

Brussels hosts PM Gruevski and EU Security chief Solana

Thursday, 29 October 2009

Following

the European Commission (EC) positive report, the recommendation for launching the EU accession talks and expected visa liberalisation, Macedonia will remain committed to reforms and settling of other, remaining issues, including the name row imposed by Greece, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski said Wednesday in Brussels after meeting EU foreign, security policy chief Javier Solana.

- This year Macedonia has achieved solid results in regard to its EU-integration process - we have positive EC report, a recommendation for launching the (accession) talks and are rather close to formally get free visa regime - serious progress, serious accomplishment. These are serious steps in the country's development to which we have dedicated a lot of attention and work. In the meantime, we have managed to settle yet another open issue - a demarcation of the border with Kosovo - which is also an important step in terms of stability and our overall progress, Gruevski said at a joint press conference with Solana.

In spite of the fact that all of those developments have unfolded in a period of global economic downturn, it seems that the maximum has been pulled out from this year, Gruevski said.

- It is important to say that we are not stopping here, we shall keep working on mending the weaknesses, noted in the (EC) report. In the upcoming period we remain committed to the reforms and settling of other, remaining issues, including the efforts for finding a solution to the name row imposed by Greece. We will do everything in our power to soon come to a solution, Gruevski said, pointing out that it was up to both (involved) parties. He expressed hope for the new Greek Government to seriously approach the matter, make it one of its priorities and enter the negotiations with willingness to come to a certain solution, the PM said.

For Gruevski, a policy of blockades have brought no results thus far. - Looking back, it may be concluded that such policies have failed to make any progress, Gruevski said, urging for more positive energy, a lot of work and dedication.

Asked if the name row could be settled by December, when a meeting of the EU Council of Ministers is scheduled, Gruevski said he was not able to give neither positive nor negative answer.

- I may only say that the Republic of Macedonia will do everything in its power a resolution to the issue to be found soon, Gruevski said.

Solana on his part said that calling a referendum in Macedonia on the name dispute was not the best idea.

- I believe that the referendum - getting citizen's opinion on important matters - is not a best solution in a parliamentary democracy. However, we are respecting the will of the citizens and government, Solana said.

Asked to comment Greece's political will, Solana said: 'We wish for the matter to be resolved - the sooner, the better'.

- I cannot respond on the behalf of the Greek government. The Greek PM is a good friend of mine. I am certain that both Nikola and Papandreou will invest own efforts to resolve (the issue). That is all I can say. I do not have a prepared formula to present at the moment for settling of that problem, Solana said.

Today Gruevski was also scheduled to meet Olli Rehn, but the meeting was cancelled due to ill health of the EU Commissioner for Enlargement.

Later this afternoon PM Gruevski will attend a meeting of the European People's Party.

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