

EU-27 WATCH



No. 9
July 2010

ISSN 1610-6458

www.EU-27Watch.org

EU-27 Watch

Contributing partners are

Austrian Institute of International Affairs, Vienna
Bulgarian European Community Studies Association, Sofia
Center for European Studies / Middle East Technical University, Ankara
Centre d'études européennes de Sciences Po, Paris
Centre d'étude de la vie politique, Université libre de Bruxelles
Centre d'études et de recherches européennes Robert Schuman, Luxembourg
Centre of International Relations, Ljubljana
Cyprus Institute for Mediterranean, European and International Studies, Nicosia
Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen
Elcano Royal Institute and UNED University, Madrid
European Institute of Romania, Bucharest
Federal Trust for Education and Research, London
Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki
Foundation for European Studies - European Institute, Łódź
Greek Centre of European Studies and Research, Athens

Institute of International Affairs and Centre for Small State Studies at the University of Iceland, Reykjavik
Institute for International Relations, Zagreb
Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest
Institute for Strategic and International Studies, Lisbon
Institute of International and European Affairs, Dublin
Institute of International Relations, Prague
Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University
Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome
Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga
Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta
Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', The Hague
Ohrid Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs, Skopje
Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
University of Tartu

On the project

Due to the new treaty provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and the economic crises the enlarged EU of 27 member states is on the search for a new *modus operandi* while also continuing membership talks with candidate countries. The EU-27 Watch project is mapping out discourses on these and more issues in European policies all over Europe. Research institutes from all 27 member states and the four candidate countries give overviews on the discourses in their respective countries.

The reports focus on a **reporting period from December 2009 until May 2010**. This survey was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire that has been elaborated in March and April 2010. Most of the 31 reports were delivered in May 2010. This issue and all previous issues are available on the EU-27 Watch website: www.EU-27Watch.org.

The EU-27 Watch No. 9 receives significant funding from the **Otto Wolff-Foundation, Cologne**, in the framework of the *"Dialog Europa der Otto Wolff-Stiftung"*, and financial support from the **European Commission**. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



Disclaimer

Institutes/authors are responsible for the content of their country reports. The publisher and editorial team cannot be held responsible for any errors, consequences arising from the use of information contained in the EU-27 Watch or its predecessors, or the content of external links on www.EU-27watch.org or in the EU-27 Watch. The content of the EU-27 Watch is protected under German copyright law. The articles of the EU-27 Watch can be printed, copied, and stored for personal, scientific, and educational use for free. Articles of the EU-27 Watch may not be used for commercial purposes. Any other reprint in other contexts is not allowed without prior permission from the publisher. For permission or any other question concerning the use of the EU-27 Watch please contact: info@EU-27watch.org.

Editorial Team

Publisher: Prof. Dr. Mathias Jopp
Executive Editor: Dr. Katrin Böttger
Managing Editor: Julian Plottka
Editorial Staff: Daniela Caterina, Gregory Kohler, Christoph Kornes
Layout: Matthias Jäger

Contact: info@EU-27watch.org
www.EU-27watch.org

 Institut für
Europäische Politik
Bundesallee 23
D-10717 Berlin
Tel.: +49/30/88.91.34-0
Fax: +49/30/88.91.34-99
E-mail: info@iep-berlin.de
Internet: www.iep-berlin.de

Macedonia**Lisbon Treaty brings hope for Macedonia**

Biljana Janeva*

The news about the Lisbon Treaty in Macedonia was followed with great attention. Macedonia has been a candidate country since 2005 and has been praised for its progress in the reforms in the last two Progress Reports of the EU Parliament. After the news about the Lisbon Treaty, the Macedonian media and public opinion have turned to positive and hopeful expectations. Although overshadowed by the internal issues and the overall debate about the EU integration process of the country, the main interest in the Republic of Macedonia in terms of the Lisbon Treaty was enlargement. “Will the Lisbon Treaty speed up the integration of the Western Balkans? What will happen next?” These were the questions posed in many talk shows and opinion pieces in the newspapers and TV. According to the Macedonian public, the treaty has a much more flexible approach in terms of the other questions and issues. The Lisbon Treaty is expected to ease the EU accession of the Republic of Macedonia, because it clearly states that all countries may become part of the Union, says the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Antonio Milososki.¹

Is the EU prepared for a direct democracy? This was one of the main questions circulating in the Macedonian media. Also, there is a lot of discussion regarding the willingness of the “new EU” to embrace the candidate countries and the possible “tiredness” of the EU for enlargement and the wish of the EU to be left alone to deal with its internal problems first. In Macedonia, these EU opinions and movements are followed with a great attention, mainly because it is regarded that EU integration is the first and foremost important strategic and security priority of the country.

The debate in the country between the political leaders is mainly in the domestic arena, in regard to the progress reports, the reforms needed for advancing Macedonia’s position and getting an accession date, reciprocal accusations between the political leaders about who’s to blame for not getting a date for negotiations, etc.

The new functions in the EU

The new function of the President of the European Council was positively viewed, and always tied to the implications for Macedonia from the creation of this new function. Herman Van Rompuy was seen in a positive light, as a leader who would give a voice to the EU regarding key issues, such as enlargement. A big debate is the constant shift in direction by the EU presidencies. While sometimes helpful, this can be somewhat burdensome. The debate revolves around the question: is a stable presidency or a changing presidency better for Macedonia and its European future?

With the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the focus of the EU can be put back on the Western Balkans. That is how most of the analytics and politicians view the election of the President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. It was recognised as a positive signal towards the enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkan countries. It shows that the process is alive, many experts from the NGO sector analyse. Although both of the new functions don’t have competences in the negotiation process of the candidate countries, their role is still viewed as positive, dialogue enabling, and helpful in the accession of candidate countries, in opening or closing some of the negotiation chapters, and in preventing vetoes from member states.²

European External Action Service and European Citizens’ Initiative

The news about the European External Action Service was commented differently. One aspect emphasised was the concentration on foreign policy and enlargement, but also the creation of new structures within the EU. On the other hand, there was a debate over the mandate of the EU to sign international treaties in the name of its member states and open embassies around the world, establishing itself as a global power. Will that be at the cost of the member states? Will the EU act as a single state and is this transfer of power sustainable? These were some of the questions posed in the Macedonian media, without having answers this early in time.³

* OHRID Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs.

In Macedonia, the debate about the new European Citizens' Initiative was not so strong. There were reports, mostly in the written media, that EU citizens will be able to demand that the EU Commission propose new laws. It is still unclear how this "direct democracy" experiment will function in practice and if this is a good idea at all.

¹ Statement from Minister Milososki for the news portal Time.mk, available at:

<http://www.time.mk/read/cbcf09afa7/ae14c1077d/index.html> (last access: 20 March 2010).

² Part of these statements available at: <http://www.dw-online.eu/dw/article/0,,4919103,00.html> (last access: 27 April 2010).

³ Analysis of the daily Biznis, available at: <http://biznis24.com.mk/node/5161> (last access: 10 May 2010).

Macedonia**In front of the gates of Europe**

Biljana Janeva*

The Republic of Macedonia strongly supports the EU enlargement process for all Western Balkan countries. The Western Balkan region is the only region which is bordered by the EU on all sides. However, not only its geography, but also its multiculturalism and rich multiethnic history make it only natural that it belongs to Europe.

Since Croatia solved the bilateral issue with Slovenia, it is clear that it is advancing to the EU's doorstep. The Republic of Macedonia was also part of the package for accession into the EU, and, having spent five years as a candidate country, it has so far fulfilled the conditions and benchmarks set by the EU and received a recommendation by the EU Commission in order to obtain a start date for the accession negotiations. The only remaining obstacle keeping the Republic of Macedonia from receiving a start date from the EU is the bilateral issue with its southern neighbour – an absurd dispute over Macedonia's constitutional name imposed by Greece. Yet, the Republic of Macedonia is willing to cooperate and to solve this issue in order to take a step further and start negotiations. Nevertheless, the name issue is a very sensitive issue for the Macedonian people, touching their identity and language.

There was huge disappointment expressed by the Macedonian public after the Council of Ministers failed to give a start date for the accession negotiations, and there was general dissatisfaction from the “double standards” imposed on Macedonia and it not being judged by its merits.

“On the 60th anniversary of the day when Schuman presented the proposal for a United Europe, Macedonia is the best example that the EU forgets that his idea was that Europe be open to those who want to join, and also forgets the idea of Jean Monnet that the veto requires a strong reason and the ability to look past the national egoism”, writes the daily Nova Makedonija. “Macedonia will pass yet another year put aside by the unprincipled politics of the EU, which is distant from the ideals of its visionaries. Macedonia is the best example that the basic ideas of the founders of the EU are being ignored today, being blocked on its way toward European integration by one member country. If the founding fathers would be alive, they would have been disappointed that bilateral issues stand in the way of enlargement”, say the Macedonian experts consulted by the newspaper. It quotes the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, Antonio Milososki, that the dream of the founders of the EU – a Europe whole and united – can never be realised without the Balkans.¹ With the help of the EU, Macedonia has so far successfully built a functional model of democracy in a multiethnic society, which can serve as an example for the region and abroad.

Having the close historical and cultural connections in mind, the Macedonian model is of great importance for the other Balkan countries, and it has a positive contribution to regional stability. That is why the accession process in Macedonia should be viewed in its larger context, not only through the prism of the solution of the name issue with Greece. “We are not looking for a shorter way, but a steady process which will enable us to advance on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria. The start of the negotiations for Macedonia will be a win-win solution for all”, said Milososki.²

The attitudes in Macedonia regarding its European integration agenda are moving from total disappointment due to the fact that its future is blocked by a member state of the EU (which can last for several years), through encouragement because of the fact that if the country focuses on the EU agenda (the reforms foreseen in the negotiation chapters and the legislation approximation) it can shorten the length of the negotiation process even while sitting in the EU “waiting room”, to positive views that the name issue will be resolved and Macedonia is ready to immediately start working on the negotiation chapters.³

Another issue, which is becoming more and more obvious, is that EU officials do not even use Macedonia's name any more. Being aware of the name dispute between Macedonia and Greece, and even knowing that the country has a temporary name reference – “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” or FYR of Macedonia in short – EU officials, either from ignorance or from respect

* OHRID Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs.

towards their Greek colleagues, refer to the country as “FYROM” (which is perceived as offensive by the Macedonian people) or as “the country”, “your country” or, simply, the Former Yugoslav Republic.⁴

After the bad news from Brussels that Macedonia was not given a date for opening negotiations, the government blamed the EU for not setting a firm agenda for Macedonia. “The EU, in the same amount as Greece, will be guilty if Macedonia doesn’t get a date for starting negotiations in June” was the message sent by both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Vice-Prime Minister for European integration. Both of them called upon the EU to keep its credibility and be principled in its decision to start negotiations for Macedonia.

The opposition, on the other hand, says that the government is ignoring the clear messages from the EU that there is no other way for membership except through a compromise in the name dispute with Greece. According to the opposition, by doing that, the government is trying to cover up its own responsibility for the failure, regardless of all the consequences Macedonia might face both internally and externally. The opposition leader Crvenkovski said that this is another failure by the government, another missed chance for Macedonia, which has been waiting for 20 months. “Self pity doesn’t move the country forward”, says Crvenkovski. “The prime minister should deal with the problems, not tell us how hard it is for him and who is to blame for his failure”.⁵

Membership perspectives

Regarding the prognosis of the membership perspectives of the countries aspiring towards EU membership, public opinion is clear and realistic. Croatia will undoubtedly become a member state. Iceland will start its negotiations process. Serbia, Albania and Montenegro will receive candidate statuses (and maybe start negotiations for membership before Macedonia). Turkey is already negotiating and still has some issues, but is actively included in the Union for the Mediterranean. The neighbouring states are already planned in the new Europe 2020 Strategy. Where is Macedonia in all of this? was the conclusion drawn by a political talk show on A1 TV.⁶

The biggest fear in Macedonia is that it will be “stuck” waiting for Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo so that these countries can join together. Clearly, they aren’t on the same level of development and the delay could only worsen the fragile situation in the country.

At the moment, public opinion in Macedonia is not so certain there will be a next round of enlargement after Croatia, or, if there will be, when it would happen. The uncertainty comes mostly from the EU’s “tiredness” concerning enlargement and its will to resolve its own problems before further enlargement. Also, with European economic recovery in question, it is still uncertain if the EU has the capacity to enlarge at the moment.

Unfortunately, that is not what the candidate and accession countries want to hear. The future looks much grimmer without an EU integration perspective. It is a question of stability, economic prosperity, access to markets and, above all, peace and security. Not having a clear signal from the EU has a demotivating and demoralising influence on the people: it attracts Euroscepticism, instability and uncertainty.

For Macedonia, the undesirable outcome of every EU meeting has consequences in its political and interethnic relations, as well as in the economy. Social and economic tensions are rising and there is only one subject in the internal discussion – the name issue.

There should be a clear and firm rule in the EU that one member state should not, in any condition, use its position to “bully” a candidate country which has fulfilled all the conditions necessary for the next step in its accession process. It should be reiterated that bilateral issues of any nature are only bilateral issues between the two countries, not between the EU as a whole and that country. Or, if there is a rule that all bilateral issues are indeed EU issues, then the EU should show true leadership and arbitrate all bilateral issues, present and potential, between all member countries and candidate countries.⁷

The Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean

The general opinion in Macedonia regarding the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the Union for the Mediterranean is that the EU should focus more on its own “backyard” – the Western Balkans. The EU should deal with the closest issues first, as the Balkan region is not even a backyard. It belongs to the

EU: it is surrounded on all sides by the EU, but it is not in the EU. With regard to the EaP, the debate revolves around whether the EU will focus more attention on the EaP countries from 2011 onward and forget Macedonia or force it to wait for the other Western Balkan states (Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo). "The Western Balkans were the focus in 2009, now it is Iceland and the new neighbourhood countries will be next. Is Macedonia lost? In any case, there will be a change in the policy of the EU regarding enlargement", analyses the Dnevnik daily newspaper.⁸

The countries from the EaP are regarded as having more support in the EU, especially among the new member states (from the 2004 and 2007 enlargement). This will also be evident in the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA), which will probably be diminished or conjoined with the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), which will pit Macedonia against bigger competition, prognoses the daily Dnevnik. Most discussions in public regarding the EaP are in correlation to the Macedonian position and standpoint.

The creation of the Union for the Mediterranean was considered by many as a utopian and false hope for connecting the Mediterranean countries and for creating a greater influence of European politics. The functioning of the Union for the Mediterranean is only monitored and reported in Macedonia.

¹ Interviews of the newspaper Nova Makedonija, EU forgets about the ideals of Monet and Shuman, available at: <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=5810918166&id=9&setlzdanie=21978> (last access: 8 May 2010).

² Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, Antonio Milososki at a conference in Sweden, available at: <http://www.vlada.mk/?q=node/5406> (last access: 21 May 2010).

³ Even without a date we can negotiate with EU, analyses Nova Makedonija daily newspaper, available at: <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=5710102918&id=9&setlzdanie=21977> (last access: 7 May 2010).

⁴ Analysis by the time.mk news portal, available at: <http://www.time.mk/read/cbcf0afa7/ae14c107d/index.html> (last access: 20 May 2010).

⁵ Analysis and interviews by A1 TV: Macedonia asks for principality by the EU, available at: <http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=123988> (last access: 20 May 2010).

⁶ From Studio 2 vo 20, aired on the 10 May 2010, available at: <http://a1.com.mk/default.aspx> (last access: 20 July 2010).

⁷ In the OHRID Institute's Leadership Monitoring Report N 2, p. 43.

⁸ Available at: <http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=DEBE6D4BCAA39995BD97D9006920FD74> (last access: 18 May 2010).

Macedonia**Crisis of Europe or Europe in Crisis?**

Biljana Janeva*

Greece is assessed as always being the “bad boy” of the EU and being able to get away with anything. The developments of the economic crisis were closely followed in Macedonia, not only because Greece is the biggest foreign investor in Macedonia, with a share of 60 percent of total foreign direct investment (FDI) in Macedonia, but also because Macedonia wanted to see how the EU would react: would it decide to “punish” the “bad boy” or save it again? The debates mostly focused on the overall influence of the situation in Greece and how it would affect Macedonia. Greece received financial aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union, but that does not mean that the authorities’ headaches are gone. This also applies to Macedonia, which is most exposed to Greek capital, analyse the Macedonian newspapers.¹ According to the media, the Greek financial crisis arouses fear and anxiety in Macedonia.² The question, which is circuiting at all times, is: how big will the consequences be and how will Macedonia feel them? Having in mind that Greece is the biggest and most used port for exports, the constant strikes of Greek officials had large consequences on Macedonia’s international business as well. The Greek crisis did not have any direct consequences at first, but Macedonian experts, authorities and businessmen were carefully following its progress. Other questions which are addressed by the Macedonian media are: “Why does the European Union discuss the billions of Euros needed to prevail a Greek bankruptcy? Why is nobody discussing sanctions, when Greece has violated all standards and procedures? Why hasn’t Greece started selling its islands? Is it worth saving Greece? What will be the effect on the whole EU? Who will be next?” The Macedonian public believes that the EU public and authorities should start asking these questions.

The Macedonian media wrote that the first wave from Greece was felt in the textile industry. Some Greek companies closed, supposedly because Greece is bound to cutting expenses and rationalising its spending. The remaining Greek companies in Macedonia, due to the financial issues, are working with decreased capacity, and it is possible that there will be a further withdrawal of capital from Macedonia. In the following period, the Greek flight will be intensified. As said by the experts and the media, the monetary authorities in the Republic of Macedonia have already done analysis for the impact of the Greek crisis in Macedonia, and it is noted that those banks in Macedonia that are under Greek supervision are safe and stable. Taki Fiti says that the fact that Greek ratings fell to their lowest levels so far gives a bad impression for the entire region, especially for the closest countries.³ As Fiti stated, the low Greek debt ratings will influence the perception of investors for the entire region, including Macedonia.

Prime Minister Gruevski showed serious concerns for the Greek crisis. According to the Prime Minister, the situation is on the verge of becoming dramatic and could have a bigger influence on the Macedonian economy. “We cautiously follow the situation in Greece, with hope that this issue will soon be closed and that the European Union will find a solution for stopping the progression of the issue in the EU and the region as well, because if it takes further negative directions, which is also possible, it might represent new shocks for our economy”, said the Prime Minister.⁴

The political and expert opinion in Macedonia was also focused on comparing the situations in Macedonia and Greece – between a candidate country and a member state. The International Monetary Fund’s visit in Macedonia and their views on the crisis were very lively discussed. Namely, the foreign position of Macedonia has improved. Exports are starting to increase and imports are still decreasing. The deficit is slowly decreasing and it is expected to fall to 2.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). The Minister of Finance Stavreski stated that Macedonia will accomplish its planned growth of 2 percent of GDP in 2010, and a moderate but successful recovery of domestic expenditure is expected, which will be especially prominent in the second half of this year.⁵ Income was lower than planned and also decreased from last year, but improvements were noticed for the first time in April 2010. Stavreski said that he expects this trend to continue to the end of this year, and he announced careful policy in the expenditure side and its adaptation if needed. Gosev, Governor of the Central Bank in Macedonia, said that the recovery does not depend only on Macedonian policy, it is dependant on a worldwide recovery, and especially on the part with which Macedonia collaborates

* OHRID Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs.

most. According to the estimates of Macedonian experts, Macedonia will lose more than 220 million US Dollars by 2014 as a consequence of the Greek crisis.⁶

The Macedonian media were occupied with the debate on whether the crisis in Greece is becoming a European crisis. With the worsening of credit ratings for Greece, Portugal and Spain, the crisis is spreading. Talk now centres on the overall economic growth of the Eurozone, the economic prospects of the EU as a whole and the means of dealing with the situation.

In that context, the perceptions of investors on Greece, but also on the Balkan region and Europe as a whole, are worsening, which undoubtedly has implications for the countries that are not directly affected by the crisis.⁷

The Macedonian media reported on the decision of the finance ministers in the Euro group to support Greece.⁸ According to the media, the ministers stated that, although Athens has their support, it still needs to take responsibility for its own state finances. Also, although the Euro group supports Greece, it still demands concrete measures for decreasing Greece's public debt. It is already clear that Greece will manage to "come out of the woods" with the 120 billion Euros it will get from the EU and the IMF in the next 3 years, but in return Greece had to pledge unseen cuts and measures, which will turn public opinion against the government and worsen the overall situation in the country and the region, analyse the experts in the Macedonian media.⁹

The newest economic strategy for sustainable growth, known as the Europe 2020 Strategy, appeared during the biggest economic crisis of the last decades. The strategy for innovation and green growth are part of the draft plan for competition and the proposals to strengthen the monitoring of national reform programmes.¹⁰ Europe 2020 replaces the Lisbon Agenda from 2000, according to which the Union was supposed to become one of the most dynamic knowledge based economies by 2010. According to the Macedonian media, the success of Europe is possible only if the Union acts together, through a strategy which will secure a more efficient exit of the economic crisis, as well as securing a sustainable and inclusive economy, which will bring a high employment level, productivity and social cohesion. The media in Macedonia refer to the Europe 2020 Strategy as a base for the vision of the European social and market economy for the 21st century. The strategy has three priorities:

- strong growth through the development of a knowledge and innovation based economy;
- sustainable growth through resource promotion and a greener and more competitive economy; and
- strong economy growth with a high employment level and delivery of social and territory cohesion.

The development of these priorities will be measured through the success and accomplishments of certain measures.

The expert opinion in the Macedonian media is that the worldwide economic crisis brought many problems and unstable tendencies in the economy to surface, but, with this Strategy, the EU economy can be directed on the right track.¹¹

¹ Analysis by the daily newspaper Utrinski Vesnik, available at: <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=9EF45F0B1F055949806E35D5D5C35CE5> (last access: 3 May 2010).

² Analysis by the Macedonian Edition of Deutsche Welle, available at: <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5522196,00.html> (last access: 30 April 2010).

³ Analysis by the daily newspaper Utrinski Vesnik, available at: <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=9EF45F0B1F055949806E35D5D5C35CE5> (last access: 3 May 2010).

⁴ Interview of the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski for TV Sitel's news, available at: <http://www.sitel.com.mk/dnevnik/biznis/gruevski-grchkata-kriza-mozen-nov-shok-za-makedonskata-ekonomija> (last access: 30 April 2010).

⁵ The International Monetary Fund observations, and the address of the Minister of Finance. Stavreski, Macedonian Information Agency, available at: <http://www.mia.mk/default.aspx?vld=73655519&lld=1&pmld> (last access: 5 May 2010).

⁶ Analysis and reportage from the daily newspaper Vreme, available at: <http://www.vreme.com.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=7&tabid=1&EditionID=2047&ArticleID=142867> (last access: 10 May 2010).

⁷ From the daily newspaper Utrinski Vesnik, available at: <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=053C9ED46F1C7F45921A3E6E989C6CF6> (last access: 10 May 2010).

⁸ From the TV Sitel news, available at: <http://www.sitel.com.mk/dnevnik/biznis/evrogrupata-podgotvena-da-obezbedi-30-milijardi-evra-pomosh-za-grcija> (last access 20 May 2010).

⁹ From the daily newspaper Nova Makedonija, available at: <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=120101058271&id=11&setIzdanie=21888> (last access: 20 May 2010).

¹⁰ According to the official information from the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia available at: <http://www.sobranie.mk/default.asp?ItemID=5222EE77E5736F4BAAE5772654471CD6> (last access: 09.05.2010).

¹¹ From the Alsat TV, available at: <http://alsat.mk/svet/242414.html?print> (last access: 21 May 2010).

Macedonia**A need for a regional climate strategy in the Balkans**

Biljana Janeva*

Climate change politics in Macedonia are interlinked with the European integration process, as well as with the wider political horizon.

According to the Macedonian daily newspaper Dnevnik, the Copenhagen climate summit organised by the UN is hardly possible to be assessed as a new phase in human thought and organisation or as the corner stone of a new ecologically conscious civilisation. According to the daily, the climate summit was threatened by multiple fiascos: lack of a binding agreement, the discrediting of renowned scientists, and open dispute between the developing world and the wealthy world. Copenhagen will be noted for revealing profiteer's interests, politicians' dirty interests, the misuse of the civil sector and the manipulation of the world leading media, notes the daily.¹ After the summit, the media in Macedonia were filled with headlines, such as "Failure and downfall of the Copenhagen Summit". According to the Macedonian media and experts, although the Copenhagen summit was declared to be a fiasco, the adopted agreement has certain duties for the countries, especially small ones like Macedonia.²

The media in Macedonia was also focused on Macedonia's preparations for the Copenhagen summit. As stated in the media, according to the Minister for Environment and Physical Planning Nexhati Jakupi, the Republic of Macedonia does not have a big contribution or participation in global warming, but, since it is a developing country, it strongly feels the effects and the impact of climate change. The Ministry has held a coordinative meeting regarding the actions necessary on the state level as a response to the Copenhagen Accord.³

The President of the Republic of Macedonia George Ivanov held an address at the Copenhagen summit demonstrating Macedonia's support for conveying the global agreement.

"We are already witnessing the negative effects of climate change and we must act promptly in order to prevent the process from having an irreversible negative impact. This is why we need a legally binding global agreement creating the best possible conditions which will keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius. In this regard, we strongly support the European Union in its efforts to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and its advocacy for global emissions reduction by at least 50 percent by 2050 compared to 1990 levels, as well as an aggregate developed countries' emissions reduction of at least 80-95 percent."⁴

The conclusions were noted and discussed in the press: the mitigation and adoption measures are costly. The Republic of Macedonia cannot cover the expenses by itself, which is why its participation in this global action is exquisitely active. According to the media and the authorities in the Republic of Macedonia, the measures implemented by Macedonia are completely in accordance with those proposed by the Kyoto Protocol. The Republic of Macedonia is actively working on reducing the emissions of harmful gases.

However, the opinions of the NGOs working in the sector are different. Although the NGOs warn about the extremely serious consequences in all sectors, there are no real mitigation measures. Mitigation is not a goal in the Energy Strategy either; according to this document, low-quality domestic lignite will remain Macedonia's main energy source in the next two decades. Its solar potential is mentioned with symbolic value, but it is not even analysed as such. Macedonia is in a very specific position: it is a Non-Annex I country to Kyoto and an EU candidate. This means that it does not have obligations concerning its targets and it is eligible for both clean development mechanism (CDM) projects and EU pre-accession funds. However, this situation will not last forever. Once it becomes an EU member state, it will lose both opportunities for funding and have to become an Annex I country (define its targets). This situation is not reflected in the country's related strategic documents and Macedonia seems to be rather disinterested when it comes to opportunities for funding clean energy projects. According to BELLS, a Macedonian NGO in the Balkan Bridges Network, the Balkans are in urgent need of an action plan for climate change. The countries in the region already suffer from a serious adaptation deficit to its current climate, deriving from a combination of socio-economic factors and the

* OHRID Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs.

legacy of chronic environmental mismanagement. Large investments are needed to guarantee an environmentally sound development pathway that reduces vulnerability and increases resilience. The Western Balkans need mitigation and adaptation efforts for climate change. There is a need for adoption of national plans in the parliaments by involving the civil sector as a partner in adaptation as well as mitigation of climate change, for the protection of citizens from unclean technologies and for all current and future investments to include analysis of their climate change impact.⁵ This NGO has sent letters to governments throughout the region demanding an increase in regional cooperation and regular meetings in which an action plan of the Western Balkans for adapting to and dealing with climate change could be adopted. According to the NGO sector in Macedonia, there is a growing need for more debate regarding the environment and climate change. It comprises only 0.2 percent of the total questions asked by Members of Parliament in the parliament, and 0.67 percent of the information published in the printed media.

There was little news and no discussion regarding the questions on the EU's energy and climate policy, the best strategy to fight climate change and alternatives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

¹ Analyses of the daily Nova Makedonija, available at: <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=12169102399&id=9&prilog=0&setlzdanie=21863> (last access: 21 May 2010).

² Available at: <http://www.time.mk/cluster/32c2564c19/samitot-vo-kopenhagen-neuspeh.html> (last access: 20 July 2010).

³ Information from the official website of the Ministry, available at: <http://www.moepp.gov.mk/default-MK.asp?ItemID=C5856FDF8C89A440BEED28D98E97E1AE> (last access: 19 April 2010).

⁴ The President of Republic of Macedonia H.E. Gjorgje Ivanov address at the UN Conference for Climate change in Copenhagen, Information from the news portal Time.mk, available at: <http://www.time.mk/read/10c69c2744/b4d3356022/index.html> (last access: 20 July 2010).

⁵ Information from the Macedonian Information Agency, available at: <http://www.mia.com.mk/default.aspx?vld=691462&lld=1&pmkd> (last access: 20 May 2010).

Macedonia

Current issues in Macedonia

Biljana Janeva*

According to the official "Programme for work of the Government of Republic of Macedonia", Macedonia's foreign policy for the current period was devoted to five strategic priorities: NATO membership, starting accession negotiations with the EU and membership in the EU, liberalisation (abolishing) of visas for Macedonian citizens, overcoming the name dispute created by Greece, and strengthening its economic and public diplomacy. Also, these were the questions and issues most discussed by the Macedonian media and institutions in the past period.

NATO membership remains a very painful burden for Macedonia. After the fiasco at the Bucharest Summit in 2008, when Macedonia did not get its promised (and earned) membership because of the name dispute with Greece, it still continued with its army reforms and contributions to NATO missions abroad. The Republic of Macedonia has completed the longest preparations for membership in the alliance's history and is the fifth largest contributor to NATO's international missions, with regard to population, compared to all NATO members.¹

The other big debate is EU membership: the criteria, the presidencies, the benchmarks, the reforms to be passed and the tempo of the reforms (100 laws are to be passed in 2010). Also, a big issue is the creation of national negotiating teams for EU integration and their competencies.

One of the most important foreign aims in Macedonia was a complete liberalisation of the visa regime with countries in the Schengen zone, which happened on 19 December 2009 and brought unprecedented joy and hope for the Macedonian people.

Regarding plans for multilateral activities, the biggest foreign-political engagement in the Republic of Macedonia in 2010 is the Presidency with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from May until November. The priorities of the Macedonian Presidency with the Council of Europe are the fight against corruption, the reform of the European Court of Human Rights through an increase in the efficiency of the judiciary and education of the judges on a national level, integrating national minorities into European societies, the promotion of the position of the Roma people, protection of the cultural heritage and religious dimension of the inter-cultural dialogue, as well as more active inclusion of the youth in the political and democratic developments of the countries from South-eastern Europe. Unfortunately, the Macedonian Presidency of the Council of Europe has not passed without scandals and problems. Again, Greece blocked this important Macedonian engagement with opposition to its name, saying that it shouldn't be called the Macedonian Presidency, but the Presidency of FYROM. This would have been a new precedent in the Council of Europe, as every country, regardless of its official name, bears the presidency by its first name. That was why the Macedonian Presidency was left as such. After all the energy lost in the disputes and explanations, Macedonia was finally able to focus on its Presidency programme.²

Of course, the most burning issue, and the issue most present in the public domain, is the name dispute with Greece. Regarding the negotiations that the Republic of Macedonia participates in with Greece under the patronage of the United Nations, a big step forward was evident in the last period. There were a number of direct meetings between state officials of the two countries, which brought a sign of improvement of relations between the countries. The negotiations continue, however, and real progress hasn't been made in the last months.

The experts' opinion regarding the foreign policy of the Republic of Macedonia is that it is still burdened with internal political processes. It should be qualitatively strengthened, which requires a national consensus by all political parties regarding the priorities of the Macedonian foreign policy, as well as the means for its successful realisation – diminishing the influence of internal cross-party disputes and building and promoting unity in the representation of Macedonian foreign-political priorities.³

* OHRID Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs.

¹ The material is taken from the text of Biljana Janeva for the Leadership Monitoring Report N. 2, published by the OHRID Institute, p. 32, available at: <http://oi.org.mk/upload/Foreign-affairs-2.pdf> (last access: 20 July 2010).

² More information can be found on the news portal Time.mk, available at: <http://www.time.mk/read/10c69c2744/b4d33562/index.html> (last access: 21 May 2010).

³ In the Leadership Monitoring Report N. 2, published by the OHRID Institute, p. 37, available at: <http://oi.org.mk/upload/Foreign-affairs-2.pdf> (last access: 20 July 2010).

Questionnaire for EU-27 Watch, No. 9

Reporting period December 2009 until May 2010 – Deadline for country reports 21 May

All questions refer to the position/assessment of your country's government, opposition, political parties, civil society organisations, pressure groups, press/media, and public opinion. Please name sources wherever possible!

1. Implementation of the Lisbon Treaty

On the 1 December 2009 the EU-reform ended with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty. However, the new treaty provisions still have to be implemented. Some procedures and conditions have to be determined. In other cases, procedures, power relations, and decision-making mechanisms will change due to the new provisions.

- How is the work of the new President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, assessed in your country? Which changes to the role of the rotating council presidency are expected?
- How is the work of the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, assessed in your country? Please take into particular consideration both her role within the European Commission and her relationship to the Council of the European Union.
- On 25 March 2010 a "Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service" was presented. How is this concept perceived in your country? Which alternatives are discussed?
- On 31 March 2010 the European Commission presented a proposal defining the rules and procedures for the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). What are the expectations for the ECI in your country? What are the various positions concerning the rules and procedures?

2. Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Commission has given its opinion on Iceland's application for EU-membership and a decision from the Council is expected before the end of June. Croatia seems to have settled its border dispute with Slovenia. Against this background:

- Which countries does your country expect to become members of the European Union in the next enlargement round? What are the opinions in your country on the membership of these countries?
- How are the membership perspectives of those countries discussed, which are not expected to become a member in the next enlargement round?

The Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean were the last major projects dealing with the European neighbourhood:

- How are these projects assessed in your country?

3. European economic policy and the financial and economic crisis

The European Council agreed on 25/26 March on the key elements of the Europe 2020 strategy, the successor of the Lisbon strategy. While not being on the formal agenda the economic and financial situation in Greece was discussed. The European Council agreed on a finance package combining bilateral loans from the eurozone and financing through the International Monetary Fund.

- How is the finance package for Greece assessed in your country? Are there any opinions on the process, how the agreement on the package was reached?
- Which lessons should be drawn from the Greek case for a reform of the Stability and Growth Pact?
- How is the idea of "a strong coordination of economic policies in Europe" perceived in your country? What concepts of an European economic governance are discussed in your country and which role do they assign to the Euro group?
- How is the Europe 2020 strategy discussed in your country? What are the priorities for the Europe 2020 strategy from your country's perspective?

4. Climate and energy policy

The climate conference in Copenhagen took note of the Copenhagen Accord but did not reach a binding agreement. The next conference of the parties (COP 16 & CMP 6) will take place at the end of November 2010.

- How is the Copenhagen conference assessed in your country? Please take into consideration the negotiation strategy of European Union and the results of the conference.
- Does the European Union need to change its own energy and climate policy in order to give a new impulse to the international negotiations?
- Is a global agreement within the UNFCCC the best strategy to fight climate change? If not, which alternative strategy should the European Union follow?
- What is your country's position on financing mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries?

5. Current issues and discourses in your country

Which other topics and discourses are highly salient in your country but not covered by this questionnaire?