

Republic of Macedonia

The Council welcomes that the Republic of Macedonia has achieved further progress in key reform areas such as police reform, albeit at an uneven pace. The country continues to fulfil its commitments under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The Council expects the country to keep the momentum of the reform agenda. The country needs to make further progress in relation to dialogue among political actors, judiciary and public administration reform, the fight against corruption, freedom of expression and improving the business environment. The implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement remains an essential element of democracy and the rule of law in the country.

The Council broadly shares the Commission's assessment of the country's sufficient fulfilment of the political criteria and notes that the Commission has reiterated its recommendation that accession negotiations should be opened with the Republic of Macedonia. The Council is ready to return to the matter during the next Presidency.

Maintaining good neighbourly relations, including a negotiated and mutually accepted solution to the name issue, under the auspices of the UN, is essential. The Council welcomes the ongoing highlevel dialogue and looks forward to it bringing results shortly.