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ANALYTICA INTERNS' YEARBOOK **2011**

EDITORS

Ana Stojilovska
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Dear reader,

Critical thinking, interdisciplinary policy analysis and knowledge producing has always been Analytica's driving force. Our Internship Programme aims to share this experience with young and prosperous researchers and rising experts in the areas in which we work. The Programme offers students and young professionals from all over the world to put their knowledge into practice and by doing so to contribute to Macedonia's society and beyond.

Analytica's interns have different backgrounds, spend two and a half months in Macedonia, and conduct research on topics both of their and Analytica's relevance. Working in an extremely diverse and vibrant environment such as Analytica gives them a sense of a belonging to a multicultural and professional ambience. Our think tank remains to be one of the few in the Western Balkan region which offers internship placements to students and young professionals who want to grasp firsthand experience of the think tank work and put into practice their academic and professional expertise.

In 2011 Analytica continued its Internship Programme and hosted eight research interns from Macedonia and abroad, all of which were residential. They had backgrounds: in law, political science, sociology, European studies, migration studies and human rights and came from Macedonia, Turkey, Romania, Greece and Croatia. The interns' research was diverse and included the visa liberalization process in Macedonia, the dialogue with the civil society in the country, the Macedonian Roma policy, the Balkan "Visegrad-like" co-operation, the Macedonian readiness to combat cyber security treats, the Macedonia's relations with IMF as well as the rethinking of the European Neighborhood Policy.

Analytica is glad to present the issue of the Interns' Yearbook for 2011 containing seven policy papers which the interns have pre-pared during their stay in Analytica. Analytica's team is convinced that the research papers tackled important topics for Macedonia and the region in 2011 and that they contain interesting views and conclusions. The team of Analytica wishes you pleasant reading.

Kind regards,

Turker Miftar, Executive Director

CONTENT

Inter-sector cooperation in Macedonia – Improving the dialogue with the civil society at local and national level

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INTRODUCTION

One of the characteristics of contemporary societies is their diversity: ethnic, national, linguistic, religious and cultural, and as a consequence nowadays almost all democracies are pluralistic. In most of the countries these diversities are seen more and more as a threat to the dominant culture,[1] and thus the narrative of ethnic heterogeneity still prevails in the public discourse[2]. That is why, in particular for divided societies, the development of cross-cutting cleavages is considered favorable for a stable and effective democracy, and the civil society is seen as one of the means to generate it.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the role of the civil society[3] in the different stages of the decision-making process in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (from now on referred to as Macedonia). This is performed by studying its cooperation with the Government and other state institutions as a representative example for cooperation between the public and non-governmental/private sector. Macedonia is taken as a particular case study from two perspectives. Firstly it has recently undergone a transition process that aimed to move from an authoritarian regime and establish a democratic political system. Secondly, it is an ethnically divided society[4], between the majority represented by the ethnic Macedonians and the largest minority, the ethnic Albanians. In this context, achieving a consolidated democracy in which there is no potential of conflict seems like a difficult goal to achieve in the absence of the cooperation between all the stakeholders in the society, from state to non-governmental and private business sector. Therefore, this paper aims to show the relevance of creating networks of governance in which the decision-making platform is broadened including the input from the civil society, and the decisions are not taken only by the political leaders, divided on ethnic grounds. In this context the civil society, together with the business sector and the media, play an important role in strengthening inter-ethnic relations.[5]

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[1] See the example of the German chancellor, Angela Merkel who stated that the concept of *multikulti* "has failed utterly". Shortly after that her counterpart from the United Kingdom, David Cameron, took a similar stand, by stating that there is a need of "a clear sense of shared national identity".

[2] For more on ethnic heterogeneity and ethnicity see Žagar, Mitja. "Diversity Management and Integration: From Ideas to Concepts." *European Yearbook of Minority Issues* 6 (2006): 307-327.

[3] Although the concept of civil society is broader, in this paper, due to the space limit, it will only refer to the civic organizations.

[4] Not only the political divisions follow the ethnic lines – this also applies to the mass media, non-governmental organizations, or different associations.

[5] "Results of participatory assessment - National and local capacities for strengthening inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration." UNDP the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. http://www.undp.org.mk (accessed June 30, 2011).

BACKGROUND

After gaining its independence in 1991, Macedonia was warned by both domestically and internationally commentators of an imminent crisis, which escalated ten years later with a violent inter-ethnic conflict.[6] In order to end the conflicts, in 2001, the representatives of two of the majority ethnic groups in Macedonia (the Macedonians and the ethnic Albanians) decided to sign a peace agreement, called the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA), which gave more rights to the minorities. The OFA introduced a system of power-sharing that partly follows the consociationalist approach envisaged by Arend Lijphart. Ten years after the OFA was signed the situation in terms of inter-ethnic relations improved visibly. Lijphart's model of power-sharing proved to be the best solution for divided societies that reached the point of violent conflicts and civil wars such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. However, he based his theory on the idea of "ruling elite",[7] which in practice translated into "political elites" (top-down approach of decision-making) and led to an institutionalization of ethnicity[8]. The ruling elites in Macedonia are divided on ethnic grounds and this implicitly becomes the principle of making decisions. That is why, on the long term, consociationalism only leads to more segregation and more emphasis is put on the differences that exist between the ethnic groups. As a consequence, the tensions and discontent still exist both among the people (majority and minorities) and at the political level. On the other hand, although the emerging civil society after 1990 was also ethnically divided in the beginning[9], the practice of these days shows that the civil society organizations (CSOs) are mixed in terms of the ethnicity of their members, and aim at serving the interests of all communities.

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[6] Bieber, Florian. "Power Sharing and the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement." In *Power Sharing and the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement*. Skopje: Friedrich Eberto Stiftung, 2008. 7-40.

[7] For more about "elite" in consociationalism see Sisk, Timothy D. *Power sharing and international mediation in ethnic conflicts*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996, p. 34.

[8] Bieber, Florian. "The Challenge of Institutionalizing Ethnicity in the Western Balkans: Managing change in deeply divided societies." *European Yearbook of Minority Issues* 3, no. 4 (2003): 20.

[9] Ilievski, Zoran. "Country Specific Report on Actors and Processes of EthnoMobilization, Violent Conflicts and Consequences: Macedonia." EURAC research. http://www.eurac.edu/en/research/institutes/imr/Documents/MacedoniaReport.pdf (accessed July 10, 2011).

ANALYSIS

In 2007 the Government adopted the "Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil sector"[10] together with a four-year action plan of implementation. The paper will be based on the analysis of this Strategy, as this is the last year of its implementation. At the end of the year the Strategy will be revised with the help of the technical assistance team of the European Union Delegation in Macedonia and based on the experiences from the last four years. In addition the paper will use secondary information from the existing reports regarding the implementation of the Strategy. The Strategy of the City of Skopje for Cooperation with NGOs is also relevant as an example coming from the local level. Concerning information from primary sources, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the key actors engaged in the implementation: citizens associations and representatives from the State and local public sector. The questions are formulated to determine if and how they cooperate with actors from different sectors, their knowledge and experience on the national Strategy (the Strategy of the City of Skopje, where appropriate) and the Unit for Cooperation with the NGOs, or the role of the ethnic criteria in building partnerships and the value of the civil sector in developing the inter-ethnic dialogue.

In order to narrow down the analysis, from the seven goals of the national Strategy, the paper will look only into two: *Participation of the civil sector in the decision-making process;* and *Maintaining inter-sector cooperation.* On the other hand, regarding the local Strategy, the focus will be on: *Establishing mechanisms of cooperation*; *Developing strategic partnerships between the City of Skopje and civic organizations*; *Increasing the participation of civic organizations in the planning processes and the development of specialized strategies*; and *Increase civic organizations' participation in the processes of strengthening inter-ethnic relations*. These goals are the most relevant for the scope of the paper.

- No involvement of the Local Self-Government in creating, developing and implementing the national Strategy
- No system for ensuring participation of CSOs in the policy-making process
- Society divided along ethnic lines
- The work of the Unit for Cooperation with the NGOs

Box 1. Identified problems concerning the inter-sector cooperation in Macedonia

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[10] See "Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil sector." European Center for Not-for-Profit Law. http://www.ecnl.org.hu (accessed June 20, 2011).

Further on, the paper will discuss the main issues identified, that concern the inter-sector cooperation in Macedonia such as the participation of the CSOs in the policy-making process, the ethnic division, the work of the Governmental Unit for Cooperation with the NGOs, or the national Strategy in relation to the Local Self-Government.

The National Strategy vs. the Local Self-Government

The main aim of the "Strategy for the Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society" is, as can be understood from its title, to promote the cooperation of the Government, and some of its relevant ministries according to their field of competence[11], with the civil sector. The active key actors, that have a role in the implementation of the Strategy, are the citizen associations, the relevant ministries and the Unit for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations.

The Action Plan that accompanies the Strategy is definitely a plus as it furthers its implementation. However, the fact that it is too ambitious makes the goals almost impossible to reach in the defined period of four years. At the end of the four-year period of implementing the Strategy there is still a lack of political will to completely engage the civil society as an equal stakeholder in the decision-making process, as no policy was adopted in this sense. Developing the Strategy was a big step forward, but there is still a need to further institutionalize it and conceive a national policy on cooperation. This policy should have a binding character for all the levels of government, as at this point it does not apply to the Local Self-Government where actually the strongest impact could be attained.

Although the Strategy is not binding for the Local Self-Government, it was expected that it will indirectly motivate this segment "without which the overall development would be incomplete and limited".[12] In this context, it is surprising to see that the representatives of the Local Self-Government were not consulted or involved in any way in the preparation of the national Strategy. [13] This, together with the fact that the national Strategy is mostly focused on the Ministries and the Government and not on the NGOs, is one of the criticisms that came from the local sector. In this sense, the emphasis on the civil society is much more visible in the local Strategy of the City of Skopje. The local "counterpart" of the national Strategy for cooperation proves to be more accurate in defining its main goal which is "to ensure active involvement of civic organizations in the processes of defining development activities and initiatives of

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[11] It is not specified which are these "relevant ministries".

[12] "Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil sector." European Center for Not-for-Profit Law. http://www.ecnl.org.hu (accessed June 20, 2011).

[13] Interview with Mirjana Apostolova – Deputy Head of the Department for International Cooperation and Cooperation with NGOs and foundations, City of Skopje.

the City of Skopje, as well as to create preconditions for establishment of effective partnerships"[14]. In the case of the Strategy of the City of Skopje for Cooperation with the NGOs, the key stakeholders in the implementation are the administration of the city and the civic organizations.

The Strategy of the City of Skopje was adopted in 2007, in the same year in which the Department for International Cooperation and Cooperation with NGOs and foundations of the City of Skopje was established. In creating the local Strategy for cooperation, the Department worked closely with the General Secretariat of the Government and the Unit for Cooperation with the NGOs on national level. Nevertheless, the approach of the Strategy of the City of Skopje is different from the national Strategy as the former shows how the NGOs will actually be part of the policy of the city and does not focus on the work of the Department. At this moment, apart from the City of Skopje, only the Municipality of Karpos developed, at the local level, a Strategic Action Plan for Cooperation. This proves that mechanisms for cooperation are still lacking at the local level, but there are good examples to be followed. In addition, CSOs such as the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) are offering their expertise in a pilot project that is being implemented this year for creating strategies for cooperation with the civil sector in three municipalities: Bitola, Jegunovce and Debar.

Box 2. Strategies for cooperation at the local level[15]

Participation of the CSOs in the decision-making process
According to Civil Rights Defenders, an international human rights organization, the civil society in Macedonia has showed improvements in terms of its impact on the decision-making process, but on the other hand, the political pressure on the non-governmental organizations has increased, which affects their ability to be critical about the government.[16] However, in the last Progress Report of the European Commission (EC) on Macedonia it was stated that the involvement of the civil society in the policy development is still limited.[17] Both the EC Progress Report and the study of Freedom House (an independent watchdog organization)[18]

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[14] "Strategy of the City of Skopje for Co-operation with the NGOs." Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe | OSCE. http://www.osce.org/skopje/30747?download=false (accessed July 15, 2011).

[15] Interviews with Mirjana Apostolova – Deputy Head of the Department for International Cooperation and Cooperation with NGOs and Foundations, City of Skopje; Emilija Georgievska – Senior officer for cooperation with NGOs and Foundations, Department for International Cooperation and Cooperation with NGOs and Foundations; Marija Sazdevski – Junior Project Officer, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC). Hafner - Ademi, Tanja. *The Missing Link? Development and Functioning of Civil Dialogue in the Western Balkans*. Skopje: Balkan Civil Society Development Network, 2010.

[16] "Human rights in Macedonia." Civil Rights Defenders. http://www.civilrightsdefenders.org (accessed June 29, 2011).

[17] "FYROM - Progress Report 2010." European Commission - Enlargement. http://ec.europa.eu (accessed June 29, 2011).

agree that institutional mechanisms, which encourage public participation in the decision-making, should be developed. One reason is that, even after the implementation of the Strategy, there is still no system for ensuring the participation of the civil society in the decision-making process, its consultation remaining rather something ad hoc and selective.[19] Moreover, there is no consistency in the follow-up of the recommendations of the civil society.

If the contacted representatives of the Ministries state that they "involve the citizens through their NGOs in almost all segments", concerning "the creation of laws, regulations, the allocation of subsidies, policy-making and decision-making"[20], the CSOs representatives claim that they have never been consulted in drafting laws at the central level[21]. Nevertheless the CSOs affirm that they are regularly contacting the state or local authorities in order to present their policy proposals. The cooperation with the local authorities seems to be more fruitful as the interviewed representatives of the CSOs[22] stated that they are regularly consulted by the municipal authorities, that their opinions are taken into consideration, and that they are also involved in the implementation process.

The participation of the civil sector in the decision-making process is one of the goals set by the Government in the national Strategy in order to develop principles for the participation of CSOs in the decision-making, but so far there is no structured mechanism to achieve that. According to experts' opinion, the provisions in the Strategy are "ambiguous or may undermine the essence of participation to policy- and decision-making"[23].

Most of the interviewees agreed that a step forward was made in this sense, as (mainly) the Ministries have involved the representatives of the civil society in their working groups for drafting new laws. Nonetheless they consider that the procedures for the participation of the CSOs in the decision-making process should be improved and, very important, should be made official through a centrally established system, as to eliminate the "random", irregular character of contacting the civil society.

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[18] "Nations in Transit 2011 - Macedonia." Freedom House. http://www.freedomhouse.org (accessed June 29, 2011).

[19]"Macedonia - Civil dialogue." Balkan Civil Society Development Network. http://www.balkancsd.net/policy-research-analysis/civil-dialogue/national-level/macedonia/435-i1-general-practice-cases.html (accessed June 30, 2011).

[20] Sonja Traikova – Head of Department for Public Relations, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Republic of Macedonia & Katerina Ivanovska – Junior Collaborator, Cabinet of the Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Republic of Macedonia.

[21] Kristina Pavloski – Program Coordinator, Center for Civic Initiative (CCI).

[22] Kristina Pavloski – Program Coordinator, Center for Civic Initiative (CCI), Marija Sazdevski – Junior Project Officer, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC).

[23] Hafner - Ademi, Tanja . *The Missing Link? Development and Functioning of Civil Dialogue in the Western Balkans*. Skopje: Balkan Civil Society Development Network, 2010.

Division along ethnic lines

Concerning the inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation, the research did show that the civil society has a positive contribution, since the civil society is not considered to be divided along ethnic lines as opposed to the political segment. According to the MCIC representative, "for the civil society it is not the case at all to speak about division, because that is why the civil society exists – to break these kinds of stereotypes".[24] Another argument brought to this debate was that, as most of the communities in Macedonia are mixed, the CSOs are mixed as well, their main purpose being to work together towards resolving community issues.[25] The CSOs that target activities only towards a certain ethnic group are usually doing that because there is a typical problem in that particular ethnic group. This can actually prove to be beneficial and does not necessarily mean that the civil society is fragmented. However, even in this case the CSOs can be mixed (in particular the CSOs dealing with the ethnic Roma). The respondents from all the sectors (public: local and state, non-governmental and international) showed that they are aware of the role of the cooperation between the civil society and the public sector in moving the focus from ethnic-related issues to inter-ethnic dialogue: "CCI (Center for Civic Initiative) values the cooperation between different stakeholders as it believes that the cooperation can overcome the inter-ethnic misunderstandings in the divided societies".[26]

This paper argues that the OFA, as based on the consociational model, focuses on the role of the political elite, and does not envisage the role of the civil society as a relevant stakeholder in the decision-making process. Also it encourages inter-ethnic cooperation but only at the elites' level, whereas the whole society and the political system are segregated along ethnic lines. There is a need to strengthen the inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration at all the levels and for this the civil society can have a valuable input.

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[24] Interview with Marija Sazdevski – Junior Project Officer, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC).
[25] Interview with a representative of the international community in Macedonia dealing with the Civil Society Sector.
[26] Kristina Pavloski – Program Coordinator, Center for Civic Initiative (CCI).

The work of the Unit for Cooperation with the NGOs

Units for Cooperation with NGOs existed at the national level and at the level of the City of Skopje even before the Strategies were adopted. Although the Government Unit for Cooperation with NGOs was supposed to be an instrument that connects the public and civil sector and facilitates the inter-dialogue and flow of information between the two, it has been criticized for its lack of independence from the Government and for its inefficiency, which is a consequence of the bureaucratic top-down steering. Moreover, most of the activities mentioned in the Strategy, that the Unit is supposed to implement, are focusing more on its development and the relationship with the Ministries, with little accent on the actual cooperation with the CSOs or how this should take place.

Nevertheless, the views of the interviewed experts regarding the Unit for Cooperation with the NGOs are divided. The representative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy does not find the dependency of the Unit on the Government as an issue; however, he admits that this affects the efficiency in making decisions, as the whole procedure is much longer.[27] Also the representative of the MCIC considers that their cooperation with the Unit is a productive one[28], but, according to her, this is also due to the fact that their organization is one of the biggest and well developed in Macedonia, and that the other institutions are the ones in need of their support and expertise.[29] All of the interviewees agree that the Unit is too bureaucratic and this is an impediment in the cooperation with the civil sector. The fact that it is constrained to request approvals for all of its activities or actions makes the Unit less visible for the civil society.[30]

According to the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategy, due to its organizational setup, the Unit for Cooperation "does not provide the necessary flexibility and does not have the required authority in the hierarchy of the General Secretariat of the Government to respond and act proactively in realizing the measures of the Strategy, but also in establishing direct communication with the civil society organizations".[31]

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[27] Interview with Dusan Tomsik – Contact person in the Government for the Department for Cooperation with the NGOs, the Department for Social Protection, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Republic of Macedonia.
[28] "Maybe because you have to know the persons there, and who is in charge of what; it is like that everywhere."
[29] Interview with Marija Sazdevski – Junior Project Officer, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC).
[30] Interview with a representative of the international community in Macedonia dealing with the Civil Society Sector.
[31] "Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Sector ." Macedonian Center for International Cooperation. http://www.mcms.org.mk/en/our-work/research-and-publications/list-of-research-and-publications/553.html (accessed July 5, 2011).

In several contexts Croatia was given as a good practice example in terms of the institutional framework for the cooperation with the civil sector. That is because in Croatia, apart from the Governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs, created the Council for Civil Society Development in 2009. The Council is an independent advisory body to the Government of Croatia that has 27 members: 12 representatives of relevant state administrative bodies and the Croatian Government offices, 12 representatives of NGOs and 3 representatives of civil society from foundations, trade unions and employers' associations. The purpose of this Council is broad: it deals with lobbying, policy-making, but also with checking the decision-making process, or the involvement of the civil society in creating new legislation. It was set up as a forum where the representatives of CSOs can have direct meetings with the representatives from the public administration that should lead to consensual decisions on societal related matters.

Box 3. The case of Croatia [32]

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to analyze the role of the civil society in Macedonia, by going beyond what is written on paper, such as the strategies for cooperation between the public sector and the civil sector, and seeing what is actually implemented in practice. The paper stressed on the importance of this type of cooperation, in particular in the context of Macedonia being a divided society along ethnic lines.

The power sharing model that was implemented in Macedonia ten years ago through the OFA should be constantly improved as to suit the present context and include elites from different spheres, in particular from the civil society. As the OFA has more a political approach, based on ethnically divided ruling political parties, it only encourages more segregation between the majority and the minorities. What might be nowadays more suitable for a divided society is the hybrid model of complex power sharing, which encourages the involvement of the civil society in the decision-making process, recognizes the importance of all actors, and also stresses on the idea that for different levels of government different strategies should be applied. As it was recently defined, "complex power-sharing

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[32] "The Council for Civil Society Development" Government of the Republic of Croatia. http://www.uzuvrh.hr (accessed July 23, 2011).

generates a multi-level process of inclusive access to resources and to public decision-making by nominated groups with international involvement".[33]

Moreover, there is a need for a type of network governance, in which the formulation and implementation of public policies is made by different actors. Network governance implies a shift from government to governance, meaning a change in the role of the state and in the way social problems are controlled. Instead of imposing a certain will, in governance the state (because of the limits it encounters and the complex challenges) involves in the decision-making process actors from different levels.[34] According to different scholars, governing is no longer about running the centralized state only, but it should be about managing public and private actors that, especially if they act together, could have an important contribution in solving public problems. In this context, most authors define governance as a process in which both public and private actors are involved, and their activities are coordinated through formal and informal rules.[35]

As a result of the concluded analysis in the text, this policy paper recommends:

- Involve the Local Self-Government in the revision of the national Strategy. In this way it is more probable that the Municipalities will follow the provisions of the Strategy or will use it as a guideline to create their own binding strategy.
- Develop institutional mechanisms to facilitate the regular involvement of the civil society in the decision-making process. These mechanisms can include: conceiving a national policy for cooperation that specifies means of accountability of the key actors and even sanctions for non-compliance with the provisions; clear follow up mechanisms stating how the opinions of the CSOs will be taken into consideration and how they will be involved in the next stages of the decision-making process; the creation of a national data base administrated by the Government, where the CSOs can register. This will enable the CSOs to be informed about the public body's activities and plans in first hand and on time, as a more structured means of cooperating with the civil society and a more transparent way of selecting/inviting the CSOs for projects or debates.
- Delegate some of the responsibilities of the State and Local Government to the CSOs as they have the capacity to keep aside the politics of ethnicity and to develop the inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation. The CSOs can fill some of the gaps that the

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[33]"Complex Power-Sharing: Workshop Report." Department of Polis: PPSIS Faculty. http://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/research/cps/workshops_1_report.html#003 (accessed June 20, 2011).

[34] Peters, B.G., and J. Pierre. "Governance without Government? Rethinking Public Administration." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 8, no. 2 (1998): 223-243.

[35] Sending, O.J., and I.B. Neumann. "Governance to Governmentality: Analyzing NGOs, States, and Power." *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006): 651-672.

local and state authorities have in terms of human resources and expertise, as the public authorities have more experience in the policy-making, but the CSOs have more experience in the field[36] and they are closer to the citizens, the recipients of the public services.

- Give more authority to the Unit for Cooperation with the NGOs in the hierarchy of the General Secretariat of the Government or create an additional joint CSOs-Government body to it that is more flexible and independent in terms of decision-making. This new unit should act as an advisory body to the Government and should have members from all the sectors: governmental, non-governmental and from the private sector as well. In this sense Croatia can serve as an example, as it is considered to have the most comprehensive and systematic civil dialogue framework in South East Europe.[37]

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[36] Interview with Dusan Tomsik – Contact person in the Government for the Department for Cooperation with the NGOs, the Department for Social Protection, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Republic of Macedonia.

[37] Hafner - Ademi, Tanja. *The Missing Link? Development and Functioning of Civil Dialogue in the Western Balkans*. Skopje: Balkan Civil Society Development Network, 2010.

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LIST OF INTERVIEWED PERSONS

- **Marjan Kelemen**, **Dana Gapkovska** – Local Development Office, Aerodrom Municipality.

- **Mirjana Apostolova** – Deputy Head of the Department for International Cooperation and Cooperation with NGOs and Foundations, City of Skopje.

- **Emilija Georgievska** – Senior officer for cooperation with NGOs and Foundations, Department for International Cooperation and Cooperation with NGOs and Foundations.

- Representative of the international community in Macedonia dealing with the Civil Society Sector.

- **Marija Sazdevski** – Junior Project Officer, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC).

- **Kristina Pavloski** – Program Coordinator, Center for Civic Initiative.

- **Katerina Ivanovska** – Junior Collaborator, Cabinet of the minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, the Republic of Macedonia.

- **Sonja Trajkova** – Head of Department for Public Relations (P.R.), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, the Republic of Macedonia.

- **Dusan Tomsik** – Contact person in the Government for the Department for Cooperation with the NGOs, Collaborator in the Department for Social Protection, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Republic of Macedonia.

The abuse of visa liberalization in Macedonia: What went wrong?

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Introduction

After coping with number of challenges and the fulfillment of the criteria set in the roadmap, finally the border barriers between Macedonia and the Schengen area countries have been lifted. One of Macedonia's top five foreign policies' priorities was reached in December 2009 when the European Council decided to grant visa free travel to and throughout the Schengen area to the citizens of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Nevertheless, not everything turned out to be as planned in Macedonia, partly because not everyone understood the meaning of the visa liberalization and partly because many tried to abuse it, which resulted with the first wave of the false asylum seekers. Apparently the visa liberalization was seen by a number of Macedonian citizens, predominantly from the Roma and Albanian ethnic communities, as a possibility to individualy improve their financial status, go and work or even live in some of the countries of the European Union (EU). This was done even though these actions are not allowed by the liberalization procedures and have raised many issues since the international law is not familiar with the existence of the economic asylum, at least not yet. In the first year after the liberalization, Macedonia, in the report for Europe and selected non-European countries, was listed as a major country of origin of asylum seekers with the highest relative increase of more than 599% asylum seekers. [1] With time, the number of asylum seekers from Macedonia grew and so did the concern of the EU countries. This trend further developed and became a serious threat to the whole process of the visa liberalization.

The aim of this paper is to present the phenomenon called "abuse of visa liberalization-false asylum seeking", its results and consequences with the purpose to recommend policies which Macedonia should undertake in order to prevent more asylum seekers and stricter visa regulations. The methodology includes analysis of the European Commission's (EC) progress reports on Macedonia 2008-2010, official EU documents, official Macedonian documents, the public policy research organizations' papers written on this matter, a wide range of media coverage as well as an interview with a former President and current EU adviser.

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[1] UNHCR, *Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries 2010-Statistical overview of asylum applications lodged in Europe and selected non-European countries,* (Geneva, 2011) pg.11,13.

Background of visa liberalization

The visa liberalization process has its beginning in 2003 when at the Thessaloniki summit the EU acknowledged the importance and the necessity of the countries of Western Balkans (WB) focusing their efforts on the liberalization of the visa regime.[2] Four years later the first concrete step towards visa liberalisation, the Agreement on visa facilitation and the Agreement on readmission between the Republic of Macedonia and the European Union were negotiated[3]. These agreements signed in September 2007 and entered into force on 1 January 2008, started the transitional stage towards establishing a visa-free regime for the citizens of Macedonia. In line with all of this, a visa liberalization dialogue with the WB was launched and the tailor-made Roadmap for Macedonia with certain criteria was presented.[4] The requirements consisted of four blocks: Block 1 - of the security of documents; Block 2 - border management, asylum and migration; Block 3 - public order and security, as well as Block 4 - foreign relations and human rights[5]. For the whole process, the country's capacity to ensure correct and effective implementation of the visa facilitation and readmission agreements was taken into consideration while the EC provided financial and technical assistance to support for implementation of the roadmap.

As stated in the initial report of the EC, Macedonia has made significant progress in all four blocks and was from the very beginning recognized as a leader in the region[6]. After the adoption of the EC's proposal for the abolition of visas for citizens of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, in November 2009, during the Swedish presidency of the EU, the Council of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs made a decision to liberalize the visa regime of the EU for citizens of Macedonia, through amendment of Regulation 539/2001[7].

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[2] *Declaration of the EU-Western Balkans Summit* , (Thessaloniki,2003).

[3] The Readmission agreements that the EU signs with the third countries to facilitate the expulsion to their own country of third -country nationals residing without authorization in a Member State and that include the false asylum seekers. Republic of Macedonia as a contracting party will readmit to its territory without any formality persons who are residing without authorization in the other country or who have crossed its frontier illegally or in this case who are looking for asylum status on wrong grounds.

[4] Analytica, *Ending 'Ghetoization' of the Western Balkans- Visa liberalisation process*, (Skopje,2009) pg.5

[5] European Commission, *Visa liberalisation with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia roadmap* , (2008) available at http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/White%20List%20Project%20Paper%20-%20Roadmap%20Macedonia.pdf (last accessed 04.05.2011).

[6] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, *liberalization of the EU's visa regime towards the Republic of Macedonia,* available at http://www.mfa.gov.mk/default1.aspx?ItemID=402 (last accessed 04.05.2011).

[7] Tanja Fajon, *Report on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders of Member States and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement* (COM(2010)0256 – C7-0134/2010 – 2010/0137(COD)), (2010).

Since December 2009 Macedonia is transferred from the so-called Black List[8] to the White List[9] enabling Macedonian citizens the right to travel freely into the Schengen zone without a visa.

The exact meaning of Visa Liberalization for Macedonian citizens

In order to explain the essence of the abuse of visa liberalization, firstly the meaning of the visa liberalization must be clarified. The visa-free regime for the WB is a purely political action which aims to incorporate all countries in the European zone by ensuring the freedom of movement. In the Communication to the European Parliament and the Council named "Western Balkans: Enhancing the European perspective" the EC stated that promoting people-to-people contacts between the Western Balkans and the EU is of paramount importance. In this occasion the European Council invited the Commission to take initiatives to promote this people-to-people contact, in particular in the areas of visas and scholarships.[10]

According to the new visa regime rules, the citizens of Macedonia who own biometric passports can travel without a visa for a short stay in the countries of the Schengen zone. The stay should not exceed 90 days, meaning that the citizens of Republic of Macedonia have neither the right to a longer stay than 3 months, nor the right to live and work in the Schengen countries.[11]

Besides the biometric passport, there are other entry requirements that apply to all nationals of third countries who travel to the Schengen zone. They are linked to the possession of sufficient funds for duration of stay and return to Macedonia, possession of evidence of the purpose and conditions of intended stay, then determining that passengers do not exceed the maximum approved length of stay and that passengers are not considered a threat to public order, public health or internal security. Macedonian citizens can be rejected for entry into the Schengen zone unless they meet the entry requirements. Citizens of Macedonia who do not posses biometrical passport or citizens who wish to stay in the Schengen zone longer than 90 days require a long-term visa or residence permit.

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[8] The Black list consists of countries which need visa to enter EU's external border.

[9] The White list consists of countries which do not need visa to enter EU's external border.

[10] European Commission, *Western Balkans: Enhancing the European perspective,* (Brussels,2008).

[11] Nationals of the Republic without a visa for short stays will be able to travel to 25 countries of the European Union: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Finland, France, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Sweden, Spain and 3 countries which are not members of the Union, but are part of the Schengen zone: Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

Analysis of the problem

It was back in March 2010, only 3 months after the granting of the visa free regime, when the first signs of the abuse of visa liberalization appeared. "Germany is concerned about the false asylum seekers,"[12] "Belgium returned our first 23 asylum seekers"[13] and "Europe risen to its feet by the Macedonian asylum seekers"[14] are only few of the front titles and breaking news in the daily media for the

Table 1. Asylum applicants in the EU-27 by citizenship of applicants

	Q3 2009			Q4 2009			Q1 2010			Q2 2010			Q3 2010					
MK	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Jul-Sep 2010	Q2 to Q3 2010 change in %	Last 12 months
	65	90	65	80	65	110	65	750	420	235	155	230	275	615	1260	2155	248	4265

Source: Eurostat

stories of the people who were returned in their homes after they did not get the asylum status and its benefits. As soon as the rules for crossing the borders of the EU countries were changed, some Macedonian citizens mainly from the northern part of the country as from the municipalities of Kumanovo, Lipkovo and Roma citizens from the municipality of Shuto Orizari, used the asylum as an excuse for applying for a permanent stay in the EU countries. Soon this category of people was called "false asylum seekers".

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[12] MIA, Germanija zagrizena poradi prilozvot na azilanti, (14.11.2010), article available at : http://daily.mk/cluster3/1ad49b1e2b5fd563ef147b11c34fae0d/464390 (last accessed on 11.05.2011).
[13] Alfa TV, *Belgija ni gi vrati prvite 23 azilanti*,(11.03. 2010) available at : http://www.time.mk/read/c854ab312a/04629a362e/index.html (last accessed on 04.05.2011).
[14] Sitel TV, Evropa se krena na noze od makedonskite azilanti,(22.10.2010), available at: http://www.sitel.com.mk/dnevnik/makedonija/evropa-se-krena-na-noze-od-makedonskite-azilanti (last accessed on 04.05.2011).

These false asylum seekers have being applying for this status on the basis of a range of reasons starting with the bad economic situation[15] till the fact that Macedonia is a partially free country regarding the civil rights and liberties. The latter was alleged to be a reason since the most of the false asylum seekers belong to ethnic minorities in Macedonia. However, one of the main reasons for the phenomena is that the asylum seekers were uninformed about the meaning of the visa liberalization. There was a poor informational campaign in Macedonia on this issue, meaning the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held only one thematic briefing on aspects of implementation of the visa liberalization with the representatives of tourist agencies and the media.[16] Being uninformed, made the citizens an easy prey of the manipulators who promised that the travel tickets bought in their agencies will lead them to their asylum status and its accompanying economical benefits and financial compensations. It must not be neglected that some of the Macedonian citizens who traveled to the Schengen area countries despite knowing the legal procedure, the obligations of the visa liberalization and the rules of the readmission agreement, went there anyway because of the financial compensations. The German newspaper Focus wrote that the financial aid that Germany paid to the asylum seekers for a family with four children is more than 2,500 Euros, and that was a big incentive for the large number of asylum applications from Macedonia.[17]

Furthermore, one ethnic Albanian from Macedonia admitted in the media that he used the asylum to get social and health insurance, alleging to be a Belgium patient.[18] That is why the Croatian experts assessed the situation of Albanian asylum seekers from Macedonia as an issue of the leaders of ethnic Albanian parties in Macedonia because they did not promptly tried to educate and prepare citizens.

Table 2. Origin of asylum applications lodged in the European Union (27) | 2009 and 2010

Origin	2009	2010	Total	Annual	Share	Rank

[15] Interview with former President and current EU adviser, May 2011.

[16] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, Briefings, available at http://www.mfa.gov.mk/default1.aspx?ItemID=334 (last accessed 11.05.2011).

[17] Nova Makedonija newspaper, Baraat azil za da dobijat 2500 evra pomosh , available at:
http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=1025101035597&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=22115 (last accessed 04.05.2011).

[18] Nova Makedonija newspaper, Azilantni ili "briselski pacienti", available at:
http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=38101027579&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21928 (last accessed 04.05.2011.

					2009	2010	To-tal	2009	2010
MK	749	5 773	6 522	67%	0.3	2.4	1.4	40	10

Source: Eurostat

The statistics in Table 1[19] and 2[20] show that the increased number of asylum seekers raises significantly right after the visa liberalization in December 2010. The third quarter of 2010 is the most alerting despite the fact that in this period lot of attention was put on this abuse by domestic and foreign politicians.

Table 3. First instance decisions by outcome across the 30 main groups of asylum applicants' countries of citizenship in the EU-27, 3rd quarter 2010 (rounded figures)

	Total decisions	**Total positive decisions**	**Refugee status**	**Subsidiary protection**	**Humanitarian reasons**	**Rejected**
MK – (MK)	945	30	20	**5**	5	920

Source: Eurostat

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[19] Anthony Albertinelli, Eurostat, *Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications in third quarter 2010* pg.3 Table 1b: Asylum applicants in the EU-271) by citizenship of applicants (including new asylum applicants), Q3/09-Q3/10 (rounded figures), available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-QA-11-001/EN/KS-QA-11-001-EN.PDF (last accessed 04.05.2011).

[20] UNHCR, *Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries 2010 -Statistical overview of asylum applications lodged in Europe and selected non-European countries,* (2011) pg.19 Table 5, available at http://www.unhcr.org/4d8c5b109.html (last accessed 04.05.2011).

As shown in Table 3[21] the ratio between the total positive decisions and the rejected applications for asylum is very large. This table also shows that 920 out of the 945 applications were based on economic grounds.

In its progress report, the EC mentions that shortly after the introduction of the visa free regime ill-founded asylum claims in several EU member states have been noted and that the authorities have reacted quickly to tackle the matter.[22] Several high representatives from Belgium, as the first most concerned country, visited Macedonia regarding this issue. Yves Leterme, the Prime Minister of Belgium and Meklior Wathelet, Secretary for Budget, Asylum and Migration in the Belgian Government in their visits urged the authorities to make greater efforts to prevent displacement and by recognizing the the problem of false asylum seekers recommended that a public campaign is needed in order the Macedonian citizens-asylum seekers in the EU to be informed about the meaning of the visa liberalization.

Nonetheless a new rise in asylum applications was registered in August and September 2010. Regarding this the Home Affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom sent a letter to the Minister of Interior Gordana Jankulovska in which she warned about the "very worrying phenomenon" of the rapid increase of persons from Macedonia seeking asylum, stating that this could seriously jeopardize the entire process of visa liberalization in the Western Balkans.[23]

One of the issues which influenced the abuse of the visa liberalization process are the quasi touristic agencies which in order to make more profit manipulated the citizens by promising them asylum status, financial gain and bright future outside Macedonia. The citizens from the municipality of Shuto Orizari claim that the agencies charged the passengers 90 EUR so they can "help" them get asylum status in the foreign countries.[24] The Mayor of Shuto Orizari Elvis Bajram said that he is not aware who assists the citizens from

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[21] Anthony Albertinelli, Eurostat, *Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications in third quarter 2010* pg.11 Table 6b: First instance decisions by outcome across the 30 main groups of asylum applicants countries of citizenship in the EU-27, 3rd quarter 2010 (rounded figures) , available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-QA-11-001/EN/KS-QA-11-001-EN.PDF (last accessed 04.05.2011).

[22]European Commission, *the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2010 progress report accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the EuropeanParliament and the Council Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011, (*Brussels,2010) pg.64-65 available at : http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/mk_rapport_2010_en.pdf (last accessed on 04.05.2011).

[23] Artice in the newspaper *Utrinski vesnik* available at : http://daily.mk/cluster3/f65a0b9b75a7a4a1eb08e2af40e62db9/431345 (last accessed 04.05.2011)

[24] Valentina Stojceska in the newspaper Vreme, Vladata nema plan za azilantskiot bran *,* (Skopje, 2010) available at http://www.vreme.com.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=2&tabid=1&EditionID=2151&ArticleID=150536 (last accessed on 11.05.2011).

his municipality in such a manner. Later on, there was a scandal which announced that one of these fraud travel agencies, the agency "Skaj VIM-AB" is owned by Mayor's brother and father, the latter a member of the Macedonian Parliament. [25]

The Former EU Ambassador in Macedonia Erwan Fouere added that the issue of abuse of visa liberalization raises the question of the living conditions in Macedonia as the main reason for search for a better life in the European countries. He advised that the Government should invest more in order the citizens not to leave their country[26]. However there seems to be a lack of understanding the gravity of the issue as on the official page of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs there is an official statement that says: experience from the implementation shows that the visa liberalization is impeccably implemented in practice.[27]

The "gains" of the visa liberalization abuse

As previously presented, the problem with the abuse of visa liberalization has led to negative consequences for Macedonia and the rest of the WB. The concern of the Schengen countries triggered mechanisms and new stricter rules which would prevent further spreading of the problem. The EU, having in consideration that the visa liberalization gives responsibilities both to the EU and to the third countries on the White Schengen list, adopted a declaration which introduced stronger monitoring in the visa liberalization usage in the countries of WB with increased border control, checking the biometric passports and enhanced intelligence cooperation. This declaration was a result of the appeals of the European politicians that in several occasions tried to warn and advice for the matter of the abuse of the visa liberalization.

The monitoring will be strengthened by the follow-up mechanism which will include joint work of Europol, Frontex and the EU missions to the countries. The monitoring was put in place for Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia but also for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The EC stands behind the monitoring and is allowed in case of difficulties, to propose a suspension to the visa-free travel. Eventually the EU can threaten with returning Macedonia on the black Schengen list. Such measures can be taken at the request of one

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[25] Article on *A1* television, 04.03.2011, available at: http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=120598 (last accessed on 04.05.2011).

[26] Article in the newspaper *Vreme* available at : http://daily.mk/cluster3/13b39c714f397cb2e846f4a3d4e76e69/431121 (last accessed on 04.05.2011).

[27] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, *liberalization of the EU's visa regime towards the Republic of Macedonia,* available at http://www.mfa.gov.mk/default1.aspx?ItemID=402 (last accessed 04.05.2011).

or two states in case they feel threatened by the great wave of asylum seekers[28]. Some EU member states such as France and Netherlands have already proposed stricter legislation possibly leading to suspension of visa free regime. This means that also the EU ministers could decide to reintroduce visa obligation. This mechanism also includes regular reports on visa-free regime for the WB every six months of which the first report is expected in June. In addition, the Belgium Prime Minister Mr. Wathelet in fact described the visa liberalization as a contract of confidence and further stated that its abuse could jeopardize its existence.[29]

A little and a lot

A little and a lot is the answer of the question how much was done and how much should be done regarding the problem of the abuse of visa liberalization by the Macedonian citizens. The focus will be put on the set of actions that the respective Macedonian institutions should undertake in order not to further endanger the visa liberalization process.

The reason that Macedonia was granted the visa liberalization status was the list of achievements starting from the high quality biometric travel and ID documents, over the Integrated Border Management system, the National Coordination Center for Border Management, the cooperation with FRONTEX, the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative till the enhanced capacity of the Border police which made the country a regional leader in fulfilling the respective criteria set in the roadmaps.

Informational campaigns

There were no intensive informational campaigns on national level regarding the rules and obligation stemming from visa-free travel, but however certain media stories made it clear that no EU country will give economic asylum, and all seekers of asylum will be send back without financial compensation. In addition, there were also no initiatives or measures from the concerned municipalities to address this issue and there were lack of possible strategies and other activities in order to inform the citizens about the consequences from illegal emigration.

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[28] Tanja Fajon former EU Parliament reporter on visa liberalization for the Balkans, article in newspaper Dnevnik, 24.11.2010, available at http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=BC13DFA4444892429F4634AA6A3A8777 (last accessed on 04.05.2011).
[29] Influx of Asylum Seekers in the EU : a threat to the visa-free regime, Script - March 2011, available at : http://www.seetv-exchanges.com/upload/documents/Asylum%20seekers%20EN.pdf (last accessed on 05.05.2011).

On the other hand, Albania's Interior minister has been campaigning intensively to raise public awareness about the seriousness of the issue. Through community meetings, leaflets, billboards and TV spots, the Albanian government has been giving a clear message that breaching EU regulations can have consequences. Such awareness raising campaigns were unfortunately not practiced in Macedonia.

Local communities and local authorities' acts of commitment

Poverty as a main reason for searching a better life outside the borders is a widely known fact. Even though it is more difficult to combat it on national level, there are ways and mechanisms which the municipalities from the concerned regions may undertake in order to provide information about the issue in question. The EU funds available for the municipalities are a great possibility to improve the citizens' quality of life since these funds can be used for combating energy poverty, raising awareness regarding environmental issues, strengthening human rights etc. The lack of proactive approach from the municipal administration to make the best use of the foreign funds also results in limited municipal budget and low level of quality of the communal services, which beside the economical problems, are some of the reasons for emigration. Strengthening the capacities of the municipal administration and municipal council in the area of emigration and further concretizing the actions of the local authorities in this matter with an action plan are necessary steps for combating poverty and indirectly the reasons for immigration.

In the instrument for Pre-accession Assistance – IPA 2007-2013, for instance, the local communities are eligible to apply for the following components: the Component 1 – Transition Assistance and Institution Building: Offering more efficient services to citizens (supporting decentralization): Grant support for building local infrastructure; Component 2 – Cross border Cooperation: Grant support for infrastructure, cultural and economic relations with neighboring municipalities; Component 3 - Regional Development (Environment): Using modern systems for environmental protection (construction of water treatment plants, regional landfills) and for Component 5 - Rural Development: Grants schemes for diversification of rural economy (an alternative tourism) and grants for the construction of rural infrastructure[30].

Besides this, there is a wide range of other pre-accession support and foreign assistance from bilateral and multilateral donors[31], The Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX)[32] as a possibly source of finances for the municipalities to apply for. How-

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[30] Secretariat for European Affairs/IPA, http://www.sep.gov.mk/Default.aspx?ContentID=26

[31] Secretariat for European affairs Other foreign assistance, available at http://www.sep.gov.mk/Default.aspx?ContentID=27 (last accessed on 11.05.2011).

ever the municipalities could invest their own resources in other productive projects. Moreover, it must be made clear that the EU funds and other foreign assistance can help the government's policies, but they cannot by themselves solve the problems.[33]

Enhancing the Border Police

Border Police checks currently focus on establishing the identities of persons by means of checking travel and vehicle documents. However, the Border Police should also check whether the people who travel meet the necessary criteria as having necessary funds for a stay in the member countries of the Schengen zone. In addition, efforts should be made to deliver appropriate training to all Border Police personnel to ensure that border checks are conducted effectively in accordance with EU requirements and best practices. There is also a need to improve and modernize the equipment required to undertake effective border surveillance.[34] Even though the Border Police has access to the Ministry of the Interior's data communication network as well as to the relevant databases, the Police Stations responsible for Border Surveillance still has no access to the databases which should be rectified as a matter of urgency. Furthermore, a central database of false and genuine documents is not available.

Stricter monitoring of the travel agencies

One further aspect of the problem is the quasi touristic agencies. Even though it was said that Macedonian police is monitoring the work of several local travel agencies in Shuto Orizari, the Ministry of Interior and other institutions should make bigger efforts to trace the possible fraud by travel agencies and process claims against them.
The Ministry of Finance is in charge for the issuance of license for the travel agencies which are listed in Registry of travel agencies[35] and it might be their obligation to create specific bodies for inspection which would accomplish the major task for field checks and strict monitoring of agencies carrying passengers in order to prevent the mass departure of asylum seekers.

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[32] Secretariat for European affairs TAIEX, available at http://www.sep.gov.mk/Default.aspx?ContentID=171 (last accessed on 11.05.2011)
[33] Interview with former President and current EU adviser, May 2011.
[34] ICM, A*assessment and monitoring mission (amt) report Strengthening Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey* , (Budapest, 2010) pg.56-59.
[35] Internet page of Ministry of Finance of Macedonia http://www.economy.gov.mk/?article=c40e8d4e-62c0-4e67-b4ad-3b4a387628f7&lang=3 , Registry of travel agencies available at: http://www.economy.gov.mk/Uploads/files/sektorskiDok/turizam/Registar%20na%20turisticki%20agenci.pdf

Secretariat for European Affairs' (SEP) tasks

Part of the guilt must be addressed to the SEP which should have done much more than the printing of few leaflets. SEP was established as a separate professional service of the Government of Republic of Macedonia in 2005. It was established in order to comply with the increased demand arising from process of EU integration of Macedonia.[36] The SEA is in charge for the National Programme for the Adoption of the European Union (NPAA) and Strategy for Information and Public Relations in the process of the accession of the Republic in the EU 2007-2010[37]. SEP must prepare a new Strategy for Information and Public Relations in the process of the accession of Macedonia in the EU which should include the detailed information about the visa liberalization since previous one expired in 2010.

The work of the relevant Committees

The Macedonian Government established a Committee to monitor the applications for asylum by nationals of the Macedonia in other countries after the rise of the problem of visa liberalization abuse. This committee concluded in few occasions that it would take further measures to prevent this misuse in joint coordination between state institutions, the Macedonian diplomatic and consular missions abroad and the relevant authorities in the EU member states. An intensive information campaign on the rights and obligations of citizens traveling in the Schengen zone, and organizing debates and discussions on this issue, with emphasis on adverse effects and risks of asylum were also announced.

Another relevant organ, the Joint Parliamentary Committee between the EU and Macedonia, has the main objective to examine all aspects of relations between Macedonia and the EU, and especially the implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement. This Joint Committee has never reviewed or discussed the visa liberalization abuse mentioning only once the gain of the status of visa liberalization.

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[36] Internet page of Secretariat for European Affairs/ Organization : http://www.sep.gov.mk/Default.aspx?ContentID=8.
[37] Internet page of Secretariat for European Affairs/ Communication projects :http://www.sep.gov.mk/Default.aspx?ContentID=32.

Concluding remarks and recommendations

This policy paper tacked the issue of the abuse of the process of visa liberalization and after presenting a clear picture of its meaning, background, achievements and setbacks, focused on indentifying solutions which will address this problem by suggesting recommendations to the respective institutions who deal with this issue.

- The local authorities and national bodies need to organize more intensive informational campaign throughout the whole country. They can take advantage of the various media tools as instruments for dissemination of the benefits and obligations of the visa liberalization: TV spots, leaflets and brochures on Macedonian, Albanian and other languages, community meetings, institutional open days for questions regarding the visa liberalization, trainings and seminars are only part of the methods that will usefully spread the message among the wider population. All this information should focus on explaining that no EU country will give economic asylum, and all false asylum seeker will be sent back without financial compensation;
- The border police should be more precautious and should ask for all the necessary documents as sufficient funds for duration of stay and return to Macedonia, possession of evidence of the purpose and conditions of intended stay, then determining that passengers do not exceed the maximum approved length of stay, and that passengers are not considered a threat to public order, public health or internal security. Moreover, the Police Stations for Border Surveillance need to gain access to the Interior ministry's databases as well a central database of false and genuine documents should be established.
- The travel agencies in the concerned regions of Macedonia should be monitored more strictly by the respective inspection bodies;
- Claims should be processed against tourist agencies which manipulated the citizens by promising them asylum in the Schengen countries;
- The municipalities need to be strengthened in project fund management with focus on economic development and improving the quality of life of the local citizens;
- SEA should prepare a Strategy for Information and Public Relations in the process of the accession of Macedonia in the EU in which the issue of visa liberalization will be addressed;
- The Committee for monitoring the applications for asylum by nationals from Macedonia in other countries and the Joint Parliamentary Committee should tackle more intensely the issue of the abuse of visa liberalization.

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Anthony Albertinelli, Eurostat, *Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications in third quarter 2010* Table 6b:
First instance decisions by outcome across the 30 main groups of asylum applicants countries of citizenship in the EU-27, 3rd quarter
2010 (rounded figures)Table 6b , available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-QA-11-001/EN/KS-QA-11-
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From an Ethnic Conflict to a War in the Fifth Domain: Is Macedonia Prepared to Combat Cyber Attack Threats?

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Changing concept of security…

During the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, Macedonia has been often characterized as the "peace oasis" in the Balkans. However, in 2001, tensions between the ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians led to a conflict and internal instability which resulted with an intervention from the international community. More specifically, the security sector reform (SSR) was introduced to develop a secure environment based on development, rule of law, good governance and local ownership of security actors. [1] Several reforms were envisaged to be carried out in Macedonia under the SSR umbrella, i.e. defense, police, intelligence, judiciary, border management reform, etc. While Macedonia was undertaking measures to combat the threat of wars and conflicts at the beginning of the new millennium, the world was facing an emerging type of security threats, the cyber attack threats. After the 9/11 attack, security experts have been warning that the cyber attacks have been on rise and became the new pressing issue on the international security scene.[2] A cyber attack is "an attempt to undermine or compromise the function of a computer-based system or attempt to track the online movements of individuals without their permission. Attacks of this type may be undetectable to the end user or network administrator or lead to such total disruption of the network that none of the users can perform even the most rudimentary tasks."[3]
Macedonia implemented the SSR and to some extent eliminated the prospect of an interethnic conflict. However, the question that rises nowadays is whether Macedonia is ready to cope with the emerging security threats that may have severe impact on the country's security and stability, since for example a cyber attack may cause economic disruption, damage critical infrastructure or provide for leaking of classified data from the government computer networks. The impairment in Macedonia in terms of cyber security appeared to be that limited legislation dealing with cyber attack threats and no legislation on cyber terrorism were adopted over the last decade, that the country is partially involved in international cooperation on combating cyber attack threats and that it lacks strategies and expertise to cope with those threats.

This paper will be a descriptive and analytical study aiming to examine the strategies in Macedonia for coping with the emerging security threats and the prospects of them, to analyze the legislation and its enforcement and to review policy options used in the EU, NATO and USA as successful cases from which practices Macedonia can indeed learn. The purpose of this study is to urge the gov-

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[1] Macedonia: Security Sector Reform: Between Post Conflict Peace Building and EU Integration
[2] 10 Years after 9/11, Cyber Attacks Are Big Threat, http://www.webpronews.com/10-years-after-911-cyber-attacks-are-big-threat-2011-09 (accessed on January 11, 2012)
[3] WiseGEEK definition http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-cyberattack.htm (accessed on January 10, 2012)

ernment and the relevant institutions to adopt legislation that will address these threats and to emphasize the importance of international cooperation and continuous training of the expertise in order to efficiently and effectively address the issue of cyber attack threats.

"One of the most intense challenges of our time"

During the International Conference on Cyber Security in 2010, Robert S. Mueller, the director of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), stated that "every five seconds, computer users conduct some 170,000 Google searches, an estimated 22 million e-mails are being send—and about 80 percent of those are spam, users post at least 3,500 status updates on Facebook and 3,000 "tweets" on Twitter."[4] This is just a simple illustration on how the world is dependent on the use of computers and Internet and at the same time is exposed to different kind of information that is available in the cyber space. As a result of this interdependence, the prospects of cyber attacks and the damages caused by them has increased over the years. Prior to the late nineties most of the cyber threats were characterized as computer hacking and the governments and the international organizations underestimated the scope and damages of such attacks. However, as the new millennium approached, the fear of the millennium bug[5] made the governments and the international organizations aware of the damages a cyber attack can produce and started taking measures to address it.

Cyber attack threats can be "unintentional and intentional, targeted and non-targeted coming from a variety of sources, including foreign nations engaged in espionage and information warfare, criminals, hackers, virus writers and disgruntled employees and contractors within an organization."[6] Cyberterrorism is the most challenging cyber threat which is difficult to be addressed because of its vague definition. The term was coined in the 1980s by Barry Collin[7] who discussed this dynamic of cyberterrorism as "transcendence from the physical to the virtual realm and the intersection, the convergence of these two worlds...."[8] The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) was more specific and defined cyberterrorism as "the use of computer network tools to shut down critical

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[4] The Federal Bureau of Investigation http://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/using-partnerships-to-combat-cyber-threats (accessed on December 2, 2011)

[5] "The millennium bug was a computer problem that threatened the operations of corporations, utility companies, finance industries, government agencies and even science. On the stroke of midnight between 31 December 1999 and 1 January 2000, the fear was that all computers had the potential of shutting down." http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-the-millennium-bug.htm

[6] IT Law Wiki http://itlaw.wikia.com/wiki/Cyber_threat (Accessed on January 11, 2012)

[7] A senior research fellow at the Institute for Security and Intelligence in California

[8] Barry Collin,"The Future of Cyberterrorism," *Crime & Justice International Journal* (March 1997): 15.

national infrastructures (e.g. energy, transportation, government operations) or to coerce or intimidate a government or civilian population."[9] As a result of the dependence on the Internet and the computers and at the same time the broad scope of targets, potential attackers and damages of the cyber attacks, the issue of cyber attack threats became the new pressing issues on the international scene.

The cyber attack threats trend in Macedonia

The following part of the paper will analyze the situation in Macedonia in regards to the cyber attack threat issue. It will evaluate the dependency of the citizens and institutions on the Internet and the prospects of a cyber attack, furthermore it will elaborate on the incentives and causes for such attacks and will present previous cyber attack cases in the country that occurred over the last decade. Last but not least, it will examine the loopholes in the national legislation, the level of involvement in international cooperation on combating cyber attack threat and the expertise that the government and the relevant institutions have on their disposal in the fight against cyber attacks.

Gradually over the last decade, the firms, government and the civil society in Macedonia, became more and more dependent on the Internet technology and information society. As an illustration, in 2009, 54.1% of the households used computers, which is 8.5% more than 2008; the number of the Internet users has risen for 12.4%, i.e. 41.8% of the households used Internet. At the same time all of the of the public and private sector institutions, companies and firms use computers and Internet.[10] From an e-trade perspective, in the first ten months in 2010 the turnover in the internet trade (buying from Macedonian internet traders) has been 4.000.000, 00 denars (~65.000 Euros), while the transactions made with foreign traders was 20 times bigger. These numbers clearly show that the consumers in Macedonia have become confident on the Internet and complete tasks and Internet transactions from nearly anywhere which increases the prospects of cyber attacks and the damages such attacks may cause.

The incentives behind attacks in the cyber space are different. "Individuals or groups can exploit the anonymity afforded by cyberspace to engage in illegal or illicit activities that aim to intimidate, harm, threaten or cause fear to citizens, communities, organizations

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[9] James Lewis, "Assessing the Risks of Cyber Terrorism, Cyber War and Other Cyber Threats," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/021101_risks_of_ cyberterror.pdf (accessed on October 28, 2011)
[10] Ministry of Information Society and Administration of the Republic of Macedonia, http://mis.gov.mk/?q=node/2190, (accessed on November 15, 2011)

or countries."[11] Mane Piperkovski[12] argues that the cyber attacks on the web-sites in Macedonia, which are the most common cyber attacks, have religious, political or personal roots. The basic reasons for cyber attacks are the accessibility to the free hacking tools and the limited implementation of the security measures when creating the web-sites. Cyber attackers often attack random web-sites that have vulnerable protection systems. According to the specialized portal for information technology, it.com.mk, about ten web-sites with the domain gov.mk, which are government web-sites are vulnerable, among which are the Ministry for Internal Affairs, Economy, Transport and Communication, Finance, Labor and Social Affairs and the Employment Agency.[13] As a result of this vulnerability of the protection systems, there is an increase in the number of criminal acts of unauthorized entry into computer system (Art.251) since 2001, when no criminal acts were registered. However, the number rose to two cases registered in 2002 and eleven charged acts by 2007. Since 2008, drastic increases in the number of computer criminal acts are recorded; the number rose up to 30 criminal acts in 2008 and 73 in 2009. [14] Since 2010, the sector for computer crime within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the police detected 20 hackers – out of which about ten were stealing credit card data of foreign citizens and about seven were stealing credit card data of Macedonian citizens. In total they stole about 300,000 Euros.[15]

Furthermore, over the last decade the most targeted web-site has been the web-site of the former President Branko Crvenkovski, which has been attacked twice. [16] The first time the attack came from a Bulgarian hacker who posted text which was titled "In the unity is the power" and the second attack is assumed to be from the hacking group "Kosova hackers group".[17] Two years ago, the hackers known as "KingHakTim" attacked the web-site of the Ministry for Transport and Communication and changed the design of the web

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[11]"Cyber Crime and Cyber Terrorism," last modified on February 23, 2011, http://iconof.com/blog/cybercrime-cyberterrorism-inducing-anxiety-fear-on-individuals/ (accessed on November 15, 2011)

[12] An internet expert and ethic hacker in Semos – leading Macedonian company in providing software solutions, system integration and IT consulting

[13]"Домашниот сајбер-простор небранета зона - како и името," Нова Македонија, ("The National cyber space as an unprotected area – as the name" in New Macedonia)
http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=1028101033449&id=9&setIzdanie=22118 (accessed on November 15, 2011)

[14]Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia,http://www.moi.gov.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=395 (accessed on November 16, 2011)

[15]"МВР уапси тројца Бугари што фалсифицувале платежни картички," Канал 5, last modified on May 31, 2010, ("MOI arrested three Bulgarians who were falsifying credit cards" on Kanal 5) http://tv5plus.com.mk/default.aspx?egId=13&eventId=61091&mId=37&tip=video (accessed on November 17,2011)

[16] "Балканските земји војуваат на Интернет," Нова Македонија, ("The Balkan countries are in war on the Internet" in New Macedonia)
 http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=101911192456&id=9&setIzdanie=22410 (accessed on Januart 15, 2012)

[17] Ibid.

portal.[18] The hackers left only the picture of the minister Mile Janakievski, while they completely changed the text and posted "Dif-ejsd baj KingHakTim - Ound". In the line of cyber attacks in Macedonia was the one coming from the Albanian hackers who attacked the web-site of the Macedonian Opera and Ballet when they posted a provocative note „F..k you parliament of Serbia, Russia, Greece & Macedonia". Target of a cyber attack has been the web-site of the municipality of Aerodrom in Skopje which has been blocked from a group named „Albanija islamistik haker".[19]

It follows that the prospect of cyber attacks on the Macedonian institutions, firms and companies is eminent and the need to address them is pressing on the national scene. Although as written in the paragraph above, Macedonian government, institutions and organizations have been subjects of cyber attacks several times, Macedonia is still unprepared to tackle those threats. In fact, the reason for the increased prospects and frequency of such attacks is the limited national legislation that addresses the issue of cyber attack threats, the lack of involvement in international cooperation on combating such attacks and limited training and expertise of the people who are working on combating these threats. In the following paragraph the main issues in Macedonia regarding cyber attack threats will be presented.

1) Limited National Legislation

In the Criminal Code of the Republic of Macedonia of 1996 only one article (Article 251) was referring to the penetration into a computer system and was providing for a fine/imprisonment of up to three years. However, in the amended and consolidated version of the Criminal Code of Macedonia the legislation includes more articles that address the issue of computer crime. Nowadays, the national legal system distinguishes several types of criminal acts in the field of computer crime which in some cases can be used for terrorist purposes:

1. Damaging and unauthorized entry into computer system – Article 251

2. Production and spreading of computer viruses– Article 251a

3. Computer fraud – Article 251b

4. Computer forgery – Article 379a

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

5. Dissemination of racist and xenophobic material through computer systems – Article 394-d

However, the criminal act of cyberterrorism is not addressed in the Criminal Code; it does not include criminal acts which are defined in view of cyberterrorist character. Article 313 addresses the *terrorist endangerment of the constitutional order and security* where a terrorist is defined as "a person who, with the intention of endangering the constitutional system or the security of the Republic of Macedonia, causes or seriously threatens to cause an explosion, fire, flood, or some other generally dangerous act or act of violence, creating a sense of insecurity or fear among the citizens, shall be punished with imprisonment of at least ten years."[20] The Internet can be used to cause fire, flood and to produce fear among the citizens through attacks on national critical infrastructure; however these means of committing the criminal act of "terrorism" are not legally defined and embraced. Article 394-b addresses terrorism itself and again lacks a definition of cyberterrorism and punishment.

The experts in Macedonia are unanimous on the cyber threats issue in terms of the law enforcement:

> "The annual number of cyber attacks that have been detected can be counted on one hand and the convicted are tried solely for unauthorized entry into a computer system. According to the Criminal Code, the punishment for this criminal act is in cash or up to three years in prison. The punishment is more rigid if it is a criminal act of this type against the government institutions, therefore the punishment is up to five years, and it can be up to ten years for those who will make huge damage or will have property benefit. However, these rigid penalties are only on paper because in reality the convicted ones get fines from up to three months to up to three years in prison while the law enforcement and the penalties in USA are more rigid."[21]

It follows that the national legislation does provide for punishment of cyber attacks; however it is mostly limited to cyber attacks such as hacktivism – the act of breaking into a computer system for a politically or socially motivated purpose – and it does not embrace the wider scope of cyber attack threats.

2) Limited international cooperation on combating cyber attack threats

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[20]"Criminal Code of the Republic of Macedonia" on LegislationOnLine, http://legislationline.org/documents/section/criminal-codes (accessed on December 1, 2011)

[21] "Интернет страниците отворени за криминалците," Дневник online, ("Internet web-sites open for the criminals" in Dnevnik online) http://daily.mk/cluster3/a7798168370f32c7e325e97f4ada12fa/855928/internet-stranicite-otvoreni-za-hakerite (accessed on November 10, 2011)

In terms of involvement in international cooperation, Macedonia, on one side, has participated in a joint regional project of the European Union and the Council of Europe on cooperation against cybercrime under the Instrument of Pre-Accession.[22] Macedonia is also a member of the *European Cybercrime Training and Education Group* (ECTEG) which is an official ad hoc sub group within Europol and was founded as a result of a recommendation coming from the partners to the EU Commission.[23] This participation in projects that provide for education and training on cyber crime clearly shows that Macedonia is putting efforts to involve in international cooperation and gain experience in the fight against cyber threats. On the other side, Macedonia is not member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) which is specialized agency of UN for information and telecommunication technologies.[24] Furthermore, although it is member of the International Multilateral Partnership against Cyber Threat (IMPACT), it does not receive cybersecurity services from IMPACT, because of the fact that it is not member of ITU.[25] Last but not least, according to the NATO's Cyber Defense Concept, "NATO will assist the Allies, upon request, in their own cyber defense efforts, with the aim to optimize information sharing and situational awareness, collaboration and secure interoperability based on NATO agreed standards."[26] It follows that although there is an increased trend of involvement of Macedonia in international projects and initiatives, the fact that Macedonia is not member of NATO and similar organizations such as IMPACT or ITU, which are devoted to countering cyber attacks, puts Macedonia in a vulnerable position in terms of gaining services and firsthand experience on combating cyber attack threats.

2) Lack of expertise and training of the people working on combating cyber attack threats

In order to address the issues of cyber threats and provide for cybersecurity, the Academy for Training of Judges and Prosecutors educated 167 judges, public prosecutors, judicial counselors and persons that are involved in the detection, prevention and combating of cyber crime since 2008. However, the events in the cyber space are changing on a daily basis and there is a constant need for the experts dealing with cyber attacks to be enabled to develop and improve their knowledge on a long term basis. Furthermore, the number

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[22] Cybercrime@IPA Regional Co-operation in Criminal Justice: Strengthening capacities in the fight against cyber-crime.http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/economiccrime/cybercrime/cy%20project%20balkan/Default_IPA_en.asp   (accessed on December 16, 2011)
[23] European Cybercrime Training and Education Group Official Website http://www.ecteg.eu/about/
[24]International Telecommunication Union Official Website http://www.itu.int/cgi-bin/htsh/mm/scripts/mm.list?_search=ITUstates&_languageid=1 (accessed on December 16,2011)
[25]International Multilateral Partnership against Cyber Threat Official Website http://www.impact-alliance.org/countries/alphabetical-list.html (accessed on November 15, 2011)
[26] NATO and Cyber Defence http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_78170.htm (accessed on December 10, 2011)

of the experts that are employed in the sector for combating computer crime within the Ministry for Internal Affairs is very low and the employees are between 20-30 years old.[27] The prosecutor Marko Zvrlevski argues that although there is a sector for combating computer crime within the Ministry for Internal Affairs they lack expertise that will enable them to track everything that has been posted on the websites.[28] Having in mind that the resolution of a cyber attack case requires weeks or months of hard work and that the number of such criminal cases is high (as discussed above) it is remarkable that there is a need to increase the number of experts working on these issues and to provide them with the appropriate training.

"A case for action" among the developed countries and the international organizations

The fact that the government of Macedonia made amendments in the Criminal Code and introduced articles that prohibit particular types of criminal cyber actions is remarkable, considering that the threat of cyber attacks and especially cyber terrorism threats are not as eminent as they are in the USA. At the same time the effort of the Academy for Training of Judges and Prosecutors to train judges, public prosecutors, judicial counselors and persons that are involved in the detection, prevention and combating cyber criminal is an action to be greeted. The effort of the Ministry for Internal Affairs to charge and prosecute cyber criminals is noted as well in the last couple of years. In this context, the police have at its disposal well equipped computer labs for the fight with the cyber crime.[29] However, the prospects of cyber attack in Macedonia are still high due to the limited national legislation that addresses cyber attacks, the lack of involvement in international cooperation on combating cyber attack threats and the lack of expertise and training of the people working on combating this issue. Therefore, Macedonia can indeed learn more from the practices of the EU, NATO and the USA which are forerunners in this area and are constantly putting efforts in the fight against cyber threats.

In 2001, the European Commission published a Communication titled *Creating a Safer Information Society by Improving the Security of Information Infrastructures and Combating Computer-related Crime.* The year after, the EU presented a proposal for a *Framework*

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[27] "За антихакерите на МВР нема совршен е-криминал," Нова Македонија, http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=6301192938&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=22318 (accessed on December 10, 2011)
[28] Forum Kotle http://forum.kotle.ca/showthread.php?tid=32 (accessed on January 14, 2012)
[29] "За антихакерите на МВР нема совршен е-криминал," Нова Македонија, ("For the anti-hackers in MOI there is no perfect e-crime" in New Macedonia) http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=6301192938&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=22318 (accessed on December 10, 2011)

Decision on Attacks against Information Systems which concentrates on the harmonization of substantive criminal law provisions that are designed to protect infrastructure elements. In 2011 NATO approved a revisited *NATO Policy on Cyber Defense* across the Alliance with a focus on preventing cyber attacks and building resilience. The policy provides for "all NATO structures to be brought under centralized protection, and new cyber defense requirements will be applied."[30] "The policy sets out the framework for how NATO will assist the Allies, upon request, in their own cyber defense efforts, with the aim to optimize information sharing and situational awareness, collaboration and secure interoperability based on NATO agreed standards. Finally, the policy sets the principles on NATO's cyber defense cooperation with partner countries, international organizations, the private sector and academia."[31]

In the USA the threat of cyber attacks are perceived with high awareness. In general the cybersecurity policy includes "strategy, policy, and standards regarding the security of and operations in cyberspace. It encompasses the full range of threat reduction, vulnerability reduction, deterrence, international engagement, incident response, resiliency, and recovery policies and activities such as computer network operations, information assurance, law enforcement, diplomacy, military, and intelligence missions as they relate to the security and stability of the global information and communications infrastructure."[32] The FBI together with the intelligence community, have engaged actively in combating this threat through training their own staff or recruiting outsiders to help the fight. Together, they run complex undercover operations and examine digital evidence and share information with the US law enforcement and intelligence partners.[33] It follows that the developed countries like the USA and the international organization such as NATO and the EU are actively engaged in the fight of cyber threats and especially the threat of cyberterrorism. They work on adoption of legislation, law enforcement and approval of strategies, frameworks and documents with an aim to successfully address the cyber threats and at the same time are focused on the prevention and early detection of such criminal actions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper analyzed to what extent Macedonia is prepared to combat cyber attacks threat. It examined the dependency of the citizens and institutions in Macedonia on the internet and the prospects of a cyber attack, elaborated on the incentives and causes for such at-

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[30] NATO and Cyber Defence http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_78170.htm (accessed on December 10, 2011)
[31] NATO Official Web-site http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_78170.htm (acessed on December 7, 2011)
[32] "Cyberspace Policy review," http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Cyberspace_Policy_Review_final.pdf, (accessed on December 5, 2011)
[33] The Federal Bureau of Investigation Official Website http://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/fbi-budget-for-fiscal-year-2012 (accessed on December 2, 2011)

tacks, presented previous cases and examined the loopholes in the legislation and its enforcement, the level of international coopera-tion on combating cyber attack threat and the expertise that the government and the relevant institutions have on their disposal. Last but not least, it reviewed policy options used in the EU, NATO and USA as successful cases from which practices Macedonia can in-deed learn.

The government and the relevant institutions play a crucial role in providing security for the country and its citizens. A decade ago, Macedonia was facing a threat of an interethnic conflict and war; nowadays it is exposed to an emerging security threat – cyber attacks and cyberterrorism. Due to the fact that many activities are carried out online, which makes the threat from cyber attack and cyberter-rorism real and very serious, the government must make efforts to cover these issues through a proactive campaign and with progres-sive control on the events that are appearing in the fifth domain – the cyber space. Acting preventively against these emerging security threats which may endanger the constitutional order and national security is the most optimal policy option for the Macedonian gov-ernment and the relevant institutions.

It is remarkable that Macedonia made fundamental steps over the last decade in order to address the threat of cyber attack and to pro-vide for security of its citizens. However, as it was discussed above in this paper and on the premise of the best practices of the devel-oped countries and international organizations, it is striking that Macedonia still lacks an operational mechanism and a strategic framework that provides for cooperation among the law enforcement, the intelligence community, and the international and private sector actors. Macedonia lacks strategies, procedural laws, security and technical guidelines, public awareness, training and education in order to effectively and efficiently combat the threat of cyber attacks.

In order to efficiently address the issue of cyber attack threats, it is necessary *for the government to adopt legislation* that will address these threats and will provide for punishment, especially to cyberterrorism and which will be in accordance with NATO's Cyber De-fense Concept. At the same time the government and the relevant institutions *must keep an eye* on the changing events in the cyber space that happen on daily basis and assure that their laws apply to the cyber crimes.

Due to the global nature of the information networks and systems, no policy can be effective if it only addresses the national scope of cybersecurity. Macedonia should be actively engaged in international cooperation based on partnership with organizations from other

countries in areas such as information-sharing, early warning, monitoring and alert networks. Macedonia *needs to establish national strategies that provide for international cooperation*. Macedonia should take a proactive role in international initiatives, especially in the exchange of information and best practices, training and research which will provide for capacity-building in organizational structures (including policies, roadmaps and strategies).

Last but not least, there is a need for the experts who in charge of cyber issues to have the knowledge and experience in order to efficiently and effectively combat cyber attacks. At the same time, those experts should be offered trainings and education in order to keep them updated since the events in the cyber space change on a daily basis. *Macedonia needs logistics and international trainers who are going to share the best practices and the successful cases in combating cyber attack threats* and who will provide the government and the relevant institutions with guidelines and strategic documents to effectively and efficiently address the issue of cyber attack threats.

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From Romi to Gitanos: Can Spain's integration success be replicated for Macedonia's Roma?

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Introduction

With a variation between 2, 66% and 6.67 % of the total population of the Republic of Macedonia (from now on Macedonia), Roma is after the Albanian minority one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the country. [1] Unfortunately, neither their size nor their long lasting presence in the region, were enough to eliminate their marginalization. Some may say this is due to the lack of proper policies for their incorporation, a hypothesis which is completely unfounded as Macedonia has policy provisions for Roma population since January 2005 and is also an active member of the Decade of Roma Inclusion since 2003. [2] Consequently, since policies do exist, one assumption is that poor integration may probably lay in government's inability to successfully implement its policies and programs. It might also be due to the discrimination against Roma or Roma's unwillingness to become an integral part of the Macedonian society.

Spain on the other hand, with the second biggest Roma population in Europe[3], not only has adopted the policies but implements them as well. In contrast with Macedonia's Roma, the majority of Gitanos (Romani people in Spain) are more integrated into the Spanish political and socio-economical life and rightfully Spain is considered to be a fine example of Roma inclusion.[4]

But what is integration? This specific term is quite broad and can be referred to multiple contexts. The Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), an American CSO, underline that integration is a two-way process which concerns not only the host society but also the migrants themselves and in order to integrate sufficiently they need to "work together to build secure, vibrant and cohesive communities".[5] Their interaction in the social, political and economic life of the host country does not require the denial of their origins and culture. Immigrants can associate freely and equally with the majority group.[6]

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[1] European Roma Rights Center and National Roma Centrum, "Written Comments on the European Rights Center and the National Roma Centrum Concerning the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2006, p.2
[2] Nadir Redzepi, "Policies for Integration of Roma in Macedonia, reality or illusion?",2007, p.1
[3] Andres Cala, "Spain's tolerance of Gypsies: A model for Europe?", Time ,September 16, 2010, accessed August 15,2011 : http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2019316,00.html
[4]Internet page of "Debatewise:Where Great minds Differ" last accessed August 15,2011, http://debatewise.org/debates/2332-can-the-rest-of-europe-replicate-spain-s-success-in-the-integration-of-roma-population
[5] Internet page of "Grantmakers concerned with immigrants and refugees: Immigrant Integration" last accessed August 15,2011, http://www.gcir.org/integration
[6] Internet page of "Grantmakers concerned with immigrants and refugees: Immigrant Integration" last accessed August 15,2011, http://www.gcir.org/integration

Despite Macedonian government's efforts for Roma's proper integration, actual results are lacking visibility and the government still fails to find an adequate solution for combating exclusion. In a candidate for accession in the EU, the preservation of minority groups' rights are the key to "the promise land-EU". Therefore, the Roma integration deserves immediate and radical solutions.

This paper will attempt to do a comparative analysis between the current policies and the actual state of Roma in Macedonia and Spain. By using the successful example of latter's integration program for the inclusion of its Roma population, suggestions for policy plans will be made. For the analysis of the issue countries' reports from CSO's and international organizations have been used as well as relevant policy reports and information from the media. The analysis will be limited only to the areas which Spain takes precedence, meaning the areas of housing, education and employment.

The choice of Macedonia and Spain is made due to the fact that they both have been hosting a large number of Romani for a long period of time and have large organized Roma communities, Shuto Orizari in Macedonia and the Roma community in Andalucía in Spain. Moreover, in both countries there are Roma representatives in local and national governments, a fact that demonstrates that political participation is not a taboo. Finally, apart from those similarities they also share a crucial difference. Despite that both countries have policies for Roma integration, Macedonia fails to apply them, while Spain stands out as an example of their implementation. Based on those reasons the present paper will proceed to analyze ways in which the Spanish practices can be replicated in order to facilitate the integration of Roma in Macedonia.

A never ending rejection leading to an everlasting odyssey

The imperative for the merge of the Roma ethnic minority into the general population can be highlighted not only as a necessity for EU accession for the Macedonian state but also as a need to respect the basic human rights. The importance and the urgency of Roma integration and policies to ease their condition can be cited in only one phrase: "*Without the Roma's inclusion in the democratic process there can be no peaceful, normal relationship between them and the majority population*"[7]. It is clear that a great discrepancy between the Roma strategy and the reality represents an obstacle for the Roma inclusion in Macedonia when at the same time Spain has managed to overcome it. The brief historic approach in both countries that follows will give more information about the issue.

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[7] Internet page of Rom news, "Report of the condition of the Roma in Europe" last accessed August 15,2011, http://www.romnews.com/a/RKreport.htm

❖ **Romi**

A long lasting presence of an ethnic group even in a multicultural country as Macedonia does not guarantee integration into the general population. Roma have been living in the region from the 12th till the 14th century being mentioned in historical texts only sporadically. Further data refer to a more positive development in the 20th century, when in 1974 the Yugoslav Constitution granted them the status of "ethnic" group.[8] Moreover, in 1981 the Yugoslavian state granted them a "nationality" status and finally in 1991, once Macedonia became an independent country, Roma were equally accepted as a minority along with Albanians and Turks and others.[9]

Despite the previous acts of good will towards the inclusion of Roma population, their situation did not change through the next years, as from the independence of Macedonia in 1991 till 2003, there were no political actions for their integration.[10] Romani are being left on their own and their segregation remained profound. It was only in 2003 and the beginning of 2004 when Macedonia started to take serious action for the incorporation of Roma into the main population by being part of the "Decade of Roma Inclusion". This Decade is a political commitment that as a main goal has the socio-economic improvement as well as the social inclusion of Roma. [11] The efforts to regulate the problem continue and unfortunately stop with the policies for Roma of 2005, which in combination with the Decade's National Action Plans, were destined to give a solution to the exclusion of the Roma. However, with few visible results due to lack of policy application and with Roma still on the margins of society, Macedonian state's strives for a solution still linger.

❖ **Gitanos**

The Roma in Spain, also known as Gitanos, seem to make their first appearance in the country at the beginning of the 15th century, arriving from North Africa. Repression and exclusion were the main characteristics of the Spanish treatment for almost over four centuries, such as: anti - confronted imprisonment persecution, denial of their recognition as a minority, segregation and Roma legislation[12] (which also continued throughout the Franco era, from the 1940's till the 1970's). The change came in 1978 when the Constitution fi-

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[8] By 1974 Macedonia was still part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

[9] Center for documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe-Southern Europe (CEDIME-SE), "Minorities in Southern Europe: Roma in Macedonia" p.34

[10] Nadir Redzepi, "Policies for Integration of Roma in Macedonia, reality or illusion?",2007

[11] Internet page of Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015,last accessed August 15,2011, http://www.romadecade.org/about

[12] Amy Motomura, "The Concord Review: Gypsy Legislation in Spain, 1499-1783" 2003, p.141-156

nally established full citizenship and equality to all of the citizens of the country and prohibited discrimination on grounds of gender, religion and racial origins. Moreover, the state granted recognition to various Gitano groups but only on a territorial base[13] being the first attempt from the Spanish state towards integration of Gitanos.

In 1985 the "National Plan for the Development of Roma" (Plan National de Desarrollo Gitano) was approved by the Spanish Parliament. This Plan addressed the problems of Romani population and provided for their participation in various ministries. In 1989 for the first time the Spanish State included targeted funds in its General Budget for the "Roma Development Programme". During the same year a few committees and working groups were also formed focusing on the implementation of various programmes concerning Gitanos. Finally, in 1990 the road for Roma representation opened wide with the creation of a "Consultative Commission". Although much has been accomplished with the National Plan for Development for the inclusion of Spain's Roma in the general population, the problem was still present. It was in 1999 when the government decided to establish a Parliamentary Commission which aim was to raise the public concern about the Roma problem and to improve their living condition.[14] Since the first attempt for Roma inclusion in Spain many goals have been achieved. Spanish policy in combination with EU regulations and social funds made Spain's integration efforts a remarkable example for the rest of Europe.

Through the historic background it is clear that Spain and Macedonia share the same experiences when it comes to Roma population as they are both host countries of a large number of Roma for many centuries now. Although they face the same problem, their reactions to the Roma challenge are different. Since the beginning of the presence of the Gitanos in Spain there were efforts for their incorporation into the general society, even with unorthodox measures, while the same time Macedonia seemed to neglect its Roma population. Recently though these two countries, in the seventies for Spain and in the nineties for Macedonia, seem to follow the same course, the course of Roma integration.

The Housing Situation

- Macedonia

Macedonia has signed nearly all the international treaties that promote and protect housing rights and urge actions for the improvement of the living standards of those in need of adequate housing, including Roma. Although Macedonia's governmental institution

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[13] Internet page of European Roma Rights Center, "The State and the Roma in Spain", last accessed August 15,2011, http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=2288
[14] Internet page of European Roma Rights Center, "Spanish Policy and Roma" ,last accessed August 15,2011, http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1740

per se does not include provisions for the right to housing, the ratified international treaties that are part of the domestic legal system fill that gap. In other words, the normative frame of the right to housing and adequate living standards in Macedonia, are the international legal agreements. For the improvement of Roma housing conditions and the construction of social housing in Macedonia, the Council of Europe Social Development Fund granted the country a loan of 20 million US dollars additionally to the government's housing policy in 1999. There were also discussions among various CSOs for housing provisions but there is still a lack of detailed strategies.

Although there is an existence of sufficient legal provision, according to the data, an overwhelming number of Roma lives in poor conditions[15]:

Box 1: Deficiencies in housing as identified in the Roma Strategy

- ✓ Approximately 95% lives in very bad conditions in urban settlements in the outskirts of big cities.
- ✓ Most of them dwell in slums under the level of the proclaimed standards for adequate housing as they have limited access to water, no connection to electricity, no asphalt roads and sewage disposal.
- ✓ It is a frequent phenomenon the appearance of Roma residences near garbage dumps and isolated buildings.

Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Republic of Macedonia[16]

This supports the findings from the European Roma Rights Centre that the vast majority of Roma face a serious housing problem.[17] 90% of the citizens in the municipality of Shuto Orizari are Roma.[18] Although the municipality is near the center of the city, housing and living conditions are far from the standard.

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[15] Ministry of Labor and Social Policy Republic of Macedonia, "Strategy of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia", December 2004
[16] Ibid
[17] European Roma Rights Center, "ERRC Report on Macedonia, for the 2010 EU Progress Report" June 2010

Central government's funding for reconstructions and improvement the previous years did not meet the needs of the community and apart from minor changes, the situation remains the same.[19] Roma housing is a complex issue that needs coordinated action from the government, the local authorities and the international organizations. Unfortunately, for more than 30 years now the limited provision failed to tackle the problem.

- **Spain**

Spain started its long history of housing programmes in the seventies which as their main target tackled the social exclusion, the elimination of the shantytowns and informal settlements of the Roma population. The first programs that were implemented by the government during the 1970's had a positive impact on the Roma, as many of them were relocated to high-standard apartment buildings.[20] Unfortunately the positive effects of relocation lacked duration as the preference of Roma had not been taken into consideration[21] and they soon moved out from their new houses into their old resettlements.[22]

The 1980's housing attempts of the government seem to be more successful as resettlement policies also focused on the social inclusion of Gitanos and not only improving their housing.[23] The second policy led to the creation of small towns in the outskirts of cities and towns consisting of two - level houses with courtyards[24], which however, due to their location in the suburbs, and the fact that were inhabited exclusively by Gitanos, were rapidly transformed into slums.

The twenty year experience in Roma housing lead to the acknowledgment that:

➢ The isolation of Gitanos into separated communities outside the cities promoted their segregation, therefore government's housing policies focused on the placement of Roma in non-Roma neighborhoods.[25]

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[18] Ina Zoon, "On the Margins, Roma and Public Services in Romania, Bulgarian and Macedonia", Open Society Institute 2001, p.144-151
[19] Ibid p.144-151
[20] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, " Case study: Improving Roma housing and eliminating slums, Spain", October 2009, p. 6-9
[21] For example the new apartments did not allow for large families to live together.
[22] Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erica Wilkens, "Roma in an Expanding Europe,Breaking the poverty Cycle", the World Bank, 2005, p. 166-168
[23] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, " Case study: Improving Roma housing and eliminating slums, Spain", October 2009, p. 6-9
[24] Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erica Wilkens, "Roma in an Expanding Europe,Breaking the poverty Cycle", the World Bank, 2005
[25] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, " Case study: Improving Roma housing and eliminating slums, Spain", October 2009, p.6-9

> ➤ Their settlement into more diverse neighborhoods along with policies for equal Roma access to employment, education and health were the government's crucial policies.

The outcomes of the housing policies are mixed. The venture was beyond doubt a positive step for the improvement of Roma housing as "*the percentage of Roma living in substandard housing reduced from 31 per cent to 11, 7 per cent*"[26] and the number of neighborhoods that consist exclusively of Gitanos was remarkably reduced.[27] However, further challenges remain such as the question of the short term policies in combination with the lack of a national policy framework as well as the prejudices of the rest of the citizens towards the Roma population.

Education

- Macedonia

The present situation for Roma's described in one sentence: *"Romani children are, at the present, either not being well-educated or not being educated at all"*[28] gives a clear picture of the general situation of education of Roma. The legal framework, more precisely the Macedonian Constitution guarantees to everyone access to education on equal terms. In addition the international conventions which the country has signed enhance the prior provisions and along with the basic international document for education in Macedonia, the Child Rights Convention, reassures high education standards for every child.

The Ministry of Education and Science took actions for the improvement of education with the preparation of the Program for Development of Education which had as its main goal the increase of the quality of the education provided from the relevant institutions and the increase of the educational level of the pupils. Through education Macedonia wants to increase the educational and economic competitiveness of the country and establish a strong bond between education and labour market. Moreover, for the enhancement of education efficiencies including all ethnicities and of course Roma, the Ministry established a Directorate for Development and Im-

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[26] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, " Case study: Improving Roma housing and eliminating slums, Spain", October 2009, p.9
[27] Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erica Wilkens, "Roma in an Expanding Europe, Breaking the poverty Cycle", the World Bank, 2005, page 122
[28] European Roma Rights Center, "A Pleasant Fiction, The Human Rights Situation of Roma in Macedonia", July 1998, p. 87

provement of Education in 2003[29]. Finally, for the facilitation of Roma participation in education and their inclusion into the educational system, the Roma Decade established a Roma Education Fund.

The data concerning Roma in schools are limited due to the lack of systematic collection of information from the institutions responsible. Nevertheless, the available reports towards the matter show that Roma children have very low access to education in comparison with the non-Roma ones.

Pre-school obstacle:

➢ The first stage education is too expensive for the Roma parents, as they need to pay for textbooks and other schools accessories that their children will need till the age of seven when their pre-school education will finish.

The situation is different in primary education which is compulsory and free of charge. The enrollment of Roma pupils is higher but there are other kinds of identified barriers in this stage of education.

Primary school obstacles:

➢ Roma children that have not attended pre-school education do not master Macedonian as the majority of them speak their native language till the day they go to school.

➢ Quitting education for Roma children from the fifth grade since at this stage more qualifications are needed[30]. The drop-out increases as education stages go up.

The provisions of the Ministry are applied poorly in reality. Furthermore, Roma children face discriminatory behaviors from non-Roma students and teachers and it is important at this point to underline that Macedonian state has no laws against discrimination in education in order to protect the vulnerable minorities in their territories. Also when it comes to enrollment in the educational institutions residents proof is required, proof that many Roma families do not possess as the majority of them live in illegal settlements. Finally, children with irregular status cannot be enrolled in schools, another barrier in Roma education that keeps children away from schools.

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[29] Ministry of Labor and Social Policy Republic of Macedonia, "Strategy of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia", December 2004, p. 38-51

[30] The World Bank, "Needs Assessment Study for the Roma Education Fund ,Background Paper, Republic of Macedonia", December 2004

- Spain

The constitutional provision for education in Spain along with the international instruments concerning education signed by the abovementioned country, underline the right to equal education to all of the children, even those with irregular legal status. Additionally, the Preamble of the National Education Act (LOGSE) and the 1995 Royal Decree establish equal opportunities and rights to students and prohibit any form of discrimination[31]. Besides the already existing measures, the Spanish Government took further action in order to promote Gitanos education. For instance in the late 1970s the Spanish Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Secretariat Gitano attempted to increase Roma attendance in schools by launching the "bridge school agreement", schools especially for Gitanos and after that with the "remedial education" a programme designed for the support of disadvantaged students[32] .

In the last two decades the government's efforts were successful because the enrolment rates of school attendance increased significantly, illiteracy rates among youngsters are lower in comparison with the previous Roma generations and the once negative attitudes against education are shifting, as 77% of Roma families are inclined to believe that their children should complete compulsory education and 36% that their children should continue their studies even further[33]. The most encouraging though is the fact that eventually Roma children do consider schooling as part of their life and their attendance is no longer rejected by them or their families.

The progress is undeniable yet its magnitude is not satisfactory. Some of the still pressing issues include a remaining small number of Roma pupils finishing basic general education and even lower percentage (only 1) managing to enroll in universities[34]. The main reason behind this situation might be due to the way of living and Roma traditions, the still present discrimination and lack of motivation, the latter justified by the absence of educational material on Roma and the insufficient teacher training on cultural diversity issues.
At this point it would be useful to add that programmes which main goal was to promote Roma schooling, had controversial results.

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[31]   Open Society Institute, "The situation of Roma in Spain, Monitoring the EU accession process: Minority protection", 2002
[32] Government's response to Roma schooling are also the "compensatory education programmes and intercultural education: Open Society Institute, "The situation of Roma in Spain, Monitoring the EU accession process: Minority protection", 2002
[33]Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erica Wilkens, "Roma in an Expanding Europe,Breaking the poverty Cycle", the World Bank, 2005, p. 170
[34] Ibid. p. 169

- ✓ The "bridge schools", that started to function in 1978 and were abolished in 1986, did provide a certain education to children that otherwise would not have the chance to study and would remained illiterate. In addition they were more flexible for Roma pupils as they were more adapted to their needs, but on the long term proved to segregate those children even more.
- ✓ Remedial education was also criticized for the same reason although those programmes were providing technical and language training courses in addition to schoolbooks, hygiene programs, meals and vaccination[35]. Also remedial education was criticized for blocking the access to higher education and therefore to better-paid employment.

Employment Conditions

- Macedonia

Employment along with education and housing make up the main pillars of Roma integration into the general population. The Macedonian constitutional provisions for employment follow the European recommendations and guarantee the right to work on equal basis, free choice of employment and protection at work, compensation in case of unemployment and measures for reduction of unemployment. Additional legislation for tackling the low level employment is a commonplace for Macedonian governments[36]; two of the most recent policies the state introduced were the National Action Plan on Employment (NAPE) and the National Strategy for Roma[37].

Regardless of the legal framework, the current situation of employment in Macedonia is one of the worst in Europe, as unemployment rate for the general population is alarmingly high, almost between 34-53 % according to the States Statistical Office data[38]. Additionally data for Roma unemployment show that the rate is 71, 3% when Roma recourses for unemployment raise that figure even higher, to 95 %.[39]

The reasons for the extreme unemployment Roma rates can be summed up in the following:

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[35] Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erica Wilkens, "Roma in an Expanding Europe,Breaking the poverty Cycle", the World Bank, 2005
[36] Ex. Branko's Law which was providing tax relief to companies for each new employee.
[37] The National Strategy for Roma is part of the EU Agenda and its main goal is the inclusion of Roma into the mainstream labor market.
[38] The World Bank, "Needs Assessment Study for the Roma Education Fund ,Background Paper, Republic of Macedonia", December 2004
[39]Nadir Redzepi, Aleksandra Bojadzieva, "Policies for Improvement of the Employment of Roma in Macedonia", Minority Rights Group International

- ➢ Rapid increase of unemployment among Roma during the transition from socialism, as many state-owned businesses which employed Roma, closed.
- ➢ Gradual elimination of Roma's traditional professions (for example blacksmiths, traders of small goods, street musicians etc.).
- ➢ Lack of education, as the majority of the recorded unemployed Roma have only elementary education and the rest have either not completed elementary education or have no education at all.[40]
- ➢ Limited access to employment information: the Macedonian state does not provide information in simple language and in some cases the information is not properly presented to the public.[41]
- ➢ Discrimination against Roma both from employers and employees.

Generally, Roma face many difficulties in accessing the labour market not only for the above mentioning reasons but also because they do not benefit from the international and national employment programmes and have limited participation in the planning and decision making of those programmes. It is important to be noted that due to the particular nature of Roma population their employment issue cannot be solve only by applying general employment policies. Specialized measures need to be taken in order Roma to become an integral part of the working force in Macedonia.

- Spain

In Spain the employment policies and policies related to Roma access into the work force of the country, are a combination of EU frameworks and Spain's specialized programme for Roma employment, Acceder. The Acceder programme is a two dimension project that includes field work and policy approaches, with 48 integrated employment centers scattered all over the country providing guidance, training, and employment opportunities as well as policy approaches which reinforce the existing ones, researches, data collection, awareness campaigns and new policies.[42]

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[40] Ministry of Labor and Social Policy Republic of Macedonia, "Strategy of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia", December 2004, p.29-37
[41] Nadir Redzepi, Aleksandra Bojadzieva, "Policies for Improvement of the Employment of Roma in Macedonia", Minority Rights Group International
[42] Working group on Employment, Jose Manuel Fresno, Technical staff- Fundacion Secreteriado Gitano, "Framework Document, Acceder Programme, Structural Funds: Investing in Roma", 2009

Roma employment is still behind Spain's standards of general population: 48, 5% of Roma are self-employed when the percentage for the general population is only 18, 3%. Furthermore, 81, 6% of the Spanish are salaried when the corresponding figure for Roma is 51, 5%. 42% of the salaried Roma work part-time and finally, 71% of the Roma who work have temporary contracts.[43] The conclusions drawn from the above mentioned figures show that high unemployment rates remain among the Roma and they still have difficulties in entering the work force. Nevertheless, the situation started shifting with the implementation of Acceder, which main goal was the facilitation of Roma access into the labour market. Some of the most innovating key characteristics of the programme that made it so successful are:

  ➢ The ability to adapt international strategies to the local level and the flexible reactions to local situations.
  ➢ The multicultural composition: the participation of Roma and non-Roma professionals to all levels of organization.
  ➢ The 48 easily accessible for Roma employment centers which facilitate their access to employment information and training.
  ➢ The long term approach of the issue and strong partnership ties with the business sector.

Additionally the success of the programme was so significant that managed to go beyond the objectives foreseen for 2000. The change the Acceder programme brought to Roma employment in Spain is the reason for its recognition at a national and European level as an example of "good practice"[44] and the impact in Roma employment can be shown in the following box:

Box 2: Improvement of the Roma employment due to Acceder Programme

Equal gender participation of Roma in the labor market
Large participation of Roma youth in the programme: 56%
Training opportunities for those with low or no education and training courses directly connected to employment opportunities
About 35,304 people, 70% of which were Roma, were served in total at the Acceder centers, 26,000 contracts were signed and 13,902 people took part in the training programmes

Source: Framework Document, Acceder Programme[45]

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[43] Ibid
[44] Working group on Employment, Jose Manuel Fresno, Technical staff- Fundacion Secreteriado Gitano, "Framework Document, Acceder Programme, Structural Funds: Investing in Roma", 2009

Beyond doubt the programme transformed and keeps transforming the Spanish labour market as more and more Roma participate into the work force of the country and take training courses as they aim for better employment. In addition, there is an elimination of discrimination and prejudice against Roma as they are proved to be more interested in mainstream employment. Finally, and as a direct outcome of Roma's work participation the living conditions of Gitanos show a substantial improvement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present policy paper focused on the comparison of Macedonia and Spain, two countries with a large number of Roma in their territories, in three important domains for Roma integration: housing, education and employment. Its goal is to present realistic integration solutions for Macedonia's Roma by using the good practice example of Spain. Spain's performance in the above mentioned domains is better not only due to realization of implementation of policies but also because of the successful strategies that were introduced especially for tackling Roma exclusion. Macedonia on the other hand still lacks specialized strategies and faces deficiencies in the implementation sector.

The recommendations to the respective Macedonian stakeholders will be introduced separately for each sector due to the diversity of the suggestions. Although, it should be underlined that on the same time housing, education and employment should not be viewed as isolated problems. The state should start facing the Roma situation with more complex and integral approaches.

Housing

- o Promotion and increase of small public resettlement for Roma families into non-Roma neighborhoods in order to integrate them into the main society and avoid segregation;
- o Facilitation of access to rental housing and special funding for house purchase of Roma population;
- o Active participation of CSOs dealing with Roma issues for the design and application of housing strategies;
- o Information campaigns of the legalization of illegal settlements whenever is possible and facilitation of the connection of already existing Roma municipalities to the electricity and water network.

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[45] Ibid

Education

- o Facilitation of enrollments for Roma children in primary and secondary education (allow Roma children with illegal status to be able to attend school) and reduction or elimination of the expenses of primary schools;
- o Providing supplementary education programmes for Roma children and for weak students in general and allowing repetition of classes when it is needed;
- o Avoiding separated Roma schools that can promote isolation and incorporating special Roma educational programmes into the mainstream education;
- o Facilitating Roma access into higher education by providing special grants for their education.

Employment

- o Creation of an employment framework similar to the Spanish Acceder that will provide training, information and facilitate Roma's access into the labour market;
- o Participation of Roma and CSOs dealing with Roma issues in the design and application of the new Roma employment strategy and in the drafting and implementation of Roma relevant national and international employment programmes and
- o Supporting Roma with low education for engaging into employment positions that require minimum or no education and educating and supporting Roma to be self-employed.

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Balkan 'Visegrad-like' Unity: Pros and Cons for Macedonia

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Introduction

The Balkan countries finally grasped the idea that the regional cooperation is not just an obligation for the EU membership, but an opportunity and necessity for regional progress and development. With the three presidential meetings held in the last three years, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro showed the EU and the world that the region is capable of discussing the common challenges on a single table. Although, there are other cooperation initiatives which include the Balkan region as the- Regional Cooperation Council
[1], the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative[2], the South-East European Cooperation Process[3], the Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association[4] and the Southeast European Prosecutors Advisory Group[5], this initiative was initiated by the abovementioned countries themselves and not by the international community like the others.

One may agree that cooperation between the four Balkan countries is very similar to the one established in Central Europe in 1991, known as Visegrad Group composed of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (V4). These four neighboring countries agreed to work together and to joint their efforts towards fulfilling their common goal of EU and NATO integration. The V4 cooperation did not cease after the four countries entered EU and NATO because they realized that together they would be stronger when protecting their common interests on European and international level.

Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro are all striving to become EU member-states. Having in mind that good regional and bilateral cooperation is one of the Copenhagen criteria which has to be fulfilled in order to enter the EU, the general impression is that this kind of regional initiative would be accepted as highly positive by the international community. The questions which will be the

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[1] The Regional Cooperation Council promotes mutual cooperation and European and Euro-Atlantic integration of South East Europe. It is the successor of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe.
[2] The Southeast European Cooperative Initiative is committed to sustaining the combat against organised crime and to strengthen the law enforcement capabilities for countering the organised crime in its 13 member states.
[3] The South-East European Cooperation Process is a forum for diplomatic and political dialogue among the SEE countries aiming to enhance the stability, security, democratization and economic prosperity in the region.
[4] The Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association is dedicated to building public security in the region through cooperation of its police services, citizens and partner organizations.
[5] Southeast European Prosecutors Advisory Group is an international mechanism of judicial cooperation in the SEE region aiming facilitated cooperation in the trans-border investigations and cases.

subject of analysis in this paper are: How this regional cooperation will be gainful for Macedonia? What are the positive and negative sides from it? Since Macedonia has started its EU application process much earlier than the others from the group can it be a leader in this case? Last but not least since Macedonia is advanced in fulfilling the entering criteria while two of other countries have not even been granted the candidate status, is it unrealistic to expect that this regional initiative would follow V4's example where all the countries entered the EU together?

This policy paper aims to review the current prospects for regional cooperation between Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo following the steps of the Visegrad countries in order to reflect on the question what are the benefits and consequences from this kind of cooperation for Macedonia. The first part of the paper will deal with the Visegrad Group example, including the history of the Group, the level of cooperation within it and the results it has achieved. This analysis will be based mainly on the different documents and sources available at the Visegrad Group's official website. The second part focuses on the new initiative on the Balkans for regional cooperation between the four countries and the prospects for Macedonia as one of the participants. Furthermore, the aims and objectives of this regional cooperation according to its initiators will be analyzed, as well as the respond of the international community to this initiative, and the reactions of the Macedonian citizens to it. The analysis here will include different articles from the media, statements of the Presidents of the four countries and interview with the Foreign Policy Advisor at the cabinet of the Macedonian President Gorge Ivanov.

The History and Developments of the Visegrad Cooperation

In February 1991 the new central European regional initiative known as the Visegrad Group was established by the Presidents of the Czechoslovak Republic, Poland and Hungary with the idea to strengthen the mutual cooperation and neighborly relations between themselves. Having signed the '*Declaration on cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary in striving for European integration*' they have formalized their cooperation. This cooperation was put on paper since the participating countries shared their traditional, historically shaped system of mutual contacts, cultural and spiritual

heritage and common roots of religious traditions which were also acknowledged in the Declaration to be promising indicators for their successful regional cooperation.[6]

The main factors which motivated the formation of the Visegrad Group were 'the desire to eliminate the remnants of the communist block in Central Europe, the desire to overcome historic animosities between Central European Countries, the belief that through joint efforts it will be easier to achieve the set of goals i.e. to successfully accomplish social transformation and join in the European integration process and the proximity of ideas of the then ruling political elites.'[7] After the disintegration of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the Visegrad Troika became the Visegrad Four (V4) as both countries the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic are members of the group.[8]

The success which the Visegrad Group has achieved so far is a result of regular mutual contacts at different levels, from meetings of the countries' high officials (Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers) to meetings of the non-governmental organizations, associations, think-tanks etc.[9] The countries in 1999 agreed the substantive directions of their future cooperation will be covering the fields of foreign affairs, internal affairs, education, culture, society, youth, sport, science, technology, infrastructure, environment and cross-border cooperation.[10]

In 2000 the International Visegrad Fund (IVF) was founded as the only organizational and institutional structure within the V4 with the main duty to support 'the development of cooperation in culture, scientific exchange, research, education, exchange of students and development of cross-border cooperation and promotion of tourism'.[11] Usually the IVF provides financial support to different non-governmental and civic organizations and individual scholarships aiming to promote and exchange experiences in the V4 region

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[6] Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Declaration on cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary in striving for European Integration, 1991, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations/visegrad-declaration-110412-2 (accessed July 5, 2011)
[7] Internet page of the Visegrad Group/History of the Visegrad Group, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/history (accessed July 5, 2011)
[8] Ibid
[9] Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Aims and Structure of the Visegrad Group, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/aims-and-structure (accessed July 5, 2011).
[10] Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Contents of Visegrad Cooperation approved by the Prime Ministers' Summit Bratislava on 14th May 1999, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/cooperation/contents-of-visegrad-110412 (accessed July 5, 2011).
[11] Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Aims and Structure of the Visegrad Group, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/aims-and-structure (accessed July 5, 2011).

and surrounding countries.[12] What is maybe the most important cornerstone of the successful cooperation inside the V4 is the fact that these countries did not allow their bilateral problems[13] to burden their relations.

The intensity of V4 cooperation was not always stable; it sometimes was on a high level, sometimes on a very low one, depending mostly on who had the ruling power at a particular time in the countries. It is considered that the lowest level of cooperation was in the period from 1993 to 1998 when Vladimir Mečier was the Prime Minister in Slovakia. His anti-western views and his populist ideas were not in accordance with the V4 policy. According to many opinions this 'Mečiar era' was the main obstacle and the main reason why Slovakia did not join NATO together with the other three countries in 1999.[14] But at the same time, this was the moment which brought back the V4 cooperation in a first place and strengthened the solidarity among the countries. Pavol Demeš who at that time was working for the Slovak President, Michal Kováč, recognized the efforts made by the other three countries especially by their presidents at that time aiming for the NATO membership of Slovakia[15], which it did eventually achieve in 2002.

The key objectives which were set in the Declaration from 1991 were fully achieved in 2004 when all four countries joined the European Union. Even if there were many opinions that the Visegrad cooperation would cease after the countries enter NATO and EU, they saw it as new opportunity and challenge for 'their further cooperation on the issues of common interest'.[16] The Prime Ministers met in Kroměříž in May 2004 where they signed the Kroměříž Declaration which set up the new objectives and common interests of the V4 countries as Member States of NATO and EU. They decided to work together on strengthening the Central European identity, helping the EU in fulfilling its goals and objectives and successful continuation of the enlargement process.[17] In order to be more ef-

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[12] Ibid.

[13] The Benes Decrees under which Czechoslovakia in 1945-46 deported about 30 000 ethnic Hungarians and deprived them from their property, and about 400 000 of Hungarians were forced to give up their Hungarian nationality, were the main bilateral problem issue between the Hungary and Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

[14] Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Ananicz, Andrzej, "From the Anti-Communist Underground to NATO and the EU", http://www.visegradgroup.eu/the-visegrad-book/ananicz-andrzej-from-the (accessed July 10,2011)

15 Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Demeš, Pavol "Visegrad Dreams" http://www.visegradgroup.eu/the-visegrad-book/demes-pavol-visegrad (accessed July 12, 2011).

16 Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Declaration of Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on cooperation of the Visegrad Group countries after their accession to the European Union, 12 May 2004, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/2004/declaration-of-prime (accessed July 5, 2011).

[17] Ibid.

fective when defending their common interests, the V4 countries adopted the Guidelines on the Future Areas of Visegrad Cooperation were they specified the areas of their future cooperation in the V4 area, within EU, with other partners and within NATO and other international organizations.[18]

The Presidency of the Group is changed every year on a rotating principle, the country-President is responsible for drafting an action plan that draws the one-year priorities of the Group and an annual report of what has been done the previous year. These annual reports provide excellent information about the inside V4 cooperation which is generally achieved through inter-ministerial cooperation in different fields.

The achievements of the V4 teamwork

The V4 countries were unified when defending their mutual EU interests even before they became EU members. In 2001 the Czech Minister for Foreign Affairs at that time, Jan Kavan and his Hungarian colleague János Martonyi decided to fight together for more seats in the EU Parliament. Firstly it was scheduled that these two countries should have each 20 seats but because countries like Belgium, Portugal and Greece with almost the same population as Hungary and Czech Republic were granted 22 seats[19] they supported one another and were allotted 22 seats.[20]

At the final round of the negotiation talks all four countries decided to "speak with the same voice"[21] so that the process could be finished for a shorter period of time. They refused to be net contributors to the EU budget after their accession, asked to be given the same chances as the member countries, refused to be second class members and asked the transition period to be shortened significantly. Poland harshly defended its positions saying it "would rather postpone EU entrance than accept unfavorable terms".[22]

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[18]Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Guidelines on the Future Areas of Visegrad Cooperation, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/cooperation/guidelines-on-the-future-110412 (accessed July 10, 2011)

[19] EUobserver, Pihl Hemmer, Luise," Czech Republic and Hungary to fight for more seats" http://euobserver.com/9/1919 (accessed July 21, 2011).

[20] Composition of the European Parliament after European Elections in June 2009.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=IM-PRESS&reference=20071008IPR11353&language=EN (accessed July 21, 2011).

[21] EUobserver, Frydrych, Marcin, "Visegrad group to speak with one voice" http://euobserver.com/15/6842 (accessed July 21, 2011).

[22] Ibid.

The Visegrad Countries usually meet before every EU summit so that they can unify their positions. This V4 practice was criticized by the French President Sarkozy saying "if they have to meet regularly before each Council that could raise questions".[23] This statement caused many reactions. Polish diplomat explained that every V4 meeting is just for coordination of their positions which should be accepted as positive step because by pre-coordinating their positions they shorten the long-lasting EU meetings. An EU diplomat said Sarkozy did not have the right to criticize the V4 meetings otherwise he should justify his regular meetings with the German chancellor. Piotr Kaczynski, who is working for the Centre for European Policy Studies think tank in Brussels, thinks that Sarkozy is probably irritated by the fact that Germany and France are not able to control things alone anymore and that they should probably change their policies.[24] This is substantiated with the fact that by 2014 the Visegrad Group will have the same voting power as Germany and France together.

In 2010 the Visegrad countries asked together for fair share of the diplomatic corps, asked for more places for officials coming from the new member states in the European External Action Service[25] if not, they warned countries could decide to release themselves from EU foreign policy.[26]

It is not that the Visegrad states have always shared the same positions and opinions. The fiasco surrounding the recognition of Kosovo is still fresh, when Slovakia did not support the other three countries and did recognize Kosovo's independence.[27] Also, they did not always have the same or similar progress after they entered EU – according to the European Commission in 2009 only Slovakia fulfilled the conditions to enter the Eurozone, while the other three are expected to join in 2014-15.[28]

When it comes to the Western Balkans (WB), the Visegrad countries have always been standing supporters of its EU integration, having it always on the top of their agenda. In 2010 they organized Extended Ministerial meeting of the V4 countries and the WB which

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[23] EUobserver, Mahony, Honor, "Sarkozy warns Visegrad countries not to make a habit of pre-summit meetings" http://euobserver.com/9/28928 (accessed July 21, 2011).

[24] Ibid.

[25] The European Commission has 1,657 officials working in the EEAS, only 117 are coming from the new member states.

[26] EUobserver, Rettman, Andrew, "New EU states make bid for more diplomatic clout", http://euobserver.com/18/29651 (accessed 21 July, 2011)

[27] Huszka, Beata, "Hungary's Western Balkan Policy in the Visegrad context", Center for EU Enlargement Studies, CEU, November 2010, p.4.

[28] Internet page of the Visegrad Group/ Euro versus national currencies in Visegrad countries http://www.visegrad.info/monetary-policy--euro/factsheet/euro-versus-national-currencies-in-visegrad-countries.html (accessed July 29, 2011)

reaffirmed once again their strong support for the EU future of the WB. It is considered that this meeting helped Montenegro to become an EU candidate country and helped Croatia to bring the EU negotiation process at the end.[29]

Nonetheless, no matter of the disagreements between the V4 countries, the Visegrad Group has successful history and promising future. It has proved to be one of the most effective regional alliances, thus making its experience helpful for other regions that want to go down the same path.

The idea for Balkan 'Visegradlike' Unity

Good regional cooperation is one of the key factors of the EU enlargement policy towards the WB as it is the one of the required conditions under the Stabilisation and Association Agreements which had to be signed by the Western Balkan countries which want to join the EU. The regional cooperation is important mainly because it is seen as the main source of security, political stability and economic prosperity.

The cruel conflicts and wars which took place on the Balkans left not only material damages and human casualties, but also bad image for the region as a conflict-causing,, dangerous and insecure place. All countries from the region worked hard in order to change this and it can be said that they are succeeding in that. However, closer regional cooperation is still an ambition waiting to be achieved on the Balkans. The overall picture regarding this issue is that all initiatives are external, and that the international community is "a key driver" of the regional and bilateral relations in the Western Balkans.[30]

In order to show the EU and the world that the region is capable of cooperating on its own initiative and solving the regional problems with regional efforts, three meetings of the Presidents of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro were held in the last three

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[29] Internet page of the Visegrad Group/Annual Implementation Report of the Program of the Presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Visegrad Group (1 July 2010 – 30 June 2011),p.2. http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports (accessed 10 July, 2011).

[30] Transconflict, Bastian, Jens, "Cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans- roadblocks and prospects", http://www.transconflict.com/2011/03/cbc-wb-roadblocks-prospects-163/ (accessed August 5, 2011)

years. First they met in Valona, then in Prizren and the last one was Ohrid in July 2011. Serbia was invited in all three meetings but has declined to come because of Kosovo's participation. After the last meeting, all four Presidents agreed to renew the invitation for the next year's meeting as the regional initiative would be much stronger with Serbia inside.

The main message sent after the last meeting in Ohrid was that better economic cooperation, more regional investments, attraction of the foreign investors with joint projects, support for free flow of people and capital, can accelerate the countries' EU and NATO integrations. These meetings on a highest level should "contribute to the stability, security and prosperity of the region in total"[31] according to the Macedonian President Gorge Ivanov. The Albanian President Topi believes in the future of this initiative, as the Balkan countries are leaving in new era today with common goals and can not be fragmented as in the past.[32] The main emphasis was placed on the topic of better infrastructure connection of the region as it is very important for strengthening the economic ties between the countries.[33]

It is however very unclear, how a meeting where the Presidents only talked and no concrete steps were taken or determined for the future, can be helpful for the countries involved. The Presidents also agreed that the governments, the parliaments, the NGO sector etc. should be included so that this initiative would give results but again, until now nothing has been done by these institutions either. [34]

Pros and Cons in the Macedonian case

This WB 'Visegrad-like' cooperation has not provided positive reactions among some political factors, some media analysts but also among the citizens in Macedonia. If one read the comments on the internet sites people do not perceive this initiative as a positive

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[31] Official site of the Macedonian President/Presidents of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo Pledge for Accelerated EU Integration of the Region http://www.president.mk/en/public-relations/news/546-2011-07-12-15-26-09.html (accessed July 13, 2011).
[32] Ibid.
[33] Nova Makedonija, Dimishkova, Slagana, "Without Tadic there is no Balkan Visegrad" http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=71411847181&id=9&setIzdanie=22330 (accessed July 14, 2011)
[34] Official site of the Macedonian President/Presidents of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo Pledge for Accelerated EU Integration of the Region http://www.president.mk/en/public-relations/news/546-2011-07-12-15-26-09.html (accessed July 13, 2011).

one,: "stop spending our money"; "citizens are hoping for serious solutions not endless meetings" etc.[35] This negativism goes so far that some citizens think that this is the best way for the Albanians in the region to fulfill their long-lasting desire for "Great Albania". According to Darko Kostadinovski, a President's Advisor for Foreign Policy, there is noting relevant in these statements and opinions. He says that Macedonia has been the victim of many such improvised creations (Great Albania, San-Stefano Bulgaria etc), and that each of these dreams will be "realized" when the region becomes part of the EU family.

Mr. Kostadinovski, noted the problem of not having any concrete actions taken so far, saying that after the three Presidential meetings it is necessary to deepen the cooperation in order to preserve the credibility in front of the citizens, the governments and EU. He added that time has come for concrete actions, declarations to be transformed in action. That was the crucial message from the President Ivanov at the Ohrid Summit. He asked from all present Presidents to encourage their Governments to follow their example to intensify cooperation on a ministerial level.[36] Here, one may raise the second question – credibility in front of the EU institutions. It is true that the EU is the biggest supporter of the regional cooperation in the WB and therefore applauds every step in that direction. According to the Polish Ambassador in Macedonia, Karl Bahura, these regional meetings will enhance the cooperation among the countries, their mutual thrust and neighborly relations which would in return strengthen their economies. In that way, the regional cooperation will be on a very high level and very close to the one typical for the EU countries.[37]

If analyzed precisely one may understand that this type of regional approach may be very gainful for Macedonia and the other participants. The regional cooperation may be the key factor for solving many problems like tackling the problem of organized crime and illegal migration in the region, finding proper solution for the refugees and displaced people[38], market opening, better connection between the transport corridors and energy networks etc[39]. This would lead to an overall better security picture for the region, which would probably open space for more attractive foreign investments which again will lead to strengthening the economies of the WB

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[35] Utrinski Vesnik, Comments by Macedonian citizens on article in daily newspaper
http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=084880B5694F474C957079752261D740 (accessed July 14, 2011).
[36] Interview with Darko Kostadinovski – Foreign policy Advisor in the cabinet of the Macedonian President.conducted on August 25, 2011.
[37] Macedonian Information Agency, Bahura: The Presidential Summit in Ohrid keeps the dynamics of the regional cooperation, http://www.mia.com.mk/ (accessed July 13, 2011)
[38] There are still about 1 million refugees and displaced people as a result of the wars and conflicts in the region.
[39] Stabilisation and Association Process for South Eastern Europe, First Annual Report (COM2002) 163 final 3.4.2002
http://eurlex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=en&numdoc=502DC0163 (accessed 10 August, 2011).

countries. Mr. Kostadinovski also supports the thesis that this regional initiative can bring many "pros" for Macedonia because when the countries act mutually the success is guaranteed, unlike when they work individually where the chances for success are limited.[40]

The only negative impact on Macedonia could come from the different progress level that it has when compared to the other countries on the path to the EU. If we consider the Visegard Group's situation, the EU started the accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic in March 1998, and in October 1999 with Slovakia.[41] All four countries started the EU integration process almost at the same time and they all together became full EU members in 2004. The case with the Balkans regional initiative is much different. Macedonia signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU in 2001, Albania in 2006, Montenegro in 2007, and for Kosovo under the Res.1244/99 in 2005 the Commission adopted the Communication to the Council and the EU Parliament on "A European Future for Kosovo.[42] At the moment Macedonia and Montenegro are candidate countries for EU membership, while Albania and Kosovo are potential candidates. Macedonia can be said to be the frontrunner in this group. The only obstacle why it has not started the negotiation talks is because of the name dispute with Greece. It is obvious that this Balkans' regional initiative can not be the same as the Visegrad one because the countries are on a very different stage in their integration process. In the Visegrad case, Slovakia lagged behind the other three countries only for one year, while here there is a completely different situation regarding the EU integration progress level.

Conclusion and recommendations:

This policy paper aimed to review the prospects of the regional cooperation in the Western Balkans by Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania in which the greatest emphasize was placed on the possibility of positive and negative influences from this kind of cooperation on Macedonia. As this regional initiative is similar to the Visegrad one, the WB countries may follow the successful steps taken by these four Central European countries but at the same time should try to avoid and learn from their mistakes. The WB "Visegrad-like" Unity has promising future and opportunity for regional success, while the countries have the political will, however the

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[40] Interview with Darko Kostadinovski – Foreign policy Advisor in the cabinet of the Macedonian President.conducted on August 25, 2011.
[41] Euroepan Commission Enlargement (Archives)
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/enlargement_process/future_prospects/negotiations/eu10_bulgaria_romania/index_en.htm (accessed August 10, 2011).
[42] European Commission Enlargement http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm (accessed August 10, 2011)

concrete output of the meetings is still missing. The fact is that in the last three years the Presidents met three times discussing issues from EU and NATO integration to economic cooperation. However, no concrete steps have been taken so far in implementing the conclusions from these meetings, which leaves lot of room for this cooperation to go both ways – to perish completely or to become the Second Visegrad.

The WB region has the same EU perspective and common national goals as economic prosperity, attracting more investments, fight against organized crime etc. which can be achieved more effectively when working together than individually. Therefore, this initiative can be a big achievement for the Macedonian foreign policy and generally for its national strategic priorities if used in the appropriate manner. How will thing turn at the end, it remains to be seen.

According to the analysis made, this policy report recommends to the Macedonian authorities:

• Immediate steps must be taken by the proper authorities in the four WB countries aiming at deepening and strengthening the cooperation by following the Visegrad example. This includes more precisely regular Prime Ministers meetings, meetings of other government members, meetings of state secretaries for foreign affairs, ambassadors' meetings, meetings of Visegrad co-coordinators, and other forms of cooperation between the parliaments, the CSO etc.

• It is necessary that this initiative produces concrete results which will be appreciated by the citizens and the international community. One possible solution is a Declaration or Memorandum for cooperation to be signed during the next year's meeting in Montenegro in order to formalize the regional cooperation. It is not necessary the initiative to be institutionalized immediately. After each meeting conclusions can be made on which basis further actions on national and regional level can be taken.

• The President should urge the Prime Minister to treat the conclusions of these meetings as top priority projects and demand action plan for their realization.

• Macedonian authorities as the President's cabinet should inform better their citizens and the media on what this regional initiative represents, what are the gains for the country and similar. Macedonia should take the role of a leader in the group and transmit its own experiences regarding the EU integration process in order to assist the other countries in their preparation for EU membership.

• Macedonia should utilize this cooperation for pushing ahead the high capital-intensive infrastructure and energy projects for which regional cooperation is a necessity and also other projects which are of regional interest and importance.

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Macedonia - IMF Relations: An old love across new avenues

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List of Abbreviations:

CCFF – Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility
EBRD - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EFF – Extended Fund Facility
ESAF - Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
IMF – International Monetary Fund
PCL – Precautionary Credit Line
PRGF – Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
SFRY – Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia
WB – World Bank

Introduction

Macedonia is relatively small economy compared to the countries from the region (i.e. Serbia, Croatia etc.). Referring to the data of World Bank about the GDP of 2010, Macedonia is ranked at the 128th place behind Croatia (66), Bulgaria (75), Serbia (81) and Albania (118)[1].

With its 2 million consumers it is obliged to cooperate with international foreign institutions so that it can cover the trade deficit. [2].

Since the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, Macedonia has exhibited intensified cooperation and has signed numerous financial arrangements with international financial institutions. The intensity of the cooperation depended very much on the course of Macedonia's macroeconomic policy as well as the areas where Macedonia was lagging behind, such as economic growth and macroeconomic stability. The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are two of most important financial institutions in the field of financing public policies. Their goal is to be a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. [3]

This research paper will put an emphasis and analytically asses the relations between Macedonia and the IMF, especially looking into the decline in cooperation in the last four years and accordingly the effect such a downsizing had on the Macedonian economy. This paper will do so by looking more closely on the mandates the IMF had with Macedonia since its declaration as an independent state. At the end the paper offers set of recommendations focusing on the need for increasing the level of relations between Macedonia and the International Financial bodies such as the IMF.

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[1] Gross Domestic Product 2010, World Bank, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf
[2] For example the International Monetary Fund (being the key institution that this paper analyzes), World Bank, Central European Bank etc.
[3] About Us, Official page of World Bank,
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/0,,pagePK:50004410~piPK:36602~theSitePK:29708,00.html

Macedonian membership in IMF

The Macedonian membership in the IMF comes in a successive way. On December 15th 1992 the executive board of the IMF has reviewed the status of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's (SFRY)[1] membership in the IMF. Even though Macedonia gained its independence in 1991, its status was not changed in the international, financial or non-financial organizations. SFRY, before its dissolution, was a member which enjoyed the same status as all other members.

Reviewing of the position of SFRY within the IMF was made particularly urgent because of the tragic situation in the country where the IMF, together with other multilateral institutions, was able to play an important role in contributing to the economic recovery of the areas affected by the wars. It is important to address the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the wars that follow since this process had many consequences, both human and economic.

In the light of its consideration of the issue, the IMF on the 15th of December in 1992 has confirmed that the SFRY has ceased to exist and has therefore ceased to be a member of the IMF. At the same time, the IMF has decided that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia/Montenegro) are the successors to the assets and liabilities of the SFRY in the IMF and has determined that their respective shares in such assets and liabilities are as follows[2]:

Table 1.Proportion of taking the obligations and rights which the SFRY had in the international monetary fund by its successor after the breakup of SFRY

State	%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	13.20
Croatia	28.49
Macedonia	5.40
Slovenia	16.39
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia/Montenegro)	36.52

Source: IMF press release 92/92, 15 December 1992, at 8

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[1] Macedonia was a an integral part within SFRY
[2] Ana Stanic, Financial Aspects of State Succesion: The Case of Yugoslavia, page 759,
http://ejil.oxfordjournals.org/content/12/4/751.full.pdf

The above apportionment key (known as the "IMF key") was devised primarily using the economic criteria, including the republic's contributions to the federal budget and their share in social product and export earnings of the SFRY as well as their percentage of the SFRY's population and territory. All successor states accepted the proposed IMF key.

The IMF's decision was important for three reasons. First, it unequivocally confirmed the finding of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) that the SFRY had dissolved[1]. Secondly, the IMF key set a precedent for the future apportionment of unallocated debt. Thirdly, Macedonia's and Bosnia's acceptance of IMF decisions weakens the claim that the population is the only equitable method for apportionment of assets. As it was previously mentioned, criterion for the distribution of the instruments was the economic criteria and the contribution of the republics in the federal budget. If the population were the only criterion, then the rates of distribution of the instruments would have been a bit different in favor of Macedonia and Bosnia, a tendency which was present in that time, but it remained non-materialized.[2]

Benefits and costs that Macedonia has had from its membership in the IMF:

Benefits:
The benefits that Macedonia has had from its membership in the IMF can be classified in three groups:
    From its membership in the IMF until today Macedonia has had at least three kinds of benefits:
- *Financial support* in cases where Macedonia needed one;
- *Technical support* or assistance in creating macroeconomic policies. IMF trained the administration on how to create macroeconomic policies in the early 90's;
- *Political support* in the early 90's, in terms of Macedonia's recognition by other states. At this time a very important role played the involvement of the IMF arrangements with Macedonia in the international arena, sending signals that the IMF believes in the sovereignty of the country.

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[1] It should be noted that EBRD was the first international organization to declare that SFRY had dissolved. See EBRD, Resolution of the Board of Governors No. 30 on the Membership of Countries Previously Forming Part of Yugoslavia, 9 October 1992

[2] Ana Stanic, Financial Aspects of State Succesion: The Case of Yugoslavia http://ejil.oxfordjournals.org/content/12/4/751.full.pdf

The support from the Fund was especially significant in terms of implementation of structural reforms. Many times IMF encouraged Macedonia to make reforms in few areas.

Costs

The membership in IMF brings some costs or disadvantages, as:

- *Dispersing of reforms' energy*
  The management of public administration is preoccupied by monitoring implementation and meeting agreed deadlines, which leaves little time for strategic planning;
- *Lost output*
  One of the possible indicators for assessing the lost output (because of arrangements with IMF) is the difference between the planned and the realized growth rates of GDP. Often IMF makes a systematic error in targeting the economic growth. With the exception of 1994, 1996 and 2003, in all the other years the projected growth is significantly higher than the realized.

Relations between Macedonia and the IMF from its membership until today

The relations between Macedonia and the IMF since 1992 can be generally marked with positive and steady development which entailed different set of bilateral cooperation (for example financial arrangements, economic and financial suggestions etc.).

The first ever financial arrangement between Macedonia and the IMF was signed in 1993, two years after the country's independence. It was total of 40 million US dollars. With this arrangement the IMF and Macedonia officially started the financial cooperation which is considered to be of great importance, taking in consideration the political and economic circumstances due to the wars in the region.

The Agreement that was signed apart from having financial and economic benefits can be also considered as one with a symbolic value. The act showcased Macedonia's sovereignty (which at that time was being questioned by different parties) and ability to create common economic policies with a relevant institution such as the IMF. As a result of the political crisis and economic regression in the 90's, Macedonia's budget deficit continued to grow and as a result the authorities made one additional arrangement with IMF in

the value of 35 million US dollars. This arrangement proved two facts: Macedonia was still having very fragile economy mostly due to the regional occurrences such as the economic blockades and the second notion is the fact that Macedonia at that time was considered to be trustworthy and committed to maintain its cooperation with the IMF.

Macedonia signed the third Arrangement, this time called the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF), signed in 1997, as a result of yet another embargo (this time by the Greek authorities). It was in value of 75 million US dollars. In 1999 in sequence followed the Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility[1] arrangement (CCFFA) for protection of unexpected situations in the economy. Macedonia remembers the year of 1999 as a time when it hosted around 350 000 Kosovo war refugees on its territory, which undoubtedly had serious economic consequences for the country's slowly recovering economy. IMF in this case enabled Macedonia to draw 19 million US dollars from the quota originally allocated for reimbursement. Almost all other expenses originating from the refuge crisis Macedonia had to cover on its own.

At the end of 2000 Macedonia concluded another arrangement this time called the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF)[2] which was 45 million US dollars. However from this sum Macedonia managed to use only 3.5 million. The last arrangement between Macedonia and the IMF was concluded in September 2005. IMF on August 31 approved a three-year Special Drawing Rights (SDR)[3] with a total estimate of 75.8 million US dollars Stand-By Arrangement[4] for supporting Macedonia's economic program[5].

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[1] The CCFF is an International Monetary Fund (IMF) facility which provides resources to an IMF member for a shortfall in export earnings or an excess in cereal import costs that is due to factors largely beyond the member's
control and which is temporary.
[2] PRGF is an IMF facility which is available to those countries that are facing protracted balance of payments problems and are eligible to borrow on concessional terms under the International Development Association (IDA).
[3]SDR- Special Drawing Rights –an international reserve asset, created by the IMF in 1969 to supplement its member countries' official reserves. Its value is based on a basket of four key international currencies, and SDRs can be exchanged for freely usable currencies.
[4]Stand-By Arrangement is IMF's tool who IMF uses in situation of economic crises and in situations when member countries need financing to help them overcome their balance of payments problems
[5]IMF Executive Board Approves Three-Year US$75.8 Million Stand-By Arrangement for Macedonia, IMF, Press Release 05/196, September 2005
http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2005/pr05196.htm

Looking chronologically one can pose the question why Macedonia keeps borrowing from the IMF? This habit or trend of constant borrowing no matter if it is from the IMF or another financial institution, can be traced in the budget deficits of the country. In order to cover up the deficits, Macedonia has to borrow. The borrowing from the IMF has a two side effect. From one side the IMF is a financial institution which offers the lowest interest rates for the borrowed amounts and from the other side the bigger the borrowing is - the bigger the influence is on the economic politics of its members. This influence and dependence would mean losing the sovereignty of the country in creating its own economy politics.

In November 2006 IMF delegation visited Macedonia in order to discuss about the Stand-By Arrangement and see how things are going on with the implementation of this arrangement. Officials from the IMF stressed once again the level of satisfaction with the constructive collaboration with the Macedonian authorities[1] However, a year later the Government decided to pay the rest of the IMF debt (51.7 million US dollars) and to cease the cooperation with the IMF. Macedonia's Prime Minister stressed that the most recent development in Macedonia - IMF relations does not mean that there will be no cooperation with the IMF in the future.[2]

This step can be considered as the right one because firstly the country will save money and secondly it will cut down the dependency of the country from International Financial Institutions. On the other hand, 2007 was the predecessor of what has become one of the shakiest years in the world economy. The effects of the global economic crisis shortly afterwards were apparent in many industries. Macedonia as a country in development was not immune from the occurrences which were happening on global level, so the crisis had its own impact even on the balance of payments. Therefore it was necessary that Macedonia has access to additional cash payment operations with which it would provide cover of the budget gap. In that time the budget gap was growing constantly and the suggestions from the opposition for re-establishing arrangements with the IMF were numerous. The Minister of Finance Trajko Slaveski simply responded: "*Macedonia does not need funding from the IMF*"[3].

As the crisis was growing, the consequences in the Macedonian economy were getting even worse. The culmination was reached in January 2009 when the GDP compared to the one at the same period of the year before was lower by 1.4%. It was obvious that another borrowing is the only solution. The IMF in that case was the best alternative taking in consideration the low task rates, but Macedo-

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[1]"Finally, the mission would like to thank the Macedonian authorities for their cooperation throughout the mission and for their generous hospitality." – were the last words of Mark Griffiths, IMF Press Release 06/244 http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2006/pr06244.htm

[2]Macedonia is going to pay back its loan toward IMF earlier than expected, A1 Television, 2007 http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=78769

[3]Slaveski: Macedonia does not need the IMF, Vecer, 12.11.2008 http://www.vecer.com.mk/?ItemID=1FDD35913932EE47A56A29A5B74959D0

nia decided to take a borrowing with Eurobond emission. The Eurobond was issued in March 2009 and its value was 175 million Euros with a task rate of 9.8%.

Why was this action needed? Why Macedonia did not borrow from the IMF with more favorable task rates? This action taken by the Macedonian Government was criticized by most of the economy experts such as Abdulmenaf Bedzeti, Nikola Popovski and others. The Minister of Finance at that time was Trajko Slaveski and his reaction and answer to those critics were: *"I comply with fact that in condition of independency we need to be careful and we are careful. Government of the Republic of Macedonia differs on several issues from the IMF projections..."*[1] Analyzing this statement one can come to a conclusion that Macedonia and the IMF do not share the same opinions on some economic policies, which may state that Macedonia is refraining and reserved from some recommendations and obligations that are given by the IMF to all of the member states. The differences in the economic policies which were obvious between Macedonia and the IMF were a strong and important factor for the declination of the collaboration at that time.

In an interview given in the daily newspaper Utrinski Vesnik, Marek Belka, the Director of IMF's European department, on the question why Macedonia does not bond agreement with IMF, he responded: *"To reduce external pressures, Macedonia is likely to need some combination of tighter monetary policy, tighter fiscal policy, and higher external financing. The Fund stands ready to support Macedonia in whatever way is most helpful. The Fund is willing to discuss with the authorities the provision of technical assistance, policy advice, or financial support".*[2]

This statement did not receive any kind of feedback from the Macedonian authorities so in addition to that Macedonia closed up the year 2009 with a debt from the emission of Eurobond evaluated on 175 million Euros and with few smaller credits from other financial institutions. Thinking in this direction opens up another question: did Macedonia make the right by borrowing with emission of Eurobonds and avoiding the arrangements with IMF?

For the purpose of putting daily politics aside and focusing only the topic of the paper, interviews with two former Finance Ministers Mr. Trajko Slavevski and Mr. Nikola Popovski were conducted (both coming from different political parties). According to Slaveski, Macedonia did the right thing by not signing another agreement with the IMF which has proved that Macedonia can deal with the cri-

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[1]Macedonia will not enter into an arrangement with the IMF, A1 Television http://a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=108548
[2]The IMF will assist Macedonia, Interview with MarekBelka, Director of IMF's European Department by *UtrinskiVesnik.* Published on June 13, 2009http://www.imf.org/external/np/vc/2009/061309.htm

ses situations on her own and with that it will keep the credit rating stable on the International Finance Market[1]. The opinion of Nikola Popovski on the other hand displays different image. According to him Macedonia avoided the borrowing from the IMF in order to avoid the controlling measures that come with the credit from the IMF. It is a principal and fact that the IMF does not allow the money to be spend in unproductive and populist projects (this refers to the famous Skopje 2014 project meant to architecturally revamp Skopje's central area)[2] The project is extremely challenged, particularly by the opposition and part of the experts because of its costs and non-productivity. Whether Macedonia has strained relations with the IMF, the two interviewees, both having a ministerial role in two different governments, provided the paper with two different opinions.

Trajko Slaveski stated: "*Macedonia has never had strained relations with the IMF in a single moment, but there was no intense financial cooperation because the Macedonian government has determined that there was no need for such*"[3]. On the other hand Nikola Popovski stated that *the word strained might be too strong, but it is certain that relations between Macedonia and the IMF have been slightly deteriorated*[4] However Macedonia used the allowable quota that it had in the Fund (around 70 million Euros) to cover some of the current expenses.[5]

Because of the dept that Macedonia has from the emission of Eurobonds, it has to pay 16.6 million Euros per year or 49.8 million Euros for three years, **more** for interest rates compared with the borrowings from IMF. This can be proved by the following calculations:

Case 1: Macedonia's obligations with Eurobonds and with other commercial banks

Debt: 200.000.000 €(K)

$$i = \frac{K * p * t}{100} = \frac{200.000.000 * 9.8 * 1}{100} = 19.600.000\ €$$

Interest: 9, 8% (p)

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[1] Interview with TrajkoSlaveski, December 2010
[2] Interview with Nikola Popovski, December 2010
[3] Interview with TrajkoSlaveski, December 2010
[4] Interview with NikollaPopovski, December 2010
[5] Macedonia will take a loan from the IMF, A1 Television, 2010 http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=128463.

Year: 1   (t)

Case 2: Macedonia's obligations to the International Monetary Found

Debt : 200.000.000 €(K)

Interest : 1, 5%(p)

Year : 1 (t)

$$i = 19.600.000 \text{ -}3.000.000 = 16.600.000 \text{ (per year)}$$
$$16.600.000 * 3 = 49.800.000$$

The given question is: Did Macedonia avoid the IMF because there was no need for its help (according to Slaveski), or did it take that decision in order to escape the control over the public expenditure (according to Popovski) and as a consequence now pays additional 16.6 million Euros interest rates per year?

This refers to the government's decision to gather finances through the emission of bonds in 2009 with an interest rate of 9,8% and not through a loan as part of an an arrangement that would result with an interest rate of 1.5%. Just as a result of this interest gap between the two offers, for 3 years (the time until bond maturity) Macedonia will pay 50 million Euros more. This financial amount is big, but the reasons of the ceased cooperation between the Government of Macedonia and IMF are still not clear.

In 2010 Macedonia was faced with lots of promises and problems at the same time. The country was going trough a heavy economic year, having in mind that the end of 2009 was marked with GDP of -1.4%. Conversely, the relationship between Macedonia and IMF still remainded the same. The business sector (Macedonian Economic Chamber in particular) and the opposition parties asked the budget gap to be closed with arrangement with IMF. The Prime Minister Gruevski responded on this request by stating: "i*ssuance of bonds is another positive signal in the international community that the country is able to enter the international markets and borrow funds, therefore we want to stay on that path in the group of countries that can independently manage their economic policies and not be dependent on the IMF*"[1].

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[1] For good rating Macedonia will borrow from capital markets by Eurobonds, A1, 2009 http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=122992

From strained to warmer relations

In November 2010 Macedonian authorities hit the reset button with the IMF after the announcement that in October 2010 the IMF in Washington offered to the Macedonian Minister of Finance a loan from the New Loan line from the Precautionary Credit Line worth 400 million Euros. This is not a packaged deal, which carries conditios and liabilities of the IMF, but an open credit line that is given without any major conditioning and is introduced as something new, (this is after the restructure of the IMF).

Macedonia decided to activate this loan line worth 480 million Euros for a period of two years, which somewhat normalizes the relations between the country and the IMF. According to the Minister of Finance Zoran Stavrevski, the money from the credit line will be designated as a variant reserve in case there are any complications that can happen in Macedonian economy as for example an unexpected crises. According to him Macedonia as any other country does not have unlimited amount of cash for a year which could be spent[1]. Macedonia is the first country in the world that uses this new tool from the Precautionary Credit Line (PCL), which is designed to meet the needs of countries that despite having sound policies and fundamentals, have some remaining vulnerabilities that preclude them from using the Flexible Credit Line (FCL).

The credit line provides security for the countries exposed to the global economic crisis and in case something undesirably happens (for example an unexpected economic crises), they will be able to attract sufficient funds and to maintain their stability. The credit line agreement assists the country in keeping its reputation among the creditors and enables easier access to funds in the capital markets.[2]

The benefit of this credit line is that Macedonia and the IMF restored the good collaboration. Macedonia needs IMF for better handling of its macroeconomic policy and for financial support in times when the economic crisis is hitting many EU economies. Fur-

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[1] Macedonia is the first country in the world that uses new loan from IMF , Sitel Television, 08.12.2010, http://sitel.com.mk/dnevnik/biznis/makedonija-e-prva-zemja-vo-svetot-shto-ke-ja-koristi-novata-kreditna-linija-na-mmf
[2] Admir Brava, Newsletter "Macedonia gets new credit line from International Monetary Fund", December 2010, http://analyticamk.org/images/stories/newsletters/2010/12_2010/Newsletter_December_2010.pdf

thermore, this arrangement sends a signal to the foreign investors that IMF believes in the economic stability of Macedonia, as a country in progress.[1]

Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of this research was to analyze the relations between Republic of Macedonia and the IMF, with special accent to the last 4 years, discovering the reasons for the strained level of collaboration in this period. The first part of this paper is narration of relations between Macedonia and the IMF in the past starting from its membership in 1992 up until today. The second part analyzes the benefits and the costs that Macedonia has had from its membership until today.

During these four years the relationship between Macedonia and IMF has been somewhat strained. As an excuse the government announced that this is happening so that Macedonia can preserve the rating in the international financial markets proving that it can handle with the financial and economic crisis by herself. On the other side the opposition was blaming the government that with these moves it was avoiding the control that the IMF has over its members. However, whether it was an attempt to prove that we can deal with the crisis by ourselves or attempt to escape the control of the IMF, one thing is clear, for this step Macedonia had to pay a relatively high price (about 16.6 million Euros per year).

However after four years Macedonia is returning back to its former position in relation to the cooperation with the IMF, although now with some new arrangements coming from the PCL. . Nonetheless this should be further explored as to what kind of effect it will have on the Macedonian economy taking into account that the PCL is something relatively new, and Macedonia was the first country in the world to sign this type of contract.

The overall conclusion is that Macedonia should continue to cooperate with the IMF through credit lines, as long as it has problems with balance payment. After the reformation of the IMF, Macedonia in the future needs to pay more attention to the credit lines than the financial arrangements. Having this approach, the image of Macedonia will improve in front of the international financial markets.

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[1]Admir Brava, Newsletter "Macedonia gets new credit line from International Monetary Fund", December 2010, http://analyticamk.org/images/stories/newsletters/2010/12_2010/Newsletter_December_2010.pdf

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Comparison of ENP with SAP: how to spread the common values without spreading the membership

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Introduction

In the Maastricht Treaty, which was signed in 1992, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established as one of the three pillars in the newly reformed European Union (EU). The EU leaders, the scientific community and the involved public concluded that a strong union is not possible without an external dimension. Since then, the EU became ever more engaged with foreign policy consolidations, eventually resulting in creation of a common diplomatic service [1] under the framework of the Lisbon Treaty of 2009.

So far, the EU's most effective foreign policy instrument proved to be the Enlargement policy. European countries, that want to join this prosperous community, proved to be more than willing to align their laws and policies to the common acquis in order to become members and share the integration benefits. Beside Iceland, next (and as it seems the last) in line to become a part of this success story are the Western Balkan countries which are covered under the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). Even though for most of them, the association process is and will be very long and troublesome, the benefits of becoming a member one day still keeps their politicians and public motivated in pursuing reforms.

However, after the two last waves of enlargement in 2004 (10 countries) and 2007 (2 countries), EU found itself in a completely new situation. For the first time after the cold war, there was no consensus or plan for further enlargement to the east. Thus, although being considered more European than not, the remaining, former Soviet republics at its newly established eastern borders were not eligible for becoming future members. Consequently, a new foreign policy approach (excluding the membership perspective) has to be found. In order to breach this new gap between the members and non-members, the idea of creating a ring of friends[2] around Europe with whom the EU would share everything but the institutions, was born and enshrined in the newly created European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Very soon after its creation, due to the need for supplementing the bilateral nature of this policy, the ENP was enriched by multilateral initiatives – the Union for the Mediterranean, Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership (EaP)[3].

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[1] European External Action Service (EEAS)

[2] As stated by Romano Prodi ex president of the European Commission in his speech A Wider Europe – "A Proximity Policy as the key to stability". Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/02/619 (8. 11. 2011).

[3] Unlike the case of south Mediterranean countries whose membership in the EU is out of question, the EaP neither promises nor precludes the prospect of membership to the partner states. The EaP states are: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Benchmarks and scope of the analysis

The focus of this paper is **to research the prospects, possibilities and the applicability of exporting all the positive results of the enlargement policy** relating to introducing a strong rule of law, democratization and adoption of the acquis communautaire to the countries covered under the EaP initiative **without exporting the membership itself**.

In order to analyze how the membership perspective (or the lack of it) influences achieving the mentioned results, a comparison between the ENP's eastern dimension (targeting Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia) with the SAP (covering Western Balkan countries) will be conducted. The result of such an analysis will enable assessing the relation between the willingness of the targeted countries to align themselves to the EU standards when membership is (not) offered. The ultimate goal is to explore the possibilities of redrafting the EU foreign policy in order to fit the present situation.

The two countries used for the purpose of testing the membership perspective as a precondition for implementing EU reforms are Macedonia (covered under the SAP) and Georgia (covered under the ENP). They are chosen as most suitable because of their similarities: they both host(ed) a domestic conflict; have a significant problem with their neighbor; went through a democratic transition; face similar challenges (media freedom, corruption, independent judiciary issues, highly politicized public administration), while at the same time having a strong pro-EU attitude. Although numerous EU officials clearly expressed the need to spread the acquis communautaire and EU's principles of security and democracy beyond its (potential) borders, the question of how far are the countries without a membership perspective ready to go in implementing the EU norms, remained little researched. Having in mind that EU wants to strengthen its international role, setting a consistent and clear policy towards the direct neighbors is a precondition for becoming a serious and respected international actor.

Beyond the SAP and ENP rhetoric – let's talk numbers and results!

With the EU politicians using every opportunity for stressing the importance of good relations with the neighboring countries, the question set in place is: how much is really being done besides the general talk and tap on the shoulders. In this chapter, it will be presented how the framework for cooperation within each of the two foreign policies (SAP and ENP) actually looks like, how much funds are there at the disposal and what are the results achieved. Comparison of their economical (funds and their influence) and polit-

ical components and their influence on the reforms and level of alignment with the desired EU standards is a pivotal point in evaluating the existing and assessing the alternative policies.

SAP –reasoning, legal framework and funding

According to the Treaty on the European Union[4] any European country which respects the principles of liberty, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law may apply to become a member of the EU. In the Zagreb summit of 2000, it was officially announced that the accession of the Western Balkan (WB) countries to the EU is just a question of time. Such a stance was later confirmed on the Thessaloniki summit in 2003. In order to better evaluate and track their progress, a special framework - SAP was created. Although the process was not easy from the beginning (and is still troublesome for most of the candidates) the membership perspective was never in question.

In order to take an active role in stabilizing the region and preparing it properly for membership, the EU also uses the SAP framework for promotion of regional cooperation while at the same time assisting their transition processes. The mutual rights and obligations are established in the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), already signed by all WB countries[5]. SAAs are important because they provide formal mechanisms for bringing the countries closer to the EU. Effective implementation of the SAA is a precondition for any further advancement towards membership.

Since the conflicts of the 1990-ies were happening at the very borders of the EU, its involvement in the region included peace and stability promotion. From 1990 until 2000, more than 6.8 billion EUR were spent for that purpose. In the period between 2000 and 2006, through the new Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme, more than 5 billion EUR were spent on financial assistance to the region. [6].With the development of the situation, the financial assistance was redirected to rebuilding infrastructure; developing government institutions and legislation; establishing free market economy and eventually harmonization with EU laws. Besides the financial assistance, autonomous trade measures, allowing duty free access to the EU market were introduced. Since 2007 all the financial assistance and help to potential candidate and candidate countries is given through a sin-

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[4] Article 6, article 49, Treaty on European Union.
[5] Due to the issues regarding its statues Kosovo, framework for Kosovo is still not completely clear.
[6] Data Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/cards/index_en.htm (21. 11. 2011.)

gle channel – the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The total pre accession funding for the 2007-2013 period amounts to e 11.5 billion EUR[7]. It is divided in 5 components, with only the first two being open to potential candidates as well**.**

ENP east – reasoning, legal framework and funding

In order to bridge the gap between the enlarged Union and the new neighbors, the European Commission (EC) launched a communication on Wider Europe[8], followed by the Strategy Paper on the European Neighbourhood Policy[9]. The Lisbon Treaty of 2010 also left a space for establishing special relations with the countries in the neighborhood with a goal of spreading the zone of democracy and stability beyond the EU borders[10]. In order to further strengthen the cooperation and provide a framework for better dealing with specific issues, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) was launched for the ex-Soviet neighbors. It introduced a new cooperation framework based on four platforms: democracy, good governance and stability, economic integration in the EU, energy security and contacts with the people.

The formal process of cooperation is quite similar to the enlargement agenda. After the EC prepares a Country Report, the Council decides whether to proceed with the development of the Action plan. The action plans are negotiated with each country, based on the specific needs and interests. They set the agenda for meeting various political and economic criteria, eventually leading to greater integration into European economic and social structures[11].

Until 2006, financial assistance to the countries of the EU neighbourhood was carried out by various programs. In order to make the assistance more effective, since 2007 the ENP and the Strategic Partnership with the Russian Federation are financed through a single channel – the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)[12]. 13 billion EUR are available for the 2007-2013 period for supporting the agreed priorities from the Action Plans[13]. In addition to these funds, neighbouring countries will also be eligible for

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[7]Data Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/instrument-pre-accession_en.htm (24. 11. 2011).

[8] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf (21. 11. 2011).

[9] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/strategy/strategy_paper_en.pdf (21. 11. 2011).

[10] Article 8 of the Treaty on European Union.

[11] EU – Georgia Action Plan. Available at: ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/Georgia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf (27. 1. 2012.)

[12] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/oj_l310_en.pdf

[13] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/funding_en.htm

loan financing through the European Investment Bank up to a total of 12.4 billion EUR[14]. In order to support the EaP project, additional funds (350 million EUR) will be available for the six eastern neighbours[15] in the 2010 – 2013 period.

In order to raise support for the non-state actors, crucial in development of the civil society, at the end of 2011, the EU issued a 25.9 million EUR worth global "Call for Proposals on Strengthening the Capacities of Non-State Actors. Around 10 million EUR of the available funds were earmarked for actions in the ENPI [16]. At the moment, it is planned to further support such actions with formation of a Civil Society Facility (providing for non-state actors in its Neighbourhood Partners)[17].

Evaluation – expectations, nice talk and reality

Although, the SAP is far from being perfect, concrete and measurable progress has been done in the field. Croatia will become the 28th EU member state in 2013; Montenegro and Macedonia both have an official candidate status, while noticeable progress was done in Serbia. Kosovo, Albania and BiH seem to be in a deadlock for quite some time, but the blame for the situation is to be placed manly on domestic political elites not on EU policies. The existence of the final goal (EU membership) makes it much easier to measure the progress, as well as the work yet to be done by the aspirant countries.

On the other hand, a bit more complex goal (having in mind the non entirely defined "final destination" of the whole project) of establishing the ring of friends around Europe makes it more complicated to set viable criteria for both the successfulness of the eastern dimension, as well as the progress done by the targeted countries[18]. Although the ruling elites in some of the EaP countries (Georgia, Moldova) have a strong pro-European stance, with clear aspirations towards the EU membership, most of the EaP countries are facing challenges in meeting even the basic Copenhagen criteria[19] of being a stable democracy.

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[14] Data Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/0703_enpi_figures_en.pdf
[15] Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.
[16] ENPI info centre. Available at: www.enpi-info.eu/main.php?id=18730&id_type=4 (28. 1. 2012.).
[17] ENPI info centre. Available at: www.enpi-info.eu/main.php?id=26632&id_type=1 (28. 1. 2012.).
[18] The most precise definition on the goals of the EaP can be found on the EaP civil society forum web page: www.eap-csf.eu/en/about-eap-csf/about-the-eastern-partnership/ (5. 12. 2011).
[19] Rules which define whether a country is eligible to join the EU. The criteria require that a state has the institutions to preserve democratic governance and human rights, has a functioning market economy and accepts the obligations and intent of the EU.

According to the EC[20], there are three specific priorities in financing the EaP: comprehensive institution building programs; pilot regional development programs and implementation of the Eastern Partnership multilateral dimension. So far, tackling the technical part of the policy seems to work well: the institutional framework is set; the civil society forum is established, Euronest Parliamentary Assembly comprised of members of the European and national parliament held its first session, a Comprehensive Institution Building programme has been initiated and there has been some limited progress regarding the visa liberalization negotiations.

However, when coming to the part of having concrete results, the situation is disappointing. Political and economic reforms have not been implemented with the satisfying speed; the principles of media freedom, rule of law and good governance remain low. Due to the inexperience in dealing with complex projects, and inability to work separately from the state, cooperation with the non governmental sector proved to be troublesome as well[21]. Unfortunately the process of empowering this sector may be long and hard, since the non governmental organizations are often not capable to participate in big projects which demand experience in fund absorption.

One of the big obstacles which remain up to date is the inability of the citizens of the EaP countries to travel to the EU without a visa. Even though the visa free granting process is completely dependent on the progress done by the countries' governments, the ones who end up punished are the ordinary citizens. In order to stimulate the bottom up reforms in these countries, civil society and ordinary people should be addressed. Allowing them to travel more easily and consequently seeing and experiencing the EU from first hand could do much for establishing people to people contacts eventually opening possibilities for influencing more effectively the situation in these countries. In a situation where political elites are not reliable, alternative ways of reaching the country should be sought. Unfortunately, up to now, the countries have generally not moved substantially closer to EU norms and standards as envisaged in ENP strategy papers[22].

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[20] *Vademecum on financing in the frame of Eastern Partnership Agreement.* Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/eap_vademecum_en.pdf   (5. 12. 2011.).

[21] Action Fiche for Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility 2011. Available at: ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/aap/2011/af_aap-spe_2011_enpi.pdf (27. 1. 2012).

[22] The Review of the ENP – Missing Ingredients. Available at: www.easternpartnership.org/community/debate/review-enp-missing-ingredients (27. 1. 2012.).

Macedonia and Georgia – the sun too is a star, the cross is not: Assessing the meaning of the membership perspective

1) Financial differences

First of all, it is obvious that the difference between the funding of the two EU policies is enormous. Although the funds at the disposal of the countries in the two frameworks is steadily increasing, total funds allocated to Georgia through the ENPI in the 2007 – 2013 period are approximately 300 million EUR[23], while the ones allocated to Macedonia in the same period equal to 619 million EUR[24]. Just as an indicative information, the total population of Macedonia is 2 million and Georgia around 4.5 million EUR. However, the successfulness or the quality of the policies should not be viewed solely through the amount of the funding available.

2) Membership perspective influence evaluated

- Macedonia

Taking into account the mentioned two countries' histories (to be more precise - their ethnic tensions and conflicts) since their independence in the 1990-ies, it becomes clear that EU perspective (or the lack of it) was crucial. The brief Albanian insurgency in 2001 was a proof that EU diplomacy can be very effective when having a membership carrot in its hands. Although Macedonia is still not a member, EU made it clear that an agreement between the Albanian and Macedonian community needs to be done for the country's sake of joining the EU one day. In addition, under the direct influence of the EU diplomacy, the Ohrid framework agreement, regulating the relations between the two communities was signed[25]. Only than the ratification of the already signed SAA in the member countries parliaments could proceed normally.

As Atanasova and Bache (2010) argue, thanks to the IPA funding, Macedonian answer was rapid, resulting in setting the necessary mechanisms for facilitating the pre-accession aid. Albeit Macedonia was considered to be the economically least developed of the ex-

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[23] Data available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/2011_enpi_nip_georgia_en.pdf (1. 12. 2011).

[24] Data available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/planning-ipa_en.htm (1. 12. 2011).

[25] Grabbe, Heather, Gerald Knaus and Daniel Korski. 2010. *Beyond Wait and See: The Way Forward For EU Balkan Policy.* European Council on Foreign Relations.

Yugoslav republics, and to a large extent remains the poorest even today, it was the first one from the group to sign the Stabilization and Association Agreement. The country was also the first one (along side Croatia) to be awarded with the EU candidate status. Ever since 2009, all of the Commission's progress reports[26] were highly positive on opening accession negotiations, but due to the Greek veto, Macedonia remains effectively blocked.

With the EU being the only game in town, most of the political discourse and public opinion always reason the country's progress and reforms as something which simply needs to be done in order to join the EU one day. Although just the mere membership perspective is not the only reason why the country is trying to improve, its notion definitely remains the highest and most prestigious motivational locomotive of the country's development. It is important to stress that even though Macedonia remains one of the poorest European countries, the progress done in the field of institution building, minority rights, rule of low and market economy is quite impressive. Such progress should be acknowledged even more if we have in mind all the problems that the country went through from its independence – Kosovo's conflict spill over resulting in a refugee crisis and eventually insurgency, ethnic tensions and last but not least constant Greek blockages in the international arena.

Such alignment of an ex-communist republic with limited resources to European standards is a clear example of how powerful is the effect of EU attractiveness. It is even more significant that ever since the momentum was lost with the negotiation stalemate and lack of support for the country's undisputed progress, the ruling elites seemed to abandon efforts of reconciliation with Greece and proceeded with projects bringing visible results (votes) at least in the domestic field. One of such actions is the controversial "Skopje 2014" project[27].

- **Georgia**

Among the three Caucasus states[28], Georgia was always most interested for deepening its relations with the EU. After the Rose revolution in 2003, Georgian people and politicians saw approximation to the EU as a way out of the Russian shadow over their country. Unlike in Macedonia, where EU diplomacy played a crucial role in achieving a sustainable peace between the two communities, the

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[26] For the latest 2011 progress report check: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_oct_2011_en.htm (6. 12. 2011).

[27] More about such projects and and importance of EU-Macedona relations: http://euobserver.com/7/29568 (5. 12. 2011).

[28] Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

1990ies inter ethnic and civil wars left Georgia alone, without any considerable (friendly)[29] foreign aid or assistance. Although the EU managed to play a significant role during the 2008 brief August war with Russia, the achievement was a mere ceasefire agreement without any improvements in the direction of a sustainable solution regarding the status of the two brake away regions on the Georgian territory (Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement regulating relations between Georgia and the EU entered into force in 1999. The National Indicative Program (NIP), setting bilateral priorities was introduced for the 2007 – 2010 and 2011 – 2013 periods. The priorities of the NIP are: 1. Support for democratic development, rule of law and good governance; 2. Support for economic development and ENP AP implementation; 3. Poverty reduction and social reforms; 4. Support for peaceful settlement of Georgia's internal conflicts. So far, the results of the efforts in the prioritized areas are not visible. According to the note on potential priority areas for the 2011-2013 NIP[30] period the usage and directing of the aid at disposal for Georgia remains problematic.

After the Russian embargo in 2006, Georgia was practicality left without a choice regarding its trade partners. Therefore, signing and implementing the newly offered Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) remains to be Georgia's best chance for boosting its trade and consequently increasing the economical wealth. The main difference between the Free Trade Agreements (FTA) and the DCFTA is that the second one goes much further from mere mutual opening of the markets. Signing the DFCTA means that Georgian trade and trade-related legislation and standards will be made compatible with those of the EU[31]. Having in mind that free trade and redistribution of resources (coal and steel) marked the beginning of the European integration eventually leading to cooperation in so many areas, signing DCFTA with Georgia and other countries in this uncertain membership perspective limbo seems to be a step in the right direction.

Just like in the case of Macedonia, Georgia's politicians and general public were highly motivated to pursue reforms which could bring the country closer to the EU. Unfortunately, when comparing the development of Georgian and Macedonian inner conflicts, it becomes clear that the EU does not have the same power and influence in both cases. With the South Ossetian and Abkhazian insur-

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[29] Although Russia was present, its role could hardly be viewed as positive for Georgia
[30] Initial Concept Note Potential priority areas for ENPI National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2011-2013 Georgia.
[31] Prospects of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between Georgia and the EU. Available at:
www.easternpartnership.org/community/debate/prospects-deep-and-comprehensive-free-trade-agreement-between-georgia-and-eu   (27. 1. 2012.).

gents, supported by Georgia's biggest and most threatening neighbor, being much keener on integrating into the Russian Federation than the EU, waving of the membership carrot in front of their noses would not help to settle the conflict anyhow.

It is obvious from the latest Commission progress report on Georgia[32], that even though the country is progressing in most of the fields, there are still problems in some of the basic areas as democracy consolidation, media freedom and political plurality. Georgia managed to transform itself from a failed state into a respectful modern country with a liberal economy and a strong credit rating, but however, the economical reforms have not yet been followed by progress in the field of democracy. Georgia is the best example how the old notion of trade liberalization eventually spilling into democratic reforms area may be wrong[33]. Even though the country is quite advanced in terms of trade and economy, the current regime is constantly showing worrying signs of leanings towards autocratic rule. The economic reforms and progress under president Saakashvili did not help the formation of the so far non-existing line between the ruling party and the state[34].

Distant EU membership perspective had some limited influence, but unless democratic reforms take place soon, Georgia could become just another post-soviet autocracy. In order for the ENP to succeed in Georgia, an approach stimulating the establishment of stable and independent institutions needs to be found. Only independent institutions can ensure a stable democracy on a long range in all of the EaP countries. With the resources at the EU's disposal it would not be a problem to offer assistance programs such as educating and training state officials and scientists for this purpose. Unfortunately, this easily doable and relatively cheap component is still not sufficiently developed.

Conclusions and recommendations: In the end, it is (not) all about the money

The political debates regarding EU foreign policies (often in connection with EU effectiveness) tend to end up in calls for extra funds aimed at domestic actors or projects in the targeted countries. On the contrary, the concluding remarks in this paper go more towards proposing a better usage of available resources as well as modification and adaption (instead of replacement) of already existing ap-

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[32] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/progress2011/sec_11_649_en.pdf (7. 12. 2011).

[33] The ENP Strategic Review: the EU and its Neighbourhood at a Crossroads. Available at: http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/ENP_Strategic_Review.pdf (9. 12. 2011).

[34] The West Hails Georgia As a Democracy. But is it one? Available at: www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2008/09/19/the-west-hails-georgia-as-a-democracy-but-is-it-one.html   (26. 1. 2012.).

proaches. As it was elaborated in the text, even though the ENP is built on the experience of enlargement policy, its goals are quite different. With the EU pushing for reforms in EaP countries, similar to the ones supported in the membership eligible WB states, a reasonable "reward" for countries like Georgia should be established in order to make them cooperate and fulfill their part of the deal. In this chapter it will be pointed to the possible improvement of existing approaches towards the EaP which could help in fulfilling the goal of exporting the achievements of the EU's most successful policy – the enlargement policy, without exporting the membership itself. This concluding part will summarize the key findings and present a list of recommendations to the EU authorities regarding the ENP and SAP policies.

□ **The key to success is in sustainable development of the civil and scientific society**

Obviously, the ENP can hardly be called a success story. So far the achievements of its eastern component can be summarized as follows: the EaP has managed to make the EU significantly more visible in the region; it harmonizes the EU offers to the eastern neighbours and it provides the Eastern partners with a clear reform agenda, jointly set out in the EaP Action Plans. The problem remains that EaP countries approximation towards the EU is highly dependent from the political elites whose first goal is staying in power. Therefore, in order to export and spread the EU values and norms to the countries without a clear membership perspective, alternative domestic partners should be sought. Since the political elite's enthusiasm towards the EU integrations depends on their personal interests and preferences, the key in Europeanizing the region is in targeting the civil society and bypassing the governments whenever possible and necessary. Only by doing so, a stable democratic society is able to make the necessary push for the long range bottom-up reforms to establish themselves. Setting up of a Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility (currently in progress) is a step towards the right direction.

Targeting ordinary people and making the EU closer to them can hardly be achieved without enabling them to travel inside EU borders more easily. Separating granting the visa free access to the citizens from the progress done by their governments could effectively stimulate the empowerment of the civil society and encourage people to people contacts. The EaP also misses another important component, and that is education of young experts that can come back and improve their countries one day. Encouraging study visits for both students as well as public officials is the core of change. Although to some amount study visits are possible through the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window, a more particularly targeted way of educating young people, for the purpose of serving their country in the future, needs to be found. Identifying target groups, open for cooperation with the EU should be the first and

most important priority for success of EU policies with such an ambitious agenda of substantially reforming countries without offering them a membership perspective!

☐ **Concrete policy – concrete results**

Distinctly pointing out the policy as reform assistance (what it actually is)[35], could help the countries by giving them the so badly sought sense of direction. In order to make the cooperation under such framework attractive for the targeted countries, there should be clear and visible economic benefits, enabling the country to profit on a large scale even if there is no membership at the end of the tunnel. DCTA's like the ones being negotiated at the moment, definitely represent a step in the right direction, offering perceivable benefits in exchange for political and economic reforms. Again the existing ENPI needs to be available to civil society and private enterprises as an only guarantee that citizens of the targeted countries will not depend on their often corrupted political elites. More for more approach is basically a good idea but there should be a very good reason why the countries would want to achieve more.

☐ **Consistency of EU policies and reality of the international arena**

Macedonian example made it clear that the WB countries are willing to cooperate and reform, but they need an encouragement from Brussels. Even though the available funds are satisfactory, what Macedonia (and other countries from the WB region) need is a moral stimulus, enshrined in granting the candidacy status and opening of the negotiations when the set criteria for such actions are met. Unlike Georgia, Macedonia does not need more EU (meaning its presence, visibility or funds) but the deserved opening of the accession talks which would give a necessary boost for the continuation of reforms. By allowing bilateral disputes to come in between small and practically powerless countries and the EU, harms the candidate country, but makes also huge and easy measurable financial damage for the EU itself. Each and every Greek blockade actually means lost money for the Union in a sense that the IPA funds are increasing while the momentum in the country in terms of EU enthusiasm and reforms seems to be getting lost. Targeting the right issues is crucial for achieving the established goals of both ENP and SAP. Although reforms and implementation of EU standards may be achieved on a bilateral EU – country level, Macedonia and Georgia are good examples that its policies cannot be isolated but compati-

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[35] European Neighbourhood Policy Review: the Forgotten East. Available at: http://www.easternpartnership.org/community/debate/european-neighbourhood-policy-review-forgotten-east (9. 12. 2011).

ble. Solutions should also be sought on a wider scope – in talks and negotiations with powerful neighbours whose influence on small countries ambition to join the European family of nations cannot be ignored.

Recommendations

The EU when drafting the ENP policy and supporting programmes needs to bypass the political elites when necessary and target the right groups – civil society, academics, students and the private sector;

The EU to make sure that grating the visa liberalisation to the ENP countries does not depend only on the cooperation done by the governments;

The EU to strengthen the existing and to introduce new study and young exchange programs in the EaP countries;

The ENP's purpose and goal to be clarified and pointed out as reform assistance;

The EU to offer concrete rewards for cooperation (DCTAs), resulting in visible and measurable benefits for the targeted countries;

ENPI to be more accessible for the private and non governmental sector;

The EU policies need to be consistent and to rely on a merit-based system. Situations where one country blocks another's membership path due to a bilateral dispute should not be tolerated;

The EU when drafting the ENP and SAP to take into consideration third actors influencing on targeted countries' politics and policies.

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