
MACEDONIA PUSHES FORWARD CONSTITUTION CHANGES TO SEAL GREECE DEAL

-

30.10.2018

Balkan Insight (29 October 2018)

Parliament is expected this week to open a debate on the draft constitutional changes which the government is expected to submit on Monday, or in the next few days.

The draft amendments are still being worked on, government spokesperson Mile Bosnjakovski told media on Friday.

The moment they are put on paper, we will publish them and submit them to parliament for their finalisation, Bosnjakovski said.

Each of the draft constitutional changes, one of which will allow the country's name to become the Republic of North Macedonia - as required under the deal made with Greece this summer - will first be deliberated in parliament's constitutional commissions.

The parliamentary rulebook allows a three-day debate for each draft separately. After this, the drafts will be put to a plenary session where again three days of debate will be allowed for each amendment before they are put to a vote.

Unlike on October 19, when parliament had to pass the first phase of the implementation of the name agreement with a two-thirds majority, the voting in the second phase will require only a simple majority of 61 MPs in the 120-seat parliament.

On Friday, Aleksandar Kiracovski, an MP and secretary-general of the main ruling Social Democrats, called on parliamentarians from the opposition VMRO DPMNE to join in the debate in a constructive manner.

I hope that all the legislators will participate in the debate on the draft amendments and in making them better, so that we can all together finish this process which moves us further towards the EU and NATO, Kiracovski said.

He reiterated the ruling majority's belief that if the process moves forward according to plan, parliamentary implementation of the name agreement could finish in two or two-and-a-half months, meaning by the end of the year.

If the second phase passes successfully, the government will have a green light to prepare the final constitutional amendments which will have to be debated in parliament again for at least 30

days before a third and final vote that will again require a two-thirds majority.

At a meeting on Friday, Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Terence Quick assured his Macedonian counterpart Andrej Zernovski that once Macedonia implements the agreement, ratification in the Greek parliament will follow shortly afterwards.

According to the Macedonian Foreign Ministry, Quick said that he is convinced that the ratification in the Greek parliament will happen without delays.

An informal deadline to implement the deal comes in March next year, in order for the Greek parliament to be able to ratify the agreement before Greece goes to general elections, in which political forces opposed to the agreement have a real chance of winning.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-constitutional-changes-move-forward-10-26-2018>

Kaynak/Source: