

# **NORTH MACEDONIA**

## **A T A G L A N C E**



Foreign policy · Society · Economy · Culture

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# FOREWORD

What are the main features of North Macedonia, its politics and society? How do the citizens of North Macedonia live? What are their possibilities in education and employment? How do they spend their free time? These are the questions I was asking myself four years ago, during my preparation time at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Berlin, trying to find out more about the country of my new appointment. Researching and googling made me realize that there is a huge lack of systematized data about the country, so, being a foreigner and future Director of the KAS Office in Skopje, I had to put a lot of effort into finding basic information, and only a few sources seemed reliable. This was to become one of my strongest motivations for initiating the idea of "North Macedonia at a Glance": a short guidebook with the most important facts and figures about the country.

"North Macedonia at a Glance" provides especially the international reader with the most important basic information about North Macedonia, particularly with regard to its political and legal system, culture and society, the educational system, media, the way of life, as well as some basic economic data.

Hence, our main target group is the international community. This publication is aimed at promoting North Macedonia in those circles, at presenting North Macedonia's best capacities, and at supporting the country in promoting itself on the international stage.

The handbook comprises nine chapters, with each of them presenting facts and figures in order to provide a basic understanding of North Macedonia's history, its society and politics, including contemporary issues as well as famous personalities.

The publication is a joint project of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the CIVIC-Institute for International Education in Düsseldorf, our long-standing partners and friends, who shared their ideas and gave valuable inputs during the concept development and the realization of this project.

We wish you a pleasant and interesting reading.

**Johannes D. Rey**  
*Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*



Kale Fortress, City of Skopje

# INTRODUCTION

In ten chapters, we would like to present different perspectives on the Republic of North Macedonia. It has been an honour for us to have ten respected and well-known Macedonian authors, specialists with different fields of expertise, give us their in-depth insights in order to raise awareness about their country, its people, possibilities and challenges, thus offering us the opportunity to better understand North Macedonia in these stormy political days.

An extensive introduction can be found in the **first chapter**. It addresses problems of the ethnic composition of the population in the Republic of North Macedonia and the complex political system related to it. This overview serves as a basis for an in-depth understanding of everyday life in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The **second chapter** is based on the previous one. It deals with facets of the three powers according to the Macedonian Constitution and sketches the public institutions of the country.

The **third chapter** is of paramount importance to better understand the Macedonian society and politics. Starting from the Ilinden Uprising and proclamation of the Kruševo Republic in 1903, the author describes Macedonia's way to statehood. He presents challenges and obstacles that this young state has

faced so far and which we hope to overcome. Definitely, integration into the European Union remains the primary goal of Macedonian foreign policy.

Economic upswing leads to prospering general welfare. In the **fourth chapter**, we describe the legal foundations and key initiatives of the Republic of North Macedonia in the field of economic policy. For a young state, these are the main guidelines for the years to come.

Aspects of environmental and energy policy, as well as the issues of global climate change, are also gaining importance in the Republic of North Macedonia. Reducing the air pollution in built-up areas, especially around greater Skopje, is becoming increasingly significant. Macedonian society becomes ever more aware of the waste management problems and the need of reducing plastic waste. However, many steps are left to be taken in order to achieve sustainable success. The **fifth chapter** describes the requirements and necessary measures in detail.

In the **sixth chapter**, we take a look at the efforts of the education policy of the Republic of North Macedonia. According to the government, education, research and the will to innovation are the key factors to strengthen the Macedonian economy and the welfare of its people. This is related to the aim to develop an education system that focuses on learners

and is based on modern learning programmes which should provide future generations with the necessary knowledge, skills and capabilities to meet the requirements of a well-functioning, democratic, and multicultural society, in accordance with the European model. Those assets are equally needed to meet the requirements of the constantly changing labour market and new global challenges, as well as to assume an active role in the design of these processes.

The Republic of North Macedonia is characterised by its multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. The **seventh chapter** gives an impression of the religious landscape and the efforts of the civil society. Another aspect the chapter deals with is the emigration from North Macedonia, which has been lasting for decades, including an overview of where people have tried to find a new life beyond their homeland.

Free media play an important role in the free development of civil society and equal political competition. The **eighth chapter** describes the current situation of media in the Republic of North Macedonia, including the development of digital media.

In the **ninth** and **tenth chapter**, we discuss the cultural heritage and the current „Macedonian way of life“ in detail. The authors give a diverse picture of the country and point out why North Macedonia is worth visiting and getting to know, especially when it comes to its people. The Republic of North Macedonia inspires with its everyday culture. It engages the visitor, invites to participate, and integrates. Join us on a journey to the Republic of North Macedonia.

**Finally**, on the last pages of our publication, you will find a summary of additional facts and information about the Republic of North Macedonia.

We have composed an overview of the most important data from the last decades, which clearly depict the remarkable will to be sovereign and to integrate with NATO and the European Union.

We cannot present a complete picture of the country, but we still wanted to mention some important Macedonian personalities from the areas of religion, culture, sports, and politics. Certainly, you are familiar with some of these persons, while you might not know that they are Macedonian. And, definitely, you may know other important persons from North Macedonia that we have not listed here.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to one of the most precious treasures of the country. Although we do not see our publication primarily as a travel guide focused on tourist destinations, the picture would definitely not be complete without the national parks and the double world heritage of the city of Ohrid with its lake.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this publication that aims to bring closer the Republic of North Macedonia, its everyday life, its people and their wishes, and we hope that reading it will provide you with some pleasant surprises. ■

**Holger-Michael Arndt**

Managing Director of the *CIVIC Institut für internationale Bildung*

Honorary Consul of the Republic of North Macedonia

# AT A GLANCE

The Republic • Crests & Symbols • Demographics •  
Geography & Climate • Parliament & Parties • Government •  
The President • Judiciary

by Daniel Gjokeski

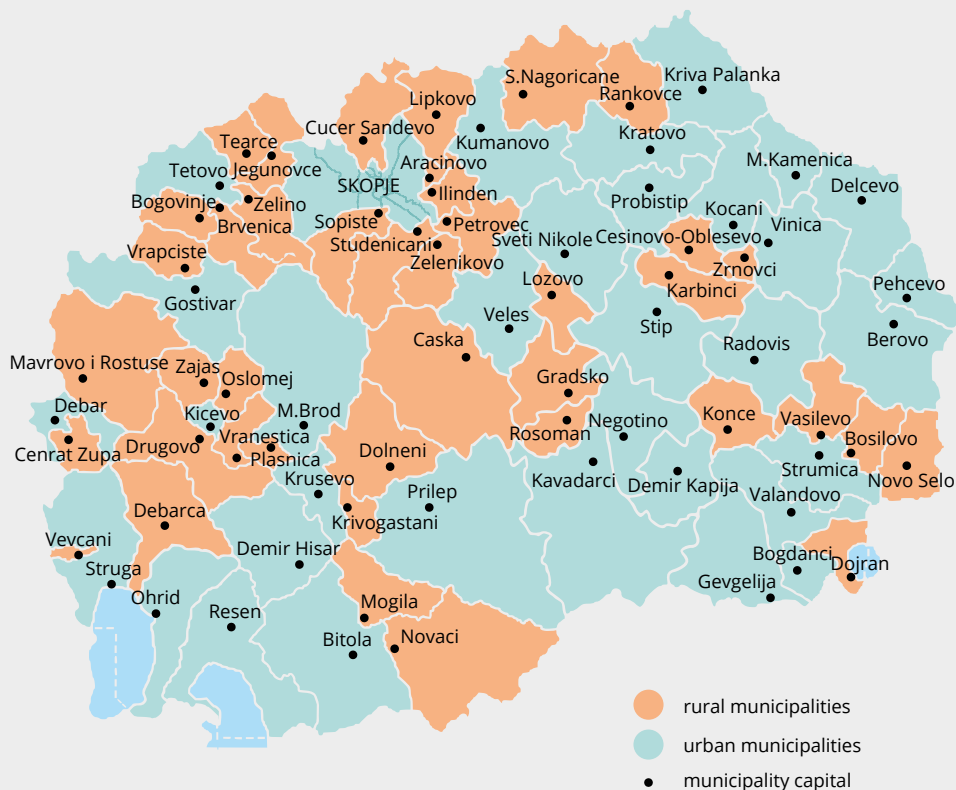
*Project Developer in the fields of education and youth empowerment*

## THE REPUBLIC

The Republic of Macedonia is a sovereign and independent state at the heart of the Balkan Peninsula. It is a representative parliamentary democracy with an executive government composed of a coalition of parties from the unicameral Assembly, and an independent judicial branch with a constitutional court. The President of the Republic is the head of state, and the President of the Government (Prime-Minister) is the head of government. After gaining independence in September 1991, the Republic of Macedonia was swift in

drafting a Constitution which was adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia on November 17th, 1991, establishing it as the highest act within the state's legal system. Its content is typical for a liberal-democratic state. With the adoption of a new law and elections held in 2005, local government functions were divided among 78 municipalities. The capital Skopje comprises ten municipalities, collectively referred to as the "City of Skopje". Municipalities in Macedonia are units of local self-government. ■

## The administrative map of municipalities in Macedonia



## Municipalities of the City of Skopje



## Coat of arms



The coat of arms is composed of two curved garlands of sheaves of wheat, tobacco leaves and opium poppy fruits, tied by a ribbon decorated with the embroidery of traditional Macedonian folk motives. In the centre of the frame, a mountain, a lake and a sunrise are depicted.

## Constitution



The **constitution** institutes a clear division of powers and defines the Republic of Macedonia as a contemporary European democratic state.

## Flag



The **flag** depicts a stylized yellow sun on a red field with eight broadening rays extending from the centre to the edge. The sun represents "the new sun of liberty" referred to in the national anthem of the Republic of Macedonia, "Today Over Macedonia" (Денес над Македонија, „Denes nad Makedonija“).

## National holiday



The **Independence Day** (Macedonian: Ден на независноста, Den na nezavisnosta) in the Republic of Macedonia is celebrated on 8 September. It has been a national holiday since 1991, when a Referendum for Independence took place. The Republic of Macedonia gained its independence from Yugoslavia.

## Currency



The **Macedonian currency** is the Denar (MKD). Banknotes of 10, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000 and 2000 as well as coins of 1, 2, 5, 10 and 50 denars are used. Since 1996, a large number of commemorative coins for collectors have been issued. Foreign currency should be exchanged at banks and authorized exchange offices.

## Domain



The **Internet country code top-level domain (ccTLD)** is .mk for the Republic of Macedonia. It is administered by The Macedonian Academic Research Network (MARnet). Available second-level domains are: .mk, .com.mk, .org.mk, .net.mk, .edu.mk, .gov.mk, .inf.mk, .biz.mk, and .mob.mk. The Cyrillic domain .mkд was officially approved and registered on March 20, 2014.



# National Anthem

"Denes nad Makedonija" (Macedonian: Денес над Македонија, English: "Today Over Macedonia") is the national anthem of the Republic of Macedonia. Both the music and lyrics date from the early 1940s. Todor Skalovski composed the music, while the lyrics were written by Vlado Maleski. It was adopted as the Macedonian national anthem in 1992, a year after the state's independence was declared. The anthem had already been used in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia while it was part of Yugoslavia.

$\text{♩} = 88$

De- nes nad Ma- ke- do- ni- ja se ra- ga, no- vo son- ce  
Od- no- vo se- ga zna- me- to se ve- e, na Kru s- hev- ska-  
Go- ri- te Ma- ke- don- ski xum- no pe- at, no- vi pes- ni,

na slo- bo- da- ta! Ma- ke- don- ci- te se bo- rat , za svoi- te prav- di-  
ta Re- pu- bli- ka! Go- ce Del- qev, Pi- tu Gu- li, Da- me Gru ev, San- dan-  
no- vi ves- ni- ci! Ma- ke- do- ni- ja slo- bod- na, slo- bo- dna жи- ve-

ni! Ma- ke- don- ci- te se bo- rat , za svoi- te prav- di- ni!  
ski! Go- ce Del- qev, Pi- tu Gu- li, Da- me Gru ev, San- dan- ski!  
e! Ma- ke- do- ni- ja slo- bod- na, slo- bod- na zi- ve- e!

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The average lifespan in the Republic of Macedonia is 75.41 years, while the average population age is 38.5 years. As for age structure, the Macedonian population is getting increasingly older. In the period from 2005 to 2015, the share of the young population (0-14 years) dropped from 19.4% to 16.7%, whereas the share of the older population (65 and above) increased from 11.1% to 13.0%, amounting to 265,570 persons. Demographic indicators on a regional level point to differences symptomatic of discrepancies in the population's territorial distribution. The Skopje Region, being the most densely populated, has almost double the population density compared to the most sparsely populated, the Vardar Region. According to the last census in 2002, Macedonians form the largest ethnic group in the Republic of Macedonia. The second largest group is the Albanians, who are concentrated in the northwestern part of the country. Estimates indicate a Roma population of up to 260,000. Up to 65% of the population follows Orthodox Christianity, with most of them belonging to the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Other Christian religions account for 0.4% of the population. Muslims account for 33% of the population. Macedonia has the 5th highest proportion of Muslims in Europe. Most of the Muslims in the country are Turks, Roma or Albanians, while there is a small number of Macedonian Muslims. Total life expectancy (for both sexes) at birth is 75.1 years. This is above the average life expectancy at birth of the global population, which is about 71 years (according to the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations). The life expectancy at birth is 72.6 years for men and 77.9 years for women. ■

### LIFE EXPECTANCY

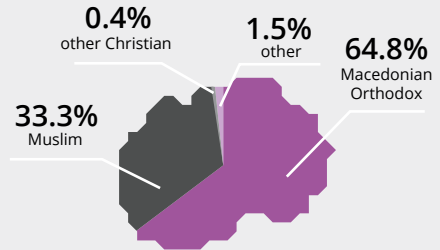
**78 years / 73 years**

Women

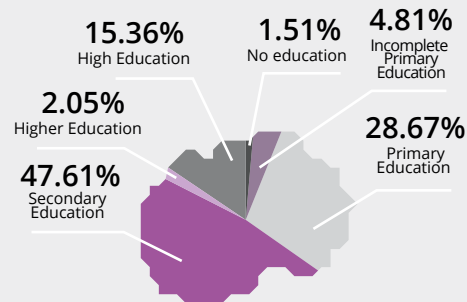
Men



### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

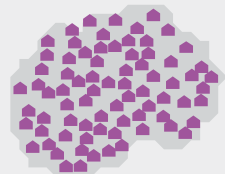


### WORKING POPULATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION



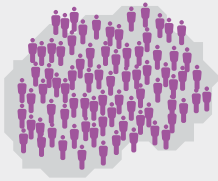
### HOUSEHOLDS

**561,693**



## POPULATION

2,074,502

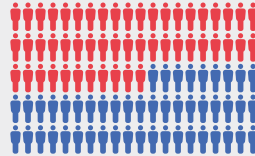


## GENDER DISTRIBUTION

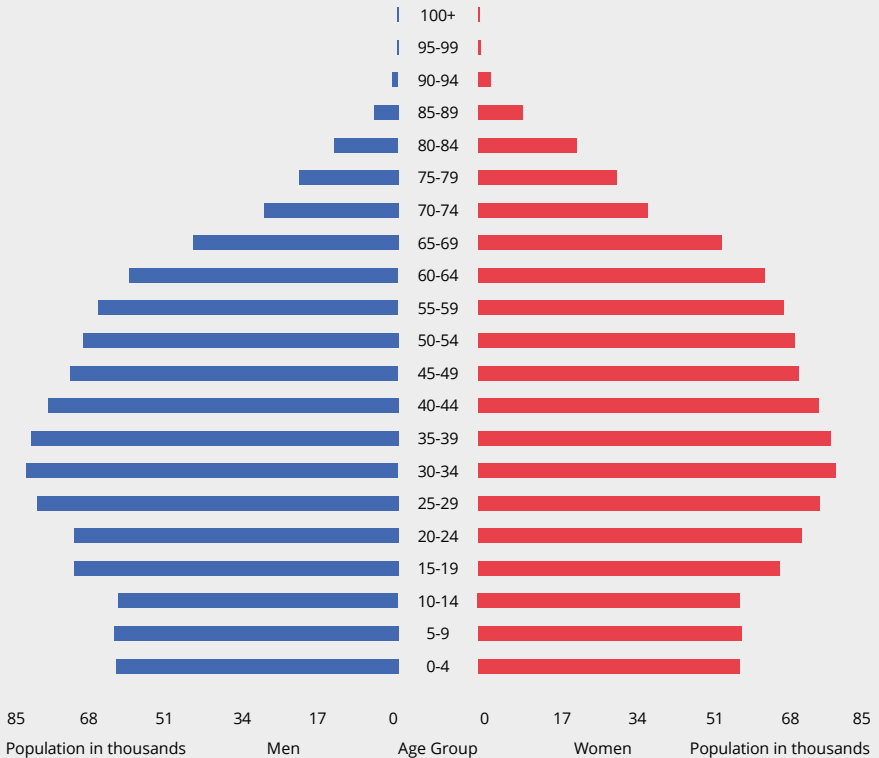
1,035,554 1,038,948

Women

Men



## AGE STRUCTURE



## GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

The Republic of Macedonia is positioned in south-eastern Europe, at the heart of the Balkan Peninsula. It covers an area of 25.713 square kilometers and has some 2.1. million inhabitants, with 1.179.111 living in the urban areas.

The Republic of Macedonia has three national parks: Pelister, Mavrovo, and Galichica, covering an area of 130.000 hectares. These national parks provide opportunity for a variety of sports and leisure activities during all four seasons, such as paragliding, scuba diving, horse riding, skiing and snowboarding, mountain biking, hiking, kayaking and canoeing. The Republic of Macedonia has more than thirty mountain peaks of over 2.000 meters and 968.033 of hectares of forest. The lowest altitude is 44 meters, and the highest peak Golem Korab is 2.764 meters high.

Lake Ohrid and the city of Ohrid are cultural monuments protected by UNESCO. Lake Ohrid is one of the oldest natural lakes of the planet, with its deepest point being 286 meters. Beside Lake Ohrid, there are several other lakes that are unique attractions, such as Lake Prespa with 62 bird species enlisted on the List of Protected Species by the Bern Convention, the Dojran Lake with its unique creation legend, Mavrovo Lake and the half-submerged church in it, and Lake Spilje near Debar, the second biggest artificial lake in the country after Lake Tikvesh, both considered perfect for boating and fishing activities. 62 types and 56 subtypes of fish live in the lakes and rivers. The longest river is the Vardar, 420 kilometers long, cutting the republic of Macedonia in two. ■

### LOCATION

## Southeast Europe



### SURFACE AREA

**25,713 km<sup>2</sup>**



### CAPITAL

**Skopje**

571.46 km<sup>2</sup>



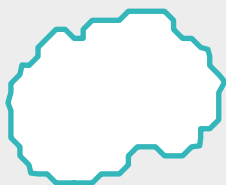
HOURS OF SUN  
**2041 hours**



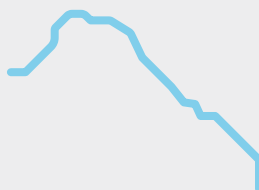
RAIN  
**500-700 mm**  
(mountainous region of  
the country over 1000 mm)



BORDERLINE  
**897 km**



LONGEST RIVER  
**Vardar**  
301 km in Macedonia



FORESTED AREA  
**835,055.82 ha**



HIGHEST MOUNTAIN  
**Mount Korab**  
2.764 m



## FAMOUS MACEDONIANS

Macedonians take great pride in and have immense respect for their revolutionary past. Having been part of the Ottoman Empire for five centuries, the country certainly values the people who made history by raising their voices and risking their lives in the fight against occupation.

These people, immortalized in monuments, paintings and songs, are constantly present in everyday life, and Macedonians celebrate their life as a reminder of the struggle that the nation went through to gain independence and enjoy the liberty we have today.

Culture also plays an important role in the life of Macedonians, as a statement of national identity. There are few artists who have made their mark on the world stage, which is why they have gained the status of heroes and are worshipped by their fellow Macedonians because of their work as ambassadors of their country. ■



### Goce Delčev

(1872-1903)

Delčev, who was a school teacher, was a key member of the International Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and is hence considered a Macedonian national hero in Macedonia's struggle for independence against the Ottoman rule.



### Metodi Andonov - Čento

(1902-1957)

A prominent fighter against fascism, the President of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia, as well as the first President of the People's Republic of Macedonia following the end of World War II.



### Mother Theresa

(1910-1997)

Born Anjeze Gonxhe Bojaxhiu in Skopje in 1910, of Albanian ethnicity, founder of the Missionaries of Charity congregation, widely known and acclaimed for her humanitarian work with the Roman Catholic Church. She was canonized by Pope Francis on September 4th, 2016.



## Nikola Karev

(1877-1905)

A famous Macedonian revolutionary known for his role in the Ilinden uprising, an attempt by Macedonians to liberate themselves from the Ottoman rule.

During this period he authored the Kruševo Manifesto: a document outlining the aims of the Macedonian uprising against the Ottomans.



## Krste Petkov Misirkov

(1874-1926)

Krste Petkov Misirkov is considered the founder of the contemporary Macedonian language. Misirkov is one of Macedonia's most well known philologists and historians.



## Blaže Koneski

(1921-1993)

Blaže Koneski was a well-known author, poet, linguist, founder and the first President of the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Koneski is considered the key codifier of the contemporary Macedonian language.



## Nikola Martinoski

(1903-1973)

Considered one of the founders of Macedonian contemporary painting, Nikola Martinoski was a member of the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences. He won numerous prizes at home and abroad.



## Esma Redžepova

(1943-2016)

Esma Redžepova was a famous singer and humanitarian of Romani ethnicity. Redžepova was also known for her humanitarian work which was focused on helping underprivileged children.



## Simon Trpčeski

(1979)

Macedonia's famous classical pianist. Simon Trpčeski's career takes him all over the world to perform with some of the world's finest orchestras and conductors.

# THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Republic of Macedonia is a sovereign and independent state. It is a parliamentary representative democratic republic with a President as head of state and a President of the Government (Prime-minister) as head of government. In the following chapter, we will examine the general aspects of the legal and political systems of the state. ■



**Gjorgje Ivanov**, born 1960,  
VMRO-DPMNE, State  
President since May 2009



**Zoran Zaev**, born 1974,  
SDSM, President of the  
Government since May 2017



**Talat Xhaferi**, born 1962,  
DUI, President of the  
Assembly since April 2017



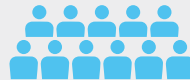
## The people

All Macedonian citizens who are at least 18 years old are eligible to vote. They elect Members of the Assembly in a direct secret ballot election.



## Assembly

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia is the representative body of the citizens, which exercises the legislative function.



## Government

The Government is elected by the Assembly. The Government bears the primary executive function.

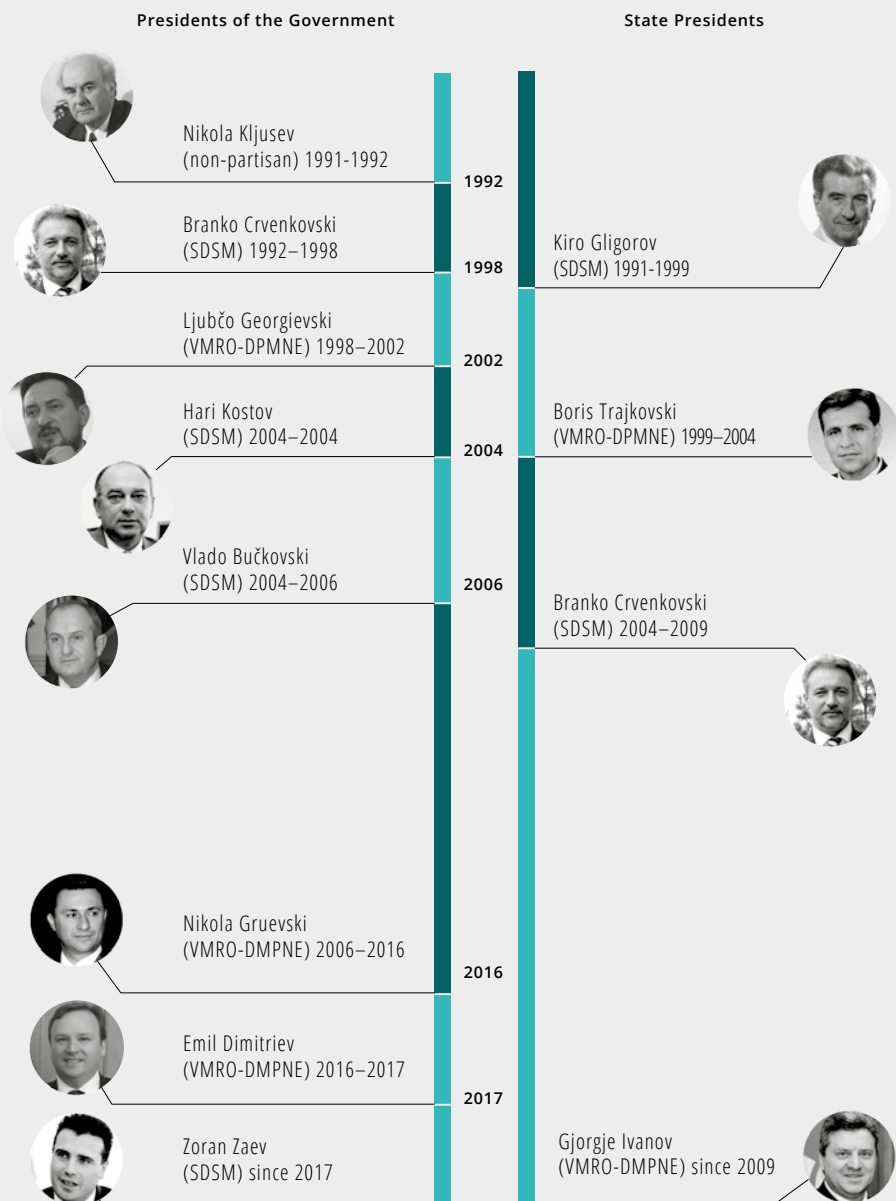


## State President

The President of the Republic of Macedonia, the head of state, is elected by direct, secret ballot for a mandate of five years, with a two-term limit.



# Presidents of the Government & State Presidents



# THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Constitution • The Legislative Branch • The Executive Branch  
• The Judicial Branch • Public Administration

by Timcho Mucunski  
*Faculty of law "Iustinianus Primus" - Skopje*

## THE CONSTITUTION

Every overview of a contemporary legal and political system, of course, starts with the highest legal act of the country. In most nations, this is their constitution. After gaining independence in September 1991, Macedonia was swift in drafting a Constitution, which was adopted in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (the national parliament) on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1991, establishing it as the highest legal act within the nation's legal system.

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia introduced a clear division of powers, as is necessary for a contemporary European democratic state. It constitutes the sovereignty of the state, while, of course, also encompassing specific rights of citizens. Reading through its content, it is clear that it represents **a Constitution typical for a lib-**

**eral-democratic state.** A basic analysis of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia leads to the conclusion that Macedonia is **a parliamentary democracy.**

The Constitution's content is divided into nine parts:

The **first part** covers basic provisions related to the Republic of Macedonia, including sovereignty, citizenship, the national flag, emblem and anthem, language, as well as the fundamental values of the nation.

The **second part** (which, in terms of content and scope, is the largest) is dedicated to the basic rights and freedoms of citizens.

The **third part** encompasses provisions related to the organization of the bodies of government, including the judiciary. ►



The Crystal Hall at the Assembly

► The **fourth part** regulates matters related to the Constitutional Court of Macedonia.

The **fifth part** contains the basic provisions related to local self-government.

The **sixth part** covers provisions related to international relations.

**Part seven** covers issues related to the defense, martial law and state of emergency.

**Part eight** contains provisions on the procedures related to amending the Constitution.

**Part nine** contains transitional and final provisions, including specific provisions for a transition from the previous to the new constitutional system.

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia was amended in 2001, in accordance with the **Ohrid Framework Agreement**, a peace Agreement brokered by the European Union and the United States to end the 2001 Conflict. The subject of this Agreement, and the amendments that result from it, are specific rights of ethnic minorities. ■

## THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

# PARLIAMENT

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia is the representative body of the citizens, which conducts the legislative function. Its Members (*Pratenitsi/Пратеници* in Macedonian) are elected via direct secret-ballot elections, by a **proportional representation electoral system**. Currently, the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia can elect up to 123 members to the **unicameral Assembly**. Starting with the constitutive session of the Assembly, the mandate of its Members is up to four years.

The Members of the Assembly elect a **President** as well as **Vice-Presidents**. The President of the Assembly represents the Assembly, convenes and manages sessions, applies the Rules of Procedure, and communicates with the Representatives of the Parliamentary groups, as well as the President of the Republic of Macedonia and the President of the Government (Prime-Minister).

The Assembly has permanent and other working bodies which support the efficiency of its

proceedings. These bodies look over legislation which is adopted by the Assembly, follow the execution of legislation, and analyze other issues in the framework of their competencies. They also establish international cooperation within their competencies.

**The Permanent working bodies of the Assembly** currently include the following Committees: Constitutional Issues; Legislative and Legal Affairs; Defense and Security; Political System and Inter-Ethnic Relations; Finances and Budget; Culture; Health; European Affairs; Equal Opportunities for Women and Men; Education, Science and Sport, etc.

**Other Working bodies** include the Inter-Community Relations Committee. The Assembly is also represented in the **National Council on European Integration**, which, apart from the MP's, includes the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for European Affairs, a Representative of the President, a Representative of the President of the Government, a representative of the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Representative of the Community of Units of Local-Self Government, as well as a representative of the Association of Journalists. The Assembly also has various **delegations to parliamentary assemblies**, including those to the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The Assembly elects a **Secretary-General**, who is responsible for organizing the functioning of the administrative service of the Assembly. ■

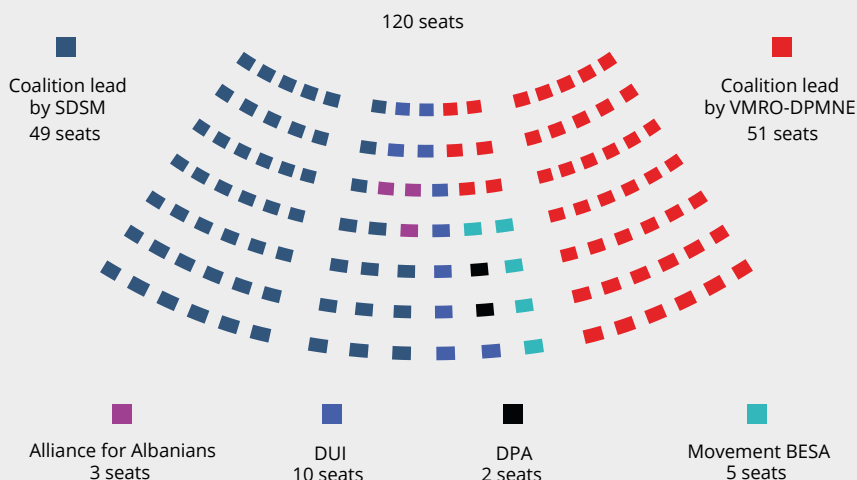
## → INTERNET

**The Assembly of the Republic Elections, Members of Parliament, parliamentary groups**

→ [sobranie.mk](http://sobranie.mk)

# The Assembly

The Assembly has at least 120 members. The 9<sup>th</sup> composition of the Macedonian Assembly, elected in 2016, has 120 members



## Parties



**The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE)**  
2016 election result: 38.14%



**Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM)**  
2016 election result: 36.66%



**Democratic Union for Integration (DUI)**  
2016 election result: 7.28%



**The Movement BESA**  
2016 election result: 4.86%



**The Alliance for Albanians**  
2016 election result: 2.95%



**Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA)**  
2016 election result: 2.60%

## THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

## THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

The President of the Republic of Macedonia, who is the head of state, is elected by direct secret-ballot elections for a **mandate of five years**, with a **two-term limit**. He gives his Oath of Office in front of the Assembly. Although throughout Macedonia's democratic history, it has been argued many times that the President has only a "monarch-like" function in terms of competencies, the role actually comprises a large number of responsibilities and tasks, especially in foreign policy and defense, as he is the **Supreme Commander of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia**.

In terms of foreign policy, the President represents the Republic of Macedonia in international relations. In this function, he **appoints the ambassadors of the Republic of Macedonia abroad** and **receives letters of accreditation of foreign ambassadors to Macedonia**. The President also concludes international agreements in the name of the state.

In his role as Supreme Commander, the President **appoints the Chief of Staff of the Army**, as well as Generals. He chairs the National Security Council, and appoints three members to it. In this role, he also appoints the Director of the Intelligence Agency.

In relation to the work of the Government, the role of the President is vital, as he is responsible for **giving the mandate for the formation of the Government**. He also recommends two members of the Constitutional Court, two members of the Judicial Council, as well as the Governor of the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, who are all subject to election by the Assembly.

The role of the President of the Republic of Macedonia is also very important for the normative function of government. Namely, the President **signs decrees for the proclamation of laws**. He has the constitutional right to reject the signing of such a decree if, in his view, the legislation is not in accordance with the Constitution or with established international norms and agreements. In this case, the law is returned to the Assembly for revision. If it is passed a second time with a majority of the total number of Members of the Assembly, the President, according to the Constitution, is obligated to sign the decree for proclamation (although no time-frame is specified as to how soon the decree should be signed). This means that **the President has the right to veto legislation, and, arguably, the possibility of using a "pocket veto" exists**.

The President of Macedonia also has the **constitutionally mandated right to grant amnesty**.

The Office of the President and its staff are managed by the **Secretary-General of the President**. ■

## → INTERNET

**The President of the Republic**  
State visits, appointments, duties

→ [pretsedatel.mk](http://pretsedatel.mk)



The State President Ivanov and the National Guard in front of his residence

## THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

# THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia is elected by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. After the President gives the mandate for the formation of the Government, the person granted the mandate (the leader of the parliamentary majority) has twenty days to form it.

The Government bears the primary executive function in the Republic of Macedonia. It consists of a **President** (Prime-Minister), **Ministers** and **Deputy Ministers**. It is the role and responsibility of the President to lead the government in accordance with the previously defined program priorities.

The Ministers are independent in carrying out the competencies and obligations of the bodies of government (in most cases, ministries) which they manage. The role of the Deputy Minister is to carry out the executive function together with the Minister, and replace her or him when necessary.

The current Government of the Republic of Macedonia consists of **fifteen Ministries** with the following portfolios: Defense; Internal Affairs; Justice; Foreign Affairs; Finance; Economy; Agriculture; Forestry and Water

Economy; Health; Education and Science; Labour and Social Policy; Local Self-Government; Information Society and Administration; Transport and Communications; Environment and Urban Planning.

There are **two Secretariats**, which are usually led by Ministers without portfolio with the title of Deputy Prime-Minister: **The Secretariat for European Affairs** and the **Secretariat for the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement**.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia has significant and widespread executive competencies. It is responsible for the execution of legislation, has a normative function which entails the proposal of legislation (including the Budget), widespread competencies in foreign policy (in collaboration with the President), and competencies in naming or proposing officials for specific roles and functions, including the State Public Prosecutor (who is subject to election by the Assembly).

In the Republic of Macedonia, the role of President, Minister or Deputy Minister is incompatible with the role of Member of the Assembly.

The functioning as a "centre of government" (the administrative function of the Government, as well as the organization of the work of the Cabinet) is organized by the General Secretariat of the Government of Macedonia, which is lead by a Secretary-General who is chosen by the Government. ■

## → INTERNET

**The Government of the Republic**  
Composition, duties, sessions

→ [vlada.mk](http://vlada.mk)





Government's building

## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

They key to a functional state is always a responsive, efficient and economically effective public sector. In the past years, Macedonia has implemented various reforms aimed at creating a professional public service which carries out its service function professionally. To that goal, various e-services have been implemented. Currently, Macedonia has 1,288 institutions within

the public sector. These include institutions on both the central and local level, such as the various ministries, typical bodies of government (agencies, inspectorates, etc.), and municipalities, but also hospitals, national theaters, museums, schools, state universities, social institutions, etc. The number of employees in the public sector is around 129,000. ■

## THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Macedonian judicial system has undergone vast reforms since the independence of the state. Set Within the constitutional and legal norms, the Macedonian judiciary is independent from the executive and legislative branches. Currently, Judges and Prosecutors are selected

by means of a competitive procedure based on practical and theoretical training within the academy of Judges and Prosecutors “Pavel Shatev”. The final decision of their selection rests in the hands of the Judicial Council as well as the council of Prosecutors.

### THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

## COURTS IN THE REPUBLIC

In the court system of Macedonia, the judicial power rests in **Primary Courts, Courts of Appeal, the Administrative Court, the Higher Administrative Court, and the Supreme Court of the Republic of Macedonia.**

Currently, there are **27 Primary Courts** that cover the municipalities of Macedonia, **four Courts of Appeal in larger centres** (Bitola, Skopje, Gostivar and Shtip). **The Administrative Court, the Higher Administrative Court** and the **Supreme Court** are in Skopje.

Generally, cases of civil law, criminal law, commercial law and labour law go through the Primary Courts, Courts of Appeal and, lastly, the

Supreme Court, as the last instance of appeal in Macedonia, on the basis of extraordinary legal remedies.

The Administrative Court and High Administrative Court are responsible for cases of administrative disputes, which usually arise from administrative procedures.

Within the Macedonian system, there is also a **Constitutional Court**. Its competencies are in the area of normative control. Essentially, it decides on the compliance of basic legislation with the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as conflicts of jurisdiction. ■

### MILESTONES

## 1991

The Republic of Macedonia declares independence from Yugoslavia on September 8th, 1991

## 1991

The Assembly adopts the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia on November 17th, 1991

## 1994

Macedonia conducts its first Parliamentary elections as an independent state on October 16th, 1994

## THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

# THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR

Within the judicial system in Macedonia, the institution of the Public Prosecutor is organized hierarchically as follows: **The Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Macedonia, the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office, the Public Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, and the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office.**

The Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Macedonia covers the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia, with headquarters in Skopje. It is lead by the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of Macedonia, who is elected by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia upon proposal of the Government.

A Higher Public Prosecutor's Office covers the area of an Appellate Court, which means that there are four such Offices in Macedonia.

The Public Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption investigates specific types of crimes and covers the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia, with headquarters in Skopje.

Primary Public Prosecutor's offices cover the area of one or more Primary Courts. Currently, there are 22 such offices in Macedonia. ■

### → INTERNET

#### Courts in the Republic

Judicial Portal of the Republic  
→ [sud.mk](http://sud.mk)

Constitutional Court  
→ [ustavensud.mk](http://ustavensud.mk)

The Public Prosecutor's Office  
→ [jorm.gov.mk](http://jorm.gov.mk)

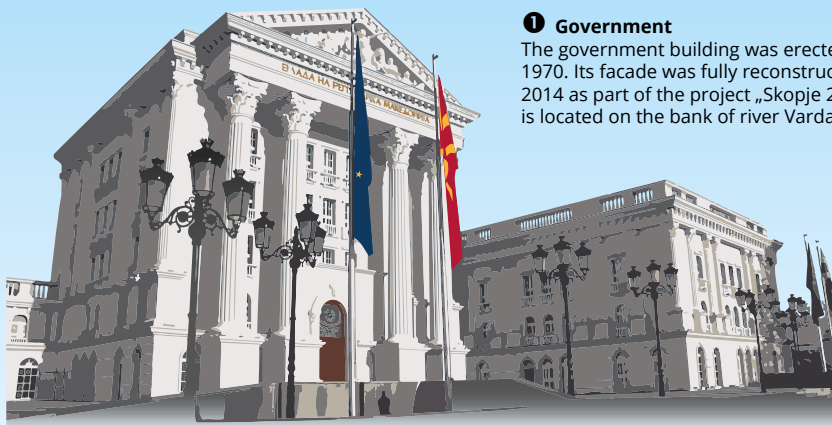
## 1994

Macedonia holds its first Presidential election as an independent state on October 16th, 1994

## 2001

The Ohrid Framework Agreement is signed on August 13th, 2001

# POLITICAL SKOPJE



## 1 Government

The government building was erected in 1970. Its facade was fully reconstructed in 2014 as part of the project „Skopje 2014“. It is located on the bank of river Vardar.



## 2 Villa Vodno

Villa Vodno has been the official residence of the State President since 2009. It is located in the foothills of Vodno Mountain, in the South of Skopje.



120

MPs make up the 9<sup>th</sup> composition of the Macedonian Assembly



38 %

of MPs in the Macedonian Assembly are women



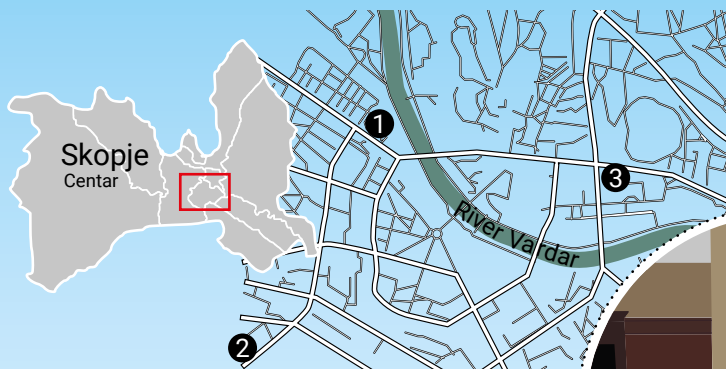
1,806,336

citizens are eligible to vote in elections



4,500

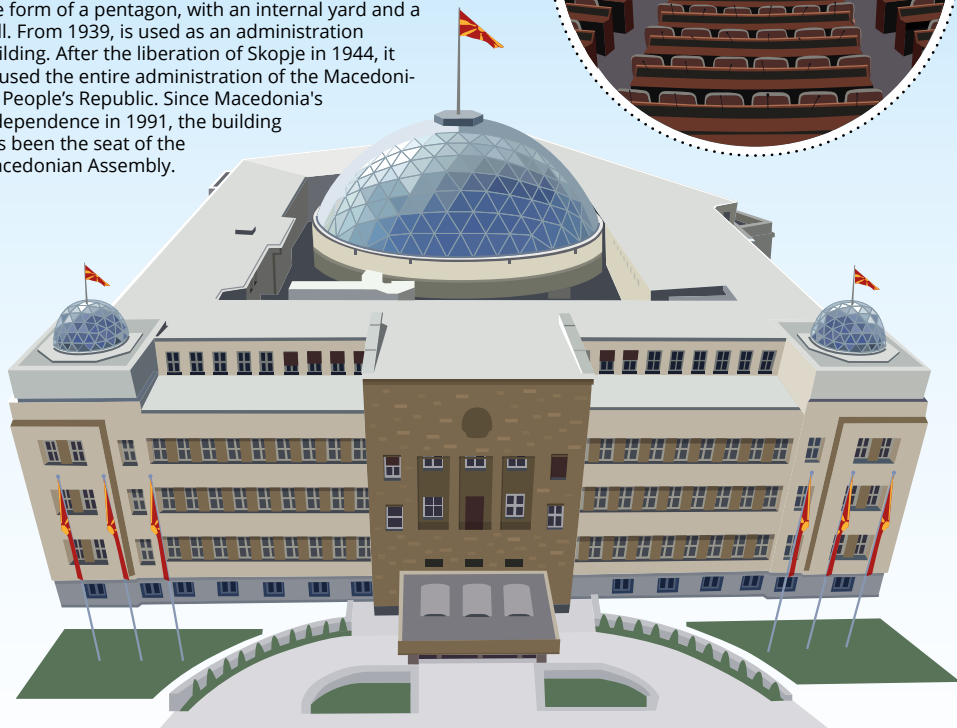
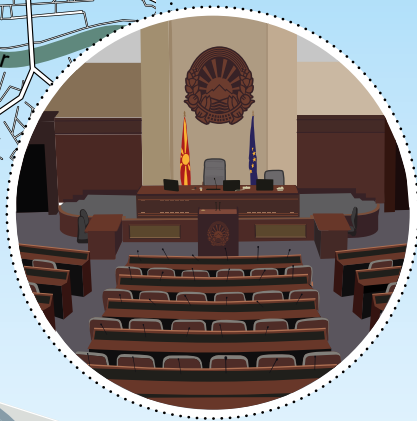
people visit the Assembly in Skopje each year



- 1 The Government
- 2 Villa Vodno
- 3 Assembly

### 3 Assembly

The Assembly was built in 1938, based on a project designed by Czech architect Victor J. Hudak. It has the form of a pentagon, with an internal yard and a hall. From 1939, is used as an administration building. After the liberation of Skopje in 1944, it housed the entire administration of the Macedonian People's Republic. Since Macedonia's independence in 1991, the building has been the seat of the Macedonian Assembly.



15  
ministers form  
the Government



9  
coalition governments  
since 1991



4  
State Presidents  
since 1991



9  
Presidents of  
the Government  
since 1991

# MACEDONIAN FOREIGN POLICY ON A EUROPEAN TRACK - MYTHS VS. INTERESTS

The “three Ilindens”: from the dream of autonomy to challenged sovereignty • The essence of “Great power” support • Long-lasting “Interim” solutions • Security and welfare umbrella • Threats - myths vs reality • Real and fake alternatives • Internal market and beyond • Who remains to be integrated? • Success is rather based on reforms than on membership

by Nikola Poposki  
*Former Minister of Foreign Affairs*

The foreign policy of a nation is best defined by the **discrepancies** on its path of decisions, not by the **general outline** of national **myths**. For the latter, we provide additional references. Our focus in the following text, however, will be on the discrepancies.

## THE “THREE ILINDENS”: FROM THE DREAM OF AUTONOMY TO CHALLENGED SOVEREIGNTY

Three historical events illustrate the pattern of what was to become the Macedonian concept of modern statehood, which its foreign policy is derived from. All three events happened to occur in summer. The first two even on the same date (2nd of August, St. Ilya the Prophet's day). Hence, the sun on the flag (or at least some type of it).

**1<sup>st</sup>:** In 1903, in a **people's uprising**, the ambition to establish an autonomous Macedonia was officially proclaimed: at that time, within the already crumbling Ottoman Empire. The derived “Kruševo Manifesto” might have looked like an expression of the Socialists' dreams. However, it captured the aim for freedom by means of, so to say, **democrati-** ►



The state flag in the UN

- **sation.** It was brutally crushed and followed by years of violence.

The Balkan Wars and World War I followed, as did the period of competing forced migrations and assimilation across the wider region. By 1918, about everything was left to be rebuilt, whereas violence persisted. As a consequence of World War II, the Balkans were expected to be redefined. The War stimulated the resurgence of the hopes that had not been fulfilled in 1903.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** In 1944, the most successful fighters against the fascists' (and their allies') domination across the region had one thing in common: **socialist ideology**. The Macedonian context fitted the rule. At the Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia, Macedonian socialists reportedly converged over the idea of self-determination and favoured the concept of a federal union with fellow nations. The ideology later appeared to be their curse, when thousands became subject to property nationalisation or forced exile, ended up in correctional camps or, in the worst case, died. Some of the affected were perceived as **too ideological** (e.g. even preferring Stalin over Tito), others at the contrary as **not being ideological enough** (e.g. valuing their national or individual interests or liberties more than the supranational socialist mainstream). Either way, the road to hell was shortened for disobedience, even if it was well-argued.

The "Srem vs Solun" dilemma was present at that time. As historians would record it, each nation in the region had its proxy. After World War II, the lack of anticipation that the borders would be fine-tuned by the Allies,

who did not like considerable disturbances, would be paid for at a later stage.

**3<sup>rd</sup>:** In 1991, the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) went hand in hand with growing aspirations for independence. Macedonia's path toward independence was unique:

It remained the **only former Yugoslav Republic not to be involved in a bloody secession conflict**.

It conducted a referendum for independence from Yugoslavia which, **in a unique manner, left open the option to join a renewed federation** at a later stage. The move was justified as an attempt to appease worried ethnic communities and/or hawkish leaders in the neighbourhood.

Macedonia was the only Republic that was considered fit for independence by European Community (EC) experts, but disregarded by the EC Council at the same time. The special EC commission on Yugoslavia was led by top constitutional experts from Member States and offered opinions on statehood and succession. It concluded that Slovenia and Macedonia were the only Republics clearly ready to be recognised as independent states at that stage, while others still had to fulfill some preconditions. The EC Member States acted politically by following the recommendation on Slovenia, while refusing to do so in the case of Macedonia.

Thus, the first lesson in international law for Macedonia was rather rough: when the **rule of law** and the **"rule of the jungle"** (real politics) are in collision, **the latter tends to prevail.** ■





President Kiro Gligorov declares the independence of the country after the successful referendum held on 8 September 1991.

## THE ESSENCE OF “GREAT POWER” SUPPORT

The 1903 insurrection was not the only one in the region. The emerging Balkan nations had seen armed uprisings against the Ottoman Empire for many years. However, the successful ones included an element that the Macedonian insurgency in 1903 was obviously lacking: substantial support from at least some of the Great Powers of that time (the British, Russian, French, and Austro-Hungarian Empires, and later Germany and Italy). In some views, the Serb, Montenegrin, Greek, Romanian, and Bulgarian insurgencies were accompanied by rival Empires' backing against the Ottomans in a way that determined their outcome. As for the 1903 insurgency in Macedonia, the attention of rival Empires could be partially attracted only after it had been crushed and revenge raids affected local populations, provoking considerable migration flows. Hence, it was followed by at least a decade of extended suffering.

As World War II was reaching its end, some partisans in Macedonia were more attracted to

the national (rather than the ideological) component of the after-war, as were others in the neighbourhood. All of them missed to note that ideological borders had already been fixed. In absence of consideration for such circumstances, anti-communist treatments at the time were quite radical (sometimes, they are said to have included bombing raids, forced migration, executions or incarcerations in labour camps).

For many citizens, the independence referendum in 1991 completed the long way to freedom. However, they would see that the perspective it offered on sovereignty and international rule of law was not all that glamorous. The achieved independence was peaceful and legal. Still, Macedonian citizens were left to discover the true meaning of real politics. In substance: UN accession was frozen, the EC imposed a ban on the name, and a trade embargo was imposed by Greece, the only neighbour whose ports Macedonia as a landlocked country could ship from and to at a reasonable cost. ■

## LONG-LASTING “INTERIM” SOLUTIONS

This situation was set to last, at least until it became absurd. However, the bloodshed in the other parts of the former Federation imposed the need for action. The solution included Security Council resolutions (817 & 845), a new flag, a so-called temporary reference instead of a constitutional name of the country for UN purposes, followed by an asymmetric Interim Agreement with Greece.

The long process of moving from attempted autonomy to independence went through phases of compromised sovereignty and unprecedented acceptance of unilateral concessions. On one hand, it was meant to be only temporary. On the other, it provided justification for an extended list of further unprecedented concessions. Some Greeks point out that, since the young Republic voluntarily applied for UN membership as Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and this was accepted by the UN, it is clear that the Greek stance on the name issue was legitimate. From that perspective, the Mac-

edonian argument about the name of a country belonging to its sovereign rights has suffered the toughest hit from its own ranks. Thus, what should have been temporary became permanent, and bilateral talks under UN auspices about the name dispute were introduced as a permanent instrument.

Many governments have elapsed ever since, and many different approaches have been tested. With the sole exception of the persistent UN mediator, Matthew Niemetz, pretty much everything else has changed. Relations between Macedonia and Greece flourished through investments, trade, tourism, banking, even during the migration crisis... Also cross-border contacts between citizens of both countries grew exponentially. The sky became the limit for cooperation, provided the identity issue was left aside. In Macedonia, the price was no NATO or EU membership. Part of the Greek rationale behind this was that once the young Republic would be stabilised and positioned in the club, unilateral

### MILESTONES

## 1993

Macedonia becomes a member of the United Nations on April 8th, 1993

## 1995

Macedonia becomes a member of the OSCE on October 12th, 1995

## 1995

Macedonia becomes a member of the Council of Europe on November 9th, 1995

concessions might come to an end. In private, a fraction of the decision-makers was convinced that Turkey might use Macedonia as an additional platform of destabilisation regarding Greece. Perhaps none of this is well funded, but a number of Greek politicians have consistently reminded that the name issue will be solved either by Macedonia aligning with all the Greek claims or by being dissolved (if failing to do so). For some Greeks, this sounded radical, but it made others reflect on how comforting the alternative of “Great Albania” and/or „Great Bulgaria” would be for hellenism.

We all tend to agree on one point: **myths still seem to dominate over rational understanding of a common security concept for Balkan nations.** As a counterbalance, Americans and Germans at least are constantly reminding us that tax-payers` interests might matter more than the relation to antiquity, across national borders.

**Two decades after the Interim Agreement,** Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) were relaunched on a purely bilateral basis. In a unique

manner, the President, the Parliament, and even the Ministry of Interior in Athens opened the gates to Macedonian official presence. The Macedonian language was publically spoken in the Foreign Ministry, too.

The apparent openness in Athens later met a new government in Skopje, whose polarising Prime Minister Zoran Zaev is largely perceived as a “name deal-breaker”. His supporters perceive previous cabinets as antiquity builders, while he responded by renaming the main Macedonian airport and motorway which had been named after Alexander the Great. Many disagree at home. “One day he could win the case before the Court of history for the merits of his efforts”, claim his supporters. His opponents, on the other hand, say that he will only have to turn up for Court on municipality charges.

Almost everybody agrees that the name issue is experiencing a “window of opportunity” regarding Europeanisation. What some might miss in this process is that real sector reforms are what makes the difference. ■

1995

Macedonia enters the Partnership for Peace with NATO on November 19th, 1995

1999

Macedonia begins the Membership Action Plan (MAP) Process with NATO on April 19th, 1999

## SECURITY AND WELFARE UMBRELLA

Turbulent regional surroundings, fragile inner stability, shattered competitiveness and excessive trade dependence have all contributed to Macedonia's NATO and EU membership aspirations.

They have been important to the extent that the Republic was led to compromise on its name and flag, and the Macedonians were expected to do the same about their identity and language, because the second highest defense spender (relative to GDP) in the mightiest military alliance on Earth sensed the danger of irre-

dentism and a potential security threat. Some might view this as excessive. Once again, reality beats fiction.

In 2018, after the conclusion of the Interim Agreement, the failed NATO accession and a ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the Government appears more determined than ever to further compromise the country's sovereignty. The promised reward is not negleagable at all: NATO membership & an updated EU perspective. And perhaps this time it is for real. ■

## THREATS - MYTHS VS REALITY

The mainstream Macedonian political elite, across the board, views NATO as the Holy Grail of security, territorial integrity and statehood. The population is clearly less religious about it, but still convinced of its usefulness. Membership support

has dropped from some incredible +90% to more realistic +70%. More importantly, it is viewed as a binding element for a small, but colourful nation.

In theory, Article 5 stipulates that an attack on

### MILESTONES

## 2001

Macedonia signs the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU on April 9th, 2001

## 2005

Macedonian receives EU candidate status on December 16th, 2005

## 2009

The European Commission, for the first time, recommends to start accession negotiations with the Republic of Macedonia on October 10th, 2009

one NATO member state is considered as being directed against the Alliance as a whole. Once, Niemitz class carriers and ballistic missiles constituted an attractive insurance policy against a tanks-led invasion. Today, neither the treath nor the insurance are the same. In practice, nations can be shattered without a single tank or fighter-jet crossing a border line.

Also, Alliance members might have dramatically different views about the **scale** or the **context** of a **threat**, especially once it happens. Some might decide to dispatch any kind of required support to a threatened member state, others simply to pull out their manpower and equipment from a conflict zone. Reasons can vary from policy disagreements to public preasure back home.

It can be perceived that a threat in a member state comes from another member state, no matter that this might be an inaccurate evaluation of the threats. Even in democracy, misperceptions can shape decision-making.

Luckily, Macedonian rationale tends to be simple: our neighbours are either in NATO or NATO is in them. Either way, even unallied-minded Serbia is advancing on the path of the "Partnership for Peace", a NATO-led program. Therefore, the Re-

public's **security priorities are almost entirely shared with those of the neighbours.**

Today, radicalised individuals and groups that operate on a cross-border basis constitute a primary source of concern. Many have gained experience in the past Balkan or Middle East conflicts. They represent the same kind of threat in North-Western Europe as they do on the Balkan peninsula. The only way to counter them is through efficient cooperation mechanisms between states. This also goes for **cyber and hybrid threats**. Today, NATO is probably still the most efficient system to enable security cooperation in the region.

Additionally, the membership has proved to have beneficial side effects on the **investment climate**, which is perhaps only due to the expectation of a more predictable environment.

Last but not least, NATO membership is believed to have possible appeasing side effects on **social cohesion**. This can be critically important in societies suffering from segregation (on cultural, religious, or ethnic grounds) or compromised national cohesion. However, this might merely mean to treat the symptoms rather than the causes of the problem. ■

## 2009

Macedonia is granted visa liberalization with the European Union on December 19th, 2009

## 2018

The Prespa Agreement is signed (agreement on resolution of the name dispute between Macedonia and Greece) June 17th, 2018

## REAL AND FAKE ALTERNATIVES

The most fragile argument for NATO membership is “there is no alternative”. Scientifically, it will not prevail. Clearly, there are always alternatives. The fact is that the American security umbrella provides the best marketable insurance policy in the wider region.

It might not always be directly linked to full NATO membership, though. Sweden and Austria, for example, are declared neutral countries, while Turkey provides the second biggest military manpower in the Alliance. Those countries have, by all standards, different status in respect to potential external threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. In practice, public opinion in some NATO member states might be more inclined to intervene in favour

of the former rather than the latter.

In Macedonia, the alternatives are not given in terms of “choosing a club”. Instead, they are about taking different shapes of strategic relationship, all following the very same **pillars of national security**:

1. Relations with neighbors
2. Internal integration capacity
3. American security umbrella
4. EU framework for economic prosperity

Obviously, the pillars are **interdependent**. Also, they are likely to remain fundamental, even after joining NATO and the EU. ■

## THE EU WELFARE DREAM

The goal of EU membership is what really unites Macedonians. The most successful peace project in Europe is not inspired by military might, but focuses on **economic welfare** founded around a quasi-religious belief in a jointly agreed **set of rules**. For most Macedonian citizens, the leading EU nations are **role models**.

Obviously, they are not naive about the imperfections (to say the least) of the bureaucratic machinery and challenged democratic representation of institutions. Still, the EU is the most efficient and fairest of the known beasts that can deliver overall benefit to its citizens at today's level of sophistication.

Over time, disappointment following numerous failed attempts to start accession talks, as well as the irrational disappearance of the Macedonian language or national identification from docu-

ments of the European Commission have taken the toll of bitterness from many Macedonians' hearts. ■

## INTERNAL MARKET AND BEYOND

Macedonian economy is very open, and 90% of the trade is with the EU or its (potential) candidates. Germany alone absorbs nearly half of the exports. Therefore, integration in the internal market is a logical choice. However, the steep road to membership is dominated by reaching standards related to the rule of law rather than trade practices.

Painful integration experiences in the past have raised the accession bar. It is more difficult than ever to convince German or French tax-payers that integrating the Balkans into the EU is not merely going to bring more of the trouble inside the club. To some, it might appear that stabilising the south-eastern part of the continent and develop new market opportunities there is not worth the effort.

The highest risk for the process is that, if it remains as **vague and lengthy**, there might be too few people left in the Balkans to be integrated, as many more might opt

to **vote with their feet** and simply move to the more competitive parts of the Union.

As a matter of fact, most young people in the Balkans perceive EU membership as a fast-track job opportunity in richer Member States. However, this is obviously a misperception, since less EU citizens are enthusiastic about enlargement now than at any moment since the great stretch eastwards in 2004.

Critically, European integration was never driven by democratic tendencies, but rather by an elitist vision of a better tomorrow. The average Frenchman was not more enthusiastic about the accession of Great Britain back in the 1960's than he would be about the Balkans now. Still, the former happened a few years later, as the latter, one day might do as well.

Arguably, the "Balkan 6" might remain in the Union even longer than the UK, as they have ►

► experienced a (much harder) “exit” from a Common market, only a couple of decades ago. The lessons learned have left some marks in the collective memory which go well beyond migration and the loss of market opportunities.

For Macedonia, the biggest challenge of

this generation is to keep at home a large fraction of its most competitive citizens. Migration is certain to continue, whatsoever. But for a small nation, having in mind the traumas of Bulgaria, Romania and, more recently Croatia, who see young skilled people massively leaving their country, this is probably the ultimate challenge. ■

## WHO REMAINS TO BE INTEGRATED?

The most efficient way of making Macedonia a prosperous country in the 21st century is to genuinely apply the **guiding principles** of (liberal) **democracy, rule of law, and free market**. Fulfilling these dreams might take the path of Euro-Atlantic integration.

More important than the actual membership in those clubs is to **implement** the guiding principles. As this is what makes the most obvious difference between a **prosperous democracy with competitive economy and a struggling entity dependent on foreign assistance**.

The difference between both extreme scenarios considerably depends on the **quality of our reforms** today. This will also play an important role regarding how many of the brightest and smartest graduates will decide not to move to places where their skills are more appreciated. Failing in this effort, on the other hand, could

make much of the arduously achieved Macedonian statehood irrelevant.

While observing the trends, one can legitimately ask what on Earth could prevent the competitive ones from leaving the underdeveloped Balkans for Northern Europe or the USA. Some arguments in favour of the Macedonian “remain” campaign could include better preserved traditional values and a **less stressful lifestyle** (at least for the intellectual upper and middle class), and the enthusiasm about contributing to a **pioneering effort to anchor a nation** in the 21st century and beyond.

In essence, attracting **competitive companies with high technology to invest in Macedonia is probably the ultimate challenge for Macedonia's foreign policy of the 21st century**. Without it, “keeping the brains” will be a much harder mission. ■





## SUCCESS IS RATHER BASED ON REFORMS THAN ON MEMBERSHIP

Observing the disbalance, a friendly diplomat once offered consolation about Macedonian inconclusive persistence on the ICJ court ruling to be implemented: “since you decided to be small, you better run fast”. In summary, international rule of law has limits. “Great power support” in different forms mattered in 1903, 1944, 1991, and it matters in 2018, especially for small and polarised nations. Survival instincts tend to pre-

vail over trust in legal instruments. Still, being right on principles certainly helps.

Ultimately, the welfare of people in a country depends on **how unified** and **well organised** the society is. **“Quality over speed”** of reforms is probably the most useful advice which Macedonia has received from partners in the last two decades. ■

# BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Doing business in Macedonia • Taxes • The Macedonian economy

by Aleksandar Klimovski, PhD  
*Faculty of law "Iustinianus Primus" - Skopje*

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, free markets, the freedom of entrepreneurship, and property rights are fundamental values in the legal system of the nation.

In this chapter, we will give a brief overview on two aspects related to business and economy: the legislative framework of doing business in Macedonia and the Macedonian economy.

## THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF DOING BUSINESS IN MACEDONIA

As stated above, in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, specific emphasis is put on guaranteeing investors' rights to own private property. In accordance with the Constitution as well as national legislation, no person can be deprived of their property or any of the rights which derive from it. Foreign investors have the legal possibility to obtain property rights for buildings and for other real estate to be used for their business activities and full ownership of property rights through locally registered companies.

**The Law on Trade Companies** (The Company Law) is the primary legal act which regulates businesses and their operations in Macedonia. It defines the types of companies as well as the procedures and regulations for their incorporation and operations. Foreign investors are treated in the same way as local companies and are not subject to extraordinary approvals.

Under the Company Law, trade companies are formed as separate legal entities

that operate independently with corporate shields (veils). The law foresees five forms of trade companies: 1. Public trade companies (also known as general partnerships); 2. Limited partnerships; 3. Limited liability companies; 4. Joint stock companies; and, 5. Limited partnerships with shares.

The Republic of Macedonia has created an institutionalized stock-market (**the Macedonian Stock Exchange**), as well as a regulator in this field (**the Securities Commission**) which follows the legality of trading and issues permits for corporate takeovers.

In accordance with the Company Law, the **Central Register** is the body authorized to perform all company registrations and maintain a list of companies within the Central Register.

Macedonia has a **One Stop Shop System** which allows for investors to register their businesses within four hours after submitting on application. It is possible to register a company in Macedonia by visiting one office, obtaining the information from a single place, and addressing one public officer. This significantly reduces administrative barriers and start-up costs.

In addition to the business registration as foreseen by the Company Law, certain specific business activities are subject to obtaining additional working licenses or permits. For such companies, the registration process is followed by a licensing process under the competencies of relevant author-

ities covering the matter of licenses and/or permits.

An important element related to the development of Macedonia's economy are the **Technological-Industrial Development Zones (TIDZs)**, in which manufacturing activities are concentrated and new technologies are developed.

The Macedonian government offers incentives for development in the TIDZs. Investors in TIDZs have the right to personal and corporate income tax exemption for the first 10 years, and are also exempt from payment of value added tax and customs duties for goods, raw materials, equipment, and machines. Furthermore, up to €500,000 can be granted as an incentive towards building costs, depending on the value of the investment and the number of employees. There are also additional tax deductions for employee benefits.

Other benefits include a completed infrastructure that enables free connection to natural gas, water, electricity and access to a main international road network. Investors are also exempt from paying a fee for the preparation of the construction site. The TIDZs provide fast procedures for business activity registration that further reduce the costs of setting up.

The Government pays specific attention to production activities, activities within the IT sector, scientific research activities and new technologies with high environmental standards, which additional benefits are foreseen for within the TIDZs. ■



Steelmaking

## TAXES

Macedonia has created a very business-friendly tax system. There is a flat tax rate of 10% on corporate and personal income, which stimulates successful companies to advance operations and profitability.

The relevant institution for the implementation of tax policy and legislation is the **Public Revenue Office**, which has an established system for electronic oversight of the profits of trade companies. ■

TYPE OF TAX	TAX RATE
Personal Income Tax	10%
Value Added Tax (VAT)	General Rate: 18% ; Preferential Rate: 5%
Corporate Income Tax	10%
Property Tax	0.1% - 0.2%
Inheritance and Gift Tax	2-3%; 4-5%
Sales Tax on Real Estate	2-4%

# THE MACEDONIAN ECONOMY

The Macedonian economy has stable GDP growth, a low inflation rate of  $< 2\%$  on average in the past 10 years, a fiscal discipline as established by international financial institutions and a well-functioning coordination between fiscal and monetary policy. The following important variables should be mentioned:

1. The public debt of the Republic of Macedonia is 49% of its GDP.
2. During the past years, the inflation rate has been low.
3. The credit rating was BB- by Standard and Poor's and BB by Fitch.
4. The Macedonian currency is stable: the Macedonia Denar has been pegged to the Euro; one Euro equals 61.5 Macedonian Denars.

Trade is essential to the Macedonian economy, as a result of the fact that the value of exports and imports taken together equals around 113% of the GDP. As mentioned above, based on the legislative framework, foreign and domestic investments are treated equally. The financial sector has become much more dynamic as a result of a rise in competition in the banking sector. Namely, the foreign presence accounts for more than 80% of banking-sector assets. Special incentives for attracting foreign direct investments in Macedonia proved to be quite successful in the run-up to the political crises since 2015. Namely, between 2006 and 2015, the nation noted an inflow of foreign capital equal to

2.6 million Euro, or on average of around 262 million Euro annually. This is 2.5 times more than in the period between 1993 and 2005, when the nation saw an average inflow of 108 million Euro annually.

Macedonia primarily depends on its economic activity in the service sector, but as a result of the vast increase in foreign direct investments in the TIDZs, automotive parts manufacturing is supporting the diversification of the economy. Key real industries are food processing, textile production, chemicals, iron and steel.

The GDP of Macedonia is 11.34 Billion US Dollars. The unemployment rate is slightly more than 21%. Macedonia's most important trading partners are Germany, Bulgaria, Serbia, Belgium, Greece and Turkey.

The key institution for creating and following the macro-economic policy is the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia (The Central Bank). ■

## → INTERNET

Agency for Foreign  
Investments and Export Promotion  
of the Republic of Macedonia

→ [investinmacedonia.com](http://investinmacedonia.com)

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

Climate change • Energy • Waste • Air quality • Water • Biodiversity

by Antonio Jovanovski & Kristina Prilepchanska

*Go Green - Environmental Youth Organization*

## CLIMATE CHANGE

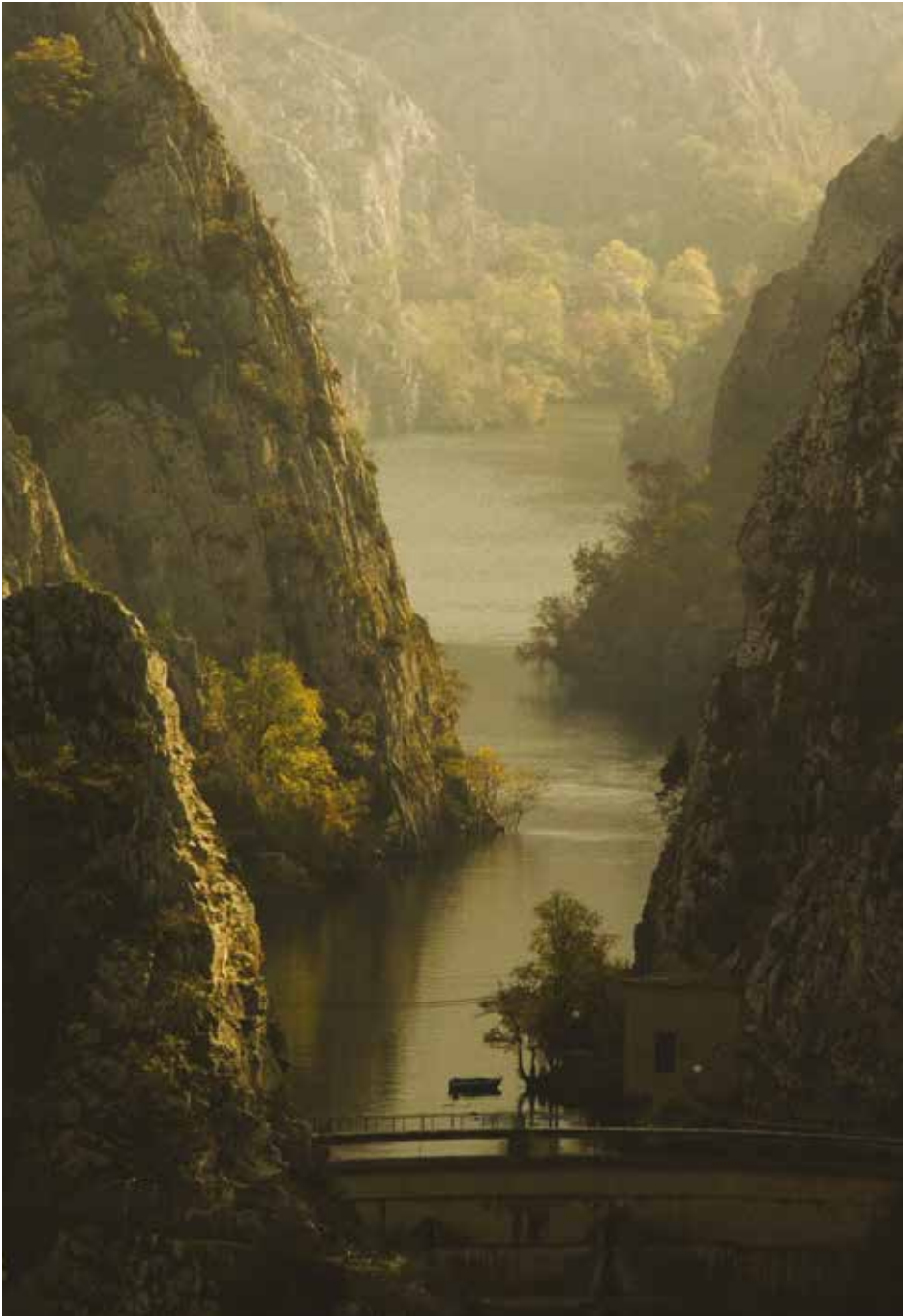
The Republic of Macedonia is particularly vulnerable to climate change. Water resources are especially sensitive with regard to both quantity and quality. Overall water availability is expected to decrease by 18% until 2100. Consequently, the negative effect of climate change on agriculture will be increasing. The agricultural sector as a whole is expected to be exposed to prolonged heat waves, rapid temperature changes, severe droughts and floods. By 2050, apple yields are expected to decrease by 50% and tomato yields by 81%.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Macedonia primarily originate from the energy sector (73%), followed by agriculture (13%), waste (7%) and industry (7%). The land use and forestry sector accounts for 3 to 10% of emissions, depending on the amount of forest fires, conversion of land and management of soil (fertilizers etc.).

The Republic of Macedonia is a non-Annex 1 country of the UN Convention on Climate Change (developing country), but at the same time, it holds the status of EU accession candidate, which is why it has to follow the European Climate and Energy Policy.

The country has signed the Paris Agreement, and with its ratification in the Assembly, it has officially committed itself to reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30% (or 36%, in the more ambitious scenario) by 2030 (with 1990 taken as the baseline). Interventions are planned in the sectors of energy supply, buildings, and transport, which account for about 80% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

As the country aims to join the European Union (EU) by 2030, the climate commitments need to be in line with the EU's target, which is currently to reduce emissions by at least 40% ►



Matka Canyon, a nature paradise near Skopje



Wind park "Bogdanci"

► by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. The calculations of the Climate Action Network Europe indicate that even the poorest EU Member States will have to take on substantial reductions of their greenhouse gas emissions, starting from -25% up to -65% compared to 1990. Therefore, the climate commitments of Macedonia require higher ambition and a revision process, which the Energy Strategy and the Climate Action Law planned for 2018 offer an opportunity for. The position of the Macedonian environmental sector is that the existing coal plants should run until the end of their lifetime, but no new coal plants or mines should be planned. Meanwhile, preference should be given to energy efficiency, solar and wind energy. An expansion of the natural gas infrastructure should be the very

last resort. Communal waste should be minimized, composted, or recycled, but not burnt for energy.

Macedonia is the only country in the region that has calculated the number of green jobs that are expected to be created by achieving the climate goals. The latest biennial report on climate change, published in 2018 by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the RM, highlights that green jobs are win-win-win measures and states that at least 6,200 green jobs would be created by 2035 if energy efficiency measures in buildings are implemented and low-carbon energy supply (renewables and gas) is introduced, not including the additional 14,000 jobs that would be created abroad. ■



# ENERGY

According to the State Statistical Office, in 2017, Macedonia produced only 42,3% of its total energy consumption (including electric energy and fossil fuels) itself, while 57,7% were imported. In the same year, 37,1% of the energy was used by transport, 26,9% by the households and 19,5% by industries. In the period between 2011 and 2016, the generation of electricity decreased.

The gross national energy consumption per capita in 2017 equaled to 3658,8 KW/capita, while the final electricity consumption in households averaged 1494,1 KW/capita. According to the last official detailed reports on the country's energy balance, regarding electricity, the total installed capacity of large hydropower plants is 603,2 MW, or 31,11% of the total capacity, while the capacity of small hydropower plants is 35.61 MW, or 1,88% of the total capacity. The thermal power plants contribute towards the total installed capacity with 52,09%, which is 1010 MW, while the combined plants that produce both electric and thermal energy contribute with 14,80%, or 287 MW. Since 2012, Macedonia has been seeing a trend of increasing hydro-energy and decreasing thermo-energy production. In 2017, Macedonia produced 23,75 GWh of electricity by means of solar power and 110,48 GWh of electricity by single means of wind power. The total capacity of the wind power plant in Bogdanci is 36,8 MW, which is planned to be extended.

Macedonia does not have reserves of natural gas, thus it imports it. So far, two cities (Strumica and Kumanovo) have a distributive gas network, used by both industries and households. Skopje's tech-

nological industrial development zone also has a gas network, but the capital's households and other industries within the city are not connected to it yet. During 2017, though, many promises about realizing distributive gas network plans for some Macedonian cities and the capital were made.

Thermal energy is being produced and distributed to households through the district heating network in Skopje. The total heat consumption of the network is 630 MW and it serves to about 40% of Skopje's households. Bitola also has a district heating network which is fueled by the thermal power plant 'REK Bitola', as a by-product of the electricity production in the plant. 'REK Bitola' is the largest thermal power plant in the country, with an installed capacity of 699 MW, contributing with 70% to Macedonia's electricity production. Many households continue to depend on wood, which must be coupled with energy efficiency measures. Solar water heating should be rolled out much more rapidly.

The feasibility of heat pumps for heating and cooling is yet to be explored further.

The environmental sector has strong positions on diversifying the energy mix, "no coal plants or mines" and no hydropower plants in protected areas. Small hydropower should not be developed further due to its disproportionate (cumulative) environmental impact compared to the power generated. For the generation of biomass power, only residues should be used, not specially cut wood. ■

## WASTE

According to the Waste Management Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia (2008 – 2020) the establishment of eight waste management regions in Macedonia is planned. Each region should run a proper landfill, separate waste and establish controlled sectors for different kinds of waste, with clearing of leaching and energetic recovery of landfill gas. At the moment, waste management plans are being developed for each region, while the North and North-East region are most advanced. For the moment, the only existing landfill with certain standards is the Drisla landfill near Skopje.

Without proper landfills, the waste situation in the Republic of Macedonia is quite staggering. Most of the municipal solid waste and other collected waste fractions are disposed of without any pre-treatment at municipal landfills, which operate without regular monitoring regarding impacts on the environment. There is no evidence of the delivered waste and not even visual inspection regarding the characteristics of the waste to be disposed of. Deposition of mixed hazardous and non-hazardous waste, as well as burning the municipal waste, plant tissue waste and plastics in open air fires represent the most serious risks and impacts on the environment. According to the assessment of the risk they pose to the environment, one third of the landfills have been assigned the highest risk category, which means that they should be closed or remediated.

Every citizen of Macedonia generates an average of 376 kg of waste per year, which is a total

of 752.000 tons of waste per year in the country. The 54 existing municipal landfills have the capacity to store only 70% of the total waste. This means that 30% (225.600 tons) of the total generated waste end up at unknown locations, creating hundreds of illegal dumpsites in nature. (Source: The “Waste management strategy 2008-2020”). Incomplete coverage of the population with a communal waste collection service, particularly in rural areas, is caused by insufficient capacity and resources (trucks, containers, personnel, etc.), as well as low the awareness of citizens who refuse to be connected to and pay for the service.

The recovery and recycling of municipal waste is very limited and lacks organized approach. It is mostly the informal sector and private companies that deal with the collection and recycling of potentially recyclable materials such as metals, paper, plastics, car batteries and accumulators, waste oils etc. in scrap yards, with a potential impact on the environment as well as public health. The organization and collection of waste for recycling is mostly done by collective handlers who need to fulfill national goals (collection rates) according to national legislation. The studies operate with an estimation of 3000 to 5000 informal collectors in the country, the majority of which is based in Skopje.

Public communal enterprises lack capacity, knowledge and motivation to contribute to a more efficient and effective waste management system. According to the 2015 report of the Ministry of Environment, there are only 28 mu-



Sculpture of a dinosaur made of recycled iron in the Skopje zoo

nicipalities, including the City of Skopje, that reported their waste data for 2015. This data has shown that the population of 1.191.056 citizens generates 536.364 tons of municipal waste. Recycling is reported for 1%, 0,52% out of which is composting. Only 5% of the hazard waste has been treated or properly removed. The handling and management of 95% of the reported hazard waste in 2015 is unknown.

The NGO involvement is limited, which is mostly due to institutional projects for revision and aligning legislation with EU directives and guidelines. There are some positive examples, though, such as the initiative by a grass-root organization for establishing a system of donating food waste (Ajde Makedonija) and the initiation and establishment of a waste batteries management system (Go Green – Bidi Zelen). ■

## AIR QUALITY

Macedonia has the most polluted air in Europe, according to the World Bank's latest report on Green Growth in Macedonia (2014). Macedonia has the fifth highest number of annual deaths caused by polluted air, i.e. PM10 particles. According to the World Bank's report, solid particles are responsible for 1.350 deaths per year, as well as thousands of lost working days, which leads to an annual economic cost of 253 million Euro, or 3,2% of the GDP. Particularly the cities of Skopje, Bitola, Tetovo and Kichevo must reduce their emissions of suspended particles below the limit value of 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup>; the levels of which sometimes reach over 1000 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

The energy system based on fossil fuels is the largest contributor to the air pollution, such as the thermal power plant in Bitola, which burns lignite and contributes to the total electricity production in the country with 70%. Its annual emissions are estimated to be about 80.000 tons of SO<sub>2</sub>, 11.000 tons of NO<sub>x</sub> and 11.000 tons of total suspended particles/powders, which is especially harmful for the citizens of Bitola and Novaci.

Another significant contributor to air pollution in most Macedonian cities is household heating. Since many citizens cannot pay their electricity bills, they are forced to find alternative ways to heat their homes, so that apart from wood, coal and pellets, they burn furniture, plastics and other materials in order to cope with the low temperatures. This is a social issue which local and national authorities are trying to tackle by subsidizing pellets and pellet stoves. They are also planning to subsidize solar panels and build a gas distribution network for heating in larger cities.

Transport is a smaller but important source of air pollution, especially in Skopje. A decision by the Government in 2009 allowed imports and reduced the excise for used (old) vehicles (Euro 0). Thus, more than 170.000 old cars were imported between 2009 and 2015, while only 15.000 old cars had been imported between 2004 and 2009. Due to rising pollution problems and continuous public pressure by NGOs, the Government changed the regulation in 2014, so that only Euro 4 standard old vehicles as well as Euro 5 standard new ones can be imported.

Air quality is also affected by small industrial enterprises that work overnight without any monitoring or inspection, by reducing greenery and cutting down trees for construction and urbanization activities, and by the sub-standard landfills and waste burning which remain to be a problem in the entire country.

Many citizen initiatives have been triggered by the problem of air pollution. The Government has established an inter-institutional air pollution body that involves all relevant institutions. Its task is to ensure the implementation of the most important legislative and strategic documents for air quality: the Law on Air Quality (Official Gazette 59, 11.05.2012), the National plan for protecting the air quality 2013-2018 (Official Gazette 170/2012), and the National Program for the Reduction of Polluting Substances 2010-2020 (SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub>; adopted by the Government in 2012 and published in the Public Gazette in July 2012 (170/2012)). ■

# WATER

Water makes up 2% of the territory of Macedonia, with 35 rivers and 42 lakes, out of which 3 natural (tectonic) lakes, over 25 natural glacial lakes and 14 dams and accumulations, mostly used for energy production. There are 4 river basins on the country's territory: Vardar, Crn Drim, Strumica and Juzna Morava. There are 4400 known water springs in Macedonia, with an annual capacity of approximately 6.6 billion m<sup>3</sup> of water.

Macedonia has satisfactory water resources, but a rather uneven distribution. Most of the water is rainwater. The country does not abound with surface waters, as they generally depend on the intensity and the length of the rainfalls. As a result of the morphological, hydro-geological and hydro-geographical structure of the landform configuration, surface currents quickly flow into the hydrographic network (rivers, streams and lakes) and the water flows out of the ground.

One of Macedonia's most important and well-known water surfaces is Lake Ohrid, located at the border between southwestern Macedonia and eastern Albania. It is one of Europe's deepest and oldest lakes and the deepest lake on the Balkan Peninsula, with a maximum depth of 288 metres. The lake preserves a unique aquatic ecosystem of worldwide importance, containing more than 200 endemic species, including the famous Ohrid trout (*Salmo letnica*) and the "Belvica" (*Salmo ohridanusi*). In 1979, it

was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. About 50% of the lake's water come from underground springs, while over 20% come from the nearby Lake Prespa, through an underground watercourse in the karstic landscape. The only outlet of the lake is the Black Drim River, which flows north of the lake, through Albania and, finally, into the Adriatic Sea. The European Eel is known to migrate from Lake Ohrid through the Black Drim all the way to the Sargasso Sea in the Northern Atlantic Ocean to reproduce and then come back to the lake with its offspring. Unfortunately, though, the six hydropower plants on the Black Drim (two on the territory of Macedonia and four on the territory of Albania) now block the migration path of the eel. Thus, in 1970, there were merely 10% of the original eel population left in the lake.

Wastewater treatment plants are important for conserving the natural water resources of the country. Macedonia has only 30 years of experience with wastewater treatment plants. Until 2017, there were only 8 plants to collect communal wastewater and treat it before sending it off to rivers, lakes and water accumulations. The existing wastewater treatment plants serve smaller communities, while the capital city of Skopje will not get one until 2020. Meanwhile, another three wastewater treatment plants are in the process of construction, and another 11 are planned, but without any definite timeframe. ■

## BIODIVERSITY

The richness in species and the level of endemism explain the country's importance as a "hotspot" for biodiversity in Europe. To date, over 16,000 species have been recorded in Macedonia, including 854 endemics. The centres of endemism are the natural lakes (Ohrid and Prespa in particular) and the high mountainous areas. The Balkan lynx is a subspecies of the Eurasian lynx, and it is considered to be the largest

cat in the Balkans. The lynx is a national symbol in the Republic of Macedonia (it is depicted on the Macedonian five Denar coin). The lynx lives in the Mavrovo National Park.

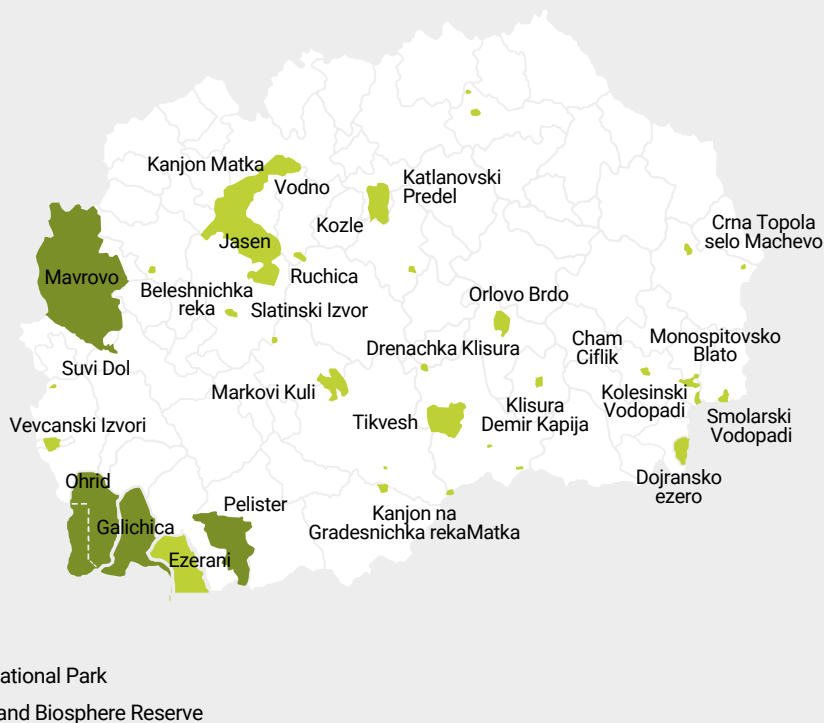
There are 86 protected areas with a total area of 230,083 hectares, or about 8,9% of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. National parks account for about 4,5% of the territory of the



The Balkan lynx in the Mavrovo National Park

## MAP

### Biosphere reserves and national parks in Macedonia



country, followed by monuments of nature with 3,0%, while all other categories of protected areas account for about 1,4%. According to a study on the protection of natural heritage for the period until 2020, an increase in the percentage of protected areas from the current 8,9% to 11.5% is expected.

The “Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl

Habitat” (Ramsar, 1971) includes two protected areas in Macedonia: Lake Prespa (added 1995) and Lake Dojran (added 2007).

The most relevant legislative and strategic documents for the biodiversity sector are the “Law on Nature Protection” (Official Gazette 63/16) and the “National Strategy regarding Nature Protection 2017-2027”.



# EDUCATION

Pre-school education • Primary education • Secondary education •  
Higher education, research and innovation

by Pishtar Lutfiu

*Former Minister of Education and Science*

## INTRODUCTION

A landlocked country with an estimated population of 2.07 million, the Republic of Macedonia has achieved relatively stable growth over the last 15 years and raised its status from a lower-middle income economy in 2000 to an upper-middle income economy. Among 188 countries, Macedonia ranked 82nd in 2016, and it is in the group of the countries with a high human development.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia considers education, training, research and innovations as key factors for strengthening the national economy and for the citizens' well-being. Within this context, the

vision of a comprehensive, inclusive, and integrated education focused on the learner, based on modern programmes for providing future generations with knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the needs of the multicultural democratic society, requirements of the labour market, and the new challenges in the global scientific-technological environment.

The education system of the Republic of Macedonia comprises a mix of pre-school, primary (6-14 years), secondary (15-17/18 years) and higher education. The chart below shows the structure of the education system. ■





Prom parade on the main square in Skopje

## PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

In the Republic of Macedonia, the functions of preschool education are socialisation, upbringing and education of preschool age children, with the purpose to create a basis for developing their potential and acquiring knowledge about the world that surrounds them. The mission of pre-school education is equal access for and maximum coverage of preschool age children with various forms and programmes

designed in line with modern trends and the latest scientific achievements in the field of child development.

With the decentralisation that started in July 2005, the founding rights and responsibilities for over 51 public kindergartens (with 181 objects) in 40 municipalities were transferred from the central to the local governments. Children ►

- ▶ from eight municipalities attend classes at branches of the neighbouring municipalities' kindergartens.

An important aspects of the pre-school education system is the licensing of the kindergartens' directors, educators, and other staff. In 2010, a team of local and international experts created a programme for professional development of kindergarten staff. It consists of six modules that serve as a basis for the staff's licensing. In 2013, a Commission for licensing directors, professional and associate staff, educators and caregivers in the preschool system was established. Ever since, 4,230 licenses have been issued to the successful candidates. Moreover, all kindergarten directors and candidates for directors went through a 40-hour training on financial management, human resources management, pedagogical work and evidence, and legislative regulation as a part of the licensing procedure.

Efforts to increase the number of kindergartens, i.e. centres for early child development, and enlarge the capacities of the existing kindergartens, especially in rural and socially deprived areas, were made. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the following structures have been established since 2006: 14 public kindergartens, 21 institutions for preschool education, 23 groups in other premises, 23 centres for early child development, 7 private institutions for children/centres for early child development, 21 private institutions for children/kindergartens, 4 kindergartens organised as structural units within the private schools, and 2 kindergartens organised as structural units within other legal entities for the needs of their employees. ■

## PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Age 0-6

## COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION

### I period of Primary Education

duration – 3 years, age – 6-9

### II period of Primary Education

duration – 3 years, age – 9-12

### III period of Primary Education (I)

duration – 3 years, age – 12-15

## COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

### Vocational training (II)

up to 2 years,

### Secondary Vocational Education (III)

3 years

### Secondary Vocational Education (IV)

4 years

### Secondary School (IV)

4 years

### Art Education (IV)

4 years

### STATE MATURA

## HIGHER EDUCATION

### Vocational Studies (V A)

1-2 years

### Post-secondary Education (V B)

1-2 years

### I Cycle (undergraduate) Studies (VI A - VI B)

3-4 years

### II Cycle Academic Studies (VII A)

3-4 years

### II Cycle Professional Studies (VII B)

3-4 years

### III Cycle (Doctoral) Studies (VIII)

minimum 3 years

# PRIMARY EDUCATION

In Macedonia, compulsory nine-year primary education was introduced in 2007, according to the concept of nine-year primary education. The Law on Primary Education provides guarantees for this level of education to be free of charge for all children aged 6 to 14, as well as to be accessible for all children, particularly by provision of free textbooks and free transportation for pupils that permanently live more than 2 kilometres away from the nearest school. Primary education lasts for nine years and is compulsory and free for all pupils (6-14 years old). There are 347 primary schools in the Republic of Macedonia (1,100 including satellite schools). The level of literacy is high, 98.8% of the male and 96.8% of female population are literate (2015). The gross enrolment rate is 63%, while the net enrolment rate is 91%.

Besides increasing the duration of primary education, reforms of the curricula were initiated. The subject programmes include development goals for the cycles of primary education, general goals for each year, and specific goals for each topic or programme.

An adapted version of the curriculum was introduced in the 2014/2015 school year, according to the Cambridge International Examination Programme Centre (United Kingdom), related to mathematics and science from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and natural science subjects such as physics, chemistry, and biology from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Textbooks for the respective subjects were approved in accordance with the Concept on Developing Textbooks and the Methodology on Assessing Textbooks.

A system for professional development of the teaching staff was established within the period of 2013 to 2015. Standards for professional orientation and career development of teachers were prepared, and a teachers' training, based on the verified programmes, was organised by accredited providers. The selection of the latter was carried out according to the special Rule-book. In addition, from 2007 to 2015, the Bureau for the Development of Education prepared 26 guides and provided 188 types of trainings for teachers, with the help of around 500 trainers. Pupils with special educational needs can be enrolled in regular schools (in regular or special classes) or in special schools, according to the type and degree of the special education needed. Some teachers are trained to work with those categories of pupils. Block subsidies are foreseen to be provided, according to the number of pupils with special educational needs.

Developing a system for working with gifted pupils in primary schools has been started, and research on the latter has been initiated. Awards for the winners of national and international competitions in mathematics and sciences were introduced.

In 2012, a 5-year project on inter-ethnic integration in education was started. The goal of this initiative is to create a political, social and economic climate that supports inter-ethnic integration in schools. The project covers all primary and secondary schools where trainings and joint activities of teachers and pupils with different instruction languages are organised. ■

## SECONDARY EDUCATION

Since the academic year 2007/2008, secondary education is compulsory for all citizens under equal terms and conditions, as stipulated by the Law on Secondary Education. The enrolment policy in secondary schools was adjusted according to this requirement. The Law also provides opportunities for the horizontal and vertical mobility of pupils. Free textbooks and PCs were provided for each pupil, as well as free transportation or free accommodation in dormitories, in order to ensure equal access to quality education for all. As an additional support, a free portable PC was granted to each teacher, and internet connection was established in all schools and dormitories.

Out of the existing 124 secondary schools, 108 are public, while the other 16 are private. Out of the secondary public schools, 23% are general education schools, 34.5% are vocational schools, and 29% offer a mix of general and vocational education. There are 4 vocational schools for children with special educational needs, and 5 art schools.

In order to promote entrepreneurship education in accordance with modern trends, programmes for two compulsory subjects for secondary school and secondary art education were developed: “business and entrepreneurship” (for the 4th year) and “innovations and entrepreneurship” (for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year). New programmes for English as a first foreign language, and German, French and Russian as a second foreign languages were introduced for the first, second, third and fourth year of secondary education. In addition, a programme for the newly introduced compulsory subject “programming languages” was adopted for the third year of secondary school, and programmes of algebra, linear algebra and analytic geometry as optional subjects for the third year of secondary school were updated. Curricula and subject programmes for secondary art education were also improved.

The subject programmes for secondary education were analysed in respect of the representation of multiculturalism in the objectives and in

### MILESTONES

## 1949

The University of “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje is founded on April 24th, 1949

## 1967

The Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences is founded on February 22nd, 1967

## 1979

The University of “St. Kliment Ohridski” in Bitola is founded on April 25th, 1979

the content. The curriculum for life skills was prepared, together with a manual for its implementation during class hours.

In order to promote a healthy learning environment, pupils' rights, democratic values, freedom, diversity and safety, and to reduce school violence, a number of extracurricular activities are implemented with the annual action plans of the municipalities and the City of Skopje.

A Sports Academy was established and a curriculum and subject programmes for football, basketball, handball and tennis were developed.

A decentralisation process for providing the schools with full funding has been launched. This system is based on a rational distribution of the targeted and block subsidies and with additional funds from the budgets of municipalities and the City of Skopje. Investments have been made for strengthening the municipalities' (including the City of Skopje) capacities

of governing and managing secondary schools, particularly in terms of funding, monitoring and adjusting the school budgets.

In 2008, the national final secondary school examination ("matura") was introduced for 4-year general and vocational secondary education, and in 2009, also for secondary art education. The matura is expected to provide a guarantee for the quality of secondary education, a monitoring of the implementation of subject programmes, the completion of secondary education with an appropriate certificate (diploma), and an instrument for selection of pupils for university education.

Besides, new curricula and subject programmes were prepared and adjusted for hard of hearing and visually impaired pupils. These measures provide pupils with minor disabilities an opportunity to complete the 4th year of education, pass an adjusted matura, and continue their education at higher education institutions, in Macedonia and abroad. ■

## 1994

The State University of Tetovo is founded on June 4th, 1994

## 2007

The University "Goce Delchev" in Shtip is founded on March 27th, 2007

## 2008

The University for Information Society and Technology "St. Paul the Apostle" in Ohrid is founded on July 7th, 2008

# HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Higher education is implemented at 3 levels: undergraduate, master, and doctoral studies. There are 6 public universities, one public-private university, 8 private universities, and 4 private universities of applied sciences. In 2016/17, there were around 58,000 undergraduate students enrolled at a total of 122 university faculties, 56% of which were female. The gross enrolment rate of students was 34.2% (39.2% for females), while the net enrolment rate was 26.3% (30.9% for female students). In 2016/17, there were around 3,000 master students, 58.9% of which studied at the public universities.

The Law on Scientific Research (2008) regulates relations in the sphere of scientific research and international cooperation with regard to the transfer of knowledge, research and training. In accordance with the Law on Innovative Activities, the Fund on Innovations and Technological Development (FITD), responsible for coordinating activities in the field of innovation, was established in 2013.

Since 2010, the Ministry of Education and Science has been providing undergraduate, master and doctoral students with scholarships for studying abroad, especially to those accepted at the first 100 universities from the Shanghai list, in the areas of law, technical sciences, architecture, civic engineering, mathematics, economics and finances, physics, biology, chemistry, and genetics.

The procedure for recognition of foreign higher education qualification acquired at one of the top 500 universities is operational since 2011. The Macedonian Qualifications Framework (according to the Law on the National Qualifications Framework) is expected to provide the recognition of Macedonian degrees abroad (and vice versa) and improve the labour mobility.

Since 2016, a process of revising the higher education funding model has been launched with the purpose to increase the efficiency in the distribution of financial means to the universities.

Since 2010, different means of support have been provided to research centres: public universities were equipped with laboratories with modern technical equipment for scientific research and applied activities; the web portal [www.nauka.mon.gov.mk](http://www.nauka.mon.gov.mk) was created to provide a data base for scientific institutions, researchers, and research laboratories; “scientific subventions” were made available to authors of scientific research papers published in international journals with impact factor; 1,000 professional books and textbooks used in the world’s most prestigious universities were translated.

Since 2013, the Ministry of Education and Science has been providing grants to academics from higher education and scientific institutions for the implementation of three types of creative activities in the spheres of art and architecture,

dramatic arts, musical arts, film, and literature:

- (1) participation or performance at a festival that is member of the European Festivals Association;
- (2) participation as a country representative in a project or festival abroad;
- (3) participation in an international project and festival abroad.

In 2014, the Republic of Macedonia joined the seven-year EU programme for research and innovation “Horizon 2020” together with four other Western Balkans countries, thus becoming an associate member with equal participation in all segments. “Horizon 2020” provides mobility for prominent scientists, strengthens national research systems, and assists countries to integrate in the European research system.

In 2015, the Fund on Innovations and Technological Development started using the instru-

ments for providing co-financing grants for:

- (1) newly established start-up and spin-off trading associations;
- (2) commercialisation of innovations;
- (3) transfer of technologies;
- (4) establishment, operation and investment in business technology accelerators.

So far, 37 projects in the areas of ICT, mechanical and electrical engineering, agriculture, mineral production, creative industries, and civic engineering have received grants.

In 2017, expenditures on education were 25,492.8 million MKD (around 414.5 million Euro) or 12.4% of the State budget, while in 2016, the expenditures amounted to 23,644.4 million MKD (around 383.3 million Euro) or 12.1%. This demonstrates that the share intended for education has remained relatively stable during the last years.

LEVELS OF EDUCATION	Thousand MKD		Thousand Euro (approx.) <sup>7</sup>		Growth 2016-2017 %
	2016	2017	2016	2017	
Pre-school and primary education	1,160,204	1,916,388	18,804	31,161	65.2
Secondary education	1,116,846	1,314,261	18,101	21,370	17.7
Higher education	5,794,35	6,030,399	93,912	98,055	4.1
Other education, not classified by level	19,301	28,939	313	471	49.9
Education support services	14,318,833	14,751,639	232,072	239,864	3.0
Education research	546,325	513,662	8,855	8,352	-6.0
Other activities in education	163,739	256,091	2,654	4,164	56.4
Education development programmes	524,797	681,375	8,506	11,079	29.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,644,401</b>	<b>25,492,754</b>	<b>383,216</b>	<b>414,516</b>	<b>7.8</b>

PROGRAMME	Thousand MKD			Thousand Euro (approx.)		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Translation and publishing of professional literature (50 textbooks used in the top 10 Universities from the Shanghai list)	30.000	76.250	76.250	0.49	1.24	1.24
Equipment of laboratories (provision of modern equipment for the research laboratories of universities and public scientific institutions)	205.000	20.000	-	3.33	0.33	-
Translation of books of renowned authors (500 professional and scientific books and textbooks used in the most renowned universities)	75.000	100.000	100.000	1.22	1.63	1.63
Construction of primary schools	125.983	200.000	200.000	2.05	3.25	3.25
Reconstruction of primary schools	25.500	50.000	50.000	0.41	0.81	0.81
Construction of sports halls in primary schools	276.072	384.497	1.411.531	4.49	6.25	22.95
Construction of secondary schools	35.000	25.000	30.000	0.57	0.41	0.49
Reconstruction of secondary schools	25.000	30.000	30.000	0.41	0.49	0.49
Construction of sports halls in secondary schools	71.948	20.732	25.036	1.17	0.34	0.41
Reconstruction of dormitories for secondary school pupils	2.100	5.000	5.000	0.03	0.08	0.08
Construction and reconstruction of dormitories for university students	98.000	325.000	250.000	1.59	5.28	4.07

#### Programmes including capital investments in education foreseen for 2017

- The funds to be allocated from the State budget will cover the running costs of the education system (i.e. block and earmarked subsidies, salaries, scholarships, procurement of goods and services, regular capital investments) and the costs of a number of development programmes.

However, in order to meet the objectives established by this Strategy and to cover the cost of the Action Plan, additional allocations from the State budget and from other sources will be necessary.



TYPE OF SUBSIDY	Thousand MKD		Thousand Euro (approx.)		Growth 2016-2017, %
	2016	2017	2016	2017	
Earmarked grants for primary education	3,000	3,000	48.6	48.8	-
Block subsidies for primary education	8,800,000	8,870,000	142,625.6	144,227.6	0.8%
Block subsidies for secondary education	4,120,000	4,150,000	66,774.7	67,479.7	0.7%
Block subsidies for child care	1,263,785	1,373,870	20,482.7	22,339.3	8.7%
<b>Total subsidies</b>	<b>14,186,785</b>	<b>14,396,870</b>	<b>229,932</b>	<b>234,095</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

#### Subsidies foreseen to be allocated by the municipalities

Considering that the municipalities are closer to the citizens, the decentralization process is considered to bring education closer to the demands of the citizens. In the case of Macedonia, schools which are in the competency of municipalities should focus more on the implementation of quality policies which the Ministry of Education proposes, hence they should focus more on the quality rather than the quantity of teaching and education. The decentralization process means broader competencies for schools and municipalities, which, with regard to their right to a better education, is in the interest of citizens.

Education, training, youth and sport can largely contribute to tackling socio-economic changes, the key challenges that Europe will be facing until the end of the decade, and to support the implementation of the European policy agenda for growth, jobs, equity, and social inclusion.

Erasmus+ unites EU programmes for education, training, youth and sport in the period 2014-2020. It is designed to support the participating countries' efforts to efficiently use the potential of Europe's talent and social assets in a lifelong learning perspective, giving support to formal,

non-formal and informal learning in the sphere of education, training and youth. Erasmus+ also enhances the opportunities for cooperation and mobility with partner countries, notably in the spheres of higher education and youth.

The National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility is a public institution established by Law, adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. The aim of this agency is to promote and implement the European educational programmes in the Republic of Macedonia. It hence contributes to the development of a knowledge-based society, a sustainable economic development, more and better jobs, and better social cohesion, at the same time promoting environmental protection and especially exchange, collaboration, and mobility in the areas of education and training. Programme beneficiaries are learners, students, teachers, professors, educators and other personnel engaged at any stage of the educational process at enterprises and other legal bodies, including commercial entities, chambers of commerce and other associations of legal bodies in the field of industry, research centres, as well as citizens' associations and foundations. ■

# SOCIETY

Freedom of religion • Civil society • Migration

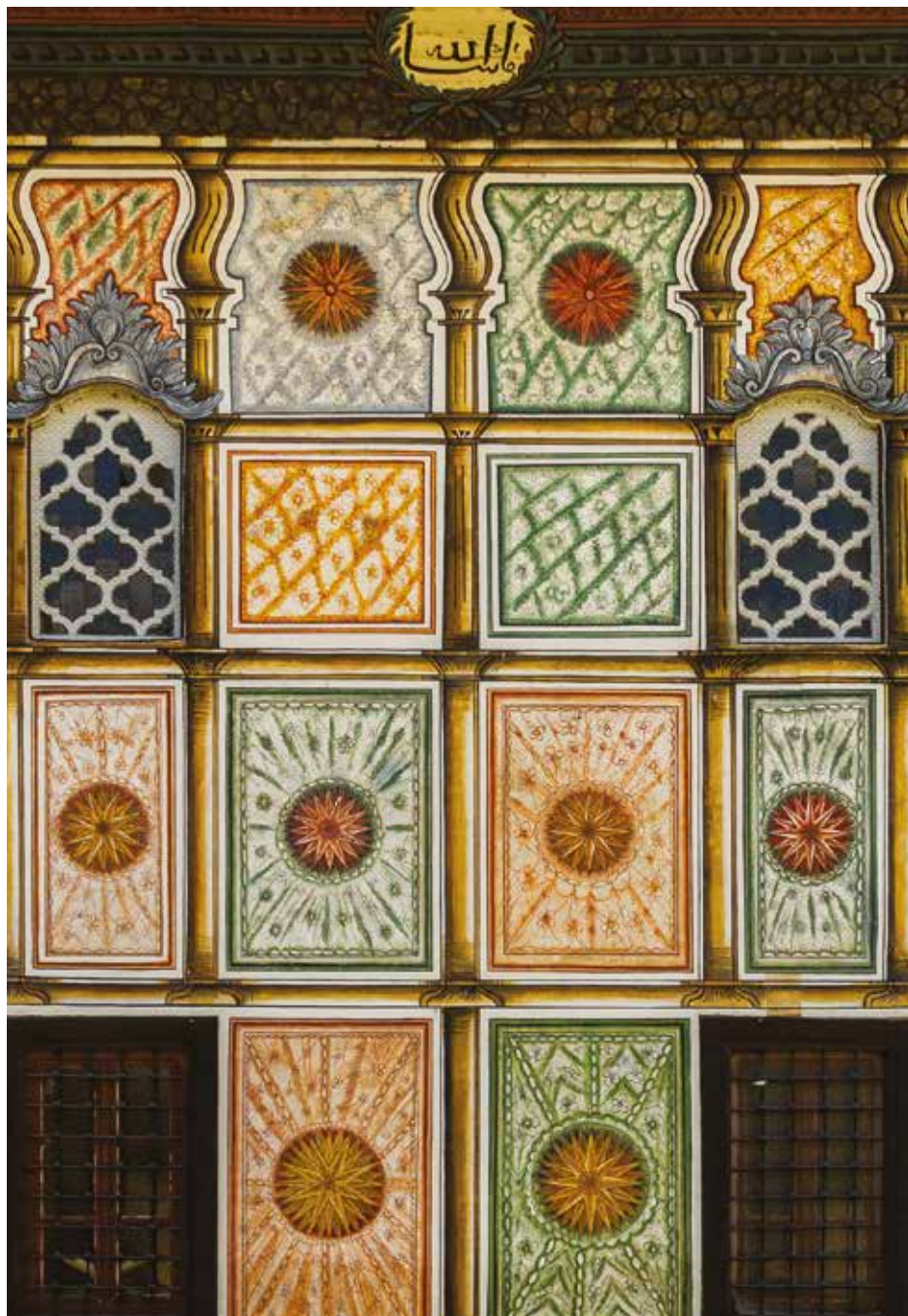
by Nenad Markovic, PhD

*Faculty of law "Iustinianus Primus" – Skopje*

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

The Republic of Macedonia is a multi-confessional society, where several global religions meet and live side by side. Macedonia guarantees the freedom of religion based on a number of international documents it has signed, as well as its national legislation. Macedonia is a party to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Council of Europe, which in its Article 9 guarantees the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The country has also signed and adopted the Declaration on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief of the United Nations, which explicitly bans discrimination on basis of religion in its Article 2.

The basis for religious freedom in the Republic of Macedonia is the Constitution, which in its Article 19 defines the secular nature of the state and guarantees freedom of religious belief. In 2001, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia amended the Constitution and, besides the Macedonian Orthodox Church, explicitly mentions the Islamic religious community, the Catholic Church, the Evangelical-Methodist Church and the Jewish community, however not excluding smaller religious groups as major religious denominations with the right to form religious schools and charity organizations. A more detailed legal framework on establishing religious organizations is provided by the Law on the legal status of churches, religious ►



Details of the painted walls of the Šarena Džamija in Tetovo

- communities and religious groups. This law regulates all aspects of religious life of both more and less numerous religious organizations, based on the principles of equal treatment, religious freedom and secularism.

The equal treatment of all religious communities implies that the Republic of Macedonia is a secular state. There is no official state religion, although the most widespread religions are Orthodox Christianity and Islam.

In a national research on perceptions on religion and its role in multi-confessional societies in 2016, respondents in the Republic of Macedonia gave the following answers:

- 52,4% of the respondents say that they are religious and 30,6% that they are somewhat religious;
- 75,2% of the respondents say that they belong to the Orthodox religion, while 21,6% say that they belong to the Islamic faith. The Catholic religion is represented by 0,4% of the respondents, while other religions are represented by 2,4%;

- 25,3% of the respondents say that the religious communities in the country contribute to the inter-religious cohabitation in the Republic of Macedonia and respect for the people of different religion, while an additional 26,9% think that this is true to some extent.

In the Republic of Macedonia, religious education is not allowed outside the educational system organized by the religious organizations. This means that religious education is prohibited both in elementary and high schools. Religious education remains exclusively in the domain of the religious organizations. Formally, religious symbols are prohibited in schools and universities.

Religious tolerance is perceived as an important factor for the co-existence of different ethnic groups and religions. This is an important feature of Macedonian society, since the ethnic and religious landscape of the country is very versatile. In a survey on religion in 2017, as many as 64,5% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the welfare of the Macedonian society depends on the level of religious tolerance, while another 29% of the respondents somewhat agreed with this statement. Additionally, as many as 63% of the respondents said that the religious affiliation of their friends and neighbors does not affect their closeness and the ability to cooperate with other people. ■

## INTERNET

**Commission for relations with religious communities and groups**

→ [kovz.gov.mk](http://kovz.gov.mk)

# CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Freedom of association is guaranteed in Macedonia, according to Article 20 of the Constitution. The freedom of association is being practiced through different direct and organized forms of democratic action. However, the most organized and most visible forms are the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), formally called citizen's associations. The Law on Associations and Foundations from 2010 establishes five major principles for the functioning of the NGOs:

1. Independence;
2. Public work and transparency;
3. Non-profit nature;
4. Non-partisan character;
5. Initiatives in public life.

Macedonia has a relatively high number of NGOs, given that the overall number in 2017 was 13727, citizen's associations and foundations included. With a total population of 2 022 547 people according to the last census in 2002, it turns out that Macedonia has one NGO per 147 inhabitants. However, not all listed organizations are permanently active, and the NGO scene is divided in many subsectors (ecology, democratic development, human rights, LGBT rights, religion, solidarity and social aid, etc.).

Providing sustainability for such a large number of diversified civil society organizations is not easy. Direct economic activity of NGOs is forbid- ►



Citizens' protest against air pollution

► den by Law, but accumulating funds that serve NGO sustainability and its basic aims and activities is allowed. However, economic sustainability of NGOs mostly depends on two factors: foreign donors and support from state institutions. In a 2016 survey by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, as many as 54% of the surveyed NGOs stated that they have obtained funds for their work from foreign donors. On the other hand, only 14% of the surveyed organizations said that they have obtained funds from the state (local self-government units excluded), although the overall sum of state transfers to NGOs is increasing every year. For instance, in 2014 the overall sum of state transfers to NGOs was 4 541 000 EUR, in 2015 it was 4 673 180 EUR, and in 2017 it reached 6 147 810 EUR.

Civil society organization carry out many activities in partnership with state institutions. For instance, such initiatives cover the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which foresees that NGOs directly support state institutions in undertaking commitments of the Action Plan 2016-2018. This plan contains OGP activities in order to improve transparency, accountability and access to data of both state and local institutions in Macedonia. Another example are the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, which are part of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, where civil society plays a crucial role in the implementation of activities.

Besides the state - civil society partnerships, civil society organization initiate and carry out many grass-root initiatives and processes. The "Blueprint for urgent democratic reform" <sup>5</sup>is an example of this: an effort by a number of civil society organizations to give guidelines for future democratic developments.

Citizens' associations are not the only organized form of civil society. Trade unions are a form of civil society organizations which represent labour rights. The overall number of registered trade unions is 43, with four umbrella organizations, the largest one of which is the Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Macedonia. Employers are organized in chambers of commerce, the biggest of which are the Union of Chambers of Commerce of the Republic of Macedonia and the Chamber of Commerce of Northeast Macedonia.

Direct citizens involvement in protests, marches and rallies has been growing rapidly. The development of civil society involves not just organized forms of civil engagement, but also direct street protests and marches, as well as rallies in support of various political and social causes important to different groups of the Macedonian population. The right to protest and assemble is guaranteed by the Constitution and respective laws. ■





Grass-root action for a cleaner environment

# MIGRATION

The Republic of Macedonia is traditionally a society of emigrants, with a very small population of immigrants. The most common destinations for economic emigrants from Macedonia are Germany, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, Canada, Australia, the USA, etc. These countries have the biggest diasporas originating from the Republic of Macedonia.

The Macedonian diaspora is relatively young. The first noticeable migration waves occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, under Ottoman rule, and after the Second World War. The predominant motivation for migration was economical, but political reasons should not be underestimated either. The second wave of migration took place in the sixties, while the third big wave was triggered by the dissolution of the Socialist

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the independence of the Macedonian Republic.<sup>7</sup> Once again, both economic and political reasons motivated a large number of Macedonians to emigrate to traditional destinations in Europe and across the globe. The trend of emigration from the country has continued in the last decade, with a noticeable change of structure of the emigrants: nowadays, mostly skilled and highly qualified labour force is leaving the country in search of a better life.

It is very hard to determine the precise number of Macedonians permanently living in other countries. The most precise approach is to follow the censuses of the countries where Macedonians traditionally migrate to. According to this approach, the biggest Macedonian diasporas can be found in the following countries:

COUNTRY	Number of Macedonians	Year of census	Source
Australia	40219	2011	<a href="https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/research/people-australia-2013-statistics.pdf">https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/research/people-australia-2013-statistics.pdf</a>
Italy	78090	2007	<a href="http://demo.istat.it/str2007/index.html">http://demo.istat.it/str2007/index.html</a>
Canada	43110	2016	<a href="http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/imm/Table.cfm?Lang=E&amp;T=31&amp;Geo=01">http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/imm/Table.cfm?Lang=E&amp;T=31&amp;Geo=01</a>
Switzerland	62633	2013	<a href="https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases/publications.assetdetail.349257.html">https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases/publications.assetdetail.349257.html</a>
USA	61332	2010	<a href="https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_B04003&amp;prodType=table">https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_B04003&amp;prodType=table</a>

Table 1.    Number of Macedonians in top-five migration destinations according to local censuses in respective countries



Oversea countries	Number (according to the estimation of Macedonian embassies)	Number (local country statistics - Statistical Offices of respective countries, censuses, Ministry of interior etc.)
Australia	200 000	81.898
USA	200 000	43.783
Canada	150 000	30 915 / 31 265
New Zealand	15 000	621
<b>Total</b>	<b>565.000</b>	
European countries		
Germany	75 000 - 85 000	42.550 / 51.841
Switzerland	63 000	61 455
Italy	50 000	34 500
The Netherlands	10 000 - 15 000	10 000 -15 000 / 1091
Austria	10 000 - 15 000	3 607
Sweden	12 000 - 15 000	4 872 / 4 144
France	12 000	7 000 -10 000
Belgium		2 054 / 3 288
Denmark	12 000	3 147
England	9 000 - 10 000	
Norway	2 000	
Czech Republic	2 000	
Poland	2 000	
Russia	1 000	54
Island	200	
Finland	200	
Spain	200	
Luxembourg		356
<b>Total</b>	<b>284.600</b>	

**Table 2. Number of Macedonian emigrants in the world according to data gathered by the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

The Macedonian diaspora is represented by the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD), which is the leading international non-governmental organization promoting the interests and needs of Macedonians and Macedonian communities worldwide. In the Republic of Macedonia, the of-

ficial agency that is concerned with the issues related to Macedonian emigrants is the Agency for Emigration of the Republic of Macedonia. The registration of emigrants from the Republic of Macedonia can be made on the web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ■

# THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Public Broadcaster • TV Stations • Radio Stations • Print Media • Online Media

by Dragan Sekulovski  
*Association of Journalists of Macedonia*

## INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of its establishment, in the early 1990ies, the Republic of Macedonia had one public broadcaster, Macedonian Radio Television (MRT), and just a few printed newspapers. However, in the following years, the media business started to develop, and, as a result, new private broadcasters and print media began to operate and disseminate information to the public. Nowadays, rough statistics imply that there are around 300 media outlets operating in a media market of less than 30 million , with less than 1000 journalists employed.

There are numerous traditional and on-line media outlets in Macedonia, all oper-

ating on a rather small market of media, which makes pluralism and sustainability challenging to achieve. The many different media outlets include one national public broadcaster, Macedonian Radio Television (MRT), 134 private broadcasters (63 TV stations and 71 radio stations), 27 registered print media (6 out of which are daily print papers, 4 in Macedonian and 2 in Albanian, and several weekly editions) and more than 150 online information media. In addition to this, there are several information agencies, with the biggest one being the state owned Macedonian Information Agency (MIA). Based on this data, we can conclude that there are approximately 300 media outlets



Building of the National Radio Television in Skopje

in the country which struggle to survive on a market of less than 1 million Euro annually (in the past years). Commercial TV and radio stations get the biggest incomes: in 2016, this amount was 28 million Euro, while for MRT, it was 19.3 million, the smallest budget for the public broadcaster in the last five years.

Based on the estimation of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM), approximately 1000 journalists are currently employed in traditional and online media outlets. Most of the journalists are employed with the traditional media, despite the high popularisation of online media in the recent years. ■

# THE PUBLIC BROADCASTER MACEDONIAN RADIO TELEVISION (MRT)

MRT, member of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), has 839 employees and has had an annual budget of 17 to 21 million Euro in the last several years. The highest income for MRT was provided with the broadcasting tax, however, in September 2017, this financing model was changed with amendments to the respective law, and ever since, the MRT is financed directly from the budget. The broadcasting tax was terminated due to the insufficient collection system. According to the expectations, as of January 2018, the MRT will be financed with 0.7% of the annual budget of the Republic of Macedonia. Until 2020, this share should rise to 1%, which is expected to be sufficient for stable financial conditions for the public broadcaster as a basic precondition for its independence. The broadcasting tax was inadequate given the local context, which made the MRT the second biggest public enterprise with a debt of more than 25 million Euro to different public and private vendors.

The MRT was founded by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia in 1993. Previously, it had been operating as a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Currently, MRT is producing and broadcasting media content in six different languages: Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Roma, Serbian and Bosnian. **The content is broadcasted on three channels, on MRT 1 in Macedonian, on MRT 2, mainly in minority languages, and on MRT 3, which broadcasts the work of the Parliament.** In July 2016, amendments to the media regulations were made as part of the “Pržino Agreement”, which stipulates that a separate channel within MRT broadcast content in Albanian during 24 hours a day. However, this has not yet been implemented.

Apart from the TV channels, MRT has **three separate radio channels**, two of which broadcast in Macedonian. and one in the minority languages.

As of 2003, MRT is also broadcasting content via satellite channel, with the target audience being mainly the Macedonian diaspora.

The content produced within MRT is diverse and comprised of news, debates, educational programmes, cultural and entertainment content, documentary movies, and sports, for the entire audience inside and outside the country, including persons with special needs. ■

## → INTERNET

**Macedonian Radio Television**

→ [mrt.com.mk](http://mrt.com.mk)

# PRIVATE NATIONAL TERRESTRIAL TV STATIONS

There are five TV stations with the license to broadcast on national level via digital terrestrial multiplex: TV Alfa, TV Alsat-M, TV Kanal 5, TV Sitel, and TV Telma. In 2016, the largest income, 19 million Euro, went to these five media outlets. On an annual level, 45% of the share goes to TV Sitel, followed by TV Kanal 5, TV Alsat M, TV Telma and, finally, TV Alfa. This trend is declining, and the total budget of all these media outlets has been decreasing in the last years. However, this still indicates that the largest part of the media market is focused on these outlets. The largest share in the income of these outlets stems mainly from commercial sales, which is 90%. Other types of incomes are sales of media

content, grants, and other means. Four of these media outlets produce and broadcast content in Macedonian language, while TV Alsat is mainly producing content in Albanian, but also in Macedonian. All the TV stations have relatively good coverage on the national level, and all have a mixed programme scheme that includes information, education and entertainment. They are members of an association that occasionally rises its voice when media reforms are on the agenda. The majority of these media outlets is also represented in the Council of Media Ethics of Macedonia (CMEM), a media self-regulatory body based on membership. ■

## PRIVATE NATIONAL TV STATIONS THAT BROADCAST VIA SATELLITE

The number of TV stations that broadcast via satellite varies from year to year, with the main reason being the easier access for obtaining a license from the media regulator. At the moment, there are five TV stations of this kind. In 2016, they had a total income of one million Euro. TV 24 has the largest share of income gained by commercials (83% of the total market

income of all the satellite stations). According to official data, Nasa TV has the largest income from other, non-determined means. The other, smaller TV stations in this group are TV Kanal 5 plus, TV Sitel 3, and TV Sonce. All these media outlets are producing and broadcasting content solely in Macedonian language. ■



Media landscape

## PRIVATE NATIONAL TV STATIONS THAT BROADCAST VIA OPERATOR OF A PUBLIC ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

These kinds of outlets were established in 2015/2016, and, in the beginning, there were four TV stations operating. In 2017, however, only three remained: TV 21, TV Nova and TV Shenja. According to official data, in 2016, the joint annual income of these media outlets was

2.2 million Euro, given the necessity of investments in the newly established media outlets. In 2017, however, this amount is assumed to have been far less. TV 21 and TV Shenja are producing and broadcasting content mainly in Albanian, TV Nova in Macedonian. ■

# REGIONAL TV STATIONS

The biggest difference between this kind of media and the other broadcasters lies in their coverage. Thus, the annual licence fee they pay to the media regulator is far less than the national broadcasters', depending on the number of municipalities the media outlets broadcast to. In total, there are 26 regional media outlets. In 2016, their joint annual income was 3.2 million Euro. Apart from the income gained with commercials, some of these media receive direct

subsidies from the municipalities, although this is not regulated by a law, which leads to the risk of a selective approach. Most of the regional media outlets are also members in an association that strives to represent their needs vis-a-vis the lawmakers. The total number of employees with these media outlets is smaller, compared to the outlets with national coverage. It varies from 5 to 32 journalists and technical staff. ■

# LOCAL TV STATIONS

In 2016, 24 media outlets were operating on a local level. Their joint annual income was 600.000 Euro, whereas four of them (TV Orbis

Bitola, TV Intel Strumica, TV Plus Kumanovo, and TV Kočani) absorbed more than 40% of the total income. ■

# RADIO STATIONS

The radio stations, too, have to obtain broadcasting licenses from the media regulator, with the exception of online radios. There are four commercial national radio stations that broadcast on the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia, using different frequencies, depending on the region. In 2016, the total annual income of these four stations was 1.4 million Euro. Two of the stations, Kanal 77 and Radio Free Macedonia, broadcast informative programmes apart from the other content, while Radio Antenna 5 and Radio Metropolis are mainly oriented at entertainment programmes.

On the regional level, there are 17 broadcasters. Despite of the higher number compared to the national broadcasters, their total income in 2016 was less than one million Euro.

The category with the most media outlets is local radio stations, with a total number of 53. In 2016, their joint income was 585.000 Euro. The number of local radio stations varies from year to year, so that, at the moment, there are considered to be 47 stations with local range. ■

## PRINT MEDIA

Since December 2013, the print media are obliged to submit basic information regarding their circulation and contact of responsible persons to the media regulator, the Agency of Audio and Audio Media Services (AAAMS). In the respective register (which is publicly available on the web page of the regulator), there are currently 27 print media, but not all of them have a traditional informative format, and some of them are thematic (cooking, fashion, sport etc.). After Media Print Macedonia (MPM), an enterprise previously owned by the German WAZ Mediagroup, was closed in 2017, several mainstream daily newspapers were shut down. At the moment, there are six daily newspa-

pers: Sloboden Pečat, Nova Makedonija, Večer, Nezavisen, Lajm, and Koha. The majority of the papers publishes their content in Macedonian, Koha and Lajm write in Albanian, and Nezavisen, a new media established in late 2017, partly publishes in English. There are also several national weekly editions such as the mainstream political magazine Fokus, as well as Kapital, which focuses on economic issues. There are also some free newspapers which are distributed throughout the capital city, like Skopsko Eho. The total annual unofficial income of all print media, national and local, regardless of the topics they cover, is roughly estimated to be around two million Euro. ■

## ONLINE MEDIA

A vast number of online media exists in Macedonia, and there is no official data about the exact number. There are several news aggregates, however the most popular one is [www.time.mk](http://www.time.mk), which includes around one hundred separate online media, despite the strict criteria for aggregating. Based on some assessments, the actual number is over 300 online media outlets, half of which publish mainly informative content, such

as politics and daily news, while the others focus on entertainment, sports, fashion etc.

There are several platforms which also publish content in English, including three or four online media focused on investigative journalism. All online media are under self-regulation, and most of the credible ones are members in the media self-regulatory bodies. ■



# REGULATION IN THE MEDIA SECTOR IN MACEDONIA

Since December 2013, the print media are obliged to submit basic information regarding their circulation and contact of responsible persons to the media regulator, the Agency of Audio and Audio Media Services (AAAMS). In the respective register (which is publicly available on the web page of the regulator), there are currently 27 print media, but not all of them have a traditional informative format, and some of them are thematic (cooking, fashion, sport etc.). After Media Print Macedonia (MPM), an enterprise previously owned by the German WAZ Mediagroup, was closed in 2017, several mainstream daily newspapers were shut down. At the moment, there are six daily newspapers: Sloboden Pečat, Nova Makedonija, Večer, Nezavisen, Lajm, and Koha. The majority of the papers publishes their content in Macedonian, Koha and Lajm write in Albanian, and Nezavisen, a new media established in late 2017, partly publishes in English. There are also several national weekly editions such as the mainstream political magazine Fokus, as well as Kapital, which focuses on economic issues. There are also some free newspapers which are distributed throughout the capital city, like Skopsko Eho. The total annual unofficial income of all print media, national and local, regardless of the topics they cover, is roughly estimated to be around two million Euro. ■

## → INTERNET

Association of Journalists  
of Macedonia

→ [znm.org.mk](http://znm.org.mk)

Council of Media Ethics  
of Macedonia

→ [semm.mk](http://semm.mk)

Independent Union of Journalists  
and Media Professionals (SSNM)

→ [ssnm.org.mk](http://ssnm.org.mk)

Macedonian Institute  
for Media (MIM)

→ [mim.org.mk](http://mim.org.mk)

Institute of communication studies

→ [iks.edu.mk](http://iks.edu.mk)

Ministry for information society  
and administration

→ [mio.gov.mk](http://mio.gov.mk)

Agency for audio and audio-visual  
media services

→ [avmu.mk](http://avmu.mk)

Macedonian Information Agency

→ [mia.mk](http://mia.mk)

# CULTURE AND WAY OF LIFE

Macedonia: A country of rich cultural heritage • Culture and events •  
Customs and traditions • Food • Wine

by Roza Nolcheva Angelovska  
*Musicologist*

## MACEDONIA: A COUNTRY OF RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

To nature and culture lovers alike, Macedonia has great attractions to offer. From its lush green nature, beautiful lakes and mountains to the cities full of old architecture, artifacts and buzzing nightlife, the country is a small gem shining bright in the heart of the Balkans.

**Skopje**, the capital city of the country, is easily accessed from Skopje International airport (17 km) with links to most major European cities. The other airport of the country (St. Paul the Apostle Airport) is in the tourist center Ohrid. Skopje has something to offer for everyone: there are plenty of sites to visit, good food in relatively inexpensive restaurants, fun nightlife, and a good choice of events around the year.

The **Skopje aqueduct** on the outskirts of the capital (about 2km, near the village Vizbegovo) dates back to Roman times according to some sources, while others locate it in the time of the Byzantine reign. There are also sources that state that it was built in the 16th century by the Ottomans to serve the many Turkish hamams located in Skopje, one of which is the **Daut Pasha Hamam** at the entrance to the Old Bazaar. Well preserved and a historic monument of Islamic culture, today, the Daut Pasha Hamam houses the National Gallery of Macedonia, exhibiting works by Macedonia's finest painters and sculptors. The space is also used for small chamber concerts.

The **Old Bazaar** is one of Skopje's most au-



Kale Fortress

thentic places to visit. Buzzing with life, it is home to many small shops along small cobbled streets. You can buy handcrafts, textile, gold and silver, but the Bazaar also hides some of the most beautiful religious

objects such as the **Church of the Holy Saviour** (Sveti Spas) with its magnificent wood carvings) as well as the **Mustafa Pasha Mosque** built in 1492. The tomb of the great Macedonian revolutionary **Goce Delchev** ►



The Millennium Cross overlooking the city of Skopje

► (1872-1903) can be found there as well. In the many cafés and restaurants in the Bazaar, traditional Turkish tea and sweets are served, but also Turkish coffee (traditionally cooked in a small copper pot), one of the Macedonians' favorite beverages, drunk by many at the start of the day. The Museum of Macedonia, founded in 1924, is also located in the Bazaar, next to **Kurshumli An**, a historic object of culture from the 16th century. Overlooking the city are the walls of the Skopje Fortress, more commonly known as **Kale Fortress**. Built initially in the 6th Century AD and rebuilt in Byzantine times during the reign of Justinian I, the Fortress is one of the city's landmarks. Beautifully lit at night, it offers wonderful photo opportunities. From the highest point of the Tower one can get beautiful vistas of Skopje, the river, as well as Vodno Mountain, topped by the 66 meters high **Millennium Cross** which was built to

mark 2000 years of Christianity. Visitors can reach the Cross by cable car.

**The Stone Bridge** links the Old Bazaar and its historic artifacts to the new, central core of Skopje, the main **City Square**, which is dominated by a large fountain and sculpture of Alexander the Great on a horse. The statue and fountain, along with many of the monuments, sculptures and buildings in the vicinity of the square, were built between 2009 and 2016 in an attempt to beautify the city and give importance to various historical figures. Today, tourists are fascinated by the number of new monuments and new buildings on the left bank of the Vardar river, such as the **Archeological museum**, the Museum of Macedonian struggle, the Macedonian National Theatre, as well as some administrative buildings including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ■

# SKOPJE EARTHQUAKE OF 1963

On July 26<sup>th</sup> 1963 at 05: 17, Skopje woke up to the sounds of wailing sirens, following a 6.1 magnitude devastating earthquake. 1070 deceased and over 3000 were injured, while about 80% of the buildings were ruined. The world came together in a relief effort that helped rebuild the capital, which resulted in a completely new ur-

ban design. The **Skopje City Museum** located at what used to be the old railway station at the end of the pedestrian Macedonia Street bears witness of the destruction: the building was left as it was following the earthquake, when the clock on its front stopped at 05:17. ■

# MOTHER TERESA (GONXHE BOJAXHIU)

The world-renowned nun Mother Teresa, winner of the Nobel Prize, recognized as a saint by Pope Francis in 2016, was born in Skopje on August 26<sup>th</sup> 1910 under the name Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu. The birth house of Mother Teresa was where the main square is today, and the position of the house is marked with a plaque. The Mother Teresa Memorial House was built in 2009 in the center of the city, in the pedestrian Macedonia Street, accompanied by a monument of Mother Teresa in prayer. The aim of

the exhibit in the Memorial House is to follow her life, from her childhood spent in Skopje, the years spent as a Missionary of Charity, all the way until her death and canonisation. The most important items in the museum are the traditional white sari with blue stripes, the official habit of the Missionaries of Charity, a copy of the Baptism certificate from the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, authorized copies of documents with her handwriting, and her awards. ■

# MATKA CANYON

**Matka Canyon** is located about 30 km from the capital. It offers a nice escape from the daily dynamic of Skopje. The most popular sight is the Vrelo cave, the biggest one in a system of 10 caves. It has been explored by deep divers and cave divers from all over the world, who have

reached a depth of 240 meters, which makes it the deepest explored cave in the Balkans and the second deepest in Europe. **Vrelo cave** is open to the public and illuminated, boat tours are scheduled daily. Matka Canyon is attractive for kayaking and hiking. ■



Interior of the Macedonian National Theatre

## MAIN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND EVENTS

Skopje is home to some of Macedonia's main cultural institutions. The **Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra** was established in 1944. Since 2017, it is residing in a brand new concert hall that is one of its kind in the region. Built to highest standards, it seats an audience of 900 and brings world-renowned soloists and conductors to the stage. The **Macedonian Opera and Ballet** is situated right next to the concert hall in a striking building from 1979. It has a full orchestra, an opera and ballet company. One of its main events is the May Opera Festival, which is held every year and traditionally ends with a performance of Verdi's Aida.

There are 5 large theatre companies in the capital: the **Macedonian National Theatre**, the **Drama Theatre**, the **Comedy Theatre**, the **Children and Youth Theatre** and the **Theatre of Turkish and Albanian Drama**. With an audience that enjoys theatre, it is only natural for Skopje to host the acclaimed International Young Open Theatre festival **MOT** organized by the Youth Culture Center.

The first Balkan cinematographers Milton and Yanaki Manaki lived and had their photo studio in the city of Bitola. In 1904, Yanaki brought the first film camera, a Bioscope 300, to his hometown, and the first film in South East Europe was shot by the two brothers, who have subsequently become important figures for Macedonian cinema. The National Archive of the Republic of Macedonia preserves more than 17,000 photos and over 2000 meters of film by the Manaki brothers. In their honour, the Association of Film Workers of Macedonia organizes the **International Film Festival "Manaki Brothers"**, which takes place every year in Bitola. **Before the Rain**, a film by Macedonian director Milcho Manchevski featuring Rade Sherbedzija and Labina Mitevska, won the "Golden Lion" award at the Venice Film Festival in 1994 and was nominated for an Academy Award in the category Best Foreign Language Film in 1995. Skopje is also the host of 2 international film festivals: the CINE-DAYS Festival of European Film and the Make-dox Festival of Creative and Documentary Film.

# CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

Macedonia's rich tradition is reflected in the music, dance, dresses, and celebrations of people in different regions.

One of the most popular events is the **Galichnik Wedding Festival**, which takes place in the small village of Galichnik every July. The bride and groom are carefully selected, and one of the partners must originate from the village itself. During the 2 day wedding celebration, all traditions must be honoured as in old times: the bride and groom must wear traditional dresses with all embellishments and jewelry, both are dressed in the main colors of white, red and black. The bride's dress, with all addi-

tions, can weigh up to a stunning 30kg. During the two days of the wedding, the family, friends and everybody attending are witnessing over 20 various traditions linked to the holy marriage communion, including songs, dance, and gift bearing. The traditional dance "**Teshkoto**" ("The hard one") is performed by an all-male party, accompanied by the sounds of the tapan (drum), whereas one of the performers dances on top of the drum standing on one foot. Only the best dancers can perform this traditional dance ("oro") which aims to depict the hardships of the Macedonian people through its slow pace and heavy movements.

The **Vevchani Carnival** takes place in the small village of Vevchani in the West of the country, close to the Macedonia-Albanian border, and is linked to the celebration of St. Basil the Great and the old Orthodox New Year on January 13th. This pagan tradition has been kept alive for over 1400 years. It features gory masks linked to the dead, zombie-like creatures, as well as masks that are inspired by the events of the previous year. It attracts spectators from all over the country and the region. During the two days of the Carnival, people can obtain a passport of the Independent Republic of Vevchani, a model country that aims to attract tourists. The "independence" is linked to a political event in 1987, when the Yugoslav authorities tried to redirect water from Vevchani to nearby Struga. The inhabitants protested by proclaiming an independent republic which turned out short-lived, but has now been revived and serves as a tourist attraction since 2000, with its own flag, passport and currency. Vevchani is a member of the Federation of European Carnival cities. ■

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→ [mob.mk](http://mob.mk)

Macedonian National Theatre  
→ [mnt.mk](http://mnt.mk)

Drama Theatre  
→ [dramskiteatar.com.mk](http://dramskiteatar.com.mk)

Comedy Theatre  
→ [teatarkomedija.mk](http://teatarkomedija.mk)

Youth Cultural Centre  
→ [mkc.mk](http://mkc.mk)

Young Open Theatre Festival  
→ [mot.mk](http://mot.mk)



## FOOD

Macedonia is an excellent destination for people who enjoy good food and wine. With Macedonian tradition strongly revolving around family events, people throw big family celebrations which are concentrated around large meals consisting of freshly made pastries and pies, fresh salads with local vegetable produce and lovely rich stews cooked in traditional clay pots. Food bears the tastes and colors of the Mediterranean and like all Balkan countries, has preserved the rich Ottoman heritage, with plenty of spices that include sweet paprika, oregano, dried chili flakes, parsley, etc. As the country is landlocked, most dishes include pork, chicken or beef, but there is also plenty of sweet water fish that is usually grilled.

Some of the **most famous dishes** are tavche gravche (baked beans in a rich tomato and pa-

prika sauce), Vardar pot (vegetable and meat stew cooked in gravy in a clay pot), selsko meso (village style meat with 3 kinds of meats and mushrooms in sauce), zelnik and komat (savory pies with a cheese, meat or spinach filling), ajvar (red pepper spread usually eaten with fresh bread), pastrmajlija (a dough topped with pieces of spiced pork and a tiny bit of dried sheep or lamb meat that enhances the flavor).

Macedonians cherish their coffee culture. In the past, people invited their friends, family and neighbors for coffee and sweets, and today that is reflected in the many coffee shops that are always full. Visit the pedestrian Macedonia Street for good coffee and people watching, and the many restaurants in the Bazaar and the central city area that offer international and national quality food at affordable prices. ■



Traditional Macedonian dishes





Wine barrels in a Macedonian winery

## WINE

Macedonian wines go back to Roman times, according to artifacts found at archeological sites. These artifacts include drawings of wine and grapes on marble and terracotta, but also objects like the krater (VI-V century BC) found near Ohrid, a large vase which was used for watering down wine. Historians claim that wine has been produced here since over 4000 years. Today, more than 33.500 ha of land is covered with vineyards producing over 300.000 tons of grapes every year. Statistically, Macedonia is the 25th country in the world regarding wine production, with 40% of the wine being bottled, and 60% sold in bulk. Bottled wine is mainly exported to Croatia and Serbia, while about 48% of the bulk goes to Germany.

The main wine region is the Povardarie (along the Vardar river), also known as Tikvesh region, near the cities of Kavadarci and Negotino, where most of the vineyards and wineries are situated. Tikvesh winery is the largest and oldest one in Macedonia, with a tradition of over 125 years. It produces red, white and rosé wines in a variety of sorts including **Vranec**, **Cabernet**, **Merlot**, **Temjanika** etc. The most traditional and authentic wine of Macedonia and the region is the dark colored and full-bodied potent Vranec, a grape that flourishes in the Tikvesh region. Besides Tikvesh, the wine route takes wine lovers to smaller wineries such as Bovin, Skovin, Popova Kula and Stobi, with the latter being located close to **Stobi**, a Roman archeological site with a well-preserved amphitheater and Basilica. ■

# TOURISM

Ohrid: the city, the lake and the festival • The mountains • Bitola and Krushevo • Kokino

by Roza Nolcheva Angelovska  
*Musicologist*

## OHRID: THE CITY, THE LAKE AND THE FESTIVAL

**Ohrid** is one of Macedonia's most beautiful cities, situated on the shores of the Ohrid Lake, one of Europe's oldest and deepest natural lakes. Declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1979, Ohrid is the spiritual capital of Macedonia. The town is linked to the Saints Cyril and Methodius, creators of the Cyrillic alphabet in the 9th century, and their students St. Clement and St. Naum of Ohrid, founders of the Ohrid Literary School in 886. Often referred to as the "Jerusalem of the Balkans", Ohrid's authentic architecture, cobbled streets and beautiful nature attract tourists from all over the world. Its strong spirituality originates from numerous churches spread all over the city, purportedly 365, one for every day of the year. Some of the most beautiful ones are the **Church of**

**St. Sophia, the Church of St. John at Kaneo**, which offers spectacular views on the lake and is possibly the most photographed object in Macedonia, as well as the **Monastery of St. Naum**, 29 km from the city, at the very border with Albania. The city is overlooked by **Samuel's Fortress**, a medieval fortification restored in 2003. Archeologists claim it was built by Tsar Samuel at the turn of the 10th century, on the grounds of a previous fort dating back to the 4th century, built by King Filip II of Macedon. The fortress has 18 towers and 4 gates covering a perimeter of 3 km.

The **Ohrid lake** with its average depth of 155 meters is one of the oldest in Europe, dating back more than one million years. It is ►



Sunset above the church St. Jovan Kaneo in Ohrid

- home to over 200 endemic species, including the Ohrid trout, a beautiful red-spotted trout which is protected by law and mustn't be fished. Every summer, domestic and foreign tourists crowd the city and its beaches, attracted by nightlife and entertainment, as well as the moderate prices of accommodation and food.

Ohrid is also home to Macedonia's most important cultural event: the **Ohrid Summer Festival** which takes place annually from July 12 to August 20. During the 40 days of performances, Ohrid welcomes some of the world's most acclaimed musical artists and becomes a hub for concerts, ballet and drama performances which take place in various venues. The Church of St. Sophia opens its doors to art lovers, welcoming them for recitals and chamber concerts inside the church and for larger performances in the vestibule. However, all large spectacles take place in the **Antique theatre** seating 3000,

an amphitheatre from the 3rd century BC, which was discovered by archeologists in the 1960's, restored and made fully functional by 2001.

The nearby city of **Struga** (15 km west of Ohrid) is also set on the shore of Ohrid lake, dominated by the Black Drim river, which flows out of the lake and into the city. A fairly small town, Struga's charm comes from the mix of ethnicities, various handcraft sold in the Old Bazaar and the many cafés and restaurants on both river banks. Struga Poetry Evenings is an annual event dating back to 1962 and bringing together over 200 poets from around the world. The central event is entitled Bridges, when poets address the audience from the Bridge of Poetry where the Black Drim exits the lake and runs into Struga. The laureate of the festival is presented with a Golden Wreath, the festival's main prize awarded to a living poet for their works or life achievement in poetry. ■



Peacock in the monastery of St.Naum



Macedonian mountains, equally beautiful in winter and summer

## THE MOUNTAINS

Macedonia's wondrous nature is not limited to Ohrid and its surroundings. The beauty and serenity of the Prespa and Dojran lakes invite tourists to a calmer, less crowded experience, set in villages where authenticity can be experienced at its best. Stay in a traditional village house and try some of the national dishes cooked by genuine Macedonian housewives. The lush green forests and mountains are a perfect place to be explored by hikers and nature lovers. Venture to **Berovo** in the East of the country for sunny days, the highest oxygen concentration in the Balkans and some exceptional cheese.

In winter, the same serenity can be found in the sport centers **Mavrovo** and **Popova Shapka**. In the Mavrovo National park that covers 192.000 acres, skiing and snowboarding are the favourite sports of local winter fans, along the slopes of Bistra Mountain. Mavrovo Lake is dominated by the sight of the submerged church of St. Nicholas. Go to Mavrovo and the region for good quality cheese, and do not miss out on the fascinating Monasteries **St. Jovan Bigorski** (XI century) with its unique wood carved iconostasis, and **Rajchica**, where the sisterhood produces the famous and rare episcopal mitres. ■



## BITOLA AND KRUSHEVO

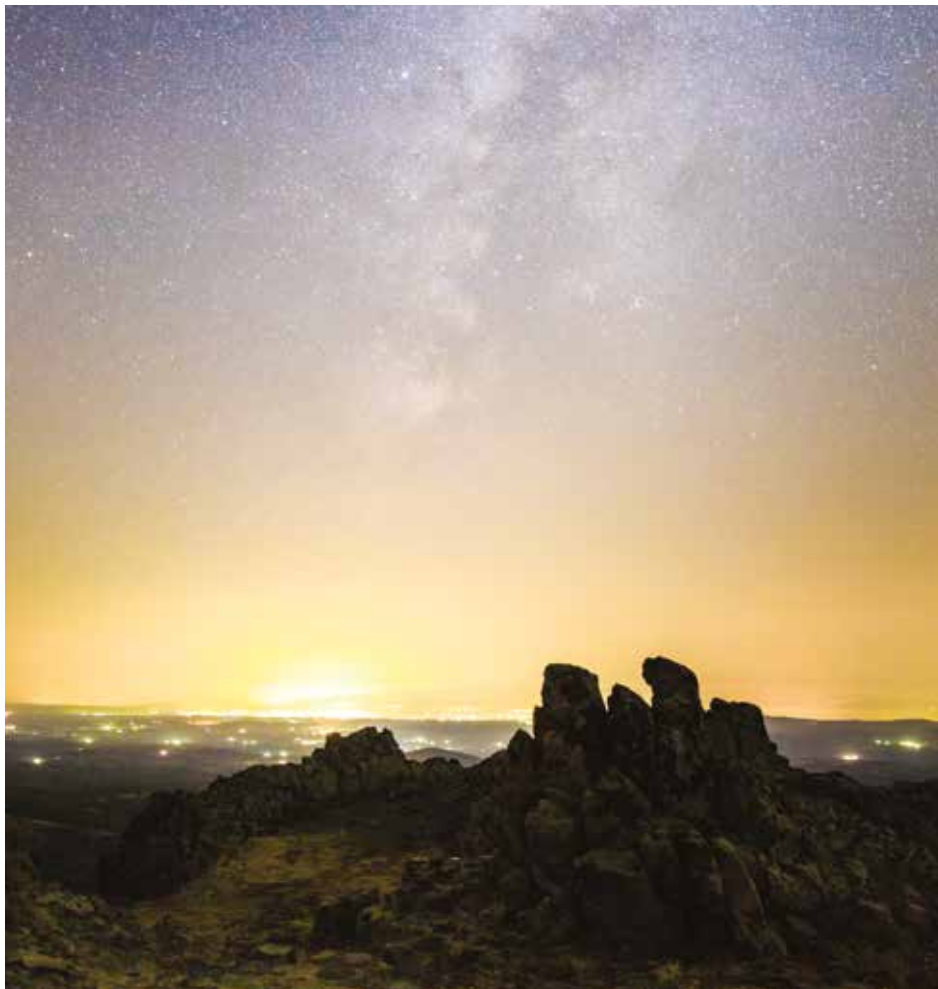
**Bitola** lies at the foot of the National park Pelister. It is a beautiful city which was especially important for diplomacy at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was the seat of consuls in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and they brought a specific European charm to the city. **The Clock tower** is a symbol of Bitola, and the neoclassical architecture is juxtaposed to architectural examples of ancient times with the antique city of **Heraclea Lyncestis**, but also the Ottoman period, with the Bezisten (covered bazaar), the recently restored Gazi Haydar Kadi Mosque, the Ishak Celebi Mosque, etc. The city is also known for its cemeteries: the **French cemetery** (more than 13.000 French soldiers were killed at the Macedonian front in WWI), the **German cemetery** (3406 German soldiers buried during WWI), the Serbian and the Jewish cemetery.

**Krushevo** is the highest town in Macedonia, set at an altitude of 1350 meters. In winter, it is the

place to go for Mountain biking, paragliding, skiing and snowboarding. When it comes to history, the place is famous for the **Krushevo Republic**, which followed the **Ilinden Uprising of 1903**. The latter started on August 2 and was the initial attempt at liberating Macedonia from Ottoman occupation. The famous Macedonian revolutionaries Goce Delchev, Pitu Guli and Nikola Karev were at the helm of the uprising, liberating Krushevo and proclaiming a free Republic. Albeit the Republic survived only 10 days, it led to outbursts of rebellion against the Ottoman Empire throughout the region. Visit the **Makedonium**, a strikingly modernist monument in honour of the Ilinden Uprising, the memorial house of one of Macedonia's most celebrated painters Nikola Martinovski known for his portraits of women, as well as the memorial house and grave of Toshe Proeski, a widely popular young Macedonian pop singer who tragically lost his life in a car accident in 2007. ■



Colourful stained glass at the Makedonium



Kokino observatory

## KOKINO

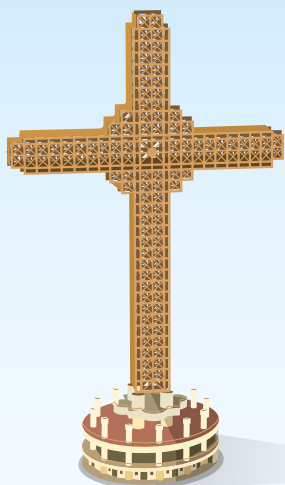
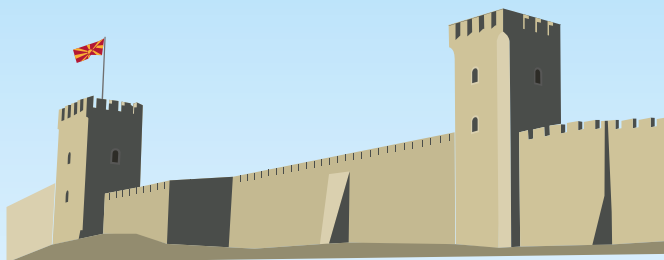
**Kokino** is a megalithic observatory from the Bronze Age, a testimony for the creative human genius when it comes to using specific natural resources for satisfying vital needs and beliefs. Recognized by NASA as a significant

heritage of this type, Kokino is listed as the 4<sup>th</sup> oldest observatory in the world. Kokino is located in North-East Macedonia, 30 km from the town of Kumanovo. Guided tours are available on request. ■

# EXCITING HERITAGE SITES

## 1 Kalle Fortress

Archaeological excavations at the Kale Fortress were carried out from 2007 to 2012. A total of 13.400 artefacts were found, 4527 of which are coins.



## 4 Millenium cross

With a height of 66 meters (without the concrete base), the Millennium Cross is as tall as the Statue of Liberty and 20 meters higher than the sculpture of Jesus in Rio de Janeiro. It is ranked 5th on the list of the world's tallest crosses.

## 10 Church St. John at Kaneo

The Church of St. John at Kaneo, the most photographed church in Macedonia, is a unique site in the UNESCO protected city of Ohrid.



200

endemic species  
live in Ohrid Lake



18,000

tickets were sold within  
one day at the Skopje zoo



95%

WiFi coverage on the  
territory of Macedonia



45.7°C

is the maximum  
temperature measured  
in Macedonia





- 1 Kale Fortress
- 2 Mustafa Pasha Mosque
- 3 The Church of the Holy Savior
- 4 Millennium Cross
- 5 Holocaust Memorial Skopje
- 6 Archeology museum Skopje
- 7 Stobi
- 8 King Samoil's fortress
- 9 Plaoshnik
- 10 Church St. John at Kaneo
- 11 Colorful Mosque Tetovo
- 12 Tikvesh Winery
- 13 Heraclea Lyncestis
- 14 Makedonium Krushevo
- 15 Wood carvings at Monastery St. Jovan Bigorski

### 11 Colorful Mosque Tetovo

Some 22.000 egg yolks were used to prepare the paint used by the Debar masters in order to preserve the freshness of the colourful decorations on the inside and outside walls of the mosque.



120

naturally formed  
pillars in the village of  
Kuklica near Kratovo



19

pieces make up an  
elaborate Macedonian  
female traditional costume



40%

is the alcoholic  
content of žolta rakija



3

national  
parks

# SPORTS

Football • Handball • Basketball • Marathon

by Roza Nolcheva Angelovska

*Musicologist*

Macedonia is a nation that loves sports. Whenever a national team competes, there is a strong and dedicated support.

**Vardar is a sports brand** that incorporates Skopje's football and handball teams. In recent years, the handball teams have gained great popularity thanks to the high quality men's and women's league. Skopje's Vardar handball team won the EHF Men's Champions League in 2017. However, one of the greatest international successes of Macedonian team sports was the 4th place of the Macedonian basketball team at the Eurobasket 2011 in Lithuania. Pero Antic is the first Macedoni-

an to play in the NBA (2013-2015, for Atlanta Hawks).

Other popular sports include football, swimming (the Ohrid International Swimming Marathon is part of the Fina Open water marathon series) and karate. The latter two have gained Macedonia the largest number of trophies at international competitions. The Matka Canyon hosts a wild-water kayaking and canoeing event every year, and the ski center Popova Shapka is known for the Sharplanina cup in skiing. The Skopje Marathon is organised annually in May and has attracted some of the world's fastest marathon runners since its establishment in 2008. ■



HC Vardar fans celebrate the title in EHF Champions League 2017

# PICTURE CREDITS

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Source of information: reports and data about MRT available on their web page [www.mrt.com.mk](http://www.mrt.com.mk)

# IMPRINT

**Title**

North Macedonia at a Glance

**For the publishers**

Johannes D. Rey, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung  
Holger-Michael Arndt, CIVIC - Institute for International  
Education

**Authors**

Daniel Gjokeski  
Timcho Mucunski  
Nikola Poposki  
Aleksandar Klimovski  
Antonio Jovanovski  
Kristina Prilepchanska  
Pishtar Lutfiu  
Nenad Markovic  
Dragan Sekulovski  
Roza Nolcheva Angelovska

**Coordination**

Daniela Popovska  
Davor Pashoski  
Timcho Mucunski

**Proofreading**

Tiina Fahrni

**Design**

Dejan Kuzmanovski

**Printing**

Vinsent Grafika

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The signing of the Prespa Agreement on 17th June 2018 initiated the process for a change of the constitutional name of the country into "Republic of North Macedonia". The Agreement entered into force on 12th February 2019. Since this publication was compiled prior to this agreement's entry into force, the name "Republic of Macedonia" is used throughout the text in this edition.

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# GETTING AROUND

Useful information for travelers

**Passports and Visas:** Foreign citizens are required to have a valid passport to enter Macedonia. Some foreign nationals need a visa issued at the Macedonian embassy in the respective country. Citizens of EU Member States do not need a Macedonian visa if they enter the country as tourists. Holders of a valid British, US or Canadian visa can enter the country without visa for a maximum stay of 15 days. For further information, visit the website of the Ministry of Foreign affairs at:  
→[mfa.gov.mk](http://mfa.gov.mk)

**By air:** Macedonia has two international airports, one in Skopje and one in Ohrid. 14 airlines operate in the country, including budget airlines. Skopje airport is connected to the city centre by regular bus line. A taxi costs 20 euros approximately, and the trip takes about 30 minutes.  
→[airports.mk](http://airports.mk)

**Skopje airport bus:**  
→[manoragroup.com](http://manoragroup.com)

**By Rail:** Macedonia has a developed domestic railway system, but international lines are limited to the neighbouring countries. Trains from the main railway station in Skopje take passengers to the cities of Bitola, Prilep, Gevgelija, Kičevo, Kočani and Veles.

→[mzt.mk](http://mzt.mk)

**By Bus:** Buses are most common to get around in the country. There are various and frequent domestic inter-city connections. Some are fast and direct, while others make stops on their routes. There are also regular international lines to Serbia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Turkey, Albania, Austria and Germany.  
→[sas.com.mk](http://sas.com.mk)  
→[e-avtobuska.mk](http://e-avtobuska.mk)

**Travel by car:** Macedonia has a road network with 4 motorways that cover about 242 kilometres, and 911 kilometres of main road. Pay tolls on the motorways can be paid in Macedonian denars and Euros. Speed limits on some parts of the roads are set at maximum 130km/h and roads are clearly signposted. Urban areas have speed limits of 50 km/h, some densely populated areas have limits of 30 km/h. Wearing a seatbelt is compulsory for drivers and passengers, and child seats are obligatory for children up to 150cm. Many gas stations and rest areas provide gasoline (Super (95 octane) and Super plus (98 Octane)), diesel, and liquid petroleum gas. Travelling by car is the best way to explore Macedonia. Car hire companies offer competitive prices.

→[roads.org.mk](http://roads.org.mk)

**Road assistance 24/7:**  
→[amsm.com.mk](http://amsm.com.mk)

**Accommodation:** All categories of accommodation are available, starting from private holiday homes and private apartments, to five star hotels of major hotel chains. Some private accommodations only accept cash payments. Youth hostels offer competitive prices for budget travellers.

→[naitm.org.mk](http://naitm.org.mk)  
→[exploringmacedonia.com](http://exploringmacedonia.com)

**Money and currency:** Legal tender is the Macedonian denar, no other currency is accepted. There are many exchange offices that do not charge commission. A passport is required for currency exchange at any bank. Cash is available 24/7 from cash machines, and all major credit cards are accepted. Prices in stores include VAT, while prices in restaurants include service charge.

**Emergency phone numbers:**  
192 Police  
193 Fire service  
194 Emergency medical service

**Time zone:** Macedonia has CET. Clocks are set to summer time (plus one hour) between March and October.

**Electricity:** The voltage is 230 volts