

Macedonia's ethnic-Albanians end boycott

by UPI

SKOPJE, Macedonia -- Macedonia's primary opposition ethnic-Albanian party has ended a boycott of parliament to help pass major laws needed for integration into the European Union.

The opposition Democratic Union for Integration, or DUI, agreed with Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski on a list of laws that should be approved by parliament, the Serbian news agency Tanjug reported Thursday.

The DUI ended its six-month boycott of the parliamentary work and decided to resume a political dialog with Gruevski's government on issues which require consensus and are significant for integration to NATO and the European Union, the two sides said in a joint statement.

Gruevski stopped cooperating with the DUI after elections in July 2006, when he formed a coalition government with a number of minor ethnic-Albanian parties. Ethnic Albanians make up 25 percent of Macedonia's population.

In response to the move, DUI's leader Ali Ahmeti decided to boycott the parliament, accusing Gruevski of ignoring the will of ethnic-Albanians who largely support the DUI.

Ahmeti's DUI emerged from the ethnic-Albanian national army that in 2001 was involved in a six-month armed conflict with Macedonian forces over the issue of more political and economic rights for national minorities.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is already a candidate for joining the European Union.

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