



# BAROMETER

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Development in the  
Republic of Macedonia

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Political developments during the second half of 2010 were filled with numerous turbulences for which it may be said that partly were a reflection of events that burden in a prolonged manner the Macedonian political scene (like the unresolved “name issue” that overshadows many other vital issues for the country), but also of events that were a consequence of some concrete policies of the current government or other current developments involving various actors (opposition, media etc).

In short, trends may be described as:

- further strong influence of the “name issue” which in continuity puts into question the Euroatlantic integration processes and leaves this issue opened for the future period (unsuccessful efforts for Macedonia to become a NATO member and get a date by EU for start of the negotiating process)
- absence of political dialogue in the Macedonian political block, as well as in the Albanian (confrontation between the VMRO-DPMNE party on power and its rival SDSM culminated in the last most massive meeting of the three organized in the last six months and which were aimed to achieve early elections; on the other hand, the clash between the Albanian opponents, on one side DUI as the party in government and DPA and New Democracy on the other, was spiced with scandals, like the lustration process, protests etc)
- generally worsened living standard and absence of stronger economic revival, dissatisfaction of the general economic conditions, protests organized by severed workers, budget reconstructions, negotiations for credit from IMF
- implementation difficulties on the law on Lustration and complications that followed the process
- huge budget spending governmental plans, which were heavily criticized as wasted money, especially the ones concerning the project “Skopje 2014”, that includes erecting of various sculptures and monuments, etc.
- series of turbulent events, like the financial control of the Public Revenue Office upon the firms owned by the owner of A1 TV station, which produced huge reactions due to the massive presence of police forces; the opposition “Hope” affair regarding expenditures made without previous tender procedure, etc.

## **1. DEVELOPMENTS ON THE “NAME ISSUE”**

The last six months of 2010 have continued the same trend as the previous period, practically an endless push-pull game, when the “name issue” potential resolution is concerned<sup>1</sup>. There were occasions in which the officials of the Republic of Macedonia and Greece met, through which the climate for more intensified contacts has improved, but officially there were no signs of approaching the positions of the two sides in order an agreement to be reached. Same as the first half of the year, impression is that there are some discreet talks between the parties that have not yet proven to be fruitful, at least officially.

### **1.1. Name Talks Still Taking Place in New York Under Nimetz's Auspices**

“Activities over the name issue have intensified as of late, in hope those consultations could produce something that would contribute to a settlement, and in this context we support the process”...“there have been frequent contacts between countries' prime ministers and foreign ministers, while the climate of mutual relations has improved, however there is still no solution to the problem that has burdened us for a long time” said in July Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski.

During the same month, Greece laid the blame on Macedonia for lack of fresh ideas from UN mediator Matthew Nimetz in the process of resolution of name row. Asked by reporters if there are any news on the name issue, Greek foreign ministry's spokesman Grigoris Delavekouras said there are no fresh initiatives. “We don't have any news and essentially I don't think that there are conditions for anything new until there is a response on the part of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,”... “Our firm will is to reach a solution on the name issue as soon as possible. We want to reach a solution soon. This is why we have clearly formulated our positions that are understood and supported by most members of the international community” he stated. He called on the government in Skopje to come to the UN-brokered negotiations with constructive stands in order to reach a deal.

“It is time for speeding up the process for settling the name row and for Macedonia to move forward”... “Washington has not been a middle man in the Greek-Macedonian dispute, but its position is well-known - the matter should be resolved”...“We believe that both Macedonia and Greece are capable to do that and I believe that there is a possibility for doing that quickly. As I have said many times before, it requires will, effort, creativity and courage”, US Ambassador to the country Philip Reeker told reporters. Asked if there is a genuine will in Macedonia for settling the name row, Reeker said that majority of the citizens of Macedonia wished for the name dispute to be left behind.

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<sup>1</sup> The long-running dispute over Macedonia's name affects the ties between Skopje and Athens for nearly two decades. Greece, which objects to Macedonia's use of what it considers Hellenic name, blocked Macedonia's entry into NATO and also put off the start of Macedonia's EU accession talks. Athens has insisted the row be resolved before it agrees to the start of Macedonia's European Union accession talks, which requires unanimous support from all EU members.

At a mid-September press conference in the UN dedicated on the start of the 65th UN General Assembly, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated that he will continue to do whatever he can to have a harmonious solution to this name issue, which has quite serious political implications. "Special Representative Matthew Nimetz has had active discussions with the parties concerned on this matter. And I understand that he is now consulting with both parties about arranging appropriate meetings while delegations are in New York for the General Assembly opening", Ban Ki-moon said, adding that he fully supports his activities. Ban Ki-moon also said that he has had many meetings with officials of Greece and Macedonia on this issue, on the necessity of addressing this issue with a sense of flexibility and mutual understanding.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Milososki announced that Macedonia's delegation taking part at this year's main session of the UN General Assembly in late September would meet with mediator Matthew Nimetz, adding that he had no information on a possible fresh proposal in overcoming the long-standing name dispute with Greece.

In an interview with Alsat TV, Milososki said that Nimetz was an experienced diplomat and was probably expecting some kind of positive signal from the frequent bilateral meetings between Macedonian and Greek officials and a favorable climate to be created in order a breakthrough regarding the issue to be made. According to him, Nimetz had most likely estimated that the long-standing dispute could not be solved only by formal unveiling of new proposals that would be rejected by either of the parties involved or by both parties. "On Macedonia's part, there is preparedness and pragmatism to overcome this long-standing row, but obviously in terms of the essence of this issue and pragmatism for its settlement, we haven't received any positive signal from Greece, even though the country has demonstrated a fresh openness to communicate with Macedonia's leadership", the FM stated.

## **1.2. President Ivanov on the "Name Issue"**

"The issue of Macedonia's constitutional name requires great patience, caution, as the country is pressed to urgently find a solution to the matter in order to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions, which was not as such foreseen by the 1995 Interim Agreement with neighboring Greece", President Gjorge Ivanov told reporters by end-August. He believes that the problem is complex, as pressure has been exerted only on Macedonia, while on the other hand Greece is being considered as a 'constructive partner' in the (name) negotiations.

Ivanov estimated that there is progress in the relations between common citizens of both countries, which is not the case with the politicians, reminding that in the course of his one-year presidential mandate he has in several occasions invited his Greek counterpart for a meeting, which may not settle the name row, but will contribute to bolstering the overall relations between the two countries. He stated that Greece is breaching the Interim Accord, under which it is bound to not impede Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integration, pointing out that the law is on Skopje's side. "How could Greece guarantee its respect of a possible name settlement when the experience thus far has been proving the opposite,"..."Macedonia is for a solution, but it must take care for its dignity, as not only the name, but the identity is also at stake",..."Changing of the country's name would be an

international precedent, as such scenario opens the road to powerful states to force the weaker ones to alter their identity"...All concessions that go beyond the UN Charter on admitting new members present a serious threat for abuse in the future", he added.

### **1.3. Newspaper Ethnos: "US Taps Skopje on the Shoulder"**

"The United States taps Skopje on the shoulder" is the comment of Greek daily "Ethnos" in August regarding the latest statement of US Ambassador to Macedonia Philip Reeker that Washington's position with regard to a name settlement between Greece and Macedonia doesn't envisage the constitutional name or the Constitution of the country to be changed. The newspaper says that Reeker with his statements is in fact advocating the "double name formula" to be accepted as a solution to the name issue between Skopje and Athens i.e. a compromise solution to be found which would substitute the reference FYROM, while the name the Republic of Macedonia would be used internally and in bilateral communication with states that have already recognized the constitutional name. Philip Reeker, the newspaper adds, assures that the resolution would not alter the Macedonian identity and language.

"We think that the solution should not change the constitutional name or the Constitution. It is your Constitution, your sacred document. It is necessary both sides, Greece and Macedonia, to reach an agreement on a single international name, which would replace FYROM and where it will be used. We support efforts to be made to focus on the real issue, not on the issues of identity or language - it refers to finding a resolution which will allow to preserve the Constitution and to join NATO", "Ethnos" cites Reeker's statement.

The daily comments that his statements comes ahead of an anticipated new initiative by UN mediator Matthew Nimetz aimed at settling the name row while seeking for a formula to overcome the deadlocked situation in the name talks. It is due to be determined whether the statements of Ambassador Reeker fully reflect the official US position and whether Athens is familiar with the new framework in the name talks, comments "Ethnos".

### **1.4. FM Milososki: Greece Only Declares to Negotiate on Name Dispute**

"The Republic of Greece rhetorically declares that it negotiates only on dispute it has with our constitutional name but essentially and in practice it can be noted that in Greece, Macedonian identity, existence of the Republic of Macedonia, our constitutional name, the issue of existence or non-existence of minorities, are a taboo topic which burdens modern Greek society", FM Antonio Milososki stated in September.

"I think that these taboos are inherited from the Cold War period and today are pulled through as a burden of Greek politicians who mostly became hostages of the Greek nationalistic policy regarding this issue, which was produced in 1991-92. In any case we have certain practical problems which are created regarding this issue and one can see to what extent the problem is prolonged", Milososki said in his interview with Radio Free Europe.



Regarding possible prefixes Vardar or Vardarska, Milososki said that most frequently these are speculations by Greek sources and media. "I would not comment them, we would leave to UN mediator Matthew Nimetz to officially propose certain ideas, suggestions during this process. Oftentimes there are attempts in Greek circles of imposing or promoting certain solutions that have Greek design for Macedonian national name, but in any case for us it is very important to see the reality in this issue, it is the Republic of Macedonia, existence of the Macedonian people and dignity of the Macedonian citizens, who would have active participation through a referendum in resolving of this bilateral dispute", Milososki said.

On another occasion, MoFA Antonio Milososki stated: "Macedonia has paid its dues with its rationality and pragmatism in order to fulfill certain irrational, national or nationalistic whims coming from the Republic of Greece and the name dispute cannot be solved with an imposed solution" ... "We believe it is truly high time both sides to overcome this issue with the same will and same goal the EU integration process in the region to resume - for Macedonia this move to be of historic importance and for Greece a success that can be included in its Agenda 2014".

According to him, it was unlikely to be expected Macedonia, its citizens and country's leadership to pay their dues with rationality for the "irrational demands coming from Greece year by year, or season by season". "We want to debate with arguments to reach a compromise. This dispute cannot be solved by imposing a solution and we believe that the two sides can be winners unless the name row is solved as soon as possible. However, the process of reaching or not reaching a solution depends on both sides equally. Macedonia doesn't hinder this process. Macedonia has a great interest this irrational bilateral issue to be overcome swiftly", FM Milososki noted.

Compromises were made in a bid circumstances to be created enabling Macedonia to make headway at the international scene, according to him. These compromises include amending the Constitution, the Macedonian state flag and accepting the reference FYROM to be used in international organizations. "We support the dialogue with Greece's top officials and we pledge to be resumed. Most probably, the UN General Assembly in late September will offer an excellent occasion for the resumption of the Macedonian-Greek dialogue", Milososki stressed.

### **1.5. Newspapers Commenting under-the-carpet Negotiations**

George Papandreou's government okayed the latest Matthew Nimetz's idea for the name 'The Republic of Vardar Macedonia' and withdrew its demand for the name's overall use, Greek daily 'To Paron' reads in mid-September. A formula has been found that ignores Greece's 'erga omnes' name usage, the daily says, pointing out that such a 'painful compromise' brings a serious political risk to Papandreou's cabinet.

The daily, which few days ago said that Nimetz submitted a new proposal to Greece and Macedonia - something both parties denied, claims that Athens has given green light in July, while Skopje has failed to reply yet. "To Paron" says the new developments related to the name row have been unfolding ahead of Papandreou's visit to New York for the UN

General Assembly session and in a period when the EU, US and NATO have been creating a climate for reaching a compromise.

In the headline of Macedonian newspaper "Vreme", 'Greeks to Seek Settlement in New York', it is said that Greece is likely to demand a pre-contract to set timetable for resolution of name dispute as it is expected that the country will come up with its motion during the forthcoming session of the UN General Assembly. In this context, the newspaper quotes media as hinting at a possibility for a breakthrough towards final settlement. The signing of the deal, which is to be non-binding, would be under the auspices of the UN Security Council, which would guarantee that both countries shall resolve the dispute in due time.

Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski urges theses outlined in Greek newspapers involving the name issue to be perceived with reservation in the coming period until the local elections in Greece. "Mediator (Matthew) Nimetz hasn't submitted a new proposal to Macedonia, while Greece hasn't confirmed that it quits its "erga omnes" demands. In fact, the campaign for local elections has been launched in Greece. Therefore theses which are presented in the newspapers about the name dispute should not be easily accepted. On the other hand, they should not be excluded from our analyses and daily commentaries either, but need to be perceived with reservation", Gruevski told reporters in mid-September.

#### **1.6. Name Row Harms Macedonia, Needs to be solved - Says Angelika Beer**

"The European Union has proven that Macedonia plays an important role for the organization. For instance, in 2001 Macedonia was the first state to sign a Stabilization and Association Agreement. The European stabilization was active during the development of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the recent visa liberalization", says former German MEP and current chairwoman of the Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention, Angelika Beer.

"The question is whether Macedonia needs EU and whether EU needs Macedonia! This question has to be answered by your government. The name dispute harms Macedonia and it is time for the government's "red line". As far as I know, taking into consideration that the people of Macedonia do not want the constitutional name to be changed, this could mean an end of the governing coalition. But a decision has to be made", says Beer in an interview.

She believes that Macedonia will not lose its identity if a compromise is made. "Compromises are frequently used in politics, both internationally and nationally. Macedonia didn't lose its dignity by accepting to change the state flag in order to clearly declare that it has no territorial pretensions towards Greece. There's no need for low moral. The government and the PR sector are responsible to explain the decision and will beforehand", stresses Beer.

The name row, she adds, still exists because part of Greece called Macedonia is next to the Republic of Macedonia. "Thus, we see that two nationalities are involved: Greek

Macedonians and Macedonian Macedonians. A solution most probably lays somewhere between these nationalities, not in nationalism. Now it's high time for compromise. Since a majority of the population in Macedonia support EU accession, then the road leading ahead is in the hands of the Macedonian government, which needs to use this potential", Beer notes.

### **1.7. Droutsas Says Greece Proved its Will for Settlement**

Greek Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas<sup>2</sup> said in September that Greece has proved the necessary political will to resolve name issue, hinting at a possibility for meeting of prime ministers of Macedonia and Greece in New York. Outlining the key-points of Greek foreign policy, Droutsas underlined that no international pressure is now exerted on Greece because Athens has clearly defined its policy framework. "If our neighbors decide to examine the problem with an open mind, we will be here with our positions," ANA-MPA news agency quotes Droutsas as saying.

"There is no proposal by mediator Matthew Nimetz and nothing is happening behind the scenes and we draw clear, red lines and we stick to them. Greece's position is well known to everyone – an 'erga omnes' name with geographical qualifier, Greek Deputy FM Mariliza Xenogiannakopoulou stated in September in the Greek parliament. "We draw red lines and we stick to them. Greece's position is well known to everyone – an 'erga omnes' name with geographical qualifier, a strong position because it has the support of the vast majority of the political forces within the parliament. It is a fair, visible solution that will allow the two countries to live peacefully side by side and that will free the European perspective of the FYROM, Xenogiannakopoulou said answering journalist question.

### **1.8. President Ivanov Meets Greek PM Papandreou in New York**

The epilogue of the "media and statements trench communication" was a 20-minute meeting at the sidelines of the 65th UN General Assembly between Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov and Greek Premier George Papandreou held on September 22<sup>nd</sup> in New York. It is said that the meeting, initiated by President Ivanov, aimed at establishing trust between the two countries. Ivanov and Papandreou concluded that this period was sensitive in which both countries should jointly send messages with positive elements of building of trust, however interlocutors failed to discuss the essence of the dispute at their meeting. Both state officials concurred that it was better for mediator Matthew Nimetz to put forward a proposal "as soon as he feels that it won't be rejected by the two parties". On the occasion, the Macedonian President said that discussing the Constitution within the name talks was a sensitive topic for Macedonia and that both parties needed to pay attention to their official statements in this period.

In the same period, name issue was among the wide range of issues covered at the meeting between Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou and US Vice-President Joe

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<sup>2</sup> Papandreou relinquished his post of foreign minister to his deputy, Dimitris Droutsas. This was one of the most important changes after the government reshuffle.

Biden, ANA-APA news agency reported<sup>3</sup>. Biden pointed out the urgency of finding a name settlement, the White House said in a statement. Biden underlined the need of solving name issue, saying that leaders of Skopje and Athens should make a deal and find an acceptable name solution, US Vice-President's cabinet said in a statement. Papandreou-Biden meeting followed after Papandreou-Biden meeting followed after Papandreou met with UN Secretary General Ban-Ki-Moon. Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski expressed disappointment, saying that Greece's position is extremely radical.

### **1.9. Server: You Cannot Disappear Over Piece of Paper**

Macedonia and Macedonians exist and they will not disappear because of few words on piece of paper of any deal agreed in name dispute, Daniel Server of the US Peace Institute, told Voice of America's Macedonian news. Server said people call the United States by different names, but it does not affect the country's identity. In the Constitution it is called the United States of America, but some call it America, or the United States. Some oppose the name America, Server said. The same principle could be applied in the Macedonia case, he thinks.

From his perspective, no piece of paper determines whether Macedonia exists, whether Macedonians and the Macedonian language exist. They all exist and they won't disappear over a few words written on a piece of paper, Server said, adding that Macedonians must show more self-confidence. His advice to Macedonia is to continue the talks with Greece in calm and orderly manner, and not to provoke a reaction that the negotiating partner is trying to achieve.

### **1.10. Greece Fails to Meet Obligations Stemming from 1995 Interim Agreement - President Ivanov**

"Macedonia is still waiting in front of the doors of the European Union and NATO due to the acts of our southern neighbor Greece, which are contrary to the obligations undertaken by the 1995 Interim Agreement", President Gjorge Ivanov said addressing the 65th UN General Assembly end-September in New York. Ivanov noted that the Republic of Macedonia had been directing all its available capacities to the implementation of the top strategic foreign policy goals -integration into the EU and NATO and that the people of Macedonia deserved to feel the benefits stemming from the membership into these organizations.

"I would like to remind you that, 15 years ago, right here in New York, the Interim Accord was signed with our southern neighbor, when Greece obliged itself not to obstruct the membership of my country in international and regional organizations and its integration. Notwithstanding, I must mention the fact that my country is still waiting in front of the

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<sup>3</sup> Speaking to reporters afterwards, the Greek prime minister said his talks with Biden covered a wide range of issues, such as the global economic crisis, the Middle East issue, the Cyprus problem as well as the FYROM "name issue".

doors of these two organizations due to the acts of our southern neighbor, which are contrary to the obligations undertaken by the 1995 Interim Agreement", Ivanov stated. The President added that the country was committed to finding a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue under UN auspices.

"Our name is concerned, our right to self-identification and human dignity. We do everything in our capacity to nurture close and friendly relations with neighboring Greece, with its people. A solution can be reached only if the UN Charter, the Resolutions, the international law and principles, on which the international order rest, are respected", President Ivanov said in his speech. Finding a name settlement would be a great step not only for Macedonia, but also for meeting the joint visions of the entire region, according to him.

### **1.11. Nimetz Hints on New Proposal, Droutsas Reiterates "red lines"**

After meeting with Greek Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas and Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov, UN mediator Matthew Nimetz said that the relations between the two countries have come at a different level than before, but now is not the time for a final proposal. Nimetz failed to come forward with a new proposal for the resolution of name dispute stating: "In the past several years I gave a set of proposals, but so far none of them was acceptable for the two sides. I believe that I will have to be very careful in the preparation of the new proposal, as several things have been put on the table and have to be taken into consideration by the two sides".

"Dialogue between the two prime ministers and the relationship between the countries are at a different level now than it was several years ago. I think I must be very careful to prepare a new proposal, because there are many things on the table, which both parties can take them into account and to discuss",..."I feel that parties are now talking between themselves on matters which are in the frames where some expectations can be seen and eventually solution to this problem will be found. I certainly see a dialogue developing that gives one some realistic expectation that the problem here can reach some type of mutual solution that each side feels that they achieved national goals and maintain national dignity of both sides", said Nimetz.

Greek Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas was highly critical of PM Nikola Gruevski for his statements and refusal to visit New York and meet with Greek Prime Minister George Papandreu. "All the time and all the energy that the Skopje side now expends in its effort to create certain impressions that act in the wrong direction; if it instead invested these in finding a solution to the 'name issue' then we would be in a very different position," Droutsas underlined. Gruevski was "creating impressions that do not contribute at all to a solution," he added.

### **1.12. Greece's Radical Positions not in Favor of Name Settlement, says PM Gruevski**

PM Nikola Gruevski did not travel end-September to New York, as President Ivanov did, but he commented the latest statements by Greek Premier George Papandreou and Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas given there, by expressing disappointment that hopes created recently in a bid the name issue to be solved had been misleading, because they once again "presented utterly radical positions".

Greece by reiterating its "erga omnes" positions - a name with geographical determinant for overall use and adoption of constitutional amendments if necessary - implies that it is not changing its stances, according to the PM. "These statements deny many people in Macedonia who have said that Greece is flexible and Macedonia isn't", Gruevski stated. The PM said he was still optimistic about a possible solution, adding that optimism was not enough, but demonstration of constructiveness from the other party.

"I'm not sure to what extent these stances might improve their positions ahead of the local elections, only time will tell. However, if their positions are truly firm, this won't help in overcoming the dispute. On one hand, Greek officials say they have willingness and constructiveness to solve the issue, on the other they voice their positions, which are utterly radical, even more radical than the positions of the previous government", Gruevski said.

### **1.13. Greek Ambassador: Skopje and Athens May Find Solution, as Name nor Identity are Disputable**

The governments in Skopje and Athens are mature enough to solve the name row in a reasonable manner. The problem is related to the country's name not the identity, which is a personal matter, says Greek Ambassador to Macedonia Alexandra Papadopoulou in October. "I believe the matter will be resolved, as the problem is related with the country's name, not the identity. Greece is not disputing the identity, considering it a personal matter. It only asks for the name modification", Papadopoulou said at a debate on Greek-Macedonian relations in light of the EU-integration process.

To Papadopoulou's statement that a difference should be made between the Macedonians in Thessaloniki and in Macedonia, who share same name and have different identity, participants in the debate said that Greece had been disputing the right of collective identity of Macedonians and denied the main difference - the Macedonian language, which is a constituent part of the Macedonian identity. Now, Papadopoulou said, Greece is accepting a complex name, which was not the case when the problem occurred. By supporting Macedonia's EU candidate status Greece has demonstrated its backing of the country's EU-integration, she added.

#### **1.14. Meetings Gruevski/Papandreou**

“The meeting was constructive, talks were positive, but more encounters are required to resume dialogue in order to overcome the problem”, assessed Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki after the talks of Macedonian and Greek Prime Ministers, Nikola Gruevski and George Papandreou respectively, in Brussels by end-October. FM Milososki said the meeting focused on a number of topics, including politics, economic crisis, regional issues, but primarily on the Macedonia-Greece bilateral row. "I believe talks can be assessed as positive. More meetings will be necessary to resume the dialogue so that differences are overcome in the future. It is important that the Macedonian and Greek Prime Ministers have the political will to seriously approach this issue, so that certain progress is achieved, leading towards settlement of the bilateral problem", added Milososki. This was the seventh tête-à-tête meeting of the two prime ministers after Papandreou assumed post of Greek PM. Previous meetings, despite all efforts for improvement in bilateral ties, did not bring progress in resolving the name dispute. The eighth PM's meeting took place at the sidelines of the EU-Africa summit in Tripoli, which is seen as an established practice in the Macedonian-Greek dialogue at the highest political level.

#### **1.15. Macedonian Language Reinstated in UN Register**

The Macedonian language has been reinstated in the language graph in Macedonia's ID as member-state in the UN register, which due to unauthorized intervention has disappeared in November. The correction was made after the reaction of the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Macedonian mission in the UN to the Cabinet of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well as the UN Secretariat, which expressed assurance that world organization remains on its principles and respect of established practice in relation to the use and naming the Macedonian language. MoFA underscores Macedonia's resolve to fight for the defense and promotion of Macedonian national identity as equal part of European and world cultures, whereas this subversive act within the UN could serve as an additional incentive for louder international promotion of Macedonian national and cultural traits.

UN mediator Matthew Nimetz stated that recent erasing of Macedonian language from Macedonia's ID in the United Nation's register was a result of technical error without any political intent. "Due to a technical-level error, there was a change in the UN Secretariat's Bulletin of Terminology relating to the language designation of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This error occurred without political intent and was not due to the intervention of any government. I can report that the matter was rectified by returning to the previous wording," Nimitz said in his press release. The Secretariat remains impartial in its efforts to help the parties resolve their differences relating to the name issue, and hopes for speedy progress toward a mutually agreed solution, the statement reads. In spite of all the reactions, the public in Macedonia remained highly suspicious about this event.

### **1.16. FM Milososki: Papoulias Statement Reminds of old-fashioned Nationalism**

The statement of Greek President Karolos Papoulias given during his visit to Sofia that 'the door of NATO will remain closed and accession procedure towards the EU will be frozen, as long as Skopje insists on the intransigent position on name issue' reminds of an old-fashioned nationalism, assessed Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki.

"I believe the Macedonian-Greek dialogue should resume despite the fact we are hearing Greek statements that often remind of old-fashioned nationalism. The only question I would ask the Greek President is if he is the same person who signed the Interim Treaty in the capacity of Foreign Minister in September 1995. If there is an answer to that question and the relevance and validity of that document, then we can refer to the credibility of statements by Greek officials", stated FM Milososki. According to him, political and diplomatic pressure by the Greek side is expected to resume.

### **1.17. O'Neil and Purdue: Views on the "Name Issue"**

"Sometimes, but not always, the country's name reflects the language and cultural identity of its people. It can also reflect a geographic concept. I believe that the people of Macedonia are certain in their language, identity and nationality. It is natural that they want the country's name to reflect this, but the name itself does not contribute to the strengthening or weakening of the people's certainty in their identity", says former mediator in the Macedonia-Greece name dispute, Robin O'Neil in an interview with Macedonian Television (MTV).

Asked if Athens's goal is not a name change, but disappearance of the Macedonian people and identity, he expressed hopes that no one in Greece thinks in this way. "I had doubts in the past that maybe such ideas are reviewed in Greece, but the country does not have any territorial pretensions towards Macedonia or its people. Greek national interests lie in the fact they want stable and economically successful neighbors, including a stable, prosperous and independent Macedonia. The Macedonian people had demonstrated during the Ottoman rule their commitment to independence and I am certain they will not give up now. There is no peace and stability on the Balkans without an independent Macedonia", adds O'Neil.

He believes progress and a long-term solution to the dispute is possible, which would benefit Macedonia and the region in general, but assistance is required from EU and NATO member-states. "According to international regulations, Macedonia has the right to use the name it has chosen and I agree this that should be the foundation for the negotiations. I have said on many occasions that the best starting point is in the 1995 Interim Treaty, which Macedonia and Greece have committed to observe", underlines Robin O'Neil.

James Purdue, former deputy of the NATO Secretary General and one of the Ohrid Agreement mediators commented that Washington and Brussels did not understand seriously enough the name dispute, as stronger international support is necessary for solving it. He thinks that a stronger international boost is needed in order a final negotiation process to be lead, as this issue brings damage to Macedonia as it does not become a NATO member, but the unresolved issue can be damaging for Greece as well.



### **1.18. Ivanov: I Won't Allow Breach of Macedonia's Identity and Language**

While presenting his remarks in front of the Macedonian parliamentarians in December, Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov said: "It is unacceptable to discuss a name settlement which might breach Macedonia's identity, language and the constitution, which are the guardian of our national sovereignty and our national dignity. Know that I won't allow that as long as I am the president of Republic of Macedonia...Macedonia is ready to overcome all differences and focus on its national interests. We are citizens of one European country and we urge Greece to behave as one European country would", President Ivanov noted. He pointed out that Macedonia's top officials have unanimous stance on name issue, which is continuance of Macedonian-Greek dialogue and finding an acceptable name settlement. Many found this President's statement as very indicative, as rumors have circulated that a fresh round of under-the-carpet negotiations with Greece have resumed.

### **1.19. ICG: Name Row Settlement will Contribute to Regional Stability**

Renewing the efforts to achieve a compromise in Athens-Skopje name dispute and taking other steps to insulate Macedonia and Bosnia/Herzegovina from possible negative repercussions of a Kosovo-Serbia rapprochement, reads a report of the International Crisis Group, titled Kosovo and Serbia after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) opinion published in August.

It says that the ICJ advisory opinion on the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence offer an opportunity to Belgrade and Pristina to resolve differences, establish bilateral relations and unblock their paths to the EU integration. ICG also warns that ideas for Kosovo division along ethnic lines or exchange of territories between Belgrade and Pristina may provoke destabilization and separatism in neighboring Macedonia and Bosnia/Herzegovina - something the international community should prevent. Skopje and Sarajevo should be detached from the Kosovo problems, while a swift name row settlement will contribute to easing the tensions in the region.

## **2. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESSES**

### **2.1. No Alternative to Name Settlement, say Officials in Strasbourg**

Spain's State Secretary for EU Affairs, Diego Lopez Garrido, whose country held the European Union Presidency during the first half of 2010, stated in July that he believes Macedonia's EU progress depends on Athens-Skopje relations. He expressed hope that there will be results in the course of the future Belgian Presidency, but failed to say if there are other possible solutions for unblocking of Macedonia's European integration process, in case a solution to the name issue is not found.

Belgium's caretaker Prime Minister Yves Leterme, at a later date stated that in the course of its mandate Brussels will try to secure a deal to ensure a start of Macedonia's EU accession talks. Among the priorities of Belgian EU presidency mentioned by Leterme was enlargement, with the Belgian presidency aiming to get EU governments agreeing on further enlargement of the bloc, but each aspirant country will be evaluated on merits.

The European Parliament Rapporteur for Macedonia, Slovenian MEP Zoran Thaler also estimated that the international community expects a solution to the name row, while no one operates with alternatives. According to him, the European Commission will not withdraw its recommendation for start of accession talks, however at present there is a problem over Macedonia's motivation and energy to implement required reforms. He also expressed concern regarding a real threat that Macedonia is taken off the EU agenda if the situation remains unchanged.

“It is time for final solution to the name issue”... “I am more convinced now that it will happen than I was several years ago” European Commission's President Jose Manuel Barroso said in September in Brussels after his meeting with Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov. “We have had a very important meeting as now the EC is preparing the report on Macedonia's progress towards the EU membership, which is to be published this November”, Barroso said, reminding that last year's EC report recommended opening of Macedonia's EU accession talks, visa liberalization and support of further efforts for settling the name row. “Unfortunately it has not happened yet. I am aware that efforts (to that effect) are being made under the UN auspice and in direct negotiations with Greece. I know how sensitive this matter is. However I call on both parties to eliminate this obstacle as soon as possible as now is the time for making a final decision on the issue”, Barroso said, reaffirming the EC commitment to Macedonia and expressing belief for the country's EU accession talks to kick off once the Council asks for it.

### **2.2. Macedonia Ready for NATO and EU talks, Must Solve Name Issue, says French Minister**

“The obligation of politicians today is to turn to the future and not look in the rear-view mirror. I urge political leaderships in the region, which is still filled with tensions, be it ethnic, cultural or lingual, to try and avoid going back to the 19th century, because we do not have time, there are other tasks ahead and that is building Europe capable of coping with challenges, defending its interests, but also securing stability and peace”, said French

Minister for European Affairs Pierre Lellouche in July's address before members of the National Euro-Integration Council. According to him, Macedonia has achieved enormous progress and it is truly ready to start EU and NATO accession negotiations, but it needs to solve the name dispute, something which requires political will.

"I know it is not easy for Macedonia, but also Greece, which is faced with series of other difficulties. Enlargement is a continual process and the accession of each country requires prior settlement of all bilateral issues, accompanied by meeting of required criteria and of course the wish to be part of the Union. The EU cannot import a bilateral problem and now it is necessary more than ever to reach compromise with Greece regarding the name, so that we can move forward by the year-end", said Lellouche.

Asked about the referred support, taking into consideration French President Nicolas Sarkozy's open support to Greek PM Papandreou in the name row, Lellouche mentioned the model of Slovenia and Croatia, which managed to jointly solve the border dispute, underlining the name row was an issue that two sovereign states need to settle. "It is neither up to France, nor others to get involved in the issue, just as we did not meddle in finding a solution to the Slovenia-Croatia border dispute", added the French Minister.

### **2.3. Ambassador Bergant: Slovene-Croatian Model Hardly Applicable for Name Row**

A model for settling Slovene-Croatian dispute may not be easily applied in other region. This model however shows that dialogue and meetings may lead to some solution, Slovene Ambassador to Macedonia Alan Bergant told reporters. The European Commission (EC) should be involved in the name dispute settlement, the Slovene Ambassador says, pointing out that the Macedonian Government should ask EC and the European Council President to take part in resolving of the matter. Bergant doesn't believe that Greece will agree for Macedonia to join NATO under the interim reference FYROM. "Hence the name issue should be settled so that Macedonia may move forward," he said.

### **2.4. Turk: The Balkans no longer priority for EU**

Danilo Turk, the President of Slovenia, the country which considered itself an advocate for the Balkans in EU, pointed out by end-summer that the Balkans should be no longer EU's priority. In his interview for APA agency, he even criticized the countries of the region, which wanted to join the European Union. "The EU-candidate countries would be the one to blame if there is going to be a blockage in the EU accession talks", Turk noted. Turk pointed out that EU's priority should focus on its strategic partners, particularly Russia and its Eastern neighbors.

## **2.5. Knaus: Macedonia Deserves EU Accession Talks, Which is Impossible Without Name Solution**

European Stability Initiative (ESI - a non-profit research and policy institute), published a proposal on how to solve the name dispute, in which it envisages a constitutional amendment in Skopje that changes the country's name now, allowing Athens to support the start of EU accession talks later this year. But the amendment would only foresee the change's entry into force on the day Macedonia actually joins the EU.

ESI President Gerald Knaus says that this proposal is even more attractive and could contribute to a successful referendum in Macedonia if Greece promises to support country's accession to NATO under its temporary reference. Knaus also argues that the proposed solution would allow both countries and their leaders to claim victory. Greece will be part of the solution in the region, not a source of problems, Macedonia could once again become a pioneering leader in helping the rest of the region in the visa liberalization process and the first country to start entry talks before Croatia joins the EU, reads the ESI analysis.

However, ESI acknowledges that the proposal may be difficult to be realized. Still, if accepted, it could put an end to the longstanding deadlock. "Politicians in Skopje comprehend that a name compromise is needed for country's membership in EU. It is almost certain that a referendum will be scheduled and broad support will guarantee its success. Even those who are prepared to make concessions over the name, will agree to than only if there are strong guarantees that the country will join EU. A name change with only given promises for start of accession talks at this moment seem unrealistic, given the fact that Greece has another 70 opportunities to veto the negotiations", ESI considers.

Commenting these ideas in an interview, Knaus stated: . "Macedonia should be the first country from Western Balkans to kick off talks for EU membership, unfortunately one thing is clear: without a resolution to the name issue with Greece, entry talks will never be launched. Most Macedonians think this is not fair. And the majority of Europeans think the same and I personally agree with this position. However, this is only a reflection of how EU works once you become a member".. "But, Greece is not the only problem. Other EU member countries, that oppose EU enlargement, are hiding behind Greece. Therefore it is unrealistic to expect EU countries to exert pressure over Greece".

The ESI chief pinpointed that the request Macedonia to find a solution to the name row with Greece had become an official EU request. "In 2009, after the European Commission said that Macedonia was prepared to start EU membership talks, it also urged "a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue" to be found (a conclusion of the European Council, December 2009). This is a reflection of the reality of EU's policy: not one step towards the enlargement process can be made with the vetoes of Greece, Germany, the Netherlands or Slovenia",... "However, there's one positive thing that is in Greece's interest Macedonia to make a progress. The current administration in Athens seems to be more prepared than the previous ones to find a compromise. It may be also prepared not to insist on a constitutional change of the name to settle the issue", Knaus estimated.

“The core of our proposal is Macedonia to start EU membership negotiations and join NATO by year's end, without being urged to make constitutional changes right away, but only when it joins the EU”, noted Knaus. According to him, there are two possibilities that might enable headway. The first one is each agreed name change to enter into force only after Macedonia becomes EU member. This would trigger an interest the country to join the Union, because if the process fails, then the constitutional amendment would never go into effect. The result would be that Macedonia could make an ally within EU, based on its own interest. The second possibility would be Greece not to insist on a change of the constitutional name, but only on a change of the name for international use. “I personally believe that regardless of what solution would be agreed, now is the time for it to be done. Macedonia really should be the first country from Western Balkans to start EU negotiations”, the ESI president stated.

## **2.6. Milososki Seeks Start of Accession Talks Under the Provisional Reference**

Start of accession talks with EU under the provisional reference Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and becoming EU member state under the new name, Macedonian Foreign Minister Anotnio Milososki prioritized in his interview for a German daily. FM Milososki said that the talks with Greece should be held in parallel with the talks with EU in order Macedonia to be certain that Greece won't impose another blockade. “If we've made a national concession in order to begin talks with EU, we must be certain that Greece won't be blocking us again after the fourth of tenth chapter. Therefore, I believe that the two processes should be run in parallel, meaning that after the official admission of Macedonia into EU, the new name will come into force. In that way, we can overcome the distrust in the entire matter”, FM Milososki said.

He evaluated the meetings with Greece's top officials as courteous without any real effects, as Greece talks about national red lines. “The red color is not the color of compromise. Athens wants us to change our passports, web-pages, vine declaration, Milososki said. Finding a solution might be very difficult, but it isn't impossible when political elites, the Government and the opposition, will be convinced in it. We pay the costs surrounding the dispute and we want it to be resolved”, Milososki stresses. He also believes that the election of George Papandreou for Greek premier gives certain hope in the whole process.

According to him, Macedonia lacks adequate "weight" to defy Greece and as a result country's Euro-perspective is held hostage in a way. "At the Bucharest NATO summit in 2008, Greece used veto to block Macedonia's accession even though under the Interim Agreement our membership in international organizations cannot be blocked if the interim name is being used. Therefore, a procedure was launched on the violation of this agreement before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. We expect an appropriate ruling with regard to the validity of the agreement to be reached”, the FM says.

Asked about the erection of monuments of Alexander the Great, which is seen as provocation by Athens, Milososki says: "I was a child when Macedonia became independent 20 years ago. At that time we weren't focused on ancient history. But when Greece started presenting history as forbidden fruit for us, we became more motivated to

prove that our nation has roots. It is probably a complex of small nations; I believe that nationalism of one side is able to awaken the nationalism of the other side.

Asked about alleged textbooks with maps of great Macedonia, Milososki responds that it is Greece's attempt to spread confusion. "I was educated in Macedonia and had never studied from such textbooks. Greece is trying to spread confusion by claiming that Macedonia has territorial pretensions. This is ridiculous as someone to say that Luxembourg has territorial pretensions towards Germany. We have only 8.000 soldiers and eight helicopters. In the past 20 years we had never had a security issue with Greece", FM Milososki states.

When asked whether the Albanian minority in Macedonia aimed at creating greater Albania, the Minister responds that the idea of great Albania has been exhausted with country's accession to NATO. "No NATO member country will allow and even discuss alteration of borders. This is good for the entire region, underlines Milososki.

On the debate involving the role of Muslims, which is ongoing all around Europe, Milososki says that Islam is nothing new in Macedonia. "I was raised with that. Macedonia is a model of integration without assimilation. It is not always ideal, but it functions. Despite respect, there are prejudices. In Germany as in Europe, Islam is something new, foreign, unknown. But maybe the German society should stop using the word Gastarbeiter (guest worker), because there are families that are here for 40 years, together with the culture and tradition in their homes and it will stay like that forever, FM Milososki underlines.

## **2.7. 95 out of 106 laws from 2010 EU Agenda Completed**

While presenting the Information on the Adoption of EU Acquis - 2010 revision vice-Premier for European Affairs Vasko Naumovski said that Government up till November 2010 has completed the texts of 95 laws out of a total of 106 that need to be adopted in line with the National Program on the Adoption of EU Acquis (NPA) in 2010. According to him, these were the best results since the instrument monitoring the harmonization process of Macedonian laws with EU's legislation was being applied. "This is a good result and we hope it will be appropriately reflected in this year's European Commission Progress Report, due to be released at the beginning of November", added Naumovski.

The laws refer to the fields of democracy and rule of law, judiciary and economic sector. "The European agenda remains the top national priority for the Government and we hope the degree of harmonization with the Copenhagen criteria will increase in the coming period. Thus, Macedonia would have fewer tasks to complete compared to countries from Central and Eastern Europe by the time it begins accession talks", stressed Vice Premier Naumovski. He pinpointed the conclusions passed by the Stabilization and Association Committee welcoming the reforms made in several areas, including judiciary, fight against corruption, the establishment of a separate working group to monitor reforms in the administration.

Prime Minister Gruevski announced that Macedonia prepares teams that will be fully capable to immediately begin EU accession talks as soon as the name dispute is settled.

About 850 public administration employees have been engaged for this purpose, who are learning from Croatia's experiences in the Union accession process, but are also consulting with Slovenia and other countries.

## **2.8. Fule: EU doesn't Alter Positive Recommendation for Macedonia**

“The European Commission does not alter the last year's recommendation for opening of Macedonia's EU accession talks”, Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fule said end-July in Brussels after the Seventh Meeting of Macedonia – European Union Stabilization and Association Council. “It was a rather significant meeting, taking place in crucial period as we were trying to answer the question whether Macedonia's reform process had stalled or not. I have to say that we have had a positive meeting as we have been insured that instead of stalling the reform pace has gained new momentum”, Fule said at a press conference.

The EU officials urged Macedonia to improve the political dialogue, for which, as Fule said, both ruling and opposition parties bear responsibility. The country should also keep working on professionalization of its public administration, judicial independence, fight against corruption, improving the human rights (in particular the protection of vulnerable groups) and on creating better business climate.

In September, PM Nikola Gruevski held talks with EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fule, in which they focused on the progress of Macedonia's reforms towards the Union's membership and the name negotiations. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Gruevski said he presented Macedonia's position on the name issue and everything that had been done thus far in favor of its settlement. As Macedonia has been making efforts for solving the problem, but Greece may not be planning such outcome for a long period and this possibility should be addressed, Gruevski believes that the EU should consider an option to set a date for Macedonia's accession talks even if the name issue remained unsettled.

After the meeting, European Parliament's rapporteur for Macedonia Zoran Thaler said he expected positive European Commission's report on the country's progress towards the Union's membership, as it advanced in regard to reforms and was more successful in mitigating the consequences of the economic crisis in comparison with many other European countries. “I hope for a positive report in November. Substantial progress has been made in overall reforms, but there are also spheres that require additional efforts. All remarks will be precisely notified in the report, which are not a result of Brussels' desire for criticism, but for granting assistance to the country to synchronize with the EU standards”,.. “Macedonia is the weaker party in this name dispute and a non-EU member. Hence it should invest additional energy for settling the matter” Thaler said, urging Macedonia once again to solve the name row with Greece.

## **2.9. Danish Diplomat Sorensen will be new EU Ambassador to Macedonia**

Danish diplomat Peter Sorensen will be the new Head of the European Union Delegation to Macedonia, the Cabinet of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton said in a press release. Sorensen will replace Erwan Fouere, who has been in the office since November of 2005. So far, Ambassador's Fouere mandate has been extended twice for a six-month period. Sorensen was a personal representative to former EU foreign policy chief in Belgrade and head of the EU Office in Pristina from 2002 to 2006.

## **2.10. Fajon: High time for EU to Determine Macedonia Accession Date, Name Solution**

"It is high time the EU determined a date, along with solution to the name issue. I do not agree that the dispute serves to slow down the EU enlargement process. It is maybe of use to someone, but I am certain that Macedonia will begin accession talks as soon as all conditions are met, says Slovenian MEP and European Parliament visa liberalization rapporteur", Tanja Fajon in an interview with NTV station.

"It is true there is certain EU enlargement fatigue, especially in a time of economic and financial crisis, when a number of European governments are faced with austerity measures and social unrest. At the same time, EU support is generally dropping in the Western Balkans. This worries me. I am convinced that the EU is the only right direction. EU needs the Western Balkans and vice versa. I am convinced that the region needs to become part of the EU, since this will strengthen the economic and political cooperation, but also contacts among people", stresses Fajon. She remains on the stance that Macedonia should get a date for start of EU accession talks as soon as possible.

## **2.11. Rompuy, Fule and Barroso: Praise Macedonia's Reform Process, Urge for Faster Name Row Settlement**

European Council President Herman Van Rompuy praised in October in Skopje the progress Macedonia has made towards the European Union membership, called the country to maintain the reform pace and urged for faster settling of the name row, which will open the European door to the country.

"The EU membership is very important for Macedonia, as it will act as an anchor of its multiethnic society".. "EU is a strong supporter of the European vocation of this country. The support is accompanied with our expectations for maintaining the pace of the reform process. I have encouraged the Prime Minister to invest additional efforts and energy on the road to realization of the European perspective" Van Rompuy said at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. He also reaffirmed the EU support of the process for settling Skopje-Athens row over Macedonia's name. "EU is not part of the (name) negotiating process, but I believe there is great opportunity for its swift settlement. This opportunity, which will finally open the European door, should not be missed, Van Rompuy said.



"In the case of Macedonia, the European Commission recommendations continue to apply, meaning the candidate country is ready to start European Union accession negotiations. The only obstacle is the resolution of the country's name, and EU accession talks will begin soon after this issue is settled", says Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fule in an interview, in October. Fule does not believe the EU has altered rules over accession, but has required since 2006 that the candidate-state is truly prepared, adding that the so-called "absorption capacity" is also a condition for EU entry, i.e. requirement that all Union member-states give their consent prior to the accession of the candidate-country.

European Commission (EC) President Jose Manuel Barroso after meeting by end-October with Macedonian Premier Nikola Gruevski in Brussels said he expected Macedonia once again in 2010 to receive a positive report and a solution to the name issue to be found. "Last year EC recommended start of membership talks and visa liberalization. It was a clear acknowledgement of implemented reforms and encouragement for the name row to be settled. The time has come and the country mustn't miss this historic chance. Identity issues are nevertheless significant, but it is more important the future not to be held hostage by the past. I urge both parties to overcome this hurdle as quickly as possible. I hope this will happen and the name issue will be solved. It is crucial for your country, the region and for all of us in Europe", stated Barroso at a joint press conference with PM Gruevski.

Asked whether the European Union should exert more pressure in the name talks between Macedonia and Greece, Barroso said: "I constantly call on all parties involved in the name issue. Today I urged the parties to settle the dispute because it is of essential importance not only for your country, but also for the region and EU, for all of us who believe in the future of the enlargement process. Therefore, on my personal behalf and official capacity I encourage involved parties to come to a solution. But I still think that it is not useful in this stage many statements to be made".

## **2.12. 1010 EU Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia**

In November 9<sup>th</sup> has been officially issued the EU Progress Report which by foreign diplomat's estimations has been less successful than the one in 1009. This report shall focus only on some areas that have been located as week spots in the Report.

Under the chapter Democracy and the Rule of law regarding the Parliament, it is said that overall, there has been further progress in the Parliament reform; amendments to the rules of procedure have been adopted to safeguard the rights of the opposition and the Parliament took measures to strengthen institutional capacity. Still, the Parliamentary Committee on Interethnic Relations failed to meet several times due to the lack of quorum. When in question the government functioning, it is said that the coalition continues to be stable and to resolve differences through cooperation, continuing to take forward the EU reform process. However, more dialogue is required on issues concerning interethnic relations, as additional efforts are necessary to take the decentralization process forward.

The public administration reform is seen as partial and mainly confined to legislative aspects and the political and operational responsibility for management of public administration remains fragmented. However, the recruitment procedure under the Law on Public Servants does not guarantee a merit-based recruitment procedure, nor does it establish when an external rather than an internal recruitment procedure will apply. There is no probationary period and promotion is not clearly linked to staff appraisals. There are concerns regarding politicization of the public service and there have been reports on replacement of trained professionals with appointees of limited experience in several institutions. Also, senior management positions have been filled in the absence of appointment criteria sometimes with staff under temporary contracts. The government did not provide precise information on the number and type of its temporary staff, for which procedures are not compliant with the Law. Conclusion is that significant further efforts are needed to ensure the transparency professionalism and independence of public administration.

Limited progress was made in implementing the reform of the judiciary a key priority on the Accession Partnership. Regarding the independence of the judiciary, no further progress was made in ensuring that the existing legal provisions are implemented in practice. The role of the Minister of Justice within the Judicial Council raises serious concerns about the interference of the executive in the judiciary. The assessment of judge's professional abilities should become more qualitative than merely quantitative. The report points its finger on the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, the Speaker and several VMRO-DPMNE MPs for openly criticizing the work and the decisions of the Constitutional Court considering them to be politically motivated. The President of the Constitutional Court defended the Court and called on the political parties to respect the Court's authority. The implementation of the 2008 Law on lustration resulted in a first case when the lustration committee found that the President of the Constitutional Court cooperated with the secret services. The President however denied these allegations. These developments have raised concerns about pressure on the independence of the judiciary. In the conclusion was said that the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors need to ensure high standards of the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in practice.

Regarding the anti-corruption policy, progress has been registered, although the case-law on corruption has been inconsistent. Transparency of public expenditure is not satisfactory. Corruption remains prevalent in many areas and continues to be a serious problem.

There was some progress in the ratification of human rights instruments. Overall, whilst civil and political rights are broadly respected, limited further progress was made. Social and economic rights are broadly in place, there was limited further progress.

Progress was achieved in the area of cultural rights and minorities. There has been some progress on equitable representation and the government undertook initial steps to foster interethnic integration in the educational system. Nonetheless, integration of ethnic communities remains limited and greater dialogue is needed to foster trust especially in areas of culture and language.

### **2.13. EC to Abide by UN Practice on use of Macedonian Language - Ivanov to Barroso**

President Gjorge Ivanov has sent a letter to European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso calling for the adjective "Macedonian" in the future to be used appropriately in the organization based on a practice endorsed by UN, all relevant international documents on human rights and based on the principle of naming the Macedonian minority in Albania in EC's report. The President said that he and his fellow citizens had been deeply upset by the manner in which the Macedonian language was named in this year's EC progress report - not as Macedonia, but as "state language", "official language" and "local language". "On the other hand, other languages that are spoken and recognized in Macedonia (for example Albanian or Roma language) are correctly used in the report. Sadly, the European Commission for five consecutive years has been carefully avoiding the use of the term "Macedonian" for report descriptions (except in naming institutions, organs, etc)," Ivanov wrote to Barroso.

He said that such omissions hadn't been made in progress reports on other countries in the region. The adjective "Macedonian" is used to precisely describe the Macedonian minority in Albania in country's EC report, according to Ivanov. President Ivanov said he was concerned with the impression that the EC had yielded over the pressure exerted by an EU member state, endorsing the policy of avoiding the use of term "Macedonian" and stressed that the policy was not in accordance with EU's basic principles. He called on the EC President to take over the helm with respect to the issue and to cease the unjust approach to Macedonia.

### **2.14. EU-Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee Ends Brussels Session**

At the end of November was held a two-day session of the 8th EU-Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee, which focused on an array of topics included in Macedonia's integration process. The meeting was chaired by German MEP Jorgo Chatzimarkakis and co-chaired by Macedonian MP Aleksandar Spasenovski. Discussing at the session, members of the European Parliament praised the progress made by Macedonia in the economy and in handling with consequences of the economic crisis. Participants at the meeting also welcomed efforts made in Macedonia towards advancing political dialogue, judicial reforms and the combat against crime and corruption. Referring to the upcoming 2011 census, Macedonian deputies and MEPs called on all political parties in Macedonia to create conditions for its successful conduct. Recommendations were voiced at the meeting for start of EU-Macedonia membership negotiations as soon as possible.

### **2.15. Macedonian Officials' Position on the EU Report**

Macedonian officials have estimated that this year's EC report is positive and that the recommendation for opening of Macedonia's EU accession talks was reaffirmed by the EC Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fule. PM Gruevski added that in the next year the government shall try to meet most of the report's remarks and recommendations in order to first and foremost improve the quality of life of the citizens of Macedonia, to keep developing good relations with EU, come closer and become part of the Union.

Vice-Premier Vasko Naumovski also denied the remark of official Athens on stalling of the country's reforms: "Despite Greece's opposition to official opening of (Macedonia's) EU accession talks, the Report notifies progress. Greece cannot hold up the European reforms of the Republic of Macedonia. We believe that faster Europeanization of the Macedonian society is also in favor of Greece, as it will enable for the two countries as EU members to work for the benefit of the Western Balkan region," Naumovski told reporters.

On the other hand, EU ambassador Erwan Fouere after presenting the EC Report before the Economic-Social Council session pointed out that reduction of the unemployment rate and increasing number of persons living in poverty are the crucial challenges for the Government, which are clearly noted in the European Commission Progress Report. Ambassador Fouere expects the announced Government's Action Plan to encompass all areas where shortcomings have been noted, along with increase of budget funds for socially-threatened individuals. "We hope the Government will accept this Report as a plea for increase of budget funds at disposal for all problems that socially-threatened communities in the country are faced with", he added.

"The conclusions of the EU Ministers Council regarding Macedonia are expected. It has been acknowledged that Macedonia is prepared to start membership negotiations, but this has been hampered by an EU member country", Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Milososki stated Wednesday. "It can be emphasized that the Council shares the same conclusion, assessment and recommendation with the European Commission that the country, as a candidate, meets the political criteria and is ready to start accession talks. However, we know that an EU member country objects such a decision to be reached and hinders its adoption," Milososki said after a meeting of foreign ministers from Adriatic Group countries.

In spite of the Government enthusiasm, opposition and media in the country have been highly critical in interpreting the report and analyzing the weak spots identified in it.

#### **2.16. Greek FM Satisfied From EU Council Conclusions for Macedonia**

Greece is satisfied from the conclusions of the EU Ministers Council regarding 'FYROM', which remain as they were last year. "We support the country's Euro-integration, but the name issue must be solved first, along with respect of good neighborly relations", said Greek Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas at a press conference after the meeting of EU FMs in Brussels. "Our position on Skopje's accession perspective is clear and well known. We sincerely want the opening of FYROM's accession negotiations with the EU, we support the country's Euro-integration, but with full respect for the rules and obligations FYROM has undertaken to the EU and all of its member-states. One basic rule is respect of good neighborly relations. This is stressed once again. The basic demand for our being able to talk about the opening of accession negotiations with FYROM is the resolution of the name issue. Like last year, all of this is reiterated in a clear manner, in clear language", said Droutsas. According to him, Athens hopes to see progress soon, through a change of the stance by the Skopje leadership, so that a mutually acceptable solution is reached.

## **2.17. Brussels Points its Finger to Macedonia**

“Macedonia must understand that further steps towards EU integration are impossible without a solution to the name dispute, while Brussels adds that seen from the outside, it is Macedonia the country that lacks initiative”...“EU for now does not intend to be included in the name dispute, as the UN frame is pretty clear...there are countries which would like the dispute to be quickly resolved and they would be even ready to get into negotiations as facilitators, but that must be explicitly asked from them” - says an anonymous diplomat.

It is known that so far, Greece and Macedonia have not taken concrete steps to approach each other, even less to reach some kind of general agreement on the way in which negotiations should be lead. In Brussels is said that for quite some time there has been no more open message to Macedonia than this, according to which the country must apply without justifications that there is lack from the side of Greece for solving the dispute. In EU say that they are hoping for positive developments in the next few weeks. “Messages that we have been receiving in June were excellent. Then came a request from Greece for a two-week suspension, after which things went downwards. At the end came the New York episode, which ruined many hopes” the anonymous diplomat comments.

### **3. NATO INTEGRATION PROCESS**

As the Lisbon NATO summit was approaching, Macedonian leading officials realized numerous meetings with their counterparts from various countries and especially with NATO officials. Goal was to broker the possibility of obtaining NATO membership for Macedonia during the upcoming summit, under the current reference “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, instead of being pressured to previously arrange an agreement with Greece for the issue. Considering the Lisbon summit outcome, these efforts have not been proven fruitful.

#### **3.1. Humar: NATO Invitation Waits for Name Solution**

“The NATO membership invitation waits only for the name solution”, said chief of Alliance's Advisory Team to Macedonia, Brigadier-General David Humar in an interview with Radio Free Europe. He stressed reforms are not a one-time achievement and need to be continual, but this also refers to other countries, especially new members.

“Since Macedonia has achieved such progress, the country doesn't need huge NATO support as in the past. However, NATO will be with you and we hope Macedonia will become part of our family as soon as possible”...“NATO at its summit in Lisbon will discuss very important issues, such as the new strategic concept and the NATO structure”, he said expressing hopes that Macedonia would be among the topics of discussion. “I'm sure that your Government will do everything that is necessary debates to be held on Macedonia. If the Macedonian Government has enough courage and knowledge, together with all NATO members, then a favorable solution can be found. Your country has already received a membership invitation in Bucharest. There it was clearly stated what has to be done and there is no need to wait for the summit in Lisbon. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) meets every Thursday, therefore whenever you are ready, they are here to complete the job”, said Humar.

The NATO high representative said that Macedonia since 1995 had been an excellent partner of NATO in the peace process and international operations, especially in Afghanistan where Macedonian soldiers “have shown great values and willingness for cooperation with the Alliance”. “Therefore, today you're in a stage where we do not ask for improvements, only capacity to maintain the progress” he added.

#### **3.2. Macedonian Official's Meetings Ahead of Lisbon NATO Summit**

In July, Defense Minister Zoran Konjanovski and Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki took part at the North-Atlantic Council's session to discuss Macedonia's progress in implementing the 11th cycle of the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP), after which followed by a meeting with NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Talks referred to the ongoing reforms in Macedonia's Army, administration, judiciary, in line with NATO accession criteria. It is believed that taking into consideration its capacity and resources, Macedonia is obviously one of the biggest contributors in NATO-led missions, especially ISAF. FM Milososki underlined that large credit went to the overwhelming support of Macedonian citizens to the country's NATO accession. Moreover, Konjanovski

and Milososki stressed Macedonia and Greece lead intensive talks regarding the imposed name dispute, with the former expecting greater flexibility and pragmatism from the latter, resulting in the issue's settlement that would enable Macedonia's NATO accession, but also enhance regional stability. The two ministers expressed hope for greater flexibility and pragmatics from Athens in order to overcome name issue, which will enable Macedonia to join NATO.

“Macedonia is ready for and firmly committed to settling the bilateral dispute with Greece over the name within the UN-led process, wishing for a solution that will be acceptable to the peoples of both countries”, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski said in Brussels at his October meetings with NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for foreign and security policy. Gruevski reaffirmed the Government's commitment to realizing Macedonia's top foreign policy objectives - the European Union and NATO membership.

### **3.3. Volker: Name to be Resolved at NATO Summit in November**

Macedonia to be part of the agenda of the NATO Summit where name issue would be resolved, considers Kurt Volker, analyst of the Centre for Transatlantic Relations of “John Hopkins” University and former US envoy to NATO. According to him, long-standing dispute mostly harmed the Macedonian people. “I think it is tragic that a common name became barrier for better future of several million people. It is a shame that citizens of Macedonia are not put on track for NATO membership under the old name as it was foreseen with 1995 agreement”, he commented.

As the September report of the Centre for Strategic and International Research in Washington reads, “the name dispute between Athens and Skopje caused too many international and internal complications and that's why it should be resolved at the NATO Summit in November...blockades, boycotts, embargoes and political conflicts that could cause further nationalist tensions between the two countries should be quickly resolved”.

However, Volker believes that Macedonia's entry into NATO under its provisional reference „Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia“ is impossible at this moment. In his interview, he said that finding a name solution mostly depends on Macedonia and Greece reckoning that NATO summit and NATO-EU summit are good time to do that. However, he doesn't exclude the possibility of joining NATO under the provisional reference.

### **3.4. Konjanovski: Macedonia May Join NATO Under Provisional Reference**

Macedonia should be admitted into NATO under the provisional reference “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” if no resolution of the name dispute is reached, Macedonian Defense Minister Zoran Konjanovski stated after the meeting with US Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

Konjanovski underlined that nobody could guarantee a negotiated settlement in one or two years, and therefore, a tangible option for the time being is that Macedonia be admitted into NATO by its provisional reference. Meanwhile, the talks with Greece will continue as long as a mutually agreeable solution is reached. “It is an obligation of the

Republic of Greece not to hamper integration processes of the Republic of Macedonia. If no mutually-acceptable solution is reached, Republic of Macedonia should join NATO family by its interim name FYROM, and meanwhile the Greece-imposed dispute could be solved," Konjanovski said.

### **3.5. Macedonia to be Admitted to NATO Under "FYROM" Reference, O'Neil says**

The Article 11 of the Interim Agreement opens door to Macedonia towards NATO and EU membership under FYROM reference. If the Macedonian government wishes to join the NATO and EU, my advice is to do this through use of the Interim Agreement i.e. by applying FYROM reference, first mediator in the Greece-Macedonia name dispute, ambassador Robin O'Neil, recommends.

He said that Macedonian government should remind the rest of the countries for the existence of an Interim Agreement and that this document is obligatory both for Macedonia and Greece in relation to admission to international organizations. "It is of significant importance the fact that agreement was negotiated by Cyrus Vance, US representative led by the UN. This means responsibility rests on the US government and UN Secretary General to support this agreement to be obeyed", O'Neil said.

He said that the claims of the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen that Interim Agreement cannot be used is not supportive, because all NATO decisions are passed by consensus. "I do not know whether NATO Secretary General is quoted correctly. Interim Agreement in any case is obligatory to Greece. It is true that NATO works according to consensus principle but we must have in mind what consensus means. It is opposite of vetoing. During the negotiations for a consensus, governments discuss about their common interest so they achieve agreement based on that common interest. If a country opposes the common interest, then other members should make pressure on this country to make her to urge for common interests. In this case, no one can deny that Macedonia's membership in NATO will strengthen the Alliance and the international stability, and especially the stability of the Balkans. Also Macedonia's membership will not weaken Greece in any case nor will endanger Greece's position in relation to name issue of Macedonia, if this membership is negotiated under FYROM name, O'Neil said.

Still, Alliance Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen after the October meeting with Greek Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas in Athens stated that name solution should be found as quickly as possible in order to activate Macedonia's NATO invitation: "NATO's position is clear. Skopje's accession can begin when a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue is found. Alliance decisions require unanimity. I urge all parties to do everything they can to find a solution as quickly as possible".



### **3.6. Keeping Macedonia out of NATO Destabilizes Western Balkan, Says Former Alliance Chief**

“Keeping Macedonia out of NATO is a waste of the progress that the country has achieved and has destabilizing effect on the Western Balkan”, says former NATO Secretary-General George Robertson. In an interview, Robertson says he is convinced that following the fulfillment of standards required for NATO membership, Macedonia should become an Alliance member, adding this would contribute to Balkan's security, whereas the artificial exclusion from NATO could have an opposite effect.

"I was always critical towards those responsible for Macedonia's veto. It is not fair and reasonable to deny the benefits, but also the obligations of a country when becoming a NATO member, just because the country's name causes difficulties for an Alliance member. I would really like to see Macedonia in NATO, especially after the efforts by its leaders to achieve required reforms", said Robertson.

However, he believes efforts should be invested in solving the name dispute with Greece, thus opening the country's perspective. "Macedonia's leaders should seek for compromise on the country's name. A small compromise will result in a large step towards the future. Macedonia's future in NATO and EU is more important than a name detail from history. I think emergency talks on the country's name should be held. It is time for leaders of Macedonia and Greece to settle this problem together", stresses Robertson, adding Macedonia should be allowed to choose its name, but the country should also demonstrate flexibility in the issue.

### **3.7. New Macedonian Ambassador to NATO Presents Platform for Diplomatic Activities**

At NATO Summit in Lisbon this November Macedonia should according to merit be invited to join the Alliance, which is an absolute priority and lasting determination of the country's foreign policy, newly appointed Ambassador to NATO Martin Trenevski said in July, presenting his platform of diplomatic activities to the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy, adding that Macedonia is an exporter of peace, stability by its direct participation in international peace missions, led by NATO, EU and UN.

However, other Trenevski's comments have been viewed by the public as pretty undiplomatic, as he stated that: "NATO decision to not hand over a membership invitation to Macedonia at Bucharest Summit has seriously undermined the Alliance's reputation" adding that the Bucharest Summit's decisions on Macedonia, based on the principles of consensus and solidarity are absurd and untenable as he intends "to challenge these principles at NATO Headquarters in Brussels". "No democratic country approves something that under the political vocabulary may be defined as a political, economic aggression of a NATO member against a non-member country. I will urge for the Bucharest Summit's conclusion to be corrected and for (the Alliance) to establish more fair attitude towards Macedonia as a candidate country that has been contributing as much as it can to the Alliance's goals and principles", Trenevski added. For these and other similar positions Trenevski was heavily criticized by media, various opinion makers and opposition parties.

### **3.8. Macedonian Peacekeepers to Remain in Afghanistan as long as Necessary – President Ivanov**

Macedonian peacekeepers will remain in Afghanistan as long as the set goal is realized - the people of Afghanistan to build a democratic society, based on the respecting the human rights and rule of law, President Gjorge Ivanov said at the NATO Summit in Lisbon. Ivanov spoke at a session on Afghanistan, which brought together the Heads of State and Government of NATO and countries-contributors to the Afghan mission ISAF.

Macedonia's contribution is not only numerical, but realistic value. In defense of democracy, Macedonian peacekeepers are deployed on some of most responsible posts and regularly engaged in some of the most complex operations, Ivanov said. Reaffirming Macedonia's commitment to NATO membership, Ivanov expressed belief that the new NATO strategy document, would prepare the Alliance for dealing with the challenges of the 21st century.

“Macedonia shares NATO values, interests and priorities, as well all responsibilities but still something is missing in this picture of partnership”, Ivanov said, reminding of the irrational bilateral dispute that has been the only reason for the country to still wait for a membership invitation. "We have showed willingness in numerous occasions for settling this bilateral dispute. I believe it is possible and may confirm that there is a favorable climate to that effect at the moment. We are certain that dialogue, stronger trust and better understanding will lead us to mutually acceptable solution," Ivanov said. Macedonia, has been participating in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan since 2002, being one of the top per capita contributors to the mission.

“I am sorry that you are not NATO member yet, but nonetheless extend my congratulations for your outstanding contribution to the Afghan mission ISAF and for the partnership you have been nourishing with the US”, President Barack Obama told to his Macedonian counterpart Gjorge Ivanov at the sidelines of NATO Summit in Lisbon. The US remain committed to and wish for swift mutually acceptable solution to this matter, Obama said at the meeting. "The US is ready to help," Obama said.

### **3.9. Reeker: Lisbon Outcome Expected, Another 2,5 years Shouldn't be Wasted on Name Dispute**

Finally, there was no miracle for Macedonia at historic summit – Macedonia failed to secure the NATO membership invitation at the alliance summit in Lisbon. The summit closing statement reiterates that Macedonia could join NATO only after it resolves the name dispute with Greece. A final communiqué of the NATO Summit in Lisbon reaffirmed the conclusion of Bucharest, namely that Macedonia is ready for full-fledged membership and that the Alliance's doors remain open for the country, which will be admitted after a mutually acceptable solution to the name dispute with Greece is found.

“The outcome from the NATO summit in Lisbon, where Macedonia didn't get a membership invitation, was expected. I hope you will not waste another two and a half years in finding a solution to the name dispute, which is a condition for obtaining NATO membership invitation”... "There were no surprises at the NATO summit in Lisbon. No

one expected different kind of outcome for Macedonia. The North Atlantic Council has reiterated its positions from Budapest's summit in 2008 - that Macedonia had met the criteria and that an invitation will be extended to the country as soon as the name issue with Greece is solved" stated US Ambassador Philip Reeker.

The Ambassador underlined that two and a half years had passed since the Bucharest summit without any solution to the name row to be found. "The US wants to help, but we cannot want more than you to join NATO and to take the necessary measures and to move forward in terms of your goals. This is something that hopefully will be embraced by Macedonia and Greece and prompt actions will be taken. As I've said many times before, don't make things more complicated than they already are. Focus on the issue and how it can be solved. Implement the reforms and work closely with Greece in order to find a name solution as soon as possible," Reeker pledged.

### **3.10. PM Gruevski meets US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Countryman**

Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe Thomas Countryman discussed by end-October in Skopje on Macedonia-US relations within the Declaration of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation. At the meeting, Gruevski reaffirmed Macedonia's top foreign policy priorities - the European Union and NATO membership. From its side Countryman conveyed the message that the United States support and will continue to support Macedonia on the road to NATO and EU and that the US remains actively involved in encouraging the governments of Macedonia and Greece in settling the name dispute, but consistent implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement as well as continual efforts in the reform process are of essential significance.

Pertaining to the claims that the name dispute cannot be settled without real involvement of the United States and EU, as well as the fact that the current US administration pays less attention to the issue compared to the previous one, Countryman reiterated that the United States support the efforts of the two governments, they are involved in the governments' efforts to communicate with one another, adding that Skopje and Athens need to find the solution. He saluted the efforts of U.S. diplomat Daniel Fried in the issue, which have failed, not because he did not try hard, but because the problem is a difficult one.

According to him, the focus on the name issue reduces the attention of authorities on other important objectives, such as continuation of the consistent Ohrid Framework Agreement implementation and other reforms required for EU accession. "The most important issue for every regional state is the rule of law, and not borders, constitution, status and name. One day the name issue will be resolved, Macedonia will join NATO and work towards its EU integration. We strongly believe that Macedonia and other regional states will face the most difficulties when they will have to meet European standards regarding the rule of law, independence of judiciary and observance of human rights", added Countryman.

## **4. ECONOMY**

### **4.1. PM Gruevski: Government has Drastically Cut Macedonia's Debts**

PM Nikola Gruevski in July refuted the claims of opposition parties that the Government has been overburdening the country with debts, saying that his cabinet has on the contrary managed to drastically reduce them for close to one third and transfer the country from the group of medium indebted to the one of low indebted states. He also stated that he does not expect for Macedonia to be hit by recession again. He expressed satisfaction that the fresh EBRD's report, which modestly revised downward its average growth forecasts for the SEE region, has predicted not negative but positive outlook for Macedonia.

### **4.2. Poverty Rate Expected in Times of Crisis, Says Finance Minister Stavreski**

Vice PM and Finance Minister Zoran Stavreski, commenting the September statistical data showing that the percentage of poverty in Macedonia is 31.1, estimated it was an expected trend in times of economic crisis. "It is not unexpected the poverty rate to rise amid crisis. The trend of rising poverty rate is identical in other countries as well...the rate growth was insignificant and the poverty in Macedonia must drop from 30 to 20%, which in turn could be achieved with growth and employment boost. The boom of poverty in 2009 compared to 2008 is expected because the crisis didn't have any effects in 2008, only in 2009 and 2010", Minister Stavreski emphasized.

### **4.3. Macedonia Seeks to Join Gazprom-led South Stream Gas Pipeline**

Macedonia wants to join a pipeline planned by OAO Gazprom and Eni SpA's that will carry Russian natural gas across the Black Sea through Bulgaria to Western Europe. Macedonia's government met with Gazprom officials in the capital Skopje on October 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss extending a leg of the link. Macedonia, along with Romania is seeking to join countries including Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia and Serbia as a partner in the onshore section of South Stream that is scheduled to deliver gas by the end of 2015. One section of the pipeline would terminate at OMV AG's Baumgarten hub, currently the destination for about a third of Russia's gas exports to Western Europe. South Stream competes with the OMV-led Nabucco pipeline, which aims to bring gas from the Caspian Sea region and the Middle East to Austria via Turkey to reduce Europe's reliance on Russian supplies.

### **4.4. IMF offers Macedonia unconditional open line of credit up to \$400 million Says Finance Minister Stavreski**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has offered Macedonia an unconditional open line of credit in amount of 400 million dollars with favorable interest rate of 1.3% annually, announced Vice PM and Finance Minister Zoran Stavreski. According to him, Macedonia has gotten an excellent offer from IMF. "It is not an arrangement, but line of credit, which

Macedonia could use under very favorable rate of 1.3% if it is estimated that this is positive for the country. Macedonia has a chance to get it as a result of our economic policies", said Stavreski after meeting top IMF representatives in Washington. The Vice PM elaborated that IMF had introduced this instrument for countries such as Macedonia that were in need of finances for realization of capital investments, business payments in order not to be indebted at home with state bonds.

The IMF offer was made based on an assessment for good macroeconomic policy. Its line of credit is a flexible instrument offering cheap credit funds without rigid conditions. If Macedonia accepts this offer, funds would be used for capital investments in infrastructure, health-care, education and budget demands as well as for payment of foreign debt. Macedonia is the first country to be offered this line of credit.

#### **4.5. Macedonia to get EUR 150 million World Bank Support in Next Three Years**

The World Bank will support projects in Macedonia, primarily in the energy sector, with at least EUR 150 million in the next three years, said Vice Premier and Finance Minister Zoran Stavreski after meetings with World Bank Vice President Philippe Le Houérou and WB Macedonia director Jane Armitage in October.

"Energy projects will be funded in the first year, including the long-distance power-line from Stip to Nis (Serbia), along with budget support to the country. A project on insurance from climate change, floods etc will be also implemented, an area that represented a problem when it came to farmers' insurance. Moreover, the WB has developed a new project, i.e. an instrument aimed at property insurance", said Vice Premier Stavreski.

Vice Premier for Economic Affairs Vladimir Pesevski said the WB, through the International Finance Corporation (IFC), would support a project on development of pilot-study regarding green sustainable development in Macedonia, first of such type in the region and in addition are to be increased investments in the private sector.

#### **4.6. MPs Resume Debate on Budget Rebalance**

Macedonian Parliament in July debated on the 2010 draft-Budget rebalance. Vice Premier and Finance Minister Zoran Stavreski elaborated the draft-Budget rebalance on Monday, saying total gross savings amount to about 8 billion denars (EUR 130 million), with net savings amounting to 4,7 billion denars (EUR 76 million), mostly in categories of goods and services.

The Budget rebalance stipulates a budget deficit of 2.5 percent from the GDP. More funds are to be allocated to health and social aid sectors, as well as pension funds, whereas the draft-rebalance does not contain proposals for increase of taxes or reduction of salaries and pensions. Pertaining to the sector of capital investments, cuts amount to 5,2 billion denars (EUR 85 million). The Budget rebalance also foresees additional austerity measures aimed at increased savings.

National per diem payments are annulled, whereas international per diem is reduced by 30% for all public sector employees until the end of 2011. A working group will analyze ways to optimize bodies within the ministries (agencies, administrations, funds, bureaus, centers), in order to transform them into sectors within ministries, so that costs for steering and supervisory boards are cut. Furthermore, salaries of the PM, ministers and deputy-ministers, as well as elected state officials was decided to be reduced by 10% in 2010 and 2011.

## 5. HEADLINES/POLICIES

### 5.1. Parliament Incident Challenging it's Normal Functioning

Parliament Speaker Trajko Veljanoski scheduled a meeting, where debates were planned on the establishment of an inquiry committee for changing the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. VMRO-DPMNE's intent was the issues considering the inquiry committee and the Rules of Procedures to be settled in a package ahead of a session of the Stabilization and Association Council on July 20<sup>th</sup>. Previously, efforts to introduce the new rules by the coordinators of parliamentary groups have been unsuccessful. However, an incident that took place there on July 1 in the Parliament premises in which opposition MPs reacted in anger, when discovered that they were under surveillance by a person from the Ministry of Interiors wearing civilian clothes and being present in the Parliament without clear distinction of who put him on charge in doing so.

As the incident took place and the atmosphere was heated, there were efforts to create an inquiry committee to clarify the incident. SDSM and NSDP parliamentary groups, demanded that inquiry committee to determine the circumstances leading to the events on July 1, which will determine the accountability of participants and those involved in the events in line with legal regulations and by-laws. The opposition parties have made accusations that the ruling majority and the Parliament Speaker are against the establishment of an inquiry committee, adding that the issue on the Parliament's Rules of Procedures should be opened only after the formation of the inquiry committee regarding the incident. The ruling party responded that it won't allow the inquiry committee to be limited and conditioned by the opposition<sup>4</sup>.

As the process was dragged through time and delayed, in order opposition not to be pointed out as the main culprit for possible negative remarks in the Annual EU Accession Report for Macedonia, and having in mind the national and state interests for furthering EU and NATO integration processes which are a national priority without alternative, SDSM party decided to give up its initiative for forming a parliament commission for their three key demands: tasked to control the spending of the budget means, attendance at the coordination meetings at President of Parliament Trajko Veljanovski and support for adopting any kind of code of conduct of Macedonian parliament. The opposition said that they made this move so that they won't be the excuse if the European Commission sends a negative report on Macedonia's progress. SDSM leader Branko Crvenkovski also stated that the party shall support and vote for any kind of Assembly Book of Rules which shall be suggested by VMRO-DPMNE for adoption at the Parliament.

“Every other issue related to EC's report, the situation with Macedonia's judicial system and administration, media pressure, non-governmental sector, organized crime and corruption as well as the economic situation in the country will be on full responsibility of the government of Republic of Macedonia”, SDSM leader Branko Crvenkovski stated. He said that this move fulfills the criteria for functional political dialogue, therefore the responsibility on every other issue lays on the back of the government.

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<sup>4</sup> The event was even commented by the US Embassy in Skopje which expressed hope that the recent incident in Macedonia's Parliament will be left behind and that the legislative institution is going to resume its activities.

## **5.2. Milososki-Meta: Region's Future is to Unite, not to Erect new Borders**

“Solutions for bilateral issues in Southeastern Europe do not lie in irrational policies envisioning new borders, but in uniting and cooperating in the region where borders will not matter, because the time to debate about borders should be left behind”, Macedonian Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki and his Albanian counterpart Ilir Meta concluded at a joint press conference in Skopje.

“Bilateral issues, ethnic ones or related to borders, should be overcome in the same way as EU founding countries managed to settle their disputes after WWII. Back then, borders were not reconstructed, walls were not erected. They became irrelevant, because Europe was uniting and becoming economically stronger. Therefore, solutions cannot be found in irrational policies, but in uniting and cooperating in the region where borders will not matter. That is why all countries in the region need the help of EU in order to become part of the successful European project”, said Milososki when asked to comment ideas on possible partition of Kosovo and whether it would influence borders to be restructured.

FM Meta agreed with Milososki, praising "Macedonia's wise political decision to recognize Kosovo", and pinpointed the statement of EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton given after the ICJ's ruling with regard to the Kosovo independence, that a new phase in the region was being launched - a future where borders would be lifted and new ones would not be erected. “There is nothing more annoying for the citizens in the region to hear plans about another division on the Balkans, because it is part of the history of the region filled with conflicts and usually pointless wars, which had stalled our region. Therefore it is not the time to discuss about borders - it is time to leave them behind once and for all”, Meta stressed.

## **5.3. Gruevski: Struggle for Success, Economic Development, Better Life is our Third Ilinden**

“If Ilinden 1903<sup>5</sup> (meaning the 107th anniversary from the Ilinden Uprising) was one of Macedonian disobedience, Ilinden 1944<sup>6</sup> one of Macedonian perseverance and unity (meaning the 66 years of the first Anti-Fascist Assembly for the People's Liberation of Macedonia - ASNOM), then Ilinden 2010 is one of Macedonian struggle for success, economic development, better and dignified life of all citizens”, said PM Nikola Gruevski in the address at site Meckin Kamen near Krusevo on occasion of August 2-Day of Republic. According to him, this struggle can be won only through unity and overcoming differences, high moral, patriotism and healthy values.

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<sup>5</sup> On August 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1903 Ilinden Uprising of the Macedonian people against the Turks began. This event is one of the most significant in the Macedonian history. During the uprising, battles were led near the village of Smilevo in the area of Demir Hisar, at Sliva and Meckin Kamen near Krusevo, at Karabunica - Kicevo, Armensko village near Lerin and the villages of Canista and Rasanec - Mariovo.

<sup>6</sup> On August 2<sup>nd</sup> the First General Assembly of ASNOM (Anti-Fascist Assembly of the Macedonian People) took place at "St Prohor Pciniski" monastery near Kumanovo. 122 delegates attended the meeting. The decision for the Republic of Macedonia to become a full-fledged member of Yugoslavia was confirmed at the meeting. ASNOM was set to be the highest legislative body of the Macedonian people, and the Macedonian language became the official language in Macedonia.



"Our goal is for the Republic of Macedonia to turn into a country with high quality of life, higher standards and happier people. There is no barrier that can't be overcome. We are determined to achieve the high European ideals and civilization achievements", stressed Gruevski. He said significant results have been achieved in the past period, such as meeting criteria for NATO accession and the European Commission recommendation for start of EU accession negotiations.

"Unfortunately, when we obtained independence we believed the struggle of generations to come would be progress, education, upgrading of ethnic and religious coexistence, NATO and EU accession, but we are faced with a cruel reality that even in the 21st century, we are still forced to fight for our identity, language, name, nationality and self-determination...However, this imposed issue by our neighbor to deal with challenges we believed have long been overcome, will not deter us from our strategic priorities for EU and NATO accession, or the modernization of our society, so that our citizens enjoy a better, safer, richer and quality life"... "We respect all our neighbors and we want to cooperate with all of them, as we are already doing. We do not want to take away anything from anyone, be it territory, culture, history etc. However, we do not want anything taken away from us too. We are a tolerant and peaceful nation and I believe we will find solutions to the problems in this spirit", Gruevski emphasized.

Similar positions were expressed by President Ivanov on the same occasion: "Macedonia and Macedonians are a reality on the Balkans and part of Europe, to which they naturally belong and live the idea of a united Europe as an open space of democracy and observance of human rights, where everyone carries its own identity. Therefore, I urge Greece to accept that we exist and will exist as sincere neighbors and friends", said President Gjorge Ivanov in the address at the Pelince ASNOM Memorial Center on occasion of August 2-Day of Republic.

#### **5.4. Nine Years of Ohrid Framework Agreement**

August 13 marks the ninth anniversary from the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which put an end to the 2001 conflict, setting a framework for interethnic coexistence and Euro-Atlantic perspective of the country<sup>7</sup>. Nine years later, the Ohrid accord is supported by the international community and major political parties of ethnic Macedonians and Albanians as the only framework for the country's development.

Vice Premier for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, Abdilaqim Ademi stated that the process is developing well, supported by the international community and contributing to Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integration. He stated that the main activity for the future remains the just representation of all ethnic communities in state administration. "The number of ethnic Albanians in state administration is about 20%. There is slight over-representation of Serbs and Vlachs and less of Roma and Turks,

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<sup>7</sup> Following days of negotiations, the Framework Agreement was signed in Skopje on August 13, 2001 by late President Boris Trajkovski, former PM and VMRO-DPMNE leader Ljubco Georgievski, as well as leaders of SDSM,, DPA and PDP, Branko Crvenkovski, Arben Xhaferi and Imer Imeri respectively, along with EU and US special envoys Francois Leotard and James Pardew.

something on which we are focused at the moment", says Ademi. He adds the Secretariat will soon adopt an Action Plan regarding the implementation of the Law on Use of Languages, developed by representatives of all state institutions and ZELS.

Law Faculty professor Vlado Popovski, who took part in the Ohrid Framework Agreement negotiations, says in a BBC interview the "Ohrid accord is Macedonia's third Ilinden, pillar of Macedonia's sustainability and synthesis of the two Ilinden days in 1903 and 1944". According to him, the document is compatible to EU laws, whereas its affirmation is the last step towards Macedonia's stabilization as a state.

The Delegation of the European Union, NATO HQ Skopje, OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and US Embassy issued the following statement marking the anniversary: "We recognize and welcome the positive progress the country has made in improving interethnic relations since the signature of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The Agreement and relevant constitutional provisions remain indispensable to building a peaceful, just and cohesive multiethnic society. We remain absolutely committed to the Ohrid Framework Agreement and look to all national stakeholders to take full ownership of what is a continuing process, and to support its implementation both in letter and spirit.

During our meeting with Prime Minister Gruevski and other government officials on 30th July, we stressed the particular importance of adopting further measures in the fields of equitable representation, decentralization and education. Notably, further efforts are needed in order to establish an education system able to foster integration and interethnic relations at all levels", reads the joint statement.

### **5.5. PM Gruevski Holds Press Conference on his Cabinet's Results**

"Work has been a constant guideline of this Government, which respects the principles of transparency and accountability", Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski said at a press conference, elaborating his Cabinet's achievements in the last four years at the beginning of September. "We have had a concrete program and worked on its realization, we did not promise anything impossible, just work, dedication and responsibility"... "in the first two-years under his Government Macedonia registered the highest GDP growth since its independence 6% and 5% respectively: record export rate of 60%, close to EUR one billion direct investments, substantially reduced public debt".

"It was felt by thousands of retired persons - their pensions went up for 30% - as well as public servants - their salaries were raised for 22 percent", Gruevski said. He also mentioned the introduction of 10% flat tax, regulatory guillotine, gross salary, self-employment projects, investments in agriculture, education, early foreign debt servicing.

"The recognition of Macedonia's progress, coming from the World Bank and other international organizations, is a confirmation of the job well done, the PM said. It was also the case with NATO, which gave credit to Macedonia in 2008 for its success to complete all necessary reforms for the Alliance's membership"... "The EU followed the suit, saying that Macedonia had reached the necessary reform level and accordingly awarded the country with positive report and recommended to the European Council to

open the accession talks. At the same the EU lifted its visa regime, thus turning one of the Government's promises to the citizens of Macedonia into reality” Gruevski added. However, the global economic crisis put an end to the upward trend in the first two years, Gruevski said, pointing out that the Government's measures have mitigated the downturn consequences, preventing an introduction of harsh austerity actions as it was the case in other crisis-hit countries.

“The main driving power of each success - national spirit - is not going to be forgotten too. The love for one's own, past, inherited values has raised many nations from the ashes. The (project) Skopje 2014 puts an end to the chapter of Macedonia without monuments, permitted, partial history, attempt for imposing massive national illiteracy and self-inferiority, accompanied by constant denials of our nation, language, identity, history, Gruevski said. He reaffirmed the Government's commitment to settling the row with Greece, 'related to the name and identity'. Any possible compromise on the matter will be placed before the citizens of Macedonia, as they are the ones who should make the final decision”... “We shall do everything in our power for Macedonia to join NATO and the European Union as soon as possible, being cautious in the same time to not make larger damage to the national interests”... “We are fighting to preserve our identity having a serious opponent, which is much more powerful in terms of resources and EU, NATO membership status. The fight is far from being easy, but we have a solid reason for our struggle. We wish for a compromise that will not bring harm to the national interests, one that will be acceptable for the majority of Macedonia's citizens” Gruevski said.

## **5.6. Macedonia Establishes Diplomatic ties with Syria Under Constitutional Name**

Republic of Macedonia and the Syrian Arab Republic established diplomatic relations at an ambassadorial level in the course of the 65. UN General Assembly. Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki and Syrian counterpart Walid al Muallem signed the joint communiqué, which according to the UN protocol, will be distributed to all member-states. The initiative for establishment of diplomatic ties with official Damascus was launched in April 2007, in the course of Milososki's visit to Syria. Syria is the 129th country that has officially recognized the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia.

## **5.7. Intelligence Services Merge?**

Media report about the government efforts to hush up the latest motion to amend the law on security-intelligence services, as it foresees that intelligence-related activity be concentrated in one panel under the government's umbrella, which also means that Intelligence Agency, which is under President's jurisdiction, is to be revoked. The military intelligence would merge with counterintelligence and national security directorate, run by Saso Mijalkov (Prime Minister's cousin). Notwithstanding that claims of government's spokesman, who denied such a motion, the report from August 30 session of the government shows that the Cabinet discussed alterations to the law on intelligence services. Newspaper “Vreme” says that there is no reaction by the President, even though he is deprived from his constitutional authority in the secret services, meaning that he is

practically “not meddling in his own business”. There have been several attempts to cut some of the president's rights, but so far all presidents have fought for what the constitution guarantees them, the paper adds.

Media also estimate that this government move has been a sort of abuse of the EU recommendations for achieving coordination among the services, especially for combating terrorism more efficiently and appointing a national coordinator for struggle against terrorism. Still, there was no mentioning of merging the intelligence services. EU also insists of democratic control, and professionalism in the services, as well as equitable representation, especially in higher positions in the services.

Another criticized policy move is the Government idea of placing the Civil Servants Agency under the auspices of the Ministry for Informatics. Opposition and media argue that in that way shall be definitely destroyed any possibility of having an independent and professional state administration.

### **5.8. Lustration Process Kicks-off With Inconsistencies**

Although the law on lustration (or as its real name is Law on Additional Condition for Performing a Public Function) started to be implemented with quite a delay, it showed many deficiencies in practice. After the intervention of the Constitutional Court on several provisions, especially regarding the time frame for its applicability (lustration period shall be considered only up to 1991, the year when constitutional changes have been made and the new pluralistic political system has been established), the Facts Verification Commission did not stand up to the level of its assignment. It turned out that in practice some individuals have been treated more mildly than others, which were proclaimed informers on basis of dubious and/or contradictory information existing in their files.

Newspapers wrote about lustration process in Macedonia, citing experts as saying there are no minor or big informers, since all those who had collaborated with the former secret services, cannot be exempt from sanctions defined in Lustration Law. The dilemma on whether the incumbent dignitaries had collaborated with the former secret police for a short period or for a lengthy period surfaced after confusions created by the Facts Verification Commission. The board found the allegations that some legislators used to collaborate with secret police insufficient to launch lustration proceedings, a decision which stirred up the public opinion, leaving many wondering why the whole process was opened at all.

As the first person who was “undoubtedly” a former collaborator was pointed Trendafil Ivanovski, the President of the Constitutional Court. He however denied the allegations in a struggle in which he was trying to prove that accusations have not been correct since according to him he was a victim, and not a collaborator as the Facts Verification Commission purposefully wanted to prove. He dismissed the allegations raised by Facts Verification Commission and vowed to clear his name, claiming to be a victim of the former and the current regime.

Media comment that this first lustration case with the Constitutional Court president Trendafil Ivanovski opened Pandora's box and showed how the Committee should not work (there is selectivity, controversial facts, party motivated voting etc) and how the government should not behave (satanization of the Constitutional Court). According to Stojan Andov, one of the initiators and authors of the Law on Lustration, in order the Committee to verify whether the informer's dossier is relevant or not there "must be an undoubtful statement of the person that agrees to be an informer; then, there must be continuity in giving information that is collaboration; and thirdly, there must be clearly set benefit from the collaboration, be it in a direct form (money) or easy career advancement, etc". He thinks that in the case of Ivanovski, who announced court procedures for defending his rights, facts given by the Commission are at least "loose"<sup>8</sup>. (The case was forwarded by Ivanovski's motion to the Administrative Court, which ruled out against Ivanovski. Currently, the case is pending in front of the Supreme Court.)

As media report, this first lustration case Macedonian way turned out to be in the style "let Pedro hang". The committee estimated that out of the few hundred cases of the leading country's officials all are clean, while "guilty" was found only "Pedro" which lead to a situation having the Prime Minister for a moment freezing his PM position, and giving his opinion "as a citizen" to give his "personal opinion" harshly criticizing the Constitutional Court and its President, as "that man from that court that stops government reforms", taking down laws which were better than the Constitution. Many in this move saw government tactics to deal with the Constitutional Court, as it was accused by the ruling party as "opposition dominated" and as "destroyer of the government legal projects". For this the government was criticized in the country's November issued EU report. By making that move, estimations were that it was a pogrom to all who are not like-minded persons with the government. What's more, there are suspicions that in the recent past powerful and influential persons have made themselves "clean" by removing their dossiers, thus making the whole process disputable and pointless. The files of former KOS and UDBA agencies are in Belgrade and practically directly influence the lustration process in Macedonia and if not acting institutionally, most probably shall be subject to "street lustration".

Former VMRO-DPMNE party leader Ljubco Georgievski has accused the ruling party-VMRO-DPMNE for being the brake in the proper implementation of lustration process in Macedonia. Ex-party leader wrote in his open letter to VMRO-DPMNE party leader Nikola Gruevski that due to a party deal between VMRO-DPMNE<sup>9</sup> and DUI party, two members of the two parties won't be investigated, even though there are allegations for their cooperation with the secret services.

Newspapers wrote about "battles for elimination of VMRO camp" due to the lustration disclosed disagreements in the country's center-right parties, as once they used to be a part of the same government, and now they are "shooting" on each other. In 1998, Ljubco Georgievski became a prime minister and formed his cabinet, which included Boris

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<sup>8</sup> "Utrinski Vesnik" newspaper quotes Constitutional Court President Trendafil Ivanovski who compares himself to David against Goliath in the battle against claims that he had collaborated with former secret services. He claims to be a victim of a planted lustration process. "I didn't do anything wrong and I won't step down. But, I have no artillery to defend myself," Ivanovski said.

<sup>9</sup> Georgievski claims that Gruevski knows the identity of the MP from the ruling party, who is suspected to have been cooperating with secret services.

Stojmenov, a businessman whose company employed many notable personalities of VMRO-DPMNE, and for which rumor had it that he was a past informant as well. The Cabinet back then also included Ljube Boskoski and Nikola Gruevski. Stojmenov, currently member of the ruling coalition, denied allegations that he collaborated with former secret services. However, schism in the right-wing parties surfaced even when Georgievski was a prime minister, but it peaked when Gruevski took the helm of VMRO-DPMNE. These relations reflected in the lustration issue at present as well.

Stojmenov pointed out that three months ago, the Facts Verification Commission have submitted documents, that clarified him from any kind of involvement within the secret services. He added that he will sign an authorization for each and everyone who would like to investigate his record file. Stojmenov announced that he will take measures in line with the lustration law against all people who attempted to destroy his dignity and all media that published his name and surname.

However, this process did not surpass the ethnic Albanian political camp as well. Speculations have surfaced that incumbent dignitaries had collaborated with the former secret services. The ethnic-Albanian parties raised mutual recriminations over collaboration with the former secret services. Operational “nicknames” that have been frequently mentioned were “Ibar”, “Vujko” and “Mama”<sup>10</sup>.

'Vujko' and 'Mama' are fabrications and plagiarism – this was the statement by Security & Counterintelligence Directorate that was submitted to Lustration Panel regarding the respective file documents, submitted by Shpend Ljusi. Still, the two files triggered an imbroglio, as they unveiled names of local government minister Musa Xhaferi and DUI deputy Fazli Veliu. Same turmoil produced the file on “Ibar” who allegedly was DUI’s leader Ali Ahmeti. These possibilities shed a different light on Macedonia's 2001 conflict and opened many questions on real motives behind the rebellion. However, the lustration panel decided that the alleged secret police files fall short of standards, due to the lack of file authenticity of which has not been proven. All this cases that had different “treatment” compared to the overdimensioned case of Trendafil Ivanovski undermined the reputation of the Facts Verification Commission (or Lustration Panel).

## **5.9. Radical Islam on Rise in Balkans**

An online music video praising Osama bin Laden has driven home a troubling new reality: A radical brand of Islam embraced by al-Qaida and the Taliban is gaining a foothold in the Balkans. Although most of Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority are Muslims, they have generally been secular. But experts are now seeing an increasing radicalization in pockets of the country's Islamic community, particularly after armed groups from the ethnic Albanian minority, which forms a quarter of the population of 2.1 million, fought a brief war against Macedonian government forces in 2001.

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<sup>10</sup> As the president of the Committee Adziev claimed that all ministers have passed the lustration filter, DPA leader Menduh Taci said that he recognized a current minister who was allegedly collaborator of the former secret services whose file is most probably taken to Belgrade.

It's a trend seen across the Balkans and has raised concerns that the region, which includes new European Union member Bulgaria, could become a breeding ground for terrorists with easy access to Western Europe. Many fear that radicalized European Muslims with EU passports could slip across borders and blend into society. At the center of the issue is the Wahhabi sect, an austere brand of Islam most prevalent in Saudi Arabia and practiced by bin Laden and the Taliban. "Wahhabism in Macedonia, the Balkans and in Europe has become more aggressive in the last 10 years," said Jakub Selimovski, head of religious education in Macedonia's Islamic community. He said Wahhabis were establishing a permanent presence in Macedonia where none existed before, and that "they are in Bosnia, here, Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia and lately they have appeared in Bulgaria." It is the first time a high-ranking official in the former Yugoslav republic's Islamic community has agreed to speak openly about the presence and threat of radical Islam.

Authorities in Macedonia are reluctant to confirm any threat of radical Islam in the country. But a government official, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the topic, did acknowledge that "radical groups and their followers are being closely observed."

#### **5.10. Macedonian Language Instruction to Begin in First Period of Education, Parents to Choose When**

Macedonian language instruction will begin in the first period of education, while parents can choose when, i.e. first, second or third grade, foresees the Strategy for Integrated Education, which the Government has adopted. Vice Premier for the Ohrid Framework Agreement Implementation, Abdilaqim Ademi and Minister of Education and Science Nikola Todorov promoted the strategy in October. The strategy also includes optional instruction through play of other community languages in Macedonia. According to Vice Premier Ademi, the strategy's implementation aimed towards progress in setting up the system of integrated education, "Upping the quality of education, promotion of equality, tolerance, multilingualism and ethnically positive conduct among pupils will enable the elimination of the trend of divisions in the education, securing a peaceful and multiethnic future to future generations". The strategy will be implemented up to 2015, with info-campaigns on learning the language of the others to be implemented in the course of this school year. It encompasses five components - curricula and instruction books, qualification of teachers, promotion of integration through joint activities, integration through language mastering, as well as school management in the context of decentralization.

"It is not important whether the language is taught from the first, second or third grade, it is of exceptional importance that all communities learn and master the state language from an early age. This is the future of the people", said OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek on the occasion, adding that "We should discuss how this will be done. I know that the Minister of Education then decided that learning of the state language from the first grade would be the best solution. Teachers need to be prepared, instruction books should be provided, parents should be ready". Taking into account his experience from other countries, the earlier start in learning the state

language is especially significant for the participation of all communities in public life. "Therefore, consultations are needed with all students, local authorities, teachers' associations, parents and NGOs. The Government will act as carrier and we are offering our experience and expertise in the strategy's implementation", emphasized Vollebaek.

DPA leader Menduh Taci opposed the idea, saying that his party opposed the application of "Macedonism" for the Albanians because they are forced to learn the Macedonian language. He is not bothered with the Macedonian language, he is bothered by the definite legalization of supremacy: "We shall be against it as long as we do not have such political climate in which we shall both learn the state language, Albanian and Macedonian" he said.

### **5.11. "Skopje 2014" - Expensive Project**

"Skopje 2014" swallows 130 million EUR – newspapers quote opposition SDSM party as saying that so far the government has spent 130 million EUR of taxpayers' money for the project. The party claims that the total cost of the project will top 200 million EUR, far more than the 80 million EUR claimed by the government. SDSM says it's high time for the government to stop cheating the people, and it's high time to disclose the cost of statues and other objects, including the expenses for author's remuneration, transport etc.

### **5.12. US State Department: Religious Freedoms and Rights Generally Respected in Macedonia**

The Constitution and the 2007 Law on the Legal Status of Churches, Religious Communities, and Religious Groups in Macedonia<sup>11</sup> provide for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion, reads the latest 2010 Report on International Religious Freedom released by the US State Department.

The government generally respected religious freedom in practice; however, the lack of effective implementation of the registration portion of the 2007 legal status law continued to hinder the ability of some religious groups to acquire legal standing. In April 2010 parliament passed a new antidiscrimination law, scheduled to be implemented on January 1, 2011, to protect against discrimination based on religious beliefs. There were few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or

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<sup>11</sup> The report reads that the country's two major religions are Orthodox Christianity and Islam. Approximately 65% of the population is Macedonian Orthodox, and 32% is Muslim. Other religious groups include Roman Catholics, various Protestant denominations, and Jews. There is a general correlation between ethnicity and religious affiliation--the majority of Orthodox believers are ethnic Macedonian, and the majority of Muslim believers are ethnic Albanian. There is no official state religion, but a 2001 amendment to the constitution specifically mentions five religious groups: the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC), Islamic Community of Macedonia (ICM), Roman Catholic Church, Jewish community, and Evangelical Methodist Church. Members of other religious groups asserted that this led to favorable treatment by the government towards these five groups.



practice. In this context the so-called Orthodox Archbishopric of Ohrid of Jovan Vraniskovski is mentioned.

The report also implies that the government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Orthodox Easter, Christmas, and Ramazan Bajram (end of Ramadan). Other Christian, Islamic, and Jewish holidays are not national holidays, but they are government-designated religious holidays for adherents of those faiths. The law requires religious groups to register in order to acquire status as legal entities and states that all (registered) groups are separate from the state and equal before the law. The law details application materials for new registrants and a timeline in which the court must issue its rulings. The law allows for the registration of more than one group from each religious confession.

The report notes that private religious primary schools are not allowed under the law, but there are no restrictions on private religious schools at secondary levels and above, or on religious education that takes place in religious spaces such as churches and mosques. At the end of the previous reporting period, the Ministry of Education announced plans to develop a new course entitled "Ethics of Religion" for the 2009-10 school year, asking students/parents to choose between history of religions and ethics of religion.

### **5.13. Events Regarding A1 TV Station**

Media war between Channel 5, Sitel and MTV from one side and media owned by Velija Ramkovski A1 television, and newspapers "Vreme" and "Shpic" on the other were filling up the media at the end of November and beginning of December. The dispute started when finance police inspectors entered the premises of a couple of firms which were located at the same building with the A1 TV studios and which are supposed to belong to Velija Ramkovski, the owner of A1 TV station. As police was intervening by blocking the main building entrance, with the justification that they are helping the finance inspectors to do their job, A1 reporters objected that they are obstructing the freedom of the media, by not letting them enter their working area. As situation was getting more complicated, political forces were practically grouped in two opposed camps, accusing each other. It is expected that the case shall end up in front of the courts.

Many think that the primitivism expressed during the "fights" is considered as a reflection of the primitivism of political fights which on its turn have a strong reflection upon economic interests, since the government is the largest advertiser of its activities, consequently the best advertising customer, thus all media are very motivated to have a piece of the advertisement themselves, which is translated to better profits, but also increased political influence in the media sector.

#### **5.14. Upcoming Census Activities**

According to some parties, census which is planned to be held next year in April has numerous inconsistencies and unanswered questions. VMRO and DUI agreed that the census shall be lead by the State Census Committee in cooperation with the State Statistical Office, while small monitoring shall be lead by Eurostat. Included in the process shall be about 19.000 persons, half of which shall be selected randomly among people working in the administration, and the others by public call. In all structures equitable representation shall be secured.

SDSM representatives say that the census should be correctly performed according to scientific methods and get statistical data necessary for the citizens and the state as well. On the other hand, the leaderships of the ethnic Albanian opposition political parties announced that if their request for organizing a census in July shall not be realized they will organize protests when the law is going to be passed. They demand census in July, including counting the people who do not have Macedonian citizenship, to include in the process an additional body composed by political parties' representatives, and a strong international monitoring. If these requests are not met, DPA announced that shall boycott the census.

The authorities called upon the political parties not to use the census for political gains. The Minister of Interiors Gordana Jankulovska stated that "this is a process that depends exclusively by us and which needs to be an indicator of the institution's capacity, of the maturity of political parties but most of all of the level of the achieved mutual trust". Peter Everers the Director of Eurostat said that Macedonia should not make mistakes, as this process is very important for the EU accession of the country.

## 6. PARTY DEVELOPMENTS

### 6.1. Crvenkovski: Some Moves May be Interpreted as Setback

The process of Macedonia's integration into the European Union was the main theme of discussion between SDSM leader Branko Crvenkovski and EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fule, in July in Strasbourg. Crvenkovski and Fule shared the view that the talks, intended to resolve the ongoing name dispute with Greece, are mediated by the United Nations. According to SDSM leader, EU keeps an eye on the talks but it won't get involved.

"There was no mention of possible launch of EU accession talks, given the fact that Macedonia's EU entry talks are still long way off. I believe that a number of guidelines – not only resolution of name row with Greece but also fulfillment of benchmarks set out by the European Commission – should be complied with before we can move to the next phase and secure a date for start of EU membership talks,"... "We shared the view that in certain spheres Macedonia failed to make a significant progress. Certain moves could be interpreted as setback. A main focus was put on judiciary and the ongoing political pressure on judicial system in Macedonia. The country failed to make judiciary independent and free of political influence," stated Crvenkovski on the occasion.

### 6.2. Opposition Rallies

SDSM organized a big Skopje rally in an effort to emphasize the blockade of EU and NATO integration processes and the bad economic condition in the state. Some 30.000 thousand supporters gathered under the slogan "We Are For Winning Macedonia". The call was general, oriented to all the citizens of the country regardless ethnic or political affiliation. Various other smaller opposition parties, some civil initiatives and representatives of farmers, severed workers and others joined the meeting.

The party called for the parliament to be dissolved directly following the NATO summit scheduled for November. Estimations were that elections before that date could harm the country's chances to join the alliance and make progress in its EU bid if there is a breakthrough in the name talks with Greece, party representatives said. "Regardless of the outcome of the NATO Summit, whether the negotiations with Greece are successful or not, our goal in November will be for the Assembly to disband so that we can get out and meet the citizens (at elections)," the head of the Social Democrats, Branko Crvenkovski, said at the rally. He accused the ruling centre-right VMRO DPMNE party of ruining the country's prospects: "The country's EU and NATO bids are blocked, the economy is shattered, citizens' rights have been set back and interethnic relations are deteriorating". The opposition leader sent a message to Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski that he will be held accountable for allowing crime and robbery to infiltrate the state during his term. He blamed the government for not doing enough to solve the name issue. He said that a more pragmatic approach rather than Gruevski's "false patriotism" would do more to help untie the long standing problem. "Faced with defeat and failure on all fronts, unable to achieve any results, Gruevski decided to play on a single card of dividing patriots from traitors," the opposition leader said. "Gruevski and the VMRO-DPMNE persistently paint a false picture of themselves- that they are the only ones who defend the

constitutional name. This is an absolute lie. No Macedonian wants to change the country's constitutional name.” Crvenkovski condemned Greece for abusing its veto rights as a member of NATO and the EU to block Macedonia’s bids to join the same structures. He said this was an “unfair, undemocratic and non-European policy” towards Macedonia. As a reaction to the meeting, PM Gruevski stated that early elections are not planned.

After his return to the party helm last year, Crvenkovski announced reforms to the political grouping, which has lost every consecutive general, presidential and local election in the country since 2006. He now promised that the party is reformed, internally stronger and more democratic, honest and open to the people.

The second big meeting was held in Prilep (estimated 15.000 rally supporters) in which Crvenkovski said that he will not withdraw himself from politics until he finishes the work he has begun. “Macedonia is a state with the highest poverty and unemployment, the least foreign investments in Europe, every third citizen cannot feed and dress himself, while Gruevski and his family are telling us to hold on. Until when to hold on? They can continue like this million years more, because for five years they have secured themselves until the fifth generation”. He symbolically said that with this date (October 11<sup>th</sup>), which is a national holiday, SDSM starts the rebellion for freeing Macedonia from Gruevski.

He also added: “Macedonia today is a kidnapped state. Gruevski with one group around him, with the family, keeps in custody the whole country. They falsify our history, they ruin our present, they bury our future. Therefore, if there is no NATO and EU membership, if there are no investments, no new work places, no health, no education, no justice and freedom, no present and no future with Gruevski and the family ahead of this country, there is no choice, we shall solve Gruevski, we shall defeat the family on the next elections”. He also criticized that Gruevski and the government are spending without mercy, owing to the economy 650 million EUR, does not fight crime, but organizes and leads it.

### **6.3. “Hope” Strategy Raises Doubts?**

During the presidential mandate of the current SDSM leader Branko Crvenkovski his cabinet ordered a project whose aim was to make estimations of the current political situation and to suggest a PR strategy for the former president. Three Slovenian professors were involved in the preparation of the strategy and the cost of the entire project was estimated to be less than a half a million EUR. The current president's cabinet is investigating the possibility of publishing the document in accordance with the law on access to public information, while the government calls upon responsibilities for spending budget money without previously having a tender. The former president’s cabinet reacted on the matter, claiming that the project outcome was transparent, as it was left behind and not taken away when personal changes in office occurred, however, many oppositioners believe that this case is only a construction of current government to create another case that would attract public attention.

## **7. PUBLIC OPINION POLLS**

### **7.1. Scepticism Doesn't Prevail, Majority of Citizens Want to be Part of EU – EU Ambassador Fouere**

Results from a poll requested by the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) in July which showed that citizens' support for EU integration has dropped - are contrary to earlier polls suggesting that the integration process enjoys huge support, according to EU Ambassador Erwan Fouere. According to this poll for 82% of Macedonians the name is more important than the accession to the EU and NATO, while 77,8% of ethnic Albanians favor the country's integration with the European, Euro-Atlantic institutions. "We're still reviewing these reports, but I have to say that they are contrary to earlier polls demonstrating huge support of the citizens for the EU integration process. I believe it is still the primary objective of citizens, because they see the EU integration as a guarantee for better future, more jobs and lower unemployment rate and an opportunity for Macedonians to experience the benefits from joining the Union", Ambassador Fouere stated. According to him, scepticism doesn't prevail and the majority of the citizens in Macedonia want to see the country as part of EU.

### **7.2. Polls Regarding the "name dispute"**

Citizens of Macedonia believe that preserving the name is more important than Macedonia's EU, NATO membership, according to the results of a poll, conducted by the Institute for Political Research on July 3-4 that upon a request by the Secretariat for European Affairs. A total of 66,5% of 1,110 respondents chose the name against 26,2% who favored Macedonia's EU, NATO membership. However, the results are rather different in regard to the respondents' ethnic origin. For 82,1% of Macedonia the name is more important than the accession to the EU and NATO, while 77,8 of ethnic Albanians favor the country's integration with the European, Euro-Atlantic institutions. In order to bring the country closer to EU, priority should be given to the economy, say 46,1%. A total of 22,3% of respondents considered that special attention should be paid to the judiciary and 15% to the security. Both Macedonians and Albanians believe that the country's economic development is top priority. A total of 65,5% said they considered to be citizens of Macedonia, 28,5 - of both Macedonia and Europe, while 3,4% - of Europe.

For 28.8%, country's accession to EU will positively affect the economy, for 16.9% it will boost the quality of life in general. 11.9% believe the EU membership will attract more foreign investments and reinforce stability, while 11.1% deem that it will reduce unemployment. Out of those who participated in the poll, 0.8% believe it will least affect education and agriculture and 0.2% say it will not affect technical and technological assistance.

According another public opinion poll of the Pavel Satev Institute (conducted in the period between July 11-18 2010 among 1110 interviewed) if there were a referendum to be held, 57.4% would vote against change of the constitutional name of the country, while 30.7% would vote in favor.

### **7.3. Eurobarometer: For 60% of Macedonians EU Membership is a Good Thing, for 73% is Beneficial**

Nearly 2/3 of Macedonians believe that EU membership is a good thing for the country and that it would benefit from being a member, shows an August survey by Eurobarometer, which was conducted by EU's statistical service, Eurostat<sup>12</sup>. The sample in Macedonia had 1,048 interviewed people.

The opinion poll says 60% of the citizens in Macedonia think that EU membership is good for the country, 11% deem it is bad and 27% think it is neither good nor bad. Compared to a previous Eurostat poll this past fall, the number of those supporting EU integration has lowered by 6% and of those against it has increased by 2%. Despite this trend, the number of those believing that EU membership would be beneficial for the country is 73%<sup>13</sup>.

Concerning the economic situation, the percentage of those assessing it as bad is almost the same (76% in Macedonia and 77% in EU). 23% in Macedonia and 22% in EU say it is good. Almost half of Macedonian citizens and 64% of the citizens in EU assessed the financial situation of their households as favorable. 48% of Macedonians and 34% of EU citizens think the opposite.

Unemployment and the economic situation cause the biggest concern for Macedonians and EU citizens. Unemployment as the biggest problem was pinpointed by 63% of Macedonian citizens and 46% within EU. The economic situation is a concern for 46% of Macedonians and 40% of EU citizens. The same percentage of citizens in Macedonia and EU (24) hope the situation will improve in the next 12 months, 35% think the situation will remain the same and 36% believe it will only get worse.

### **7.4. Majority Back Early Parliamentary Elections**

The October opinion poll conducted among 1560 respondents by the "Rating" agency shows that a total of 47% of respondents back early elections versus 38% opposing elections if name dispute is not resolved by November. The poll shows that the ruling VMRO-DPMNE would win 23.5% of the vote; opposition SDSM would win 12.2%, DUI 5.3%, DPA 1.9% and New Democracy 1.4%. A total of 22% of respondents would give their confidence vote to Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, 9% to SDSM party leader Branko Crvenkovski, 7% to DUI party leader Ali Ahmeti, 6% to ND party leader Imer Selmani, 3% to DPA party leader Menduh Tachi, 3% to Ljube Boskovski and Ljubco Georgievski and 2% to Jovan Manasijevski. A total of 47% of respondents support the prime minister's policy, versus 43% opposing his policy.

In the past four years, living standards in Macedonia have improved for only 4% of the respondents, versus 54% who say that the living standards in Macedonia have worsened.

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<sup>12</sup> The survey, which was recently published by the European Commission, was conducted between May 5-28 in 27 EU member states, candidate countries - Croatia, Macedonia, Turkey and the Turkish part of Cyprus.

<sup>13</sup> Unlike Macedonians, less than half of the EU population (49%) says that EU membership of their countries is a good thing. 47% have shown lack of trust towards EU and the people in UK and Greece are the least satisfied - 68% and 56% respectively.

Living standards have improved by 25% of respondents, versus 48% who say that living standards have worsened.

### **7.5. Polls: High Percent Support EU Accession**

If a referendum was to be held tomorrow, 77.9% of citizens would vote in favor of Macedonia's European Union accession, show results of a telephone poll conducted by Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" in the first week of October. Just 8.5% said they were against Macedonia joining the EU, 6.4% of respondents would not vote, while 7.2% had no response. Asked which party they would vote for if parliamentary elections were held tomorrow, 55.1% were undecided, 20.1% would vote for the ruling VMRO-DPMNE, followed by SDSM-10.3%, DUI-6.8%, DPA-2.7%, New Democracy-1.5%, with 3.5% of respondents voting for other parties.

Pertaining to confidence in politicians, 52.7% of respondents said they did not believe anyone. VMRO-DPMNE leader Nikola Gruevski has the confidence of 20.1% of people polled, followed by SDSM leader Branko Crvenkovski with 9.2%, DUI leader Ali Ahmeti-6.6%, New Democracy leader Imer Selmani-2.5%, DPA leader Menduh Thaci-1.9%, while leaders of other parties are trusted by 7% of respondents.

Preserving the name is more important than Macedonia's EU, NATO membership, according to the results of a poll, conducted by the Institute for Political Research in October. Over 80% of the citizens of Macedonia would support the country's accession to the European Union and NATO if a referendum on the matter was to be held next week. However, 72% of 1,100 respondents do not agree for the country to change its name in order to become part of the Euro-Atlantic institutions, even if certain proposal enjoys the support of all parliamentary parties. According to ethnicity, 77,6% of Macedonians and 92,6% of Albanians are in favor of the country's NATO membership. The ratio in regard to Macedonia's accession to the EU is 77,7 verses 92,9%.

A total of 73,6% of Macedonians would vote against certain proposal for changing the country's name that enjoyed the support of all parliamentary parties. 50% of Albanians share the same opinion. The situation is similar with respondents of other ethnic communities.

Macedonia's accession to NATO and the European Union enjoys the support of 79,8% of the citizens, with 62,6% being against the change of the country's name, shows a poll of the Institute for Political Research, conducted on November 12-15 on a sample of 1,111 respondents. 30,7% would vote at a referendum in favor of amending the country's name for NATO, EU membership. 37,2% would vote for such move at a referendum on name proposal, supported by all parliamentary parties, against 53,2%.

A total of 46,6% considered the European Commission's Report on Macedonia's progress towards EU membership as positive, 28,4 as negative, while 25,4 had no answer. The party ratings again put ruling VMRO-DPMNE on the top, with 23% of supporters, followed by opposition SDSM - 11%, ruling coalition partner DUI - 6,5%, and opposition DPA - 2,9%.



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