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**TSVETANOV: 'BULGARIA AND N MACEDONIA SHOULD FOCUS ON WHAT UNITES US'**

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The Sofia Globe (16 December 2019)

Bulgaria and North Macedonia, as well as the other countries in the Western Balkans, should focus on the things that unite us and direct efforts towards building a better future for the citizens, Euro-Atlantic Security Center (EASC) head Tsvetan Tsvetanov told a conference in Skopje.

Tsvetanov was participating in an international conference Opportunities for regional integration into the EU, organised by the Union of European Federalists of Macedonia on December 15 in Skopje.

Speaking on the topic of the role of the NGO sector as generator of innovative political solutions, he said that it is key that NGOs work for the preservation of Euro-Atlantic values that are the foundation for rights, freedoms, and prosperity.

The rational political elements should also join those efforts with a positive tone and a constructive approach to the issues that could cause disputes in the region, he said.

Other speakers at the conference include the President of North Macedonia Stevo Pendarovski and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikola Dimitrov, the Vice President of the Union of European Federalists Christopher Glueck, members of the Parliament of North Macedonia and the European Parliament, representatives of the diplomatic corps, the media, and the NGO sector.

An EASC statement said that main messages of the event were centered on the idea of regional integration initiatives as assisting integration into the EU and not as an alternative to it. There was consensus at the conference that there was no alternative to the the Euro-Atlantic path of North Macedonia, the statement said.

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