

## Frei: Albanian PM Meddling in Macedonian Internal Affairs Unacceptable

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German Bundestag member Thorsten Frei (CDU) says it is unacceptable to impose political topics by foreign countries and politicians in Macedonia, MIA reports from Berlin.

In a comment to the so-called "Tirana Platform", Frei believes there should be no meddling of foreign politicians in internal affairs of other countries in the EU or the Western Balkans.

"In my experience, Albania has always had a constructive role in the region. However, it does not send a good signal when the country's

prime minister wants to impose an Albanian platform through the parties of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. This is unacceptable. Current political challenges are Macedonia's internal problem and issues should not be imposed by other countries", says Frei, a member of the Bundestag foreign affairs committee.

He adds that Macedonia needs to undertake measures towards increasing the level of integration of all citizens within the society.

"For the sake of truth, the Ohrid Framework Agreement has not helped the increased integration of Albanians in Macedonian society in recent years. I believe a deciding factor in the future is to achieve higher integration in society, so that all citizens can identify themselves with Macedonia. This is a task for everyone in the country and the region. Germany provides support by promoting cooperation, which should reduce the threat of divisions", says the German MP.

Regarding the future of Macedonia and the region in the EU, Frei says the Union must instill trust among future members that obligations must be fulfilled, while regional countries need to overcome all open issues in order to resume on the EU path.

"It is in EU and Germany's best interest to support the Western Balkans in becoming members. It should be clear that if the Copenhagen Criteria are met, then EU accession follows. To me, this is a issue that affects EU's credibility. However, many countries on the Western Balkans still have problems that need to be overcome. There is constitutional crisis in Macedonia that prevents the formation of a government since the December elections. The situation is complicated, but we should take the best out of the election results and respect the will of the Macedonian people", says Frei.

Regarding Greece's hindering of Macedonia's EU and NATO integration, Frei stresses that Macedonia needs to overcome its internal problems, followed by EU's increased pressure on Greece.

"It is a matter of law, but also moral, if Macedonia or any other Western Balkan state cannot join the EU while meeting criteria", adds Frei.

He expressed hope there would be no conflicts in Macedonia because the country has the potential to overcome problems. However, he urges all politicians to use caution in preventing any internal or inter-ethnic conflict.

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