



**25th Workshop
of the PFP Consortium Study Group
“Regional Stability in South East Europe”**

**“Meeting the Challenges of EU Membership and
NATO Accession – Macedonia and her Neighbours”**

Programme and Workshop Outline

27 – 29 September 2012

Skopje, Macedonia

Purpose

The Study Group Regional Stability in South East Europe has been assessing the post-conflict development in Western Balkan countries and its implications for the region and beyond since 1999. Embedded in the wider academic framework of both the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes as well as the security-political research in the Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports, its main focus is to elaborate major conflict areas and propose possible solutions to local authorities and international actors alike. During the last two decades, the region of the Western Balkans has been on the daily agenda of Transatlantic, European and Austrian institutions with the goal of enhancing capabilities in the field of conflict management and peace support. Recent developments in the region have given rise to the main topic of the upcoming 25th workshop of the Study Group entitled **“Meeting the Challenges of EU Membership and NATO Accession – Macedonia and her Neighbours”** to be convened in Skopje/Macedonia from 27 to 29 September 2012.

Partners

The partners to this project are

- Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna/Austria
- Directorate General for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports, Vienna/Austria
- PfP Consortium Study Group “Regional Stability in South East Europe”
- Analytica Think Tank, Skopje/Macedonia
- Progres Institute for Social-Democracy, Skopje/Macedonia

Topic Outline

Considered by many as the only success story of peaceful transformation in the Western Balkans in the early 2000s, Macedonia managed to emerge from the shades of the 2001 armed conflict and acquire EU candidate status in just four years. The first among the countries from the Western Balkans to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement in 2001, Macedonia today, however, is considerably lagging behind on its EU/NATO accession path. Formally, the country is situated in the Brussels waiting room, while other countries from the region have developed closer ties with both Brussels and Washington: Croatia and Albania joined NATO in 2009; Croatia will join the EU in 2013. Montenegro though gaining its independence only in 2006, is expected to be the next on the enlargement line, with the EU accession negotiations starting in the summer of 2012.

On the technical level, Macedonia has shown progress in the implementation of the recommendations issued by the European Commission. These are part of the Annual Progress Reports which are considered to be the main reforms guidebook for any aspirant country. Already in 2008, the progress report recommended that Macedonia should start accession negotiations with the EU. The European Commission repeated this recommendation a further three times in the respective reports up to 2011. However, due to Greek objections to Macedonia’s integration in both the EU and NATO, Macedonia still remains in the waiting room. Meanwhile, democratic reforms slide back. To retain the Commission's recommendation, the government needs to make improvements in key areas such as public administration, rule of law and freedom of the media.

After the 2008 NATO Summit, the Macedonian political leadership started using patriotic and nationalistic rhetoric and put the “name dispute with Greece” in the centre of the political mainstream. This can be seen in ethno-centric projects such as “Skopje 2014” revamping the capital including a grand statue of Alexander the Great in the main city square, a triumphal arc and many statues of Macedonian historic figures. Without doubt, the nationalist rhetoric among elites causes an equal nationalistic response in other ethnic groups, thus creating a circle of nationalism and hatred. This culminates in inter-communal violence, as well as inter-ethnic and inter-religious mass protests on the streets of Skopje this spring.

Key questions:

Under these circumstances we need to revisit Macedonia’s image as a success story in the Western Balkans:

1. With all the countries from the region rushing to reserve a seat in both EU and NATO, where is Macedonia today?
2. How does Macedonia cope with internal challenges and relations with the neighbours?
3. What role can the countries from the region play in speeding up the processes of Macedonia’s EU and NATO integration, especially now as Macedonia shares borders with three NATO and two EU member states?
4. If Macedonia continues to sit in EU and NATO's waiting rooms, then what are the consequences for the country, for the regional dynamics and for the overall enlargement process of the Western Balkans?

Panel structure:

PANEL 1: Macedonia: Meeting the Internal Challenges of Security, Stability and Progress

What internal challenges does Macedonia face in its EU and NATO integration process? What is the state of reforms needed to reach the EU and NATO accession criteria? What is the state of the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement? In which aspects has the EU and NATO integration processes moved fastest and in which slowest, in which areas are there significant improvements and in which is there deterioration?

PANEL 2: Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia: Gaining Perspectives through Bilateral Cooperation

How do the neighbours see Macedonia today? What is their perception of the internal situation and of the Macedonian position in the region? Has this perception changed over time and why is that so? How are the relations of Macedonia with her neighbours today? Which aspects impede and which foster the good neighbourly relations? Is there a trend of improving or worsening of the neighbourly relations, or do they remain on the same level? In which areas is the regional cooperation most advanced, and in which is it still lagging behind?

PANEL 3: The International View on the Uneven Path to Euro-Atlantic Integration: Macedonia and her Neighbours

What impact does the Euro-Atlantic progress of the neighbours have on Macedonia? Is it an invitation to speed things up or is it a demoralisation? How can the EU and/or NATO help the country to move forward, (i.e. support the reform processes or move beyond the bilateral problems?) Can EU and/or NATO accession be done in parallel with the unresolved bilateral issues? What role do the neighbours play in regards to Macedonia's EU and NATO integration, do they set impediments or do they aid the process? With its current state of affairs, how much are the EU and/or NATO interested and willing to deal with Macedonia and the region? From the perspective of the international community, what can move forward the integration process of Macedonia and the integration of the Western Balkan region?

Programme

Thursday, 27 September 2012

- till 18.30 Arrival of the participants
- 19.45 – 19.50 **Introduction**
Andreas F. WANNEMACHER, Directorate General for Security Policy,
Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports, Vienna
- Introduction by the Host Institutions:
Magdalena LEMBOVSKA, Analytica Think Tank
Dane TALESKI, Progres Institute for Social-Democracy
- Dr. Heinz BONGARTZ, Resident Representative of FES in Macedonia
- 19.50 – 20.00 **Words of Welcome**
- Radmila SHEKERINSKA, Chairperson of the National Council for EU
Integration, Republic of Macedonia
- 20.00 **Dinner Reception**
- hosted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation – Office in Skopje

Friday, 28 September 2012

- 07.00 – 09.00 **Breakfast**
- 09.00 – 09.30 **Introduction to the PfP Consortium and Administrative Remarks**
LTC Ernst M FELBERBAUER, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna
- 09.30 – 10.00 **Opening Addresses**
- COL Ljube DUKOSKI, Director General for Security Policy, Macedonia
- Amb. Thomas BAIER, Austrian Ambassador to Macedonia
- 10.00 – 11.30 **PANEL 1: Macedonia: Meeting the Internal Challenges of Security,
Stability and Progress**
- Chair:** Predrag JUREKOVIĆ, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna
- Nazim RASHIDI, Free lance analyst and journalist, Diversity Media NGO
- Marinela TUSEVA, Parliament's Committee for Foreign Affairs
- Marisa MacISAAC, Political Officer, US Embassy in the Republic of Macedonia
- 11.30 – 12.00 **Coffee Break**

12.00 – 13.30 **PANEL 2: Albania, Bulgaria, Greece: Gaining Perspectives through Bilateral Cooperation**

Chair: LTC Ernst M FELBERBAUER, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna

Enfrid ISLAMI, Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana

Petyo VALKOV, Institute for Security and International Studies, Sofia

Marios P. EFTHYMIPOULOS, President Strategy International, Thessaloniki

13.30 – 14.30 **Lunch**

14.30 – 16.00 **PANEL 2: Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia: Gaining Perspectives through Bilateral Cooperation**

Chair: LTC Ernst M FELBERBAUER, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna

Dita DOBRANJA, Institute for Development Policy, Prishtina

Ljupcho STEVKOVSKI, Professor at University American College Skopje and analyst at Macedonian Intelligence Agency

Jovan TEOKAREVIĆ, Department of Political Science, University of Belgrade

16.00 – 16.30 **Coffee Break**

16.30 – 18.00 **Interactive Discussion**

Moderation: Filip EJDUS, Department of Political Science, University of Belgrade

19:00 – 20:00 **Reception**

hosted by MG Johann PUCHER, Defence Policy Director, Ministry of Defence and Sports, Vienna

20:00 – 22:00 **Dinner**

upon invitation by the Austrian Military of Defence and Sports

Saturday, 29 September 2012

07.00 – 09.00 **Breakfast**

09.00 – 10.30 **PANEL 3: The Uneven Path to Euro-Atlantic Integration: Macedonia and her Neighbours**

Chair: Dane TALESKI, Progres Institute for Social-Democracy

Robert LIDDELL, Minister Counsellor at the EU Delegation in Skopje

Laurie WALKER, Desk Officer for NATO's relations with Skopje, NATO Headquarters, Brussels

Stevo PENDAROVSKI, Professor at American College, Skopje

Dennis BLEASE, Cranfield University Centre for Security Sector Management, Shrivenham

10.30 – 11.00 **Coffee Break**

11.00 – 12.15 **Plenary Session: Interactive Debate for Policy Recommendations**

Moderation: Predrag JUREKOVIĆ, Austrian National Defence Academy, Vienna

12.15 – 12.30 **Closing Remarks and Outlook**

MG Johann PUCHER, Defence Policy Director, Ministry of Defence and Sports, Vienna

12.30 – 13.30 **Lunch**

14.00 **Departure to the Side Programme/Individual Departures**

SIDE PROGRAMME:

Guided City Tour through Skopje

Sunday, 30 September 2012

Individual Departures