
Ghosts from a Recent Past. Preventing Violence in Macedonia

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Abstract. The recent history of Macedonia shows the presence of multiple conflicts that pose many challenges to the very existence of this country. This paper will study the evolution of the Republic by paying attention to the efforts to prevent the escalation of violence in those conflicts. It will present the Ohrid Agreement and analyze the partial failure of state reform. Finally, it will identify the main challenges that Macedonia is facing nowadays.

Keywords: Ohrid Agreement, Macedonia, peace agreements, conflict prevention, violence, State reform

1. Introduction

The Republic of Macedonia was born as an independent state after the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. During that decade, its transition was seen as an example of conflict management by the international community due to two reasons. First, it managed to escape the violence that struck other young republics from the Balkans. Second, it undertook a political and economic transition without major upheavals, despite having complicated relationships with some of the countries in the neighbourhood during this time. However, the armed conflict that erupted in 2001 threatened Macedonia's stability and confronted Albanian armed groups with

Macedonian security forces. Once the Ohrid Agreement put an end to the violence, the country's political forces began their implementation with the assistance of the international community. This process succeeded in integrating minorities into political life, but the stability of Macedonia has remained weak and interethnic tensions continued. In recent years, there are some worrying trends emerging, such as the rise of ethnic Macedonian nationalism, the capture of the State by the Prime Minister and his party, a setback in media and judicial independence, the increased segregation in schools, and slow development of the decentralization processes.

This article analyzes the history of Macedonia as an independent republic. In order to do this, first it presents the threats that endangered its survival, then studies on the conflict between the ethnic Macedonian and Albanian communities, as well as the development of the Ohrid Agreement and the process of state reform. We will conclude that despite the fact that the return to the armed struggle is unlikely, Macedonian society continues to face significant challenges such as the persistence of strong interethnic tensions, serious deterioration of its political system, and instability arising from its lack of integration into the Euro-Atlantic axis.

2. Independence, instability and survival

Unlike the events that happened in other regions, the dismemberment of former Yugoslavia gave birth to the Republic of Macedonia peacefully. This process started with a democratic and plural electoral process. It was created in 1990, when the Assembly launched a new Constitution for the State, and reached its point of no return with the declaration of independence supported by 95% of the voters in the referendum on the 8th of September of 1991 (Frčkoski, 2001). The process was validated by the Badinter Commission and this facilitated the recognition of the country's independence from 1992 onwards by European communities and their member states. Despite these quiet beginnings, Macedonia fell into a situation of instability that continued through the next decade and it would only be appeased after the Ohrid Agreement in 2001 (Flores, 2001).

The international community closely followed the evolution of Macedonia given the Balkan regional context. Thus, it carried out two actions to prevent the spread of violence to this country. First, an OSCE mission (1992) was deployed on its territory. Afterwards, the United Nations also deployed preventive forces from 1992 to 1999. Furthermore, since its independence, Macedonia received economic aid to support the political and economic transition process from the European Union (EU) as part of its strategy towards the status of a candidate country of Central and Eastern Europe.¹ However, the recognition of Macedonia as an independent and sovereign country by the international community has been a slow and difficult process, mainly due to problems arising from its relations with Balkan neighbours. Greece, in particular, rejected the use of the name (Macedonia) by the new country and some symbols it considered Hellenic, delaying its international recognition (Danforth, 1995). Finally, Macedonia joined the UN on the 8th of April of 1993 and was officially recognized by the United States in February 1994. The recognition of European institutions was more problematic but it did occur in late 1995, the same as in Euro-Atlantic defence structures.

The complex interethnic relations in the country, especially between the wider community, ethnic Macedonian, and the main minority, the ethnic Albanian community, evidenced the existence of a latent conflict in the country.² Both communities led separate and enclosed lives, due to mistrust between them. The ethnic Macedonian community doubted Albanian loyalty to the Macedonian state and feared for its territorial integrity, and possible secession of the areas inhabited by the ethnic Albanian community and its integration into a political project in Greater Albania. In contrast, the ethnic Albanian community had reservations about the Constitution approved without

¹ The European Commission allocated 470 million Euros to Macedonia between 1992 and 1999. *CARDS Assistance Programme. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006*, Brussels, European Commission, Non dated.

² According to the official census, the population of the Republic of Macedonia in 1994 was ethnic Macedonian (66.5), ethnic Albanian (22.9%), Turkish (4%), Roma (2.3%) and the rest was formed by smaller ethnic groups (up to a total of 2%). Valentina Georgieva & Sasha Konechni, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 1998).

the vote of Albanian deputies and with a preamble which did not specifically consider them constituent people. In addition, they demanded a proportional representation in the government, greater participation in local government bodies, as well as public institutions, police, and armed forces. They also called for an end to their discrimination in Macedonia, since they considered that they received worse health and education services than ethnic Macedonians. Ethnic Albanians also found access to public sector employment more difficult. Alongside this, they also demanded the recognition of their identity through the use of Albanian as an official language, the possibility of using Albanian national symbols freely and following the studies in the University of Tetovo in Albanian language (ICG, 1997).

In the 1990s, there were measures to improve the situation of minority communities in Macedonia. However, the results were not enough to satisfy the most extremist ethnic Albanian elements. They even generated strong discontent among the sectors of the ethnic Macedonian community, claiming that the creation of differentiated systems in order to exercise some rights of ethnic minorities could encourage the division of the country. Macedonia's party system reflects this split by unequivocally responding to the lines separating ethnic communities. Thus, none of the political formations of the country has managed to overcome the ethnic barrier and bring together a significant part of the electorate of both communities. This is indicative of the scope of the country's division following ethnic guidelines, despite the formation of government coalitions between representative organizations of the two wider communities.

In this context, the Kosovo war in 1999 contributed to the escalation of the latent conflict between the two communities. Thus, 300,000 Albanians from Kosovo sought refuge from the war in Macedonia. This event altered the ethnic balance within the country and increased political tension. Once the war ended, the uncertainty of Kosovo's legal status and the prospect of access to independence with the support of most of the international community, was a stimulus that exacerbated the more extremist sectors of the Albanian community in Macedonia (Liotta & Jebb, 2004).

3. From latent conflict to armed confrontation

Kosovo was the model for groups of ethnic Albanians willing to resort to arms to achieve their political objectives. A large part of the Albanian community of Macedonia catalyzed their frustrations participating in the Kosovo conflict and many of its members joined the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK) during 1998 and 1999 (ICG, 2001 a). After the political autonomy had been gained by Kosovo through armed struggle and the international support received, many of the ethnic Albanians who joined the UÇK considered the use of violence to force the Macedonian state to accept its demands necessary. This was the origin of the National Liberation Army (UÇK).³

The increase of tensions at the border between Macedonia and Yugoslavia triggered the 2001 armed confrontation. These countries tried to recover border control after the war in Kosovo but this process created resentment among the Albanian population living in the area because it was not taken into consideration during the negotiations (ICG, 2001 b). In addition, NATO transferred full control of the security buffer zone established around Kosovo to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Both events pushed Albanian rebel groups and traffic networks working in the area to adapt to the new situation.

In this context, two Macedonian police stations were attacked on 23rd of January 2001 and, the UÇK claimed responsibility for one of the attacks and justified them as resistance actions against the Macedonian oppression to end the Albanian discrimination (ICGC, 2001 c). Violence spread through the country reaching the Tanusevci area in February and affecting Tetovo, the second biggest Macedonian city, in March. At the end of that month, the Macedonian army began a counterattack against the rebel positions in Tetovo and the border with Kosovo, including the bombing of many Albanian villages generating a wave of 11.000 refugees. The escalation of

³ In Albanian language, National Liberation Army is *Ushtria Clirimtare Kombetare* (UÇK) and shares the same acronym than the Kosovo Liberation Army (*Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves*).

violence forced the international community to express support for the Macedonian government. The UN Security Council Resolution 1345 condemned the use of violence by the rebel groups, fearing the progression of the conflict into a civil war on a larger scale.

The armed confrontation between the rebels and the Macedonian security forces continued over the next few months in the areas populated mostly by the Albanian community bordering Serbia and Kosovo, eventually approaching the suburbs of Skopje.⁴ The clash led to a humanitarian crisis and forced many Albanians to take refuge in Kosovo. This refugee crisis came about for two reasons. On one hand, the Macedonian army used artillery to target rebel positions, seriously affecting the civilian population in the area. On the other hand, there were riots in some Macedonian towns between ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonian extremists which resulted in increased number of internally displaced persons in both communities. This situation moved the EU, US, NATO and OSCE to pressure Macedonian political players to stop violence.

As a result of this pressure, the national unity government was formed on May 13, 2001. The main Macedonian parties were represented in this government to address state reform and, thus, find a negotiated solution to the conflict that satisfied the Albanian claims.⁵ However, the start of the dialogue was difficult because the Macedonian government refused to negotiate with the UÇK believing it to be an illegal armed group, so that, in order to launch peace negotiations, the Albanian political parties participating in the government pledged to represent the UÇK position as long as it did not involve the ethnic division of the country. To this end, the DPA and the PDP initiated talks with the UÇK that led to the signing of the

⁴ Institute for War & Peace Reporting, *Ohrid and beyond. A cross-ethnic investigation into the Macedonian crisis* (IWPR: London, 2002), 35-38.

⁵ The national unity government managed to bring together up to 8 Macedonian political parties, including both the two main ethnic Macedonian parties (Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for National Unity, VMRO - DPMNE; and the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, SDSM), as well as the two main parties of the Albanian community (Albanian Democratic Party, DPA; and the Party for Democratic Prosperity, PDP).

Prizren Agreement, a common statement with the Albanian claims for the reform of the Macedonian state (ICG, 2001 d).

Negotiations between the parties of both communities allowed the establishment of several ceasefires and the distribution of humanitarian aid among the population. Pressure from the international community ensured that the negotiations did not stall and led to a definitive agreement reached in Ohrid on 13 August, ending the violence. The result of seven months of armed confrontation was about 200 dead between combatants on both sides and civilians, the destruction of many villages, displacement of a significant part of Macedonian population and deterioration of interethnic relations in the country (Liotta & Jebb, 2004).

4. The Ohrid Agreement and the state reform

The Ohrid agreement put an end to the armed conflict between the Macedonian security forces and the UÇK by promoting a plan for state reform.⁶ Albanian parties accepted the dissolution of armed groups in exchange for several amendments to the Constitution. The agreement also included the adoption of new laws by the Parliament, guaranteeing political rights and improving the legal status of Albanians, together with amnesty for demobilized militiamen (ICG, 2001 e) For their part, ethnic Macedonians leaders led ethnic Albanian leaders to accept a clause on the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the state. In this way, the violence was stopped despite the fact that the scenario fulfilled a number of conditions able to fuel an ethnic conflict (Hislope, 2003).

Firstly, the agreement introduced a change in the preamble of the Constitution to declare the Republic of Macedonia the state of all its citizens, preventing it from becoming a national home of any particular community. It also introduced the *de facto* recognition of the Albanian language as an official language,⁷ and gave the ethnic

⁶ *Framework Agreement*, signed in Ohrid, 13 August 2001.

⁷ The agreement established that any population comprising at least 20% of the total population of the State obtained official recognition of their language and also obliged the State to provide university education for all communities speaking an

Albanian minority the right to have equitable representation in central and local public institutions, and at all levels of public employment.

Secondly, the agreement was a challenge for the decentralization of the Macedonian state through local self-government development. This idea tried to promote respect towards local identity of different communities and boost citizen participation in the democratic life. At the same time, it refused to offer territorial solutions to ethnic problems (Flores, 2004). In addition, the Ohrid Agreement gave the Albanian community veto powers through a new parliamentary procedure. This affected matters involving culture, language use, education, personal documents, use of symbols, local finance laws, local elections and municipal borders, as well as the election of one third of the judges of the Constitutional Court, the members of the Judicial Council of the Republic, and the Ombudsman.

Thirdly, the agreement included a program for the cessation of hostilities and demobilization of Albanian armed groups with the support of NATO. It established a process for UÇK disarmament and demobilization that would be developed in parallel with the adoption of the constitutional amendments contained in the agreement.

The de-escalation of the Macedonian interethnic conflict followed the path laid down in Ohrid after the summer of 2001 with the support of the international community (Jakobsson, 2005: 38-39). NATO took responsibility to implement the military and security aspects. This included the deployment of troops to monitor the ceasefire between the warring parties and, later, to supervise the voluntary disarmament and demobilization of the UÇK. Its field presence supported the peace process and the refugee return. Then, the EU followed the NATO's work and continued military operations to contribute to the democratic stabilization. Later, it also supported the reform of Macedonian police (Ruiz, 2008). Furthermore, the EU coordinated the international aid to Macedonia and financially supported its institutional reforms in the framework of the Stabilization and

official language other than Macedonian. Only the Albanian fulfilled this condition although it was not mentioned explicitly.

Association Agreement signed in April 2001.⁸ In addition, it contributed with humanitarian aid and the rehabilitation of houses and infrastructure, and developed training programs for minority representatives in the State administration. Meanwhile, the UN worked in the area of development and poverty reduction through the UNDP, improving interethnic relations, and assisting refugees and internally displaced persons through the UNHCR action. For its part, the OSCE continued its monitoring mission in Macedonia and, in addition to supervising different electoral processes, supported the implementation of the peace agreement in the areas of trust building, thus improving interethnic relations. In addition, its High Commissioner on National Minorities promoted interethnic reconciliation.

The dissolution of the UÇK on the 27 of September 2001 meant its renunciation of armed struggle. It gave way to the struggle in the political arena with the formation of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and its participation in the political system and even in the Macedonian government (Brunnbauer, 2002: 7). The process of demobilization of the UÇK increased the level of trust between the parties, limited residual violence and prevented subsequent violent escalations of the conflict. This process, viewed at first with scepticism from the ranks of ethnic Macedonian political parties, developed smoothly and drove away the spectre of armed confrontation (ICG, 2001 f). The elaboration of amnesty that would ensure that UÇK members would not be prosecuted after their demobilization was an important element in this peace process and in the disarmament of guerrillas. Not without obstacles, the Macedonian parliament passed the Amnesty Law on the 7 of March 2002.⁹

The situation of refugees and internally displaced persons escaping violence improved rapidly. In June 2003, almost two years after the end of the conflict, Macedonia had a rate of return of 95%. Of 160,000 refugees and IDPs generated in 2001, only 6,300 had not yet

⁸ Stabilization and association agreement between the European Communities and their member states, of the one part, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of the other part, Brussels, 2001.

⁹ Law on Amnesty, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia* 18/2002, 7 March 2002.

returned to their homes (ICG, 2003). Two elements contributed to this: the reconstruction of those areas affected by armed confrontation and the improvement of security conditions due, inter alia, to the constitution of multiethnic police patrols (ICG, 2006).

A little more complicated was the reform of the State envisaged in the peace agreement and the development of legislative acts complementary to the constitutional amendments. This regulatory development was slow, breached the deadlines, and reduced the Ohrid Agreement to a simple starting point in the negotiations on new laws. The constitutional amendments were adopted by the Parliament on 16 November 2001, after the renegotiation of the preamble. This finally included the people principle, referring to Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Serbian, Roma and Bosnian (Brunnbauer, 2002: 8).

Another element of the peace agreement was the decentralization of the State. This process involved two elements: the transfer of power from central to local authorities and the redesign of administrative boundaries at the local level. Thus, with the assistance of the UNDP office in Skopje, the new Local Self-Government Act was adopted in January 2002. This law increased local authority powers in the areas such as investment, culture, education, urban planning and health. This law also established the use of the Albanian as an official language in those municipalities where the Albanian was spoken by at least 20% of the population, as well as the creation of interethnic commissions in the municipality to discuss problems related to ethnic diversity. Then, a new administrative division of Macedonia was designed and, finally, a census was completed in order to determine the representation in public sector positions and the implementation of minority rights under the peace agreement.¹⁰ In 2004, legislation on local self-government was completed with the approval of a reduction in the number of municipalities in Macedonia from 123 to

¹⁰ The census data showed the following figures on the composition of the population of the Republic of Macedonia: 64.18% ethnic Macedonians; 25.17% ethnic Albanians; 3.85% Turks; 2.66% Roma; 1.78% Serbs; 0.84% Bosnian Muslims; 0.48% Vlachs; 1.04% others. *Census of population, households and dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002*, The State Statistical Office, Republic of Macedonia.

80, and the establishment of new demarcations for them, in a way that allowed 12 municipalities to reach a majority ethnic Albanian population. This government-led legislation was criticized by the opposition parties and ethnic Macedonian nationalist groups announced that it would generate greater ethnic divisions. However, its proponents argued that the new design produced a greater number of mixed municipalities that did not exist before.

The implementation of the peace agreement was carried out under the pragmatic acceptance of the representatives of the two main Macedonian communities. However, this process was not exempt from difficulties. The first was the response of a number of ethnic Macedonian nationalist organizations to the changes in municipal boundaries made in 2004 (ICG, 2005). The second was the 2004 incidents in Kondovo, a village near Skopje, which was occupied by an ethnic Albanian armed group (Kim, 2005: 10). In spite of these problems and complicated political stability of the country in the following years, the contents of the Ohrid Agreement were fulfilled and violence disappeared from the Macedonian political scene in the years to come.

5. An insufficient reform

After the end of hostilities and post-war rehabilitation, the state reform process that was agreed in Ohrid followed, which improved interethnic relations and drove the ghost of violence out of Macedonian society. However, the reform process has been insufficient and the integration of minorities has not been completed due to several reasons. This situation added to the context of weak economic growth (ICG, 2011), together with recent trends indicating a rise in ethnic Macedonian nationalism, the capture of the state by the ruling coalition, a setback in media and judicial independence, and deterioration of interethnic relations, place Macedonia in a position to face the ghosts of its recent past and the possibility of resurgence of war.

Nowadays, there are several challenges that Macedonian society has to face after the partial failure of the Ohrid. Firstly, there is a need to

address the equitable representation of minorities in state administration and public enterprises, especially with the inclusion of the Turks and the Roma, as well as the increase of the numbers of ethnic Albanians in positions of responsibility. According to the data provided by the Office of the Ombudsman of Macedonia, only 18.6% of the total public employment is occupied by ethnic Albanians, 1.9% by the Turks, and 1.4% by the Roma.¹¹ Although this data shows an improved situation in comparison with 2001 when the Albanian population accounted only for 5% of the posts in state structures, it is still far from the 25% figure which is the proportion of population belonging to this community.

Secondly, Macedonia has to advance in the decentralization of the State, a process initiated from the Ohrid but still unfinished. Cultural centres, theatres, and sports facilities remain at the same location and social services have not been fully decentralized. The financial independence of the institutions is not yet guaranteed (Grozdanovska, 2005: 420), while the government has maintained a policy of discrimination in the distribution of investments according to political parties that control the local governments, also showing a deep territorial and ethnic discrimination (Osmani, 2011: 187-188). Furthermore, some sectors of ethnic Macedonian communities criticized the decentralization policy arguing that it has not provided adequate protection to all ethnic communities. On the contrary, it has benefited ethnic Albanians hurting sometimes the rest of the communities (Lyon, 2011).

Thirdly, the use of the Albanian language is another important issue. It was already one of the most complicated issues addressed in the Ohrid negotiations and it still presents a different point of view. The ethnic Albanian community considers that the peace agreement gave Albanian the status of the second official language of the state. On the contrary, the ethnic Macedonian community argues that its official character is only valid in the local self-government units where the ethnic Albanians are at least 20% of the population.

¹¹ Annual report on the level of respect, promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms 2014. Republic of Macedonia Ombudsman, Skopje, 2015.

Many believe that policies developed in Macedonia around languages aim to maintain linguistic, socio-economic, cultural and political imbalances of minority communities (Rustemi, 2011: 203). This is seen in the 2008 Language Act, which *de facto* defined Albanian as the second official language at the municipal level and allowed municipalities where minorities account for at least 20% of the total population adopting other official languages in the case municipal councils agreed.¹² Each community sees this law as an instrument for interethnic well-being with an aim to ensure social cohesion. Although it improved the situation of Albanian which *de facto* became the official language of the State, this language can not be used in most of municipalities where the ethnic Albanians do not constitute more than 20% of the population. The Albanian language has therefore an asymmetric and selective use compared to the Macedonian and is not yet used in the written form in regional or central administrations beyond the parliament (Rustemi et. al, 2011: 207-208).

Another key challenge facing Macedonia is the serious erosion of the political system and the systematic control of state institutions by the ruling party. This deterioration accelerated due to deep political crisis that polarized Macedonian society. This crisis began in December 2012 on the basis of the feeling of marginalization that grew in the main opposition party, the SDSM, after not being consulted on government decisions on sensitive issues for the country and not taking into account its parliamentary proposals (ICG, 2011: 8-9). This crisis was not resolved with the parliamentary elections in April 2014 either, which kept the SMSD in the opposition, or with international mediation. The EU pressured the coalition in power formed by VMRO and DUI parties, and on the SDSM itself, that boycotted the legislature alleging the existence of massive fraud in the elections (ICG, 2015: 3-4), albeit with poor results.

On the contrary, the political crisis was exacerbated by the scandal of recordings uncovered by the SDSM. This scandal revealed the existence of an illegal large-scale surveillance system developed by

¹² Law on the use of languages spoken by at least 20% of the Citizens in Macedonia and in the units of local self-government. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 101/2008, 13 August 2008.

the government. It exposed the high level of corruption in the system and the apparent direct involvement of the government and party members in illegal activities. These activities included electoral fraud, corruption, the abuse of power and authority, conflict of interest, blackmail and extortion.¹³

In addition to this, the judiciary is weak and exemplifies the discredit of institutions in the Macedonian state. It is an institution that is considered inefficient, corrupt and permeable to political influence that needs to be reformed (ICG, 2006). Although Macedonia initiated reforms in the administration of justice to form an efficient and independent system, the new legal framework has not been implemented. Meanwhile, opposition parties repeatedly criticize Macedonian justice system for making political decisions, because they doubt its impartiality and its capacity to withstand government pressure (ICG, 2011: 11).

The last of the great challenges that Macedonia still has to face is the instability arising from its lack of integration with the Euro-Atlantic axis. The country obtained the Action Plan for NATO membership in 1999 and an EU candidate status in 2005. However, the inability to resolve the country name dispute with Greece has postponed Macedonia's move towards integration into both structures, in spite of the advances and the reforms made by the State to achieve both memberships. Thus, the NATO meeting held in Bucharest in 2008 only offered the promise that an invitation to accession "will be extended as soon as a mutually acceptable solution is reached".¹⁴ Similarly, in October 2009 the European Commission recommended to the EU member states to initiate negotiations for accession with Macedonia but, due to Greek pressure, it was impossible to reach the required unanimous decision. The EU General Affairs Council explained that it a negotiated and mutually acceptable solution on the topic of name under the auspices of the UN¹⁵ remained essential.

¹³ Recommendations of the Senior Experts' Group on systemic Rule of Law issues relating to the communications interception revealed in Spring 2015, 8 June 2015, 4-6.

¹⁴ Bucharest Summit Declaration, 3 April 2008.

¹⁵ General Affairs Council Conclusions on Enlargement/Stabilisation and Association Process, 7-8 December 2009, 6.

These rejections are a source of tension between the ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian communities and between the government and the opposition for two reasons. On one hand, Euro-Atlantic integration is considered fundamental to maintain the stability of the country and in the region by Macedonian society. On the other hand, it is a goal that unites all ethnic groups.¹⁶ Hence the importance of this challenge for the future of the Republic of Macedonia.

6. Conclusions

Macedonia is still a vulnerable state nowadays, exposed to a crisis of governmental legitimacy and under threat of a deteriorating regional security, as revealed the Kumanovo incident in 2015 (ICG, 2015: 9-12). Although there is still strong resentment in the ethnic Albanian community because they feel they are second-class citizens in a state dominated by ethnic Macedonians, the incident did not precipitate the re-emergence of armed confrontations on a larger scale. However, this situation can change following a political crisis, manipulation of interethnic tensions, and the emergence of new violent incidents.

Macedonia must continue the process already under way in Ohrid to meet these challenges. It has to deepen the equality of citizens within the State and continue with the decentralization of public administrations. Furthermore, beyond Ohrid, it has to move forward with the democratization of the political system and maintain its aspirations of European integration. This will require strong political will from all internal players, something that does not seem easy today, as well as the support of the international community.

¹⁶ According to data from opinion polls, both communities supported the Euro-Atlantic integration, scoring 80% of the total population. Rizvan Sulejmani, "Challenges of the Ohrid Framework Agreement: Ten years later", in Reka, Blerim (ed.) (2011), *Ten years from the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Is Macedonia functioning as a multi-ethnic state?*, Tetovo: South East European University, 63.

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