amended.

The curriculum for the vocation of clothier was drafted.

Opinions were provided for educational profiles for private vocational schools.

Opinions were provided for verification of non - formal education and the programs for working qualification.

Guidelines for optional classes, as well as practical training in the four year vocational education were prepared.

A model for educational programs for different vocations and skills in demand on the labour market and was prepared, as well as a working plan for trainings for different vocations and skills in demand on the labour market, as activities envisaged in the Operational plan for active employment programs and measures for 2009.

.The VET councillors monitored the State Matriculation exam and the School exam in the vocational schools.

The VET Centre also participated in and organised several trainings.

Environment

In the area of **horizontal legislation**, two decrees were adopted:

- Decree on the activities for which elaborate must be prepared and the approval of which is within the competence of the body responsible for expert affairs in the area of environment (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” No.80/2009) and
- Decree on the activities for which elaborate must be prepared and the approval of which is within the competence of the mayor of the municipality, the City of Skopje and the municipality within the City of Skopje respectively (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” No.80/2009).

Although these bylaws do not represent direct transposition of Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, they will contribute towards significant improvement in the implementation of the Law on Environment concerning the environmental impact assessment of activities that are not subject of EIA procedure.

A presentation of the National Strategy for Environmental Investments was held on 23 June 2009 in Skopje.

The draft Strategy on Sustainable Development was presented to the responsible agencies after its approval by the Steering Committee of the project financed by SIDA.

Within the frameworks of the project “Support to Macedonian national preparations for EU membership in the area of environment from a Member State point of view” within the bilateral cooperation between MEPP and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), help desks were organised among SEPA, MEPP and (Directorate for Environment (DE) with the purpose of activating the cooperation in the area of nature protection and IPPC.

According to the Law on Environment on 4 June the oral part of the exam for acquiring status of SEA expert was held and the list of experts for SEA is currently under preparation.

The representatives of the Inspectorate for Environment participated at the following meetings and trainings: Third General Assembly meeting within the IMPEL network, 3-5 June, Prague, Czech Republic; Regional TAIEX workshop for trans-boundary waste shipment, 18-19 June, Sofia, Bulgaria; Meeting within the GREEN ENFORCE network, 16-20 June, Spain; Training for planning of inspection supervision in the environment within the IMPEL network, 23-27 June, Lisbon, Portugal.

The following workshops and meetings addressing **climate change** issues took place: Workshop within the project of the Ministry of Health via World Health Organisation on the subject “Climate change impact on human health”, Ohrid, Macedonia, Bilateral Meeting with the Slovenian Minister for Environment on climate change and investments in the environment were discussed, 10 June, Bled, Slovenia.

For the purpose of raising the public awareness in environmental issues, the following activities took place: Eco festival, 20-23 June, Ohrid, organised by MEPP, Ministry of Culture and Ministry for Transport and Communication (MTC); Public consultation on the EIA Study for the windmill project in Stip; Eco quizzes on Macedonian and Albanian language within the project "Green Packet", on certain environmental subjects in cooperation of MTV 1 and 2 and SKY Net.

In the area of **hydrometeorological affairs**, one automatic meteorological station for measurement of meteorological highs was procured, the automatic meteorological station located in Gostivar was connected to the Centre in the Hydrometeorological Directorate, the automatic meteorological station in Skopje – Zajcev Rid was installed and connected, thermometers for air and soil were procured and the Hydro-meteorological Directorate was equipped with IT equipment (hardware and software).

In the area of **civil protection**, the Law on Ratification of the Agreement between the Government of Republic of Macedonia and the Government of Montenegro for cooperation in the protection of natural and other catastrophes was adopted (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* No. 71/2009).

The capacities of the Protection and Rescue Directorate were strengthened with participation of its employees on international training "BUDVA 09" in Monte Negro 8-12 June 2009 and training on demining – 2nd degree in Croatia.

Representatives of the Crisis Management Centre (CMC) participated at the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 15-19 June in Geneva, as well as on the SCEPC Plenary (Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee) held on 4 June in the NATO headquarters in Brussels

Within the UNEP/GEF Project "Strengthening the capacity for effective participation in Biosafety Clearing House" 3rd national workshop for training representatives of the Customs Directorate and the inspectors from MEPP, MAFWE, MH and Veterinary Directorate was held on 22-23 June 2009, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

In the area of waste management, **the National Plan for Waste Management 2009-2015 was adopted** (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* No. 77/2009) as well as the Rulebook on the conditions to be fulfilled by the landfill (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia"* 78/2009), the latter further transposing the Council Directive 1999/31/EC of 26 April 1999 on the landfill of waste.

Public debate for the Law on packaging and packaging waste was held in the Economic Chamber of the Republic of Macedonia on 27 June in Ohrid and a study visit in Letonia on regional waste management took place from 1-5 June.

For the purpose of enhancing the administrative capacities in the **water quality sector**, a study visit of the river Radika basin and Debar Lake was organised on 16 June, a surface and underground waters workshop on 18 June in Skopje, as well as a working visit to Strumica on 24 June, the latter within the ARKADIS project for the Strumica river basin.

In the area of **nature protection**, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia accepted the proposal for re-proclaiming Matka canyon for protected area in the category of monument of nature. The following trainings took place: Seminar on the Strategy and Action plan for Balkan bobcat's protection, organised by MED Skopje and KORA Switzerland on 22 June in Skopje; Regional workshop for implementation of the Convention for Biodiversity (S/KBD, BFN, Vilm, Germany) on 12-18 June; Workshop on supporting environmental protection organizations in monitoring and sustainable practices of land use for nature protection via use of methods for remote monitoring on 29 June - 3 July.

Customs union

The annual WCO Yolanda Benitez Trophy for combating counterfeiting and piracy was awarded to the Republic of Macedonia's Customs administration for the high number of seizures of counterfeit goods that could affect people's health and safety, including automobile parts, toothpaste and detergent.

External relations

Strengthening of Macedonia's capacity to address trade policy-related issues and to design appropriate responses regarding important emerging issues is the topic of the Fifth Annual Conference on Enhancing Macedonian Exports, held in Skopje on 11 June 11. The conference, organised by the Ministry of Economy supported by the USAID's Business Environment Activity (BEA) project aims to raise the awareness of trade issues in the government, the business sector and in civil society, and to strengthen the capacity of the local researchers and policymakers to analyse, formulate and implement appropriate trade policies in the spirit of the World Trade Organisation trade regime.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

International Conference entitled "Experiences of National Security Authorities from the preparation and after accession in NATO" took place in Ohrid.

In the scope of the Conference, on 29. June an Agreement on mutual protection of classified information between the Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine was signed.

COOPERATION FOR INTEGRATION

The VI Stabilisation and Association Committee took place in Brussels on 18-19 June 2009, under the chairmanship of Mr. Dirk Lange, Acting Deputy Director in DG Enlargement, co-chaired by State Counsellor Malinka Ristevska Jordanova on the side of the Republic of Macedonia.

In the passed five years of successful implementation of the SAA between the Republic of Macedonia and the EU and its Member States, five cycles of meetings of the institutional structure of the Agreement have been completed, providing intense and fruitful dialogue on all issues of integration.

The Committee discussed the progress made in meeting accession criteria and the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The European Commission encouraged the Government to keep up its efforts in order to fully meet the benchmarks related to the opening of accession negotiations before the next Progress Report. The SA Committee noted the perspective of establishing a visa free travel regime by the end of 2009. The Joint Press Release is available at <http://www.sep.gov.mk/Default.aspx?ControllID=NovostiDetali.ascx&NewsID=1351>

Institution building activities and training

Training in EU affairs "Introduction in EU" was organised in the period 26-28 of May and 2 June 2009. Civil servants from IPARD, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture, Water economy and Forestry participated.

In the month of June, two training sessions within the Dutch Programme MTEC/MATRA, took place in the Netherlands: Administration of Justice - 15 - 26 June; Public Finance Management - 29 June - 10 July

GOFRE (SPFRE) project

Two trainings for IPA trainers and national IPA structures were realised:

- Participative Monitoring and Evaluation (26-30 May) and
- Procedures under PRAG (1-3 June)

Capacity building for implementation of the national communication strategy for EU integration

Two trainings for trainers - selected from the personnel responsible for public relations in the ministries and in the other units of state administration were realised, from 9-13 June and from 30 June – 4 July. Advanced techniques for communication and public relations methods were presented to the future trainers.