

*Thursday, 23 May 2013 - Strasbourg*

*Debate*

Pino Arlacchi (S&D), in writing . – I voted in favour of this resolution because I agree with the call to the Council to set a date for the start of accession negotiations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia without further delay. I think it is regrettable that, for the fourth consecutive year, the European Council decided not to open negotiations despite the Commission's positive recommendation in this respect. This continuous postponement is increasing frustration about the EU integration process among the country's public opinion and risks exacerbating domestic problems and internal tension. EU accession is fundamental to the long-term stability of the country and good inter-ethnic relations and I believe that all candidate and potential candidate countries should be treated according to their own merits in the integration process. Consequently, all the bilateral issues should not represent an obstacle to the official opening of accession negotiations, although they should be solved before the end of the accession process.

[source: [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu) ]