



## PRESS RELEASE

### Lecture topic:

**“The road and the experience of Slovakia in the EU integration process – Lessons learned”, by Mr. Edward Kukan Member of the European Parliament**

21.02.2011, Skopje

The Ohrid Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs in cooperation with the Pan European Union of Macedonia on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2011 in hotel Holiday Inn, organized public lecture on the topic **“The Road and the Experience of Slovakia in the EU Integration Process – Lessons Learned”**. Special guest lecturer was the distinguished member of the European Parliament and Former Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Slovakian Government Mr. Edward Kukan.



Mr. Kukan is also known as the father of the European integration of Slovakia, expert in the European integration and affairs. Furthermore, Mr. Kukan is very important for the integration processes in Republic of Macedonia since he is known as shadow reporter for Macedonia. Mr. Kukan is also member of the group “Friends of Macedonia” formed in the European Parliament whose founder is Mr. Martin Kastler, member of the Pan European Union of Germany and last year’s guest of the Ohrid Institute.

Through the lecture Mr. Kukan shared his experience with the Macedonian public and encouraged the country to continue with its hard work, the reforms and the implementation of the EU criteria. Mr. Kukan also spoke for the benefits of Slovakia from the EU entrance, namely he explained that each country after the entrance faces with the shortcomings and the benefits of the family, nevertheless, according to him the benefits are much bigger and more significant than the shortcomings. Mr. Kukan said that he is satisfied with the direction Macedonia has chosen, but there is a need for much bigger effort, reforms and work in order Macedonia to get into the EU family. One of the most significant EU criteria is the business climate, namely Republic of Macedonia needs to create positive business climate so to be more creative and attractive for the foreign investors. Republic of Macedonia needs to work and to maintain its principles and values. Mr. Kukan also said that the criteria and the conditions are much stricter and rigorous than before, this is something that all people need to understand. Mr. Kukan in regards to the enlargement has clear attitude, nobody can speak for United Europe if the countries from the Southeast Europe and the Balkan are not part of it. The name issue is one of the biggest obstacles and both countries need to find solution for



overcoming it, furthermore, as Mr. Kukan said the last Progress report was too critical, according to him Macedonia has made great achievement and improvement and this must not be neglected. EU needs to stay aside in regards to the name issue, as far as Mr. Kukan is concerned, the issue is delicate and is a bilateral problem. According to Mr. Kukan Republic of Macedonia is a completely acceptable solution and for him this country will stay Republic of Macedonia.

At the end of the lecture, the participants discussed together with Mr. Kukan, asking questions and commenting some of his views. The lecture was covered by the media in Macedonia. About 70 respected guests attended the event among which representatives from the international community in Macedonia, the diplomatic core, representatives of the state institutions in Macedonia, the NGO sector and students. The Ohrid Institute will continue its tradition of holding lectures with renowned guests and experts in different areas of the socio-economic life. At the beginning of this year the Ohrid Institute hosted Mr. Georg Von Habsburg and we are working on bringing more guests who will unselfishly share their experiences and lessons learned with the Macedonian public.

\* \* \*