



## Interview with H.E. Charles Garrett, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the Republic of Macedonia

**How long have you been in Macedonia? What has been your experience of Macedonia so far in the context of your diplomatic career and personal journeys? Have you had an opportunity to familiarize yourself with and relate to the country's cultural diversity?**

I have been here just under two years, two years which have flown past. Professionally, this is an excellent job. Macedonia, as a future member of the EU and NATO, is an important partner for the UK. And I find that working to make that happen is both challenging and rewarding.

We have all, as a family, enjoyed our time here enormously. It is impossible not to. Macedonia is a beautiful country with wonderful people and fascinating culture. Being surrounded by that, we

count ourselves very lucky. Macedonia is of course very different from our previous postings – Hong Kong, Switzerland and Taiwan – but it is making just as big an impact!

**You are the Honorary President of the 2016 DMWC International Charity Bazaar dedicated to the International Children's Day. How do you feel about this role? Would you like to comment on the choice of beneficiary of this year's event?**

It is an honour to take on this role. The diplomatic community here, through the DMWC, wants to support children in Macedonia. And it is a privilege to be involved in that.

The Centre for Street Children in Shuto Orizari does fantastic work supporting Roma children. It offers them a refuge away from the street and gives them a safe environment in which they can learn and enjoy themselves. On visits to the Centre I have always been struck by the positive energy there and by how much the children benefit from that. I hope some of the children can be involved in the Bazaar and in events leading up to it – that way everyone involved will have the opportunity to meet them and see for themselves what a difference the Centre makes.

**What is your experience of charity work of the diplomatic communities in other countries, and how do you see the charity engagement of the expat community and international organizations in the Republic of Macedonia?**

My greatest involvement in charity work has been through an organisation set up by my wife Veronique in Moscow to support families of children with Down's syndrome. That is an important project for us. But I have also been involved in many projects and initiatives in previous



postings, often working with the children of diplomatic families to support local communities. A favourite example was supporting the Taipei European School in sending groups of students to Cambodia to help build new houses.

Diplomatic communities are, in my experience, keen to support local charity work. They are also extremely well-placed to do this. And Macedonia is no exception. I am sure we can, collectively, make a difference.

**How do you see the role of Dobrodojde Macedonia Welcome Centre in Macedonia's expat community and wider society?**

It is central. It plays a great role, not just through initiatives like the Bazaar, but also in helping diplomatic families orientate themselves here and enjoy themselves through their postings, and in bringing foreign diplomats closer to their Macedonian hosts. That's important. Keep it up! We really appreciate it.