



YOUTH ASPIRATION SURVEY IN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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FOREWORD

With this study of Macedonia's population between 18 and 30 years of age, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" Skopje wish to fill a gap in the existing scientific research of public opinion in the Republic of Macedonia. Though many useful studies are conducted which differentiate according to gender, ethnicity, age and geographical structure, there was no representative survey examining the expectations and opinions of the young population, i.e., those who represent the future of the Republic of Macedonia.

Why is it so important to ask specifically how the young population views the situation in and the development of the Republic of Macedonia? Their responses show their understanding of the general situation, the economy, migration, education, and interethnic relations, and they present a detailed image of how this young population sees its own country, as well as the opportunities they see for their future in the given circumstances.

This age group represents the generation of those who especially await the implementation of the political, social and economical reforms, but also those who will be the most and the longest affected by these reforms – if they stay in Macedonia. This means that stable interethnic relations, good regional and international relations, a competitive education system and economic reforms, which are supposed to guarantee stable development, will decide if and how many of these young, hardworking, but also idealistic people will want and be able to engage in their own country and its development.

The expectations represented herein will be an indicator for politicians of all parties of what this generation expects from them, in which areas this population sees a specific need for reforms, and which direction to follow. Some results were partly expected, but this study reveals some unforeseen results as well, be this positive or negative. We hope that the representatives of the political and economic spheres, as well as employers, will carefully read the results from this survey in order to examine their strategies and programs in light of their future prospects, and, if needed, to correct them. The young generation is the hope of each country, but it is, at same time, the most mobile population group. If the framework of circumstances differs excessively from their expectations, young people will search for a better life abroad. That should not be a model any longer for the Republic of Macedonia.

Stefan Dehnert
Friedrich Ebert Foundation

SUMMARY

The Youth Aspiration Survey is one of the first projects in the Republic of Macedonia that completely covers young people's perceptions regarding vital social and economic issues, domestic and foreign policy issues, as well as issues related to education, migration, human rights, etc. The survey was conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) Macedonia, in partnership with the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" Skopje. The research presented here consists of two parts: a public opinion poll of the young population, and an analysis of data obtained from the poll. The YAS was carried out on a national level between April and June 2006.

Public Opinion Poll – Methodology Used

The public opinion poll for the Youth Aspiration Survey (YAS) was conducted on a standardized and stratified sample that representatively reflected different aspects of the Republic of Macedonia's young population. Demographic specifics of the youth (gender structure, age, educational level, occupation and ethnic background) were considered in the sample, and the respondents' places of residence were furthermore classified (as urban or rural environments, with the city of Skopje being regarded as a separate entity due to its own specifics). Respondents from all regions in Macedonia were included in the sample. Each municipality, including the rural environments it governs, was represented by a percentage equivalent to the number of its inhabitants in proportion to the whole population.

The survey included a total number of 1197 respondents, of which 697, or 58.2%, were men, and 500, or 41.8%, were women. The respondents were grouped by age into three strata. On the basis of this division, 456 of those who were surveyed, or 38.1% of the young people, were of the age of 18 to 22; 452, or 37.8%, were of the age of 23 to 26; and 289, or 24.1% of the respondents, were aged 27 to 30.

A majority of the respondents had completed a high school education, i.e. 62.1%, while only 0.7% of the respondents had not completed their elementary education. Of the survey participants, 3.8% had completed only their elementary education, 4.7% had post-secondary education, and 28.8% had higher education.

With regard to the occupation of the respondents, the greatest percentage of them, i.e. 35.8%, were students, followed by those in the private business sector (19.8%) and those unemployed (19.1%), while farmers represented only 1.4%.

Depending on their ethnic background, there were 74.8% Macedonians, 22.5% Albanians, 1.4% Turks, 0.8% Serbs, 0.1% Roma and 0.3% Vlachs. According to their place of residence, 25.7% lived in villages, 19.2% in smaller towns, 30.1% in larger cities, and 25% lived in the capital city of Skopje.

The respondents were proportionally divided depending on the electoral districts to which they belonged, i.e. as follows: 16.5 % belonged to the Electoral District (ED) 1, 16.4% to the ED 2, 17.1% to the ED 3, 14.5% to the ED 4, 18% to the ED 5, and 17.5% to the ED 6.

Analysis of the data gathered in the public opinion polls included cross-tabulation according to respondents' demographic characteristics, place of residence, and the electoral district they belonged to.

The public opinion poll was conducted between

May the 10th and May the 28th of 2006. A team of experts at the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" in Skopje supervised the teams, processed the data, and analysed the results.

Perceptions of the Youth in the Republic of Macedonia – short Summary

The second part of the Youth Aspiration Survey (YAS) in the Republic of Macedonia is an analysis based on the data from the public opinion poll, as well as other sources that serve as a comparative basis for analysing the surveyed themes. With regard to the themes themselves, the analysis consists of four sections: domestic political situation and general perceptions thereof; international relations; education; and a section devoted to the economy and emigration. Each of these parts is followed by appropriate conclusions and recommendations intended for the Republic of Macedonia's relevant factors, from the government and other "policy-makers" to the media and the non-governmental sector. That being the case, the analysis was primarily intended for the target group represented in the poll – youth between the ages of 18 and 30.

The first section of the YAS analysis describes some general perceptions of the respondents, as well as perceptions about the Republic of Macedonia's **domestic political situation**. It clearly depicts a lethargic attitude among the young population, accompanied by distrust (or very low trust) towards state institutions. Despite the low level of current interethnic social activity, there are positive attitudes towards the development of this sphere of social life, which suggests slow but gradual progress in this area. On the other hand, young people show great trust in the third sector and the religious institutions.

Concluding the area of general perceptions and attitudes towards the domestic political situation, the results indicate a consensus among the youth that corruption is the most urgent problem of Macedonian society and the most threatening factor for the Macedonian economy. Despite this, however, the percentage of youth that would accept corruption as a profitable practice is worrying. Regarding human rights, young people's social sensitivity and feelings of solidarity towards handicapped and socially endangered persons is evident, but the fact that they show resistance towards the advancement of women's and homosexuals' rights is worrying.

Respondents' attitudes towards **international relations** indicate very interesting and positive viewpoints towards several issues in this area. The question of the Republic of Macedonia's joining the European Union is not disputed, and it represents a point about which there is maximum agreement among young people of all demographic categories. The respondents perceive that EU membership would be a stabilizing factor and an agent for economic progress in Macedonia, and they express no fear for the country's identity and the communities' traditions in that context.

Regarding other international relations topics, the respondents have positive perceptions of the NATO alliance and the Republic of Macedonia's membership in it, although there were slight differences in views along ethnic lines. As for the responses concerning the operations of the United Nations and its specialised agencies, there is an impression that young people in the Republic of Macedonia need to be

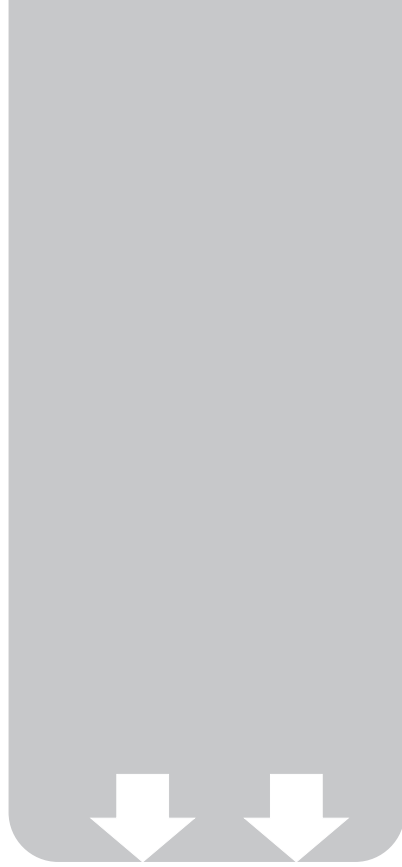
thoroughly introduced to the work and the role of the UN.

The respondents within the YAS in the Republic of Macedonia show a critical attitude towards **education**, the third section of the analysis. Despite the relatively good general evaluation of the Macedonian educational system, answers given to this section's other questions point out young people's unambiguous scepticism towards some aspects of the educational system. Moreover, each successive level of the educational system is viewed less favourably. The respondents also express a relatively low satisfaction with the practical skills offered by the state educational system. They likewise doubt the possibility to find employment with the particular educational degree they have obtained. This clearly shows why young people think the Macedonian educational system needs a thorough reform.

Furthermore, the young population's desire for additional education abroad, with an emphasis on the EU countries and the USA, is evident. In addition, the respondents' opinions vary widely about their preferred system of education and their preferences regarding state or private universities as tertiary higher education institutions.

Finally, the last, fourth section of the YAS covers the **economy and emigration**, topics that affect the everyday lives of young people in a most direct way, and which provoke interesting attitudes towards several issues. The Republic of Macedonia's young people perceive unemployment and corruption to be the greatest problems in the economy, and they hold state institutions responsible for resolving these issues. In addition, the respondents consider that this responsibility also falls partly on the unreformed educational system, and they see the European integration process as a possible remedy to this situation.

The respondents' attitudes towards emigration indicate a great propensity for emigration as a result of their dissatisfaction with the economic situation, even though this option is perceived as a last resort. The majority of the young people surveyed express a desire for permanent relocation, and those who would emigrate temporarily prefer the EU as their destination.



**SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AND
GENERAL PERCEPTIONS**



The largest proportion of young people in the Republic of Macedonia (42%) consider that they have average living conditions, while 29% of them consider that their living conditions are good. These numbers, in a sense, indicate the real perception of the young people in Macedonia, and so a defeatist rhetoric and negative presentation of their living conditions could not be observed. Although relatively high, the percentages given for young people who believe they live in bad (18.4%), and very bad (4%) conditions, illustrate the actual situation in the country. Research shows a correlation between the quality of living conditions and the educational level of the respondents, so a higher percentage of those young people who have completed higher education consider that they have good living conditions. Also, young Albanians have significantly higher positive perceptions for their own living conditions than those of the same age belonging to the Macedonian ethnic group. So, 13.8% of the Albanians (as opposed to only 3.6% of the Macedonians) consider that they live in very good living conditions, and additional 42.8% of the Albanians (as opposed to 24.8% of the Macedonians) consider that their living conditions are good. On the other hand, 20% of the young Macedonians consider that their living conditions are bad. That perceptions were similar regardless of where the respondents lived is revealing. Though a general perception exists of a lower quality of life in the rural environments and smaller towns, the attitudes of young people coming from these environments suggest otherwise.

Anticipation of a better future and a better quality of life is a relatively common theme among young people, whereby 55% of the young generation expect improvements in their living conditions. Of these, 13.2% of the young people expect much-improved living conditions, while 41.7% expect their living conditions to be improved to some degree. Bearing in mind that only 5.6% of them anticipate a worsening of their conditions, it is valid to say that there is a lack of emphatic scepticism among the youth as regards their own future. However, if the expectations are compared with the actual living conditions of the respondents, it could be pointed out that many of the young people who live in good or average conditions have a positive outlook for the future.¹ In contrast, only 20% of the respondents who consider themselves to live in bad conditions expect some improvement.

The degree of political, economic, and civil participation of the Macedonian young population reveals a worrisome lethargy. A large 64.2% of the respondents do not participate in any organizational model, whereas only 2% of the youth is part of some professional organization. The data, which indicates that only 15% of the young people are members of political parties, and only 8% of them are members of nongovernmental organizations, points out the rudimentary position of the civil sector in Macedonia. In addition, only 6% of the young people are active in sports. At the same time, in most of the categories, the lowest degree of participation is found among the young people living in Skopje. The low degree of youth participation in political parties is characteristic of the other Balkan countries as well. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), only 8% of the young people are members of some political party.²

However, if this data is compared with the stated interests of the young people, actual opposite proportional tendencies are seen, and the lack of active participation becomes even more apparent. Thus, while 23.2% of the young people indicate an interest in entertainment and sports (each), only 6% participate in sporting activities. A great disparity, which signals a lack of possibilities, is also present in the areas of economic issues and business, where 19.7% indicate an interest but only 2% of the young people participate. Finally, it could be said that the young population is relatively uninterested in politics, bearing in mind that only 7% of the youth indicate an interest in politics – far lower than the 15% who are members of political parties. This highlights the weak activity of the young people within the political parties, which really do not have any aspirations to involve their membership in a more serious political engagement. In consolation, the situation is similar in the other Balkan countries. Some research shows that only one third of the young people in B&H vote during the elections, while only 3% of them are members of juridical bodies, in Bulgaria about 50% of the young people consider abstaining from voting in elections, and in Albania less than 1% of the youth consider that politics has an influence on their lives.³

Perceptions of the Public Institutions and International Organizations

The respondents' views in this study regarding trust in international and public policy institutions fall within the boundaries of previously noted tendencies, but this study's data differs slightly regarding trust in private institutions and organizations with wider social character. The tendencies are clearly visible in the first graph given below. Of interest is the finding that the greatest percentage of trust among the young people belongs to the banks. Banks are symbols of financial power and the possibilities of handling capital. Like private companies, but even more so, banks represent a symbol of the market society. The fact that young people have greater confidence in the symbols of the private sector means that they are, to a great extent, market-oriented and that they don't have great expectations from the state. Their discontent with the public institutions is supplemented by greater trust in the international institutions, which could result in greater support for the Euro-Atlantic integration processes, but which could also be a motive to emigrate from Macedonia.

Although it might be expected that the local governments enjoy a greater level of trust when compared to other institutions, a fact that is explained by benevolence, as well as by the citizens' lack of information about their local governments,⁴ the fact that the army and police also enjoy great trust among young people in the Republic of Macedonia is surprising. Trust in the army is an interesting phenomenon, especially when considering the debates about and the demands to repeal the mandatory armed service, which has been done to the joy of about 15-20,000 young people, who not only avoided compulsory military service but also the fines they had to pay for failing to meet this obligation.⁵ Such answers are more in context with the general perceptions in Macedonia than they are a reflection of the need for personal safety and security.

¹ 76.89% of the respondents who consider that live in good living conditions, expect significant or some improvement. So, 77% of the respondents who consider that live in good living conditions, expect significant or some improvement.

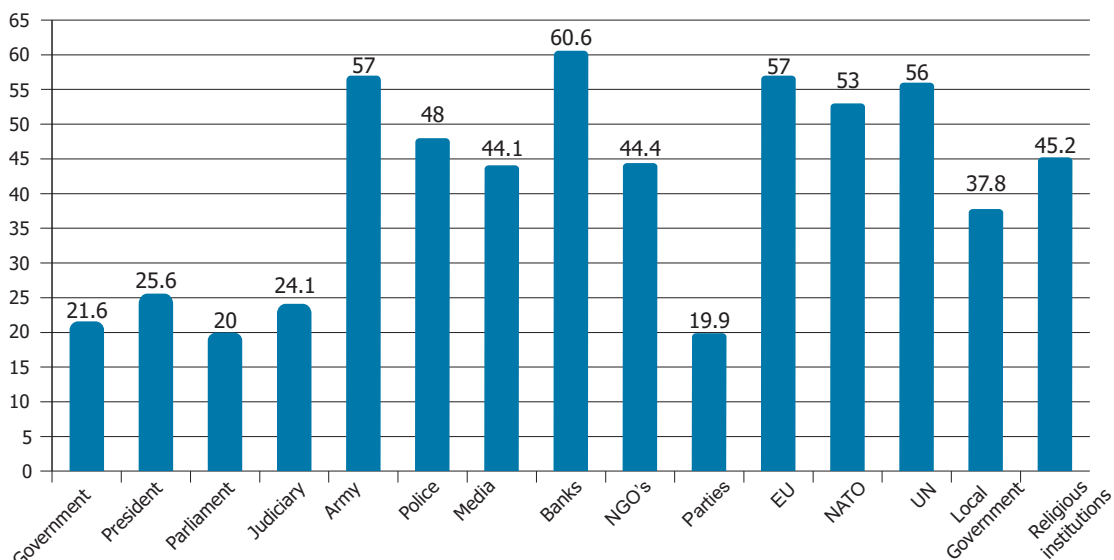
² UNDP. Human Development Report Bosnia and Herzegovina 2000: Youth, Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues (IBHI), Sarajevo 2001.

³ UNICEF and World Bank. Youth in South Eastern Europe: Report of the Rome Conference on Participation, Empowerment and Social Inclusion, Rome June 2002

⁴ ISPP. Political culture of citizens and their influence on the work of the local government bodies, Skopje, 2005.

⁵ Sasko Dimevskai, in the Utrinski vesnik "By the law 15 thousand young people supposed to be soldiers will be granted amnesty" <http://217.16.70.245/?pBroj=1189&stID=3922&pR=2>

Who do young people in Macedonia trust?



Graph 1. Degree of the trust of the young people in the Republic of Macedonia (in percentages)

Similar to trends already established for the general population, the young people have the lowest level of trust for the parliament, the government, the president of the country, the judiciary and the political parties.⁶ A lack of trust in the public political institutions in transitional countries has two main explanations. The first is related to a strong confidence in the institutions for keeping peace and stability – the army and the police – which is based on people's belief in the need for a “firm” hand in politics and their authoritarian consciousness, a remnant of the old regime. The second explanation is that, since the consolidation of democratic systems had not been completed yet, as well as the impossibility of a system of “good behaviour” to be established, it is not possible for the citizens to achieve an active level of participation in politics.⁷ These are the reasons the citizens feel detached from the political sphere and that their confidence in public institutions is low.

Such statements could be appropriate for wider transitional processes, as well as for the influence they have on the general public. But, when research is examined regarding the perceptions of and interest in participation in politics among youth in the EU member-countries, the same disastrous results are found as in the Macedonian research. So, for example, there are similarities in that about “60% of the young people are not expected to vote” in parliamentary elections,⁸ which summarizes an attitude present among the youth in EU. Moreover, research conducted in 8 EU member

countries on a sample of 8,030 young people⁹ by the Institute for Social Research and Analyses (SORA) from Austria, show that, on average, 64% of young people are not interested in politics.¹⁰ Results from this analysis show that young people in Europe have an extremely low confidence in public institutions and political parties. The Table 1 compares the SORA data with that obtained in the YAS.

The SORA analysis shows that young people have a low level of political socialization, but also that political participation and their degree of education are both influential factors. If we take these two conclusions and test them in the research of the Macedonian youth, one can see that both factors have a significant influence in the formation of young people's attitudes. Namely, the results presented in Table 2 show that young people with a higher degree of education – defined as having obtained a college or university degree – have higher levels of confidence than those with low levels of education or those who are not educated. The same conclusion holds true with more active youth, that is, young people who do not participate in public life have less confidence in the public institutions.

Regarding political institutions, it seems the attitudes of young people in Macedonia are, to a great extent, comparable to those of the youth in the EU countries, and, as is concluded from the analysis there, the passivity of the youth changes by “the process of their maturity... and by their active inclusion to various organizations”.¹¹ Such a

Trust in	YAS -Macedonia	SORA – 8 EU countries
Government	21.6	12 - 19
Parliament	25.6	18 - 24
Political parties	19.9	13 - 18

Table1. Comparative perceptions of youth in Macedonia and some other EU member-countries (in percentages)

⁶ For more details, see Early Warning Report , UNDP, Skopje, March 2006.

⁷ Ibid, p. 14

⁸ According to cross tabulations of the Early Warning Report from June 2006, see www.ewr.org.mk

⁹ The research was conducted from 2003 until 2005 in Germany, Italy, Austria, France, Finland, Great Britain, Estonia and Slovakia. For more information, refer to web page www.sora.at

¹⁰ Westphal, Sabine. Political Participation of Young Europeans, Vienna: SORA, 2006.

¹¹ Ibid, p.36

Trust in	Lower level of education	Higher level of education	Average	Active	Not active
Government	17 - 28	27 - 29	21.6	20 - 32	18
Parliament	15 - 21	27 - 31	25.6	26 - 33	14
Political parties	12 - 37	22 - 29	19.9	22 - 36	13

Table 2. Factors that influence the level of trust in the political institutions (in percentages)

conclusion regarding the attitudes of young people finds strong support in our case: research shows that the majority of youth in Macedonia (64.2%) do not have any organizational participation, either in the sphere of politics, sports, economics or anything else. It is obvious that such a passive lifestyle creates a sense of alienation and hostility towards the public institutions.

But, young people in Macedonia are also subject to the influence of the dominant political culture and common public perceptions.

Table 3 contains scores from the research of the youth (YAS) along with the scores from the Early Warning Report, published in March 2006. Great deviations among the youth from the trust levels of the general public towards the given institutions are almost not present. The lowest level of trust is in the public institutions of the system, but while trust among the general public is between 22 and 35%, it is lower among the youth – from 20 to 25%. Trust in the police and the army is comparatively higher than in the public institutions. However, the trust in them is lower among the youth in Macedonia than among the general public, and the same is true regarding the religious institutions. These three differences suggest three conclusions (respectively):

1. Young people in the Republic of Macedonia are passive regarding public happenings;
2. They are less militant and authoritarian than the general public;
3. They are more secular than the general public and do not attach a great importance to religion.

If we consider the fact that young people have the greatest trust in banks, it could be concluded that they are oriented towards solving and overcoming their everyday problems, predominantly economic ones, and that they are

less interested in politics and religion. Bearing in mind that for 44% of them the greatest problem is unemployment, their greater concern for personal practical problems is understandable.

However, other influential factors should be taken into consideration regarding the attitudes towards public institutions, such as the ethnicity of the respondents. There are significant differences in this regard concerning levels of trust in the police, army and the religious institutions. Table 4

Macedonians have greater trust in the police and the army, while Albanians have greater trust in the religious institutions. This demonstrates that ethnicity is also a factor that affects the attitudes of the youth in relation to their trust in some of the institutions. Aside from the aforementioned institutions, there is also a difference in attitudes with regard to the international institutions. 80 to 85% of the Albanians have confidence in the EU, NATO and the UN, while the trust level among Macedonians is between 40 and 50%. As other research has shown, such attitudes are directly caused by differing perceptions of the Ohrid Agreement's model of interethnic relations and the role of various institutions in that process.¹² However, it should be emphasized that besides its different ethnic attitudes, the youth has a relatively high trust in international institutions, as more than half of the respondents trust in all institutions. This tendency towards greater trust in EU institutions than in domestic institutions is also found among surveys of youth in the eight EU member countries. Aside from those security, religious, and international institutions that had a role in the crisis of 2001 and its aftermath, ethnicity does not play a great role in the attitudes of the young people regarding the other institutions. Attitudes about interethnic relations will have their place in this analysis, but for a moment we should examine the perceptions of the youth regarding the influence of institutions in solving the problems young

Trust in	YAS - June 2006	EWR - March 2006
Government	21.6	25.2
President	25.6	35.9
Parliament	20	22.4
Judiciary	24.1	25.4
Army	57	65.8
Police	48	57
Banks	60.6	48.7
Local Government	37.8	42.4
Religious institutions	45.2	72.1

Table 3. Comparison of the perceptions of the youth with the perceptions of the general public (in percentages)

¹²Taleski, Dane. Images of Macedonia: Model of inter-ethnic relations and public perceptions, Paper delivered at the Nation States and Xenophobias: In the ruins in ex-Yugoslavia conference, Piran 13-14 May 2005

Trust in	Macedonians	Albanians	Total
Army	62	49	57
Police	49	40	48
Religious institutions	41	55	45.2

Table 4. Ethnic belonging and the trust of the youth in institutions (in percentages)

people are faced with.

Perceptions of Social Engagement and Institutional Involvement

Of interest is the fact that the majority of the respondents expect to improve their living conditions by themselves, and they do not intend to ask for help from anyone else. A number of others count on the help offered from their close relatives, and only 6.6% of them expect help from the state. Most of those who responded that they will improve their living conditions by themselves consider that they will achieve that by a new, better-paying employment (32.7%) or by establishing their own business (34.7%, or 20% of the total number of the respondents). According to these statistics, it seems that more and more of the young population are self-confident and do not expect that their problems will be solved by someone else.

Bearing in mind the problems that face the youth, most of them think that Macedonia is going in the wrong direction. At the same time they also identified the greatest problem, which, according to them, the country has taken the wrong direction in attempts to solve. A majority of the respondents who declared that Macedonia is going in the wrong direction consider the greatest problem to be unemployment and the failure to reduce it (40%). A great number of others choose corruption (32.3%), and 20.6% think that the poverty is the fundamental problem in Macedonia. An interesting, but also worrisome, fact is that as many as 32.4% of young people could not decide on which direction the country is going in solving its most urgent problems. However, a majority of this group of respondents have located what they think to be the most urgent problem, and, again, it is unemployment. Poverty was a close second, but in any case, poverty is also a natural consequence of unemployment. In attempting to reduce unemployment, efforts should be primarily directed towards addressing the root causes, and these are corruption and the lack of new job opportunities.

The largest proportion of young people think that the government bears the responsibility for solving those problems (48%), 33% look to the political parties, while international organizations and private companies each were named by 22%. This situation reveals a paradox within Macedonia society. Namely, young people place the most responsibility for solving societal problems on an institution they don't have confidence in, the government, and their second institution of choice is one which they trust even less than the government. This data may help explain why more than 60% of the youth are not active in public life. To expect help from an entity they lack confidence in likely increases the passivity and inactivity of the youth in the Republic of Macedonia. If we examine the results more carefully, we'll see that the largest factor that affects this phenomenon is

age.

Young people between the ages of 26 and 30 typically think that the government or the parties have the greatest influence in solving problems. While, like the other age groups, their confidence in the government and the parties is low, they have the greatest rate of political party membership (21%, compared to 11% and 15% for the other two groups). From these findings we can draw the following conclusions:

1. The political socialisation of young people depends on their age; but also

2. Adults, and therefore the most politically-socialized young people, expect help from the intermediating and public institutions in the political system to a greater extent.

These conclusions suggest the possibility that a "political clientelism" may develop among the young people, especially among those between the ages of 26 and 30. But events are not predetermined to move in that direction, as that age group of young people, more than any other group, identifies private companies as having the greatest influence in solving problems. But what are the factors that bring about these attitudes? Young people between the ages of 26 and 30 are to the greatest extent interested in economics, i.e. business, and their interest considerably increases with each level of education. Thus, we can draw a conclusion that there are politically socialized young people of a certain age who tend to rely on political and public institutions to solve the problems, and young people of a certain age and higher levels of education who see the solutions in the private sector. In both cases, young people of the age between 26 and 30 more often show confidence in their own potential and their readiness to personally take part in solving their own problems. The situation in the other Balkan countries is similar. Studies have shown that "whereas high levels of education do not decrease young people's risk of remaining unemployed, it nonetheless decreases the risk of their remaining indifferent and discouraged".¹³

The younger respondents, aged 18 to 22, are less confident in their abilities and they are less prepared to participate in public life. For them, public life activities are not a challenge and they are mostly interested in entertainment (according to 30% of this group). The respondents aged 22 to 26, particularly those who have or will have higher levels of education, are much more self-confident and want to be actively included in the solving of the problems. Despite their good intencollapse of the communist system and its programmes for young people created a vacuum in the politics for the young people".¹⁴ In theory, public institutions recognize the use of including young people and providing mechanisms for their involvement, for example, through opportunities to volunteer. A survey conducted in public institutions in several Balkan countries reveals that more

¹³ La Cava, et al. Youth in South Eastern Europe: From Risk to Empowerment, World Bank: January 2005, p. 73

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 12

than 60% of the respondents employed with the public administration say that their institutions are open to young volunteers.¹⁵ But, in reality, volunteers are rejected due to their inability to meet formal or technical prerequisites. The same study has shown that only 8% of the respondents from the Republic of Macedonia's public administration said that they have the conditions to accept volunteers. Similarly, employers in the private sector "have weak motives to employ young people without any work experience".¹⁶ The indifference of the public institutions and the private sector towards young people in the aforementioned study is explained by an existence of corruptive practices in the Balkan countries, lack of transparency in the employment policy, as well as nepotism and family connections.

NGOs and religious institutions are considered to have significant influence on problem solving by the lowest percentage of respondents. Although 44% of the respondents have confidence in NGOs, an attitude compatible with that of the young people in the EU,¹⁷ only a small number of respondents think of them as influential. It is possible that the benevolence towards the NGOs, but also the critical view of their capacities, is the explanation for the low 7.9% of respondents who are members of NGOs – a membership which, however, is the second most popular one as a form of social activity. The low 8.6% of respondents who think that religious institutions are not influential may be a result of a cause-and-effect relationship with young people's more secular affinities (as opposed to the general public). The question of whether their confidence in religious institutions would be stronger if the young people thought that these institutions could solve their problems remains to be answered.

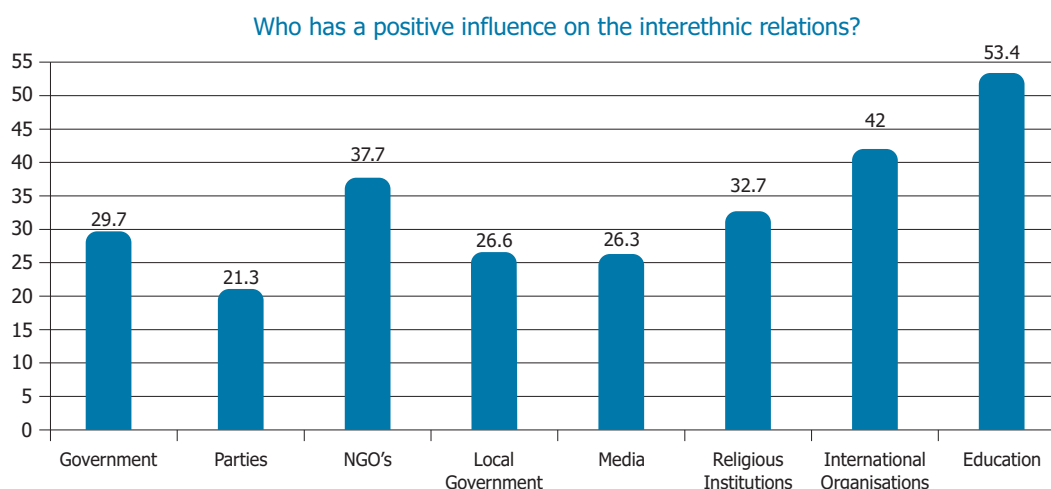
Perceptions of the Interethnic Relations

The interethnic relations already were under observation. More precisely, different perceptions regarding ethnicity were tested in relation to other factors. Despite the stabilization of the conflict in 2001, the paradigm for the interethnic relations is that "the largest ethnic communities (Macedonians and Albanians) have different, even opposite, opinions regarding their interrelations".¹⁸ But are these

conclusions also valid for the youngest, and which factors influence their attitudes? If we look at the graph given below, we will see that the young people consider education, international organizations and NGOs to have a greater extent of positive influence on interethnic relations.

Thus, there is a consensus among the young people in regard to education, supported by the fact that a high 42% of the general public in Macedonia thinks that the educational system does not contribute towards creation of any ethnic tensions.¹⁹ Young people who are included, or were recently included, in the educational system estimate it as positive for the interethnic relations. Although it is not clear whether the reason for this is the quality of the curriculum or the teaching and studying arrangements of different ethnic groups, the benevolent attitude towards the educational system remains. Education is a symbol of knowledge and discovery, and by accepting it as a positive factor, the young people are sending a message that getting to know each other can help improve the ethnic relations, but also that they are not afraid to learn the differences that exist between ethnic communities.

Unlike the existing consensus on the educational system, responses vary when international institutions and NGOs are in question. While the Albanians believe to a greater extent that NGOs positively influence interethnic relations (46.5%), a great number of the Macedonians chose not to answer this question (26.6%), whereas the percentages of responses that NGOs have a negative influence are similar in both groups. Hence, the Macedonians and the Albanians have different, but not opposite, views regarding the influence of NGOs. This is probably due to the fact that a great number of NGOs that are in contact with Albanians deal with interethnic issues, whereas only those Macedonians who live in multiethnic environments are in contact with that type of NGO. This results in benevolence among the Albanians, but it also seems that the Macedonians are not informed. Other factors that influenced these responses are the level of education and the place of residence. Young people with a higher level of education, who live in urban environments, to a greater extent believe in the positive influence of the NGOs; whereas those with a lower level of education and who live in rural environments



Graph 2. Young people's perceptions of the positive influence on interethnic relations(in percentages)

¹⁵ Association for Democratic Prosperity - Zid. Voluntarism and Public Institutions, Podgorica: SEEYN, 2005.

¹⁶ La Cava, et al. Young People in South Eastern Europe: From Risk to Empowerment, World Bank: January 2005, p. 72

¹⁷ Westphal, Sabine. Political Participation of Young Europeans, Vienna: SORA, 2006.

¹⁸ UNDP. Raporti për paralajmrim të hershëm, Shkup, mars 2006, faqe 39

¹⁹ Ibid.

are less convinced of it. Trust in the positive influence of NGOs seems to weaken according to the respondents' inactivity. It seems that low opportunities and qualifications, together with passivity, result in pessimism towards the attempts of individuals of the civil society to mediate interethnic relations.

As regards international relations, the situation is inverted to a certain extent. The results are presented comparatively in Table 5, given below.

Namely, fewer of the young people who live in urban environments consider that international organizations have a positive influence on interethnic relations, which is in correlation with the respondents who have a lower level of education. More young people who live in rural environments think that international organizations have a positive influence, which is in correlation with a higher level of education. Another factor which supports the perception of the international organisations' positive influence on the interethnic relations is the support which the young people show for Macedonia's accession to NATO and the EU. Namely, 46 to 48% of those who would vote in favour of the integration into EU or NATO think that international organisations have a positive influence. A conclusion may be drawn that the better educated young people, who already generally support the idea of membership in the Euro-Atlantic structures, think that the international organisations positively influence interethnic relations.

However, the predominant factor that reveals differing views of the international organisations' role in the interethnic relations is the ethnicity of the respondents. More Albanians (65.5%) than Macedonians (36.2%) consider the influence to be positive. A quarter of the Macedonians, or 25%, consider the influence to be negative, an opinion shared by only 15% of the Albanians. In this case, the views of Macedonians and Albanians are opposed to a certain extent. As was already pointed out, it is probably due to their different perceptions regarding the international organisations' role during the crisis of 2001, but also regarding the process of the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. There are certain coincidences, but also differences in the attitudes, as well as certain contrasts regarding the positive influences in the interethnic relations.

But what about perceptions of the negative influences on the interethnic relations? According to the young people, the political parties have the greatest negative influence on the interethnic relations. This was the response given by 52% of the respondents. The second most frequent response was the media, by 38 %, closely followed by the government at 36 %. These scores reflect the general attitude that "citizens consider the politicians as responsible for the interethnic relations, as well as that citizens consider the media responsible for the situation of

the interethnic relations".²⁰

Aside from the influence of the wider public, that is, the dominant political culture which helps define the attitudes of the people, there are trends according to the ethnicity of the respondents, especially when political parties are in question. On several occasions, the political parties have used the rhetoric of ethnic mobilisation in the pursuit of some of their goals.²¹ But, while 53% of the Macedonians consider that the parties have a negative influence on the interethnic relations, 48% of the Albanians share that attitude. 32% of the Albanians view party influence as positive, as is the case among only 18% of the Macedonians. In sum, regarding views about the influence of the political parties on interethnic relations, there are certain differences based on the ethnicity of the respondents. Since, the proportions of Macedonians and Albanians who declared themselves as members of political parties is almost the same, the explanation should be sought in the way in which the young Macedonians and Albanians experience the political parties, as well as in the values these groups attribute to them.

Putting aside the different attitudes, on the issue of certainty of the negative influence which the media and the government have on interethnic relations, the answers were similar across all strata of the respondents. It seems that the media's super saturation of this issue, the government's use of it as a prism through which coalition agreements are portrayed, as well as its use in daily political aims, greatly contributes to the perception of the young people. This serious problem, which is also reported in other analyses of the attitudes of the general public, points out that the media and the public political institutions are not performing some of their social functions sufficiently well. Namely, instead of providing a social cohesion, especially in the case of the government, they are observed as agents of negative influence on the sphere of social relations.

However, the greatest part of the young people (47%) think that interethnic relations have improved when compared to one year ago, and more than one third (37%) think that they will be improved within the next year. And while 10% think that ethnic relations became worse during the last year, only 8% expect worsening during this next year. Macedonians are somewhat more pessimistic regarding interethnic relations. 11% of them, compared with 6% of the Albanians, think that interethnic relations became worse during the last year, and 10% of them expect the same to become worse during this next year, which is the case among only 4% of the Albanians. This highlights the fact that there is fear for the development of interethnic relations among a small number of the young Macedonians. However, it is not clear whether that fear is connected with personal feelings of being endangered or if it is a reaction to increased rights accorded to the ethnic communities under

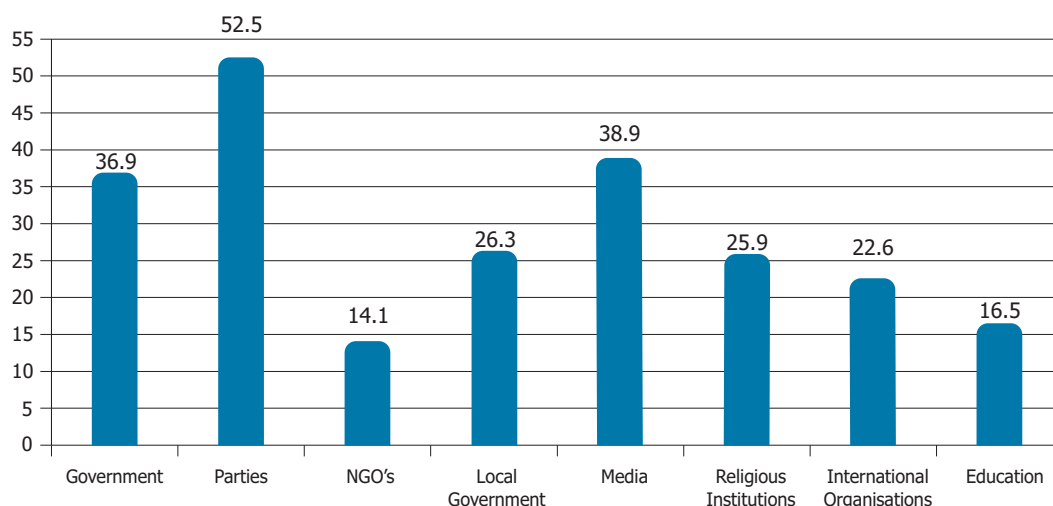
Positive influence	Lower education	Higher education	Average	Urban environments	Rural environments
NGO's	31	45	37.7	39	36
International organizations	40	50	42	39	50

Table 5. Factors that show the perception for NGOs' and international organizations' positive influence on the interethnic relations (in percentages)

²⁰ UNDP. Early Warning Report, Skopje, March 2006. p.

²¹ See in details at Daskalovski, Zhidas, Walking on the edge: Consolidating multi-ethnic Macedonia, Skopje, 2005.

Who has a negative influence on the interethnic relations?



Graph 3. Perceptions of the young people for the negative influence on the interethnic relations (in percentages)

the implementation of the Frame Agreement.

It is clear that there is a correlation between the respondents who think that Macedonia is going in the wrong direction and those who believe that interethnic relations have worsened since last year (17%), or that they will worsen within the next year (13%). Although at first glance one might assume that pessimists will always be pessimists, it is worth emphasizing that only 30 to 50% of these responses were given by those who believe that Macedonia is going in the wrong direction. Almost 30% of the respondents who think that we are going in the wrong direction expect improvements in the area of interethnic relations, and 35% of them believe that interethnic relations have improved since last year. In general, young people consider that interethnic relations have improved, or that they will further improve in the next year, which is in accordance with the attitudes and expectations of the general public in the Republic of Macedonia.²²

Perceptions of the Corruption in Macedonia

Corruption in the Republic of Macedonia is one of the most urgent problems within the last 16 years of transitional reforms and efforts for a democratic and economic consolidation of the country. In this regard, data given by the majority of international organisations, among which is the CPI (corruption perception index of the Transparency International), reveals that citizens of the Republic of Macedonia largely perceive the country as a rather corrupted one. Likewise, this organisation's research finds the Republic of Macedonia's ranking in the lower part of following Table 6, according to its own citizens' perceptions

of the degree of corruption.

That this level of perception of the corruption is not much different among the young generation is shown by the results of the research conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis". When asked to select the greatest problem in Macedonia, corruption occupies second place (26.7% of the respondents decided on the corruption as the greatest problem in the Republic of Macedonia), ranked next to unemployment (unemployment is the greatest problem for 44.8% of the population). The equal distribution of this perception points out that there is a general consensus about this issue among young people in Macedonia, regardless of their sex, ethnic group, place of living, education or profession.

This would not be a worrisome fact if corruption were not unambiguously perceived as a critical factor in the Republic of Macedonia's weak economic situation. When asked to rank the reasons for the country's slow economic development, the young population chose the following two leading problems: the corruption and government. That corruption handicaps the economy is a very important problem for 72.4% of the respondents, and it was an important problem for 21.1% of them. This reveals a huge percentage of 93.5% of the young respondents who consider that corruption destroys the economic tissue of the Republic of Macedonia year after year, and as such is responsible for the slow economic growth.

In relation to the aforementioned statistics, it is interesting also to emphasise the complete parallel between the two most responsible factors for the slow economic growth in the perceptions of the young people. Namely, bad

Year of the test	2003	2004	2005
Corruption perception index score (CPI score)	2.3	2.7	2.7
Ranking of the Republic of Macedonia	108	99	104
Total number of ranked countries	133	145	158

Table 6. CPI score of the Republic of Macedonia during the period 2003-2005²³

²² UNDP. Early Warning Report, Skopje, March 2006. p. 32

²³ Source: Transparency International

management on the part of the government is a very important factor for 72.4% of the respondents, and an important factor for 21.1% of them (93.8% in total). This agreement in perceptions of the inefficiency of the government and its corruption (93.5%) could indicate only one thing: young people in Macedonia clearly envision corruption in the highest bodies of the authority, and they hold them the most responsible for the slow economic growth and for the presence of the corruption, which as a phenomenon obviously follows an octroi form of reflection (top to bottom).

Youth in Macedonia perceive the corruption as a problem which is precisely located in certain bodies of the state. In this context they slightly differ in relation to the national average attitude of the population in the Republic of Macedonia, which has recently reached ceiling values (to March 2006 inclusive, according to data of the United Nations Development Programme - Macedonia²⁴). The comparison in this sense is rather revealing with regard to the distinction of the most corrupt bodies of authority, where the national average and the Youth Aspiration Survey indicate almost identical opinions.

It is obvious that differences between the general population and the young people are slight, and that rankings of the most corrupted institutions are similar. Among young people this ranking from the least corrupted to the most corrupted institutions takes the following order: parliament, local government, education, police, health care, judiciary, ministries. Among the general population, the same ranking has the following order: education, police, parliament, health care, judiciary, customs office, ministries. While there slight differences in the rankings exist, it is obvious that the ministries and the judiciary in both cases have the dubious distinction of the most corrupt institutions.

Table 7.

Although the corruption pointed out is obviously a destructive problem, the research of Youth Aspiration Survey shows another worrisome dimension. Namely, the issue of accepting and offering bribes among the young generation is

more prevalent when compared with the national average. As the scores show, a high 37.9% of the young people had witnessed the accepting and offering of bribes or were directly asked for favors in return for the rendering of goods or services they were legally entitled to.²⁶ This points out that young people are faced more often with corruptive practices, probably because of the degree of the social activity of this specific group, which certainly is worrying and suggests a perpetuation and transfer of negative habits from the elders to young people.

The fact that 23.1% of the young respondents declared that they would accept a bribe if they had a chance to do so also suggests the culture of the corruption is perpetuated and transferred as a traditional form of conduct in the Republic of Macedonia. Even with the overall very negative attitude towards corruption, which is on the level of a social consensus, and an awareness of its harmful influence on the economy, almost one quarter of the young respondents would not avoid this harmful practice. If we also add to this the group of 19% of the respondents who didn't have an answer or didn't want to directly give an answer to this hypothetical scenario, the situation attains hypocritical dimensions, which is a really disastrous fact considering that the group of young people between the ages of 18 and 30 is in question. It highlights not only the power of traditions in transferring matrices of social behaviour, but also the hopelessness of the great many young people in Macedonia. We should not forget that 22.3% of the young people in Macedonia have estimated their own living conditions as bad or very bad, or that 87.8% consider that the economic situation in Macedonia is bad or very bad. That some of the young people follow the path of least resistance under such circumstances is expected behaviour.

The overall data regarding corruptive practices in the Republic of Macedonia demonstrates the need for an organized and coherent approach in order to face and fight this problem, bearing in mind that the previous approach obviously is not achieving visible results, especially among the young population. A high percentage of the young

	YAS – Percentage of young people who declared that there is a corruption in:	Early Warning Report – UNDP ²⁵ Percentage of respondents who declared that there is a corruption in:
Ministries	89,7	88,7
Parliament	80,5	83,9
Police	84	79,2
Judiciary	89,6	87,8
Health care	88,3	84
Education	82,9	77,3
Local Government	81,2	/
Customs	/	88,2

Table 7. Comparative analysis of the perceptions of the young people in relation to the corruption at the organs of the state in relation to the national average

²⁴ This increase of perception of corruption in the country is confirmed by the fall of the Republic of Macedonia on the rank order list of the Transparency International for 5 places. See Table 6.

²⁵ Data taken from Early Warning Report of UNDP (March 2006) available on www.ewr.org.mk.

²⁶ The national average according to data of the Early Warning Report of UNDP in March 2006 is 18. 1%.

people perceive corruption as a part of their everyday life, but also as a potential profitable practice, and the fact that there are no differences in the perception of corruption even among young people who have estimated their own financial situation as a good or excellent one reveals the seriousness of the situation, in relation to (provisionally saying– however, an individual perception is in question) the poorer social layers²⁷. Corruption is perceived as a barrier to economic development even among those whose situation is good or excellent, which clearly shows that corruption is one of the carcinogenic facets of the Macedonian economy.

Perceptions of the Rights of Specific Social Groups

The level of awareness with regard to human rights and the rights of marginal groups among the young generation was part of the focus of the Youth Aspiration Survey. Consequently, the research has shown great variation in young people's perceptions regarding the rights of the five groups of citizens (the range of the same) which were investigated. In order to precisely determine the attitude of the young people towards the rights of women, ethnic communities, homosexuals, handicapped people, and the poor, answers were offered that explicitly measure the social activity (or passivity) of the young people in relation to the rights of the aforementioned groups of citizens in the Republic of Macedonia. In a [table 8](#), the scores are shown.

From the review in the table regarding the attitudes of the young people in Macedonia in relation to the rights of certain social groups, the difference in the perceptions of different social strata is evident. On one hand, this determines the focus and breadth of the public debate in the Republic of Macedonia, which is obviously selectively conducted in relation to different social segments (debate about the rights of minorities and women is far more present within the last 16 years, than, for example – the rights of LGBT population), and on the other hand, points out the huge volume of prejudices in relation to certain issues.

Clearly the social dimension of human rights is a very sensitive theme among young people in the Republic of Macedonia. In this sense, the rights of poor and handicapped people are unconditionally supported by a consensus of the young people, regardless of their demographic characteristics. That 90% and 89.2% of young people support increasing the rights of handicapped and poor people demonstrates a high level of social solidarity, but, especially if the issue of poverty is considered, also that many young people identify with these groups (this may be seen also from all the economic indicators in this survey which are perceived negatively by the young people). In this

sense, the level of solidarity and social awareness is not lacking among this population, which reflects a transfer to the younger generation of the long tradition of a social state.

This primarily positive impression is, however, in question with regard to the rights of the female population, where the level of support rapidly decreases. Support for increasing the rights of women has been expressed by half of the respondents, while 40.6% think that women have enough rights. If 6.1% of young people who consider that these rights should be reduced are added to this, 46.7% of young people who would not support an affirmative action with regard to the rights of the women is observed. This reveals a powerful conservative capacity in relation to this subject, and also the existence of a passive resistance towards the promotion of the role of women among many young people.

The research data indicates another irrefutable factor, and that is the strong gender polarization with regard to attitudes towards the rights of women. Different perceptions regarding to the rights of women are a demonstrable fact in relation to the respondents' sex, bearing in mind that one of the sides is directly concerned. As such, only 33.1% of the young men think that the rights of the women should be promoted, while this percentage among young women is 73.4%. A high 53.7% of the male respondents think that women have enough rights, while the percentage among female respondents is only 22.4%. The conclusion is more than obvious. The tendency towards conservative matrices of conduct regarding this issue is far more expressed among the young male population, which indicates strongly defined gender roles within the family and society, as well as a dose of inherited prejudices.

However, far more expressed tendencies of prejudice exist with regard to the issue of the rights of the homosexual population in Macedonia. If there might be said to be passive resistance towards the rights of women among a certain population, with regard to the rights of homosexuals there is an active resistance among the young respondents researched. It is evident that we can not advance discussion for supporting the rights of homosexuals in this case (only 12.6% declared support for an increase of the rights of the homosexual population), as the resistance is more than evident (22% - have enough rights). The active resistance against the promotion of homosexuals' rights is demonstrated among the 49% of the respondents who preferred a reduction of the rights of the homosexual population. Although the female respondents are slightly more liberal than the male respondents, even among the female population the resistance for the increase of the rights of homosexuals is evident and highly present.

	Rights should be improved	Have enough rights	Rights should be reduced	Don't know/ No answer
Rights of the women	50%	40,6%	6,1%	5,3%
Rights of minorities	21,5%	47,4%	25,6%	5,6%
Rights of the homosexual population	12,6%	22%	49%	16,5%
Rights of the handicapped	90%	7,4%	0,9%	1,7%
Rights of the poor	89,2%	6,3%	1,4%	3%

Table 8. Attitudes of the young people towards certain social groups

²⁷ Only 2.2% out of those respondents, who declared that their financial situation is excellent, declared that the corruption is not so important for the weak economic development, but no one of them declared that it is not important. The adequate percentage at those who declared that their financial situation is good is 2.9% and 1.1%.

This data is partly in agreement, but partially conflicts, with data from a recent study by the Macedonian Association for Free Sexual Orientation (MAFSO), which deals with the LGBT population problems²⁸ in the Republic of Macedonia. On one hand, the YAS's research and the analysis conducted by the MAFSO unambiguously show that among a large portion of the population the topic of homosexuality and the issue of homosexuals' rights cause unpleasantness and that they are a part of a broader social taboo. Compared with the other four tested categories in the YAS's survey, the group of those who didn't want to give an answer on the issue of homosexuals' rights, or didn't know how to answer it, is far larger in relation to the other tested social groups²⁹ (16.5% of the respondents selected "don't know" or "no answer"). On the other hand, these findings raise the question: is the estimation of MAFSO, with regard to the percentage of representation of 10% (200.000 people) of the homosexual population, accurate considering the young population's serious resistance against homosexual phenomena and the promotion of homosexuals' rights? (Especially since the young population should, according to the definition, be the most liberal part of the social milieu.)

Attitudes towards the rights of ethnic communities reflect the post-conflict reality of the Republic of Macedonia among the young population. Although perceptions are divided with regard to this issue, it is clear that the framework that defines the rights and obligations of the larger ethnic communities – The Ohrid Frame Agreement – is endangered by a significantly large part of the young people in Macedonia. Thus, 25.6% of the young respondents declared that the rights of ethnic minorities should be reduced, while 47.4% are satisfied with the current condition of the rights in this sphere. Potential for an affirmative action exists among 21.5% of the respondents. This doesn't demonstrate any endangering of ethnic relations³⁰ per se, but rather the discontent found in a part of the population for the status quo as defined by the Frame Agreement.

Ethnic perceptions regarding this issue are divided along the lines of the two largest communities in Macedonia: ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. Differences in their perceptions concerning the rights of minorities are obvious even about affirmative action, for which 60.6% of the ethnic Albanians declared support, as opposed to only 8.8% of the ethnic Macedonians. The view that ethnic communities have enough rights was expressed by 52.4% of Macedonians, as opposed to 30.9% of young Albanians. Finally, 32.5% of young Macedonians favoured a restrictive action, as opposed to only 5.2% of the ethnic Albanians. This clearly shows differences in the perceptions based on ethnic group membership, but it also demonstrates the attitude among young people that the issue of ethnic communities' rights is one of winners and losers (including the Ohrid Frame Agreement).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions:

- The greatest proportion of the young people in the Republic of Macedonia believe that they have average

living conditions, and they expect that the same will be improved in the future. Those young people who have worse living conditions are sceptical with regard to their future.

- The greatest proportion of the young people in RM, more than 60%, do not have any social engagement and are completely lethargic. The largest group of those who are active are members of political parties, a smaller group are members of nongovernmental and sport organisations, and the smallest group are members of professional organisations.
- Young people in the Republic of Macedonia are most interested in entertainment and sports, and to a certain extent in economic issues, while they have the least interest in politics.
- The young people in the Republic of Macedonia place the most trust in the banks and the international organisations.
- Young people in the RM have the least trust in the political parties and the public political institutions (government, parliament, and the president). As with the young people in EU member countries, the low level of trust in the political parties and the public political institutions is a result of the educational level and the social activity.
- The attitudes of the young people are strongly influenced by the dominant political culture and the attitudes of the general public. This reveals that a parish political awareness is predominant among the young people in RM. But, young people in RM are passive in relation to public events, they are not militant, and to a great extent they are secular.
- Young Albanians have higher trust in the international and the religious institutions. Young Macedonians have higher trust in the army of the Republic of Macedonia, while attitudes towards other institutions, political or otherwise, are without great differences along ethnic lines.
- According to the young people in the Republic of Macedonia, the government and the political parties have greatest influence on the solving of the problems. In constellation with the other conclusions, it suggests that a political clientelism is developed among the young people.
- Although they have a rather high trust in the NGOs and the religious institutions, a very small part of the young people expects any concrete support by them.
- The self initiative and the trust in the personal capacities depends on the level of education that the young people have.
- The greatest part of the young people in the Republic of Macedonia consider that the interethnic relations are improved or the same with regard to the last year. The greatest part of them expect improvement in the next

²⁸ The study "Identification of LGBT population in the Republic of Macedonia – 2004/2005" available at www.massso.org.mk

²⁹ It should be especially pointed out that this question does not mean even a minimum of an expert's analysis, but simply a personal attitude for a certain issue.

³⁰ It should not be neglected that there is optimism in relation to the interethnic relations among the young people. Hence, 37% consider that the interethnic relations will be improved or will be improved very much within the next year, and only 8.8% consider that the same will be worsened or will be much worse. 33.5% consider that the interethnic relations will remain the same.

year, too.

- Young people in RM, no matter to the ethnic belonging, think that the education has the most positive influence on the interethnic relations. Young Albanians also think that the nongovernmental and the international organisations have positive influence.
- According to young people in RM, the political parties, media and the government all have a negative influence on the interethnic relations. The political and media exploitation of the interethnic relations creates a negative attitude about this issue among the youth.
- Corruption in the Republic of Macedonia is perceived as one of the most critical problems. There is a general consensus among young people with regard to this issue.
- Young people unambiguously think that corruption is one of the most responsible factors for the weak economic situation in the Republic of Macedonia.
- Despite the negative perception towards corruption among a great many young people, the culture of corruptive behaviour is tolerated or accepted by many.
- A degree of social solidarity with handicapped people, as well as with poor people, is present to a great extent among the young population in the Republic of Macedonia.
- There is a passive resistance among the young population (especially men) regarding the rights of women.
- The rights of the homosexual population in the Republic of Macedonia are facing an active resistance among the young generation that demonstrates the existence of social taboos among the greatest part of this age group.
- The rights of minorities still have a subjective and prejudiced perception among the youth which varies according to their ethnicity.
- Young people in the Republic of Macedonia show a strong conservative capacity with regard to the treatment of different social groups.

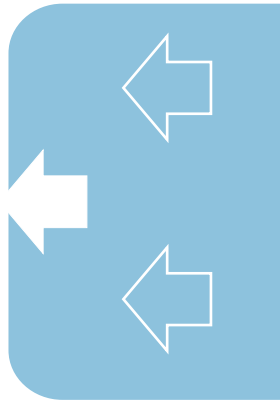
Recommendations:

- Create conditions for greater social engagement of the young people, primarily in the public institutions and the professional associations, through giving them volunteer work.
- Promote the need and the usefulness of the inclusion of the young people in public institutions and nongovernmental organisations that deal with youth-related issues.
- Create mechanisms for educating young people about the public political institutions and membership within the same. Besides the educational themes in the public institutions, within the formal or informal education one day in the year the public political institutions could be open for young people to visit.
- Make instruments by which the young people can express themselves and their attitudes that will be available to the

general public in RM, first of all in the youth organisations, but also in other institutions that are interested (for example: younger generations of the political parties).

- Provide greater public support among banks and international organisations in order to induce greater engagement among the youth.
- Establish mechanisms, first of all in the economy, for engaging young people with higher levels of education.
- End the government's and the political party's practice of employing political party's members in the public administration.
- Include in the educational system themes that will address the interethnic relations. Regardless of whether such themes will be a part of the formal or informal education system, they should be implemented across the whole territory of the Republic of Macedonia, not only in the multiethnic environments.
- Programs and projects aimed to improve the interethnic relations should be also active outside of multiethnic environments.
- Stop political parties and the public political institutions from addressing interethnic relations in their everyday politics, and stop the practice of ethnic mobilisation for political support.
- Emphasise in the media information about facts and arguments before focusing on the ethnic membership. Ethnicisation of events, at any price, engenders negative attitudes towards the media, and it is also dangerous for interethnic relations.
- Initiate a more comprehensive campaign to fight corruption at all levels, especially at the level of system decisions which make allowances for such practices.
- Start a public campaign in order to fight corruption with a special focus on the consequences that it causes for the economy of the country.
- Initiate a public debate about the issue of gender rights, as well as the rights of the homosexual population.
- Increase efforts to change the perception of the rights of minorities, taking the same out of the context of "winners" and "losers".
- Determine and analyze the reasons that lead to the creation of a strong conservative capacity among the young population in Macedonia.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Taking into consideration the complex domestic and regional constellation of relations within which the Macedonian social system exists, it is necessary to point out the role and the importance of the international factors' influence on the Republic of Macedonia. The two parallel processes of EU and NATO integration are certainly a priority, and, in the long term, they will be the most important factors in the country's political and economic development and its future position in the international scene. These two processes are the country's key concerns, and they are championed by the main supporters of the debate on Macedonia's young people's future. Hence, there is a need of more detailed research of the young people's opinions and expectations about Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic future. There is also a need for educating them about the important international role of the United Nations and its operations.

Perceptions of the Process of Accession to the European Union

The trend of high approval towards Macedonia's accession process to the European Union, which has garnered a large percentage of support among the general population within the last two years, is also obvious among the young population. Thus, a high 73.8% of the citizens aged 18 to 30 would vote for a referendum for Macedonia's membership to the European Union. However, although the young population's aspirations for EU membership cannot be disputed, this target group's lower percentage of support compared to Macedonia's general population should be noted. For instance, 87.2% of Macedonia's whole population would vote for EU membership if there was a referendum in the next week³¹, indicating approximately 14.5% higher inclination to EU membership than is found among the youth. **Table 9**

In addition to the expected decline of the trend for strong EU membership support noted in all EU candidate countries during the period after they were given candidate status, in the case of Macedonia's declining enthusiasm there are several concrete factors which are directly connected to the influence of the reform process and the problems that arise from it. The expected decline in Euro euphoria (which peaked in two most important moments, that is, the submission of its membership application and the proclamation of its candidate status) has been in some way underlined by two parallel processes that took place in the Republic of Macedonia and in the European Union.

On the one hand, it is realistic to expect that the interest in the national election, the central social issue in the first half of 2006, should surpass the interest for the technical and administrative parts of the European integration process. In this manner, although the bid for EU

membership was one of the more important issues during the campaign, it generated less interest than the election results.

On the other hand, the situation in the European Union itself and its internal debate about the Union's enlargement process and absorption powers is of great importance. Bearing in mind this issue's wide media coverage, in which certain pessimistic views apropos the European future of Macedonia were also present, it is realistic to expect it had a certain impact on Macedonia's young people, who in general would be the most affected by any problems arising from the relations between the EU and Macedonia.

Finally, the aforementioned tendencies shouldn't in any case be interpreted as a serious decline in support among the young population for Macedonia's membership to the EU. The degree of support remains significantly strong, and the fact that only 5.8% of the respondents were against EU membership is in favour of this thesis. Also, this strong support is predominant throughout all demographic categories without any significant fluctuations. This interpretation is further supported when the data is cross tabulated according to the financial situations of the respondents. Strong support at all economic levels is obvious, with the wealthier respondents having the most positive perceptions (77.8% of those with an excellent financial situation and 73.1% of those with a good financial situation). A bit more sceptical are the poorest respondents, of whom 12.1% would vote against membership to the EU. However, support in this category is nonetheless within the scope of the general average.

Finally, if a comparison of perceptions is made between the youth in Macedonia and the youth in EU member countries, the higher percentage of support for EU membership among young Macedonians is noteworthy. Namely, 73.8% of Macedonian young people have a positive perception of EU membership, while only 63% of the young people in EU member countries feel the same way.³² **Table 10**

EU Influence Perceptions on the Main Social Parameters

If we look at the young people's attitudes regarding the influence of the European integration process on several important social issues, it is obvious that they perceive the European Union and the accession process as extremely important factors for solving certain problems in the Macedonian social and political platform.

Enthusiasm for the economic component is extremely obvious, as eight out of ten young Macedonians believe the three main parameters for economic growth – economic development, direct foreign investments and technological development – will be greatly aided by the European integration process. If Macedonia's integration

	General population (research of the IDSCS, April 2006)	Young population (YAS)
If there is a referendum for the accession of the Republic of Macedonia to the European Union, how would you vote (% positive)	87,2%	73,8%

Table 9

³¹ Research conducted by the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje, for the needs of the Secretariat for European Issues, April 2006.

³² In "Youth takes the floor"-Young Europeans' concerns and expectations as to the development of the European Union (Background note based on relevant findings from Euro barometer data) Publication: December 2005, p. 2.

	Young population in EU (Euro barometer, December 2005)	Young population (YAS)
Support for EU membership	63%	73,8%

Table 10

into the EU progresses at a steady pace, such expectations should be perceived as realistic and parallel to the general economic expectations – bearing in mind that 87.1% of those respondents who think that the European integration process will positively influence economic development are also convinced that the economic situation will be better within the next few years. Additionally, 41.7% of the young people believe that their living conditions will improve to a certain degree. However, such opinions should not provoke hasty conclusions, as this data does not mean that the expectations for an improvement of the economic situation necessarily lead to expectations that the living standard will rise according to the younger population's desires. The data that 74.7% of Macedonia's youth are considering the possibility to emigrate, and that 78.3% would emigrate for financial reasons, reveals a reserve.

On the other hand, bearing in mind the role of the EU not only in Macedonian society, but also in a wider regional context, 76.5% of the young people recognize the EU as a very important stabilizing factor. Such a perception is equally distributed throughout all demographic categories, including the ethnic ones. In contrast to the attitudes towards NATO³⁴, the EU – as a securing and stabilizing factor – enjoys equal support in both of the largest ethnic communities: the Macedonian and the Albanian. The recognition of the role that the European Union could play in upgrading democratic awareness is also obvious, as 75% of the respondents see the EU as a positive factor that will contribute towards the development of human rights in Macedonia. Practically, this

view of one of the most important political criteria could help overcome the problem of negative attitudes towards the equal rights of some social groups³⁵. See Table 11.

A comparative analysis of the young people's opinions versus the general population's perceptions shows a greater optimism among the youth, especially regarding the positive influence of the integration process on economic development and the level of direct foreign investments. Such a trend is completely in accordance with the tendencies among all European youth regarding the importance of the integration process with regard to the strength and the development of economies. Thus, 68% of the youth in EU member-countries (as opposed to 56% of the whole population) is optimistic about the prospects for economic development. Such an optimism is even higher among the young population of the 10 newest member-countries (75%)³⁶. Concerning all other parameters, the youth and the general population of Macedonia have almost identical opinions. A small disparity is present only in the attitudes about the influence of the European integration process on domestic politics, which points out a perception that the domestic political scene is little affected by the pressure of Macedonia's accession process. At the same time, bearing in mind the decreasing trend among the whole population (the period immediately after the positive opinion given by the European Commission is excluded³⁷), it may be expected that positive perceptions of the influence of the European integration process on internal affairs may diminish.

Finally, this research also examined whether young

What will be the influence on the following things by the integration of Macedonia to EU?	YAS - Percentage of young people that have given a positive answer	IDSCS research ³³ % of respondents that have given positive answers
Economic development	82,7%	75,7%
Direct foreign investments	85,1%	72,1%
Domestic politics	58,9%	65%
Stability	76,5%	75%
Human rights	75,1%	76,3%
Technological development	77,4%	77,2%
National values / Identity	56,9%	/

Table 11

³³ Research conducted by the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje, for the needs of the Secretariat for European Issues, April 2006.

³⁴ See page 30

³⁵ See page 28

³⁶ In "Youth takes the floor"-Young Europeans' concerns and expectations as to the development of the European Union (Background note based on relevant findings from Euro barometer data) Publication: December 2005, p.9.

³⁷ If a comparison between the public opinion surveys regarding these problems is made, a decrease of the positive perception towards the Macedonian integration to EU's influence on the domestic policy is noticeable. Thus, in May 2004, the question "What will be the influence on the following things by the integration of Macedonia to EU: Domestic policy", received 79% positive responses; in December 2004, the same question received 67.3% positive responses. By December 2005, the support had increased to 78%, to again decrease to the lowest 65% in April 2006. - Polls conducted by the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis"-Skopje, for the needs of the Secretariat on European Issues, May 2004, December 2004, December 2005, April 2006.

people perceive that joining the EU will influence their identity and Macedonia's national values. It is quite interesting that this is one of the pioneering attempts to study how young people feel about this intriguing topic (which is very relevant within the framework of the debate about Europe's future). On average, half of the young people in Macedonia consider that the European integration process will have a positive influence on traditional values and national identity. On the other hand, 12.4% envision a negative influence. These findings point out a certain division, whereby the positive opinions are more aptly interpreted as a feeling that EU membership acts as a cohesive substance which fosters a sense of European identity, but not as an acceptance of the priority of the European identity over the national one. In favour of this idea is the data from the European Union itself, where only 3% of the young people identify themselves as European only, and this proportion among the young population in the new ten member-countries is even less, amounting to only 1%.³⁸ On the other hand, having both a European and a national identity is reported by 58% of the youth, which is similar to the proportion of young Macedonians who expect that the European integration process will have a positive impact on national identity and traditional values. It should also be mentioned that this positive impact is expected more by the young people of the Albanian community (67.3%) than by young Macedonians (54.1%). A process of informing young people about the organisation and functioning of the EU, as well as the values inherent to the European concept, would eventually result in a stronger and more-developed European identity.

Personal expectations related to Macedonia's joining the European Union are also very high. Thus, 72% of the young people in the country believe that this process will provide more possibilities for their personal future prospects, while 15% of them consider that there won't be any influence on their further career. This high percentage reveals strong positive expectations for personal possibilities created by the European integration process. At the same time, 44.6% of the respondents who consider that their living conditions will be improved in the future believe that this improvement will be a consequence of opportunities

created by EU accession.

Young people's estimations of the actual time frame when Macedonia would become a member of the European Union are to a certain degree in accordance with expert predictions. Hence, 33.2% of the respondents, consider that Macedonia will become a EU member-country within the next ten years. A similar percentage, 29.4%, see Macedonia joining the EU after 2016. Compared to the views of the general population on this matter, the views of the youth are more objective and less optimistic regarding the pace of the reform process and the fulfilment of requirements for membership. Thus, the percentage of the general population who consider that Macedonia will become a EU member-country within the next five years is 26.7%, which is 10% more than found among young respondents. Moreover, a slightly higher percentage of the young respondents consider that it is a realistic assumption that Macedonia needs more than five years for an eventual European Union membership.

On this topic, the perceptions of the two largest ethnic groups, the Macedonians and the Albanians, is revealing. Among the young respondents from the Albanian community, there is greater optimism that Macedonia will be granted EU membership by 2011 (22.4% of Albanians, 12.7% of Macedonians). In contrast, a greater percentage of young Macedonians believe it will take longer than five years to gain membership. When speaking about the general population (not just the youth), this difference in expectations becomes more pronounced.³⁹

Generally speaking, the integration process of the Republic of Macedonia to the European Union finds very strong support among the young population. European integration is perceived as a very important factor for the improvement of the situation in several social spheres, and, at the same time, the expectation for economic improvement is highlighted the most. EU membership is perceived to offer new possibilities and better living conditions for the majority of the young citizens. Expectations for the accession of Macedonia to the European Union are realistic and coincide with the experts' opinions. See [Table 12](#).

An overarching view of all data from this research

	YAS - Percentage of young people who declared that Macedonia will become a EU member-country:	Early Warning Report - UNDP⁴⁰ Percentage of respondents who declared that Macedonia will become a EU member-country:
Within the next 5 years	15,9%	26,7%
Within the next 10 years	33,2%	27,7%
More than 10 years (at EWR 15 years)	29,4%	25%
Never	11%	13,9%
No answer / Don't know	10,4%	6,4%

Table 12. Prediction for the EU membership

³⁸ In "Youth takes the floor"-Young Europeans' concerns and expectations as to the development of the European Union (Background note based on relevant findings from Euro barometer data) Publication: December 2005, p. 8.

³⁹ So, according to data from the Early Warning Report of UNDP (March 2006) (available at www.ewr.org.mk), even 53.2% of the Albanians, opposite to 18.2% of the Macedonians consider that Macedonia will become a member-country of the European Union within the period of the next five years.

⁴⁰ Data taken from Early Warning Report of UNDP (March 2006) available on www.ewr.org.mk.

⁴¹ Thus, for 62% of the young European Union population it means freedom of travelling, studying and working. Among the youth of the ten new member-countries, this perception is even higher and it amounts to 76%. Source: In "Youth takes the floor"-Young Europeans' concerns and expectations as to the development of the European Union (Background note based on relevant findings from Euro barometer data) Publication: December 2005, p.3

reveals a perception of European integration as a process that, to a great extent, will solve the basic living problems of the young people in Macedonia. In contrast to the situation in the European Union, where the youth view EU membership as freedom to travel, study and work,⁴¹ in Macedonia's case it seems that the youth view European integration as a means of achieving stability and improving living conditions. In addition, 57% of the young population trust in the European Union itself (21.2% of them have a great trust, and 35.8% have a partial trust). However, that 21.2% of the young people do not have any trust in the EU is worrisome. It demonstrates a certain lack of balance between the high positive regard for Macedonia's accession process and the relatively weaker support for the European Union itself. This indicates a need for greater education among the young people about the role of the EU in Macedonia, and, above all, the values and ideas which it represents.

Perceptions of the Process of Approaching NATO

NATO membership is one of Macedonia's most important foreign policy priorities, and a majority of the young population agrees. The YAS research shows strong support for Macedonia's potential NATO membership, and on a hypothetical referendum 70% of the youth would vote in favour of joining NATO (with 9% voting against it). Of note is that the parallel processes of EU and NATO integration receive almost the same level of support. All previous surveys of the general population had shown a greater support for joining the EU. This indicates a slight decrease among the young population of support for EU accession⁴², but also a relatively stronger support for NATO membership. Such a conclusion becomes significant if we bear in mind the considerably lower media coverage of the latter process. An essential correlation with the time frame for gaining membership should be emphasized here, whereas the probability for earlier membership to NATO is greater and more realistic. On the other hand, stronger support among ethnic Albanians is evident in this area as well, as 80% of the Albanians would vote for accession to NATO as opposed to 64.8% of the Macedonians. This assertion is more evident if we look at the percentage of the opponents to this process. 10.7% of the Macedonians would vote against joining NATO, as opposed to the extremely low 3% of the Albanians.

However, opinions are more dispersed as to whether NATO membership would serve as a guarantee for the personal safety of the respondents. Although 62% of the respondents consider that NATO membership will increase their safety in some way, nearly 10% are strongly convinced of it; 24% share this opinion, but with a weaker intensity; while 29% consider that NATO will increase the safety to some degree. On the other hand, 28.5% don't believe that NATO membership will affect their personal safety. These figures reveal a perception of stability in the regional and domestic context. What also supports this assertion is that 54% of the respondents who consider that NATO membership won't increase their personal security and 73% of the respondents who consider that NATO membership will increase their safety to a certain degree both still would vote in favour of NATO membership for Macedonia, which means that NATO membership should not be exclusively associated with the desire for personal safety. At the same time, the

relatively strong trust in Macedonia's army and police forces also contributes to this dispersion of views. On the other hand, similarly to the previous issue, there are differences between the two largest ethnic communities as to the influence of NATO membership on personal safety. Thus, 17.5% of the Albanians (and only 7.2% of Macedonians) consider that NATO membership will increase their personal safety to a great extent. An additional 35% of Albanians (as opposed to 20.8% of the Macedonians) answered that the NATO membership will increase their safety to some degree. Only 13.8% of the Albanians do not consider increased safety to be a likely consequence of the NATO membership. This figure for Macedonians is 32.6%.

Perceptions of the Role of the United Nations Agencies

The agencies of the United Nations, and their operations, play a subordinate role in the media when compared to the EU and NATO. As these bodies directly deal with a number of quality-of-life issues in both rural and urban areas, there is a need to evaluate the way the youth perceive them. 49.7% of the youth in Macedonia see a contribution by the UN agencies in the development of Macedonia, while a relatively high 28% do not see any specific role of these agencies. This indicates a need for greater awareness among the young population of the various projects implemented by the United Nations agencies.

However, in grouping the data according to ethnic community membership, we can see that more Albanians (22.7%) believe that UN agencies greatly contribute to Macedonia's development than do Macedonians (6%). Additionally, 44% of Albanians consider that the UN agencies contribute somewhat to development, which totals 67% of the young Albanian population who believe that UN agencies contribute to Macedonia's development. On the other hand, even though the UN agencies are most active in the rural and smaller urban environments, the level at which their contributions are perceived is similar within all types of populated places.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions:

- The trend of strong support for joining the EU is also present among the young population; at the same time, a slight disparity is noticeable in comparison to the general population's level of support, that is, there is a lower percentage of support among the younger generation.
- Strong support for the process of EU accession dominates throughout all demographic categories without significant fluctuations.
- The younger generation in Macedonia supports the European integration process more than the youth of the European Union itself does.
- The European Union and the process of accession are perceived as extremely important factors in solving certain problems in Macedonia's social and political platform. There is a commonly-held belief that the process of European integration will, to a great extent,

⁴² See page 20

solve the quality-of-life problems of the young people in Macedonia.

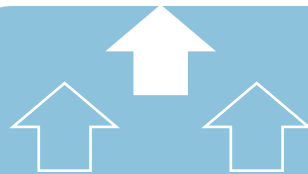
- The main parameters for economic growth – economic development, direct foreign investments, and technological development – are perceived as the main benefits gained from the European integration process.
- Young people recognize the EU as a very important stabilizing factor.
- Half of the young people in Macedonia consider that the European integration process will have a positive influence on traditional values and national identity.
- Young people in Macedonia show a strong personal affiliation with the European integration process and distinguish it as an essential factor in their own vision for the future.
- Expectations of the youth for the eventual accession of Macedonia to the European Union are realistic and coincide with expert opinions.
- The possibility of Macedonian membership in NATO enjoys strong support among the young people, which suggests a stronger positioning of the policy of approaching NATO.
- There is greater support for this process among ethnic Albanians than among ethnic Macedonians.
- More young Albanians perceive NATO membership as a guarantee of personal safety than do people of the same age from the Macedonian community.
- The operation of the UN agencies in Macedonia is not known enough among the young population, as a high percentage of young people do not recognize any influence of these agencies in the Macedonian society.
- The operation of the UN agencies is much more familiar to the young Albanians than to young Macedonians.

Recommendations:

- Intensify the information campaign about Macedonia's EU accession process, with a special emphasis on targeting the youth.
- Provide more detailed information to the young population about the achievements resulting from the European integration process, supported by objective media coverage of the debate for the absorption power of the European Union.
- Strengthen the reform process towards providing the youth in Macedonia complementarity with the youth of the European Union.
- Enhance the administrative capacities for the management of the European-accession funds in the direction of providing real economic development.

- Provide a higher level of information to the young people about the role of the EU in Macedonia, and, foremost, the values and ideas which it represents.
- Provide a continuous stream of information to young people about the advantages of NATO membership, as well as about NATO's role in the regional and global context.
- Strengthen efforts to establish greater trust among the young Albanians in the domestic institutions of public safety .
- Intensify public access to and communication about the various projects implemented by the United Nations agencies.
- Determine and analyse reasons for the weak perception of the role of the UN agencies among ethnic Macedonians.

EDUCATION



	Excellent	Good	Bad	Very bad	No answer / Don't know
Primary	15,1%	54%	24%	6,1%	0,81%
Secondary	9,9%	53,7%	28,1%	7,6%	0,7%
Higher education	9,9%	42,4%	20,6%	12%	7,2%
Postgraduate studies	10,1%	29,9%	15,3%	7,6%	37,1%

Table 13. Perceptions of the youth for the quality of education in the Republic of Macedonia

Perceptions of the Quality of the Educational Process

The third part of the Youth Aspiration Survey includes the young people's perceptions with regard to the quality of education, their preferences with regard to types of educational systems, their perceptions of the education and labour market in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as their potential for studying abroad. Research data has shown expected trends and opinions, but also the development of new views about certain spheres of the educational aspects covered by the survey.

The first part of the survey deals with the respondents' **evaluation of the quality of education** in the Republic of Macedonia at all educational levels: primary (basic), secondary (high school education), higher education and postgraduate studies. Participants were asked to respond using four options, such as: excellent, good, bad and very bad. As presented in the table below, the perceptions with regard to the quality of education look positive. See Table 13.

From the data presented in the table, it is evident that young people in the Republic of Macedonia are **predominantly satisfied** with the quality of the education, although it could be concluded that there is a strong negative disposition with regard to certain levels of education. This negative attitude is especially expressed towards secondary education (35.7% of the respondents have a negative attitude), but it is not significantly lower towards undergraduate studies (32.6%). The relatively low percentage of respondents who rated the offered educational categories as excellent attests to the overall presence of scepticism for the quality of education.

Also evident is the tendency for young people to be increasingly sceptical towards higher educational levels, and **ratings of the quality decrease** from primary education to postgraduate education. Accordingly, primary education received a positive rating from 69.1% of the respondents,

secondary education from 63.6%, undergraduate studies from 52.3%, and postgraduate studies received a positive rating from 40%. An explanation for these results could be the worrisome level of prejudice that young people have towards higher education, bearing in mind that a very small percentage of young people in Macedonia enroll in universities in the country, that even fewer of them complete their studies, and that there is a very low number of postgraduate students (those who attend special training, master's programs, or doctoral programs).

Data from the Republic of Macedonia's Bureau of Statistics⁴³ confirms this assertion by illustrating a rapid decrease of enrollment at each further level of education. So, for example, in 2005 the data is very interesting. See Table 14.

This worrisome trend indicates that less than 0.1% of young people who start elementary education eventually reach the postgraduate level, and only 2.4% get a university degree.⁴⁴ This suggests that the **low ratings given for the higher levels of education** (undergraduate and postgraduate) are based on superficial impressions alone, and this may partially explain why each successive level receives lower ratings. Indeed, 7.2% indicated that they didn't know how to rate the quality of higher education, and 37.1% reported the same for the postgraduate level. These levels of education seem inaccessible for a great number of the young respondents in the Republic of Macedonia. A lack of motivation among many students certainly is a logical consequence under these conditions.

That the problems in the Republic of Macedonia's education system are, to a great extent, located within the higher levels of education is evidenced by another fact: data from the YAS's research, as well as data provided by the Bureau of Statistics, clearly indicates that the higher levels of education suffer from low graduation rates. See Table 15

A lack of participation does prevent young people

Educational level	Number of enrolled / graduates
Primary education (enrolled)	218935
Secondary education (enrolled)	95867
Undergraduate studies (enrolled)	48368
Undergraduate studies (completed)	5397
Postgraduate studies (completed)	198 (189 + 9)

Table 14. Total number enrolled / graduates by level of education in 2005. Source: Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Macedonia

⁴³ Data accessible at www.stat.gov.mk. Remark: in the data are not admitted statistics from the State university of Tetovo and SEE University in Tetovo. They have not delivered information's to the Bureau of Statistic of Republic of Macedonia

⁴⁴ The correlation refers to the year 2005.

	1999	%	2000	%	2001	%	2002	%	2003	%
Total number of students that graduated after 3 years (earlier graduation)	34	0,9	25	0,7	22	0,6	6	0,1	/	/
Total number of students that graduated after 4 years (normal graduation)	85	2,3	82	2,2	59	1,7	66	1,8	23	0,5
Total number of students that graduated after 5 years	911	24,4	825	22	768	22	763	21,6	1.028	23,3
Total number of students that graduated after 6 years	650	17,4	715	19	626	18	687	19	853	19,3
Total number of graduated students	3.735		3.740		3.480		3.618		4.404	
Total number of students that graduated after 7 or more years	2.089	55,9	2.118	57	2.027	58	2.082	57,5	2.500	56,7

Table 15. Tertiary education graduation levels in the Republic of Macedonia during 1999 - 2003⁴⁵

from accurately assessing higher levels of education – leading to decreasing ratings for each successive level – but, more importantly, it is the very low graduation rates at the high levels that is responsible for handicapping young people with a lack of educational motivation.

This certainly affects the capacity of the country on a general level with regard to the wider labour market, and the attitude of the majority of young people in the Republic of Macedonia is that the situation calls for basic or partial reforms in the educational sector. But, before we address the need for reforms in the educational sector, it is necessary to explain the perceptions of young people for the two aspects of the educational process most vital to the economy: learning practical skills and feeling confident that their level of education will be compatible with the labour market.

Practical Skills, Labour Market and the Educational Process

Although the perception of the quality of education in the Republic of Macedonia could be estimated as generally satisfactory (with a significant percentage of sceptical young people), unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the young people's perceptions of the **practical skills** offered by the educational process. The general attitude towards this issue could be characterized as unsatisfactory, since 72.5% of the respondents declare that the educational system in the Republic of Macedonia offers limited or no possibilities for gaining practical skills (36.9% - limited possibilities, 35.9% - does not offer any possibilities for getting practical skills). This is a strong consensus on this issue if we bear in mind the equal distribution of this response among all ethnic groups, educational categories, and the rest of the demographic strata of these 18 to 30-year-old respondents.

Young people perceive the issue of gaining practical skills as strongly related to their **potential for finding a job** after graduating. Here they also demonstrate

scepticism, which is an indicator of the inadequacy of the educational process and its incompatibility with the labour market, both in the Republic of Macedonia and beyond. So, 54.7% of the respondents consider that it will be hard for them to find a job, and 10.5% are even more sceptical in saying that they will never find a job with their level of education. This amounts to 65.2% of the respondents with a negative attitude towards this subject. It is normal that, when comparing the different strata of the respondents, those with lower educational levels (no primary, primary, or secondary) are more sceptical, but the scepticism does not rapidly decrease among those categories of young people with more advanced levels of education. This reveals a general disappointment with regard to the chances of finding a job among all categories of young people, which, above all, is a serious economic indicator.

These two tightly-connected indicators highlight another dimension of the educational problem. Namely, only 13.2% of the respondents declared that they should upgrade their education in order to find an adequate job. As a bare statistic it means very little, but in constellation with other data gathered by the YAS's research, it indicates a very serious phenomenon. In essence, 60.75% of the respondents consider that education is very important for promoting greater economic development, and 30.2% rate it as important. Therefore, education is recognized as a necessary factor for the improvement of one's own position and also as an influential factor in a country's economy. This raises the question: why, then, would only 13.2% of the respondents (the greater part with lower educational levels) seek additional education in order to find a better job?

A part of the answer is obvious: young people do believe in education, but they are **sceptical about whether Macedonia's system of education** really increases their chances in the open labour market. If we combine this with the significant reserve the respondents show towards the practical skills offered, the image of

⁴⁵ Source: Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Macedonia

Macedonia's educational system in the eyes of its young people is clearly negative. Other data also supports this thesis.

Studying Abroad, Desired Destinations and the "Brain-Drain" Phenomenon

In agreement with all other aspects of young people's perceptions presented so far, there are also preferences with regard to studying abroad and what the desired destinations for such studies would be. More precisely, only 17.4% of the respondents would choose to study within the country, which strongly indicates the young people in the Republic of Macedonia consider a foreign education to be superior. The level of consensus with regard to the preference for a foreign education does vary according to the amount of foreign education desired, so that 45.6% of the respondents would prefer a complete education abroad, while 31.2% desire only part of their education to be found abroad. In any case, it is evident that 76.8% of the young people in the Republic of Macedonia consider the possibility of getting a partial or complete education abroad as a desirable alternative to a domestic education.

That educated people **emigrate** from the Republic of Macedonia, a propensity which is suggested by the YAS research, is in fact a reality is supported by the analyses of a great many experts dealing with this issue. Thus, in the Southeast European Politics magazine, an interesting analysis by the young scientist Vedran Horvat, M.A. appeared, which points out (according to research by the Skopje Institute of Economics) that "within the last decade 12,000 to 15,000 educated, highly trained young people left the country"⁴⁶, and that even "85% of young Macedonians are planning or want to leave the country after the completion of their studies"⁴⁷.

The **motivation of this "brain-drain" process** is not solely due to the weaknesses of the education system. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that the motives for educational migration are always completely of an educational nature. In this sense, the respondents in the YAS's research recognize the high emigration rate, but they do not see the motivation for it to be personal reasons only (which would also include seeking a better education), but the majority of them blame it on the undesirable economic situation in the country (83.5% declared that the reasons for migration are of an economic nature). This leads to questions as to the motivations of those who claim to emigrate from Macedonia for educational purposes. That aside, the desire to seek a better education abroad should in no way be ignored.

In addition, the survey also reveals the preferences of the Republic of Macedonia's young citizens as to their preferred destinations for (additional) education. The European Union countries are the most popular destinations, with a little more than half of the respondents choosing them (52%). The United States of America also appears as an extremely popular destination, with 30.1% of the respondents choosing it. The Balkan countries are far less popular as desired destinations for beginning or continuing the educational process, with only 8.5% of the responses.

Reform of the Educational System, Preferred System of Education, Private and State Universities

The seriousness of the situation in the country's educational sector is also indicated by the widespread perception among young people of the **need for education reforms**. With regard to this issue, which in a way sums up all previously-discussed attitudes, there is a clear and precisely defined opinion among the youth which favours thorough reforms in the educational system. Thus, the majority of young citizens in Macedonia (46.9%) are in favour of fundamental reforms in education, while 42.8% consider that the country's system of education should undergo some degree of reforms. Bearing in mind that only 4.8% of the youth feel that the educational system does not need any reform, the message from the youth to the responsible factors in charge of education should be clear enough, even though young people's responses are not altogether negative when asked about the general quality of the educational system.

As for the direction that these serious reforms should take, the **desired system of education** is of key importance to the youth. Therefore, in light of the current liberalization of the educational market, it seems that Macedonia's young people display an inclination from the state-sponsored model. Many of the respondents (31.8%) have opted for private education as a preferred model, compared to 27.3% who still consider that the state system is the better solution. The compromise solution of a mixed state/private system received support from 26.7%, which was a majority of the respondents that support a mixed system.

An additional dilemma among the youth arises when considering which **type of university** offers a better quality of education. Considering the increase of private institutions in the realm of higher education, a polarization of preferences with regard to the model of these institutions is evident. As such, 25.3% of the respondents consider that private universities offer a better quality of education, as opposed to 18% who consider the state universities to be a better option. These results are likely related to personal financial capabilities, and may be due to the greater cost of attending a private institution.

Of interest is the fact that 26.1% of the respondents believe that private universities only offer easy access to diplomas, and the prevalence of this belief likely affects overall perceptions of the **quality of a private higher education**. Although this is a significant percentage of respondents, if a general conclusion should be drawn from the findings, it is that the private universities are becoming more attractive in the minds of the young people (as opposed to the state universities), but also that a great deal of scepticism remains towards the quality of the services they offer.

⁴⁶ Horvat, Vedran. "Brain Drain – Threat to Successful Transition in South East Europe". Southeast European Politics. Vol. V. No.1. June 2004. page 84

⁴⁷ Ibid

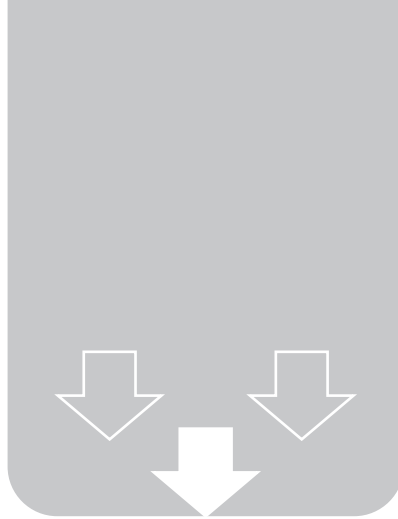
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions:

- Young people in the Republic of Macedonia perceive Macedonia's educational system to be relatively good.
- The perceived quality of education decreases with each successive level of education.
- Young people in the Republic of Macedonia are not satisfied with the practical skills offered by the educational system. In addition, they are sceptical about finding a job that parallels their education level achieved.
- Young people do not believe that getting additional education in the Macedonian system would enable them to get better positions in the labour market.
- There is a desire among young people in the Republic of Macedonia to seek education abroad.
- Young people in Macedonia agree that there is a need for fundamental reform of the educational system.
- There are split opinions among the young population about the preferred model of education. Although private universities in the Republic of Macedonia have a higher status, there is a great dose of scepticism for the quality of the same.

Recommendations:

- Establish a quality assessment system for the education in the Republic of Macedonia compared to that in the European Union member-countries.
- Focus more on offering practical skills during the educational process in Macedonia.
- Establish connections between the institutions for higher education and the labour market (employers).
- Analyse reasons for the youth of Macedonia's scepticism towards the educational system.
- Make an analysis for an educational reform – especially in the higher education levels – and continue the current reforms in accordance with the Bologna process.



ECONOMY AND EMIGRATION



Although these are the final topics covered by the Youth Aspiration Survey analysis (carried out by Institute for Democracy - Skopje in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung), the economy and emigration are very important components of a young person's life, as the economic processes fundamentally determine not only his or her prospects in society, but also in the family, which is considered to be the basic cell of the community.

As the title states, this chapter covers two separate topics which are very interrelated: economy and emigration.

Economy

Table 16 shows the basic economic indicators in the Republic of Macedonia. Although certain progress can be noticed in some economic categories, this is not enough to initiate stabilization in two extremely important economic components: employment and foreign trade. Unemployment⁴⁹, one of the basic determinants for economic development, is probably the most urgent

problem in Macedonia, bearing in mind the constant lack of employment opportunities. Another problem is the ratio of exports to imports, that is, the high deficit in foreign trade.

These indicators are the reason that almost a half (44.8%) of the respondents emphasized unemployment as the greatest current problem in the Republic of Macedonia. At the same time, 87.8% of the surveyed young people replied bad or very bad to the question: In your opinion, what is the country's economic situation like at the moment? However, it should be pointed out that one-third of the respondents think the situation will improve in the near future, which represents a relatively optimistic attitude compared to another survey that covered the whole population, in which only 18% of respondents representing all age groups believed the economy would improve in the near future.⁵⁰ This difference in answers is due to a greater optimism in the young population, although it is worrying that 2/3 of them predicted the situation would remain the same or would even become worse.

However, it should be pointed out that half of the

	2001	2002	2003	2004
GDP in current prices (in million denars)	233.841	243.970	251.486	265.257
GDP in denars from 1995 (in million denars)	187.342	188.941	194.988	/
Real growth rate of the GDP	-4.5	0.9	3.2	4.1 1)
GDP per capita in USD (\$)	1.830	1.859	2.230	2.382
Population in the middle of the year	2.035	2.020	2.027	2.032
Economically active population	862	825	861	832
Number of employees according to ARS	599	561	545	523
Number of unemployed according to ARS	263	263	316	309
People out of the labour force	692	742	718	762
Rate of unemployment according to ARS	30.9%	31.9%	36.7%	37.2%
Activity rate	55.5%	52.6%	54.5%	52.2%
Employment rate	38.6%	35.8%	34.5%	32.8%
	2002	2003	2004	2005
Growth rate of nominal salaries	6.9	4.8	4.0	2.5
Growth rate of real salaries	5.0	3.6	4.4	2.0
Average paid net salary per employee in USD \$ 1	174	218	/	256
Import	1.962.110	2.299.921	2.931.626	3.227.998
Export	1.115.527	1.363.252	1.675.877	2.041.265
	2002/2001	2003/2002	2004/2003	2005/2004
Index of living expenses	101.8	101.2	99.6	100.5
Index of retail sale prices	101.4	102.4	100.9	102.1
Index of prices of the manufacturers of industrial products	99.1	99.7	100.9	103.2

Table 16⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Source: Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Macedonia.

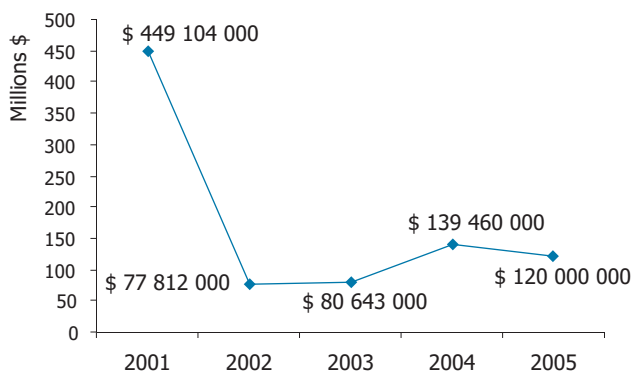
⁴⁹ The Republic of Macedonia has the highest rate of unemployment in Europe, which according to estimations is about 38% www.intra.rbec.undp.org.

⁵⁰ Data taken from the last survey for the Early Warning Report, March 2006, p. 23.

young population that described the current situation as bad or very bad believe it will improve in the future. The majority of the respondents hold the government responsible for the economy's development, that is, 63.1% of the Republic of Macedonia's young population consider the government to be the institution that should deal with all urgent economic issues, as well as with corruption, which directly influences economic development. Namely, almost 72.4% of the young consider the corruption problem to be the culprit for the low economic growth, and the same percentage of them consider that it is due to the inadequate functioning of state institutions, primarily of the government. It could be concluded that corruption also exists to a great extent because the government is indifferent and takes no action to put an end to it. This conclusion could be supported by the Early Warning Report⁵¹ data, which lists corruption (18%) as the second most-reported problem after unemployment (53%). However, it should be pointed out that 87.1% of the respondents are also self-critical, since they likewise consider their own bad working habits to be a great hindrance to economic growth. This conclusion could be confirmed by the fact that 85.6% of the young people think increasing their capacity to take on more work assignments could augment their incomes in the future.

High-quality education, as survey results show, is a very important contributing factor to the economy's development. Two questions concerning education and economic growth were included in the survey. If we compare the answers given to the question about the importance of high-quality education with those to the question for the influence of inadequate education on the economy and its low growth, we will confirm the perception of a dependence between education and the economy. Namely, 56.9% of the respondents who claimed education quality influences economic growth stated that inadequate education is a key reason for the economy's slow growth (34.6% of the whole research sample).

One of the economy's basic problems that directly influences the rate of unemployment and the negative trade balance is the low volume of foreign direct investments (FDI). Graph 4 shows the total assets invested in the Republic of Macedonia by foreign companies on a yearly level. This problem is also noticed by young people, among which 91% consider foreign direct investments as important or very important for the economy's development and the decrease of unemployment. This percentage is even higher among young people whose main occupation is economy



Graph 4⁵²

and business, 94.1%, i.e. 18.5% of the total number of the respondents. The slow pace of reforms in the administration and the judiciary is one of the reasons for the low rate of foreign direct investments. This is a serious problem, bearing in mind that investments are a key factor for the decrease of the unemployment and increase of the economic growth and the gross domestic product. This statement is also confirmed by the survey, in which 55.9% of the total number of respondents do not trust the judiciary at all, while 51.9% consider the highest priority to be the reform of the administration and the judiciary so that a higher economic growth can be achieved.

One factor believed to have a potential influence on the development of Macedonia's economy would be European integration. The processes of European integration have contributed towards economic growth in Eastern European countries, and at the same time they have brought about a decrease in unemployment, especially among young people. The Republic of Macedonia's young people's attitudes reflect this situation, that is, 90.1% of the respondents who regard positively the integration of the Republic of Macedonia into the European Union (EU) consider that this will contribute towards a greater and faster economic growth. Thus, it may be concluded that the driving force for reforms in Macedonia -- which were initiated by the EU and which should reconstruct the Macedonian economy, as well as other segments of the society -- is the optimism for greater economic development through the EU-offered benefits. Similarly, the Republic of Macedonia's status as a candidate country and its initiative to start negotiations for accession to the EU could attract foreign investors who would bring fresh capital, thereby also contributing towards new work opportunities and a faster economic growth.

Although agriculture represents 9.7% of the gross domestic product (GDP), industry 28.8%, and the service sector 61.5%⁵³, the majority of the respondents consider agricultural development to be the greatest priority (41.4%), followed by 34.8% who chose industry. Only 17.4% of the sample (and 21.3% of the respondents from Skopje) chose as the greatest priority the development of the service sector, even though the service sector contributes the most to the GDP. From this, it may be concluded that young people's opinions about the economy are distorted to a great extent with regard to modern economic trends. However, it should be emphasized that these attitudes have been greatly influenced by the educational system, the media, and the general opinion that -- given its agrarian traditions and favourable climate -- Macedonia's agricultural pursuits are the most important branch of its economy and therefore deserve development. Some opinions were to be expected, such as the ones about how the economy's general situation relates to the respondents' personal financial situations. Namely, the majority of the respondents who declared their financial situation to be bad or very bad (93.5% of those with a very bad financial situation) likewise, as was expected, declared that the general economic situation is not on a satisfactory level, or that the situation in the economy is very bad. Surprisingly, 58.5% of the young people whose financial situation is good also perceive the general economic situation as unstable. This leads to a conclusion that although a part of the young people are personally satisfied by their own income, or the income of their family,

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Source: Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Macedonia.

⁵³ www.cia.gov/worldfactbook/macedonia

they still consider that this is due to their personal effort, or favourable circumstances, and not to the general economic situation. Bearing in mind that 41.6% of the young people who participated in the survey consider their financial situations to be bad or very bad – and the general percentage of Macedonia's citizens who live on the edge of poverty, which, according to statistical data, is 38%⁵⁴ – the previously-referred conclusions may be accepted as relevant for analysis.

A high percentage of the respondents consider that the best way to increase their income is to start their own business (32.9%). However, only 25.1% of the young people who gave that response consider that their best employment would be one created by themselves. On the other hand, a high 37% of those who declared that emigration is the best way for achieving financial security consider working in public administration to be the best employment. All of this lends itself to a hypotheses about how the respondents are weighing their financial options. In other words, young people foremost like to feel financially secure, and though they have ideas about the ways to earn the most money, they are often afraid to pursue this goal. Self-employment and emigration could bring a relatively high financial benefit, but, on the other hand, these strategies also bring high risks. This is the reason a great number of young people would rather choose to work for a low salary in a secure job, such as with the public administration.

This leads to a second hypothesis which assumes that very few things have changed in the people's consciousness, especially in regard to employment, during the last 16 years. It may be said that, "employment with the state" still has the strongest appeal, although it does not bring the best financial benefits.

Emigration

The annual rate of emigration from Macedonia is 1.54 emigrants per 1000 citizens. In other words, over 3000 citizens,⁵⁵ predominantly young people, leave the country each year. Almost 60% of the respondents consider this rate to be too high, and an additional 32.6% consider it to be high. Only 2.4% of the citizens consider it to be low. It is understandable that the 82.4% of the young people who declared that the best way to improve their financial situation is to emigrate consider that Macedonians emigrate only because of financial reasons. If we look at the general tables, this figure is 83.5%. This is enough to conclude that the emigrants from Macedonia are predominantly relocating for economic reasons, while the other reasons are almost marginal. This conclusion may be confirmed by the data that 46.8% of the respondents who described their living conditions as very bad, and 47.3% of those who described their living conditions as bad, are seriously thinking about the option to emigrate. Presented in general figures, 35.1% of the respondents are seriously thinking about emigrating. It should be pointed out that the majority of them, nevertheless, remain in their homeland.

To determine what percentage of those who consider emigrating are unlikely to return, a cross-tabulation was made using the questions "Do you plan to emigrate?" and "How long would you remain out of the country if you emigrated?". Thus it was determined that 42.6% of the young people who are planning to emigrate would leave the

country for good, which is 15.7% of the total number of respondents. In essence, this is the percentage of young people in the Republic of Macedonia who are most likely to leave the country. This is confirmed by the fact that 44.4% of the young people who think their living conditions will improve in the future are planning to emigrate for good, that is, they see relocation to a foreign country as a viable option for increasing their living standard.

As regards the most desired destinations where they would like to emigrate if they decided to do so, the young people who would like to stay abroad permanently chose more remote destinations, such as North America, Australia, and New Zealand. In contrast, those who are planning to leave the country for a shorter period of time prefer the European Union countries.

Young people in the Republic of Macedonia perceive the same problems as other parts of the population, but the responses indicate that they place more emphasis on certain problems and needs. The main problem they report is unemployment. Young people who should become part of the workforce certainly don't want to join the ranks of the unemployed, or, on the other hand, to work for low salaries or at unsatisfying employment. That is the reason why some of them want to leave the country in the search for a more secure future. However, the fact that the young people know to a great extent to determine in the right way the reasons for, as well as to locate the responsible ones who should solve, the problems they are facing every day, deserves a great attention. They recognize that the basic reason for unemployment is the low rate of economic growth. However, it is only a consequence of the low levels of foreign investments, and indirectly of the slow administrative reform (which should be increasing the level of the investments). Another problem they face is corruption, and that is the reason they hold the government responsible for overcoming the aforementioned obstacles, thereby increasing employment opportunities.

Although the respondents identify the government as the most responsible entity for the development of the economy, nevertheless they also single out other causes for the current situation. Inadequate education is one of them, but also they blame a low level of work ethics, and in that way they accept a part of the responsibility. This is the reason many of them are ready to improve their financial situations by personal efforts, and they are not waiting for anyone else to do it for them. As previous generations expected the state or some other institution to solve their problems, this signals a very important change in social consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions:

- The Republic of Macedonia's general economic problems also affect its young population.
- Young people view unemployment and corruption as the most pressing problems.
- The state institutions, according to young people, bear the most responsibility for solving the economic problems of the country.

⁵⁴ Ibid

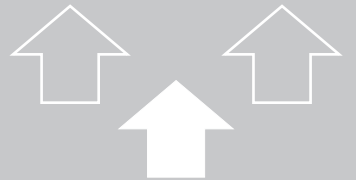
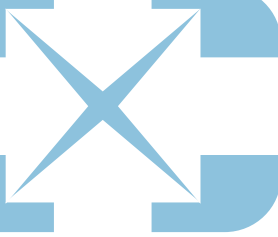
⁵⁵ www.worldpress.org/profiles/macedonia.cfm

- The state institutions, according to young people, are primarily responsible for the low economic growth and unemployment.
- However, the young people place part of the responsibility on other factors, including themselves.
- Another great problem is an outdated educational system that is undergoing reforms, but, according to young people, not sufficiently.
- They see the process of European Integration as a possibility for faster economic development, and, at the same time, new work opportunities.
- According to the respondents, the greatest investment should be made in agriculture.
- A certain number of young people consider emigration to be a quicker solution to their economic problems, that is, an option to find employment more quickly and earn financial resources for living.
- However, a great many of them see emigration as a last resort.
- The majority of those who would leave the country for a shorter period of time would prefer the EU, whereas those who would venture abroad for a longer period of time, or relocate permanently, would prefer North America or Australia.

Recommendations:

- Make reducing unemployment among young people a top priority of the economic policy of the country.
- Decrease pension and health care contributions from the salaries of all personnel under the age of 30, especially if it is their first employment.
- Provide free retraining courses and qualifying courses for young people to enable them to find jobs more easily.
- Advance "part-time" jobs as a way to increase employment among young people, and as a means of self-support during their studies.
- Create a campaign aimed towards the young population of the Republic of Macedonia as a means for endorsing:
 - an acceptance of a part of the responsibility for the economic development of the country
 - a greater personal engagement for the increase of their own incomes
 - an active participation in educational and economic reform as a prerequisite for personal improvement and to better their chances for business success
 - a reduction of their reliance on state institutions
 - an awareness of the various possibilities for progress in the business sphere, which would serve to decrease the lure of emigration.

APPENDIX



SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AND GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

How do you consider your living conditions to be?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Very good	71	5.9
Good	350	29.2
Average	503	42
Bad	220	18.4
Very bad	47	3.9
No answer/Don't know	6	0.5
Total	1197	100

Are you a member of a:

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Political party	181	15.1
NGO	95	7.9
Sport association	75	6.3
Professional association	24	2
Other organization	26	2.2
Not a member in any organization	769	64.2
No answer/Don't know	27	2.3
Total	1197	100

According to your opinion, in which direction is Republic of Macedonia going?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Right	179	15
Wrong	427	35.7
Cannot say	472	39.4
No answer/Don't know	119	9.9
Total	1197	100

What is the biggest problem in Republic of Macedonia at the moment?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Corruption	320	26.7
Unemployment	536	44.8
Poverty	257	21.5
Security issues	4	0.3
Ethnic issues	14	1.2
Crime	29	2.4
Social security	3	0.3
Education	7	0.6
Environment	5	0.4
Other	8	0.7
No answer/Don't know	14	1.2
Total	1197	100

If you had the chance, would you personally get involved in the development of Republic of Macedonia?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Definitely	732	61.2
Only if I have personal benefit	233	19.5
Never	120	10
No answer/Don't know	112	9.4
Total	1197	100

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

What would your vote be if next week a referendum for Macedonia's accession to the EU was held?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
For	883	73.8
Against	69	5.8
Not decided	128	10.7
Won't vote	96	8
No answer/Don't know	21	1.8
Total	1197	100

What would your vote be if next week a referendum for Macedonia's accession to NATO was held?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
For	813	67.9
Against	108	9
Not decided	133	11.1
Won't vote	99	8.3
No answer/Don't know	44	3.7
Total	1197	100

How will the EU integration process influence the Economic development?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Positively	990	82.7
Negatively	47	3.9
No influence	62	5.2
No answer/Don't know	98	8.2
Total	1197	100

How will the EU integration process influence the Foreign direct investment?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Positively	1019	85.1
Negatively	37	3.1
No influence	55	4.6
No answer/Don't know	86	7.2
Total	1197	100

How will the EU integration process influence the Domestic politics?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Positively	705	58.9
Negatively	136	11.4
No influence	171	14.3
No answer/Don't know	185	15.5
Total	1197	100

How will the EU integration process influence the Stability?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Positively	916	76.5
Negatively	59	4.9
No influence	102	8.5
No answer/Don't know	120	10
Total	1197	100

How will the EU integration process influence the Human rights?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Positively	899	75.1
Negatively	54	4.5
No influence	120	10
No answer/Don't know	124	10.4
Total	1197	100

How will the EU integration process influence the Technological development?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Positively	927	77.4
Negatively	48	4
No influence	82	6.9
No answer/Don't know	140	11.7
Total	1197	100

How will the EU integration process influence the National values/identity?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Positively	681	56.9
Negatively	148	12.4
No influence	156	13
No answer/Don't know	212	17.7
Total	1197	100

Will Macedonia's NATO membership increase your personal security?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Yes, a lot	113	9.4
Yes	290	24.2
To a certain extent	350	29.2
No	241	20.1
Not at all	101	8.4
No answer/Don't know	102	8.5
Total	1197	100

EDUCATION

To what extent do you think that the educational system in Macedonia offers practical skill-building?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
It offers excellent skill-building opportunities	38	3.2
It offers satisfying skill-building opportunities	207	17.3
It offers limited skill-building opportunities	442	36.9
It offers no practical skill-building opportunities	430	35.9
No answer/Don't know	80	6.7
Total	1197	100

If you had a choice what would you choose?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Foreign education	546	45.6
Domestic education	208	17.4
Partial studies abroad	374	31.2
No answer/Don't know	69	5.8
Total	1197	100

Would you agree that:

	Number of surveyed	Percent
State universities offer better quality than private ones	215	18
Private universities offer better quality than the state	303	25.3
Private universities offer easy access to a university degree	313	26.1
Both are good	166	13.9
Both are poor	102	8.5
No answer/Don't know	98	8.2
Total	1197	100

With which of the following statements do you agree?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
The educational system in Macedonia needs thorough reforms	561	46.9
The educational system in Macedonia needs some reforms	512	42.8
The educational system in Macedonia needs no reform at all	57	4.8
No answer/Don't know	67	5.6
Total	1197	100

ECONOMY AND MIGRATIONS

How would you describe the present general economic situation in Republic of Macedonia?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Excellent	14	1.2
Good	124	10.4
Bad	634	53
Very bad	416	34.8
No answer/Don't know	9	0.8
Total	1197	100

What are your expectations for the economic situation in the next several years?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Will be better	379	31.7
Will remain the same	443	37
Will be worse	200	16.7
No answer/Don't know	175	14.6
Total	1197	100

Which economic sector should be a priority in Macedonia?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Agriculture	495	41.7
Industry	417	34.8
Services (tourism, banking, telecommunications etc.)	208	17.4
No answer/Don't know	77	6.4
Total	1197	100

What is the main reason for emigration from Macedonia?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Economic situation	999	83.5
Security reasons	23	1.9
Personal non-economic reasons	70	5.8
Adventure	19	1.6
Better prospects for your children	66	5.5
Other	3	0.3
No answer/Don't know	17	1.4
Total	1197	100

Do you consider emigrating from Macedonia?

	Number of surveyed	Percent
Yes	420	35.1
Maybe	474	39.6
Not very likely	220	18.4
No	54	4.5
No answer/Don't know	29	2.4
Total	1197	100

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERCEPTION OF THE YOUTH
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**



Part One

Internal situation and general perceptions

1. How do you consider your living conditions?
 1. Very good
 2. Good
 3. Average
 4. Bad
 5. Very bad
 6. No answer/Don't know

2. How do you see your living conditions in the future?
 1. Very much improved
 2. Somewhat improved
 3. Same as now
 4. Somewhat worse
 5. Very much worse
 6. No answer/Don't know

3. Are you a member of a:
 1. Political party
 2. NGO
 3. Sport association
 4. Professional association
 5. Other organization
 6. Not a member in any organization
 7. No answer/Don't know

4. What is your main interest?
 1. Politics
 2. Economy/Business
 3. Sport
 4. Education
 5. Party/ Fun
 6. Other _____
 7. No answer/ Don't know

5. How much confidence do you have in:

Trust in	Very much	Somewhat yes	Somewhat no	No confidence	No answer/ Don't know
Government	1	2	3	4	5
President	1	2	3	4	5
Parliament	1	2	3	4	5
Judiciary	1	2	3	4	5
Army	1	2	3	4	5
Police	1	2	3	4	5
Media	1	2	3	4	5
Banks	1	2	3	4	5
NGO	1	2	3	4	5
Political Parties	1	2	3	4	5
EU	1	2	3	4	5
NATO	1	2	3	4	5
UN	1	2	3	4	5
Local Government	1	2	3	4	5
Religious institutions	1	2	3	4	5

6. From whom do you expect help to improve your living conditions?

1. Only myself
2. Family and relatives
3. Friends
4. State
5. Political parties
6. Local government
7. NGOs
8. EU
9. USA
10. No one
11. other _____ (WHO)
12. I do not need improvements
13. No answer/Don't know

7. According to your opinion, in which direction is Macedonia going?

1. Right
2. Wrong
3. Can not say
4. No answer/Don't know

8. What is the biggest problem in Macedonia at the moment?

1. Corruption
2. Unemployment
3. Poverty
4. Security issues
5. Ethnic tensions
6. Crime
7. Social security
8. Education
9. Environment
10. Other
11. No answer/Don't know

9. What is the influence for solving this problem of the:

Trust in	Very much	Somewhat	No influence	No answer/Don't know
Government	1	2	3	4
Private entities	1	2	3	4
Political parties	1	2	3	4
NGO	1	2	3	4
Local Government	1	2	3	4
Media	1	2	3	4
Religious institutions	1	2	3	4
International organizations	1	2	3	4
Yourself	1	2	3	4
Someone else	1	2	3	4

10. If you would have a chance, would you personally get involved in the development of Macedonia?

1. Definetly
2. Only if I have personal benefit
3. Never
4. No answer/Don't know

11. What is the influence of the following to the inter-ethnic relations:

	Positive	Negative	No influence	No answer/ Don't know
Government	1	2	3	4
Political Parties	1	2	3	4
NGO	1	2	3	4
Local Government	1	2	3	4
Media	1	2	3	4
Religious institutions	1	2	3	4
International organizations	1	2	3	4
Education	1	2	3	4

12. Compared to last year, what is the current state of inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia?

1. Very much improved
2. Somewhat improved
3. No changes
4. Somewhat worse
5. Very much worse
6. No answer/Don't know

13. In the upcoming year the inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia will:

1. Very much improve
2. Somewhat improve
3. No changes
4. Somewhat worsen
5. Very much worsen
6. No answer/Don't know

14. Do you believe that corruption or misuses of funds exists in:

	YES	NO	No answer/ Don't know
Ministries	1	2	3
Parliament	1	2	3
Police	1	2	3
Judiciary	1	2	3
Hospitals	1	2	3
Education	1	2	3
Local administration	1	2	3

15. Have you been a witness to corruption or asked substitutes for receiving services?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. No answer/Don't know

16. Would you take bribe if you had the opportunity to do so?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. No answer/Don't know

17. In your opinion the rights of:

	Should be Improved	They have enough rights	Should be reduced	No answer/Don't know
Women	1	2	3	4
Ethnic minorities	1	2	3	4
Homosexuals	1	2	3	4
Disabled people	1	2	3	4
Poor people	1	2	3	4

Part Two

International Relations

18. What would your vote be if next week a referendum for Macedonia's accession is held for:

	YES	NO	Not decide	Wont vote	No answer/ Don't know
EU	1	2	3	4	5
NATO	1	2	3	4	5

19. How will the EU integration process influence the following issues

	Positive	Negative	No influence	No answer/ Don't know
Economic development	1	2	3	4
Foreign Direct Investment	1	2	3	4
Domestic Politics	1	2	3	4
Stability	1	2	3	4
Human Rights	1	2	3	4
Technological development	1	2	3	4
National Values / Identity	1	2	3	4

20. What impact will the EU accession of Macedonia have on you?

1. Provide more opportunities
2. Remain the same
3. Reduce the opportunities
4. Not answered/Don't know

21. When will Macedonia become an EU member?

1. Within the next five years
2. Within the next ten years
3. More than 10 years
4. Never
5. No answer/Don't know

22. Will Macedonia's NATO membership increase your personal security?

1. Yes, a lot
2. Yes
3. To a certain extent
4. No
5. Not at all
6. No answer/Don't know

23. According to you what is the role of the UN agencies in Macedonia's development?

1. Contribute to the development in a large extent
2. Contribute to the development to a certain extent
3. No specific role
4. Contribute to stagnation to a certain extent
5. Contribute to stagnation in a large extent
6. No answer/Don't know

Part Three

Education

24. What is your perception on the quality of education in Macedonia?

	Excellent	Good	Bad	Very bad	No answer/Don't know
Primary	1	2	3	4	5
Secondary	1	2	3	4	5
Undergraduate	1	2	3	4	5
Postgraduate	1	2	3	4	5

25. To what extent do you think that the educational system in Macedonia offers practical skill building?

1. It offers excellent skill building opportunities
2. It offers satisfying skill building opportunities
3. It offers limited skill building opportunities
4. It offers no practical skill building opportunities
5. No answer/Don't know

26. Having in mind your current education, do you think that:

1. You can easily find a job
2. You can hardly find a job
3. You will never find a job
4. You need more education in order to get a job
5. No answer/Don't know

27. If you had a choice what would you choose?

1. Foreign education
2. Domestic education
3. Partial studies abroad
4. No answer/Don't know

28. If you had the chance to study (to continue your education) abroad which destination would you choose?

1. United States of America
2. Country in the EU
3. Country in the region
4. Other destination (please specify)
5. No answer/Don't know

29. With which of the following statements do you agree?

1. The educational system in Macedonia needs thorough reforms
2. The educational system in Macedonia needs some reforms
3. The educational system in Macedonia needs no reform at all
4. No answer/Don't know

30. Which is the best educational system?

1. Private education
2. State – financed education
3. A mixed system
4. Other (please specify)
5. No answer/Don't know

31. Would you agree that:

1. State universities offer better quality than private ones
2. Private universities offer better quality than the state – financed ones
3. Private universities offer easy access to a university degree
4. Both are good
5. Both are poor
6. No answer/Don't know

Part Four

Economy and migration

32. How would you describe the present general economic situation in Macedonia?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Bad
4. Very bad
5. No answer/ Don't know

33. What is your expectation for the economic situation in the next several years?

1. Will be better
2. Will remain the same
3. Will be worse
4. No answer/ Don't know

34. Who is mainly responsible for providing economic development?

1. Central government
2. Local authorities
3. Private entities
4. Foreign organisations
5. Citizens
6. Political parties
7. Other
8. No answer/ Don't know

35. How important are the following characteristics for securing higher and more stable economic development?

	Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important	No answer/ Don't know
Hard work	1	2	3	4	5
Better education	1	2	3	4	5
Administrative and judiciary reform	1	2	3	4	5
Foreign direct investments	1	2	3	4	5
Entering the EU	1	2	3	4	5

36. How important are the following characteristics as a reason for the slow economic development of Macedonia?

	Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important	No answer/ Don't know
Dissolution of the common Yugoslav market	1	2	3	4	5
Corruption	1	2	3	4	5
Incompetent management in companies	1	2	3	4	5
Poor government management	1	2	3	4	5
Inadequate education	1	2	3	4	5
Poor work performance by the employees	1	2	3	4	5

37. Which economic sector should be a priority in Macedonia?

1. Agriculture
2. Industry
3. Services (tourism, banking, telecommunications etc.)
4. No answer/ Don't know

38. What is your current financial situation:
1. Excellent (skip next question)
 2. Good
 3. Bad
 4. Very bad
 5. No answer/Don't know
39. What is the best way to improve your incomes?
1. Find a job/better job
 2. Start your own business
 3. Enter the gray market
 4. Join a political party
 5. Leave the country
 6. Other _____
 7. No answer/Don't know
40. According to you, the best employment is in:
1. Public administration
 2. Large company
 3. Private SME
 4. Self-employment
 5. No answer/Don't know
41. According to you, the scale of emigration rate from Macedonia is:
1. Very high
 2. Not so high
 3. Low
 4. Insignificant
 5. No answer/Don't know
42. What is the main reason for migration in Macedonia?
1. Economic perspectives
 2. Security reasons
 3. Personal non-economic reasons
 4. Adventure
 5. Better perspectives for your children
 6. Other _____
 7. No answer/Don't know
43. Do you consider migrating from Macedonia?
1. Yes
 2. Maybe
 3. Not very likely
 4. No (skip 43rd, 44th and 45th)
 5. No answer/Don't know
44. What would be your reasons for migration?
1. Financial
 2. Security
 3. Better fun
 4. Personal
 5. Other _____
 6. No answer/Don't know
45. If you immigrate how long you plan to stay abroad?
1. Couple of years
 2. Up to five years
 3. 5-10 years
 4. More than 10 years
 5. Forever
 6. No answer/Don't know
46. If you decide to immigrate what would be your preferable destination?
1. US & Canada
 2. Western Europe
 3. Australia & New Zealand
 4. Other _____
 5. No answer/Don't know