

*Mladen Karadzovski\**

## **Macedonian Party System and European Integration Process**

### **Introduction**

Macedonia gained its independence in 1991, after the dissolution of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which part was from 1945. Since 1991 Macedonia started to establish and develop its political system, which immanent segment are also the political parties.

Although widespread on 25 715 km<sup>2</sup> with about 2 million inhabitants, the Republic of Macedonia is characterized by a great number of political parties. According to the Court of First Instance Skopje, where the register of political parties is held, in 2009 there were 99 registered political parties,<sup>1</sup> which means that the political space in the country is overflowing. This leads to the conclusion that the party system in the country is atomized.

The purpose of this paper is to determine the level of support for the process of accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union by political parties, but also to determine whether that support is only nominal, i.e. declarative, or is it realistic, concrete and active support realized through instruments and mechanisms available to the political parties in the country. Also, in this paper will be analyzed the attitudes of political parties in Macedonia, referring to the name dispute with Greece, fostering good neighborly relations with Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania, but also in respect of certain internal political issues.

### **Macedonian Party System**

The transition from one party in a pluralistic party system meant greater opportunity for political organization and association of citizens

---

\* **Mladen Karadzovski** – Ph.D., Faculty of Law University St. Kliment Ohridski Bitola (Macedonia).

<sup>1</sup> <http://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki> (last visited 4.04.2016).

of the Republic of Macedonia. At the same time, it meant raising the level of democracy in a society that did pioneering political steps. The chance was well used by political factors in the country since the beginning of the 1990s, and the initial number of political parties which was 24, rose to 59 in 1992, 80 in 1995, 103 in 2000, even the 150 political parties in 2005, and today the number gravitates around 100.<sup>2</sup>

There are several factors that affect this strength of the political parties on the independence of the Republic of Macedonia. One factor is the desire to establish their own national political parties and catching a position in the political space in Macedonia which was almost empty before the breakup of Yugoslavia. Another factor was the demise of several political parties which had failed to launch at the political scene, or from one party were arising after several parties who wore similar. For example, from VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) came out VMRO-People's Party, VMRO-True, VMRO-reform party, VMRO-Macedonian party, etc. From SDSM (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) came out New Social Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Union, etc. Another factor is the multi-ethnic character of the Republic of Macedonia, i.e. each of the ethnic communities has formed several political parties.

Although we have noted a great number of registered political parties in the country, yet they are all grouped into two major blocs led by the two largest political parties VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. During the 23 year old Macedonian political history, these two parties and their coalitions are the only entities that have been or are in power in Macedonia.

VMRO-DPMNE is a kind of historical continuity of VMRO, founded in 1893 by several intellectuals and revolutionaries, with the initial goal for liberation of Macedonia from the Ottoman yoke and the creation of a separate, autonomous and independent Macedonia. The Ilinden Uprising and Krusevo Republic represent the crown of the revolutionary and liberation attempts members of VMRO to win their statehood. VMRO directly and indirectly took part in the Young Turk Revolution, in both Balkan and the First World War. After the Second World War and the liberation of Macedonia, members and supporters of VMRO again have risen the historical ideas of organisation. Extremely dissatisfied and disappointed, the members of VMRO were the main titulars of the political opposition in communist Macedonia. Not accepting the status of Macedonia within the Yugoslav federation, members and supporters of VMRO organized numerous secret political groups and organizations. Most of

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

them were named after VMRO and their main objective was the creation of an independent, democratic and independent Macedonian state, with an established system and free market economy. The struggle for an independent Macedonia continued in the period of acquisition of independence in the nineties of the 20th century. Then, after the establishment of June 17, 1990, the newly formed party VMRO-DPMNE was the only political force that openly advocates the separation of Macedonia from the Yugoslav federation, resurrecting the idea of an independent and sovereign Macedonian state, completing the Macedonian statehood and international recognition of the Macedonian state, which today in the Republic of Macedonia became a reality.<sup>3</sup>

Social Democratic Union of Macedonia as a political party was established on April 21, 1991 at 11 Congress-PDP ECM (League of Communists of Macedonia-Party for Democratic Prosperity) when on the basis of the initiative of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the PDP ECM-February 14, 1991 and the proposal of the Central Committee of February 23, 1991 has taken the decision to change the name of the ECM-PDP SDSM.

Since then SDSM is a modern, democratic, social democratic party which has its roots in the traditional leftist ideas that exist on this territory since the holding of the First Conference of the Macedonian socialists in Macedonia on June 17, 1900 in the village Zitoshe around Krusevo, the existence of political group Vasil Glavinov which defined the basic socialist views of the liberation struggle of Macedonia as 'the work of the Macedonians' and creating independent Macedonian republic with equal rights for all its citizens regardless of ethnic, religious, cultural and other differences.

Left, socialist ideas had their roots in the Macedonian revolutionary organisation as a carrier of modern, progressive idea of freedom and the creation of a state, independent and free from the influence of all neighboring propaganda outside. Among the representatives of the left wing in the Macedonian revolutionary movement most important place occupy Gotse Delchev and Nicola Karev.

Substantive progress in the formation of socialist and social democratic organizations were achieved after winning the Young Turk Revolution (1908) when in all major urban centers were created such branches. And between the two world wars, these ideas have an important place and support among the Macedonian population as an authentic representatives of the Macedonian national movement against pro-Bulgarian jets headed

---

<sup>3</sup> [http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/?page\\_id=172](http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/?page_id=172) (last visited 13.04.2016).

by Ivan Mikhailov and Todor Alexandrov as propagandists of ideas of the Bulgarian state and denial of the Macedonian nation.

Left, Socialistic idea was most dominant in the Second World War through the Communist Party of Macedonia, which resulted in the first meeting of the Antifascist Assembly of the People Liberation of Macedonia – ASNOM on 2nd August 1944 and the establishment of the Macedonian state and the realization of old aspirations for independence and freedom of the Macedonian people.

Starting from these old ideas and traditions, today SDSM has its foundations as modern statehood party and strive to create a society based on equality, freedom, democracy and membership in Euro-Atlantic integrations, economic development and solidarity.<sup>4</sup>

### **Political Parties in the Republic of Macedonia and the Accession to the European Union**

The membership of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union is one of the strategic goals of the country, which is not dependent on specific political nomenclature. This means that there is an absolute consensus of all political parties in the country when it comes to joining the European Union. Different political, ethnic, religious and cultural policy options are blended into a single pro-European option, which guarantees the right strategic orientation of Macedonia.

However, despite this seemingly 'pink' and unified position of political parties in terms of accession to the European Union, there is some distinction between the various political parties, especially in terms of their activity related to the EU. Also, as a problem occurs the discrepancy between the declared (written in statutes and programs of political parties) and realized work.

In Article 8, paragraph 10 of the Statute of the VMRO-DPMNE, stands: VMRO-DPMNE is striving for the inclusion of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union and NATO.<sup>5</sup> From further analysis we see that not only the statute of the party, but the statutes of all other political parties are too poor to provisions concerning the accession of Macedonia to the European Union and NATO. Not only that are not provided any specific activities and actions that would support these goals, but the goals themselves are not further elaborated. Thus, in the Statute

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sdsm.org.mk/Default.aspx?mId=45&lId=1> (last visited 14.04.2016).

<sup>5</sup> Статут на ВМРО-ДПМНЕ, [http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/?page\\_id=174](http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/?page_id=174) (last visited 14.04.2016).

of the SDSM, Article 2, paragraph 7, is said: the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia is an independent political party of free and responsible members who act to accomplish the following basic political principles and objectives – one of the goals of the SDSM is establishing and applying European values in the Republic of Macedonia and its membership in the European Union and NATO.<sup>6</sup>

And in the statutes of smaller political parties the situation is similar. Namely, in Article 7, paragraph 10 of the Statute of VMRO-NP (VMRO People's Party) stands VMRO-NP stands for membership of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union and NATO.<sup>7</sup> In the Statute of NSDP (New Social Democratic Party), however, in Article 3, paragraph 8, is standing provision that NSDP advocates application of European values in the Republic of Macedonia and its immediate integration into European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes.<sup>8</sup> In the Statute of PODEM (Party of United Democrats of Macedonia), there is the same formulation as that of the NSDP and similar to that of SDSM<sup>9</sup> and the in the Statute of the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party), Article 6, paragraph 6 says: One main objectives of the LDP is completely running the country and prepare them for full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic economic, political and security systems.<sup>10</sup> Article 6 of the Statute of the Liberal Party said that one of the main goals of the party's full membership of the Republic in the European, Euro-Atlantic and global political and security associations and structures.<sup>11</sup>

As for the political parties of ethnic communities in the country and their access to the European integration process, the situation is similar. In their statutes stand short and poor content provisions relating to the accession of Macedonia to the EU and NATO, in which is noted only the desire for integration, and nothing more than that. So, it can be summarized that the political parties in Macedonia through its party statutes does not explicitly express and content supported desire and efforts to join the state to Euro-Atlantic structures.

---

<sup>6</sup> Статут на СДСМ, [http://www.sdsm.org.mk/upload/documents/STATUT%20SDSM\\_2013.pdf](http://www.sdsm.org.mk/upload/documents/STATUT%20SDSM_2013.pdf) (last visited 15.04.2016).

<sup>7</sup> Статут на ВМРО-Народна партија, [http://vmro-np.org.mk/?page\\_id=71](http://vmro-np.org.mk/?page_id=71) (last visited 15.04.2016).

<sup>8</sup> Статут на НСДП, <http://nsdp.org.mk/docs/statut.pdf> (last visited 15.04.2016).

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.podem.org.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=55](http://www.podem.org.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=55) (last visited 15.04.2016).

<sup>10</sup> Статут на ЛДП, [http://www.ldp.org.mk/Dokumenti/Statut\\_Precisten\\_2007.pdf](http://www.ldp.org.mk/Dokumenti/Statut_Precisten_2007.pdf) (last visited 15.04.2016).

<sup>11</sup> Статут на ЛП, [http://www.lp.org.mk/?page\\_id=7](http://www.lp.org.mk/?page_id=7) (last visited 15.04.2016).

Seen from the perspective of election programs and platforms, the situation is slightly better, because there are many essential commitments taken by all political parties in terms of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. There were carried out surveys for parliamentary elections in 2011, and were analyzed the party programs of the parties which offered some content related to the accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union.

With the exception of the DPA (Democratic Party of Albanians), all other political parties, both in ethnic Macedonian and in ethnic Albanian block, regardless of size, in its programs consider the issue in terms of European integration and NATO accession as a priority. SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE consider EU and NATO as a top priority i.e. as the main foreign policy objective. Therefore, their programs contain specific measures that would move Macedonia towards EU and NATO. Both parties believe that the name is a key issue that stands in the way of integration. EU and NATO are mentioned also in the programs of smaller political parties, and some of them, i.e. LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) pay most attention to the specific internal reforms aimed at European integration, while the United for Macedonia (OM) and Social Democratic Union of Macedonia add emphasis on security policy, and therefore membership in NATO. In the context of the EU and NATO, PODEM stress the need to inform the citizens about the process, while Democratic Right pays more attention on the Macedonian Diaspora, and it gets more important than integration. All parties in the Albanian political block, except DPA, in their programs pay attention to NATO and the EU. According to the program of Democracy e-re, National democracy party and National democracy union, European integration and joining NATO is one of the main goals of these parties. Considering this issue, DUI (Democratic Union for integration) refer only to the Albanian community and their representation in the security sector, while emphasizing the importance of partnership with the United States (US) in this process. Proposals and measures mainly concern the internal reforms that are evaluated by the European Community as problematic and should be improved in order further integration. These areas are the judiciary, investment, administrative and institutional framework etc.<sup>12</sup>

In some offered political, i.e. election programs is mentioned improvement or upgrade of the legal framework, and further harmonization with European legislation. At the same time, they initiate changes in existing

---

<sup>12</sup> <http://mojotizbor.mk/images/phocadownload/eu-i-nato-vo-izbornite-programi.pdf>, pp. 5 (last visited 18.04.2016).

laws and regulations. VMRO-DPMNE offered adoption of EU legislation and its implementation, which is necessary not only as a criterion for membership in the EU but also for the approximation of European standards and values in order to improve the lives of the citizens. SDSM had planned amendment of the Law on Service in the direction of getting more social benefits of military personnel, including professional soldiers who go on missions in accordance with the armies of other Member States in NATO. PODEM gives maximum support to the gradual adoption of the *acquis communautaire* in the legal system of the Republic of Macedonia, because it felt that in this way Macedonia will achieve full compatibility with the rules and regulations in force in the EU. SDU stands for an intensive process of harmonization of national legislation with EU legislation, and the LDP would initiate changes in regulation that will automatically pull request for responsibility of every political and administrative head of any institution that fails to pull at least 95% of the funds that are available to the EU pre-accession funds. NDU (National Democratic Union) as priority highlights administrative reforms and harmonization of the current legislation with EU legislation.<sup>13</sup>

The program of only five political parties provided state policies towards the integration of the Republic of Macedonia to the EU and NATO. Among the measures offered, some parties have more concrete measures than others. What is unique among all the parties is that the public policies that are planned to be taken are in the areas which are located as a problem by the European Union and whose solution will get closer Macedonia to the standards of the EU and NATO. The proposals of the VMRO-DPMNE are: Extension of fundamental reforms in the judiciary and the administration; Maintenance and improvement of compliance with the EU political criteria; Further economic reforms in line with European standards in order to ensure the evaluation of EC for a functioning market economy; Further reforms to the competitiveness of the Macedonian economy in terms of the EU internal market; Maintaining the level of full implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA); Cooperation with the European Commission for the entry of SAA in the second stage; Cooperation with the European Commission on Accreditation of national institutions of the Republic of Macedonia for the full transfer of responsibility for management of IPA and the last of the five components of the instrument; Further strengthening of the human capacity of the Mission to the EU in Brussels; Projects E-Diaspora; Learning about IPARD; Hello EU; Diplomatic Academy; Regional Forums;

---

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

Far and near; Forum Macedonian experts abroad; Learning about Europe without borders; Macedonian lobby in the EU. Proposals of SDSM are: Respect for the system of career progress in the diplomatic service; Setting an experienced and professional, not party staff in key positions in the Ministry; Reorganisation of the diplomatic and consular network and economic diplomacy according to actual needs, priorities and economic interest of the Republic of Macedonia; Involving of non-state actors and business associations, industry associations and chambers, the financial sector, business educational institutions and think-tanks, the tourism industry, etc.; Again forming teams that has acquired candidate status, which will be composed of experts from the administration, NGOs, universities, chambers and other professional associations. Suggestions of SDU are: Restoring the defense budget at a level above 2% of GDP; Appropriate equipment and modernization of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia; Continuation of reforms in the defense sector; Status of members of the Army of Republic of Macedonia; Setting up of experts in the field of defense that will work properly on the process of integration in NATO; Continuing with high contribution to peacekeeping operations; Reform of the reserve team; Reform of the military Intelligence; Proper implementation of the policy of equitable and balanced representation of the ethnic communities; Integration of the Ministry of Defence and General Staff; Restarting the military industry; Implementation of the standards and policies of the New Strategic Concept of NATO in 2010; Set of professional staff which will be dedicated to Macedonia's membership in the EU and show capacity, responsibility and accountability to citizens and to the EU. PODEM, in turn, highlights the following suggestions: Massive familiarizing of the citizens with the process of European integration; Complete staffing of all institutions that have direct or indirect authority in the process of European integration with professional and competent staff, and LDP: for 40 months will be achieved the completion of the legal, institutional and administrative framework of internal reforms necessary for full membership in the EU; Regarding the use of pre-accession funds, LDP is obliged to use at least 95% of the assets and the disposal of the country; Setting up of experts in the field of defense that will work properly the process of integration in NATO; Reform of the reserve team; Reform of the military intelligence; Proper implementation of the policy of equitable and balanced representation of ethnic communities; Integration of the Ministry of Defence and General Staff; Implementation of the standards and policies of the New Strategic Concept of NATO in 2010.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, pp. 7–8.



We can summarize that the election programs of political parties recognize the contours of good and consistent policy related to Macedonia's accession to the European Union and NATO. What is essential for democracy in Macedonia is this trend to continue in the next election processes, thus will be confirmed its strong commitment to integration, but not only superficially and declaratively, but also through specific proposals, activities and content.

Nearly a year ago, VMRO-DPMNE initiated and proposed text of the Memorandum of political parties to meet the strategic goal for the Republic of Macedonia – membership in the EU. This memorandum should be signed by the political parties in the country, and they will be committed to continuously implement all activities and reforms for meeting the criteria for EU membership and will refrain from actions and activities that may interfere or negatively affect the accession process.

In the text of the Memorandum stands: “Considering the strategic orientation of the Republic of Macedonia for membership in the European Union, established from the time of its independence in 1991; Recalling that this strategic orientation of the Republic of Macedonia is set by the fact that Macedonia is a European country that belongs in Europe historically and geographically and also by civilisation; starting from the commitment of the Republic of Macedonia to share the values of the European Union for dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights; given that the strategic goal of EU membership is clearly and unequivocally supported by all political parties and citizens of the Republic of Macedonia; Aware that dialogue and cooperation between political parties and the constructive exchange of views and opinions are crucial for democratic development; Emphasizing that on the path of the Republic of Macedonia to the European Union is necessary cross-party consensus and mutual support, political parties in the Republic of Macedonia, which signed this Memorandum, undertake that:

1. Continuously and without delay, within the institutions, will conduct all activities and reforms needed to meet the criteria for membership in the European Union, that will provide constructive support to them;

2. We will refrain from actions and activities that may hinder or negatively influence the accession process; The disagreements or differences of opinion will be overcome in a dialogue within institutions (primarily in the Parliament,) taking into consideration the interest of the state and its citizens;

3. We will endeavor to achieve harmonized positions or solutions to overcome the challenges facing the Republic of Macedonia in the accession process".<sup>15</sup>

This Declaration is only a formal verification of previously proclaimed positions of political parties in the country and their commitment to the accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union. Signed by 17 parliamentary political parties,<sup>16</sup> clearly expresses the geo-strategic and geo-political orientation of the majority of political parties.

Institution through which political parties create and implement policies and strategies related to the accession of the Republic of Macedonia to the European Union is the Assembly, i.e. the European Affairs Committee of the Assembly, which includes members from the ruling and opposition parties.

Commission considers issues relating to:

- monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for Integration of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union and regularly reports to the Assembly for its implementation;
- monitoring the fulfillment of the obligations arising from the agreements between the Republic of Macedonia and the European Union and exercise programs and other acts of the institutions of the European Union, including financial assistance programs;
- monitoring and encouraging the process of harmonization of the legislation of the Republic of Macedonia with the European Union, as well as proposing measures to promote conciliation procedures, opinions and suggestions about the activities of the other working bodies of the Assembly and focuses their attention on issues related to the accession of Macedonia to the EU;
- monitoring the activities of the government and the departments of state administration regarding the admission of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union and in relation thereto opinions and recommendations;
- analysing the consequences of the accession of Macedonia to the EU and prepare reports relating thereto;
- regular reporting to the Assembly on all issues related to European integration, including the collection of information, literature and other documents related to the European Union;

---

<sup>15</sup> <http://kurir.mk/makedonija/vesti/107847-IntegralnoMemorandum-megu-politicki-te-partii-za-makedonskite-evrointegracii> (last visited 20.04.2016).

<sup>16</sup> <http://grid.mk/read/news/505823510/4618878/partiite-potpishaa-za-eu> (last visited 20.04.2016).

- proposing and realisation of activities aimed at informing the public about the process of European integration;
- cooperation with the relevant committees of other countries and
- other issues related to European integration and the accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union.<sup>17</sup>

As body sui generis in the integration of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union is important to note the National Council for European Integration. It has a central role in deciding the policy of the state in the process of European integration. The National Council for European Integration is chaired by the leader of the largest opposition party in Parliament, and its members are deputies from among the ruling and opposition parties in the very Assembly. With the establishment of this body, the consensus of all parliamentary political parties regarding the European integration of Macedonia is verified.

The European Union has always strived to animate parties in Macedonia in terms of European integration in every possible way through direct meetings of its representatives, through letters and statements, through Macedonian competent institutions, etc. But what we should always bear in mind is that the state has no benefit from declarative commitment of political parties, and would benefit if they start actively, concretely and specifically work towards the accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union.

### **Political Parties in Macedonia and Relations with the Neighbors**

Macedonian relations with neighboring countries are very important for Euro-Atlantic road of the state. The reason for this is the explicit approach of the European Union in terms of regional and neighborhood policy in the Balkans, which if is not successful puts in question the accession of the Balkan countries in the European Union. Of course, there is also another very practical reason that relates to the Macedonian Euro-integration, which is the right of veto which have neighbors who are members of the EU, Greece and Bulgaria. In the future, if Serbia and Albania join the Union before Macedonia, they will also possess the ability to block Macedonia's membership in the EU. This means that good neighborly relations appear as a necessary criterion for Euro-Atlantic future of Macedonia.

---

<sup>17</sup> [www.sobranie.mk/mk/default.asp?vidi=komisii&mandatID=6&naziv=%ca](http://www.sobranie.mk/mk/default.asp?vidi=komisii&mandatID=6&naziv=%ca) (last visited 22.04.2016).

Political parties in Macedonia have always had a position on Macedonia's relations with neighboring countries. As a subject of analysis in this paper we consider the two largest political parties in Macedonia, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. Sometimes, these parties have compatible views on certain issues, but also on certain issues they have very divergent perspectives.

Let us start from the relations with Greece, in which the central part comprises the name dispute. There is something called national identity here and the two main political parties are adamant that the state should not make any concessions concerning this.

For example, VMRO-DPMNE that is currently on power, has a strong and unequivocal stance of not changing the constitutional name of Macedonia.<sup>18</sup> Also, the party believes that any proposed solution by Nimetz, requires consultation with the people, by asking that question in a referendum.<sup>19</sup> Generally, the position of the party on the issue of the name is largely consistent in the last few years, however, there are some movements towards greater flexibility for acceptance of the proposed solutions.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, SDSM over time had greater modifications of its position related to the name issue, that ranged from hard line to very flexible.<sup>21</sup> However, the last paragraph of the SDSM is that any solution must be filtered in a referendum, i.e. citizens to be consulted about any decision. Also, the party is adamant that it will not allow solution that infringe on national identity.<sup>22</sup>

As a very bad image for the country is the political bickering of the two major parties in the name dispute, and they abuse this sensitive issue in a day – political purposes.<sup>23</sup> It reflects the perception of the state by the international community, which is confused by the parties disunity and inconsistency in their views on this such important issue of Macedonia.

Greece has always required a constructive partner in the Macedonian political parties on resolving the dispute, but should not expect to run into cooperation with any party, if disputes Macedonian identity. That

---

<sup>18</sup> <http://mrt.com.mk/node/16926> (last visited 25.04.2016).

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=427101019579&id=9&setIzdanie=21969> (last visited 25.04.2016).

<sup>20</sup> <http://utrinski.mk/?ItemID=70743DDE7C1B444B808CFBCF87716237> (last visited 25.04.2016).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.idividi.com.mk/vesti/makedonija/564730/index.htm> (last visited 25.04.2016).

<sup>22</sup> <http://republika.mk/?p=150173> (last visited 25.04.2016).

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.dnevnik.mk/?ItemID=A29AE620AE40A940818B317B23BEBD5F> (last visited 25.04.2016).

means disobeying of the so-called 'Red line' by any side will mean stagnation in the negotiations, and that means a halt for Macedonia's Euro-integration processes.

The document on which is based the cooperation between Macedonia and Greece is the Interim Agreement of 1995.<sup>24</sup> Any attempt to misuse its provisions by any side will mean a reaction from the other side.

Besides name dispute, there are other problems on the relation between Macedonia and Greece. Such is the failure to recognize the existence of the Macedonian minority in Greece,<sup>25</sup> dispute for the properties of Macedonians in Greece dating back to the Civil War in Greece,<sup>26</sup> etc. Resolving these disputes, or part of them, would unblock the process of accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union and NATO.

Relations between Macedonia and Bulgaria are subject to regular interest by the major political parties. Ambivalence of interstate relations has a reflection on the ambivalence of the views of political parties in terms of relations with Bulgaria.

After the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, the public perception was that the VMRO-DPMNE is Pro-Bulgarian oriented party, and SDSM is pro-Serbian (pro-Yugoslav) oriented party. The label of Bulgarofilly was attached to the VMRO-DPMNE, because a large part of the members of the leadership of the party stand for emotionally close relations with Bulgaria, without critical observation of the historical relations between the two countries.<sup>27</sup> After all, most of the initiatives for cooperation and rapprochement of Macedonia and Bulgaria came at a time when the government was led by VMRO-DPMNE, not only in the past but also today.<sup>28</sup> Despite the best intentions of both sides, a comprehensive cooperation agreement between Macedonia and Bulgaria, which would solve some of the disputed issues between the two countries is not signed yet.

SDSM has always had very reserved attitude towards Bulgaria, created due to the lessons learned from the past. But despite this, also in the ranks of the party has emerged specific initiatives for cooperation with Bulgaria.<sup>29</sup> Modern constellation of relations between neighboring coun-

---

<sup>24</sup> <http://mk.wikisource.org/> (last visited 25.04.2016).

<sup>25</sup> <http://sitetel.com.mk/panajotis-atina-nema-da-go-priznae-makedonskoto-malcinstvo-bez-pritisok-od-megjunarodna-zaednica> (last visited 27.04.2016).

<sup>26</sup> <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/baranjata-za-vrakjanje-na-imotite-e-obid-za-kreiranje-na-makedonsko-malcinstvo-vo-grcija> (last visited 27.04.2016).

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.makdenes.org/content/article/3540949.html> (last visited 27.04.2016).

<sup>28</sup> <http://vesti.mk/read/news/2863900/1001533/potvrdenoto-dobrososedstvo-na-skopje-i-sofija-po-izborite> (last visited 29.12.2014).

<sup>29</sup> <http://duma.mk/index.php/politika/5379-2013-07-02-17-19-37> (last visited 29.04.2016).

tries that are or should be members of the European Union requires the implementation of cooperation free from emotion, historical memories and so on. Therefore, in the interest of both parties is the creation and implementation of good neighborly relations with Bulgaria.

As the main problems between Macedonia and Bulgaria, are noted the interpretation of certain historical events and problematic ethnic affiliation of certain historical figures,<sup>30</sup> as well as non-recognition of the existence of an ethnic Macedonian minority in Bulgaria.<sup>31</sup> Resolving these issues is particularly important, especially for Macedonia, because the outstanding issues can generate a blockade by Bulgaria, on the Euro-Atlantic integration processes in Macedonia.<sup>32</sup>

Relations between Macedonia and Albania are generally honest and friendly. However, there are some outstanding issues that are incorporated in the attitudes of the political parties in Macedonia, related to the Macedonian national minority in Albania (its numbers), the territorial reorganization of Albania and the abolition of municipalities with majority of Macedonian population.<sup>33</sup> These views are almost identical at the ruling and the opposition party in Republic of Macedonia.

Macedonia and Serbia have built a common history for decades within Yugoslavia, but in 1991 they began to build relationships as two neighboring countries that aspire to join the European Union. Although most of the citizens of Macedonia perceive Serbia as the friendliest neighbor,<sup>34</sup> however, there are certain problems associated with the status of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which was denied by the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>35</sup> These problems are noted by the two major political parties, who are clearly on the side of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and often call the Serbian state to help for addressing this issue.

---

<sup>30</sup> <http://skandalno.net/bozhidar-dimitrov-makedoniya-krade-bal-85103/> (last visited 29.04.2016).

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/DetalNewsInstant.asp?vestInstant=11596> (last visited 29.04.2016).

<sup>32</sup> <http://novinite.bg/articles/11085/Plevneliev-namekna-che-Balgariya-moje-da-blokira-Makedoniya-za-ES-zaradi-incidenta-v-Skopie> (last visited 29.04.2016).

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/dijaspora/albanskite-vlasti-podgotvuvaat-zakon-za-ukinuvanje-na-makedonskite-opshtini> (last visited 29.04.2016).

<sup>34</sup> <http://press24.mk/anketa-makedoncite-ja-smetaat-srbija-za-najprijateljski-sosed-grcija-za-najneprijateljski> (last visited 29.04.2016).

<sup>35</sup> <http://star.utrinski.com.mk/?pBroj=1234&stID=7333&pR=2> (last visited 29.04.2016).

## Bibliography

- Kacarska S., *The EU in Macedonian party politics – Consolidating and dividing*, in: *EU integration and party politics in the Balkans*, ed. C. Stratulat, “EPC Issue Paper”, No. 77, September 2014.
- Siljanovska Davkova G., *Organizational Structures and Internal Party Democracy in the Republic of Macedonia*, in: *Organizational structures and Internal Party Democracy in South Eastern Europe*, ed. Georgi Karasimeonov, Sofia 2005.
- Taleski D., Casal Bértoa F., *Party Regulation and Party System Development in Macedonia (1990–2012)*, “The Legal Regulation of Political Parties Working Paper”, No. 39, February 2014.

## Websites:

- <http://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki> (last visited 4.04.2016).
- [http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/?page\\_id=172](http://vmro-dpmne.org.mk/?page_id=172) (last visited 13.04.2016)
- <http://www.sdsm.org.mk/Default.aspx?mId=45&lId=1> (last visited 14.04.2016).
- Статут на ВМРО-Народна партија, [http://vmro-np.org.mk/?page\\_id=71](http://vmro-np.org.mk/?page_id=71) (last visited 15.04.2016).
- Статут на НСДП, <http://nsdp.org.mk/docs/statut.pdf> (last visited 15.04.2016).
- [http://www.podem.org.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=55](http://www.podem.org.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=55) (last visited 15.04.2016).
- Статут на ЛДП, [http://www.ldp.org.mk/Dokumenti/Statut\\_Precisten\\_2007.pdf](http://www.ldp.org.mk/Dokumenti/Statut_Precisten_2007.pdf) (last visited 15.04.2016).
- Статут на ЛП, [http://www.lp.org.mk/?page\\_id=7](http://www.lp.org.mk/?page_id=7) (last visited 15.04.2016).
- <http://mojotizbor.mk/images/phocadownload/eu-i-nato-vo-izbornite-programi.pdf> (last visited 18.04.2016).
- <http://kurir.mk/makedonija/vesti/107847-IntegralnoMemorandum-megu-politickite-partii-za-makedonskite-evrointegracii> (last visited 20.04.2016).
- <http://grid.mk/read/news/505823510/4618878/partiite-potpishaa-za-eu> (last visited 20.04.2016).
- [www.sobranie.mk/mk/default.asp?vidi=komisii&mandatID=6&naziv=%ca](http://www.sobranie.mk/mk/default.asp?vidi=komisii&mandatID=6&naziv=%ca) (last visited 22.04.2016).
- <http://mrt.com.mk/node/16926> (last visited 25.04.2016).
- <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=427101019579&id=9&setIzdanie=21969> (last visited 25.04.2016).

- <http://utrinski.mk/?ItemID=70743DDE7C1B444B808CFBCF87716237> (last visited April 2016).
- <http://www.idividi.com.mk/vesti/makedonija/564730/index.htm> (last visited 25.04.2016).
- <http://republika.mk/?p=150173> (last visited 25.04.2016).
- <http://www.dnevnik.mk/?ItemID=A29AE620AE40A940818B317B23BED5F> (last visited 25.04.2016).
- <http://mk.wikisource.org/> (last visited 25.04.2016).
- <http://sitel.com.mk/panajotis-atina-nema-da-go-priznae-makedonsko-to-malcinstvo-bez-pritisok-od-megjunarodna-zaednica> (last visited 27.04.2016).
- <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/baranjata-za-vrakjanje-na-imotite-e-obid-za-kreiranje-na-makedonsko-malcinstvo-vo-grcija> (last visited 27.04.2016).
- <http://www.makdenes.org/content/article/3540949.html> (last visited 27.04.2016).
- <http://vesti.mk/read/news/2863900/1001533/potvrdenoto-dobrososedstvo-na-skopje-i-sofija-po-izborite> (last visited 29.12.2014).
- <http://duma.mk/index.php/politika/5379-2013-07-02-17-19-37> (last visited 29.04.2016).
- <http://skandalno.net/bozhidar-dimitrov-makedoniya-krade-bal-85103/> (last visited 29.04.2016).
- <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/DetalNewsInstant.asp?vestInstant=11596> (last visited 29.04.2016).
- <http://novinite.bg/articles/11085/Plevneliev-namekna-che-Balgariya-moje-da-blokira-Makedoniya-za-ES-zaradi-incidenta-v-Skopie> (last visited 29.04.2016).
- <http://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/dijaspora/albanskite-vlasti-podgotvuvaat-zakon-za-ukinuvanje-na-makedonskite-opshtini> (last visited 29.04.2016).
- <http://press24.mk/anketa-makedoncite-ja-smetaat-srbija-za-najprijatel-ski-sosed-grcija-za-najneprijatel-ski> (last visited 29.04.2016).
- <http://star.utrinski.com.mk/?pBroj=1234&stID=7333&pR=2> (last visited 29.04.2016).

**Key words:** Republic of Macedonia, Political Parties, Foreign Policy, European Union



### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to determine the level of support for the process of accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union by political parties, but also to determine whether that support is only nominal, i.e. declarative, or is it realistic, concrete and active support realized through instruments and mechanisms available to the political parties in the country. Also, in this paper will be analyzed the attitudes of political parties in Macedonia, referring to the name dispute with Greece, fostering good neighborly relations with Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania, but also in respect of certain internal political issues.