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Stabilitätspakt für Südosteuropa
Gefördert durch Deutschland
Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
Sponsored by Germany

Panel Discussion

Macedonia Between Hope and Anxiety. Agreement on the Name Issue with Greece and Euro-Atlantic Perspectives

Tuesday, 27 November 2018, 18:30

Deutscher Bundestag, Paul-Löbe-Haus (PLH), Room E 800 / Entrance West,
Konrad-Adenauer-Str. 1 (vis-à-vis Bundeskanzleramt)

Conference Languages: German and English (simultaneous translation)

Opening / Welcome

Manuel **Sarrazin**, MP, Spokesperson for Eastern Europe of the Alliance 90/The Greens's Parliamentary Group of the German Parliament, Vice-President Southeast Europe Association, Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Europa-Union

Panelists:

- Dr. Christian **Hellbach**, Director for South-Eastern Europe, Turkey and the EFTA States, Federal Foreign Office
- Dr. Simonida **Kacarska**, Director, European Policy Institute, Skopje
- Xenia **Kounalaki**, Foreign Editor, Kathimerini, Athens
- Matthias **Lüttenberg**, Head, Division Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, German Federal Chancellery, Berlin
- Thorsten **Frei**, MP, CDU, Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the German Parliament
- Dr. Reinhard **Priebe**, Chair of the EU Senior Expert's Group on Macedonia, former director of the European Commission, Brussels

Moderation:

- Michael **Thumann**, Foreign Affairs Correspondent, Die Zeit, Berlin

Following the discussion we kindly invite you to a small reception.

Attention: You will have to present your passport or identity card at the entrance of Paul-Löbe-Haus. Therefore application with name (as written in your identity document) and date of birth is obligatory and should be sent to Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft until 22 September 2018 the latest.

For more information on the subject please observe next page!

On the subject:

On 17 June 2018, the heads of government of the «Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia» and Greece agreed in the so-called "Prespa Agreement" on a settlement of the decades-long name dispute between the two neighbors. Macedonia should in future be called "Republic of Northern Macedonia". To implement the agreement, several changes to the Macedonian constitution are necessary. However, the conservative opposition party VMRO DPMNE is firmly opposed to the changes. In a referendum on the constitutional amendments on September 30, though 91 percent of voters voted for the changes, with a turnout of only 37 percent of eligible voters the necessary quorum was not reached.

In the parliament in Skopje, after the consent of individual opposition MPs had been secured, during the vote on the constitutional amendments on October 19, the government was able to achieve the narrowest of margins, the required majority of two thirds of MPs. The continuing parliamentary decision-making process is eagerly awaited and a matter of concern: Until the final adoption of the constitutional amendments several months may pass and a failure is also conceivable. In this case, the government of Prime Minister Zaev announced its resignation and new elections.

As a matter of fact, in Skopje, the supporters of the Prespa Agreement are in a race against time, especially as the Parliament in Athens needs to ratify the agreement in the end. In any case, this should be done before the Greek parliamentary elections scheduled for March 2019. The historic compromise has aroused great hopes not only in Macedonia, that the obstacles to inclusion in NATO and the opening of accession negotiations with the EU are finally eliminated. If the compromise fails in the end, the Euro-Atlantic perspectives are also in question.

What will happen in Macedonia and how can the country be effectively supported in its efforts to reform and integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures? Is Macedonia's path into NATO and EU fully depending on a final agreement on the name issue? Which scenarios are there, even in the event that the settlement of the name question finally fails in the decision-making processes in Skopje or Athens?

We cordially invite you to an open and factual debate on the prospects of the Balkans.